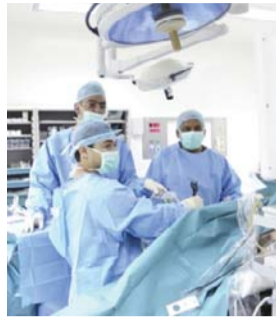




**Kuwaiti expert  
conducts weight  
loss operation on  
German patient**



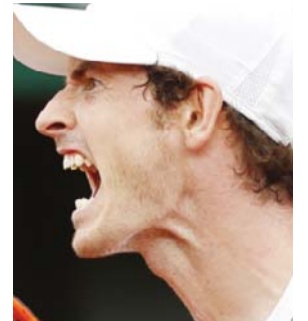
**Email scandal  
returns to  
dog Clinton  
presidential bid**



**Babies behind  
bars: Should  
moms do time  
with newborns?**



**Murray  
survives fresh  
five-set  
Paris battle**



## MUNICIPALITY BILL PASSED AS MPs SLAM CORRUPTION

### LAWMAKERS REFER KIA BUDGET FOR INVESTIGATION



150 FILS  
NO: 16885  
40 PAGES



Min 24°  
Max 39°  
High Tide  
03:28 & 13:38  
Low Tide  
08:29 & 21:20

### KUWAIT TO SIGN \$1BN DEAL FOR MUTLAA PROJECT

**DUBAI:** Kuwait is expected to sign within two weeks a \$1 billion contract with Italy's Salini Impregilo and Turkey's Limak Construction for its planned South Mutlaa City project, an official said yesterday. It is the first phase of the planned 100,000 sq km urban development, which is situated in central Kuwait and is expected to house around 400,000 residents when completed.

The project is part of a larger effort by the government to implement billions in megaprojects under its five-year development plan, despite a projected state budget deficit of around KD 22 billion for the next three years as a result of lower oil prices. The government has called for 'cost-cutting' programs including unsuccessfully reducing salaries and benefits of the country's oil sector workers.

Kuwait suffers a significant shortage of government-funded housing which particularly impacts young people, who often wait for years for a family home.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: MPs are seen during a session of the National Assembly yesterday. — KUNA

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** The National Assembly yesterday passed major amendments to municipality law in the first reading amid a strong onslaught by MPs on what they described as rife corruption in the municipality. State Minister for Municipality Essa Al-Kandari said the government has reservations over a number of articles in the draft law and will submit amendments to them before the second and final vote after two weeks.

MP Youssef Al-Zalzalah criticized corruption in the municipality, saying that for every violation and every license, there is a price at Kuwait Municipality. He called for holding corrupt people accountable. MP Mohammad Tana and others spoke about flagrant violations in constructions because of corruption. Tana asked why authorities can't hold accountable foreign contractors and engineering offices. Tana also threatened to grill the commerce and industry minister if he does not remove the scrapyard from Jahra.

MP Jamal Al-Omar said it is almost impossible to pass any transaction through the municipality without paying a bribe. MP Ahmad Lari said the new law will allow residents of 28 new areas to take part in the elections for the municipal council, while MP Hamdan Al-Azemi called for making the number of voters equal in each constituency, adding that the number of voters is over 100,000 in some districts, while it is around 16,000 in others.

Continued on Page 13

## YEMEN TALKS 'CLOSER' TO AGREEMENT UN CHIEF WANTS TO RAMP UP PEACE EFFORT

### INDIA COUNTING COST OF REDUCED GULF TRANSFERS

**NEW DELHI:** Having quit his low-paid job with a contractor in Qatar, electrician Kurian Joseph scurries for work each day in his hometown in Kerala, a southwestern state that has one of India's highest unemployment rates. He's a casualty of the global oil price collapse. Stories like Joseph's explain why remittances from Indians working abroad slumped 27 percent in the fiscal year through March to \$48 billion - the lowest since the 2008 global financial crisis.

Making \$250 a month, and faced with a pay cut as construction jobs in Qatar became scarcer, Joseph realized he could no longer afford monthly installments on his house and son's education. In January, after 15 years in the Gulf, he decided to go home. "Working conditions became bad after the oil crisis hit construction. Our company could not sustain its large work force," Joseph, 56, told Reuters from Changanassery, a ramshackle town strung along Kerala's main north-south road. "I am told the company is planning to retrench workers. Many of my friends are planning to return."

Most of India's remittances come from the oil-rich Gulf, where some seven million Indians have been working, but more and more are being forced to come home. Earlier this year, 1,000 Indian professionals were laid off by Qatar Petroleum. The prospect of further falls in remittances is a hindrance for the Reserve Bank of India, as it seeks to "bulletproof" the economy against sudden capital outflows.

Whereas India's external balances are in a far better shape than three years ago, when a sudden burst

Continued on Page 13

**KUWAIT:** The UN envoy said yesterday that Yemen's warring parties were closer to agreement at peace talks in Kuwait as he prepared to brief the Security Council on progress in negotiations. "We are moving towards a general understanding that encompasses the expectations and visions of the parties," Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed said in a statement. "The discussions have become more sensitive and delicate bringing us closer to a comprehensive agreement," he said.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed was to brief the UN Security Council in a closed session later yesterday on the progress made in

the peace talks which began on April 21 but have been clouded by repeated walkouts by the government delegation. He clarified on Twitter that he will make the briefing by video conference from Kuwait. Face-to-face meetings resumed on Monday for the first time in nearly a week after the latest government boycott.

Meanwhile, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is proposing a plan to beef up the UN mediation in Yemen to overcome deep differences in peace talks, according to a letter obtained by AFP yesterday.

Continued on Page 13



KIEV: Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko presents the Hero of Ukraine award to Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko yesterday. — AFP

## UKRAINIAN PILOT RETURNS HOME TO HERO'S WELCOME

**KIEV:** Ukrainian pilot Nadiya Savchenko returned home to a hero's welcome yesterday after nearly two years in a Russian jail following a prisoner swap with Moscow that drew a line under a major diplomatic spat. The 35-year-old army helicopter pilot flew home as part of a carefully choreographed exchange with Moscow, with two alleged Russian soldiers leaving Ukraine earlier in the day. "I'm ready to once again give my life for Ukraine on the battlefield," a defiant Savchenko declared after she touched down on home soil, barefoot and wearing a white T-shirt bearing the Ukrainian trident, a national symbol.

Soon after the presidential plane brought the crop-haired Savchenko home, a presidential motorcade whisked her from Kiev's main Boryspil airport to Poroshenko's office where he awarded her the Hero of Ukraine order, the country's highest honor. In Ukraine, she has become a symbol of resistance against what Kiev sees as Moscow's aggression in the east and has even been elected to parliament in absentia.

The president vowed that Ukraine would take back Crimea, which was annexed by Russia in 2014, and the rebel-held territory in the east of the ex-Soviet country. "Just as we brought back Nadiya, we will bring back Donbass and Crimea under Ukraine's control," Poroshenko said, adding that she had spent 709 days as a "Russian hostage". Speaking at the presidential administration building, Savchenko - who was officially pardoned by Russian President Vladimir Putin - urged Russians to fight injustice at home. "You have to rise up from your knees," she said. "Ukraine has every right to exist despite

someone's rotten soul and sick mind," she added in an apparent reference to Putin.

While in prison, the pilot launched several hunger strikes to protest her detention, refusing both food and water during her high-profile trial in southern Russia. She constantly defied the Russian authorities and even raised her middle finger at the court in March. Kiev and its Western allies view Savchenko as a pawn in Moscow's broader aggression against Ukraine that has seen Russia seize the Crimean peninsula and fuel the separatist uprising in 2014.

The French presidency said Savchenko's release was agreed by the leaders of France, Germany, Russia and Ukraine during phone talks earlier this week. Savchenko's return will be seen in Ukraine as a rare political victory for Poroshenko, who has been struggling with mounting economic troubles, squabbles among his allies and festering violence in the east of the ex-Soviet country. Savchenko, an Iraq war veteran, was convicted in March over the killing of two Russian journalists in eastern Ukraine and sentenced to 22 years behind bars. She had been held in captivity in Russia since June 2014.

She denies any involvement in the deaths of the two state television journalists. Savchenko - who was fighting in a pro-Kiev militia group against rebels in east Ukraine - insists she was kidnapped by separatist fighters before the journalists were killed in June 2014 and then illegally smuggled to Russia. "It's been a long and complicated road," lawyer Nikolai Polozov said on Twitter.

Continued on Page 13



SANAA: A Yemeni woman and a girl walk past cars as they beg for money in a street in the Yemeni capital on Tuesday. The United Nations says more than 80 percent of the population in Yemen is in dire need of food, medicine and other basic necessities. — AFP

## AFGHAN TALEBAN APPOINT NEW LEADER



Haibatullah Akhundzada

**KABUL:** The Afghan Taliban yesterday announced Haibatullah Akhundzada as their new leader, elevating a low-profile religious figure in a swift power transition after officially confirming the death of Mullah Mansour in a US drone strike. The surprise announcement coincided with a Taliban suicide bombing that targeted court employees near Kabul, killing 11 people in an assault that illustrated the potency of the insurgency despite the change of leadership.

Akhundzada, formerly one of Mansour's deputies, faces the enormous challenge of unifying an increasingly fragmented militant movement while it remains unclear whether he will emulate Mansour in shunning peace talks with the Afghan government. "Haibatullah Akhundzada has been appointed as the new leader of the Islamic Emirate (Taliban) after a unanimous agreement in the Shura (supreme council), and all the members of Shura pledged allegiance to him," the insurgents said in a statement.

It added that Sirajuddin Haqqani, an implacable foe of US forces, and Mullah Yakoub, the son of Taliban founder Mullah Omar, were appointed his deputies. Analysts had previously seen them as the most likely candidates for the leadership. "The leader of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan and commander of faithful, Mullah Akhtar Mansour, was martyred in a US drone strike in... Pakistan's Balochistan province," the statement said, in the insurgents' first confirmation of his death. Before his killing, Mansour had written a will handpicking Akhundzada to be his successor, Taliban sources told AFP, in an apparent bid to lend legitimacy to his appointment.

US President Barack Obama, who authorised the drone strikes, had confirmed the death Monday. He said Mansour had rejected efforts "to seriously engage in peace talks", asserting that direct negotiations with the Afghan government were the only way to end the attritional conflict.

Continued on Page 13

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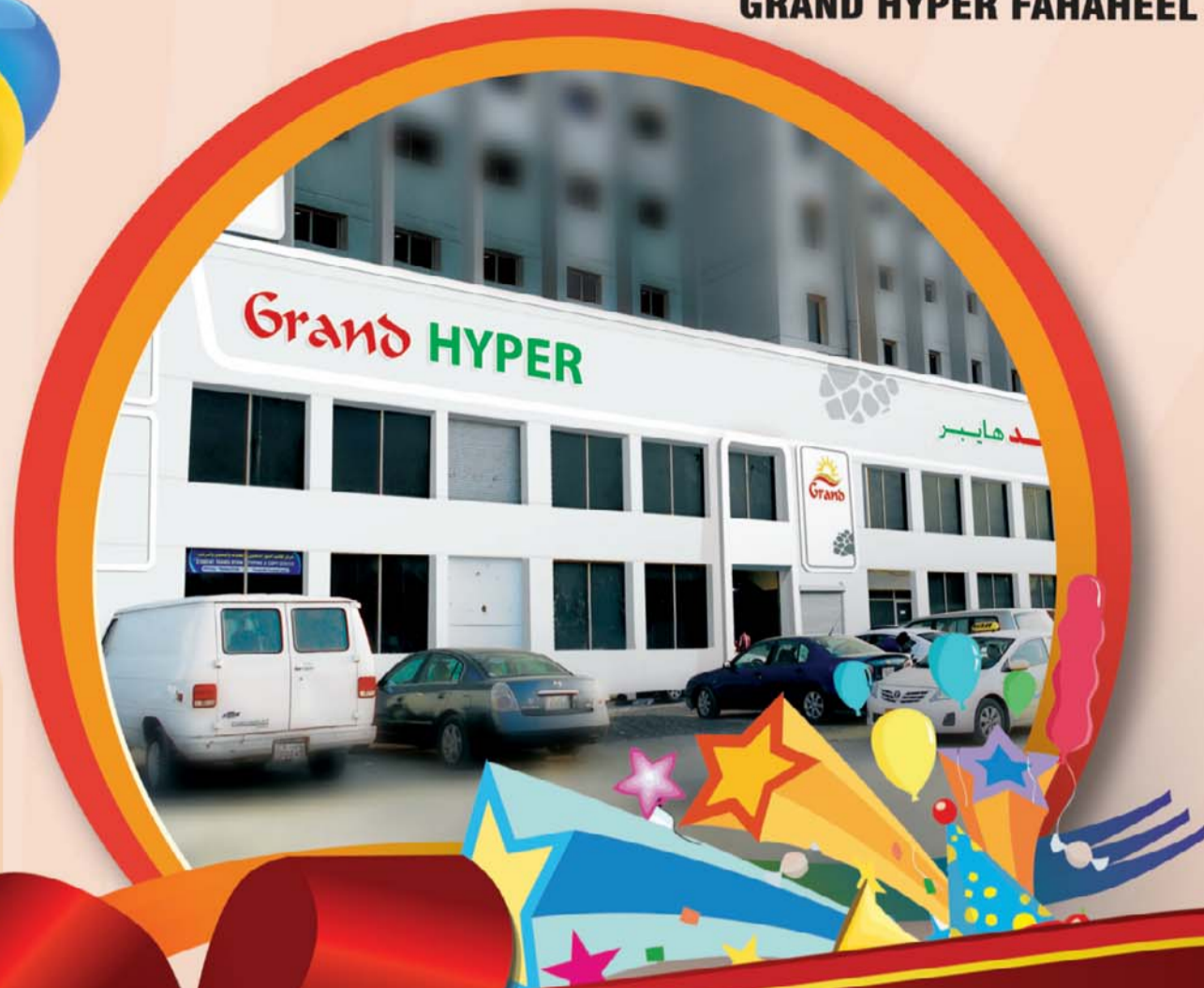
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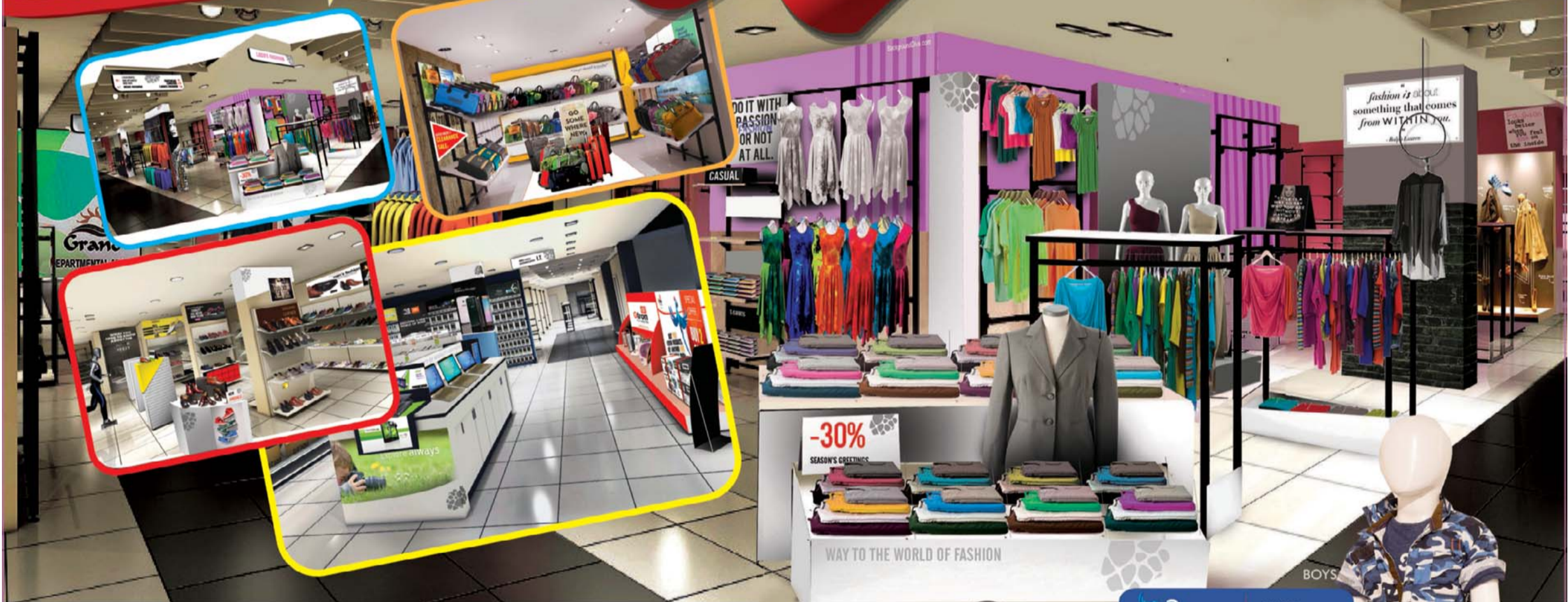


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**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah separately received Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and Kuwaiti actor Abdulhussain Abdulridha at Bayan Palace yesterday. Sheikh Salman and Abdulridha expressed gratitude during the meetings for naming a theater, affiliate to the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, after the actor's name. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah leaves for Moscow yesterday. — KUNA

## FM HEADS TO MOSCOW FOR GCC-RUSSIA MEETING

**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah has left for Moscow to lead Kuwait's delegation to the fourth meeting of GCC-Russian strategic dialogue due today.

The Kuwaiti delegation comprises Assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister's Office Affairs Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-

Mohammad Al-Sabah, Assistant Foreign Minister for GCC Affairs Nasser Al-Mezain, Kuwaiti Ambassador in Russia Abdulaziz Al-Adwani, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister Dr Rashed Al-Adwani and several other senior officials of the Foreign Ministry.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled was seen off at the airport by Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocols Dhari Al-Ajran and several other ministry officials. — KUNA

## KUWAIT CALLS FOR RAISING AWARENESS AGAINST EXTREMISM

**VIENNA:** Kuwait stressed on the importance of raising awareness against terrorism and radical thinking by educating the public and intensifying campaigns that call for tolerance and acceptance of others, a Ministry of Justice official said yesterday.

This remark was made by Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs at Ministry of Justice Zakariya Al-Ansari at the 25th session for the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) in Vienna. Ansari said that Kuwait strongly condemns terrorism of all its forms which violates all principles of human rights and values. He added that Kuwait is taking sincere measures against countering this phenomenon by strengthening regional and international cooperation.

Locally, Kuwait has adopted some protective measures such as: setting up a national committee to counter money laundry and terrorism funding, establishing a monetary investigation unit to protect public funding and creating a peace rehabilitation center to correct deviant ways of thinking within religious and psychological methods.

He said that the CCPCJ exerted efforts to promote religious moderation, stating that Kuwait has also set up a full scale strategic plan to promote religion moderation through the involvement of private sector, civil communities and governmental specialized bodies. The plan focuses on teaching religious values, encouraging social responsibility, developing e-media means to promote moderation, and tightening security methods. — KUNA



**MOSCOW:** Chief of Kuwait's National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah meets with Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov yesterday. — KUNA

## NATIONAL SECURITY CHIEF MEETS CHECHEN PRESIDENT

**MOSCOW:** Chief of Kuwait's National Security Apparatus Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah met with Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov in Grozny, Chechnya yesterday. Sheikh Thamer conveyed greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-

Jaber Al-Sabah to the Chechen President and people.

He also conducted negotiations with Secretary of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev, tackling the latest developments and issues of common interest. Sheikh Thamer is representing Kuwait in a meeting of senior officials in charge of security. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with US Assistant Secretary for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Frank Rose. — KUNA

## DEFENSE MINISTER MEETS US OFFICIAL

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah discussed yesterday with US Assistant Secretary for Arms Control, Verification and Compliance Frank Rose, issues of mutual concern, par-

ticularly, military ones. Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah underscored that ties between Kuwait and the US are robust, with both sides eager to further enhance those ties, a statement from the Ministry of Defense noted. Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant

General Mohammad Al-Khoder, Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah, US Ambassador to Kuwait Douglas Silliman and a number of military officials attended the meeting. — KUNA

## GOODWILL VISIT OF PAKISTAN NAVAL SHIP 'ZULFIQUAR'

**KUWAIT:** Pakistani Naval Ship 'ZULFIQUAR' will be visiting Kuwait on a good-will visit from May 29 to June 2, 2016. Pakistan Naval Ships periodically undertake goodwill visits to the State of Kuwait which provide excellent opportunity to Pakistan Navy officials to interact with their counterparts at brotherly country Kuwait. It also helps in further improving the strong relations between the two countries. Pakistani Naval Ship 'ZULFIQUAR' is the pioneer ship of the SWORD Class, F-22P Frigate project. The Ship was inducted in Pakistan Navy Fleet on 19 September 2009. Development of F-22P Frigate Project is a landmark achievement of PN towards self-reliance and indigeniza-

tion. The mission of the Ship is to maintain the standards of professionalism and excellence which are a hallmark of Pakistan Navy. The Ship will also avail this opportunity to hold Joint/Passage exercises with Kuwait Navy at the end of visit.

The Commanding Officer of the Ship, Captain Faisal Javeed Sheikh joined Pakistan Navy in 1989 and is a Navigation Specialist. During the stay in Kuwait, he will pay courtesy calls on the dignitaries of Kuwait Navy. A reception will also be held onboard which would be attended by the high civil/military officials of the State of Kuwait, Diplomats, notables and representatives of the Pakistani community.



**Captain Faisal Javeed Sheikh, Captain of the ship.**



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KUWAIT: Kuwaiti bariatric (weight loss) surgeon Dr Mohammad Al-Jarallah during a surgery. — KUNA

## KUWAIT DOCTOR PERFORMS WEIGHT LOSS OPERATION ON GERMAN PATIENT

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti bariatric (weight loss) surgeon Dr Mohammad Al-Jarallah conducted on Wednesday a surgery, the first of its kind, on a German national who arrived in the country specially for the operation due to his obesity and other health problems. Dr Jarallah said that the patient, Jorg Fischer, 45, weighed more than 150 kilogram, and also suffered from lack of movement, tiredness, and sleep disorder. The doctor said that this type of operation was conducted on patients who do

not suffer from throwing up or diabetes, adding that the operation was successful and is considered the first of its kind to be conducted in Kuwait on a foreign patient.

The process was based on a previously signed MoU between Dr Jarallah and a German hospital. Dr Jarallah noted that the patient is completely satisfied with the surgery, which would pave the way for conducting similar operations to European patients in the future in

Kuwait. Dr Jarallah noted that last year he conducted a similar surgery, which was broadcasted live from Kuwait to an international conference on obesity, participated by a number of world-wide experts on the specialty.

Fischer said that he was pleased with the operation and thanked Dr Jarallah for it. Among other contributions, Dr Jarallah published more than 40 scientific research papers, and was a former minister of health. — KUNA

## FORMER MP INDICTED OF OFFENDING JUDICIARY

By A Saleh and Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The criminal court yesterday indicted former MP Khaled Al-Sultan of offending a judge, but abstained from punishing him. Although the plaintiff - the judge hearing the Abdaly cell case - dropped the charges, informed sources said this ruling highlights that questioning the judiciary is an offense. The sources added that if it were not for dropping the charges, the ruling might have been tougher. Notably, on his Twitter account, Sultan had inquired about the reason behind holding the Abdaly case's hearings behind closed doors, which he deemed as discrediting and assuming that the case would be manipulated in the suspects' favor.

### Rent allowance

The constitutional court yesterday rejected a case against the housing welfare law that demanded receiving rent allowances from both the body an employee works for and the Public Authority for Housing Welfare. The court also rejected six other cases including one filed by MP Abdulhameed Dashti in which he questioned the constitutionality of article 4 of law number 31 of 1970 pertaining with amending penal law number 16/1960.

### Fugitive caught

Jahra detectives arrested a bedoon (stateless) in Sulabiya who had been wanted for a

total of 120 years imprisonment in a number of cases. Security sources said that the suspect showed a great deal of resistance, adding that detectives had lately arrested a number of suspects wanted for prison sentences totaling almost 1,000 years.

### 'Fake' drinks confiscated

The commercial inspection department at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry held sudden inspections at several supermarkets and department stores in Shuwaikh yesterday, which resulted in confiscating 1,440 bottles of a popular beverage that is widely consumed during Ramadan. Rasheed said the bottles were fake and did not have expiry dates. He added that the fake beverage was confiscated and the owners were referred to commercial prosecution. The campaigns were held under the supervision of the ministry's assistant undersecretary for supervision Eid Al-Rasheed, and as part of its plans to control prices and foodstuff quality before Ramadan.

### Sand 'theft'

Ahmadi municipality director Ahmed Al-Shetali said that his emergency team inspected Kuwait's southern areas, and the campaign resulted in detecting a number of trucks and diggers stealing sand. Shetali added that the team impounded nine trucks and a bulldozer at the site and that they were all referred to Mina Abdullah police station.

## 6,000 SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE: MINISTER

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Minister of Education Dr Bader Al-Essa announced 6,000 scholarships are available in the academic year 2016-2017 and that the number of scholarships to study medicine has been increased. Commenting on the ongoing final high school exams, Essa denied intentions to use jamming devices during the exams. He explained that the ministry had considered using them, but scrapped the idea when the Ministry of Health (MoH) advised that these devices may harm students.



Minister of Education Dr Bader Al-Essa

available 24/7. Yaqout added that the new service was made in collaboration with MoH and that ambulances would also be provided at Kaifan and Shuwaikh campuses later with the aim of providing safety, prevention, medical and first aid services during possible contingencies, especially since the total number of students has exceeded 30,000.

### Students robbed

Meanwhile, around 10 KU students' vehicles were broken into and their contents stolen yesterday in Kaifan. Security sources said detectives found that all thefts happened at the same time, using the same method of breaking the side windows. The sources added that robbers stole a number of mobile phones and wallets. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

### Ambulances at campus

In other news, the safety and security manager at Kuwait University (KU) Khaled Al-Yaqout announced providing Khalidiya campus with an ambulance that would be



LONDON: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with the UK Government Special Envoy to Yemen, Sir Alan Duncan. — KUNA

## KUWAITI, UK OFFICIALS DISCUSS YEMEN TALKS

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with the UK Government Special Envoy to Yemen, Sir Alan Duncan. The two officials discussed the pace of progress in the Yemen peace negotiations, currently on-going in Kuwait, as well as the status of bilateral relations between Kuwait and the UK. Attending the meeting was Kuwait's ambassador to the UK Khaled Al-Duwaisan and a number of Kuwaiti officials from the embassy of Kuwait and the office of Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah.

Meanwhile, Jarallah met later with members of the Kuwaiti task groups from government bodies who took part in the eighth meeting of the joint Kuwaiti-UK Steering Group. The meeting between Kuwaiti and UK officials of the Steering Group started earlier yesterday and cov-

ered much ground in the relationship between both countries.

Jarallah touted the two-day meeting which he noted would boost bilateral ties in a wide array of interests. Aimed at broadening and deepening a close and historic relationship which dates back decades, the Joint Steering Group was set up during the state visit to the UK of the Kuwaiti Amir, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in December 2012.

Chairing the meeting from the Kuwaiti side was Jarallah and from the UK side Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Tobias Ellwood. The biannual meeting of the Group brings together a large number of government officials from both countries who seek deepening bilateral relations in numerous fields of interest. — KUNA

## News

In Brief

### Egyptian flight searched for disparity of boarding cards

KUWAIT: Authorities at the Kuwait International Airport on Tuesday searched a flight bound to Egypt as a "precautionary measure" prompted by a disparity in the number of boarding passes issued, the Interior Ministry said. As a result of the difference between the actual boarding cards and the number recorded by the airline, the authorities asked the passengers to leave the NileAir plane which was subjected to a full inspection, in line with the relevant security requirements, the ministry's Security Media Department said in a statement yesterday. It added that the airport's security bodies took the "precautionary measures" for inspecting the flight, which later took off to its destination. The Department called for verifying information from the authorized sources, saying they are always ready to offer reply to inquiries. — KUNA

### Tax treaties

RIYADH: The GCC committee on financial and economic cooperation convened an extraordinary meeting on the ministerial level on Tuesday, with Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance Khalifa Hamadah leading his country's delegation. The meeting, chaired by Saudi Minister of Finance Dr Ibrahim Al-Assaf, reviewed a range of recommendations on activation of economic cooperation and integration among the GCC member states. These recommendations were developed by the joint meeting of the committee of finance undersecretaries and the GCC customs union, and the council of heads of tax departments. They include two draft treaties on a single value-added tax system and the selective tax system for the GCC countries. — KUNA

### Environment protection

KUWAIT: Kuwait is taking serious measures to protect the environment and natural resources, said Minister of Public Works and Minister of National Assembly Affairs Ali Al-Omar. "Implementing the articles of the environment protection law and setting a number of restrictions is vital to protect our resources," said Omar at a ceremony held by Kuwait Environment Protection Society to celebrate the "International Day for Biological Diversity" late Tuesday. The minister, meanwhile, stressed on the role of environment law in achieving sustainable development and protecting different life forms in Kuwait. — KUNA

### Food agreements

KUWAIT: The Public Authority of Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) have signed agreements with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to execute several key projects in Kuwait. The agreement involves projects to develop fish stock, establishing a training center run by FAO and a fodder evaluation program, deputy director general at PAAAFR Faisal Al-Sideeqi said in a press statement yesterday. He added that the two bodies also agreed on setting gardens containing plants of all environments for the purpose of educating people and protecting endangered species, while promoting tourism and investment. — KUNA



Bottles containing homebrewed liquor found in Hawally yesterday.

## MAN WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASE COMMITTED VICE ACTIVITIES

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

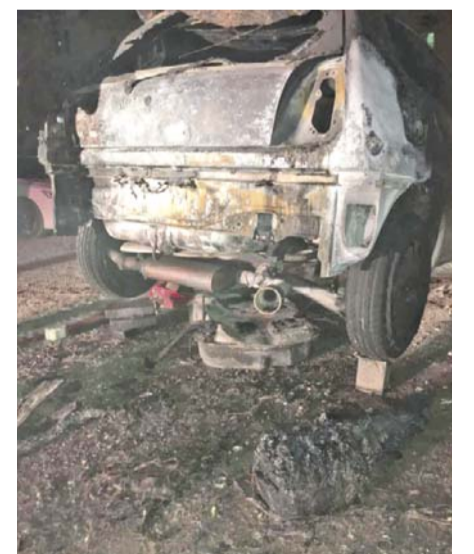
KUWAIT: Residency detectives arrested an Egyptian man infected with an infectious disease who engaged in vice activities in exchange of money. The suspect, identified as Mohammad Al-Dabe Mahmoud, entered Kuwait on a visit visa issued by a company, according to information received by detectives.

### Liquor raid

Hawally detectives raided a place where local liquor was being brewed, finding 309 bottles and equipment. Police arrested a number of people who operated the place. The suspects were taken to the authorities for further action.

### Fire

Farwaniya fire department put out a fire in a car that started while its fuel tank was being repaired in Khaitan. No injuries were reported in the incident.



A damaged vehicle pictured following a fire in Khaitan.

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## INFLATION IN KUWAIT UP 2.8% IN APRIL

KUWAIT: The Consumer Prices Index (CPI), or inflation rate, recorded an increase estimated at 2.85 percent in April 2016, compared to April 2015, showed an official economic report yesterday. The index figure during the month of April 2016 recorded a fall of 140.6 by 0.07 percent as a result of the fall in prices of some major groups with influential figures in the movement and rise in prices of some groups, said the monthly report of the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB).

The report gives indications of the rates of changes in prices for the commodity groups influencing the families' expenditure and the ability of consumer spending. This index uses the year 2007 as the base year. The index figure for the main group of food and beverages rose

by 2.62 percent in April, compared to April 2015, but it fell by 0.46 percent on an annual basis.

The prices of subgroups of the first main group dipped on a monthly basis, while those of three groups were high. The second main group (tobacco and narcotics) stood in April on a monthly basis, but hiked 0.99 percent on an annual basis, it said.

The index figure of the third group (clothing and footwear) went up 0.39 percent on an annual basis, while it dropped 0.08 percent on a monthly basis. Inflation in the fourth group (housing services) shot up by 6.25 percent on an annual basis, as that of the fifth group (furnishing equipment and household maintenance) surged by 2.95 percent on an annual basis, the

report added. The sixth group (health) saw a 1.25 percent rise in the inflation rate in April on an annual basis, and a 0.08 percent dip on an annual basis, while the seventh group (transport) went down 1.44 percent on a yearly basis, it indicated.

The eighth group (communication) edged up 0.59 percent on a yearly basis, as the ninth group (recreation and culture) plummeted 0.39 percent on a yearly basis. The tenth group (education) hiked by 3.48 percent in April on an annual basis. The 11th group (restaurants and hotels) went up by 2.36 percent on a yearly basis, while the last group (miscellaneous goods and services) saw an annual rise of 0.84 percent, the report concluded. — KUNA

## BANKS SHOULDER RESPONSIBILITY THROUGH TRAINING PROGRAMS: KIBS

**KUWAIT:** Director-General of Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies (KIBS) Dr Ya'qoub Al-Refa'ei said yesterday the banking sector's program for training and employing the new graduates is a national pilot project that reflects the banks' commitment to their social corporate responsibility. The program came in response to an initiative by the Central Bank of Kuwait and is backed by the KIBS stakeholders with a view to building the capacity of new employees in the banking sector, he said.

Refa'ei made the comments at a ceremony held by KIBS to mark the graduation of 28 participants in the fourth batch of the training program. He noted that the Institute made numerous achievements in terms of professional education, e-learning services, and capacity building, citing KIBS winning of the academic accreditation for its certificate from the British IFS University College. He added that the 28 graduates were selected from 143 candidates for the two-month training program. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** A group picture of students who graduated from a training program organized by the Kuwait Institute of Banking Studies.



**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah meets with Arab women journalists' union members. — KUNA

## MINISTER HIGHLIGHTS ARAB WOMEN JOURNALISTS' ROLE

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah lauded the role played by the Arab women journalists' union in highlighting women's issues in the Arab World. This remark was made by the minister during his recent meeting with the union's President - Kuwait branch - Raba'a Hussein Muki Juma'a.

Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah stressed his support to Kuwaiti women in all fields of

media by providing proper training and vocational rehabilitation. He wished success to all members of the union in their endeavors, pointing out that this newly established body will be a fundamental addition to women journalists in Kuwait.

The Arab women journalists' union is sponsored by the Arab League and its inception was announced officially in December 2015, in Cairo. The union aims at supporting women who work in print and broadcast journalism. — KUNA



**KUWAIT:** Some of the manuscripts on display. — KUNA

## RARE MANUSCRIPTS ON DISPLAY AT KUWAIT'S NATIONAL LIBRARY

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait National Library, in collaboration with the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, opened Tuesday evening the first exhibition for the Arab and Georgian manuscripts. The event, sponsored by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), is part of the celebrations of Kuwait Capital of Islamic Culture 2016, and is organized in cooperation with the Georgian embassy.

The exhibition highlights "bright and exciting" pages in the history of the Arabs and Muslims, reflecting major features of the Islamic civilization, Director General of the Kuwait National Library Kamel Abdul-Jalil said on the sidelines of the opening ceremony. It features rare items from the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, located in the capital Tbilisi, including a multitude of works by Arab and Muslims scientists, as well as by pioneer Georgian calligraphers.

Abdul-Jalil stressed the library's eagerness to enhance Kuwait's status as a "Capital of Islamic Culture 2016" and reveal its openness to the world countries, in particular ones that own Islamic manuscripts. This "cultural openness is part of Kuwait's identity and heritage," he said.

Georgian ambassador to Kuwait, Roland Beridze said the event will contribute to efforts to bolster bilateral ties, since cultural activities constitute a major channel for convergence among nations. — KUNA

## KUWAIT YOUTH INSPIRED BY JAPANESE MANUFACTURING

**OSAKA:** Young manufacturing professionals from Kuwait led by Dr Souhaila Al-Muttawa, faculty member of the Mechanical Engineering Department at Kuwait University, visited a comprehensive support hub for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) manufacturers in western Japan to learn about Japanese expertise.

The 11-member delegation, the first-ever Kuwait's group to visit Monodzukuri (Innovative Manufacturing) Business Information-center Osaka (MOBIO) located in Higashiosaka City, was impressed by the latest technologies and products on display in its permanent exhibit.

"I am pleased to see so many innovative ideas being shared in this manufacturing cluster," Tariq Al-Khonaini, a Kuwaiti manufacturing entrepreneur, said after the visit. "This hands-on visit to Japan is a great learning experience for all involved, much more can be gained from this visit than any other type of training program or lectures," said Meshari Al-Baqer, an engineer in Aqual Cool Water Company. Osaka Prefecture hosts more than 41,000 factories, the largest number in Japan. Established by the Osaka prefectural government in 2009, MOBIO is an integrated support facility to promote innovation and industry partnerships among SMEs' manufacturers.

According to Dr Muttawa, after initial recommendation by the Japanese Embassy in Kuwait, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) has arranged the visit to MOBIO through their offices in Dubai and Osaka. The JETRO has recently launched an Industrial Tourism program to promote visits to manufacturing hubs, factory tours, and industrial museums in Japan. While in Osaka, the youth also visited the Entrepreneurial Museum of Challenge and Innovation to trace the growth of Japanese entrepreneurs from villages to the world stage. Many large corporations today started as small enterprises, such as Osaka-origin Panasonic and trading firm Itochu.

Their itinerary included a tour of the Disaster Prevention Museum, where they experienced an earthquake simulator, fire-escape training and other facilities. At the site, Refrigeration Industries Co. (Coolex) Safety Manager Khaled Yousry underlined the importance of applying new ideas gained in Japan in Kuwait's local factories and manufacturing sector. "Most of the time, simple solutions lead to the greatest impact," Yousry added. — KUNA

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ARABS' IDOLS

By Salah Al-Sayer

According to researcher George Kadar, the author of 'Pre-Islamic Arabian Gods', there were 360 idols around the Kaaba before Islam, with Hobal the greatest of them all. He also said that the Quraysh tribe manufactured, traded and exported idols to India. It was also said that Muawiya Ibn Abi Sufian was an idol merchant and that idols were brought to Makkah for people to purchase and take home. There was hardly a man from Quraysh who did not have an idol in his house to touch for blessings whenever he went in or out of the house.

The book also notes that Amr Ibn Ohaii Al-Khozaei was known as the 'father of idols' in Arabia and that he was the first to bring one from the Levant and place it in Makkah, ordering people to worship and respect it. The book also mentions that Hobal was the greatest of Quraysh idols and explains that all Arabian gods' names originated from three names - the moon, sun and Venus, considering this heavenly trinity as the nuclei of divinity for Semites, from whom monotheism originated.

Kadar explained that Arabian religious life in pre-Islamic periods was characterized by endless diversity of acts of worship and thought that celestial phenomena were acts that were no less worthy of worship than worldly and earthly phenomena. In ancient Yemen, the name Tho Samaei (Owner of the Sky) was very common.

Kadar's readers can notice that some names used to describe some ancient idols have become part of Allah's good and beautiful names after Islam, due to the divine meanings they have. These names include Al-Jabbar (the Compeller) Al-Hakeem (the Wise), Al-Aleem (the Knowing), Al-Hayy (the Alive), Al-Dayyan (the Judge), Al-Rahman (the Compassionate), Al-Sattar (the Protector), Al-Raheem (the Merciful), Al-Hadi (the Guide) and Allah.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Jarida

الفرشوان

SPECIAL BENEFITS FOR LAW-ABIDING COMPANIES

**KUWAIT:** High-ranking sources said the Manpower Public Authority (MPA) board, headed by Social Affairs and Labor Minister and State Minister for Planning and Development Hind Al-Subaih, is about to issue a ministerial decision on 'VIP' companies in the private sector that comply with law 6/2010 concerning work in the private sector.

Sources said the MPA board is finalizing the decision before its release, which will be in a few days, adding that all labor departments have collected the names of companies to be included on the VIP list, which will be the first companies to benefit from the advantages and facilities the decision provides. They said that there are certain rules in the decision based on which the companies will be chosen for the list, including complete compliance with the law and its rules, being of good repute, providing suitable jobs for workers on their files and compliance with their



Minister Hind Al-Subaih

contracts with the workers. They added that they should be committed to transferring employees' salaries monthly, and should not have a file at the "disputes" department. If they do have such a file, the complaint must have been resolved in the company's favor and all its workers should be working for it and not for others.

About the facilities the selected companies will enjoy, the sources said the companies will be treated similar to categories excluded from issuing work permits and small and medium size projects, like bringing workers from abroad according to area (one worker per five meters). They said the companies will be given greater facilities in processing transactions and expanding the use of the online portal, and process most transactions electronically without the need to go to the specialized department. — Al-Jarida

INTERIOR MINISTRY READY TO APPLY CHILD PROTECTION LAW



Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahd

**KUWAIT:** Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahd asked ministry sectors to prepare to implement the child protection law when it becomes effective. Security sources said the public security department has begun cooperation with the family disputes affairs department to discuss child abuse cases, as well as coordinating with the investigation department which works with the technical office on the categorization of cases - to be recorded as misdemeanors or felonies, and deal with them confidentially. There is also coordination with investigators about the mechanism necessary to categorize a case and send it to the courts.

Meanwhile, the health ministry asked doctors in all hospitals to inform the child protection team at the hospital immediately when they suspect any violence, physical or emotional mistreatment, sexual abuse or negligence against children, so that the necessary procedures can be taken towards every case.

Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Khalid Al-Sahlawi issued a circular to health zone directors, saying that the child protection team will inform the juvenile protection unit at the criminal detectives department to take the necessary action and receive information about maltreatment or negligence referred from the primary healthcare center. — Al-Rai and Al-Jarida

News In Brief

Co-ops reject 5% profit share for governorates

**KUWAIT:** Chairmen of co-operative societies rejected a proposal to allocate five percent of profits for governorates. They said following a recent meeting that co-ops are owned by shareholders, arguing that the government has no right to allocate some of the profits to governors 'who enjoy a specific budget allocated by the cabinet.' — Al-Anbaa

Classes canceled

**KUWAIT:** A total of 3,000 students have withdrawn their registration for summer courses at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), General Director Dr Ahmad Al-Athari said. Meanwhile, 12,000 out of 17,000 students registered for summer courses have canceled registration in some classes they had originally registered for. As a result, some classes had to be closed because they could not meet the minimum number of students after many of them canceled their registration. This situation creates problems for many students who wish to sign up for certain courses but are forced to wait for the following semester after the classes are closed. — Al-Rai

No leaves

**KUWAIT:** State departments can hire bedoons (stateless) under an article under which the employees are unentitled to any leaves aside from annual and sick leaves, the Civil Service Commission (CSC) decided. This article pertains with seeking the services of non-Kuwaiti expertise for hire. The CSC had recently made this clarification to the Ministry of Education, indicating that an employee hired under this article is entitled to an annual leave equal to one day for every ten working days since his last leave, as well as a maximum 15 days a year of sick leaves. — Al-Rai

Crime Report

Teacher arrested for child abuse

**KUWAIT:** A video clip showing a teacher molesting a girl inside a house led to his arrest. The suspect, a 65-year-old Pakistani, gave private lessons in his house, where some girls were abused. A security source said a video clip of an elderly teacher harassing a girl who was in his house for private tuitions led vice detectives to investigate the case. The investigations led them to identify a suspect who works for a private school. The man has been living in Kuwait for 35 years. Detectives waited for him outside his house and arrested him. He confessed to abusing some girls. Detectives are investigating.

Thief overpowered

A citizen foiled the attempt of a thief who tried to mug him near a mall in Salmiya. The suspect begged him for forgiveness, but the citizen did not oblige and called police, who detained him at the police station. The suspect had attacked the citizen near his car and demanded his money, but the man overpowered him. — Al-Rai

NBK SPONSORS ACK

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) sponsors Australian College of Kuwait (ACK). The sponsorship comes in line with NBK's vital role it plays in supporting all students, youths and educational initiatives. This sponsorship goes with NBK's support to ACK's activities and events for a whole year including educational initiatives, internships, activities, lectures for industry-related seminars, as well as sponsorship related to certain ACK student activities and events.

"NBK's sponsorship and support to ACK comes in line with the bank's customary and ongoing spirit of corporate citizenship as well as the vital role it plays in supporting educational initiatives," said NBK Public Relations Manager, Abdul Mohsen Al-Rushaid. "NBK always strives to empower youth to realize their potentials, providing different supportive opportunities."

Rushaid added "NBK has always considered supporting youth an essential part of its social and philanthropic outreach which comes in line with the bank's commitment to encourage a merit-based educational system that promotes the best and the brightest the country has to offer and rewards students for their hard work and excellence." From ACK's end, Dr Gad Elbeheri, ACK's Dean, went on to



add: "I am very excited about teaming up with such a reputable and well established bank like NBK. I believe that affording our students the chance to experience real life work through our internship program with NBK will not only enrich their exposure to the job market in Kuwait but will also enable them the chance to apply the practical skills they

have learnt with us at ACK and empower them to serve the community in which they live in."

NBK annually promotes a range of educational initiatives as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility. In addition to sponsoring student's clubs and universities, NBK offers many training programs including NBK Academy, Shabab program and the

Summer Internship Program. The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) has become one of the leading educational institutions in Kuwait, strongly contributing to the employment sector and continuing to produce knowledgeable, skilled and professional candidates for Kuwait's growing economy through its Bachelor's Degree and Diploma programs.



KUWAIT: Stephen M R Covey speaks during the seminar.



Stephen Covey with KIPCO Group executives.

KIPCO HOSTS 'SPEED OF TRUST' SEMINAR BY STEPHEN COVEY

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO) hosted Stephen M R Covey on his first trip to Kuwait. Covey is a renowned keynote speaker and advisor on trust and leadership and the author of New York Times Bestseller 'The Speed of Trust'. In collaboration with Franklin Covey Middle East, Covey held two sessions on the importance of trust; the first for KIPCO Group CEOs and their Deputies, and the second for leaders and high potentials at KIPCO and KAMCO Investment Company.

In his welcoming remarks, Samer Khanachet, KIPCO's Group Chief Operating Officer said: "At KIPCO, we invest in our current and future executives. We are delighted to welcome Covey, who is in Kuwait for the first time, to talk about ways in which we can each extend trust to others and support the development of our group leadership." Meanwhile, Covey, Co-Founder and CEO of Covey Link Worldwide said: "I believe that trust is 'the one thing that changes everything', and this is why it has



Stephen Covey with KIPCO-KAMCO group.

become an important competency in leadership today. In a fast-changing business environment, people need to continuously find ways to collaborate and partner, and this can only be made possible with trust. I

am delighted to be here at KIPCO to speak about this highly learnable skill."

In his sessions, Covey described trust as being 'the one thing that changes everything'. He emphasized three main ideas:

Trust is an economic driver, not merely a social value; trust is the number one competency of leadership needed today, and is the currency of collaboration and partnering; and that trust is a learnable skill.

NATIONS HAVE GONE

By Nermin Al-Houti

Morals are among the attributes many poets of the Islamic and Arab civilization wrote about, and among those poems that we remember instantly when we mention morals are the words of the prince of poets Ahmad Shawqi: "Nations are strong with their morals - if these morals are gone, they are gone."

Today we do not have words about morals other than saying "nations are gone" - yes this is the situation of our societies and people, who now lack much of the meanings of morals. In our societies, the young do not respect their elders, and the elders do not show compassion towards the young. Credibility, honoring kinship and respecting relatives, helping the needy and other good manners our grandfathers called for and our fathers instilled have regressed, and regretfully, winds came by to uproot the seeds from their land and replace them with the seeds of grudges, envy and jealousy in our environment.

A reader sent me a complaint to give her advice. She is not married and does not have children, and she used to consider the children of her siblings as her own. The woman said in her letter: "Following the death of my parents, everybody used to call me during the early days, but after months went by, calls became scarce, then became nonexistent." This was not limited to her brothers and sisters, but also their children, who do not call her and do not ask about her. Her uncles and their children no longer call and only remember her during Eids, when she goes to visit them.

The strange thing in the woman's letter is that her entire family used an excuse for not asking about her, which is that when they see her, they ask: "Are you not out of town?" This is the excuse her family imposed on her to have a reason for not communicating with her, and considered her always "traveling," as if she "had left life," waiting for her actual death so she would leave their lives for real. The irony of those individuals is that when this woman is sick or undergoes surgery, and when they learn about it, their response is: "Why didn't you tell us?"

I wonder about you, as you are many in our society - does the person who gets sick have to put an announcement about his illness? Why do not you call and ask? Our case today is not something new to society that is awash with materialism and interests and lacks mercy. We end with what we started, that "nations have gone."

— Translated by Kuwait Times



**Netanyahu joins forces with Lieberman to expand govt**

## IS UNDER PRESSURE WITH TWIN ASSAULTS

**BEIRUT:** US-backed Syrian fighters and Iraqi forces pressed twin assaults against the Islamic State group yesterday, in two of the most important ground offensives yet against the jihadists. The operations to the north of IS' de facto Syrian capital Raqqa and near the jihadist-held Iraqi city of Fallujah are adding to pressure on the extremist group, which has seen territory under its control steadily shrinking in recent months.

The US-led coalition that launched air strikes against IS in Syria and Iraq in mid-2014 is providing air support on both fronts, as efforts intensify to dismantle the group's self-styled Islamic "caliphate" straddling the Syrian-Iraqi border. But there is deep concern for thousands of families in both cities, with fears civilians will be caught in the crossfire or used as human shields by the jihadists.

After the start of the Fallujah offensive was announced on Monday, Iraqi troops backed by pro-government militias have been advancing toward the city from surrounding areas. Yesterday, forces from Iraq's 8th Division bolstered by tribal fighters pushed forward from areas to its south, said Staff Major General Ismail Al-Mahalawi, the head of the Operations Command for Iraq's Anbar province. US-led coalition warplanes and Iraqi aircraft were providing support, Mahalawi said. In northern Syria, a Kurdish-Arab alliance also backed by coalition strikes was meanwhile pressing the jihadist group in its bastion province of Raqqa.

### 'Constant Air Strikes'

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), formed in Oct 2015, announced on Tuesday its push for IS territory north of Raqqa city, which is some 90 km south of the Syrian-Turkish border and home to an estimated 300,000 people. The SDF is dominated by the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) - largely considered the most effective independent anti-IS force on the ground in Syria - but it also includes Arab Muslim and Christian fighters.

The SDF already has two footholds north of the city: the border town of Tal Abyad and the smaller town of Ain Issa between Tal Abyad and Raqqa city. Yesterday, SDF fighters cleared two fields that lie southeast of Ain Issa, according to a statement distributed to journalists. SDF spokesman Talal Sello told reporters the fighting was taking place in "rural areas. There is no street fighting". "There are no plans yet to liberate Raqqa city, except in a future campaign after this one, depending on the circumstances," he said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said 10,000 to 15,000 SDF fighters were estimated to be taking part in the offensive. "There were constant air strikes on Raqqa by the coalition overnight," Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. Baghdad-based US military spokesman Colonel Steve Warren said Tuesday the US military would conduct air strikes to support thousands of SDF fighters, some of whom have been trained and equipped by US forces. If Raqqa falls, "it's the beginning of the end of their caliphate," Warren said.

The anti-IS coalition has set its sights on Raqqa in Syria, as well as Fallujah and eventually IS's main Iraqi bastion of Mosul. Tens of thousands of civilians remain in all three

cities. Coalition planes dropped flyers over Raqqa earlier this month urging residents to flee but IS has prevented residents from leaving. SDF spokesman Sello said IS "use of civilians as human shields" was slowing the drive for rural territory and villages north of Raqqa city. Abdel Aziz Al-Hamza, a co-founder of the prominent Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently activist group, said IS was taking cover among civilians in Raqqa city too.

"In a civilian building, you'll find two or three apartments for ISIS fighters," Hamza said in an interview with AFP, using another acronym for IS. "The civilians are besieged, they can't leave their city," said Hamza, who fled Raqqa in January 2014 and has been living in Germany. Rights groups have also appealed for safe exit for the estimated 50,000 civilians still inside Fallujah, which was seized by anti-government fighters in early 2014 and later became an IS bastion. With IS also facing increasing pressure in Syria from regime offensives backed by Russian air strikes, analysts say the group will struggle to hold on to the swathes of territory it seized in Iraq and Syria two years ago. The territory "is in the long run too big for (IS) to possibly hold," analyst Romain Caillet said.

But the group, which has claimed a wave of deadly bombings and attacks in the West and across the Middle East, has shown it can continue to operate to horrific effect. On Monday, a spate of IS-claimed bombings in two regime-held cities in coastal Syria left 184 people dead, in what the Britain-based Observatory said were the deadliest bomb attacks in Syria's five-year civil war. — AFP



**Iraqi pro-government forces gather in Al-Shahabi village, east of the city of Fallujah, on Tuesday, as part of a major assault to retake the city from Islamic State (IS) group. — AFP**

## CLINTON EMAIL SERVER BROKE US GOVT RULES

**NEW YORK:** Hillary Clinton broke government rules by using a private email server without approval while U.S. secretary of state, an internal government watchdog said yesterday. The long-awaited report by the State Department inspector general was the first official audit of the controversial arrangement to be made public so far, and was also critical of department record-keeping practices before Clinton's tenure. It concluded that Clinton, now the frontrunner in the race to become the Democratic presidential nominee, would not have been allowed to use the server in her home had she asked the department officials in charge of information security.

The report undermined Clinton's defense of her private server. She said it was allowed and that no permission was needed, although she has since apologized for the arrangement. The report's highly critical findings included an account of State Department technology staff trying to internally raise concerns about the arrangement in 2010 only to be told to keep quiet by an official in Clinton's office. It immediately fueled Republican criticism of Clinton in an already acrimonious race. The report will also add to Democratic anxieties about voter perceptions of Clinton as untrustworthy and secretive.

Several other inquiries are continuing, including a US Justice Department investigation into whether the arrangement broke laws. The inspector general's report cited "long-standing, systemic weaknesses" with State Department records that predated Clinton's tenure, and found problems with the email record-keeping of some of her predecessors that failed to comply with the Federal Records Act. But it singled out Clinton for her decision to use a private server in her home in Chappaqua, New York, for government business, apparently without seeking authorization.

"OIG found no evidence that the Secretary requested or obtained guidance or approval to conduct official business via a personal email account on her private server," the report said, using an abbreviation for the office of inspector general. The report said she should have discussed the arrangement with the department's security and technology officials. Officials told the inspector general's office that they "did not - and would not - approve her exclusive reliance on a personal email account to conduct Department business."

The reason, those officials said, is because it breached department rules and presented "security risks." When two lower-level information technology officials tried to raise concerns about Clinton's email arrangement in late 2010, their supervisor in Clinton's office instructed them "never to speak of the Secretary's personal email system again," the report said. Their supervisor told them that department lawyers had approved of the system, but the inspector general's office said it found no evidence this was true.

Brian Fallon, a Clinton spokesman, said the report rebutted criticisms of Clinton made by her political opponents. "Contrary to the false theories advanced for some time now, the report notes that her use of personal email was known to officials within the Department during her tenure, and that there is no evidence of any successful breach of the Secretary's server," he said in a statement. — Reuters



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# CLINTON SLAMS TRUMP FOR CHEERING HOUSING CRASH

## ANTI-TRUMP PROTESTS TURN VIOLENT



**BEDFORD HILLS, New York:** In this April 12, 2016 photo, Jennifer Dumas watches her daughter, Codylynn, play in her crib under her room at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. — AP

### SHOULD MOMS DO TIME WITH THEIR NEWBORNS?

**BEDFORD HILLS, New York:** Jennifer Dumas sits on a sofa, her smiling 6-month-old girl on her lap. The room is full of bright toys and children's books. A rainbow-colored activity mat is on the floor, and Winnie the Pooh is painted on the walls. It looks like any other nursery, except that there are bars on the windows and barbed-wire fences outside the austere brick building. New York's maximum-security Bedford Hills Correctional Facility is one of the very few prisons in the US that allow inmates and their babies to live together, a century-old approach that not all corrections experts agree is the best way to deal with women locked up while pregnant.

Mothers who get such a chance say it's better than the alternative: In most prisons, babies born behind bars must be given up within a day to a relative or foster care. "Before I came here, I thought it was a terrible idea. A baby in prison? No, thank you," the 24-year-old Dumas said as her daughter, Codylynn, gleefully rocked in a bouncy seat. "But it's actually wonderful to be able to spend this much time with my little girl. ... I'm blessed to be able to go through this."

Nobody thinks raising babies behind bars is ideal, and some worry that the children could be scarred by the experience. But some advocates say that the practice allows mother and child to develop a vital psychological attachment, and that the parenting classes and other practical instruction help the moms stay out of trouble when they get out. About 112,000 women are in state and federal prisons, mostly for drug or property crimes. And an estimated 1 in 25 are pregnant when they enter, according to the nonprofit Sentencing Project. But there are no national statistics on the number of babies born to inmates.

Of the more than 100 women's prisons in the US, there are eight nurseries. While nearly 100 countries, including South Sudan and France, have national laws that allow for incarcerated mothers to stay with their babies, the US is not among them. Dumas was three weeks pregnant when she was arrested last year, along with her boyfriend, on charges they tried to steal a safe packed with \$32,000 in cash and jewelry. Her baby was born just days after she took a plea bargain on attempted burglary charges that sent her to Bedford Hills, about an hour north of New York City, for up to two years. She is now among 15 carefully screened new mothers allowed to serve up to 18 months of their sentences in a nursery unit that includes a communal playroom stocked with toys and mother-and-child rooms equipped with a single bed and a crib. The walls are painted with rainbows, fluffy clouds and jungle and barnyard scenes. The nursery currently has 16 babies, including a set of twins. During workday hours, the babies are taken across the street to a daycare center, where they are watched by staff and other inmates while the moms go to school or vocational programs.

#### Prison

But there are constant reminders it is a prison. Armed officers patrol the unit. And the moms know their babies can be taken away for such infractions as fighting or even leaving a toy in a crib while the baby sleeps. "It's still scary," Dumas said. "At any given point if you do what you're not supposed to your baby could get sent home." Some women have been dropped from the program from time to time for breaking the rules, but corrections officials and advocates said they could not recall any instances in recent years in which a baby was harmed.

Still, some argue that prison should be reserved for punishment and that women should instead consider putting their children up for adoption. "The focus should be on what's best for the baby," said James Dwyer, a law professor at the College of William & Mary who has written a paper on the topic. "There is skepticism about these women being adequate parents." —AP

**WASHINGTON:** Democrat Hillary Clinton, seeking to dampen Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump's growing appeal with working-class voters, on Tuesday accused him of having cheered on the 2008 housing market crash. Clinton's campaign released an ad with audio that the presumptive Republican nominee recorded in 2006 for his now-defunct Trump University venture. Trump, a billionaire real estate developer, in remarks on a "bubble burst," said: "I sort of hope that happens because then people like me would go in and buy" property and "make a lot of money."

Clinton's campaign and her surrogates used the recording to argue that she would take better care of the US economy. Clinton is seeking to blunt the inroads that Trump has been making with voters in crucial states such as Florida and Ohio. Trump defended his comments on Tuesday evening at a rally in Albuquerque, New Mexico, saying buying when the housing market was down showed smart dealmaking skills that he would bring to the White House. "I'm a businessman, that's what I'm supposed to do," Trump said. "I feel badly for everybody. What am I going to do? I'm in business." The New Yorker also impersonated Clinton on the campaign trail, who he said "screams," and said other big names in business did similar deals as he did before the housing crisis. Trump has never held elected office and often touts his history as a businessman in response to accusations that he is unprepared to assume the presidency.

#### Clashes

Anti-Trump protesters and police clashed outside the Albuquerque convention center on Tuesday when protesters tried to storm the center, calling for an end to the Trump rally. The crowd threw burning T-shirts, bottles and rocks at police, while police on horseback and officers wielding clubs used pepper spray and smoke grenades to try to disperse the crowd.

Albuquerque police said on Twitter that protesters threw rocks and bottles and a door to the facility appeared to have been hit with something. Police said the only arrests so far had been inside the rally, where Trump was interrupted multiple times by protesters. "Several #APB officers are being treated for injuries as a result of being hit by rocks. At least one subject arrested from the riot," Albuquerque police said via Twitter early yesterday. The protesters, several of whom waved Mexican flags, chanted epithets about Trump. Some also waved signs with expletive-laden anti-Trump slogans in Spanish. Most of the protesters left before midnight, police said.

Opinion polls in key states show Clinton, the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination, and Trump in a tight race ahead of the Nov 8 US presidential election. Nationally, Trump has been rising in polls to pull roughly even with Clinton. US Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Democrat who is a favorite of financial reformers, bashed Trump in prepared remarks released ahead of a speech in Washington on Tuesday. Trump's 2006 comments, she said, amounted to rooting for "people to get thrown out on the street."

"The rest of us were horrified by the 2008 financial crisis," Warren said in the comments. "But Donald Trump was drooling over the idea of a housing meltdown - because it meant he could buy up a bunch more property on the cheap." Warren also criticized Trump for saying in a Reuters interview last week that the 2010 Dodd-Frank financial oversight law, enacted in response to the crisis, made it hard for bankers to operate. "Let me find the world's smallest violin to play a sad, sad song," Warren said. "Can Donald Trump even name three things that Dodd-Frank does? Seriously, someone ask him." Trump did not directly respond to Warren's comments on Tuesday, but he called her a "total failure" as a US senator during the rally.

#### Battlegrounds

Clinton surrogates from Ohio and Florida held a conference call with reporters about Trump's housing statements. Her campaign hosted related events in Virginia, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Iowa, Colorado and Nevada, which will all be battlegrounds in November's general election. "How could Trump possibly champion the collapse of the housing market and our economy?" US Representative Tim Ryan of Ohio said on the call. Clinton is still fighting on two fronts as she seeks to wrap up her primary battle with Democratic rival Bernie Sanders, a US senator from Vermont. — Agencies



**ALBUQUERQUE:** Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump yells at a protester during a rally at the Albuquerque Convention Center on Tuesday. During the rally, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee was interrupted repeatedly by protesters, who shouted, held up banners and resisted removal by security officers. — AP

## MEXICO FAMILIES WAIT FOR NEWS AS GRAVE EXHUMED

**TETELCINGO, Mexico:** Anguished relatives are standing by as experts dig up a mass grave with more than 100 bodies buried by authorities in Mexico, where morgues are full due to surging violence. Relatives with missing loved ones have gathered since Monday in the central town of Tetelcingo, waiting behind a security cordon for the operation to empty the two pits, 10 m deep. Guillermina Sotelo, whose son has been missing for nearly four years, is one of those hoping for closure from the week-long operation. "It's an injustice. They should not have been thrown (into a pit) as if they were animals," she said.

The pit dug by authorities in Tetelcingo, a town in Morelos state about 100 km south of Mexico City, was discovered in March 2014. It reflects the government's struggle to deal with the explosion of violence and the number of murder victims, which climbs by the day. Morelos has been one of the Mexican states hardest hit by drug violence plaguing the country, including kidnappings and murders. As many as 28,000 people are thought to have gone missing in Mexico in the past decade, according to estimates by rights groups and the United Nations. The families of missing victims were outraged to learn about the mass grave. They demanded an inquiry that led to the exhumation. The work has been slow to start. Relatives objected to the use of an excavator, arguing that it could damage corpses and prevent the bodies from being identified. Morelos state prosecutor Javier Perez said the bodies were buried in a mass grave for "public health reasons."

In November, he had warned that public morgues were running short of space. Mexican authorities are permitted to

use mass graves, but they must meet legal requirements including forensic analysis. The investigation into the burial pit in Tetelcingo will determine whether authorities followed protocol in this case.

#### Faked Signatures

Maria Concepcion Hernandez, whose son Oliver Wenceslao Navarrete was kidnapped and murdered in May 2013, has slammed authorities' handling of the grave. She brought the existence of the mass grave to public attention after an official told her that her son was buried there after procedural irregularities involving "falsified" signatures in the paperwork. Her son's body was exhumed in Dec 2014. Video shot by the family showed that the young man's corpse was buried under dozens of other bodies. That violated international protocol, said Roberto Villaneuva, one of the experts taking part in the exhumation. According to the protocol, "in mass graves bodies must be separated from each other to allow them to be claimed" by relatives, said Villaneuva, director of a program for victims at the Morelos State Autonomous University. Hernandez said there were 150 corpses in the grave wrapped in plastic, but state officials say there are only 116. They have DNA records for 88 bodies, but 28 others remain unidentified. Criminal gangs "can make people disappear in one state and abandon their bodies or bury them in graves in other states," said Javier Sicilia, father of a young man who was murdered in Morelos. "So naturally the families believe that their relative could be buried anywhere." —AFP

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## US SHOOTER FACES DEATH

**WASHINGTON:** The man accused of gunning down nine African American churchgoers in South Carolina last year will face two death penalty trials, after federal prosecutors announced Tuesday they would seek capital punishment. Dylann Roof, 22, allegedly joined an evening Bible study class at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, then shot participants with a .45-caliber Glock handgun. Three people survived the shooting. He has been indicted for the killings in both state and federal court. It is not yet clear when the federal trial will begin.

"Following the department's rigorous review process to thoroughly consider all relevant factual and legal issues, I have determined that the Justice Department will seek the death penalty," US Attorney General Lynch said in a statement. "The nature of the alleged crime and the resulting harm compelled this decision." In a separate filing in US District Court in Charleston, federal prosecutors listed several aggravating factors they said justified execution.

Roof "has expressed hatred and contempt toward African Americans, as well as other groups, and his animosity towards African Americans played a role in the murders," read the seven-page filing entered by Assistant US Attorneys Julius Richardson and Nathan Williams. The document also noted Roof "demonstrated a lack of remorse" and "targeted men and women participating in a Bible study group at the Emanuel AME Church in order to magnify the societal impact." —AFP

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## IS 'FALSELY CLAIMING' BANGLADESH ATTACKS

**DHAKA:** Islamic State is trying to ride a wave of religious radicalization by falsely claiming a spate of killings in Bangladesh, a government minister said, adding there was enough evidence implicating domestic militant groups. Analysts say that as Islamic State loses territory in Iraq and Syria and its finances get drained, it may be trying to build affiliates in countries such as Libya, Egypt and Bangladesh for jihadists to launch attacks locally and cheaply.

But Shahrar Alam, Bangladesh's state minister for foreign affairs, told Reuters in an interview that no local or foreign agency had found any presence of Islamic State in the country. "Those claims (of killings) are definitely false," Alam said on Tuesday. "But what we've agreed with our partnering countries is that we'll not argue over it - that sends a wrong message." His comments came just days after a EU delegation said there was an unprecedented threat to human rights and freedom of expression in Bangladesh and urged Dhaka to tackle the challenge to protect its international reputation.

Since February last year, the Muslim-majority South Asian nation of 160 million has seen the killing of at least 26

people, including five secular bloggers, a publisher and two gay right campaigners. Al-Qaeda has claimed some of the attacks, while Islamic State has claimed 17 killings since first taking responsibility for murders in Bangladesh in September last year, according to US-based monitoring service SITE. Alam said it was an attempt to "ride the wave" without being involved at all. "We know from Syria that there is no such common ground for Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, they can't be on the same platform," he said. "But the funny thing is that in some instances both have claimed responsibility here."

The government has said that two groups, Ansarullah Bangla Team and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh, were behind the attacks as part of their campaign to establish a sharia-based Muslim state. "Islamist violent extremism has gained so much ground (around the world)," Alam said. "The question is whether Bangladesh is vulnerable. Bangladesh has always been vulnerable because of the low level of education, lack of employment. But till date, the global radical organizations, the terrorist groups, haven't been able to make any presence in Bangladesh, let alone make it their base." — Reuters



**NEW DELHI:** This file photograph shows India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (fourth right) as he stands with African Heads of State and Leaders during the India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi. African nationals in the Indian capital live in a "pervading climate of fear and insecurity," a group of African ambassadors has said, after the brutal murder of a Congolese teacher sparked allegations of racism. — AFP

## INDIA TO MAKE PANIC BUTTONS 'A MUST' ON ALL PUBLIC BUSES

**NEW DELHI:** Panic buttons will have to be fitted on all India's public buses to curb sex attacks on women, the transport minister said yesterday, more than three years after the fatal gang-rape of a student on a bus in Delhi. The transport ministry said it would issue a formal order after June 2 making the emergency measures on public buses a must.

"To ensure the safety of women after the unfortunate incident, we have decided to make it mandatory for public transport buses to install emergency panic buttons, CCTV cameras and GPS-enabled vehicle tracking devices," Nitin Gadkari told reporters in New Delhi. He was referring to the brutal attack on a woman in December 2012 as she returned home from the cinema. The assault triggered outrage and mass protests across India, leading

to an overhaul of its rape laws but high numbers of assaults persist. Rajasthan is the first state in India to have such buses, with 20 vehicles fitted with the new safety measures.

Panic buttons are placed above the front doors which, once pressed, send an emergency message to a police control room that can then view live footage of the bus interior. Gadkari said all public buses would have to be modeled the same way, while manufacturers must ensure new buses come equipped with the facilities. The government's latest anti-sex attack move follows its announcement last month that all mobile phones sold in India would have to have a panic button from the start of 2017. The button would allow users to call emergency services by pressing a single key on their phone. — AFP

## AFRICANS IN INDIA LIVING 'IN FEAR' AFTER KILLINGS: ENVOYS

### CONGOLESE TEACHER BRUTALLY MURDERED IN NEW DELHI

**NEW DELHI:** African nationals in the Indian capital live in a "pervading climate of fear and insecurity", a group of African ambassadors has said, after the brutal murder of a Congolese teacher sparked allegations of racism. The Group of African Heads of Mission said they may recommend their governments not to send students to India until safety conditions improve, following a string of what they say are unpunished racial attacks. In the latest case, Masunda Kitada Oliver, from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, was allegedly bludgeoned to death in New Delhi on Friday night by three Indian men after an argument over an auto-rickshaw.

"Given the pervading climate of fear and insecurity in Delhi, the African Heads of Mission are left with little option than to consider recommending to their governments not to send new students to India, unless and until their safety

can be guaranteed," Alem Tsehage Woldemariam, Eritrean ambassador and dean of the group said in a statement Tuesday. "Several attacks and harassment of Africans in India have gone unnoticed without diligent prosecution and conviction of perpetrators," he said. In an embarrassment for New Delhi, the envoys said they would not participate in Africa Day celebrations being organized by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations on Thursday.

They said the African community was in mourning over Oliver's death and asked for the event to be postponed. Oliver had completed his postgraduate study in India and was teaching at a private institute in the capital. Police have arrested two of the three men accused in the attack but deny the murder was racially motivated. India's foreign ministry condemned the killing but said not every attack on an

African national should be regarded as racist. "Thousands of African students continue to pursue their education in India without any issues," a foreign ministry spokesman said in a statement.

Junior minister VK Singh will meet mission heads and students to assure them of their safety, the spokesman said, without specifying a date. In 2013, a Nigerian national was killed by a mob in western Goa state, with local politicians later comparing Africans to "cancer". Meanwhile in January, an Indian mob beat a Tanzanian woman and her male friends in Bangalore and set their car ablaze before dragging them off a bus, in an apparent revenge attack for an earlier road accident. Delhi's former law minister was also accused in 2014 of harassing African women after he led a vigilante mob through an area of the capital, accusing the women of being prostitutes. — AFP



**HAIRATAN:** Afghan border police personnel stand guard on the Afghan side of the Afghanistan-Uzbekistan bridge in Hairatan. — AFP

## NO WORK, NO TRADE ON EMPTY SILK ROAD IN NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

**HAIRATAN:** Some days there is no train at all crossing the bridge to Uzbekistan, yawns a customs officer in Hairatan, formerly a teeming Silk Road border town whose decline is a barometer of economic depression in Afghanistan's north. "The camel driver is at work; the caravan is being readied," proclaimed the mystic poet Rumi, born in Balkh province, where Hairatan is located and through which passes one of the routes of the ancient trade network. "He asks why we travelers are asleep."

Eight centuries later, sleep has won in Balkh, and Hairatan sees few travelers—a situation attributed by local entrepreneurs and politicians to insecurity and the departure of foreign troops. "Three years ago, you had to wait five or six days for a boat to become free and bring our goods across the river Amu Darya from Uzbekistan to Afghanistan. There was a real bottleneck," recalls importer Mohammed Afzal Joya. "Today there is no longer any boat," he laments in Mazar-i-Sharif, the largest city near Hairatan.

"If two freight trains cross the bridge in a day, this is Peru!" adds the chief of the Hairatan rail yard, who does not wish to give his name. Behind him, trucks marked with Cyrillic characters wait for a hypothetical load. Hairatan, the only crossing between Afghanistan and Uzbekistan, is an ominous bellwether of economic activity in northern Afghanistan. It is here, and at four other entry points on the borders with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, that construction materials, flour and household products are exported from Central Asia to Afghanistan.

The Afghan economy is in bad shape, its labor market struggling to absorb a young and often unskilled workforce. According to the Labor Ministry, 22 percent of the workforce is unemployed, while 16 percent are in odd jobs. This is in part because, apart from saffron, some cotton and grapes, war-torn Afghanistan does not produce much else. And the little it does export is hit with "prohibitive taxes" levied by Central Asian countries, according to the vice president of

the Balkh Chamber of Commerce, Mir Abdul Wahab Delsouz. He accuses Afghanistan's neighbors of "keeping our goods in stations or ports" for fear of competition. In the end, the overall picture is alarming. "Trade between Central Asia and Afghanistan fell by 60 percent (in 2015) compared to 2010," says Delsouz.

The bleak economic prospects have driven thousands of Afghans to make the perilous journey to Europe. The depression is felt in a Mazar-i-Sharif market, where Hasibullah sells imported flour from Kazakhstan, via Uzbekistan and Hairatan. "Customers no longer come as they did three or four years ago. People are out of work. They used to buy 50 kilograms at once, now it's more like four," he complains.

Entrepreneurs and political leaders agree that the end of the NATO combat mission in Afghanistan in late 2014 sounded the death knell for the local economy, which had experienced a rebirth with the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001. According to Hajji Walid Akbarzada, a building materials importer, development aid has dried up with the departure of the military. "Before, foreigners had many assistance programs and were building their facilities. But they left and there are no more projects," says the entrepreneur, who brought iron bars and metal products from Uzbekistan.

Turnover fell 70 percent in the last three years and he had to lay off 20 of his 26 employees. "After 2014 and the NATO withdrawal, the economic situation of the Afghans went down, especially in Balkh," says Delsouz. "Their incomes went down by 50 percent. The situation is especially dire for students. The government cannot absorb all of those who enter the job market and offer them jobs." Added to this is insecurity. The 80 kilometer asphalt road leading from Hairatan to Mazar is safe, but the Taliban, who began their annual spring offensive last month, are clashing with Afghan forces throughout the country and especially in the east, where the Islamic State group is also trying to gain a foothold. —AFP

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BOMBER AND BOMBED: US, JAPAN BOUND BY ATOMIC LEGACY

TOKYO: Japan and the United States have forged one of the world's most enduring-some would say improbable-relationships in the seven decades since American atomic bombs laid waste to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing 200,000 people.

There will be no shortage of sensitivities, symbolism and emotion on display, including difficult and contentious questions that have long eluded precise answers: Were the bombings war crimes because they targeted civilians? Or did they save lives by bringing the conflict to a speedy conclusion?

for "America as a whole".

'Tolerant occupation'

The road to the current relationship started not just in the violent culmination of World War II-the "cruel bomb" described by Japanese Emperor Hirohito in his surrender speech-but in what came after.

But it also ushered in monumental social changes, including the nascent empowerment and liberation of women through the granting of suffrage. "I think this occupation could be said to be both tolerant and peculiar," said Fumio Matsuo, a veteran journalist who survived an American air raid as a child.

'Convergence of interests'

Terumi Tanaka, a Nagasaki survivor, said what is most important in Obama's

visit is that he express understanding, a sentiment reflected more broadly in Japan ahead of the trip. "He doesn't have to apologize if he is truly moved, feels remorse and understands what to do to eliminate nuclear weapons," Tanaka told reporters.

In the decades since the war, the countries came to have much in common: Japanese love baseball and Hollywood while Americans have taken to sushi and anime. But on a higher plane there is "a convergence of interests, a convergence of values, two societies that for the most part acknowledge and see the world through similar lenses"

Occasional tensions

Still, as in most relationships, there are occasional tensions. The biggest crisis came in 1960 with massive demonstrations against a revision to their mutual



NAGASAKI: Photo shows a detail of an aerial picture taken by the US military after the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. —AFP

security treaty, scuttling a planned visit to Japan by then-president Dwight Eisenhower. Trade disputes in the 1970s and 1980s sparked ugly rhetoric and imagery in the US depicting a resurgent, unrepentant Japan winning by economic means what it failed to achieve in war.

The eve of Obama's visit is no exception. An American civilian working at a US military base was arrested last week over the death of a local woman in Okinawa, where many US bases are concentrated.

Abe, who is under pressure to press Obama on the issue on the sidelines of a Group of Seven summit just ahead of the Hiroshima visit, has said he feels "strong outrage" over the case. Glosserman stressed that the countries are blessed with "dedicated cadres" of politicians and bureaucrats who make things work, especially in times of just such trouble.

S KOREA COURT REJECTS SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

SEOUL: A lawsuit filed by a prominent gay film director and his partner seeking legal status for their same-sex marriage was rejected by a South Korean district court yesterday in the first case of its kind.

"Circumstances have changed concerning marriage ... but unless there is separate legislation, a same sex union cannot be recognized as marriage under the existing legal system", the Seoul western district court said in a statement.

it said. The two Kims are the most high-profile gay couple in South Korea and the lawsuit they filed over their marriage licence was the first of its kind.

The couple's lawyer Ryu Min-Hee said the lawsuit had argued that civil law should be viewed through a "gender-neutral" prism that upheld equal rights provisions in the constitution. "When in doubt, all laws should be interpreted in a constitutional way," she said.

WORLD LEADERS GATHER IN JAPAN AHEAD OF G7

ISE-SHIMA: US President Barack Obama arrived in Japan yesterday for a Group of Seven summit, kicking off a historic visit that will also take him to the atomic-bombed city of Hiroshima.

Security was tight across the region, with thousands of extra police drafted in to patrol train stations and ferry terminals, and to direct traffic on the usually quiet roads during the two-day meeting.

One left-wing demonstration focused mostly on Japan's domestic politics attracted just a handful of largely elderly protesters. Britain's David Cameron, whose country's referendum next month on continued membership of the European Union was likely to figure prominently on the summit agenda, arrived late afternoon at the main international airport near Nagoya.



SHIMA CITY: Anti-G7 summit protesters stage a demonstration march in Shima city, Mie prefecture yesterday. Japan is on high-alert ahead of a Group of Seven summit with thousands of police on the streets of Tokyo and fanning out across the country as authorities boost security to unprecedented levels.—AFP

Abe. Abe was also due to meet Obama, whose visit to Hiroshima on Friday threatens to overshadow the summit itself.

Obama will become the first sitting US leader to travel to the city, the site of the world's first nuclear attack, on August 6, 1945. Obama has spent the last few days in Vietnam, where on Tuesday he urged the communist authorities to embrace human rights and abandon authoritarianism.

Exquisite calligraphy

The leaders will spend Thursday morning at Ise Jingu, a huge shrine complex that sits at the spiritual heart of Japan's native Shintoism. In line with the animistic religion's traditions, the buildings are regularly replaced, but the shrine is believed to have occupied the same spot for more than 2,000 years.



HO CHI MINH: People line up the streets to catch a glimpse of US President Barack Obama on his way to the airport at the end of two-day visit to Ho Chi Minh City yesterday. —AFP

VIETNAM WON'T PURSUE MILITARY BUILDUP IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

PM SAYS PRIORITY IS PEACE, NOT MILITARIZATION

HANOI: Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said yesterday his country was not pursuing a military buildup over the South China Sea and would work with allies to seek peaceful solutions to disputes, with no use of force.

His comments came two days after Obama removed a decades-old lethal arms embargo on Vietnam, allowing the communist country's military to engage closer with its US counterparts and procure American defense technology.

"Vietnam is a country that loves peace and Vietnam resolves international and regional issues based on international laws ... in the spirit of not using force and not using force to threaten each other," Phuc made no reference to China during the interview and it was unclear what he meant when he used the word "justice" as a means of preserving Vietnam's sovereignty claims.

'No conflict'

The end of the US arms embargo, one of the last vestiges of the Vietnam War, could be a big boost to what experts say is Vietnam's pursuit of a deterrent by modernizing its forces to defend a long coastline and forge stronger security ties.

"Vietnam does not have a militarization policy but we have necessary measures of working together with other countries ... to ensure peace, freedom of navigation, aviation and commerce," Phuc hailed as a success Obama's three-day visit, which ended yesterday. He said Vietnam's leaders and people had welcomed

him with affection and friendship. "He himself said the welcome of Vietnamese people has touched his heart," he said.

That, she added, was just the start: "There will be more and more countries and organizations supporting China." Similar announcements have become an almost daily ritual at China's foreign ministry media briefings, as it steels itself for what is widely expected to be an unfavorable ruling by the tribunal that could come within weeks.

Communist party, but our country is a country following a market economy," he said. "We can't say Vietnam is a conservative country. A market economy must be dynamic, it can't be conservative."

BEIJING LINES UP DIPLOMATIC BATTLE GROUPS OVER THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

BEIJING: The disputed rocks and reefs of the South China Sea are more than an ocean away from the landlocked African nation of Niger. But that has not stopped the strife-ridden, largely desert country of 17 million people adding its voice to a growing diplomatic chorus that Beijing says supports its rejection of an international tribunal hearing on the waters.

That, she added, was just the start: "There will be more and more countries and organizations supporting China."

Similar announcements have become an almost daily ritual at China's foreign ministry media briefings, as it steels itself for what is widely expected to be an unfavorable ruling by the tribunal that could come within weeks.

1940s, pitting it against several neighbors.

But it is also a party to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. Manila accuses Beijing of flouting the convention and has called for the tribunal, set up in 1899, to rule on the row. Beijing insists that the court does not have jurisdiction, arguing that any claims to the contrary are politically motivated, and has boycotted the proceedings.

Not very successful

Despite requests by AFP the foreign ministry in Beijing did not provide a full list of China's backers on the issue. But other than its main diplomatic partner Russia, few heavy hitters have come out in support, with Beijing's neighbors-many of them unnerved by its increasingly assertive behavior-notably absent.

## AFGHAN TALEBAN APPOINT NEW LEADER

Continued from Page 1

"The new leader's appointment is a good opportunity for the Taliban to return to peace talks and rebuild their country," Afghan presidential spokesman Dawa Khan Menapal told AFP. "If they reject peace talks they will face the same fate as Mansour."

But "the status quo remains unchanged" after Akhundzada's appointment, Taliban expert Rahimullah Yousafzai told AFP. "I don't foresee any shift from Mansour's policies. He is unlikely to negotiate peace with the Afghan government." Other observers say Akhundzada, who is from Kandahar, is seen as more of a spiritual figurehead than a military commander. "Even if he favors peace talks, he is unlikely to proceed without consensus within the supreme council" where many vehemently oppose negotiations, said analyst Amir Rana. "Akhundzada enjoys some moral supremacy within Taliban ranks but he will be more of a symbolic leader than a functional leader," he added.

Rana stressed that his deputies will likely play a more active role, with Haqqani overseeing the military side and Yakoub the political side. The US killing of Mansour showed that Washington has at least for now abandoned hopes of reviving the direct peace talks between Kabul and the Taliban, which broke down last summer. It marked a significant shift for Washington, highlighting a new willingness to target the group's leaders in Pakistan and risk retaliatory attacks against struggling Afghan security forces.

Saturday's drone attack, the first known American assault on a top Afghan Taliban leader on Pakistani soil, sent shockwaves through the insurgent movement which had seen a resurgence under Mansour. He was killed just nine months after being formally appointed leader following a bitter power struggle upon confirmation of founder Mullah Omar's death.

Omar died in 2013, but his death was kept secret for two years, with Mansour issuing statements in his name - a revelation that helped fuel internal opposition and splintered the group into rival factions. Akhundzada faces a similar challenge in unifying Taliban ranks. A breakaway faction led by Mullah Rassoul rejected Akhundzada's appointment, saying he was selected inside Pakistan without any broad consultation with field commanders in Afghanistan.

The Taliban's supreme council held emergency meetings that began Sunday in southwest Pakistan to try to find a unifying figure for the leadership post. Taliban sources told AFP council members were lying low and constantly changing the venue of their meetings to avoid any fresh air strikes. The Taliban said yesterday's suicide attack in Paghman district near Kabul, which the UN condemned as "cowardly," was in revenge for the execution of six Taliban-linked inmates. The executions earlier this month were approved as part of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's new headline policy against the insurgents after a brazen Taliban attack in April killed at least 64 people. - AFP



This combination of handout pictures released yesterday by the Italian Navy (Marina Militare) shows the shipwreck of an overcrowded boat of migrants off the Libyan coast. At least seven migrants have drowned after the heavily overcrowded boat they were sailing on overturned, the Italian navy said. The navy said 500 people had been pulled to safety and seven bodies recovered, but rescue operations were continuing and the death toll could rise. The navy's Bettica patrol boat spotted 'a boat in precarious conditions off the coast of Libya with numerous migrants aboard,' it said in a statement. — AFP

## UKRAINIAN PILOT RETURNS HOME TO HERO'S...

Continued from Page 1

"But we have been able to prove that there are no insurmountable tasks and we've managed to free the hostage from the jaws of Mordor," he added, referring to a savage land in the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy.

Iryna Gerashchenko, a senior lawmaker in the Ukrainian parliament who flew to Russia to bring Savchenko home, said her return had been in the works for several weeks and that the presidency had not wanted to make any premature announcements. "There was a strong probability that the operation might fail," she said on Facebook.

Earlier yesterday, two alleged Russian soldiers, Aleksandr Aleksandrov and Yevgeny Yerofeyev, sentenced by Ukraine to 14 years in prison for fighting in the rebel-held east, arrived in Moscow. Ukraine said the men were in Russian military intelligence, but Moscow denied they were serving

army officers, insisting they had quit the military before heading to fight as volunteers. Poroshenko pardoned both the men. Putin meanwhile said the relatives of the killed Russian journalists had asked him to pardon Savchenko. Putin was shown on television meeting Yekaterina Kornelyuk and Marianna Voloshina, the widow and sister of the journalists and thanking them for their request.

Western officials greeted Savchenko's release. US Secretary of State John Kerry said the move was "an important part of fulfilling Russia's commitments" to a series of truce agreements in eastern Ukraine. "Finally!" Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė said on Twitter. "Glory to Ukraine," she said, invoking the battle cry of Ukrainian protesters who toppled a Kremlin-backed president in 2014. EU foreign affairs supremo Federica Mogherini hailed Savchenko's release as "long awaited good news," while German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said he was "happy and relieved". — AFP

## INDIA COUNTING COST OF REDUCED GULF...

Continued from Page 1

of portfolio investment outflows put the rupee in a tailspin, there are still risks of external shocks. Chances of US interest rates going up, Britain voting to leave the European Union, and China's economy worsening all pose risks for emerging markets like India. Portfolio investment is typically the most volatile source of inflows, but last year's \$18 billion drop demonstrated how unreliable remittances can be. Taking note, an RBI panel warned last month that the likely impact on remittances should be factored into any monetary policy decisions.

Though oil prices have recovered more than 50 percent since late January, the rally could easily peter out before the labor market tightens in the Gulf once again. Marie Diron of Moody's Investors Service warned there could be worse to come for remittances. "We have highlighted the risks of a marked fall in remittances as the Gulf economies' long-term adjustment to lower oil prices has only just started," said Diron, a senior vice president in the rating agency's Sovereign Risk Group.

Having covered 50 percent of India's trade deficit in the previous two years, remittances only covered 40 percent in 2015/16 even though the trade gap had shrunk significantly. "Essentially an improvement in the trade balance is being offset by worsening private transfers," said Pronab Sen, country director for the UK-based International Growth Centre's India program.

On balance, of course, India has benefited massively from cheap crude over the past two years. It halved the oil import bill, cooled inflation and improved public finances, all of which helped the RBI to cut interest rates. Economists expect a balance of payments surplus close to \$25-30 billion for 2015/16, as foreign direct investment inflows into the world's fastest growing major economy remain robust, and foreign exchange reserves stood at \$361 billion on May 13.

All of which makes lower remittances a far smaller headache for India than for its neighbors - Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Meantime, down in Kerala, Joseph has sold his house and cleared his debts. He plans to build a smaller home and start a business with what money he's got left. — Reuters

## MUNICIPALITY BILL PASSED AS MPS SLAM...

Continued from Page 1

MP Saadoun Hammad said the draft law contains many loopholes as it penalizes citizens for construction violations and not engineering offices or contractors.

Meanwhile, the Assembly approved a letter from the head of the budgets committee calling to assign the Assembly public funds protection committee to probe suspected violations in the 2014/2015 budget of Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA). Commerce and Industry Minister Yousef Al-Ali said that the finance minister has already appointed a neutral committee to investigate the issue, but several MPs insisted that the committee is actu-

ally not neutral and was formed to cover up the violations instead of exposing them.

The Assembly also paid warm tributes to former veteran MP Hamad Al-Jouan, who died last week. Jouan was a member of parliament in 1985 and 1992. MPs praised him for being a strong fighter against corruption.

Also, Minister of Public Works Ali Al-Omar defended the awarding of the KD 1.32 billion airport expansion project to a Turkish-Kuwaiti alliance, saying that all legal and financial issues were taken into consideration. But he said the contract has not been signed yet. Omar said that the contract was evaluated rationally and in case of any shortcomings, the project will be taken away from the contractor.

## YEMEN TALKS 'CLOSER' TO AGREEMENT

Continued from Page 1

Ban outlined his proposal in a letter to the Security Council just before Ould Cheikh Ahmed was to report to the council's 15 members.

"While both sides have committed to reaching agreements in Kuwait, there remain deep differences between the two sides which will need to be overcome in order to achieve a successful outcome," Ban wrote. Ban proposed expanding the staff of the UN peace mission to Yemen and moving it to Amman from New York to intensify the mediation. The bigger UN team would provide technical expertise to the Yemeni parties on a range of issues, in particular on ways to shore up a ceasefire in force since April 10 that has led to a decrease but not a halt in attacks.

"The nationwide cessation of hostilities remains extremely fragile, and requires urgent additional support from the United Nations," wrote Ban. An upsurge in violence could "undermine the Kuwait talks and derail the progress towards greater stability and security," he added. Council members were to decide on Ban's proposal by today.

Ould Cheikh Ahmed said discussions on Tuesday centered on "various military and security issues including withdrawals and troop movements." "We are now working on overcoming various obstacles and addressing specific details of an implementation mechanism," he said. The apparent progress comes after Foreign Minister Abdulmalek Al-Mikhlafi said on Monday that the government stood ready to make concessions for the sake of peace.

A Western diplomat familiar with the talks said they had made important progress. "We are in a stage where

the parties have to make hard choices and compromises," the diplomat told AFP, adding that he was "very optimistic" that a deal could be reached. "We have not seen this momentum towards peace in the past one and a half years... a roadmap plan has been laid down... and it has to stick," he said.

The main sticking point in the talks has been the form of government to oversee a transition. The Houthi rebels and their allies have demanded a unity government. The government delegation insists that the legitimacy of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi must be respected. The government has also demanded that rebels implement an April 2015 Security Council resolution demanding their withdrawal from the capital and other territory they have seized since 2014.

To overcome this problem, the UN envoy has proposed a "national salvation government," the Western diplomat said. The proposed government "would be formed on a consensual and inclusive basis and in accordance with the legal references, and would only replace the current government once Sanaa and key government institutions are not under the control of non-state actors," he said.

Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdulsalam warned that if no fair solution was reached, the rebels would form the government in Sanaa. "Yemenis are awaiting a fair solution and if it fails, anti-aggression national forces must fill the vacuum by forming a government to serve the people and confront challenges," Abdulsalam said on Twitter. The rebel delegation met late Tuesday with the ambassadors to Yemen of the United States, Britain and the European Union and called for the formation of a "consensus executive authority" in Yemen. — Agencies

## KUWAIT TO SIGN \$1BN DEAL FOR MUTLAA...

Continued from Page 1

The South Mutlala City contract will cover construction of a road and other infrastructure and be funded by the Kuwaiti government from its own reserves, Naser Khraibut, director of planning at the country's Public Authority for Housing Welfare, told reporters on the sidelines of a conference in Dubai.

Costs for building infrastructure and public buildings in the city have been estimated at around \$20 billion. "Other packages we're now in the process of pre-

qualification for contractors to tender," said Khraibut. The state will also sign a contract this month worth between \$80 million and \$90 million with Hill International to manage the building of the entire city, Khraibut said. Meanwhile, Kuwait is also designing and completing an economic study for the planned South Saad Abdullah City, which will cover 60 sq km. The \$10 billion to \$15 billion cost of the project will be financed through a special purpose vehicle jointly established by the Kuwaiti and South Korean governments, Khraibut said. — Agencies

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# UEFA EURO 2016



THURSDAY, MAY 26, 2016

## FRANCE TO DEPLOY 90,000 SECURITY FOR EURO 2016

**PARIS:** France said yesterday it will deploy more than 90,000 police and security guards for Euro 2016, vowing to do "everything possible to avoid a terrorist attack" during the football tournament that starts next month. The announcement followed chaos on Saturday at the Stade de France national stadium when smoke bombs were set off during the national cup final, sparking panic. Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve told the sports daily L'Equipe that the match between Paris Saint-Germain and Marseille should not be considered a test for Euro 2016. "They were not the same spectators, not the same organizers, nor the same security deployment," he said. "However, what happened will be taken into account" ahead of the month-long football tournament, which kicks off on June 10 with matches to be played at 10 venues around the country. Cazeneuve later wrote on Twitter that 77,000 police and paramilitary police would be deployed, along with 13,000 private security guards.

Some of the 10,000 soldiers deployed around France since last year's jihadist attacks in Paris will also be used to secure the matches, he said. "Our objective is for the Euro to be a big festive gathering, but we owe the French the truth. Zero percent precaution means 100 percent risk, but 100 percent precaution does not mean a zero percent risk," he said. "We are doing every-

thing to avoid a terrorist attack, and we are preparing to respond."

The Stade de France, which will host the opening game and final, was targeted by suicide bombers during the attacks by the Islamic State group on the French capital in November. The assailants tried unsuccessfully to get inside the security perimeter.

### No 'specific threat'

Cazeneuve said security inside the stadium is the responsibility of UEFA, while safety at the "fan zones"—which will accommodate seven million people—will be in the hands of private security agents. "Fan zones are secure spaces," he said. "I took the decision to impose security pat-downs at entrances, to use metal detectors and to ban bags inside. If there were no fan zones, fans would regroup in an ad hoc setting and the risk (of an attack) would be greater."

Despite the beefed-up measures, the interior minister said there was no particular threat against the football tournament. "At this time we do not have a specific threat to a specific team or a specific player, a specific match, or a specific fan zone," he said. He added that protests would not be banned but did not rule out possible disorder as the country is gripped by a major labor strike. "It remains an open possibility... that security cannot be guaranteed by law and order forces." —AFP



**ROME:** Antonio Conte (C), Italy's national football team head coach and former coach of Juventus, is seen in the stands before the Italian Tim Cup final football match AC Milan vs Juventus on May 21, 2016 at the Olympic Stadium. — AFP

## DISRUPTIONS, DISTRACTIONS COULD UNDO CONTE'S ITALY

**ROME:** Italy coach Antonio Conte goes into the European Championship with questions hanging over his team after injuries disrupted his selection plans and a lack of punch was exposed up front. Adding to the frustrations of only occasional get-togethers with his players has been the distraction of his impending move back to club football with Chelsea.

However, the former Juventus coach was relieved to be cleared of any role in a 2011 match-fixing scandal while in charge of Serie B side Siena a month before the tournament's June 10 kickoff. The passionate Conte showed his frustration with managing a national team when he graphically described his displeasure with the long spells "in the garage" and far from the track.

That will not lessen his desire to bow out in glory in France and he has the tactical nous and motivational powers to succeed. "I'm very tired of spending so much time in the garage," he said before two March friendlies in which Italy drew 1-1 with European Championship holders Spain and were beaten 4-1 by World Cup winners Germany.

"In the garage, I smell the smell of the machine, or rubber and motor oil, not the grass of the pitch," Italy, who lost the Euro 2012 final to Spain in Kiev, were unbeaten in the qualifiers this time round thanks to a strong defense and a

brilliant goalkeeper in captain Gianluigi Buffon. However, injuries have disrupted Conte's midfield plans with Paris Saint-Germain's Marco Verratti and Claudio Marchisio of Juventus both out of the tournament after injuries requiring surgery.

He is sure to turn to PSG's Thiago Motta, whose only appearances under Conte were in the two March friendlies, to fill the breach. Italy can field an impressive all-Juventus defense with Buffon in goal and Leonardo Bonucci, Giorgio Chiellini and even 2006 World Cup veteran Andrea Barzagli in the back line.

Up front, Conte will be looking to talented little Napoli winger Lorenzo Insigne and striker Stephan El Shaarawy, who has spent the season at AS Roma on loan from AC Milan, for flair and goals. Italy open their Group E campaign on June 13 in Lyon against second-ranked Belgium, who beat Conte's team in a friendly last year, and also face Ireland and Sweden.

### Legend Buffon still standing

There is no stopping master goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon in his ambition to add more major titles to his collection of the 2006 World Cup and seven Serie A championships. Buffon, who will lead Italy in France when they look to end a 48-year wait for their second European Championship crown, has extended his con-

tract with Juventus beyond his 40th birthday as he also seeks the equally elusive Champions League.

He has been a runner-up in both, finishing on the losing side in the Euro 2012 final against Spain in Kiev. The question is whether Antonio Conte's Italy will be good enough to go one better even with record holder Buffon, ripening with age like a vintage Chianti, between the posts. Buffon, Italy's most capped player with 156 appearances, set a Serie A record in March of 974 minutes without conceding a goal.

"I was born for this type of work and to be the exception," Buffon was recently quoted as saying in La Gazzetta dello Sport. "If it could happen that I'd be the first player to compete in six World Cups, it would certainly mean something because of its rarity," he added with the 2018 tournament in his sights. He has seen action at the last four tournaments after being an unused reserve at France 1998.

Any goalkeeper keeping a string of clean sheets needs the help of a good defense and Buffon has that at Juventus with Italy team mates Leonardo Bonucci, Giorgio Chiellini and Andrea Barzagli, but he also has to be a rounded performer. Buffon is a remarkable shot stopper, commanding in the air, a fine reader of opposition attacks and organizer of the defense and a respected voice in the changing room. — Reuters

## GERMANY'S HUMMELS INJURED WHILE SCHWEINSTEIGER REMAINS ON TRACK

**ASCONA:** World Cup winners Germany were without stalwarts Mats Hummels and Bastian Schweinsteiger as they began preparing yesterday for Euro 2016 but coach Joachim Loew was confident both would be fit for the finals. Central defender Hummels picked up a calf muscle injury in Borussia Dortmund's German Cup final defeat by Bayern Munich on Saturday.

"He has a muscle fiber tear in his calf and will be out for a few days. At the moment the only thing possible is treatment," Loew told reporters after Germany's first training session in their camp in northern Italy. Loew, who trained with only 16 players yesterday morning, also sounded upbeat about captain Schweinsteiger's recovery with the Manchester United player out of action since March with a knee injury. "Physically he has done everything asked of him. Sometimes he trained as much as three times a day," Loew said. "He has a good basis now and I am optimistic for the coming weeks." Loew said the 31-year-old Schweinsteiger, who has 114 caps, could train fully in terms of running and sprinting but would need a few days before starting to work with a ball.

Germany, drawn in Group C along with Ukraine, Poland and Northern Ireland, are looking for their first continental trophy in 20 years, with the last of three Euro titles back in 1996. "I am doing well at the moment and I am very optimistic," Schweinsteiger told reporters. "The good thing is that I can deal with these situations. I have had difficult times before."

Schweinsteiger, who had an injury-plagued first season at United and played just 18 league games, also had to race to get fit for the 2014 World Cup with Germany winning the trophy for the fourth time. "There is a plan for me and I follow it by the hour," he said. "It worked two years ago. Maybe I was even worse back then than today. Little by little I will move forward." — Reuters



**BERLIN:** Dortmund's defender Mats Hummels reacts during the German Cup (DFB Pokal) final football match Bayern Munich vs Borussia Dortmund at the Olympic stadium. — AFP

## STRIKER KANE SEES ABLE PARTNERSHIP WITH VARDY

**LONDON:** Tottenham Hotspur forward Harry Kane believes he and Leicester City marksman Jamie Vardy will provide England with one of the most formidable strike partnerships on display at next month's Euro 2016 tournament in France.

Kane edged out Vardy by a single goal in the race for the Premier League golden boot after netting 25 times to become the first Englishman to scoop up the award since Sunderland's Kevin Phillips 16 years ago. The pair both scored in England's 2-1 friendly win over Turkey in Manchester on Sunday as their burgeoning partnership continued to bear fruit on the international stage. "We should be considered among the best strikers in Europe. We're up there, we're confident, we're both scoring goals and long may it continue," Kane told British media.

Manchester United striker Wayne

Rooney faces stiff competition for a starting spot in the frontline and manager Roy Hodgson may have to push England's all-time leading goalscorer into midfield to accommodate his captain in the first team. Kane was certain Rooney could make the transition from a goal scorer to a creator and hoped to benefit from the England skipper's ability to pick a pass.

"Wayne Rooney has been doing great in that deeper position, but we've all got to fight for places," Kane said. "There are a lot of options... the manager will do what he wants to do. But whoever is playing, I'm sure the service will be great and I will be happy to get on the end of it." England, who play Australia in a warm-up game on Friday, face Russia, Slovakia and Wales in Group B of 24-team tournament that kicks off on June 10. —Reuters



**MANCHESTER:** England's striker Harry Kane (L) celebrates scoring his team's first goal with England's striker Jamie Vardy during the friendly football match between England and Turkey at the Etihad Stadium. — AFP

## SWEDES HOPE IBRAHIMOVIC KEEPS ON SCORING IN FRANCE

**STOCKHOLM:** Having secured their spot at Euro 2016 by beating Scandinavian rivals Denmark in a thrilling two-legged playoff, Swedish fans hope Zlatan Ibrahimovic and company will hit the ground running in France.

The Swedes crashed out at the opening stage of Euro 2012 and, with Italy and Belgium in their group this time round, a victory in their opening Group E game against Ireland on June 13 would go a long way towards helping them to make the knockout stages. "The team that wins that game has a good chance of advancing. A victory there might be enough to go through," Sweden coach Erik Hamren told Reuters.

The Swedes struggle against higher-ranked teams and managed just two points from a possible 12 in qualification against group winners Austria and runners-up Russia to finish in third spot. To make an impact at Euro 2016 they will need captain and record international goalscorer Ibrahimovic to continue to find the net on French soil.

### Virtually unstoppable

Virtually unstoppable in four seasons in France's Ligue 1, the 34-year-old Paris Saint Germain striker netted 11 of Sweden's 19 strikes in qualifying, including three of the four goals that downed Denmark 4-3 on aggregate. However, Ibrahimovic's heroics in front of goal have been frequently wiped out by a soft-centred defense that struggles against pace and counter-attacks. Known for his loyalty, Hamren still includes ageing stalwarts such as Sebastian Larsson and Kim Kallstrom in his squad but he is gradually introducing new players.

These include six of the side who were victorious at last year's U21 European Championships in the Czech Republic, and a number of players with Champions League experience with Malmo FF.

Celta Vigo forward John Guidetti has won plenty of praise in Spain

and Emir Kujovic topped the scoring charts in Sweden's Allsvenskan in 2015, netting 21 goals as his unfancied IFK Norrkoping side won the title. They also have plenty of cover on the wings and at full back but it is choosing the best pairings at the centre of defense and in cen-

tral midfield that will give Hamren his biggest headaches. With the manager due to step down after the tournament and rumors that Ibra's international retirement is looming, the Swedes will want to mark what seems like the end of an era with qualification. — Reuters



**STOCKHOLM:** Sweden's national football team player forward and team captain Zlatan Ibrahimovic (C) attends a training session at Stockholm Stadium. — AFP



# SPAIN NEEDS A BETTER SPINE TO REIGN AGAIN

**BARCELONA:** For all Vicente del Bosque's confidence that he has the right balance of experience and youth to return Spain to their familiar place on the winner's rostrum, questions remain about his best starting line-up ahead of Euro 2016. On the surface, Spain's qualifying record of nine wins out of 10 going into the tournament looks impressive but they rarely delivered performances to suggest they could pick up a third successive title or banish the memories of their 2014 World Cup failure.

No-one will be keener to prove the doubters wrong than Del Bosque in what looks to be his last hurrah as Spain's coach. Once again he can call on trusted stalwarts Andres Iniesta, Sergio Busquets, Gerard Pique, Sergio Ramos and Cesc Fabregas, all regulars before or since the 2010 World Cup triumph, this time blending them with a new generation of young players such as Manchester United goalkeeper David de Gea, Atletico Madrid midfielder Koke and Juventus striker Alvaro Morata.

"I really believe in the veterans who have spent a long time with us and we trust the newcomers, who give the squad impulse and fresh blood," said Del Bosque. "Our objective is to think beyond the two European Championships we've won, because people are only going to value what we do in the next one."

Another triumph will require a settled spine to his team, yet there remains uncertainty over who will start as central striker and in goal, where the manager must decide whether to demote Iker Casillas in favor of De Gea, whose consistently outstanding performances in the last three seasons contrast with the long-standing captain's waning powers. Up front, the situation is equally fluid. After leaving out Diego Costa and Paco Alcacer-top scorer in qualifying-Del Bosque is likely to opt for Morata as first-choice striker, although he made just 16 league starts for Juventus.

Athletic Bilbao striker Arritz Aduriz is in the form of his life at the age of 35 and scored more goals than any other Spaniard in the campaign but there are doubts about whether his physical, direct style fits in with Spain's possession game. At the back there remains an alarming lack of depth to cover for Sergio Ramos, who appears to have hit form at the right time after an inconsistent season, and Gerard Pique, who arrives on the back of another brilliant campaign with Barcelona. Injury to either would be a major headache because the inclusion of Barcelona's Marc Bartra, who has played relatively little first-team football this season, suggests experienced cover is not at hand.

## Iniesta aims for more glory

Andres Iniesta, the driving force behind Spanish triumphs at the last two Euros and scorer of the goal that delivered their only World Cup in between, will hope to provide further inspiration as his country target a record fourth European Championship triumph.

The virtuoso midfielder's extra-time strike against the Netherlands in Johannesburg in 2010 earned him universal devotion in Spain, with even Real Madrid supporters giving the Barcelona man a standing ovation on his most recent visits to the Bernabeu. With his trusted midfield companion Xavi Hernandez retired from international football, Iniesta is the last architect of the "tiki-taka" style of fast-moving passing football which Spain mastered to dominate the world game between 2008 and 2012.

He has also evolved his game in recent years, dropping deeper and dictating the play rather than just fuelling the attack. His influence on games is more subtle now, yet it is no less important. "Iniesta has unique peripheral vision. He is a magical player," said Barca coach Luis Enrique earlier this year. He is likely to captain the team in their opening group game against Czech Republic if, as expected, Iker Casillas drops to the bench. As Spain try to rise again after their painful early exit from the World Cup two years ago, the elegant pass master is best placed to orchestrate another triumph and reassert their credentials among football's elite. — Reuters

## HUNGARY HAVE A CHANCE TO UPDATE THEIR OWN HISTORY

**BUDAPEST:** History always hangs heavy on the Hungarian national team, whose decades of under-achievement are contrasted with the sepia glory of the 1950s when glittering talents such as Ferenc Puskas and Jenő Buzanszky reshaped football's landscape. Whatever else Bernd Storck's team achieve-and nobody expects very much-they at least have the opportunity to bring the story up to date when they rejoin football's elite in France.

"We want to play good football and to prove, that we are worthy members of the championship. Making the second round is not an expectation, rather a dream," said Storck in an assessment that few fans will disagree with.

Hungary have not appeared in a major tournament since the 1986 World Cup and their last European Championship appearance was in 1972. So just being there in 2016 ranks as a major achievement for a team who finished only third in their group, eventually qualifying via a 2-1 aggregate play-off win over Norway.

## Troubled campaign

Their campaign was troubled, with one coach sacked and another leaving for club football in Germany before Storck delivered unexpected qualification on an unforgettable night in Budapest. The qualifiers had begun in the worst possible way with a 2-1 defeat to Northern Ireland, a result that led to Attila Pinter being replaced by Pal Dardai, who started the difficult job of rebuilding a team short on confidence and cohesion. Dardai soon departed for Hertha Berlin, leaving Storck, the former head coach of Kazakhstan, to introduce young blood and dare his team to come good with a more attacking style. Among some surprising calls was his decision to play Laszlo Kleinheisler in the first game against Norway despite the midfielder not having played for his club all season after refusing to sign a contract extension.

The 22-year-old rewarded Storck's faith with a man-of-the-match performance that was followed by a move to Werder Bremen. Kleinheisler is tipped to catch the eye in France, not least for his red hair which has led to the nickname Scholes. The midfielder also shares former Manchester United player Paul Scholes's eye for a goal. At the other end of the age range is former Crystal Palace keeper Gabor Kiraly, who turned 40 in April and is hoping to eclipse German Lothar Matthaus as the oldest player to appear in the tournament finals. Where Hungary may struggle is up front after managing just 11 goals in 10 qualifiers but the group draw in France has been kind to them and, Portugal apart, they will look to games against Austria and tournament debutants Iceland as offering the chance to sneak a result. — Reuters



**BARCELONA:** Barcelona's Spanish midfielder Andres Iniesta holds his son Paolo next to his daughter Valeria as he speaks during celebrations at the Camp Nou stadium. — AFP

## SIGURDSSON THE ENGINE IN ICELAND'S HOPE FOR SUCCESS

**STOCKHOLM:** Gylfi Sigurdsson's road to soccer success has been winding, with the latest twist taking the Swansea player to France where he will govern Iceland's midfield as they aim to make a mark at Euro 2016. Sigurdsson's six goals in qualifying proved instrumental in his side qualifying for a major tournament for the first time, but his impact is felt beyond the scoresheet. In coach Lars Lagerback's team the collective is always more important than the individual but without Sigurdsson it is hard to imagine Iceland beating teams such as Turkey, Czech Republic and Netherlands, as they

did in qualifying. Now 26, Sigurdsson arrived at the academy of English club Reading as a teenager in 2005 and played for Shrewsbury Town and Crewe Alexandra on loan before moving to 1899 Hoffenheim in Germany. From there he was loaned to Swansea where his performances caught the eye of Premier League rivals Tottenham Hotspur, whom he joined in July 2012 before returning to Swansea two years later.

A powerful runner with the ball, Sigurdsson is essential to Iceland's successful style of defensive containment and quick counter-attacking. He also poses a threat when shoot-

ing from distance, forcing backtracking defenses to decide whether to pressure him and thus leave others free, or allow him to shoot and hope for the best. It is a conundrum that few sides found a solution to in Iceland's qualifying group, in which they finished second. Sigurdsson posed particular problems for the Dutch, scoring all three of Iceland's goals against them in the home and away qualifying victories. With his strong engine, coolness from the penalty spot and power and accuracy from dead balls, Sigurdsson will be one of the first names on Lagerback's team sheet in France. — Reuters



**KONYA, Turkey:** This file photo taken on October 13, 2015 shows Iceland's team posing for photographers during the Euro 2016 Group A qualifying football match between Turkey and Iceland at the Konya Arena stadium. — AFP

## VERSATILE ALABA MAKES HIS MARK ALL OVER THE PITCH

**VIENNA:** Nigeria's loss is Austria's gain as David Alaba has become one of Europe's most versatile and accomplished players. Alaba is still only 23 yet seems to have been around for ages, having made his debuts for both Bayern Munich and Austria as a 17-year-old. Born in Vienna to a Nigerian father, who is a disc-jockey, and a Filipino mother, the left-footed Alaba initially contemplated playing for the Super Eagles but says he was never approached by them. Austria were more than happy for him to play for them, however, and it is no coincidence that since Alaba has become a regular presence they have improved markedly.

An outstanding passer, good tacker and free-kick specialist, he is already the team captain, with 44 appearances and 11 goals under his belt. In terms of medals, he is one of Austria's most successful-ever players, having won four Bundesliga and one Champions League titles.

For Bayern, he played as a left back under Louis van Gaal and Jupp

Heynckes, while Pep Guardiola has played him in several different roles, including advanced left back. He has even played as an improvised centre back. Austria prefer him on the left of the midfield, in front of the defense, where he can orchestrate the team with a style and authority which belie his youth.

## Austria wants to prove itself

When UEFA decided to expand the European Championship finals from 16 to 24 teams, Austria were seen as one of the teams most likely to benefit. By no means among Europe's weakest teams, Austria were never quite good enough to make the final 16 and their only appearance in the finals came in 2008 when they co-hosted the event. Such has been Austria's improvement that they would have qualified for France had it been a 16, or even eight-team, tournament. After drawing at home to Sweden in their opening game, Austria stormed through their qualifiers as they won all their remaining

games, beating Russia at home and away and thrashing Sweden 4-1 to clinch their place in style.

Coach Marcel Koller, given a lukewarm reception when he was appointed in 2011, has received most of the credit for lifting Austria from 70th in the world rankings to just outside the top 10. Koller has given the team a new tactical identity and has also proved a master at getting the most out of his players, including temperamental forward Marko Arnautovic.

He has also brought remarkable stability, fielding an unchanged starting line-up in the last six qualifiers. The turnaround had been in the making even before the low-profile Swiss, whose last club job ended with him being ignominiously sacked by German club VfL Bochum, took over. The Austrian federation had already implemented a new youth development program and, like neighboring Switzerland, begun to tap into the country's large pool of immigrant talent, something they had previously failed to do. — Reuters

## AGEING BUT DANGEROUS, PORTUGAL STILL A THREAT

**LISBON:** They may be over dependent on Cristiano Ronaldo and struggling to replace old faithfuls, yet under the wily leadership of Fernando Santos, Portugal can still be a threat. Semi-finalists four years ago, Portugal suffered a miserable first-round exit at the World Cup in 2014 and followed that up by losing at home to Albania in their opening qualifier for Euro 2016.

Tempestuous coach Paulo Bento, who had steadfastly refused to replace Portugal's old guard, was sacked and replaced by Fernando Santos, who made an instant impact as Portugal reeled off seven successive wins in the Euro qualifiers, all by single-goal margins, to steer themselves safely to France. Santos has found the rebuilding process as difficult as his predecessor and has also relied heavily on more experienced players, even recalling veteran central defender Ricardo Carvalho, who will be 38 when the competition gets underway in France.

At least there has been a willingness to give the new generation a chance. More than 50 players have been called up under Santos who has given 17 their full international debuts and fielded 33 players in the qualifiers. His boldness to experiment has paid off, unveiling highly promising players such as winger Bernardo Silva and midfielders William Carvalho and Joao Mario.

Possibly the most exciting of all is 18-year-old Renato Sanches, who has just signed for Bayern Munich from Benfica months after making his professional debut. Portugal's biggest failure is their inability to convert chances into goals with former Manchester United winger Nani, who remains a regular at international level, one of the main culprits. In the end, however, everything still revolves around Ronaldo, who is often criticized for failing to reproduce his best form for Portugal even though he is their all-time leading scorer.

## Ronaldo remains Portugal's talisman

Cristiano Ronaldo owes most of his fame and fortune to his exploits with Real Madrid, yet he also remains a hugely influential figure when representing his country. Portugal's results have improved enormously since Ronaldo made his international debut against Kazakhstan as an 18-year-old in 2003. Their recent record at major tournaments is the envy of many bigger countries after they reached the Euro 2004 final, 2006 World Cup semi-finals and the Euro 2012 semi-finals, where they lost to eventual winners Spain in a shootout. Portugal have suffered when Ronaldo, who has captained them since he was 22, has been off-form such as at the last World Cup when he suffered a bout of tendinitis in his left knee in the run-up to the competition. The Madeira-born forward, who makes a point of breaking records, is Portugal's all-time leading scorer with 56 goals in 125 appearances and needs three more caps to beat Luis Figo's record. — Reuters



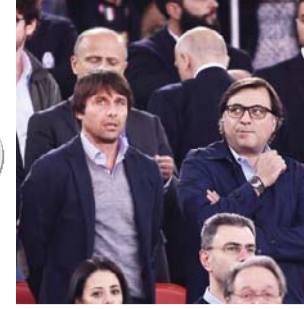
**MADRID:** Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo smiles as he addresses journalists during the club's Open Media Day at Real Madrid sport city. — AFP

# Sports

Disruptions, distractions could undo Conte's Italy

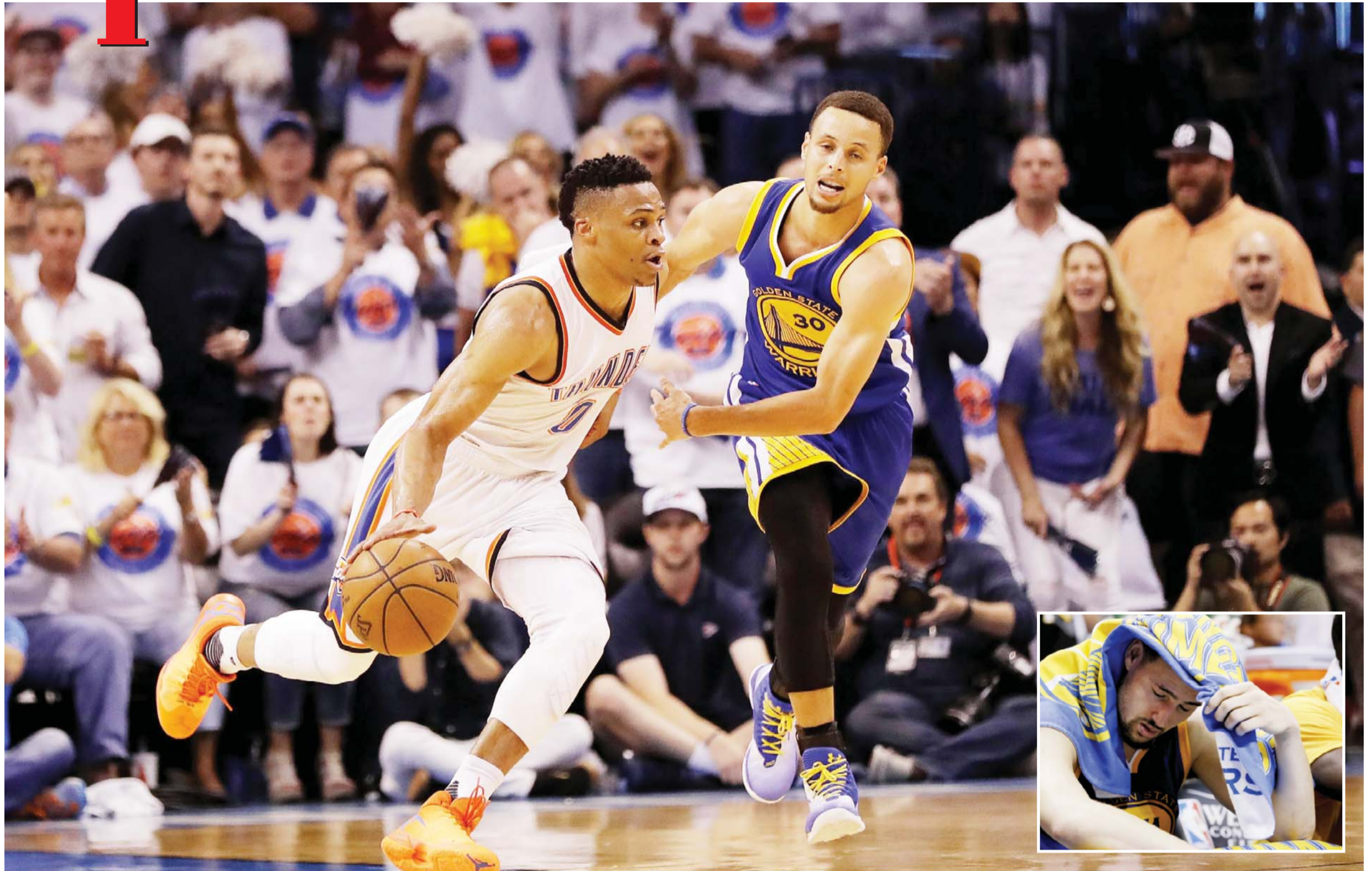
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Spain needs a better spine to reign again



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MEN ONLY? NOT ANY MORE AS WOMEN FLOCK TO IPL Page 17



OKLAHOMA CITY: Russell Westbrook #0 of the Oklahoma City Thunder drives against Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors in the third quarter in game four of the Western Conference Finals during the 2016 NBA Playoffs at Chesapeake Energy Arena. (Inset) Golden State Warriors guard Klay Thompson (11) reacts in the final moments of the game. — AP

## WARRIORS ON BRINK OF ELIMINATION

RECORD BREAKING WARRIORS TEETERING ON THE EDGE

**OKLAHOMA CITY:** Suddenly, the Golden State Warriors team that a short time ago was being favorably compared to the all-time great teams of NBA history is now on the brink of elimination from the Western Conference finals. Oklahoma City beat Golden State 118-94 on Tuesday to take a 3-1 lead in the series and move within one win of prematurely ending the Warriors' record-breaking season.

Russell Westbrook had 36 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists for his first triple-double of the playoffs after posting 18 in the regular season, and Kevin Durant added 26 points and 11 rebounds for Oklahoma City. Golden State, which won a league record 73 games in the regular season, lost consecutive games for the first time this season. The Warriors must win Game 5 on Thursday in Oakland to

keep their season alive. "We all have to bounce back," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "The idea now is to go home and get one win. Do that, and we put some pressure on them and we'll see what happens." Klay Thompson led Golden State with 26 points. Two-time league MVP Stephen Curry was limited to 19 points on 6-for-20 shooting, but Kerr insisted he was not still being affected by the knee injury that troubled him in the late stages of the regular season.

"He's not injured," Kerr said. "He's coming back from the knee, but he's not injured. He just had a lousy night. It happens, even to the best players in the world." Oklahoma City got a boost from an unlikely source. Andre Roberson, a player the Warriors have ignored at times during the series,

scored a career-high 17 points and grabbed 12 rebounds.

**'Every game is different'**

Kevin Durant added 26 points and 11 rebounds and Serge Ibaka added 17 points and seven rebounds. Nine teams have rallied from 3-1 deficits in NBA playoff series to win 4-3. "We're in a good place, but like I said, this game is over," Westbrook said. "We've got to move on to the next game. Every game is different."

The Thunder led 30-26 at the end of the first quarter, then gained control in the second. In the most unlikely of connections, Adams threw a bullet pass to Roberson near the basket for a dunk that gave the Thunder a 56-43 lead with just over four minutes left in the first half.

Oklahoma City finished with a flurry and led 72-53 at halftime. The Thunder matched the most points they have scored in a first half in franchise playoff history, a mark they set the previous game against the Warriors. It also matched the most points Golden State has allowed in a half this season for the second straight game.

Westbrook had 21 points, nine assists and five rebounds in the first half, and Durant had 18 points and six boards. Thompson tried to keep the Warriors in it, scoring 19 points in just over seven minutes to start the third quarter. But the Thunder maintained their composure, led 94-82 at the end of the period and remained in control in the fourth. "This is a tough situation to be in, but the series isn't over," Curry said. — AP

## MADRID STARS THRIVING UNDER COACH ZIDANE'S FREE REIGN

**MADRID:** Just five months into his first senior managerial role, Real Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane is already living up to the unenviable task of matching his credentials as one of the finest players of his generation.

Fourteen years on from the sumptuous volley that rippled a rain-soaked net at Hampden Park in Glasgow to hand Real their ninth European Cup over Bayer Leverkusen, he can become just the seventh man to win the Champions League as a player and a coach with victory over Atletico Madrid at Milan's San Siro on Saturday. A repeat of the outcome when Real met Atletico in the only other Champions League final between two clubs from the same city two years ago would see Real extend their dominance as the most successful club in the competition's history with an 11th win. Zidane was also a part of the 10th. Two years ago in Lisbon he cut an animated figure as assistant coach to Carlo Ancelotti as Sergio Ramos's stoppage time header rescued Real before Los Blancos cut loose in extra-time to win 4-1.

**Real solutions**

That was the Frenchman's final match as Ancelotti's aid as he delved into the third tier of Spanish football with Real's youth team Castilla to cut his teeth as a coach of his own merit. The leap when he was then promoted to the top job at the Santiago

Bernabeu to replace the sacked Rafael Benitez after an ill-fated seven month spell in charge in January seemed steep.

A very Real Madrid solution to a very Real Madrid problem, many concluded. Zidane was one of club president Florentino Perez's first 'Galactico' star signings when he joined for a world record fee in 2001. After giving Benitez the shortest of leashes, Perez bet on stardust over stability once more.

However, this time it seems to have worked. Zidane has won 21 of his 26 games in charge, not only taking Real to just their second Champions League final in 14 years, but also pushing Barcelona all the way in a La Liga title race decided by just a point when Real trailed their eternal rivals by 12 in February. "I have a lot to learn, the desire I have to learn is tremendous and I am convinced I am going to improve," Zidane insisted on Tuesday.

Yet, his easy-going nature and reputation as a player have instantly produced respect and results from Madrid's often unmanageable, ego-driven dressing room. "With Zizou's arrival we have improved hugely," said three-time World Player of the Year Cristiano Ronaldo. "I think everybody feels the fun comes back a little bit when he arrived," added Toni Kroos.

Fortune has also favored Zidane. The embarrassment of being thrown out of the

Copa del Rey for fielding an ineligible player before his appointment has ensured Real have been fresher at the business end of the season than many of their rivals. Moreover, a run of Roma, Wolfsburg and an underwhelming Manchester City has been a far easier road to Milan than that faced by Atletico in seeing off Barcelona and Bayern Munich.

Replacing an unloved disciplinarian in Benitez has also been a contributory factor to Real's stars embracing him with open arms. Every compliment aimed his way seems like another dart meant to tarnish Benitez. "I think when you have been a player you have a way of focusing on things in football that is different to a coach who hasn't been," said Ramos. "Perhaps, that's why although he has only been in charge for a short time, it seems like he has for 30 years."

Zidane's slender frame and amiable attitude still give off the vibe of a player rather than a man weighed down by the pressure of leading the richest club in the world. "It is a game we'd all love to play... well I can't," he added on Tuesday with a smile that laid bare he would still feel more comfortable as a midfield maestro than sidelined observer. Yet, despite the change from player, to assistant and now coach, the constant drive to win the Champions League remains. — AFP



MADRID: Real Madrid's French coach Zinedine Zidane (4th left) looks at his players during a training session on the club's Open Media Day at Real Madrid sport city. — AFP

# Kuwait Times BUSINESS

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## SAUDI SHOULD KEEP OPTIONS OPEN ON CURRENCY PEG



**DUQM:** Chinese investors listen to an explanation as they check the model of the dry dock which is to be built following an economic agreement in the Omani port city of Duqm. Chinese investors signed a deal with Oman's government to establish an industrial city, including an oil refinery, in the port town of Duqm, both sides said in a joint statement. The agreement signed during the ceremony in Muscat would open way for investments worth \$10.7 billion by 2022 to finance industrial projects in Duqm, on the Arabian Sea, which the Omani government is developing in a bid to diversify revenues beyond oil. — AFP

# IRAN-SAUDI ROW THREATENS ANY OPEC DEAL

## OPEC'S THORNIEST DILEMMA - TENSIONS BETWEEN ARCH-RIVALS

**LONDON:** OPEC's thorniest dilemma of the past year - at least from a purely oil standpoint - is about to disappear. Less than six months after the lifting of Western sanctions, Iran is close to regaining normal oil export volumes, adding extra barrels to the market in an unexpectedly smooth way and helped by supply disruptions from Canada to Nigeria. But the development will do little to repair dialogue, let alone help clinch a production deal, when OPEC meets next week amid rising political tensions between arch-rivals Iran and oil superpower Saudi Arabia, OPEC sources and delegates say.

Earlier this year, Tehran refused to join an initiative to boost prices by freezing output but signaled it would be part of a future effort once its production had recovered sufficiently. OPEC has no supply limit, having at its last meeting in December scrapped its production target. According to International Energy Agency (IEA) figures, Iran's output has reached levels seen before the imposition of sanctions over its nuclear program. Tehran says it is not yet there.

But while Iran may be more willing now to talk, an increase in oil prices has reduced the urgency of propping

up the market, OPEC delegates say. Oil has risen towards a more producer-friendly \$50 from a 12-year low near \$27 in January. "I don't think OPEC will decide anything," a delegate from a major Middle East producer said. "The market is recovering because of supply disruptions and demand recovery." A senior OPEC delegate, asked whether the group would make any changes to output policy at its June 2 meeting, said: "Nothing. The freeze is finished."

### Higher exports

Within OPEC, Iran has long pushed for measures to support oil prices. That position puts it at odds with Saudi Arabia, the driving force behind OPEC's landmark November 2014 refusal to cut supply in order to boost the market. Sources familiar with Iranian oil policy see no sign of any change of approach by Riyadh under new Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih - who is seen as a believer in reform and low oil prices. "It really depends on those countries within OPEC with a high level of production," one such source said. "It does not seem that Saudi Arabia will be ready to cooperate with other members."

Iran has managed to increase oil exports significantly in 2016 after the lifting of sanctions in January. It notched up output of 3.56 million barrels of oil per day in April, the IEA said, a level last reached in November 2011 before sanctions were tightened. Saudi Arabia produced a near-record-high 10.26 million barrels per day in April and has kept output relatively steady over the past year, its submissions to OPEC show.

Iran, according to delegates from other OPEC members, is unlikely to restrain supplies, given that it believes Saudi Arabia should cut back itself to make room for Iranian oil. "Iran won't support any freeze or cut," said a non-Iranian OPEC delegate. "But Iran may put pressure on Saudi Arabia that they hold the responsibility." Saudi thinking, however, has moved on from the days when Riyadh cut or increased output unilaterally. Talks in Doha on the proposed output freeze by OPEC and non-OPEC producers fell through after Saudi insisted that Iran participate.

Indeed, differences between Saudi Arabia and Iran, which helped found the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries 56 years ago, over OPEC policy have

made cooperation harder - to say nothing of more fundamental disagreements. For more than a decade after oil crashed to \$10 in 1997, the two set aside rivalries to manage the market and support prices, although they fell into opposing OPEC camps with Iran wanting high prices and Saudi more moderate. Now, the Sunni-Shia conflicts setting Saudi Arabia and Iran at each other's throats, particularly in Syria and Yemen, make the relationship between the two even more fraught.

The two disagree over OPEC's future direction. Earlier in May, OPEC failed to decide on a long-term strategy as Saudi Arabia objected to Iran's proposal that the exporter group aim for "effective production management". With that backdrop, ministers may be advised to keep expectations low, an OPEC watcher said. "The only aspiration OPEC should have for its 2 June meeting is simply not to repeat the chaos of the Doha process," said Paul Horsnell, analyst at Standard Chartered. "A straightforward meeting with no binding commitments and, most importantly, no overt arguments would be the best outcome for ministers." — Reuters

## AFTER SIX YEARS AUSTERITY, GREEKS FEEL NO JOY FROM NEW DEBT DEAL

### EURO MINISTERS APPROVE NEW AID TRANCHE FOR GREECE

**ATHENS:** While Greece's government trumpeted a debt relief deal with other euro zone countries yesterday as the beginning of the end of its bruising six-year financial crisis, many Greeks remained unconvinced. After years of austerity measures demanded by Greece's international creditors - the latest passed in parliament last Sunday - Greeks wonder whether the sacrifices they have made to stay in the euro were worth the pain. "We are done, we can't even leave our homes anymore to have a coffee," said Panagiotis Zabetakis, 50, a carpenter who, like one in every four Greeks, is unemployed. Playing with worry beads at a cheap cafe in an Athens suburb, Zabetakis paid 1 euro (\$1.10) for his morning coffee. That will rise on June 1 when the measures passed to secure yesterday's deal start coming into force.

By next year Greeks will pay an extra 20-30 cents for their coffee and the price of just about everything else will rise too as added tax will (VAT) goes up to 24 percent from 23 percent. Greeks' spending power, meanwhile, is in sharp decline. "We are running after the Europeans, hoping they throw us a bone which would suffice for a few months. I'm very disappointed," Zabetakis said, criticizing the deal which opens the way for debt relief from 2018, but does not include any firm promise

to reduce the payments Greece has to make.

Greece have been hit with waves of pension cuts and tax increases since it was forced to seek its first bailout in 2010. Leaving the meeting in Brussels where he secured 10.3 billion euros (\$11.5 billion) in new funds from his euro-zone colleagues, Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos said he hoped the deal marked "the beginning of turning Greece's vicious circle of recession-measures-recession into one where investors have a clear runway to invest in Greece."

The deal won a provisional commitment from the IMF to return to the bailout process, but with Germany opposed to cutting the debt pile, euro zone ministers made any relief measures such as extending maturities on loans contingent on Athens respecting strict criteria, something Greeks fear means more austerity. "This cannot continue ... they (the Europeans) are telling us we will be in debt for 100 years. How can we be pleased?" asked pensioner Eleni Palaiologou, 85. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, elected in early 2015 on a promise to end austerity only to row back and accept a new bailout to avoid being forced out of the euro, struggled to get his coalition to accept the latest reforms.

Scraping through with a narrow majority of



**ATHENS:** Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras addresses lawmakers during a parliamentary session in Athens. — AP

153 members in the 300 seat parliament, there is some stirring dissent. One of Tsipras' lawmakers quit after Sunday's vote. "We are adopting measures and policies which run counter to the core of our values and policies," the resigned member of parliament, Vassiliki Katrivanou, said on her Facebook page. "But I cannot think of any credible alternative." On the streets of Athens, a 33-year-old chartered accountant, who declined to give his name fearing repercussions at work, said he was tired of scraping by. "I feel we are just living in this vortex of austerity measures," he said. "It's a constant of just sacrifices." — Reuters

## LONDON'S CITY FINANCE HUB BRACES FOR POSSIBLE BREXIT

**LONDON:** With one month to go before Britain's vital in-out EU referendum, London's City finance district is busily planning ahead for a potential "Brexit". Big City firms, many of which are housed in skyscrapers that dominate the London skyline, are seeking to protect themselves from market volatility should Britons vote "Leave", experts say.

Major players like HSBC and Deutsche Bank have said they may need to shift activities abroad and the Bank of England is boosting liquidity in the weeks around the June 23 referendum to avoid a credit crunch. But big banks, insurance giants, trading exchanges and accounting firms are mostly keeping mum on the full "toolbox" of contingency measures. Anastasia Nesvetailova, economics professor at City University London, told AFP that big finance firms will be seeking haven assets, mulling extra liquidity to ward off a cash crunch-as well as eyeing potential re-location and job cuts.

"The main tool in such a box would be stocking up on reserves-cash, quality securities, collateral-whose value is immune to Brexit," Nesvetailova said. "In addition to boosting their buffers, financial institu-

tions are communicating with regulators and are assessing the range of possible risks. "This involves scenario planning; stress-testing their funding positions, proofing their balance sheets against a massive and prolonged liquidity crisis (and) planning for staffing needs in the eventuality of relocating some of the activities away from London."

Following an EU exit, London could shed 100,000 jobs, according to finance lobbyists TheCityUK. That is almost one in seven of the estimated 729,600 people employed by financial and related professional services in the traditional City district-and the newer Canary Wharf area that houses HSBC and Barclays. HSBC, Europe's biggest bank, has stated it could potentially shift 1,000 jobs to Paris, comprising about one fifth of its global banking and markets division.

The bank will also make sure it is "extremely liquid" over the June-July period, and will seek to determine the "shape" of its businesses in the two years following Brexit. Deutsche Bank, with some 9,000 staff in Britain, has established a working group to assess whether it would need to shift its activities. — AFP





GLOBAL STOCK MARKETS EXTEND RALLY

LONDON: European stocks jumped yesterday, mirroring gains in Asia, as investors welcomed Greece's debt relief deal, bright German and US economic data, easing Brexit concerns and firmer oil prices.

the country's debt mountain. The deal releases 10.3 billion euros (\$12 billion) in bailout funds that Greece urgently needs to repay big loans to the European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in July, having already fallen behind in paying for everyday government duties and wages.

ministers were at it all night... to hash out a deal that satisfies both those opposed to major debt relief-Germany-and those who are adamant that Greece cannot survive without it-the IMF'.

Frankfurt rallied 1.3 percent after a key survey showed that German businesses are feeling increasingly positive over the economic outlook in the euro-zone powerhouse. The Ifo institute's busi-

ness climate index rose by a full point to 107.7 points in May, comfortably outpacing analysts' expectations, Ifo said in a statement.

Total won 1.1 percent to 43.60 euros in Paris. Back in London, Marks & Spencer plunged 7.9 percent to 409.70 pence after the British retailer warned that a new turnaround plan would have a short-term hit on profits.

Energy focus

The energy sector forged higher on rising oil prices, which boost profits and revenues. London-listed Royal Dutch Shell was also lifted after it announced another 2,200 job cuts due to low oil prices and following its takeover of smaller rival BG Group.

Elsewhere, Asian equities gained ground yesterday, as investors also adjusted to the prospect of a US rate rise in the near future. New York stocks charged higher overnight, with technology and financial shares benefitting especially from greater confidence in the US economic outlook.

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Includes logo for 'Global' and 'Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report'.

Market data table for Wednesday 25 May 2016. Includes sections for Index, Trades, Basic Materials, Consumer Goods, Health Care, Consumer Services, Investment Instruments, Technology, Parallel Market, and Insurance.



RENNES: A placard reading '20 liters maximum, no jerrican, no portative containers' has been set at a gas station in Rennes, western France yesterday, as widespread blockades of oil depots - as part of strikes over labor reforms - could lead to an oil shortage.

GOLD DROPS TO 7-WEEK LOW ON FED RATE HIKE PROSPECTS

PALLADIUM, SILVER, PLATINUM EDGE OFF MULTI-WEEK LOWS

LONDON: Gold fell to a seven-week low yesterday after upbeat US home sales data in the previous session boosted expectations that the Federal Reserve will press ahead with interest rate hikes in the near term.

as data suggested new US single-family home sales have hit the highest in eight years. Holdings in the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, SPDR Gold Shares, fell 3.9 tons on Tuesday to 868.66 tons, its first decline in a month.

OIL NUDGES \$50 PER BARREL

LONDON: Oil rose towards \$50 a barrel yesterday for the first time in seven months, driven by expectations that shrinking supply will help erode any overhang of unwanted crude, particularly after industry data showed a sharp fall in US inventories.

Strikes across France that crippled output from most of the country's eight refineries have had little impact so far on crude oil prices, but rather helped lift refining margins for diesel and gasoline.





## PROPERTY LOANS, THE GLASS CHIN OF CHINA BANKS

### BIG CITY HOME PRICES RISING SHARPLY, RAISING FEARS OF BUBBLE

**HONG KONG:** China's top banks are lending more to homebuyers and developers than at any time since at least the global financial crisis, making them vulnerable to a property market downturn as prices overheat and real-estate firms struggle with a growing debt burden. China's top five banks had mortgages and loans to the sector of 12.4 trillion yuan (\$1.9 trillion) at end-2015, up 11 percent over the year, and representing 28 percent of total loans, a Reuters analysis of their balance sheets shows.

That is the biggest exposure on their books, more than to manufacturing or transportation, and it exceeds 40 percent, up from about 26 percent seven years ago, if all loans secured on property are included. And as banks including Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and Bank of China increase their exposure, property prices in China's big cities have soared, forming what some fear is a bubble waiting to burst.

"There are two concerns - the reliance on property collateral to secure loans has increased, and property prices have also increased to a level that some may argue is over-heated," said Jack Yuan, associate director for financial institutions at Fitch Ratings. "If there is a very sharp fall in prices, then the consequences could be quite serious," he said,

adding that the authorities do have tools to try and avoid such a tumble. Many developers are already saddled with debt from China's most recent real-estate bubble - an eight-year frenzy that left many with unsold and uncompleted projects when prices turned lower in late 2013.

As China's economy stutters to its weakest growth in a quarter of a century, and the property market remains subdued outside the larger cities, the build-up in debt is continuing. Developer Yang Guang Co Ltd is among those taking on more. It said last week it would borrow an extra 300 million yuan on top of its existing 6.1 billion yuan liabilities, though its revenues halved in 2015. On current cashflow it would take 17 years to clear its debts. The company did not respond to a request for comment.

Standard and Poor's in March flagged the risks to Chinese developers' credit ratings, as many were ploughing more capital into land and construction, increasing leverage despite falling profitability. Those buying expensive land in tier-1 and tier-2 cities could be particularly at risk if prices dropped, it said. There are also growing risks to banks from homebuyers. A study by Natixis showed buyers took out 1 trillion yuan in new mortgages in the

first quarter this year on home sales of 1.6 trillion yuan, implying a loan-to-value (LTV) ratio of 62 percent. That remains a comfortable cushion for lenders, but the direction of travel is remarkable, jumping from 28 percent the previous quarter.

#### Defaults

In April average home prices in tier-1 Chinese cities rose at their fastest in four years, fuelled by six interest rate cuts since 2014 and easier downpayments. Shenzhen and Shanghai were the hottest spots, with prices up 62.4 percent and 28 percent over the year, according to government data. "It's a parabolic surge before the burst. It doesn't reflect the real economy," said Roshan Padamadan, an equities fund manager with Singapore-based Luminance Global Fund.

"The property market may cause a serious destabilization of the Chinese banking sector," he said, adding his fund had recently build up some short positions in Chinese banks. The situation still appears much less threatening than it was in the United States leading up to the global financial crisis, when banks' real estate-related loans increased from 42.6 percent to 56.5 percent in the five years to March 2007.

But there are question marks over the quality of Chinese commercial banks' balance sheets. Defaults in the property sector were once unthinkable, but that changed when developer Zhejiang Xingrun failed to pay its bank loans in March 2014, and Kaisa Group defaulted on its dollar bonds 10 months later. Banks' non-performing loans are already at an 11-year-high, or nearly 2 percent of the total, according to China's banking regulator, and many analysts believe the situation is much worse, as some banks are slow to recognize problem loans or park them off balance sheet.

Brokerage CLSA thinks the real figure is between 15 percent and 19 percent, while RBS says 15 percent is its most optimistic estimate, and 35 percent its least. At ICBC, China's biggest lender by assets, new impairment losses on loans to real estate developers tripled in 2015 from a year earlier, its latest annual report showed. ICBC said in the report it had "strengthened risk management" of the sector and enhanced monitoring and analysis of outstanding property loans. The big five banks did not return requests for comment. China's central bank, which is responsible for financial stability, did not immediately respond to request for comment. — Reuters



## MOHAMED NASER AL SAYER LAUNCHES 'CLICK AND GET A GIFT WITH COFRAN' CAMPAIGN

**KUWAIT:** Mohamed Naser Al Sayer, one of the Al Sayer Group Holding Companies and the authorized dealer for Cofran Lubricants in Kuwait recently built excitement with Click and Get a Gift With Cofran campaign for visitors at Avenues Mall. The Cofran booth at Avenues Mall became top attraction for the visitors as they clicked photo of the booth and posted on their social media accounts to receive attractive gifts. Hundreds of visitors stepped forward to show their keen interest in the campaign. The design of the booth was inspired by rising flames and freezing water, representing extreme



hot and cold weather conditions withstood by Cofran.

Krishna Kumar, General Manager Tires Oil and Paint Division said "I thank all visitors who came forward

to participate in this campaign and to make it a big success. We were able to achieve excellent level of engagement driven by social media activity. Such result also is a testimony of the reputation Cofran has built over the past several years. With 80 years' experience Cofran is the specialist of lubricants and also one of the market leading brands in Kuwait."

**Once Cofran, Always Cofran**  
Cofran Lubricants, made in France, always proves the ability to work in the toughest weather conditions to meet the different needs of

vehicle as much as possible and provides excellent protection against corrosion. Cofran is specialized in different oil products that give longer lifetime for machines and better performance. Engineers at Cofran, through constant research have tested the products under "real world" conditions and come out with a wide range of specialty greases and oils which can withstand high and low temperatures, shocks, fling off, extreme pressure, etc. Cofran product range includes specialty greases, engine oils, hydraulic oils, and other special products to meet today's growing demands.

## GULF RISES ON BACK OF OIL AND GLOBAL MOOD

### MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

**DUBAI:** Gains for global equity and oil markets boosted Gulf bourses yesterday with Saudi petrochemical shares and Dubai real estate stocks leading the gains. Riyadh's index rose 0.6 percent in modest volume as Saudi Basic Industries, the largest petrochemical producer, climbed 1.2 percent. Saudi Cement added 2.0 percent after the company said it had sold its 40 percent stake in Kuwaiti cement company Group International Cement for \$6.59 million; the deal will be reflected in its books in the second quarter.

Dubai's stock index rose 1.9 percent in the heaviest trade for a month as Emaar Properties jumped 4.0 percent. Another real estate developer, Deyaar, gained 3.0 percent after saying it had formed a partnership with Turkey's Ascioglu to build a residential tower in Dubai. Real estate

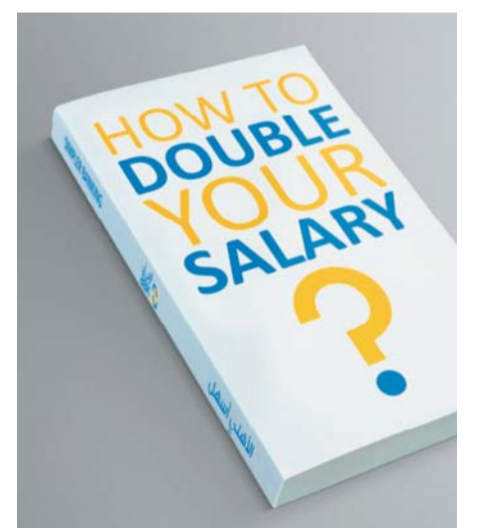
firms were also the most active in Abu Dhabi's bourse with Aldar Properties adding 3.5 percent. The Abu Dhabi index was up 1.6 percent.

Blue chips helped support Qatar's index, which was 0.4 percent higher. Oil drilling rig provider Gulf International Services rose 2.2 percent while telecommunications operator Ooredoo gained 1.3 percent. In Egypt, the stock index climbed 0.6 percent. Investment bank EFG Hermes climbed 0.8 percent to 10.95 Egyptian pounds, approaching technical resistance on its March peak of 11.45 pounds. Dubai Group plans to sell its stake in EFG Hermes this year under the terms of the Dubai firm's debt restructuring, the chief executive of Dubai Group's parent Dubai Holding said on Tuesday. Dubai Group holds 11.8 percent of EFG Hermes, according to Thomson Reuters data. — Reuters

## ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' DRAWS

**KUWAIT:** Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its fourth 'Double Your Salary' weekly draw on 24 May, 2016 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, announcing the names of the winners for this week. The new promotion includes weekly draws, with two winners per draw and will run from 1 May to 30 September, 2016. The winners this week were: Amani Hussain Ali Khan (Qurain Branch) and Abdullah Athbi Abdullah Ghareeb (Salmiya Branch).

New customers who transfer their salary to ABK will receive KD 100 and automatically be entered into the weekly draws to double their salaries. Existing customers who are already transferring their salary to ABK will be entered into a separate draw. The Bank's next draw will be held on 31 May, 2016 where two new lucky winners will be announced subsequently. All winners will be contacted personally and a weekly announcement will be made through the media with the winners' names. For more



information on Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit [www.eahli.com](http://www.eahli.com) or contact an ABK a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.

## YBA KANOO AWARDS AVAYA TRANSFORMATION CONTRACT

**MANAMA:** Bahrain based Yusuf Bin Ahmed Kanoo (YBA Kanoo), one of the largest independent, family-owned businesses in the Gulf region, has announced awarding a flagship networking and wireless project contract to Avaya, a leader in business communications solutions. Under the contract, Avaya will deploy its networking and wireless technologies to connect the group's 60 branches across the GCC (Gulf Council Countries), providing the group with superior customer and team experiences while building operational efficiencies across the group's stores and offices in the GCC.

Scheduled for completion in June 2016, YBA Kanoo customers and employees will enjoy the secure, fast and seamless wireless roaming experience in all of the group's outlets and offices, while enabling the management of the group to quickly and easily roll out customer and employees specific applications that enhance productivity and the experience of the group's customers.

"At YBA Kanoo, staff mobility is a fundamental business requirement considering the diverse nature of our lines of businesses across many geographies. We firmly believe that wireless access will enhance the collaboration between our teams while increasing their efficiency and productivity. Having access to internal company resources wherever our sales and operations teams are would also

greatly improve the customer satisfaction through faster response time," commented Jameel Al-Sharaf, Head of Group IT at YBA Kanoo.

With the centralized wireless network management, network administrators at YBA Kanoo will be able to differentiate enterprise users from guests, with full network visibility and control all the way to individual user level. The



Jameel Al Sharaf

network is managed on a private cloud, and allows for centralized licensing management, which will help YBA Kanoo to cut OPEX by an estimated 30%. The group's head office in Bahrain will also be running on Avaya networking technology, running Avaya applications such as voice and video conferencing solutions. "Continuing the drive towards higher efficiency and improved staff productivity, integrated voice and videoconferencing solutions

will greatly reduce our operational costs while enhancing the collaboration experience between our staff across our offices," said Al Sharaf

"Our work with the Yusuf Bin Ahmed Kanoo Group demonstrates the digital maturity of business groups in the region, led by strong examples such as the Kanoo Group. In such engagements, flexibility is a key requirement, and our solutions and services targeted towards diverse business needs are available to consumers in a number of consumption models. We also look at this as testament to our strong support towards Bahrain, a market we see as a key growth area. Across regions, our wireless solutions deliver the simplicity, scalability and security that our customers now expect from Avaya, allowing them to meet changing business requirements and enable their employees to do more than ever before," said Mohammed Areff, VP MEA, Avaya.

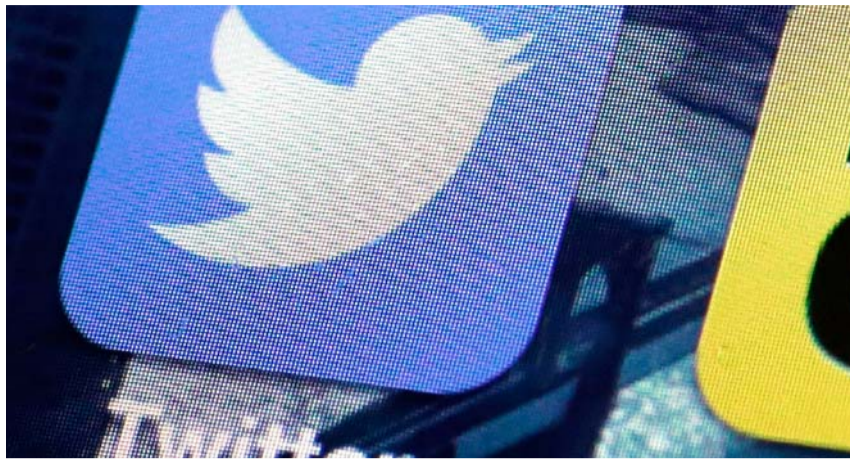
Established in Bahrain in 1890, YBA Kanoo has diversified its business interest from trading and shipping to other dynamic industries, including shipping, travel, machinery, chemicals, logistics, properties, energy, technology and other retail and commercial activities. The group also operates the largest travel and leisure company in the Middle East. The group is looking to further expand internationally and the Avaya solution will help it achieve its ambitions.



COMING SOON TO TWITTER: MORE ROOM TO TWEET

NEW YORK: Twitter is making some big changes, at least in the context of 140 characters or fewer. The social media service said that in coming months, photos, videos and other media won't count toward Twitter's 140-character limit. Now, for example, when a user posts a photo, it counts for about 24 characters. That means slightly more wordy tweets are on the way. The change, announced Tuesday, is yet another attempt by the San Francisco company to make its messaging service easier to use, and to attract new users.

against the limit. And people will be able to retweet and quote their own tweets. All followers In another change, any new tweet beginning with an @name will be seen by all followers. Previously, a tweet that started with a person's handle did not become part of their feed. If a user wanted this to happen, they had to put a period before the @ symbol. Confusing? Some users thought so. Twitter has tried to keep all users happy, those for and against relaxing character limits, by sticking to the current count while allowing more freedom to express thoughts, or rants, through images and other media. Above all, Twitter Inc hopes that the changes will re-ignite user growth. The company, which recently celebrated its 10th birthday, is dwarfed by its rival, Facebook. Its current number of users, about 310 million, trails even the profes-



spurring growth. "It is a very user friendly change and it is about time," said Wedbush Securities analyst Michael Pachter. While he said the changes are not likely to bring back users who have abandoned the site, new users might be less alienated. Abandoning the 140 character limit altogether would be going too far, he added. "They want to be purists and stick to the original vision," he said "Baby steps. Let's start with that." Late last year, as it continued to struggle, Twitter brought back co-founder Jack Dorsey. In addition to staff and cost cuts, it launched a channel called "Moments" that brings together hot topics in one place. Earlier this year, it tweaked its timeline to show users tweets that they may have missed while they were away. Yet company shares continue to hemorrhage, falling almost 40 percent this year. Twitter's stock hit an all-time low of \$13.73 on Tuesday before recovering some ground. It ended the day down 38 cents, or 2.6 percent, to \$14.03. — AP

sional networking service LinkedIn. Facebook has 1.65 billion users. Even though many people are familiar with Twitter, at least that it exists, the company has been unable to convert them to active users. Twitter remains hard to understand for many, with its own lingo of hashtags and symbols. User friendly The changes announced Tuesday are the latest put in place with hopes of

EU TO PROBE DEEPER RELATIONS BETWEEN WEB PLATFORMS, BUSINESSES

BRUSSELS: The European Commission will examine the terms of use of web platforms such as Google, Amazon and Apple Inc's App Store for businesses to decide whether further regulation is needed to curb possible unfair practices. The European Union executive yesterday presented the conclusions from a year-long inquiry into online platforms such as Facebook, Google and eBay, ruling out a single law for them but saying it would target specific problems in areas such as copyright and telecoms. The Commission also proposed a reform of the bloc's broadcasting rules which will include an obligation on providers of online video streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon to devote at least a fifth of their catalogue to European works. EU member states will also have the option of requiring streaming services not based in that country but targeting their audience to contribute financially to the production of European works. "I want online platforms and the audiovisual and creative sectors to be power houses in the digital economy, not weigh them down with unnecessary rules," said Andrus Ansip, EU Commission Vice-President in charge of Brussels' strategy to create a single market in the digital world. Yesterday, the Commission also unveiled proposals to make online shopping across borders easier. Online platforms - largely US tech companies - have come under increased

scrutiny in the 28-nation bloc for their business practices as well as handling of swathes of data. The Commission said its inquiry had highlighted a number of problems in relations between businesses and platforms, including the imposition of unfair terms and conditions, refusal of access to markets and important business data and the promotion of the platform's own service to the disadvantage of competitors. The EU executive will probe further into the allegedly "unfair" practices and decide if further action is needed next year. Separately, the Commission has charged Google with abusing its dominance to promote its shopping service over rival services. In an upcoming reform of EU telecoms rules the Commission said it will look at both deregulating telecoms companies where they face competition from similar services, such as Microsoft's Skype or Facebook's WhatsApp, and extending some telecoms data protection rules to platforms providing similar services. Telecoms firms have long complained about the lack of a level playing-field with tech firms who can provide messaging or calling services without being subject to the same rules. A reform of the bloc's copyright rules expected after the summer will address concerns by the music industry that platforms such as YouTube do not pay artists enough when their content is uploaded. The new broadcasting rules will become law when approved by the European Parliament and national governments. — Reuters



REDMOND: This July 3, 2014, file photo, shows the Microsoft Corp logo outside the Microsoft Visitor Center in Redmond, Washington. — AP

MICROSOFT CUTS MORE JOBS IN TROUBLED MOBILE UNIT

NEW YORK: Microsoft will cut up to 1,850 jobs and book an approximately \$950 million write-down as it attempts to salvage its rocky entrance into the smartphone market. The company acquired Nokia's phone business in 2014 for \$7.3 billion, seeking to capitalize on and the fast-growing industry. But by last summer it had slashed the value of that business severely and it eliminat-

ed 26,000 jobs. Microsoft, under former CEO Steve Ballmer, attempted to leverage its software knowhow to take on increasingly powerful tech rivals, but the company has beat a quick retreat under new CEO Satya Nadella, with the venture taking on water. Nadella has redirected Microsoft to better focus on software and Internet services. The bulk of the jobs cuts announced yesterday,

up to 1,350 positions - are at Microsoft Mobile Oy in Finland. There will also be up to 500 additional jobs trimmed worldwide. Microsoft had 117,354 employees globally at the end of its last fiscal year. Microsoft Corp, based in Redmond, Washington, hopes to complete most of the "streamlining" by year's end. The company's stock rose slightly in pre-market trading. — AP

ASIA HOTBED OF IT PIRACY DESPITE GROWTH: REPORT

SINGAPORE: More than 60 percent of all computer software installed in the Asia-Pacific in 2015 was unlicensed, the worst of any region, despite growing economies and anti-piracy efforts, an industry watchdog said yesterday. The Software Alliance-which includes giants like Microsoft, Apple, Intel, Oracle and Adobe-said in a report that the unlicensed software in Asia had a value of \$19.1 billion last year. Piracy rates were most rampant in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia at more than 80 percent. The global piracy average was 39 percent. While the worldwide piracy rate decreased by four percentage points from 2013, Asia saw only a one percentage point decline to 61 percent over the two-year period, said the report, which did not cover mobile devices. The report resulted from a survey of 22,000

computer users and 2,000 information technology decision-makers and includes business, operating system, gaming and security software. The group's Asia-Pacific senior director Tarun Sawney called for more action to address the problem of unlicensed software, particularly for key sectors like banking. "Whilst there's still been improvement from two years ago on the use of unlicensed software, the rate is still too high and certainly in emerging economies, a lot of which are in Asia-Pacific, the problem still persists," he told a press conference. The report cited a "disconnect" between businesses' concern about cyber-security and their attitude to unlicensed software. It found that the worldwide rate for what it called "critical" sectors such as banking, insurance and securities industries was 25 percent. No figure was given for Asia in those sectors. — AFP

SMART HOME GADGETS NEED TO LIVE TOGETHER

BURLINGAME: Smart home technology that has long been knocking at doors will settle into the mainstream after rival gadgets and services become hassle-free guests that get along with one another, industry insiders say. While smart home offerings have been around for years, attention has been heightened by Google, Amazon and Apple maneuvering to be at the heart of managing devices capable of wirelessly taking commands or feeding information. "We need to look at problems in the home from a holistic perspective and realize it is the value of all these devices working together that will drive adoption of the smart home," EVERYTHING senior vice president of connected products Curt Schacker said. He was speaking in Silicon Valley on Tuesday for the start of a 20th anniversary Connections conference devoted to smart homes and the fast-growing Internet of Things. EVERYTHING works with businesses to manage data gathered from just about any object given a "real-time digital identity" by using computer chips, sensors or even scannable codes. "We think every single thing in the world can benefit from a digital identity," Schacker said.

Connections. "We started thinking about Echo and Alexa and it was hard for us to imagine in a couple of years any kind of interaction with technology will not be voice driven," Isbitski said. "It is easy to see that voice will be everywhere." He envisioned an era of "ambient computing" in which, as depicted in science fiction, people speak commands and machines respond and obey with the help of artificial intelligence. "The Internet of Things enables these smart home scenarios we have been talking about for years," Isbitski said. A section at Amazon's online retail website is devoted to smart devices that work with Alexa, an open network that invites developers to teach the software new skills. Amazon last year established a \$100 million Alexa Fund to provide venture capital for innovators working with the technology. "We are crawling; we are going to be walking pretty quick and we are all looking for-

ward to running toward that smart home that we have always envisioned," Isbitski said. Meanwhile, Apple has been wooing developers with a HomeKit framework for using the technology giant's devices and Siri virtual assistant to manage smart appliances, fixtures and more. Apple is believed to have HomeKit news planned at a press event taking place in San Francisco in June. Speakers at Connections were skeptical that one smart home device would rule them all, given the array of service providers and gadget makers along with the fact that the web of smart things is growing to include cars. Mark Skarpness chairs IoTivity, a project aimed at establishing standards that would let the gamut of smart devices work together. "I think the market will get much bigger if you are not spending all your time competing on connectivity and instead competing on what we can do for you," he said. — AFP

JAPAN ATM HEIST PROMPTS CALL FOR VIGILANCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA BANK

PRETORIA: The theft of \$13 million from ATMs in Japan using counterfeit cards from South African lender Standard Bank prompted a call for vigilance from South Africa's central bank yesterday. Thieves made 14,000 withdrawals in just three hours - 78 a minute - from bank machines at 7-Eleven convenience stores across Japan, according to a source familiar with the matter. Central bank deputy governor Kuben Naidoo told reporters that Standard Bank would shoulder the losses. "We are pleased that Standard Bank publicly said what had happened. We don't know all the details yet

but we're looking into it and we will take all the steps necessary to protect our payment systems and banking systems from similar types of attacks," he said. "We are working with the banks to ensure that they are constantly upgrading their ability to detect and repel cyber-attacks. But you will always be subjected to these attacks." Standard Bank said on Monday it had suffered the losses, not its customers, and that it had alerted the authorities. It estimated its total loss at 300 million rand (\$19 million). The bank has declined to comment further. —AFP

HP ENTERPRISE PLANS \$8.5 BN SPINOFF, MERGER

SAN FRANCISCO: US technology group Hewlett Packard Enterprise said it plans to spin off and merge its corporate services business in a deal valued at \$8.5 billion (7.6 billion euros). The split-off unit is to be merged with Computer Sciences Corp. to create a global corporate technology services giant with expected annual revenues of \$26 billion, Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) said in a statement Tuesday. HPE chief executive Meg Whitman described the deal as the "right next step." "Enterprise Services customers will benefit from a stronger, more versatile services business, better able to innovate and adapt," she said. The two companies aim to complete the deal by March 31 next year, HPE said, predicting eventual cost savings of \$1.5 billion a year. The transaction is worth \$8.5 billion to HPE shareholders, who

would end up owning both HPE shares and about half of the new company, it said. News of the plan sent HPE shares surging nearly 10 percent and CSC stock soaring more than 23 percent in electronic trading after the close of the New York Stock Exchange. The core HPE business left over after the spin-off would bring in revenues of \$33 billion a year, the company predicted, focusing on its faster-growing business of technology infrastructure including servers, storage, networking, and cloud technology. In a separate statement, CSC said the merger, which is subject to agreement by regulators and shareholders, would create one of the world's largest IT services companies with more than 5,000 clients in 70 countries. CSC boss Mike Lawrie is to be chief executive of the new group. — AFP

BLOW FOR APPLE AS INDIA STICKS TO RETAIL RULES

NEW DELHI: Apple faces a roadblock in its quest to open stores in India after the finance minister decided it must comply with tough local sourcing rules, a report said yesterday, days after a visit by chief executive Tim Cook. India will not exempt Apple from regulations stating that foreign single-brand retailers must buy at least 30 percent of their parts locally if they want to open outlets, the Bloomberg report said. Apple has no stores in the world's second-most populous nation, instead selling iPhones through third-party retailers such as Vodafone and Airtel. It makes most of its handsets in China. The Silicon Valley giant had reportedly applied for an exemption that allows firms bringing cutting-edge technology that cannot be easily replicated by Indian manufacturers to sidestep the rules. "Minister Arun Jaitley decided to support the decision by India's Foreign Investment Promotion Board that Apple will have to procure 30 percent of components locally if it wants to sell through its own retail stores," Bloomberg reported, citing unnamed sources. The potential blow to Apple comes only days after its boss Cook toured India in what was widely seen as an extended charm offensive. During the visit he was pictured in New Delhi using Prime Minister Narendra Modi's gold-colored iPhone as he launched a new version of



the premier's eponymous app. Cook also announced an app design center in the southern technology hub of Bangalore and a maps center in Hyderabad, showering praise on India's talented software developers. India sets stringent rules for foreign retailers, seeking to encourage investment that brings in manufacturing jobs rather than simply allowing them to sell products to its potentially vast market. India is a compelling proposition for the technology giant, with nearly a billion Indians-among a population of 1.2 billion-still not online, especially as sales of the iPhone slow in more saturated markets. Yet Apple products are too expensive for the vast majority of Indians, with taxes taking the cost of a basic iPhone to almost \$600. — AFP





MIAMI: Marlie Casseus, center, elicits a laugh from nurses Ginette and Gina Eugene, left, and her mother Maleyn Antoine as she visits Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami to say thanks and to celebrate National Nurses Week. — AP photos

### HAITIAN WOMAN VISITS HOSPITAL WHERE DOCTORS REBUILT HER FACE

MIAMI: A Haitian woman who attracted widespread media attention 10 years ago for a 16-pound facial growth says she'd now like to work as a reporter, too. The Miami Herald reports that Marlie Casseus recently returned to Jackson Memorial Hospital with about 150 Haitian nurses to celebrate National Nurses Week. Casseus is now 23. Speaking through an interpreter, she said she wanted to join the reporters who chronicled her medical journey.

Casseus has a rare disorder that causes bone to swell and become jelly-like. Doctors rebuilt her face after removing the growth that nearly killed her. She's had roughly 10 surgeries since 2005. The hospital's International Kids Fund and a local charity have raised funds for her care here. Casseus' recovery in Haiti sometimes hit setbacks, including the 2010 earthquake that destroyed her special-needs school. — AP



MIAMI: Jackson Health System employee Nancy Spain hugs Marlie Casseus, a Haitian woman who had a 16-pound tumor removed from her face in 2005 at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami.

### THAIS UPSET THAT 'FRESH' ORANGE JUICE IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

BANGKOK: Thai health officials are conducting surprise inspections of fresh orange juice vendors around the country after photos posted on Facebook showed a backyard producer adulterating the juice in big plastic tubs. Thailand's Food and Drug Administration announced the crackdown yesterday in response to an uproar over the pictures, which showed a couple diluting orange juice with water streamed from a garden hose, and then adding sugar and orange food coloring. Small plastic bottles, touted as freshly squeezed, are widely sold at street stalls and small shops for 20 baht (\$0.55) and up. Police arrested the couple in Saraburi province, north of Bangkok, on Monday. Depending on the ingredients found in their concoction, they could face up to two years in jail and a 50,000 baht (\$1,400) fine. They

are already liable for selling a product in a sealed container without proper labeling. The crackdown has resulted in confiscations from five vendors selling orange juice from carts in Bangkok's Chinatown. "They were selling their products without labels showing the ingredients, nutritional values and certification from the FDA," said the director of the agency's Bureau of Food, Tipyon Parinyasiri. "We took their identification cards to make sure they don't run off with their carts before the analysis of their products is complete." FDA Deputy Secretary General Paisarn Dunkhum advised the public against assuming the product is real just because there are oranges and peels nearby. Some vendors, including those who insist their product is 100 percent pure, said their business has dropped off because of the scandal. — AP

## AS ZIKA SPREADS, FLORIDA TOWN A STUDY IN BUG-BORNE ILLNESS

'WE DON'T HAVE AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HERE'

RIO, Florida: A summer flu seemed to be sweeping through Rachel Heid's riverfront neighborhood. Pale and shaky, she left work with a fever. Neighbors had the same symptoms, and a contractor at her home felt so sick he went to the hospital. Heid thought the neighborhood children were passing a bug around their circle. She never suspected a virus carried by bugs hovering around their birdbaths and tarp-covered boats - until health officials left pamphlets at their houses asking for blood samples if they recently suffered from fevers and joint or muscle pain.

The dengue fever outbreak infected 28 people in August and September 2013. It caught Florida's Atlantic coast by surprise. The mosquito-borne disease associated with crowded, third-world conditions had spread among the pink plastic flamingoes of Rio (pronounced RYE-oh) and Jensen Beach. The mosquitoes that spread dengue also carry the Zika virus, which has been linked to serious birth defects and has grown into an epidemic in Central and Latin America - though officials expect only small outbreaks in the United States. The successful fight against dengue in these Florida suburbs may forecast what other US communities worried about Zika face as the summer mosquito season begins. Among the lessons local officials learned: the importance of home inspections by mosquito control technicians, media campaigns to "drain and cover" standing water, and changes residents made in their own yards.

#### Potential for dengue

Travelers occasionally come home with dengue, but Florida went 75 years without a local infection until a 2009 outbreak in Key West. The state now records a handful of cases annually, mostly in the densely populated Miami area. Health officials have alerted hospitals to the potential for dengue, but mosquito-borne diseases have rarely worried lifelong Florida residents like Heid. "We don't have an international airport here. We don't have a lot of tourism. We don't have a cruise, we don't have a port - nothing. So we don't have the international intake like you would in Miami or the Keys. But yet - we had dengue here," Heid said.

The 2013 outbreak in Martin County seemed like an anomaly - 100 miles north of Miami, in communities with fewer than 15,000 people - but it had the Aedes aegypti mosquitoes that transmit dengue and a traveler who brought home the virus two years earlier. The last time Heid had thought of mosquitoes as more than pests was in 1990, during a statewide outbreak of mosquito-borne St Louis encephalitis. Her Martin County high school started playing afternoon football games to avoid bugs biting at dusk, and she remembers the smell of insecticides wafting over as mosquito control trucks passed by. "When I was a kid, when they would fog, it was heavy," she said. "It smelled like a can of Raid!" She noticed there were fewer chemicals deployed in 2013. Fogging trucks rumbled down the streets of affected neighborhoods nearly every night for a month, but county employees spent more time - four or five hours daily - on sweeps targeting all small containers holding water where Aedes aegypti breed. The biggest offenders: buckets, kiddie pools, recycling bins, convenience-store soda cups, potato chip bags and boats. "Rio is this old seaside town, you know, a fishing town," said Stephen Noe, a county mosquito control inspector. "Boats were a huge problem."

#### Larger county

Maintenance and office workers from the county engineering department joined Noe and five other mosquito control employees for the work. The response drew resources away from mosquito surveillance elsewhere in the county, but for an operation with a budget under \$1 mil-



RIO, Florida: This photo shows mosquito larvae breeding in a plastic pot with standing water, outside a home in Rio. — AP photos

lion dollars and only six employees, it was enough to handle the outbreak, said Don Donaldson, the county's engineering director.

Eight people needed hospitalization, but none suffered more severe forms of dengue. Things could have been worse, hospital officials said. Caught off-guard by the outbreak, blood banks suspended collections in two counties. Officials later determined that was overkill and could have jeopardized a third of Florida's blood supply if dengue had struck a larger county, said OneBlood's chief medical officer, Dr. Rita Reik. New protocols suspend donations only from the ZIP codes immediately affected by mosquito-borne viruses.

Today, all but a handful of hotspots in the outbreak areas remain mostly clear of the discarded containers that attract Aedes aegypti, Noe said. "You can't, you know, eradicate totally, but to go from a dozen houses to just two, even three years later, is great," he said. No one has contracted dengue in Martin County since 2013, even though a neighboring county has since documented local transmission of another virus carried by the same mosquito. Mosquito-borne disease outbreaks develop from a perfect storm of variables, and there's little evidence supporting the effectiveness of any particular effort to control Aedes aegypti or prevent it from spreading

diseases, according to researchers. "You'll have to have an infected person arriving into the community, you'll have to have the vector species in some critical abundance, you'll need people active outdoors - and you can imagine these things happening every day in Florida. Why in particular did it take hold in that location and it doesn't take hold in other locations when you have the same exact circumstance?" said Nathan Burkett-Cadena, who studies how mosquitoes transmit viruses at the University of Florida's medical entomology laboratory.

Mosquito control efforts helped end the 2013 outbreak, but no one can say to what extent, or to what extent similar efforts would prevent or control Zika transmission elsewhere, Burkett-Cadena said. But people learned something from the dengue outbreak, said Heid, a 39-year-old office manager who now keeps insect repellent by her front door and in her car and adds a capful of bleach when filling a kiddie pool for her dog to cool off. A few summers ago, she'd be slapping away at mosquitoes while tending to her garden. "Now it's not as bad because people emptied their birdbaths," she said. "They don't leave standing water. Everyone's conscious that their garbage can lids are flipped. Even planters that have a catch pan for the water - people are emptying those." — AP



RIO, Florida: Steve Noe, Martin County mosquito specialist, explains the use of the Mosquito Magnetic Pro, a machine used for luring and trapping mosquitoes, outside a home in Rio.

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## LULU LAUNCHES 'GIFT VOUCHER DELIGHTS 2016'

Lulu Hypermarket, the leading hypermarket chain in the region, launched their 'LuLu Gift Voucher Delights 2016' on 25th May. The promotion running from 25 May to 6 July is present in all Lulu Hypermarket outlets and offers customers the opportunity to get one raffle coupon for every purchase of KD 5.

The draw will be held at the four LuLu outlets, Al Rai, Qurain, Salmiya and Egaila where 204 lucky winners will get a chance to win KD 12,000 as gift vouchers, that is gift vouchers of KD 500 each for four winners and KD 50 each for 200 winners.

The 'Gift Voucher Delights 2016' is an

incredible venture by LuLu Hypermarket to draw in customers with a lively campaign, where they will get a chance to buy products at reasonable prices and win amazing prizes.

LuLu Hypermarket has consistently branded itself as the company that meets customers' expectations for quality products at competitive prices. The hypermarket presents a unique shopping experience through attractive customer oriented campaigns that help garner shoppers' interest and increase support for the brand.



## ZAIN ANNOUNCES STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH KRCS

ZAIN telecommunications company has announced it is holding a strategic partnership with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) through which it would enhance cooperation with KRCS in various charity and humanitarian campaigns starting with the 'Zain Al-Shohour' (The Best Month) due to start this Ramadan. Zain explained that it would

send a number of awareness flashes through SMS messages and social media networks about charity in addition to providing a special link on its official website for donations to KRCS and funding boxes of foodstuff to be distributed during Ramadan to needy families.



## VIETNAM AMBASSADOR VISITS LULU HYPERMARKET BRANCH IN EGAILA

His Excellency Nguyen Hong Thao, Ambassador of Vietnam to Kuwait recently visited the newly opened Lulu Hypermarket in Egaila. Ambassador Thao was welcomed by Mohammed Haris, Regional Director of Lulu Hypermarket. HE was taken on a tour of the outlet by the Lulu management team and also discussed ways and means to promote Vietnamese products in all Lulu outlets around Kuwait.

Lulu Hypermarket has consistently branded itself as the retail outlet that meets its customers' expectations for quality products at competitive prices. The hypermarket presents a unique shopping experience through attractive customer oriented promotions and value added benefits to its clients.



## 48 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE AT ESF



The English School Fahaheel's 48th Annual Graduation and Sixth Form Prize-giving was once again held with great fanfare at the Grand Hashemi Ballroom at the Radisson Blu Hotel. Graduates and hundreds of guests thoroughly enjoyed an evening that saw prizes handed out by Chief Guests His Excellency the Ambassador of Great Britain Mr Matthew Lodge and His Excellency the Ambassador of the Republic of India Mr Sueil Jain to years 12 & 13 respectively. They were accompanied by the owner and Chairman of ESF Mr Ibrahim Shuhaiber.

The evening was also attended by HE the German Ambassador, and the Ambassadors of Malta, Liberia and Armenia. Many dignitaries, special and parents were also attendance. The evening commenced with the entry of the class of 2016 to a huge round of applause from the parents and guests.

ESF Sixth Form Graduates Sara Shuhaiber (Head Girl) accompanied by Rahul Rajiv and Ruwan Bedier then performed a beautiful tribute entitled "Next to You" to the Graduating Class of 2016. Kyungmi Lee then stunned audiences with an outstanding rendition of Mozart's Sonata Number 8 on the piano. Both Sara and Kyungmi are A/S Music students at ESF. This was followed prize distribution ceremony to Years 12 and 13.

Following the prize-giving ceremony HE the British Ambassador Mr Matthew Lodge gave a very inspiring speech to students and spoke about the rich history of ESF which was established in 1968 under the guidance of the incumbent British Consul. The evening concluded with a photo opportunity for the Graduates and parents followed by a sumptuous dinner buffet for the guests.



## DRINK MORE WATER CAMPAIGN AT IISM

India International School, Mangaf conducts 'Drink More Water Campaign' at the onset of summer every year.

This academic year it was held for a week starting from 1st May. Charts and posters, with slogans highlighting the necessity of drinking water, were made by the students to spread the awareness in the campus.

A special assembly was conducted in this regard and water was distributed to all by the students. Teachers and subject coordinators visited all the primary classes with messages showing the importance of keeping our body

hydrated for the smooth functioning of its mechanics. The 'Water song' was the anthem of the week. 'Eight glasses of water a day' irrespective of the seasons was the forerunner of the campaign. Activities and group discussions were held on the topic 'Healthy You'.

The concept was initiated by the School Director Malayil Moosa Koya and he appreciated the teachers and students for their effort and interest. Principal, FM Basheer Ahmed, Sr Vice Principal and the Vice Principals also took lead in the campaign.



## MAHMOUD HAJI HAIDAR HEALTH CENTER HOLDS AWARENESS DAY

**KUWAIT:** The diabetes unit at Mahmoud Haji Haidar Health Center held its annual awareness day, that came just before the holy month of Ramadan. The event included advice on all aspects of caring for your body during days of fasting and other general health tips and advice for the holy month. The advice ranged from nutrition, how to manage diabetes, blood pressure, skin care bearing in mind the hot temperature in the summer. Al-Sanabel Al-Tahabiya and Sebamed were on hand as usual, and distributed booklets on the proper care of the skin.



## AL MULLA GROUP LAUNCHES THE FIRST TRAINING PROGRAM FOR NATIONAL MANPOWER



**A**l Mulla Group has launched the first training program for national manpower qualification and training, in which selected representatives and executive members from public and governmental sectors have attended in support of the Group. The program was launched in cooperation with Taqat Projects Management Co. and sponsored by the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program. Al Mulla Group has participated in the intensive training course for the development of managerial and behavioral skills of its employees, which shall act as a bridge through which the employee may experience the real business environment and become deeply involved in labor market; especially the private sector which is deemed as a challenging field that requires expertise and skills that are not trivial. The program will provide training and qualification for sixty Kuwaiti employees where each trainee will be granted twelve courses. The above training program is a consequence of the Group's concern to support the young national cadres and help them develop their skills and be engaged in real business environment, in order to complete the advancement and development journey of our beloved Kuwait.

On that occasion; the Chief Administrative Officer Mr Abdullah Najeeb Al Mulla, gave a speech in which he emphasized on the continuous concern of Al Mulla Group to provide more opportuni-

ties to develop Kuwaiti employees and encourage them to participate in private sector; especially in Al Mulla Group, and stated that such action is a new promising movement for the Group. He also conveyed his thankfulness and appreciation to all participants of organizers, sponsors and trainers, and praised the trainees' interaction with the courses provide so far.

Ms Iman Al-Ansary, Manager of the National Manpower Development Department at the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program, addressed the participants and encouraged them to make benefit from such event, and added that training is the first step towards success and growth.

From his part; Mr Abdullah Al-Hajiri, partner and promoter of Taqat Projects Management Co. spoke about the company's trend and desire to build the next effective generation that may take part in the advancement and rise of the country.

The evening show ended with Dr Ayoub Khalid Al-Ayoub, the General Secretary of Supreme Advisory Committee for the Completion of Applying Islamic Sharia Provisions at Al-Diwan Al-Amiri, and the promoter of the Speech and Dialogue Club, and the Consultant of Aljomanah Managerial Consultancy Co, where he gave an encouraging lecture to the attendants which was titled "Discover Yourself Again".

## NISSAN AL BABBAIN SPONSORS RED BULL'S NEYMAR JR FIVE INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENT

**A**bdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Co (AABC), the exclusive agent of Nissan in the State of Kuwait always aims to reach its young clients and keep them entertained and engaged in the biggest events happening that is why Nissan Al Babbain is sponsoring the Red Bull's Neymar Jr Five Tournament.

The tournament started on Monday the 2nd of April and will end with the final game today the 26th of May in Al Kout mall beach. The winning team will participate in the World Final held in Brazil to compete with the other teams from around the world. The world final will take place in Neymar JR Instituto Projeto in July in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil where the winning team will get a chance to meet and practice with Neymar.

Nissan Al Babbain believes that supporting such activities gives young generation the opportunity to express themselves individually and in groups, which will prepare them to start their career with great confidence and the ability to communicate with others.

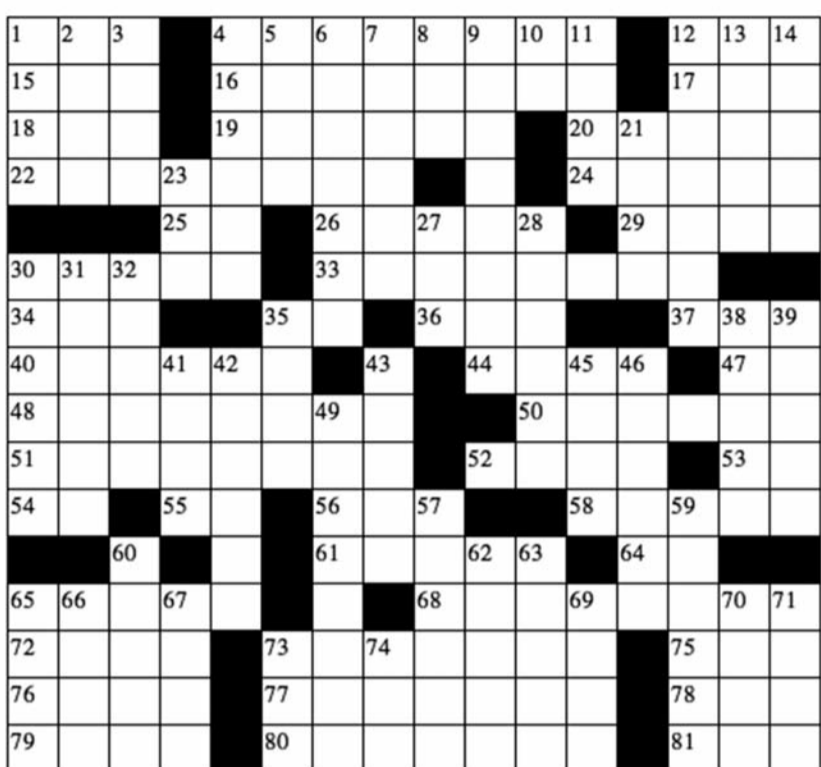








CROSSWORD 1265



ACROSS

- 1. (computer science) Protocol that allows users to copy files between their local system and any system they can reach on the network.
4. Express complaints, discontent, displeasure, or unhappiness.
12. A vinyl polymer used especially in paints or adhesives.

DOWN

- 79. Humble in spirit or manner.
80. Dried bark of the cascara buckthorn used as a laxative.
81. A kind of person.

Yesterday's Solution

Grid of yesterday's crossword solution with words like CRAB, CALPAC, RASP, etc.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

The behavior of another person may have you completely surprised today. You have a lot of mental drive. In trading and speculating, your choices are good and will gain good results in a short period.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a fundamental day with much passion and lots of action. You have much physical vigor and it would not be a bad idea to take your breaks out-of-doors; perhaps the noon break you could take a swift walk and then come back and eat a good lunch.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your determination to accomplish some project today may be interpreted as a sign of stubbornness. Others may not realize that you desire perfection. You may have to read instructions or ask advice before you can really get into action.



Scorpio (October 23-November 18)

This marks a time when you enjoy good relations with co-workers. Plans for a camping trip or plans for a summer get together are great ways to build good co-worker relations.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Your thinking this morning may be to get your daily exercise completed before work or become better motivated in your exercise routine. Your usual routine may be changed only slightly because of this beneficial exercise.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You seem automatically motivated to be productive-one thing you may concentrate on the most today could be on reorganizing and making files thinner and more accessible, perhaps by putting part of the files on a computer file in some way.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

The more creative you are, the better able you will be to come up with a few problem-solving ideas. Take some time now to do some writing on what makes you happy and how you can reach this goal of being more creative.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You have a strong urge to work through some internal changes and you may have found a mentor to help you learn and acclimate yourself to some new working equipment or method or attitude.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your relationship with others is usually most harmonious. A young person or family member would do well to use you as a mentor in his or her relationships.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

An instinctive urge to get serious about taking care of yourself at many levels is emphasized now. This may mean an early morning exercise program, as well as some vitamin regimen.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have made some real headway with regard to healing any disgruntled type of individual. Additional responsibilities may be placed on you in the workplace today but you are able to achieve a positive end.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Many little chores seem to block your progress this morning but there is something about today that brings with it good luck. These slowdowns may have been meant to be, so to speak.

WORD SEARCH

Winter 1 - Word Search

Find the words hidden in the grid of letters.

Word search grid containing letters for finding winter-related words like SNOWBALL, SKATES, etc.

- ANTIFREEZE, BLACK ICE, COLD, FIREPLACE, FOG, FROST, HIBERNATION, HOLIDAYS, ICE SCRAPER, ICICLES, MITTENS, SCARF, SKATES, SKI PANTS, SLEET, SNOW PLOW, SNOWBALL, SNOWMAN, SOUP, STORM, TOBOGGAN, WINTER TIRES, WOOL SOCKS

Yesterday Solution

Autumn - Solution

Autumn word search solution grid with words like EQUINOX, HARVEST, SQUASH, etc.

- CANNING, CHILLY, COLD, CROPS, EQUINOX, FALL, FARMING, FEAST, FROST, HALLOWEEN, HARVEST, HAYSTACK, NOVEMBER, OCTOBER, PUMPKIN, RAKE, SCHOOL, SEASON, SEPTEMBER, SQUASH, THANKSGIVING, TURKEY, WINDY

Daily SuDoku

9x9 grid for daily sudoku puzzle with some numbers pre-filled.

Yesterday's Solution

9x9 grid showing the solution to yesterday's sudoku puzzle.



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

SUDOKU

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

Bicycle

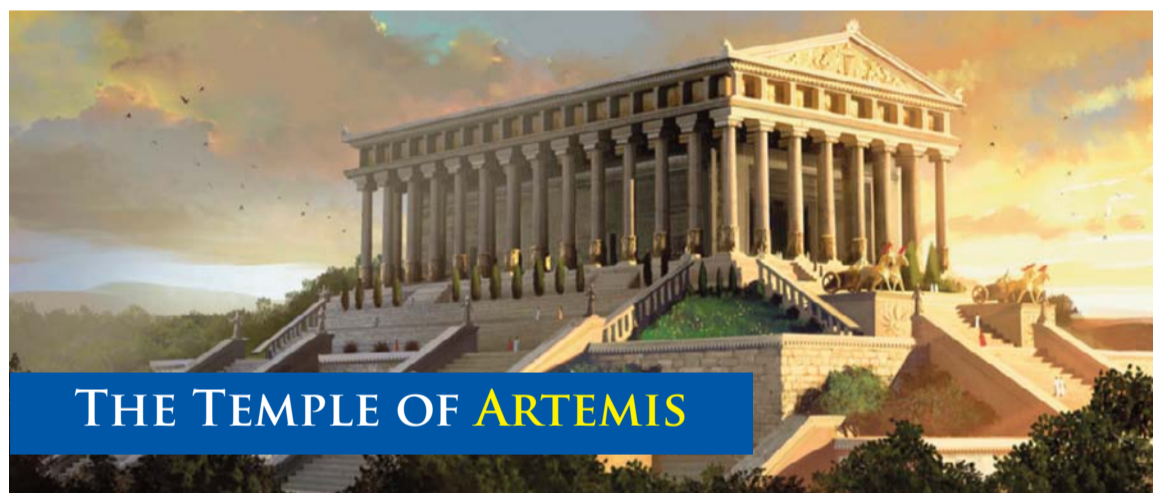
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The words may be hidden in any direction.

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

- |         |              |           |
|---------|--------------|-----------|
| AXLE    | FRAME        | KICKSTAND |
| BELL    | GEARS        | LOCK      |
| BRAKES  | HAND SIGNALS | SEAT      |
| CHAIN   | HANDLEBARS   | SPOKES    |
| CYCLIST | HEADLIGHT    | TIRES     |
| FENDERS | HELMET       | WHEELS    |

JOKES!

- Q: Who says sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me?  
 A: A guy who has never been hit with a dictionary.
- Q: How do you make a fire with two sticks?  
 A: Make sure one is a match!
- Q: Why did the banana go to the hospital?  
 A: Because he wasn't peeling well!
- Q: What's the slipperiest country?  
 A: Greece!
- Q: Why can't you say a joke while standing on ice?  
 A: Because it might crack up!
- Q: Why did the orange stop in the middle of the hill?  
 A: It ran out of juice!
- Q: What do postal workers do when they're mad?  
 A: They stamp their feet.
- Q: Why are the floors of basketball courts always so damp?  
 A: The players dribble a lot.
- Q: What starts with E, ends with E and only has one letter?  
 A: An envelope.
- Q: What is at the end of everything?  
 A: The letter G.



THE TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS

The Temple of Artemis or Artemision, also known less precisely as the Temple of Diana, was a Greek temple dedicated to the goddess Artemis. It was located Ephesus (near the modern town of Selcuk in present-day Turkey). One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, it was completely rebuilt three times before its eventual destruction in 401 AD. Only foundations and sculptural fragments of the latest of the temples at the site remain.

The first sanctuary (temenos) antedated the Ionic immigration by many years, and dates to the Bronze Age. Callimachus, in his Hymn to Artemis, attributed it to the Amazons. In the 7th century BC, the old temple was destroyed by a flood. Its reconstruction began around 550 BC, under the Cretan architect Chersiphron and his son Metagenes, at the expense of Croesus of Lydia: The project took 10 years to complete. The temple was destroyed in 356 BC by an act of arson and was again rebuilt, this time as the Wonder.

Where was it?

The Temple of Artemis was located near the ancient city of Ephesus, about 75 km south from the modern port city of Izmir, in Turkey. Today the site lies on the edge of the modern town of Selcuk.

The sacred site (temenos) at Ephesus was far older than the Artemision itself. Pausanias was certain that it antedated the Ionic immigration by many years, being older even than the oracular shrine of Apollo at Didyma. He said that the pre-Ionic inhabitants of the city were Leleges and Lydians. Callimachus, in his Hymn to Artemis attributed the earliest temenos at Ephesus to the Amazons, whose worship he imagined already centered upon an image (bretas) of Artemis, their matron goddess. Pausanias says that Pindar believed the temple's founding Amazons to have been involved with the siege at Athens. Tacitus also believed in the Amazon foundation, however Pausanias believed the temple predated the Amazons.

Modern archaeology cannot confirm Callimachus's

Amazons, but Pausanias's account of the site's antiquity seems well-founded. Before World War I, site excavations by David George Hogarth identified three successive temple buildings. Re-excavations in 1987-88 confirmed that the site was occupied as early as the Bronze Age with a sequence of pottery finds that extend forward to Middle Geometric times, when a peripteral temple with a floor of hard-packed clay was constructed in the second half of the 8th century BC. The peripteral temple at Ephesus offers the earliest example of a peripteral type on the coast of Asia Minor, and perhaps the earliest Greek temple surrounded by colonnades anywhere.

In the 7th century BC, a flood destroyed the temple, depositing over half a meter of sand and flotsam over the original clay floor. Among the flood debris were the remains of a carved ivory plaque of a griffin and the Tree of Life, apparently North Syrian, and some drilled tear-shaped amber drops of elliptical cross-section. These probably once dressed a wooden effigy (xoanon) of the Lady of Ephesus, which must have been destroyed or recovered from the flood. Bammer notes that though the site was prone to flooding, and raised by silt deposits about two meters between the 8th and 6th centuries, and a further 2.4 m between the sixth and the fourth, its continued use "indicates that maintaining the identity of the actual location played an important role in the sacred organization".

Destruction

In 356 BC, the temple was destroyed in a vainglorious act of arson by a man, Herostratus, who set fire to the wooden roof-beams, seeking fame at any cost; thus the term herostratic fame. For this outrage, the Ephesians sentenced the perpetrator to death and forbade anyone from mentioning his name; but Theopompus later noted it. In Greek and Roman historical tradition, the temple's destruction coincided with the birth of Alexander the Great (around 20/21 July 356 BC). Plutarch remarked that Artemis was too preoccupied with Alexander's delivery to save her burning temple.

Facts!

- Water is the only substance on earth that is lighter as a solid than a liquid.
- The biggest canyons in the world are under water. Beneath the Bering Sea off Alaska there are seven giant canyons: Bering Canyon, 240 miles long; Navarin Canyon, 60 miles wide; Zhemchung Canyon, 9000 feet deep. In comparison, the Grand Canyon in Arizona is only 10 miles wide, one mile deep and 250 miles long.
- The Sahara, one of the worlds largest and driest deserts with sand up to thirty feet deep was once a land with flowing rivers, humid swamps and lush fields. Cave painting, 9,000 years old, found in the heart of the Sahara, show men herding cattle and hunting lions and hippos. About 2,000 years ago the cave painters, herders and animals left because the area that was rapidly becoming the desert we know today.
- Seeds from a wild flower, the Arctic Lupine, found in Alaska, have grown in the lab after being frozen in the ground for 10,000 years.
- The bristle-cone pine, which grows in the deserts of Nevada and California, is the oldest living species in the United States. Some are believed to be 4600 years old and can live to be 5500 years old.
- Monster waves of over 100 feet tall can suddenly appear at sea when there is no storm to cause them. They are actually accidental meetings of several waves that can combine to form one. When scientist drilled through the ice of Antarctica's Lake Vanda, they discovered that the water at the bottom of the lake was an amazingly warm 77 degrees Fahrenheit. Ice crystals actually heat the water by focusing on the bottom of the lake. huge one that can easily sink a freighter.

Homemade Greenhouse



- What You Need**
- o A tray of grass or growing seeds
  - o A jar or any container

- Instructions**
1. Place the jar over a patch of grass or a section of your plant tray of seeds.
  2. Watch the plants under the jar grow taller and faster than the ones outside.

**Why?**  
 The jar creates a greenhouse, which provides a warmer and moister atmosphere for growing plants. The light and heat from the sun go through the glass and heat the air inside, and the heat cannot escape very easily.



English-Muffin Egg Pizzas

Recipes for Kids

1. 4 English muffins
2. olive oil
3. tomato slices
4. 2 hard-cooked eggs, sliced
5. grated mozzarella
6. oregano
7. salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Make Hard-Cooked Eggs. (Ask a parent to help you with the eggs.)

2. Toast 8 English-muffin halves and place on a cookie sheet.
3. Drizzle each with olive oil, then layer on tomato slices, hard-cooked egg slices (1/2 an egg each), and a little grated mozzarella. Sprinkle with oregano and salt.
4. Place in the microwave for a few minutes or until the cheese melts.







By Yalda Golsharifi

I wish I was one of those women out there who have absolutely no issues with stretch marks and who don't mind them one bit when it comes to losing weight or during pregnancy - sadly I'm not. Some say stretch marks are hereditary, but all the women in my family got them during pregnancy. I had convinced myself that there are ways to avoid them, did my research and believed I could avoid them altogether. I was determined. I came up with my remedies - remedies that had proven to work for me over the span of both my pregnancies and resulted in beautiful skin.

There are different ways to reduce the appearance of stretch marks, but let me tell you girls out there, that it does require consistency with your routine and a looooot of patience. I'm constantly being asked about my skin, and yes, my remedies did work, but I was disciplined from the start.

First things first, you need to start early on. It doesn't matter whether you can see a stretch mark or not, moisturize, moisturize, moisturize as soon as you find out that you're pregnant. Get all those glorious smelling oils and creams working into your

skin. As for old stretch marks, they require extra patience and even then may not vanish completely. But do what you must, do your bit and show them love.

Now what exactly did I use in order to avoid stretch marks? Extra virgin coconut oil (if you've been following me for a while, you must know I'm coconuts over coconut oil) and olive oil. Who cares if you smell like olive or coconut oil? (I personally love the smell of coconut oil.) It's your body and you take care of it the way it needs to be taken care of.

I used to alternate between the two as I wanted my body to absorb the moisture and not get used to just one of them. I'd rub it on my belly three times a day but most importantly after showers since that's when you need the moisturizing the most as your pores are still open, especially if you like your warm showers as much as I do. Long warm showers are known to dry out your skin, so moisturizing with oils or creams is key. Avoid tanning as well since this is known to dry out your skin while also causing damage. Do remember to keep your belly covered if you're at the beach.

These oils were massaged into my belly and other parts that were prone to stretch marks, like breasts, thighs and inner

thighs, especially if you're gaining weight around that area. Massaging it in is important as this really helps the skin absorb it rather than just applying the oil. Research also shows that exfoliating a couple of times a week can help remove dead skin and that way your moisturizer or body oils will be absorbed better into your skin.

Along with the external care of your body, you should also care for it internally by staying hydrated at all times. Water, coconut water and infused water is what I recommend. Eat foods that are actually good for your body and try to exercise or stay active during the span of your pregnancy, that is if your doctor agrees with this and you have no health issues.

I've read numerous articles by many celebrities about their experience with stretch marks and they've all brought it down to one thing - love them more than anything on your body. In the end, our bodies go through so much during pregnancy and it all really depends on how you take care of it. "Your body is not ruined. You're a tiger who has earned her stripes."

# A tigress and her stripes

## HOW TO DECORATE WITH ANTIQUES AND HEIRLOOMS

In this age of minimalism and decluttering, the common response to an offer of a family heirloom or antique might be, "I don't have space," "It's not my taste," or simply "No thanks." Well, "pull yourself out of that as fast as you can and start saying yes," urges Susan Sully of Charleston, South Carolina, author of "Past Present: Living with Heirlooms and Antiques" (The Monacelli Press, 2016). Unless you find a piece really ugly, she says, just take it.

"What's so bad about temporarily having too much stuff?" asks Sully. "The worst is saying no and having lost the precious tangible objects that tell the story of your family or a place you love." San Francisco decorator Ken Fulk, designer chairman of the New York Botanical Garden's Antique Garden Furniture Fair, agrees: "No room is complete without something of age and provenance and character." And that show's manager, antiques dealer Karen DiSaia, describes heirlooms and antiques as "the connective tissue of life, offering a feeling of depth and history." The trick to blending old and new in your home's decor is careful curating - and keeping an open mind, says Sully.

### Anchor lineup

Her book is packed with photos and descriptions of 20 homes around the country, from a converted fire station to farmhouses to elegant city dwellings. She offers tips on displaying odd collections, setting inviting tables, arranging tabletop compositions, and bringing together objects from different styles and periods. "Start by dropping all your preconceptions about

what goes with what. Just put things together and see what happens," she advises. "Then rearrange them a few different ways and look at it all again. You might have two pairs of completely different chairs, but put them together and you might be surprised." Create what Sully calls an "anchor lineup" and then have fun curat-



ing the small stuff: "You don't need a lot of things in each room - just a few great pieces that converse with each other.

Start with an uncluttered, interesting foundation, with one or two interesting, eye-catching pieces in each room that are there to stay. Then you can start a rotating exhibit of vases and lamps and oddments." The book includes the dining room of a Federal Revival home in Birmingham, Alabama, where a wall lined with gilded, leather-bound books and two sleek contemporary glass vases adds a warm yet airy backdrop for a heavy, dark-stained English library table. It's surrounded by light-colored Hepplewhite-style dining chairs beneath an ornate Italian chandelier. The parlor area in an 1880 home in San Antonio, Texas, features high Victorian detail and white furniture juxtaposed with strong colors in a series of Josef Albers lithographs. They share a corner with a small pile of painted wooden cubes found in an antique shop.

### Smaller condominium

"I've always been interested in having at least one modern piece of furniture or contemporary painting in each room, so the house doesn't look like a museum," said the homeowner, banker and art collector Carl Groos. Even for space-challenged apartment dwellers, antiques hold an important place. After downsizing from a large home to a much smaller condominium, Atlanta antique collectors Stephanie and Bill Reeves grouped together portraits that had been displayed throughout their house. "We displayed the portraits as if they were in a bigger room," Bill Reeves explains. "As a result, the space looks bigger."

Sticking to a palette of taupe, gold and brown allowed them to bring together pieces from different continents and centuries in an elegant and understated way, they said. And don't treat heirlooms like stuffy museum pieces, Sully advises. Instead, "take what's old and give it life again by actually using it. ... Allow heirlooms to relate to the rest of the room. These are beautiful things with stories to tell and history to share." Use the fancy stemware and silver. "Life is short, and silver only really tarnishes when it's unused. It wants to be handled and washed. I hand-wash the knives, but throw the rest in the dishwasher and it looks great," she says. "If you mess it up, c'est la vie. But making heirlooms a part of your life adds depth and character, and makes every day more glamorous." — AP



Photos provided by The Monacelli Press show photographs of the rooms in an 1850's Alabama farmhouse featured in the book "Past Present: Living With Heirlooms and Antiques," by Susan Sully. — AP photos

## Decor from glass artists



Liana Yaroslavsky's striking La Luna table, crafted from Murano glass. — AP photos



Photo provided by Gartner/Blade, an Amethyst covered jar and bowl from Danielle Blade and Stephen Gartner are shown.



In this photo provided by Gartner/Blade, a Batik covered sphere with Avian finial from Danielle Blade and Stephen Gartner is shown.



Photo shows one of Chris Ahalt's "balloon animals," which are blown out of glass, and tethered to thin copper rods attached to small lead weights.



One of Chris Ahalt's "balloon animals," which are blown out of glass, and tethered to thin copper rods attached to small lead weights.

Chris Ahalt's menagerie of blue whales, pink hippos and gold giraffes looks like a flotilla in a really fun dream. Their balloon-animal bodies are gathered at the point of attachment in a tight little knot, tethered to a tiny lead weight. But they aren't latex. Ahalt, who lives in Minneapolis, makes the whimsical yet realistic-looking creatures out of blown glass.

"Balloons, to me, suggest celebration, children and wonder," he says. "The animals that I pick appeal to those child-like sensibilities as well. But there's profundity in his designs, as well. He crafts animals that are facing endangerment; rendering them in glass, he says, highlights not only their beauty but their precarious existence. "The thrill never gets old of thwarting the glass' desire to fall apart, and it's always a victory when a piece comes together," Ahalt says. "At times I do wish I'd chosen a career in something a little less temperamental," he laughs. "Glassblowing can be a really frustrating medium. There are countless hours lost to broken glass." There are lots of other artists, too, willing to take the risk.

Danielle Blade and Stephen Gartner, glassblowers in Ashley Falls, Massachusetts, create vessels and lighting inspired by the environment outside their rural studio. "Both of us have strong ideas about beauty. We have spectacular gardens here, and it's wonderful to wander them," Gartner says.

"We're trying to bring that walk in the woods into our living room," says Blade. In their Strata collection of vases and vessels, tones of warm, earthy color are blown into layers that evoke geological terrain. A pendant light rendered in different hues brings to mind the design duo's objects come topped with surprising

touches like a delicate snail's head; a sliver of animal bone or antler; or a curling leaf.

Casey Hyland blows softly tinged blue and white glass into vessels that look like droplets of sky with wispy clouds. He'll teach you how to blow your own ornaments, mugs and paperweights in classes offered at his Louisville, Kentucky, studio.

Loy Allen rests delicate glass monarch butterflies and dragonflies on bud vases and perfume bottles, using a technique called lampworking, in which the glass is molded over a small flame. A native South Dakotan, she's inspired by the plant and animal life around her Hot Springs studio, as well as by the Art Nouveau movement.

Corvallis, Oregon-based artist Eric Bailey's little creatures include sleek, racer-striped lizards, tree frogs and colorful snails that clamber impishly over bottles and cylindrical paperweights. Beyond objects, some glass designers are producing furniture. The "canvas" of a coffee, dining or side table can give an artist space to do extraordinary things. John Foster, another Minneapolis-based artist, assembles multiple cut crystals of various sizes into his Sparkle Palace cocktail table, which looks like a giant molecular structure. When light shines through it, prisms cast a rainbow around the room.

Designer Liana Yaroslavsky is known for avant garde creations; for example, she encases chandeliers, or piano keys and sheet music, inside her tables. O2, available as a side or coffee table, suspends 100 Murano glass balls inside a transparent cube to give the effect of bubbles in water. And the base of Yaroslavsky's Luna table was also blown from Murano glass; the sphere looks like she plucked the moon from the sky and rested a glass top on it. — AP

# On the island of Cyprus:

## Aphrodite's Bath, historical sites and beautiful nature



Photo shows Gulf Air's Airbus A320 aircraft.



A view of the seaside in Larnaca.

By Nawara Fattahova

**S**unny pleasant weather, clean waters, tasty food, rich historical sites, beautiful nature and friendly, welcoming and lovely people all characterize the gorgeous island of Cyprus. Its strategic geographical location has attracted conquerors over the ages, and today Cyprus is divided into Greek and Turkish parts. The southern part of this Mediterranean island is the Greek part, which has many popular touristic sites.

Arriving in Larnaca, the third largest city in Cyprus, our group was warmly welcomed by the staff of the Cyprus Tourist Organization. The trip was organized by Gulf Air, the national carrier of Bahrain, on the occasion of celebrating the 40th anniversary of launching direct operations between Larnaca and Manama. The flight was comfortable,



One of the sand beaches in Larnaca.



View shows the sea at the Coral Beach Hotel in Paphos.

ed the Hala Sultan Tekke, the Mosque of Umm Haram, who was Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) wet nurse and the wife of Ubada bin Al-Samit. The Hala Sultan Tekke complex is composed of a mosque, mausoleum, cemetery and living quarters for men and women.

Arriving at the Coral Beach Hotel in Paphos, I instantly fell in love with it. My room in this traditional-style cozy hotel had an unbelievably romantic view of the sea, and at night I enjoyed falling asleep while listening to the symphony of the waves. The beach was beautiful and not crowded, and during the two nights that I spent in this hotel, I had the chance to witness two weddings taking place on the pier.

History, traditions and Latin and Roman stories are documented on the mosaics of this town. Our team had the opportunity to enjoy listening about ancient stories drawn on the mosaics preserved at various locations. We also strolled around other historical monuments including the Limanaki Castle in Paphos.

May is not the season for turtles to lay eggs on the beach, but we were able to listen to an explanation of this process by Andreas, who drove us on an excursion to the Lara turtle beach and the Akamas peninsula sea caves. We also visited Aphrodite's Bath (Fontana Amorosa). According to legend, Aphrodite, the Greek goddess of love, beauty, pleasure and procreation, took her lovers to this place to take a bath.

As I mentioned above, halloumi is a symbol of Cypriot cuisine, and we were given a chance to taste homemade halloumi cheese. We visited Letymbou village, where we experienced real Cyprian hospitality and were served traditional lunch in a home atmosphere after enjoying a bread-making workshop, which I was not so good at, while my colleague Talal appeared as an expert.

On our second day, our other lovely tourist guide Dena joined us. We left our nice hotel, heading to the coastal city of Limassol, the second largest urban area in Cyprus, also called Lemesos in the local language. It has the biggest port in Cyprus and a wide range of activities, and a number of museums and archaeological sites as well.

Before arriving to Limassol, we visited the Elea Estate Golf Club in Yeroskipou. This clubhouse is in a breathtaking

onboard Gulf Air's state-of-the-art Airbus A320 aircraft, and we enjoyed the flatbed seats in the Falcon Gold (premium) class cabins and Gulf Air's Gold Lounge services.

Accompanied by Talal Al-Mahmood, Gulf Air's Manager of Communications and Sponsorships, we landed in Larnaca at noon, and were taken from the airport by minibus by our friendly driver Agapios and sweet tourist guide Effie straight for lunch at Charmers Restaurant, where we were served delicious fish meze, and of course halloumi cheese. Meze is the traditional way of dining in Cyprus, and halloumi is the popular traditional cheese of Cyprus. Halloumi is a must with each meal - breakfast, lunch and dinner. As on any island, fish and seafood are the most popular meats on the restaurant's menu.

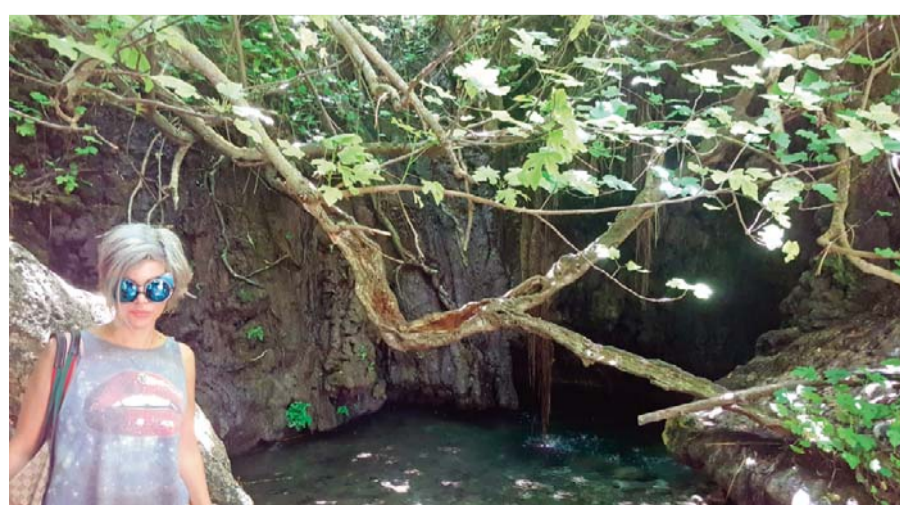
On our way to the quiet, coastal city of Paphos, we visit-



A traditional fish meze restaurant in Larnaca.



A sign that shows the way to the Aphrodite's Bath (Fontana Amorosa).



Our Kuwait Times reporter at the Aphrodite's Bath (Fontana Amorosa).



Talal Al-Mahmood cutting bread during the bread-making workshop.



The media delegation at Larnaca airport.



The media delegation at the ancient Greek Roman theatre.



The media delegation enjoying a bicycle ride with Nextbike rental in Lemassol.

Concourse D, Dubai International Airport and Heathrow Terminal 4, the passengers are well taken care of with well laid-out business, dining, lounging facilities and TV areas in addition to the added facilities of the "Quiet Lounge" which holds private sleeping rooms with comfortable beds, dimming lights and the 'do not disturb' option to rest in complete privacy.

Additional facilities include a cigar lounge and shower rooms with hotel-style towels and luxury brand toiletries and amenities. There are also separate prayer rooms and secure lockers for those who want to use these facilities while the modern, self-service buffet area offers a wide variety of snacks and meals, including an Italian coffee corner offering the world famous Lavazza brand coffee varieties.

Passengers can stay connected with free Wi-Fi throughout the lounges, discreet power sockets at every seat and a business center that includes PCs, fax machines and printers. For families, the lounge offers a spacious family room with our SkyNannies in attendance as well as a gaming room equipped with Xbox and PlayStation units.

**Gulf Air Falcon Gold Lounge access**

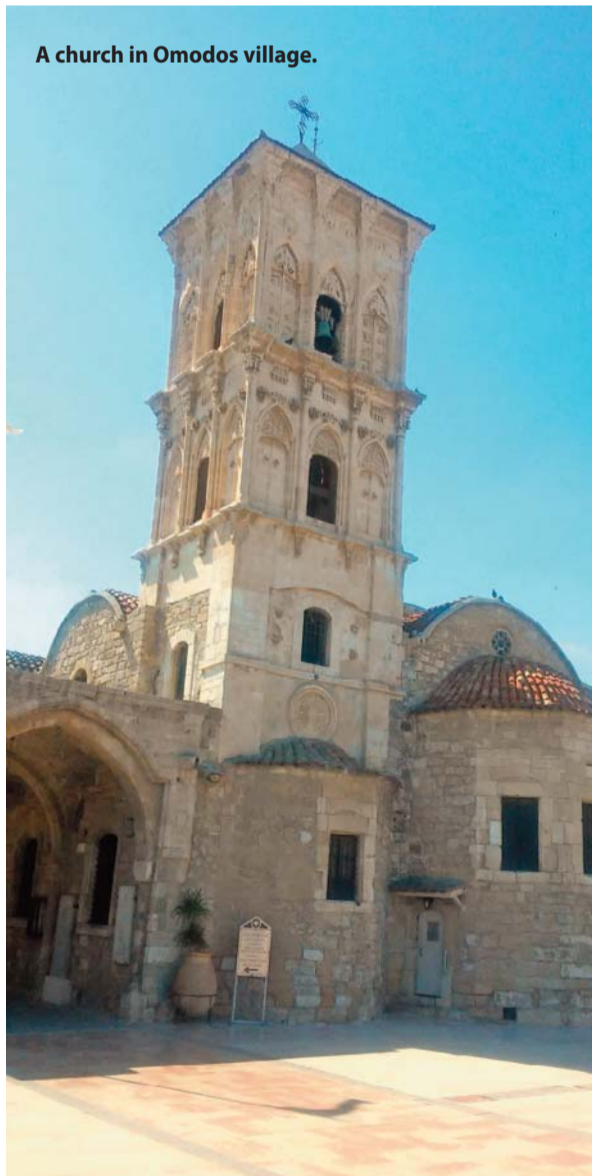
The lounge is freely accessible to all Black, Gold, Silver and Blue card-holding FFP members of Gulf Air, and Falcon Gold class ticket holders of Gulf Air and premium class ticket holders of the carrier's code-share partner airlines.



The Grand Mosque of Lemassol.



Hala Sultan Tekke Mosque.



A church in Omodos village.

location with amazing views and spacious grounds. This club provides complete services including golf, dining and even souvenirs. Elea Estate has an 18-holes par 71 course, and was designed to make the most of the stunning natural environment and test the strategic skills of players. Eirini Zinouli, the Sales and Marketing Manager, said they look forward to welcoming more visitors from the GCC soon.

More historical sites were waiting for us. We visited the Kourion archaeological site, including the House of Eustolios, where we enjoyed more mosaic artworks, telling us more legendary stories. We also visited the ancient Greek Roman theatre, where experienced journalist Habib Toumi showcased his singing skills. He even encouraged us to try and live the experience of the ancient times, and succeeded to force me to sing a bit.

On our way to our modern Amathus Beach Hotel, we visited the new Limassol marina. At the Amathus, we were warmly welcomed by the front-desk staff with fresh juice. Our last day started with an hour-long biking experience at Molos and the old town of Limassol, including Ayliou Andreou and Saripolou streets. This exciting pedaling experience was organized with Nextbike rental.

Since many years had passed since I last rode a bike, I was pleased to pedal again with my group and were led by Neofytos, the Manager of Nextbike, who explained that not only tourists and visitors rent bikes, but even some locals do so occasionally or regularly, and some even use it to get to work. This was followed by a visit to the Troodos Mountains, passing by Ayios Amvrosios and Kantou villages. Enjoying the nature and the sound of water at the little waterfall, we had lunch at the Neraida Restaurant in Foini village.

Four days were certainly not enough to explore this beautiful Mediterranean island. Our program on this trip was full, yet I enjoyed every single activity and didn't regret waking up early every morning, which I usually consider a torment. Of course, what made the trip even better and full of fun was the accompanying group, especially Habib, who was the most active member of the group, and bailed me out with the huge number of great photographs that he took with his phone and camera.

**Gulf Air's Falcon Gold Lounges**

Gulf Air's Falcon Gold Lounges are distinct in many ways - specifically, their architectural designs combine traditional Arabian theme with modern amenities, giving guests a sense of space and freedom. With dedicated Gulf Air Falcon Gold Lounges in all of Bahrain International Airport,



A beach in Paphos.

**Gulf Air's flatbed seats**

Gulf Air's state-of-the-art Airbus A320 aircraft is one of the first narrow body aircraft with fully flatbed seats in its Falcon Gold (premium) class cabins. With a total of 14 flatbed seats in Falcon Gold class, Gulf Air integrated the comments of its customers during the development stage of its A320 seats' design to ensure the product met their requirements.

Through customer interface workshops the views of the airline's Gulf Air Falconflyer Loyalty Program (FFP) members - were incorporated and, today, the outcome of the FFP workshops is a seat that meets most passenger requirements in terms of seating and sleeping comforts. There is also significant storage space such as a shoe packing pocket and a side compartment specifically designed for laptops - further complemented by a USB port in every seat to allow passengers to easily charge electronic devices.

For those seeking onboard entertainment, each Falcon Gold seat comes complete with a full Audio-Video on Demand (AVOD) feature: a selection of over 1,500 movies, music, music videos, games and television programming with touch screen technology. Individual 15-inch touch screens in every seat and high quality noise cancelling headphones further enhance the viewing experience.



Mosaic artworks at the Kourion archaeological site.



Mosaic artworks at the Kourion archaeological site.



The Elea Estate Golf Club in Yeroskipou.



Lara turtle beach and the Akamas peninsula sea caves.



Archeological sites in Paphos.



Photo shows one of the dozens of lowriders on display at the historic plaza in downtown Santa Fe. — AP photos

## Lowrider car culture takes summer spotlight in New Mexico

Those classic cars called lowriders are the focus of a summer celebration in Santa Fe. The spotlight on lowrider culture includes exhibitions at the New Mexico History Museum and the New Mexico Museum of Art. The low-to-the-ground cars are decked out with hydraulics, chrome and candy-colored paint jobs. The celebration kicked off Sunday when more than 100 lowriders cruised into one of the state's most historic plazas in the heart of Santa Fe.

Lowriders have become fixtures across the Southwest. There are some similarities with the cars that cruise the streets in California and Texas, but there are also differences with the culture that has been thriving for decades in New Mexico. The cars have become rolling works of art and symbols of Hispanic cultural identity.

"The New Mexico style is a little more focused on family, faith and place," said Kate Ware, a curator at the New Mexico Museum of Art. Ware spent more than a year helping to pull together a collection of photographs, sculptures, paintings and videos highlighting the lowrider lifestyle and its connection with religion and community. Of the more than 50 works in the "Con Carino" exhibit at the art museum, some date back to the 1970s. The show will run through Oct 9.

### Hydraulic lift system

At the history museum across the street, there are lowriders, hubcaps, a chromed-out Chevy small block engine and dozens of photographs that capture the essence of lowriding. In one corner is a scale that's used to gauge how high a car can hop, the term used to describe the front end bouncing off the ground, triggered by a custom hydraulic lift system. "Lowriders, Hoppers, and Hot Rods: Car Culture of Northern New Mexico" will be on display at the history museum through March 5, 2017.

Daniel Kosharek, the photo curator at the history museum, said there are people who use cars just for transportation and then there are those who use the cars for self-expression. "Two

types of people, two world views," he said. "This exhibit is about the latter — people who express themselves through pride in their ride."

Lowriders can come in any flavor, from the classic bombs made between 1930 and 1955 to hoppers that are outfitted with suspension systems that have evolved into high-tech rigs from the earliest days when sand bags were used to weigh down a car to get it closer to the ground. Steven "Sparky" Gomez has tens of thousands of dollars invested in his Packard. He's been offered double its worth but there's no way he's selling it. For Gomez, lowriding is a family tradition started by his father back in the 1940s.

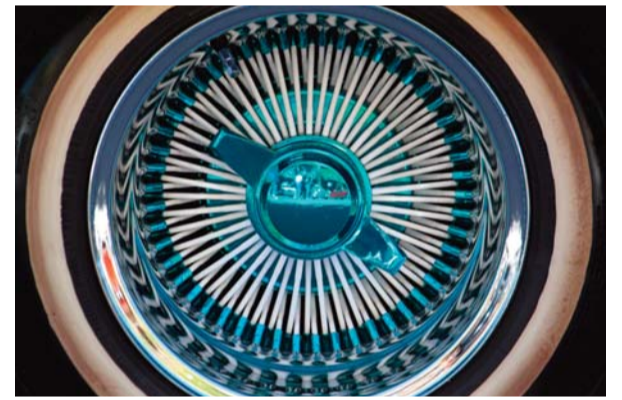
"You get a car that somebody else discarded and as you see, you turn it into a piece of art and it's better than drugs and alcohol. There's no limit," he said. "And then you feel like a movie star when you're in it because everybody's waving at you." At the celebration kick-off, cars circled the plaza, some flipped their

switches, boosting one wheel off the ground while the rear of the car squatted and twisted. The front ends of others jumped up and down as the driver and passengers bounced around inside and the car crept forward with each hit.

### Plane flaps

The spokes spun slowly, the slower the better as the crowd soaked in all the chrome and glistening metal-flake paint. "Bajito y suavecito." Translation: Low and slow. "These are folks who really put their heart and soul into these cars and it's a family treasure," Ware said. "The whole family is involved in the making and the financing and then of course there's this whole brotherhood, this team of people who help put the car together." In the 1980s, the northern New Mexico community of Espanola proclaimed itself the Lowrider Capitol of the World, but the history of lowriders stretches back at least to World War II. El Paso, Texas, and Los Angeles like to take credit for birthing lowriders as a Latino response to Anglo hot rod culture.

As the style progressed, some car customizers began building their suspensions with hydraulic lifters originally designed to raise and lower plane flaps. Air bags came later and smoothed out the ride. The exhibits touch on history but they also seek to elevate lowrider culture beyond the usual stigmas and stereotypes to celebrate the craftsmanship and commitment that come with building and maintaining a lowrider. After the hopping settled down Sunday, Gomez surveyed the crowd. "You see the smiles on people's faces. It kills all the stereotypes," he said. "We're not drug dealers. We're not gang members. With our appearance, people assume stuff but once they get to talk to us and find out the real history behind lowriding, they find out it's just a beautiful culture." — AP



A polished lowrider rim in downtown Santa Fe, NM.



Photo shows lowriders on display at the historic plaza in downtown Santa Fe.



A piece of glazed stoneware created by Rose B Simpson that is on display.



Photo shows Steven 'Sparky' Gomez with the Imperials Car Club during a show at the historic plaza in Santa Fe.



Lowriders parading around the historic plaza in Santa Fe.



Photo shows lowriders on display at the historic plaza in downtown Santa Fe.



Photo shows one of the dozens of lowriders on display at the historic plaza in downtown Santa Fe. — AP photos



Photo shows a detailed lowrider paint job on display.