

NUKS-USA
cancels last day
of conference for
security reasons



**Will Modi's
India cash
ban plan
backfire?**



**Supermarket in
Denmark offers
fresh take on
expired food**



**Rosberg foils
Hamilton
to claim
maiden title**



TSUNAMI OF CHANGE DUMPS OLD GUARD BY THE WAYSIDE

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THOUSANDS FLEE REGIME ADVANCE IN ALEPPO

ALEPPO: Thousands of civilians have fled rebel-held east Aleppo after government forces, determined to retake all of Syria's second city, seized its largest rebel-controlled district and advanced into two other areas. The capture on Saturday of Masaken Hanano - which had been the biggest rebel-held district of Aleppo - was a major breakthrough in a 13-day regime offensive to retake the entire city. Yesterday, regime forces also took control of two neighboring areas, Jabal Badra and Baadeen, the Syrian Observatory of Human Rights said.

"The army's rapid advance is due to its strategy of attacking east Aleppo on several fronts, weakening the rebels," Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman said. The regime gains came as its aircraft pounded rebel positions and amid heavy clashes between the opposition and forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad. Masaken Hanano was the first district the rebels took in the summer of 2012 in a move that divided the city into a rebel-held east and a regime-controlled west.

Around 250,000 civilians trapped under government siege for months in the east have faced serious food and fuel shortages. The Syrian Observatory said nearly 1,700 civilians had fled over the past 24 hours to government-held parts of western Aleppo and another 2,500 to the Kurdish-controlled northern district of Sheikh Maksoud. "It is the first exodus of this kind from east Aleppo since 2012," Abdel Rahman said.

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ALEPPO: Syrian displaced families arrive at a makeshift camp yesterday in the government-held district of Jibreen. — AFP

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The 2016 National Assembly elections sprang a number of major surprises that included the failure of many big names and the battering of the three biggest Bedouin tribes, outgoing Assembly members, and Shiite candidates. At the same time, the election saw significant gains by the opposition and its supporters, an important injection of fresh young blood and a stellar and unexpected performance by smaller tribes.

Meanwhile, HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent cables of congratulations yesterday to the winners of the elections. The Amir wished the winners success in their duties aiming to serve and develop the dear homeland. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-

SEE PAGE 2

Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent similar cables to the new MPs.

Writing on his Twitter account, political analyst Salah Al-Fadhli described the election results as a "tsunami of change because they were like a tornado that uprooted many figures". Only 20 out of the 50 members of the outgoing Assembly were re-elected, a massive 60 percent turnover. As many as 42 members of the dissolved house contested the polls, while the remaining did not take part for a variety of reasons. Prominent among those defeated include former public works minister Ali Al-Omar, who secured a small number of votes in the third constituency, former minister of justice and Islamic affairs Yacoub Al-Sane and deputy speaker Mubarak Al-Khrainej.

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DOHA: Migrants gather at the Search and Follow Up Department in the Qatari capital on Nov 8, 2016. — AFP

QATAR 'ILLEGALS' SCRAMBLE TO LEAVE UNDER AMNESTY

DOHA: Kalawani has spent the past six years hiding from the Qatari authorities, but finally she is going home to Sri Lanka for the first time since 2010. The former housemaid is one of 9,000 undocumented residents expected to leave Qatar before Dec 1 after Doha introduced a three-month amnesty for those living in the country illegally to leave without "legal consequences". Kalawani ran away after her employer refused to pay her monthly wage of 1,000 Qatari riyals (\$275), a common problem. "I didn't get any salary from my sponsor," she says while waiting for her

papers to be approved. Under Qatar's strict sponsorship laws, anyone wishing to change their job must get permission from their employer, so Kalawani became an "illegal" after fleeing.

She has existed by relying on her family for help and working in a cafe, though that was also illegal as her entry visa to Qatar allowed her to work only as a housemaid. "This amnesty is good for me. I want to go home," she says quietly. Under normal rules, she could be facing a huge fine or imprisonment for absconding.

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CUBA MOURNS DEATH OF CASTRO

ARID SAUDI COULD NEED '\$50BN' IN WATER INVESTMENT

RIYADH: Arid Saudi Arabia could need more than \$53 billion in water sector investment supported by private funds as demand grows, officials said yesterday. The world's largest oil exporter, whose petroleum revenues fell 51 percent last year on declining crude prices, is pushing to diversify its economy through greater private sector investment and development of new industries. Among government agencies targeted for privatization is the Saline Water Conversion Corporation (SWCC), which desalinates water from the Gulf and Red Sea coasts.

"Future plants will be tendered to the private sector," Ali Al-Hazmi, SWCC governor, told the government-organized Water Investment Forum. "We have everything ready for privatization." The desert kingdom, which has no rivers, obtains most of its water from desalination and the rest from ground sources. "This requires a lot of money and a lot of capital investment," Mansour Al-Mushaiti, a deputy minister with the ministry of environment, water and agriculture, told the forum. "We are envisaging that the capital requirements in the next five years will reach up to 200 billion Saudi riyals (\$53.3 billion)."

SWCC, created in 1974, is the world's largest producer of desalinated water. It operates 28 plants and as part of the process is able to generate electricity for the national power grid. Saudi water demand is increasing by more than five percent annually, Hazmi said at the start of the two-day forum. By 2020 the kingdom is targeting 52 percent of desalinated water production through "strategic partners". — AFP

HAVANA: Cuba mourned its revolutionary leader Fidel Castro yesterday as it prepared a four-day funeral procession for the giant figure of modern history, loved by many but branded a tyrant by others. After the stunned commotion triggered by Saturday's announcement that Castro, 90, had died, yesterday was set to be a day of preparations ahead of a flurry of events to mark his death. Students left lighted candles next to a portrait of the black-bearded communist leader during a vigil at Havana University.

A titan of the 20th century who beat

the odds to endure into the 21st, Castro died late Friday after surviving 11 US administrations and hundreds of assassination attempts. No cause of death was given. "It is a great loss. The most important thing is that he died when he chose, not when all the counter-revolutionaries wanted," said Carlos Manuel Obregon Rodriguez, a 43-year-old taxi driver in Havana. "It may not be painful for everyone, but it is for a lot of people. I was born under this revolution and I owe Fidel a lot."

Continued on Page 13



HAVANA: A picture of Fidel Castro and a Cuban flag decorate a home in the Cuban capital yesterday. — AP



RUTLAND, Vermont: Morgan Denehy, a Rutland County native who majored in Arabic in college, speaks at a coffee shop on Nov 14, 2016. — AP

US PLANS FOR SYRIA REFUGEES IN LIMBO

RUTLAND, Vermont: Arabic language classes are drawing 25 to 30 people a week in preparation for the new arrivals in town. High school students are helping collect furniture and housewares for them, and employers have inquired about giving them jobs. For the past several months, Rutland has been getting ready to receive 100 mostly Syrian refugees beginning early next year. But with Donald Trump taking office in late January, Rutland's plans and those of other US cities that have agreed to take in people fleeing the civil war have been thrown into question, given the incoming president's hostility to Muslim immigrants.

"I am not even going to hazard a guess" about the fate of the program, said Mayor Christopher Louras, who invited the newcomers in the hope they can help revitalize this shrinking, post-industrial, heroin-plagued city of 15,800. In the fiscal year that just ended,

the Obama administration screened and admitted nearly 12,600 Syrian refugees, who were resettled in cities and towns across the US. Thousands more are scheduled to arrive in the coming year.

During the campaign, Trump proposed a ban on Muslims entering the country and called for a moratorium on accepting Syrian refugees for fear of terrorists slipping through. He also vowed "extreme vetting" of would-be immigrants from countries plagued by extremism. Presidents set the quotas for refugees allowed into the country. Once Trump takes office Jan 20, he could cut off the flow or reduce the number the US will accept. The president-elect's transition team had no comment this month on his plans.

Stacie Blake, spokeswoman for the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, said her organization hopes Rutland will start seeing the refugees arrive by mid-January. Once

admitted to the US, refugees cannot be expelled unless they have committed a serious crime or are found to have lied to gain entry. Rutland's plan has been welcomed by some and condemned by others, who warn that the refugees could not only pose a security threat and but also take away housing, jobs and social services from locals.

"It's just sad, sad. We don't need any more people here, from anywhere, but especially the Syrians, because you know, there could be one terrorist in there. Once they're here, they're hard to get rid of. They're like a tick, or rats," Rennie Masler said. Among the many other US communities preparing to accept Syrians and other refugees in 2017 is Bowling Green, Kentucky, a longtime refugee resettlement community that took in about 400 mostly African immigrants this year. It expects 40 Syrians in September.

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OFFICIAL LIST OF WINNERS OF THE 2016 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

KUWAIT: The following is the final list of winners in each constituency with the number of votes as released by the judicial commission tasked with vote counting for the 2016 National Assembly elections:



First Constituency



- The winners are:**
- 1- Adnan Sayed Abdulsamad (4,287 votes)
 - 2- Essa Ahmad Al-Kandari (4,077 votes)
 - 3- Mohammad Mirwi Al-Hadiya (3,016 votes)
 - 4- Adel Jassem Al-Damkhi (2,758 votes)
 - 5- Abdullah Youssef Al-Roumi (2,731 votes)
 - 6- Saleh Ahmad Ashour (2,541 votes)
 - 7- Mubarak Salem Al-Harees (2,444 votes)
 - 8- Osama Essa Al-Shaheen (2,270 votes)
 - 9- Khaled Hussein Al-Shatti (2,166 votes)
 - 10- Salah Abduredha Khorsheed (2,131 votes)



Second Constituency



- The winners are:**
- 1- Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem (4,119 votes)
 - 2- Riyadh Ahmad Al-Adasani (3,578 votes)
 - 3- Khalil Ibrahim Al-Saleh (2,914 votes)
 - 4- Jamaan Thaher Al-Harbash (2,432 votes)
 - 5- Hamad Seif Al-Harshani (2,341 votes)
 - 6- Mohammad Barrak Al-Mutair (2,172 votes)
 - 7- Khalaf Dumaitheer Al-Enezi (1,942 votes)
 - 8- Rakan Youssef Al-Nasef (1,888 votes)
 - 9- Oudah Oudah Al-Ruwaei (1,772 votes)
 - 10- Omar Abdulmohsin Al-Tabtabaei (1,755 votes)



Third Constituency



- The winners are:**
- 1- Abdulwahab Mohammad Al-Babtain (3,730 votes)
 - 2- Saadoun Hammad Al-Otaibi (3,444 votes)
 - 3- Yousef Saleh Al-Fadhalah (3,399 votes)
 - 4- Abdulkareem Abdullah Al-Kandari (3,325 votes)
 - 5- Safaa Abdurrahman Al-Hashem (3,273 votes)
 - 6- Mohammad Hussein Al-Dallal (2,533 votes)
 - 7- Waleed Musaaed Al-Tabtabaei (2,504 votes)
 - 8- Khalil Abdullah Abul (2,443 votes)
 - 9- Mohammad Nasser Al-Jabri (2,219 votes)
 - 10- Ahmad Nabil Al-Fadhl (2,124 votes)



Fourth Constituency



- The winners are:**
- 1- Thamer Saad Al-Dhafiri (5,601 votes)
 - 2- Mubarak Haif Al-Hajraf (4,621 votes)
 - 3- Mohammad Hayef Al-Mutairi (4,506 votes)
 - 4- Saad Ali Khanfour Al-Rusheedi (3,811 votes)
 - 5- Abdullah Fahad Al-Enezi (3,545 votes)
 - 6- Shuaib Shabab Al-Muwaizri (3,528 votes)
 - 7- Ali Salem Al-Deqbasi (3,379 votes)
 - 8- Askar Auwayed Al-Enezi (2,972 votes)
 - 9- Saud Mohammad Al-Shuwaier (2,897 votes)
 - 10- Marzouq Khalifa Al-Khalifa (2,874 votes)



Fifth Constituency



- The winners are:**
- 1- Hamoud Abdullah Al-Khudair (5,072 votes)
 - 2- Hamdan Salem Al-Azmi (5,038 votes)
 - 3- Al-Humaidhi Bader Al-Subaei (4,660 votes)
 - 4- Talal Saad Al-Jalal Al-Sahli (4,299 votes)
 - 5- Faisal Mohammad Al-Kandari (4,114 votes)
 - 6- Khaled Mohammad Al-Otaibi (3,998 votes)
 - 7- Majed Musaaed Al-Mutairi (3,821 votes)
 - 8- Nayef Abdulaziz Merdas Al-Ajmi (3,769 votes)
 - 9- Nasser Saad Al-Dossari (3,296 votes)
 - 10- Mohammad Hadi Al-Huwailah (2,851 votes)

HISTORICAL VOTER TURNOUT FIGURES:

July 27, 2013 polls: Votes cast: 228,314 Registered voters: 439,911 Turnout: 51.9%	February 2, 2012 Votes cast: 238,308 Registered voters: 400,296 Turnout: 59.53%	June 29, 2006 Votes cast: 312,762 Registered voters: 340,248 Turnout: 91.92%
December 1, 2012 Votes Cast: 163,301 Registered Voters: 400,296 Turnout: 40.8%	May 17, 2008 Votes cast: 214,886 Registered voters: 361,684 Turnout: 59.41%	July 3, 1999 Votes cast: 93,996 Registered voters: 112,882 Turnout: 83.27%

NEW MPs THANK VOTERS, VOW TO WORK FOR KUWAIT'S GREATER GOOD

OPPOSITION TO COORDINATE NEXT STEP

By A Saleh

government attempts for economic reforms at their expense. He also called for a new Cabinet formation that would match these aspirations including having technocrat ministers.

Opposition meets

Opposition MPs plan to hold a meeting before the end of this week to discuss the outlines of their work and coordinate their approach prior to the speakership and other parliamentary committee elections, well-informed sources said. The lawmakers will also discuss establishing a new parliamentary bloc and discuss its priorities before the new parliament convenes within two weeks, the sources added. Moreover, the sources said the meeting MPs will also discuss supporting one of them, most probably Shuaib Al-Muwaizri, to run for the speakership, as opposed to others supported by other MPs from outside the bloc such as Abdullah Al-Roumi in particular, who is also said to have plans to run for the speaker's post.

Online payment

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is scheduled to launch its online payment service to collect company and commercial licenses fees and fines during the first quarter of 2017. The ministry explained that the new service would be part of those provided by the e-government project and that it would have a positive impact on facilitating transactions for both company owners and individuals. Meanwhile, the ministry's one-window department received 41 applications to set up new companies last week, said informed sources, noting that 25 had been approved, 15 had been rejected and one was deferred for further checks. The sources added that the department received 124 applications from Oct 23 until the end of last week.

LAWYERS ASSOCIATION PRAISES ELECTIONS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Commenting on the results of the parliamentary elections, the Kuwait Lawyers Association's Chairman Nasser Al-Karyoun hailed all the efforts exerted to make the elections a success. He also congratulated His Highness the Amir and the Kuwaiti people on the occasion. In addition, Karyoun congratulated the winning MPs and reminded them that their task would be a tough one, and that they would be accountable over their responsibilities, especially before the voters who have great aspirations in terms of legislation and monitoring the government's performance.



Kuwait Lawyers Association's building.

US AMBASSADOR PRAISES PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS

KUWAIT: The United States Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman released the following statement yesterday, in which he commented on Kuwait's parliamentary elections:

"I congratulate Kuwait and its people on the successful holding of yesterday's national parliamentary elections. Kuwait has long been a regional leader with respect to constitutional governance and political participation, as reflected by Saturday's free and competitive elections. The United States and Kuwait enjoy a strong and close friendship that provides benefits for both our nations and peoples. I look forward to deepening our relationship with the Kuwaiti



US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman

people and to continue working closely with the Government of Kuwait in all areas, reflected in our recently-held Strategic Dialogue."

UK KEEN ON BOLSTERING TIES WITH KUWAIT - LORD MAYOR OF LONDON

LONDON: The United Kingdom is keen on bolstering ties with the State of Kuwait on all possible domains, Lord Mayor of London Andrew Charles Parmley said yesterday. In an exclusive interview, Parmley lauded the significant political and humanitarian roles played by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah within the regional and international spheres, affirming that the GCC leader was a wise and level-headed figure who deserved all respect and admiration.

On his upcoming two-day visit to Kuwait, which begins tomorrow, Parmley said that the Gulf country provided strong incentives for foreign investors to seek business in the region. The Lord Mayor of London affirmed that the goal of the visit was to reassure Kuwait and the GCC countries that the UK would remain as a strong business partner. Parmley's visit comes on the backdrop of Brexit, an event that sent shockwaves around the globe after the UK expressed clear intentions to fully separate from the EU.



Lord Mayor of London Andrew Charles Parmley

Parmley revealed that more top UK officials will visit the region soon, pointing out the UK Prime Minister Theresa May will partake in the GCC summit to be held in Bahrain later next month. Parmley said that business personnel and investors around the globe should not be worried about the aftermath of Brexit, noting that his country had built solid relations with many nations that were not easily shaken by any given event. —KUNA

DEFENSE MINISTER MEETS WITH GERMAN AMBASSADOR

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah met yesterday with German Ambassador to Kuwait Karfried Bergner on several issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah lauded deep relations between Kuwait and Germany, the Kuwaiti Army's Moral Guidance Directorate said in a press release. Earlier in the day, Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah received Bangladeshi Ambassador to Kuwait S M Abul Kalam on a number of issues and subjects that concern both sides, it added. —KUNA



Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah

AMIR THANKS MINISTRIES FOR EFFORTS DURING ELECTIONS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday thanked the Interior Ministry for its efforts during the National Assembly's elections. His Highness the Amir extended his gratitude to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah as well as the ministry's security and civilian staff for their gigantic efforts to secure the parliamentary elections.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir expressed his deep appreciation and gratitude to members of the Supreme Judicial Commission for their tremendous efforts in supervising the 2016 National Assembly elections. His Highness the Amir made his remarks yesterday in a cable of thanks he sent to Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Justice Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also valued the judicial commission's significant efforts in securing total success for this election, wishing the members all the best of luck in serving Kuwait in all fields and levels.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir expressed his appreciation to Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth

Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and to all his ministry staff for the excellent coverage of the National Assembly election. His Highness the Amir described the coverage as highly accurate and extremely subjective. He wished everyone success in their present and future endeavors.

In the meantime, Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud expressed appreciation to a successful parliamentary election under a leadership that encourages and instills practices of democracy. In a press statement yesterday, Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud also congratulated all the winners of the election, wishing them success in attaining their goals and serving their country the best they could.

He added that the country saw the best practices of democracy at the polling stations yesterday where everyone expressed their freedom of choice in picking their best candidates to represent them in the parliament.

Transparency and integrity were the main components of the candidates' campaigns leading up to election day, he added. He lauded a media coverage that followed voters since the opening of polling stations until the announcement of the winners; this coverage



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

used the latest technologies and utilized the best of social networks to broadcast this major event by the minute. —KUNA

EPA SIGNS COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH UNEP

KUWAIT: Public Authority for Environment (EPA) has signed a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to write up Kuwait's second UNDP Country Programme Document related to climate change.

Regional Director and Representative for the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) Iyad Abumoghli told the press, Sunday, that Kuwait is expressing keenness on the UN agreements on climate change; this interest is apparent in the Kuwaiti leadership's recent participation in the UN meeting of states parties on climate change (COP22) which took place in Marrakesh on November 16.

EPA has been a link of communication between UNEP and Kuwait since the latter signed United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 1994 and Kyoto Protocol in 2005, he said. He added that Kuwait has been submitting its required reports on its climate change, which comprise changes happening to temperature, the levels of rains and sea rise, in addition to the increase of sand storms. These reports are essential tools for the UNEP in giving a comprehensive evaluation on how these changes impact the economic and social aspects of the country and in helping finding solutions to overcome these climate challenges. Abumoghli explained that complet-

ing Kuwait's second Country Programme Document will take three years and it will be fully funded by international environment organizations, hoping it will be handed over by 2019. EPA will lead the project of writing up this document with the help of many local institutes, he pointed out.

Kuwait's first UNDP Country Programme Document indicated to many changes occur-

ring in the country's climate such as the decrease of rain levels subsequently causing sandstorms increased. The report also showed an increase of the average rate of temperature by 1.6, predicting that this rate will be at 28.7 Celsius by 2035. Furthermore, due to the coastal nature of Kuwait, sea level rise will increase leading to a loss of 1.4 percent to 3 percent of land. —KUNA



Public Authority for Environment (EPA) signs a cooperation agreement with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).



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Legalese

TERMINATION AND RESIGNATION FOR WOMEN

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Being terminated isn't always easy to deal with. On top of that, imagine being terminated because you are a woman, you don't speak the language, you don't have family around you, you are in a foreign country and they won't give you your rights. I know many of you have concerns about being terminated in Kuwait, and I know that many people know that employers don't always follow the law. It is a very tough situation to be in, so I hope the questions and answers mentioned here are of help.

Illegal reason

Question: I was terminated for an illegal reason. My termination letter says that I was being terminated because I got married, which makes no sense. Are there laws in Kuwait that protect women from such actions? What are our rights as women? I feel like it is my right to get married, there was no mention of this in the contract. What can I do?

Fajer: Being terminated for getting married is illegal and the law protects you. Kuwait labor law has many articles that protect women in the working field. I have listed them below:

* Maternity Leave

Maternity leave in Kuwait is for 70 days and is PAID. The leave days are NOT included in the employee's annual leave or other leaves!
The woman has to give birth within this period.

* Leave after delivery

Female employees can request non-paid leave of up to four months after the 70-day maternity leave. The request has to be from the employee.

* Termination

The employer may NOT terminate the employee while on maternity leave or if the employee is sick or had complications due to the delivery and needs extra medical leave.

* Breastfeeding

The employee is allowed a two-hour break in order to breastfeed her newborn (it is not clear what the provisions are though).

* Nursery

The employer is OBLIGED to have a nursery at work for organizations with more than 50 female employees or more than 200 employees in general.

The nursery is for children under four years of age. Unfortunately, there a lot of employers in Kuwait and around the world that do not want to hire married or pregnant women, because pregnant women can be costly to them. Fortunately, there a lot of people speaking out about this and the laws have changed in the past years giving more rights to women so they can start a family and also have a career.

I would suggest that you file a complaint at the Shuoon (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs) for illegal termination, especially since you have a termination letter in writing that says you are being terminated for getting married. If I was your lawyer, I would negotiate compensation for you. If you go to court, the judge will give you compensation for wrongful termination.

Resignation

Question: I am resigning because I am not being treated well at work. This is because I am working overtime, am not getting days off and so on. Do you think it is the right step?

Fajer: No. I see people making this mistake all the time. Instead of submitting the resignation to your employer, I would much rather you submit your resignation at the Shuoon stating all the violations that your employer has done towards you. I usually give this advice to my clients because when you resign, you are legally relinquishing your rights, and if your reason for resignation is not documented clearly, then you lose some of your rights, that depending on your years of employment, can affect your termination indemnity.

For any legal questions or queries, email ask@fajerthelawyer.com

KIB CHAIRMAN OPENS ANNUAL ARAB BANKING CONFERENCE 2016 IN BEIRUT

'LOBBYING FOR BETTER ARAB - INTERNATIONAL BANKING COOPERATION'

BEIRUT: Sheikh Mohammad Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of Kuwait International Bank (KIB) and Chairman of the Union of Arab Banks (UAB), called for the establishment of an Arab banking consortium, as a means to prevent international banks from assuming control of Arab banks and other financial institutions. Jarrah said that these economic consortiums will allow banks to channel some of the Arab investments currently being made abroad into local investments within Arab states. This will in turn lead to a boost in new projects, creating job opportunities and driving economic development across the entire Arab region - in addition to helping stem terrorism in the region.

According to Jarrah, the idea of creating an Arab banking conglomerate stems from a belief in the fundamental need for cooperation and collaboration within the banking sector. It is also driven by the notion that cooperation will help mobilize human capital, conserve and maximize resources, and build capacities. This cooperation is a prerequisite to building a solid foundation rooted in peace and stability, and a key component towards achieving balanced, sustainable and comprehensive development, said Jarrah.

Economic sanctions

Jarrah's statement came as part of his opening address at the inauguration of the Annual Arab Banking Conference 2016, which took place in Beirut on November 24th and 25th at the Phoenicia Hotel. Organized by the UAB, under the patronage of Prime Minister Tammam Salam, represented by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Samir Moqbel, the conference was held in partnership with the Bank of Lebanon (Banque De Liban), the Association of Banks in Lebanon and the World Union of Arab Bankers, and was attended by a number of influential economic and political figures, including: Fouad Siniora, Former Prime Minister, Amr Moussa, Former Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Sheikh Mohamad Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of the UAB, Riad Salame, Governor of Banque du Liban, Dr Joseph Torbey, Chairman of the World Union of Arab Bankers and President of the Association of Banks in Lebanon, Adnan Kassar, President of the Lebanese Economic Organization, Dr Sahar Nasr, Minister of International Cooperation of Egypt, Ghada Alwali, Minister of Social Solidarity of Egypt, and Wissam Fattouh, Secretary General of the UAB.

In his speech, Jarrah applauded the role the UAB plays in enhancing the reputation of Arab banks around the world, promoting a better understanding of the strength and integrity of these institutions in an effort to alleviate the economic sanctions imposed on some of the Arab states. He also lauded the UAB's efforts to harness the capabilities of the Arab banking sector to drive greater social and economic development - calling upon banks in the region to unite and align their efforts, encouraging them to invest their capabilities within the Arab region.

The responsibility of peace

Jarrah expressed his concerns over the turmoil currently taking place in the Arab world, with the region becoming overwhelmed with wars, conflicts, refugee crises, terrorism, and struggles of every kind - leading to the destruction of cities and demolishment of infrastructure, not to mention the incredible toll this has had on the economies of Arab states. As the region finds itself shrouded in uncertainty and as it struggles to find peace and stability, Jarrah said peace ceases to become an achievement, but rather a responsibility for governments and key political and economic powers, including the banking sector. As a pillar of the economic landscape, the banking sector can be a key contributor to the peace process by taking an



BEIRUT: Sheikh Mohammad Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of Kuwait International Bank (right) speaks during the Arab Banking Conference 2016.

active role in restoration and rebuilding efforts, as well as helping to boost the economy by capitalizing on its financial and human resources. Jarrah also noted that the banking sector enjoys an international reputation for being trust-worthy and credible, largely due to its adherence to international practices and standards. Other factors which have contributed to this reputation include the sector's continued commitment to remaining current with all the latest financial and technological innovations, as well as the industry's dedication to investing in its human capital and building capacities, in order to empower these talents to lead the development process.

Within this context, Jarrah noted that available data has shown that the Arab banking sector's assets have surpassed \$3.3 trillion, and that combined deposits have reached \$2.06 trillion, whilst loans have exceeded \$1.7 trillion. He also pointed out that the combined assets of Arab banking institutions, which number at about 500 institutions, are valued at about 109% of the GDP and exceed the total value of the Arab economy.

An Arab lobby

Addressing the conference in his opening statement, Jarrah said: "Through this conference today, the Union of Arab Banks is looking to explore the possibility of establishing an international Arab banking lobby, stemming from the Union's commitment to promoting financial stability and economic cohesiveness despite the political and security challenges the world is currently facing. Key amongst these challenges is the drop in oil prices to historical lows, which has resulted in over \$360 billion in losses for the oil-dependent GCC states, not to mention the negative impact this has had on economic growth rates across the entire Arab region."

Jarrah further warned against the consequences of the migration of domestic capital. He also warned against the economic, political and technological dependency that is incurred and exacerbated due to foreign debt, particularly in cases where borrowing countries are subjected to economic and political decisions which benefit creditor nations, and which lead to censorship and interference in internal affairs in some form or another. According to Jarrah, the integration of Arab financial institutions into the international financial system puts the former at risk of being frozen by



Western governments, as has already happened with several Arab nations.

Transparency and objectivity

In his closing words, Jarrah thanked Prime Minister Tammam Salam, represented by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Samir Moqbel, for his patronage of the conference. He further praised the Lebanese Capital of Beirut for always welcoming its Arab and International guests with open arms, lauding its willingness to always offer a friendly and fertile environment for open dialogue of all kinds. Jarrah concluded by wishing all participants success in addressing the conference topics with utter transparency and objectivity, in an effort to set the groundworks for the establishment of an Arab banking lobby dedicated to building a better future for the economies of Arab states.

Jarrah also announced that the UAB will be holding its next conference under the title: "Investing in Palestine", which is set to take place during the first week of December 2016 in the Jordanian capital of Amman. This conference seeks to highlight the urgent need to mobilize all Arab banking powers to strengthen the Palestinian economy and its banking sector.

Conference agenda

Over a period of two days, the "Lobbying for Better Arab - International Banking Cooperation" conference discussed a number of topics which addressed various sensitive, important and relevant economic issues. Attended by a number of key influential figures, decision makers and experts, the conference also honored a number of prominent Arabic economic figures.

One of the main discussion topics on the conference program was "The effects of international and Arab political developments on the banking sector", which explored the implementation of laws and regulations based on political and financial objectives, as well as the impact of terrorism, tax evasion and money laundering on the banking industry. The discussion also touched upon the need to create an Arab banking consortium and how to establish international trust in it. Additionally, participants addressed the role of the Arab banking sector in financing economic and financial industries within the context of the law, as well as the implementation of financing policies that focus on economic sectors, and finally the impact of international legislation on the financing policies of Arab Banks.



400 BOY SCOUTS PARTICIPATE IN DOHA BEACH CLEANING CAMPAIGN

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Several voluntary groups participated in a major campaign organized recently to clean Kuwait's beaches from Doha to Eshairej. One of those campaigns was carried this past weekend by the 'Kuwait is Green Oasis' environmental group and the 'Prevention is our Goal' voluntary team. Nearly 400 boy scouts from Jahra Education Zone were brought to Doha beach, which was littered by various leftovers, plastic nets, dead animals, picnickers' trash, glass bottles and other harmful material. The boy scouts collected large amounts of trash and filled them into plastic bags to be collected by Kuwait Municipality.

Dr Musaed Al-Enezi, President of the 'Prevention is our Goal Team', said that such activities aim to spread public awareness regarding the importance of keeping the environment clean, with special emphasis on beaches where different kinds of wildlife frequent, and thus the area should be kept clean at all times. He said the team is now concentrating on schools to keep students informed of the importance of a clean and pollutants-free environment.





EQUATE PARTICIPATES IN GPCA LEADERS OF TOMORROW SEMINAR

DUBAI: EQUATE Petrochemical Company, a global producer of petrochemicals, participated in the Leaders of Tomorrow Seminar organized by the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA) for various university students from Arabian Gulf countries to develop their leadership skills.

EQUATE President and CEO Mohammad Husain said, "Leadership is a choice and an aspiration. You might have different feelings about these aspirations. These aspirations have responsibilities and accountabilities with them."

Husain added, "Leadership is not a matter of title, it is about your attitude and what you contribute regardless of

your position. Irrespective of the definition for leadership, each one of you can paint your future that includes many colors representing the challenges and achievements of your personal painting." Husain explained, "Life has different colors. Dark and light. Leadership is part of life! You can paint the future. Make it unforgettable!"

During the seminar, Husain interacted with the students and discussed the main characteristics of leadership that motivate and inspire people. The event also included the participation of other officials from a number of organizations who addressed the role, significance, future and fundamentals of the petrochemical industry.

KFH-GROUP CEO DELIVERS SPEECH AT NUKS CONFERENCE IN USA

NAHEDH: SCIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE ROADMAP FOR PROSPERITY

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House Group CEO Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh said that the science and knowledge are the roadmap for prosperity, and the main tool for achieving comprehensive development. This statement was made during his speech at the annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students NUKS-USA Branch held in San Francisco, California under the sponsorship of Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Bader Al-Essa in the presence and participation of Kuwait Ambassador to the United States Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He added that the Kuwaiti youth are a force to reckon with, indicating Kuwait depends on the youth and students in achieving further development and prosperity in the country. He advised the students to ensure they put in their best performance and benefit from the experience in studying in the USA that has the most prominent universities in the world, stressing the importance of learning from the positive side of the American culture such as the hard work, dedication to the job, patriotism, perseverance and diligence.

Nahedh confirmed that KFH participates in the conference as part of its keenness to communicate with students and support their activities. KFH took part in a plethora of students' activities and forums convened both inside and outside Kuwait, be it sport, social, cultural, or scientific activities, noting the impor-



Kuwait Finance House Group CEO Mazin Al-Nahedh is surrounded by some students and members of the diplomatic corps.

...tance of concerted efforts to beat odds and pave the way for prosperous future. He extend his appreciation and thanks to the organizers of the conference that was attended by a huge number of students, important dignitaries and representatives of the diplomatic mission.



NUKS-USA CANCELS LAST DAY CONFERENCE FOR SECURITY REASONS

NEW YORK: The 33rd annual conference of the National Union of Kuwait Students (NUKS) - US Branch - cancelled its last day of events due to security reasons. In a letter late Saturday, NUKS affirmed that all the events originally scheduled for the last day - including forums, workshops, closing ceremony, dinner, and concert - have been cancelled to protect the conference's attendees and participants.

The conference kicked off Thursday in San Francisco, California, under the sponsorship of Kuwait's Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Bader Al-Essa, with the attendance of Kuwaiti Ambassador to the US Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. —KUNA



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Crime

Report

FIGHT AT JAHRA HOSPITAL

KUWAIT: Jahra Hospital was the scene of a bloody fight between several people, before the brawl was controlled by guards just before police arrived. The fight started between two groups of in-laws in Saad Al-Abdullah, who resumed it at the hospital when they saw each other, and each side asked friends to come for help. Eight bedoons who were on one side were arrested, while the other party of three citizens and their mother escaped.

Under the influence

Ardhiya police arrested two young men in an abnormal condition, as their car was obstructing traffic. The driver was found under the influence and the passenger did not have any ID. Both had hashish joints on them.

In debt

Farwaniya police arrested three wanted persons for over KD 290,000 in debts.

Car thief at large

Jabriya police are looking for thief who stole a late-model car after its owner went into a pharmacy leaving the engine running.

Juveniles arrested

An Egyptian couple told Khaitan police they were stopped by two bedoons who claimed to be detectives, took their IDs, then beat them. Khaitan detectives had noticed what took place and arrested the suspects. Both were sent to the juvenile prosecution.

Drug trafficker caught

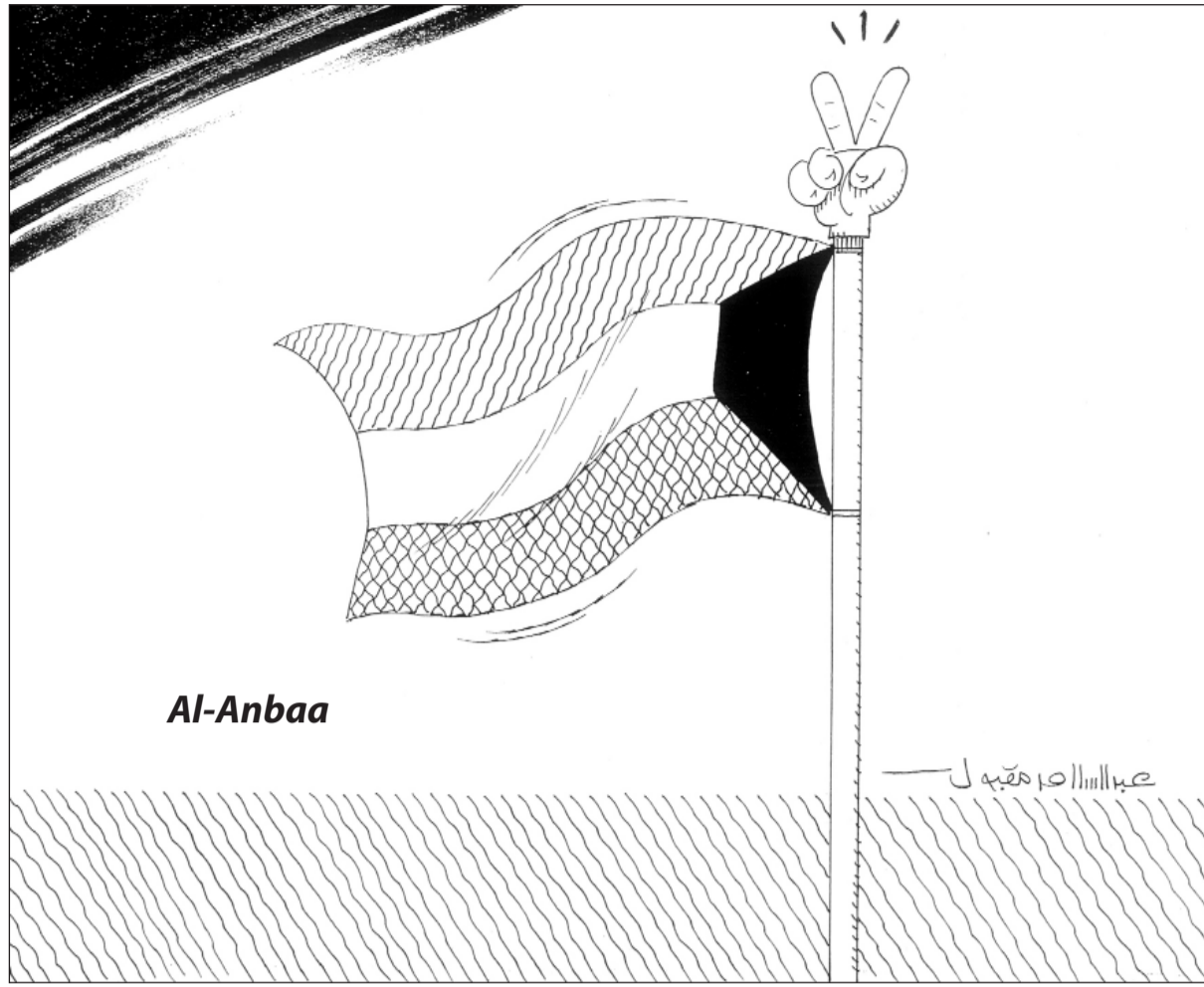
Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Maj Gen Abdelhameed Al-Awadhi sent a bedoon to the drugs prosecution charged with trading. One kilo of shabu was attached to the case file. The suspect was arrested in Salmiya after he sold 20 gm to an undercover agent. The rest of the drugs were found in his house.

Marital problems

An Egyptian woman who works at Kuwait University said her husband, with whom she has problems, tied her up, and with his brother's help, stole a gold bracelet along with KD 800. They also abducted her son and fled to Egypt.

Search for shooting suspects

Police are looking for three persons who attempted to stop two girls in a car by force, then shot at them. The incident took place in Hawally after the two had just left a private hospital. — Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa



Al-Anbaa



Al-Anbaa

EYES OF DISSATISFACTION

By Saleh Al-Shayehi

Close an eye and open another - that is, close the eye of satisfaction and open wide your eye of dissatisfaction. Close eyes that see the good and activate ones that only see follies. Being abroad at the time being, I seem to be longing for Kuwait with all my feelings. I cannot get it off my mind because it is everything I have in this life. My hopes are there. I have lived decades of my age in it. It is my homeland where I lived my childhood, youth and old age. It has my home, family and grave.

I am saying this because it really hurts me to see everybody closing their good eyes and only opening eyes of dissatisfaction that fail to see any beauty in it nowadays. All speakers, activists and preachers talked about the negative sides of Kuwait, especially when many of them are struggling to win a parliamentary seat.

Everybody talked about ugliness as if Kuwait is a very old ugly witch. Why on earth have they all closed

their good eyes and only talk about follies? The reason might be to please a majority of people who only like listening to such talk. Well, this does not mean that everything is rosy in my country nor does it mean that it is full of cultural venues, theatres and concert halls in every co-op. However, I am trying my best to create a sense of beauty and satisfaction. We should focus more on positive aspects of life as a means to limit the presence of ugliness.

My country has a lot of ugliness but still has far more beauties. I am not here calling to stop criticizing or to cutting off fingers pointing out faults. I am only asking to give due praise when needed as well as criticize when needed. Talking about beauty beautifies the speaker himself and talking about ugliness only makes the speaker uglier. Take it easy on our country. Stop seeing things as critics and open eyes of satisfaction wider to express your patriotism!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

TRUMP IS NO SURPRISE

By Dr Hassan Abdullah Jouhar

Studying the Donald Trump case does not need much effort. It is an unexpected surprise that Trump made it to the White House, winning the American people's votes. The man swept all American states, which reflects the new public trend in the USA and the dominance of severe rightist sentiments. Many political analysts, media figures and ordinary people considered electing Donald Trump as US president as a major shock and disaster that would affect the USA and the entire world. As a reaction to his winning, the elections came fast and might continue to accelerate to the peak until he swears into office the beginning of next year.

For the first time in modern history, negative reactions to electing a US president match domestically and worldwide. Those pessimistic about Trump's ideas as well as his racist and narrow visions say that those might lead to violence and hatred. This is a wave that has started dominating many Western societies lately. Trump not only defeated his opponent Hillary Clinton or the democratic party, but also defeated his own republican party, as well as the American media, empires and machines. He also defeated nongovernmental organizations that mobilized their efforts against him, as well as thousands of sports, Hollywood and political celebrities including three former presidents namely Bill Clinton, George Bush and Barack Obama. He is a clear manifestation of the American silent majority that made this change.

What will happen to the USA is purely a domestic concern, though the entire world will be affected. However, both the American people and the world ought to learn two lessons from this experience. Trump succeeded in convincing the Americans that Washington DC and its political icons were corrupt and that those politicians were using them for the best interest in mega companies and Wall Street. It was such a gigantic media machine that made the entire world fear the US, made it arrogantly a world leader, making it interfere in other countries concerns, create tensions, wage wars and kill people, backed by America's support to such a racist policy. Now, the Americans are suffering from the same and have started to sense the feeling of fear, anxiety, racial discrimination and unknown future.

The world and governments, including Arabs and Muslims, have nobody to blame but themselves because they neglected education and human rights which has resulted in a situation where people line up in long queues outside US embassies for immigration. People have been oppressed by tyrant regimes and the USA seemed as the promised paradise on earth. Arabs have been taking American weapons to fight each other. They have even deposited their wealth in American banks and financial institutions without any sense of shame or consideration to their dignity. They are now reaping what they had already sown. So, why are they upset?

— Translated by Kuwait Times



GCC SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES STUDENT COMPETITION WINNERS ANNOUNCED

ORGANIZED BY UN-HABITAT AND DUBAI REAL ESTATE INSTITUTE

KUWAIT: The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and Dubai Real Estate Institute (DREI) announced yesterday the two student that won from the university competition launched to universities in the GCC region, focused on generating new and innovative solutions for sustainable public space in collaboration with major universities in GCC.

The collaborative direction between the two organizations DREI and UN-Habitat is to continuously offer educational and leadership opportunities to both young professionals and experts updating them with housing policies and trends, in-line with international standards for the development of sustainable cities and communities through several proposed activities.

Activities include training courses, workshops, urban campaigns, urban research on city prosperity and affordable housing and urban competitions that promote positive change within cities and housing communities for better quality of life.

The 'My City My Responsibility' competition launched in August to all fourth years' university students in the GCC region, invited students majoring in civil engineering, architecture, and environmental design to apply their projects either individually or in a group.

The competition, under the 'I am a city Changer' campaign aims to utilize student's innovative talents to contribute to re-thinking public space for safe, connected, integrated, healthy and resilient future cities in at least six gulf cities. Celebratory event kicked off in the main theatre of Dubai Real Estate Institute, the first Middle-East Real Estate Institute and the educational arm of the Dubai Land Department.

The public schemes that won were selected and awarded based on key selection criteria in

urban sustainability, such as inclusivity, safety and accessibility for women, children, elderly and individuals with special needs. The jury consisted of Urban planning and urban design experts including Nadine Bitar and Shadi Hasbini.

First prize withheld

During the selection process, the jury members decided to withhold the first prize as due the submissions did not push the envelope in terms of implementing sustainability pillars in the Gulf region that is resilient to harsh desert climate change.

Each winner received a monetary prize from DREI and certificates for their participation from UN-Habitat and students will be given the opportunity to intern at a top real estate firm with the possibility to implement their project design with concerned city authorities.

The student winners include one individual and one group project

Second Place: The Individual project from student, Asmaa Abdulla Al-Mulaih, from the University of Jeezan- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has won a prize worth \$3,000 from DREI with a certificate of appreciation from UN-Habitat.

Third Place: Group Project from students, Abdulrahman Al-Ateeqi, Ahmad Al-Saffar, Dalal A-Inoumas, Rahaf Al-Dabbous, and Shahad Al-Awadhi, and Danah Al-Olaimi all from Kuwait University- Kuwait have won a



prize worth \$2,000 from DREI with a certificate of appreciation from UN-Habitat.

The jury reviewed the project winners based on six evaluation criteria, which are: the ability to resolve environmental issues, the ability to generate business of scale, group effort, resolving issues related to people with special needs, women, elderly, and children, the ability to resolve social issues; inclusive and safe, as well as innovation and creativity.

The awards were distributed as part of DREI celebration of UAE Innovation week and recognizing the importance of innovation and research as key drivers of sustainability. Guests included Leaders from the Real Estate Sector. Student winners accompanied by their parents, the Deans and professors who taught students in sustainable courses relating to the competition.



New experiences

Dr Tarek El-Sheikh, the Regional Director of UN-Habitat said, we believe that all the participants of this competition has developed new experiences and learnt new ideas about transformative urban settlements that are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Therefore, their learning process will not stop here, but rather, they will invest and built on it after their graduation and when they join the work field, we will witness their positive actions in their countries.

It is worth mentioning that there is a growing consensus about the need to work together to address the impact of climate change and achieve the sustainable development goals as stated in the GOP meeting in Paris last September.

As a result of this global demand of climate change, UN-Habitat plan of action in Kuwait is to promote the New Urban Agenda ratified by more than 192 countries representatives in

HABITATIII, Quito, 2016 and achieve 2030 SDGs specifically Goal 11: sustainable cities and communities and Goal 17: Partnerships (PPP) as habitat believes creating partnership plays a crucial role in the overall development of societies. Mahmoud Al-Burai, The Managing Director of Dubai Real Estate Institute, congratulated all the winners of the competition and encouraged those who did not win to participate in the future competitions organized by both DREI and UN-Habitat, adding "I congratulate the winners wishing them a successful career in which they can implement their knowledge of New Urban Trends."

He ended by saying, I am excited to see what the finalists have come up with to provide their ideas for a vibrant sustainable and living future in their region, encouraging us to do a public display in our future competition to show case the vision of Gulf state youths in what contribute to revitalize their areas and make them more sustainable.



Fillon tipped to win French rightwing primary

PAKISTANI MARKET WHERE WOMEN SEEK JUSTICE



WASHINGTON: Construction continues on the presidential reviewing stand on Pennsylvania Avenue in front of the White House, Saturday, Nov 26, 2016. —AP

TRUMP: RECOUNT A 'SCAM' EFFORT MOVES FORWARD

WEST PALM BEACH: For months Donald Trump called the presidential election "rigged." The president-elect has a different word - "scam" - for the recount effort aimed at revisiting the vote in three pivotal battleground states. "The people have spoken and the election is over," Trump declared Saturday in his first comments about the growing effort to force recounts in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania. He added, "We must accept this result and then look to the future."

Green Party nominee Jill Stein's fight for a recount got a major boost Friday when Wisconsin officials announced they were moving forward with the first presidential recount in state history.

The incoming president had been paying little if any attention to Stein's recount push, but Democratic rival Hillary Clinton forced his hand on Saturday by formally joining the effort. Stein, who drew 1 percent of the vote nationally, is raising millions of dollars to fund the recounts. "Because we had not uncovered any actionable evidence of hacking or outside attempts to alter the voting technology, we had not planned to exercise this option ourselves,"

Clinton campaign attorney Marc Elias wrote Saturday in a blog post. "But now that a recount has been initiated in Wisconsin, we intend to participate in order to ensure the process proceeds in a manner that is fair to all sides."

Elias said Clinton would take the same approach in Pennsylvania and Michigan if Stein were to follow through with recount requests those states, even though that was highly unlikely to change the election outcome. Clinton leads the national popular vote by close to 2 million votes, but Trump won 290 electoral votes to Clinton's 232, with Michigan still too close to call. It takes 270 to win the presidency.

Challenging US election system

Trump, who repeatedly challenged the integrity of the US election system before his win, called the recount push "a scam by the Green Party for an election that has already been conceded." "The results of this election should be respected instead of being challenged and abused, which is exactly what Jill Stein is doing," he said in the statement, which didn't mention Clinton's involvement.

Trump was expected to return to New York yesterday after spending the Thanksgiving holiday weekend at his West Palm beach estate. His transition team said the president-elect had scheduled a series of Monday meetings with prospective administration hires.

Trump offered a one-line tweet Saturday morning in reaction to the death of Cuban leader Fidel Castro - "Fidel Castro is dead!" - before issuing a more detailed statement. "While Cuba remains a totalitarian island, it is my hope that today marks a move away from the horrors endured for too long, and toward a future in which the wonderful Cuban people finally live in the freedom they so richly deserve," Trump said.

Trump's Cuba policy was inconsistent during the campaign. He first suggested he supported President Barack Obama's orders loosening the US trade embargo on the island. He reversed himself less than a month before the election, however, vowing to overturn Obama's order unless Cuba meets demands including "religious and political freedom for the Cuban people and the freeing of political prisoners." —AP

FALWELL SAYS TRUMP OFFERED HIM EDUCATION SECRETARY JOB



LYNCHBURG, Virginia: In this Wednesday, Nov. 16, 2016 file photo, Liberty University president Jerry Falwell Jr., poses during an interview in his offices at the school. —AP

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA: Liberty University President Jerry Falwell Jr. says President elect-Donald Trump offered him the job of education secretary, but that he turned it down for personal reasons.

Falwell tells The Associated Press that Trump offered him the job last week during a meeting in New York. He says Trump wanted a four- to six-year commitment, but that he couldn't leave Liberty for more than two years.

Falwell says he couldn't afford to work at a Cabinet-level job for longer than that and didn't want to move his family, especially his 16-year-old daughter. Trump announced Wednesday he had selected charter school advocate Betsy DeVos for the job. Falwell says he thinks DeVos is an "excellent choice."

Trump spoke at the Christian university in Lynchburg, Virginia, in January and Falwell later endorsed him. —AP

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FOR TOP IRAQI COMMANDER, MOSUL OFFENSIVE IS PERSONAL BATTLE

JULUKHAN, Iraq: Major General Najm al-Jubbouri, a top commander in the offensive against Islamic State in the Iraqi city of Mosul, peered through binoculars at flames after his men shot dead an Islamic State suicide bomber.

It was a small victory for a man whose war against jihadists is deeply personal. "You are heroes," he said through a walkie talkie as Iraqi forces cleared another village, hoping to open a new route to the militants' stronghold of Mosul. "You are heroes."

Last year, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi asked Jubbouri to return home from the United States to help lead the fight against Islamic State, which swept through Mosul and other parts of northern Iraq in 2014 and imposed a reign of terror.

Upbeat

Jubbouri is upbeat as he paces on the rooftop of a house that serves as a makeshift command centre, surveying the battlefield and tightly managing advances. But he is acutely aware of what

Islamic State, also known as ISIS, is capable of. Last year, he watched an Islamic State video broadcast on social media which showed the drowning of prisoners who are locked inside a steel cage and slowly lowered to their deaths in a pool.

Some of the victims were Jubbouri's cousins, he said. "My relatives and citizens suffered a lot from al Qaeda and ISIS. I decided to return back here. In Mosul, ISIS killed a lot from my tribe and from my friends," he told Reuters in an interview.

Jubbouri left his family behind and his job at the National Defence University in the United States and put on his military fatigues again at home. Eager to avenge the deaths of his relatives and help stabilize Iraq, Jubbouri is trying to figure out ways to overcome the complex challenges of fighting Islamic State in Mosul, home to about one million people.

Iraqi forces can't move heavy weapons and tanks through Mosul's narrow streets, and Islamic State is using civilians as human shields to slow government advances, said Jubbouri, who served in Saddam Hussein's army for decades.

In the desert just beyond Jubbouri are two army trucks mounted with machineguns, primed to attack any suicide bombers in vehicles who try to approach the makeshift command centre, which is surrounded by bodyguards. "We want to remove the cancer (of Islamic State) from the body and this is a very difficult mission inside Mosul," said Jubbouri.

Jubbouri, who moved to the United States in 2008, is acutely aware of the dangers posed by Islamic militants, and the sectarian animosities which have destabilized Iraq. As mayor of Tel Afar from 2005-2008, he cleared out al-Qaeda fighters from the town and promoted reconciliation between Sunnis and Shi'ites.

Iraq has been struggling to find a formula for stability since a US-led invasion toppled Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Islamic state defeat

Even if Islamic State is defeated in Mosul, Iraqi leaders must ensure that the same ethnic and sectarian hostilities which helped Islamic State estab-

lish a widespread presence in the country do not creep up again. The group initially won over Sunni supporters because that sect felt marginalized by the Shi'ite-led government in Baghdad. Jubbouri called for an end to a governing system which allocates top posts based on sects. "It won't be rosy. Many difficulties," he said. "Some politicians will not like to change because many of them would lose their positions."

For now, he is focused on the fight against Islamic State. Jubbouri said Iraqi forces had set a six-month timetable for the Mosul campaign. But he is confident of victory by the end of this year, predicting the group will collapse.

So far, Iraqi forces have captured about 60 percent of eastern Mosul, and the western part of Iraq's second biggest city could prove far more dangerous. "In beginning, everyday we faced between 60 and 70 car bombs. Now we are facing about two or three," said Jubbouri, as his forces fired mortar bombs and rockets at an asphalt factory where militants strapped with explosives were positioned. — Reuters



MOSUL, Iraq: Iraqi special forces soldiers pass civilians, sitting in the back yard of their houses used in fighting against the Islamic State militants, in the Bakr front line neighborhood on Saturday. — AP

LOCAL INTEL KEY IN HOUSE TO HOUSE BATTLE FOR IRAQ'S MOSUL

'WE CANNOT ALLOW THIS'

MOSUL, Iraq: When Islamic State militants in Mosul discovered that Ahmed's brother had served in the army, they went to his house, pulled him into the street, and shot him dead as his parents watched.

Now, it was time for revenge, and after two years of ferrying the extremists around as a taxi driver, Ahmed had plenty of information to offer special forces at a command post in an east Mosul apartment on Friday.

"They're in this church, and only God knows what goes on in there," he told intelligence officers, pointing out map coordinates during a half-hour session. They met in a living room used to receive residents just a few blocks away from the battle, some seeking help, others being questioned, while the unlucky ones faced interrogation or stern reprimands for various infractions. Ahmed asked his full name be withheld for fear of reprisals.

With heavy weapons less useful in the dense urban alleyways of Iraq's second city, local intelligence is growing in value. Special forces on the front lines are beefing up efforts to win civilians' trust, passing out food and medicine and gleaming real-time information about the extremists they are fighting in pitched, house-to-house combat.

Classic counterinsurgency roles

In doing so, officers are also taking on classic counterinsurgency roles, becoming actors of local governance, addressing grievances and dispensing swift battlefield justice. The offensive to free Mosul of IS militants is now in its second month, and progress has slowed as troops try to avoid mass civilian casualties that could give the impression the Shiite-heavy military was riding roughshod over the city's majority Sunnis.

While tens of thousands of civilians have fled

the fighting, over a million remain in their homes - some following official requests by the government to stay there, others preferring the risk of crossfire to spending the winter in an anonymous number in cold displacement camps.

In the Bakr neighborhood, parts of which are still contested, civilians lined the streets. Smiling children waved and greeted the troops, while younger men and elders watched convoys of Humvees pass with an air of skepticism.

Automatic rifle fire and heavy machine guns blasted all day from both sides, while mortars lobbed shells across neighborhoods, the city's relentless soundtrack. In the dusty wasteland to the east, a family pushed a relative's body on a cart back toward an aid station.

Part of the intelligence gathering is rough - in the Samah neighborhood, soldiers arrested at least two suspected IS militants, wrapping T-shirts over their heads and beating them in the street as they dragged them off. Not every combatant shares the government's optimism that sectarian reconciliation can happen here. "Why do you speak to them? They're all (IS)," one soldier said of civilians leaving homes to visit relatives further from the crossfire.

But the softer approach, as advancing forces have learned countless times in modern warfare, can yield more value, and keeping civilians on one's side has become a major part of operations for Iraq's special forces, known officially as the Counter Terrorism Forces.

Speaking in the Bakr apartment, Lt. Col. Ali Hussein said his forces have strict orders to take care of civilians to win the peace, but that they went a bit further, buying medicine for the old and infirm. "We pay with our own money, it's the humane thing to do," he said. "It's a modest neighborhood and we have to keep a good rep-

utation and show the civilians we are on the same side - Daesh has brainwashed them for two years," he said, using the Arabic acronym for the group.

IS forces as well, driven underground and unable to group into formations for risk of attracting airstrikes, also realize the importance of information. On Friday alone, they sent three reconnaissance drones to scout positions in the district - the same amount as over the previous two weeks. "It was a big push, much more than normal," Hussein said, showing off a damaged commercially available DJI Phantom 4 drone the size of a record player.

'We shot down two'

Fighting in built-up areas has slowed to a slog, as small numbers of IS snipers and suicide bombers in heavily-armored vehicles infiltrate neighborhoods to surprise troops and stunt advances. Battles play out on rooftops with IS forces holed up in buildings just a street or two away, with troops often jumping walls between houses to reach their positions.

On patrol, Iraqi forces here said that IS was now sending in two cars at a time packed with explosives. The first one destroys the giant sand barriers the army builds on side streets to create safe zones, and the second one races through the opened passage to attack troops. As a response, the special forces now line up parked civilian cars in front of the barriers.

Troops also listen in on IS radio traffic, where they can sometimes hear the extremists directing suicide bombers who can't see through the heavy armor plating protecting their moving vehicles. Many of the dialects are foreign, including Gulf Arab and Egyptian.

As Hussein walked the streets with his troops, a man approached, beseeching the soldiers for help to protect his family on the IS-controlled side. After a brief stand-off, and the man lifting his shirt to show he wasn't wearing explosives, he became the latest informer.

"They are knocking down walls so they can move house to house, and they're approaching this line," said the man, who also asked that his name be withheld for fear of IS reprisals. "They dig all night, we can hardly sleep." After sunset, IS was burning tires and homes to obscure night vision scopes used by the special forces.

The patrol went to the neighbors to confirm the story, lecturing the man for crossing over the front line via a rooftop but letting him go after locals vouched for him. Speaking with elders, Hussein told families to stay indoors and explained that cars must have their tires flattened or be considered a security risk.

Another man was scolded for trying to break into a house, claiming his uncle had sent him to secure belongings. Soldiers pushed him by the shirt collar to the area's de facto governor, who waved him off after some angry words.

"We cannot allow this," said Hussein. "When civilians return they must not think that the special forces looted their homes." — AP

QATAR WILL HELP SYRIAN REBELS EVEN IF TRUMP ENDS US ROLE

DOHA: Qatar will continue to arm Syrian rebels even if Donald Trump ends US backing for the multinational effort, Doha's foreign minister said in an interview, signalling its determination to pursue a policy the US President-elect may abandon.

But Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said the wealthy Gulf state would not "go solo" and supply shoulder-fired missiles to the rebels to defend themselves against Syrian and Russian warplanes.

While the rebels needed more military support, any move to supply "Manpad" anti-aircraft weapons to them would have to be decided collectively by the rebels' backers, the minister, a member of Qatar's royal family, told Reuters late on Saturday.

Some Western officials worry that Gulf states, dismayed at effective Russian air support for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, could supply such weapons. Washington fears they could be seized by jihadi groups and used against Western airliners.

Qatar is a top backer of rebels fighting Assad, working alongside Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Western nations in a military aid programme overseen by the US Central Intelligence Agency that provides moderate groups with arms and training.

Qatar was determined to carry on, Sheikh Mohammed said, sipping tea in his spacious office on the ministry's top floor overlooking the Gulf. "This support is going to continue, we are not going to stop it. It doesn't mean that if Aleppo falls we will give up on the demands of the Syrian people," he said.

Historic ally

"Even if the regime captures it (Aleppo), I am sure they will have the ability to capture it back from the regime ... We need more military support, yes, but even more important was to stop the bombardment and create safe zones for the civilians." He said Assad was "the fuel of Daesh" - an acronym for Islamic State - because his forces' killing of Syrians helped the hardline group motivate young Syrian recruits. "We never see any effort for him fighting Daesh," he said. But Trump has signalled opposition to US support for the rebels, indicating he could abandon them to focus on fighting Islamic State which controls land in eastern and central Syria.

He might even cooperate against IS with Russia, which has been bombing the rebels for more than a year in western Syria. In an interview published this month, Assad said Trump would be a "natural ally" if he decides to "fight the terrorists". "We want to have the US with us, for sure, they have been our historic ally," Sheikh Mohammed said.

"But if they want to change their minds, are we going to change our position? For us, in Qatar at least, we are not going to change our position. Our position is based on principles, values and on our assessment of the situation there."

Qatar and other Gulf states believe the nationalist Sunni rebels are needed to push a stable Syria. But their policy has long been hampered by splits in the opposition and the prominent role jihadists have played in the insurgency. — Reuters



DARAA, Syria: Smoke billows following a reported air strike by Syrian government forces in a rebel-held area of Daraa, in southern Syria, yesterday. — AFP

HELICOPTER CRASHES IN IRAN, KILLING FIVE: OFFICIAL

TEHRAN: Five people on board an Iranian helicopter were killed when it crashed into the Caspian Sea yesterday, state television reported. The bodies of four crew and a civilian, plus the helicopter, had been found, a security official told state television website.

The helicopter, owned by the National Iranian Drilling Company, was carrying an emergency patient from Amir Kabir offshore oil platform when it

"disappeared half a mile from the oil rig on its way back," ISNA news agency quoted Behshahr governor Khalegh Sajadi as saying. "The reason of the crash will not be known until the black box is found," he added.

Amir Kabir drilling rig is 137 air miles (250 kilometers) off the Caspian Sea coastal line and extracts oil from the water depth of 1,000 meters, according to official IRNA news agency. — AFP

22 SYRIA REBELS HIT BY IS CHEMICAL ATTACK: ARMY

ISTANBUL: Twenty-two pro-Ankara Syrian rebels were hit by a chemical gas attack from Islamic State (IS) jihadists in northern Syria, the Turkish army said yesterday. "After a rocket was fired by Daesh (IS), 22 opposition members were observed to have been exposed in their eyes and bodies to chemical gas," the general staff said in a statement, quoted by the state-run Anadolu news agency.

It said the attack happened in the area of the village of Khaliliya, east of Al Rai in northern Syria. Turkish media said that the affected Syrian fighters were brought over the frontier to the Turkish border town of Kilis by teams from Turkey's AFAD emergency agency.

The reports said that the Turkish emergency workers were equipped with special chemical suits to protect themselves. The Syrians were brought to the main hospital in

Kilis where they are currently undergoing treatment.

Television pictures showed some of the Syrians being transferred on stretchers to the hospital, with the emergency workers dressed in full-body white protective clothing and gas masks. The Turkish army is backing the Syrian fighters in an unprecedented incursion aimed at rooting out IS jihadists from the border area and also ensuring there is no Kurdish militia presence.

In a three-month operation, the rebels have so far captured the IS stronghold of Jarabulus, cleared IS from Al Rai and retaken the symbolically important town of Dabiq without much resistance.

With Turkish support, they are now pressing to take Al Bab from the jihadists in an advance that appears to be taking more time and encountering greater opposition. — AFP



MOSUL, Iraq: Iraqi Special Forces parade with Staff Lieutenant General Abdul Ghani Al-Asadi, commander of the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) in a recently recaptured district of south-east Mosul, yesterday. — AFP



REDDING, California: A section of road along County Road 17 from the Interstate 5 overpass. Shown on Friday, Nov 25, 2016, is where Sherry Papini, a 34-year-old wife and mother was found on Thanksgiving Day. —AP

CALIFORNIA WOMAN FOUND CHAINED TO OBJECT, BEATEN

SAN FRANCISCO: A Northern California woman was chained to an object and had been badly beaten when found near an interstate three weeks after she disappeared while jogging, according to a newspaper citing a police-dispatch recording. The Sacramento Bee reported that it acquired an audio clip of the exchange between dispatchers and officers in the moments after 34-year-old Sherri Papini flagged down a passing motorist near Interstate 5. "CHP is on scene and advised that she is chained to something," a radio dispatcher told a responding officer. "CHP is advising that she is heavily battered."

Authorities previously said Papini was injured badly enough to require medical treatment when she was found before dawn Thursday, but have given no details of her condition. Calls to California Highway Patrol spokesmen were not immediately returned Friday night.

Earlier Friday, a family member and law enforcement said they expected Papini to spend her first few days of freedom quietly, with family. "We are very, very thankful and very ecstatic," sister Sheila Koester, 36, told The Associated Press by telephone. "It's the best Thanksgiving that anyone could ask for."

'Very traumatic event'

Speaking separately at a news conference, Koester declined questions about her sister's disappearance and rescue and the ongoing Shasta County criminal investigation to find those responsible, saying she knew no details. "Right now she's been through a very traumatic event, and needs time with her family," Koester said.

A motorist spotted Papini before dawn Thursday near Interstate 5 about 150 miles south of the area where she had vanished, outside her home near Redding. Shasta County Sheriff Tom Bosenko told reporters on Thursday that authorities are looking for two women, armed with a handgun and driving an SUV, who allegedly released Papini near the interstate that morning.

The motorist who spotted Papini called authorities, who connected the mother of two to her husband by cellphone. "She was very emotional to be released and hear her husband's voice and then a few hours later to be reunited with him," Bosenko told "Good Morning America" on Friday. Bosenko says Papini, the mother of two children, was treated and released at a local hospital for unspecified injuries after her reappearance. The sheriff told reporters hours after Papini's rescue that he was withholding some information he considered sensitive for the sake of the investigation. "Obviously she was emotional and quite upset, but elated to be freed, and so we were able to get some information from her," Bosenko told "Good Morning America." "Then, in the days following this, we will be following up with her."

The Shasta County sheriff's department did not respond to calls and emails from The Associated Press seeking further comment Friday. Sandra Oswald, a 29-year-old community organizer in Redding, had helped run search groups to look for the missing woman. Oswald is a runner, like Papini, and said her sudden vanishing hit close to home. "It was just the biggest blessing, not only for the family but for the community that's been trying to find her," Oswald said of Papini's return. "Now, it's just praying for them and her recovery." — AP

ONE TICKET HAS WINNING NUMBERS IN \$421 MILLION POWERBALL LOTTERY

NEW YORK: A lottery ticket sold in Tennessee had the winning numbers for a \$421 million Powerball jackpot, one of the biggest on record, officials said after Saturday's draw. The winning numbers selected were 17, 19, 21, 37, 44, with the Powerball 16. No one as yet had stepped forward to claim the prize, which grew in size since Sept. 17, the last time anyone matched all six numbers. The jackpot soared from \$403 million to a reported \$420.9 million on Saturday due to a spate of late ticket-buying. The prize is paid out over 30 years, with the option of a lump sum payment, which officials said would add up to about \$254.7 million.

The odds of winning the Powerball jackpot are 1 in 292 million. The largest ever US lottery prize of \$1.6 billion was split between three winning tickets in January. Powerball, one of several games run by the Multi-State Lottery Association, a non-profit owned and operated by member states' lotteries, is played in 44 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. Players can either buy \$2 tickets using their own numbers or have them randomly generated by a computer. The Mega Millions lottery, also offered by the association, produced the country's second-largest-ever prize, worth \$656 million, in a 2012 drawing. For every \$1 worth of Powerball sales, half goes to prizes, 40 percent to state governments for causes such as education, and 10 percent to retailers who sell the tickets and other administrative costs. — Reuters

MURDER-SUICIDE SUSPECTED IN ALASKA HOTEL ROOM

FAIRBANKS, Alaska: Preliminary evidence points to 22-year-old McKay Hutton as the gunman in a murder-suicide that left four dead - including an infant - at an Alaska hotel on Friday, police said in a statement.

A motive is unknown in the deaths of 54-year-old Linda Hutton, 22-year-old Emily McDonald and 2-month-old Teagan Hutton, according to a Fairbanks police statement. A single firearm was recovered in the room, said Fairbanks police public information officer Yumi McCulloch in a statement. The make, model and location are still being withheld, he added. Hotel staff called Fairbanks police and fire departments to a Hampton Inn on Friday afternoon. When officers arrived, a man found crying in a second-floor hallway directed police to a nearby room, where they found the bodies. — AP

TRUMP DISAVOWAL OF WHITE SUPREMACISTS DOESN'T QUIET CONCERNS

MORE ACTS OF HATE CARRIED OUT IN HIS NAME?

ATLANTA: Donald Trump's disavowal this week of white supremacists who have cheered his election as president hasn't quieted concerns about the movement's impact on his White House or whether more acts of hate will be carried out in his name.

Members of the self-declared "alt-right" have exulted over the Nov. 8 results with public cries of "Hail Trump!" and reprises of the Nazi salute. The Ku Klux Klan plans to mark Trump's victory with a parade next month in North Carolina. Civil rights advocates have recoiled, citing an uptick in harassment and incidents of hate crimes affecting blacks, Jews, Muslims, Latinos, gays, lesbians and other minority groups since the vote. The president-elect has drawn repeated criticism for being slow to offer his condemnation of white supremacists. His strongest denunciation of the movement has not come voluntarily, only when asked, and he occasionally trafficked in retweets of racist social media posts during his campaign.

Further, Trump has named Stephen Bannon, the conservative media provocateur who shaped the final months of Trump's campaign, as a White House chief strategist who will work steps from the Oval Office. Bannon's appointment has become as a flashpoint for both sides.

Trump's detractors and his "alt-right" supporters broadly agree on one thing: It may not even matter what Trump himself believes, or how he defines his own ideology, because his campaign rhetoric has emboldened the white identity politics that will help define his administration. "Those groups clearly see something and hear something that causes them to believe he is one who sympathizes with their voice and their view. ... Donald Trump has to take responsibility for

that," said Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, a black Democrat. He was among 169 members of Congress who signed a letter opposing Bannon's White House appointment.

'All riding in the same lane'

White nationalist leader Richard Spencer said he believes Trump, Bannon and the "alt-right" are "all riding in the same lane." Spencer explained that neither Trump nor Bannon is a movement "identitarian," Spencer's preferred term for his racially driven politics. But Spencer said Trump's election validates Spencer's view that America must reject multiculturalism and "political correctness" in favor of its white, Christian European heritage.

Spencer's group, the National Policy Institute, drew headlines for their recent gathering where some attendees mimicked the Nazi salute as they feted Trump. Spencer told The Associated Press the salutes were "ironic exuberance" that "the mainstream media doesn't get." But at the Anti-Defamation League, which tracks incidents of anti-Semitism, Oren Segal said it is part of a disturbing postelection atmosphere tied to Trump's 17-month campaign.

Before, Segal said, it wasn't "surprising" for the ADL to get calls about a swastika, the Nazi insignia, defacing public or private property. "What's surprising now," he said, "are the references to the campaign" in the incidences. "Make American White Again' ... 'Go Trump' with the swastika," he said. "That is unique." Trump was asked about the rash of incidents during a postelection interview on CBS' "60 Minutes." Trump said he was "saddened," and he looked into the camera and said, "Stop it." But Trump has steadfastly defended his hiring of Bannon, who previously led Breitbart News and in July



SARASOTA, Florida: In this Nov 7, 2016 file photo, Donald Trump arrives to speak at a campaign rally. —AP

described it as a "platform for the alt-right" - just a month before he took the job running the Republican nominee's campaign. Jared Taylor, editor of the white supremacist magazine "American Renaissance," said Trump bears some responsibility for his pitched rhetoric, which included describing Mexican immigrants as "rapists" at the outset of his campaign and proposing a ban on all Muslim immigrants. But Taylor said Trump is still unfairly maligned as a white supremacist and racist because he "cares about Americans already here." But white supremacist imagery was a common sight at Trump rallies. Pepe the frog, a cartoon character appropriated by the white supremacist movement on social media, appeared on dozens of T-shirts and signs. The "Make America Great Again" motto was seen by some as a call back to the nation's simpler,

whiter, past. While the businessman's campaign never actively courted votes from the movement, it did recognize the long-term fears that some whites feel about immigration. Taylor insisted, "There's nothing Ku Klux Klan about any of this." But, in fact, Trump drew Klan backing.

Trump's retweets

As part of his prolific Twitter use, he has retweeted white nationalist accounts and a famous quote of Benito Mussolini, the 20th century fascist leader of Italy, saying "It is better to live one day as a lion than 100 years as a sheep." In February, Trump declined to repudiate former Klan leader David Duke during a CNN interview. Afterward, Trump blamed the move on a faulty earpiece, only to come back days later and offer an explicit condemnation. — AP

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\$20K REWARD OFFERED AS SHERIFF VOWS TO CAPTURE JAIL ESCAPEES



SANTA CLARA, California: This Friday, Nov. 25, 2016 photo provided by the Santa Clara County Sheriff shows a window of the Santa Clara County Jail where inmates cut through the bars to escape. —AP

SAN JOSE, California: A Northern California sheriff is promising to capture a pair of men who sawed their way out of a California jail and vanished late Thanksgiving Eve. Santa Clara County Sheriff Laurie Smith told reporters Friday that authorities are using helicopters, dogs and other means as they search night and day for the two men. A \$20,000 reward has been posted for the capture of Rogelio Chavez and Laron Campbell.

Smith said authorities believe the two are still in the area, noting search dogs tracked them to a nearby river before losing their scent. "We will find these two and any person who is harboring or aiding and abetting in their escape we will attempt to prosecute," she said.

The sheriff also told reporters that authorities have received numerous credible tips from people who believe they saw the two, including one tip that came from the area that search dogs had chased them to. She encouraged people to keep reporting such information but warned they should not try to confront the men. "I want to remind the community that these are danger-

ous people," she said. "They are not to be approached. Please just dial 911."

How they escaped

The pair escaped with two other prisoners by cutting through the bars covering a second-story window of the county's main jail and then rappelling to the ground. The others were quickly apprehended. Chavez, 33, and Campbell, 26, are facing possible life sentences if convicted of burglary, extortion, false imprisonment and other charges they were being held on. Chavez had been held at the jail since August and Campbell since February 2015.

Chavez, who is from San Jose, is recognizable by a distinctive face tattoo resembling an inky gash going through his left eye. Campbell, who is from Palo Alto, stands 6-foot-4. Smith said authorities still haven't found the tools used to cut through the bars and don't know how they were obtained. "That's one of our big concerns," she said. "To think that we have inmates in there with those kinds of tools is pretty disheartening."

The escapees were being held in a dormitory designed to hold 20 people. Conditions there are often very loud,

Smith said, making it hard for guards to hear any suspicious noise that might have been made. That section of the jail, built in the 1950s, doesn't have cameras either, which helped facilitate the escape. "From the officers' station you cannot see in," Smith said, adding there are plans to put cameras there in the future. Wednesday's escape was discovered by a deputy patrolling the jail's perimeter. "He kind of thought he saw some movement in the shadows, looked up and saw some bedding in the window," said Sgt. Rich Glennon.

A similar escape was made from a Southern California jail in January by three men authorities later determined had planned it for weeks. They cut through the main Orange County jail's fifth-floor bars with tools smuggled in by an outsider, rappelled to the ground and escaped in a get-away car. They later abducted a cab driver and forced him to drive them to Northern California.

The escape began to unravel when one of the men, fearful the others would kill the driver, fled to Southern California with him and surrendered. The others were captured soon after in San Francisco. —AP

FILLON TIPPED TO WIN RIGHTWING PRIMARY

FAVORITE FOR NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION

PARIS: Millions of French voters were casting ballots yesterday to pick the presidential candidate for the center-right Republicans party, with ex-premier Francois Fillon tipped to win and become favorite for next year's election.

The US-style primary contest, the first for the party, is a battle between socially conservative and economic "radical" Fillon and the more moderate

right allowed to cast a ballot. Whoever wins will face fierce competition from far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen, who is waiting in the wings ready to attack the victor as a symbol of France's ruling class. Fillon, a career politician and prime minister from 2007-12, has warned that France is "on the verge of revolt" and believes his plan to slash 500,000 public sector jobs and business regulations is the tonic

He demanded Friday that "the Islamic religion accept what all the others have accepted in the past... that radicalism and provocation have no place here."

Happy France?

Juppe, meanwhile, has made a pitch for the centre-ground, accusing his opponent of wanting to reform France with "brutality" with an unre-

Fillon's conservative views on abortion and gay marriage, as well as his closeness to Russian President Vladimir Putin who praised Fillon last week as a "very principled person". But it is Fillon who has all the momentum heading into Sunday's run-off vote.

He won the first round of the primary last Sunday with 44 percent and has since picked up endorsements from party heavyweights including former President Nicolas Sarkozy, who was knocked out last weekend in perhaps a final blow to his political career.

Several surveys last week forecast Fillon to emerge as winner on Sunday with around 60 percent, but after a topsy-turvy year that has made fools of analysts and pollsters, no one should take his victory for granted.

Unpredictable election

As well as Le Pen, Sunday's winner will face competition in next year's vote from a Socialist party candidate, probably President Francois Hollande who appears intent on trying to defy his historically low approval ratings. After a troubled five years in power, a survey on Friday showed current Prime Minister Manuel Valls would be a far more popular candidate than Hollande.

Valls did not exclude making a run at the candidacy in the socialist primary, saying "I will make my decision with a clear conscience", in an interview published by weekly Journal du Dimanche.

Hollande's former protegee and economy minister, 38-year-old Emmanuel Macron, is also set to stand for the presidency as a centrist independent, injecting some youth and another element of uncertainty into the race.

Far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melancon is also likely to draw votes away from mainstream parties in a trend seen in elections across Europe following years of austerity and anger over globalization and job losses.

Current polls forecast that Le Pen and the Republicans' candidate will make it through to the final run-off round of the election in May, with the latter set to win by drawing moderate voters from the right and left to block the far-right. —AFP



ROME: Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi addresses supporters during a "Basta un Si" rally calling for a "Yes" vote to the upcoming constitutional reform referendum at the Fuksas' Cloud Convention Centre on November 26, 2016. —AFP

YOUTH FOR CHANGE? NOT IN NAPLES AS ITALY VOTE LOOMS

NAPLES, Italy: As the youngest leader of a G7 economy, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi would seem to have youth and time on his side. But listen to young people in Naples and it can appear that the fresh-faced, 41-year-old has neither.

One week short of a referendum on constitutional reform on which he has staked his future, Renzi's message of modernizing change is largely falling on deaf ears in the capital of Italy's long-neglected south. "How exactly will it change our lives?" snorts Gaia levoli, 20, when asked what she thinks of Renzi's proposal to streamline Italy's parliament by drastically curtailing the powers of the second chamber, the Senate, while shrinking its membership and running costs.

Voting for the first time, levoli insists she will cast her ballot in support of a 'No' campaign whose leaders have grown increasingly confident of emulating Brexit and Donald Trump's triumphs to make it a 2016 hat-trick of rebuffs for the political establishment.

As levoli sees it, constitutional fine-tuning is far from being an obvious priority in a country where high unemployment and declining real incomes have left the younger generation facing worse living standards than those enjoyed by their parents, and prompted tens of thousands of emigrate in recent years. "More job security for the young" would be top of her to do list, says the waitress, currently waiting to learn if her downtown bar will take her on permanently.

A few less senators "isn't really going to change things," she says.

Modernising Italy

Federica Nicosia, 25, considers herself relatively lucky because she has managed to obtain a prized steady job on a permanent contract in a nearby cafeteria. But she says the prevailing mood is one of bitterness with the way things are going, and is not even sure she will bother to vote. "I don't know yet. I will probably make up my mind at the last minute once I have found out something about this reform, which seems too complicated to me and not really designed for us," Renzi's proposals for the Senate are designed to go hand-in-hand with a new electoral reform law designed to ensure elections produce winners with clear majorities.

As he sees it, it is about modernizing Italy, putting an end to endemically weak adminis-

trations and logjams in parliament which have stymied equally overdue reforms in areas ranging from education and the snail-paced judicial system to the fight against corruption and organized crime.

He has urged voters not to "waste this chance to change Italy". But according to Elena Piccolo, a 21-year-old student of Classical Literature at the city's Federico II university, the bullish young leader made a fatal mistake in making the referendum all about him with his suggestions he could walk away from politics if the outcome goes against him. "Renzi was wrong to personalize the ballot, which he did from the beginning by saying he would resign if the No camp won," Piccolo said. "By doing that he simply made himself a focus for all the disenchantment in the country, including that of young people," she added, confirming that she plans to vote No.

One third undecided

Like many young Italians, Piccolo says she has no confidence in the traditional political forces in the country but admits to being attracted by the "different voice" of the Five Star Movement, the populist party that was created by comic Beppe Grillo only seven years ago but has established itself as the biggest rival to Renzi's centre-left Democratic Party. "I think we should give them a chance at running the country," the student says.

Recent opinion polls have given the No side of the argument a clear lead and voters under 34 appear to be the most strongly opposed, although surveys also indicate that over a third of voters are undecided.

And while a victory for the No camp would be expected to trigger Renzi's resignation, most analysts are not forecasting immediate elections with a reshuffled centre-left administration tipped to continue at least until the end of next year. "It seems paradoxical that it is young people that are most strongly opposed to this reform - but not all change is for the better," says Anna Basile, a 22-year-old student. But not everyone in Naples is on the No side. Young electrician Antonio Medugno says he will be backing Renzi with a Yes vote. "Something has to change in this country," he says. "And if this referendum is an opportunity to do that, we have to take it, because who knows when we will get the chance again." —AFP



PARIS: French member of Parliament and candidate for the right-wing primaries ahead of the 2017 presidential elections, Francois Fillon (C) looks on before casting his ballot in a polling station on November 27, 2016. —AFP

Alain Juppe, also a former prime minister who is nine years older at 71.

The French presidential vote is seen as a key test for mainstream political parties after the success of Donald Trump in the United States and the Brexit campaign in Britain, both of which harnessed anti-elite, anti-establishment anger. Polls opened at 8:00 am (0700 GMT), with all French voters who pay two euros (\$2.10) and state they share the values of the centre-

the demoralised country needs. "I'll do everything for entrepreneurs!" he declared at his final rally on Friday night in Paris, promising to help businesses create the jobs needed to lower France's stubbornly high unemployment rate of around 10 percent.

The devout Catholic and motor racing fan has also won support with his hard line on Muslim immigrants, as well as an emphasis on protecting France's identity, language and family values.

He has also sought to highlight

alistic program that has drawn support from the far-right.

As well as promising to shrink the French state, Juppe's signature announcement was a promise to seek a "happy identity" for multicultural France despite worries about the threat of immigration and Islamic extremism. "I am best placed with my program to beat Marine Le Pen," Juppe said on the last day of campaigning on Friday.

He has also sought to highlight

UK WOMEN'S EQUALITY PARTY DEBUTS ON TRUMP 'DISASTER'

MANCHESTER: Britain's newly-formed Women's Equality Party is thrashing out topics such as unequal pay and the "disaster" of Donald Trump beating Hillary Clinton to the White House, at its first ever conference this weekend.

The WEP's debut congress since its formation in March last year is being held in a red-brick former warehouse close to Manchester United Football Club's famous Old Trafford ground in the northwest English city.

In a symbolic move, the three-day conference opened Friday on the United Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. Violence was among the numerous topics discussed in a bid to fashion an identity and a political program for the party, born out of frustration at a perceived lack of consideration given to women's rights in Britain.

Of course, Britain has a female head of state in Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Theresa May is its second woman prime minister after her fellow Conservative predecessor Margaret Thatcher. The first ministers of Scotland and Northern Ireland are also women. But their prominence masks the true picture, argued WEP leader Sophie Walker, a former journalist, underlining that women were outnumbered in parliament's lower House of Commons by two to one.

Furthermore, "two women a week

are killed by their partner or their former partner" in Britain, she added. And women are still paid less than their male counterparts, on average. "We are saying that women rights are human rights and human rights should be at the top of the political agenda," she told AFP. "There have been many many brilliant women's pressure groups that have fought for women's rights for decades," she said, recalling the Suffragette move-

ment of the early 20th century, battling for the right to vote.

However, "the pace of progress has been glacial", she added. "Unfortunately, the only way that you can force a political party to act is to threaten their share of the vote."

Concern over Trump

Meanwhile property tycoon Trump's election to the US presidency

threatens to be "a disaster for women's rights", she added. "It was a vote that said misogyny and racism doesn't matter."

During the election campaign, a 2005 tape surfaced of Trump bragging about kissing, groping and trying to have sex with women, to the horror of WEP members. "I don't know if Clinton wasn't elected because she is a woman," said Lucie de Beauchamp, a French, 24-year-old student, who came to the conference from Glasgow. "What bothers me the most is that Trump was voted in despite his vile comments about women."

Walker contested the London mayoral election in May and came sixth out of 12 candidates, winning two percent of the vote. The party scored 3.5 percent in the parallel London Assembly elections.

Though it has not yet won any seats anywhere, the party has a reach of around 65,000 members and sympathizers. And they are not all women. "The reason I'm here is equality is for everybody and everybody benefits from equality," said Scott Matthewman, 46, after watching Walker's speech. "At the moment, the people who suffer the most from inequality are women," said the Londoner, who works in IT-a sector, to his regret, which is still dominated by men. "So now it's up to men to listen." —AFP



MANCHESTER: Sophie Walker (C), the leader of the Women's Equality Party, poses for a photograph with the two joint founders of the party, Catherine Mayer (R) and Sandi Toksvig (L), before the opening day of her party's first conference at Victoria Warehouse on November 25, 2016. —AFP

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PROBE LAUNCHED AFTER DEATHS IN NEW ZEALAND BOAT TRAGEDY

HAMILTON, New Zealand: An investigation was under way in New Zealand yesterday to determine why a chartered fishing boat capsized, claiming at least seven lives in stormy seas that kept other vessels inshore.

The victims were identified as a group of Pacific Island friends who regularly fished together, and the captain of the vessel. "Investigators are working to establish exactly what happened," police Inspector Mark Fergus told reporters. "We will be assessing whether there is any culpability on the part of anyone involved."

There were 11 people on the boat, The Francie, when it sank at the entrance to Kaipara Harbour, north of Auckland, on Saturday afternoon.

Three survivors were rescued and seven bodies recovered, police said. Aerial and shoreline searches continued for the missing man, who is presumed dead. Fergus said there were life jackets on board The Francie but it was not yet known if they were used.

The 12-meter Francie went down when trying to re-enter the harbor in waves of up to four meters. The coastguard raised the alarm after the vessel

failed to make the expected radio contact when it crossed the sandbar into the harbor.

Spokesman Ray Burge told Fairfax Media that radio logs showed The Francie was the only vessel to cross the treacherous bar on both Friday and Saturday. "What I can tell you is that our volunteers reported four meter swells" in the harbor, Burge said. A former skipper of The Francie, who now operates another charter boat, told the New Zealand Herald conditions were "too rough" to have gone out on Saturday and he cancelled his sailing. "I stayed home, I'm not stupid," the Herald quot-

ed Rod Bridge as saying. The owner of Kaipara Cruises told Radio New Zealand the bar could get very rough and he would not have attempted to cross it on Saturday. "I can tell just from being on the land here it would have been horrible down there, I'd say huge seas, breaking seas, it would have been not a very nice place to be," Terry Somers said.

Police Inspector Willi Fanene said the passengers were all of Pacific Island descent from Tonga, Samoa and the Cook Islands and aged between 31 and 59. It is understood that they chartered the boat about once a month. — AFP



RAWALAKOT, Pakistan: In this photograph taken on November 21, 2016, Pakistani Kashmiri women wait outside the office of social worker Nusrat Yousuf to discuss their social issues with her in the women's market on the outskirts of the town of Rawalakot, in Pakistani-administered Kashmir. — AFP

PAKISTANI MARKET WHERE WOMEN SEEK JUSTICE

A WOMEN-ONLY MARKET

RAWALAKOT, Pakistan: A narrow path winds through Kashmir's Valley of Pearls towards 13 tin-roofed shops hidden in a rickety row, a women-only market that doubles as a space for those seeking help against the violence of Pakistan's patriarchy.

The market, in a small village outside the main city of Rawalakot in a conservative corner

of Pakistani-held Kashmir, began simply as a place run by women for women. There they could buy and sell sewing supplies, visit clothing boutiques or train as beauticians—a welcome outlet for many struggling with the restraints on women in the deeply traditional Muslim area.

Social worker Nusrat Yousuf, who works with victims of domestic violence through the non-

governmental organization (NGO) she heads, helped persuade a generous landlord to provide the land to set up the market in 2011.

Women in the area, she says, are forbidden by their families to work in the main markets in the area's towns and cities. "They become frustrated when they can't get jobs and spend their lives at home," the 48-year-old widow tells AFP.

The market, from which men were at first banned, provided a way around conservative beliefs, making women "economically strong". Yousuf describes it as a place "where they can visit and freely discuss all their issues—such as childbirth, menstruation, cooking, and domestic issues, and we find solutions".

From talking to fighting

That increasingly includes how to help divorced women and victims of domestic violence lodge complaints with police and fight their cases in the courts. Women have battled for their rights for decades in Pakistan. Hundreds are murdered each year—usually by male relatives—in so-called "honor killings" and disfiguring acid attacks are still common. Rights groups and politicians have for years called for tougher laws to tackle perpetrators of violence against women in Pakistan.

"Police were not arresting an influential man who cut off the nose of his wife three months ago," she says, describing just one of the cases she has handled from her office in the market. "She approached us, and our NGO staged a protest against police," Yousuf explains, adding that she then met with police officials and lodged a complaint. "Now the culprit is in police custody. We have hired a female lawyer to fight the case," she says.

Razia Bibi, a 35-year-old mother of two whose husband divorced her five months ago, described how Yousuf is helping her navigate the courts to seek alimony from her children's father. "I am hopeful that the verdict will be in my favor," she says. Yousuf says her NGO, the Pearl Rural Support Program, which brings together women's organizations in seven local villages, is also lobbying the government for a separate desk for women at every police station, where they can speak to a female officer "more comfortably".

Businesswomen

Yousuf says that, originally, men were banned from entering the market. Now they can enter—but only in the company of a woman. The market has made life easier, says customer Ayesha Bibi. "We had to travel to the main markets for such things in the past, and we needed the company of a male family member to go there," she explains.

It is also providing economic opportunity for those such as computer graduate Sara Rasheed, whose family refused her permission to work in any area dominated by men. She convinced them to allow her to open a beauty parlour and a garment shop in the market, she says. "I am earning a good income and saving lots of money for my future and family," she adds proudly.

Khurshid Begum, a 42-year-old widow and mother of four, opened a tailor's shop and teaches sewing to young girls there. "My business has flourished... My income has increased," she says. "We are trying to make more and more women skillful in future," Yousuf says. "I am very happy that I am achieving my goal." — AFP



RAWALAKOT, Pakistan: In this photograph taken on November 21, 2016, Pakistani Kashmiri girls stitching cloth during their class in the women's market on the outskirts of the town of Rawalakot, in Pakistani-administered Kashmir. — AFP

NAJIB COOLS SNAP ELECTION TALK AS MALAYSIA LACKS 'FEEL GOOD FACTOR'

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said yesterday that he will "not necessarily" call a snap election next year, amid talk that he would seek an early vote as splits in the opposition have hobbled efforts to oust him over a long-running financial scandal. The multi-ethnic Southeast Asian country is due to hold an election by August 2018, and a government official has told Reuters that Najib could call for a poll in the second half of 2017.

But in an interview published in The Star daily yesterday, Najib, who has led the country since 2009, suggested he was in no hurry to call for a vote, and remarked on the current lack of a "feel good factor" among Malaysians. "Not necessarily... it can be later," Najib replied when asked whether an election could be called sometime next year. "With today's economic situation, it's going to be a challenge because you don't see the world economy on a rising trend. It's going to be much more the same next year, as the year before," Najib said.

Najib has been battling calls to step down over a scandal involving state fund 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB). The US Justice Department filed lawsuits in July alleging misappropriation of over \$3.5 billion from the fund and that some of those flowed into the accounts of "Malaysian Official 1", whom US and Malaysian officials have identified as Najib.

Denied wrongdoing

Najib has denied wrongdoing and has consolidated power by sacking critics within his ruling party and cracking down on dissent. His fiercest critic is former premier Mahathir Mohamad, who is over 90 years old. Mahathir joined hands with Najib's sacked former deputy Muhyiddin Yassin to form a new party. But the main Islamist party's failure to join efforts by other opposition parties campaigning against Najib, has made it hard for them to whip up more support among ethnic Malays.

Anwar Ibrahim, the most charismatic opposition leader, is serving a five-year sentence on sodomy charges that supporters and many observers believe were politically motivated. Looking ahead, Najib said he expected some recovery in oil and gas revenues to help the national mood. "After that I think that the price of oil will likely be at a slightly higher level, not at the all time high, but something between \$60 to \$70 per barrel, will be a comfortable level for us," he said.

The Malaysian economy has been hit hard by the slide in oil prices. A recent slump in the ringgit currency to a near 14-month low has also raised concerns. In the interview with The Star, Najib also said a free trade deal for the Asia Pacific region was important to create jobs, investment and wealth. — Reuters

MILITANTS WERE PLANNING MYANMAR EMBASSY ATTACK IN JAKARTA

JAKARTA: Indonesian police arrested a third Islamic State-linked militant yesterday accused of plotting to bomb the Myanmar embassy in Jakarta, as anger grows at a violent military crackdown on Rohingya Muslims.

The militants—all from a domestic cell affiliated with the Syria-based jihadist group—had amassed enough explosives to create bombs more powerful than those used in the 2002 Bali bombings, which killed 202 people, police say. "They were helping plan a bomb attack against parliament, the national police headquarters, the embassy of Myanmar and several television stations," national police spokesman Rikwanto said in a text message.

Anger is growing in Indonesia and other parts of Muslim world over what has been described as the "ethnic cleansing" of Rohingya in Myanmar's Rakhine state. Refugees fleeing into Bangladesh say Myanmar's military has been leading a campaign of rape and murder against the homeless ethnic group.

Thousands of Muslims rallied in capitals across Asia on Friday demanding an end to

the violence. In Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country, protesters urged their government to cut diplomatic ties with Yangon.

Indonesia's anti-terror unit Wednesday nabbed suspected bomb maker Rio Priatna Wibowo and seized a significant quantity of high-grade explosives from a laboratory west of the capital Jakarta. His arrest led to the capture of two other suspected militants in different parts of the country, Rikwanto said yesterday.

Bahraini Agam was detained Saturday for allegedly purchasing the explosives while Saiful Bahri was arrested Sunday accused of helping assemble the bombs, said Rikwanto, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

Indonesian police say it remains unclear when exactly the militants planned to carry out their assault, but that they had enough explosives to detonate a blast more than double that which leveled nightclubs in Bali in a fiery inferno. All three were members of Jemaah Ansar Daulah, a local extremist outfit that has sworn allegiance to IS, Rikwanto said. — AFP

TROOPS FIRE ARTILLERY AT ISLAMIC MILITANTS IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

BUTIG, Philippines: Troops yesterday fired artillery at positions held by an Islamic militant faction in the southern Philippines as more soldiers deployed against the group, which staged a deadly bombing in President Rodrigo Duterte's home city.

The army is trying to dislodge members of the Maute group from an abandoned town hall and other positions they have occupied in Butig, a remote, mainly Muslim mountain town on Mindanao island.

Clashes broke out Saturday between the members of Maute, which claims allegiance to the Islamic State group, and the army. Armed forces spokesman Brigadier General Restituto Padilla, citing what he called "intelligence sources", said 11 of the militants had been killed and five wounded.

The bodies of the slain fighters had not yet been recovered, he said, adding that two soldiers were wounded. Reporters in Butig said the military had obtained photographs of the Maute group flying the black IS flag over the occupied building.

They said they themselves were not close enough to verify this. Another military spokesman, Colonel Edgard Arevalo, said this action was expected. "They have long been professing allegiance to the foreign terror group. This is still part

of the Maute group's agenda in courting support and encouraging similar-minded individuals to support ISIS," he said in a statement, referring to another acronym for IS.

The Maute group is one of several armed Islamist organizations in Mindanao which have pledged allegiance to Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria. In past fighting with troops, the group's members were seen carrying black IS flags and bandannas bearing the jihadists' insignia were found in their base, the military said.

Three members of the Maute group were arrested last month, accused of the September bombing that left 15 people dead in Davao, Duterte's home town and Mindanao's largest city. Residents of Butig, which has a population of 17,000, fled after the old town hall was occupied.

Government forces captured a Maute training camp in the town in June after a 10-day gunbattle that left four soldiers and dozens of militants dead, according to an army account. The Mautes, once described by the military as a small-time extortion gang, attacked a remote army outpost in Butig in February, triggering a week of fighting that the military said left six soldiers and 12 militants dead.

The group also beheaded two employees of a local sawmill in April, the military has said. — AFP



WASHINGTON: In this Nov 17, 2016 file photo, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of Calif. speaks at a news conference on Capitol Hill. — AP

PELOSI BROADENS LEADERSHIP TEAM IN FIGHT TO RETAIN POST

WASHINGTON: House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi moved Friday to broaden her leadership team by naming three junior lawmakers to chair the party's messaging arm. Pelosi also named two-term California colleague Eric Swalwell to co-chair the panel responsible for making committee assignments.

The announcement comes days before a leadership election in which Pelosi is being challenged by Ohio Rep. Tim Ryan for the party post she has held since 2002. Pelosi is likely to retain her post, but Friday's moves come amid restiveness in the Democratic caucus, especially among junior members, after the elections. "This team of new and experienced leaders is dedicated to working with their entire caucus to make the future better for the American people," Pelosi said in a statement.

The core of Pelosi's leadership team will remain in place, including 77-year-old Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer of Maryland and South Carolina Rep. Jim Clyburn, 76. Elderly Democrats also remain atop several important committees.

Pelosi has named Illinois' Cheri Bustos, New York's Hakeem Jeffries and Pennsylvania's Matt Cartwright to the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee, noting they would take a role in fighting GOP proposals to cut Medicare. They would replace Rep. Steve Israel, D-N.Y., who is retiring.

Pelosi also is retaining Rep. Ben Ray Lujan, D-N.M., as chairman of the campaign and fundraising arm for House Democrats. Rep. John Yarmouth will replace Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., as the top Democrat on the Budget Committee. — AP

US PLANS FOR SYRIA REFUGEES IN LIMBO

Continued from Page 1

Albert Mbanfu, executive director of the International Center of Kentucky, a refugee resettlement agency in Bowling Green, said he isn't so sure Trump will follow through on his threats. "Campaign rhetoric is completely different from governing, and there are so many things that we might say because we are in the heat of a campaign, and when we get into the practicality of things, we do it differently," Mbanfu said. He added: "I believe we will be fine."

Two Iraqi refugees who arrived in Bowling Green in 2009 were charged two years later with attempting to provide money and weapons to extremists in Iraq. Both are serving prison sentences. The Migration Policy Institute, a nonpartisan think tank in Washington, said that of the 784,000 refugees cleared for resettlement in the US since 9/11, only the two Iraqis in Bowling Green and a third man from Uzbekistan were later arrested and accused of planning acts of violence.

In Rutland, the mayor sees accepting refugees not just

as a humanitarian gesture but as a way to boost the population and inject energy into the city, which had a booming marble-quarrying industry that was built on immigrant labor from Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The local hospital, restaurants, ski resorts, contractors and other employers have expressed interest in hiring the refugees, Louras said.

Rutland's population has dropped by about 700 since the 2010 census, and the city has suffered from the surge in heroin use that is hitting small-town America. Rutland has been using a mixture of law enforcement, treatment and neighborhood revitalization to fight the drug scourge with some success. It has been helping to buy and seize drug houses and either demolish them or renovate them for new owners.

As preparation for the refugees continue, Morgan Denehy, a Rutland County native who majored in Arabic and spent two terms in college living in north Africa, is giving the weekly Arabic lessons. "Even if it's how to say 'hello,' even if you learn one or two phrases to say something to someone," he said, "it can make such a difference." — AP

QATAR 'ILLEGALS' SCRAMBLE TO LEAVE...

Continued from Page 1

Today, all she has to provide is her passport, ID card or entry visa into Qatar and a plane ticket home - or at least enough cash to buy one. Once approved, she will have seven days to leave.

Like all those leaving during the grace period, Kalawani's case is being processed by the Search and Follow Up Department. Located on the southwestern fringes of Doha, the department is surrounded by a dusty car park, a few palm trees and the hum of one of Qatar's busiest highways. But the crowds of people outside, and a few packed suitcases propped up against a wall, hint at something happening inside the unremarkable looking building.

Through a small door marked "Reception", about two dozen people wait patiently to register. From there they will pass to the much grander "Initial Proceedings Hall", a large tent complete with chandeliers and separate queuing spaces for men and women. The tent buzzes with activity. Ministry of Interior officers carry out background checks and take all applicants' fingerprints "for the records". "When we first started (the amnesty), it was like 100 people a day. Now we are coming to the end, it's about 300 each day," one officer says.

There is no official figure for how many "illegals" live among Qatar's 1.8 million migrant workforce. It is though a highly sensitive subject. People approached by AFP prior to visiting the department said they had been told not to speak to the international media. Officials are wary as Qatar has faced constant criticism of its treatment of workers since winning the right to host the 2022 football World Cup. The authorities point to labor reforms includ-

ing the impending end of the sponsorship rules and the Wage Protection System which ensures workers get paid.

Officials say most of those who will take advantage of the amnesty come from Asia, including Bangladesh, Nepal and the Philippines. In the "Exit Hall", where "illegals" receive final approval to leave, is Sajad, from Kerala, India. "I had some problems with my sponsor, salary and security issues," he says about his eight months outside the law. He found out about the amnesty on Facebook - the Ministry of Interior's initial announcement was made on social media and translated into 14 different languages. "I am going to go home, inshallah (God willing). I am going to go straight from here," he says with a smile. He can buy his plane ticket in the Qatar Airways office on site.

Less happy is a nearby Nigerian electrical technician. He declines to give his name but says he was marked as "absconded" after going home on holiday. While back in Africa, a close relative died and he attended the funeral, informed his bosses he would be late back to Doha - but says his company told the authorities he had fled. When he returned to Qatar, he was arrested and placed in prison. "This is bad, very, very bad," he says angrily. "This is an embarrassment, the way they treat people. My company should not have taken any action against me. I cannot cope with this environment anymore."

Ahmed Faram, a 42-year-old Nepalese driver, has spent more than two years outside the law and is resigned to leaving - but wants to return for work. "If it's possible to come back, I will come back, inshallah." Others though have little hope of ending their illegal status. A Pakistani construction worker waiting outside the department says his sponsor stole his passport and is demanding 10,000 riyals to return it. "I cannot go home," he says. — AFP

THOUSANDS FLEE REGIME ADVANCE IN ALEPPO

Continued from Page 1

Syrian state television broadcast images of a crowd of civilians including women and children gathered around green buses that it said had come to pick them up in Masaken Hanano. One woman was shown pushing a stroller and many others carried plastic bags on their heads while bombardment could be heard in the distance. Yasser Al-Youssef, from the rebel group Nureddin Al-Zinki, said that opposition fighters were consolidating their positions in Sakhur. "We are strengthening our positions to defend the city and residents, but the aircraft are destroying everything methodically, area by area," he said, referring to a regime campaign of air strikes on the city.

Sakhur lies on a stretch of just 1.5 km between west Aleppo and Masaken Hanano, now both controlled by the regime. If the regime did manage to take control of Sakhur, east Aleppo would be split in two from north to south, dealing a further blow to the armed opposition. Pro-government media reported that government forces continued their advance yesterday.

The latest regime push comes after days of intense bombardment on the east, which has been pounded with air strikes, shells and barrel bombs. On Saturday, dozens of families fled Sakhur and Haidariya as regime raids and artillery fire killed at least 18 civilians in several districts, the Britain-based Observatory said. That took to 219 the overall number of civilians killed, including 27 children, since the

government launched its latest assault on east Aleppo on November 15. Rebel forces also intensified rocket attacks on western districts overnight, killing at least four civilians and wounding dozens, the Observatory said. Such attacks have killed a total of 27 civilians since the offensive began, among them 11 children. The United Nations has a plan to deliver aid to Aleppo and evacuate the sick and wounded, which rebel factions have approved but which Damascus has not yet agreed. Guarantees are also needed from regime ally Russia.

Once a commercial and industrial hub, Aleppo has seen some of the worst fighting in Syria's five-and-a-half-year war. The conflict broke out in 2011 with the brutal repression of anti-government protests and has since evolved into a complex war involving different factions and foreign powers. Yesterday, the Turkish army said that 22 pro-Ankara Syrian rebels were hit by a chemical gas attack from Islamic State group jihadists in northern Syria.

The Turkish army is backing the Syrian fighters in an unprecedented cross-border operation it says is targeting both IS and the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) militia, which it considers to be a "terrorist" group. The YPG is a key component of a US-backed Arab-Kurdish alliance that is fighting to oust IS from its de facto Syria capital of Raqqa, after the jihadist group overran large parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014. Syria's war has killed more than 300,000 people and displaced more than half the population. — AFP

CUBA MOURNS DEATH OF CASTRO

Continued from Page 1

President Raul Castro said his older brother's remains would be cremated Saturday, the first of nine days of national mourning. There was no official confirmation of whether that had yet happened. Havana was unusually quiet after alcohol sales were restricted and shows and baseball matches suspended. No official events were scheduled yesterday but a series of memorials will begin today, when Cubans are called to converge on Havana's Revolution Square.

"Tomorrow will be great. It will go down in history," Obregon said. Castro's ashes will then go on a four-day island-wide procession before being buried in the southeastern city of Santiago on Dec 4, the government said. Santiago, Cuba's second city, was the scene of Castro's ill-fated first attempt at revolution in 1953 - six years before he succeeded in ousting the US-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista.

Castro ruled Cuba from 1959 with an iron fist until he handed power to his brother Raul in 2006 due to his ailing health. Ordinary Cubans hailed him for providing free health and education. But he cracked down harshly on dissent, jailing and exiling opponents. Even in retirement, Castro wielded influence behind the scenes and regularly penned diatribes against American "imperialism" in the state press.

The news of Castro's death drew strong - and polarized - reactions across the world. In Miami, just 370 km away, crowds of celebrating Cuban-Americans danced in the streets for a second night. Amid the cacophony of car horns, drums, loud music and singing in the city's Little Havana neighborhood, a chant rang out: "Fidel, you tyrant, take your brother too!" Some two million Cubans live in the United States, nearly 70 percent of them in Florida. The vast majority of those live in Miami.

Cuban-American politicians excoriated Castro, with Florida Senator Marco Rubio calling him an "evil, murderous dictator who inflicted misery and suffering on his own people". However, Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed Castro as "the symbol of an era," and China's

Xi Jinping said "Comrade Castro will live forever". There were sharply different US reactions from outgoing President Barack Obama and President-elect Donald Trump.

Obama, who embarked on a historic rapprochement with Cuba in 2014, said the US extended a "hand of friendship" to the Cuban people. But Trump dismissed Castro as "a brutal dictator". The future of the US-Cuban thaw is uncertain under Trump, who has threatened to reverse course if Havana does not allow greater human rights.

Havana was unusually silent as the nine official days of mourning began. "What can I say? Fidel Castro was larger than life," said a tearful Aurora Mendez, 82. She recalled a life in poverty before Castro's revolution in 1959. "Fidel was always first in everything, fighting for the downtrodden and the poor," she said. Indiana Valdes and her husband Maykel Duquesne, who work at a state-run bank, worried about life after Castro. "Fidel was the island's protector, he was everywhere," said Valdes, 43.

Fidel Castro, who came to power as a bearded, cigar-chomping 32-year-old, adopted the slogan "socialism or death" and kept his faith to the end. He survived more than 600 assassination attempts, according to aides, as well as the failed 1961 US-backed Bay of Pigs invasion. His outrage over that botched plot contributed to the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, when the Soviet Union accepted his request to send ballistic missiles to Cuba. The confrontation following Washington's discovery of the weapons pushed the world to the brink of nuclear war.

The USSR bankrolled Castro's regime until 1989, when the Soviet Bloc's collapse sent Cuba's economy into free-fall. But Fidel managed to hang on, ceding power to his brother Raul in July 2006 to recover from intestinal surgery. Raul Castro has begun gradually to liberalize the economy and strengthen ties with former foreign foes. The father of at least eight children, Fidel Castro was last seen in public on his 90th birthday on Aug 13. — AFP

TSUNAMI OF CHANGE DUMPS OLD GUARD...

Continued from Page 1

In the first constituency, prominent losers included former Shiite MPs Faisal Al-Duwaisan, Hussein Al-Qallaf and Yousef Al-Zalzalah. As a result, Shiite strength in this key constituency dropped to four MPs compared to five previously. Former MP Abdulhameed Dashti was prevented from contesting and remains outside the country.

Divisions within parts of the community impacted the Shiite performance and reduced them from nine MPs in the previous house to just six. At the same time, former commerce minister Salah Khorshid and Khaled Al-Shatti, both Shiites, managed to return. Other prominent figures who lost include former MPs Kamel Al-Awadhi, Abdullah Al-Turajji, Ahmad Al-Mulaifi and Ahmad Al-Qudhaibi, all Sunnis. This was more than compensated by impressive wins by former MPs Abdullah Al-Roumi, Adel Al-Damkhi and Osama Al-Shaheen.

The country's three major Bedouin tribes - Awazem, Mutair and Ajman - which normally had between 15 and 18 seats among them, managed only a meager seven seats, their worst performance ever. At the same time, smaller tribes made an unexpectedly strong showing, with almost all small tribes represented. The Enezi tribe, which normally has one or two seats, this time bagged four, and tribes that usually never won seats have at least one each.

Jahra, which makes up almost a third of the fourth tribal constituency, won six of the 10 seats in the district against two to three seats normally. Mutair, the largest tribe in the constituency which usually wins four to five seats, managed only one, because too many Mutairi candidates split the votes. In the fifth constituency, the Awazem and Ajman used to win four seats each out of the available 10. On Saturday, the Awazem only won a single seat, while the Ajman bagged two.

The other main losers were pro-government Salafist Islamists, who along with supporters had about 6-7 seats in the previous house, but were reduced to nothing, with figures like Ahmad Baqer, Omaid Humoud Al-Hamdan and Ahmad Al-Azemi all losing. This is the strongest blow to this group. The opposition-linked Salafists however

returned to the Assembly in an impressive manner, winning five seats along with supporters. The Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM), the Muslim Brotherhood-linked group, gave one of its best performances, winning around six seats, while they only had one supporter in the outgoing Assembly.

Although the opposition and its allies made an impressive showing, winning nearly half of the Assembly seats, a number of key opposition figures lost. These include former MPs Mubarak Al-Waalan, Salem Al-Namlan, Hussein Al-Mutairi and Hamad Al-Matar. The opposition's performance and weight will depend on its unity and whether it can form a formidable force in the Assembly.

The first litmus test will be the battle for the speaker's post. At least two figures - MP Shuaib Al-Muwaiziri from the opposition and veteran MP Abdullah Al-Roumi, also close to the opposition, have already said they will compete with outgoing speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. So Kuwait appears at a crossroads: If the government fails to cooperate with the opposition, it is tipped to witness a repeat of the political crises of the past few years, but this can be avoided if a cooperation formula is reached.

Analyst Dahem Al-Qahtani said the opposition had made an "impressive showing". "Kuwaiti voters have punished those who let them down... and rejected the austerity measures," he told AFP. Qahtani said for the government to prevent a standoff, it should make initiatives for cooperation with the opposition. "If the government makes such initiatives, it may succeed in striking a needed political balance and avoid disputes," he said. "If not, confrontations could start from day one," Qahtani said.

"There are many issues that could spark disputes: Economic measures, revoking of citizenships and others," political analyst Mohammad Al-Ajmi told AFP. Analyst Ibrahim Al-Hadban said the election campaign had shown that some of the decisions taken by the government were not popular among citizens, including raising gasoline prices. "MPs who were in the Assembly did not object to these decisions. So, in my view, they were blamed and punished," Hadban, who teaches political science at Kuwait University, told Reuters.

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Focus

MUCH DEPENDS ON TRUMP TO CHANGE CUBA DYNAMICS

Fidel Castro's death could give his younger brother, President Raul Castro, more space to pursue economic reforms, but change will also depend on whether US President-elect Donald Trump decides to work with or challenge Cuba's communist government. Raul Castro has introduced market-oriented reforms in recent years, but the pace of change has been slowed, many Cubans say, by Fidel Castro's continued influence over an old guard that mistrusts both markets and warming ties with Washington.

Two years ago, the more pragmatic, younger Castro engineered a detente with the old enemy that has seen commercial flights, dollar remittances and American tourists all flow into the cash-strapped Caribbean island. Those advances could easily be reversed if Trump sticks to the harder line he took at the end of his election campaign, when he vowed to close the US embassy, opened last year after half a century, and to renegotiate President Barack Obama's agreement to normalize relations with Cuba.

But Castro's death could also be an opportunity for Trump to keep up an engagement with Cuba that is popular with voters and US businesses. With Fidel Castro now dead at 90 and the 85-year-old Raul Castro promising to retire in early 2018, working with Cuba becomes easier on a symbolic level. Trump had not mentioned Cuba since his election and in his first responses to the overnight news from Cuba, he gave little sense of which way he will go. "Though the tragedies, deaths and pain caused by Fidel Castro cannot be erased, our administration will do all it can to ensure the Cuban people can finally begin their journey toward prosperity and liberty," Trump said in a statement.

Richard Feinberg, a former national security adviser to US President Bill Clinton, said it is now less likely that Trump will reverse Obama's opening to the island. "The passing of Fidel Castro removes the object of hatred, fear and revenge of many Cuban-Americans, bringing to an end what has been one of history's longest grudge matches, opening the gates for the reconciliation of the deeply divided Cuban family," he said. "It is in the US national interest to compete with China and Russia for influence in Cuba and the broader Caribbean, and to see Cuba as a natural ally in counterterrorism," said Feinberg, author of a book on the Cuban economy.

In the short term, Cuba may see from its government an orchestrated outpouring of support for Castro's undiluted idea of communism. The first sign of that was a government campaign launched on Saturday to have millions of Cubans sign a pledge to be faithful to Castro's revolution, "as an expression of the will to perpetuate his ideas and our socialism." Even years after stepping down from the presidency, Castro remained a buttress for the old guard among Cuba's political hierarchy and bureaucracy who are not convinced by Raul Castro's measures leading Cuba slowly toward a socialist economy with a strong role for private businesses.

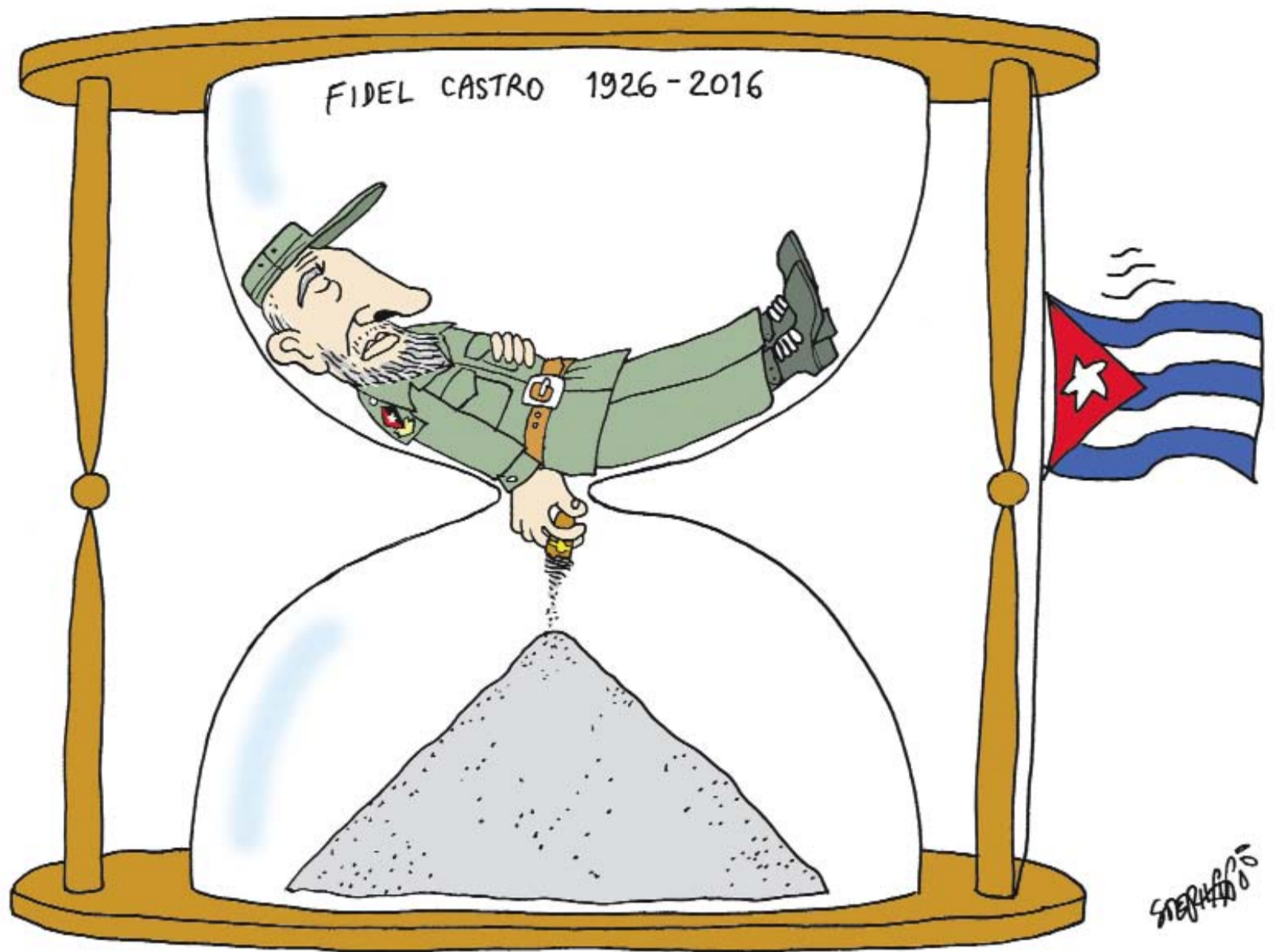
Over time that influence will fade, potentially making it easier for reformers in Raul Castro's government and in the future. "It removes a court of final appeal for the conservatives while giving hope to the usually younger reformers in the party for a more rapid future economic change," said David Jessop, a UK-based business consultant on Caribbean affairs.

Transition

The inner workings of the Cuban power structure have always been tough to read, and not everyone believes Fidel Castro was behind a recent backtracking on market reforms, such as allowing farmers to sell products at market prices or permitting private imports and exports. Mid-level bureaucrats fearful of losing power in the system are often seen as a major reason economic reforms have not been rolled out at the pace announced by Raul Castro in a 2011 policy paper. "He was fully retired, so his passing is not likely to alter the course of Raul's economic modernization program," said William LeoGrande, co-author of a book on US-Cuba relations. "Of course, there are bureaucrats still in office who share Fidel's ideological hostility to markets. They have been and will continue to be an obstacle to change."

Trump may decide that Castro's demise is an opportunity to pressure the communist government into making concessions, such as freeing political dissidents or preferential access for US products and services. "President-elect Trump may simplistically see a chance to restart an adversarial relationship... to prove he is the strong man he said he is," said Paul Hare, a former British ambassador to Cuba. — Reuters

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ANGOLA: CASTRO'S BIG AFRICAN ADVENTURE

Southern African leaders paid glowing tributes to the late revolutionary icon Fidel Castro, but if one country will forever be heavily indebted to his leadership of Cuba, it is Angola. Castro sent tens of thousands of troops when oil-giant Angola became embroiled in a proxy war between the United States and Russia who were vying for Cold War supremacy. Having gained independence from Portuguese colonial rule in 1975, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government faced a civil war against the rival National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

Castro supported the MPLA, which was fighting US- and apartheid-backed UNITA. It culminated in the 1988 Battle of Cuito Cuanavale, in southern Angola, an epic confrontation that sounded the death knell for South Africa's apartheid regime and indirectly led to the independence of Namibia. He was "an extraordinary figure of transcendent historical importance," Angolan leader Jose Eduardo dos Santos said of the late Cuban leader.

In a manner similar to Libya, Cuba provided military and ideological support to national liberation movements across the African continent - around 56,000 of the nearly 400,000 troops Castro sent to Cold War hot spots were in Angola. The highlight of that deployment was Cuito Cuanavale, which "was the watershed moment in southern African liberation," said Namibia's President Hage Geingob. Castro, 14,000 km away in Havana, reportedly gave commands via telephone to his generals on the ground. "Cuba, in Angola is where the Cold War superpowers forces had their showdown," said Paula Roque, a University of Oxford specialist researcher on Angola.

Watershed Moment

While Cuba provided troops, the Soviet Union was responsible for military hardware. By the time the war ended Angola owed Moscow \$5-billion, but nothing to Cuba. Castro believed "revolution was not something you paid for," said Roque. "They were very much punching above their weight, they were a small island that had such a big ambitious project in Angola," she added. Even African countries with lesser links to Cuba, such as South Sudan, had liberation movement leaders trained in Havana.

"Southern Africa freedom is inextricably intertwined with the history of Cuba," said Mac Maharaj, an ANC veteran and fellow inmate of Nelson Mandela, South Africa's late

anti-apartheid icon. After Namibia won independence from South Africa in 1990, shortly after Cuito Cuanavale, apartheid would fall and the African National Congress (ANC), led by the freed Mandela, won its first free elections in 1994. "Fidel became a huge inspiration. There in an unbreakable bond between Cuba and the southern African struggle," said Maharaj.

It was Castro who received the "loudest applause" from the audience at the inauguration of Mandela as president,

according to the late former president's friend in the struggle against apartheid, Ahmed Kathrada. And three decades after the end of Cuba's military involvement, Havana's contribution to Angola and southern Africa is still alive. More than 42 percent of healthcare workers in Angola are Cubans, many of whom decided to stay on after the war. Elsewhere in the region, South African state security, intelligence officers still go for training in Cuba, according to Roque. — AFP

CASTRO'S MILITARY FORAYS IN AFRICA

Back in the 1970s at the height of the Cold War, the small Caribbean nation of Cuba went to war thousands of miles away in the battlefields of Angola and Ethiopia, leaving thousands dead. Cuban leader Fidel Castro, who died late Friday, was convinced that the global stage for the "world revolution" was happening in Africa - and thus Cuba became the first Latin American nation to go to war outside its own continent.

Angola and Ethiopia soon became symbols of the "regional conflicts" of the Cold War, in which Washington and Moscow battled for ideological supremacy and power through proxy wars. But Havana's involvement in the fighting fields far from home was to cost it dear. Some 4,300 Cubans died in African conflicts, half of them in Angola - although experts say that number has been sharply underestimated.

Cuban veterans have often complained of lack of care and benefits on returning home. In Angola, Castro responded to calls for help from the Marxist guerrilla leader Agostinho Neto, who had seized Luanda during a bloody war from its Portuguese colonial masters. Neto had no intention of sharing Angola's independence, with rival guerrilla leaders Holden Roberto, supported by Zaire - now the Democratic Republic of

Congo - or Jonas Savimbi, backed by South Africa. Initially thousands of Cuban troops were deployed along 14,000 km of coastline in Operation Carlota, named in honor of a black slave revolt in Cuba. Moscow also poured logistics and funding into Angola in a war that turned into a hard slog for Cubans, as the heroes of the island's guerrilla-led revolution had to quickly adapt and learn counter-insurgency tactics. In March 1988, the South African army retreated in the face of the Cubans at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in Angola, a setback that sounded the death knell for the apartheid regime and led to the independence of Namibia.

The Angola campaign lasted until 1991, when the last of some 400,000 Cuban soldiers sent to fight "imperialism" in an "international mission" finally returned home. In Feb 1977, General Arnaldo Ochoa was also sent to Ethiopia to support the leader of the Communist military junta, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, against the Ethiopians' former Somali allies, who were forced to surrender the Ogaden plateau to 17,000 Cuban soldiers. Cuban troops were also stationed in Mozambique after its independence. Since the 1960s Cuban troops have served in Algeria, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone and Libya. — AFP

MUCH UNCERTAINTY AHEAD IN US-CUBA TIES

Fidel Castro's passing removes what was long the single greatest psychological barrier to a warmer US-Cuba relationship. But it also adds to the uncertainty ahead with the transition from an Obama to a Trump administration. "A brutal dictator" of a "totalitarian island," declared President-elect Donald Trump, underscoring the historical trauma still separating the countries. A more restrained President Barack Obama, carefully promoting and working to preserve his own attempt to rebuild those ties, said history would assess Castro's impact and that the Cuban people could reflect "with powerful emotions" about how their longtime leader influenced their country.

In death as in life, Castro has divided opinion: A revolutionary who stood up to American aggression or a ruthless dictator whose movement trampled human rights and democratic aspirations. President Raul Castro, Fidel's younger brother, is 85. Their Communist Party shows no signs of opening up greater political space despite agreeing with the United States to re-establish embassies and facilitate greater trade and investment.

As Obama leaves office in January, his decision to engage rather than pressure Havana in the hopes of forging new bonds could quickly unravel. Trump has hardly championed the effort and Republican leaders in Congress fiercely opposed Obama's calls to end the 55-year-old US trade embargo of the island. "We know that this moment fills Cubans - in Cuba and in the United States - with powerful emotions, recalling the countless ways in which Fidel Castro altered the course of individual lives, families and of the Cuban nation," Obama said. He offered neither condemnation nor praise for Castro, who outlasted invasion and assassination plots, and presided over the Cuban missile crisis, which took the world to the

brink of nuclear war. "History will record and judge the enormous impact of this singular figure on the people and world around him," Obama said, adding that US-Cuban relations shouldn't be defined "by our differences but by the many things that we share as neighbors and friends."

Trump didn't pass off his evaluation to the historians. "Today, the world marks the passing of a brutal dictator who oppressed his own people for nearly six decades," Trump said in a statement. "Fidel Castro's legacy is one of firing squads, theft, unimaginable suffering, poverty and the denial of fundamental human rights." Trump expressed hope that Castro's death would

mark a "move away from the horrors" toward a future where Cubans live in freedom. But he said nothing about Obama's project to reset ties, and even hailed the election support he received from veterans of the failed 1961 Bay of Pigs invasion that was backed by the CIA. Such a statement probably will irritate Havana, coming after a two-year period of intense diplomatic discussions with Washington that have done more to improve relations between the countries than anything in the past 5 1/2 decades. Castro's reign began when his improbable insurrection ousted the US-backed strongman Fulgencio Batista in 1959. Only 32 at the time, Castro was the youngest leader in

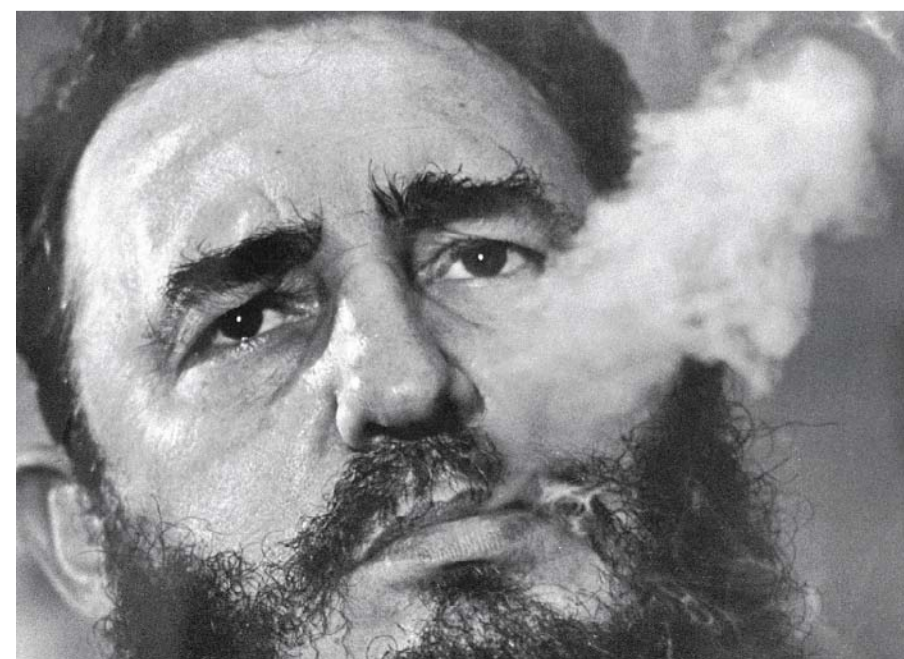
Latin America and inspired revolutionaries as far afield as Africa and Asia.

But Castro's socialist Cuba was anything but an idyll, and the United States quickly became his fiercest opponent. Members of Batista's government went before summary courts, with at least 582 executed by firing squad in the first two years of Castro's rule. Independent newspapers were closed. Gays were herded into camps for "re-education." Tens of thousands were held as political prisoners. Hundreds of thousands of Cubans fled. After the Soviet Union vanished, Cuba's economy collapsed.

Emigres

In Miami and other American cities, a powerful emigre community emerged that was bitterly opposed to any improvement in US relations with Castro's government. For many years, their threat alone was enough to sink any attempts to bridge divides. The dynamic began changing a decade ago, as Castro stepped back from public life. His health ailing, he handed over power to brother Raul in 2008 and a period of limited economic reforms was ushered in. After Cuba's government released American prisoner Alan Gross and agreed to a spy swap with Washington in 2014, Obama and Raul Castro felt they finally had enough trust to embark on a journey of rapprochement.

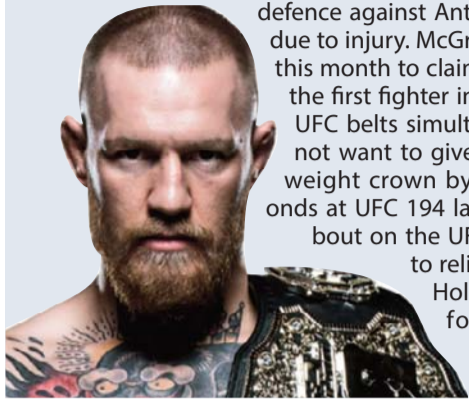
While some US investment has opened up and travel rules for Americans are now greatly eased, the normalization has been limited because Obama could never get Republican lawmakers to end the vast restrictions tied up in the trade embargo. Triumphant alongside Trump in November, some GOP leaders have vowed to reverse Obama's effort. "Now that Fidel Castro is dead, the cruelty and oppression of his regime should die with him," House Speaker Paul Ryan, said in a statement Saturday. — AP



In this March 1985 file photo, Cuba's leader Fidel Castro exhales cigar smoke during an interview at the presidential palace in Havana. — AP

MCGREGOR RELINQUISHES FEATHERWEIGHT BELT

NEW YORK: UFC's first dual division champion Conor McGregor has relinquished his featherweight title with Jose Aldo replacing the Irishman as the category's undisputed champion, officials said on Saturday. The move was triggered by a sequence of events that followed light-heavyweight champion Daniel Cormier's withdrawal from his scheduled title defence against Anthony Johnson at UFC 206 on Dec 10 due to injury. McGregor, who knocked out Eddie Alvarez this month to claim the lightweight crown and become the first fighter in the promotion's history to hold two UFC belts simultaneously, had previously said he did not want to give up either title. He won the featherweight crown by defeating Brazilian Aldo in 13 seconds at UFC 194 last December. In order to keep a title bout on the UFC 206 card, officials asked McGregor to relinquish his featherweight title so Max Holloway and Anthony Pettis could fight for the interim UFC featherweight championship. — Reuters



TOKYO 2020 VENUE OPTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED THIS WEEK

TOKYO: An International Olympic Committee (IOC) official said yesterday that detailed options for moving some Tokyo 2020 venues will be presented this week at a key four-party meeting. Tokyo is eyeing ways to save money after warnings that skyrocketing costs could hit an eye-watering \$30 billion-four times the initial estimate and almost triple that of the 2012 London Olympics. Options include relocating venues for canoeing and rowing as well as volleyball, and scaling back plans for a new swimming venue. "We certainly have made a lot of progress in terms of acquiring more information for each of the options," Christophe Dubi, IOC executive director, told reporters. "But the final decisions will be made by the four political leaders." Dubi spoke after a technical meeting of officials from the IOC, the Tokyo 2020 organising committee, the Tokyo metropolitan government and the central government. The officials were preparing for a top-level gathering on Tuesday at which the detailed options will be presented for consideration. Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike and IOC chief Thomas Bach agreed last month to set up the working group to try to control costs. —AFP

BAYERN EXTEND RIBERY'S CONTRACT

BERLIN: Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich said yesterday they had extended Franck Ribery's contract by another year to June 2018, giving the Frenchman an 11th season with the German giants. "Six German championship titles, five cup triumphs, the Champions League, the FIFA Club World Cup, the UEFA Supercup: Bayern's biggest triumphs in the last few years are closely linked with Franck Ribery," said Bayern chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge in a statement. "He's both a key player and a crowd-pleaser, so we're happy we've extended the contract with Franck by another year." Ribery, 33, joined Bayern from Olympique Marseille in 2007. Since then he has played 333 games for the club, scoring 108 goals and setting up another 164. Ribery said he is "looking forward to many more beautiful moments together with the FC Bayern fans, and I want to play my part in the team's success in the next one and a half years." The winger's new contract will run to June 30, 2018. —AFP



MAJESTIC ALL BLACKS BASK AFTER ANNUS MIRABILIS

PARIS: Even the most cynical of observer would have bet on a chink appearing in the armour after New Zealand lost the likes of talismanic captain Richie McCaw and goal-kicking playmaker par excellence Dan Carter. No such luck as Beauden Barrett stepped into Carter's shoes in a blink and McCaw's absence was mitigated by the presence of Kieran Read and Jerome Kaino, with a number of younger forwards quickly bloodied around the veteran backrowers. After winning a second successive World Cup in October last year, the All Blacks embarked on a winning run of 18 matches, a streak broken when they went down 40-29 to Ireland in Chicago earlier this month. It proved to be their sole loss in the calendar year. Thirteen victories were notched up in total, and the Rugby Championship title claimed with two rounds to play. The final win of the year came on Saturday, a 24-19 victory over a feisty France team that threw everything at New Zealand without really ever threatening to come close to an upset. But a marked improvement from the 62-13 World Cup quarter-final mauling the Tricolors received last year. "It was a great Test match and both teams contributed to the crowd enjoying it. It felt like the old French rugby team. They wanted to run the ball at every opportunity," said All Blacks coach Steve Hansen. "They should be very happy with the progress they're making, but at the same time I'm also very happy with our own team. "We lost over 800 caps and some real legends of the game after the Rugby World Cup. "To come out and do what we've done this year, lose just the one match, play some good rugby at times, to stand up under pressure late in the season when fatigue is a big factor, I'm very proud of our team. "This time of year is a tough time - we went around the world twice in nine weeks, nine time changes in seven games, so the boys did well." While the All Blacks go on a well-

deserved holiday, Hansen had a warning for potential rivals. "We're a young group. There are 20 players who weren't at last year's World Cup. There are 11 new All Blacks and not too many of them have played against northern hemisphere teams," he said. **ALL BLACK WARNING** "Every opportunity we've had we've used the young guys and tried to build them. "We'll go away and enjoy the break and come back a better team for these four weeks." France coach Guy Noves said it was now the moment to digest what the November games had thrown up (a 52-8 win over Samoa followed by a 25-23 loss to Australia and then the defeat by New Zealand) before tackling preparations for the Six Nations. "We lost twice by small margins and we created lots of chances for ourselves, we crossed the field several times with movements which I like," said the former Toulouse coach, praising his team for upping the physical contest. "The New Zealanders were superior to us but I don't think they had too much of a laugh!" Noves added. "It's obvious we can't wait to win, as soon as possible. Our next match is in England (in the Six Nations). "We'll have played the best three nations in the world in three matches. If the result doesn't please us, I feel nevertheless that a team is in the process of being hatched because it's only a few months that we've been working together. "But it's a team which believes in itself, which employs gameplans that suit me even if some were naive against New Zealand. "We're disappointed to have lost but we've just played two of the biggest nations in the world. And our youngsters were not only a match for them but put them in difficulty. "There'll be sunnier days than tonight." — AFP



PARIS: France's centre Wesley Fofana (2nd R) is tackled by New Zealand's winger Julian Savea (C) during the rugby union Test match between France and New Zealand on Saturday, at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, near Paris. — AFP

COETZEE READY FOR SACK AFTER BOKS' HORROR YEAR

CARDIFF: South Africa coach Allister Coetzee accepted the sack was a real possibility after overseeing a woeful 2016 for the Springboks. But he insisted he alone was not responsible for a desperate run of results that culminated with Saturday's 27-13 defeat by Wales in Cardiff. It was South Africa's eighth Test loss of 2016 — the most they had ever suffered in a calendar year—with the season yielding just four wins from 12 full internationals. On the way they suffered their heaviest home defeat of all time, going down 57-15 to world champions New Zealand in Durban in October, while last week's 20-18 reverse in Florence was their first loss to Italy. Although Coetzee was appointed on a four-year contract after succeeding Heyneke Meyer following last year's World Cup, it is hard to see how he will remain in post for much longer. "I don't fear anything, to be honest," said Coetzee. "Collectively, we've got to understand that it's not just one person that can take responsibility for that. "If I'm solely held responsible for that, then I will walk away." Former Springboks coach Nick Mallett said better national coaches than Coetzee had been fired. "I feel dreadfully sorry for Allister because he is a decent guy, but better Springboks coaches than him have been

fired," said Mallett, an influential and respected TV analyst. Meanwhile outgoing Springbok captain Adriaan Strauss promised he would be "ruthless with the truth". The hooker, who had already announced his international retirement, bowed out of Test rugby against Wales. "I'm not here for a 'pity party', I am responsible," Strauss told reporters. "I did everything I could this year," added Strauss, thrust into the leadership after the retirements of Jean de Villiers, Fourie du Preez and Victor Matfield following a 2015 World Cup where the Springboks came third. "I made a lot of mistakes, I knew I would. But in every situation I put the Springboks first and really gave it my all." Minutes after the final whistle, SA Rugby president Mark Alexander announced plans for a wide-ranging review, where the "number one priority is a turnaround strategy for the Springbok team." The 65-times capped Strauss responded by saying: "I will be ruthless with the truth... When I get my opportunity at the right places I will make honest contributions." Coetzee, paying tribute to Strauss, said: "The big thing for me is that there wouldn't have been any other captain currently playing in South Africa that could have handled the pressure he has handled." — AFP



MELBOURNE: Denmark's Soren Kjeldsen, left, and partner Thorbjorn Olesen hold miniature replica's of their trophy after winning the World Cup of Golf at Kingston Heath in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday. — AP

DANISH DELIGHT IN WORLD CUP TRIUMPH

MELBOURNE: Thorbjorn Olesen and Soren Kjeldsen proved the perfect blend of flamboyant youth and wily experience as they completed a shock triumph for Denmark at the World Cup of Golf in Melbourne yesterday. The pair displayed tremendous poise under pressure to hold off their challengers by four strokes to accomplish the biggest feat in Denmark's golfing history in the strokeplay team competition. Denmark turned into the back nine at Kingston Heath with their four-shot overnight lead cut to just one, as a host of countries—including joint runners-up China, France and the US—queued up and waited for a stumble that never materialised. The enigmatic 26-year-old Olesen and his veteran 41-year-old partner Kjeldsen instead played flawless fourball (better ball) golf as they made six birdies on the back nine to finish with a six-under 66 and a 20-under par total of 268 to win by four strokes for their first ever World Cup triumph. When Olesen secured the historic trophy with a birdie on the 18th, he raised his fist to the crowd before embracing his team-mate Kjeldsen, who was playing in his sixth World Cup. "We both came in good form this week and then we've just gelled so well," Kjeldsen said before the pair hoisted the giant World Cup trophy. "We've had an incredible week here in Melbourne, and I think a friendship has been built as well." The US\$8 million event featured two-man teams from 28 countries and represented the biggest victory of each player's career, with world number 50 Kjeldsen and 70th-ranked Olesen both having won four times on the European Tour. "It's been amazing, I love Australia. I have won in Perth also, so I don't know what it is about Australia," Olesen said after seeing off the challenge of joint runners-up France, China and the US. A nine-under round of 63 from Victor Dubuisson and Romain Langasque ensured France their highest finish in a World Cup, while a 65 from Wu Ashun and Li Haotong meant China came in on the same 16-under 272 mark as did the US team of Rickie Fowler and Jimmy Walker who carded a closing 66. It was a big week for the Chinese, particularly 21-year-old Li, who followed up his 23rd place finish in the European Tour's Race to Dubai standings a week ago with a brilliant individual performance yesterday. A key moment came at the difficult par-three 15th hole after Kjeldsen found a bunker and Olesen, under pressure, struck his tee hot gloriously to 10 feet and holed the birdie putt to give Denmark a three-shot cushion with three holes to play. The duo were already boosted by Friday's incredible round of 60 which had placed them four shots better than any other team on the day. Swedish duo Alex Noren and David Lingmerth finished in style with a 10-under par round of 62 that included six birdies on the back nine, to propel them to a fifth-place finish. —AFP

MERCEDES-AMG GT R TAKES ABU DHABI BY STORM

ABU DHABI: As the Formula One season draws to an end with its final race of the year in the Yas Marina Circuit, Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East hosted an exclusive event with the MERCEDES AMG PETRONAS FORMULA ONE reigning champion Lewis Hamilton. The event unleashed Mercedes-AMG's most powerful beast yet: the all-new Mercedes-AMG GT R. Also known as the Beast of the Green Hell, the powerhouse car remained captive in a wooden cage on Zaya Nurai Island, Abu Dhabi until it was released before assembled guests by its true racing master: Lewis Hamilton. "We are delighted to be welcoming Lewis Hamilton back here in the very same venue where we launched the A 45 4MATIC Champions Edition last year. We are here this time with an even bigger force - a powerful beast that was made for the most challenging racetracks of the world. The GT R combines the driving dynamics of our AMG GT3 racing car with the everyday practicality of the AMG GT. It's a true technical marvel that deserves its moniker as the Beast of the Green Hell, and there's no one better than Lewis to release it," commented Lennart Mueller-Teut, Head of Marketing & Communications, Mercedes-Benz Cars Middle East. From the world's most demanding racetrack directly onto the road: Never before has Mercedes-AMG packed so much motorsport technology into a production vehicle. The front-mid-engine concept with transaxle, the twin-turbo V-8 engine rated at 430 kW/585 hp, the extensively modified suspension, the new aerodynamics and the intelligent lightweight construction laid the foundations for an especially dynamic driving experience. Even from afar, the exclusive "AMG green hell magno" special paintwork leaves no doubt as to the sports car's origin, having spent most of its development time in the



Lewis Hamilton

"Green Hell" of the Nurburgring racetrack. Aerodynamics engineers and designers worked intensively to create a flawless balance between the classy serenity of Mercedes and the thrilling, energetic genes of the AMG brand. Form follows function, and function supports form: All elements of the GT R possess an inherent technical benefit and contribute to enhancing driving dynamics. Aerodynamics experts managed to make the designers' ambitious aspirations a reality. Lewis Hamilton is currently in the UAE capital to defend his Grand Prix Championship title for the fourth time. The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix sees 13 teams and 22 drivers compete in the final of the 21 Grand Prix races for both the World Drivers' and Constructors' Championships. Mercedes-AMG currently dominates the Championship, with Nico Rosberg in the lead followed by Lewis Hamilton. "We wish Lewis and Nico all the best in this final race. This has been yet another exciting F1 season, thanks to the strength, skill and passion of the entire Mercedes-AMG team," said Mueller-Teut. The MERCEDES AMG PETRONAS FORMULA ONE team is competing at Abu Dhabi Grand Prix from 25-27 November 2016 in Yas Marina Circuit.



Mercedes-AMG GT R takes Abu Dhabi by storm.

SIGNATURE WIN FOR LOMACHENKO AFTER WALTERS QUILTS

LAS VEGAS: Ukraine's Vasyl Lomachenko retained his super featherweight title with a seven round demolition Saturday of Jamaican Nicholas Walters, whose corner threw in the towel in between rounds telling the referee "no mas." The two-time Olympic gold medal winner Lomachenko registered the biggest victory of his career in dynamic fashion as it was the second defense of his World Boxing Organization title and just his eighth professional fight.

"He just stood there in one place which made it easy for me," Lomachenko said of Walters.

He dominated the previously unbeaten Walters from the opening bell, scoring at will by landing hard punches in the final round of the beatdown at the Cosmopolitan in Las Vegas.

Walters' face showed signs of the punishment, but it appeared that he could have continued if he chose to.

Before the start of the eighth round Walters shot out of his corner and told

referee Tony Weeks, "I don't want to continue." The way the fight ended was reminiscent of the historic 1980 rematch between Panamanian Roberto Duran and American Sugar Ray Leonard, when Duran quit in the eighth round famously telling the referee "no mas" ("no more").

This time it was Walters' Panamanian trainer Celso Chavez uttering the words to Weeks. It was an embarrassing first defeat for Walters, as his decision to quit in the middle of the fight dropped his record to 26-1-1 with 21 knockouts.

Walters blamed his poor performance on taking a year off between fights. "It wasn't about quitting," he said. "In the last round he caught me with good shots. I was hanging on just to survive. It would be stupid to come out after the last round." With his victory Lomachenko - who compiled an amateur record of 396-1 with Olympic gold medals in 2008 and 2012 - is now 7-1 as a professional.

Lomachenko captured his first world title in June of 2014, dominating former US Olympian Gary Russell to win his in

his third pro bout. He matched Saensak Muangsurin's record for fewest fights needed to win a world championship.

The only blemish on his pro record was a loss to Mexico's Orlando Salido in Lomachenko's second professional fight, when the vacant WBO featherweight title on the line. Lomachenko said after the bout that he next wants to fight WBC super featherweight champion Francisco Vargas. Manny Pacquiao has also been mentioned as a possible future opponent. —AFP

TAI OVERPOWERS SINDHU IN HONG KONG OPEN FINAL

HONG KONG: World number three Tai Tzu-ying won the women's singles at the Hong Kong Open yesterday, dashing P.V. Sindhu's hopes of back-to-back superseries titles and avenging her loss to the Olympic silver medalist in Rio.

Sindhu, fresh from capturing the China Open in Fuzhou last week, looked hesitant as she struggled to match the pace of the Taiwanese player, who unleashed a mix of well-timed lobs and drop shots in her 21-15, 21-17 victory.

"It was a good game overall, but it was her day," said Sindhu, who downplayed suggestions her win at Fuzhou had left her drained in Hong Kong. "I'll go back and train hard."

Tai cruised through the first game with relative ease, remaining cool as she controlled the contest's tempo and placement of the shuttlecock. Sindhu rallied in the second but was unable to establish a rhythm as Tai pulled away in the latter half of the game. The 22-year-old was patient during longer rallies, with her opponent struggling to reach shots and keep the shuttlecock in play.

"I like to be easy during my matches. I don't like to put too much pressure on myself," said Tai, who booked her ticket to the final a day earlier by beating Rio gold medalist Carolina Marin.

Tai's triumph in the Hong Kong Open marked her second superseries win of the season after clinching the Indonesia Open title in June. She said her eyes were now firmly set on finishing the season on top at

the tour final in Dubai, a tournament she won in 2014.

On the men's side, Hong Kong's Angus Ng nabbed his first superseries title after battling through a tough three-game scrap with India's Sameer Verma in front of a packed house.

The hometown favourite put on an aggressive display early with repeated whipping overheads and down-the-line winners, chalking up a 21-14 win in the first game. But the 43rd ranked Verma fought back with the relentless hustle of an underdog with nothing to lose in the second, as Ng appeared to falter under the pressure.

The 14th ranked Ng later regained composure in the third as his opponent struggled with unforced errors and lengthy rallies at the net that saw Verma grow visibly frustrated.

"In the third game I just forgot about what happened in the second," Ng told reporters after the 21-14, 10-21, 21-11 win. The Hong Kong native rounded out his maiden superseries victory by uncorking leaping overheads coupled with dropshots, falling to his knees to celebrate after Verma whiffed the match point as thousands roared in approval.

"When I was younger I wished I could play in the finals of the Hong Kong Open in the future," said the 22-year-old Ng.

Verma, a relative unknown in the badminton world stayed humble following his improbable run. "I was a little bit nervous," said Verma. "I didn't expect to reach the finals." —AFP



LOS ANGELES: Chicago Blackhawks right wing Patrick Kane, left, scores a goal past Los Angeles Kings defenseman Derek Forbort, center, and goalie Peter Budaj, right, during the first period of an NHL hockey game Saturday, in Los Angeles. — AP

CARTER'S OT GOAL PUTS KINGS PAST HAWKS 2-1 FOR FIFTH STRAIGHT WIN

LOS ANGELES: Jeff Carter scored his 10th goal of the season as the Los Angeles Kings beat the Chicago Blackhawks 2-1 in overtime on Saturday night for their season-best fifth consecutive victory. Alec Martinez scored and Peter Budaj stopped 18 shots for the Kings, who persevered through a back-and-forth game between Western Conference contenders for their third straight win over Chicago at Staples Center. After Los Angeles failed to score on a power play stretching into overtime, Carter fired a wrist shot past Scott Darling for his fifth goal in five games. Carter also had an early assist, giving him 19 points in 22 games. Patrick Kane scored and Darling stopped 27 shots in his first loss for the Blackhawks, who finished their seven-game circus road trip at 3-3-1.

DUCKS 3, SHARKS 2

Ryan Getzlaf had a goal and an assist as the Ducks snapped a three-game skid. Ryan Garbutt and Rickard Rakell also scored for Anaheim and Jonathon Bernier had 23 saves. Getzlaf gave the Ducks the lead for good at 12:59 of the second. With Justin Braun in the box for elbowing Corey Perry, Getzlaf beat Martin Jones for just his second goal of the season. Logan Couture and Dylan DeMelo scored for San Jose while Jones had 23 saves.

CANADIENS 2, RED WINGS 1

Alex Galchenyuk scored at 3:37 of overtime as the NHL-leading Montreal Canadiens beat the Detroit Red Wings 2-1 on Saturday. Brendan Gallagher also scored to help Montreal improve to 16-4-2. Carey Price stopped 32 shots. Justin Abdelkader scored for Detroit and Petr Mrazek made 22 saves.

PENGUINS 4, DEVILS 3, SO

Sidney Crosby tied it with 14 seconds left in regulation then Kris Letang scored the only goal in a shootout to lift Pittsburgh past New Jersey. Penguins rookie Jake Guentzel picked up his third goal in six days and Tom Kuhnhackl also scored. Evgeni Malkin had three assists while extending his points streak to eight games. Mike Cammalleri scored twice and Vernon Fiddler added a goal for New Jersey.

BLUES 4, WILD 3, SO

Jaden Schwartz had two goals in the third period and David Perron scored the only goal in a shootout as St. Louis beat Minnesota Wild 4-3. Paul Stastny also scored while Jake Allen stopped 28 shots and all four shootout attempts. Minnesota's Charlie Coyle tied it at 3 with 1:08 left in regulation after the Wild pulled goalie Devan Dubnyk for an extra attacker. Erik Haula and Mikko Koivu also scored for the Wild.

CANUCKS 3, AVALANCHE 2, SO

Jacob Markstrom had 32 saves and made three consecutive stops in a shootout to help Vancouver get the win. Markstrom denied Nathan MacKinnon, Mikko Rantanen and Matt Duchene in the tiebreaker, and Markus Granlund converted his shootout opportunity for the Canucks. Loui Eriksson and Alexandre Burrows scored for Vancouver, while Mikhail Grigorenko and Jarome Iginla scored for the Avs.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, CAPITALS 2

Mitch Marner set up a pair of goals and Auston Matthews scored for the second straight game as Toronto beat Washington to end a

NHL Results/Standings

Toronto 4, Washington 2; Ottawa 2, Carolina 1; Montreal 2, Detroit 1 (OT); Florida 2, Columbus 1 (SO); Pittsburgh 4, New Jersey 3 (SO); St. Louis 4, Minnesota 3 (SO); Vancouver 3, Colorado 2 (SO); Los Angeles 2, Chicago 1 (OT); Anaheim 3, San Jose 2.

Western Conference							
Central Division							
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Chicago	14	6	3	66	59	31	
St. Louis	12	7	3	58	60	27	
Minnesota	11	7	3	58	42	25	
Nashville	10	7	3	60	51	23	
Dallas	9	8	5	57	72	23	
Winnipeg	9	12	2	60	70	20	
Colorado	9	10	1	44	58	19	
Pacific Division							
Edmonton	12	8	2	67	57	26	
San Jose	12	9	1	52	48	25	
Los Angeles	12	9	1	57	54	25	
Anaheim	10	8	4	57	54	24	
Calgary	10	12	1	53	70	21	
Vancouver	9	11	2	49	66	20	
Arizona	7	10	2	48	62	16	
Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
Montreal	16	4	2	67	48	34	
Ottawa	13	7	1	49	51	27	
Tampa Bay	13	8	1	69	56	27	
Florida	11	9	1	55	55	23	
Boston	11	10	0	49	49	22	
Toronto	9	8	4	66	69	22	
Detroit	10	10	2	54	58	22	
Buffalo	7	9	5	39	53	19	
Metropolitan Division							
NY Rangers	15	6	1	85	55	31	
Pittsburgh	13	6	3	66	65	29	
Washington	13	6	2	57	48	28	
Columbus	11	5	4	62	47	26	
New Jersey	10	6	5	53	55	25	
Philadelphia	9	10	3	69	75	21	
Carolina	8	8	4	49	54	20	
NY Islanders	6	10	4	49	63	16	

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

three-game losing streak. Marner set up goals from Matt Martin and James van Riemsdyk and Matthews scored his first goal at home in more than a month. Nazem Kadri added his ninth goal of the season. Nicklas Backstrom and Marcus Johansson scored and Braden Holtby made 37 saves for Washington.

PANTHERS 2, BLUE JACKETS 1, SO

Aleksander Barkov scored the shootout winner to lift Florida past Columbus. Barkov backhanded the puck high over Sergei Bobrovsky for the only goal in the tiebreaker. Florida's Roberto

Luongo stopped all three shots he faced. Jaromir Jagr scored his 752nd career goal for the Panthers and Luongo made 36 saves. Brandon Saad scored for the Blue Jackets and Bobrovsky stopped 22 shots.

SENATORS 2, HURRICANES 1

Kyle Turris scored his team-leading 10th goal to help Ottawa beat Carolina. Turris broke a tie with 3:32 left, beating goalie Cam Ward high to the stick side. Dion Phaneuf also scored and Craig Anderson made 32 saves. Sebastian Aho scored for Carolina. —AP



SUNRISE: Jonathan Marchessault #81 of the Florida Panthers is unable to score against goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky #72 of the Columbus Blue Jackets during the overtime period at the BB&T Center on Saturday in Sunrise, Florida. The Panthers defeated the Blue Jackets 2-1 in a shootout. — AFP



HONG KONG: Winner Tai Tzu-ying of Taiwan (R) poses with second-placed P.V. Sindhu of India after the women's singles final at the Hong Kong Open badminton tournament in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP

CANADIAN PAIR WIN NHK TROPHY WITH RECORD

TOKYO: Olympic silver medalists Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir won the NHK Trophy ice dance title yesterday, bagging a world record score with their dazzling performance. The duo skated to the crown with a combined 195.84 points, earning a standing ovation at the Makomanai Ice Arena in the northern Japan city of Sapporo.

The score eclipsed the previous record of 195.52, which brought gold to the American duo of Meryl Davis and Charlie White in the 2014 Sochi Olympics. It was "a huge task" for the Canadian dancers to compete against a field that included the French world champions, Moir said. "They inspired us every day... Luckily we're able to just focus on our job and compete like we trained," he said.

The world record marked a stunning return to competition for a couple who had been off the circuit since taking the silver medal at Sochi two years ago. Virtue said they had missed competing and the structure of training. "We missed pushing ourselves, so we're so pleased to be in this position to make art and create material that we're proud

of. "We just can't wait to get home and build this programme even more," she said.

Virtue said the duo would try to keep up the momentum towards the 2018 Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

Two-time world and European champions Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron of France finished second, with Italian veterans Anna Cappellini and Luca Lanotte coming third. The French ice dancers, we well as Canada's Moir and Virtue, qualify for the Grand Prix Final in Marseille, France, on December 8-11.

In the men's competition, Japan's reigning Olympic champion Yuzuru Hanyu retained his NHK Trophy title on Saturday, moving into high gear as he aims for a record fourth straight triumph in the Grand Prix Final. In the women's competition, World bronze medalist Anna Pogorilaya of Russia won the trophy, while two-time and reigning world champions Meagan Duhamel/Eric Radford of Canada triumphed in the pairs component. The NHK Trophy is the last of six events in the ISU Grand Prix of Figure Skating series. —AFP



SAPPORO: Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir of Canada perform during the ice dance event at the NHK Trophy figure skating competition in Sapporo, northern Japan, yesterday. — AFP

ATLETICO RETURN TO TOP FOUR WITH COMFORTABLE WIN AT OSASUNA

BARCELONA: Atletico Madrid put last week's painful defeat by Real Madrid behind them with a 3-0 win over Osasuna yesterday that included two goals in the space of a minute and allowed them to return to the top four in La Liga.

Defender Diego Godin gave Atletico the lead in the 36th minute with a towering header from a corner and Kevin Gameiro added the second immediately after, latching on to a lofted through ball from Angel Correa and producing a crisp, low finish.

Substitute Yannick Carrasco rounded off the victory in the 90th by robbing Unai Garcia in Osasuna's half and tearing towards goal before powering home the ball. Atletico had what looked to be a clear penalty turned down in the second half when Osasuna's Oier Sanjurjo appeared to block Tiago Mendes's goal-bound shot with his arm, the midfielder also escaping a red card.

Diego Simeone's side capitalised on Villarreal's surprise 2-0 defeat by Alaves earlier on Sunday to provisionally go fourth on 24 points.

Champions Barcelona can leapfrog Sevilla to go second when they visit Real Sociedad, sixth on 22 points, later.

Simeone veered from the more attack-minded tactics he has embraced this season, reverted to employing Koke on the left wing and rewarded Tiago for his excellent display in Wednesday's 2-0 win over PSV Eindhoven by again playing the Portuguese veteran alongside Gabi in the middle.

It made for a more solid if less threatening team and there were signs of the dogged Atletico side that won the La

Liga title in 2014 thanks to an uncompromising defence and making use of set plays.

Godin became the first Atletico defender to score this season when he rose highest to nod in Koke's curled corner and the visiting side were well on course for their first victory in three league games when Gameiro slipped behind the Osasuna backline to meet Correa's ball and score the second.

Carrasco's late goal equalled the scoreline by which Atletico had lost to Real last week while Simeone's side also

recorded a first clean sheet in six league games.

Villarreal felt the strain of returning to action less than 72 hours after their Europa League game away to Zurich and were beaten by two early goals from Alaves to surrender their unbeaten home record. Ibai Gomez pounced on a loose ball at the far post to put the visitors ahead in the eighth minute while Victor Camarasa capitalised on indecisive defending from a long ball by the hosts to knock in the second in the 17th. — Reuters

SIMEONE SCORES TWICE IN GENOA'S WIN OVER JUVENTUS

MILAN: Genoa blew away Serie A leaders Juventus yesterday, scoring three times in an astonishing first half hour on the way to a pulsating 3-1 win.

Giovanni Simeone, the 21-year-old son of Atletico Madrid coach Diego, scored twice in the first 15 minutes before Alex Sandro put through his own goal on a miserable afternoon for the Turin side.

Miralem Pjanic pulled one back for the titleholders when he curled in a free kick in the 82nd minute.

It was the first time since October 2005 that Juventus had conceded three goals in the first half of a Serie A match. Juve's third league defeat of the season meant their lead at the top was cut to four points over AC Milan who won 4-1 at Empoli on Saturday.

Genoa, ninth in the table with 19 points, went ahead with an extraordinary goal after just three minutes. Juventus defender Leonardo Bonucci lost possession and Luca Rigoni sprinted clear.

His shot was parried by Gianluigi Buffon, who also saved the rebound from Lucas Ocampos and then another effort from Simeone before the Argentine forward scored at the fourth attempt.

Ten minutes later, a flowing move found Darko Lazovic on the right and he turned Alex Sandro inside out before delivering a low cross which Simeone met with a diving header to score the second.

Genoa, who had already beaten Milan by the same score at the Luigi Ferraris stadium looked dangerous every time they came forward and scored a third in the 28th minute after more chaos in the Juventus defence.

A corner found Rigone who volleyed against the crossbar and Alex Sandro, in attempting to clear, only succeeded in heading it over the line.

Shortly afterwards, Juventus defender Leonardo Bonucci went off with what appeared to be a hamstring injury. Juve pulled themselves together after halftime and brought on striker Gonzalo Higuain but were only able to make a small dent in Genoa's lead with Pjanic's late goal.

Lazio and Atalanta both won to move onto 28 points, one behind Milan. Sergej Milinkovic-Savic tapped in Dusan Basta's cross from close range to give Lazio a 1-0 win at Palermo and hand the Sicilians a seventh straight defeat.

Andrea Masiello and Jasmin Kurtic scored in each half to give Atalanta a 2-0 win at Bologna, their sixth win in a row. Palermo are now level at the bottom on six points with Crotona who drew 1-1 with Sampdoria. Marco Sau scored with a backheel flick to give Cagliari a 2-1 win over Udinese in the afternoon's other match. Roma were at home to Pescara in the evening needing a win to pull level on points with Milan. — Reuters



LONDON: Arsenal's German midfielder Mesut Ozil (C) leaps for the ball during the English Premier League football match between Arsenal and Bournemouth at the Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

SANCHEZ DOUBLE KEEPS ARSENAL IN TITLE HUNT

	Arsenal	3
	Bournemouth	1

LONDON: Arsenal closed the gap on Premier League leaders Chelsea as Alexis Sanchez braggadocio in a 3-1 win over Bournemouth yesterday. Arsene Wenger's side are within three points of top spot after Chile forward Sanchez struck in each half at the Emirates Stadium to take his goal tally for the season to 10. Sanchez gave Arsenal an early lead before Callum Wilson equalised with a penalty before the interval.

Theo Walcott headed Arsenal back in front just 24 hours after the birth of his second child and Sanchez wrapped up the points.

After drawing three of their last four league games to fall six points behind Chelsea, this was a timely victory for fourth-placed Arsenal, who are now unbeaten in their last 19 matches in all competitions and firmly in the title race.

Even Wenger conceded Arsenal had lost their momentum of late and, in a bid to revitalise his team, the boss made seven changes from the midweek draw against Paris Saint-Germain.

France striker Olivier Giroud dropped to the bench and there was a recall for right-back Mathieu Debuchy, who last played for Arsenal in November 2015. On-loan Arsenal midfielder Jack Wilshere was ineligible to play for Bournemouth against his parent club, but his absence didn't stop the visitors sticking to manager Eddie Howe's philosophy of playing out from the back.

It proved a fatal indulgence in the 12th minute. Bournemouth goalkeeper Adam Federici rolled the ball out to Steve Cook on the left and instead of knocking it long under pressure, the defender tried a back-pass that was intercepted by Sanchez, who gleefully slotted into the empty net.

Wilshere, watching from the stands, buried his head in his coat as injured Arsenal teammate Danny Welbeck turned to indulge in some banter with his friend.

DEBATABLE

Sanchez caused more chaos in the Bournemouth defence moments later with a surging run that ended with contact from Nathan Ake, but no foul was given by referee Mike Jones as Arsenal appealed for a penalty.

If that was frustrating for Arsenal, there was worse to come at the hands of Jones in the 23rd minute when he gave Bournemouth a debatable penalty for Nacho Monreal's collision with Wilson, who picked himself up to slot home his club's first ever goal against the Gunners.

Just before Bournemouth's leveller, Debuchy's return had come to a premature end when he limped off with the latest in a long line of injuries. His departure seemed to destabilise Arsenal's back four and Bournemouth should have taken advantage when Ake headed a free-kick towards the unmarked Adam Smith, who could only direct his header well over.

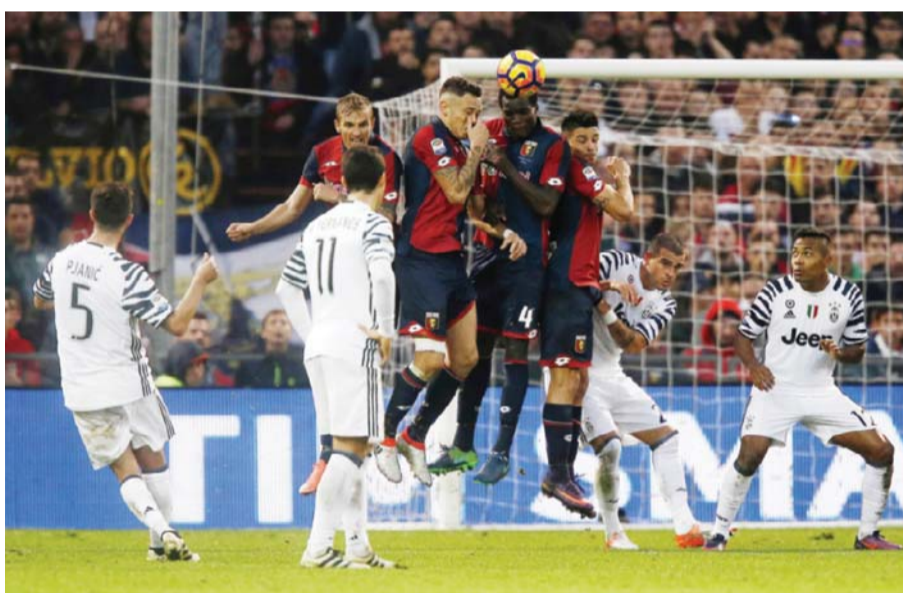
Arsenal are usually the ones bewitching their opponents with slick passing, but they were getting a taste of their own medicine from Bournemouth as another flowing move gave Brad Smith space for a shot that Petr Cech saved at his near post. Sanchez tried to restore order just before half-time with a thunderous shot that

cannonied back off the crossbar.

That warning shot foreshadowed a more dynamic period for Arsenal after half-time and they regained the lead in the 53rd minute.

Mesut Ozil's cross was deflected on by Ake to Monreal, who scooped a cross back towards Walcott and the Arsenal winger nodded home from close-range before marking the birth of son Arlo with a 'rock the baby' celebration.

Having been embroiled in penalty controversy in the first half, Jones made another dubious call when he denied Bournemouth a spot-kick after Monreal blocked Simon Francis's pass with his arm. Bournemouth were finishing strongly and it took a fine save from Cech to deny Benik Afobe, but Sanchez eased Arsenal's nerves in the 90th minute when he tapped in from Giroud's cross. — AFP



GENOA: Juventus' Bosnian midfielder Miralem Pjanic (L) scores during the Italian Serie A football match Genoa vs Juventus yesterday at the Luigi Ferraris stadium in Genoa. — AFP

GOMES OWN GOAL HANDS VICTORY TO STOKE CITY

	Watford	0
	Stoke City	1

LONDON: Stoke City capitalised on an unlucky own goal by Heurelho Gomes to beat Watford 1-0 with an assured display that moved them clear of the Premier League relegation zone.

Watford were disrupted by an early injury to Younes Kaboul, who limped off injured halfway through the first half, and seldom threatened before conceding what turned out to be the decisive goal when Charlie Adam's header from a corner bounced off the post on to the unwitting Gomes and into the net. With Marko Arnautovic impressing, Stoke looked comfortable in midfield despite the absence of suspended Joe Allen and almost increased their lead after the break when Jon Walters just failed to get on the end of the Austrian's weighted

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA DIV	
Las Palmas v Bilbao	22:45
beIN SPORTS 3 HD	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE SERIE A	
Napoli v Calcio	21:00
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	
Inter Milano v Fiorentina	23:00
beIN SPORTS 4 HD	

pass. Watford brought on last season's top scorer Odion Ighalo in search of the equaliser and went close when Daryl Janmaat blazed over the bar. Their frustration was obvious and a bad day was made worse by the late sending off of Miguel Britos for a second bookable offence. — Reuters



LONDON: Stoke City's Charlie Adam heads the ball which becomes their first goal of the game after hitting Watford goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes during the English Premier League soccer match between Watford and Stoke City at Vicarage Road, London, yesterday. — AP

SOUTHAMPTON RUIN KOEMAN'S RETURN

	Southampton	1
	Everton	0

SOUTHAMPTON: A dream debut for Southampton's latest teenage talent Josh Sims ensured a nightmare return to St Mary's for former manager Ronald Koeman whose lacklustre Everton side were beaten 1-0 in the Premier League yesterday. The 19-year-old winger is the latest youngster off the

club's academy production line and took just 43 seconds to justify his starting place, scooping the ball on to Charlie Austin who headed Southampton into the lead from close range. It was a spectacular start for a side who failed to muster a single shot on target against Liverpool the previous week and Sims almost doubled the score with a header when unmarked close to the goal before the break.

Koeman has had to give Everton several halftime gee-ups this season but the visitors were little better in the second half when Austin was denied a second goal by a sprawling save from Maarten Stekelenburg and James Ward-Prowse put one effort wide and had another cleared off the line. — Reuters



SOUTHAMPTON: Southampton's English striker Charlie Austin (C) vies with Everton's English defender Phil Jagielka (up) and Everton's Senegalese midfielder Idrissa Gueye (R) during the English Premier League football match between Southampton and Everton at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, southern England yesterday. — AFP

Sports

Danish delight in
World Cup triumph

16



Canadian pair win
NHK Trophy
with record

16



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S LANKA BEAT ZIMBABWE TO LIFT ONE-DAY TROPHY Page 17

ROSBERG BEATS HAMILTON TO CLINCH WORLD TITLE



ABU DHABI: Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 Team's German driver Nico Rosberg (front) celebrates at the end of the Abu Dhabi Formula One Grand Prix at the Yas Marina circuit yesterday. Nico Rosberg won his maiden Formula One world title by securing second place behind his Mercedes arch-rival Lewis Hamilton in the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. — AFP

ABU DHABI: German driver Nico Rosberg held his nerve to win the Formula One championship for the first time after finishing second at the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix yesterday.

Defending champion Lewis Hamilton won the race from pole position for his 53rd GP win. Rosberg was 12 points ahead of his teammate coming into the title showdown and only needed to finish third, even if Hamilton won.

Hamilton blatantly disobeyed team orders to speed up near the end, thus backing Rosberg toward Sebastian Vettel and Max Verstappen in third and fourth places, respectively. Vettel could not quite pass Rosberg and he finished third ahead of Verstappen. Having finished runner-up for the past two seasons, the 31-year-old Rosberg finally emulates his

father Keke Rosberg, who won the F1 title in 1982. "That was definitely not the most enjoyable race I've had. Can't believe it's over. I'm ecstatic," Rosberg said.

Hamilton, meanwhile, misses out a third straight title and fourth overall, despite ending the year with 10 wins - one more than Rosberg. Hamilton slowed in the later stages of the race to increase the chances of Rosberg being overtaken by other drivers. If Rosberg had been passed by Vettel and Verstappen and had finished fourth, then Hamilton would have held onto his title.

When his team told him over race radio to up the tempo, Hamilton replied bluntly: "I suggest you guys let us race." Even a direct order from Mercedes' executive director Paddy Lowe four laps from the end did not work. Rosberg was clearly getting nervous,

and Vettel was a wheel's length away from him on the final lap. But he kept his cool and his elation was evident as he let out a delighted screech of "Yes! World champion" when he crossed the line.

Then he jumped out of his car and danced around the track before being hugged by his mechanics. Hamilton made a point of coming over to congratulate Rosberg and offered him a hug. Rosberg accepted but it was a brief one, and then he carried on celebrating as he was tossed into the air by his Mercedes crew. He then grabbed Formula One supremo Bernie Ecclestone and lifted him into the air, while Ecclestone congratulated him.

Hamilton stood in the corner sipping water as Vettel - himself a four-time F1 champion - smiled and congratulated Rosberg. — AP

LOURINHO SENT OFF AS MAN UTD SLUMP GOES ON

Man Utd 1

West Ham 1

MANCHESTER: Jose Mourinho was sent to the stands as his Manchester United side drew 1-1 at home to West Ham United in the Premier League yesterday. Zlatan Ibrahimovic cancelled out Diafra Sakho's opening goal to leave United contemplating a run of four straight home league draws for the first time since Dave Sexton's managerial tenure in 1980-81. Mourinho, the current United manager, was dismissed by referee Jonathan Moss in the 27th minute when he kicked a water bottle in anger after midfielder Paul Pogba was cautioned for simulation.

Mourinho, whose side have fallen 11 points below pace-setters Chelsea, now faces Football Association censure for the third time in barely two months. He served a one-match touchline ban and had to pay an

8,000 pounds (\$9,980, 9,420 euros) fine for arguing with referee Mark Clattenburg during the recent home draw with Burnley. Prior to that, he had been fined 50,000 pounds by the FA for claiming Manchester-based referee Anthony Taylor would find it difficult to perform well in a game at Liverpool.

To add to the volatile situation, Mourinho served a one-match stadium suspension last season, when Chelsea manager, after an angry confrontation with Moss during a game at West Ham. On that occasion the Portuguese had to be escorted from the referee's room at half-time by stadium security.

Mourinho's mood at Old Trafford cannot have been helped by the fact his side conceded within two minutes of kick-off.

Jesse Lingard brought down Dimitri Payet, who took the resulting free-kick and planted the ball onto the head of Sakho, who slipped marker Ibrahimovic and converted powerfully from six yards. United's Swedish striker made up for that error on 21 minutes, however, when he headed the hosts level from similar distance after connecting with Pogba's excellent chipped through ball. It was no more than United deserved for the way in which they responded to

going behind so early in the contest.

Juan Mata's shot tested West Ham goalkeeper Darren Randolph and, after claiming the equaliser, Ibrahimovic almost finished off Marcus Rashford's cross at the culmination of a flowing move.

After Mourinho's dismissal, Mata and Ibrahimovic combined for Lingard to rush a shot over the bar and, on 36 minutes, Rashford missed the best chance yet of giving his side the lead. Phil Jones's header put the teenager clean through on goal, but he was denied by Randolph's outstretched leg.

Pogba and Ibrahimovic headed wide, the latter had a shot superbly blocked by Angelo Ogbonna and Randolph again did well to dive and turn away a Lingard shot just before half-time.

West Ham threatened little after taking the lead, until the opening exchanges of the second half when Payet began to exert some influence on proceedings.

First, his corner picked out Sakho, who headed onto the roof of David de Gea's goal.

Then the France international almost scored with an audacious free-kick as he spied De Gea slightly out of position and forced the Spaniard into a brilliant tip over the United crossbar. — AFP



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Matteo Darmian, top, and West Ham's Michail Antonio battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and West Ham United at Old Trafford in Manchester, England, yesterday. — AP

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Al-Jabriyah - Al-Salmiya



Kuwait aims to
 broaden economy
 through industry

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TUNIS: Tunisian prime minister Youssef Chahed (center) attends an event to kick off an investment project ahead of the international conference on investment, Tunis 2020, in Raoued in the district of Ariana, yesterday. Tunisia will host 2,000 business and finance executives from 40 countries this week in hopes of drumming up investment to boost its struggling economy. — AFP

TUNISIA AIMS TO KICK-START ECONOMY

CONFERENCE HOPES TO PERSUADE ATTENDEES COUNTRY IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

TUNIS: Tunisia will host 2,000 business and finance executives from 40 countries this week in hopes of drumming up investment to boost its struggling economy. Six years since the revolution that swept away dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the country's fragile democratic progress has been threatened by economic stagnation that has stirred social unrest. As it tackles high unemployment, low growth and a tourism sector hampered by jihadist attacks, the government hopes to persuade attendees of the "Tunisia 2020" conference tomorrow and Wednesday that the country is open for business.

"Tunisia today needs foreign direct investment, and the conference will be a chance to restart the machine and create jobs," Prime Minister Youssef Chahed told AFP. Chahed's government took office in August in place of an administration heavily criticized for its economic management. That followed a catastrophic 2015 in which attacks claimed by the Islamic State group killed 59 foreign visitors and 13 Tunisians, a devastating blow to a key industry.

Strikes and social unrest have also hit strategic sectors including phosphate mining. Some 15 percent of the workforce was unemployed in the spring of 2016 according to the World Bank - many of them young graduates, who have seen the hope of the Arab Spring dissipate. The government will use this week's conference to call

for bids on 140 projects - including large-scale infrastructure projects - worth some \$32 billion.

Officials say the conference is part of a charm offensive aimed at the private sector. "The idea is to leave the conference with Tunisia as a destination back on the investment map of the Mediterranean," said Fadhel Abdelkefi, Tunisia's investment and international cooperation minister. Abdelkefi will present the country's new investment code that aims to streamline procedures and create a "new business climate" in the country. He said Tunisia is "extremely competitive." "It has already attracted more than 3,500 (foreign) companies that produce in Tunisia, export, use logistics," he said, also highlighting the country's "deep and qualified employment pool."

Chahed said he is determined to tackle Tunisia's smuggling and corruption networks. "They are complex networks to take apart, but we will succeed," he said. French Prime Minister Manuel Valls will attend the conference along with representatives of top international lenders - the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the African Development Bank. The European Union has already announced a doubling of its financial support in 2017 to \$318 million. Chahed said Tunisia deserves support as it struggles to defend "universal values." "The international community should invest in Tunisian democracy," he said. — AFP

WILL MODI'S CASH BAN PLAN BACKFIRE?

SIGNS EMERGE CASH CRUNCH COULD HIT INDIAN ECONOMY HARD

MUMBAI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's shock decision to scrap most of India's currency was hailed by some as a masterstroke against endemic corruption, but signs are emerging that it may hit the economy hard. The sweeping overnight abolition of all high-value notes was supposed to bring billions in so-called "black," or undeclared, money back into the formal system.

But experts are warning the ensuing cash crunch could have a dramatic impact on growth just as the economy was beginning to take flight. India runs largely on cash, but that is still in short supply, nearly three weeks after Modi's shock announcement that 86 percent of its currency would be withdrawn from circulation.

Many ATMs remain empty and banks have been forced to ration cash as they face huge queues. Many people have still not been able to change their old currency.

That has left farmers unable to sow their crops and produce markets all but empty, while small traders like the tea sellers that dot India's streets say business has fallen off a cliff.

On Thursday former prime minister Manmohan Singh, a respected economist, told parliament the surprise decision would shave at least two percentage points off growth and slammed the government for what he said was shoddy implementation.

The rupee shake-up had been "a monumental management failure" and "a case of organized loot and legalized plunder," said Singh, who belongs to the opposition Congress party.

More worrying still for the prime minister, experts including former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers have questioned whether the scheme will even achieve its core aim of cutting tax evasion. "Without new measures to combat corruption, we doubt that this currency reform will have lasting benefits," said Summers in a blog post denouncing the move.

"Corruption will continue albeit with slightly different arrangements."

Popular support

Most experts agree it is too early to say what the impact will be on India's gross domestic product, which expanded 7.1

percent year-on-year in the three months from April-June, outpacing Asian rival China. "The fall-out of the policy is unfolding now. So the next month will be critical to determine what people finally think of this move," political analyst Devdan Chaudhuri said.

But ratings agency Fitch has already said it is revising down its India growth forecast for the fourth quarter of the calendar year, saying it would "almost certainly" be weak. Yes Bank chief economist Shubhada Rao said it would take until the middle of next year for growth to recover.

"We are seeing disruption to growth in the near term, but once liquidity is restored, demand will return. By the second quarter of the next financial year, GDP will return to normalcy," he told AFP.

Experts say the move was a contributing factor to the rupee hitting an all-time low of 68.8625 rupees against the dollar on Thursday, although the main reason was an expected US rate rise next month. The uncertainty has contributed to huge outflows of foreign capital from India, although N S Venkatesh, a currency spe-

cialist at IDBI Bank, told AFP this could reverse in time.

"Foreign investors are waiting to see how the demonetization drive will play out in the near term. If it stabilizes, all the cash could come back to the Indian economy," he said. Modi, who won a landslide election victory in 2014 on a promise to tackle endemic corruption, has strongly defended his move, which still enjoys widespread popular support.

Many poor Indians who have patiently spent hours queuing at banks say they back the decision if it forces the rich to pay their taxes. Only six people earning over 500 million rupees (\$7.3 million) filed tax returns in 2012-2013, even though an estimated 2,100 Indians have a net worth that exceeds \$50 million.

In a speech on Friday the prime minister urged ordinary Indians to stick with him, promising that "the new notes will come" and saying the scheme would root out corruption and tax evasion. "This black trade is eating away our country like termites," he said, comparing tax evasion to the "exploitation of the poor." — AFP



CHENNAI: An Indian woman holds INR 2000 notes as she has her finger marked with indelible ink after exchanging 500 and 1000 banknotes at a bank in Chennai. — AFP

GULF BOURSES EDGE UP, EGYPT'S RALLY REVERSES

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Gulf stock markets edged up in quiet trade yesterday, encouraged by strength in emerging markets generally, but Egypt's index reversed the trend higher it had enjoyed since the float of the Egyptian pound three weeks ago.

The Saudi stock index rose 0.7 percent to 6,844 points, though it stopped short of technical resistance on its April peak of 6,876 points, which it had tested and failed to break on Thursday. Trading volume fell sharply. The petrochemical index underperformed, edging down 0.1 percent, after oil prices fell sharply at the end of last week. Saudi Kayan fell back 1.8 percent. But Alawwal Bank jumped 1.6 percent after changing its name to Alawwal from Saudi Hollandi Bank in a rebranding exercise that coincides with Royal Bank of Scotland seeking a buyer for its 40 percent stake.

Much activity focused on second- and third-tier stocks favoured by local retail speculators, such as Saudi Fisheries, which surged

3.9 percent. In Dubai, the index climbed 0.4 percent on the back of an 11.4 percent leap to 0.93 dirham by Union Properties, the most active stock, in its heaviest trade since June 2015. It rose above this year's previous high of 0.91 dirham, which had been hit in March.

Abu Dhabi's index gained 0.6 percent, aided by a 2.0 percent rise in telecommunications blue chip Etisalat. Qatar's index edged up 0.2 percent on the back of a 2.4 percent surge by Barwa Real Estate. The Egyptian index dropped 1.8 percent to 11,146 points, confirming a bearish engulfing pattern on the daily candlestick chart - a classic technical sign of the reversal of an uptrend.

The pull-back suggested the market's dramatic bounce in response to the Nov. 3 currency float, which boosted the index by as much as 37 percent to last week's peak, might now be ending as investors took profits and focused on Egypt's still-difficult economic environment. — Reuters

KUWAIT AIMS TO BROADEN ECONOMY THROUGH INDUSTRY

OXFORD BUSINESS GROUP SPECIAL REPORT

The government of Kuwait is hoping to diversify the economy through industrial expansion...

New industrial target

In late September Mohammad Al-Ajmi, director-general of the Public Authority for Industry (PAI), announced plans to boost Kuwait's industrial output by 25 percent in the coming years...

Industrial expansion is particularly critical in light of persistently low global oil prices, which are expected to result in a record budget deficit for Kuwait in fiscal year 2016/17...

comprise the bulk of non-oil growth, boosting industrial output - particularly in the high-potential chemicals and plastics segments - will also form a crucial component of economic diversification.

Petrochemicals and plastics to lead expansion

To this end, in August Equate Petrochemical Company - a joint venture between US-based Dow Chemicals and local firms Petrochemical Industries Company, Boubyan Petrochemical Company and Al Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company - announced plans to build a 200,000-sq-metre industrial complex in Al-Shuaiba.

This facility will buttress operations already being carried out by state-owned oil producer Kuwait Petroleum Company (KPC). At present, KPC produces 1.8m tons per annum (tpa) of ethylene, 825,000 tpa of polyethylene, 1.2m tpa of ethylene glycol and 829,000 tpa of paraxylene.

More recently, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced in mid-October that it had approved a request from KPC to establish a new subsidiary, Kuwait Integrated Petrochemical Industries, to carry out refinery and petrochemicals projects. The company, which will launch with \$6bn of capital, is expected to execute major downstream projects including the greenfield Al-Zour refinery complex, with a production capacity of 615,000 barrels per day and an associated petro-



chemicals complex. The Al-Zour refinery is slated for completion in 2019. Overall, the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority forecasts the country's petrochemicals output will increase from 7.57m tpa in 2014 to 10.54m tpa in 2019.

lion (\$198.2 million) or 1.7 percent.

Investment in industrial zones

New industrial projects coming on-line are also expected to support increased production, including the KD160 million (\$528.3 million) Al-Naayem Industrial Zone, launched by the PAI last year for heavy industries.

The new zone joins Kuwait's Sabhan Industrial Zone, which recently benefitted from

a KD12 million (\$39.6 million) investment to establish Block 11 of the industrial zone. More recently, in October the Kuwait Industries Union (KIU) announced plans to release 1056 industrial plots in the KD80 million (\$264.1 million) Al-Shadadiyah Industrial Zone to kick-start development in the area.

The KIU has already approved over 230 applications for new industrial projects - primarily concentrated in West Shuaiba, Amghara and Subhan - in the past two years, Al-Ajmi said at an industry conference in October. West Shuaiba, for example, will be home to 35 new industrial investment projects worth some KD1 billion (\$3.3 billion). This announcement follows on KIU's partnership with the Public Authority for Manpower to roll out a single-window electronic portal to facilitate project registrations.

Note: This Kuwait economic update was produced by Oxford Business Group.

EGYPTIAN IMPORTERS NURSING LOSSES WANT A GOVT BAILOUT

TRADERS LOSE HEAVILY AFTER CURRENCY FLOAT

CAIRO/ABU DHABI: Huddled in the Radisson Blu hotel on the outskirts of Cairo last week, some of Egypt's top wheat traders talked damage control: they had lost more than \$1 billion since the country floated its currency and now they wanted to be bailed out.

The flotation helped the cash-strapped government clinch a \$12 billion IMF loan program it hopes will revive growth hampered by political uncertainty since a 2011 uprising ended Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule. But it also created huge losses for some importers of staples like wheat and medicine who opened credit lines when the pound was pegged but did not settle before the float.

Importers of essential goods like wheat - Egypt is the world's biggest wheat importer - and medicine were on a priority list that gave them access to scarce dollars at the official rate before the float. Alaa Ezz, secretary-general of the Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce, estimates that these critical industries now owe \$6-7 billion as a result of foreign exchange losses.

"The banks in the past few months were not making foreign currency available except for strategic commodities, so this is the majority of the backlog," he said. Pharmaceutical companies said the losses and frozen credit lines had exacerbated a growing shortage of medicines since the sudden plunge in the pound's value rendered

price-controlled medicines unprofitable to make or import.

"This is a very big problem and is being looked at as it does not only involve food products," said a source at the company that organized the crisis meeting of wheat traders.

Representatives of about 50 grains companies that attended last week's meeting at the Radisson said they were drafting a letter to Prime Minister Sherif Ismail, a plea to help cover losses they say are tied to dollar requests they made months before the float but that were held up by banks.

"We have to ask high to see what they will do," said Hesham Soliman, president of Med Star for Trading, which made losses due to the flotation. Soliman did not attend the crisis meeting but is in close contact with traders who did. "This should be solved before Dec. 31 because the banks have to do their balance sheets... they have to decide how they record this on the balance sheet and they are running out of time."

LITTLE SYMPATHY

Facing dwindling foreign reserves and a gaping trade deficit, Egypt has rationed its dollar supplies in the past few years. As banks prioritized essential goods, importers of non-essential items were forced to resort to the black market for dollars, where they paid much higher rates.

Many importers of essentials had executed deals on credit in the months before the float, receiving shipments while dollar transactions were in process at banks at the old official rate. This exposed them to risks in the event of a

currency devaluation. But many were willing to shoulder the risks, believing the central bank would provide dollars to cover import backlogs if it adjusted the exchange rate, just as it did when it last devalued the pound in March.

When the central bank announced it was liberalizing the exchange rate altogether, however, it auctioned just \$100 million at about 14 to the dollar. The multi-billion-dollar injection many expected has yet to materialize. The central bank did not respond to requests for comment.

Banking sources confirmed that some importers were facing major foreign exchange losses but declined to give details. Importers said that some banks had frozen their credit lines until the backlogs were covered, creating a cashflow crisis.

Some traders are still holding out hope of a central bank dollar injection at a rate between the old peg of 8.8 pounds to the dollar and the new market price, to cover some of their losses. Ezz said this was unlikely at a time of sweeping government austerity, including tax increases and subsidy cuts, though his trade group was pushing for banks to unfreeze credit lines. "Politically, it's insensitive to work on anything like that at the moment," he said. "But we need these companies to keep operating so their profits can start to absorb the losses."

Other traders have little sympathy for the predicament of those caught out by the float. "They believed that even if there was a flotation, there would be an auction to cover them at the lower rates. They were very greedy," said one trader who was not exposed. "Let them go bankrupt." — Reuters

PILOTS UNION OPEN TO TALKS WITH LUFTHANSA

FRANKFURT: German pilots union VC said yesterday it was open to further talks with Lufthansa to try to find a compromise over a long-running pay dispute that caused a four-day strike last week, adding the airline needed to present a new offer. "It will become clear in the course of the day how the dispute will continue," a spokesman for VC told Reuters.

Lufthansa said earlier that all flights would start on schedule on Monday, Nov. 28, as there had been no further strike call from VC so far. Lufthansa cancelled nearly 2,800 flights during a four-day strike from Wednesday that affected more than 350,000 passengers, the 14th walkout in a dispute since early 2014 that has cost the carrier hundreds of millions of euros. Germany's biggest airline earlier urged

VC to resume talks. "We have to talk," Bettina Volkens, Lufthansa's board member in charge of human resources, told Bild am Sonntag. "I hope very much that (VC) finally changes its uncompromising stance."

"This cannot be forced via strikes," VC rejected the latest pay offer from Lufthansa late on Friday but lifted the threat of extending its strike beyond Saturday.

It said on Saturday more strikes were possible, and would be announced at least 24 hours in advance. Lufthansa has offered to increase wages by 4.4 percent in two instalments, plus a one-off payment worth 1.8 months' pay. The union wants an average annual pay rise of 3.7 percent for 5,400 pilots over a five-year period backdated to 2012. — Reuters



FRANKFURT: Lufthansa aircraft are parked as Lufthansa pilots went on a strike in Frankfurt, Germany. — AP

News in brief

US dollar at KD 0.305, euro up to KD 0.323

KUWAIT: The exchange rate of the US dollar against the Kuwaiti dinar was stable at KD 0.305 yesterday and the euro went up to KD 0.323, compared to last Thursday. According to the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), the pound sterling rose to KD 0.380, the Swiss Franc to KD 0.300, while the Japanese yen was unchanged at KD 0.002.

UAE bank lending growth edges up in October

ABU DHABI: Annual bank lending growth in the United Arab Emirates edged up to 6.0 percent in October from 5.9 percent in September, central bank data showed. Bank deposits dropped 0.4 percent from the previous month to 1.503 trillion dirhams in October because of a 5.3 percent fall in government deposits. Non-resident deposits edged up 0.3 percent. Percentage changes are Reuters calculations based on official data.

Alawwal Bank capital position comfortable

RIYADH: Saudi's Alawwal Bank, formerly known as Saudi Hollandi Bank until a rebranding this week, has no plans to increase capital in the near future, Managing Director Bernd van Linder told reporters at a press conference yesterday. "We have increased our capital substantially by retaining lots of our earnings over the last couple of years," he said. "We're comfortable with the level of capital that we have today." Other banks in the Gulf have been seeking to up their reserves to cope with new regulations for capital requirements and bolster their positions after years of steady growth. Alawwal launched a new corporate identity yesterday in branches across the country and on its electronic banking channels. Linder told reporters in Riyadh that the bank would place greater emphasis on digital products as part of its new identity.

SPAIN, QATAR EYE \$1 BILLION LATAM FUND SIGNING IN 2017

DUBAI: Spain and Qatar hope to sign early next year an agreement to form a \$1 billion joint investment fund that would help the Gulf state invest in Latin America, the Spanish ambassador was quoted by a Qatari newspaper as saying yesterday.

Negotiations on the agreement have been stalled for almost a year by political uncertainty in Spain, but could resume once a new minister of trade has been appointed, Ignacio Escobar said, according to the interview with Gulf Times. Mariano Rajoy was sworn in for a second term as Spain's prime minister on Oct. 31, giving the country a fully functioning government for the first time in 10 months after two inconclusive elections and fruitless coalition talks.

Officials hope, Escobar said, that the investment deal can be signed during a high-level visit to Qatar by Spanish officials in the "first semester of 2017". — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Table listing Asian currencies: Japanese Yen, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, Sri Lankan Rupees, Nepali Rupees, Singapore Dollar, Hongkong Dollar, Bangladesh Taka, Philippine Peso, Thai Baht.

GCC COUNTRIES

Table listing GCC currencies: Saudi Riyal, Qatari Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, UAE Dirham.

ARAB COUNTRIES

Table listing Arab currencies: Egyptian Pound - Cash, Egyptian Pound - Transfer, Yemen Riyal/for 1000, Tunisian Dinar, Jordanian Dinar, Lebanese Lira/for 1000, Syrian Lira, Morocco Dirham.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Table listing European & American currencies: US Dollar Transfer, Euro, Sterling Pound, Canadian dollar, Turkish lira.

Table listing Swiss Franc, Australian Dollar, US Dollar Buysing.

GOLD

Table listing Gold prices: 20 Gram, 10 Gram, 5 Gram.

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer

Table listing transfer rates for various currencies: US Dollar, Canadian Dolla, Sterling Pound, Euro, Swiss Franc, Bahraini Dinar, UAE Dirhams, Qatari Riyals, Saudi Riyals, Jordanian Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Sri Lankan Rupees, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, Bangladesh Taka, Philippines Peso, Cyprus pound, Japanese Yen, Syrian Pound, Nepalese Rupees, Malaysian Ringgit.

Table listing Chinese Yuan Renminbi, Thai Bhat, Turkish Lira.

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

Table listing buy and sell rates for various currencies: British Pound, Czech Korune, Danish Krone, Euro, Norwegian Krone, Romanian Leu, Slovakia, Swedish Krona, Swiss Franc, Turkish Lira, Australasia, America, Asia.

Table listing Indonesian Rupiah, Japanese Yen, Kenyan Shilling, Korean Won, Malaysian Ringgit, Nepalese Rupee, Pakistan Rupee, Philippine Peso, Sierra Leone, Singapore Dollar, South African Rand, Sri Lankan Rupee, Taiwan, Thai Baht.

Arab

Table listing Arab currencies: Bahraini Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Iranian Riyal, Iraqi Dinar, Jordanian Dinar, Kuwaiti Dinar, Lebanese Pound, Moroccan Dirhams, Nigerian Naira, Omani Riyal, Qatar Riyal, Saudi Riyal, Syrian Pound, Tunisian Dinar, Turkish Lira, UAE Dirhams, Yemeni Riyal.

SURGING HOMEOWNER LOANS IN CHINA RAISE ALARMS

BEIJING: Chinese household debt has risen at an "alarming" pace as property values have soared, analysts say, raising the risk that a real estate downturn could send shockwaves through the world's second largest economy. Loose credit and changing habits have rapidly transformed the country's famously loan-averse consumers into enthusiastic borrowers.

Skyrocketing real estate prices in major Chinese cities in recent years have seen families' wealth surge. But at the same time they have fuelled a historic boom in mortgage lending, as buyers race to get on the property ladder, or invest to profit from the phenomenon.

Now the debt owed by households in the world's second largest economy has surged from 28 percent of GDP to more than 40 percent in the past five years.

"The notion that Chinese people do not like to borrow is clearly outdated," said Chen Long of Gavekal Dragonomics. The

share of household loans to overall lending hit 67.5 percent in the third quarter of 2016, more than twice the share of the year before.

But this surge has raised fears that a sharp drop in property prices would cause many new loans to go bad, causing a domino effect on interest rates, exchange rates and commodity prices that "could turn out to be a global macro event", ANZ analysts said in a recent note. While China's household debt ratio is still lower than advanced countries such as the US (nearly 80 percent of GDP) and Japan (more than 60 percent), it has already exceeded that of emerging markets Brazil and India, and if it keeps growing at its current pace will hit 70 percent of GDP in a few years.

The ruling Communist party has set a target of 6.5 to 7 percent economic growth for 2017, and the country is on track to hit it thanks to a property frenzy

in major cities and a flood of easy credit.

But keeping loans flowing at such a pace creates such "substantial risks" that it could be a "self-defeating strategy", Chen said.

Transferring risks

China's total debt-including housing, financial and government sector debt-hit 168.48 trillion yuan (\$25 trillion) at the end of last year, equivalent to 249 percent of national GDP, according to estimates by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a top government think tank. China is seeking to restructure its economy to make the spending power of its nearly 1.4 billion people a key driver for growth, instead of massive government investment and cheap exports. But the transition is proving painful as growth rates sit at 25-year lows and key indicators continue to come in below par, weighing on the global outlook.

Authorities "desperate" to keep GDP growth steady have turned to consumers as a source of finance because "many of the sources of capital through the banks and corporations are essentially used up", Andrew Collier of Orient Capital Research told AFP. Individuals have turned to pawn shops, peer-to-peer networks and other informal lenders to borrow cash against assets such as cars, art or housing, he said, to spend it on consumption. Banks are also driving the phenomenon, Andrew Polk of Medley Global Advisors told AFP. "Banks have been pushing people to buy houses because they need to make loans," he said, as corporate borrowing has dried up. Combined with a rise in peer-to-peer lending, with over 550 billion yuan borrowed in the third quarter of 2016, the risks of speculative investment have risen, S&P Global Ratings said.

Some analysts argue that China is well positioned to manage these risks, and has

plenty of room to take on more leverage as families still save twice as much as they borrow, with some 58 trillion yuan in household deposits, according to Oxford Economics.

"From an overall perspective, household debt remains in a safe range," Li Feng, assistant director of the Survey and Research Center for China Household Finance in Chengdu, told AFP, adding that risks over the next three to five years were modest. But Collier said that credit-fuelled spending was a "risky game", because when capital flows slow, property prices are likely to collapse, particularly in China's smaller cities. That could lead to defaults among property developers, small banks, and even some townships.

"That will be the beginning of a crisis," he said. "How big this becomes is unclear but it's going to be a difficult time for China." — AFP

THE END OF EASY MONETARY POLICIES

By Hayder Tawfik



It has been a couple of years since the Federal Reserve hinted at the reversal of its easy monetary policy. It did raised rates back in December of last year. Since then the financial markets got used to the idea that the Federal Reserve will not be aggressive in tightening its monetary policy. Investors have priced in a lot less monetary tightening than was signaled by the Federal Reserve for the future path of interest rates.

The surprise election of Donald Trump and the aggressive sell off in global bonds are likely to affect this divergence for two main reasons, and the market reaction will depend on which of the reasons will drive interest rates and the financial markets.

Although the Federal Reserve had ample reasons to tighten monetary policy but failed to do so. Continues economic optimism at the Federal Reserve, at times led to repeat downward revisions in growth projections. Also, the clear diversion in the opinions of some members of the Federal Reserve committee, market participants and the spillovers from international developments and changes in the value of the dollar. Initial market reaction to the result of the US presidential election was the more credible one. Investors have decided with their money rather than listen to the Federal Reserve comments. The difference between what the officials say or forecast and the financial market forecast of future interest rates, could only be tested in the coming months.

Future reflationary

Economic environment mostly based on Donald Trump's new economic policies. This is something the new president has to stick with or he would face violent and markets turbulence soon. Investors are anticipating new economic policies that are going to double US economic growth. Also, the size of budget that is targeted for infrastructure spending and corporate tax cuts.

Donald Trump's softer tune and pro economic growth just after winning the election has boosted market sentiment, leading to a surge in stocks and setting a new record for the Dow Jones

Industrial Index. In response, and even though it is still early days, some analysts already are inclined to revise upward their economic projections for the US, with beneficial spillover effects for the global economy. It all depends on how Donald Trump carries out his new policies. High expectations of investors may not be the only factor leading to the selloff in bonds, rally in stocks and a surge in US dollar. Some of Donald Trump's new economic advisors have already been questioning the effectiveness of prolonged central bank monetary stimulus. These come after some complaints were made during the presidential campaign about the independence of the Federal Reserve and its chairwomen Janet Yellen. The new US administration led by Donald Trump have to be very careful about any comments or move that might destabilize the working of the Federal Reserve and its committee.

Questioning the independence of the Federal Reserve might unsettle investors and could trigger market concern about the whole operation and policies of the US central bank. Such concerns will not benefit the US economy or the global financial market. Much higher bond yields would likely lead to weaker stocks and a global economic slowdown.

NEW OWNERS PLAN TO BRING CLOSED STORE BACK TO LIFE

CONCORD, NH: When it closed earlier this year, there was much mourning over The Brick Store, the New Hampshire landmark that claims to be one of the oldest continuously operating general stores in the country.

No more fudge, penny candy, or smoked meats. No more ambience of a time gone by. But, a few months after they bought the store at auction, Becky and Scott Mitchell are gearing up for its reopening. They've had a few setbacks this fall, but vow to open soon. "To us it was just part of the lineage up here," Becky Mitchell said. "We didn't realize how people would stop all summer long, the tour buses, would come from just all over."

The store in the northern town of Bath, a few miles from the Vermont border, is thought to have been built in the early 1800s and rebuilt after a fire in 1824. It's served as a post office, gathering place and presidential campaign stop. The late singer Patti Page, who lived part of the year in Bath, sold bottles of maple syrup at the store that when you uncapped the bottle, one of her songs played. In 1985, the store was named to the National Register of Historic Places.

But early this year, its longtime owners said on Facebook, "We have nothing left to give... financially, emotionally, or physically." The Mitchells felt they had to save it when it went up for auction in July. — AP

CHINA'S INDUSTRIAL PROFITS GET BOOST FROM HIGH PRICES, SALES

STRUCTURE OF GROWTH NOT IDEAL: NBS OFFICIAL

BEIJING: Profit growth in China's industrial sector picked up in October, aided by stronger sales and higher prices, suggesting further strengthening of the world's second-largest economy, though growth was skewed towards high-polluting heavy industry. There has been widespread speculation in China's commodities futures market this year, with coal prices hitting records in recent weeks, and economists say growth driven by loose money policies won't last.

Indeed, a subdued property market is expected to drag on growth in the first two quarters next year, as policymakers introduce curbs to cool home prices, which could hit profits of companies producing construction materials.

Profits in October rose 9.8 percent to 616.1 billion yuan (\$89.1 billion), the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) said in a statement yesterday. Profits in September rose 7.7 percent.

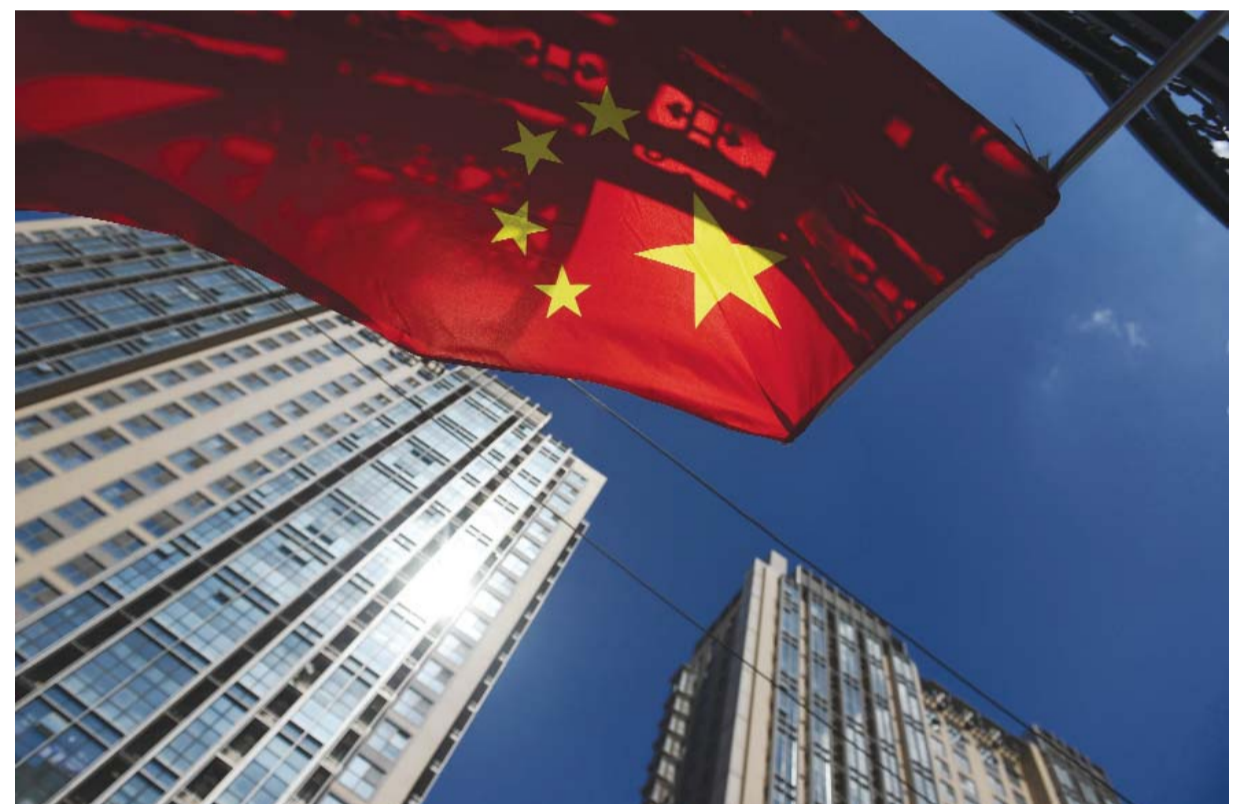
Industrial profits rose 8.6 percent in the first 10 months from the same period a year earlier, similar to an 8.4 percent growth rate in the first nine months of the year. Profits in the coal mining sector rose 112.9 percent for January-October from the same period a year earlier while manufacturing profits rose 13.2 percent. "Although October industrial profit growth picked up, the structure of growth was not ideal," NBS official He Ping said in a statement accompanying the data.

"Profits in traditional raw material production increased relatively quickly...while high technology and equipment manufacturing profit growth slowed," He said.

Profit growth was overly reliant on rising prices, and industrial firms need organic improvement to see better results, He added. Profits for iron and steel production and processing companies rose 310.2 percent in January-October.

China's producer prices jumped more than expected in October as prices of coal and other raw materials surged in the midst of a supply crunch and a pick-up in the economy. The producer price index is also expected to stay positive in coming months.

Chinese industrial firms' liabilities at the end of October



BEIJING: This file photo taken on September 11, 2015 shows a Chinese flag flying near apartment buildings in Beijing. Chinese household debt has risen at an "alarming" pace as property values have soared, analysts say, raising the risk that a real estate downturn could send shockwaves through the world's second largest economy. — AFP

were 5.1 percent higher than at the same point last year and rose slower than assets. The data covers large enterprises with annual revenues of more than 20 million yuan from their main operations.

Profits at state firms rose 0.4 percent in the first 10 months of 2016 from a year earlier, marking the first

increase in year-to-date earnings for state-owned companies this year, the finance ministry said on Friday. China's industrial profits have rebounded strongly this year after falling last year, boosted by a recovery in commodities prices as supply tightened due to a capacity reduction drive and an infrastructure boom. — Reuters

AS NIGERIA'S RECESSION TAKES HOLD, BUHARI'S SHINE WANES

LAGOS: It's not Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's fault that Nigeria's economy is inextricably tied to the global price of oil, now half of its 2014 peak of over \$100 per barrel.

But the president's response to the economic crisis has a growing number of people concerned that he doesn't have what it takes to rescue Nigeria from recession. Warning signs appeared early. Buhari took six months after being elected to name a finance minister, then vowed not to "kill the naira" by devaluing it, against expert advice and with nefarious consequences.

His seemingly lackadaisical attitude to the crashing economy spooked investors who worried that he was ignoring the crisis. Now critics are coming from all sides. In October, Buhari's wife Aisha told the BBC that she may not back him in the next election, suggesting that his government had been hijacked and he had lost control.

Buhari's response, that his wife "belongs to my kitchen", made Nigerians cringe. But what he said next was, politically, more revealing. "It is not easy to satisfy the whole Nigerian opposition parties to participate in the government," Buhari said.

He can say that again. Over the past month, the president has repeatedly been stonewalled by lawmakers who want the executive to be more transparent about his economic policies and plans.

Early this month, Nigeria's Senate rejected Buhari's attempt to take on almost \$30 billion in external borrowing to fund his record budget "due to lack of documents" supporting his request. The Senate also "expressed surprise" at the Nigerian Law Reform Commission, who said it was considering jailing or fining people for holding dollars in an unconventional strategy designed to address a foreign currency shortage in the country. "The measure is disruptive and counterproductive, threatening to undermine many of the reform efforts...intended to boost investor confidence," the Senate said in a press statement Monday.

'Policy paralysis'

"The president is having difficulty making any kind of legislative headway," John Ashbourne, economist at Capital



ADDIS ABABA: This file photo taken on January 29, 2016 shows Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari attending the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council in Addis Ababa. It's not Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's fault that Nigeria's economy is inextricably tied to the global price of oil, now half of its 2014 peak of over \$100 per barrel. — AFP

Economics, told AFP. "It adds to the sense that there's policy paralysis and when the economy is facing a difficult time we need some action. We can't get that if Buhari isn't able to negotiate."

Nigeria's economy contracted in the third quarter by 2.2 percent, with rebels in the oil-producing southern swamplands continuing to attack pipelines and businesses struggling to access foreign exchange. "I think the recession is really starting to hurt," Razia Khan, Africa economist at Standard Chartered Bank, said. "With the current shortage of foreign exchange clearly having a detrimental effect on growth, there is little evidence of any meaningful policy initiative that might be able to resolve this," Khan said.

"There is a concern that there isn't enough momentum, not enough is being done." Ideally, Buhari's expansionary budget would have boosted growth. But the fiscal stimulus isn't materializing. In October, the budget ministry said it was facing unanticipated revenue shortfalls and that it had spent only a little more than half of what was allocated for 2016. Revenue shortfalls will persist as long as militants continue sabotaging the oil and gas infrastructure. Today Nigeria's oil production is 1.6 million barrels per day, down 22 percent from the same

period in 2015, with no signs the sabotage will stop.

'Military ruler'

Talks with the militants in the south have been unsuccessful so far. "President Buhari and his government have so far failed to hold constructive talks with militants," Rhidoy Rashid, oil analyst at Energy Aspects, said in a recent note. "The Nigerian military has also continued its operations in the Delta, inflaming tensions while failing to disrupt the militants."

Investors are rattled and want to see a more concrete plan from Buhari's government, said Manji Cheto, risk analyst at Teneo Intelligence. "I believe he continues to act as if he's a military ruler, there is a perception that has undermined the ability of policy makers within his government to take decisions," Cheto said. "I genuinely think that he's pretty much run out of his goodwill." Some polls are already reflecting that sentiment. Last year around this time, Buhari enjoyed an 80 percent approval rating, reported analysis firm BMI Research. Compare that to this September, when his approval rating hit just 41 percent, with voters bearing the brunt of 18 percent inflation, slow business and sputtering electricity, the result of lower oil and gas output. — AFP

STRIKE OVER FUEL SUBSIDIES QUIETEN KHARTOUM STREETS

KHARTOUM: Several public transport buses stayed off the streets in Khartoum and many shops shut yesterday in a mixed response to opposition calls for a nationwide strike against fuel subsidy cuts.

The call for a three-day strike came after the authorities announced a 30-percent hike in petrol and diesel prices that has led to a sharp rise in the cost of other goods, including medicines. Several key squares and roads in Khartoum and its twin city of Omdurman were deserted yesterday morning, the start of the working week in the Muslim country, as many public transport buses remained off the streets, AFP correspondents reported. Schools in Khartoum were open but many parents preferred to keep their children at home fearing clashes between protesters and security forces. "My son's school urged parents to send only grown up boys. My five-year-old son is at home," Mohamed Khalid, a resident of south Khartoum, told AFP. The capital's squares were free of the normal traffic jams, while many shops, cafes and restaurants in downtown Khartoum and Omdurman remained shut. "There are not many people on the roads, which has impacted my business since I opened in the morning," said Ahmad Saleh, an owner of a grocery shop in downtown Omdurman.

Restaurant owners said they had told their workers to prepare less food, anticipating a drop in business. "There is at least a 40-percent drop in business. My usual customers are other shopkeepers and many of them have closed their shops today," said Ibrahim Mohamed, who runs a restaurant in north Khartoum. "Some of my workers have also not reported to work today." However, state employees turned up for work, transported by government buses to their offices. The authorities are determined to avoid any repetition of 2013 unrest that was sparked by a similar round of fuel subsidy cuts. It was suppressed only by a deadly crackdown by security forces that drew international condemnation. Rights groups say that crackdown left about 200 people dead, while the government put the death toll at less than 100.

Protests over high prices

President Omar Al-Bashir's regime has been forced to progressively reduce fuel subsidies since 2011 when South Sudan seceded and took with it nearly three-quarters of the formerly united country's oil reserves. The latest fuel price hike coupled with a sharp fall in the Sudanese pound has triggered sporadic protests.

Groups of protesters have staged rallies in Khartoum, which have been swiftly dispersed by anti-riot police. "Before the price rise we needed 30 pounds (\$ 4.60) to buy our daily vegetables," said Fatima Ibrahim, a resident of Khartoum. "Now we need 100 to 150 pounds to buy the same amount of items. What will people do?"

Prices of medicines have shot up on the back of a sliding pound on the black market. The Sudanese pound has dropped by more than 60 percent to the dollar in the past six months. — AFP

DOLLAR RALLY CONTINUES, RATE HIKE IN SIGHT

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

KUWAIT: Last week the US dollar continued its rally against most of its counterparts sparked by Presidents-elect Donald Trump's promises to introduce expansionary fiscal policies and boost growth. A Trump administration could spell tax cuts, infrastructure spending and amnesty for corporate dollars held overseas that will fuel inflation and bring extra capital into the United States. Furthermore, expectations of a US rate hike were fueled further by the release of the FOMC's latest meeting minutes. "Some participants noted that recent committee communications were consistent with an increase in the target range for the federal funds rate in the near term or argued that to preserve credibility, such an increase should occur at the next meeting," reported the minutes. While expectations are now at 90 percent for a hike, the question now remains as to whether these higher interest rate expectations have already largely been priced-in to the rallying US dollar, or whether the greenback has significantly further to run. Rising anticipation of a Fed rate hike coupled with expectations of higher bond yields as Trump prepares to take office could drive the dollar even higher in the near-term.

The US dollar index opened the week at 101.420 and continued its rally to a new 13 year high of 102.05 after FOMC minutes and positive economic data were released. The USD retreated slightly on Friday spurred on by investor profit taking. The index closed off the week at 101.49.

The euro remained subdued against the rallying US dollar throughout the week. Even the release of the strongest composite PMI of the year could not help resist the rallying USD. The fact is that the European economy is lagging behind a much more advanced US recovery and the market optimism about the future of the US economy after under Trump have pushed EUR/USD to cycle lows. The EUR/USD opened the week at 1.0580 and closed off the week at 1.0584.

In the UK however, the British pound seems to be resilient and holding of against the US dollar. The GBP was actually able to rally 1.5 percent against the USD at the open of the week moving from 1.2319 to the week's high of 1.2512. The rally comes on the back of hopes of a soft British exit from the EU after Prime Minister Theresa May said she was open to a transitional deal to avoid cliff edge Brexit. The GBP/USD closed off the week at 1.2474.

In Japan, USD/JPY has extended its rally to the highest level since March reaching 113.90 before stabilizing around 113 later in the session. Risk appetite has generally remained supportive with equities holding on to recent gains and US Treasury yields ris-

ing. The USD/JPY closed off the week at 113.06.

On the commodities front, focus is firmly fixated on next week's OPEC meeting in Vienna. Renewed optimism comes from the latest comments made by oil ministers of Saudi Arabia and its allied Gulf states. The Saudi Arabian backed proposal to set a production ceiling of 32.5 million barrels a day would remove almost 2 percent of the world's oil supply. Furthermore, OPEC could face a challenge next year as Donald Trump's goal of boosting US energy output by easing regulations could threaten to increase the global oversupply of crude in 2017. In the Beginning of the week, Brent crude oil

came on the heels of data last week showing a surge in housing starts. It also added to strong reports on retail sales and the labor market as well as improving manufacturing surveys suggesting that the economy continued to gain speed early in the fourth quarter. Sales increased to 5.60 million from 5.49 million in September.

New Home Sales Down

New-home sales slid in October but downward revisions to sales data from prior months continued to point to a market moving forward very slowly. Sales ran at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 563,000, the Commerce Department said Wednesday,

climbed in October for the fourth straight month and sales also advanced as corporate investment began to increase. New orders for manufactured durable goods in October increased \$11.0 billion or 4.8 percent to \$239.4 billion. Excluding transportation, new orders increased 1.0 percent and excluding defense, new orders increased 5.2 percent. The jump in total bookings in October was the biggest in a year and included more orders for fabricated metals, machinery, computers and electrical equipment.

President Draghi testifies

European Central Bank President testified to the European Parliament Monday about the ECB's Annual Report. Draghi stated that recovery continues to proceed at a moderate, but steady, pace and has shown remarkable resilience to adverse developments and uncertainties emanating from the global environment. "In fact, euro area unemployment has been steadily declining domestic demand has also strengthened and real GDP growth has recorded positive figures for 14 consecutive quarters," he continued. Since the beginning of the year headline inflation has gradually picked up, moving from the negative rate of -0.2 percent in February to 0.5 percent in October. He later attributed the ECB's QE program as the key factor behind these positive developments.

Eurozone PMI signals strong growth

Economic growth in the Eurozone accelerated at the fastest pace this year in November as rising order books prompted firms to take on extra staff improving employment and average prices inched higher as higher input costs were passed on to the consumer. The report indicated that inflationary pressures are at their highest for over five years. The manufacturing and services sector both expanded this month with the services sector seeing the best expansion for 11 months. The preliminary 'flash' Markit Eurozone Manufacturing PMI rose to 54.1, up from 53.3 in October while the Services PMI rose to 54.1 from 52.8.

German sentiment still optimistic

German business morale was unchanged in November a survey showed on Thursday, suggesting company executives are still optimistic about the growth prospects for Europe's largest economy despite growing political uncertainties. The Munich-based Ifo economic institute said its business climate index, based on a monthly survey of some 7,000 firms, was unchanged at 110.4 in November after a slight downward revision reported in October. Ifo chief Clemens Fuest said "Confidence in the German economy

continues to be good" in the current business situation and that the economy seems to be "unfazed by the election of Donald Trump as US president."

UK public sector net borrowing decrease

In October 2016, the public sector spent more money than it received in taxes and other income. This meant it had to borrow £4.8 billion to balance the books. Public sector net borrowing (excluding public sector banks) decreased by £1.6 billion to £4.8 billion in October 2016, compared with October 2015. Of this £4.8 billion, £2.0 billion related to the cost of the "day-to-day" activities of the public sector (the current budget deficit), while £2.8 billion related to the spending on infrastructure (net investment). In the current financial year-to-date (April to October 2016), the public sector borrowed £48.6 billion. This was £5.6 billion lower than in the previous financial year-to-date (April to October 2015). Annual borrowing has generally been falling since the peak in the financial crisis in 2010.

UK autumn forecast statement

Newly appointed UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Phillip Hammond delivered the first budget plan since the UK voted to leave the European Union this week. In the Autumn Report, Hammond said the Office for Budget Responsibility, the government's independent forecaster, thinks U.K. growth in 2016 will be higher than forecast at 2.1 percent. In 2017 however, it will slow to 1.4 percent on lower investment and consumer demand driven by uncertainty and higher inflation. Hammond also confirmed he is abandoning his predecessor's flagship policy of returning to a budget surplus within this parliament. Instead, he will borrow to finance spending on the country's productive capacity in a "National Productivity Investment Fund." The £23 billion Fund will be spent on housing, research and development, and economic infrastructure including transport and fiber-optics.

Japanese prices rise

Japanese consumer prices rose in October for the first time in nine months, although core inflation continued to decline, painting a mixed picture of the economy at the start of the fourth quarter. The national consumer price index rose at an annualized 0.1 percent in October, following a 0.5 percent year-over-year drop the previous month, the Statistics Bureau reported Friday.

Kuwait
Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30505
The USDKWD opened at 0.30505 yesterday morning.



opened at \$46.92 and reached a high of \$49.5 before closing at \$47.24.

The price of gold fell to the lowest level in ten months on Friday, reaching \$1,171.21 an ounce. Having fallen in excess of 10 percent on a brief post-US presidential election high of \$1,337, the precious metal remains under pressure ahead of an expected increase in interest rates in December and solid economic data from the US Gold opened the week at \$1,207 and closed the week at \$1,184.38.

Existing Home Sales Rise

US home resales rose in October to their highest level in more than 9 years as homebuyers took advantage of still-low mortgage rates to snatch up properties. The report

down 1.9 percent from the 574,000 pace set in September, which was revised down from 593,000. Compared to last year however, October sales were 17.8 percent higher and total sales so far in 2016 were 12.6 percent higher. The slowdown could be attributed to lean supply that's keeping prices higher as home builders haven't ramped up enough construction of new homes to levels that many analysts believe would nurture a healthier market. However, that may slowly change since the Commerce Department said last week that construction on new houses surged nearly 26 percent in October to the highest level in nine years.

More Core Durable Goods Orders
Orders for US business equipment

In cooperation with SIIT and KFAS

Midas organizes Creative Thinking program for employees



Midas successfully concluded the Creative Thinking Training Program, organized in cooperation with the Seattle International Institute for Training (SIIT) and with the support of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) at KFAS Auditorium in the period between 13-15th November 2016.

Speaking about the event, the Regional Director of Finance and Administration at Midas, Mr Ali K. Hammoud stated that it was a part of the company's continuous pursuit of excellence, "which can be achieved through the development of the human resource. At Midas, we lay great emphasis on our employees, who are the most valuable asset for us."

Further, Mr Hammoud expressed his gratitude to both Seattle International Institute for Training and KFAS for enabling a training program of such a high standard, "which is sure to benefit our people by a long way. I am sure that as a result of the program, our overall efficiency level will go up tremendously, reflecting in our performance."

The program focuses on how to build a competitive advantage by fostering a creative culture that sparks inspiration, collaboration and innovation. The employees of Midas were provided a team exercise aimed at testing their skills and creative mindsets through various challenging tasks.

At the end of the program, the employees gave a very positive feedback about the event in general and said the program helped them in not only broadening their problem-solving skills but has also greatly enhanced their confidence.

The training provided new insights into the creative process at work in the real-

world business scenarios. "We will be able to craft innovative solutions to complex business problems," they added.

Apart from focusing on individuals, the program also inculcated in the trainees the need to foster a culture that values, nurtures and rewards creative solutions. For team leaders, there were useful points about how to harness a team's collective abilities to produce innovative solutions and strategies.

However, the most interesting part of the training program, which everybody enjoyed immensely, revolved around creative thinking. To many employees, it was a great eye opener as they were able to kindle their creative potentials that were latent in them. Creativity is more about practice than about a natural endowment.

The trainees were thankful to Midas for providing them the opportunity to attend "such an enlightening program, which will surely stand us in good stead in future."



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اكتشف أماناً جديدة

CHEVROLET

KUWAIT: When we mention Tahoe, those after power, challenge and luxury know it very well. So imagine a limited quantity of the new 2017 Tahoe LT2, with a multitude of impressive features at an irresistible price, recently made available at the Alghanim Automotive's Chevrolet showrooms. Indeed, it is unbelievable priced at KD13,999, and it's only available until the end of the current month.

The 2017 Tahoe LT2 stands out with a rich set of features, and it is truly a "now or never" opportunity with the limited stock available. After all, the Chevrolet Tahoe needs no introduction, gaining favor day on day with its loyal fans, noticeably with its sleek exterior lines that combines its sheer power with elegant presence. The interior and performance aspects accomplish the same harmony in parallel.

Technological improvements have also been made inside the new Tahoe. Thanks to the award-winning MyLink Infotainment system that includes 9-speaker Bose Premium system, voice, radio, and navigation controls, which are fully integrated and operable from the 8-inch full-color touchscreen on the center console. Enhanced connectivity and convenience are also incorporated on the steering wheel itself, effectively offering easy and intuitive operation of basic functions, thus giving users more ways of staying connected on the road.

The new Tahoe features a V8 power

engine that offers 355 horsepower, boasting a better fuel economy than any full-size SUV in the industry. It also incorporates a slew of new safety technologies that contribute to a 360-degree of occupant protection and comfort. Standard and available features include Remote Vehicle Start system, Forward Collision Alert, Lane Keep Assist and Lane Departure Warning with Rear Camera, plus 6-way power adjustable seats for both driver and front passengers as well as 18-inch Aluminum Wheels, Power Tailgate lamps, Sunroof and many more, which all have been designed and developed to meet the needs of drivers and passengers alike.

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A. Alghanim & Sons will receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance.

Hurry up and make the most of your daily drives by visiting the nearest Chevrolet Alghanim showroom to own one of the limited 2017 Tahoe LT2 at an exceptional price before November 30th.

NBK INTRODUCES INTERNATIONAL TOLL-FREE NUMBERS TO CONNECT WITH CUSTOMERS TRAVELING ABROAD

KUWAIT: In its continuous strive to serve customers wherever they are and answer their queries in the best possible way, NBK introduces new international toll-free numbers enabling customers to stay in touch with the bank while traveling abroad.

Through toll-free numbers, customers can now call NBK Call Center when traveling to the USA, UK, Canada and France, which are the most visited destinations by customers on regular basis as well as NBK branches are also available in these countries. To enjoy the toll-free service without incurring extra charges, customers should use a local number of the country they are in to have their queries answered by the bank's expert agents who are ready to assist them quickly and efficiently 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and in both Arabic and English languages.

NBK's Deputy General Manager, Consumer Banking Group, Mohammad Khaled Al-Othman said that NBK attempts to stay closer to its customer base wherever they are, and the launch of the first phone banking in Kuwait two decades ago is a solid proof of this commitment. NBK places a major emphasis on enhancing and developing its wide range of services and products that answer customers' needs and exceed expectations, in addition to adopting the latest in technology that meet the highest industry standards to provide them with stress-free and exceptional banking experience at all times.



NBK's Deputy General Manager, Consumer Banking Group, Mohammad Khaled Al-Othman

Al-Othman affirmed that this pioneering step would eventually enhance the NBK Call Center offerings and guarantee incessant interaction of customers with the bank in line with the highest quality standards. NBK Call Center enables customers to complete various banking transactions and manage their accounts remotely by calling 1801801 within Kuwait or +965 22248361 from outside Kuwait, in addition to the new dedicated International toll-free numbers, which are: 18555 777 625 (USA), 08000 988 456 (UK), 18555 777 625 (Canada) and 0805 080 765 (France). Al Othman added that customers can also contact us for any inquiry through the dedicated WhatsApp No.: 52221333.

The NBK Call Center employs a team of skilled agents to tackle customers' inquiries effectively and help them conclude a wide range of banking transactions; such as accounts, credit cards, loan information, bill payment, transfer between accounts and more. The center agents also tackle other situations relating to lost or stolen cards and other services that are delivered with utmost security and confidentiality.

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Now, you can call the NBK Call Center through toll-free numbers, so you can access your account, report problems and have your queries answered to:

- France: 0805 980 365
- Canada: 1855 777 625
- UK: 0800 988 456
- US: 1855 777 625

1801801
nbk.com

AL-TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al-Najma Account daily draw on 27th November, 2016.

The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The winners of the Al-Najma daily draw are: Meena Adel Maqar Abdulhay— KD 7000, Layla Abdulrazak Al-Hunayan — KD 7000,

Abdul Naser Ali Embaby Aaqel— KD 7000, Ameen Hasan Al-Fahad — KD 7000, Rajaa Ahmad Mohammad Mahmoud— KD 7000.

Al-Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever.

With the revamped Al-Najma account, all your dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to

reach KD 250,000.

The new prizes scheme for Al-Najma account

Daily draw to win KD 7000

Quarterly draws to win great prizes that would start from KD 100,000 to KD 250,000

1ST QUARTER — KD 100 000, 2ND QUARTER —KD 150 000, 3RD QUARTER — KD 200 000, 4TH QUARTER —KD 250 000.

With Al-Najma you have more chances to win greater prizes

- * Each KD 25 kept in your account gives you one chance to win
- * Each KD 25 kept in your account for one week will give you a chance to enter the daily draw.
- * Each KD 25 kept in your account for 3 months will give you chance to enter the quarterly draw.

Additional features

- * ATM card
- * Issue a credit card against your account
- * Obtain all CBK banking services

You deserve to win! Open an account now with just KD 500 and you will enter all draws.

Amazing news from Al-Tijari...

Al-Najma account gives you the biggest daily prize in Kuwait!

KD 7000

BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES NAMES LUCKY WINNERS OF YAWMI ACCOUNT

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the lucky winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners for the daily draws took home a cash-prize of KD 5,000 each, and they are:

1. Abdullateef Mohammad Naser Al Hamad
2. Usman Mohammad Iqbal Ahmad Al Din
3. Mohammad Abdullah Ali
4. Katabjiwala Salma Saifuddin
5. Alyaa Fadhel Al-Kadhemi

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, entitling one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for 2 months prior to draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account, will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances to becoming a winner. The more customers deposit, the higher the chances they receive of winning.

For more information on opening a Yawmi account or about the new quarterly draw, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch and receive all the details, or simply call the bank's Call Center at 1804080 where customer service representatives will be delighted to assist with any questions on the Yawmi account or any of the bank's products and services.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial Bank and second

now... "Yawmi" account offers 125,000 or 5,000

1804080
www.burgan.com

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

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

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

VIVA ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'MORE' PRIZES CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced 5th week draw's winners of KD 100, of "more" prizes campaign for postpaid

customers. The names of daily prize winners, KD 100, from 15 November until 21 November, were as follows: MAHENDRA SINGH MEWTA, HAJAR FARHAN MNAIZEL

ALSAEEDI, MARIAM SAGHEER NAFELI ALRASHEEDI, FALAH MAJED FALAH ALAMEERI, TIJANI OLUSHOLA SANNI, HANOUF YASEEN DAHHAM, Abdulaziz Naif Hilal Al-Otaibi.

VIVA gives the customers a wonderful opportunity to win amazing cash prizes, KD 100 daily and KD 1000 at the end of each month, once they pay their VIVA bills through Direct Debit, VIVA website, VIVA's Kiosks, VIVA App or by calling 102. Customers earn one chance for each KD 1.

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things Possible for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established an unrivalled position in the market through its customer centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions; a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation (4G LTE) network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability.

'more' prizes
Pay your bills and win cash prizes every KD 1 gives you a chance to win

VIVA Web - Quick Pay or Self Care
VIVA 102 IVR (Interactive Voice Response)
VIVA App
Kiosk
Direct Debit

Daily Prize - KD 100
Monthly Grand Prize - KD 1,000

Services
VIVA

Call 102
viva.com.kw
@vivatelecom

AUSTRIAN ELECTION: IT'S THE ECONOMY, DUMMKOPF!

VIENNA: Austria is one Europe's richest countries, yet the hills are alive not with optimism but with worries about the economy, boosting the far-right candidate ahead of December 4's presidential election. At the grotty job centre in Vienna's fifth district, for instance, manager Astrid Mayer is busy.

"Things are getting worse every year", Mayer told AFP. "The figures speak for themselves. I've been here for 15 years and I've never seen it like this."

When Mayer started, the jobless rate was "three point something", she says. Now it's 8.6 percent. Adjusted to compare with the rest of the European Union, it's 6.3 percent, no longer the lowest in the bloc. Doris Blei is one of the lucky ones. The 48-year-old has found a new job after being laid off by her bank. "Lots of banks are reducing headcount. It's hard, particularly when you get older," she told AFP as she

queued up. And even those in work don't necessarily have it easy. Some 400,000 people are classified as the "working poor"—in employment but unable to get by.

'Demoralising'

Austria is on the crossroads between Italy, Germany and the EU's newer eastern members. Bordering eight countries, it lives off tourism, agriculture and, most importantly, selling goods abroad. Like Germany, the Alpine nation of 8.7 million people boasts a raft of world-beating exporters. Glock guns, Novomatic gaming machines and energy drink Red Bull are all Austrian, as is motorbike maker KTM.

"Austria is one of the biggest winners of the EU, the euro and EU enlargement," KTM's chief executive Stefan Pierer said. Some 98 percent of KTM's products—the firm has an alliance

with India's Bajaj Auto—are exported, half to outside the EU.

But cracks in the Austrian model are beginning to show. Working hours are too rigid, non-wage labour costs are too high and the bureaucracy dizzying, Pierer complains.

"It's awful, demoralising," he told AFP. Austria's competitiveness rankings are far from glowing and investment is mostly just to keep things ticking over, not for the future.

"Out of every 10 euros invested, eight go into renovating existing plants and only two into new projects," said Franz Schellhorn from think-tank Agenda Austria. Christian Kern, who spent 20 years in industry before becoming Austria's centre-left chancellor in June, says he is aware that life has got harder.

But his promises to jumpstart the unhappy "grand coalition" with the cen-

tre-right and launch a "New Deal" package of reforms have so far disappointed, critics say.

Jobs for Austrians

Nonetheless Schellhorn stresses that by international standards, Austrians live well. Growth has picked up and unemployment fallen this year. The government has cut some taxes.

"People have in fact never had it so good," Schellhorn told AFP. "But there is a feeling that things are getting worse." Just 23 percent of Austrians are optimistic about the future, a recent Imas survey showed. Like populists elsewhere, the Freedom Party (FPÖ) has tapped into this pessimism.

It portrays itself as being on the side of ordinary Austrian workers against jobs-killing immigration and globalization. "Austrian jobs should first be for Austrians, not for EU for-

eigners and definitely not for the many economic migrants," the FPÖ's presidential candidate Norbert Hofer says.

The opposition party's economic policies—slash taxes, splurge on infrastructure—strongly resemble those of US president-elect Donald Trump. While this might boost growth, like Trump the FPÖ is suspicious of trade deals and it is ambivalent about the EU, particularly the free movement of labour.

The message is bearing fruit in the race for the largely ceremonial presidency, with Hofer neck-and-neck in polls with the independent Alexander Van der Bellen. Van der Bellen, a staunchly pro-EU economics professor, also bemoans the lack of reforms. But Hofer depicts him as being from the same out-of-touch elite as the government. —AFP

9 SECURITY STEPS TO STAY SAFE ONLINE DURING HOLIDAYS

By James Lyne

The holidays are a heightened time when cybercriminals are using clever phishing emails, scams that look like special offers or shipping notices for gifts. When in reality, these are designed to snare clicks and make you hand over information. Sophos is reminding consumers to pay extra attention to nine simple security steps to stay safe online during the holidays:



1. If an online deal or email offer with price discounts looks too good to be true, it probably is. Hit delete.
2. Be aware of untrusted wireless networks when you're out shopping with your mobile phone. Consider waiting to enter your credit card information when you get home.
3. Only use trusted merchants to make online payments. Use PayPal or your credit card, not bank debit cards to purchase gifts online.
4. Be on the lookout for Typosquatting. Cybercriminals take a popular online brand and change one letter or two to trick you into clicking and sharing personal information.
5. IoT devices are sure to be on everyone's list this year, but they are vulnerable to cybercriminals. Before you start using your newfangled device,

reset the password. Some, as we've recently seen with Dyn DDoS attack, are vulnerable to criminal-hacker hijacking.

6. Be sensible about password security. Make account passwords different and difficult to guess. Include upper and lower case letters, numbers and symbols to make passwords harder to crack - refer to the Sophos How to Pick a Proper Password video for creating stronger passwords.

7. Cybercriminals intercept data with spyware more than usual during the holidays. Protect against all malware, including spyware, which logs your financial data while you type it into your keyboard, with security software like Sophos Home. Of 1,250 consumers polled in the U.S., U.K., Germany, Switzerland and Austria in a recent Sophos survey, 54 percent perceive spyware as an extremely large

cyber security threat. Thirty-one percent of those surveyed consider themselves unprotected, are not familiar with spyware or unsure if they're protected.

8. Run up to date security software and check out the Sophos Home toolkit videos for tips on blocking spyware and all other malware, detecting and blocking malicious URLs and apps, which could contain ransomware, securing wifi, and ruling out phishing emails.

9. At a time of higher than normal e-commerce, criminals have a piqued interest in exploiting online activity. Consumers need to be extra vigilant to protect against cybercriminals who amp up their nefarious ways during the holidays. Be cyber aware and use best security practices."

Note: James Lyne is the Global Head of Security Research, Sophos



SAN FRANCISCO: Employees stand next to self-driving, big-rig trucks during a demonstration at the Otto headquarters, in San Francisco. Uber's self-driving startup Otto developed technology allowing big rigs to drive themselves. After taking millions of factory jobs, robots could be coming for a new class of worker: people who drive for a living. — AP

SELF-DRIVING TRUCK HITS THE ROAD AS OHIO DISCUSSES RESEARCH

COLUMBUS, Ohio: A self-driving truck will begin traveling on two Ohio roads next week after state officials announce details of new investments to support innovative transportation technology.

A vehicle from self-driving truck maker Otto will travel a 35-mile stretch of US Route 33 today in central Ohio between Dublin and East Liberty, home to the Transportation Research Center, an independent testing facility. It will travel in regular traffic, and a driver in the truck will be positioned to intervene should anything go awry. Department of Transportation spokesman Matt Bruning said Friday, adding that "safety is obviously No 1."

Officials say that section of Route 33 - a four-lane, divided road - is an important piece of autonomous vehicle research in the state and will become a corridor where new technologies can be safely tested in real-life traffic, aided by a fiber-optic cable network and sensor systems slated for installation next year. Gov. John Kasich is scheduled to discuss details of that investment and other efforts to support autonomous vehicle research on Monday before the truck hits the road.

"Certainly we think it's going to be one of the foremost automotive research corridors in the world," Bruning said. The self-

driving truck is also expected to travel next week on part of the Ohio Turnpike, though Bruning said he couldn't yet detail when or where.

The turnpike's executive director said in August that officials were moving toward allowing testing of self-driving vehicles on the 241-mile toll road, a heavily traveled connector between the East Coast and Chicago. Tests of self-driving vehicles have been made in other areas. Anheuser-Busch said last month that it had completed the world's first commercial shipment by self-driving truck, sending a beer-filled tractor-trailer on a trip of more than 120 miles through Colorado. The company said a professional truck driver was on board for the entire route. Several automobile companies have tested self-driving vehicles on public roads in California and Nevada, and Uber is testing driverless cars in Pittsburgh.

Kasich has pushed for Ohio to be a leader in the fast-advancing testing and research of autonomous vehicles. State officials say Ohio is well-positioned for such a role for many reasons, including a significant presence from the automotive industry in the state, partnerships with university researchers, and the seasonal weather changes that enable testing a variety of driving conditions in one place. — AP

STUNNED TECH SECTOR WEIGHS FUTURE UNDER TRUMP GOVT

TECH STOCKS REBOUND AFTER SHOCK WIN

WASHINGTON: After disbelief, anger and grief, the US tech sector is looking to come to grips with the presidency of a man described by many of its leading lights as a "disaster" for innovation.

The major US technology companies, almost uniformly opposed to Donald Trump's candidacy, saw huge stock declines in the wake of November 8, but most have now rebounded to near their pre-election levels. Some observers are saying it makes little difference who is in the White House, and others argue Trump is unlikely to carry out the promises-and-threats-he made during a bitter campaign.

Trump sent shivers through Silicon Valley during his election bid by pledging to squeeze trade from China, clamp down on immigration which is critical to many tech firms, and even warning that online giant Amazon could have "a huge antitrust problem" if he were elected.

Close to 150 tech icons-including founders of Apple, Wikipedia and Reddit-penned an open letter in July warning the Republican nominee would be a "disaster for innovation."

Gene Munster, analyst on the tech sector at Piper Jaffray, said the initial beating in tech shares had created a "rare opportunity to buy the fear." But in a research note last week Munster argued that "the tech industry is in more control of its own destiny than Donald Trump and will work through these problems."

The analyst said an antitrust probe of Amazon was unlikely, nor does he expect major changes on skilled immigration under Trump. Any tariffs on electronics or components could potentially impact firms like Apple, but would be spread equally over manufacturers because they all rely on imports, Munster noted.

Smart businesspeople'

In the meantime, any negative impact could be offset by Trump's pledge to lower taxes on

capital repatriated from overseas, which could be a boon for Apple, Google and others and encourage investment in the US, analysts noted. The tech sector holds the lion's share of an estimated \$2.5 trillion held by US firms overseas. "There could be a lot of money that is repatriated by tech companies," said Bob O'Donnell, analyst and consultant at Technalysis Research in Silicon Valley.

"If they could use it for job creation, that could be interesting." More broadly, O'Donnell said the tech sector may get "a fresh look at the kinds of services and technologies that people want to invest in" under Trump. For example, a major push on infrastructure investment "could be a big opportunity" to integrate "smart" technology for services such as transportation.

While tech leaders "did a lot of soul searching" after the election, O'Donnell said that "they are smart businesspeople and they realize they have to work in this new environment."

A new tack

Although Trump has said little about his agenda for the sector, O'Donnell noted that "tech is a huge part of the economy and you can't ignore it; but things that might be viewed as special privileges might be taken away."

Some are concerned that a Republican administration may seek to roll back so-called "net neutrality" that prohibits broadband firms from playing favorites, which could mean difficulties for online video operators like Netflix and Amazon. Many tech leaders have had to take a new tack after an emotional campaign that featured ugly rhetoric on both sides.

Tech leaders clashed with Trump during the campaign on issues ranging from law enforcement surveillance to immigration to gay rights. Apple chief executive Tim Cook said in a memo to staff that the company's "North Star hasn't changed" and that "the only way to move forward

is to move forward together," according to the Wall Street Journal.

Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg brushed off the vote by telling a tech conference that "most progress... is made by private citizens," and that "it would not be right to say (the election of Trump) changes the fundamental arc of technology or progress over time."

'That's us now'

Others were less diplomatic. Box founder Aaron Levie tweeted after the election, "You know those times where we watch other countries and are like 'oh man you guys are crazy.' Shit that's us now."

Tech investor Anil Dash wrote on Twitter: "I am not moving to Canada, not surprised by white supremacists & misogynists, and not afraid of Donald Trump. We have got to get to work."

Charlie O'Donnell at the investment firm Brooklyn Bridge Ventures said it's not time to panic.

"If you felt good about what you were doing at your company yesterday, you should feel good about it today," he said in a blog. But he also said the election offers a lesson that "we need to start caring about a much wider tent of people than we have been."

Meanwhile Dex Torricke-Barton, a former Facebook and Google executive, quit his job at SpaceX to work for social causes after news of the Trump election.

"As an immigrant and the son of a refugee, and as someone dedicated to advancing the interests of humanity, I don't want to watch while the world slips backwards," Torricke-Barton said on Facebook. "So I'm choosing to go and make whatever contribution I can-no matter how small-toward making the change we need: standing up for openness, compassion and sound global leadership." — AFP

BRAZIL TO PURSUE SATELLITE, NUKE SUB PROJECTS: MINISTER

BRASILIA: Ambitious projects such as satellites that could bring the internet to the remote Amazon and construction of Brazil's first nuclear submarine will proceed despite a deep economic downturn, the defense minister told AFP. Raul Jungmann said he will be in France this Thursday to take delivery of the first of three communications and defense satellites built by France's Thales and due for launching on March 21 next year. The nearly six tonne, 2.1 billion reais (\$617 million) satellite is at the core of a modernization of Brazil's military that Jungmann said will still take hits during planned government austerity cuts.

"We know there's going to be a new fiscal policy with a spending ceiling. We know we'll have to cut back," he said in an interview in Brasilia. However, some projects "are already at an advanced stage and cannot be stopped, like the nuclear submarine or the four conventional submarines that are also being developed in France," he said. "Three of them are already being built."

Swedish Gripen war planes whose payment schedule he said "is sufficiently flexible" will also survive the cuts. But with President Michel Temer pushing an austerity strategy through Congress, starting with a proposed 20-year freeze on budget increases, "there are other things we need to review," he said.

The satellite program remains a top priority, described by the minister as a chance for Brazil "to achieve a technological standard that we don't have today." Stationed over Ecuador, the network will cover all of South America, the southern Atlantic and the west coast of Africa, "what we call Brazil's strategic

sphere," Jungmann said. The network will expand broadband coverage throughout Brazil, "which is an enormous advance for society. It will allow it to reach remote places, the Amazon for example," the minister added.

The telecoms satellites will also bring new security for Brazil by putting all government communications under the country's control and strengthening military communications, he said.

Big army, no enemy

Brazil maintains one of the largest militaries in the Americas, partly to patrol its huge borders, which include 4,660 miles (7,500 kilometers) of coastline. Jungmann said the military is concerned by the proximity of "major drug producers and that Brazil, especially in urban centers, has unfortunately turned into a drug consumer. An integrated market has developed both for drugs and weapons."

Although Brazil is not involved in any active conflicts abroad, it has used its military to project influence, including with a major peacekeeping mission to Haiti. The military has also been called on to support outgunned police in battles with drug gangs in Rio de Janeiro. Members of the armed forces were also deployed around the country earlier this year to assist in a campaign against mosquitoes carrying the Zika virus.

The military ruled Brazil during a dictatorship from 1964 to 1985. However, its powers have since been curbed and now-at a time the country is being shaken by its worst recession in decades and a cascade of corruption scandals - is widely seen as the country's most trusted institution. — AFP



In this Sept 28, 2016 photo released by the Nature Conservancy, a longline tuna boat prepares for their next fishing trip in Palau. Cameras are recording everything that comes over the rail and onto the deck of a few dozen tuna boats loaded with motion sensors and GPS systems in the western Pacific Ocean. — AP

TECH SOLUTIONS TO TACKLE OVERFISHING, ABUSE AT SEA

BANGKOK: Fishing boats used high-tech systems to find vast schools of fish for decades, depleting stocks of some species and leading to the complete collapse of others. Now more than a dozen apps, devices and monitoring systems aimed at tracking unscrupulous vessels and the seafood they catch are being rolled out - high-tech solutions some say could also help prevent labor abuse at sea.

Illegal fishing, which includes catching undersized fish, exceeding quotas and casting nets in protected areas, leads to an estimated \$23 billion in annual losses, according to the United Nations. Meanwhile, overfishing close to shore has pushed boats farther out, where there are few laws and even less enforcement to protect workers from abuse. Slavery has been documented in the fishing sectors of more than 50 countries, according to US State Department reports.

Earlier this year, US Secretary of State John Kerry said using technology at sea could eventually mean "there is not one square mile of ocean where we cannot prosecute and hold people accountable..."

However, Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director of Human Rights Watch, cautions that catching human traffickers goes beyond finding boats. "Technology is all about knowing where the fishing boats are on the ocean, but that does precious little for crews being physically abused and worked to the bone on those vessels," he said.

Here are some emerging tech solutions:

APP FOR WORKERS

Nonprofit anti-trafficking organization Project Issara is tapping into near-ubiquitous smartphones with an app that allows Burmese and Cambodian migrant workers around the

world to share information about their working conditions. Their reviews reach nonprofits, governments and businesses which can monitor and learn from the feedback. Combined with a new multilingual hotline, victims of labor abuses have a safer, discreet way of seeking help.

BAR CODES

A worker runs a gadget over a fish just after it's pulled from the boat, giving it a bar code that creates a permanent record of where it was caught. It's a simple swipe with profound potential. Thomas Kraft at Norpac Fisheries Export established one of the industry's first bar-code systems that give each fish a tag that can provide details about location, boat, species, and weight. He's been using the technology in locations worldwide and says it could easily be expanded to include crews on individual boats to help fight against labor abuse. — AP

DUTCH KILL 190,000 DUCKS TO CONTAIN BIRD FLU OUTBREAK

THE HAGUE: Dutch officials have culled 190,000 ducks on a central Netherlands farm where inspectors have confirmed the presence of a highly infectious strain of bird flu, officials and local media said yesterday. The outbreak was detected at a farm in Biddinghuizen, about 70 kilometers (43 miles) west of Amsterdam, where about 180,000 ducks were put down together with another 10,000 within a one kilometer radius, the

Dutch food and safety watchdog NVWA said. "There are three other poultry farms within a three kilometer radius and they are being monitored," the NVWA added in a statement.

Authorities have also imposed a ban on poultry and poultry product transport within a 10 kilometer radius, the statement said. Tests indicated that the birds were killed by an H5N8 variant of the disease "which is highly

infectious" for poultry-killing about 30 percent of infected birds-but not "very dangerous to humans", public newscaster NOS said. Earlier this month the Netherlands shuttered petting zoos and banned duck hunting as it stepped up measures to stem a bird flu outbreak blamed for killing scores of poultry and more than a thousand wild birds in the country.

In the western port of Rotterdam, a

park closed its animal section after several aquatic birds were found to have died from the H5N8 virus. Others still not affected have been penned in. And on the banks of Lake Markermeer, close to Amsterdam, about 1,250 wild birds were found dead earlier this month, local news reports said.

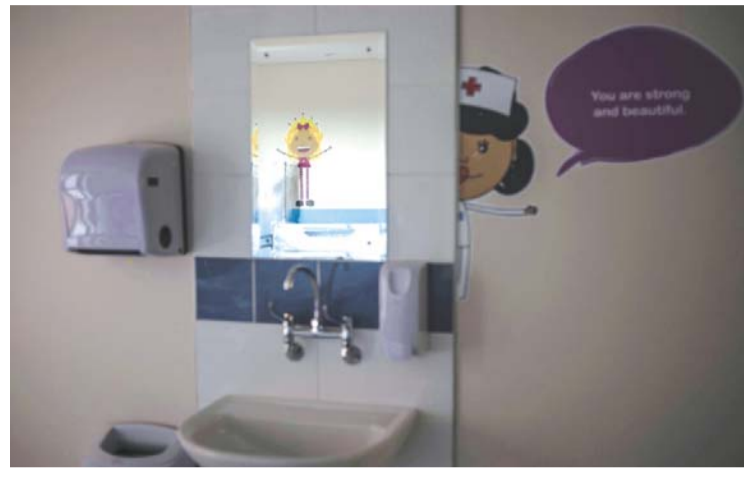
The H5N1 strain of bird flu has killed more than 420 people, mainly in south-east Asia, since first appearing in 2003.

Another strain of bird flu, H7N9, has claimed more than 200 lives since emerging in 2013, according to World Health Organization figures.

Avian flu severely hit the Netherlands in 2003 with health authorities destroying some 30 million birds in an effort to quash an outbreak. Around 106 million chickens are raised on Dutch poultry farms, according to the latest Dutch statistics.—AFP



JOHANNESBURG: A picture shows a general view of the Nelson Mandela Children's hospital, in Johannesburg, that will be inaugurated.—AFP photos



JOHANNESBURG: A picture shows children public signs and illustrations on the walls of wards a general view of the Nelson Mandela Children's hospital, in Johannesburg, that will be inaugurated on December 2, 2016.

KIDS' HOSPITAL FULFILLS MANDELA DREAM 3 YEARS AFTER DEATH

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL WAS A DREAM—NOTHING BUT A DREAM AND AN IDEA'

JOHANNESBURG: Brightly-painted wards and colorful furnishings are matched by state-of-the-art equipment and pioneering operating theatres at a new children's hospital in Johannesburg honoring Nelson Mandela. After he led the struggle to dismantle apartheid, one of Mandela's most cherished dreams was to build the first specialist paediatric hospital in southern Africa. To mark the third anniversary of his death on December 5, and more than 10 years after he conceived the idea, the Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital admits its first patients on December 2.

His dream materialized after a successful battle for funds despite the global economic downturn and the difficulties of inspiring donors without Mandela's charm and iconic presence. "It's a miracle, or just short of a miracle. The children's hospital was a dream-nothing but a dream and an idea," Sibongile Mkhabela, CEO of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, told AFP on a tour of one of the new wards. Mandela, who was South Africa's first post-apartheid president from 1994 - 1999, officially started the project in July 2009 at the site of an old cricket ground.

'He loved children'

Much of the fund-raising took place as Mandela became increasingly frail and unable to lobby for donations. "We needed \$100 million (95 million euros), we had not a penny," said Mkhabela. "It was very difficult to do it without him... extremely difficult, but people were ready to hear us, they could relate to the vision. "There are a number of ways that you can remember Mr Mandela, he was a statesman. You could build a statue... but at his core, he loved children." The 200-bed healthcare facility had to compete for funding with emergency humanitarian crises in Syria and elsewhere.



JOHANNESBURG: This file photo shows Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari giving an interview to Agence France-press at his hotel during the 25th African Summit in Johannesburg.

"South Africa was not seen as a big area of need," Mkhabela said. Construction finally began in 2014 as donations came in from philanthropists and businesses including the Bill Gates Foundation, Kellogg Foundation, Islamic Relief Worldwide and South African businessman Eric Samson. Some children even emptied their piggy banks, while ordinary South Africans donated through a popular text message appeal. The hospital logo of animated faces was designed by

children, as was the wallpaper in the wards and along the corridors.

The three-floor critical-care facility will provide cancer care, kidney and lung treatment, as well as heart, chest and brain surgery and a range of other urgent medical needs. It will be staffed by 450 paediatric nurses who have been undergoing training over the past five years and 150 specialist doctors, including some from Canada's Hospital for Sick Children and John Hopkins Medicine International in the US.

Pride and excitement

Built on a plot of land covering 34,000 square meters (370,000 square feet) in the grounds of the University of the Witwatersrand, the hospital will offer free services to those from poorer backgrounds and only charge those who can afford it. It is equipped with a wide array of advanced equipment, including ultra-sensitive scanners that can detect the "minutest" details and make "diagnoses that general equipment might not pick up", said Joe Seoloeane, the hospital's project leader.

"It's a children's hospital and must specialize in conditions that are unique to children. "We are proud and excited that ultimately, come December 2, we can officially say 'Africa: here is a hospital for those conditions that you thought you need to go to Europe for.' The hospital will also offer video broadcasting so that doctors in outlying areas across southern Africa can learn from live operations. It will be Africa's fifth children's hospital: there are two in Egypt, one in Kenya and a Red Cross hospital in Cape Town, all of which were built several decades ago. The hospital will have a radio station streaming music into the wards to entertain the children and will also offer on-site accommodation for parents.—AFP

UPSTATE NY TOWNS EMBROILED IN FIGHT OVER TALL WIND TURBINES

NEW YORK: Clean energy and environmental interests usually go hand in hand. But in western New York, they are battling over plans to build dozens of wind turbines that could be among the nation's tallest, rising 600 feet above the scenic shores of Lake Ontario. Apex's proposal to plant 70 propeller turbines amid the farms and towns east of Niagara Falls is still in its early stages, but it has already generated thousands of pages of comments, studies and legal documents considered by state regulators.

Wildlife groups are concerned the turbines could disrupt a major flyway for migrating birds. Local lawmakers worry about flight operations being compromised at a nearby military base. Residents fret about potential health threats from noise, which are still being studied, and say views could be dominated by structures taller than any skyscraper in upstate New York. "There's nothing this size on land," opponent Pam Atwater said of the turbine towers proposed by Apex Clean Energy. "We're not even really talking about aesthetics or anything like that. But of course it's going to have an impact. The terrain here is flat. You can see for miles."

It's a debate playing out as rapidly improving technology for towers and turbines allow the wind industry to move on to increasingly taller structures. Federal Aviation Administration records show that the vast majority of the hundreds of proposed turbines the agency is reviewing for air safety would stand at or just below 500 feet. But two other projects in New York - one in central New York, one in the northeast corner - have submitted plans for a combined 70 turbines from 640 to 656 feet tall, and there are several projects with towers topping 600 feet in the works in Texas and Kansas. The tallest towers in the world now top 700 feet and operate offshore in Europe.

Charlottesville, Virginia-based Apex, a major national wind farm developer, said it hasn't settled precisely on the turbine size for the project named Lighthouse Wind, but noted that taller machines offer greater yield. "Currently in New York the tallest wind turbine is just under 500 feet," Apex development manager Taylor Quarles told The Associated Press. "But certainly the trend in the industry is to go higher as the

consistency and wind speed, essentially the quality of the wind, does tend to increase with elevation."

Seventy turbines is the high end of its proposal, he said, and it may require only 50 or 60 of the larger machines to achieve the project's goal of generating 201 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 50,000 average New York homes. "There is this phase where what used to be the offshore type of size is now migrating onshore for more wind resources," said Yates Town Supervisor James Simon, a wind farm opponent. He said that makes people in his community and the neighboring town of Somerset, essentially, "guinea pigs." Atwater notes that "they're designed for offshore use, so there is no place you can go and no one who can tell you what the impact's going to be."

Local and state authorities

Retired truck driver Howard Pierce, whose home in Yates is across a street from one boundary of the project, said he isn't worried about environmental issues as much as the payments landowners will get for leasing to Apex. "The No. 1 industry in our town is farming, and the wind farm would give these farmers a steady income every year," Pierce said. "This would not depend on the commodity prices."

The project is one of the first tests of a new state regulatory regime, known as "Article 10" for the 2011 law that took the power to approve major energy projects out of the hands of a mix of local and state authorities and gave it to a single state authority, the Board on Electric Generation Siting and the Environment. There is not yet a timetable for when the panel will make a decision. Gov Andrew Cuomo has set a goal of meeting half the state's energy needs from renewable sources by 2030. One of the challenges to that goal has been a lull in wind projects since 2013. Installed capacity grew in leaps from 2000 to 2012 and then stalled, with almost no new capacity added in recent years, according to federal Department of Energy statistics.

That has opponents worried the process will be biased toward approving the project. Republican Assemblyman Steve Hawley, who opposed Article 10 and Lighthouse Wind, is giving the process a chance.—AP



SOMERSET, New York: In this file photo, people gather to protest the installation of windmills in Somerset, NY.—AP

DANISH SUPERMARKET OFFERS FRESH TAKE ON EXPIRED FOOD

COPENHAGEN: It may be past its sell-by date, but for many Danes it's a tasty proposition: A supermarket in Copenhagen selling surplus food has proved to be so popular it recently opened a second store. After launching in the gritty inner city district of Amager earlier this year, the "Wefood" project earlier this month drew a long line as it opened a second branch in Nørrebro, a trendy neighborhood popular with left-leaning academics and immigrants.

Hipsters rubbed shoulders with working class mums as a cooking school founded by Claus Meyer—a co-founder of Copenhagen's celebrated Noma restaurant—handed out cauliflower soup and bread made from surplus ingredients. "It's awesome that instead of throwing things out they are choosing to sell it for money. You support a good cause," said Signe Skovgaard Sorensen, a student, after picking up a bottle of upscale olive oil for 20 kroner (2.7 euros, \$2.9). "Isn't it great?" pensioner Olga Fruerlund said, holding up a jar of sweets that she planned to give to her grandchildren for Christmas.

The sweets "can last for a hundred years because there is sugar in them," she added. Selling expired food is legal in Denmark as long as

it is clearly advertised and there is no immediate danger to consuming it. "We look, we smell, we feel the product and see if it's still consumable," project leader Bassel Hmeidani said. All products are donated by producers, import and export companies and local supermarkets, and are collected by Wefood's staff, all of whom are volunteers. The store's profit goes to charity. Prices are around half of what they would be elsewhere, but even its biggest fans would struggle to do their weekly shop here. The products available depend on what is available from donors, resulting in an eclectic mix that changes from day to day. One weekday afternoon, customers were greeted by a mountain of Disney and Star Wars-branded popcorn, while the fresh fruit section had been reduced to a handful of rotting apples.

Growing awareness

Food waste has become an increasingly hot topic in recent years, with initiatives ranging from a French ban last year on destroying unsold food products, to a global network of cafes serving dishes with food destined for the scrap heap. The Britain-based The Real Junk Food Project also opened the country's first food waste supermar-

ket in a warehouse near Leeds in September. With a greater focus than its Danish peer on feeding the poor, the British project urges customers to simply "pay as they feel".

A UN panel said earlier this month that supermarkets' preference for perfect looking produce and the use of arbitrary "best before" labels cause massive food waste that if reversed could feed the world's hungry. Nearly 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted every year, more than enough to sustain the one billion people suffering from hunger globally, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said.

Denmark has managed to reduce its food waste by 25 percent over the past five years, partly due to the influential "Stop Wasting Food" group founded by Russian-born activist Selina Juul in 2008. Juul grew up in the 1980s Soviet Union and says she was shocked by the amount of food being thrown away in Denmark when she moved there as a 13 year old in 1993. "Surplus food has become very popular," she said of one of the measures advocated by the group: offering heavy discounts on items that are about to expire, which is now done by most Danish supermarkets.

Supermarkets changing

Inspired by Juul, one of Denmark's biggest discount chains, Rema 1000, has become an unlikely champion in the battle against food waste. Two of its main initiatives are about reducing waste after the product has been sold: The company stopped offering bulk discounts in 2008 so that single-person households would not buy more than they could eat. Last year it reduced the size and price of some of its bread loaves for the same reason. "The biggest problem with food waste is among the customers," said John Wagner, the chief executive of the Danish Grocers' Association. Regular supermarkets were becoming better at forecasting demand for different products, but they needed to do more to inform their customers that a lot of food is edible beyond its expiry date. Wefood next year plans to open in Aarhus, Denmark's second largest city, but Wagner said the brand was unlikely to become a major chain. "The problem should be solved before we get to the point where we have to give the products to a store like Wefood," he said.—AFP



COPENHAGEN: This file photo shows people shopping in the Wefood supermarket that sells food past its sell-by date at Amager in Copenhagen, Denmark.—AFP

CHRONIC GUM DISEASE TIED TO RISK OF ERECTILE DYSFUNCTION

NEW YORK: Erectile dysfunction is more common in men with gum disease, according to a new review of existing studies. Chronic bacterial infection of the gums, or periodontitis, is common and a major cause of tooth loss for adults, the authors write. The condition has been tied to a higher risk of cardiovascular disease and general inflammation, which in turn have been tied to stroke and hardening of the arteries. Stroke and hardening of the arteries are also associated with erectile dysfunction (ED).

"In our opinion, the actual biological mechanism of ED in periodontitis patients remains poorly understood," said senior author Dr. Zhigang Zhao of The First Affiliated Hospital of Guangzhou Medical University in China. "It might still be too early to suggest that men with ED should have their teeth checked; and that men with chronic periodontitis should worry about their sexual function," Zhao said. "However, it might be beneficial to inform patients with chronic periodontitis about its association with ED." The reviewers analyzed data from five studies published between 2009 and 2014, including one randomized controlled trial. In total, the studies covered 213,000 participants aged 20 to 80.

Each study found erectile dysfunction was more common among men being treated for chronic periodontitis, particu-

larly for those younger than 40 and older than 59. After accounting for diabetes, which can influence both gum disease and sexual function, erectile dysfunction was 2.28 times more common for men with periodontitis than for men without it, according to the report in the International Journal of Impotence Research. "Since chronic periodontitis had been linked with several chronic disorders, it is sensible to recommend daily inter-dental cleaning to reduce dental plaque and gingival inflammation," Zhao said. "Chronic periodontitis treatment can control or eliminate inflammation and may reduce the risk of ED."

One study in 2013 found that treating periodontitis improves erectile dysfunction symptoms. "Furthermore, clinicians should be aware of the potential role played by periodontitis disease in the development of erectile dysfunction," Zhao said. The new review did have limitations, including the fact that erectile dysfunction and chronic periodontitis are caused by similar risk factors, such as aging, smoking, diabetes mellitus and coronary artery disease. While some studies did account for diabetes, most did not account for smoking or alcohol consumption, which can also affect oral health and sexual function, the authors write. Even after an exhaustive search, the evidence linking periodontitis and ED is limited, they write.—Reuters



MUSINA, South Africa: This file photo taken on November 10, 2016 shows dehorned rhinos roaming in the Kudu Reserve as rangers take part in a joint intense anti-poaching training program with US military veterans.—AFP

MILITARY VETERANS SEEK NEW ROLE IN S AFRICA POACHING WAR

TSHIPISE, South Africa: In another life, Lynn was a sniper in Afghanistan, Damien trained paramilitary forces in Iraq, and John worked undercover infiltrating drug cartels in central America. Now all three are back in action, this time fighting what they describe as a "war" against poachers in southern Africa as the killing of rhinos escalates into a crisis that threatens the survival of the species.

In 2008, less than 100 rhinos were poached in South Africa, but in recent years numbers have rocketed with nearly 1,200 killed in 2015 alone. Faced with such slaughter, conservationists and government authorities have been desperately searching for ways to protect the animals.

Many ideas have been tried, including drones, tracking dogs, satellite imagery, DNA analysis, hidden cameras and even cutting horns off live animals before poachers can get to them. But the killing has continued, and now military veterans from the United States, Australia and elsewhere have been drafted to bring their expertise to the uphill battle to save the rhinos. "You have animals who are targeted by people using automatic weapons," Damien Mander, a former Australian Navy special forces officer, told AFP. "You cannot go to the communities and ask them nicely to stop. This is a war. We are fighting a war out there."

Lessons from the frontline

Mander, who spent three years serving in Iraq, is the founder of the International Anti-Poaching Foundation, which supports anti-poaching rangers through training and promotes "direct action" to protect rhino. "The only thing that is going to buy time for (conservation) initiatives is well-trained, well-equipped rangers who are willing to go every day and risk their lives," he said. "I was programmed to destroy. I am now programmed to protect."

Wearing a military jacket, his arms covered in tattoos, Lynn Westover is putting his military background to good use by running a two-day training course on a reserve in the northern province of Limpopo. Attended by a dozen rangers and local ranch owners, the course, which is packed with military jargon, offers a wide range of instruction from how to disarm poachers to analyzing footprints and even communicating with helicopter pilots.

Westover, 35, says his military career, which took him from Afghanistan and Iraq to Nigeria and also saw him working in southeast Asia, Latin America and Nigeria, has given him valuable experience to pass

on. "I am still doing the same kind of work, but I am changing who I am impacting for a greater good," said Westover, an American who comes from Seattle. "It is repurposing because you feel a sense of unity and pride. I feel that I am giving these rangers a better chance of survival."

He works for Vetpaw (Veterans Empowered to Protect African Wildlife), a New York-based group that helps former servicemen to develop new careers using their military skills. Another veteran finding a new purpose in the South African bush is 'John' a pseudonym who agrees that ex-servicemen bring unique skills to the poaching problem. "The behavior of a poacher, a drug trafficker or terrorist is the same," he said.

The cost of war

But the so-called "green militarization" of anti-poaching work—a term for the involvement of ex-military in conservation work—has aroused strong criticism, with some saying local men suspected of being poachers are being killed indiscriminately. No figures are available, but some of the dead are from Mozambique, which borders on South Africa's Kruger National Park. "It alienates local people and turns conservation areas into fortresses," said Libby Lunstrum, a professor at Canada's York University who specializes in poaching.

Without giving numbers, she told AFP that "a lot" of young men had been shot and buried in the border area. "It has a devastating impact on communities who are less likely to support conservation because they see park rangers as people who kill their loved ones." Even so, charity groups such as the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) are also tapping into battlefield expertise and hiring former US intelligence officers.

Fighting fire with fire

"It is not unusual to see animals killed by automatic weapons," Celine Sissler-Bienvenu, a director of IFAW, told AFP. "When we are in a war context, we have no other means than to respond using a similar force." For ranch owners like Howard Knott, who attended the training course, any assistance is welcome as demand for rhino horn soars in China and Vietnam, where it is prized for its alleged medicinal properties. Knott has lost four rhinos in the last two years, while one neighbor lost four in just one week this October. "We really appreciate what they have come to do and teach our guys," he said.—AFP

WHAT TRUMP CAN LEARN FROM OBAMA'S ROUGH RIDE ON HEALTH CARE

'IF YOU LIKE YOUR HEALTH CARE PLAN, YOU CAN KEEP IT'

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama took on the problems of a lack of access to health care and high cost, but he and Democrats paid a political price. President-elect Donald Trump has promised to undo much of what Obama put in place, and pledged to make the system better. Although Trump is lacking in specifics, he seems to want to make costs his priority. States, insurers, businesses, and individuals would get more leeway to sort out access. Health care keenly reflects the country's deep political divide. A look at some lessons Trump might learn from Obama's rough ride:

The perils of promises

Obama promised that "if you like your health care plan, you can keep it." But then several million people were threatened with the loss of policies that didn't conform to his overhaul. Obama said premiums would come down, too. Trump hasn't made such specific promises, yet it may already be too late for him. In the campaign, Trump made it sound like replacing the law would be quick and easy, and people would be widely satisfied with the results.

Consider his idea for allowing insurers to sell policies across state lines. "Get rid of the artificial lines and you will have yourself great plans," Trump said. That ignores practical issues such as whether an insurer in Houston can set up a viable network of doctors in New York. "There are no easy solutions in health care," said Jim Capretta, a health policy expert with the business-oriented American Enterprise Institute. "Whatever is done will necessarily involve some trade-offs, and winners and losers. There are political risks associated with every kind of policy proposal."

Medicare and Medicaid

As a candidate in 2008, then-Sen. Obama proposed requiring parents to get health insurance for their children, one of several steps to move toward coverage for all. As president, he embraced a broader "individual mandate" requiring most people to be covered. Enforced with fines from the IRS, it's been unpopular from the start. Separately, Obama and a Democratic-led Congress financed part of the coverage expansion in the Affordable Care Act with cuts in Medicare payments to service providers. That was an unwelcome surprise to older people. Even if Medicare cuts improved the program's balance sheet, older voters helped deliver the House to Republicans in 2010, a few months after Obama signed the overhaul.

Trump has promised not to cut Medicare, but Republican leaders in Congress want to revamp the program to provide future retirees with a fixed amount to purchase private insurance. Will Trump go along? Trump initially also said he wouldn't cut Medicaid, the health care program for low-income people. During the campaign, though, his views shifted to backing a "block grant" that would limit federal money to states and could result in big cuts. Medicare and Medicaid have been around for more than 50 years and are politically popular. Most people, including Republicans, don't equate the programs with the health law. So Trump could be left exposed.

Going it alone

Democrats passed the 2010 law over solid GOP opposition. Progressives blamed Republican obstinacy and said the overhaul contained many provisions with a centrist, even Republican, pedigree. But the lack of bipartisan support stoked years of opposition. Trump's ability to win over some Democrats will determine whether his ideas are remembered as a fleeting lurch to the political right or a lasting course correction. At the moment, it's hard to detect any glimmer of bipartisanship. "If President Trump succeeds in getting the ACA repealed, he and the Republicans will 'own' America's health care sys-



PHOENIX: In this June 17, 2013, file photo, Arizona Gov Jan Brewer signs the Medicaid expansion law in Phoenix.



PHOENIX: In this June 17, 2013, file photo, Arizona Gov Jan Brewer signs the Medicaid expansion law in Phoenix.

tem," said Ron Pollack of Families USA, a leading advocate for Obama's law. "As tens of millions of people lose coverage, the blame will go squarely onto the shoulders of those who engineered the repeal."

People live here

When Obama signed the measure into law, Democrats hailed it as the fulfillment of historic aspirations to close the last major hole in the nation's social safety net. If Trump gets to sign "repeal and replace" legislation, the rhetoric will be about getting government off people's backs and giving consumers the options they really needed.

How will the reality measure up?

Obama's law has been a lifeline for many

people who previously could not get coverage. For others it brought unwanted legal obligations and expenses that burdened household budgets.

The law did not hold back the trend of rising out-of-pocket costs for those with employer coverage. People worry about the overall affordability of their health care, said Larry Levitt of the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation. Consumers have gotten savvy that out-of-pocket costs, which come on top of premiums, erode the value of their insurance card.

"Republicans may be tempted to push insurance premiums down by allowing insurers to offer skimpier coverage with fewer benefits and higher deductibles," he said. "That's not likely to satisfy consumers in the end."—AP

DESTINATION MOON? BELGIUM JOINS THE SPACE RACE

BELGIUM: Belgian comic-strip hero Tintin helped popularize the 1950s Space Race with his iconic cartoon rocket; seven decades on from the boy reporter's "Destination Moon", his country is finally getting its own version of NASA. The Interfederal Space Agency of Belgium (ISAB) will be set up next year, science minister Elke Sleurs said, arguing that it would help a local industry hang on to what is now a 5-percent share of the EU's 7 billion-euro a year space industry.

Challenges from the likes of rising powers India and China and changing rules for EU-wide tenders meant Belgium should pool

resources to help its companies compete, she said: "If we just keep the status quo, we risk losing out on space contracts." About 60 firms in the local sector include the 96-year-old SABCA, which has worked on Europe's Ariane rocket program.

Images from Tintin space stories, starting with "Destination Moon" in 1950, have become Belgian national treasures and fed popular fascination worldwide with cosmic adventure. A single original drawing by his creator Hergé from 1954's "Explorers on the Moon" sold last week in Paris for 1.55 million euros.—Reuters

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ILOA ORGANIZES TWO DAYS' WORKSHOP FOR KUWAIT CHAPTER CBSE SCHOOLS

Indian Learners Own Academy organized a two days' workshop for the Principals and aspiring Principals of Kuwait Chapter Schools, under the aegis of the Council of CBSE Affiliated Schools in the Gulf, at the LOA Auditorium.

The theme of this workshop was "THE LEARNER- KEY TO SCHOOL EXCELLENCE." The Resource Person was Dr. Senthil Kumaran, who is the Co-founder and Chief Confluencer of 'The Learners Confluence'. The host institution invited H. E. Mr. Sunil Jain, the Honorable Ambassador of India to Kuwait as the Chief Guest for the inaugural ceremony.

The auditorium was illuminated with intellectuals and the inaugural ceremony commenced with the lighting of the lamp by His Excellency- Mr. Sunil Jain, Honorable Principal and Convener of Council of CBSE Schools, Kuwait Chapter - Mrs. Asha Sharma, introduced the esteemed Chief Guest and the Resource Person. She also welcomed all the dignitaries and participants from various Indian Schools of Kuwait. Mr. D.K. Sharma, the Chairman of ILOA also graced the occasion.

His Excellency- Mr. Sunil Jain addressed the gathering and felt honored to be the Chief Guest. He also stressed on the need to extend



quality education for the growing Indian community in Kuwait, and congratulated Mrs. Asha Sharma for organizing this workshop. The inaugural ceremony concluded with a photo session. The host institution ensured that every aspect of the event was organized with great care.

The first day session began after a tea break and handouts were given to all the participants.

Dr. Senthil Kumaran started the session by introducing the ABC of education system:-

- A- Awareness
 - B- Building competency and capabilities
 - C- Change
- Each school should have a VMV i.e. Vision Mission Values.

Dr. Senthil further elaborated that for any institution to bring about a positive change, we should have uniqueness in our practices. To achieve this, we must follow the formula - $4A + 2I = C$, where the 4 A's are awareness, assessment, acceptance and attitude. The 2 I's are I= individual & I= Institution. This will lead to C= change.

The following points were also included:-

- Learning should be continual and not continuous.
- Institutions should identify individuals from time to time.
- Institutions should check their lesson plans and keep modifying (if required) from time to time.
- Examination Committee should make a note about the errors in the question papers and be careful next time.
- Worksheets should be personalized and according to the level of each child.
- Repeated behaviour and pattern to be changed by teachers.

Before the lunch break, an interesting activity named 'Bingo' was conducted. This helped all the participants to know more about each other. Each one enjoyed a lot and then proceeded for a lunch break. After a wonderful lunch, Dr. Senthil started the next topic-

"The Learner- Bridging Expectations & Needs." Dr. Senthil expressed that, to know about the learner, it is important to have the parental profile. He made the session very interactive and following points were discussed:-

- Evolving of child is the process of learning and learning happens through the practices of school.
- Opportunities should be given to a child to improve their performance.
- Let students take responsibility for their own work. This will help them to evolve.
- Every child needs some motivation to succeed.

Day 2, began with the topic on Empowering the Learner- Tools & Strategies.

Co-operative learning:- We must create space for co-operative learning.

To show the importance and effect of co-operative learning, teachers were asked to perform a hilarious activity wherein teachers formed groups to perform skit, role play, story

writing, poetry writing and enacting etc.

The following points were also covered :-

- Let students be exposed to problems and let them learn to find the solution.
- Teachers should ask open ended questions.
- Use technology appropriately and to a limit. Do not overuse it.
- Plan for a desired objective.
- A teacher should get connected to the learner emotionally.
- Form an obituary- A personal vision for yourself.

Finally the session concluded with a very meaningful statement- "STOP TEACHING AND START REACHING."

Mrs. Asha Sharma graciously thanked all the participants for being a part of the workshop and requested one member from each school to express their views about the workshop.

Dr. Senthil Kumaran accorded the certificates to each participant who attended the workshop.

The workshop was indeed a wonderful learning experience. A very interactive session with lot of examples given from our day to day life and also from the schools around the globe. It's time for us to pull up our socks and start introspecting ourselves.

TOYOTA GENUINE SPARE PARTS HOLD 3RD ANNUAL SKILLS CONTEST



Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer (MNSS) Toyota Genuine Spare Parts Division, one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies, organized its 3rd Annual Skills Contest 2016 in logistic and warehouse category at the parts distribution center Subhan as a part of one of its key objective of fostering skill level of manpower.

Skill contest program in Logistics and Warehouse was introduced by the Warehouse team lead by Shafeer Ali Manager, Logistics and warehouse to align with the strategic objective of the functional area and also to achieve the goal of 'perfect order mechanism', thus ensure the sustainability, accuracy and the speed of logistics operation of Toyota Genuine Parts in Kuwait.

The event program included on-stage competition among the top three contestants in the parts picking process followed by the awarding ceremony, entertainment act by the employees and dinner. Top three performers were selected from a pool of 25 contestants based on their theoretical and practical capabilities and were honored with Toyota plaques, certificates and cash awards.

The event was attended by Bengt Kurt Schultz COO Al-Sayer Group holding, Mohamed Hilal Business Director Spare parts MNSS, Ibrahim Al Fouzan Business Director Service MNSS, Jacques Feghali Chief Human Resource Officer, Saied Mohamed Al Shurafa Deputy General Manager Parts and Accessories Sales

MNSS, Senior Managers, Managers and distinguished team members from Al-Sayer Toyota Parts division.

A captivating venue representing a vintage ship was set by the employees exclusively fabricated with the reusable byproducts from the Warehouse which perfectly complimented to the groups common goal of "Environment Friendly Operation". Mohamed Hilal Business Director Spare parts welcomed all the dignitaries and expressed his visionary goal of sustaining highest customer and employee satisfaction in the industry. He also thanked all the participants and contestants of the event for their dedicated efforts in making the program a milestone event in the history of MNSS.

Bengt Schultz Chief Operating Officer addressed the gathering and appreciated the efforts of the Spare parts team in retaining the position as one of the world best facility and operation standard among the Toyota distributors. Jacques Feghali CHRO highlighted that such events will challenge the employees their capabilities and will ultimately lead to the goal of employee development.

"In order to support our common goals towards environmental friendly approach we have taken keen attention to completely avoid using any sort of disposable materials or non-bio degradable materials. Once again this is a real life example for an excellent team work with care and precision. Our team spent extra hours to ensure its on time completion, without affecting daily business operations or our customer service." Hilal said commenting on the well-coordinated efforts by warehouse, inventory, marketing, IT and logistics team.



ACK HOSTS KOC'S INFORMATION EXHIBITION



Mr. Abdullah and Mr. Menahi shaking hands

The Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) proudly hosted the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) information Exhibition. The event was organized by the Alumni and Career Placement Center at ACK, in collaboration with the Training and Career Development Department at KOC, in order to raise awareness on integral departments which play a key role in KOC's operations as well providing an opportunity for students to meet ACK Alumni currently working at KOC.

The 2 day informative event opened by the Acting Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Administration and Finance at KOC, Mr. Menahi Saeed Al-Anzi and the Chairman of ACK, Mr. Abdullah Al Sharhan. A showcase was held, covering 20 booths from various KOC departments such as, Human Resources, Public

Relations & Information, Training and Career Development, Development Drilling, Field Development, Gas Fields Development, Exploration, Heavy Oil, Deep Drilling, Drilling Engineering, Medical Group, Health Safety & Environment, Export Operations & Marine Operations and more.

The mission of the Alumni and Career Placement Center at ACK is to maintain and support the relationship between ACK and all its graduates through quality career services and outstanding benefits. The Center offers a myriad of services and benefits to ACK Alumni that range from personal to professional development, such as career counseling, assistance in securing career opportunities, networking platforms, community services and much more.



Mr. Abdullah Al Sharhan and Mr. Menahi



38 CYPHER WINNERS WILL COMPETE FOR A SPOT IN THE WORLD FINAL C-SICK TO JAPAN FOR THE FINAL OF RED BULL BC ONE

Red Bull BC One Cypher World Final is returning to Japan on December 3, this time in the incredible city of Nagoya, the country's third largest city and a bustling hub for Hip Hop. B-Boy C-Sick will be joining sixteen of the best B-Boys on the planet will go head-to-head in knockout battles to determine who will be the one. The event will be broadcast live on Red Bull TV.

As Red Bull BC One entered its 13th year, big changes marked the year. In order to open up the event year-round to the wider community, the six regional Finals were replaced with Red Bull BC One Camps all over the world as an attempt to go back to the core of what

breaking is all about: culture. The World Final will once again be invitation only, with the exception of one name to be determined by a Last Chance Cypher where all cypher winners throughout the year will compete for one open spot that will conclude the line-up.

This Last Chance Cypher will represent an incredible cultural exchange, as B-Boys will come in from all over the world to prove their skills on the dance floor and battle in an attempt to earn that one coveted spot on the ultimate stage. The winner will compete in the World Final alongside a line-up of Wild Card entries, chosen by an international team of B-Boy experts.

Last year, millions of spectators tuned in from around the world to see USA's Victor take the belt in Rome. Each year the stakes become higher and the competition tougher, as breakers continue to evolve the art form. It will be an unbelievable week of events not to be missed. Kuwaiti winner b-boy C-Sick was part of last year's battle; the incredibly talented break-dancer has won the National Cypher three times in a row in 2014, 2015 and 2016!

"I cannot believe I was able to make it again this year! I am extremely excited to battle against the best b-boys from all around the world for the third time," said b-boy C-Sick.



LANDMARK GROUP HOLDS ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY - GRAND PRIZE WINNERS

Landmark Group, the region's leading retail and hospitality conglomerate, held its 20th anniversary raffle draw on Thursday 17 November at The Avenues.

The exciting draw event welcomed hundreds of shoppers who were eager to be one of the lucky raffle draw winners. The special promotion campaign that was launched from 25 October - 13 November 2016 recorded a huge success, with over 200,000 number of participants entering the draw. The Draw event attracted large crowd at the Avenues. Lots of games and activities were held for families and kids while free giveaways were distributed to the audiences.

Celebrating the campaign's success, Saibal

Basu, Chief Operating Officer, Landmark Group Kuwait said: "We are extremely proud that many of our loyal customers came to join us for our 20th anniversary at The Avenues. This is a major milestone for us and we are pleased to share this moment with our customers and the wider public in Kuwait. Operating in Kuwait since 1996, we aim to continue growing with our customers and present them with the latest range of products and the best customer service."

One of the lucky Winners said: "I was thrilled to receive a call from Landmark office informing me that I had won the Grand Prize. I have been a customer of Landmark for 12 Years. I hold Shukran card and I am very satis-

fied with their brands, products & services they provide."

Over the years Landmark Group has successfully grown into one of the largest and most successful retail organizations in the Middle East and India. Today, the Group operates close to 2,400 stores in over 20 countries, encompassing a wide range of diverse retail and hospitality concepts. The best measure of this success is the 15 million plus Shukran Loyalty Members across the Middle East who choose Landmark brands as their preferred shopping destination. In Kuwait, Landmark Group has a wide network of brands including - Centrepoint, Babyshop, Splash, Shoe Mart, Lifestyle, Iconic, Max, Home Centre,

Shoexpress, Paprika, Bossini, and franchise brands like New Look, YOURS London, Dumond, Steve Madden, Aerosoles, Pablosky & Carpisa. The Group also has a host of hospitality brands like Fitness First, Zafran, Max Restaurant, Centrepoint Cafes & Fun City. Enjoying unparalleled customer acceptance, Landmark Group in Kuwait is poised for phenomenal growth in the coming years.

The 20 lucky winners are:

1. Mohammed Mahmoud Hassoun (41336)
2. Alfa Nail (95219)
3. Hamza Mohammed (49629)
4. Wasming Hawton (276200)
5. Mossa Alottebi (55974)
6. Azari Abraham (71017)

7. Sultan Hassan (136513)
 8. Hassan Habeb(255680)
 9. Fahed Khalid(111113)
 10. Ahmed Qasem(236162)
 11. Zahra Mohammed(193459)
 12. Reem Mubarak(33637)
 13. Shima Alomeray(221033)
 14. Jammel M Lauriteo (81054)
 15. Assma Gabriel(99856)
 16. Fatima Amer(60589)
 17. Amer Essa(161114)
 18. John Tomas(195701)
 19. Nashwa Wagdy(193817)
 20. Khadiga Ali(20289)
- Kindly Contact Landmark Group Office to Collect Your Prizes. Tel: 22909909



SPECIAL DAY FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2016 - HEAD GEAR DAY

CSK Jr. conducted head gear day as a special day for Kindergarten Section on Wednesday 9th Nov 2016. Anything out of ordinary always attracts attention. Children were asked to wear fancy hats and come to school. The little stars had great fun with special vibrant hats on their heads. The tiny tots of LKG and UKG children were all excited and proud of their colourful head gear. It was a feast to the eyes to see the little ones wearing different types of creatively decorated hats such as balloon hat, flower hat, Rabbit hat, feather, vegetable hat etc. The initiative and effort put in by the parents is indeed commendable.

EMBASSY OF CUBA TO OPEN CONDOLENCE BOOK

The Embassy of Cuba in Kuwait informs with deep regret that Commandant in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, historical leader and founder of the Cuban Revolution passed away on Friday 25TH OF November. A condolence book will be opened at the Embassy from Monday 28 November to Sunday December 4, from 09 00 to 13 00 hours and from 16.00 to 18.00 hours at the Embassy, located at Al -Rawda, Block 3 Shabab Ahmed Al Bahar, St. House 74.

ANIMAL PLANET HD

00:50 Gator Boys
01:45 Mountain Monsters
02:40 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker

10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
11:25 Sacred Steel Bikes

HQ HD

00:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
01:00 America's Book Of Secrets Tanked
02:00 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate Evidence

crime & investigation network

00:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
01:00 The Haunting Of... My Haunted House

00:00 A Haunting
01:30 Paranormal Lockdown
02:20 Alaska Haunting
03:10 The Haunted

Discovery Family

00:30 Prototype This
01:20 Prototype This
02:10 Dirty Jobs

10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre

17:14 Myhbusters
18:02 Science Of The Movies
18:50 Da Vinci's Machines

Disney Channel HD

00:10 Hank Zipzer
00:35 Binny And The Ghost
01:00 Violetta
01:45 The Hive



THE AGE OF ADALINE ON OSN MOVIES HD

13:00 Loopdidoo
13:15 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
13:45 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse

21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
22:10 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister Six

09:45 The Shelbourne
10:35 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
11:25 Carnival Eats



BRICK MANSIONS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

07:25 Doki
07:50 America's Cutest Pets
08:40 How It's Made

13:00 I Was Murdered
13:50 I Almost Got Away With It

Disney Junior

00:00 Doc McStuffins
00:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
00:35 Zou

06:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
06:25 The 7D
06:50 Phineas & Ferb

00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:10 Car vs Wild
02:00 Sherpa

Discovery Science

00:40 Science Of The Movies
01:30 Science Of The Movies
02:20 Invisible Worlds

itv HD CHOICE

00:10 Keep It In The Family
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Coronation Street

NAT GEO people HD

00:10 Eat Street
00:35 Top Tables, Top Cities
01:00 Maximum Foodie

15:40 The Incredible Dr. Pol
16:35 Safari Brothers
17:30 Jobs That Bite!

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

00:10 To Catch A Smuggler
01:00 Big Fix Alaska
02:00 Big Fish, Texas

OSN FIRST HD

00:00 Prison Break
01:00 Quantic
02:00 Roadies

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

00:00 Uncle Buck
00:30 Young & Hungry
01:00 Young & Hungry

NAT GEO WILD HD

00:20 World's Deadliest
01:10 Caught In The Act
02:00 World's Deadliest

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

00:45 The Helpers
02:15 Inside
03:45 Metro

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

00:00 Army Of Darkness
02:00 Blue Streak
04:00 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

01:00 Stone Markers
03:00 Decoding Annie Parker
05:00 Parkland

OSN MOVIES HD

01:00 Lila & Eve
03:00 Pixels
05:00 A Birder's Guide To Everything

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

00:45 Ghatotchak - Master Of Magic
02:30 Blue Elephant 2
04:15 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure

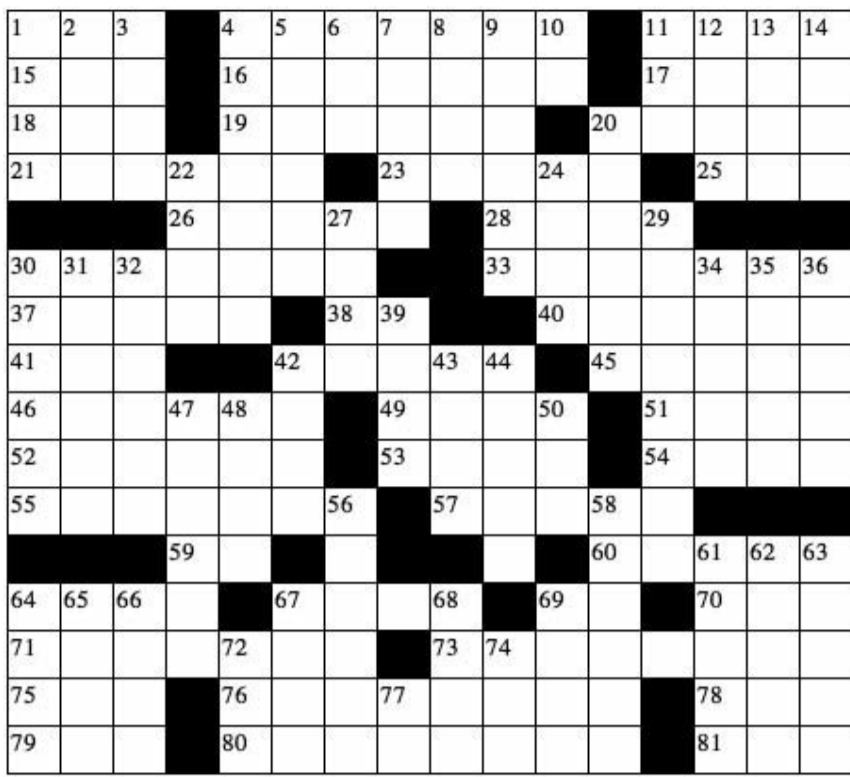
OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

01:00 Monsterville: The Cabinet Of Souls
03:00 Mostly Ghostly: Have You Met My Ghoulfriend



FRANKENWEENIE ON OSN MOVIES FAMILY HD

CROSSWORD 1444



ACROSS

- 1. Ancient Hebrew unit of liquid measure = 1.5 gallons. 4. The act of adding salt to food. 11. Norwegian mathematician (1802-1829). 15. A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice. ... 81. The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.

DOWN

- 1. A pilgrimage to Mecca. 2. The content of cognition.

Yesterday's Solution

Grid for the previous day's crossword solution, showing words like SAT, BOARD, TIARA, etc.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Phone calls, news broadcasted from the radio and taken from the newspaper, plus visits with friends in your religious circle all seem to pass your checkpoint today. Reports show that everything is doing fine in your world; it's all good news.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Cleaning out, trashing the unnecessary, giving away the extras and setting aside the unessential are what this morning is all about. This is a kind of spiritual or philosophical rebirth and it is not always easy.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Close relationships and other ties between people become a focus for much of your thinking process now. You may find yourself on the phone with a friend talking about marriage and the things that go into the mix to make a good marriage work.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Some updates in your home may be lots of fun to tackle. You have a garage or storage shed that you may decide to turn into a room for a young person. Depending on the responsibility of this young person, the room may be enjoyed as a game room.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is a feeling of being at peace and stable on the emotional level. Music is likely to play a more important role for you this morning. Some of you have the music writing talent and if not you will enjoy listening or performing.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are looking forward to expressing yourself at the next church or family meeting on the topic of some new project. This is an excellent time to add your own ideas to the mix.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Unusual approaches to philosophy, religion, law and politics come to into play today and you may find that you have a bigger interest in some community role in your life now.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Your attention may be on investments today as a neighbor or friend brags or shows off a few pictures of an investment. You may decide you like the idea of real estate as an investment and will seek to create some time to investigate the matter.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Someone may give you more attention than you would prefer this Sunday. A neighbor or an acquaintance may ask one too many questions.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You are a very sensitive person who can depend on feelings and intuition to get around in life. Fortunately, as intelligent as you are, you also seek proof for things you sense have meaning.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

A charitable organization is brought to your attention this morning, perhaps through an announcement in your church bulletin or through some other form of information. An interest in this charity may go as far as some volunteer work.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may find yourself teaching a class within your religious organization this morning. Others value you for your ability to make some difficult topics easy to understand.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Radiohead Songs

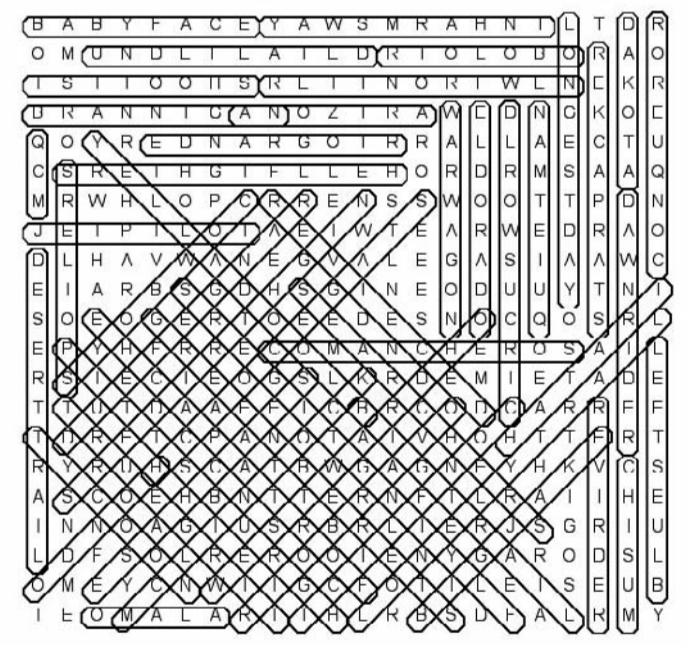
Find and circle all of the Radiohead songs that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional song by Radiohead.



- ALRBAG, ALL I NEED, BLACK STAR, BLOW OUT, BODYSNATCHERS, BONES, CREEP, ELECTIONEERING, FAUST ARP, FITTER HAPPIER, HIGH AND DRY, HUNTING BEARS, IN LIMBO, JUST, KARMA POLICE, KID A, KNIVES OUT, LET DOWN, LUCKY, LURGEE, MORNING BELL, MY IRON LUNG, NICE DREAM, NO SURPRISES, NUDE, OPTIMISTIC, PARANOID ANDROID, PLANET TEXEL, PROVE YOURSELF, PYRAMID SONG, RECKONER, RIPCORD, SULK, THE BENDS, THE TOURIST, TREEFINGERS, VEGETABLE, VIDEOTAPE

Yesterday's Solution

John Wayne Movies



- ALAMO, ARIZONA, BABY FACE, BIG JAKE, BLOOD ALLEY, BLUE STEEL, BRANNIGAN, CHISUM, CIRCUS WORLD, COMANCHEROS, CONFLICT, CONQUEROR, COWBOYS, DAKOTA, DAWN RIDER, DECEIVER, DESERT TRAIL, EL DORADO, FLYING TIGERS, FORT APACHE, GREEN BERETS, HATARI, HELL FIGHTERS, HONDO, IN HARMS WAY, JET PILOT, LONELY TRAIL, LONGEST DAY, MCLINTOCK, MIC, NEW FRONTIER, NIGHT RIDERS, PITTSBURGH, QUIET MAN, RANGE FEUD, RED RIVER, RIO BRAVO, RIO GRANDE, RIO LOBO, SEA CHASE, SEARCHERS, SHOOTIST, SPOILERS, STAGECOACH, STAR PACKER, TRUE GRIT, TYCOON, UNDEFEATED, WAR WAGON, WESTWARD HO

The hidden message is: TOMORROW HOPES WE HAVE LEARNED SOMETHING FROM YESTERDAY

Daily SuDoku

5x5 grid for Daily SuDoku puzzle with some numbers pre-filled.

Yesterday's Solution

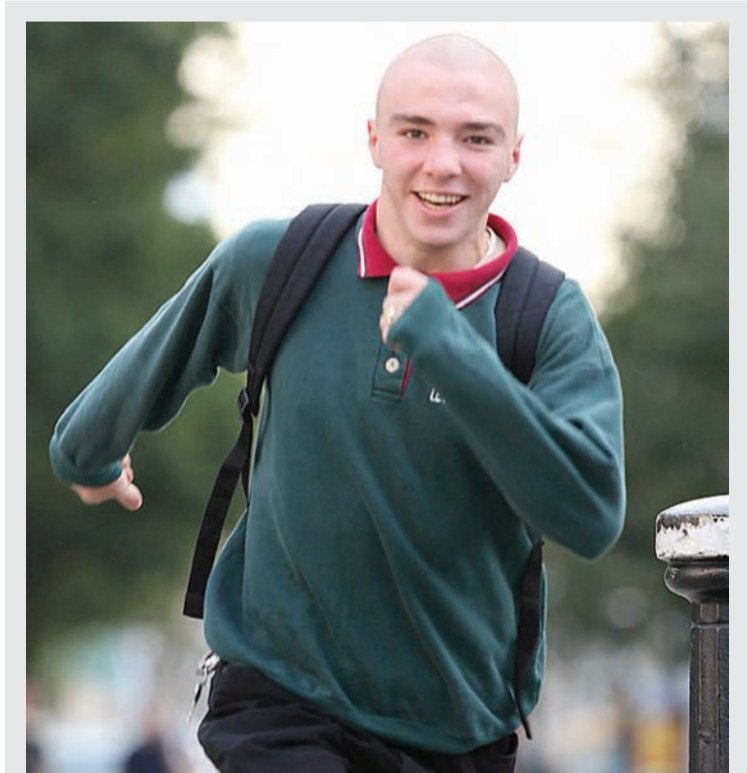
5x5 grid for the previous day's Sudoku solution.



Niall Horan: It would be 'ridiculous' if One Direction didn't reform

Niall Horan says it would be "ridiculous" to not reform One Direction in the future. The 23-year-old singer recently released his debut solo single 'This Town', but has squashed claims his band - completed by Harry Styles, Louis Tomlinson, and Liam Payne - have disbanded forever as he confirms they "will be back". Speaking to Sunday People newspaper, Niall said: "At the moment we are all doing our own thing. Everyone is just enjoying just how chilled it is. 'Harry wanted to do his movie and everyone is just chilling. I don't think anyone needs to worry about us we are fine. 'We will be back. We would be silly not to... ridiculous.' It isn't the first time the 'What Makes You Beautiful' singer has hinted at the return of One Direction either, as he previously

stated there would be "plenty more" material from the boy band. He said: "There's going to be plenty more One Direction shows, that's a guarantee so it's not a case of one more show. There's definitely more than one more 1D show coming up, that's a fact." The 'History' hitmaker also stood up for his fellow band mates, saying no-one gives them "enough credit" for how hard they work in the studio, after former member Zayn Malik - who left in 2015 - said he didn't have enough creative freedom. He said: "I don't think anyone really gives One Direction enough credit you know - in terms of what we were like in the studio. 'They think 'Here we go, another manufactured lot that don't really write their own stuff', but people would be wrong if they thought that."



Rocco Ritchie: I'm so glad I don't live with Madonna

Rocco Ritchie says he's "so glad" he no longer lives with his mum Madonna. The 16-year-old son of Madonna and Guy Ritchie has taken to Instagram in a now-deleted post that seemingly slams his 58-year-old mother for being embarrassing. Rocco took to the picture sharing website to post a video of his family - including Madonna and his adopted siblings David, 11, and Mercy, 10 - taking part in the Mannequin Challenge which requires the participants to stay completely still. Madonna was filmed with food hanging out of her mouth as she froze mid meal. The video footage was captioned: "So glad I don't live here anymore." When fans of the 'Like a Virgin' singer came to her defense to tell the teenager it was just a bit of fun, Rocco simply replied with a series of laughing emojis. According to The Sun, Rocco also reportedly blocked a number of his mother's fans on the site, preventing them from accessing his page. Rocco currently lives in

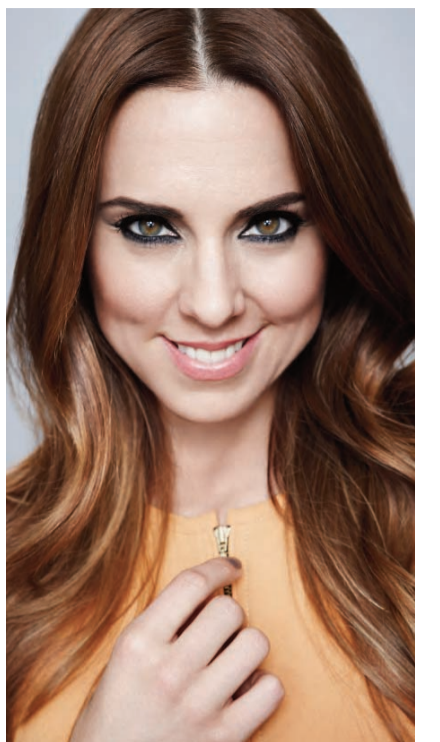
London with his father, where he was arrested last week for possession of marijuana. A source said at the time of his arrest: "Rocco has become a well-known figure in the neighborhood and not for the right reasons. He's been repeatedly seen acting in this manner and called the police." According to sources, Rocco was sat on a wall with a friend when police approached them and the officials noticed traces of cannabis on his clothes. A Scotland Yard spokesman said: "A 16-year-old has been arrested for possession of cannabis. He was bailed and dealt with by Camden Borough's Youth Offending Team." A few days after her son's arrest, Madonna released a statement asking for "privacy" whilst the matter is dealt with. She said: "I love my son very much. I will do whatever I can to give him the support that he needs, and I ask that you respect our privacy at this time."

Mel C backtracks on Little Mix comments

Mel C says Little Mix's skimpy outfits are "absolutely fine" after she previously branded them as "too sexy". The former Spice Girls singer - full name Melanie Chisholm - previously hit out at fellow girl band Little Mix for being "provocative" in the way they dressed, but has now claimed both her and her daughter Scarlet, seven, "love" the 'Shout Out to My Ex' hitmakers. When asked about the comments she made about Little Mix, Mel said: "I'm upset about that. I didn't even see the video to comment on it, but I love them and so does Scarlet." Personally, I've never worn skimpy outfits because I don't feel comfortable. I'm athletic. I don't have a

voluptuous figure and I've never seen myself as sexual. "But some people do like to dress that way and that's absolutely fine." The 'Wannabe' hitmaker, 42, says her criticism instead lies with "society and culture" for encouraging the "sexualisation of young children". She added: "As a mum I have to be responsible. The over sexualisation of young children isn't the fault of young women, is it? It's society and culture." And the 'I Turn to You' singer even admits her former band - completed by Geri Horner, Emma Bunton, Mel B, and Victoria Beckham - received backlash for their own outfits. Asked if the Spice Girls were ever criticized for their outfit choices, Mel told The Mirror newspa-

per: "Yeah! I was so naive. We all were. 'Say You'll Be There' the other girls were in PVC and thigh-high boots. We tie a man up for God's sake." In Mel's original comments, she urged Perrie Edwards, Jesy Nelson, Jade Thirlwall and Leigh-Anne Pincock to return to their roots, instead of opting for their new raunchy image. She said: "I love Little Mix. I loved them from 'The X Factor'. I just thought they were so different. "But they are getting more provocative. To me, they were kind of the closest thing to the Spice Girls we've seen. "They are all gorgeous and great singers. But they weren't sexy and it's got more and more that way. I love them - but I just say, 'Stay you.'"



Adele may 'teach a few classes' at her old school

Adele is planning on teaching "a few classes" at her old school once her tour is over. The 28-year-old singer was trained in the musical arts at the prestigious BRIT School in London, and sources have suggested that she has been "seriously" thinking about returning to the performing arts institute to "teach a few classes". A source told The Sun on Sunday newspaper: "Adele is grateful for the success she's had and has been talking a lot about her beginnings while on tour. "Tony Castro, who was head of music at the BRIT School, is someone she feels particularly grateful to because he made students write their own songs. "And talking about how teachers influenced her has made her think more seriously about teaching herself. "Once she has recovered from the tour, she would love to teach a few classes." The 'Hello' hitmaker's

possible turn to teaching comes after she recently stated she wanted to take time off from touring in order to give her four-year-old son Angelo - whom she shares with partner Simon Konecki - a little sibling. She said on stage recently: "I'll see ya later, I'll see ya on the other side. In a couple of years when I'll be back, you won't be able to get rid of me. I'm going to go and have a baby." And it isn't the first time the blonde beauty has openly discussed having a second child, as she said last month her "womb is starting to ache" with the need for another baby. She said: "I'm starting to get very emotional about it because I feel like once they turn four, they're not really your actual baby anymore. "So my womb is starting to ache a little bit. It's like, 'Baby, baby, baby. Need a baby, need a baby'. I'm not pregnant. I won't get pregnant until the end of the tour."

Phil Collins casts doubt on moon landing

Phil Collins doesn't believe the moon landings took place. The 'The Air Tonight' singer's old group Flaming Youth based an album, 'Ark II' on the historical 1969 event, but he admits he is skeptical as to whether Neil Armstrong really did step on the moon. He said: "They had the premiere of our album, 'Ark II', at the Planetarium (London venue), where they played the music and projected a light show on the ceiling. It was all in the air. "We'd already recorded the LP and we spend an evening - the evening - when the Americans apparently went to the moon... "It's a can of worms and I don't know if I should open it. But I have a lot of questions about that. "Anyway, we were on the rooftop of their very glamorous Hampstead period townhouse, looking up at the moon and watching it on TV. It was a very heady time. "It was basically the beginning of serious discussions about space travel and that's what 'Ark II' was based on." The 65-year-old musician went from drummer to frontman when Peter Gabriel quit Genesis and the thing he found hardest was filling the gaps between songs. He recalled to Uncut magazine: "My main worry was what I was going to say to the crowd as the band are tuning their 12-string guitars between songs. "You can't let the dead air settle, you have to fill it, and that's what Peter became good at. "I used to tell little



stories. Sometimes it was terribly embarrassing. "I concocted this story for 'The Cinema Show'. We were in Spain in a bullring and for some reason I can't quite fathom, the story involved an inflatable doll. "There was this guy, trying to blow the doll up, and he's smoking and of course he bursts the doll. It was quite funny on paper. "But I'm standing there in this bull ring, telling my story, which is written on a bit of paper in my hand, in pidgin Spanish, trying to blow up an inflatable doll... It became quite clear this story was going to take a good half hour."

Matt Smith is planning a festive proposal

The Crown actor is reportedly planning to whisk girlfriend Lily James - who he has been dating for two years - off to New York for Christmas, and will pop the question while they're on their trip. A source told Grazia magazine: "They are absolutely besotted and a wedding has been on the cards for a while. "The question has always been finding a time when they're not both up against it with work. They've openly discussed getting married in the past." Matt, 34, reportedly decided to wait to propose until the "fuss" surrounding his Netflix miniseries 'The Crown' - in which he plays Britain's Prince Philip - had died down. Another source said: "Now that the series has aired, he's focusing on his love life." Lily, 27, recently admitted she enjoys going out and dancing

on tables with the former 'Doctor Who' star. She said: "I love dancing but I don't do it very much now unless I'm drunk. Me and Matt have been known to dance on a table." And the couple - who starred together in 'Pride and Prejudice and Zombies' - also enjoy their time when they're not getting drunk as they moved in together earlier this year. A source said finding a time when they're not both up against it with work. They've openly discussed getting married in the past." Matt, 34, reportedly decided to wait to propose until the "fuss" surrounding his Netflix miniseries 'The Crown' - in which he plays Britain's Prince Philip - had died down. Another source said: "Now that the series has aired, he's focusing on his love life." Lily, 27, recently admitted she enjoys going out and dancing



Mark Wahlberg can't talk about the Boston bombings

Mark Wahlberg finds it "extremely difficult" to talk about the Boston marathon bombings. The 45-year-old Boston native stars as Sergeant Tommy Saunders in 'Patriots Day', the drama based on the events of the 2013 terrorist attack - which resulted in six deaths and left approximately 280 people with non-fatal injuries - and says whilst he felt a sense of "pride" being involved in the project, it's also made the event "more and more difficult" to deal with. Speaking at a special screening for the movie, Mark said: "It's such a small community, so everyone knew someone who was affected. "I also felt a sense of pride being there. It was extremely difficult making [the] movie... it's becoming more and more difficult to talk about it." Meanwhile Kevin Bacon - who also stars in the movie as an FBI Special Agent named Richard DesLauriers - said it was important "not to live in

fear" of the terrorist attacks, as he believes if you are scared, "they won". He added at the screening: "You have to choose whatever feels right to you and your family... but what I choose is to not live in fear. Because if you live in fear, they won." Previously, Mark said he felt an immense amount of "pressure" to get the movie right, due to its sensitive nature. He said: "We felt like it was very important to do this, but do it right. "And of course, me being from Boston, and knowing that I would be held accountable personally, it was a lot of pressure, certainly more pressure than I've ever felt. "Everybody knows somebody who was directly affected by this. "It's such a small community. So, yeah, I felt an enormous amount of pressure, but I knew, based on my work experience with Pete [Berg, the director], that he was the right guy for the job because of how much he cares." — Bang Showbiz

Amelle Berrabah: I'll always have a connection with my dad

Amelle Berrabah will "always have a connection" with her late father. The former Sugababes singer was left heartbroken when her dad died of cancer 14 years ago and, although she doesn't think she'll ever be able to get over her loss, she believes her hero is always watching over her and she'll continue to do all she can to make him proud in her life and career. Speaking exclusively to BANG Showbiz, she explained: "I've always got a connection with my father. We were very very close, no matter what I do whether I'm a house wife, working in music or I'm an actress whatever I'm doing I always just try and do it to the best of my ability. "I obviously want to make him proud but the way he brought me up is you make yourself proud and if it's right, go with it and if you know something is wrong you, just stay away from it. "So it's pretty simple and quite black and white especially now I've matured a lot and I



have a great business and I'm doing pretty well but I know what it's like to struggle. I just try to be the best person I can possibly be." It took the 32-year-old singer a long time to come to terms with her dad's death but she soon realized that the easiest way to deal with the death is by focusing on all that he's taught her. She said: "It's definitely hard, it takes quite some time to get used to not having that person there especially if you're very close then it's a very different dynamic in your family life. But you have to move on, take it day by day, some people go through those denial stages some people cry non-stop, I feel my sort of character is that you just have to get on with it."

NY subway inspires Broadway's first a capella musical

New York's cityscape reverberates with pounding jackhammers and blaring car horns, but it's the cacophonous subway that perhaps best epitomizes the bustling metropolis. A chorus of voices sans instrumental accompaniment will soon bring the transit system's rhythms to Broadway, the first time the famous theater district will host an a cappella show. "In Transit" brings a rather unconventional touch to the Broadway stage: in a world known for its lively orchestras and consistent vibrato, the musical strips back the traditional extravagance to showcase the human voice.

"They sing, they dance, they act and they are the band," said Kathleen Marshall, the acclaimed director and choreographer of the musical, which is currently in previews and will premiere December 11.

A quartet of songwriters scored the show, including its co-creator Kristen Anderson-Lopez, who co-wrote songs for the animated hit movie "Frozen"—

including "Let it Go," for which she and her husband won an Academy Award. "A cappella is this incredible metaphor, because you have to be tuning in to the other people and you have to be listening," she told the magazine Entertainment Weekly. "When we jump onto the subway we're one place and we're going someplace else. Really life is all about being between stations. That's what we're really trying to say with this piece."

A capella takes center stage

More than 20 years ago "Avenue X" was the first musical to feature a cappella, but it was staged Off-Broadway—a circuit typified by smaller venues, more experimental content and different financial stakes. More recently the two "Pitch Perfect" films and the television series "Glee," which ran from 2009-2015, have helped bring the a cappella style back to the forefront. More than a thousand a cappella groups

boast a presence at universities across the US, and many participate in annual regional and national competitions.

Bringing the genre to Broadway seemed a natural next step. "In Transit," which has been in the works since 1999 — and had a stint Off-Broadway in 2010 — details the intertwined lives of 11 New Yorkers navigating the city's chaotic streets and tunnels. "It's about people finding themselves or trying to get to that place in life where they say: 'Yes, I'm here, I made it somewhere,'" said James Snyder, who plays Nate, a young man who has lost his job in finance. "I think that's something relatable whether you live in a small town or in a big city like New York."

Visualizing sound

The actors had to modify their vocals to pull off the show's harmonies, working under the direction of a cappella guru Deke Sharon. "This type of singing

is different from a regular Broadway sound," said David Abeles, who plays the character Dave. He explained that the performers sing in a straight tone to blend their voices, thereby evoking more instrumental sounds. "Sometimes Deke would have us miming the instrument that we're supposed to be playing," he said. "This actually helps because you visualize the sound."

The vocal orchestration of "In Transit" replicates the shouts of harried passengers, the whooshing sound the subway makes as it approaches and the low rumbling of the trains shuttling across the labyrinthian underbelly and elevated platforms of the city. In a musical focused on commuting, Abeles said the core message is about savoring the journey. "There's a really touching story here about people's interactions," he said. "About lives in New York, about living in the moment—rather than at the destination you're going for." — AFP

FILM REVIEW



Narrated by **KEANU REEVES**

MIFUNE

THE LAST SAMURAI

by Oscar® winning director **STEVEN OKAZAKI**

Mifune: The Last Samurai, a dutiful and diverting but rather bare-bones documentary portrait, opens with a series of clips and photographs of Toshiro Mifune, the scowling-eyed Japanese actor who became, in effect, the world's first action star. The first clip, from "Rashomon," looks even more transgressive today than it did in 1950: It's of Mifune's scruffy medieval bandit forcing himself at knifepoint on a maiden he discovers in the woods. In the other clips, we see him leaping, glowering, slashing, grunting, cackling maniacally, facing down armies of sword fighters, and appearing just as volatile when he's the victim, twitching to and fro like a gnarly demon as he evades a shower of arrows. The montage ends with a photograph of what looks like a different human being entirely: It's Mifune relaxing at home, elegant and debonair, with a handsome warm smile and eyes that crinkle just so, his black hair slicked back in a way that makes him resemble a Japanese Rock Hudson.

That image demonstrates something profound about Mifune, and it also raises a fascinating question about him. What it tells us is that the ferocious persona he presented in films like "Seven Samurai" (1954) and "Yojimbo" (1961) — the upstart lone-wolf swordsman, noble but a little maniacal, dominating every situation with an unruly energy that erupted from within—was fantastically calculated and artful creation. You might say "Duh" (he was, after all, an actor), but in the movies, Mifune unleashed himself with such brutal spontaneity that he seemed a force of nature, one who gathered his energy from the earth itself. Even now, the notion that his characters were meticulously devised seems, on some level, counterintuitive.

Thrashing balletic majesty

"The Last Samurai" allows the audience to relive, film by film, the explosiveness of what Mifune achieved, or (for younger viewers) to introduce themselves to his thrashing balletic majesty. That's a serviceable thing, but the movie, narrated with zombie Zen stoicism by Keanu Reeves, only rarely goes beyond that. Steven Okazaki, who directed and edited it, takes you through a functional, slightly sketchy version of Mifune's life and career—his childhood in China (where his Japanese parents were missionaries), his enlistment in the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II, during which he trained suicide bombers, and his attempt after the war to make a living by becoming an assistant cameraman. He fell into acting by acci-

dent, after someone sent his photo to a "New Faces" contest, and he might have wound up as just another Tokyo matinee idol.

But it was his destiny, at Toho Studios, to draw the attention of Akira Kurosawa in the late '40s, right at the moment when the already powerful director, full of guilt at having worked on films that supported the Japanese regime during the war, was set on creating movies that expressed his own rebellious impulses. The time for bowing and scraping in Japan was done. Mifune didn't bow—he was more like a warrior who blew up in your face.

Kurosawa, by temperament, was an epic visual classicist, but what he expressed was something modern and anarchic: the ecstasy of violence, the unknowability of truth, the inner thrum of the samurai's heart. "The Last Samurai" shows you how Mifune became Kurosawa's wild artistic id as surely as Robert De Niro was Martin Scorsese's in the '70s. Kurosawa trusted Mifune to be his collaborator, and rarely gave him direction. It was up to the actor to create his own characters, which he did through mountains of preparation, forging these rogues from the inside out. In "The Last Samurai," even his fight choreographer, Kanzo Uni—a man who was killed onscreen by Mifune more than 100 times—testifies that during a scene, when Toshiro would come at him with his bloodthirsty grimace and eyeballs peeled, it was genuinely intimidating.

Caged animal

All of this opens the door to a question about Mifune the film never answers: Where did his drive and obsession—his inner fury as an actor—come from? According to Scorsese, who is interviewed in the documentary along with Steven Spielberg, Mifune studied the movements of lions, which resulted in his ability to conjure the aura of a caged animal. But he was an untamed human animal too: Once he got to be a star, he indulged his passions, like cars and alcohol (which he mixed to destructive effect). One of Mifune's two sons relates the story of how his father, when drunk, would wave a sword around in the living room, a sight he describes as "scary." Mifune would also motor past Kurosawa's house to yell things like "Damn you!" (the first and last we hear of any conflict between them), and there's a quick mention of how he would pick fights with gangsters. As presented, though, these amount to quaint comic wisps of bad behavior that give us only the vaguest sense of who Mifune was or the demons he grappled with.

"The Last Samurai" goes back to the silent era

of the Japanese chanbara film, with its kabuki-inspired samurai, and to one astonishing clip of a movie called "Chokon," in which the white-faced hero, looking as ghoulishly possessed as Lon Chaney, revives his own spirit by literally licking the blood of his enemies off his sword. That's the tradition that Mifune and Kurosawa were taking off from, but Kurosawa was a revolutionary of hellbent realism. On the set of "Seven Samurai," chastising an actor for a corny death scene, the director said, "This is not just another samurai film. It has to feel real." And that's how it felt: For '50s audiences, it was as if the slashing macabre tangle of it all was really happening.

Insanely comic

In the astonishing climax to "Throne of Blood," a scene filmed without insurance, those were real arrows being shot at Mifune's head (the archers were college students, some of whom could barely aim), and Mifune was willing to dodge them out of trust and actorly art and maybe a little craziness. That's why the scene still exerts an awesome graphic power: No special effects could rival this primitive dance of death. Mifune was a one-man kamikaze burlesque show, as elegantly savage as his future inheritor Bruce Lee, as dextrous as Errol Flynn, as insanely comic as Curly from the Three Stooges, with a bombs-away ego all his own.

But you could also say that Mifune was, at times, a solipsistic overactor who only rarely connected with anyone on screen. I wish that "The Last Samurai" spent time exploring his restrained performance in "The Bad Sleep Well" (1960), Kurosawa's cold dissection of corporate crime. The documentary summons a few haunting moments when it confronts the dissolution of Mifune and Kurosawa's partnership after they had made 16 films together, a quiet breakup that wound up wrecking Kurosawa's career far more than it did Mifune's.

(Mifune was successful enough to turn down, on the advice of his American agent, the role of Obi-Wan Kenobi in "Star Wars.") Yet what "The Last Samurai" barely fills in is the vastness of Mifune's influence.

He was a hurricane who blew away the landscape that had come before him. He was really the first samurai of action cinema, the one who cast his cross-cultural shadow over everything from the evolution of the martial-arts genre to Eastwood and Bronson. He had a quality that "The Last Samurai" evokes in clips yet leaves you wanting to see explored in a far more memorable way, and that was danger. — Reuters



Chinese actress Zhou Dongyu, from right, actor Fan Wei and actress Ma Sichun hold their award for Best Leading Actress and Actor at the 53rd Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, Taiwan, Saturday. — AP photos

'The Summer is Gone' tops Golden Horse Awards



Chinese director Feng Xiaogang holds his award for Best Director at the 53rd Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, Taiwan.



Taiwanese actress Hsu Wei-ning arrives at the 53rd Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, Taiwan.

Mainland Chinese film "The Summer is Gone" emerged as the winner at the Golden Horse Awards on Saturday. The film, set in Inner Mongolia in the 1990s, was named as best picture in the annual awards for best Chinese-language films. It also picked up a best new performer award for Kong Weiyi and the FIPRESCI prize awarded by a separate jury of critics. The Golden Horse Film Festival ran Nov 4-24. The 53rd annual awards were presented on Saturday Nov 26 at a ceremony in Taipei's Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall.

The event included a red carpet appearance by Frances Juliette Binoche and performances by Coco Lee and Singapore's Stephanie Sun. The awards jury was headed by the veteran, socially-conscious Hong Kong director Ann Hui. She told Taiwanese media Saturday that the jury had gone through a "life and death process" in deciding the awards.

Other winners with two awards each were "Detective Chinatown" (best action choreography, best makeup/costume); "Mad World" (best new director: Wong Chun, and best supporting actress); "Trivisa" (best original screen-

play, best editing); "Mr No Problem" (best actor, best adapted screenplay); "Crosscurrent" (best cinematography, best sound design); and "I Am Not Madam Bovary" (best director: Feng Xiaogang, and the audience choice award. In the best actress category the award was shared between the two nominees - Zhou Dongyu and Ma Sichun - from "Soul Mate."

Going into the ceremony, local Taiwanese film "Godspeed" had nominations for eight awards and was strongly favored to win in several categories. On the night it picked up only one, for art direction. Other disappointments for Taiwanese cinema included the failure of "The Road To Mandalay" to turn any of its six nominations into awards wins, and the failure of its foreign-language Oscar contender "Hang In There Kids" (aka "Lokah Laqi") to collect any awards on home soil. The awards also paid tribute to Abbas Kiarostami, the iconic Iranian director who died earlier this year. Earlier in the week Singaporean director Boo Junfeng was named as winner of the NETPAC prize, the festival and awards' only reward for a non-Chinese-language film. — Reuters



Taiwanese actor Kai Ko arrives at the 53rd Golden Horse Awards in Taipei.



Taiwanese actress Wu Ke-xi arrives at the 53rd Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, Taiwan.

K-pop video director charged in S Korea's scandal

A prominent K-pop music video director was charged yesterday as part of a corruption scandal rocking South Korea and engulfing President Park Geun-Hye. Cha Eun-Taek, who has worked with "Gangnam Style" star Psy and boy band megastars Big Bang, used his ties to a secret confidante of Park to win lucra-

tive projects from state agencies and private firms, prosecutors say. That confidante—Choi Soon-Sil—has been labeled Park's eminence grise, a shadowy figure who is believed to have leveraged her close relationship with the president to extract more than \$60 million from top firms, including Samsung.

Prosecutors say Park herself ordered her former economic adviser to help Cha pressure officials and private firms so that he would win contracts. Cha, 46, has been charged with abuse of power, coercion and embezzlement and becomes the latest public figure to be embroiled in the snowballing scandal. Choi, 60, is accused of meddling in a wide range of state affairs including the country's preparations for the 2018 Winter Olympics. Prosecutors last week formally charged her with abuse of power and coercion, saying Park was a "co-culprit" who had colluded with Choi to strongarm top firms into giving cash to non-profit foundations Choi controlled.

Park—now the first South Korean president to become a criminal suspect while in office—has rejected a series of requests from prosecutors to answer their questions. As a sitting president, Park cannot be charged with a criminal offence except insurrection or treason, but she can be investigated and potentially charged once her term is over.

Park is faced with growing public calls to resign and a push by lawmakers to impeach her, with her job approval ratings diving to record lows of four percent. Hundreds of thousands have taken to the streets in recent weeks to call for her ouster, with organizers claiming the latest rally on Saturday in Seoul drew 1.5 million people. — AFP



K-pop music video director Cha Eun-taek



From left, Hong Kong director Derek Tsang, Taiwanese actress Bowie Tsang and Hong Kong actor Eric Tsang arrive at the 53rd Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, Taiwan.

Art and nature intertwined at MASSIVE BRAZILIAN PARK



People visit "Galeria Tru Rouge," at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.



Photo shows "Imensa," by Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles at the Inhotim Institute in Brumadinho, Brazil. — AP photos



People visit an audio installation by Canadian artist Janet Cardiff at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.



Sculptures by artist Dominik Lang, of Czech Republic, are displayed at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.

Smack in the middle of lush eucalyptus forests in Brazil's heartland, Inhotim Park offers visitors a mix of sensations rarely combined into one experience: art and nature. With more than 700 works of art by more than 100 artists, there is plenty to contemplate. And because those works are spread out across 400 acres, in a forest with over 5,000 species of plants, there is plenty of time to enjoy nature, or reflect on a work you just saw, while going to the next. The park is so sprawling that many people take golf carts from one installation to the next - and even such rides take at least five minutes.

"Speed is the enemy of good taste and perfection," said mining tycoon and park founder Bernardo Paz in a recent interview with The Associated Press. "The beauty here is more or less the ideal of happiness." Inhotim (pronounced IN-YO-TCHEEM) has become one of



Visitors stand next to an artwork titled, "Troca-Troca," by Brazilian artist Jarbas Lopes, at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.

the most important art centers in Latin America since opening 10 years ago. It has reached international acclaim thanks to the mix of nature and exhibitions of globally known artists like Chris Burden, Adriana Varejao and Cildo Meireles.

Some of the most popular displays include a suspended bronze tree made by Italian Giuseppe Penone and a pavilion where visitors can hear sounds of the earth from 200 meters (yards) down via microphones, a work created by American Doug Aitken.

There is also a braid-shaped piece by Tunga that was the first work by a contemporary Brazilian artist shown at the Louvre museum in Paris. "This is a very special place. I was here before and this time I brought my girlfriend," said Humberto Nogueira, 25, who works in advertising in Sao Paulo. "Everyone should come."



An installation by Brazilian artist Helio Oiticica is displayed at the Inhotim Institute in Brumadinho, Brazil.



An art installation by Brazilian artist Cildo Meireles is displayed at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.



Visitors stand next to a bench made by Brazilian artist Hugo Franca at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.



A sculpture by Chinese artist Zhang Huan called, "Gui Tuo Bei," is displayed at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.



People visit the Adriana Varejao Gallery at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.



"De Lama Lamina," by US artist Mathew Barney at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.



"By Means of a Sudden Intuitive Realization," by artist Olafur Eliasson, of Denmark, is displayed at the Inhotim Institute in Brumadinho, Brazil.

Two million people have visited the park in the last 10 years. But despite its popularity, park administrators worry about sustainability going forward. Brazil, Latin America's largest economy, is mired in its worst recession in decades, which means Brazilians have less money to travel - even in their own country. The park's off-the-beaten-track location, 414 miles (667 kilometers) north of Rio de Janeiro, cuts both ways: the remoteness makes it both attractive and relatively hard to get to. And the upkeep of the park, which includes 1,000 staff members, is expensive (park authorities declined to say how much).

Looking for new sources of revenue, the park has begun experimenting with renting

itself out. The first glimpse of that came earlier this month, when Inhotim opened a space for indie culture festival MECA and allowed hundreds of people to spend the night in their tents. The event, which organizers said was a success, included Grammy-award winner Caetano Veloso.

A luxury hotel is also being built inside the park. Currently, there are only a few hotels in the closest city, Brumadinho. Many visitors prefer to stay in Belo Horizonte, Brazil's sixth largest city, 37 miles (60 kilometers) away.

There are also plans to build a theater, an amphitheater and a new pavilion. Also proposed: stand-alone lofts so visitors can enjoy a serene overnight stay, or even rent out a unit



long-term. Antonio Grassi, the park's executive director, says they also want to host debates and facilitate innovative art projects. But making changes "has been a very tough fight," he said. "Our capacity to draw sponsorship of private companies has been affected during this crisis. Our challenge is to keep looking for alternatives." — AP

Visitors walk past an artwork called "Rodoviaria de Brumadinho," by artists John Ahearn, of the US and Rigoberto Torres, of Puerto Rico at the Inhotim Institute, in Brumadinho, Brazil.

Museum celebrates Boston's favorite ducks with new exhibit



A boy points at a sculpture of a mother duck and her ducklings, based on the classic children's story "Make Way for Ducklings" at the Boston Public Garden in Boston.



Girls follow a path of duck footprints as they pass ancient urns at an exhibit featuring the classic children's story "Make Way for Ducklings" at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.



A boy makes a quack sound using a duck call beak as he views a sculpture depicting the classic children's story "Make Way for Ducklings" at an exhibit at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

America's most famous mallard family is waddling into Boston's Museum of Fine Arts. "Make Way for Ducklings" opens Friday, commemorating the 75th anniversary of the children's book of the same name. The exhibition looks back on the career of Robert McCloskey, who wrote the classic in 1941 and won a Caldecott Medal for it the following year.

The heartwarming story and elegant illustrations in "Make Way for Ducklings" have dazzled readers for decades, but especially so in Boston, where bronze statues of the duck family are a fixture in the downtown Public Garden. In the story, the mallards wander through

Boston's busy streets, ducking frenetic car and bike traffic and taking time to enjoy peanuts tossed by people on the city's Swan Boats.

"I hope the love for that publication will draw people in," said Meghan Melvin, the exhibition's curator. "He was such an observant artist, very detailed and perceptive. That will come through in these sketches." McCloskey, who died in 2003 at age 88, was a celebrated illustrator and author who produced eight picture books including "Blueberries for Sal," "Lentil" and "Centerburg Tales."

The exhibition displays illustrations from the special archives at Emporia State University

in Kansas that have largely been kept private until recently. To say the Mallard family is beloved in Boston and the surrounding area is an understatement. In fact, "Ducklings" fans might argue there is no better place for a McCloskey retrospective than the Museum of Fine Arts, situated less than 2 miles from the spot where the bronze birds call home.

Sculptor Nancy Schon's statues of Mrs. Mallard leading her eight progenies through the Public Garden have drawn tourists from afar since their installation in 1987. "Make Way for Ducklings" also was named the official children's book of Massachusetts in 2003. "We read the book before we came here today," said Yuen Kwan, a Boston resident attending a preview of the exhibition with her 4-year-old son, Matthew Bronk. "I'd say we go see the statues in the Public Garden a couple times a year."

Included in the exhibition is a miniature version of Schon's sculptures, with a couple of notable differences: the addition of police officer Michael, who stops traffic so the ducks can cross the street safely, and a scene painted in watercolor, a contrast to the book's signature sepia drawings. McCloskey had envisioned the book in color, Melvin said. But because of the high cost of color printing during World War II, the editor opted for sepia. "That will be a big surprise for people," Melvin said. "They feel very strongly about the sepia illustrations because that is what they know." The exhibit, which was originally organized by the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, runs through June 18. — AP



Christmas decorations are seen for sale at a stall at the Winter Wonderland in London's Hyde Park in central London. — AFP

Two artworks in one

Double-sided Pechstein on display

A new exhibit of Max Pechstein's "Still Life with Nude, Tile, and Fruit" takes viewers not only behind the scenes of the German artist's career, but also behind the painting itself. While previous owners displayed the painting with only the still life and portrait showing, the Currier Museum of Art is showing its reverse side, which reveals a separate but related landscape. The museum has installed the double-sided painting on a pedestal in a specially constructed glass frame that allows viewers to walk around it and see both sides.

"This painting has never been installed before so you can see the front and the back at the same time," curator Kurt Sundstrom said. While it's not unusual for thrifty artists to make use of both sides of a canvas - perhaps flipping to the other side if things aren't going well - it's fairly rare to deliberately create a double-sided painting, Sundstrom said.

The Fogg Art Museum at Harvard has a two-sided painting by Pablo Picasso, he said, and Pechstein, a German Expressionist who died in 1955, completed about 20 such works.

The landscape side of Pechstein's painting was created in 1912, when the artist traveled to Lithuania in search of places unspoiled by civilization. The still life, which shows Pechstein's wife, a bowl of fruit, a Delft tile and a snake, was completed a year later. Based on Pechstein's memoirs and a close examination of related paintings, officials believe the landscape is likely a depiction of the Garden of Eden, while the still life may show the temptation of Eve.

While much of the still life side features vibrant blues, one small section along the right side is painted in warm greens that carry over to the landscape on the other side. To put the paintings in context, the exhibition also includes work by

Pechstein's predecessors and contemporaries. Pechstein's broad brushstrokes in the still life are similar to work by Paul Cezanne, the outlined surfaces evoke Picasso, and the female figure is similar to the primitivist work of Paul Gauguin, Sundstrom said.

The exhibit also features prints by other German Expressionists, who grappled with the rapid industrialism leading up to World War I. "It opens a window on a historical period that's fascinating to me. I think these artists sometimes are better than historians and novelists writing about history and what they're worried about," he said. "That's what I like about these things. They're rich in narrative. To use original sin in such a creative way is pretty amazing. So I hope people come here and gain appreciation not only for a craftsman - he's a great painter and colorist - but a person who has an imagination and can tell a story." — AP



Photo shows Karen Pineau, left, and Kurt Sundstrom look at the other side of a painting by German artist Max Pechstein, in Manchester, NH. — AP

Historic home for London gentlemen opens up to women

From the Black Death to Henry VIII's break from Rome, a historic mediaeval refuge in the heart of London's throbbing financial centre is destined for a new lease of life-by allowing women to move in. Nestled between building sites in the City of London, Charterhouse's grey stone is the abode of a few dozen men who have to be poor and aged over 60 to qualify. But hundreds of years since the first stone was laid, a revolution is underway: Charterhouse is opening up to women and creating a museum open to the public. "Not everyone is overjoyed," Stephen McGhee, a former orchestra manager and one of the current "brothers," told AFP during a visit to the complex.

"Some were happy, some not so happy. Whatever happens, it will have to be done very sensitively... and the newcomer will have to adapt to 42 men!" After living abroad for more than two decades, first in Australia and then Thailand, McGhee said he wanted to return to London for his retirement. "I had just enough money to buy a cupboard in a kitchen," the 64-year-old said. He searched online for a solution. "I saw a picture, there was a vacancy for a brother. I thought: 'It is a holy place and I am not holy!' "I applied online, I had a formal interview, and I was accepted," said McGhee, happy with his good fortune, after three-and-a-half years living within the community.

Plague and treason

Leaving the chaos of the City and crossing over the threshold into Charterhouse feels like entering a different world-a few centuries in the past. Some of the darkest moments in British history were played out within its walls.

Charterhouse's monastery was built in 1371 on land which was used to bury victims of the "Black Death," the bubonic plague which decimated London in 1348. Those struck down by the plague were still being exhumed in 2013, said Dominic Tickell, development director at

Charterhouse. The friars lived in silence but broke their rule for 10 days in the 16th century, to debate Henry VIII's break with the Pope. The dramatic split from Rome in 1535 led to the monastery being dissolved and its friars put to death in an atrocious manner.

The land on which the men once lived was passed to the Duke of Norfolk, who built a cloister and a palace. The Duke, too, met a violent end-he was decapitated for high treason in 1571. The Charterhouse complex was reinvented in the 17th century when it was

bought by the wealthy Thomas Sutton, who founded a school, a hospital and a home for 80 impoverished gentlemen. The latter tradition continues, while the school was moved to Surrey in the 19th century where it is now a private boarding school.

London's Charterhouse today hosts 42 "brothers" who are chosen not for their religious affiliation but under strict criteria. They must be over 60, single, poor, prepared to live in a community and to be in good enough health to live independently.

Royal governors

The majority of residents are artists, actors or musicians, but there are also teachers, a cook, a butcher and a priest. Actors living in Charterhouse take every opportunity to return to the stage, giving up their earnings for the community, McGhee said. "Most of them are vulnerable, lonely, isolated, poor, in social need and in good health. One of the criteria is that people can still make a contribution," Tickell said during a media visit to Charterhouse. While Tudor tragedies are centuries past, the stone walls, low ceilings and stained-glass windows retain a sense of mystery.

Charterhouse benefits financially from its school fees-nearly 37,000 pounds (\$46,000, EUR42,000) annually for each boarding pupil-and from its donors. Governors of the London institution include Queen Elizabeth II, her husband the Duke of Edinburgh, and their son the Prince of Wales, in addition to the Archbishop of Canterbury. Charterhouse also has a specialist nursing home for those approaching the end of their lives. "It is very rare that a brother leaves; almost all end their days here," said Tickell. — AFP



A handout picture released by The Charterhouse on November 7, 2016 and taken on February 29, 2016 shows the facade of The Charterhouse in London. — AFP