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Local Spotlight

FOR THE SAKE OF LOVE



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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All religions forbid murder and many set extremely harsh punishments for those who break this basic human taboo. But extreme emotions can often override societal taboos, especially in the case of love and violence. Such seems to have been the case recently in Kuwait, when a woman killed her husband's alleged paramour. In the end, neither will get what they want as the killer will end up in jail and possibly facing the death penalty and the other lady has lost her life.

The killer was reportedly to have said that the woman was destroying her family. The details of this sad affair will now be heard before the court. Violence is never an answer for affairs of the heart. According to the accused she was also beaten by the husband, a fact she blamed on his girlfriend.

Whatever the truth of this particular case, it reflects a sad reality in much of the world and especially in the Arab regions. Women are too dependent on men for their survival. There are few options for women in abusive relationships, almost no support from government or health care authorities and society almost always tends to turn a blind eye. In fact, it's considered a social taboo to talk openly about domestic abuse - physical, verbal or psychological. And yet many women in Kuwait and elsewhere in the region suffer from abusive relationships.

Kuwait needs to establish a hotline and more support for abused women. It is our right and our duty to protect those most vulnerable in our communities and to provide them sanctuary and support. There have been some efforts in recent years to raise awareness about this important issue in Kuwait but more needs to be done and more concrete actions taken to help women and children living in abusive situations.

in my view

KUWAITIS FACE DISCRIMINATION TOO

By Dhari Al-Rashed

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It may surprise some to learn that Kuwaitis face a range of discriminations in their own country. These range from not being able to rent an apartment, hotel room to being discriminated against over jobs.

Kuwait is a great country. It benefits its nationals and non-nationals arguably more than any other country on the globe. What other country has 70 percent of its population being foreigners? What other country hands out cash to its nationals for no reason? What other country hands out huge amounts of money to other nations when they need help? Kuwait is a great country and there is no doubt about that. However there is a lack of laws that protect its citizens from discrimination. And that is something I find mind-boggling.

As a Kuwaiti citizen I have certain limitations placed on me. The first one and I believe this is the most important one, since it restricts a basic life necessity is that I cannot rent any apartment or even house I choose. That is due to various laws that put certain restrictions on landlords if they choose to rent to Kuwaitis. If it was a non-Kuwaiti they were renting to, they would not have those limits. Therefore the majority if not all landlords in Kuwait will not rent to Kuwaitis. A small amount of property owners will rent out to Kuwaitis only if they are married. That is due to their fear that single Kuwaitis will have parties all the time on their property. Some would also not rent out to single foreign individuals, due to the same party fear.

No hotel room for you

Another limitation on us is that hotels will not give Kuwaitis a room if they are single. If you are married you can get a room but only after providing your marriage certificate. This rule I do not understand what so ever. What purpose does this rule serve?

I sometimes like to change my environment and get away from my house. I don't necessarily want to travel

outside of Kuwait. My need for a change would be satisfied if I get a hotel room for a couple of days. But due to the law prohibiting hotels from renting out to Kuwaitis, they are limited to hotels that have cameras in the corridors. Those cameras are monitored 24/7. And if a guest invites someone to the room that is of the opposite sex I will be asked to leave immediately. Again I ask what is the purpose of this limitation? Morality is instilled by parents and kids can engage in illicit activities without being inside a hotel room.

The private sector

Some private sector companies in Kuwait also discriminate against us in our own country. Due to the financial aid that citizens receive from the government, if they work in the private sector. Employers have been paying Kuwaitis less than foreigners doing the exact same job as they are. Their excuse is that a citizen will get paid more in total once you factor in the government aid. I'm sorry is that money coming from the employers own pocket? No. I'm sorry that non-nationals don't get the aid. But, how could you rationalize paying your employee less because his government provides them with such benefits? I am all for team spirit, and I do understand how the aid can cause resentment in the work place. However, it should be up to the citizen to accept a pay cut not up to the employer to decide.

Discrimination laws are implemented all over the world. We need them here to protect Kuwaitis for all the reasons mentioned above. We need a law that prohibits landlord from discriminating against us. The hotel law should be abolished. And finally there should be a law that forbid employers from paying Kuwaitis less, unless they agree to it. Like I said Kuwait is a great country. Let us make it greater by protecting its citizens and also non-citizens from discrimination here and let us not make pride stop us from admitting that there is a problem and deal with it head on.

Photo of the day



KUWAIT: There are both a national ice hockey team in Kuwait and private teams.
— Photo by KUNA/ Ghazy Qaffaf

'Junior Creations in Islamic Arts'

We created a theme which includes three categories; calligraphy, Islamic design and Islamic architecture.

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

Within the activities of Future Generations Festival (The 27th) which is nestled by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), the 10th annual anniversary of Khalifa Qattan Children & Youth Fine Arts competition was launched yesterday under the theme "Junior Creations in Islamic Arts". The workshop will continue until tomorrow - in two sittings. The theme of the workshop was picked in line with the choice of Kuwait as the capital of Islamic Culture 2016. Music inspired by the Middle East was played - accompanied by a slideshow displaying oriental paintings of Islamic art and Arabic calligraphy to help the participants to stay in focus and feed their visual imagination. There were also specialist volunteers.

Jalila Qattan, organizer and the daughter of the late artist said: "In the past nine years, we have not had any limitations as we encourage children's creativity and imaginations. However, this year Kuwait was chosen as the capital of Islamic Culture, we wanted to do something special. We created a theme

which includes three categories; calligraphy, Islamic design and Islamic architecture. Also, for the very first time, we're hosting three guests - Calligrapher Fadhel Al-Raees lectured during a workshop on calligraphy, on Friday; Art teacher Dalal Al-Ayyam will be giving lecture on Islamic design, while Architect Engr Hamad Al-Fawwaz will be presenting a workshop on Islamic architecture tomorrow".

The best 100 artworks will be chosen by a committee and all these paintings will be showcased next September during the Khalifa Qattan Children and Youth Art exhibition which will be held in the Art Hall at Dhayat Abdullah Al-Salem. "Since we are against competitions, there will be no first or second or third places. All the winners will be given a Certificate of Excellence, a trophy and an artistic gift plus a calendar designed from their paintings. What is more important for their family is the catalogue that contains a record of their paintings and a photograph of each child and where they come from, which is something they will be proud of," Qattan added.

"Feedback is also very important. It is the way we support and encourage the children.



A painting of the late artist Khalifa Qattan

Children nowadays are losing touch with what they can do with their hands - to write and to draw or even read a book. Everything is electronic - we have to encourage children to use their hands as we sharpen their imaginations," Jalila explained.

She expressed passion in what she does. "I do it out of love. My father was a great man - he was the first fine artist in Kuwait who was

not very much appreciated by his own countrymen - unfortunately. I do it for his legacy and of course to educate the new generations. I'm very proud of making it a multi-national event," she said. Participation is all free of charge and the event is opened to children from 4 to 14 years old. Morning session is from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm; evening session is from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm.



Students from BSK participate during the event. — Photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi



Organizer, Jalila Qattan gives directions to participants.





Getting to know Mesayel

By Faten Omar

As part of our occasional series exploring various areas of Kuwait, Kuwait Times visited Mesayel to discover the main features of this area. Mesayel is a new area which is still under construction. It is a residential area and part of the Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate. It is called Mesayel (which means water stream), because the area collects a large amount of rainwater in winter. The area used to be a cattle farm and part of Messila. Now it is a modern locality consisting of five residential blocks.

See Page 6



— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



KUWAIT BEAUTIFUL & GREEN STUDENTS ART COMPETITION

HELLO ARTISTS...

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

Good luck to you, our young artists.

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

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

March 10th Till April 14th, 2016

Organized By

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Participation Form

If you are interested to participate fill the form and send it to Kuwait Times.

From:

We would like to confirm our participation in the above mentioned activity with the total number of participating student's so the corresponding number of drawing sheets can be delivered to our school.

School:

Tel: Fax:

Address:

Total number of interested student's are

6 - 8 years 9 - 11 years 12 - 14 years 15 - 17 years Special need

Name: Signature:

For more information contact Kuwait Times Tel: 24835616/7 Fax 24835620/1 or send an email to: ads@kuwaittimes.net



"Although it is a new area, you will feel comfortable here, because it is not busy with schools and restaurants like other areas," said Abu Abdullah, who rents a house in Mesayel and is satisfied with the location.

Some residents, however, aren't so happy and offer a litany of complaints. Ali Yaqoub said Mesayel's cemetery has become a garbage dump, "Because of the construction, the cemetery has become a dump for construction waste and unwanted materials," he said. He added the area is overrun with construction workers, who walk around residential buildings during late hours and at dawn, even during holidays.

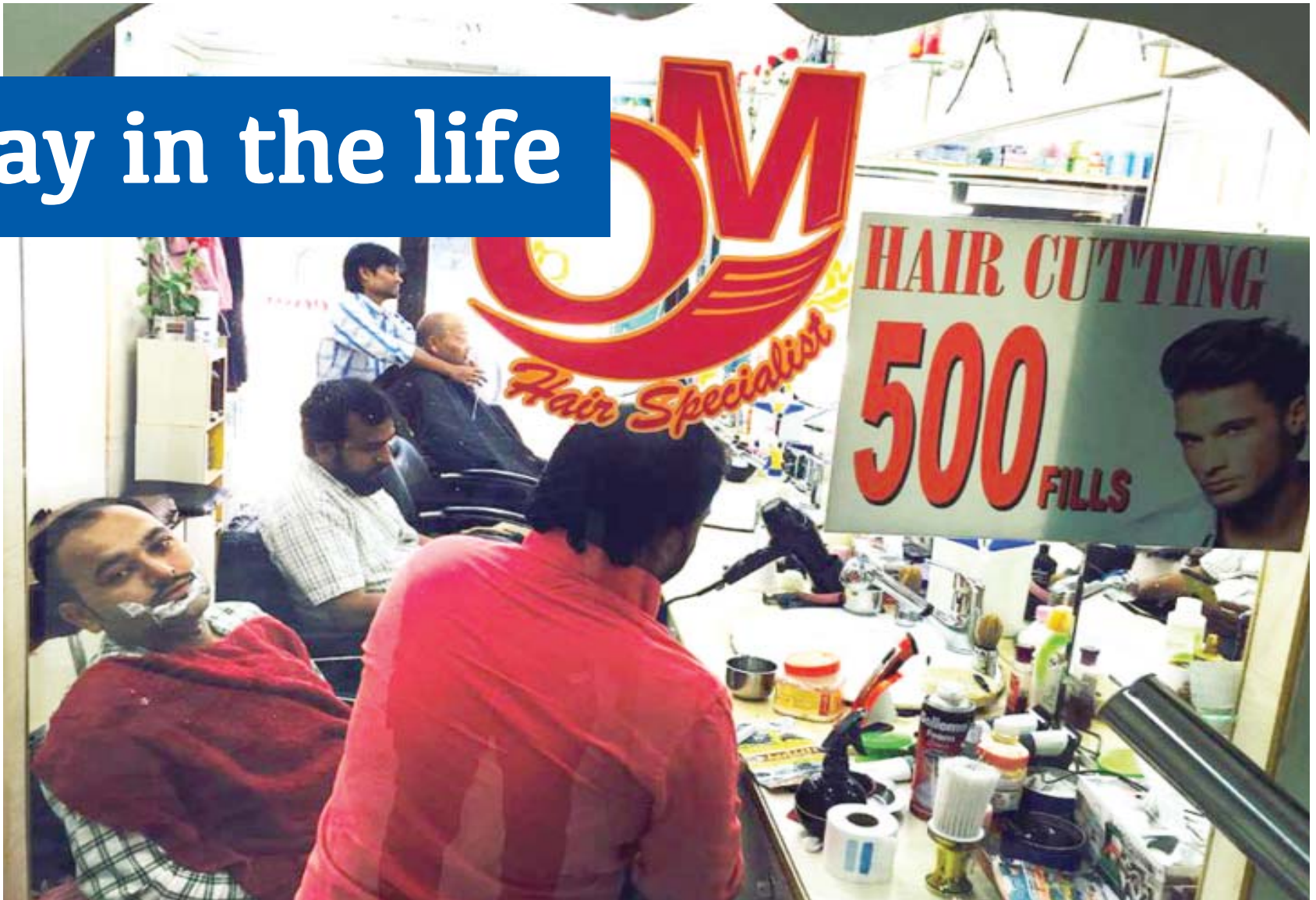
Umm Fahd agreed with Yaqoub, telling Kuwait Times that the area does not have any services or facilities such as cooperative societies, restaurants or schools. "We only have a health center that opened in November," she said.

For Meshaal Al-Musawi, Mesayel was not his dream area when he bought his house. "My house was supposed to be in Messila, but the rich residents of Messila changed the name of this area to prevent middle-class Kuwaitis sharing the area with them. This is not fair! I purchased this land at a high price because it was in Messila and not Mesayel!" he thundered.



Quiet, friendly neighborhood still under development

A day in the life



A CUT ABOVE: INDIAN BARBER THRIVES IN KUWAIT

Since he started working at Om Salon with his brother in Mirqab, Sunil has made a name for himself among many Indian customers.

By Ben Garcia

Sunil Gehlot was born with a cleft palate, but this didn't stop him from pursuing his dreams. Sunil is a barber who works with his brother in Kuwait. His wife and three children live in India. Since his childhood, his father taught to survive since he knew it would be difficult for him to lead a normal life, especially since his condition affects communication with others. Sunil learned many skills, from farming to cutting hair, which he eventually made his career. 'Sunil the Barber' was a household name for many years in his hometown in the Indian state of Rajasthan until he decided to work abroad. "It was a difficult decision to leave my family, but the money I was earning was barely enough for them. I wanted to help my parents, besides save money for my children's education. Thankfully, I had my brother to assist me. I paid for a visa to come to Kuwait and started working at my brother's barbershop," he told Kuwait Times.

Sunil's father is a simple man but a good life coach. Sunil learned many things from him, including facing people bravely and working hard for a living, despite his cleft lip. "I was born with it, so I live with it, as long as people around me understand my condition. The other option was to stay at home and do nothing. I chose to work and lead a normal life. I hear people saying bad things about my condition, but thank God there are people who really care and understand," he noted. Sunil also didn't have any problem securing a

visa to Kuwait. "There are friendly people here and they don't discriminate," he said.

Since he started working at Om Salon with his brother in Mirqab, Sunil has made a name for himself among many Indian customers. He has been working in the salon for nearly four years and has earned his own set of regular and loyal customers. "I am happy for him. I helped him get a visa. It was hard to convince him to come here, but he eventually gave in," said his brother Om at his eponymous salon.

At the shop, some customers said they only want Sunil to care for their hair. "I have been his regular customer for two years now. I come for a haircut, shave and dye," a customer said. Om is happy about the loyalty expressed by customers. "He is our lucky charm here," he said dotingly. "He is not only my brother, but a good barber. I have four workers here including Sunil. Half of my earnings are paid to the workers and the remaining 50 percent is for operational expenses and rent of the salon. I also give a percentage to my Kuwaiti business partner," he revealed.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday are the busiest days of the week, since these are days off for many domestic workers. The salon is open every day from 9 am to 11 pm. Customers are offered additional services other than a haircut, which costs 500 fils. The price is relatively low compared to other places in Kuwait, because of the shop's location in Mirqab. "We need to keep the price low because many other barber-shops here are charging the same amount," said Om.



KUWAIT LENDS SRI LANKA KD 10 MILLION

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has signed a loan agreement with Sri Lanka yesterday at a value of KD 10 million (about \$34 million) to contribute to financing construction of a complex for the Faculty of Healthcare Sciences, Eastern University. The project aims at enhancing the socio-economic living standards of the people of Sri Lanka, through construction of the new Faculty of Health Care Sciences in Batticaloa City, and provision of quality health care services to the community, KFAED said in statement.

The venture includes construction and equipment of the main building, various service structures, internal feeder roads, furniture, research, medical and technical equipment and internet services. It also includes consultancy services for detailed designs, tender documents and supervision of construction. The Project is expected to be completed by end of 2019.

The loan agreement was signed on behalf of the Republic of Sri Lanka by Secretary Ministry of



KFAED and Sri Lankan officials pose for a group photo.

Finance R H S, Samaratinga, and on behalf of the Fund by Deputy Director-General of the KFAED Hesham Al-Waqayan, in attendance of Ambassador of the State of Kuwait to Sri Lanka Khalaf Bu Dhair, and Regional Manager for East South Asian and Pacific Countries of Kuwait Fund Waleed Al-Bahar.

It is the 14th loan extended by

the fund to Sri Lanka, considering that KAFED had already extended 13 loans to it, totaling about KD 62.66 million (\$213 million). The fund has also extended to Sri Lanka technical assistance, worth KD 455, 000 (\$1.52 million) to finance technical and economic feasibility studies for projects in agricultural and energy sectors. — KUNA

TEDXALSHUWAIKH INSPIRES GREATER POSITIVE CHANGE

A CROWD, A LIGHT AND THE DESIRE TO INSPIRE

KUWAIT: TEDxAIshuwaikh, held yesterday at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research in Shuwaikh, highlighted experiences by speakers sharing their stories to inspire a greater positive change. The list of speakers included Dr Hilal Al Sayer, Catherine Silliman, Eng Ali Al Youha, Dr Fatma Al Mousawi and Balsam Al Ayoub. The journalist Abdullah Bouftain hosted the conference with contributions from artist Amira Behbehani, poet Nada Faris, Naheda Al-Baqsamee and Jaafar Al Saffar.

TEDxAIshuwaikh featured TEDTalks videos and original speak-

ers. In the spirit of ideas worth spreading, TEDx is a program of local, self-organized events that bring people together to share a TED-like experience. At a TEDx event, TEDTalks videos and live speakers combine to spark deep discussion and shed light on positive change by making a connection in a small group. These local, self-organized events are branded TEDx, where x=independently organized TED event. The TED Conference provides general guidance for the TEDx program, but individual TEDx events are self-organized.

TEDxAIshuwaikh received more

than 400 applicants to attend the one day conference that hopes to highlight positive change and inspire youth. According to the curator Nada Al Shammari "The extreme openness of the Global TED community is a catalyst for the openness of TEDxAIshuwaikh, which we are organizing in our community, one of the most diverse and culturally enriched communities in Kuwait." Tickets to attend TEDxAIshuwaikh were registration based. Live streaming was available on the day of the conference via <http://www.tedxalshuwaikh.com/live>

GCC TO CUT ROAMING RATES BY 40 PERCENT

KUWAIT: The Gulf Cooperation Council states will cut mobile phone roaming rates by 40 percent for users traveling through the six member states from April 1. The GCC General Secretariat made the announcement on its official Twitter account yesterday. The new rules will reduce the rates providers can charge for roaming - both making and receiving calls - and sending texts within the GCC. It's unclear how the new regulations will be implemented or how local providers will respond with rate changes. The new rules are part of a long term strategy for greater economic integration among GCC member states. Since 2013 the six nation bloc has been in talks on ways to strengthen economic cooperation and integration with a variety of measures including unified tariffs on mobile phones, customs and other trade-related issues.

VIP PLANES AUCTION

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Ministry of Finance has initiated a public auction of four aircraft from the government. The ministry's public invitation for bids includes three Gulfstream GV large-cabin, long-range business jets and an Airbus A310-300 VIP airliner, which have all been used by the government and operated by Kuwait Airways. Aviation website Flight Global reports that Flightglobal's Fleets Analyser database states that the Kuwaiti government has a fleet of 13 aircraft, including a G550, two G650s and two Airbus A340s. It also says the government is due to take delivery of a new flagship, Boeing 747-8, in the coming months. Four separate auctions will be held to dispose the aircraft from April 20 to May 2.

News

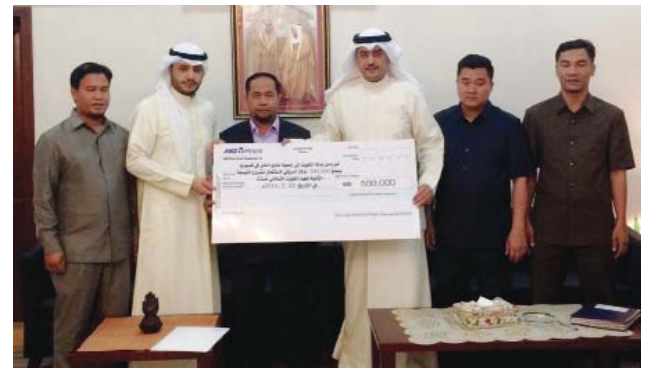
in brief

48 Kuwaitis among 411 TB cases in 2015

KUWAIT: Some 48 Kuwaitis are among 411 people diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) in 2015, a senior Health Ministry official said yesterday. The ministry's Public Health Department Director Dr Yousuf Mendakar revealed the figures during a ceremony marking the World Tuberculosis Day (March 24). TB patients constitute about 9.7 percent of each 100,000 people, of the total population in Kuwait - about 4,239,279 million, he added. According to Mendakar, the rate among Kuwaitis, who are about 1,308,093 million of the population, hit 3.7 percent among each 100,000 people. As for expats, the rate is 12.4 percent in each 100,000 people. Mendakar highlighted government efforts to face the disease five decades ago. In 1956, the Health Ministry opened the TB Prevention Unit, which is considered the first defense line against the disease through early detection.

Kuwait, Switzerland discuss bilateral ties

BERN: Kuwait's visiting Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah held talks with Switzerland's Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter at the foreign ministry headquarters in the Swiss capital Wednesday. "The talks were positive and distinctive," Al-Jarallah said after his meeting with the Swiss minister, adding that such visits are part of efforts to boost the historic relations. "This year, we are marking the 50th anniversary of establishing the diplomatic ties between the two countries," he noted. He added that the Kuwaiti-Swiss ties have expanded over the years from focusing only on political relations to economic, investment, and cultural cooperation due to the common interests of the two countries.



Kuwait donates \$500,000 for Cambodian Islamic Charity

KUALA LUMPUR: Charge D'affaires at Kuwait embassy to Cambodia Mutib Al-Usaimi handed a cheque of \$500,000 to finance second expansion project of Kuwait Islamic Institute for Girls in the Asian country. The donation, granted by the Kuwaiti Government, was submitted to the Cambodian "Manabaa Al-Khair Charity," the Charge D'affaires Al-Usaimi said yesterday. "It comes within Kuwait's support of the project which involves construction of houses, classrooms and restrooms in addition to providing scholarships to female university students," the Kuwait diplomat added. "Kuwait is keen to continue providing humanitarian aid to concerned authorities in the Kingdom of Cambodia for development in various fields particularly education, health and infrastructure, at government and grass-root levels," Al-Usaimi said. Manabaa Al-Khair Charity Chairman Muhammad Yousuf, expressed deep gratitude to the Kuwaiti Government and people for the continuing huge charitable and humanitarian aid for the Cambodian people.

Prof Al-Ghunaim wins 'King Faisal International Prize'

RIYADH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud granted the King Faisal International Prize (KFIP) to President of the Kuwait Studies and Research Center Professor Abdullah Yusuf Al-Ghunaim on Wednesday in recognition of his efforts to document Muslim geography heritage. This came during his patronage of the delivering ceremony of the prize of 2016 in Riyadh earlier today. The ceremony was attended by dignitaries, intellectuals, academicians, scientists and literati from across the globe. Al-Ghunaim was awarded the prize in recognition of his geographical books: "The Pearls" and "The Arabic Geographic Heritage", in addition to his unprecedented record of earthquakes in his book: "Arabic Register of Earthquakes." Al-Ghunaim is the second Kuwaiti scholar to win the top-level award after Dr Abdulrahman Al-Sumait, who won it in 1996 in recognition of his great efforts in serving Islam worldwide.



KUWAIT: Commerce Minister Dr Youself Al-Ali received a parking ticket yesterday after parking his car in a handicapped parking space while making a tour of the electricity and water branch offices in Ishlibiya. Afterwards, Commerce Ministry Undersecretary Khalid Al-Shamali sent a letter of appreciation to the Interior Ministry, thanking him for applying the law on all equally. — Photo from social media.

KUWAIT DISCOVERS NEW OIL-GAS FIELD

GCC URGED TO DIVERSIFY INCOME

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) said in a statement that the new crude field was discovered in Al-Jathatheel in western Kuwait, "forecast to be substantial add to the State's output productivity and reserves of light oil and gas." The KOC Chief Executive Officer Jamal Abdelaziz Jaafar said that preliminary scans of the underground strata determined that the field is of highly economic feasibility.

KOC teams are currently conducting main tests at the location to the northwest of Al-Manaqees field, predicting that the volumes of extracted crude oil and gas would double after finishing the tests. The new discovery is forecast to "enrich the Kuwaiti oil reserves and enable the country pursue the crude oil production for decades to come," he said. The company is steadily moving ahead toward accomplishing objectives of its 2030 strategy, intended to bolster Kuwait's international status as a major crude producer, in addition to securing and supporting domestic supplies of by-products.

Oil prices fluctuations

Meanwhile, GCC States have been urged to adopt new economic policies, including diversifying income sources, to face the recent instability in global economy due to the strong fluctuations of oil prices, a Kuwaiti researcher said. GCC countries must develop monthly economic indicators for decision makers in state and private sectors, and independent companies, Sulayman Al-Qudsi, a researcher at Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR), confirmed.

Al-Qudsi made his remarks while discussing his research paper he has submitted to the 15th International Conference of Middle East Economic Association (MEEA), which kicked off earlier in the Qatari capital. He also stressed the importance of watching and monitoring every single moment of indicators around the world, particularly in the United States, Canada, Europe, China, and India. Increasing the income via increasing productivity is essential for Gulf countries instead of depending on just investment and labor as income increasing sources, the Kuwaiti researcher said, noting that developing and improving national cadres, in addition to using skillful and distinctive labor, is also important.

The three-day international event, themed "The Impact of Oil Price Changes on the Economic Growth and Development in the MENA Countries," is hosted by Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DIGS). —Agencies

CARPENTRY A BOOMING CRAFT IN OLD KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Carpentry in Kuwait is traditionally associated with specific families and craftsmen who excelled in this craft and making furniture and home accessories a long time ago. This is not an easy craft since it requires, besides tools and materials, exceptional professional skills and physical abilities to master working on various types of wood.

For its hard features, imported teal (locally known as Gonguli) is predominantly used in making doors, windows and quality furniture such as tables, desks cupboards, beds and chairs. Old Kuwaiti carpenters used to buy from wood importers or loggers in coastal areas big logs of wood with lengths ranging between 10 and 15 meters, and then cut them into smaller pieces or boards with different thicknesses. Wood importers or loggers used to live in coastal areas near the seaports in order to be able to import woods from traditional exporters - India and Africa.

Later on, they opened warehouses near the flourishing carpentry workshops in such areas as 'Derwazet' Abdulrazzaq - the third gate of the second wall of Kuwait located in the 'Blockat' (blocks) area in 'Sharq' (east) neighborhood in Kuwait City. Besides the traditional carpentry, the craft expanded nowadays to involve several specializations in the areas of cutting wood, softening, decorating and painting the products.— KUNA

The Kuwaiti carpenters excelled in making items such

Crime

Report

KUWAITI FLEES TO UAE

KUWAIT: A 20-year-old Kuwaiti secretly fled to UAE - leaving her mother's home. Her mother filed an absconding complaint. A security source said a citizen in her 60s told Adan police that her daughter left home and did not return, and she gave them her details. Detectives began working on the case and discovered that she left the country to UAE. The sources said the girl will be arrested upon her return to find out why she ran away.

KD 13,800-car stolen

A citizen reported that her daughter's car has been stolen while parked in front of her house in Eqaila. The girl's father called police and told them that the car (worth KD 13,800) got missing - in less than 24 hours after she bought it. Police are investigating.

Liquor dealer nabbed

Police have arrested an Indian expat for selling locally made liquor. 85 bottles of locally made liquor was found in his car. A security source said Ahmadi police were on patrol in Abu Halifa area when an Indian was stopped. He seemed confused and suspicious, so he was searched and the liquor was found. He was sent to DCGD.

Boy flees from kidnapers

A Juvenile escaped from his kidnapers by jumping out of their 4WD vehicle. A citizen reported to Jahra police that his son was dragged into a vehicle by the kidnapers. The boy jumped out of the car and sought help from a passerby. Detectives are working on the case.

Airport security beefed up

Security sources said that a meeting by high ranking Kuwait International Airport officials, was held recently following the Belgium terror attacks. The source added that the officials decided to spread 100 officers to checkpoints around the airport and inside, to stop any suspected individuals. Officers will also be fully armed, and ready to use them if necessary. There will also be police dogs to detect any suspicious material. — Al Rai



KUWAIT: Municipality Public Relations Department recently participated - through the Environment Affairs Department and Yarmouk Cleanliness Center in the 'Yarmouk a sustainable healthy city' event which targeted Laila Al-Qurashiya Intermediate School. The aim is to spread environmental awareness among Kuwaiti youth thus teaching them the importance of protecting Kuwait environment by planting trees. —Photos by Hanan Al-Saadoun

International

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2016

Iraq begins offensive to retake IS-held Mosul

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Boko Haram's Shekau reappears looking dejected

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From Russia with love: Why Kremlin supports Trump

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GENEVA: Syrian government's delegation and the UN Syria envoy are seen during a round of negotiations on Syrian peace talks at the United Nations Office in Geneva yesterday.—AFP

US VOWS TO WORK WITH RUSSIA FOR SYRIA PEACE

KERRY MEETING PUTIN AND LAVROV • BATTLE RAGES FOR PALMYRA

GENEVA/MOSCOW: US Secretary of State John Kerry, ahead of a meeting with Vladimir Putin, said the United States and Russia must work together to end the war in Syria despite their differences, and called for a further reduction in violence and more aid deliveries.

Russia and the United States have emerged as the two outside powers with a decisive say in what happens next in Syria's five year-old civil conflict. Ahead of talks with the Russian leader in Moscow, Kerry said a fragile partial truce had cut levels of violence, but he wanted to see a further reduction plus greater flows of aid.

Kerry's visit came as Syrian state television said government forces had fought their way into Palmyra, with the army backed by Russian air cover seeking to recapture the historic city from Islamic State insurgents. Syrian government and opposition parties at peace talks in Geneva were expected to agree yesterday to a document drawn up by a UN special envoy outlining basic principles, in what one diplomat described as a "baby step" forward. Kerry is also expected to press Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on the future of President Bashar Al-Assad. While the United States wants Assad to step aside, Russia says only the Syrian people can decide his fate at the ballot box.

Washington believes that Moscow, closely allied to Assad, can nudge Damascus to make important concessions. Kerry said it was encouraging that Russia and the United States had cooperated "despite differences ... in the face of this urgency to do what is necessary to meet the challenge."

He said there was a hope that his meetings in Moscow could "further find and chart the road ahead so that we can bring this conflict in

Syria to a close as fast as possible". The United States and its allies have been backing armed groups that rose up against Assad's rule, while Moscow has asserted its role with a five-month military campaign that turned the tide of the fighting in Assad's favour.

In their brief remarks at the start of the meeting, Lavrov and Kerry did not directly address the Geneva talks, which are being brokered by the United Nations. Talks were due to adjourn yesterday after almost two weeks and to resume in April.

SLOW PROGRESS

The Geneva talks are part of a diplomatic push launched with US and Russian support to end the war in Syria that has killed more than 250,000 people, created the world's worst refugee crisis and bred the rise of Islamic State. Progress has been slow, with government officials avoiding any talk on the divisive issue of a political transition or the fate of Assad, who opposition leaders say must leave office.

But UN envoy Staffan de Mistura has said he aimed to establish if there were any points held in common by the different parties and if successful, to announce them. "Basic principles have been laid out. De Mistura wants to announce that all sides have agreed so that he can move on to the transition issue at the next round," said a senior Western diplomat. "It's a baby step, but a necessary step. It's not a bad result." A summary of the document seen by Reuters contains points including reforming state institutions, rejecting terrorism unequivocally and implementing United Nations Security Council resolution 2254 that guarantees a political transition of power.

It also calls for no tolerance of acts of revenge from either side, rebuilding the Syrian

army on national criteria, ensuring a democratic non-sectarian state and preserving women's rights in fair representation.

BATTLE FOR PALMYRA

On the battlefield, the battle was raging for Palmyra, which fell to Islamic State militants last year and which the Syrian army launched a concerted effort to recapture this month. A monitoring group said the fighting was still outside the city, after a rapid advance the day before brought the army and its allies right up to its outskirts.

The Russian and US-backed cessation of hostilities in place elsewhere in Syria does not

cover Islamic State. The state-run news channel Ikhbariya broadcast images from just outside Palmyra and said government fighters had taken over a hotel district in the west. A soldier interviewed by Ikhbariya said the army and its allies would press forward beyond Palmyra.

"We say to those gunmen, we are advancing to Palmyra, and to what's beyond Palmyra, and God willing to Raqqa, the centre of the Daesh gangs," he said, referring to Islamic State's de facto capital in northern Syria. The state news agency SANA showed warplanes flying overhead, helicopters firing missiles, and soldiers and armored vehicles approaching the city.— Reuters



MOSCOW: This NASA photo shows US Secretary of State, John Kerry as he meets with NASA astronaut Scott Kelly to discuss his year aboard the International Space Station yesterday in Moscow.—AFP

EGYPTIAN COURT ORDERS RELEASE OF TORTURE T-SHIRT DETAINEE

CAIRO: An Egyptian court yesterday ordered the release of Mahmoud Mohammed Ahmed, a 20-year-old Egyptian who was arrested for wearing a T-shirt with a slogan against torture, his brother and lawyer told The Associated Press. Ahmed was 18 when he was arrested on Jan. 25, 2014, the third anniversary of the uprising that toppled longtime ruler Hosni Mubarak. The day was marred by deadly street clashes between police and protesters.

He was accused by police of taking part in unauthorized demonstrations, possession of explosives and paying money to others to take part in street protests. He was never formally charged during his two years in detention. Yesterday's court ruling, which cannot be appealed, upheld a release order issued by another tribunal earlier this week but which was appealed by the prosecution. His bail was set at 2,000 Egyptian pounds (about \$220).

When arrested, Ahmed was wearing a T-shirt that bore the slogan "A nation without torture," something that helped turn his case into a cause celebre by Egyptian rights activists campaigning for an end to random detentions and torture by police. He also wore a scarf bearing the date the 2011 revolt began: January 25. It was not immediately clear when Ahmed would be released, but it routinely takes hours or even days for police to implement court release orders. "The ball is now in the court of the Interior Ministry," his brother, Tarek Mohammed Ahmed, said. The ministry runs the police and prisons.

Both his brother and the lawyer have maintained that Ahmed was tortured in detention and deprived of many of his rights. Ahmed had a leg operation in 2010 to remedy a condition that arose from a bad fall dating back to his childhood. The condition of the operated-on leg deteriorated while he was in detention because of a lack of adequate medical attention, according to the brother and lawyer, Mukhtar Munir.

Yesterday, Ahmed appeared in court using a cane to support him. Ahmed is an activist who took part in the 2014 street protests that marked the third anniversary of the anti-Mubarak uprising. He was arrested at a police checkpoint on the outskirts of Cairo as he was making his way to his home north of the capital. His detention is part of the harsh crackdown overseen by President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi since, as military chief, he led the ouster in July 2013 of Egypt's first freely elected president, the Islamist Mohammed Morsi, following mass protests against his divisive, one-year rule. The crackdown has primarily targeted Morsi's supporters and other Islamists but secular, pro-democracy activists have not been spared. Ahmed's case attracted the attention of rights groups at home and abroad, mostly because of his young age and the circumstances of his arrest. Amnesty International in January said his detention was an "utter disgrace" and an "affront to justice." "No one should be arrested or detained simply because of slogans on the T-Shirt or scarf

they have chosen to wear, let alone imprisoned for two years and facing torture and other ill-treatment in detention," Said Boumedouha, Amnesty's deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa, wrote in the January statement.

Al-Sisi, in office for nearly two years, has maintained that he faces a tough balancing act when it comes to balancing stability with individual rights and freedoms. —AP



MOSUL: An Iraqi refugee man who left his hometown of Mosul walks towards Irbil as he crosses a berm that separates Kurdish fighters and militants of the Islamic State group outside the northern city of Mosul yesterday.—AP



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin (left) shakes hands with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (second from right) Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and UAE's deputy commander-in-chief of the armed forces, at the Kremlin in Moscow yesterday. — AP

IRAQ BEGINS OFFENSIVE TO RETAKE IS-HELD MOSUL

US-BACKED IRAQI FORCES MASSING AROUND QAYYARAH

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi army said yesterday its troops and allied militia had launched what is expected to be a long and difficult offensive to retake the second city of Mosul, the Islamic State group's main hub in Iraq. The army and the Popular Mobilisation paramilitary force "have begun the first phase of conquest operations" in the northern Nineveh province, of which Mosul is the capital, Iraq's joint operations command said in a statement.

It said four villages had been taken between the town of Qayyarah, which is still held by IS, and Makhmur, where US-backed Iraqi forces have been massing in recent weeks. The army did not say how long this phase of the operation was expected to take and Iraqi forces still look far from being in a position to take the city itself. The joint operations command is coordinating the battle by Iraqi security forces to retake the large parts of the country seized by IS during a lightning offensive in 2014.

It includes representatives from the US-led coalition that has provided air support, training and military advisers for the Iraqi army in its fightback.

Iraqi forces have scored important recent gains against IS, including by last month retaking Anbar provincial capital Ramadi. The latest announcement comes as pro-government forces in Syria closed in on IS in the ancient city of Palmyra, which the jihadists seized around the same time as Ramadi last year.

But Mosul—which along with Raqqa in Syria is one of the jihadists' two main hubs—would be a major prize. Experts have warned that any battle to retake the city will be difficult, given the significant number of jihadists and civilians in the city and the time IS has had to pre-

pare defences. Lieutenant General Sean MacFarland, the commander of the US-led operation against IS, has said that Iraqi generals do not think they will be able to recapture Mosul until the end of 2016 or early 2017 at the earliest.

As they have done in battles to retake cities like Ramadi and Tikrit, Iraqi forces are expected to work slowly and deliberately to cut off supply lines to Mosul before launching an assault on the city.

Long way to Mosul

Thousands of troops were deployed in February to a base in Makhmur, some 70 kilometres (45 miles) southeast of

Mosul, in preparation for the offensive. The US-led coalition said it carried out three strikes in the Qayyarah area on Wednesday. "Near Qayyarah, three strikes struck an ISIL (IS) communication facility and destroyed an ISIL-used bridge section and denied ISIL access to terrain," it said in a statement. It also launched eight strikes in the broader Mosul region.

Peshmerga fighters of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region have also been heavily involved in the campaign against IS in northern Iraq. The peshmerga deputy commander for the sector, Araz Mirkhan, confirmed to AFP yesterday that the offensive had started.— AFP

TURKISH WARPLANES STRIKE PKK TARGETS IN NORTH IRAQ

ANKARA: Turkish warplanes hit and destroyed nearly a dozen targets belonging to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in northern Iraq late on Wednesday, the armed forces said, the latest operations targeting insurgent camps near the Turkish border.

The F-16 and F-4 jets carried out the operation against the camps in the Hakkurk, Haftanin, Avasin and Basyan areas at 9 p.m. (1900 GMT), destroying 11 targets including ammunition depots and shelters, the military said yesterday. On Tuesday, warplanes struck shelters, caves and ammunition depots used by the PKK in northern Iraq and rural areas near the southeastern Turkish town of Semdinli. Clashes elsewhere in the southeast killed 26 militants on Tuesday.

The military says more than a thousand insurgents have been killed in the largely Kurdish southeast since the 2-1/2-year PKK ceasefire collapsed in July, prompting the heaviest clashes in the region since the 1990s. President Tayyip Erdogan has said that more than 300 members of the security forces have died, while the pro-Kurdish opposition says hundreds of civilians have also been killed.

Separately, the military said one soldier was killed and four injured after a homemade bomb was detonated by remote control in the town of Nusaybin in the southeastern province of Mardin. Nusaybin, near the Syrian border, has been under a curfew since March 14 when security forces launched operations against militants there.— Reuters



Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau

BOKO HARAM'S SHEKAU REAPPEARS LOOKING DEJECTED IN NEW VIDEO

KANO, Nigeria: Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau appeared on video for the first time in more than a year yesterday, rejecting rumours about his death but appearing to signal his time in charge of the Nigerian jihadist group may be coming to an end.

In a message that contained none of the defiant bluster, taunts and denunciation of political leaders of previous videos and will likely be interpreted as an admission of defeat, the dejected-looking Shekau declared in the Hausa language: "For me the end has come". "This is a message of greeting and joy for you to see my face," said Shekau, who in March 2015 pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in an audio message. "This is my desire: that whoever sees this will hear nothing but greetings between me and you. Only Allah knows the rest, as you believed (and) as you submitted. For me the end has come.

"This is only the message I want to send to you for you to understand that this is certainly I. This is why I did this. "May Allah protect us so that no hypocrite stands between us. May Allah protect us from the devil so that he doesn't achieve his evil among us. "May Allah protect us and may we stand firm on the path of Allah. I thank my creator."

'Farewell video'?

A military source in the Borno state capital, Maiduguri, in northeast Nigeria, told AFP: "Watching Shekau in this video, the message is clear: the game is over. "For this arrogant and boastful terrorist to speak in such a meek and subdued tone shows he has been trounced beyond his imagination.

"It is farewell video. He is just telling his fighters they should forget their illusionary Islamic state and lay down their arms. "He knows that with the current advance of the Nigerian military our troops will soon reach him". Unlike messages from the Islamists at the end of 2014 and start of 2015, which were slickly edited and closely resembled those of the Islamic State group, the new video was poorly shot.

It was also posted on YouTube rather than via Twitter accounts linked to IS supporters and websites used by fellow jihadists, which had become Boko Haram's preferred medium of communication.

The bearded Shekau, who looked thin, spoke to his followers in front of a lime green background, with the Boko Haram black flag superimposed in crude graphics.

He also makes no mention of the Islamic State or Islamic State in West Africa province (ISWAP) and uses the group's original name "Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad" or "People committed to the propagation of the Prophet's teachings and jihad".—AFP

IN CHAOS OF LIBYA, UNITY GOVT ADDS TO DISARRAY

UN, WEST PUSH FOR POWER-SHARING DEAL

TRIPOLI: It was meant to finally bring an end to Libya's political chaos and unrest, but the creation of a new UN-backed unity government has only added to the country's disarray. Desperate to resolve years of political deadlock that has allowed jihadists to gain an important foothold on Europe's doorstep, the United Nations and Western powers have been pushing hard for the acceptance of a Libyan power-sharing deal announced in December.

Under the agreement, Libya's rival administrations—one supported by the internationally recognized parliament in the east and the other backed by an Islamist-backed militia in Tripoli—are supposed to cede power to a new Government of National Accord (GNA) under prime minister-designate Fayeaz al-Sarraj. But so far the only thing the two sides seem able to agree on is their mutual disdain for the new authority. "The birth of this government in this way has done nothing but worsen the political crisis... create new conflicts and further destabilize" the country, said Mohamed Eljarh, a Libya analyst at the Washington-based Atlantic Council.

The extent of the crisis was hammered home on Wednesday when UN envoy Martin Kobler was prevented from travelling to Tripoli to work on installing the GNA. "Again had to cancel flight to Tripoli... UN must have the right to fly (to) Tripoli," he wrote on Twitter, without specifying what had blocked

the mission. The GNA has not been formally endorsed by either parliament but it announced earlier this month it was taking office on the basis of a petition signed by a narrow majority of Libya's elected lawmakers.

The United States and its European allies have called on the government to swiftly move to Tripoli and take up power, threatening sanctions against those who undermine the political process. But neither of Libya's rival administrations has so far shown any willingness to cooperate. "Unless the international community can give the GNA control over Libyan finances, a powerful national army, and somehow make it legitimate in the eyes of the Libyan people, the GNA is poised to become the weakest of Libya's three competing national authorities," said Michael Nayebi-Oskoui, a US-based Middle East and North Africa analyst.

'A long way' from stability

Libya collapsed into lawlessness following the 2011 NATO-backed ouster of longtime strongman Muammar Gaddafi. Heavily armed groups rushed to fill the power vacuum and in mid-2014 a militia alliance including Islamists overran Tripoli, forcing a recognized government that had struggled to function to flee to eastern Libya. Eljarh said there was no hope of the GNA taking power in Tripoli "as long as the main armed groups are not ready to pledge alle-

giance" to the new authority. "The international community would need to be ready to provide it with military protection if needed," he said.

And any attempt to force the government on Tripoli would be "a major security risk likely to cause clashes between armed groups". The stakes are high. Just across the Mediterranean from Europe, Libya has become the latest stronghold of the jihadist Islamic State group. IS has seized control of Gaddafi's coastal hometown of Sirte and launched a wave of attacks, both against rival Libyan forces and across the border in Tunisia. The group claimed responsibility last year for two attacks in Tunisia—on the Bardo national museum and at a beach resort near Sousse—that killed a total of 59 tourists.

The lawlessness has also seen Libya become a favored jumping-off point for smugglers bringing migrants on dangerous sea journeys to Europe. Around 330,000 migrants have landed in Italy from Libya since the start of 2014, as Europe already struggles to cope with the influx of those fleeing five years of war in Syria. Despite the international pressure, Nayebi-Oskoui said Libya is in such a shambles that it is unlikely the GNA will make a difference soon. "Libya's fractured social and tribal structures require a strong and legitimate central government," he said. "Unfortunately we seem to be a long way from realizing that objective."—AFP



JERUSALEM: Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem Fouad Twal (right) washes a clergymen's feet during the Washing of the Feet ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, traditionally believed by many to be the site of the crucifixion and burial of Jesus Christ, in Jerusalem's Old City, yesterday.—AP

PERUVIAN MUM OF TWINS AND BELGIAN LAW STUDENT AMONG DEAD

BRUSSELS: They came from Peru, Morocco, North America and Europe, and their lives—whether as a mother, civil servant, student or missionary—were just as diverse. This is the picture slowly emerging of those caught up in the airport and metro bomb attacks in Brussels on Tuesday, which killed 31 people and left 300 injured, 61 critically. Belgian Foreign Minister Didier Reynders said around 40 nationalities were among the dead and wounded, reflecting the cosmopolitan nature of Brussels, Europe's symbolic capital.

They included citizens of Britain, Colombia, Ecuador, France, Germany, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Spain and the United States. Among the first fatalities named was Adelma Marina Tapia Ruiz, a 37-year-old woman from Pucallpa in the Peruvian Amazon, who had lived in Belgium for nine years. She was killed in the two blasts at Brussels airport, where she had been about to travel to New York with her Belgian journalist husband Christophe Delcambe and their three-year-old twin daughters.

The others survived the blast as the girls had run off and Delcambe had chased after them, though one of the girls was wounded by flying debris. "They took away everything she wanted to do with her life," her brother Fernando Tapia told Peruvian media, after she was identified by the foreign ministry in Lima. Tapia had studied as a chef and wanted to open a restaurant in Brussels, the family was quoted as saying. Doctor Muriel Brugmans, who treated her in hospital, said on Facebook: "Tonight I'm thinking very much about my patient, mother of two adorable little girls. "She was... so worried for her daughters."

'Good student'

The task of identifying the dead was proving to be a painstakingly slow one, with names only gradually emerging as experts pored over the

remains of victims at both attack sites. The process has been "complicated by the particularly violent explosions and also because there are a lot of foreigners," a federal police spokesman told RTBF television. Another victim named was 20-year-old Belgian law student Leopold Hecht.

He was killed in the attack on a metro train close to the EU's institutional hub, said Pierre Jadoul, the rector of Brussels' Saint-Louis University. "There are no words to describe our distress," he said. Naji Masri, a student in Hecht's year at university, told AFP: "He was a good student, always in the front row." Civil servant Olivier Delespesse was named among the dead by his employer, the Federation Wallonie-Bruxelles. He was killed in the metro attack, local media reported. His old friend Francois Mespreux recounted evenings spent with Delespesse during which he sang songs by Georges Brassens, the French singer and poet.

Newspaper front pages around the world carried a picture of Indian flight attendant Nidhi Chaphekar in the tattered remains of her yellow Jet Airways jacket with blood running down her face. Her family said they had not yet managed to contact the 40-year-old mother of two, but were flying from Mumbai to Brussels to be with her. "All we know is that she is in stable condition now," her brother-in-law Nilesh Chaphekar said, adding: "It has been a very traumatic experience." Jet Airways said both Chaphekar and Amit Motwani, another employee also hurt in the airport blasts, were both recovering well.

Mormon survives third attack

A Facebook page where worried relatives and friends can post notices of the missing has been set up. Pictures uploaded showed men and women, young and old, from Belgium, the United States, Britain and beyond. Mason Wells, 19, was

one of three Mormon missionaries from Utah in the United States who were seriously wounded in the airport blasts. In a twist of fate, Wells had attended the Boston marathon in April 2013, which was hit by a bomb blast, and had been in Paris during the November 2015 attacks. No Americans were immediately known to have been killed in the twin attacks, but a number remained unaccounted for. US State Department deputy spokesman Mark Toner said the situation remained "very fluid," with the list of missing US citizens continuing to grow as family members

contact US authorities about loved ones they have been unable to reach. A woman from Morocco was killed in the metro attack, according to Moroccan news agency MAP, which said three other Moroccans were unaccounted for. At least 21 Portuguese nationals were injured, minister Jose Luis Carneiro said, according to the Lusa news agency. Rome said it was "highly likely" that an Italian woman had been killed in the metro explosion. London said one British national was missing and four injured, while several other capitals said their nationals had been wounded.—AFP



BRUSSELS: Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel (center) joins King Philippe - Filip of Belgium (right), Queen Mathilde of Belgium (second right) and European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker (fourth right) after delivering a speech during a homage ceremony at Palais de la Nation in Brussels yesterday.—AFP

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BULGARIA'S NEW 'IRON CURTAIN' KEEPING PEOPLE OUT, NOT IN

SHTIT: In Soviet times, the now rusty watchtowers and barbed wire fences near the windswept Bulgarian village of Shtit stopped people escaping Communism over the border into Turkey. Now, 25 years later, a new "Iron Curtain" of sorts—a brand new fence topped by razor-wire—has been erected, aimed at stopping an exodus going the other way—migrants crossing from Turkey into Europe. "It was different back in the old days. Then it wasn't refugees who were coming in but Bulgarian prisoners and other people who wanted to run away," recalls Ivan Petkov, a pensioner from Shtit.

The fence is part of Bulgarian efforts to avoid becoming the new migrant trail into Europe after western Balkan countries slammed shut their borders to refugees, many from Syria, travelling north from Greece. EU member Bulgaria began building the fence along its frontier with Turkey in late 2013 after seeing large numbers of migrants cross the land border from Turkey. Now work is being speeded up. Around 30 kilometers were erected in 2014 and today the three-metre-high barrier stretches 95 kilometers through rolling countryside, patrolled on each side by Turkish and Bulgarian forces.

Along the length, a gravel road has been built to allow army four-by-four vehicles to patrol and reach any breaches as quickly as possible. "We are continuing at an accelerated rate of six kilometers per month," Stanislav Dechev, governor of the Haskovo border region said. The aim is to have 132.5 kilometers completed by July, covering half of the 260-kilometre frontier.

Cold War 'enemies'

During the Cold War from 1945 until 1989, when Bulgaria was under communist rule and allied to Moscow, the Turks—on the side of the West—were the "enemy". Many people, not just Bulgarians but also East Germans, Czechs and others, tried to escape into Turkey. Dozens were killed in the attempt, and others disappeared. "Any person or animal touching the barbed wire set off an alarm," remembers a border policeman who was also in the communist-era border army, without wishing to give his name. "Often the fence was set back hundreds of meters back from the border. Once escapees made it over the fence, they thought they'd made it to Greece or Turkey. "But they were wrong, and they were caught by the border guards." Locals were told to report "outsiders" to the authorities, and the situation is not dissimilar now, with border police stationed at major crossroads in the region checking all vehicles.

Harsh treatment

For now, Bulgaria has not yet seen large numbers of migrants try to enter the country since the western Balkan route—used by hundreds of thousands of people in 2015—was closed down, and following the new agreement between the EU and Turkey. Complaints from rights groups about the harsh treatment of some of the 30,000 people who made it into Bulgaria last year has also had a deterrent effect. Onwards travel to Hungary or Romania is also difficult. "On websites giving advice to refugees, crossing into Bulgaria is advised against," Vladimir Chukov, a Bulgarian Arab expert said.

But Sofia is not taking any chances, strengthening its borders and sending additional personnel to its frontiers with Turkey, Greece and Macedonia, as well as increasing surveillance on the Black Sea. It currently has close to 2,000 police on patrol with dogs on its Turkish border. In February parliament adopted legislation giving the military greater powers to act on the frontiers. High-profile exercises have taken place in recent weeks on the Greek and Macedonian borders involving helicopters and armored vehicles—in a clear show of force to any would-be migrant. "We're not going to shoot the refugees, just stop them and send them back," assured Prime Minister Boyko Borisov, at one exercise.—AFP



BRUSSELS: People gather to pay tribute to the victims of the Brussels attacks on the Place de la Bourse (Beursplein) in central Brussels yesterday two days after a triple bomb attack.—AFP

BELGIUM HUNTING THIRD SUSPECT CAUGHT ON FILM

FRENCH PM LEADS CALLS FOR A 'STRONG EUROPEAN RESPONSE'

BRUSSELS: Belgian police were yesterday hunting for a third man filmed with two Islamic State suicide bombers at Brussels airport as evidence piled up that the same jihadist network was involved in the deadly Paris attacks last November.

With pressure mounting on Europe to improve cooperation against terrorism, EU interior and justice ministers were to hold emergency talks on a joint response to Tuesday's bombings in Brussels, which killed at least 31 people and injured hundreds.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls led calls for a "strong European response", but officials say many states, including France, withhold their most cherished data despite a mantra of willingness to share intelligence.

The chief surviving suspect linking the Paris and Brussels attacks, French national Salah Abdeslam, 26, arrested in the Belgian capital last week, was remanded in custody until April 7 with two other suspects. The public prosecutor said Abdeslam, who is in detention in a prison in Bruges in western Belgium, did not appear in person. His lawyer, Sven Mary, who requested the adjournment, said Abdeslam was no longer opposed to being extradited to France.

"Salah Abdeslam has asked me to inform you that he wishes to leave for France as quickly as possible," Mary told reporters at the courthouse, saying his client "wants to explain himself".

Mary said Abdeslam was not aware of the plan to attack Brussels. Turkey's president criticised Belgium for failing to track Brahim El Bakraoui, a convicted armed robber whom it expelled last year and who blew himself up at Brussels airport on Tuesday an hour before his brother Khalid, a fellow convict, killed about 20 people at Maelbeek metro station in the city centre.

DEPORTED

A Turkish government official said Brahim El Bakraoui was deported twice

from Turkey in July and August after re-entering the country. His initial deportation was based on police suspicion, conveyed to the Belgian and Dutch authorities, that he was a foreign militant fighter, another official said.

Since he had committed no offence in Turkey he was deported to the country of his choice, the Netherlands. Belgium's inner security cabinet was meeting yesterday to discuss the matter. Opposition lawmakers demanded an explanation in parliament. Belgium's interior and justice ministers offered to resign yesterday over

a failure to track militants.

Interior Minister Jan Jambon said Prime Minister Charles Michel had asked him to stay on. "In time of war, you cannot leave the field," Jambon told VTM television. Justice Minister Koen Geens would also stay on, a ministry spokesperson said.

Security sources told Belgian media the other suicide bomber at the airport was Najim Laachraoui, a veteran Belgian Islamist fighter in Syria suspected of making explosive belts for November's Paris attacks, in which 130 people were killed by Brussels-based militants.—Reuters

JOURNALISTS IN LINE OF FIRE OVER REPORTING OF TERROR ATTACKS

PARIS: Two controversies around the Brussels attacks have shown yet again the thin line the media must tread between breaking the news quickly and not compromising police enquiries. Just two days before jihadists struck the Belgium capital Tuesday, the police had criticized "the irresponsibility of a certain outlet" which had published information "far too early" about the missing Paris attacks suspect Salah Abdeslam, "causing us problems".

Hours before Abdeslam was arrested Friday after four months on the run, the French weekly news magazine L'Obs revealed that his fingerprints had been found in an apartment near Brussels. Police moving in to arrest Abdeslam found the outside broadcast van of a Flemish-language TV channel parked only metres from his hideout. Then on Wednesday two Belgian news websites had to retract reports claiming that an as yet unidentified third suspect involved in the Brussels airport bombings had been arrested. It prompted the BBC's veteran Europe correspondent Chris Morris to tweet, "This morning's report-

ing an object lesson in why all should be careful about quoting anonymous sources secondhand."

To their credit, Belgian media had respected the news blackout demanded by police in Brussels as they carried out a series of raids days linked to the Paris attacks in November, in which 130 people were killed. The French government watchdog had earlier praised the way its media had covered the Paris attacks after criticizing several outlets' coverage of the Charlie Hebdo and kosher supermarket shootings which took place in January 2015. Reporters then had managed to interview one of the Kouachi brothers who massacred some of the country's best known cartoonists as police besieged them, as well as Amedy Coulibaly as he held staff and customers hostage in the Hyper Cacher store in the east of the city.

French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve warned Wednesday that "the media need to be careful to avoid putting out information that is not accurate and could be exploited" for nefarious ends.—AFP

CRUZ BARRAGED BY CRITICISM FOR PLAN TO PATROL MUSLIM NEIGHBORHOODS

NEW YORK: US Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz was barraged by criticism Wednesday one day after proposing that police "patrol and secure Muslim neighborhoods before they become radicalized." Included among critics was President Barack Obama, who called the Texas senator's idea "contrary to who we are." "Any approach that would single (Muslims) out or target them for discrimination is not only wrong and un-American, but it also would be counterproductive," Obama told reporters in Argentina, which he visited after a historic trip to Cuba.

"I just left a country that engages in that kind of neighborhood surveillance, which, by the way, the father of Senator Cruz escaped for America, the land of the free," he said. Cruz issued his proposal Tuesday in response to bomb attacks in Brussels that left at least 31 dead in a plot claimed by the Islamic State group. The ultra-conservative senator's rival, Republican frontrunner Donald Trump who has advocated the use of torture against terrorism suspects-backed Cruz's proposal, calling it "a good idea."

Meanwhile Democratic presidential frontrunner Hillary Clinton denounced Cruz's proposal as "dangerous" and "counter-productive." "It's hard to imagine a more incendiary, foolish statement," she said in California, where she was campaigning. "One thing we know that does not work is offensive, inflammatory rhetoric that demonizes all Muslims," she added, calling Muslims a "first line of defense" against terrorism. John Kasich, the Republican presidential candidate running in third place, also denounced Cruz's remarks. "The last thing we need is more polarization," he said.

1,000 Muslim NY police

New York Police Department Commissioner Bill Bratton was among the proposal's most vocal critics. "He doesn't know the Hell what he is talking about," Bratton told CBS News, saying the city's police force includes nearly 1,000 Muslims. "Ironically, when he is running around here, we probably have a few Muslim officers guiding him." There is little love lost between New Yorkers and Cruz, who was in the city Wednesday speaking to supporters. —AFP

BRAZIL'S ODEBRECHT MAY HAVE DAMAGING SECRETS TO TELL

BRASOLIA: The corruption scandal threatening to bring down Brazil's government may only just be getting started: construction giant Odebrecht, one of the main players, is now promising to tell its dirty secrets. Odebrecht announced Tuesday it would "definitively cooperate" with the authorities, two years into an investigation that identified it as the ringleader in a cartel of contractors that colluded to overbill state oil company Petrobras by billions of dollars. Although prosecutors were quick to insist they have not struck any deal with the company, Brasilia is bracing itself for more explosive revelations in a scandal that has already upended politics and left President Dilma Rousseff hanging by a thread.

Prosecutors say Odebrecht, one of Latin America's biggest construction groups, paid huge bribes to Petrobras execs and politicians to grease the wheels of the corruption machine, handing over cash at secretive hotel meetings and keeping track of it with a separate book-keeping system. Former chief executive Marcelo Odebrecht was sentenced to nearly 20 years in prison this month. In all, 34 lawmakers are under investigation, and two former presidents face charges, including Rousseff's powerful predecessor and mentor, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. According to Brazilian media reports, Odebrecht's former boss, the family patriarch Emilio Odebrecht, had threatened that if Marcelo, his successor and son, went down in the scandal, he would take others with him. "If they arrest Marcelo, they'll have to build three more cells—one for me, one for Lula and one for Dilma," he reportedly told acquaintances. Marcelo Odebrecht was in fact arrested last June. But he held his tongue, unlike many of those arrested in the case. Then came his sentencing on March 8 — a crushing 19 years and four months followed by new raids Tuesday that took out Odebrecht's "parallel accounting system" and ended with federal police arresting or temporarily detaining dozens of suspects. That double whammy appears to have convinced the company to cooperate.—AFP



TUCSON, Arizona: In this photo, Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump speaks during a campaign rally in Tucson, Arizona.—AP

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE: WHY THE KREMLIN SUPPORTS TRUMP

STATE TV LAUDS TRUMP, CASTS HIM AS BRAVE MAVERICK

MOSCOW: Donald Trump is a brave pro-Putin political maverick who would end US foreign wars and perhaps lift sanctions on Moscow. Hillary Clinton, however, is a warmonger beholden to the military-industrial complex. Russian state TV, which hews closely to the Kremlin's world view, leaves little doubt about who Moscow supports in November's US presidential election: "The Donald."

Vladimir Putin's spokesman took brief exception this month to a Trump attack video which showed Putin laughing at the prospect of Clinton defending America. But officials and analysts say the Kremlin still sees Trump as the best candidate by a mile. Putin has hailed Trump as "very talented". The head of the Russian parliament's foreign affairs committee said he'd be a worthy winner of the 2015 "man of the year" title in the United States.

And Dmitry Kiselyov, presenter of Russia's main weekly TV news show "Vesti Nedeli," claimed this month that the Republican party elite had struck a secret deal with the Democrats to derail Trump, in part because of his sympathy for Russia. "Trump doesn't suit the Republican party," Kiselyov told viewers. "They usually divide up the state budget (among themselves) by frightening people about Russia. But Trump is ready to find a common language with Putin. That's why they don't need Trump and even regard him as dangerous." Kiselyov has been one of the chief proponents of state television's strongly anti-American tone, once saying Moscow could turn the United States into radioactive ash.

Some experts say Trump appeals to Moscow because Putin believes a Trump presidency would be isolationist and leave Russia with a free hand. "The Kremlin can't believe its luck," said Konstantin von Eggert, an independent Moscow-based

political analyst who believes the Obama administration has not been forceful in countering Russia. "President Obama and (Secretary of State) John Kerry were a dream team for them, but now they have an even better option; someone who thinks that America should have nothing to do with the rest of the world."

RT, the Kremlin's English-language TV channel formerly known as Russia Today, says it does not back any US candidates. But it has described Trump as "idiosyncratic and raw," and suggested he represents the popular will of US voters, which a sinister US establishment is trying to subvert. "Can America's elections be truly called democratic if the political establishment aligns itself against the popular will?" lamented Peter Lavelle, the American host of RT's flagship talk "CrossTalk" show. "As things stand now millions of voters could be disenfranchised."

'Thank god for Trump'

Trump has received advice from Lieutenant General Michael Flynn, a former US military intelligence chief who advocates better ties with Russia, and who shared a dinner table in Moscow with Putin in December to celebrate RT's 10th anniversary. Trump has won friends in Moscow with statements praising Putin as a strong leader that he could probably get along with. His support for Russian air strikes in Syria was welcomed. In January, after a British judge ruled that Putin had "probably" authorized the murder of former KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko in London, Trump said he saw "no evidence" the Russian president was guilty. "First of all, he says he didn't do it. Many people say it wasn't him. So who knows who did it?" Trump said.

This week, Trump said the United States should reduce funding for NATO. A

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman said his comments showed the alliance was in crisis. "For the last two years all we heard from Western newspapers and TV was very critical of Russia," Victoria Zhuravleva, a Moscow-based expert on US-Russia relations said. "So when you hear something that is not so critical and even more friendly towards your country it's like: 'Thank God, There's one person we can talk to: Donald Trump'" Trump and Putin were similar, she said: "They are both open-minded, pragmatic, and say what they think."

'The old brigand'

The mutual appreciation between Trump and Putin has invited comparisons to the Russian leader's friendship with another billionaire-turned-politician, Italy's Silvio Berlusconi, who outraged Ukrainians and irked EU leaders last year by visiting Russian-annexed Crimea with Putin. They toured a Crimean winery and drank a priceless 240-year-old bottle from its cellar. By contrast, Hillary Clinton, who is well known to the Kremlin because of her 2009-2013 stint as US Secretary of State, is clearly not to Moscow's taste. "We really don't want Hillary," said one Russian official, who spoke anonymously because of the subject's sensitivity. "She's no friend of Russia's."

State media coverage has focused on what it has cast as her wacky promise to declassify UFO files and on the pressure she has faced for using her personal email account for government business and over her response to the fatal 2012 attack on the US diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya. Pro-Kremlin bloggers, corralled by a Putin supporter who used to represent the ruling party in parliament, are enthused by the prospect of agitating on behalf of Trump.—Reuters

MOZAMBIQUE DEBRIS 'ALMOST CERTAINLY FROM MH370'

SYDNEY: Two pieces of debris found in Mozambique are "almost certainly from MH370", Australia said yesterday, after technical analysis provided the latest clue to the fate of the missing Malaysia Airlines aircraft. Until the latest discoveries, only a wing part recovered from a beach on the Indian Ocean island of Reunion which lies to the east of Mozambique had been confirmed as coming from the plane which disappeared two years ago. "The analysis has concluded the debris is almost certainly from MH370," Transport Minister Darren Chester said, adding that Malaysian investigators had found the pieces were consistent with panels from a Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 aircraft.

"That such debris has been found on the east coast of Africa is consistent with drift modeling performed by (national science body) CSIRO and further affirms our search efforts in the southern Indian Ocean." The two pieces are a flat grey fragment with the words "No Step" printed along one side, found on a sandbank, and a metre-long piece of metal picked up by a holidaymaker.

Australia is leading the search for MH370 in the remote Indian Ocean, where the Kuala Lumpur-Beijing flight is believed

to have diverted when it disappeared on March 8, 2014 carrying 239 passengers and crew. Another piece of debris yet to be identified as coming from the missing jet was picked up near Mossel Bay, a small town in Western Cape province, South African authorities said Tuesday. They did not reveal when it was found. Malaysia is working with South African officials to arrange for the examination of the fragment, which Australia's Joint Agency Coordination Centre (JACC) said on Wednesday was "suspected to be the cowl from an engine". Mossel Bay lies more than 2,000 kilometres (1,250 miles) from Vilankulo, the Mozambican resort where one of the pieces being examined in Australia was found.

'Search for MH370 continues'

Specialists, including from Australia and Boeing, have been conducting investigations in Canberra alongside the Malaysia team on the two items after they were found in Mozambique. When a two-meter-long (almost seven-foot) flaperon part washed up on a beach on the French overseas territory of La Reunion in July, it was the first concrete evidence that MH370 met a tragic end. The Australian Transport



KUALA LUMPUR : A construction worker (top) walks behind a mural dedicated to missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, on a wall next to a parking lot in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AFP

Safety Bureau (ATSB), the agency leading the search, had said then that its location was consistent with drift modeling of where debris might have floated.

Chester said the hunt for the crash site, far off Australia's southwest coast, would continue. "There are 25,000 square kilometers (9,650 square miles) of the underwater search area still to be searched. We are focused on completing this task and

remain hopeful the aircraft will be found," he said. Three vessels contracted from Dutch firm Fugro-Fugro Discovery, Fugro Equator and Havila Harmony-along with Chinese ship Dong Hai Jiu 101 are

scouring the ocean depths, with the plane believed to have sunk up to 4,000 meters (13,100 feet). The search has been projected to cost up to Aus\$180 million (US\$130 million). — AFP

INDIAN JOURNALIST ARRESTED OVER SOCIAL MEDIA POST

'INDIA RANKED AS THE SEVENTH MOST DANGEROUS PLACE FOR JOURNALISTS IN 2015'

NEW DELHI: An Indian newspaper journalist has been arrested after allegedly posting an "inflammatory" message on social media, police said yesterday. Prabhat Singh had criticized police in a WhatsApp post about the situation in Bastar region of eastern Chhattisgarh state, where rights groups say journalists are facing official harassment from security forces. Last year two journalists in the region were arrested under anti-terror laws over stories that allegedly supported Maoist rebels waging a long-running insurgency against the government in Chhattisgarh. DM Awasthi, director general of the Chhattisgarh police anti-Maoist operations, said Singh "was arrested on a complaint over an inflammatory post".

"We have charged him under relevant sections," he told AFP. Singh's lawyer told AFP his client had been beaten in custody and denied food. "The text messages were critical of police and of some elements close to the establishment," Kshitij Dube added. His arrest came a month after freelance journalist Malini Subramaniam said she was forced to flee the region after she was threatened and her house was attacked over her critical coverage of the local police.

Subramaniam had reported extensively on human rights violations and allegations of sexual violence by security forces in the Bastar region. Bastar is one of the strongholds of Maoist rebels fighting the Indian government for land, jobs and other rights for millions of poor tribal groups spread across the country. On Wednesday India's National Human Rights Commission, a quasi-judicial body, asked authorities in Chhattisgarh to provide a report on Singh's arrest and alleged torture.

The US based Committee to Protect Journalists (CJP) and Amnesty International

have also urged the authorities to release Singh. Amnesty said the authorities "must respect the crucial work of the media and human rights defenders and refrain from apparent attempts to silence them through arbitrary arrests and torture". India was ranked as the seventh most dangerous place for journalists in 2015, according to an

International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) report. The country's Maoist insurgency began in the 1960s and has cost thousands of lives. The rebels operate in at least 20 Indian states but are most active in the forested and resource-rich areas of Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Bihar, Jharkhand and Maharashtra. — AFP

ALABAMA GOVERNOR DENIES AFFAIRS, BUT ADMITS HE MADE SOME REMARKS

MONTGOMERY, Alabama: Alabama Gov Robert Bentley admitted on Wednesday that he made inappropriate remarks to a top female staffer, but he denied accusations that he had a physical affair. The governor's admission capped a bizarre political day. A day after his firing, Bentley's former law enforcement secretary and one-time close friend made public the content of a clandestine recording and accused his former boss of having an inappropriate relationship with the staffer. The recording was made by a family member before Bentley's wife filed for divorce last year.

The two-term Republican governor, a former Baptist deacon, acknowledged in a conciliatory news conference that he said "some inappropriate things" to his senior political adviser, Rebekah Caldwell Mason. "I made a mistake. Two years ago I made a mistake," Bentley said, adding that he had previously apologized to his family and to Mason and her family. "Today I want to apologize to the people of the state of Alabama and once again, I want to apologize to my family. I am truly sorry, and I accept full responsibility."

Former Law Enforcement Secretary Spencer Collier held a news conference

Wednesday and said he heard a tape recording in 2014 in which Bentley made romantic and sexually charged comments to a woman he believed to be Mason. Collier said he listened to the call while members of Bentley's family were present on the phone. Collier said the Bentley family was trying to do some sort of "intervention" with the governor with the recording. Collier said he confronted the governor about the recording and relationship the next day.

Demonstrated gender bias

"Gov Robert Bentley simply hung his head and asked for advice on how to get out of it," Collier said. Collier and Bentley became close friends when they served together in the Alabama House of Representatives. Collier said Bentley recently told him he was "madly in love" with Mason. However, Collier conceded he had no direct evidence of a physical affair. Bentley, 73, said that although he made inappropriate remarks to Mason, he never had a physical affair with her. Collier also said Mason, who is considered one of Bentley's closest advisers, wields extraordinary influence within the governor's office. — AP

FROM TRUMP TO REFUGEES: RIPPLE EFFECTS OF BRUSSELS ATTACK

PARIS: As Brussels reels from an attack by Islamic State jihadists, analysts warn of a ripple effect that could further whip up populist sentiment on the continent and in the United States. Across the Atlantic Ocean, Tuesday's bombings in the Belgian capital have provided fodder for Donald Trump's divisive electoral campaign while in Europe they risk hardening responses to the refugee crisis. Analysts warn that at a time when unity is more crucial than ever, the attack could create divisions that will make it harder to tackle IS and the crises it has spawned. "The risk is a spiral where our reaction to this very real threat makes matters worse, not better," said Thomas Wright, an analyst at the Brookings Institution's Centre on the United States and Europe. So what could the fallout be from the latest IS attack?

Refugee crisis

Over one million refugees and migrants, nearly half of them Syrian, arrived in Europe last year alone, creating an unprecedented crisis that has created deep rifts between EU members over how to respond. Public opinion was already hardening against the refugees as their numbers swelled, and news that jihadists may have used the migrant route to re-enter Europe has added to concerns. Several EU countries have re-imposed border controls and limited the number of migrants they will accept, leaving thousands stuck in grim conditions at European crossings. The attack on Brussels, which left 31 dead, was likely to make matters worse for the refugees, with Poland's Prime Minister Beata Szydlo quick to say her country would no longer take in the agreed 7,000 refugees. "The refugee and terrorist crises are completely different topics but obviously public opinion links them," said Dominique Moisi of the French Institute for International Relations.

"The more you see terrorist activities the less you want to see refugees, which is very unfair for the refugees but this is part of the emotional response of public opinion." Wright said a tougher stance on migrants would do little to prevent further attacks. "Many of these terrorists are already residents or citizens of Europe. They wouldn't be stopped by tougher migration laws," he told AFP.

Rise of right-wing populists

The refugee crisis and Islamic State threat have pushed voters into the arms of right-wing parties. One has already taken power in Poland, while others are experiencing a surge in support from Slovakia to Sweden, Austria to France. The latest attack could deepen support for such parties. "It seems like it could play into the hands of the populists and the nationalists. Their message of closing borders, of greater intolerance may have added resonance after the attacks," said Wright. However, he said their policies would be "counterproductive". "The answer is not to reimpose borders, target Muslim communities or pull out of the European Union-the answer is increased co-operation between countries, engaging Muslim communities and isolating IS." — AP

JAPAN FLEET KILLS 333 WHALES IN ANTARCTIC HUNT

TOKYO: Japanese whalers returned to port yesterday after an Antarctic hunt that killed more than 300 of the mammals, the government said. The fleet had set sail for the Southern Ocean in December, with plans to slaughter 333 minke whales, despite a worldwide moratorium and opposition led by Australia and New Zealand. Japan's Fisheries Agency announced Thursday that the target number of "scientific research" kills had been achieved. The 2015/16 season came after a one-year hiatus prompted by a ruling by the United Nations' International Court of Justice (ICJ), which said the annual hunt was a commercial venture masquerading as science.

Under the International Whaling Commission, to which Japan is a signatory, there has been a moratorium on hunting

whales since 1986. But Japan persists in the practice using a loophole in the ban that allows for lethal research. Tokyo claims it is trying to prove the whale population is large enough to sustain a return to commercial hunting, and says it has to kill the mammals to carry out its research properly. However, it makes no secret of the fact that whale meat ends up on dinner tables and is served up in school lunches. In response to the ICJ ruling, Japan's 2014-15 mission carried out only "non-lethal research" such as taking skin samples and doing headcounts. However, the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had been determined to resume the hunt.

'Unnecessary'

The haul announced Thursday is bigger

than it has been in recent years when the mission has been hampered by a confrontational campaign on the high seas by environmentalist group Sea Shepherd. The group, which attracts support from celebrities including actress Brigitte Bardot, has harangued Japanese vessels in the Southern Ocean, and has claimed success in drastically reducing the catch. In the 2013-14 season, just 251 minke whales were caught, while the figure was only 103 in the season before.

That compares with historic catches of around 850. The returning fleet arrived early Thursday at Shimonoseki port in western Japan, the fisheries agency said. Besides the kills, the agency also said it conducted non-lethal research such as observation, the taking of skin samples

from live whales and attaching tracking devices to whales. "Attaching GPS devices helps us study minke whales' migration routes by tracking them for several days," agency official Hiroyuki Morita told AFP. Environmental campaign group Greenpeace yesterday labeled the hunt "unnecessary" and said it violated the UN court ruling.

"It is completely unacceptable for the Japanese government to ignore the ICJ's findings and furthermore, completely unnecessary to go ahead with lethal research," said Greenpeace Japan executive director Junichi Sato. Japan has hunted whales for centuries, and their meat was a key source of protein in the immediate post-World War II years when the country was desperately poor. — AFP



PARIS: French youths and activists of various youth organizations march past the "Hotel Des Invalides" during a demonstration against proposed changes to labor laws yesterday. — AFP

STUDENTS' PROTEST AGAINST FRENCH LABOR REFORMS TURNS VIOLENT

PARIS: Security forces responded with tear gas yesterday as French students protesting proposed labor reforms hurled bottles at riot police in Paris and the western city of Nantes. The reforms, which were significantly watered down under pressure from a wave of protests, were adopted earlier yesterday by the cabinet of an increasingly unpopular President Francois Hollande, who hopes to stand for re-election next year.

"Young and insurgent, the world is ours" read one banner as hundreds gathered at Place d'Italie in the south of the French capital, where riot police used tear gas after students threw bottles and emptied a rubbish bin over some officers. A protest in Nantes also turned violent as students hurled bottles at security forces who used tear gas and truncheons against the youths, making nine arrests, police said. Students have been at the forefront of protests over the reforms aimed at freeing up the job market and reining in France's 10 percent unemployment rate.

Among youths, joblessness is nearer to 25 percent—among the highest in Europe.

The youths, along with unions and the left flank of Hollande's Socialist Party, say the reforms are too pro-business and threaten hallowed workers' rights. One of yesterday's protesters in Paris was dressed as a capitalist, wearing a top hat and smoking a cigar with a sign reading "Business, power, finance—all together!" Some 58 percent of the French people oppose the measures, according to a recent poll. Prime Minister Manuel Valls has touted the reforms as "intelligent, audacious and necessary", in particular for reversing unemployment, which has not dropped below seven percent in 30 years. "Our country has become used to (joblessness) for too long," he said. The pressure prompted the government this month to water down the contested reforms, walking a tightrope between the insistent demands of employers and employees.

'Reformist' unions back measures

Bosses were unhappy with the withdrawal of a cap on the amount companies must pay for unfair dismissal, as well as the scrapping of a measure that would have allowed

small and medium-sized companies to unilaterally introduce flexible working hours. While employers' groups called on Valls to restore the reforms' original goal of creating jobs, the concessions were enough to persuade several so-called "reformist" unions to get behind the new version while still urging new language on conditions for laying off workers. The seven unions and youth groups which called yesterday's protests are demanding the withdrawal of the reforms. Last week students paralyzed dozens of schools and universities across France, and yesterday students were again barricading campus entrances in Paris. Tense protests were also under way in western Rennes and southern Marseille. Socialist Party dissidents, threatening stiff resistance when the reforms reach parliament, have presented a "counter-reform". The government's proposed reforms are scheduled to be taken up by parliament's social affairs committee on April 5, and by the full body in late April or early May. But before that, the protest movement plans an even bigger mobilization for March 31. — AFP

BANGLADESH UPHOLDS ISLAMIST MILITANT'S DEATH SENTENCE

DHAKA: Bangladesh's top court has upheld the death sentence of an Islamist militant over fatal suicide blasts targeting secular activists 10 years ago, a prosecutor said yesterday. Asaduzzaman Chowdhury, who is also known as Panir, was sentenced to death in 2008 for his role in the December 2005 bombings that killed eight people and

injured 40 more. "The decision means he can now be executed within months unless he is pardoned by the president or the verdict is again reviewed by the Supreme Court," deputy attorney general Sashanka Shekhar Sarker told AFP. Both outcomes are seen as unlikely.

A Dhaka court sentenced Chowdhury and two others from the banned Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) to hang in February 2008 for the attack on the offices of two groups that organise secular music and drama performances. The group was banned after a series of bombings across the country in 2005, but has recently regrouped and is blamed for a spate of attacks on foreigners and religious minorities in Bangladesh. Its founder Shaikh Abdur Rahman and five of his key associates were hanged in March 2007 and hundreds of JMB men were hunted down by an elite security force and prosecuted. Panir's lawyers have argued that his death sentence should be commuted because he was a minor when the blasts occurred. — AFP

NINJA-SEEKING JAPANESE REGION INUNDATED WITH OVERSEAS APPLICATIONS

TOKYO: Hundreds of aspiring ninjas from abroad have overwhelmed tourism officials in Japan looking to hire six full-time secret assassins, massively outnumbering local applicants. Central Japan's Aichi prefecture is hiring a troupe of ninjas—the martial-arts masters and stealth assassins of feudal times immortalized in history books and period dramas—to promote tourism. In a job advert published earlier this month, the prefecture said candidates of any nationality were welcome. Week later, more than 200 applications were sent to the prefecture, with 85 percent coming from foreigners. "We received so many applications and inquiries," Satoshi Adachi of the prefecture's tourism promotion unit told AFP. "We didn't expect such a huge response (from overseas)."

Out of the 235 original applicants, tourism officials have whittled the competition down to 37 finalists. The foreign finalists, 13 in total, hail from countries as far afield as the United States, France and Thailand, Adachi said. Despite the high number of foreign applicants, there were far more Japanese finalists — 24 — as many from abroad were eliminated by the need to pay their own way to Japan for auditions next week. The newly hired ninjas will receive a one-year contract with monthly pay of 180,000 yen (\$1,600) plus bonus. Their duties will include performing backflips, using the trademark "shuriken"—ninja star-weapon and posing for photographs with tourists. — AFP

ASIA MOST EXPOSED TO DISASTERS, AFRICA MOST VULNERABLE: STUDY

PARIS: Countries and mega-cities across Asia are highly exposed to natural hazards ranging from cyclones to earthquakes, but people in sub-Saharan Africa are more vulnerable, according to a report released yesterday. Nearly 1.4 billion people in South Asia-India, Bangladesh, Pakistan-face at least one major threat from Nature, especially flooding, severe storms boosted by rising seas, and quakes. In the case of Bangladesh, 100 percent of its population is exposed, compared to 82 percent for India and 70 percent in Pakistan.

China, Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines are also among the nations with the largest numbers of people in harm's way. The United States, Mexico and Brazil round out the top ten. When it comes to vulnerability, however, Africa is the continent where people are most likely to suffer injury, disease and death as a result of natural disasters, according to the Natural Hazards Vulnerability Index from risk analysts Verisk Maplecroft. The capacity to cope with disaster can determine whether a high-magnitude earthquake, for example, will cause hundreds of deaths, as happened in Chile in 2010, or hundreds of thousands, as befell Haiti in the same year.

Nine out of ten countries ranked as most vulnerable to natural hazards in the index are in sub-Saharan Africa, and 23 of 25 are on the continent. South Sudan-plagued by drought and war-heads the list of the countries most defenseless against disaster, followed by Burundi, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Chad, Niger, Sudan, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo. "The frequency and magnitude of natural hazard events cannot be controlled," the report noted. "But the development and implementation of disaster risk reduction strategies can help minimize the humanitarian and economic impacts."

Among mega-cities, Manila-facing a triple threat from cyclones, superstorms and earthquakes-tops the list of urban areas with the highest number of people exposed. Tokyo and Jakarta and in second and third place, with Dongguan in southern China, Dhaka and Kolkata following close behind. Mexico City, Delhi and Sao Paulo all have huge populations exposed to major storms. "This analysis shows that governance is key to lower vulnerability," the report said. Without major reforms and political stability, "countries such as India and the Philippines are unlikely to see improvements in the near term."—AFP

VIETNAM SLAMS 'ILLEGAL' TAIWAN SPRATLYS TOUR

HANOI: Vietnam yesterday hit back at Taiwan for taking international media on a tour of a disputed island in the South China Sea, saying the "illegal and worthless" trip had further raised tensions in the hotly contested waters. Taiwanese officials on Wednesday took journalists to Taiping, the largest island in the Spratlys chain, which it controls and views as part of its territory. The Spratlys are also claimed in part or whole by China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei and have been at the center of escalating rows.

"Taiwan, despite concerns and objections from Vietnam and the international community, sent journalists to Taiping Island," Foreign Ministry spokesman Le Hai Binh said in a statement. "This is a serious violation of Vietnam's sovereignty, escalates tensions and is not conducive to maintaining peace and stability in the South China Sea." A visit to Taiping by Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou in January triggered criticism from the United States which described it as "extremely unhelpful", as well as protests from Vietnam and the Philippines. The Philippines is currently in the midst of an arbitration case against China at the Hague over the South China Sea. A ruling on the case is expected before May. As part of its case, the Philippines argues that Taiping and other islands are just "rocks", a categorization which helps its broad claims in the area. Taiwan disagrees, saying Taiping is a fully fledged island, a designation which entitles it to a 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone. On Wednesday, journalists were shown facilities including a hospital, post office and temple, as well as visiting a monument engraved with the words "Taiping Island" during the three-hour visit. "Any activities by foreigners carried on the two island chains and not approved by Vietnam are illegal and worthless," Binh added. Rival claimants in the South China Sea have been beefing up their military presence in the disputed region, and other countries have complained China is becoming increasingly aggressive in pressing its case.—AFP



BEIJING: File photo shows Chinese President Xi Jinping speaks during the opening ceremony of Sino-German Youth Friendly Exchange Year at the Great Hall of the People.—AFP

MEDIA STAFF DETAINED AFTER XI 'RESIGN' CALL

'FOR THE PARTY CAUSE AND YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY WE ASK YOU TO RESIGN'

BEIJING: Four staff of a Chinese media outlet that carried an anonymous letter calling on President Xi Jinping to resign have been missing for over a week, a colleague said yesterday. A letter appeared on the Wujie News website earlier this month accusing Xi of a litany of policy mistakes and asking him to step down for the good of the country, before it was deleted.

Media criticism of top leaders is almost unknown in China, where the press is strictly controlled by the ruling Communist Party. Four staff including CEO Ouyang Hongliang and managing editor Huang Zhijie have been "out of contact" since last week, a reporter at the magazine who asked not to be named said. "I think they are assisting an investigation," said the staffer, adding that the media outlet may be shut down, although the letter's appearance was probably the result of a "hacking attack".

A Chinese journalist, Jia Jia, was held last week at Beijing airport while on his way to Hong Kong, with rights groups linking his detention to an alleged attempt to warn Wujie's CEO about the letter. But his lawyer has said that his detention may not be connected to the document. Wujie has not published any original articles on its website since Wednesday last week, and has not updated an account on the Wechat social media platform since Friday. Xi has tightened already strict controls on the media since coming to power in 2012, and recently urged state-run outlets to "reflect the will of the party".

'Personal safety'

Mainland Chinese media coverage of Xi is typically limited to accounts of meetings or speeches, or gushing with praise. He has presided over a slowdown in economic growth and a clampdown on civil society that has seen hundreds of people

arrested. The letter, seen by AFP in a cached form, berated him for centralizing authority, mishandling the economy and tightening ideological controls.

"Due to your gathering of all power into your own hands and making decisions directly, we are now facing unprecedented problems and crises in all political, economic, ideological, and cultural spheres," it said. Signed "Loyal Communist Party Members", it added: "For the Party cause, for the long-term peace and stability of the country, and for your own per-

sonal safety and that of your family, we ask you to resign from all positions of Party and state leadership." Wujie-known as Watching in English-was founded in 2015 with funding from Internet giant Alibaba, as well as the provincial government of Xinjiang in China's northwest. It is based in Beijing. Police in China's capital did not answer a phone call asking for comment. Hong Kong newspaper Apple Daily on Thursday first reported that four staff were missing and added that the outlet was "facing closure".—AFP

'MISSING' BOOKSELLER LEE BO RETURNED TO HONG KONG

HONG KONG: Hong Kong bookseller Lee Bo who disappeared from the city and surfaced in mainland China has returned, police said yesterday, the latest twist in a case that has provoked anger over China's interference in the city. British citizen Lee is one of five Hong Kong booksellers known to go "missing" in recent months-the other four are now under criminal investigation on the mainland. The men all worked for the Mighty Current publishing house in Hong Kong, which produced salacious titles about political intrigue and love affairs at the highest levels of Chinese politics.

Lee's case caused the greatest outcry because he disappeared from Hong Kong, prompting accusations that Chinese law enforcement agents were operating in the semi-autonomous city, which is illegal under its constitution. The other four booksellers went missing from Thailand or southern mainland China. "Immigration department and police met and took statement separately with Lee Bo, who had returned to

Hong Kong from the mainland this afternoon," a government statement released late yesterday said.

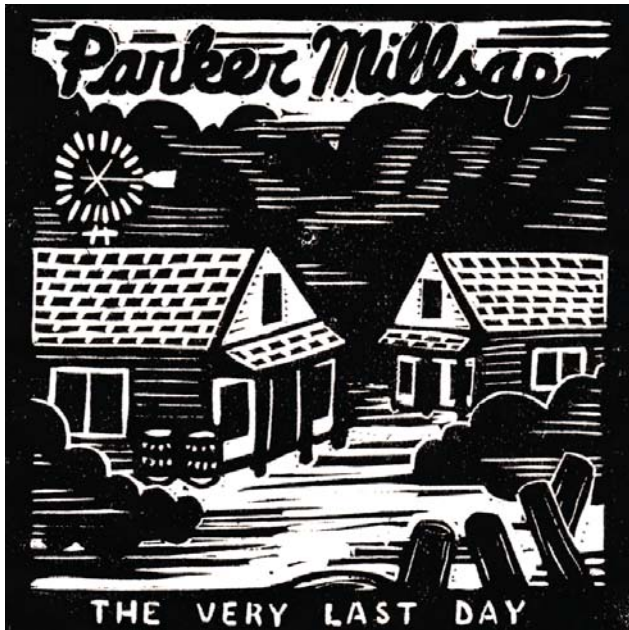
Lee had been handed over to immigration officials at the Lok Ma Chau border point in northern Hong Kong, the statement said. Lee, 65, was last seen at a Hong Kong book warehouse before his disappearance, but spoke publicly for the first time on Chinese television late last month saying he had gone to the mainland of his own accord.

Britain however had said in February it believed he had been "involuntarily removed to the mainland" in what it described as a "serious breach" of an agreement signed with Beijing before Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997, a deal that protects Hong Kong's freedoms for 50 years. That earned the ire of Beijing, which blasted Britain for interfering in its domestic affairs. Yesterday's government statement again insisted Lee had "returned to the mainland by his own means voluntarily and it was not an abduction".—AFP

Lifestyle

An Indian man reacts as powder is thrown on him during celebrations for the festival of Holi in Agartala, capital of northeastern state of Tripura, yesterday. The Hindu festival of Holi, or the 'Festival of Colors' heralds the arrival of spring and the end of winter.— AFP

Iranian star Farahani to make European stage debut



This CD cover image released by Oklahoma Records shows 'The Very Last Day,' by Parke. — AP

Parker Millsap sings Bible Belt blues

The first song is "Hades Pleads" and the last is "Tribulation Hymn," which means Parker Millsap takes his audience to hell and back. It makes for an entertaining trip. Millsap's songs are strong, and so is his tent-revival tenor, which straddles the divide between Saturday night and Sunday morning. The 23-year-old Oklahoman's breath control needs work, showing he's still a raw talent, but his scoops, slides and octave leaps suit the material.

While Millsap sings Bible Belt blues with melisma and charisma, he receives excellent support from his band mates and guests including Sara Watkins, Sarah Jarosz and Aoife O'Donovan. The Old Testament provides inspiration, and Millsap covers lots of ground, from temptation and seduction to devotion and tolerance. The opening cut rocks as hard as an unplugged band can, while "You Gotta Move" convincingly covers the Rev. Gary Davis. "Hands Up" offers a clever, sympathetic look at a holdup from the perp's perspective, but best of all is the title tune. It provides a swaggering soundtrack for the Apocalypse, which could come in handy sometime. — AP



Axl Rose and AC/DC

Axl Rose to front AC/DC

Axl Rose is already generating excitement over a Guns N' Roses reunion, but a report says he has another project that could thrill even more fans-fronting AC/DC. The Australian heavy metal veterans halted a tour this month and said they would likely hire a guest vocalist as 68-year-old frontman Brian Johnson was at risk of completely losing his hearing if he kept performing. A radio host in Atlanta, where AC/DC stopped its tour, said that he had spotted Rose in the city and that he was practicing with the band.

"It's all but a done deal that Axl will front AC/DC for the 10 remaining shows" in the United States, host Jason Bailey said on his show on rock station WNNX. Representatives for Rose and AC/DC did not immediately comment yesterday. Rose, with his high-pitched but wide-ranging voice and emotional passion, led Guns N' Roses as the heavy metal band became a

global but short-lived sensation after its 1987 debut album "Appetite for Destruction." The band will reunite for the first time since 1993 with its original lineup-including guitarist Slash, who frequently clashed with Rose-next month for the Coachella festival in California and several other shows.

Johnson, known for his punishingly harsh vocal style, has reportedly voiced dismay at his swift departure from AC/DC. US comedian and radio host Jim Breuer recently said he met with Johnson who felt "kicked to the curb" by his bandmates as he believed his hearing issues were not as serious as announced. Johnson joined AC/DC in 1980 after singer Bon Scott died following a night of heavy drinking. His first work with the band, "Back in Black," remains one of the top-selling albums of all time. — AFP

Rock star Dave Grohl backs teenage band in noise row

US rock star Dave Grohl weighed in to support an unsigned English teenage band on Wednesday after they were prevented from practicing in a family garage due to local noise restrictions. The Foo Fighters frontman and former Nirvana drummer penned a letter to the local council in Cornwall, southwest England, after the four members of rock metal band Black Leaves of Envy appealed for his support. "That's the story of Nirvana basically, young musicians starting off in a garage," 17-year-old Adam Jones, lead guitarist and singer with the group, told AFP.

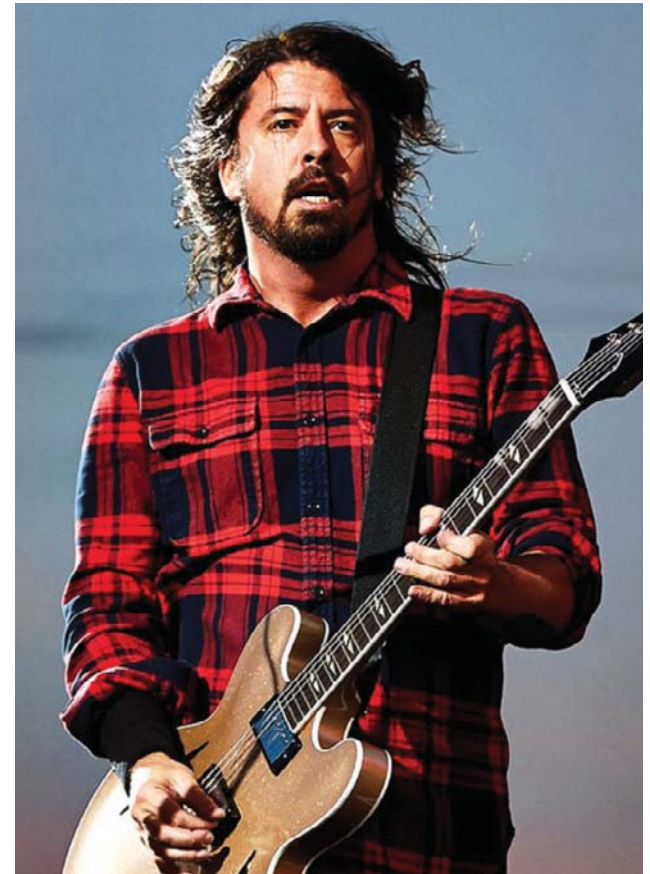
"It's pretty surreal, we sent the letter off to ask for his support... We were all shocked when we got the reply." Jones said the band members, all aged between 15 and 17, had been unable to practice for months as letters from the council threatened steep fines if they broke a noise limit of 30-40 decibels-about the level of a fridge humming. In his letter, which was published on Foo Fighter social media accounts and quickly shared by thousands, Grohl stressed the importance of allowing young musicians to practice and urged Cornwall Council to reconsider the rules.

"My name is Dave Grohl, and I'm writing on behalf of the local music group Black Leaves of Envy," he wrote. "It has been brought to my attention that the band is having difficulty functioning within the current noise restrictions placed upon them by the Cornwall Council." Grohl recalled the importance of music as a creative outlet that helped him through "difficult years" growing up in Springfield, Virginia. "For musicians that lack the resources to rehearse in professional facilities, a garage or basement is the only place they have to develop their talent and passion," he wrote.

"For the sake of your local band Black Leaves of Envy, and for the generations of young musicians that they may eventually inspire, I ask you reconsider the restrictions put upon the volume of their private rehearsal space." Cornwall Council did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A spokesman previously told local press that "certain activities are not appropriate for the area in which they occur" but that it would work with all parties to resolve any issues.

Black Leaves of Envy released their first record, an EP of four songs, in late 2015 and have played some small shows around their town of Helston. "It's amazing to have someone of with

Grohl's weight back us," Jones said. "We wrote our first EP in that garage and without having that rehearsal time and space we'd be nowhere." — AFP



Dave Grohl

Ken Howard, president of prominent Hollywood union, dies

Ken Howard, president of the prominent Hollywood actors' union SAG-AFTRA, died Wednesday at age 71, the organization said. Howard died at his home near Los Angeles, the union said, without specifying the cause of death. An Emmy and Tony award-winning actor, Howard played an instrumental role in the merger that formed the union. As director of the Screen Actors Guild, a position which he held since 2009, he orchestrated the body's merger with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists in 2012 to form SAG-AFTRA, which now represents some 160,000 performers.

"Ken was an inspirational leader and it is an incredible loss for SAG-AFTRA, for his family and for everyone who knew him," said SAG-AFTRA acting president Gabrielle Carteris, who starred in the 1990s television series "Beverly Hills, 90210." "He led us through tumultuous times and set our union on a steady course of excellence," she said. Howard appeared in a similar '90s series "Melrose Place" and also played lawyer Garrett Boydston on "Dynasty" in the 1980s. In 1978, Howard took on the role of Coach Ken Reeves for the television series "The White Shadow," portraying the white coach of an inner-city basketball team. The show ran for three sea-



This file photo taken on January 29, 2016 shows SAG-AFTRA President Ken Howard during the 22nd Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards at The Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. — AFP

sons. "Even decades after the show ended, Howard was frequently recognized on the street by fans who greeted him with a handshake and a 'Hey, Coach'," the union statement said.

More recently, he appeared in the hit TV show "30 Rock" alongside Tina Fey and Alec Baldwin. He also had roles in movies such as "Clear and Present Danger," "Rambo IV," "Michael Clayton," "J. Edgar," and "Joy." Howard is the winner of the 1970 Tony Award for his performance in Broadway's "Child's Play" and received an Emmy for his role in the mini-series "Grey Gardens." — AFP



This production still handout released to AFP from Ten Years Production Limited from the Hong Kong movie "Ten Years" shows actor Liu Kai-chi (left) playing a character who sells local Hong Kong eggs. — AFP photos

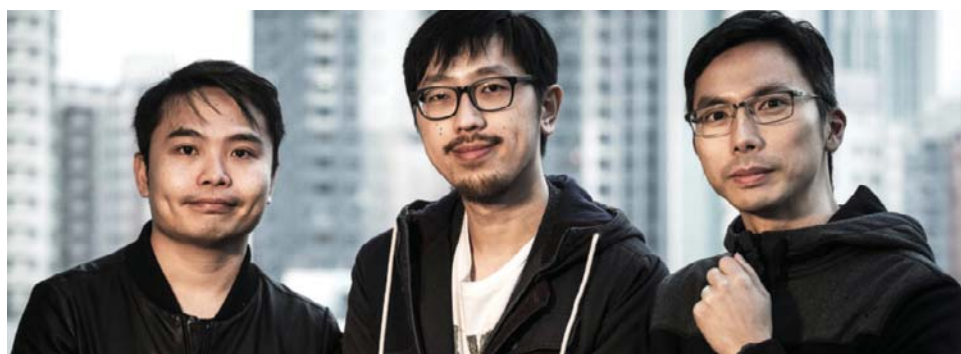
Hong Kong movie riles China and taps city's deepest fears

In Hong Kong, a woman sets herself on fire in protest, a taxi driver despairs at the eradication of the local language and young children in military uniform prowl the streets, echoing the horrors of China's Cultural Revolution. But this is not the past, it is Hong Kong in 2025 as portrayed in the movie "Ten Years", which has been a box office hit locally despite some cinemas refusing to show it and has raised hackles in China. The five-part movie made by young Hong Kong directors taps residents' worst fears for the future of the semi-autonomous territory as Beijing's grip tightens.

Its sell-out screenings have come against an increasingly turbulent backdrop of running battles between young protesters and police, and the detention in China of five booksellers critical of Beijing, as concern grows that Hong Kong's long-cherished freedoms are dying. Since its release at the end of December, the movie, made for just HK\$500,000 (\$64,000), has earned an unexpected HK\$6 million and is now a "best film" contender at the Hong Kong Film Awards on April 3. "The movie is giving a voice to the unexpressed sentiment of Hong Kongers," director Ng Ka-leung, 34, told AFP.

"I wanted to use the film to respond to some questions I wanted answered, including whether or not Hong Kong has a way out, and how would Hong Kong change." Ng's segment "Egg Man" portrays an egg vendor under attack from young "red guards" seeking to denounce citizens. China has flexed its muscles in response. Broadcasts of the Hong Kong Film Awards on the mainland have been pulled, with the movie's nomination widely believed to be the reason. China's state-run Global Times newspaper hit out at the film as "totally absurd" and a "virus of the mind".

Ng suspects political motivations were behind the difficulty in getting the film a decent run in Hong Kong cinemas. "Why wouldn't cinemas consider our movie, which was profitable and when lots of people still wanted to see it?" he questioned.



This picture taken on March 1, 2016 shows filmmakers (from left) Javons Au, Ng Ka-leung and Kiwi Chow posing in Hong Kong. — AFP

Audience in tears
The film's five segments take a no-holds-barred approach to their vision of Hong Kong, with the image of an elderly woman dousing herself in petrol and setting herself on fire particularly hard-hitting. "If we recognize the harshness of reality, that Hong Kong truly has a problem, then we can think of a way out of this situation," Kiwi Chow, director of the "Self-Immolator" segment told AFP. Self-immolation, which activists in Tibet have used to protest against Beijing's ironclad control there, is unheard of in Hong Kong. "I really don't want my story to come true," Chow, 37, said.

Cinema audiences have watched "Ten Years" in stunned silence, some of them moved to tears. "The movie has left a big impression on me because it shows many scenes which are similar to events in Hong Kong now," university student Thomson Chan, 21, told AFP after one screening. "I feel what's predicted (in the film) will happen." One 53-year-old who wanted to remain anonymous said he felt the future "would be even worse than the movie". The city's freedoms are protected by a deal made with Britain when Hong Kong was handed back to China in 1997, but there is now growing anxiety that China is stamping its mark on the territory, from politics to education and the media.

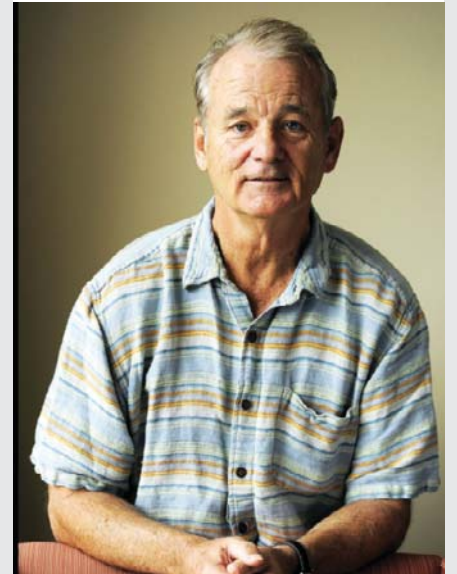
Film critics say the public wants to see those issues directly addressed. "There are some political movies in Hong Kong, but they use metaphors and indirect ways to tell the story," Hong Kong film critic Dominic Li told AFP. "(In) 'Ten Years', they are very direct and strike at the present situation of Hong Kong," he added. "These five young directors showed bravery in making a film about very sensitive issues."—AFP

A poet who knows it: Bill Murray shares some favorite verse

Bill Murray has turned up everywhere from bachelor parties to baseball games, but his latest surprise has a more literary side: He shares some favorite poems in the April issue of *O, The Oprah Magazine*, which comes out Friday. The "Ghostbusters" star is featured on a page dedicated to National Poetry Month, offering brief asides on works by Galway Kinnell, Lucille Clifton, Thomas Lux and Naomi Shihab Nye. For Clifton's inspirational "what the mirror said," Murray comments. "Everybody needs an 'Attagirl!' now and then." Murray also includes Kinnell's "Oatmeal," with its reference to sharing a meal with the late John Keats.

"Alas, Kinnell, too, is now available for breakfast," Murray adds, noting that the poet died in 2014. The magazine's books editor, Leigh Haber, had reason to believe Murray might agree to the project. He's a longtime supporter of Poets House, a literary center based in Manhattan, and one year read works there by Emily Dickinson and others to a gathering of construction workers. Haber told The Associated Press during a recent interview that she contacted Murray through a mutual friend. Two months went by without a response. On deadline day, he called the magazine's office and told Haber that he was in town and had some poems in mind. Because he didn't use emails or fax machines, he suggested a meeting at his room in the Carlyle Hotel. Haber and an assistant headed right over.

"It was so funny," Haber said. "He had scraps of paper on which he'd scribbled notes and Xeroxes of poems. His love of poetry was obvious from how much pleasure he took in reading the poems aloud to us." With business out of the way, Murray rolled



In this, file photo, Bill Murray poses for a portrait at the 2012 Toronto Film Festival, in Toronto. — AP

out a glass cart and served martinis. "An act of poetry all its own," Haber calls it. Murray's other picks include Lux's romantic ode "I Love You Sweatheart," of which he said, "This poem vibrates the insides of my ribs, where the meat is most tender." He also felt a personal connection to Nye's "Famous" and its lines "I want to be famous in the way/ a pulley is famous/ or a buttonhole, not because it did/ anything spectacular/ but because it never forgot/ what it could do." Murray's take: "It's not the dream of being big. It's the dream of being real. That's what stands out to me." — AP

Iranian star Farahani to make European stage debut

Iranian film star Golshifteh Farahani is to make her European stage debut in May playing the tragic heroine Anna Karenina in Paris. The 32-year-old, who made her name internationally in Asghar Farhadi's modern classic "All About Ely", was the first top Iranian actor to star in a Hollywood film, raising eyebrows in her homeland when she appeared in Ridley Scott's "Body of Lies" in 2008.

Authorities later forced her into exile in France and in 2012 she caused further controversy by posing nude for the cover of art magazine *Egoiste* in an act of feminist defiance of Iran's religious leaders. "Paris is the only place on the planet where women are not made feel guilty all the time," she told the magazine. "(Back home) you are guilty as soon as you feel your first sexual feelings, even before you reach adolescence."

Farahani-daughter of the acclaimed Iranian director Behzad Farahani-will play Karenina at the Theatre de la Tempete in an adaptation of Leon Tolstoy's novel written and directed by Gaetan Vassart. She is starring in the fifth of the "Pirates of the Caribbean" films alongside Johnny Depp next year after appearing in "Rosewater", the directorial debut of former "Daily Show" host Jon Stewart. That film told

the story of Canadian-Iranian journalist Maziar Bahari, who was locked up in Tehran after reporting on violence against protesters during the country's presidential election in 2009. — AFP



This file shows Iranian actress Golshifteh Farahani posing during a photocall for the film 'About Ely' by Iranian director Asghar Farhadi. — AFP



In this photo The Sports Museum curator Richard Johnson, right, stands near an exhibit that displays cover photos from the sports magazine Sports Illustrated in the museum at the TD Garden, in Boston. — AP photos



A depiction of former Boston Celtics basketball player Larry Bird, center, rests in a display case near a photograph of former Celtics coach Red Auerbach, left, in an exhibit in the Sports Museum at the TD Garden.

Sporting history: 'Boston is to sports what Paris is to art'

A vast trove of New England sports artifacts is being preserved by a museum nestled inside Boston's TD Garden. The Sports Museum of New England is moving a large share of the uniforms, trophies, photos, films and other sports artifacts it has amassed over nearly four decades into secure storage, thanks to a partnership with Iron Mountain, a Boston-based records management company.

Most of the items being moved aren't currently on display at the TD Garden, home to the NHL's Bruins and the NBA's Celtics. They're part of the museum's growing off-site collection, which includes a veritable library of primary source materials like rare films, videos, photos, scrapbooks and diaries. Curator Richard Johnson estimates the haul represents roughly three-fourths of the museum's total holdings, which an appraiser recently valued at \$7 million.

"It's like the underside of an iceberg," he said on a recent tour of the museum's exhibits at the TD Garden. "The part you don't see is the part that makes everything else possible." For a city steeped in history, the Sports Museum is a somewhat untraditional repository of cultural treasures. The exhibits, which are open daily except holidays and when there are events at the TD Garden, run about a half-mile along the expansive lobbies and narrow hallways just outside the high-priced spectator suites on the fifth and sixth floors of the arena.

While not necessarily chronological or comprehensive, they offer up a pastiche of the region's rich sports history, with a decidedly Boston-area focus. An exhibit on the Bruins, for example, showcases one of Hall of Fame goalie Gerry Cheevers' famous white masks from the 1970s, decorated with his signature black stitch marks. A Celtics display has a pair of size-23 sneakers worn by 7-foot-1 center Shaquille O'Neal, who played with the team during the 2010-2011 season before retiring.

Other exhibits highlight regional sports legends like Boston College and New England Patriots quarterback Doug Flutie; Massachusetts native and heavyweight boxing champ Rocky Marciano; and the 1980 "Miracle on Ice" US Olympics men's hockey team, which featured members of Boston University's college squad. Boston's other two major league teams - the MLB's Red Sox and the NFL's Patriots - as well as classic New England sports events like the Boston Marathon and the Harvard-Yale football rivalry, are also showcased. "Boston is to sports what Paris is to art," Johnson said. "There's a lot of territory to cover." The museum has found a comfortable niche at the arena, where it moved in 2000 after struggling to draw consistent patrons at its site in a mall across the Charles River in Cambridge during the 1990s.

Maintaining its off-site collection, though, has been more challenging. The collection is housed at the museum's original home, a state-owned building museum officials say isn't climate-

controlled and has been showing its age in recent years.

Rusty Sullivan, the museum's executive director, said the organization began working with Iron Mountain after last year's winter dumped a record 9 feet of snow on Boston and raised fears among museum staff that the collection could be at risk if the building ever sustained serious damage. "This has been a god-send for us," he said. "They really understood what we were up against." The transfer process has been going on for months. Iron Mountain officials say they've already taken roughly a tractor-trailer's worth of materials from the museum. The company, which works in 36 countries on five continents, has agreed to store the collection free, in perpetuity.

The effort is part of Iron Mountain's Living Legacy Initiative, which is also preserving letters, sneakers, flags, stuffed animals and other mementos left at the Boston Marathon finish line following the bombings that killed three people and injured hundreds more at the 2013 race. "When it comes to paper and micro-film, these things are always in danger, even in the best non-climate controlled conditions," said Christian Potts, a spokesman for Iron Mountain. "It may not be as dramatic as a flood or fire, but if these things don't go to the right place, they do have a shelf life." — AP



The Sports Museum curator Richard Johnson stands near a Boston Bruins exhibit in the museum at the TD Garden.



A 1929 Boston Bruins wool jersey, left, worn by Bruins' Dutch Gainor, rests in a display case near a 1929 jacket worn by Bruins' Cooney Weiland, center, and a photograph of players from that era, right, in an exhibit in the Sports Museum at the TD Garden.



A cat sitting on a perch next to customers at a cat cafe Kocici Kavarna.



A cat sitting on a bench at a cat cafe Kocici Kavarna.

Czech cat cafe boom pairs soothing strokes with java jolts

Nox sniffs curiously at a cup of creamy Vienna coffee and a plate of chocolate cake, then leaps off the table into the lap of a young woman, an afternoon visitor to Prague's oldest cat cafe. The jet-black cat is one of eight that Kockafe ("kocka" being Czech for "cat") has acquired from a Prague animal shelter to help its customers feel cosy and relaxed. "Cats radiate calm and purring is very pleasant, people simply like it," says Jana Parizkova, a 25-year-old tourist guide who opened the cafe in the Czech capital along with her mother and sister.

"Cats bring people together—guests who don't know each other have something to talk about, which is great," she tells AFP, surrounded by cats leaping on the bar or resting by the window. Already popular in Japan, Taiwan, and other parts of Asia and Europe, cat cafes are booming across the Czech Republic, with a dozen having popped up since the summer of 2014. "My wife and I opened the cafe a year ago. We had seven cats at home and now we have nine here," says 45-year-old Ivan Herak, a former manager, who runs one of the four cat cafes in tourist-magnet Prague.

Unlike Parizkova, Herak relies on British marbled cats, which he breeds himself. "I need cats that like being caressed, that aren't afraid of people, while cats from a shelter are often easily frightened," Herak says, stroking a big tomcat with a bell on his collar and calling him "Darling".

'You don't gulp down coffee'

At the Kockafe, Parizkova has taken several stray cats off the street, including a kitten she found outside her cafe on the day it opened, and allows guests to adopt its felines. "A cafe isn't an ideal place for a cat—that's why we have cats from a shelter, their experience is so terrible that they find the cafe OK," she says with a smile. But she admits it is difficult to find cats suitable for cafe life. The felines must be "completely relaxed and composed in order to handle the bustle here." Among the Kockafe's customers, Karolina Brabcova has taken a kitten home, while her friend Lucie Kubrova, a student, already has a cat but still frequents the cafe to soak up its unique atmosphere.

"Cats make it far more pleasant—you don't just gulp down your cup of coffee and leave; instead, you sit, play with the cats and spend more time here," Kubrova says over a plateful of pizza, graciously ignored by Nox and his peers. Herak says about 80 percent of the people who come to his cafe already have cats of their own at home. "They are cat lovers, they know the cats will be on the table and curious about their plates, so to speak, but they don't mind." But he adds some clients find the idea of pairing coffee and cats unappealing. "When we opened the cafe, a lady in her sixties came over and asked if we really sold meals made from cat meat. That, you've got to admit, was shocking." — AFP



A cat being held by a customer at the cat cafe KociciKavarna.



A cat sitting on a perch at the cat cafe Kocici Kavarna.



A photo taken through a shop window while showing a customer kissing a cat at the cat cafe Kocici Kavarna.



A photo taken through a shop window while showing a customer kissing a cat at the cat cafe Kocici Kavarna.—AFP photos



Spring's return means it's easy to enjoy our greens again

By Elizabeth Karme

This is one of the prettiest dishes to dress a spring - or dreaming of spring - table. After months of delicious but (let's face it) mostly brown food, my appetite is primed for bright colors and fresh flavors.

And there are few green vegetables as vibrant and appealing as sugar snap peas. My mother served them often in a quick saute with toasted almonds. But in recent years, I have munched on them raw as a healthy, crunchy snack. I had almost forgotten what they tasted like cooked until one day last year when I was browsing through a cookbook by Jessica Seinfeld, "The Can't Cook Book: Recipes for the Absolutely Terrified."

The book is my favorite gift for young cooks, or anyone who thinks cooking is difficult. It contains appealing contemporary recipes and everything is simplified and spelled out. When I saw the picture of her minty sugar snaps, it reminded me of my mother's dish and I had a craving that I couldn't stop thinking about until I made them.

Because I love citrus with both mint and sugar snap peas, I added the zest and the juice of a tangerine to brighten the flavor and balance the richness of the butter. The toasted sliced almonds add a welcome crunch and, if you are like me, you will find yourself making sure that every bite includes an almond or two.

MINTY SUGAR SNAP PEAS WITH TANGERINE AND TOASTED ALMONDS



Ingredients

Start to finish: 20 minutes
Servings: 6
1 pound sugar snap peas
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 cup sliced almonds
2 large shallots, sliced into thin rings
Zest and juice of 1 large tangerine
Ground black pepper
10 to 15 fresh mint leaves, julienned or chopped
Coarse sea salt

Preparation

Using scissors or your fingers, remove the stems from the snap peas and pull to remove the string if necessary (many brands are sold with the strings already removed). Place the snap peas in a bowl or strainer and rinse with cool water. Set aside.

In a heavy saute pan over medium, combine 1 1/2 tablespoons of the butter, the salt and the almonds. Once the butter is melted, lower the heat and stir the almonds occasionally until golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Once the almonds are toasted, transfer to a plate, then return the pan to medium heat and add the remaining butter.

Add the shallots and cook, stirring, for 3 to 4 minutes, or until

they are soft and beginning to brown. Add the snap peas and cook, stirring often, until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes. Add the tangerine juice and cook for another minute. Stir in the tangerine zest and mint, then season with pepper. Transfer to a serving dish and top with the almonds. Finish the dish with a sprinkle of crunchy sea salt.

Nutrition information per serving

140 calories; 90 calories from fat (64 percent of total calories); 10 g fat (4 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 15 mg cholesterol; 170 mg sodium; 10 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 5 g sugar; 4 g protein.

— AP

Avocado can do more than make guacamole. Think pasta sauce!

By: Melissa D'Arabian

Avocado is far more than just guacamole, club sandwiches and California omelets. This creamy, fatty, filling fruit (technically, it's a berry), also is a great source of healthy fat, making it an excellent replacement for other fats.

Why have fat at all? Because research is clear that our bodies need fat to absorb other nutrients. Not to mention that they taste good and leave us satisfied. When I eat healthy fats with my meals, I am far less likely to dive into a sugary-carby treat later on. It's that simple. When I find myself craving a sweet in the afternoon, it's almost always a sure sign that I didn't eat enough healthy fat at lunch.

Avocado is nutrient-dense, which means the per-calorie nutritional game is solid. Avocados are packed with vitamins and minerals. And they are incredibly fiber-rich. Who would guess given how lusciously creamy they are? Know that nutrient-dense also means calorie-dense. So downing a large bowl of guacamole at happy hour probably is not wise. I aim for an ounce or two a day, which is about a quarter or a third of a medium avocado.

What do I do with avocado? I use it when I want to swap out cheese, such as adding decadence and creaminess to morning egg whites. Or I use it as a healthy boost for my kids' morning smoothies, adding vitamins and filling fiber and fat to jumpstart their day. Avocado also is a great substitute for

heavy cream; I blend it up to make salad dressings, silky-rich sauces, even puddings and baked goods.

Today's recipe is a quick creamy pasta sauce that needs no cooking. It's as fast as whizzing up a few ingredients in the blender and letting piping hot pasta bring all the heat necessary for the pasta sauce flavours to bloom. You won't miss the cream!



SPEEDY NO-COOK AVOCADO PASTA SAUCE

Ingredients

Start to finish: 20 minutes
Servings: 6
12 ounces whole-grain pasta
1 large avocado, peeled, pitted and roughly cubed
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 teaspoon lemon zest
2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
1 scallion, chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Pinch red pepper flakes
1/4 cup cilantro leaves and soft stems
Salt and ground black pepper

Preparation

Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil. Cook the pasta according to package directions, then reserve 1/2 cup of the cooking water, and drain. Meanwhile, in a blender combine the avocado, lemon juice and zest, garlic, scallion, olive oil, Parmesan and Worcestershire sauce. Blend until smooth. If too thick, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of water. Once smooth, add the red pepper flakes and cilantro and pulse to mix, but not completely blend. Seasoned with salt and pepper. Pour into a large serving bowl. Once the pas-

ta is cooked, immediately add it to the sauce let sit for 30 seconds. Toss to coat the pasta, adding a bit of the reserved cooking water, if needed, to thin the sauce.

Nutrition information per serving: 320 calories; 100 calories from fat (31 per cent of total calories); 11 g fat (1.5 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 135 mg sodium; 47 g carbohydrate; 7 g fiber; 3 g sugar; 8 g protein — AP



Friday Times Travel



9 dos and don'ts for social media-savvy travelers

With an infinite wealth of cat videos, celebrity pouts and awkward status updates at our fingertips, it can be hard to stand out from the crowd on social media. Luckily, travel is a topic that resonates with even the speediest of scrollers - if you get it right. Avoid the common pitfalls of posting your life online and enthrall your audience with these golden rules.

Do... choose quality over quantity

The rise of social media has all but led to the death of the post-trip debrief between friends. It's unfortunate, but let's face it - when you (virtually) check in to every godforsaken airport, chain hotel and restaurant you so much as breeze through, tweeting your every move and Snapchatting every step of the way, by the time you get back everyone is seriously over it. We don't want to hear about that wild night in Ibiza again - we were practically there with you the first time.

Pro tip: Sharing a few highlights that encapsulate your trip works out better for everyone; you won't be spamming your friends' feeds and you'll still have a few stories up your sleeve upon your return.

Don't... manipulate the truth

Remember: you're on holiday, not shooting a travel brochure. And nobody's fooled by Instagram filters these days. In our perfection-seeking society the temptation to enhance your images is intense; a tweak or two is forgivable, but when you find yourself airbrushing off your love handles and blurring out clouds it's time to take a long, hard look at your priorities in life.

Pro tip: Cast off social pressures and keep it real. A candid capture of your sweaty, sunburned self having fun is far more interesting than a painfully posed poolside selfie.



Do... resist the temptation to humblebrag

A shot of sun-bleached sand on a tropical beach, into which are etched the words 'how's your Monday looking?'; a snap of your lunchtime cocktail alongside a trashy novel and a pair of designer shades, captioned, 'It's a hard life, but someone's gotta do it'; a screenshot of the weather forecast where you are, cruelly contrasted with the storm warnings of home. The final twist of the knife: #sorrynotsorry.

Pro tip: We get it. You're loving life. Tone down the taunts, pronto, or expect to be 'unfriended'.



Don't... think social media activity counts as staying in touch

Broadcasting your breakfast to the world can seem like the ideal way to touch base while travelling; everyone can see that you're still alive and enjoying yourself - with a muffin the size of your face. But this one-to-many mentality just doesn't cut it, particularly on long-term trips.

Pro tip: Make sure you set time aside for Skype calls and personal email updates so your loved ones don't end up feeling like fans instead of friends and family. Your mum wants a postcard, not a Facebook poke.

Do... opt for originality

Before you cast another careless titbit into the online abyss, at least make it creative. Find a way to slice through the white noise: an unusual perspective on a place beats the leaning tower of Pisa trick hands down, and hair-raising views trump hot-dog legs any day. Have fun and don't feel pressured to strip off on a mountain or divulge the details of an oh-so-average meal just because everyone else is doing it.

Pro tip: What quirky discoveries have you uncovered on your adventures? Share the unusual details and lesser-known sights, or depict the showstoppers in a new light.

Don't... succumb to hashtag fever

Ah, hashtags. Designed to aggregate global conversations, essentially tracking the zeitgeist, they soon devolved into a

means of adding cheeky asides and ironic quips to our tweets... #guiltiascharged. These days, anything goes, but adding 50 hashtags to your sunset shot isn't going to make it stand out from the other 93 million on Instagram, so why bother?

Pro tip: Go for the less-is-more approach: tag destination names so your followers can find more content from that region if they wish and drop the #funtimes #wanderlust waffle.

Do... master your medium

The best social media posts inspire or entertain their intended audience. So whether you're sharing six-second clips on Vine, curating your travel snaps on Facebook or liveblogging your trip on Twitter, the goal should be the same: strive to make it better than the guff that the majority of the population are spewing into cyberspace.

Pro tip: Hone your craft - see social media as an art form; take a photography class or read up on video editing; follow influencers who inspire you and attempt to inspire others in your own way.

Don't... experience your travels through a screen

Reaching for our smartphone the instant we encounter something spectacular has become second nature for today's tech-savvy generation but it can leave us feeling detached from our experiences.

Watching whales breach through a lens diminishes the magic of the moment, while the stress of capturing the perfect shot to share with your friends eradicates all enjoyment. When social media commitments start to feel like chores, it's time to switch off and live in the present.

Pro tip: When you spot an Instagram-worthy view, pause and count to 10 before framing your shot. Soaking up the scene is more important. If more extreme measures are required, read our traveller's guide to digital detoxes.



JetSetting Fools (@JetSettingFools) · 16m
That moment #Angkor #Cambodia #SEAAsia #travel #life #hot #ip #bestofthetoday #travelpics #wanderlust #traveling
Reply Retweet Favorite

Do... upload your 'wow' moments

Sometimes it's impossible to keep schtum on social media - and that's OK. Rewarded with an epic panorama after a tough hike? Go ahead. Found the world's best gelato? Let your friends in on the secret. We don't want to go all Zuckerberg on you, but this is what sharing your travels is all about: celebrating the world, telling stories and starting conversations.

Pro tip: Captioning is key. Expressing joy and positivity online is most likely to engage your audience. As we've already covered, showing off - even if tongue-in-cheek - is alienating and quite frankly, old. — www.lonelyplanet.com



Movies

Batman and Superman

films ranked from worst to best

This weekend's *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice* brings DC's heaviest hitters face-to-face for their first live-action throw down on the big screen - and gives us our first glimpse of the new Wonder Woman in the bargain. To celebrate this momentous occasion, take a look at all the times the Caped Crusader and the Man of Steel starred in movies of their own.



BATMAN & ROBIN (1997)

One of the least-loved blockbusters of recent years, *Batman & Robin* brought the Batman 1.0 franchise to a screeching halt. Unlike the earlier installments, which returned the Caped Crusader to his brooding noir roots, *Batman & Robin* was a veritable camp-o-rama, closer in spirit to the 1960s TV series. Utilizing punny dialogue to a jaw-dropping degree were villains Arnold Schwarzenegger as Mr. Freeze ("Ice to see you!") and Uma Thurman as Poison Ivy ("My garden needs tending"). Even George Clooney made little impression as Batman, and his sidekicks (Chris O'Donnell as Robin, Alicia Silverstone as Batgirl) failed to drum up much audience or critical enthusiasm. As a result, a planned fifth sequel, *Batman Triumphant*, which would have pitted our heroes against the Scarecrow, never materialized, so it was left to Christopher Nolan to resurrect the series. "

SUPERMAN IV: THE QUEST FOR PEACE (1987)

With Gene Hackman back in the cast and a four-year break to cleanse filmgoers' palates after the unpleasantness of *Superman III*, 1987's *Superman IV: The Quest for Peace* seemed to have everything going for it at first - including a smartly topical storyline that put the Man of Steel in the middle of the Cold War (and doing battle with a nuclear-powered Superclone designed by Lex Luthor). Unfortunately, when money started to run tight at Cannon Films, director Sidney J. Furie found himself forced to cut corners in every direction; the result, according to most critics, was a disjointed, cheap-looking mess, further hampered by dejected-seeming performances from a cast that appeared to know exactly how much of a mistake they were making.



SUPERMAN III (1983)

The first two *Superman* movies boasted an impressive narrative scope, state-of-the-art special effects, and layered performances that made it possible for the story to move gracefully between action, drama, and comedy, sometimes within the space of a single scene. They were a tough act to follow, in other words - which might explain why 1983's *Superman III* didn't really bother attempting to build on their success, instead opting to take the franchise in an altogether sillier direction by pitting the Man of Steel against a power-mad CEO (Robert Vaughn) who blackmails an unscrupulous computer programmer (Richard Pryor) into using his know-how to help him achieve world domination. Aside from the typically techno-ignorant screenplay, which imagines weather satellites capable of creating tornados and supercomputers that achieve sentience after being attacked with an axe, *III* earned fans' and critics' ire by ignoring any semblance of character development in favor of director Richard Lester's fondness for oddball humor and silly sight gags.

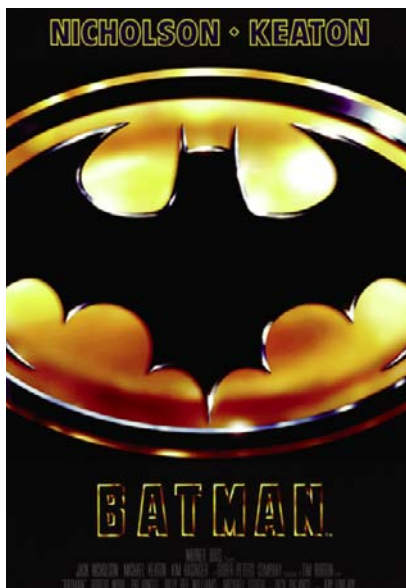
BATMAN FOREVER (1995)



One can draw a fairly direct line from the 1966 Batman to Joel Schumacher's mid-series reboot: Garish colors; some tongue-in-cheek dialogue; the presence of Robin to draw in the young'uns. This may not be a great Batman movie, but it is a successful one - drawing in a legion of new viewers while shifting the series away from the twisted mindscape of Tim Burton (whose movies weren't totally representative of the comics anyway). And if you were the at the right age, there was nothing more fun in 1995 than this (except perhaps getting a PlayStation). It's "Bigger, battier and better," wrote Susan Wloszczyna for USA Today.

BATMAN (1989)

One of the most hyped movies in Hollywood history, and one of the finest examples of movie tie-ins and cross-promotion (so successful it made t-shirt bootleggers filthy rich), Batman is also one of the weirdest event pictures of all time. Director Tim Burton jettisoned the plots (if not the dark tone) of Bob Kane's original comics, and came up with a picture with set designs reminiscent of Fritz Lang's Metropolis and freakish, brooding characters similar to... well, a Tim Burton movie. Particularly compelling is Jack Nicholson as the Joker, who gleefully relishes his plan to kill the citizens of Gotham City with lethal gas. Michael Keaton makes for a subdued Dark Knight, a hero who dispenses vigilante justice while living a morose existence in Wayne Manor. A precursor to more complex comic book adaptations, Batman made piles of money, and the bat-logo was ubiquitous in the summer of 1989.



BATMAN RETURNS (1992)

Tim Burton has said he always sympathized with monsters, and so, for his sequel to Batman, he gave audiences not one, but two empathetic, pitiable villains. The Penguin (Danny DeVito) is a deformed orphan who leads an army of aquatic, flightless birds from the bowels of Gotham City. The Catwoman (Michelle Pfeiffer) is a frumpy secretary who is killed by her boss (Christopher Walken) after she learns of his evil schemes, but is brought back to life by a group of cats. Teaming up against Batman, the pair plans an assault on the city above. Batman Returns is so cold and dark it makes the first installment look like Amelie by comparison, but that's not necessarily a bad thing; it still made a killing at the box office, and was Burton's favorite of the two Batman movies he helmed. "Of all the Batman pictures, this is the most striking, atmospheric and effective," wrote David Keyes of Cinemaphile.org.



MAN OF STEEL (2013)

After coming down from the nostalgic rush of Superman Returns, studio execs decided that instead of a sequel, yet another reboot was in order, and they handed the reins to Watchmen director Zack Snyder to make it happen. The result was 2013's Man of Steel, starring Henry Cavill as the latest take on the broad-shouldered Kryptonian orphan and Michael Shannon as his first nemesis, the villainous General Zod. Snyder's revisionist take on the Superman mythology definitely had a special effects advantage over its predecessors, but a large number of critics took issue with other aspects of the movie, particularly what many saw as a rather cavalier approach to violence - summed up by Superman's decision to commit murder in the final act. Still, even if few would argue that Man of Steel was an entirely successful attempt to apply a dark layer of post-Nolan grit to the franchise, plenty of writers appreciated seeing a fresh spin on a familiar character.

SUPERMAN RETURNS (2006)

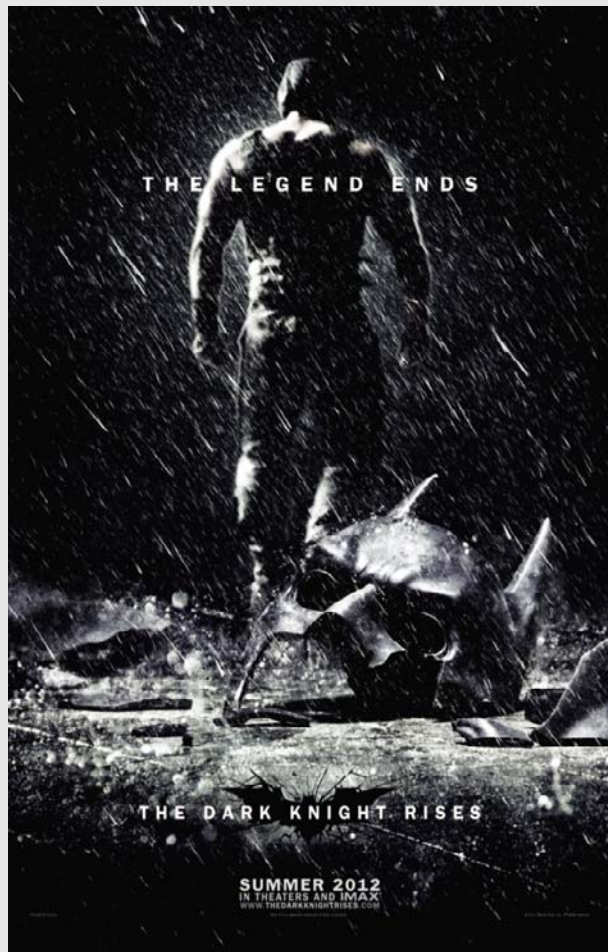
If you're any kind of film buff, you're already familiar with many of the twists and turns that Superman endured at Warner Bros. during the '80s and '90s - heck, they've even inspired their own documentary - so suffice it to say that after Superman IV tanked, the franchise was more or less frozen at a crossroads for years. Talk of another Reeve-led sequel stopped after the 1995 horseriding accident that left him paralyzed, and despite the best efforts of a long succession of screenwriters, directors, and would-be stars, our Kryptonian hero spent the better part of 20 years waiting for a hero of his own to rescue him from development hell. Help finally arrived in the form of director Bryan Singer, who was handed the keys to the franchise after proving his superhero mettle with X-Men and its first sequel; in the summer of 2006, Superman Returns rebooted the story, with newcomer Brandon Routh wearing the cape, Kate Bosworth playing Lois Lane, and Kevin Spacey chewing up the scenery as Lex Luthor.



BATMAN BEGINS (2005)

With his lack of superpowers and a vast fortune at his disposal, Batman was always the most plausible of heroes. With Batman Begins, director Christopher Nolan shucked off the direction of the previous big-screen incarnations and boiled the Batman mythos down to its essence, resulting in one of the most realistic superhero movies ever. Thankfully, Nolan didn't skimp on action-paced pyrotechnics, and as the suitably suave and tortured Bruce Wayne, Christian Bale added a greater emotional heft to the Caped Crusader (he was also ably abetted by the likes of Morgan Freeman, Michael Caine, Liam Neeson, and Gary Oldman). Batman Begins signaled a bold new beginning for the franchise, and was a huge hit with audiences and pundits alike. "It's a wake-up call to the people who keep giving us cute capers about men in tights," wrote Kyle Smith of the New York Post. "It wipes the smirk off the face of the superhero movie."

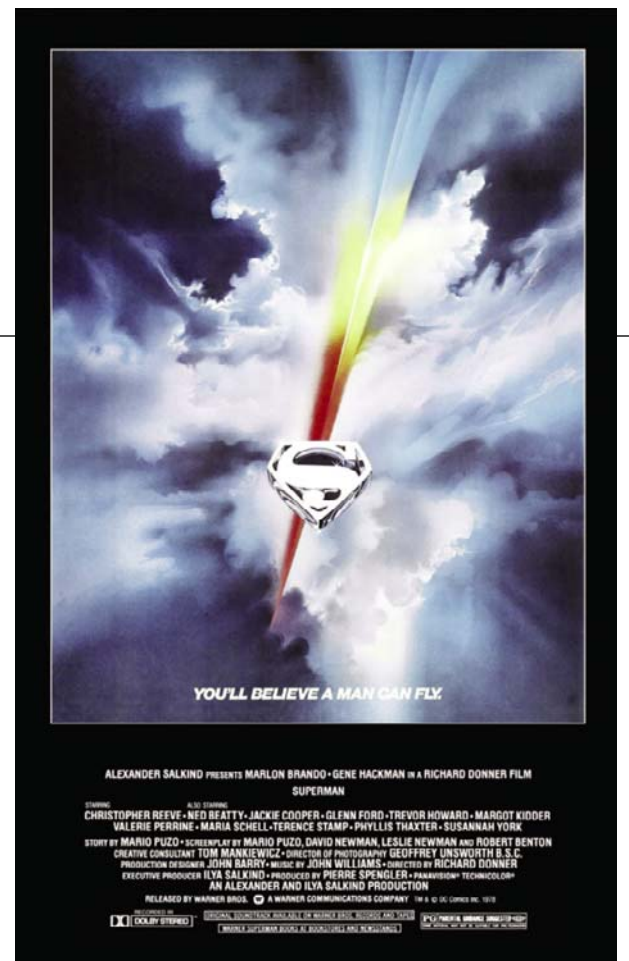
THE DARK KNIGHT RISES (2012)



With 2012's *The Dark Knight Rises*, Christopher Nolan was faced with the task of coming up with a compelling closing chapter to a blockbuster trilogy - the first two entries of which ranked among the best-reviewed superhero movies of all time. Under all that pressure, it's commendable that Nolan emerged with something as solid as *Rises*: even if it didn't quite reach the same lofty heights achieved by its predecessor, it offered Christian Bale's Batman one last round of hard-hitting action before wrapping up this era of the franchise, with a bit of socioeconomic subtext woven into the plot for good measure. For some, just being forced to say goodbye to Nolan's vision of the series was an untenable disappointment - to say nothing of any of the nits worth picking with a storyline that saw Batman being driven to the brink of destruction in an epic confrontation with the fearsome revolutionary known as Bane (Tom Hardy).

SUPERMAN (1978)

"You'll believe a man can fly," promised the posters for 1978's *Superman*, and they were right in more ways than one. The special effects were impressive for the era, but more importantly, the movie benefited from a talented director in Richard Donner, a solid screenplay derived from a story by *Godfather* author Mario Puzo, and a great cast anchored by Christopher Reeve, whose looming physique and chiseled good looks combined with his Juilliard-trained acting chops to help create the most perfect Superman ever to grace the screen (so far). While Gene Hackman's rather ineffective Lex Luthor (coupled with the



buffoonish Otis, played by Ned Beatty) was far from the most imposing foe our hero would face, the movie didn't lack for dramatic

stakes - and with Margot Kidder playing Lois Lane, it even managed to mix a little feminism in with its romance

SUPERMAN II (1981)

After putting together what seemed like a foolproof plan for a speedy *Superman* follow-up - hiring director Richard Donner to shoot much of the sequel concurrently with the first film - Warner Bros. watched with growing dismay as production slowed to a crawl, finally coming to a halt when Donner's feuds with producers Ilya and Alexander Salkind led to his firing from the project. Things grew more complicated when new director Richard Lester came on board, and - needing to film at least 51 percent of the movie in order to obtain a director's credit - reshot many scenes from a movie that had already been substantially filmed. Those are just a few of the many challenges *Superman II* needed to overcome before it finally arrived in theaters in 1981; amazingly, all that behind-the-scenes chaos didn't have much of an adverse impact on the original theatrical cut, which broke the \$100 million barrier at the box office while enjoying almost as many positive reviews as its predecessor.



THE DARK KNIGHT (2008)

Having already brought an end to the candy-colored, Schumacher-wrought nightmare that gripped the *Batman* franchise in the late 1990s, Christopher Nolan and Christian Bale had fans primed for a successful second act - but even after the smashing success of *Batman Begins*, few could have guessed just how popular *The Dark Knight* would be in the summer of 2008. A sprawling superhero epic that

somehow managed to make room for jaw-dropping visuals, a compelling storyline, and stellar performances, *Knight* climbed out from under months of intense speculation - not to mention the shadow cast by Heath Ledger's shocking death - with a worldwide gross in excess of \$1 billion, a towering stack of positive reviews, and a posthumous Best Supporting Actor Oscar for Ledger. (www.rottentomatoes.com)

WORD SEARCH

Old TV Shows 1

Find and circle all of the old TV shows that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional old TV show.

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

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|
| ALICE | FLYING NUN | L.A. LAW | ODD COUPLE |
| BEN CASEY | FUGITIVE | LASSIE | PEYTON PLACE |
| BEVERLY HILLBILLIES | GOMER PYLE | LOVE BOAT | RAWHIDE |
| CHIPS | GOOD TIMES | MAD ABOUT YOU | RIFLEMAN |
| CANNON | GREEN ACRES | MAUDE | RIN TIN TIN |
| CAPTAIN KANGAROO | GREEN HORNET | MEDICAL CENTER | SOAP |
| DOBBIE GILLIS | HOWDY DOODY | MIAMI VICE | ST. ELSEWHERE |
| DONNA REED | I SPY | MOD SQUAD | TAKI |
| DR. KILDARE | IRONSIDE | MOONLIGHTING | THREE'S COMPANY |
| EMERGENCY | JETSONS | MURPHY BROWN | WALTONS |
| FLIPPER | KOJAK | | |

Yesterday's Solution

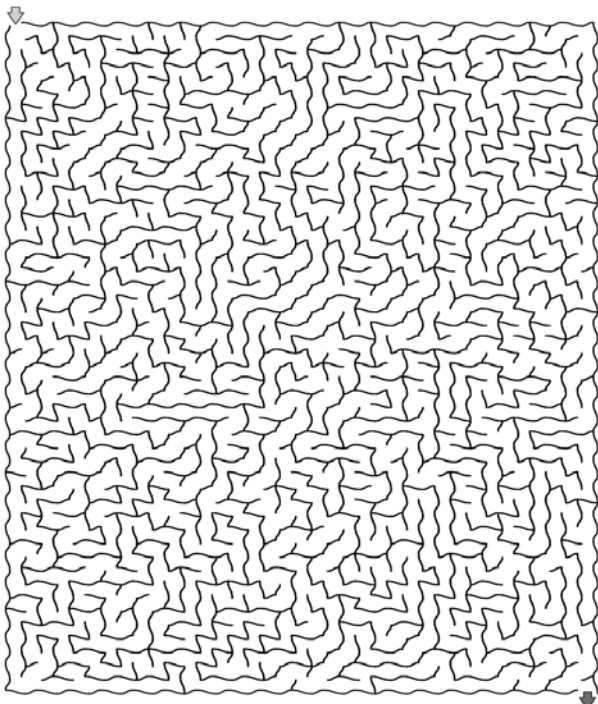
Beatles Songs 2

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

- | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| 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 |

Hidden song: EVERYBODY'S GOT SOMETHING TO HIDE EXCEPT ME AND MY MONKEY

CHALLENGING MAZE



CROSSWORD 1206

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15			16								17		
18						19					20		
21			22			23							
	24	25			26	27			28				
29	30				31				32				
33		34		35	36			37		38		39	40
41			42			43			44			45	
46			47			48			49		50		
51					52					53	54		
55				56	57			58	59				
				60				61	62				
63	64	65		66	67		68		69	70		71	72
73				74	75				76		77		
78											80		
81												83	

ACROSS

- Having undesirable or negative qualities.
- Treat with fumes, expose to fumes.
- Come into the possession of something concrete or abstract.
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- A group of bracts simulating a calyx as in a carnation or hibiscus.
- An implement used to propel or steer a boat.
- Of or relating to a speaker of the Tamil language or the language itself.
- A town in west central Florida on the Gulf of Mexico.
- A rapid bustling commotion.
- (Irish) The sea personified.
- Embellished with a raised pattern created by pressure or embroidery.
- The cry made by sheep.
- (informal) Being satisfactory or in satisfactory condition.
- A feudal lord or baron in Scotland.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- Wet spongy ground of decomposing vegetation.
- Mainly crepuscular or nocturnal nonpasserine birds with mottled grayish-brown plumage and large eyes.
- An indistinct shapeless form.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- The sense organ for hearing and equilibrium.
- Informal terms for a mother.
- A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
- An associate degree in nursing.
- A wired or starched collar of intricate lace.
- Make a plat of.
- A Loloish language.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- (Scottish) Bluish-black or gray-blue.
- A severe or trying experience.
- An enclosed space.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
- The act of remitting (especially the referral of a law case to another court).
- A doctor's degree in music.
- A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- Of or relating to or befitting hermits or their practices of hermitic living.
- Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
- Lacking in light.
- Freetail bats.
- (informal) Roused to anger.
- The compass point midway between northeast and east.
- Expressing pain or agony.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Relieve from military service.
- A boy or man.
- Being or moving higher in position or greater in some value.
- The absolute unit of pressure equal to one dyne per square centimeter.
- Being nine more than ninety.
- Talks a great deal about uninteresting topics.
- (biology) Having or resembling wings.
- Someone new to a field or activity.
- A bet that you can pick the first and second finishers in the right order.
- English zoologist noted for her studies of chimpanzees in the wild (born in 1934).
- Having been taken into the mouth for consumption.
- Relating to or used in or intended for trade or commerce.
- Formerly a term of respect for important white Europeans in colonial India.
- Hormone secreted by the posterior pituitary gland (trade name Pitressin) and also by nerve endings in the hypothalamus.
- An ancient Hebrew unit of capacity equal to 10 baths or 10 ephahs.
- Garment consisting of a folded cloth drawn up between the legs and fastened at the waist.
- A wired or starched collar of intricate lace.
- Fleshy spore-bearing inner mass of e.g. a puffball or stinkhorn.
- The small projection of a mammary gland.
- English writer of macabre short stories (1863-1943).
- Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- Obvious and dull.
- A raised mark on the skin (as produced by the blow of a whip).
- A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- A telegram sent abroad.
- A person trained to travel in a spacecraft.
- A woman of refinement.
- Preaching the gospel of Christ in the manner of the early church.
- A city in southern Texas on the Rio Grande.
- An intensely radioactive metallic element that occurs in minute amounts in uranium ores.
- A genus of Viperidae.
- Water falling in drops from vapor condensed in the atmosphere.
- Informal terms for a (young) woman.
- The 2nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
- Little known Kamarupan languages.
- The periodic rise and fall of the sea level under the gravitational pull of the moon.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- An informal term for a father.
- A small piece of cloth.
- Someone who is morally reprehensible.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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



01:35 NED Kelly
03:20 The Heavenly Kid
04:50 The Magnificent Seven Ride!
06:25 The Secret Of Santa Vittoria
08:40 The Man In The Iron Mask
10:50 Puckoon
12:15 Bound For Glory
14:40 The Aviator
16:15 Waking Up In Reno
17:50 Puckoon
19:15 Duplex
20:45 Big Screen
21:00 A Fish Called Wanda
22:45 The Heavenly Kid

10:30 On The Move
11:00 On The Move
12:00 Bloomberg Surveillance
13:00 Bloomberg Surveillance
14:00 Bloomberg Go
15:00 Bloomberg Go
16:00 Bloomberg Go
17:00 Bloomberg Markets
18:00 Bloomberg Markets
19:00 Bloomberg Markets: European
Close
20:00 Bloomberg Markets
21:00 Bloomberg Markets
22:00 Bloomberg Markets
23:00 Brilliant Ideas
23:00 What'd You Miss?



00:00 News Update
00:30 Dialogue
01:00 News Update
01:15 China 24
02:00 The Heat
02:30 News Update
03:00 Global Business
04:00 News Update
05:00 News Update
06:30 Dialogue
07:00 News Hour
08:00 Global Business
09:00 News Update
10:30 Sports Scene
11:00 Global Business
12:00 News Update
12:30 Culture Express
13:00 Africa Live
14:00 News Update
14:30 Dialogue
15:00 News Update
15:15 China 24
16:00 News Update

16:15 Global Business
17:00 News Update
17:15 World InSight
18:00 Asia Today
18:30 Culture Express
19:00 News Update
19:30 The Heat
20:00 Africa Live
21:00 Global Business
21:30 Dialogue
22:00 News Update
22:15 China 24
23:00 News Update
23:15 World InSight



00:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report
01:00 First Class
01:30 U.S. Squawk Alley
02:30 CNBC Conversation: Felipe Calderon
03:00 U.S. Closing Bell
05:00 Inside China
05:30 CNBC Conversation: Felipe Calderon
06:00 Japan Remembers
06:30 CNBC Conversation: Kyriakos Mitsotakis
07:00 Fast Money: Half Time Report
08:00 The New High: Extreme Sports
09:00 Gunfight: Remington Under Fire
10:00 Managing Asia
10:30 Managing Asia
11:00 Managing Asia
11:30 Managing Asia
12:00 Inside China
12:30 CNBC Conversation: Felipe Calderon

13:00 Japan Remembers
13:30 CNBC Conversation: Kyriakos Mitsotakis
14:00 The New High: Extreme Sports
15:00 Gunfight: Remington Under Fire
16:00 Managing Asia
16:30 Managing Asia
17:00 Managing Asia
17:30 Managing Asia
18:00 Inside China
18:30 CNBC Conversation: Felipe Calderon
19:00 Japan Remembers
19:30 CNBC Conversation: Kyriakos Mitsotakis
20:00 The New High: Extreme Sports
21:00 Gunfight: Remington Under Fire



00:20 Fast N' Loud
01:10 Salvage Hunters
02:00 Redwood Kings
02:50 Kings Of The Wild
03:40 What's In The Barn?
04:05 The Liquidator
04:30 Garage Gold
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 Chasing Classic Cars
06:00 You Have Been Warned
06:50 The Weapon Hunter
07:40 Big Giant Swords
08:30 The Island With Bear Grylls
09:20 Men, Women, Wild
10:10 So You Think You'd Survive?
11:00 Salvage Hunters
11:50 Redwood Kings

12:40 Kings Of The Wild
13:30 Fast N' Loud Clip Shows
14:20 Street Outlaws
15:10 Extreme Car Hoarders
16:00 The Weapon Hunter
16:50 The Weapon Hunter
17:40 The Weapon Hunter
18:30 The Weapon Hunter
19:20 The Weapon Hunter
20:10 The Weapon Hunter
21:00 Misfit Garage
21:50 Street Outlaws
22:40 Extreme Car Hoarders
23:30 Killing Fields



00:40 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
01:05 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
01:30 The Haunted
02:20 Ghost Lab
03:10 Deadly Affairs
04:00 True CSI
04:45 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
05:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
05:30 The Haunted
06:20 Fatal Encounters
07:10 On The Case With Paula Zahn
08:00 Dr. G. Medical Examiner
08:50 On The Case With Paula Zahn
09:40 Fatal Encounters
10:30 Murder Shift
11:20 Deadly Affairs
12:10 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
13:00 The Will
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
14:40 California Investigator
15:05 Dr G: Medical Examiner
15:55 Fatal Encounters
16:45 On The Case With Paula Zahn
17:35 Murder Shift
18:25 I Almost Got Away With It
19:15 The Will
20:05 Deadly Affairs
20:55 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
21:45 California Investigator
22:10 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
22:35 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
23:00 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones

Reservations
03:50 Tattoo Hunter
04:35 American Guns
05:20 Extreme Engineering
06:05 Gunslingers
06:50 Mao's Cold War
07:35 Origins
08:00 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
08:50 Bush Pilots
09:40 Extreme Engineering
10:30 Gunslingers
11:20 Origins
11:45 Chasing Classic Cars
12:10 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
13:00 Bush Pilots
13:50 Extreme Engineering
14:40 Gunslingers
15:30 Origins
15:55 Chasing Classic Cars
16:20 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
17:10 Bush Pilots
18:00 Extreme Engineering
18:50 Gunslingers
19:40 Origins
20:05 Chasing Classic Cars
20:30 Aircrash Unsolved: The Mystery Of...
21:20 Anthony Bourdain: No Reservations
22:10 Extreme Engineering
23:00 Aircrash Unsolved: The Mystery Of...
23:50 Gunslingers



00:00 Violetta
00:45 The Hive
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
01:40 Hank Zipzer
02:05 Binny And The Ghost
02:30 Violetta
03:15 The Hive
03:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
03:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
04:10 Hank Zipzer
04:35 Binny And The Ghost
05:00 Violetta
05:45 The Hive
05:50 Mouk
06:00 Lolirock
06:25 Sofia The First
06:50 Gravity Falls
07:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
07:40 Jessie
08:05 Shake It Up
08:30 Shake It Up
08:55 That's So Raven
09:20 That's So Raven
09:45 Girl Meets World
10:10 Girl Meets World
10:35 Disney's Descendants
12:20 Jessie
12:45 Jessie
13:10 Austin & Ally
13:35 Austin & Ally
14:00 Liv And Maddie
14:25 Descendants Wicked World
14:30 Liv And Maddie
14:55 Dog With A Blog
15:20 Dog With A Blog
15:45 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
16:10 Violetta
17:00 I Love Violetta
17:10 Disney's Descendants
19:00 Descendants Wicked World
19:05 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug & Cat Noir
19:30 Violetta
20:20 I Love Violetta
20:30 Zapped
21:55 Violetta Recipes
22:00 Binny And The Ghost
22:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
22:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
23:10 Hank Zipzer
23:35 Binny And The Ghost



00:35 Speed Junkie
01:20 How It's Made
01:44 How It's Made
02:08 Mega Builders
02:55 Space Voyages
03:42 Science Of The Movies
04:29 Speed Junkie
05:16 Mega Builders
06:03 Space Voyages
06:50 Mighty Ships
07:37 How Do They Do It?
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:23 Speed Junkie
09:08 Science Of The Movies
09:53 Mighty Ships
10:38 How It's Made
11:00 How It's Made
11:23 Invent It Rich
12:08 Space Voyages
12:53 Mighty Ships
13:38 Speed Junkie
14:23 How It's Made
14:46 How It's Made
15:10 Science Of The Movies
15:57 Invent It Rich
16:44 Space Voyages
17:31 Mighty Ships
18:18 Science Of The Movies
19:05 Killer Robots: Robogames 2011
19:50 Da Vinci's Machines
20:40 Space Voyages
21:25 How It's Made
21:50 How It's Made
22:15 Sci-Trek
23:00 Da Vinci's Machines
23:45 Space Voyages



00:40 Mao's Cold War
01:30 Aircrash Confidential
02:20 Origins
02:40 Chasing Classic Cars
03:05 Anthony Bourdain: No



00:05 Henry Hugglemonster
00:20 Calimero
00:35 Zou



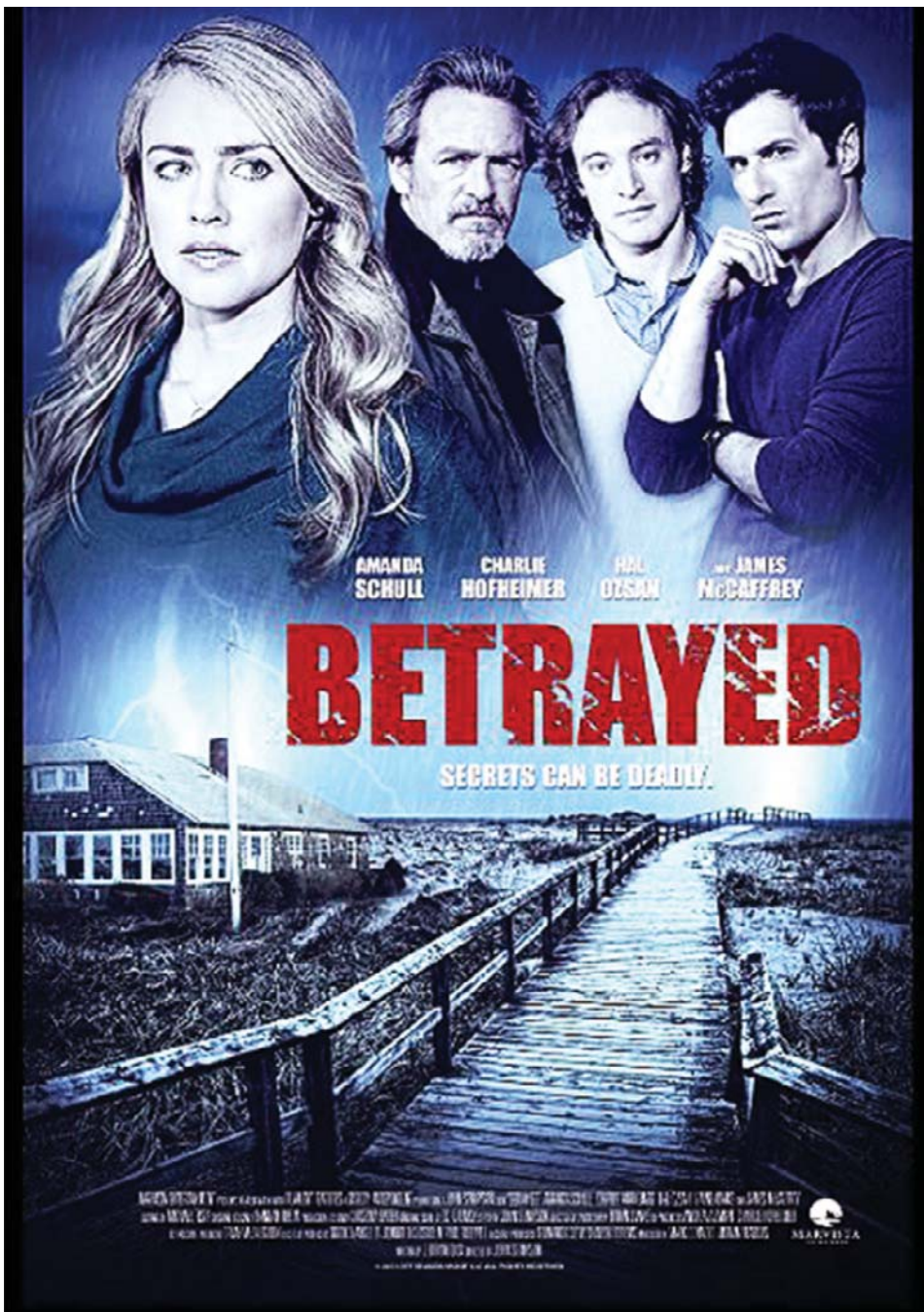
00:50 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
01:45 I'm Alive
02:40 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
03:35 Tanked
04:25 Animal Cops South Africa
05:15 Gator Boys
06:02 Treehouse Masters
06:49 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
07:36 Meet The Sloths
08:00 Meet The Sloths
08:25 America's Cutest Pets
09:15 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
10:10 Treehouse Masters
11:05 Tanked
12:00 America's Cutest Pets
12:55 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
13:50 Ten Deadliest Snakes With Nigel Marven
14:45 Gator Boys
15:40 Treehouse Masters
16:35 Tanked
17:30 Animal Cops South Africa
18:25 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
19:20 Big Fish Man
20:15 Tanked
21:10 Echo And The Elephants Of Amboseli
21:40 Echo And The Elephants Of



00:10 Eastenders
00:45 Holby City
01:40 Stella
02:30 Happy Valley
03:25 Doctors
03:55 Eastenders
04:25 Stella
05:10 Father Brown
06:00 Holby City
07:00 Stella
07:50 Eastenders
08:20 Doctors
08:55 Stella
09:40 Father Brown
10:30 Doctor Who
11:50 Doctor Who
12:40 Doctor Who
13:30 Holby City
14:25 Doctors
14:55 Eastenders
15:25 Death In Paradise
16:25 Death In Paradise
17:20 Death In Paradise
18:20 Doctors
18:50 Doctors
19:25 Father Brown
20:15 War And Peace
21:00 War And Peace
21:50 Luther
22:45 Stella
23:35 Doctors



00:00 With All Due Respect
01:00 Charlie Rose
02:00 First Up With Angie Lau
03:00 First Up With Angie Lau
04:00 Trending Business
05:00 Trending Business
06:00 Asia Edge
07:00 Bloomberg West
08:00 Charlie Rose
09:00 Countdown
10:00 Countdown



BETRAYED ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

00:50 Loopdidoo
 01:05 Art Attack
 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
 01:45 Calimero
 02:00 Zou
 02:15 Loopdidoo
 02:30 Art Attack
 02:55 Henry Hugglemonster
 03:05 Calimero
 03:20 Zou
 03:30 Loopdidoo
 03:45 Art Attack
 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
 04:20 Calimero
 04:35 Zou
 04:45 Loopdidoo
 05:00 Art Attack
 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
 05:35 Calimero
 05:50 Zou
 06:00 Loopdidoo
 06:15 Art Attack
 06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
 06:50 Calimero
 07:00 Zou
 07:20 Loopdidoo
 07:35 Art Attack
 08:00 Calimero
 08:10 Zou
 08:25 Loopdidoo
 08:40 Miles From Tomorrow
 09:05 Sofia The First
 09:30 Goldie & Bear
 09:45 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 10:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 10:35 Doc McStuffins
 11:00 Sofia The First
 11:30 Goldie & Bear
 12:00 Miles From Tomorrow
 12:25 Lion King 3: Hakuna Matata
 14:00 Sofia The First
 14:25 Goldie & Bear
 14:50 Doc McStuffins
 15:15 Zou
 15:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 15:55 Loopdidoo
 16:10 Miles From Tomorrow
 16:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 17:00 Sofia The First
 17:25 Jungle Cubs
 17:50 Aladdin
 18:15 Gummi Bears
 18:40 Goldie & Bear
 19:05 Miles From Tomorrow
 19:30 Sofia The First
 19:55 Doc McStuffins
 20:10 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 20:35 Miles From Tomorrow
 21:00 Goldie & Bear
 21:30 Sofia The First
 22:00 Jungle Cubs
 22:25 Aladdin
 22:50 Gummi Bears
 23:20 Lilo And Stitch
 23:50 Zou

Disney XD

00:00 Programmes Start At 7:00am
 KSA
 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 07:25 K.C. Undercover
 07:50 Supa Strikas
 08:15 Annedroids
 08:40 Lab Rats
 09:10 Kirby Buckets
 09:35 Guardians Of The Galaxy
 10:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
 10:25 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
 10:50 K.C. Undercover
 11:20 K.C. Undercover
 11:45 Supa Strikas
 12:10 Supa Strikas
 12:35 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
 13:00 Toy Story
 14:30 Phineas And Ferb
 14:45 Kickin' It
 15:10 Guardians Of The Galaxy
 15:15 Rocket Monkeys
 15:40 Guardians Of The Galaxy
 16:05 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 16:30 Kirby Buckets
 16:55 Gamers Guide To Pretty Much Everything
 17:25 K.C. Undercover
 17:50 Supa Strikas
 18:15 Lab Rats
 18:40 Mighty Med
 19:10 Annedroids
 19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 20:00 Kirby Buckets
 20:25 Toy Story
 21:55 Phineas And Ferb
 22:10 Mighty Med
 22:40 Super Matrak
 23:05 Super Matrak
 23:30 Boyster



FAST & FURIOUS 7 ON OSN MOVIES HD

EHD

00:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
 00:55 The Grace Helbig Show
 01:25 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 02:20 E! News
 03:15 Giuliana & Bill
 04:10 E! Entertainment Special
 05:05 E! Entertainment Special
 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 06:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 07:50 Style Star
 08:20 E! News
 09:15 Giuliana & Bill
 10:15 Giuliana & Bill
 11:10 The Grace Helbig Show
 11:35 The Grace Helbig Show
 12:05 E! News
 13:05 Stewarts And Hamiltons
 14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 15:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 16:00 Dash Dolls
 17:00 Dash Dolls
 18:00 E! News
 19:00 Christina Milian Turned Up
 20:00 WAGs
 21:00 WAGs
 22:00 E! News
 23:00 Botched

food network

00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 01:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
 01:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
 02:00 Tia Mowry At Home
 02:30 Tia Mowry At Home
 03:00 Man Fire Food
 03:30 Man Fire Food
 04:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 04:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 05:00 Iron Chef America
 06:00 Chopped
 07:00 Man Fire Food
 07:30 Man Fire Food
 08:00 Chopped
 09:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
 09:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
 10:00 The Kitchen
 11:00 Anna Olson: Bake
 11:30 Anna Olson: Bake
 12:00 Chopped
 13:00 The Pioneer Woman
 13:30 The Pioneer Woman
 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

HHD HISTORY

14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 15:00 Man Fire Food
 15:30 Man Fire Food
 16:00 Chopped
 17:00 The Kitchen
 18:00 Anna Olson: Bake
 18:30 Anna Olson: Bake
 19:00 Chopped
 20:00 Iron Chef America
 21:00 Follow Donal... To Europe
 21:30 Follow Donal... To Europe
 22:00 Australian Food Adventures With Matt Moran
 23:00 Man Finds Food
 23:30 Man Finds Food

HHD HISTORY

00:20 Pawn Stars
 00:45 Pawn Stars Australia
 01:10 Aussie Pickers
 02:00 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
 02:50 American Pickers
 03:40 Shipping Wars
 04:05 Shipping Wars
 04:30 Pawn Stars
 05:00 Hoard Hunters
 06:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
 06:50 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
 07:40 Hunting Hitler
 08:30 American Restoration
 08:55 Mountain Men
 09:45 Ax Men
 10:35 Swamp People
 11:25 American Restoration
 11:50 American Restoration
 12:15 Counting Cars
 12:40 Counting Cars
 13:05 American Pickers
 13:55 Hoard Hunters
 14:45 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
 15:35 Hunting Hitler
 16:25 Counting Cars
 16:50 Alone
 17:40 Down East Dickering
 18:30 Duck Dynasty
 18:55 Duck Dynasty
 19:20 Ax Men
 20:10 Swamp People
 21:00 Storage Wars: New York
 21:25 Storage Wars: New York
 21:50 Pawn Stars
 22:15 Pawn Stars Australia
 22:40 Hunting Hitler
 23:30 The Curse Of Oak Island

itv HD CHOICE

00:10 The Chase
 01:05 Emmerdale
 01:30 Eggheads
 02:00 Coronation Street

02:30 Big Star's Little Star
 03:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
 04:20 Seven Days With, Ä¶
 05:15 Come Dine With Me Couples
 06:10 Who's Doing The Dishes?
 07:00 Eggheads
 07:30 Grantchester
 08:25 Seven Days With, Ä¶
 09:20 Big Star's Little Star
 10:15 The Chase
 11:05 Eggheads
 11:35 Come Dine With Me Couples
 12:30 Who's Doing The Dishes?
 13:25 Emmerdale
 13:50 Emmerdale
 14:20 Coronation Street
 14:45 Big Star's Little Star
 15:35 The Jonathan Ross Show
 16:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
 17:25 Remember Me
 18:20 Emmerdale
 18:45 Emmerdale
 19:10 Coronation Street
 19:35 The Jonathan Ross Show
 20:30 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
 21:25 Remember Me
 22:20 Coronation Street
 22:50 Emmerdale
 23:15 Emmerdale
 23:40 Seven Days With, Ä¶

NAT GEO people HD

00:10 Eat Street
 00:35 Eat Street
 01:00 Confucius Was A Foodie
 01:50 Rustic Adventure Argentina
 02:15 Eat Street
 02:40 Eat Street
 03:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
 03:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
 03:55 Tales From The Bush Larder
 04:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 04:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 05:10 Eat Street
 05:35 Eat Street
 06:00 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
 06:25 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
 06:50 Confucius Was A Foodie
 07:40 Rustic Adventure Argentina
 08:05 Eat Street
 08:30 Eat Street
 08:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
 09:20 Tales From The Bush Larder
 09:45 Tales From The Bush Larder
 10:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 10:35 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 11:00 Eat Street
 11:25 Eat Street
 11:50 Tripping Out With Alie &

Georgia
 12:15 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
 Georgia
 12:40 Confucius Was A Foodie
 13:35 Rustic Adventure Argentina
 14:00 Eat Street
 14:30 Eat Street
 14:55 Cruise Ship Diaries
 15:25 Tales From The Bush Larder
 15:50 Tales From The Bush Larder
 16:20 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 16:45 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 17:15 Eat Street
 17:40 Eat Street
 18:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
 19:05 Cruise Ship Diaries
 19:30 Tales From The Bush Larder
 20:00 Tales From The Bush Larder
 20:25 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 20:50 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
 21:15 Eat Street
 21:40 Eat Street
 22:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
 22:55 Confucius Was A Foodie
 23:45 Rustic Adventure Argentina

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

00:30 Playing House
 01:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
 01:30 Web Therapy
 02:00 Curb Your Enthusiasm
 02:35 The League
 03:00 Your Family Or Mine
 03:30 Living With Fran
 04:00 Two And A Half Men
 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 05:30 My Name Is Earl
 06:00 The Bernie Mac Show
 06:30 Community
 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
 08:00 Two And A Half Men
 08:30 My Name Is Earl
 09:00 Your Family Or Mine
 09:30 Kevin From Work
 10:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
 10:30 Community
 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 12:00 The Bernie Mac Show
 12:30 Two And A Half Men
 13:00 My Name Is Earl
 13:30 Community
 14:00 Living With Fran

14:30 Kevin From Work
 15:00 I Hate My Teenage Daughter
 15:30 Playing House
 16:00 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
 16:30 The Bernie Mac Show
 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
 18:00 Fresh Off The Boat
 18:30 Black-ish
 19:00 Parks And Recreation
 19:30 The Simpsons
 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
 21:00 Playing House
 21:30 The Nightly Show With Larry Wilmore
 22:00 Community
 22:30 Curb Your Enthusiasm
 23:00 The League
 23:35 Late Night With Seth Meyers

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

00:00 The Town That Dreaded Sundown
 02:00 The Borderlands
 04:00 Dying Of The Light
 06:00 Biker Boyz
 08:00 Breakdown
 10:00 Dying Of The Light
 12:00 Betrayed
 14:00 X-Men Origins: Wolverine
 16:00 Breakdown
 18:00 Non-Stop
 20:00 X-Men: Days Of Future Past

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

00:00 Laggies
 01:45 The Devil Wears Prada
 03:45 Serial (Bad) Weddings
 05:30 Hook
 08:00 Down To Earth
 10:00 Serial (Bad) Weddings
 12:00 The Devil Wears Prada
 14:00 The Other Sister
 16:15 Down To Earth
 18:00 The Brass Teapot
 20:00 We'll Never Have Paris
 22:00 Neighbors

OSN MOVIES HD DRAMA

01:15 Belle
 03:00 The Railway Man
 05:00 The Fold
 07:00 Wrath
 09:00 Romeo & Juliet
 11:00 The Fold
 13:00 The Railway Man
 15:00 Hours
 17:00 Romeo & Juliet
 19:00 Two Night Stand
 21:00 The Trials Of Cate McCall
 23:00 Maps To The Stars

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

01:00 Medicine Man
 02:45 Gattaca
 04:45 Great Expectations
 07:00 Powder
 09:00 Paradise
 11:00 Great Expectations
 13:15 1911
 15:00 A Civil Action
 17:00 Paradise
 19:00 Thank You For Smoking
 21:00 Foxcatcher
 23:15 Donnie Brasco

OSN MOVIES HD

01:00 The Reluctant Fundamentalist
 03:15 The Hundred-Foot Journey
 05:30 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
 07:15 Parkland
 09:00 The Hundred-Foot Journey
 11:15 Knight Rusty
 12:45 Bears
 14:15 Draft Day
 16:15 Godzilla
 18:15 Transformers: Age Of Extinction
 21:00 Fast & Furious 7
 23:15 Kingsman: The Secret Service



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your shrewd judgment of character may find you working in a human resources office these days. Your input is imperative when a pleasant atmosphere is an important part of your work environment. Of course, any job that is part of the service industry is a positive for you. Your heart is as big as all outdoors-not only for those close to you emotionally, but for the general public as well. This could mean that someone you see in a shop or on a bus needs help. You will probably go that extra mile to volunteer your services. Others want to show their appreciation for your presence in their life-there are plenty of celebrations. A busy day can bring on some need to relax-let others serve you this evening-celebrate.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You can demonstrate much sensitivity to the needs of others. You will be wise to just listen and delay commenting about your thoughts for now-you will find some interesting discoveries. This is not a good time to emphasize an educated vocabulary to others, but it is a good time to involve yourself in whatever work is present. This is a great time for imagination and creativity when it comes to ideas and thinking. Advertising and teaching are excellent professions for you to consider. This evening, family, home, relatives and real estate play a big part in your life. You want to belong on a private, intimate and personal level. Although most of the day seems stressful, the progress you make is rewarded. This is a good day.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There are little frustrations today and time passes quickly. This can be one of your better days for business-you will find many accomplishments. Interest in religion or mysticism is great and you may find yourself advising someone during the time you take your noon break. You may be of tremendous help to a stranger or an associate today because of your compassion. You may find yourself feeling blocked and unable to express yourself-particularly in a group situation. Keep your arguments to yourself. If you are feeling blocked, it could be because you are missing some information. If the weather permits, get outside today and take a walk. Your romantic life may reflect some stress today; however, this is of short duration.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Others are encouraged by your independence and unique qualities. This is a time when you may be busy thinking and working at pulling in extra finances. You are learning how to balance your finances and keep within a budget. You will be able to purchase the larger items soon, but not just yet. Be sure to set aside some money each payday for savings. A hobby or part-time job may be just what you have been looking for lately. The best part-time job would be in a place where you can enjoy your favorite hobby. Perhaps you are in fashion and can work for a photographer in the evenings and on weekends. Tonight is a good night to enjoy your friends. Energetic techno or salsa music is a surefire way to spend some of that extra zeal.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is a time today when you will be able to clean up all those pesky little jobs that have been nagging at you for so long. Cooperation and flexibility are the tools needed today. Learning new methods or technologies will likely increase your value on the job. This marks a time when you could easily become carried away or even deluded with respect to your own goals and ambitions. You may enjoy a good movie or book or feel like escaping from day-to-day realities for a while. If you are feeling rather romantic and have no date or mate just now-you will find that because of your interest in reading motivating and insightful books, you will automatically have great conversation material. You may find yourself looking for that special person this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Today you have an opportunity to show off your ability to put people, ideas and things together profitably. Playing the role of a facilitator can be rewarding. Knowing things without knowing how you know them is typical of your talents. The mystical, the universal, the eternal-these are the things that stir your curiosity. You may be in control over yourself or a group of people-you show a quality of organization that puts you at the head of the class. You do your work so well that you seem magical when in actuality; you simply know the symptoms of pending disarray and can head off any problems with finesse. Guiding and teaching others is where your mind and energies are easily motivated. Continue to lead others, you do it very well.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your heart is as big as all outdoors, not only for those close to you emotionally, but for the general public as well. This is a good day to work in groups, deal with the public or work in public relations. You have a natural sense of what the public wants. Clear decisions affecting others could be made now. You have good practical job-related ideas, especially when it comes to organizational meetings. The ability to communicate with superiors or describe what you see will help you to be a mediator between companies or disputes. Your perception of a dream relationship may not fit the relationship you are in just now. If you are looking to change the relationship in some way . . . Give thought to changing your perception instead.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You teach freedom and attitude adjustment to those around you in pain or in trouble. You should not hesitate to engage in new ideas or undertake original projects now-just as long as all the facts are known. There is a lot of passion today, petitioning you to strive to accomplish whatever you set out to do. To satisfy emotional needs, keep a powerful flow of enthusiasm between both giving and receiving love and support. One-way risks rarely provide satisfaction. Today could be a challenging day, so make a concentrated effort to pace your activities and enjoy to the maximum any outside adventures. Breathe in deeply and smile! You will probably be happy to know that your love relationship is on a very steep upward and positive move.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Ideas are always on your mind and working with people to advance the company or make a job better is part of this day. If you have your own business and are looking for a business partner, choose one that has the right amount of humor. Too serious a partner can make for troubled times. A disagreement with a friend this afternoon may have you puzzled. Make sure you are looking at the whole picture and that the responsibility does not rest on one shoulder. Money comes into play today when another person has none and you have some. If you have paid this person's way before, don't do it now. If you have never helped this person, trust that the favor will be returned. Don't be afraid to move forward. Make all your activities come into balance.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may feel it necessary to contact an authority figure before your workday begins. This may slow your progress, but also add a bit of excitement to your day. You put lots of passion into your work and your progress is successful. You create your own circumstances and conditions these days without much input from others. Determined to reach your personal goals, you will proceed in your activities with determination. Consider your health and concentrate on creating a balance. You cannot become expressive very readily unless you are also receptive. Intense work or concentration with little time for relaxation breaks, plus a bit of exercise, may keep you away from fun conversations with others. There will be time to socialize soon.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Sudden loss in business may occur today but it is not a fault of yours. However, you may increase finances through unexpected avenues. Either way, you should not let finances rule your life. Your mind could be quite clear and natural just now. Ideas are flowing and could come with ease. You can talk, quite a lot. Basically, you have a warm, enthusiastic, loyal and expressive nature that gives generously to those you feel would appreciate you. Children and leadership roles that express your creativity can bring you great satisfaction now. You may enjoy a good movie or book or feel like escaping from day-to-day realities for a while. You can appreciate an imaginative approach and may value collective or advanced ideas.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

It becomes clear that authority figures are in favor of what you are trying to accomplish today. It may be that it is time to change some methods or techniques and the higher-ups in your company are looking for teachers. This may lead to a good part-time job that will allow you to make extra money and would pay for some of the lovely things that you have had your eye on lately. On another note, you can express your wit and enjoy socializing with your friends this afternoon. An old issue has resurfaced at home and this just may be the right time to make things right again. Work to resolve old problems. Tonight it is your turn to cook and it is a great way to show your earnest determination to create happy times in your home; enjoy!

COUNTRY CODES

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

DRUG RESISTANCE ADDS TO INDIA'S TUBERCULOSIS MENACE

SONIPAT: After three years of battling tuberculosis, a disease that claimed the lives of his father and younger brother, Sonu Verma, a patient in northern India, hopes a cure for his illness may be within reach. "Only a few more months and my nightmare will end... it will be my rebirth, free from tuberculosis," the 25-year-old scrap dealer, who has been left visibly lean and weak by the disease said. As India marks World TB Day on Thursday, it faces an estimated 2.2 million new cases of the disease a year, more than any other country, according to the World Health Organization.

The government says it is stepping up its fight, with Health Minister JP Nadda earlier this week

launching a new drug to help beat the growing menace of drug-resistant tuberculosis. Treating TB successfully requires patients to follow a strict, months-long drugs regimen or risk their disease becoming drug-resistant. But factors such as inadequate medical facilities, lack of knowledge, poverty and social stigma mean drug resistance is a growing problem.

Verma, who lives in the district of Sonipat in Haryana state, was told he had TB in 2013. A year later he was found to have multi-drug-resistant TB, after failing to complete his initial course of treatment because of a shortage of money and poor medical advice. "It was the worst time of my life,"



SONIPAT: Indian tuberculosis (TB) patient Sonu Verma (right), 25, sits with his wife and child at his home in Sonipat. Some 2.2 million patients are diagnosed with the disease in India every year, more than in any other country, according to the World Health Organization. — AFP



SONIPAT: Indian tuberculosis (TB) patient Sonu Verma, 25, poses with his chest x-ray in Sonipat. — AFP

Verma said. "I was always tired, I couldn't eat, couldn't work and couldn't even be close to my family." Verma was tracked and counseled by volunteers from Axshya, a civil society project backed by the Indian government that works to ensure that TB patients complete their treatment.

Now he is taking a new drug and doctors say his prospects are

good. Despite the efforts of the national TB program, hundreds of thousands of cases go undiagnosed each year, Dr Sarabjit Chadha, project director of Axshya said. "There are a significant number of cases who are still not coming for diagnosis and treatment," he added. Kushminder Balhara, a local medical practitioner who has been practicing in Sonipat for

almost 15 years, said attitudes towards the disease were slowly changing. "Earlier, people used to be reluctant to say that they wanted to get tested for TB because of the social stigma," Balhara said. "Now, knowing some of the TB symptoms, I refer at least two to three suspected TB cases to government facilities every month." — AFP

CLINIC PAGE



Kuwait Times



Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (24/03/2016 TO 30/03/2016)

Category	Movie	Time	Category	Movie	Time				
SHARQIA-1	KUNG FU PANDA 3	1:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:15 PM	AL-KOUT.2				
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	3:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:15 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:45 PM		
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	5:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:15 PM		KUNG FU PANDA 3	1:45 PM		
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	7:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 AM		KUNG FU PANDA 3	3:45 PM		
	THE INVITATION	9:00 PM	MARINA-3	KUNG FU PANDA 3		12:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	5:45 PM	
	THE INVITATION	11:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		2:15 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	7:45 PM	
	THE INVITATION	1:00 AM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		5:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM	
SHARQIA-2	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:45 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	8:15 PM	TRIPLE 9	1:00 AM			
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	2:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:15 PM	AL-KOUT.3				
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	5:45 PM	AVENUES-1	KUNG FU PANDA 3		11:30 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	8:45 PM		KUNG FU PANDA 3		1:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:15 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:45 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		1:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:15 PM	
SHARQIA-3	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	1:45 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		4:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:15 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:45 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 AM		
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:30 PM	AL-KOUT.4				
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	1:30 AM		THE INVITATION	12:00 PM		
	MUHALAB-1	THE INVITATION	12:00 PM	THU+FRI+SAT+WED			THE INVITATION	2:00 PM	
KUNG FU PANDA 3		2:00 PM	AVENUES-2	LONDON HAS FALLEN		1:00 PM	THE INVITATION	4:00 PM	
KUNG FU PANDA 3		4:00 PM		LONDON HAS FALLEN		3:15 PM	THE INVITATION	6:00 PM	
KUNG FU PANDA 3		6:00 PM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	5:30 PM	THE INVITATION	8:00 PM		
KUNG FU PANDA 3		8:00 PM		LONDON HAS FALLEN	7:45 PM	THE INVITATION	10:15 PM		
THE INVITATION	10:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		10:00 PM	THE INVITATION	12:30 AM			
THE INVITATION	12:05 AM	THU+FRI+SAT+WED		BAIRAQ-1					
MUHALAB-2	ZOOTOPIA	11:30 AM	LONDON HAS FALLEN		12:15 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	1:15 PM		
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	2:00 PM	SUN+MON+TUE			KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D	2:00 PM		
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	5:00 PM	AVENUES-3		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	4:15 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	8:00 PM			BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	7:15 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM		
MUHALAB-3	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:00 PM	BAIRAQ-2			
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:15 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM		KUNG FU PANDA 3	12:30 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:15 PM	BAIRAQ-3 Seats-121	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE -3D			KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:30 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:15 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE -3D	2:00 PM		KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:30 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 AM		FRI			KUNG FU PANDA 3	6:30 PM	
FANAR-1	THE INVITATION	12:45 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE -3D	4:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	8:45 PM		
	THE INVITATION	2:45 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE -3D	7:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	11:15 PM		
	THE INVITATION	4:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE -3D	10:00 PM	BAIRAQ-3				
	THE INVITATION	6:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE -3D	1:00 AM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:00 PM		
	THE INVITATION	8:45 PM	THU+FRI+SAT			BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM		
THE INVITATION	10:45 PM	TRIPLE 9	1:00 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE		6:00 PM			
THE INVITATION	12:45 AM	NO THU+FRI+SAT		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE		9:00 PM			
FANAR-2	KUNG FU PANDA 3	1:00 PM	360°-2	THE HALLOW	11:45 AM	BAIRAQ-3			
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	3:00 PM		THE HALLOW	2:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:00 PM	
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	5:00 PM		THE HALLOW	4:15 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM	
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	7:00 PM		THE HALLOW	6:30 PM		ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi	6:00 PM	
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	9:00 PM		THE HALLOW	8:45 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	9:00 PM	
LONDON HAS FALLEN	11:00 PM	THE HALLOW	11:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM				
LONDON HAS FALLEN	1:00 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	1:15 AM	PLAZA					
FANAR-3	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:00 PM	THU+FRI+SAT			BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:00 PM		
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM	TRIPLE 9		1:00 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:00 PM		
	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi	6:00 PM	NO THU+FRI+SAT			BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM		
	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi	9:00 PM	360°-3		THE INVITATION	1:00 PM	LAILA		
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM		THE INVITATION	3:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		3:45 PM	
MARINA-1	TRIPLE 9	11:45 AM		THE INVITATION	5:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		6:45 PM	
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:00 PM		THE INVITATION	7:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		9:45 PM	
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:00 PM		THE INVITATION	10:00 PM	AJIAL.1			
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	6:00 PM	THE INVITATION	12:15 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		4:00 PM		
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	8:00 PM	AL-KOUT.1	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:30 AM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:00 PM	
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		2:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		10:00 PM		
TRIPLE 9	1:00 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		5:30 PM	AJIAL.2				
MARINA-2	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		8:30 PM	MAHESHINTE PRATHIKAARAM-Malayalam	3:45 PM	
	SHARQIA-1	KUNG FU PANDA 3		1:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:30 PM	MAHESHINTE PRATHIKAARAM-Malayalam	6:45 PM
		KUNG FU PANDA 3	3:00 PM	AVENUES-1		THE INVITATION	1:00 PM	MAHESHINTE PRATHIKAARAM-Malayalam	9:45 PM
		KUNG FU PANDA 3	5:00 PM			THE INVITATION	3:15 PM	OOPIRI -Telugu	3:45 PM
		KUNG FU PANDA 3	7:00 PM		THE INVITATION	5:30 PM	OOPIRI -Telugu	6:45 PM	
KUNG FU PANDA 3		9:00 PM	THE INVITATION		7:45 PM	OOPIRI -Telugu	9:45 PM		
KUNG FU PANDA 3	11:00 PM	THE INVITATION	10:00 PM		AJIAL.3				
LONDON HAS FALLEN	1:00 AM	THE INVITATION	12:15 AM	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi		4:45 PM			
SHARQIA-2	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:45 AM	AL-KOUT.2	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi		7:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:45 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	2:45 PM		ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi		9:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	1:45 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	5:45 PM		AL-KOUT.3		AJIAL.4	THOZHA-Tamil	3:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	8:45 PM			THOZHA-Tamil		6:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	5:45 PM
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:45 PM			THOZHA-Tamil		9:30 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	7:45 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	1:00 AM	AL-KOUT.4	BAIRAQ-1		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D		1:15 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	9:15 PM
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:45 PM				BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE		10:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	4:15 PM
MUHALAB-1	THE INVITATION			12:00 PM	BAIRAQ-2	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	7:15 PM
	KUNG FU PANDA 3			2:00 PM		KUNG FU PANDA 3	12:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM
	KUNG FU PANDA 3			4:00 PM		KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:30 PM	BAIRAQ-3	
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	6:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:30 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:00 PM		
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	8:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	6:30 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM		
THE INVITATION	10:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	8:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	6:00 PM				
THE INVITATION	12:05 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	11:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	9:00 PM				
MUHALAB-2	ZOOTOPIA	11:30 AM	BAIRAQ-3 Seats-121	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM		
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	2:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM		
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	5:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi	6:00 PM		
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	8:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	6:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	9:00 PM		
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	11:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM		
MUHALAB-3	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 PM	PLAZA	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:00 PM	LAILA			
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:15 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:45 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:15 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:45 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:15 PM		BAIRAQ-1	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		10:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:45 PM
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 AM			BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D		1:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:00 PM
FANAR-1	THE INVITATION	12:45 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3 -3D		2:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	3:00 PM		
	THE INVITATION	2:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D		4:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	6:00 PM		
	THE INVITATION	4:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D		7:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	9:00 PM		
	THE INVITATION	6:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM			
	THE INVITATION	8:45 PM	BAIRAQ-2	PLAZA	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:00 PM	
THE INVITATION	10:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE			7:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:00 PM		
THE INVITATION	12:45 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE			10:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM		
FANAR-2	KUNG FU PANDA 3	1:00 PM			LAILA	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	3:00 PM				BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	3:45 PM
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	5:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:45 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	6:45 PM		
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	7:00 PM	AJIAL.1	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		12:05 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	9:45 PM	
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	9:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		4:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:00 PM	
KUNG FU PANDA 3	11:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		7:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:00 PM			
LONDON HAS FALLEN	1:00 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		10:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM			
LONDON HAS FALLEN	1:00 AM	AJIAL.2		AJIAL.3	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi	4:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM	
FANAR-3	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		12:00 PM		ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi	7:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:00 PM	
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE		3:00 PM		ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi	9:45 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:00 PM	
	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi		6:00 PM		AJIAL.4	THOZHA-Tamil	3:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM
	ROCKY HANDSOME- Hindi		9:00 PM			THOZHA-Tamil	6:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:00 PM
	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:05 AM	THOZHA-Tamil	9:30 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM		
MARINA-1	TRIPLE 9	11:45 AM	BAIRAQ-1	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D		1:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	4:00 PM	
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:00 PM		BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE		10:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	7:00 PM	
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:00 PM		KUNG FU PANDA 3	12:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM		
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	6:00 PM		KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM		
	KUNG FU PANDA 3	8:00 PM		KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM		
BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	10:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	4:15 PM				
TRIPLE 9	1:00 AM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	7:15 PM				
MARINA-2	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: DAWN OF JUSTICE	12:15 PM	BAIRAQ-2	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE -3D	10:15 PM		
	SHARQIA-1	KUNG FU PANDA 3		1:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	12:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM	
		KUNG FU PANDA 3		3:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	2:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM	
		KUNG FU PANDA 3		5:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	4:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM	
		KUNG FU PANDA 3		7:00 PM	KUNG FU PANDA 3	6:30 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM	
KUNG FU PANDA 3		9:00 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	11:15 PM	BATMAN V SUPERMAN: AWN OF JUSTICE	10:15 PM			

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Sathyanarayana Kandragula Karuna Vikas, holder of Indian Passport No. G1500671, Jakkamvari street, Roypeta Narsapur, West Godavari Dt., A.P - 534275, 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**

Prayer timings

Fajr:	04:27
Shorook	05:47
Duhr:	11:54
Asr:	15:23
Maghrib:	18:02
Isha:	19:19

ACCOMMODATION

Furnished central A/C room available for an executive bachelor near Shara Amman roundabout Salmiya with all facilities. 2 bathrooms, neat and clean, calm and quiet area with Keralite Christian family from May 1st. Contact: 66418746.

Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2016

RUSSIA'S RISING OIL EXPORTS EXPOSE HOLES IN OUTPUT DEAL

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More Americans seek jobless aid

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KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait General Assembly Meeting is chaired by the company's Chairman, Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani. General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al-Thani, board members and shareholders attended the meeting. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

OOREDOO MARKET SHARE REACHES 30% IN 2015 CUSTOMER BASE REACHED 2.3 MILLION • 93.24% OF SHAREHOLDERS ATTEND AGM

KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait, a member of the international Ooredoo Group, has presented its achievements and financial results for 2015 during its annual general meeting which was held at the company's headquarters in Kuwait City. The meeting was led by the company's Chairman, Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani, board members and General Manager and CEO, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al-Thani and witnessed an attendance of 93.24 percent of the shareholders.

During his speech, Ooredoo Chairman, Sheikh Saud bin Nasser Al-Thani, said: "2015 financial results and major achievements demonstrates Ooredoo's leading position and its efforts to offer its customers the latest in the world of telecoms. In Kuwait, Ooredoo was the first telecom operator to launch 4G+ during 2015, and we now have the largest retail network in the country. We delivered 39 percent increase in EBITDA and 18 percent increase in net profit. Our objective for the coming period is to launch the 5G technology and offer voice services over LTE VoLTE technology.

We are also confident that the coming years will witness a qualitative leap, and we will continue to meet the needs of our customers"

Ooredoo Kuwait's General Manager and CEO, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulla Al-Thani, said: "Proud of what was achieved in 2015 on so many levels. Telecom is one of the most rapidly growing sectors which witnessed huge changes in the last few years and will still do in the near future given the current competition. Last year we were able to achieve a 30 percent market share, customer base reached 2.3 million customers. Revenues reached a total of KD188.1 million, an increase of up to 11.9 percent compared to 2014".

Review of operations

The Group's operational performance can be summarized as follows:

Ooredoo - Kuwait

Ooredoo's customer base in Kuwait was 2.3 million at the end of 2015, a decrease of 9.8 percent on the same period in 2014. Revenues for

2015 were KD 188.1 million (\$619.8 million), an increase of 11.9 percent compared to 2014 of KD 168.0 million (\$573.3 million). EBITDA in 2015 was KD 51.3 million (\$169.1 million) versus EBITDA of KD 37.0 million (\$126.4 million) for 2014, an increase of 38.6 percent. Net profit in 2015 was at KD 17.8 million (\$58.8 million), compared to KD 14.9 million (\$50.9 million) in 2014.

Ooredoo - Tunisia

Ooredoo's Tunisia customer base at the end of 2015 was 7.5 million customers, a decrease of 0.8 percent on 2014. During 2015, the Tunisian dinar depreciated by 9 percent compared to 2014, which has significantly impacted the results shown in Kuwait dinar. Revenues for 2015 were KD 149.0 million (\$490.9 million), compared to revenues of KD 178.7 million (\$609.8 million) in 2014. EBITDA was KD 61.6 million (\$203.0 million) compared to KD 83.7 million (\$285.7 million) for last year representing a decrease of 26.4 percent. The net profit in 2015 was KD 12.1 million (\$39.9 million), a decrease of 48.2 percent compared with KD 23.3 million (\$79.6 million) in 2014. The net attributable profit to Ooredoo in 2015 was KD 9.1 million (\$29.9 million), compared to KD17.5 million (\$59.7 million) in 2014.

Ooredoo - Algeria

Ooredoo's customer base in Algeria was 13.0 million customers at the end of 2015, an increase of 6.6 percent on 2014. During the twelve months to 31 December 2015, the Algerian Dinar depreciated by 18 percent compared to 2014, which has significantly impacted the results shown in dinar. Revenues for 2015 were KD 332.5 million (\$1095.5 million), a decrease of 8.0 percent compared with revenues of KD 361.3 million (\$1,232.8 million) in 2014. EBITDA in 2015 was KD 121.8 million (\$401.3 million), an increase of 5.8 percent on KD 115.1 mil-

lion (\$392.9 million) for 2014. Total net profit for 2015 was KD 20.4 million (\$67.2 million) compared to a total net profit of KD 17.1 million (\$58.2 million) in 2014. The Net attributable profit to Ooredoo for 2015 was KD 14.5 million (\$47.7 million) compared to a net attributable profit of KD 12.1 million (\$41.3 million) for 2014. Excluding the losses caused by depreciation of DZD, the attributable net profit to Ooredoo would be KD 22.4 million (\$73.9 million) compared with KD 19.2 (\$65.4 million) in 2014.

Wataniya - Palestine

The total customer base for Wataniya Mobile Palestine at the end of 2015 was 0.7 million, an increase of 13.0 percent from the previous year. Revenues increased by 3.2 percent to KD 25.1 million (\$82.5 million), compared with 2014 revenues of KD 24.3 million (\$82.8 million). EBITDA for 2015 was KD 6.5 million (\$21.4 million) an increase of 76.9 percent, compared to an EBITDA of KD 3.7 million (\$12.5 million) in 2014. The total net loss for 2015 was KD 1.5 million (\$5.0 million) compared to a total net loss of KD 4.7 million (\$16.1 million). The net attributable loss for the year 2015 stood at KD 0.7 million (\$2.4 million) compared to a net attributable loss of KD 2.3 million (\$7.8 million) in 2014.

Ooredoo - maldives

Maldives total customer base at the end of 2015 was 0.3 million, an increase of 17.1 percent from the previous year. Revenues for 2015 were KD 23.8 million (\$78.4 million), an increase of 47.4 percent, compared to KD 16.2 million (\$55.1 million) for 2014. EBITDA increased by 104.9 percent in 2015 to KD 11.0 million (\$36.1 million), compared to an EBITDA of KD 5.3 million (\$18.2 million) in 2014. Net Attributable profit for 2015 was KD 5.1 million (\$16.7 million) compared to the net attributable profit of KD 1.3 million (\$4.4 million) in 2014.



KUWAIT: Ooredoo Kuwait General Assembly Meeting in progress.

OMAN OIL IN TALKS WITH BANKS ON \$1BN LOAN

DUBAI/MUSCAT: State-owned Oman Oil Co, the national petroleum investment company, is seeking a \$1 billion loan from banks for a subsidiary, chief executive Issam al-Zadjali told Reuters yesterday.

Banks in Oman have also been active in the loan market in the past few months, potentially a sign that liquidity is becoming tighter due to low oil prices. The oil industry contributes around 44

percent to Oman's economy, according to government estimates. Oman Oil would use the funds mainly to finance one of its subsidiaries, Oman Oil Company Exploration and Production, including for the development of the country's Khazzan natural gas field, he said. The company last month signed an agreement with Britain's BP to develop the second phase of Khazzan, taking the

estimated investment in the project to \$16 billion.

Oman Oil was talking to both local and international banks about the loan, Al-Zadjali said. He said the term of the loan was not yet decided.

Sources familiar with the matter said the loan talks were at an early stage. Oman Oil was last in the market for a \$1.85 billion two-part loan, signed in September 2014.

Last month, the CEO said the company would restructure to support expansion and improve efficiency. Reuters reported earlier this week that Bank Muscat was speaking to a small group of banks about raising a loan, expected to be in the range of \$250 million and \$300 million. In January, Oman's Bank Dhofar raised a \$250 million three-year loan to be used for general funding. — Reuters

News

In Brief

KUWAIT FEBRUARY INFLATION FALLS TO 3.1%

KUWAIT: Kuwait's statistics office reported the following February consumer price data yesterday with the inflation falling to 3.1 percent. Prices of food and beverages, which account for more than 18 percent of the basket, rose 4.8 percent from a year earlier. Housing costs, which account for nearly 29 percent of consumer expenses, climbed 6.0 percent.

US dollar firm against Kuwaiti dinar

KUWAIT: The US dollar steadied against the Kuwaiti dinar yesterday trading at KD 0.301 as well as the euro, KD 0.337, compared to Wednesday's rates. The Central Bank of Kuwait said the sterling pound dropped to KD 0.425, the Swiss franc firmed at KD 0.309 as well as the Japanese yen, at KD 0.002.

ACICO earns more than KD8 million

KUWAIT: ACICO Industries (Holding Company) earned KD 8.38 million in net profit (30.6 fils per share) in the 2015 fiscal year, against KD 8.33 million earnings (30.5 fps) in 2014, it said in a statement yesterday. The board recommended distribution of cash dividends at 15 percent or five percent as granted stakes to the shareholders for the 2015 fiscal year. Shareholders' equity reached KD 104.1 million in end of 2015, compared to KD 90.7 million in end of 2014. Overall assets reached approximately KD 371.1 million and liabilities KD 260.3 million in 2015. ACICO was established in 1990. It was enlisted in the Kuwait bourse, with a KD 27.4 million, in 1997. It specializes in production of construction materials.

CBQ shareholders OK bond programs

DUBAI: Shareholders of Commercial Bank of Qatar have approved the issuance of up to \$1.5 billion in bonds under a euro medium-term note program, the country's third-largest bank by assets said yesterday. The bonds, which are to be listed in global markets and have a maximum maturity of 30 years, could be issued in currencies including the dollar, yen and Swiss franc, the bourse statement said. Shareholders at the bank's annual general meeting also approved the launch of a global medium-term notes program to allow for the issuance of bonds to US investors worth up to \$2 billion or its equivalent in Qatari riyals, with a maximum maturity of 30 years. The shareholders also agreed to the bank issuing up to 2 billion riyals of bonds to boost the bank's core, Tier 1 capital. The bank this month raised 2 billion riyals (\$549.3 million) in additional Tier 1 perpetual capital notes.

Kuwait Industries Co earns KD 25.4 million

KUWAIT: Kuwait Industries Company Holding earned KD 25.4 million in net profits (19.2 fils per share) in the 2015 fiscal year, compared to KD 28.2 million (21.3 fps) in 2014, the company said in a statement published yesterday. The board recommended distribution of cash dividends at a 10 percent rate to the shareholders for the 2015 fiscal year. Shareholders' equity amounted to KD 384 million in end of 2015, compared to KD 440.3 million in end of 2014. Assets amounted to approximately KD 1.299 billion, liabilities KD 786.4 million, in 2015.



SINGAPORE: People walk out for their lunch break at the Raffles Place financial district in Singapore yesterday. Singapore's finance minister Heng Swee Keat delivered his first Budget statement in Parliament yesterday. — AFP

RUSSIA'S RISING OIL EXPORTS EXPOSE HOLES IN OUTPUT DEAL

ENERGY MINISTER SAYS DEAL COVERS OUTPUT, NOT EXPORTS

MOSCOW: Russia will export more oil to Europe in April than it has in any month since 2013 - despite Moscow's plan to sign a global agreement on freezing production in a bid to lift the price of crude.

The fact Russian exports are rising illustrates how hard it will be to enforce the deal, due to be finalised on April 17 in Qatar, and shows the potential for countries to use loopholes to keep exporting crude, blunting the intended impact on prices. Russia can raise exports while keeping production flat by re-routing some oil away from refineries and into exports.

Moscow says the freeze covers production, not sales abroad. The International Energy Agency said on Wednesday the deal may be meaningless. Iran and Libya have said they will not participate, at least for now, and they plan to raise production.

Nigeria, the top oil producer in Africa, has said it expects oil exporters to agree a supply freeze in Doha next month but that it plans to boost its own output.

The increase in Russian exports is mainly because of planned maintenance at refineries that reduced their capacity to process crude. It also reflects Russia's economic slump, which has reduced domestic demand for refined products.

But another factor, according to one trader, is a desire by Russian producers to protect their share of the crude oil market in Europe,

where Russia's traditional dominance is under threat from newly arriving Saudi supplies. "Of course, no one said those markets belong to Mother Russia. This is purely commercial trade," said the trader, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he is not authorised to talk to the media. "But a marketplace is a marketplace, no one is going to give it up."

EXPORTS NOT INCLUDED

Reports that members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries as well as non-OPEC producers were discussing an output freeze have helped lift world oil prices from glut-induced 12-year lows hit in January. Asked what would be covered by the agreement, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak told reporters: "The discussion is only about freezing production. And not exports."

The high level of Russian oil exports next month was confirmed to Reuters on Wednesday by export pipeline monopoly Transneft. According to the company, Russia is set to export 7 million tons from Baltic Sea ports in April, the largest volume since October 2013. That marks a 9 percent increase on the 6.41 million tons planned for export in March.

IDLE REFINERIES

According to Reuters calculations based

on Energy Ministry data, Russia will have as much as 4.3 million tons of idle refining capacity next month, more than twice the 1.9 million tons unused in March. Russian refineries traditionally have the largest offline capacity in April, as companies scramble to finish maintenance before consumption of oil products peaks in summer. This forces producers to divert crude towards exports, because there is nowhere to store the oil that otherwise would have gone to refineries.

When refineries come back on line, the glut in exports could end. However, not all of the offline capacity is down to maintenance. Some is simply idle because the economics of the oil industry make it more lucrative to export instead. Oil traders' profit from selling at home and abroad varies depending on demand. According to Reuters calculations, a trader would last month have sold crude with a premium of around 500 roubles (\$7.3) per ton for export compared to a domestic sale.

Russia could, in theory, export even more crude, but that would be limited by infrastructure constraints. There is almost no spare capacity at the Black Sea port of Novorossiisk, while the Druzhba pipeline, which connects Russia to the northeast corner of the European Union, may take an additional 200,000-400,000 tons only, traders say. — Reuters

VIETNAM INFLATION UP SHARPLY IN Q1

HANOI: Vietnam's inflation rate rose sharply in the first quarter of 2016 according to official figures released yesterday, a turnaround for the communist country which saw inflation dwindle to zero last year. Year-on-year consumer price inflation was 1.25 percent in the first quarter, the General Statistics Office (GSO) said in a statement posted on its website, a sharp increase compared to the same period in 2015.

For the month of March, consumer prices rose 1.69 percent compared to

2015, the GSO added. For decades, Vietnam has suffered from runaway inflation—with triple digit increases in the 1980s and rates as high as 28.3 percent as recently as August 2008.

Taming inflation has been a key priority for the Vietnamese government, which has repeatedly increased official interest rates in an effort to prevent the economy overheating. But as inflation slowed sharply in 2014 and 2015, the government for the first time expressed con-

cerned about deflation—a broader trend affecting the region.

During the first three months of 2016, the highest consumer price increases were in the health sector (up 11.88 percent) and in education (up 3.63 percent), the GSO said. "It is not a good sign because this trend shows the weaknesses of an economy whose development is not stable," economist Bui Kien Thanh told AFP. Experts believe that inflation could exceed the official target of five percent

this year, after hitting a record low of 0.63 percent in 2015, the lowest for 14 years.

Vietnam's economy in 2015 grew at its fastest pace in five years, thanks to strong exports and record foreign investment, bucking the woeful regional economic trend. The communist nation recorded a GDP growth rate of 6.68 percent, easily surpassing the government's 6.2 percent target. Official figures for GDP growth for the first quarter of 2016 are expected in the coming days. — AFP

DOLLAR HEADING FOR 5TH DAY OF GAINS, BEST RUN SINCE APRIL

LONDON: The dollar was on its best run in almost a year yesterday, pressuring commodities and shares after yet another Federal Reserve official talked up the chance of more than one hike in US interest rates this year. If the dollar can keep its footing going into the long Easter weekend it will notch up a near 2 percent gain, and the first weekly rise in a month against the world's other major currencies.

The hot streak extended after St. Louis Fed President James Bullard joined a chorus of officials in highlighting the chance of at least two rate rises this year, with the first perhaps as soon as April.

Markets now imply only one increase and dealers suspect an orchestrated attempt by the Fed to shift that thinking. Equity investors tend to dislike any hint of tighter US policy and European shares were down over 1 percent, their biggest tumble in over a week, as they faced a fourth straight session in the red. Wall Street was also looking at a difficult start as oil slipped back under \$40 a barrel and rekindled jitters about emerging market producer countries and firms.

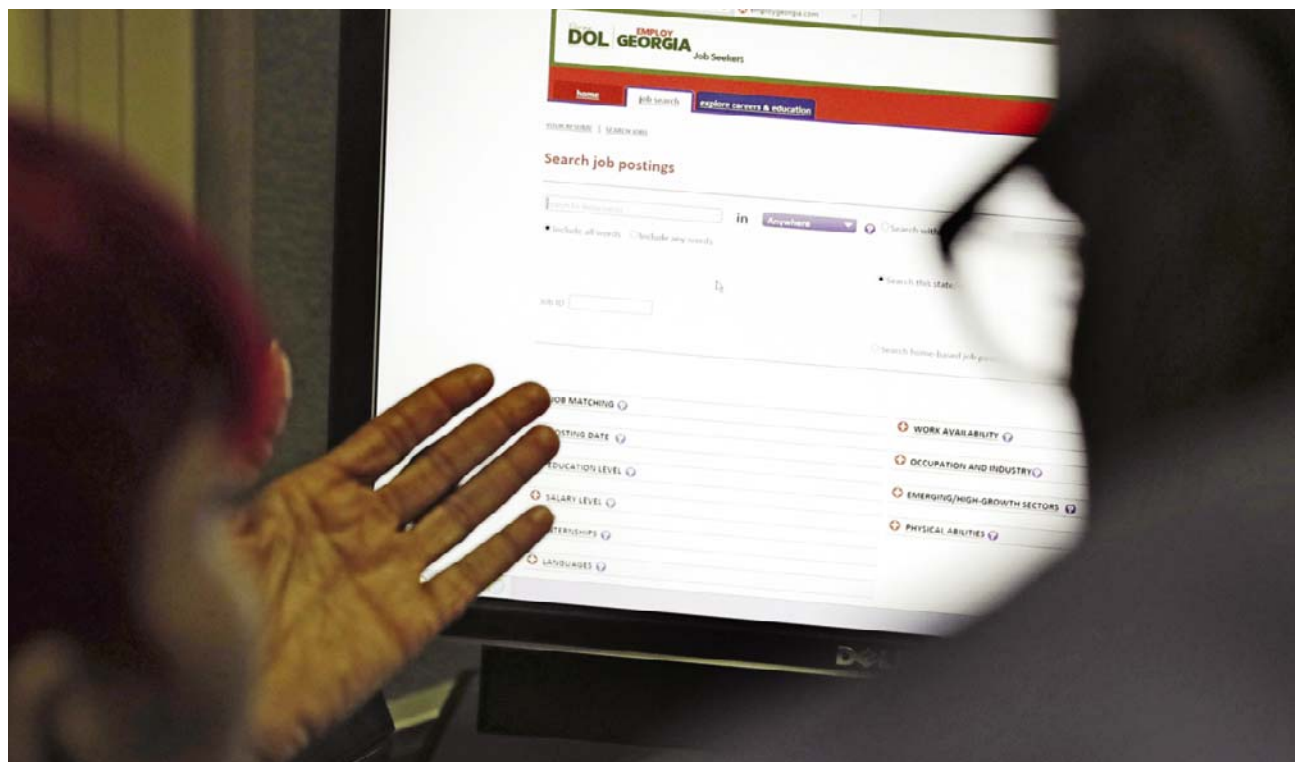
It was never going to be the relaxing pre-Easter holiday session some traders may have been hoping for. A deluge of data had already started with a fall in durable goods orders highlighting the strains a strong dollar exerts. "We are going defensive again," said Hans Peterson, SEB investment management's global head of asset allocation.

"I think it could be a slow adjustment downwards (in risk assets) for a month or two months but its hard to guess. The dollar is rising and macro demand and stronger demand in commodities is not really there." Asia shares had dropped overnight too as the relapse in commodity prices and sharp move in China's yuan took their toll.

In Europe, figures showed German consumer morale has dipped while UK retail sales fell, albeit slightly less than expected, as a comparatively warm British winter hit clothes retailers. The euro eased to \$1.1150, leaving it well off last week's top of \$1.1342. Sterling also slid as low as \$1.4064 and was set for its biggest weekly drop against a basket of currencies in six years due to concerns that this week militant attacks in Brussels could aid the campaign for Britain to leave the European Union in a June vote. — Reuters



PARIS: A banner which translates as "Hollande to the Job Centre" is displayed as French youths and activists of various youth organizations march past during a demonstration against proposed changes to labor laws in Paris yesterday during a day of action opposing the implementation of new labor legislation. — AFP



Georgia Department of Labor services specialist Louis Holliday (right) helps a woman with a job search on a computer at an unemployment office in Atlanta. — AP

MORE AMERICANS SEEK JOBLESS AID, YET APPLICATIONS STILL LOW

US DURABLE GOODS ORDERS FALL

WASHINGTON: More people sought US unemployment aid last week, but applications are still at a low level consistent with steady job growth.

THE NUMBERS: The Labor Department said yesterday that weekly applications for unemployment benefits rose 6,000 to a seasonally adjusted 265,000. The four-week average, a less volatile figure, increased just 250 to 259,750. The number of people receiving benefits fell to 2.18 million from 2.22 million the previous week. That is 8.3 percent lower than a year earlier.

THE TAKEAWAY: Applications are a proxy for layoffs, so the data indicates that businesses are holding tightly onto their staffs, despite overseas economic turmoil and modest growth in the US. Applications have been below 300,000, a historically low level, for 55 straight weeks, the longest stretch since 1973. Many businesses say they are having trouble finding new employees with the skills and experiences they need, so that may contribute to their reluctance to lay off any of their current staff.

KEY DRIVERS: When businesses are cutting few workers, they are more likely to step

up hiring. Employers added a healthy 242,000 jobs last month, while the unemployment rate remained at 4.9 percent. Modest consumer spending growth and some recovery in housing is sustaining the US economy, even as weakness overseas and cutbacks in business spending has dragged down manufacturing.

In a separate report yesterday, the Commerce Department said that orders for big-ticket manufactured goods fell 2.8 percent in February. The drop was led by a sharp decline in orders for commercial aircraft. Still, excluding transportation goods, orders fell 1 percent, a sign that manufacturing may struggle for a second year after a weak 2015.

Sales of existing homes dipped in February, but followed two solid readings in December and January. And new home sales rose 2 percent last month, though all the increase occurred in the West.

US durable goods orders fall

New orders for long-lasting US manufactured goods fell in February as the sector continues to struggle with the lingering effects of a robust dollar and lower oil prices. While other data yesterday showed an increase in the number of Americans filing

for unemployment benefits last week, revisions to the prior weeks' figures showed the labor market was much stronger than previously thought.

The labor market resilience underscores the economy's strength, which has helped calm concerns of a looming recession. That could keep the Federal Reserve on course to gradually raise interest rates this year. The Commerce Department said orders for durable goods, items ranging from toasters to aircraft meant to last three years or more, declined 2.8 percent last month after a downwardly revised 4.2 percent increase in January. Non-defense capital goods orders excluding aircraft, a closely watched proxy for business spending plans, decreased 1.8 percent after advancing by a downwardly revised 3.1 percent in January. These so-called core capital goods orders were previously reported to have increased 3.4 percent in January.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast durable goods orders falling 2.9 percent last month and orders for core capital goods slipping 0.1 percent.

The dollar dipped against a basket of currencies after the data. US stock futures were down, while prices for Treasuries were mixed. — Agencies

PRESSURE ON BRAZIL'S ROUSSEFF MAY RISE AS JOBLESS LOSE BENEFITS

BRASILIA: More than 2 million Brazilians are set to lose unemployment benefits by June, data obtained by Reuters show, threatening to erode support for embattled President Dilma Rousseff among her core working class supporters when she needs them most.

The expiration of benefits could fuel frustration and feed a growing wave of protests against Brazil's left-leaning government just as some wavering Congressmen throw their weight behind impeachment proceedings against Rousseff that began last week.

More than 1 million Brazilians have participated in street demonstrations this month. Among the reasons for discontent is a corruption scandal at state oil company Petrobras that has curbed investment in Latin America's largest economy amid recession. Economists expect the downturn, the worst in a generation, to linger through the rest of the year, driving the unemployment rate to more than 10 percent from the current 9 percent. The number of jobless people losing unemployment benefits may become a more important source of discontent.

Data provided by the Labor Ministry showed an average of 492,000 benefits a month running out between February and June, stripping many families of a crucial source of income. The severity of the downturn means the jobless are struggling for months without finding work. About a third of unemployed Brazilians have been without a job for more than six months - the highest rate in 10 years, according to official data. "There is a vicious cycle in which political paralysis feeds the economic downturn that reinforces the political crisis," said Rafael Cortez, analyst at consultancy firm Tendencias. "They are running against time, as unemployment data show. The sooner the impeachment vote happens, the higher the chances for the government are."

"GREED OF POLITICIANS"

Impeachment proceedings against Rousseff in Congress' lower house focus on allegations she manipulated government budget accounts - making them look better than they were - to benefit her reelection in 2014. The lower house is expected to vote by mid-April on whether to send her for trial in the Senate. If approved, Rousseff could face trial in the Senate as soon as May and would be suspended from office while the case is being heard.

Like many who are unemployed, Fabio Lorusso's patience is wearing thin. The 30-year-old public relations professional was fired in July and has lived with his parents since his benefits ran out in December. He blames the Petrobras scandal, in which prosecutors have uncovered billions of reais in political kickbacks to ruling party politicians, for deterring investment.

"It is the greed of our politicians - the people who are robbing us - that is tainting our image abroad and giving us fewer opportunities," he said.

"There should be more protests," he said. "We won't keep our head down anymore." In a nation of more than 200 million, an estimated 9 million are unemployed. Nearly 2.5 million Brazilians are living on unemployment insurance, which lasts five months. By comparison, an average of 3 million people were living on benefits in 2014, according to Reuters calculations based on Labor Ministry data.

But the current wave of job losses is expected to take years to reverse, in part because, unlike in previous downturns, companies have taken on more debt that will make it more difficult to return to growth. According to a Reuters poll, economists say they believe that the nation's economy will not return to its pre-crisis size and employment level until 2019. Long lines of jobless people - applying for work or for unemployment insurance - have formed in cities across Brazil in recent months. In Rio de Janeiro, Globo TV found people illegally selling their place in queues.

Diomarcos Prado, a 40-year-old former supervisor at a home appliance manufacturer in the southern city of Curitiba, had to wait 40 days to get his unemployment benefits. When they expired in January, his wife became the sole provider for the couple and their twin children. Prado has spent more than six months looking for a new job without success. "It is like talking to a brick wall," he told Reuters in a telephone interview. "I applied for a supervisor job. Then 350 other people did the same - people that used to earn much higher salaries. Managers are competing against supervisors and analysts." —Reuters



BOAO: Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (C) delivers a speech at the opening ceremony of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) annual conference in Boao, south China's Hainan province yesterday. — AFP

CHINA HAS ENOUGH TOOLS TO ENSURE STABLE ECONOMY: LI

PREMIER SEEKS TO ALLAY CONCERNS OVER SLOWING ECONOMY

BOAO, China: China has enough policy tools to keep the economy stable despite "deep rooted" structural problems and downward pressure, Premier Li Keqiang said yesterday, channeling calm amid concerns about the country's slowdown. Speaking at an annual forum in Boao on the southern Chinese island of Hainan, Li said high economic growth rates are not sustainable, so the government will pay more attention to the quality and efficiency of economic growth. The comments echoed previous statements by policymakers who are grappling with the challenge of slowing growth, soaring debt and a pressing need to drive restructuring and overdue economic reforms.

"Domestically, China faces deep-rooted, structural problems and the economy continues to face downward pressures, especially as we try to restructure

and upgrade," Li said. The renminbi currency, watched closely by global markets, will be kept within "a reasonable range", Li told the forum. "China is a responsible nation and there's no possibility that our exchange rate will depreciate in the long-term," he said.

China plans to lay off millions of people as it restructures industries mired in overcapacity, but Li said the government would "use market tools" to create new job opportunities to offset the impact. "There'll be short-term difficulties in the job market as some companies go bankrupt but the government needs to help people find new employment opportunities and ensure a basic standard of living. Both the central government and local governments have already started doing this," he said.

While many economists have highlighted the risks in China's growing

debt, Li said the country's debt-to-GDP ratio was not high. To facilitate business and fuel economic growth, the government would move to ease taxes and red tape, Li said, repeating commitments he has made in the past.

He added, however, that the country is inexperienced in implementing such reforms and there would be challenges. Li also reiterated that the country hopes to cut taxes by 500 billion yuan (\$76.77 billion) in 2016 and promote reforms to the value-added-tax (VAT) system.

The government would continue to reduce overcapacity in steel, coal and other sectors while helping develop smaller private enterprises, Li said without giving details. China's leaders have set an economic growth target of 6.5 to 7 percent for 2016. Growth last year cooled to 6.9 percent, the slowest in a quarter of a century. — Reuters

GLOBAL CONCERNS WEIGH ON EUROZONE RECOVERY: ECB

FRANKFURT: Economic recovery in the eurozone is set to continue in the coming months, but not as fast as hoped owing to global uncertainties and slowing growth in emerging economies, the European Central Bank said yesterday. "The economic recovery in the euro area is continuing, albeit with lower than expected growth at the beginning of the year on the back of a weaker external environment," the ECB wrote in its latest economic bulletin.

Recovery "continues to be dampened by subdued growth prospects in emerging markets, volatile financial markets, the necessary balance sheet adjustments in a number of sectors and

the sluggish pace of implementation of structural reforms," it said.

"Growth in China continues to slow, with negative spillovers to other emerging economies, particularly in emerging Asia, and commodity-exporting countries need to adjust further to lower commodity prices." In this context, the euro's exchange rate has increased against other currencies in recent months, which squeezes the competitiveness of European exports.

At the same time, domestic demand in the 19 countries that share the euro, which has been a key pillar of recovery in recent months, "should be further supported by the ECB's monetary policy

measures and their favourable impact on financing conditions, as well as by continued employment gains from past structural reforms", the central bank argued.

"Moreover, the low price of oil should provide additional support for households' real disposable income and private consumption, as well as for corporate profitability and investment."

In a bid to kickstart the eurozone economy, the ECB cut its key interest rates at its most recent policy meeting two weeks ago, extended its asset purchase program known as QE and said it will make massive amounts of cheap liquidity available to banks. — AFP



NEW YORK: Maserati CEO Harald Webster discusses the 2017 Levante SUV on Wednesday at the New York International Auto Show. — AP



NEW YORK: The 2017 Acura NSX GT3 is shown at the New York International Auto Show on Wednesday. — AP

LUXURY CARMAKERS INNOVATE TO WOO MILLENNIALS

NEW YORK: British carmaker Jaguar has developed a tool to win over seen-it-all millennials who view a conventional test drive as pass. Seeking to tap into younger customers' desire for a few moments of cinematic glory, Jaguar films the prospective customers behind the wheel as they navigate the vehicle through several precarious driving challenges, channeling their inner speed demon.

Moments later, they are emailed a slickly edited two-minute film, which can conveniently be uploaded to Facebook and social media sites. "It all takes literally minutes," said Jaguar spokesman Stuart Schorr. "By the time you're done, you've taken a test drive, but you've also got an asset that's shareable and fun."

The clever tactic is part of the 94-year-old brand's effort to boost its US sales as it broadens its offerings in 2016 with the introduction of new models, including the F-PACE, Jaguar's first sports utility vehicle. But all the automak-

ers at this week's New York International Auto Show have the new generation in their sights.

"Generation Y will dictate who wins and who loses in the marketplace," said John Humphrey of JD Power's global automotive practice. "It is by far the biggest generation we've had in the US."

BMW, also eyeing millennials, has trained a cadre of some 1,000 showroom "geniuses"—like the staff at an Apple Store "Genius Bar"—to show drivers how they can customize the car's myriad gadgets and driving tools. They are distinct from the salesforce and are not supposed to seal deals, said Ludwig Willisich, president and chief executive of BMW North America. Millennials "don't like sales pressure," Willisich told the JD Power auto forum Tuesday, as opposed to their parents, the baby boomers, who rely more on test drives and multiple visits before making a purchase.

With millennials, he said, "You only get one shot." "If we get this right, and we will, we

have the opportunity to create lifelong BMW drivers."

Pocketbook challenge

It is a crucial point for luxury cars, which account for about half of the auto industry's profits. A long-term worry for auto companies is that with the surge of rideshare programs like Uber and optimism about self-driving cars, younger Americans will drive less than earlier generations did. Humphrey said automakers face particular pressure because the overall US auto market is expected to cool significantly following several boom years.

"We're coming up on the end of the current cycle," said Humphrey, who warned that the industry could slip back towards overcapacity and a reliance on rebates and cheap prices to move inventory.

Those practices are less a problem for brands like Jaguar and BMW, which cater to a more select group of buyers less influenced

by price, Humphrey said. But luxury brands face other difficulties with millennials, a generation renowned for carrying hefty student loans and without the means to spend \$50,000 or \$60,000 on a car.

Compact and midsize cars accounted for the highest shares of the millennial market in 2015, with a combined 32.6 percent. Premium vehicles in total accounted for less than 10 percent, according to JD Power data. For that reason, luxury automakers are taking the long-term view in their marketing campaigns. Few of the 6,000 consumers who have participated in the Jaguar events have ordered one of their cars, Schorr said. But about 60 percent have shared their personal action videos on Facebook. That creates additional exposure and buzz, enhancing the brand's prospects. "The whole subtext is to reintroduce the Jaguar brand to a younger group of customers, and that's an investment you look to pay off over a number of years," he said. — AFP

VW SET TO PROVIDE UPDATE ON FIX FOR DIESEL VEHICLES

SAN FRANCISCO: Attorneys for Volkswagen are expected to reveal where the company stands on a fix to bring nearly 600,000 diesel cars into compliance following an emissions cheating scandal.

Senior US District Judge Charles Breyer is scheduled to get an update from the company's attorneys about its remediation efforts at a status conference yesterday. Breyer told Volkswagen attorney Robert Giuffra last month that he wanted to know by Thursday whether Volkswagen had come up with a fix for the cars that was technologically feasible and acceptable to the US Environmental Protection Agency. He warned of consequences if Volkswagen didn't act quickly.

Volkswagen admitted in September that it intentionally defeated emissions tests and put dirty vehicles on the road. The cheating allowed cars to pass laboratory

emissions tests while spewing levels of harmful nitrogen oxide at up to 40 times the level allowed when operating on real roads.

The Department of Justice has sued Volkswagen on behalf of the EPA. The company is also facing lawsuits from angry owners. Those cases are both before Breyer.

Breyer said during last month's hearing that six months was long enough to determine whether there was an engineering fix for the vehicles. "It's not just that these vehicles on the road can't be sold or can't be crated," he said. "It is the fact that they are polluting, and therefore we must address it."

Volkswagen has been in talks with regulators about a solution for the vehicles. In January, the California Air Resources Board rejected Volkswagen's recall plan for some of its most popular diesel models, saying it was unacceptable for rea-

sons including that it did not include adequate information about how the fix would affect future emissions results.

Michael Steel, an attorney at Morrison & Foerster who has advised car manufacturers about air quality matters, said Breyer may not be happy if Volkswagen has little progress to report. He said the judge could insert himself in the remediation process and propose his own solution.

"I have you given you this amount of time, you haven't done what I asked you to do, I'm going to come up with my own order," Breyer might say, Steel said. Attorneys for Volkswagen owners, meanwhile, are ratcheting up pressure on the company to find a fix for the cars by proposing a July trial on the issue. They have called on Volkswagen to buy the affected vehicles back. — AP

GOLD ON TRACK FOR BIGGEST LOSS IN MORE THAN 4 MONTHS

LONDON: Spot gold slipped to its lowest in four weeks yesterday and was poised for its biggest weekly loss since early November as the prospect of more US interest rate rises than previously expected stoked a recovery in the dollar.

Hawkish comments from several US Federal Reserve officials put investors on guard for the possibility of at least two rate increases this year, triggering a widespread correction across commodities. Brent crude oil plunged 3 percent this week, while copper prices fell below \$5,000 a ton. Spot gold dipped by 0.6 percent to \$1,212.20 an ounce, its weakest since Feb. 26, in early trade before cutting some losses at \$1,217.89, down 0.2 percent, by 1112 GMT.

It was on track for a 3.3 percent weekly loss, largely because of Wednesday's 2 percent decline. Liquidity was thinning ahead of the Easter holiday break, which starts on Friday.

US gold slipped 0.5 percent to \$1,217.80 an ounce. "In February there

were a lot of concerns about a dovish stance from the Fed, while economists are now starting to figure that there could be two (rate rises) and that would mean some pressure on gold," ING Bank senior strategist Hamza Khan said.

The dollar was on its best run in almost a year yesterday, making gold more expensive for foreign currency holders. St. Louis Fed President James Bullard joined a chorus of officials in highlighting the possibility of at least two rate increases this year, with the first perhaps as soon as April.

Earlier in the week, Philadelphia Fed President Patrick Harker said the central bank should consider another increase as early as next month if the US economy continues to improve, while Chicago Fed President Charles Evans also said he expects two more rate increases this year. The comments pushed investors to cut long positions, broker Triland Metals said in a note, with further consolidation looking likely. — Reuters



SAITAMA: Afghanistan's goalkeeper Ovays Azizi (R) punch the ball beside Japanese forward Shinji Okazaki during the first half of the World Cup Asian Group E qualifying match. — AFP

CHINA STAY ALIVE WHILE JORDAN, JAPAN WIN BIG

HONG KONG: A Jiang Ning hat-trick kept China's faint World Cup hopes alive as big guns Australia and Japan blasted towards Russia 2018 with convincing wins yesterday. Jiang, who plays at Hebei China Fortune alongside Ezequiel Lavezzi and Gervinho, powered China to a 4-0 home victory as they chase Group C's second spot in the penultimate round of games.

Australia had little trouble beating Tajikistan 7-0, with Nathan Burns and Tom Rogic both scoring twice, while Leicester City's Shinji Okazaki sparked Japan's 5-0 win over Afghanistan. Lee Jeong-Hyeop spared already-qualified South Korea's blushes with an injury-time winner as the hosts laboured to a 1-0 victory over Lebanon in Ansan.

And former Tottenham Hotspur coach Harry Redknapp's interim stint with Jordan got off to a flying start with an 8-0 win against an outclassed Bangladesh in Amman. Jiang settled any Chinese nerves in Wuhan when he struck in just the third minute, before the lead was quickly doubled by Yang Xu in the 12th.

Jiang's goals in the 84th minute and injury time added gloss for China, who nevertheless look out of the running for the next round ahead of Tuesday's Group C finale against unbeaten Qatar. Eight group winners and the four best-performing second-placed teams will reach the third round of World Cup qualifying, and seal a spot at the 2019 Asian Cup into the bargain.

In Adelaide, Queens Park Rangers midfielder Massimo Luongo set Australia on their way to what was the Asian champions' biggest win under coach Ange Postecoglou. Luongo struck with just two minutes on the clock before Australian skipper Mile Jedinak of Crystal Palace added a penalty to put the hosts 2-0 up.

Another penalty by substitute Mark

Milligan and second-half doubles from Burns and Rogic completed a comfortable outing for Australia, who now go into a top-of-the-table clash with Redknapp's Jordan. "These games can become difficult, we knew they would sit off (in defense) but having such a quick start and scoring the goal it was just a matter of time before they capitulated," Postecoglou said.

Redknapp went one better than his Australian opposite number as Jordan put

eight past Bangladesh, propelled by a first-half hat-trick from Hamza Al Dardour. Meanwhile Japan needed Okazaki, one of the men behind Leicester's inspirational English Premier League season, to shake them out of their torpor after a sluggish start in Saitama. Okazaki handed Japan a barely deserved lead two minutes before half-time before Hiroshi Kiyotake, Maya Yoshida and Mu Kanazaki joined him on the scoresheet, along with an Afghan own goal. — AFP

TERROR THREATS DOESN'T FAZE GERMANY: MUELLER

BERLIN: Thomas Mueller says the Germany squad remains unfazed by the threat of terrorism ahead of tomorrow's high-profile friendly against England in Berlin in the wake of the Brussels attacks. The world champions host Roy Hodgson's Three Lions tomorrow with a crowd of around 72,000 expected at Berlin's Olympic Stadium before the Germans play Italy four days later in Munich. Security will be tight for both games in the wake of Tuesday's bomb attacks on Brussels' airport and metro system which killed 31 people. "What is happening here in Europe at the moment is unusual," said Mueller. "We feel that we are well protected, but of course anything can always happen."

"However, we are convinced the security forces are doing a good job." Germany were affected by the terror attacks last November in Paris having had to spend the night in the Stade de France after their 2-0 defeat to the French. Then four days later, their home friendly against the Netherlands in Hanover was called off on police advice amidst fears of an attack.

Germany will be without captain and Manchester United star Bastian Schweinsteiger against both England and Italy after again tearing the medial ligament in his right knee having suffered the same injury in January. The 31-year-old faces a race against time to be fit for the European championships, which start on June 10. "It's bitter news for him and also for us," added Mueller. "I hope, that he will be fit as soon as possible. "Basti still has time before the European championships and it will be important to have our captain on board." Schweinsteiger's midfield partner Toni Kroos of Real Madrid is backing his captain to get himself fit for France. "It's bitter for Basti, but it's not his first injury and I think we can compensate without him and he has often already made a comeback," said Kroos. Regardless of who plays against England and Italy, the world champions are looking forward to testing themselves against two contenders for the Euro 2016 title. "These games against England and Italy will be a good test for us and we're looking forward to them," said Mueller. — AFP

ENGLAND WINGER JOHNSON JAILED FOR UNDER-AGE SEX OFFENCES

LONDON: Former England footballer Adam Johnson was sentenced to six years in prison at Bradford Crown Court yesterday after being found guilty of sexual activity with a 15-year-old fan. Johnson, once a winger with Sunderland and Manchester City, was found guilty following an incident in his Range Rover car in County Durham, north-east England, last year.

The 28-year-old had also pleaded guilty to another count of sexual activity with a child and one count of grooming a child. Judge Jonathan Rose, passing sentence, said the victim who cannot be named for legal reasons had been a Sunderland fan who would wait after matches to take pictures of her "favorite player", Johnson, who had known her age.

"That was known to you-to put it another way she had only just turned 15 when you began grooming her, because as you were to admit you found her sexually attractive," said the judge. Judge Rose said that the offences happened "at a time when you were engaged in frequent sexual intercourse with multiple partners".

"You made a deliberate decision to engage in sexual activity with this young girl, no doubt in the expectation that you would get away with it." Johnson was found guilty on March 2 before being granted bail ahead of yesterday's sentencing. He was sacked by struggling Premier League side Sunderland last month as the north-east club terminated his £60,000 (\$84,675, 75,909 Euros) per week contract and Judge Rose said: "Your future as a professional footballer must be in doubt."

'Dark places'

He told Johnson he had "every opportunity" to enter guilty pleas to the charges he eventually admitted and that by not doing so his victim had been subjected to a year of being called a liar, including chants by fans. "She speaks of entering many dark places in that year and said she had suffered bullying and stress and had underachieved at school as a result of the case," the judge said.

Judge Rose also ordered Johnson to pay £50,000 of the prosecution's £67,132 costs. Dr Philip Hopley, a consultant psychiatrist giving evidence for the defence, had previously told the court: "This is a man who, at the age of 28, is socially and psychologically immature." He added that he had found no evidence in Johnson of an attraction to pre-pubescent children or "sexual perversion".

Earlier yesterday, Johnson's sister did not accompany him into court but stressed she was still "100 percent behind him". In a Facebook post, Faye Johnson said she had stayed away from court because "Adam has always been my hero, my brother and my best friend, I just don't want him to see the pain in my eyes!" But Gerry Wareham, the chief prosecutor for England's north-east region, insisted any sympathy regarding a football career cut short was misplaced. "Adam Johnson exploited a young star-struck fan, actively grooming her over a number of months in single-minded pursuit of his own sexual gratification," Wareham said in a statement. "We should all be clear that there is only one victim in this case, the fifteen-year-old girl he sexually assaulted."

The fall-out from the case saw Sunderland chief executive Margaret Byrne resign on March 8. Byrne said she had made "a serious mistake" in being party to the decision to let Johnson play on for the club for nearly a year despite knowing he had admitted to kissing a 15-year-old girl. — AFP



BRADFORD: Former England footballer Adam Johnson arrives at Bradford Crown. — AP



GELSENKIRCHEN: This file photo taken on June 26, 1974 shows Dutch midfielder Johann Cruyff dribbling past Argentinean goalkeeper Daniel Carnevali on his way to scoring a goal during the World Cup quarterfinal soccer match between the Netherlands and Argentina on June 26, 1974. — AFP

DUTCH LEGEND JOHAN CRUYFF DIES AT 68 AFTER CANCER BATTLE

BARCELONA: Johan Cruyff, one of the greatest footballers in history, died yesterday at the age of 68 from lung cancer, his family announced. The Dutchman "died peacefully in Barcelona, surrounded by his family after a hard-fought battle with cancer," said a statement on Cruyff's official website. "It's with great sadness that we ask you to respect the family's privacy during their time of grief."

Cruyff won three European Cups as a player with Ajax Amsterdam and Ballon d'Or titles in 1971 with Ajax and 1973 and 1974 with Barcelona, where he starred from 1973 to 1978. Cruyff is considered one of the best four players in history alongside Pele of Brazil, Diego Maradona of Argentina and France's Michel Platini.

With his precision passes, speed, technique and goalscoring ability,

Cruyff set new standards as a player. He was the incarnation of Total Football that took the Dutch team to the World Cup final in 1974. He inspired a new generation of footballers. "Playing football is very simple, but playing simple football is the hardest thing there is," he once said. As a coach, Cruyff led Barcelona to their first European Cup title in 1992. Cruyff was once a heavy smoker who gave up after heart bypass surgery in 1991. He started sucking lollipop on the touchline at Barcelona games. Cruyff also appeared in a Catalan government advert, saying: "Football has given me everything in life, tobacco almost took it all away."

Football world in mourning

He revealed in October last year that he had lung cancer. He said in February that he had received "very positive"

results about his battle. "Right now, I have the feeling that I am 2-0 up in the first half of a match that has not finished yet. But I am sure that I will end up winning," he added in a statement. News of his death still came as a shock to the football world and tributes quickly flooded in. "He was the best player of all time," French legend Michel Platini told AFP. "I have lost a friend, the world has lost a great man. I admired him," Platini added.

"The '14' will never be the same. RIP Johan Cruyff," said modern-day Spanish hero Xabi Alonso, now with Bayern Munich, on Twitter in a tribute referring to Cruyff's number 14 shirt. "Goodbye to one of the legends of the history of football," said Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos. While Cruyff made his name at Ajax, where he started at the age of 17, he made his football home in Barcelona.

"BarÁa soon began to reap the rewards as the Dutch magician helped BarÁa to the league title in his first season, and went on to win his second and third Ballon d'Or," the club said in a tribute. "He quickly became an icon for BarÁa. "His acrobatic strike against Atletico Madrid and the 5-0 win at the Santiago Bernabeu (against Real Madrid) in 1974, among many other great moments, will live long in the memory of BarÁa fans." Cruyff returned as manager in 1988. "He was in the dugout for eight seasons, during which time he led the club through its most successful ever period up until that point." Barcelona won four consecutive league titles and their first ever European Cup in May 1992 at Wembley, beating Sampdoria of Italy 1-0. Cruyff was named Europe's player of the century in 1999. — AFP

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DORTMUND: Dutch forward Johan Cruyff jumps to hit the ball into the net for his team's second goal against Brazil in their World Cup football match. — AP

FIVE JOHAN CRUYFF QUOTES ON FOOTBALL

BARCELONA: Johan Cruyff was an artist with the ball but also had his inimitable way of describing his relationship with football. Here are five classic Cruyff quotes:

Simplicity

"Playing football is very simple, but playing simple football is the hardest thing there is".

Juggling

"Technique is not about being able to juggle a ball 1,000 times. Anyone can do that by practicing. Then you can work in the circus. Technique is about passing the ball with one touch, at the right speed, onto the right foot of your team mate."

Football wealth

"Why couldn't you beat a richer club? I've never seen a bag of money score a goal."

Hot air

"After you've won something, you're no longer 100 percent, but 90 percent. It's like a bottle of carbonated water where the cap is removed for a short while. Afterwards there's a little less gas inside."

Time flies

"When you play a match, it is statistically proven that players actually have the ball three minutes on average. So, the most important thing is what do you do during those 87 minutes when you do not have the ball. That is what determines whether you're a good player or not." — AFP



BARCELONA: In this Dec 22, 2009 file photo Dutch coach Johan Cruyff looks on during a friendly soccer match of Catalunya against Argentina at the Camp Nou stadium. — AP

BELGIUM MOVES INTERNATIONAL, EURO HAS 'CONTINGENCY PLANS'

BRUSSELS: Belgium on Wednesday moved a friendly international against Portugal away from Brussels after the militant attacks on the city while UEFA said it has "contingency plans" for the European Championships in France. But Europe's governing body and the French government insisted that Euro 2016 will go ahead and there will be no games behind closed doors.

Belgium, the world's top ranked team, had been due to play Portugal in Brussels next Tuesday. But a day after the attacks on Brussels airport and the city metro in which 31 people died, the Belgian federation said the match had been called off for "security reasons." Portugal's federation later announced that the two countries had agreed to play the match the same day in the Portuguese city of Leiria instead.

"I wanted to play in Brussels, at home, because I am against fear," said Belgium coach Marc Wilmots. "I wanted to play here to show them (the terrorists) that despite the terrible events, which shook the country, life goes on for the majority of people." The Islamic State assaults on Paris and Brussels over the past four months have increased the security spotlight on the 24-nation European Championships due to start in Paris on June 10.

One of the deadly suicide attacks in Paris on November 13 was against the Stade de France and security will again be heightened when France play Russia there on Tuesday, authorities said. France's games against the Netherlands in Amsterdam on Friday has also been confirmed. UEFA and France say they are determined that Euro 2016 should go ahead. French Prime Minister Manuel Valls said not holding the tournament would be "a victory for terrorists." UEFA also expressed confidence in the money-spinning event but added that it had planning for "crisis situations." — AFP

KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL RALLY KICKS OFF AT SIRBB CIRCUIT



— Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Edith Weiss is flying the female flag in the FIA.

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Kuwait International Rally and the third stage of the Middle East round two of the FIA Middle East Rally Championship is being held in Kuwait from March 24 - 26, 2016. The exciting three-day event kicked off yesterday at the Sirbb circuit.

The event is hosted by the Basil Salem Al-Sabah Motor Racing Club (BMRC). Many international champions from Kuwait, Qatar, Lebanon, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and other countries will be participating in this rally including the Kuwaiti champion Meshari Al-Thafiri, Qatar's Nasser Al-Attiyah, Saudi Arabian Rakan Al-Rashed, Jassim Al-Muqahwi, and many others.

The event is being held under the chairmanship of Sheikh Athbi Nayef Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in conjunction with the General Authority for Sport. The meat of the action takes place today and Saturday in the desert to the south of Kuwait City.

During the press conference yesterday at the Kuwait Historical, Vintage and Classic Car Museum, FIA Vice President Nasser Khalifa Al-

Attiyah said that the Kuwait Rally is one of the best in the region. "We see Kuwait International Rally improving every year. The participation of world champion Nasser Saleh Al-Attiyah is also a great addition to the rally. The participation was affected by the political situation in region, and we hope that in the future we will have more champions participating and that we will have a racing academy for which young champions will graduate," he noted.

The role of FIA is to support and supervise this event. "We supervise the organization of the rally to make sure that the rules, international standards of all stages are respected in addition to ensuring all services are provided during this event. We also care to preserve its continuity every year. Some drivers think that the sandy land is easy and don't cause flat tires. The cooperation of KT Club and the Quarter Mile Club gives more credibility for the organization of the rally," added Nasser Khalifa Al-Attiyah.

Another victory

Sheikh Athbi Al-Sabah, head of the BMRC stated that this rally is being

held in cooperation with the Public Authority for Youth and Sports. "The Authority is supporting the Kuwaiti rally drivers yet not in the expected level. We hope that in the future they receive even more support. Also the number of participants is not bad, yet it did not meet our expectations due to the political situation in the region, and we hope that next year's rally will have a larger number of participants," he pointed out.

World champion Nasser Saleh Al-Attiyah expressed his excitement to be participating in this rally and hopes to achieve another victory. "The Kuwaiti rally is precious to me especially that my beginnings and continued development in this sport were from Kuwait. Through my achievements, I proved that the Arab driver can achieve world records in this sport. I achieved my 61st title during the last rally held in Qatar. I will also be participating in next rally in Abu Dhabi with Toyota, which is a strong brand in the region," he said.

Saudi driver Rakan Al-Rashed stressed that his first goal is to finish the rally safely and then to rank in top positions. Rodolphe Asmar from

2016 Kuwait International Rally - starters

1. Nasser Saleh Al-Attiyah (QAT)/Matthieu Baumel (FRA) Skoda Fabia R5
2. Khalid Al-Suwaidi (QAT)/Giovanni Bernacchini (ITA) Ford Fiesta R5
3. Meshari Al-Thafiri (KWT)/Nasser Al-Kuwari (QAT) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X
4. Abdullah Al-Kuwari (QAT)/Adel Hussein (QAT) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X
5. Khalifa Al-Attiyah (QAT)/Savvas Laos (CYP) Subaru Impreza
6. Rashid Al-Naimi (QAT)/Nicola Arena (ITA) Subaru Impreza
7. Rodolphe Asmar (LEB)/Joseph Matar (LEB) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX
8. Yigit Timur (TUR)/Ufuk Uluocak (TUR) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X
9. Mohammed Al-Thafiri (KWT)/Fares Al-Thafiri (KWT) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo VIII
10. Vedat Diker (TUR)/Erdal Oral (TUR) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X
11. Saleh Ali (KWT)/Othman Hamdar (KWT) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo VIII
12. Rakan Al-Rashed (SAU)/Jarkko Kalliolepo (FIN) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX
13. Edith Weiss (DEU)/Anne Stein (DEU) Mitsubishi Lancer Evo IX
14. Elie Chachat (KWT)/Naji Sfeir (LEB) Subaru Impreza

Lebanon is participating for the first time in the Kuwait Rally. "My first participation in the Middle East rally outside Lebanon was in Qatar last month. I don't have enough experience yet I aim to achieve a good position," he noted.

New point system

There is a new points-scoring system in this year's championship. The FIA has revised the traditional 25 points for a win, 18 for second and 15 for third-style format for FIA Regional

Rallies. In addition to these points, additional bonuses are to be awarded according to the classification of each leg on the scale of seven down to one. So the winner of the rally will be awarded 25 points, plus an additional seven for winning the second day and up to a maximum of seven more points for leading after day one. The press conference was followed by the ceremonial start and the opening 1.8km special stage, which took place at the Sirbb circuit.



Meshari Al-Thafiri chasing a podium.



Nasser Saleh Al-Attiyah in his Skoda Fabia.

WARRIORS STAY ON TRACK FOR HISTORY

OAKLAND: Stephen Curry scored 33 points as the Golden State Warriors stayed on track to make more history Wednesday night with a 114-98 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers. Klay Thompson added 32 points with seven 3-pointers, Curry drew a rare technical in the fourth, and Harrison Barnes had 11 points and six rebounds as Golden State (64-7) stayed one game ahead of the 1995-96 Bulls' pace in their record 72-win season. The Warriors won their 51st straight regular-season home game, improving to 33-0 this season at rockin' Oracle Arena - where the fans let the rival Clippers have it at every opportunity. DeAndre Jordan scored 19 points for the Clippers, swept by Golden State for the first time since dropping all six meetings in 1985-86.

SPURS 112, HEAT 88

Kawhi Leonard matched his career high with 32 points before leaving with a bruised quadriceps as San Antonio beat Miami to remain perfect at home. San Antonio has won its first 36 home games, leaving the Spurs a game shy of matching the record set by Chicago in 1995-96. The Spurs have won 45 consecutive regular-season games at home over two seasons. Leonard's injury could have put a damper on the team's 60th overall victory, but it did not appear serious. He left with 6:01 remaining in the third quarter completing a three-point play after being fouled on a driving layup by Justise Winslow. Josh Richardson led Miami with 17 points and Dwyane Wade added 16.

CAVALIERS 113, BUCKS 104

LeBron James scored 26 points and Kevin Love added 24 in Cleveland's victory over Milwaukee. Kyrie Irving flirted with a triple-double on his 24th birthday, finishing with 16 points, eight rebounds and eight assists. Tristan Thompson added 13 points and 10 rebounds to help Cleveland maintain its grip on the top seed in the Eastern Conference. However, the Cavs didn't put the Bucks away until the final minute, when J.R. Smith's 3-pointer with 20 seconds left put Cleveland ahead 111-102. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 24 points for the Bucks.

SUNS 119, LAKERS 107

Kobe Bryant said farewell to Phoenix, scoring 17 points cheered on by a loud, pro-Lakers crowd in a loss to the Suns. Bryant played for the 47th and final time in Phoenix, capping his career finale in the desert with a pair of 3-pointers in the fourth quarter. The 37-year-old five-time NBA champion left the game with 1:05 to play, hugging the Suns' P.J. Tucker and waving to the cheering crowd as he headed to the bench. Devin Booker, the Suns' 19-year-old rookie, scored 28 points in his one and only game against Bryant, who sat out the previous three meetings against Phoenix this season. Brandon Knight added 25 points, and Jon Leuer had 23 points and a career-high 14 rebounds.

PISTONS 118, MAGIC 102

Andre Drummond had 30 points and 14 rebounds, as Detroit led all the way to beat Orlando. Chasing their first postseason appearance since 2009, the Pistons have won four straight, and they still have four games to go on their nine-game homestand. Detroit shot 54 percent from the field and 11 of 24 from 3-point range. Tobias Harris scored 18 points for the Pistons against his former team, and Reggie Jackson added 16 points and nine assists. Elfrid Payton had 20 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for Orlando.



OAKLAND: Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors goes up for a shot against Austin Rivers #25 and DeAndre Jordan #6 of the Los Angeles Clippers at ORACLE Arena. — AFP

TRAIL BLAZERS 109, MAVERICKS 103

Damian Lillard had 27 points and six assists and Ed Davis scored all of his 16 points in the first half to help Portland beat Dallas. Maurice Harkless, starting for just the fourth time all season, and C.J. McCollum each added 14 points for the Blazers. Former Blazers guard Wesley Matthews led the Mavericks with 22 points. Salah Mejri, making his fourth start of the season, added 14 points and 12 rebounds, and Dirk Nowitzki scored 21 points. Dallas fell into a tie with Utah for seventh in the West.

JAZZ 89, ROCKETS 87

Derrick Favors' dunk with 1.6 seconds left lifted Utah past Houston. Gordon Hayward had 22 points, and Favors added 17 for Utah. The Jazz trailed by as many as 18 in the second half before rallying for their first lead of the game with about 4 minutes left. After Favors' dunk, James Harden's 3-point attempt

bounced off the rim. Harden finished with 26 points, 10 assists, seven rebounds and a career-high eight steals.

CELTICS 91, RAPTORS 79

Isaiah Thomas scored 23 points and Evan Turner added 17 as Boston beat Toronto. Avery Bradley had 16 points and eight rebounds to help the Celtics win their third consecutive game. DeMar DeRozan led the Raptors with 21 points. Point guard Kyle Lowry sat out, resting a sore right elbow. Toronto had a four-game winning streak snapped and fell 2 1/2 games behind Cleveland for the best record in the Eastern Conference.

KNICKS 115, BULLS 107

Rookie Kristaps Porzingis matched his season high with 29 points and grabbed 10 rebounds while Carmelo Anthony added 24 to help New York beat Chicago. In the front

end of back-to-back with the Knicks, the Bulls dropped behind Detroit in the Eastern Conference standings for the eighth and final playoff spot. Nikola Mirotic scored a career-high 35 points for the Bulls.

NUGGETS 104, 76ERS 103

Emmanuel Mudiay made a 35-footer at the buzzer to finish with 27 points and give Denver a victory over Philadelphia. Mudiay, who also had 11 rebounds, was sandwiched between two defenders and nearly lost the ball before regaining control and launching the winning shot. Nikola Jokic and Gary Harris added 18 points apiece. TJ McConnell had 17 points for the 76ers. The game was played before a sparse crowd that braved daylong blizzard conditions.

HAWKS 122, WIZARDS 101

Reserve Dennis Schroder scored 23 points and Kyle Korver connected on five 3-pointers as Atlanta beat Washington to split the home-and-home series. Atlanta made a season-high 17 3s to keep pace in a competitive Eastern Conference playoff picture. Paul Millsap scored 17, Korber had 15, and Al Horford 13. Marcus Thornton led Washington with 23 points. The Wizards beat the Hawks 117-102 in Atlanta on Monday night.

TIMBERWOLVES 113, KINGS 104.

Karl-Anthony Towns had 26 points, 11 rebounds and four blocks to lead Minnesota past Sacramento. Zach LaVine scored all 23 of his points in the second half, Andrew Wiggins also had 23 and the Timberwolves overcame a sluggish start to get just their second home victory of the month. They shot 56 percent and had 29 assists to overcome 18-for-32 shooting at the free throw line. Rajon Rondo had 25 points, 12 assists and eight rebounds, but the Kings sorely missed star center DeMarcus Cousins, who missed the game with a bruised right knee. — AP

NBA results/standings

Cleveland 113, Milwaukee 104; Atlanta 122, Washington 101; Boston 91, Toronto 79; Detroit 118, Orlando 102; NY Knicks 115, Chicago 107; Utah 89, Houston 87; Minnesota 113, Sacramento 104; San Antonio 112, Miami 88; Denver 104, Philadelphia 103; Phoenix 119, LA Lakers 107; Portland 109, Dallas 103; Golden State 114, LA Clippers 98.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB		W	L	PCT	GB
Toronto	48	22	.686	-	Oklahoma City	49	22	.690	-
Boston	42	30	.583	7	Portland	37	35	.514	12.5
NY Knicks	29	43	.403	20	Utah	35	36	.493	14
Brooklyn	19	51	.271	29	Denver	30	42	.417	19.5
Philadelphia	9	63	.125	40	Minnesota	23	48	.324	26
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	51	20	.718	-	Golden State	64	7	.901	-
Indiana	37	33	.529	13.5	LA Clippers	43	27	.614	20.5
Detroit	38	34	.528	13.5	Sacramento	27	44	.380	37
Chicago	36	34	.514	14.5	Phoenix	20	51	.282	44
Milwaukee	30	42	.417	21.5	LA Lakers	15	56	.211	49
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Atlanta	42	30	.583	-	San Antonio	60	11	.845	-
Miami	41	30	.577	0.5	Memphis	41	31	.569	19.5
Charlotte	41	30	.577	0.5	Dallas	35	36	.493	25
Washington	35	36	.493	6.5	Houston	35	37	.486	25.5
Orlando	29	42	.408	12.5	New Orleans	26	44	.371	33.5



MOHALI: Pakistan's captain Shahid Afridi bats during a training session at the Punjab Cricket Stadium Association Stadium. — AFP

PAKISTAN TO GIVE THEIR ALL FOR AFRIDI AT WT20

MOHALI: Veteran batsman Shoaib Malik vowed yesterday that Pakistan would go all out for a surprise victory against Australia at cricket's World Twenty20 to give their "big brother" Shahid Afridi a winning send-off. The big-hitting Afridi, who no longer plays Test and one-day cricket, has been hinting heavily that he will retire after the ongoing tournament after being heavily criticised for Pakistan's disappointing showing.

Pakistan have lost two of their three group matches and another defeat against Australia in Mohali on Friday will snuff out any lingering hopes of a second World T20 title. "This is going to be Afridi's last World Cup. I respect him a lot, he is like an elder brother to me," Malik said at the pre-match press conference.

"Nobody will be happier than me if we can win this World Cup for Afridi. "Every player is trying to give their 100 percent. Winning or losing is not in our hands, but each one of us is taking

responsibility and trying to give our best," he said.

'Boom Boom'

A veteran of 97 T20 internationals, Afridi has scored 1,391 runs while taking 97 wickets. While his batting pyrotechnics once earned him the nickname "Boom Boom", Afridi has endured a torrid time at the crease in the last couple of years, prompting critics to question his match-winning abilities. In the ongoing WT20, Afridi hit a match-winning 19-ball 49 and also took two key wickets in the opening group match against lowly Bangladesh.

But he made just eight and 19 in the defeats against India and New Zealand and drew widespread criticism for some of his team selections. A dejected Afridi admitted after the game against the Black Caps that he would call time on his career soon. "In every game, we're making mistakes and it's not good for us.

Maybe the next game (against Australia) will be the last one of my career," the flamboyant all-rounder said. "For now we have to forget this game and focus on Australia."

Malik, 34, also stressed yesterday the team was looking at plugging the loopholes against Australia, who have one win and a loss from two outings so far. "Our first goal is to win tomorrow. We missed out on scoring singles in our last game. Nobody is perfect. We are trying to improve our skills."

A win is the least that Pakistan require to keep their slim chances of advancing in the tournament alive. Malik also sought to dismiss talk of friction within the Pakistani dressing room, blaming the team's poor performance for the speculation. "Nobody talked about rift in our camp in 2009 when we won the World T20. Six of us were not talking to each other, we still won. "When you lose games, all the talk starts." — AFP

GAYLE READY TO OPEN AGAINST PROTEAS AS WINDIES EYE SEMIS

NAGPUR: Chris Gayle is set to return to the top of the batting order as the West Indies seek to clinch a World Twenty20 semi-finals spot today against a South African side who can ill afford to lose. The Windies big-hitting opener tweaked a hamstring while fielding against Sri Lanka on Sunday night and was dropped down to number six, much to the disappointment of the Bangalore crowd.

Gayle's services weren't required as replacement opener Andre Fletcher hit 84 not out to power the Windies to a seven-wicket victory. It was the West Indies' second win of the tournament after a Gayle century, which included 11 sixes, inspired them to a six-wicket triumph over England in their opening match.

They sit top of Group One on four points and a defeat of South Africa in Nagpur would see them become the second team to qualify for the last four, after New Zealand. Gayle and Fletcher are expected to open the Windies' with Johnson Charles moving down. "I've opened the batting with him on many occasions so I know what sort of a player he is, he is very dangerous and he's capable of getting big scores as well," Gayle said of Fletcher.

South Africa desperately need a victory after picking up one win from two games as they bid to show the world that they have what it takes to clinch a first international trophy. They are yet to get up to full-steam after a stunning opening defeat to a record 230-run chase by England was followed by a win over minnows Afghanistan, leaving them precariously placed in third spot, two points behind England. If South Africa fail to beat the Windies then England would be in pole position to qualify from the group going into the last round-robin game. The Proteas' preparations were dealt a blow after all-rounder JP Duminy was ruled out of the match with a hamstring injury he picked up in the 37-run win over Afghanistan on Sunday.

The right-arm spinner, who bats left-handed, has been in fine form, making scores of 54 and 29 without being dismissed. "JP is a big player for us. Not having him is a big blow and does upset the balance of the side," South Africa coach Russell Domingo said in quotes carried by Cricinfo. — AFP



Chris Gayle

T20'S UNSTOPPABLE RISE FUELS FEARS FOR TESTS

MUMBAI: As he joined the sell-out crowd for a Twenty20 match at the home of Indian cricket, Kaushal Loday said he wouldn't have come if the game was a Test. "I'm not interested in five-day cricket, it's too long," said Loday outside Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium, ahead of a showdown between India and South Africa. "T20's more entertaining. We like seeing sixes and fours."

The success of the ongoing World Twenty20 should be cause for celebration for administrators, with millions of TV viewers and packed houses enjoying batting pyrotechnics from the likes of Chris Gayle and AB de Villiers. But while T20 cricket was conceived as a way for cash-strapped boards to make some money on the side, its growth in the last decade

has led to fears it might devour the longest form of the game. The official line is that T20 can spread the game and encourage newcomers to the five-day Test matches, or 50-over one-day internationals. "We want to make sure all three formats of the game—Test, ODI and T20 — are going to be able to co-exist well into the future and not only survive but flourish," said International Cricket Council chief executive David Richardson. But with the proliferation of domestic T20 tournaments giving players the chance to earn more in six weeks than they get from their boards in a year, some stars are turning their back on Tests. And with Tests often attracting paltry crowds, some players worry T20 cricket is endangering the format it was meant to underwrite.

Big bucks

"I think it does threaten the traditional game," said England skipper Eoin Morgan, before admitting he didn't have any solution to the problem. This year's World T20 in India is the third on the sub-continent in a little over three years. In contrast the ODI World Cup is every four years. Players such as the West Indies' Gayle have stopped playing Tests and instead earn big bucks in tournaments such as Australia's Big Bash or the Bangladesh Premier League. Gayle has admitted he would "not be so sad" if Test cricket died a death, while de Villiers—South Africa's Test captain and still only 32 — recently acknowledged rumors he was thinking of quitting international cricket in favor of Twenty20 tournaments.

"There are big tournaments going on around the world and some of them you can't ignore because financially they make a huge difference in our lives," he said. The biggest is the Indian Premier League (IPL) where an evening's entertainment features cheerleaders, fireworks and cameos by Bollywood stars.

Speaking outside the Wankhede, home to India's board and the Mumbai Indians IPL side, Indian fan Rohit Bhosale said he only had time for T20s. "The whole crowd seems to be enjoying T20 cricket more than the one-day or Test cricket," he said. India's board was initially cool on T20 cricket and only agreed to send a team to the first World T20 in South Africa in 2007 to secure the right to host the 2011 ODI World Cup. — AFP

WATSON TO RETIRE AFTER WORLD T20

MOHALI: Australian all-rounder Shane Watson announced yesterday he would retire from international cricket after the ongoing World Twenty20 in India, bringing to an end a sterling career spanning 14 years. Watson, 34, shared his decision to call it quits with teammates in Mohali, where Australia take on Pakistan in a World T20 group match today, Cricket Australia said.

"It's been over the last week that it's really become clear that now really is the right time to retire from all international cricket," Watson said in a statement issued by the national cricket body. Watson had retired from Test cricket at the end of last year's Ashes tour of England and has not played one-day internationals since September.

Watson, who is also retiring from first-class cricket, would however remain available for lucrative T20 leagues around the world. Other players such as the West Indies' Chris Gayle have also stopped playing Tests in order to earn big bucks in tournaments like Australia's Big Bash or the Indian Premier League.

An opening batsman and a reliable pacer, Watson scored 5,757 runs from 190 ODIs. He also took 168 ODI wickets and holds the Australian record for the highest ODI score, an unbeaten 185 against Bangladesh in Dhaka in 2011. Always a dangerous player in the shortest format, he has scored 1,400 runs from 56 T20 internationals so far while taking 46 wickets.

Watson was the last surviving player of the Australian golden era, having played along with the likes of Glenn McGrath, Shane Warne, Ricky Ponting and Adam Gilchrist. "I really enjoyed my time being back in the Australian squad but, it is quite different," Watson, a father of two, said. "None of the other guys that I played with growing up are here anymore."

'Homework' saga

Watson was part of Australia's World Cup triumphs in 2007 and 2015 and also starred during the team's winning campaigns at the Champions Trophy finals of 2006 and 2009. A key member of Australia's 2013-14 Ashes whitewash of England, Watson has had to battle niggling injuries but he managed to defy the critics each time.

Watson had mulled quitting Test cricket in 2013 after a disastrous tour of India that saw him being suspended and sent back home for failing "to do his homework" as the vice-captain. "That was a time I certainly was considering my future within the Australian team because at that point in time I certainly wasn't enjoying the environment at all," Watson said in yesterday's statement. "The thing that really shone through at that point in time was how much I do love the game and realizing that was absolutely living the dream.

"I just had to get through that period of time having faith that there was light at the end of the tunnel and there certainly was." Batting great and former Australian skipper Ponting took to Twitter to thank Watson for "wonderful memories" while former player turned commentator Tom Moody also lavished praise on the retiring player. "Congratulations on an outstanding international career, you've captivated us all with your all-round skills," Moody tweeted. With more time on hand, Watson said he would try his hand at coaching. "It's no secret I do love coaching and that's one thing I will be doing in my time off." — AFP



MOHALI: Australia's Shane Watson plays a shot in the nets as he participates in a training session at The Punjab Cricket Stadium Association Stadium. — AFP



BANGALORE: Indian players including Hardik Pandya (L) and captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni (C) celebrate the wicket that led to the victory of India by 1 run during the World T20 cricket tournament match between India and Bangladesh at The Chinnaswamy Stadium. — AFP

DHONI: MANAGING CHAOS KEY TO NAIL BITING WIN

BANGALORE: Mahendra Singh Dhoni said India's nail biting one-run win over Bangladesh to keep their World Twenty20 dream alive was all about holding their nerve and being able to "manage chaos". India survived a rollercoaster match in Bangalore on Wednesday night that saw Bangladesh come tantalizingly close to chasing down India's total of 146 for seven, only to lose three wickets in the last three balls.

India finally scraped home when wicket-keeping skipper Dhoni ran out Mustafizur Rahman off the last ball of the match, after earlier taking two critical stumpings. With two wins and one losses, the victory gives India much-needed momentum as they gun for a place in the semi-finals, with only Australia left to play in the group stages.

Dhoni paid credit to his side for keeping cool and recovering from mistakes in the pressure-cooker atmosphere of a packed Chinnaswamy Stadium after showing similar resolve on Saturday in a win over Pakistan. Dhoni, known as "Captain Cool" and the brains behind India's onfield strategy, said it was important to listen to all voices in those situations, and then come to your own conclusions quickly.

"In a situation like this, it's literally chaos. What you are trying to do is you're trying to manage chaos," Dhoni said after the match. "Everybody will come and he'll have his own opinion. Often the opinion of a batsman is very different to the opinion of a bowler. "If I am convinced that this is something I want to do, I will go ahead with it but definitely having an open mind at that point of time really helps because at times in situations like these under pressure, that's where the input of others comes in. "But you have to assess everything and it has to happen in a very short span of time."

Dhoni singled out his younger charges including 22-year-old paceman Jasprit Bumrah for overcoming some shaky fielding, including a miss-field turned boundary and a

dropped chance off Bangladesh star batsman Tamim Iqbal, to produce some solid bowling. "These are the games that really make you better players because it pushes you to think in a different way, it pushes you to have that confidence in your strength at the time when it's really needed."

Surviving scares

The veteran skipper has survived many scares over the years including a slow start in 2007 before winning the inaugural World Twenty20. India's prospects also looked grim in the 2011 ODI World Cup after their first two matches against the game's big guns, before going on to clinch the trophy on home soil. The possibility of a Bangladeshi win evoked nasty memories for Dhoni of the 2007 50-over World Cup, when India were

eliminated in the first round after losing to the Tigers. Dhoni could still remember the pain of that defeat which came in the early days of his international career. "That's something that was very harsh on us, especially on me, I feel that was the point where I felt life was very tough," he said.

Mashrafe Mortaza hailed his bowlers for keeping India's batsmen in check, as Bangladesh bow out of the tournament after three straight losses and only in-form New Zealand left to play. "I think (our) bowlers have done a great job. We were on top till last three balls," the disappointed captain said. Bangladesh powered through the preliminary matches, but hit a wall in the group stage, and suffered a major blow when two of their best bowlers were suspended for illegal actions. — AFP

AFGHANS STAY PHILOSOPHICAL AFTER GOING DOWN FIGHTING

KABUL: Afghans rallied behind their defeated national cricket team yesterday after Asghar Stanikzai's side went down fighting at the World Twenty20 in Delhi, crashing out of the tournament despite giving England a scare. The third straight loss came despite Afghanistan's slow bowlers making England sweat on Wednesday, reducing them to 85 for seven only to have their batting let them down, falling just 15 runs short of victory.

"We lack experience, we are an inexperienced side. We played very well against England," Aziz Gharwal, a cricket board official said. "We restricted England to a decent total, but our batting has let us down.

"I think the more we play against top teams, the more we will gain experience

from them," he said.

The result sent Afghanistan out of the hunt for a semi-final spot after they also lost to Sri Lanka and South Africa in the Super 10 stage, though they will still play against the West Indies on March 27. Afghanistan had beaten Zimbabwe comprehensively in the qualifiers in mid-March to storm into the Super 10s, a remarkable feat for the only non-Test team left in the tournament—a team who have to play all their matches away from their war-torn home.

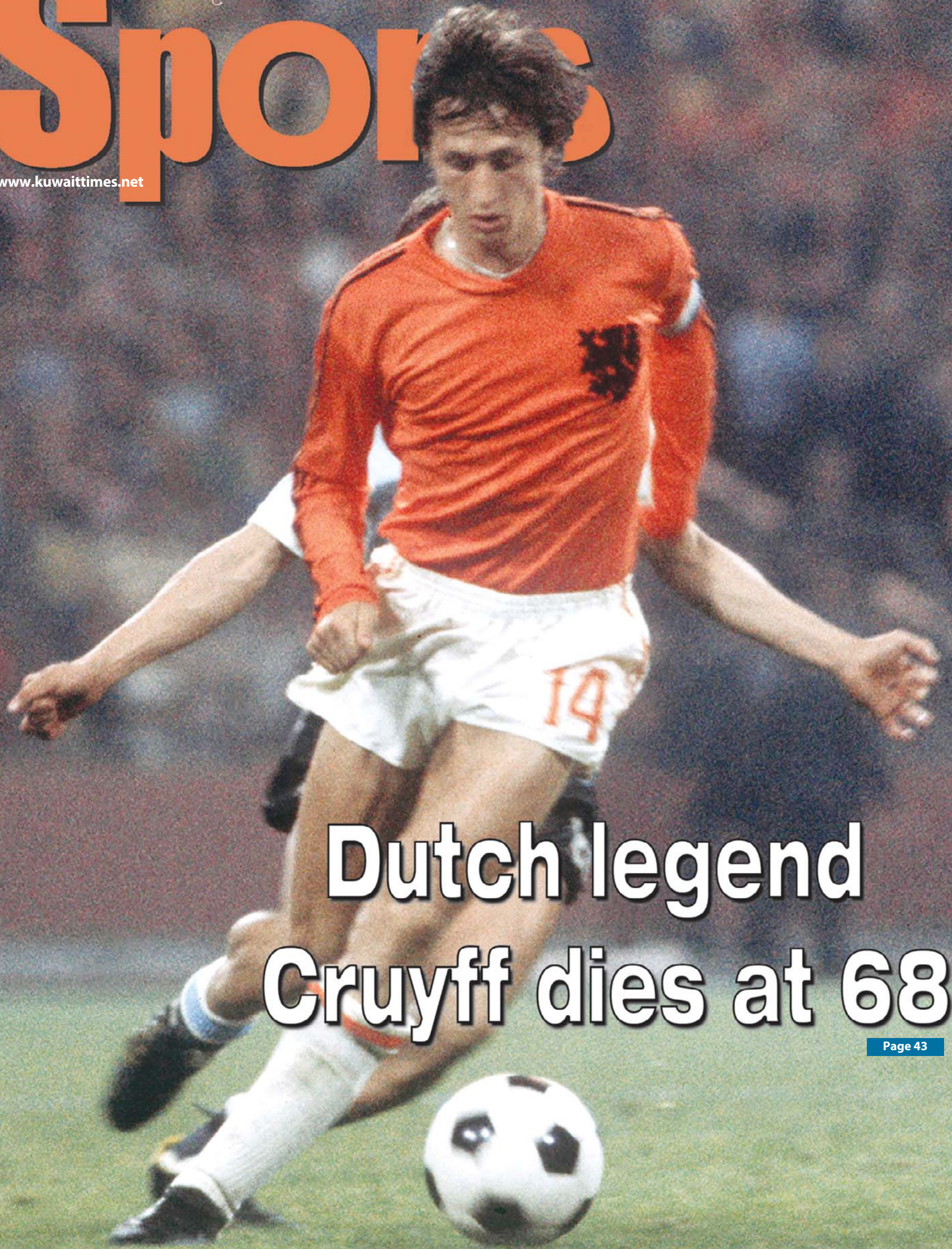
Afghan fans on social media took the loss in their stride. In 2012 England defeated Afghanistan by 116 runs. "Yesterday, we got beaten by 15 runs. Big improvements," said fan Naimatullah Khan on Facebook. — AFP

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Sports

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Dutch legend Cruyff dies at 68

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