

KRCS pays for education, healthcare of Syrian child



Kuwait seeks increased cognitive development



Bangladeshi mosque architect smashes glass ceiling



Sharapova's doping ban cut to 15 months



SAUDI ARABIA HOLDS LIVE-FIRE DRILLS DURING GULF WAR GAMES

IRAN SPACE AGENCY 'INTERESTED' IN COOPERATING WITH NASA



Min 21°
Max 37°
High Tide 01:33 & 14:40
Low Tide 08:27 & 20:27



40 PAGES

WANTED CITIZEN STABS POLICEMEN

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Two policemen were injured yesterday in Abu Halifa when a wanted citizen with a criminal record resisted arrest

and stabbed them, before he was brought under control. The suspect was referred to relevant authorities, while the policemen were taken to hospital for treatment.



The policemen suffered deep, bloody gashes.

COMPOSER OF KUWAIT ANTHEM PASSES AWAY

KUWAIT: The composer of Kuwait's national anthem, veteran Kuwaiti musician Ibrahim Al-Soula, died yesterday. Soula was born in Kuwait in 1935 to a family of folkloric musicians. He obtained a degree in music from Cairo and launched his career in 1960.



Ibrahim Al-Soula

MOI HANDS OVER NEW E-PASSPORTS

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's relations and security media department announced that the assistant undersecretary for citizenship and passports Maj Gen Mazen Al-Jarrah yesterday visited the foreign ministry, where he handed over new

diplomatic and special passports equipped with electronic chips. The department added that extra passports were given to be sent to Kuwaiti embassies worldwide, so that they could introduce them to various countries' border exits.



The special and diplomatic e-passports are seen.

RIYADH/TEHRAN: Saudi Arabia is conducting live-fire drills during war games underway in the Gulf, official media said yesterday, as tensions simmer with Iran. Exercise Gulf Shield 1 has begun with naval ships, aircraft, marines and "special units", the Saudi Press Agency said. The maneuvers are also taking place in the strategic Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman. Navy Brigadier Majid Al-Qahtani said the exercises include "shooting of live ammunition" as part of the effort to improve combat readiness and protect the kingdom's waters "against any possible aggression".

Saudi Arabia and Iran - which lie on opposite sides of the Gulf - have no diplomatic relations and are at odds over regional issues including the wars in Syria and Yemen. The Royal Saudi Navy says the latest exercise is part of a series. A Saudi-led coalition, including naval forces, operates a blockade of Yemen as part of efforts to prevent weapons reaching Houthi rebels and their allies who overrun much of Saudi Arabia's neighbor.

The United States and Saudi Arabia accuse Iran of sending missiles and other weapons to the rebels, but Tehran denies the charge. Riyadh's ally Washington has accused Iran of repeated dangerous encounters with the US Navy in and around the Strait of Hormuz in recent months. Last week, an Iranian commander said two of Tehran's warships held maneuvers with an Italian frigate in the Strait of Hormuz after it made an Iranian port call. Major oil producers in the Gulf, including world top exporter Saudi Arabia, ship most of their exports through the Hormuz, which Iran has threatened to close during past rounds of tension.

Separately, the head of Iran's space agency said yesterday his country is interested in cooperating with NASA. Speaking to reporters at the start of World Space Week, Mohsen Bahrami said that "many in the world look at NASA's programs. We are interested in having cooperation, naturally. When you are in orbit, there is no country and race." It was the first time Iran had expressed such interest since signing last summer's landmark nuclear deal with world powers.

Bahrami said, however, that cooperation will only be possible with the agreement of leaders of both countries. He emphasized that Iran has a peaceful and powerful civil space program.

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ALEPPO: A Syrian civil defense volunteer holds the body of a child after he was pulled from the rubble following a government air strike on the rebel-held neighborhood of Karm Homad in this northern city yesterday. — AFP

ARMY ADVANCES IN ALEPPO, IS WEDDING ATTACK KILLS 34

ALEPPO: Syrian regime forces advanced against rebels during intense street battles in the heart of Aleppo yesterday, after the United States abandoned talks with Russia aimed at reviving a ceasefire deal. Washington said its decision did not mean it was "abandoning the pursuit of peace", as Moscow called for "political wisdom" while announcing the deployment of its S-300 missile system to

the port of Tartous. And the UN rights chief called for action to halt the "ghastly avalanche of violence" unfolding in Syria's second city, which is reeling from some of the most brutal fighting in the five-year conflict.

The Syrian army announced a major Russian-backed military push nearly two weeks ago to capture the rebel-held eastern

Continued on Page 13



David Thouless



Duncan Haldane



Michael Kosterlitz

'STRANGE STATES' OF MATTER EARNS TRIO PHYSICS NOBEL

STOCKHOLM: The study of "strange states" of matter, which may one day yield superfast computers, earned British scientists David Thouless, Duncan Haldane and Michael Kosterlitz the Nobel Physics Prize yesterday. The trio, all based in the US working in the highly-specialized mathematics field of topology, studied unusual phases or states of matter. "This year's laureates opened the door on an unknown world where matter can assume strange states," the Nobel jury said. "Thanks to their pioneering work, the hunt is now on for new and exotic phases of matter."

The jury said there were hopes that their discoveries would have future uses in the fields of materials science and electronics, especially at the super-small quantum scale. For now, however, the scientists' discoveries remain in the realm of research. Kosterlitz, speaking to reporters in Helsinki where he was working, joked: "I've been waiting for my desktop quantum computer for years and it's showing no signs of appearing. At the risk of making a bad mistake, I would say that this quantum computation stuff is a long way from being practical."

Continued on Page 13

ASSANGE VOWS US VOTE LEAKS

BERLIN: WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange vowed yesterday to publish new "significant" documents related to the US presidential elections ahead of the Nov 8 vote, as the online leaking platform celebrated its 10th birthday in defiant mood. Taking aim at critics accusing him and his organization of manipulation, Assange pledged he would not be muzzled as he sought to raise "an army" of supporters to join in the defense of WikiLeaks.

"We hope to be publishing every week for the next 10 weeks. We have on schedule... all the US election related documents to come out before November 8," Assange, wearing a black T-shirt bearing the word "Truth", told journalists via webcast from the Ecuadorian embassy in London where he has been holed up since 2012. He refused to reveal if the US-vote related documents would hurt Democrat candidate Hillary Clinton or target her Republican rival Donald Trump. But the white-haired WikiLeaks founder described the material as "significant" with "a lot of fascinating angles". "Do they show interesting features on power factions and how they operate? Yes they do," he said.

Ten years after it was founded, WikiLeaks has faced growing charges that it is manipulated by politicians - either by recycling documents provided by

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Julian Assange

GOOGLE LAUNCHES PIXEL SMARTPHONE

SAN FRANCISCO: Google yesterday launched its Pixel smartphone with built-in assistant as the tech giant made a direct challenge to the iPhone with its own branded, premium-priced handset. The unveiling of Google's in-house designed phone came as part of an expanded push into hardware by the US firm, which also revealed details of its new "home assistant", virtual reality headset and Wi-Fi router. The San Francisco event marked a shift in strategy for Google, which is leading a major push of its artificial intelligence software, Google Assistant, centered around its new smartphones and other devices.

"We are building hardware with the Google Assistant at its core," said Rick Osterloh, head

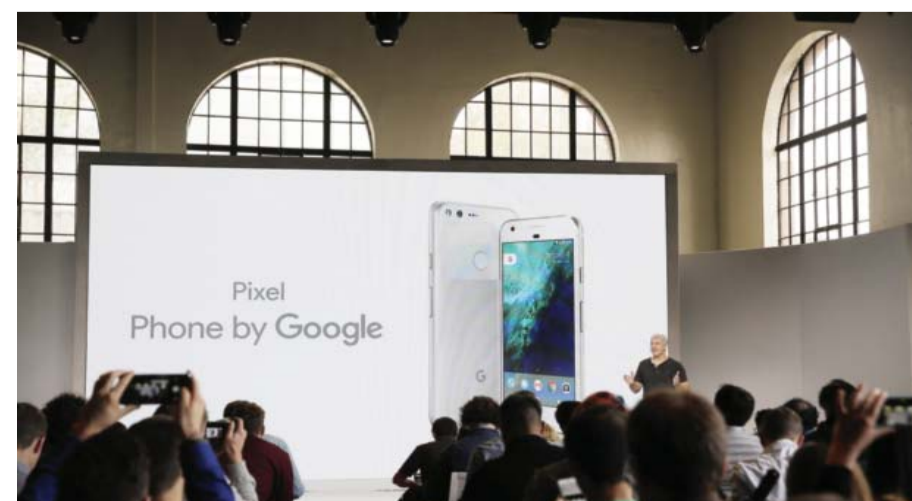
of a new hardware division at the California-based internet giant. "We believe that the next big innovation is going to take place at the intersection of hardware and software, with AI at the center." Pixel smartphone will be available with a five-inch display or a 5.5 inch display, starting at \$649 for US customers, at similar prices to the latest iPhone models. Pre-orders began on Tuesday in Australia, Canada, Germany, Britain, and the United States.

Google, by using its own name on handsets, is aiming for a bigger slice of a competitive smartphone market dominated by Samsung and Apple. "It's the first phone made by Google inside and out," said Sabrina Ellis of the Pixel product management team. By pro-

ducing both the hardware and Android software, Google is making a more direct assault on Apple and its tightly controlled ecosystem.

Along with being the first smartphone to ship with Google Assistant, it will come with unlimited storage for photos and videos and be compatible with the company's new Daydream virtual reality platform. Pixel has a "smart" camera which can select the best images from a stream, and a program to make it easy for users to switch operating systems, a move aimed at winning over iPhone users. But Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights & Strategy said it may be challenging for Google to gain significant market share.

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SAN FRANCISCO: Rick Osterloh, Google senior vice president of hardware, introduces the new Google Pixel phone during a product event yesterday. — AP



OOREDOO SERVES CLIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network for 2016, launched its new branch in Marina Mall, overlooking Salem Al-Mubarak Street in Salmiya last week. This comes as part of Ooredoo's ongoing strategy to become even closer to its customers, stemming from its values of caring and connecting. Marina Mall's branch is Ooredoo's first branch that is facilitated to serve people with disabilities, taking into

consideration the entire customer experience, with an accessible entrance and facilities placed specially to meet their needs.

Customers with disabilities can benefit from a priority queue, where designated representatives can assist them with their needs, in addition to a special display area that exhibits the latest smartphone and tablet devices.

Additionally, the branch offers Ooredoo Business services for entrepreneurs and corporate clients, providing smart and exclusive solutions to enrich their experience. In addition to its branches and authorized dealers, Ooredoo Kuwait offers its services on its convenient website shop.ooredoo.com.kw which offers monthly exclusive discounts and special offers, with free delivery for customers' comfort.

HIGH OIL PRICES 'TEMPORARY'

OIL EXPORTS TO JAPAN UP 6.7%

KUWAIT: The rise in oil prices in the past few days will not last for long, as prices will remain between \$40 to \$50 per barrel for Brent crude oil, according to Kuwaiti oil analyst Dr Hassan Qabazard. The OPEC members' agreement on limiting production rate, recently signed in Algeria led Kuwaiti oil barrel to rise by \$2.7 on Monday, Qabazard, also CEO of Kuwait Catalyst Company (KCC) said yesterday.

ble at about 7.5 million barrel per day. Qabazard said he was not optimistic on OPEC reaching a real agreement on reducing production rate.

He recalled the time between 2006-2013 when OPEC announced reducing production without actually committing to the deal. Countries that depend on oil as a main source of income have the need to raise production rate when prices go

Oil exports to Japan

Kuwait's crude oil exports to Japan increased 6.7 percent in August from a year earlier to 6.32 million barrels, or 204,000 barrels per day (bpd), for the first rise in four months, government data showed. As Japan's sixth-biggest oil provider, Kuwait supplied 6.4 percent of the Asian nation's total crude imports, the Japanese Natural Resources and Energy

978,000 bpd, followed by the United Arab Emirates with 818,000 bpd, down 6.0 percent. Qatar was next at 312,000 bpd, down 12.8 percent. Russia ranked fourth and Iran fifth, respectively. Japan is the world's-third biggest oil consumer after the US and China, importing virtually all its fossil fuels.

Gold down to \$1,309

Meanwhile, gold prices dropped to \$1,309 per ounce early this week with five dollars difference compared to Friday, defying expectations for Q4 2016, Sabaek Al-Kuwait Company announced yesterday. Gold ended Q3 2016 with a rise of 23 percent compared to beginning of year, said sabaek's CEO Rajab Hamid in a press statement. He added that gold saw a slight rise by one percent during this time period.

The slight rise was affected by the weak performance of the US dollar and the drop in American stocks, on the sidelines of the Federal Reserve's decision to keep profit rates stable at the current time, he noted. Hamid expected gold prices to rise in the coming days, adding that the yellow metal is traded at a minimum of \$1,305 and a maximum of \$1,350 per ounce. The awaited release of US job market report for September will lead to a rise in US dollar rate and a drop in Gold prices to \$1,300 per ounce, if data was positive. However, if we receive negative data, US dollar will drop and gold will exceed \$ 1,350 per ounce, he added.

Demand on gold has risen in Q3 2016, compared to the same time period last year, mainly in East Asia. China and India, representing 55 percent of international market, were among the top countries in demand on gold and export of the yellow metal. As for silver, Hamid said it rose to \$20 per ounce last week and dropped to \$18.70 early this week. He expected silver prices to go up in the coming days due to a rise in buying operations and online trading. Meanwhile, demand on raw gold grew as the price of one gram dropped to about KD 12,850. Buying manufactured gold of 21 and 22 carats was also high due to the low prices. He added that one gram of gold rose from KD 10,450 early this year to reach KD 13 in Q3, expecting it to reach KD 13.10 in the coming days. —Agencies



The weak performance of the US economy and dollar also had an impact on oil prices, said the official.

Meanwhile, he noted that prices will drop after a while due to a reduction in oil consumption, mainly in the Gulf region as weather temperatures cool and the need for air conditioning will be reduced. He added that consumption in Saudi Arabia drops about half a million barrels per day during this time period, while export is sta-

down. These countries include the Gulf states, Iran and Venezuela. Overflow of oil supplies around the world is currently between 1.5 to two million barrels per day, leading to inflation in oil reserves in industrial countries, which also affects prices, he said. The analyst added that the recent rise in shale oil production will play a role in reducing oil prices in the coming periods of time, by adding extra overflow of oil in markets.

Agency said in a preliminary report. Japan's overall imports of crude oil declined 8.3 percent year-on-year to 3.21 million bpd for the second consecutive month of fall.

Shipments from the Middle East accounted for 84.7 percent of the total, up 2.6 percentage points from the year before. Saudi Arabia remained Japan's No1 oil supplier, but imports from the kingdom plunged 18.6 percent from a year earlier to

US UNIVERSITY FAIR RETURNS TO KUWAIT

KUWAIT: The US Educational Group (USEG) will return to Kuwait to promote US colleges and universities at the Marina Hotel in Salmiya on Sunday, October 9, 2016, from 6:00-9:00pm. US Embassy Cultural and Consular officers will be present to address students' questions about education in the United States and the student visa process. The university fair is free of charge and open to the public. Cultural Attache Dr Zennia Paganini will open the event with remarks. Representatives from USEG will provide information about admission standards, financial aid opportunities, summer programs, and student life at different US universities.

The US universities that will be represented at the event are: The American University of Cairo, Arizona State University, Ball State University, DePaul University, Foothill College, Fairleigh Dickinson University, George Mason University, Hofstra University, City University of New York-CUNY- John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Kent State University, Marquette University, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Science, Montana State University, Purdue University, Saint Louis University, Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Southeast Missouri State University, St Ambrose University, St John's University, Syracuse University, Troy University, State University of New York- University at Buffalo, University of Cincinnati, University of Evansville, University of Miami, University of North Carolina- Wilmington, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), West Virginia University, Western Kentucky University and Western Michigan University.



A Syrian child, Qusai Khaleel Alloush, who lost his legs during the war in Syria. —KUNA

KRCS PAYS EDUCATION, HEALTH CARE EXPENSES FOR SYRIAN CHILD

BEIRUT: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) yesterday paid the education and treatment expenses of a Syrian child who has lost his legs during the war in Syria. KRCS' head of team in Lebanon Dr Musaad Al-Nezi stressed the society's keenness to help the Syrian boy and offer health care especially for elderly and children. KRCS' initiative to pay the expense of the Syrian child was in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Lebanese Red Cross, he added. In a similar statement to KUNA, Qusai Khaleel Alloush, the father of the Syrian child expressed thanks and appreciation to Kuwait and KRCS for their efforts toward his son. The KRCS has been involved, since the flare-up of the Syrian crisis, in various humanitarian activities to help the Syrian refugees, estimated at 1.5 million.

Arab stance on Aleppo

Meanwhile, Arab League Secretary General Ahmad Abul-Gheit has called for a conclusive Arab stance toward the random killing, siege and starvation of civilians in Syria's city of Aleppo. Addressing an extraordinary meeting for the League's Council on the level of permanent delegates that was devoted to developments in Aleppo, Abul-Gheit reiterated full solidarity with the Syrian people who are experiencing "one of the worst tragedies in the Arab modern history."

The League's chief warned against aggravation of the conditions in the city. The situation in Aleppo is "utterly grave," even by criteria of the civil war in Syria, with all its violations and atrocities. What has been going on in Aleppo since the collapse of a truce on September 19, is literary a "massacre," he said. Abul-Gheit stressed the necessity for urgent action to reach a ceasefire in Aleppo, and Syria as a whole, in order to help deliver relief aid to the besieged people, and to avert a humanitarian disaster that could be more ferocious than the massacres committed so far.

He referred to regional and international parties that were involved in the "brutal attack on the city," saying they are responsible for such grave violations of the international humanitarian law, including the deliberate and systematic shelling of hospitals in the city, the last of which targeted the major one in Aleppo Monday, for the third time in a week.

Abul-Gheit reaffirmed the fact that the Syria crisis would remain an Arab one, whose consequences would affect the region's countries and peoples, saying: "It is unacceptable to refer the entire crisis to the international parties that have been unable to reach an agreement or a settlement that could be imposed on the ground." He said that the Arab League must have a role in handling the crisis, as the need is growing for a wider Arab role and presence than ever. According to the secretary general, a military solution will not end the conflict in Syria. For him, any party that believes in a military solution in Syria is mistaken and has to review such conception that will only lead to more bloodshed. —Agencies

EPA, GCC GENERAL SECRETARIAT ASSESS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

KUWAIT: The Environment Public Authority of Kuwait (EPA) in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council for the Arab States yesterday organized a workshop on assessment guidelines for the environmental impact on the GCC states in order to enhance the ecosystems and to coordinate efforts to achieve sustainable development.

EPA's Director General Sheikh Abdullah Ahmed Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said in an opening statement that the workshop aims to develop a unified assessment system for the GCC states as part of the recommendations of the 36th meeting of the GCC environment officials held in Doha last October.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad also stressed the EPA's keenness to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the environment assessment guide in order for Kuwait to have a system that meets international regulations. He explained that the work on the project of enhancing the evaluation of the environmental impact system in Kuwait began in 2011 at the request of the EPA to conduct an in-depth review of the system by the World Bank. —KUNA



KUWAIT: EPA's Director General Sheikh Abdullah Ahmed Al-Humoud Al-Sabah seen during the workshop. —KUNA



KUWAIT: (From left) His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday receives His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Chairman and Director General of Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Sheikh Mubarak Al-Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah and Kuwait's Ambassador to Qatar Hafeeth Mohammad Al-Ajmi at Bayan Palace yesterday. —KUNA photos

FINANCE MINISTRY TO HANDLE EXPAT RESIDENTIAL PROJECT

CABINET INAUGURATES 'SPOKESPERSON' WORKSHOP

KUWAIT: The Cabinet was informed yesterday that a project dealing with a residential compound for the expatriate community in Al-Shadadiya area has been assigned to the Ministry of Finance. In its weekly meeting at Bayan Palace, presided over by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Cabinet was notified that necessary procedures will be completed to offer the deal to all companies interested in undertaking the project.

At the onset of the meeting, the Cabinet looked over letters exchanged between His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, concerning the 23rd International Energy Conference slated for October 9-13 in Istanbul. Moreover, the Cabinet was informed about His Highness the Amir's visits to Thailand and Brunei. Meanwhile, His Highness the Prime Minister briefed the Cabinet on his participation in the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, where he represented His Highness the Amir in a speech on Kuwait's humanitarian efforts all across the globe.

In the speech, His Highness the Prime Minister underscored Kuwait's support of the fight against terrorism. On meetings he held with leaders of various nations during the assembly, he said the talks centered on bilateral ties and strategies to enhance them, in addition to issues of mutual concern. Furthermore, the Cabinet also studied Kuwait Central Bank's (CBK) report for the year 2015, which contained details and facts on the nation's economy and Kuwait's economic performance in 2015. The report also featured such intricacies as local prices of goods, the country's expatriate community and the latest financial developments. CBK's report also provided information on Kuwait's international commercial ties and recent activity in the Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE).



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah presides over the Cabinet weekly meeting. —KUNA



Cabinet's first workshop for official spokespersons

'Spokesperson' workshop
Also, the Cabinet, in cooperation with the Ministry of Information yesterday

inaugurated the first workshop for official spokespersons. Several government bodies have sent representatives to attend the

three-day event, themed "bases and skills of communications for a spokesperson." The cabinet Development Committee has urged paying further attention to official spokespersons for their significant role to deliver correct and positive information to the society, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information Tarek Al-Mazram said, on behalf of Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, sponsor of the workshop.

He added that many government projects need to support their media message to show their true image. He underlined the importance of a spokesperson's role in both traditional and emergent media. There are wonderful stories in the work of government bodies that need to be highlighted, Al-Mazram said, referring to the media offices in some ministries that are "active through the year." He cited the Health Ministry as an example. The workshop focused on a spokesperson's tasks, skills and body language (nonverbal communication skills), as well as abilities to convey a positive message. —Agencies



KUWAIT: Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governor Retired Lt General Ahmed Al-Rujaib yesterday visited a number of schools during which he announced coordination with Mubarak Al-Kabeer Educational zone to honor the top male and female school directors each year.

News

in brief

Media Forum kicks off

KUWAIT: The Arab Media Forum kicked off yesterday under the auspices of Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. The activities of the forum include a variety of training courses for dealing with the media, technology and communication skills. Secretary-General of the Forum Madhi Al-Khamees said on the sidelines of the forum that was held at the Arab Planning Institute that this event comes to reiterate the Forum's belief in the importance of the relationship between media, technology and communication and their differences. Al-Khamees added that the program includes 200 trainees from the media, academics and specialists, whose lectures are given by 18 trainers in the areas of media, technology and communication.



KUALA LUMPUR: Kuwaiti Ambassador MUSAED SALEH AL-THUWAIKH yesterday submitted his credentials to Philippines' Foreign Secretary PERFECTO YASAY. Yasay hailed the strong relations tying his country with Kuwait, wishing the new Kuwaiti diplomat success in his mission. Al-Thuwaikh expressed Kuwait's willingness to enhance bilateral relations with the Philippines in various fields. —KUNA

OIC emergency meeting

JEDDAH: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has invited member states to an emergency meeting for the executive committee at the level of permanent delegates at OIC's General Secretariat headquarters in Jeddah to discuss the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Aleppo. The OIC's Secretariat General said in a statement that it received a request from Kuwait, President of the 42nd session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, to hold the meeting. The Executive Committee consists of a troika that includes Egypt, Turkey and Gambia. The Foreign Ministers troika includes Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan, in addition to the Secretariat General.

Envoy submits credentials

BEIRUT: Kuwait's new ambassador to Cyprus Waleed Ahmad Al-Kandari has submitted his credentials to President Nicos Anastasiades. In a phone call with KUNA following a ceremony held at the Presidential Palace yesterday, Al-Kandari stressed keenness by the political leadership in both countries on promoting bilateral ties in all fields. The ceremony was attended by Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulidis and senior officials at the Palace and from the ministry, as well as members of the Kuwaiti embassy.

Develop teachers' skills

KUWAIT: Developing skills of teachers in accordance with international standards is a priority in Kuwait, said senior education officials yesterday. The Ministry of Education is executing a plan involving the use of modern technology aimed at boosting education in order to achieve development in Kuwait, said Assistant Undersecretary of Administrative Affairs at the ministry Fahad Al-Ghais. There were 114 training courses held in the 2015-2016 academic year, involving 7,712 teachers, said Al-Ghais. The chairman of Kuwait Teachers Society Waleed Al-Hasawi said the society aims to tackle different issues facing the educational field, as well as organizing activities and training programs to boost the skills of teachers. The society's "pioneers of excellence" institute provides training courses on administrative, leadership and professional development, he noted.

Arab Okaz Festival

KUWAIT: Kuwait will participate in the Arab Okaz Arts Festival which will be held in Cairo between October 18-23 through a media and cultural delegation. Kuwait has been selected to head the media committee of the festival, which enjoys wide Arab participation. Chairman of the media committee of the Kuwaiti media festival Zaid Al-Sarbal asserted Kuwait's keenness to take part in such Arab cultural gatherings and exchange expertise with other Arab cultural figures. "We are honored that Kuwait has been selected to chair one of the major committees of the festival," he said, adding that he looks to promoting this event through various Arab media outlets.



Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi handed the Award of Kuwait prize for the control of cancer, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to Iranian Dr Nizal Sarrafzadegan. — KUNA

IRAN DOCTOR WINS KUWAIT CANCER, CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES AWARD

CAIRO: Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi has handed the Award of Kuwait prize for the control of cancer, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes in the Eastern Mediterranean Region to Iranian Dr Nizal Sarrafzadegan. This came in the 63rd session of the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean chaired by Dr Al-Obaidi. Al-Obaidi said in a statement to KUNA the Award, established in 2003, was given this year to Professor Dr Nizal Sarrafzadegan in recognition of her outstanding contribu-

tions in the field of cardiovascular diseases. He stressed Kuwait's keenness on providing aid and assistance to health emergencies and supporting humanitarian situation in the countries of the region, noting the directives of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in this regard. This year's session of the WHO Regional Committee will tackle key technical health issues including implementation of the International Health Regulations, universal health coverage and the development of a package of essential health services. — KUNA

AIWF ANNOUNCES ITS EIGHTH CONFERENCE

'THE YOUNG ARAB WOMEN LEADERS INITIATIVE'

KUWAIT: Following on from the success of the Young Arab Women Leaders: The Voice of the Future conferences in Amman, Beirut and Dubai in 2012, Palestine in 2013, London in 2011 and 2014, and Doha in 2015, the Arab International Women's Forum (AIWF) is proud to announce its eighth conference of the series and its first ever event in Kuwait in October 2016.

The Young Arab Women Leaders initiative in Kuwait has the valued support of the Kuwait Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, which since its inception has delivered crucial backing to over 250 successful projects and initiatives to empower young Kuwaitis by facilitating the development of young entrepreneurs and aspiring business leaders across a number of sectors and spheres and working closely with Kuwait's leading universities on educational outreach initiatives designed to address societal issues that directly impact Kuwaiti youth.

The 8th Young Arab Women Leaders conference will be opened by Guest of Honor Her Excellency Sheikhha Al Zain S Al-Sabah, Under Secretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs of Kuwait, and aims to recognize and celebrate the contribution of business women in Kuwait and inspire the next generation of young Kuwaiti women leaders to contribute to the development of the national economy and to MENA economic growth overall. It will address

sary to make this transformation a success. This means investing in our region and nurturing our young and female talent, something that PwC Middle East is committed to.

Adding to that, Fouad Douglas, PwC Kuwait Country Senior Partner said: "As part of PwC Middle East's continuous commitment in the region to invest and develop local talent, more than 270 graduates joined our firm across the region in September 2016 from top universities, and 36% of the graduates were females, which reinforces PwC's commitment to provide more opportunities for women and support their success.

In Kuwait, specifically, PwC launched its PIN2 challenge program that gives young adults the opportunity to showcase innovative ideas by working in diverse teams and incorporating challenges that are relevant to the prevailing social, economic and technological environment, and in turn allowing them to grow and develop. This reinforces our commitment to support communities and develop local talent for both females and males." Douglas added: "We are proud to support AIWF in creating a better future for our society and more opportunities for our women and our future generations."

Women entrepreneurs

The 8th Young Arab Women Leaders conference will address opportunities for collaboration between Kuwait and the international business community on developing and widening the role of women business leaders; exploring the challenges, prospects and success stories for women doing business in the MENA region and the unprecedented opportunities arising from technology and cross-border commerce; and the role that social media can play in promoting youth-led Arab entrepreneurship and mainstreaming the successes and challenges of Arab women entrepreneurs.

The one-day conference will close with reflections on leadership, with distinguished women leaders from Kuwait and across the region invited to share success stories, exchange experiences on how best to deal with the inevitable challenges of entrepreneurship; and an important session in which leaders from prominent corporations present in the MENA region will discuss the dynamics of the Arab business community with relevant and valuable advice on how to navigate through challenges with agility and creativity.

The agenda of the Young Arab Women Leaders series has been carefully developed with the close involvement of young women leaders in the region.

Delegates will be addressed by Guest of Honor HE Sheikhha Al Zain S Al-Sabah, Under Secretary of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs of Kuwait, and a number of distinguished speakers including HE Majida Ali Rashed, Assistant Director General, Land Department, Government of Dubai, UAE; Dr Alanoud Alsharekh, Consultant Researcher, Supreme Council of Planning and Development, Kuwait; Sheikhha Alanoud Hamad Al Thani, Qatar Country Operations Manager, Silatech, Qatar; Rana Al Nibari, Chief Executive Officer, Injaz Kuwait, Kuwait; Hadeel Al Shammari, Board Member, SME Fund, Kuwait; Chadia El Meouchi, Managing Partner, Badri and Salim El Meouchi Law Firm, Lebanon; Diana Al Dajani, Founder & CEO, eduTechnoz, Qatar; Hussa Al Humaidhi, Co-Founder, Nuqat, Kuwait; Mona Almoayyed, Managing Director, YK Almoayyed & Sons, Bahrain; Mona Al Mukhaizeem, Managing Partner, Sirdab Lab, Kuwait; Taibah Al Qatami, Director, Weoritu, Kuwait; Hanan Al Samari, Executive Director, Princess Madawi Fund for Women Development Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; AsmaSbeih, Coordinator of Continuing Education Centre, Palestine Al Ahliya University, Palestine; Hussa Al Humaidhi, Co-Founder, Nuqat, Kuwait; Dr Yasmin Al Tuwajri, Senior Scientist & Head of Epidemiology Research, King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Center, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Fouad Douglas, Country Senior Partner, PwC Al Shatti & Co, Kuwait; Oualel El Alami, DPharm, Africa & Middle East Oncology Lead, UAE; NohaHefny, PepsiCo, Director of Corporate Affairs, UAE; and Rania Rizk, Senior Vice President & General Counsel, PepsiCo AMEA, UAE.

The Young Arab Women Leaders conference in Kuwait City, Kuwait will take place on 20 October 2016 at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel. For more information on the conference or to view the program and list of speakers, please visit www.aiwfonline.com. Similar events are planned across the MENA region for 2017.

NA SPEAKER 'OPTIMISTIC' OVER AGREEMENT ON PETROL PRICES

MP ZALZALAH WANTS CITIZENS COMPENSATED FOR PETROL HIKE

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouk Al-Ghanem said yesterday he was optimistic at the outcome of the informal meeting between the government and the National Assembly yesterday to discuss the consequences of hiking petrol prices. Ahead of the highly-anticipated meeting, Ghanem met with the Amir, the crown prince, the prime minister and the minister of finance to discuss the issue. He said it was agreed to continue the meeting today with the prime minister and the finance minister ahead of the assembly-government meeting.

Ghanem stressed that the national assembly will face the economic challenges through smart solutions that ensure that citizens will not be touched. He said he was confident that the

meeting will come out with the required positive result, adding that lawmakers are keen to attend the meeting to contribute to finding a solution for the petrol hike issue. The speaker also said that constructive meetings like this one between the government and MPs are capable of overcoming crises between them.

MP Yousef Al-Zalzalah said that the meeting should come with one result to compensate Kuwaiti citizens for the increase in petrol prices in order to avoid further problems between the government and assembly. The meeting was called by the speaker to replace a request by 35 MPs of the 50-member assembly to convene an emergency session for the assembly which is currently on summer recess. The assembly is due to start the new term on October 18.

Lawmakers have warned that the emergency

session will be held if the informal meeting fails to come up with the required solution to the petrol crisis. The government decided in August to increase petrol prices by between 40 percent and over 80 percent for the first time in almost two decades.

The rise went into effect on September 1. MPs are demanding that Kuwaiti citizens should be exempted from the hike or given financial compensation. None of the lawmakers have called for compensating expatriates.

In another issue, a number of MPs have criticized the management of Kuwait Airways and the government for dismissing or transferring to other government jobs around 36 Kuwaiti pilots. The lawmakers wondered on what basis KAC has taken this measure and demanded explanation from the government.



KUWAIT: Under the auspices of the Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, 400 participants recently took part in a 'Pink Parade' making the launch of the second Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign which was held under the title of 'You Deserve Our Attention'. Participants included CAN board member and former MoE Minister Dr Rasheed Al-Hamad and CBK's Assistant PR and Media Manager Amani Al-Wer'a.



Haifa Al Kaylani

how the public, private and civil sectors can help young people in business achieve their potential by launching and growing scalable, profitable businesses that will create jobs and positively impact Kuwait's economy.

Valued support

AIWF is proud to have the valued support of the Ministry on this special occasion and to continue its longstanding collaboration with Conference Partner PwC and all AIWF Global Partners. Haifa Al Kaylani, Founder Chairman of AIWF, has described the Young Arab Women Leaders initiative as "a milestone in AIWF's mission to promote education, leadership training, capacity building, self-development and networking for Arab women and youth in all sectors of business and professional life."

Al Kaylani said: "AIWF sees job creation, economic inclusion and social mobility for women and youth as major social and political challenges that represent real urgency but also, at the same time, immense opportunity for the MENA region. We believe that empowering young women as the next generation of Arab business leaders, the job creators of the future, to employ, develop and progress other young people, is key to building a viable and gainfully employed Arab youth population, and essential to safeguarding stability in the future. Therefore, AIWF is proud to lead this unique initiative for the MENA region and to invest our efforts and resources into developing and expanding Young Arab Women Leaders significantly in the future."

Nurturing young talent

Hani Ashkar, PwC Territory Senior Partner, Middle East, said: "While it is true that the urgency of the transformation in the Middle East currently underway is a reaction to the sharp drop in oil revenues, the direction of change - and its complexity - is an inevitable response to these multiple global forces. By helping our partners in the government and private sectors alike understand this broader context, we can ensure they are armed with all the tools neces-

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT SYMPOSIUM RECOGNIZES ZAIN

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced its strategic partnership of the Youth Empowerment Symposium for the fifth consecutive year. The announcement came during the opening and the fifth anniversary ceremony that witnessed the presence of HH the Amir's representative, HE Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs. The Youth Empowerment Symposium's organizational committee recognized Zain's strategic partnership ever since the initiative was first born five years ago. Zain's support of the symposium came in line with its long term strategy of providing the necessary support to national initiatives aimed at uplifting the capabilities and skills of Kuwaiti youth.

Waleed Al Khashti, Zain Kuwait's

Corporate Communications and Relations Director said: "our participation in the Youth Empowerment Symposium today coincides with the fifth consecutive year of Zain's strategic partnership with this national academic initiative". Al Khashti added: "the symposium excels at inviting local and international experts, professionals, and pioneers in the fields of business, information technology, economics, and social media to share their personal and professional experiences with the Kuwaiti youth".

Al Khashti concluded: "there is no doubt that Zain's support of this national initiative since its inception stands as an indication of the company's strong belief in the youth and the importance of their development across all fields of activity." The Youth Empowerment Symposium, to be held 25 - 26 October, provides local



youth with an ideal opportunity to gain valuable insights from a number of internationally and locally renowned industry pioneers, academics, and experts.

This year's speakers include Jeremy Liew, first investor in Snapchat and partner at Lightspeed Venture Partners, Jennifer Boulanger, head of global recruitment in booking.com, Corey Owens, former head of global public policy at Uber Technologies and head of global public policy at We Work, as well as a number of prominent local speakers. Zain's presence in this national event showcases the company's dedication to empowering the entrepreneurial skills of youth in Kuwait. The symposium delivers outstanding knowledge to talented young people to be able to progress in their fields of interest as well as to spark the light of enthusiasm within them.

KUWAITI HACKER RELEASED ON BAIL

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A court yesterday released a Kuwaiti hacker accused of stealing from others' bank accounts on a KD 1,000 bail.

Workshop kicks off

A workshop for national youth leaders jointly organized by the Supreme Planning and Development Council's secretariat general and UNDP kicked off yesterday. The opening ceremony was attended by the council's Secretary General Dr Khaled Mahdi, UNDP Resident Coordinator in Kuwait Zainab bin Jaloon, UNDP's Resident Representative to Kuwait Dima Al-Khateeb and a number of PAYS officials.

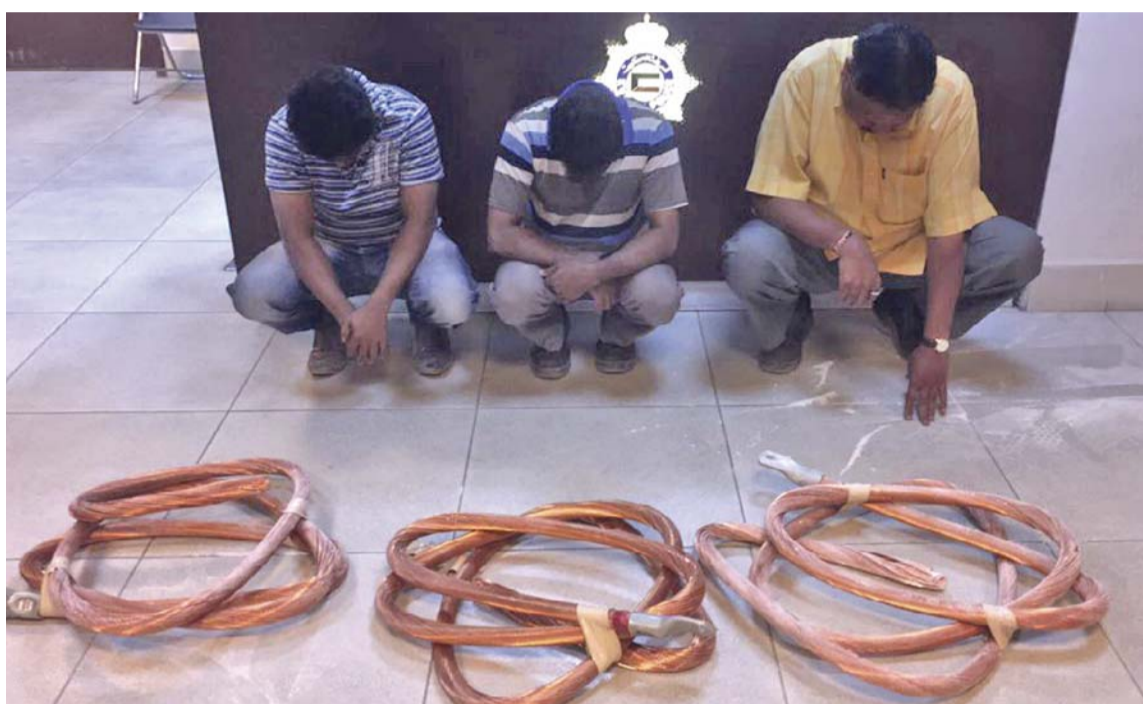
Industries Union exhibition

Supported by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS), the Sabah Al-Ahmed Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) is currently preparing to take part in the 3rd Kuwait Industries Union exhibition due to be held at the Sheraton Hotel in the period of Oct 9-11 as a platinum sponsor, said SACGC's PR and marketing officer Mohammed Al-Baqshi.

Municipal Council

After concluding its summer break, the Municipal Council is scheduled to convene on Oct 17, marking the start of its new term. Meanwhile, Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi yesterday opened a workshop on preparing the RFP conditions for the strategic urban design project at Movenpick Hotel with the presence of delegations from GCC states.

CABLE THIEVES NABBED



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Three Asians were arrested in Seddiq with three sacks of copper cables. They confessed to stealing them from a nearby power unit.

Fire in storage room

A fire broke out yesterday in a storage room at Kuwait Handball Federation's headquarters, said security sources, noting that firemen managed to control the fire without reporting any casualties. Another fire broke out on a first-floor kitchen of a

Jahra house. Also, fire broke out in a vehicle in Jahra Co-op's parking lot, said security sources, noting that fire started in the engine and was successfully controlled.

Special training course

300 female volunteers concluded a special training course in inspection, searching, first aid and firefighting, said Farwaniya security director Brig Saleh Al-Enezi. In another development, a special unit for law enforcement at the justice ministry opened yesterday at Mol's law enforcement directorate.

Vehicles collide

A citizen was seriously injured when he lost control over his vehicle and it collided into another car along Wafra Expressway. Firemen had to cut open the wreckage to release him and take him to the hospital. Separately, a citizen sustained various injuries when he lost control over his vehicle and it rolled several times along Jahra Road.



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Crime

Report

Asian commits suicide

KUWAIT: An Asian housemaid hanged herself in her sponsor's house in Jahra.

Kuwaitis arrested for fighting

Two citizens were arrested for fighting at the diwaniya of a friend. Security sources said the two were joking before things got serious between them. In another development, the owner of a cafe in Nugra filed a complaint against a regular customer, a female citizen, accusing her of smashing the cafe's glasses and throwing them at others when her order took longer than expected.

Unidentified robbers

An Egyptian reported that unidentified robbers broke into his apartment in Maidan Hawally and stole four gold rings and three valuable watches, including a gold one.

KD 58,000 compensation

A local court sentenced a local resort to pay KD 58,000 in compensation to the heirs of a female citizen who drowned in a swimming pool there.

Hunt for suspects

A search is on for the owner of a sports car who abandoned it on seeing the police in Ahmadi, said security sources. Separately, a female citizen called the police reporting that someone was in the process of breaking into her house in Salwa and that he intended to kill her. Security sources said that on arriving at the scene, the suspect had vanished, but traces of the break-in were visible on the door. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Attempted murder

A Filipina housemaid was arrested in Jabriya for attempted murder, said security sources, noting that the maid's sponsor reported that she got angry when asked to do her duties properly and threatened her with a knife.

Nepalese stabbed

Two Nepalese were rushed to Farwaniya Hospital with serious wounds they sustained when they fought and stabbed each other, said security sources.

Bedoon wife flees

A citizen reported that his bedoon wife fled the house after stealing two laptops, an iPhone 6 and a wireless router. — Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa



الجريدة

Al-Jarida

KUWAIT HOUSE IN 1960S' CAIRO

By Dr Najem Abdul Kareem

I might be right when I say that Kuwait knows no class discrimination regardless of the differences between its people. I am not about to make a sociological study here, but let me give you a glimpse about solidarity amongst a segment of Kuwaitis in 1960s' Cairo, where I lived for a few years. In the 1940s and 1950s, Kuwaiti students, about some of whom I have already mentioned in previous articles like Hilal Fajhan Al-Mutairi, were the ones who founded the Kuwait House in Cairo.

With the growing number of Kuwaiti students in the 1960s, they were part of one of the best students' organizations in that period and this was proven by the fact that many of them assumed leading positions in their country later. Back to Kuwait House, its management was democratically elected with a high sense of responsibility and had a long list of outstanding leaders like Kouthar Al-Jouan, Nasser Al-Faraj, Badriya Al-Awadhi and Faisal Al-Masoud for example. So, I beg forgiveness from those I did not mention because of space limitations. At Kuwait House, a great spirit

of solidarity prevailed amongst us - the youth who loved their country. The minute Suleiman Duhaima showed up, the whole place used to get filled with joy and he would soon start a humorous chat with Fouad Al-Matrouk that would make Sayyed Adnan Abdulsamad giggle, before Ghazi Al-Sajari joined them... and the circle got wider and wider to include Kuwait's children in amicable chats and exchange of news about our home country. We used to discuss many private and public concerns. Then, on announcing a plan to go on a trip to Suez, everybody signed up for it and the entire bus trip was full of traditional Kuwaiti songs and applause. In Suez, we heard the call for prayer and we would ALL head towards the nearest mosque and line up for prayer in one row, and I do mean ALL of us regardless of affiliations to parties and without any beards, doctrinal discrimination or short dishdashas! May Allah not forgive those who ever made us so divided, extreme and hateful, regardless of their party or doctrinal affiliations!

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Jarida



ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES - A STRATEGIC SPONSOR OF TMKEEN SYMPOSIUM

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest privately owned companies in the region, announced its strategic sponsorship of the 5th annual Tmkeen Youth Symposium, which will be held under the patronage of the Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah on 25 and 26 October 2016. The organizers of the event held an opening ceremony which was attended by the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, HE Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah, on behalf of the Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

During the ceremony, the sponsors of the event were made known, along with the keynote speakers who will be hosted at this year's conference. The speakers include Jeremy Liew, a Partner at Lightspeed Venture Partners and a key investor in Snapchat; Jennifer Boulanger, Head of Global Recruitment at Booking.com; and Corey Owens, Head of North America Public Policy at DJI and former head of Public Policy at UBER and Facebook. During the event, Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah thanked Alghanim Industries for being a strategic sponsor of this year's Tmkeen Conference. Commenting on Alghanim

Industries' sponsorship of the Tmkeen Conference, Head of Corporate Communications at Alghanim Industries, Abdullateef A Al-Sharikh, said: "The Tmkeen Youth Symposium is an exceptional conference that is looked forward to every year. It's managed to attract the attention of leaders in entrepreneurship around the world.

We are confident that the 5th Tmkeen conference will enjoy as much success as it had over the past years." He added: "We consider this sponsorship our natural role, as well as a social and national responsibility. Alghanim Industries continuously supports youth and facilitates learning opportunities, which enable them to own their future success, and become active contributors in developing the economy."

Chairman of the Tmkeen conference, Ali Al-Ibrahim, said: "We are happy to work with Alghanim Industries as a Strategic Sponsor this year. This initiative does not come as a surprise, as Alghanim Industries CEO, Omar Kutayba Alghanim spoke during one of our panels last year and was an avid supporter and motivator of youth. We thank Alghanim Industries for their generous contri-

butio, and look forward to more partnerships with them in the coming years."

This initiative comes as part of Alghanim Industries' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, which is committed to giving back to the community, supporting education and encouraging entrepreneurship. It is worth mentioning that the company is the largest supporter for INJAZ-Kuwait, as it encourages its employees to volunteer regularly in INJAZ's different programs.



الجريدة Al-Jarida

TAKE IT EASY ON EXPATS!

By Abdul Raheem Thabet Al-Mazeni

Kuwait is suffering from a state budget deficit this year and this made concerned authorities take some harsh economic measures of great importance to Kuwait's economy, including launching awareness campaigns to enlighten citizens about the significance of such measures for future generations.

Amidst all this, expats have been a point of argument amongst politicians, decision makers and Kuwaiti lawmakers, who are all divided into two teams - those for a tighter grip on expats and those for being more lenient with them. I would like to tell both teams that Kuwait's security and economic prosperity are of great importance to expats and as urgent to them as to citizens, because it would positively affect their jobs.

However, decision makers must realize that expats are already going through considerable problems, that if not taken into consideration on making any decision, would negatively and indirectly affect Kuwaitis and the Kuwaiti society, such as the growth of excess labor more than needed for the local markets, which poses a threat because jobless expats might help spread crime.

Tough economic measures usually burden expats, who earn an average of KD 80-200 a month. This particular category has found itself torn between high costs of rent, transportation, petrol, electricity and water, plus the proposed fee increases and other tough measures that entail expenses far beyond their limited incomes on one hand, and the government's incrimination and rejection to allow them to take up second jobs. In fact, this might get an expat deported.

At the same time, employers refuse pay hikes because they already have a lot of alternatives at lower costs. Thus, an expat prefers keeping silent and stops demanding raises lest he/she might be fired, despite the sufferings because of the new economic measures that also affect citizens, with a slight difference that the state has given them some alternative solutions. However, even citizens will eventually suffer because they hire expats, who still suffer more, to do various tasks and jobs.

Such harsh measures will definitely force many expats to break the law, commit crime or at least send their families back to their home countries, which will negatively affect local real estate markets that mainly rely on them, and many debtors will find it difficult to pay off their loans.

Treating expats as one group with the same economic fortunes, or that they have come to usurp Kuwait's fortunes and job opportunities, is not good for Kuwait's economy. It is not wise to view them as people who come to spread crime and corruption in Kuwait, and that it would be best to make their lives here miserable to force them to leave, because these things affect expats' stability and performance. Expats came to Kuwait to achieve mutual benefits. Kuwait needs their skills and expertise and they came seeking better living conditions and savings. They go through the pain and hardships of estrangement and leaving their loved ones behind.

However, allow me to tell you that claims about expats being behind all problems in Kuwait are false, because many of these problems are created by employers themselves and companies specialized in recruiting laborers without providing them with real jobs in Kuwait. Some exceptional laws even allow some decision makers to bring laborers to Kuwait and leave them without jobs, salaries or control, and the result is the increase of various kinds of crimes and expats being chased around by security.

Therefore, I plead to lawmakers and decision makers to take it easy on expats and not to treat them all as if they are the same and come from the same backgrounds. They have in fact given a lot to Kuwait and are willing to give more if they feel welcomed!

— Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Jarida

KUWAIT TO CONTINUE IRAQI KURDISTAN'S AID

IRBIL: Kuwait's Consul General in Irbil Dr Omar Al-Kandari yesterday has reaffirmed Kuwait's keenness to continue relief aid to Iraqi Kurdistan to help the region on the displaced Iraqis, and Syrian refugees. In a statement yesterday after a meeting with Irbil governor Nawzad Hadi Mawlood, Al-Kandari reiterated Kuwait's support to the Iraqi people in the war against terror, and whatever threats to the country's security and stability. He noted that Kuwait's aid is extended to the displaced and refugees all over Iraq, pointing to investments by Kuwaiti companies that aim to back Kurdistan's economy. Over the past two years, Kuwait, through the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and other humanitarian organizations, has been offering aid to the displaced in Iraqi Kurdistan, that have totaled 130,000 food packages. Kurdistan is hosting up to two million displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees, a matter that has aggravated the economic crisis in the region that has been suffering a budget deficit. — KUNA

KUWAIT SPORTS CLUB PRESIDENTS BANNED

By A Saleh
KUWAIT: The committee entrusted with running Kuwait Football Association's affairs yesterday decided banning all sports club presidents from entering the field or sitting with their reserve players during matches, because many of them had been affecting the performance of referees and objecting to their decisions.

KAC employees

A number of MPs are preparing for a meeting to be held to discuss transferring Kuwait Airways employees to other government bodies. MP Ahmed Lari said that former KAC employees will be invited to attend the meeting that would be mainly dedicated to discussing KAC's privatization plans.

Bedoon students

MoE's Acting Manager of the Private Education Department Sanad Al-Mutairi announced the opening of registration of bedoon students at the charity fund dedicated to help needy students. Mutairi added that MoE has allocated KD 6.5 million to the fund for the 2016-2017 academic year.



Turkey channel shuts down while live on air

DEADLY HURRICANE MATTHEW SLAMS ASHORE



HAVERTFORD, Pennsylvania: Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, accompanied by her daughter Chelsea Clinton (right) and actress Elizabeth Banks, attends a town hall meeting at the Haverford Community Recreation and Environmental Center yesterday. — AP

TRUMP'S WOMEN PROBLEM GROWS

MEGYN, ALICIA, HILLARY FORMING CONGA-LINE OF SCANDALS

WASHINGTON: Insults, personal attacks on Twitter, tirades on television: Donald Trump's behavior toward women, including presidential rival Hillary Clinton, has become a liability that could cost him the election. The Republican candidate has said, "I cherish women. I want to help women." But his record shows otherwise. He landed in hot water most recently for deriding Venezuelan former Miss Universe Alicia Machado as "Miss Piggy" after she gained weight.

But that is only the latest in a cornucopia of insults directed at female journalists, comedians and politicians, whose physiques, sex lives, competence and physical health have been targets of Trump's gibes. In a first for a White House candidate, the 70-year-old Trump took to Twitter at 5:00 am to attack Machado, goading followers to check out her past and a supposed "sex tape." He's also the first to mockingly mimic his rival during a rally, imitating Clinton's stumble as she fell ill at a September 11 memorial last month. "Here's a woman, she's supposed to fight all of these different things, and she can't make it 15 feet to her car. Give me a break," said Trump, who for months has taunted Clinton as "Crooked Hillary."

During the first presidential debate, a forum voters generally turn to for substance and nuance, Trump attacked comedian Rosie O'Donnell (the two have criticized each other for years). "I said very tough things to her and I think everybody would agree she deserves it and nobody feels sorry for her," Trump said. Trump feuded for months with Fox News journalist Megyn Kelly ("I refuse to call Megyn Kelly a bimbo, because that would not be

politically correct. Instead I will only call her a lightweight reporter!") although the two made amends in May.

He tweeted that Mika Brzezinski, a co-host on MSNBC's "Morning Joe" political show, was the "very insecure long-time girlfriend" of its other host, Joe Scarborough. The two are not in a relationship. Then there was Trump's Republican opponent Carly Fiorina, who competed against him in the primaries. "Look at that face! Would anyone vote for that?" Trump said of Fiorina, who eventually dropped out of the race. An Associated Press investigation found that Trump's crass behavior extended to "The Apprentice," the reality TV show that made him a media star. More than 20 crew members, editors and contestants recalled him making lewd or sexually suggestive remarks about women on the hit show, according to AP. Trump's camp has denounced the accusations as "outlandish, unsubstantiated, and totally false."

'Precarious position'

In poll after poll, American women, who represent some 52 percent of voters, have indicated that Trump's comments are not appreciated. Around 55 percent say they will vote for Clinton and 36 percent for Trump. And following Trump's Machado comments, 55 percent of women said they had a lower opinion of Trump, according to a Politico/Morning Consult poll.

"It really does put him in a precarious position with women, the largest voting bloc in the country," said Jeanne Zaino, a political science professor at Iona College. "Republicans have been very sensitive to the fact that they have been

losing women for many elections," she said, adding that after Republican Mitt Romney's loss in 2012, the party talked about how to win more women voters. Trump's campaign has reached out to female voters, promising paid maternity leave for women and putting out a slick commercial featuring his daughter Ivanka speaking on the theme of family. But the candidate seems bent on the opposite.

"They are working so hard to capture the female vote and he is making these statements... about a beauty queen many decades ago," Zaino said. With five weeks to go before the November 8 election, she asks whether Trump is "going to be able to convince that he has the temperament to be president?" "It's becoming increasingly tough."

Trump tumbles down rich list

It seems running for president is hurting Donald Trump's finances big time. The Republican nominee's fortune fell \$800 million last year sending him tumbling 35 spots on a list of richest Americans, Forbes said yesterday. The business magazine said the New York real estate mogul is worth \$3.7 billion-down from an estimated \$4.5 billion in March-and just over a third of the \$10 billion that Trump has bragged of amassing.

Trump, who has made his fabulous wealth a key selling point in his bid for the White House, plummeted to number 156 on Forbes' annual list of the richest 400 Americans. It is more bad news for the Republican as his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton pulls ahead in the polls after winning last week's first presidential debate. "A softening of New York City's real estate market, particularly in retail and office, where valuations are trending down, has diminished his estimated net worth," Forbes wrote.

Of 28 Trump assets scrutinized by the magazine, Forbes said 18 fell in value, including his Trump Tower headquarters on New York's Fifth Avenue and Mar-a-Lago, his beachfront club in Palm Beach, Florida.

Trump poured \$7 million into his campaign and loaned the campaign an additional \$48 million, which he is unlikely to get back, the magazine added. He did just one real estate deal this year, buying a warehouse in Charleston, South Carolina that was in foreclosure, Forbes said.

In a further dig at the most loathed US presidential candidate in modern times, Forbes chose this year to highlight immigrant success stories and said a record 42 naturalized Americans made this year's annual list. Immigrants account for 10.5 percent of the list, whereas naturalized citizens make up only six percent of the population, Forbes said. Those on the list come from 21 countries, led by Israel, India, Hungary and Taiwan. — AFP

S AFRICA STUDENTS, POLICE CLASH IN CAMPUS BATTLE

JOHANNESBURG: South African police fired rubber bullets, stun grenades and teargas at student protesters in Johannesburg yesterday as authorities tried to re-open the prestigious Wits University after weeks of demonstrations. The university, along with many campuses across South Africa, has been closed for at least two weeks during protests over tuition fees, with violent clashes regularly erupting between students, police and private security guards.

"There has been an attempt to disrupt lectures at Wits today," the university said in a statement. "Police are dispersing the protesting students as we speak using teargas and stun grenades." University authorities had vowed to re-open the campus yesterday, with vice-chancellor Adam Habib warning of the "immense consequences of not finishing the academic year". He said most students wanted to return to lectures, adding that police and security staff would ensure lectures

would go ahead, and no mass protests would be allowed to gather. "The university wants to arrest us, instead of listening to us," said 21-year-old Patrick Shabalala, a third-year law student, amid repeated clashes outside Wits' Great Hall auditorium. "We are not criminals. We want to study and not end up paying endless student loans from the government. That is why we are striking."

As police opened fire and protesters threw rocks, television footage showed several minor injuries to students and police. Campuses nationwide including the University of Cape Town, the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of Pretoria have all been hit by violence, arson and closures. The wave of protests was triggered by a government announcement that universities would set their own fee increases but that next year's hikes could be as high as eight percent. — AFP

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ANKARA: Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim addresses the board of directors of the Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen. —AFP

TURKEY SUSPENDS OVER 12,000 POLICE IN COUP INVESTIGATION

LATEST MOVE UNDER CONTROVERSIAL STATE OF EMERGENCY

ANKARA: Turkey yesterday suspended more than 12,000 police officers over alleged links to Muslim cleric Fethullah Gulen, accused of masterminding the failed July coup, in the latest move under the controversial state of emergency. Meanwhile, a prominent pro-Kurdish television channel was raided and broadcasts cut under the emergency laws, over accusations of supporting Kurdish militants.

Of the 12,801 suspended from duty as part of the investigation into the coup attempt, 2,523 were police chiefs, the police headquarters said in a statement. In total, Turkey has suspended around 270,000 police officers. The action was taken over suspected links to the Gulen movement which Turkey blames for the failed putsch on July 15 which tried to oust President Recep Tayyip Erdogan from power.

A few days after the coup attempt, a three-month state of emergency came into force and was extended on Monday a further 90 days from October 19. A Turkish official, who did not wish to be named, confirmed the suspension, adding that the individuals would continue to be paid two-thirds of their salary "pending further investigation". Gulen, an ally-turned-foe of Erdogan who has lived in self-imposed exile in the United States since 1999, strongly denies Ankara's accusations. Supporters of the Gulen movement, also known as Hizmet (service), insist it is a loose grouping of individuals committed to peace and helping people through education and charities.

'Gulen could flee'

Turkey has asked the US authorities to extradite Gulen to face justice back home and expressed impatience with the slowness of the procedure. But Washington has insisted the full judicial process should be observed. Justice Minister Bekir Bozdogan repeated yesterday previous government warnings that Gulen could escape to another country based on "intelligence" received, the Anadolu news agency reported.

According to Anadolu, 1,350 of those suspended in the police force were working at the Ankara police headquarters, which came under attack from the air on the night of the coup. The interior ministry also suspended 37 members of its staff over alleged links to the movement, CNN-Turk television reported. At least 369 had already been suspended from the ministry by early September, according to previous figures from the channel. In the central city of Konya, 21 soldiers were detained in connection with the investigation at an air base where putschists had previously clashed with Turkish security forces while resisting arrest on July 17, two days after the attempted coup.

'No matter who'

Tens of thousands of people in the judiciary, civil service, military and education sector have been suspended while 32,000 suspects have been placed under arrest on charges of links to the movement. A total of 70,000 people had been investigated, Bozdogan said last month, adding that the "process" continued. From teachers to former

generals and admirals, from bakery magnates to journalists, the investigation into the failed putsch has touched almost all aspects of Turkish life.

Also under the state of emergency, Turkish police raided the Istanbul headquarters of prominent pro-Kurdish television channel IMC TV, cutting all transmissions while it was live on air. However the channel is not accused of supporting the coup but of broadcasting "terror propaganda" for the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). It has ridiculed the charges.

The government's crackdown has alarmed Turkey's Western allies, including the European Union, which have warned Ankara that it must act within the rule of law. The Turkish official said there had been "many cases" where suspended individuals were now reinstated, but could not give an exact figure. "A suspension is a precautionary measure intended to stop suspects interfering with the official investigation, destroying evidence, etc."

Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said those found guilty would face punishment "no matter who they were" during a speech to parliament in Ankara. "(But) we will never allow those who are innocent to face any grievances." The decision to extend the state of emergency by three months was announced on Monday after a cabinet meeting. Erdogan previously suggested that it might be necessary for the state of emergency to be kept for at least 12 months. Turkish officials have defended the extension as a necessary means to address challenges to the country's democracy. —AFP

TURKEY CHANNEL SHUTS DOWN WHILE LIVE ON AIR

ISTANBUL: When the police finally came, the staff of IMC TV in Istanbul were ready. Dozens of employees crowded behind the anchor's news desk, applauding their management and shouting "free media won't be silenced." Then as technical experts sent by the authorities fiddled with wires in the backroom, broadcasts were cut and screens went blank.

The channel—which had a pro-Kurdish stance but also engaged with women's and environmental issues—was the latest casualty of what activists see as a growing crackdown against the media in Turkey in the wake of the July 15 failed coup. The government insists media remains free and diverse in Turkey, accusing outlets like IMC TV of promoting the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), claims the channel denies.

"Why are you covering your face? Long live hell for the cruel!" the channel's general manager, Eyup Burc told the police live on air as they raided the channel. "We are against all coups and we are against those who stage their own coup out of a coup!" he said. The channel was one of a dozen TV outlets ordered closed last week under Turkey's controversial state of emergency imposed in the wake of the coup and extended by another three months from October 19.

Rather than being accused of supporting the July 15 coup, they are charged with broadcasting "terror propaganda" for the outlawed PKK which has fought a bloody 32-year insurgency against the Turkish state. This appears to have confirmed fears of activists, who have repeatedly warned that the state of emergency could be used for crackdowns beyond the coup suspects.

'Could come any time'

"There are no channels left to broadcast this speech!" the leader of the opposition pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) Selahattin Demirtas told a meeting of his party in the parliament. "They believe that the people will support the government when they are not informed of the news. They are deceived again," he added. Despite the closure order, IMC TV had defiantly remained on air until Tuesday through the Hotbird satellite and internet broadcasts, with staff expecting the police

to arrive at any moment.

"Police may come to our door any time and put a complete halt to our broadcasts," Banu Guven, presenter at IMC, told AFP a day before the police raid. The television channel has attracted a number of journalists from the mainstream media like Guven, who worked for 14 years at the widely-followed NTV. "We do not threaten anyone's security. On the contrary we are a channel that defends people's right to receive news," Guven said. Several other broadcasters, including pro-Kurdish Ozgur Radyo and the strongly leftist Hayatin Sesi TV, were also raided and shut down on Monday.

Dilek Gul, another IMC journalist, said her television station did not do anything wrong. "Dramatic shutdowns of media outlets have become a familiar drama in Turkey," she told AFP. Earlier this year, Turkish police used water cannon to take over the headquarters of the Zaman newspaper linked to the cleric Fethullah Gulen who was later blamed for the coup. However there has been no suggestion IMC is linked to Gulen.

'Opposition pressured'

The closure has come at a time of growing concerns for press freedom in Turkey under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with several prominent journalists under arrest following the coup. "All form of opposition in Turkey is now deprived of its voice," Erol Onderoglu, Turkey representative of press freedom watchdog Reporters Without Borders (RSF) told AFP.

Onderoglu was himself detained for 10 days in June for "terror propaganda" after he guest-edited a pro-Kurdish newspaper, Ozgur Gundem. The government insists that Turkey has vibrant opposition media. Anti-Erdogan columnists still write in some mainstream media like the Hurriyet daily. Officials argue no other Turkish government has done more for Kurdish media, pointing to the setting up of the country's first state-run Kurdish TV, TRT Kurdi. But Turkey is ranked 151st out of 180 countries in RSF's World Press Freedom Index. Ugur Guc, head of the Turkish Journalists' Union, said the government was using the coup as a pretext to "pressure all the opposition and socialist quarters." He said: "The coup failed but a counter coup is in place." —AFP



ISTANBUL: Employees of prominent pro-Kurdish television channel IMC TV react as Turkish police raided the headquarters of the TV channel. - AFP

PALESTINIAN LOCAL ELECTION DELAYED BY FOUR MONTHS

HEBRON: The Palestinian government delayed municipal elections for up to four months yesterday with Fatah and Hamas so far unable to overcome divisions to organize their first competitive polls in a decade. The postponement came a day after the Palestinian high court ruled that the elections, initially scheduled for October 8, should be held only in the West Bank and not in the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

A new date for the vote was not set by the government based in the West Bank, the Palestinian territory run by President Mahmud Abbas's Fatah party. The Palestinian Central Elections Commission and the United Nations special representative welcomed the postponement, saying they were hopeful Gaza would now be included in the eventual vote. The Palestinians have not held an election in which both Hamas and Fatah took part since 2006. They have also not held a vote in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the same time since then.

"The Palestinian cabinet, in consultation with president Mahmud Abbas, decided to postpone the local elections for (up to) four months," prime minister Rami Hamdallah said in a statement. Islamist movement Hamas rejected the postponement and said the delay and the decision not to hold the polls in Gaza were Fatah maneuverings to avoid an electoral defeat. Hamas, labeled a terrorist organization by the United States and European Union, had planned to support lists of candidates not officially linked to the movement to avoid potential sanctions if they won.

It was not clear if Hamas would still attempt to do so. The elections were initially to choose municipal councils in some 416 cities and towns in Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank. On September 8, the Palestinian high court based in the West Bank suspended the polls following disputes between Fatah and Hamas over candidate lists. That dispute led to Monday's decision in which the high court ordered the elections to be held only in the West Bank and not in Gaza. It said that

the Hamas-controlled judiciary in Gaza did not have the necessary "guarantees" in place for holding the polls.

Postponement 'preferable'

It was unclear if yesterday's postponement meant Gaza would be included in the elections or another court ruling would be needed first, but the Central Elections Commission welcomed the delay. In a statement, it said a postponement was preferable to only holding the vote "in the West Bank, which would have deepened the division in the country and negatively affected the public interest of the Palestinian people."

Nikolay Mladenov, UN special coordinator for the Middle East peace process, also welcomed the postponement, saying in a statement it was important elections "be organised both in the West Bank and Gaza". Mukhaimer Abu Sada, professor of political science at Gaza's Al Azhar University, told AFP that "if a consensus can't be reached, the most likely scenario is cancelling the elections". Reconciliation attempts between Hamas and Fatah have repeatedly failed, and Hamas boycotted the most recent Palestinian municipal elections in 2012.

An official with the electoral commission said authorities now planned to restart the process from the beginning—meaning that candidate lists already registered could be wiped out. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri told reporters the group opposed that and wanted the process restarted at the point where it was stopped. Fatah and Hamas have not contested an election since 2006 parliamentary polls which Hamas won—sparking a conflict that led to near civil war in Gaza the following year.

This year's vote was planned with 81-year-old Abbas under heavy political pressure as opinion polls have suggested most Palestinians would like him to step down. Some analysts saw Abbas's decision to call for the municipal elections as a failed gambit since he may have been hoping Hamas would repeat its 2012 boycott. —AFP

SENIOR MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD LEADER KILLED IN SHOOTOUT

CAIRO: Egypt's security forces killed a senior Muslim Brotherhood leader and another member of the outlawed Islamist group in an overnight shootout at a Cairo apartment, the Interior Ministry said yesterday. A ministry statement carried by the state MENA news agency said 61-year-old Mohammed Kamal, a physician by profession, was killed along with Yasser Shahata Ali Ragab in an exchange of gunfire as police tried to arrest the two late on Monday night. But a Brotherhood statement posted on its official website shortly after reports of the shootout surfaced said Kamal had been arrested by police, suggesting he was killed after being taken into custody.

In July 2015, the Brotherhood made a similar claim when security forces raided an apartment

in a western Cairo suburb, saying nine of its members were killed after they were rounded up. Authorities said at the time that the nine were armed and were meeting at the apartment to plan attacks. Kamal was wanted for his part in more than a dozen armed attacks, the ministry said. He was twice sentenced in absentia to life in prison for establishing armed groups and for an explosion near a police station in the southern city of Assiut. He led several armed branches of the Brotherhood, the statement said.

Kamal was also wanted for planning the June 2015 killing in Cairo of Egypt's chief prosecutor, Hisham Barakat - the first assassination of a top Egyptian official in 25 years. The government had earlier implicated the Palestinian militant Hamas group, accusing it of training in the Gaza

Strip individuals who carried out the assassination. Hamas has denied the accusation.

The statement additionally said Kamal was behind the failed assassination of Egypt's former mufti, Sheikh Ali Gomaa, in Cairo in August. A lesser-known militant group claimed responsibility for that attack. Egypt has been carrying out an extensive clampdown on Muslim Brotherhood members and other government opponents since the ouster in 2013 by the military of Mohammed Morsi, an Islamist president who hailed from the Brotherhood. Earlier, Ragab, the second Brotherhood member killed on Monday night, had been sentenced in absentia to 10 years' imprisonment for assault and kidnapping. MENA said police also confiscated weapons and munitions at the scene. —AP



CAIRO: In this Jan 25, 2016 file photo, supporters of ousted Islamist President Mohamed Morsi, chant slogans and raise an image of him after the Muslim Brotherhood called on its supporters to take to the streets on the anniversary of the 2011 uprising. —AP

LA CHIEF DEFENDS NEW SHOOTINGS BY OFFICERS

LOS ANGELES: Police officers who shot and killed men in two separate weekend shootings were justified in their use of deadly force because they feared for their lives, the Los Angeles police chief said. Carnell Snell, 18, turned toward officers with a gun before he was shot, and the other, a Hispanic man who still hasn't been identified, pointed a replica that looked like a real gun at police, LAPD Chief Charlie Beck said Monday.

The shootings come amid heightened tensions over police actions involving black people and other minorities across the country. A protest was expected yesterday at a meeting of the Los Angeles Police Commission, the department's board of civilian overseers who now routinely face raucous demonstrators. In Snell's shooting, officers tried to pull over a car he was in Saturday because it had paper plates that didn't match the year of the vehicle - a possible indication of a stolen car and something commonly seen in drive-by shootings, Beck said. Snell, seated in the back, looked at officers and then ducked down "as if to hide from them," Beck said.

When officers tried to pull the car over, Snell jumped out holding his waistband and the foot pursuit began, he said. After a chase of several hundred yards, Beck said, Snell took a gun from his waistband and turned in the direction of the pursuing officers, prompting the shooting. Snell died at the scene and police recovered a fully loaded semi-automatic gun with one round in the chamber within 5 feet of where Snell lay, Beck said, adding that the weapon had not been fired. Beck did not say whether one or more officers fired, how close they were to Snell, or whether the car turned out to be stolen.

'No justice, no peace'

The officers were not wearing body cameras, but a surveillance video from a business clearly showed Snell was armed, Beck said. The shooting occurred in a neighborhood where nearly 450 people have been shot this year, making it the worst in the city for gun violence, Beck said.

"We are doing our absolute best to take guns out of the hands of those that would use them against others, and sometimes that leads to circumstances where Los Angeles police officers are put into peril and have to defend themselves," the chief said.

A group of people protested outside Beck's news conference, chanting, "No justice, no peace, no racist police." Three were arrested for unlawful assembly after refusing orders to leave police headquarters and take their demonstration to a public street. The protesters rejected the police department's description of the shooting and called on them to release the video if they have nothing to hide, something Beck said was being considered but could only happen when all the evidence has been collected and analyzed. "We're so tired," said protester Jade Daniels, 24. "These kids don't want to die. What black person would point a gun at a group of cops?"

More protesters marched in South Los Angeles streets Monday night. In the other shooting Beck addressed, a man was shot when he pointed what turned out to be a replica handgun at police in another high-crime area on Sunday. The man remained unidentified. He was only described as Hispanic. The officers were responding to reports of a man with a gun. Snell was the third black man in five days to die in confrontations with police in Southern California.

Last yesterday, Alfred Olango was fatally shot by an officer in the San Diego suburb of El Cajon when Olango took a "shooting stance" and pointed at an officer with what turned out to be a 4-inch vape pen - an electronic cigarette device. On Friday, Reginald Thomas died after being shot with a Taser by police in Pasadena. He was armed with a knife and his wife described him as mentally ill. Meanwhile, the family of a black man killed by police in Sacramento in July demanded murder charges Monday against two officers heard on a dash-cam video talking about trying to hit the man with their police cruiser before he was shot 14 times. —AP



Partial view of the coastline of Santo Domingo, near the Port of Haina on October 3, 2016 as strong winds and rain are expected in the next few hours in Dominican Republic. —AFP

TWO DEAD AS DEADLY HURRICANE MATTHEW SLAMS ASHORE IN HAITI

THOUSANDS FLEE THE PATH OF THE STORM

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Hurricane Matthew made landfall in southwestern Haiti early yesterday, triggering major floods and forcing thousands to flee the path of the deadly storm that has already claimed two lives in the poorest country in the Americas.

The National Hurricane Center said Matthew made landfall as an "extremely dangerous" Category Four storm near the town of Les Anglais at around 7 am (1100 GMT) packing maximum sustained winds of around 145 miles per hour. The most menacing storm in nearly a decade, Matthew began battering Haiti late Monday with strong winds and rising sea levels, before slamming ashore some 250 miles west of the capital Port-au-Prince. Even before making landfall along the southern edge of a jagged peninsula on Hispaniola, the divided island that Haiti shares with the Dominican Republic, Matthew was blamed for at least two deaths in Haiti.

Rising waters

One of the victims was a sickly woman who died late Monday in the coastal town of Port-Salut when she was unable to leave her house to receive medical care, authorities said. On Friday, a fisherman died after his boat sank in southern Haiti. Another individual went missing and is feared to have died in similar circumstances on Sunday. Forecasts predict Matthew will dump 38 to 63 centimeters (15 to 25 inches) of rain over southern Haiti with up to a meter possible in isolated areas.

In Les Anglais, rising waters swamped the

national highway, and the hurricane slowly creeping northward at around nine miles per hour — has caused extensive flooding in and around the flimsy homes and buildings in Haiti's southwest. Forecasts said landslides and flash-flooding are likely before Matthew moves on to Cuba, the Bahamas and other parts of the Caribbean.

More than 6,400 people have been evacuated to temporary shelters in Haiti, although civil protection forces have struggled with locals who refused to leave some of the most vulnerable areas. They included the capital's extremely impoverished, densely populated neighborhoods, including Cite Soleil where some 100,000 of the total 500,000 residents face serious flooding risks and the seaside Cite L'Eternel.

Workers used heavy machinery to empty canals in central Port-au-Prince that have been blocked by trash for months, although they were unlikely to complete the job in time. Edgar Celestin, a spokesman for Haiti's civil protection agency told AFP that the hurricane was responsible for overnight flooding in 11 communes. Part of the seaport city of Les Cayes was underwater after being deluged by recent rains, which now are also being blamed for mudslides.

"We have already recorded a landslide between Les Cayes and Tiburon" in Haiti's Sud department, Marie-Alta Jean-Baptiste, director of Haiti's civil protection told AFP. Haiti is home to almost 11 million people, many living in fragile housing. Thousands are still living in tents in Haiti after the country's massive earthquake in

2010. Erosion is especially dangerous because of high mountains and a lack of trees and bushes in areas where they have been cut for fuel.

Cuba evacuates 316,000

Interim President Jocelerme Privert in an address to the nation urged Haitians on Monday to do what they could to get out of the path of the storm. "My countrymen, do not be stubborn, do not say 'God is good' and will take care of you," he said. "The dangerous areas will be evacuated," he added. "We have no interest in risking your lives."

In nearby Jamaica, officials said the army and military reserves were called up to help deal with hurricane damage. Buses were also sent to flood-prone areas to move residents to shelters. US embassies in Haiti and Jamaica closed for a second day yesterday due to the storm. Cuba, meanwhile, evacuated some 316,000 people from the east of the island where Matthew was expected to hit later yesterday.

"No one likes to leave their homes, but the sea is going to rise and that is very dangerous," said Pedro Gonzalez, a retired chef who had to leave a fishing islet where he lives off the city of Santiago. At the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba-located along Matthew's predicted path-officials issued a mandatory evacuation order for all non-essential personnel and family members. Imates in the base's prison are safe, US military officials said. Forecasts predict the hurricane could hit the US East Coast around midweek. Florida and parts of North Carolina have declared states of emergency. —AFP



LOS ANGELES: Protesters demand the firing of Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck over a police-involved shooting of a black man over the weekend during a news conference at LAPD headquarters. —AP

COLOMBIA WAR ZONES SPLIT OVER REJECTED PEACE DEAL

BOGOTA: The areas hardest hit by Colombia's half-century conflict were deeply divided over a peace deal between the FARC rebels and the government rejected by voters in a shock referendum defeat. The deal, which failed Sunday when Colombians narrowly voted against it, broadly split the country between those who have experienced the war first-hand and those who have mainly watched it on the news, experts said.

"The rural world, which has lived through the conflict, bet on peace. The urban world said 'No,'" said Ariel Avila of Colombia's Peace and Reconciliation Foundation. "Because urban Colombia didn't live through combat, air strikes... it doesn't see the need" for making concessions to the leftist rebels, he told AFP. But even areas that endured the war were deeply split over the deal, the product of nearly four years of arduous negotiations between President Juan Manuel Santos's government and

the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). "We're polarized in many ways. Even victims of the conflict are polarized," said political analyst Juan David Cardenas of La Sabana University in Bogota.

Opponents of the deal attacked it for being too soft on the FARC, a Marxist guerrilla group launched in 1964. The prospect of light sentences with no jail time and the FARC's relaunch as a political party did not sit well with Colombians who associate the group with civilian massacres, hostage seizures and sowing terror in the countryside. The promise of reparations for victims and a special system of courts to try crimes committed during the conflict failed to sway many of the millions of Colombians bereaved, maimed or uprooted by a war that has killed 260,000 people.

Underground opposition

It was no surprise the "No" vote won in con-

servative areas such as the central coffee-growing region or the northwestern department of Antioquia, the stronghold of former president Alvaro Uribe-the deal's chief opponent. But Santos, who has staked his legacy on the peace process, and FARC leader Timoleon "Timochenko" Jimenez, who guided the guerrillas toward a negotiated exit, got a rude upset in other regions where they expected strong support.

In Marquetalia-the central region where the FARC was launched in the aftermath of a peasant uprising crushed by the army-the "No" camp took 63 percent of the vote. And rejection of the deal was "overwhelming" in some areas the FARC has traditionally controlled, such as Norte de Santander and Arauca on the Venezuelan border, said Cardenas. "There was a hidden, underground mindset among people who refused to say openly that they would vote 'No.' They never supported amnesty, political participation," he told AFP.

Unexpected results

Still, the electoral map featured some unexpected paradoxes. For example, in the northwestern town of Bojaya-the scene of a FARC massacre that killed 79 people in 2002 — almost 96 percent of voters cast "Yes" ballots. Every municipality in the western department of Cauca, one of the conflict's main battlegrounds because of its lucrative cocaine trade, voted "Yes." And in Mitu, a southern city seized by 1,500 rebels in 1998, more than 75 percent of people voted in favor of the deal. Eimer Sandino, a 29-year-old driver from San Vicente del Caguan, a southern region that has traditionally had a strong FARC presence, said opposition to the deal was rigid in his area.

"You want Colombia to be different, for your children's future. But it's difficult to kick-start people's thinking. The war has affected lots of families," he said. But in the end, the area voted nearly 63 percent in favor of the deal-well above the nationwide figure of 49.78 percent. "I have lived through the shipwreck of war, and I am for peace," said Naime Cometa, a 58-year-old merchant, explaining her vote. "Here in these remote areas, the guerrillas were the law." —AFP



TORIBO: A woman walks past a mural. —AFP

IN VP DEBATE, PENCE TASKED WITH CLEANING UP FOR TRUMP

WASHINGTON: In the vice presidential debate, Indiana Gov Mike Pence will step into a role that has become all too familiar during his time as Donald Trump's running mate: clean-up duty. It was Pence, a mild-mannered Midwesterner with strong conservative credentials, who tried to soften Trump's criticism of a military family and toughen the businessman's stance on Russia. When Trump waffled over endorsing House Speaker Paul Ryan in his August primary, Pence weighed in with a solid vote of confidence in his former congressional colleague.

Pence's task has perhaps never been more critical than on the debate stage at Virginia's Longwood University, where he'll face off against Sen Tim Kaine, the Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton's No. 2. The vice presidential contest comes as Trump tries to recover from one of the worst weeks of his turbulent presidential campaign. He delivered an uneven — and at times undisciplined — performance in the first presidential debate, then became absorbed in a controversy over comments he made two decades ago about a beauty queen's weight.

That first storm was quieted only by revelations that Trump suffered more than \$900 million in losses in 1995 that could have allowed him to avoid paying federal income taxes for as many as 18 years, according to records obtained by The New York Times. With time running out to sway undecided voters ahead of the Nov. 8 election, Republicans say Pence needs to use his moment in the political spotlight to shift the campaign conversation away from Trump's self-inflicted wounds.

"His goal in this vice presidential debate is to continue to take the high road, but also take every opportunity he can to not get sidetracked on issues that aren't important," said Alice Stewart, who advised Texas Sen Ted Cruz's presidential campaign. The single debate for the running mates is always a more low-key affair than the trio of presidential showdowns. That's particularly true in an election where the candidates at the top of the ticket are such outsized figures who have been in the public eye for decades.

Candidates still a mystery

While last week's first debate between Trump and Clinton drew a record-setting television audience of about 84 million people, the Pence-Kaine contest is expected to be watched by far fewer viewers. For many of those who do tune in, the debate is likely to be one of their first opportunities to thoroughly assess the men who could be next in line for the presidency. In a recent Associated Press-GfK poll, more than half of registered voters said they didn't know enough about Kaine to venture an opinion about him and about 44 percent said the same for Pence.

Kaine is a friendly and earnest political veteran whose easygoing demeanor is similar to Pence. He's tried to serve as a validator of Clinton's character, eager to offset the questions many Americans have about her honesty and trustworthiness. Kaine spent several days preparing for the debate in Raleigh, North Carolina, and in his hometown of Richmond, Virginia, which is about an hour west of the debate site. Washington lawyer Robert Barnett has been playing the role of Pence in Kaine's debate preparations.

Pence, too, has been meticulously preparing for the showdown, a contrast with Trump, who eschewed traditional study sessions and practice debates. Wisconsin Gov Scott Walker has stood in as Kaine in the prep sessions. Since joining Trump's ticket in July, Pence has often been tasked with easing the anxieties of conservatives who worry about the Republican nominee's sometimes-fluctuating political ideology.

"There's Pence speak and there's Trump speak — Mike Pence using the language of conservative orthodoxy and Donald Trump using the language of a brash businessman," said Matt Schlapp, chairman of the American Conservative Union. When Trump clashed with American Muslim parents whose son was killed serving the military in Iraq, it was Pence who issued a statement saying the family should be "cherished by every American." And when Trump seemed to encourage Russia to find missing Clinton emails, Pence quickly warned Russia that there would "serious consequences" for interfering in the US election. —AP

AFGHAN FORCES FLUSHING TALEBAN OUT OF KUNDUZ

KUNDUZ: Fighting continued on the outskirts of Kunduz yesterday as some frightened residents fled the city a day after the Taliban launched an hours-long assault that was repelled by Afghan forces backed by NATO. Helicopters hovered over the strategic provincial capital and commandoes were stationed in the main square, an AFP correspondent there said, as Afghan forces conducted a clearing operation warning that militants were hiding in civilian homes.

Dozens of residents could be seen boarding buses, many of them government employees and their families fearing Taliban violence. "I have to leave the city with my family, because my brother is in the army," 40-year-old Hussain told AFP as he boarded a bus for Kabul. "The situation is uncertain, if the Taliban find out about it they may kill us. The people are very scared, they are all moving to safer places." "We could not sleep the whole night, each blast would startle my kids and shake our house," said another resident Amrullah.

"There is no safe place in the city, they are fight-

ing from street to street. I have to move my family to a safer place until the situation comes back to normal." The assault launched early Monday came just over a year after militants briefly seized the provincial capital, and as President Ashraf Ghani flew to Brussels to meet world leaders for a crucial foreign aid conference. Interior ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said fighting was ongoing in the city's outskirts, and that at least 30 Taliban insurgents had been killed. The defense ministry earlier yesterday said three Afghan soldiers were killed and seven wounded in the fighting.

The number of civilians reaching hospital with bullet and shrapnel wounds jumped from around 40 to more than 100 yesterday afternoon, hospital officials said, with one person killed. Kunduz provincial governor Assadullah Omarkhil said the operation was moving slowly "because the Taliban are using people's houses to hide". But a Taliban spokesman insisted via Twitter that the militants were still advancing. The insurgents are known to exaggerate their claims. Jawid Salim a spokesman

for the special forces in Kunduz, said the Taliban were setting fire to some buildings as they were pushed out of the city, including the main power station.

On Monday residents had reported being trapped in their homes by intense fighting as the sound of explosions echoed across the city, with provincial officials voicing fears it could fall. NATO spokesman Brigadier General Charles Cleveland said the government was in control of the city, but the strength of the attack was still being assessed. "We did see fighting but we did not see the scale of attack that was initially being reported," he said, comparing it to "exaggerated" attacks earlier this year on Lashkar Gah in Helmand, and Tarin Kot in Uruzgan. Afghan troops had responded "effectively", he said.

'Pity for MSF victims'

Ghani is meeting world leaders in Brussels yesterday and Wednesday in a bid to secure financial aid from the international community up to 2020.

The meeting, 15 years after the US invasion of 2001, will try to drum up support despite donor fatigue compounded by conflicts in Syria and Iraq plus the worst migration crisis since World War II. "The enemy attacked Kunduz to catch the world's attention in Brussels," defense ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri said yesterday.

After seizing Kunduz on September 28, 2015, the Taliban held the city for two days then withdrew from the outskirts on October 15. More than 280 people were killed and hundreds wounded. A US air strike during the fighting hit a hospital operated by Medecins Sans Frontieres on October 3, killing 42 people. The organization, which has not since relaunched its operations in Kunduz, had planned to mark the anniversary Monday by sending its country representative Guilhem Molinie and international president Meinie Nicolai to the city. But the fresh Taliban assault forced them to hastily cancel and evacuate non-medical staff who had been sent ahead to prepare. It was "a pity for the victims", Molinie told AFP. — AFP

US-FUNDED AFGHAN HOSPITAL A SYMBOL OF FOREIGN AID FAILURE

WASTED BUDGETS, CRUMBLING WALLS AND BROKEN EQUIPMENT

SALANG: Hunched low over a hernia patient on a broken operating table, an Afghan surgeon bemoans the lack of life-saving equipment in a US-funded hospital that is crumbling into disrepair, exemplifying the eye-watering waste of aid dollars. After fifteen years and tens of billions of dollars in foreign aid, Afghanistan is still dangerously unstable and persistently at the bottom of almost every major human development index.

Its perpetual state of need is a growing impediment to those trying to encourage donors to keep on giving, and will hang over a crucial development aid conference in Brussels this week. The \$600,000 hospital, funded by US forces in Afghanistan under a program to create Afghan jobs, was meant to be a modern 20-bed

electricity, essential anesthetic equipment is in short supply, and puddles of water and blood have to be manually swabbed in the absence of a proper drainage system. In a corner of the operating room is something it does not need—a flush toilet. "This is like a regular house converted into a hospital. Those who built it don't understand the requirements of a hospital," Shams told AFP.

Building on sand

An inspection by the watchdog agency SIGAR found the Afghan contractor who built the hospital was paid in full despite the glaring deficiencies. Newborn babies are washed with untreated water and patients suffer freezing

temperatures in winter because the heaters do not work. The dental ward, where tooth extractions were carried out with pliers in the absence of equipment, recently shut down over fears the tools had become badly infected. The hospital is not an anomaly. It is among a series of what observers call "pie in the sky" projects that serve as a cautionary tale of how too much aid money with too little oversight can spell catastrophe in a country roiled by graft.

"Corruption is an existential threat to the mission in Afghanistan," said Jodi Vittori, policy adviser at international campaign group Global Witness. Donors never put in place basic protections to ensure accountability, even as money

pilfered from aid "flowed to predatory elites in the country", she continued. "That's a massive strategic blind spot that has jeopardized the blood and treasure invested there since 2001."

The United States has spent around \$110 billion on Afghanistan's reconstruction since 2001, more than the cost of the Marshall Plan that rebuilt a devastated Europe after World War II. Reconstruction in one of the poorest, most violent and corrupt nations on Earth can be akin to building on sand. Many of the schools, clinics and warehouses built by USAID and other development agencies lie vacant, unused or are just shells of concrete and steel bars, SIGAR says. The US constructed fragile roads to American weight standards—without factoring in notoriously overweight Afghan trucks—and spent millions on airplanes that were unfit for use.

Donor quandary

Some projects were culturally tone deaf, such as a \$34 million program to push Afghan farmers to produce soybeans — a crop that does not grow well in the country and which Afghans are generally averse to consuming. And perhaps the biggest failure of the reconstruction effort is the \$8.4 billion counter-narcotics programs that have been so ineffective that Afghanistan now produces significantly more opium than it did before the 2001 US-led invasion.

The opium trade is estimated to be worth around \$3 billion a year and is a key source of income for the Taliban. Worse still, experts say Western assistance has helped exacerbate the very problem that aid agencies were trying to solve—chronic dependence on aid. At the Brussels conference on Afghanistan, co-hosted by the European Union, the country is seeking to attract annual pledges of around \$3 billion until 2020. Donor nations are caught in a quandary, observers say. Without continued high levels of international assistance, despite past failures, there are fears that the government could collapse and Afghanistan could once again become a haven for insurgent groups. Back in the Salang hospital, there are more immediate concerns as doctors receive a man on a stretcher who had fallen from a tall walnut tree, possibly causing serious damage to his spine.

"Allah!" he screamed, writhing in agony as hospital staff swarmed around him. One cleaned the blood stains on his face, another scrambled to cobble together a rudimentary splint with cardboard and wads of cotton. Ashen-faced, hospital administrator Lal Mohammad Salangi walked out of the scrum. "We don't have what it takes to treat his injury," Salangi said. "After basic first aid we will have to send him to another hospital." — AFP



SALANG: In this photograph taken on September 21, 2016, Afghan surgeons perform an operation on a patient in an operating room A at Salang hospital, north of Kabul. — AFP

facility replete with dental, pediatric and surgical wards in the mountainous, poverty-stricken area of Salang near Kabul.

Instead, it is a decrepit, structurally deficient building in an earthquake-prone region, which is underused, understaffed and poorly equipped. It stands as an illustration of how the West splurged on institutions that Afghanistan cannot afford to run or maintain. "How are we supposed to treat patients? With tables and chairs?" asked the surgeon Qutbuddin Shams, who must bend to perform surgery because the foot pedal that adjusts the height of the operating table is broken.

Whirring generators offer a fitful supply of

temperatures in winter because the heaters do not work. The dental ward, where tooth extractions were carried out with pliers in the absence of equipment, recently shut down over fears the tools had become badly infected. The hospital is not an anomaly. It is among a series of what observers call "pie in the sky" projects that serve as a cautionary tale of how too much aid money with too little oversight can spell catastrophe in a country roiled by graft.

"Corruption is an existential threat to the mission in Afghanistan," said Jodi Vittori, policy adviser at international campaign group Global Witness. Donors never put in place basic protections to ensure accountability, even as money

GOVT BANS LOCAL NEWSPAPER FEARING ANTI-INDIA VIOLENCE

SRINAGAR: Authorities in the Indian-controlled portion of Kashmir have banned the publication of a local newspaper, saying that its contents could incite violence in the troubled region. The English daily "Kashmir Reader" did not publish for the second straight day yesterday, following a government order over the weekend for its owner to halt publication.

The order, handed down by police officials to the newspaper's office, said the paper's contents are "of such nature that can easily cause incitement of acts of violence and disturbance of public tranquility in the state." Kashmir is witnessing its largest protests against Indian rule in recent years, sparked by the July 8 killing of a popular rebel commander by Indian soldiers. The protests, and a sweeping security crackdown, have all but paralyzed life in the Himalayan region.

According to the state government, it sent the newspaper a notice a week ago questioning some items it had published, saying they could disturb public order. However, Hilal Mir, the newspaper's editor, said that his paper was not given any prior notice or an opportunity to explain its stand. Rights group Amnesty International said the ban was a "setback to free speech" and called on authorities to revoke the order.

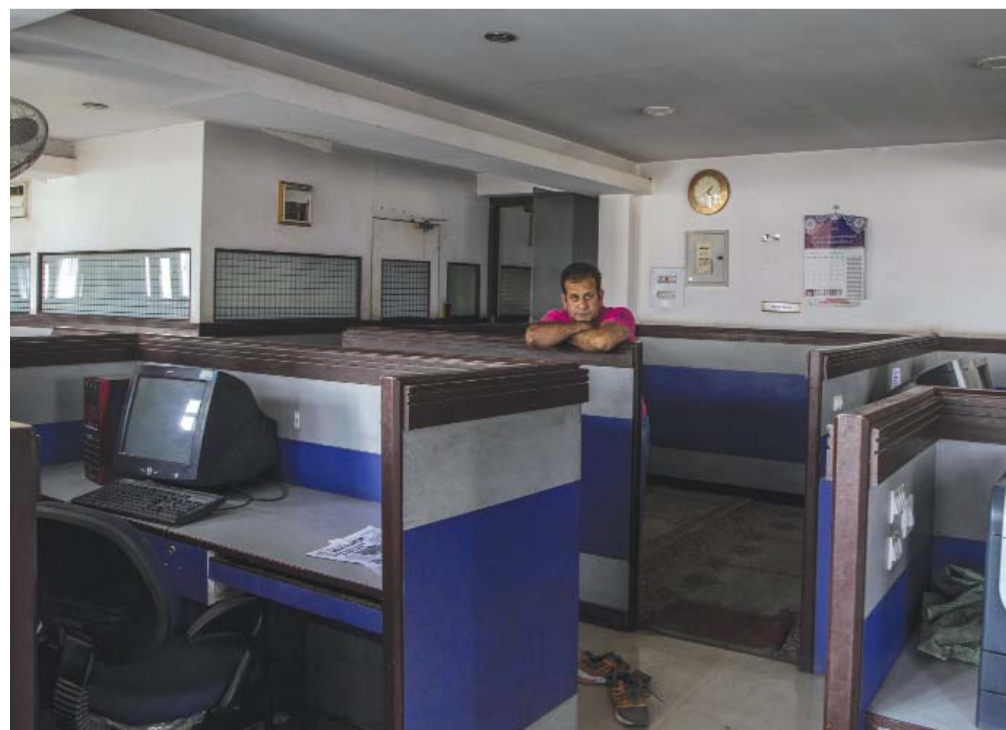
The "order does not specifically mention any news items in Kashmir Reader that incited violence," said Aakar Patel, who heads the Indian chapter of Amnesty International. "This vaguely-worded shutdown order suggests that the newspaper is being targeted for its reporting." In July, the government shut down printing presses and temporarily banned newspapers from publishing for three days in a sweeping information blackout after days of anti-India protests. The officials had said the government action was aimed at saving lives and strengthening peace

efforts. Local newspaper editors had denounced that ban. Yesterday, Kashmir's most widely circulated newspaper, "Greater Kashmir," said in a front-page editorial that the latest ban shows that the government is willing to "take extreme measures" to muzzle the press.

More than 80 civilians have been killed and thousands injured in violence related to the ongoing protests, with government forces firing bullets and shotgun pellets at rock-throwing

protesters. Two policemen have also been killed and hundreds of government forces have been injured in the clashes.

Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan but claimed by both in its entirety. Most people in the Indian-controlled portion favor independence or a merger with Pakistan. A militant uprising and subsequent Indian military crackdown have killed more than 68,000 people since 1989. — AP



SRINAGAR: Maroof Ahmed, a Kashmiri journalist working for Kashmir Reader watches as he stands inside his office. — AFP



ACCUMOLI: This handout picture taken and released by the Vatican press office on October 4, 2016 shows Pope Francis (C) posing for a picture during his visit in Accumoli, after an earthquake hit the area on August 24, a disaster that claimed nearly 300 lives. — AFP

SELFIES AND PRAYERS: POPE VISITS ITALY'S QUAKE ZONE

ACCUMOLI: Pope Francis yesterday paid a surprise visit to the Italian mountain communities devastated by an August earthquake, mixing poignant silent prayers amid the ruins with cheerful selfies alongside survivors. In keeping with his desire to make a relatively low-key visit to an area where nearly 300 people died, the 79-year-old pontiff's trip to the shattered town of Amatrice and the devastated nearby hamlets of Accumoli and Arquata del Tronto was only announced to the media after he had arrived.

In a poignant image tweeted by the Vatican press office, Francis stood briefly in silent prayer in the closed-off "red zone" of Amatrice, his stooped silhouette framed by the shells of condemned buildings and piles of rubble. He later repeated the gesture outside the ruins of the St Francesco church in Accumoli, having spent two hours over lunch chatting with 60 pensioners in a retirement home where some of the elderly victims of the quake are now housed. "I did not come earlier so as not to create any problems, knowing the state you were in," he told survivors. "I did not want to cause any bother." "But from the outset I felt I had to come to you, simply to tell you that I am with you, nothing more, and that I am praying for you." After blessing the crowd in Amatrice and saying a brief Ave Maria prayer, Francis issued a message of hope for an area still struggling to come to terms with the scale of Italy's deadliest quake since the 2009 L'Aquila disaster.

Embrace for victims

"We go forward, there is always a future," he said on what was the feast day of St Francis of Assisi, the venerated Catholic figure in whose honor Francis selected his papal name. "There are many dear ones who have left us, who fell here under the masonry. We pray to the Madonna for them, we all do together. "Always look forward. Go forward, have courage and help

each other. We walk better together, on our own, we cannot get there."

The pope's first point of call had been the prefabricated huts brought in to replace Amatrice's combined elementary and middle school, which was destroyed in the quake despite having been expensively renovated to make it quake resistant a few years ago. Vatican spokesman Greg Burke also tweeted pictures of the pope greeting youngsters and clasping the hands of a visibly-moved middle-aged man who, the Vatican said, had lost his wife and two children in the disaster. Francis had confirmed his intention to visit the quake-hit area on his flight home from Azerbaijan on Sunday, saying he wanted to visit "privately, alone, as a priest, a bishop, a pope."

1,800 homeless

The government has estimated the cost of the damage done to the area hit by the quake at four billion euros (\$4.5 billion) and has vowed to rebuild the worst-affected communities where they were, having ruled out any relocations. Around 1,800 people remain housed in temporary accommodation—either tented villages or hotels in the surrounding area, according to the latest update issued last week.

Francis's statement on Sunday was a reaffirmation of a pledge he made to worshippers on August 28, four days after the disaster, to visit the area hit by the 6.0 to 6.2 magnitude quake "as soon as possible." The earthquake, which was felt in Rome, 150 kilometers from the epicentre near Amatrice, killed 297 people and injured hundreds more. Around two-thirds of the deaths occurred in Amatrice, a beauty spot and popular tourist destination packed with holiday-makers when the quake struck at the height of the summer season. The quake struck an area only 50 kilometers from the city of L'Aquila, which was hit by a 2009 earthquake in which more than 300 people perished. — AFP

CONSERVATIVES IN DOCK IN SPAIN'S 'TRIAL OF THE YEAR'

MADRID: Spain's "trial of the year" got underway yesterday with former lawmakers of the ruling Popular Party in the dock over one of the country's biggest corruption scandals. Kickbacks, fake invoices and Swiss bank accounts: the juicy details of the so-called Gurtel affair—which allegedly saw PP politicians across the country receive bribes—are well-known to Spaniards who have become all too used to corruption in politics.

Spanish media have billed it as the "trial of the year", with 37 defendants facing justice, including three former party treasurers, notably Luis Barcenas, accused of stashing tens of millions away in Switzerland. As the defendants arrived at the court building, protesters shouted "Thieves! Crooks!" The conservative PP itself has been called to the stand for allegedly benefiting from funds obtained illegally by lawmakers. But unlike the defendants, the party as a whole faces no criminal charges and may merely be asked to repay the money.

'Godfather' figure

The case has been dubbed the "Gurtel" trial, the German translation of "belt" or "correa" in Spanish—the surname of the man who allegedly led the sprawl-

ing corruption network. Francisco Correa, a businessman who liked to be called "Don Vito" in reference to the mob boss played by Marlon Brando in "The Godfather", is accused of having showered PP lawmakers and councilors with bribes between 1999 and 2005.

In exchange, his companies or those of his friends were allegedly given contracts for public works or for organizing events, such as the 2006 visit of Pope Benedict XVI in the eastern city of Valencia. One of the defendants arriving in court yesterday, Jose Luis Penas, a former PP councilor, secretly taped conversations with Correa and other defendants over two years. His evidence is a major part of the prosecution case and will be seen as a mitigating factor should he himself be found guilty.

Last year, online daily eldiario.es published a confession from Correa, who for more than three years swapped his flashy lifestyle for prison where he was remanded in custody from 2009 to 2012. He said companies would give him "a commission of two to three percent" on the value of public works contracts awarded to them, which he would then give to Barcenas "in cash" after taking his share. — AFP

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SOUTH KOREA'S NEW WEDDING CRASHERS ARE GRAFT-BUSTERS

SEOUL: A pair of aspiring paparazzi staked out two weddings in Seoul's high-end Gangnam district recently, but they weren't looking for celebrities. Their target: officials receiving gifts that might violate South Korea's tough new anti-corruption law. About 4 million people are estimated to be directly covered by the law - civil servants, employees at state-owned enterprises, teachers, journalists - which limits the value of meals and gifts that can be accepted.

With rewards worth up to 200 million won (\$181,691), it is also fuelling a cottage industry of camera-wielding, receipt-scavenging vigilantes targeting expensive restaurants and fancy weddings in a country with a deep tradition of entertaining and gift-giving. Some of them come for training in the art of espionage at a school that calls itself the Headquarters of Reporting for Public Good, including the two that went to the weddings. "You can get rich and become a patriot at the same time," school president Moon Seoung-ok told students participating in a recent class that included tips on using hidden cameras. "You can pick up credit card receipts from garbage at restaurants," Moon told his students at his classroom housed in an office near a Seoul courthouse, where he hands out booklets about the anti-graft law. "You need to obtain evidence."

The 3-5-10 rule

South Korea ranked 27th among 34 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in the 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index compiled by Transparency International. Since the law took effect on Sept. 28, golf course reservations have plunged and fewer guests are attending weddings, while hospitals have posted warnings against thank-you gifts, media have reported. Some groups of diners are splitting bills - a practice once almost-unheard of in the country.

Consumer and entertainment companies could lose up to 11.6 trillion won (\$10.43 billion) under the law, the Korea Economic Research Institute said in June. The law limits the value of meals that can be accepted by public servants and others to 30,000 won. Gifts are capped at 50,000 won in value, while cash gifts that are traditionally handed over in envelopes at weddings and funerals are limited to 100,000 won, under prohibitions now known as the "3-5-10" rule.

Violators can expect fines, but would face criminal prosecution for more serious infringements, such as receiving a gift of more than 1 million won, or for receiving a total of over 3 million won worth of gifts in a year. Businesses are scrambling to

adjust. The lobby group for the Korean conglomerates known as chaebol, the Federation of Korean Industries (FKI), held a seminar on Sept. 8 attended by about 400 people on how corporate officials should comply with the law.

Check the obituaries

In South Korea, the term "paparazzi" applies not only to photographers chasing celebrities but to individuals who can win cash in other "report and reward" schemes that cover offences such as running traffic lights or dropping cigarette butts on the street. The Kim Young-ran anti-bribery law, named after the former Supreme Court justice who proposed it, has spawned the term "ran-parazzi". Moon tells his students to find their way into weddings and funerals. "You have to look into who you are targeting," Moon said in an interview. "Check obituaries in newspapers to find out who's holding a funeral among the upper class."

While Moon's school does not charge tuition for the "ran-parazzi" in training, it offers to sell students gadgets, including pens and spectacles with hidden cameras. A recent classroom session was attended by 10 students. One of them, Otgoutous Ochr, a 46-year-old housewife originally from Mongolia, said she hopes to earn enough money to buy an apart-

ment. But she also professes patriotism as a motive. "If the number of those who make money illegally declines, my kids can live in a better environment," she said.

Floral displays

An official with the government's Anti-Corruption and Civil Rights Committee said citizens reporting violations should provide detailed evidence. "Anyone reporting should submit a paper document with his or her name on it. A single photo is difficult to build a case with," said the official, who declined to be named because he is not authorized to speak to media.

The weddings the two students staked out did not feature the congratulatory floral displays that are standard at such occasions. One of the students, Song Byung-soo, 60, saw that as a pre-emptive measure. "Things have already changed lot," said Song, who is looking to supplement the income he earns working for a company that sells auto parts but does not expect to hit the jackpot. "I was hesitant because I have to hurt someone by doing this, but after the training, I think it is alright. If ran-parazzi can make our society clean without special favors or corruption, I think it is a good thing after all," Song said. — Reuters



TAGUIG CITY: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, center, poses with Philippine Army officers during his visit to its headquarters. — AP

PHILIPPINES, US HOLD WAR GAMES AS DUTERTE CONTINUES TIRADES

FIREBAND LEADER BEGINS TO PIVOT TO CHINA

MANILA: The Philippines and the United States launched war games yesterday against the backdrop of the unusual threat of American forces being ejected from the Southeast Asian nation, as its firebrand leader pivots to China. President Rodrigo Duterte has sustained a verbal assault on the United States, the Philippines' former colonial ruler and mutual defense partner, since he took office on June 30 in response to criticism of his deadly war on crime.

Duterte has in recent days warned the war games will be the last of his six-year term, and threatened to scrap a defense pact implemented by his predecessor that was meant to see more US troops in the Philippines to counter Chinese expansion in the South China Sea.

"Better think twice now because I will be asking you to leave the Philippines altogether," Duterte said on Sunday in his latest outburst against the Americans, full of typical invective. "The Americans, I don't like them... they are reminding me in public. So I say: 'Screw you, f**k you,'" he said, while signaling again that he wanted to forge closer alliances with China and Russia.

Last week Duterte, 71, also claimed the CIA was plotting to assassinate him. This came after he branded Barack Obama a "son of a whore" in response to being told the US president planned

to raise human rights concerns over his drug war. Duterte has vowed to eradicate illegal drugs in the Philippines, warning the nation is in danger of becoming a narco-state. His crime war has seen more than 3,000 people killed, with the United Nations, the European Union and rights groups raising concerns about alleged extrajudicial killings and a breakdown in the rule of law.

Duterte has insisted he is not doing anything illegal, yet at the same time said he would be "happy to slaughter" three million drug users. He also likened his crime war to Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's effort to exterminate Jews, but following an outcry apologized for referring to the Holocaust.

China circling

A total of around two thousand troops from the two sides are taking part in the war games, including in waters close to flashpoint areas of the South China Sea. China claims nearly all of the sea, even waters close to the Philippines and other Southeast Asian nations, and has in recent years built artificial islands in the disputed areas, capable of hosting military bases.

To counter China, the Philippines' previous president, Benigno Aquino, sought to draw the United States closer. This included the signing of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement

that Duterte now wants to scrap. Duterte appears intent on adopting the opposite tactic, saying recently he hopes to travel to China and meet with President Xi Jinping. Aquino also launched international legal action that in July saw a UN-backed tribunal declare China's vast claims in the sea illegal.

However Duterte has declined to use the verdict to pressure China. He has also said there will be no joint patrols with the United States in the sea. Still Duterte's comments have not filtered down into government policy, and it remains unclear to what extent he is prepared to damage ties with the United States. "I am confident that we will continue to build our partnership and capabilities together," the 3rd US Marine Expeditionary Force deputy commander, Brigadier General John Jansen, said at the opening ceremony in Manila.

The US Embassy in Manila urged the Philippines yesterday to live up to previous agreements. "We will continue to honor our alliance commitments, and we expect the Philippines to do the same," embassy spokeswoman Molly Koscina told AFP. Philippine defense department spokesman Arsenio Andolong told AFP on Monday the military relationship with the US "has not changed as of today." — AFP

TAIWAN SEEKS TO IMPROVE FISHING FLEET CONDITIONS

NEW TAIPEI CITY: Commercial fishing boat owners in Taiwan, one of the world's biggest seafood exporters, face strict rules and potential fines under a new law aimed at preventing overfishing and protecting migrant crewmembers who work far at sea with little oversight. The Distant Water Fisheries Act, which takes effect Jan. 15, 2017, comes amid growing pressure on Taiwan's seafood industry to crack down on modern-day slavery and other abuses for the more than 20,000 migrants working on the island's fleet of fishing vessels.

Frances Lee, a spokeswoman for Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said new requirements for the foreign fishermen will include insurance, health care, wages, working hours and human rights. Last year the European Union gave Taiwan a "yellow card" warning for failing to control illegal fishing on its commercial vessels, which sail around the world to catch some \$2 billion a year worth of exported tuna and other seafood every year. Without improvements, Taiwan's \$14 million worth of seafood exports to the EU could face sanctions.

More attention

The US State Department's 2016 Trafficking in Persons report says that while Taiwan has cracked down on forced labor and sex trafficking, fishing vessels need more attention. The report says fishermen mostly from Indonesia, Cambodia and Vietnam have been fraudulently recruited to work on Taiwan-flagged vessels where they can face abuses including violence, limited food supplies and withheld wages.

The issues extend well beyond Taiwan. Commercial fishing boat owners around the world, including the US, recruit foreign crews for the dangerous and exhausting work of hauling in the catch. The migrant fishermen are vulnerable to human trafficking and other exploitation because the work takes place so remotely, far from police or labor officials, and they can remain offshore for years as their catch is shuttled in to port.

Several nonprofit advocacy groups including Greenpeace and the International Labour Organization have repeatedly raised concerns about working conditions for foreign crew in Taiwan's fishing fleet. Allison Lee at the Yilan Fishermen's Labor Union, which represents migrant workers in Taiwan, said men have been beaten, overworked and denied pay

on board boats. "The captain or first officers will use violence, like hitting their heads, kicking or punching their stomachs," she said. Migrant workers hired for Taiwanese vessels often report working all but one or two of every 24 hours at times, said Wong Ying-dah, director of the Service Center and Shelter for Migrant Workers in Taiwan. They may also sleep in crowded quarters with other migrants and eat just one meal a day despite paying up front for three, he said. "Some don't even have a bed," Wong said.

Victim-centered inspections

Some workers sign multiple contracts, sometimes without knowing what's in them, and inadvertently agreeing to reductions in wages, activists say. Steve Trent, executive director of the London-based Environmental Justice Foundation, said Taiwan's domestic and distant water fleet already circumvent its existing labor laws, and that more needs to be done.

"Taiwan needs to develop a far deeper, more rigorous, victim-centered inspection regime on its domestic and distant water fleet if it is to have any serious intention of bringing working conditions up to basic international standards," he said. Phil Robertson at Human Rights Watch in Bangkok said passing a law is an important first step in providing protections, but said resources will be needed to give it teeth. "The real difficulty is implementation, not only in court, but in the high seas," he said.

Advocates say they hear dozens of complaints from fishermen each year. But Fisheries Agency Director Lin Ting-jung said his department gets only two reports a year of abuse against migrants. Nonetheless, he acknowledged there are problems on some boats and insufficient government oversight. "There are some tense moments on the boats and labor rights can be a problem," he said. "The captains are looking for ways to improve rights. But this sweat-blood-seafood problem, is it a common situation or a few isolated cases?"

The new law, ratified in July, requires that foreign crew be hired through registered agents with contracts that specify the workers' rights. Violators who hire foreign crew without authorized agents face fines up to \$600,000, and boat owners who abuse their workers could lose their licenses for a year. The bill also lays out specific rules to conserve marine fisheries and curb illegal fishing. — AP



KEELUNG: In this July 22, 2014, file photo, fishing boats are tied down in the port city. — AP

VIETNAM WAR PROPAGANDA BROADCASTER 'HANNAH' DIES



HO CHI MINH CITY: This picture taken on September 10, 2015 shows Trinh Thi Ngo, then aged 86 and known as "Hanoi Hannah" for her propaganda broadcasts during the Vietnam War, holding a portrait of herself in her younger days while at her residence. — AFP

HANOI: Silky-voiced communist propaganda broadcaster "Hanoi Hannah", famous for urging American GIs to leave her country during the Vietnam War, has died at age 87, friends said yesterday. The radio presenter, whose real name was Trinh Thi Ngo, was among dozens of Vietnamese journalists drafted by the communist regime to inundate the country with anti-US rhetoric during the conflict that ended in 1975 with the fall of Saigon and America's defeat. "GI, your government has abandoned you. They have ordered you to die," she said in one of her on-air appeals in English during the draining war. "Don't trust them. They lied to you, GIs, you know you cannot win this war." In daily broadcasts on state-run Voice of Vietnam (VOV) from the northern capital Hanoi, Hannah would list the names of American troops killed in combat, read US newspaper articles about anti-war protests and lull listeners with Joan Baez and Bob Dylan tunes.

She rarely spoke of Vietnamese losses or American successes in her broadcasts, which were carefully controlled by the communist authorities. Hannah died Friday at her home in Ho Chi Minh City, according to VOV. "Hanoi Hannah was clearly one of the most prominent broadcasters we had in history of the Voice of Vietnam and the country in general," said Nguyen Ngoc Thuy, a former journalist at VOV's English service. "She will be remembered for her legendary voice in broadcasts targeting American servicemen. Her influence on Vietnam's success against the US was huge," Thuy added. Hannah joined VOV at the outset of the war, recalling in her memoir a desire to make a difference to the war effort. "I thought it was time for me to do something to contribute to the revolution," according to an excerpt reported on VOV. — AFP

INDIAN JAILED FOR KILLING PREGNANT GIRLFRIEND

WELLINGTON: An Indian student who killed his pregnant girlfriend in a frenzied knife attack in New Zealand after she told him the baby was not his was sentenced to life imprisonment yesterday. The man, who goes by the single name Akash, displayed "cruelty, brutality and callousness" in murdering 22-year-old Gurpreet Kaur, Auckland High Court judge Matthew Palmer said.

The judge said the pair were secretly dating for 12 months but Akash, 24, snapped on April 7 this year when Kaur told him the baby was not his and she wanted to end the relationship. High on methamphetamine, he stabbed her 29

times and dumped the body in roadside bushes south of Auckland.

He initially pleaded not guilty, arguing the stab wounds were self-inflicted, but admitted his guilt in August, four months after being arrested. Palmer said the fact that Kaur was 7 to 10 weeks pregnant exacerbated the crime and made her death even more painful for her family. "Not only did you murder Gurpreet Kaur and deprive her family of her existence, but you deprived her and her family of the potential of another life," the judge said. Akash was sentenced to life with a minimum of 17 years behind bars. — AFP



Emirati men check weapons during the first day of the Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian exhibition (ADIHEX) in Abu Dhabi yesterday. — AFP

Continued from Page 1

Moscow, or by allegedly serving the interests of Trump in the US presidential election race. And Assange himself took refuge in the Ecuador embassy to avoid extradition to Sweden where he is accused of raping a woman while she was asleep. The 45-year-old has always maintained the allegations are false and has refused to travel to Stockholm for questioning due to concerns that Sweden will hand him over to the US to stand trial for espionage.

He has come under fresh pressure after WikiLeaks published some 20,000 internal emails on the eve of the US Democratic Party convention that forced top party officials to quit. Assange charged that WikiLeaks was now the target of a witch hunt orchestrated in particular by Clinton, likening it to the repression of American communists in the 1950s driven by then senator Joseph McCarthy.

But he said he would not back down. Rather, WikiLeaks will scale up operations to "amplify our publications and to defend us against what is really a quite remarkable McCarthyist push in the United States at the moment, principally by Hillary Clinton and her allies because she happens to be the person being exposed at the moment," he said.

The domain name wikileaks.org was registered in 2006 and launched in Jan 2007, with Assange saying it would use encryption and a censorship-proof website to protect sources and publicize secret information. The site has since published more than 10 million leaked documents. It first caught the world's attention when it released manuals for US prison guards at Guantanamo Bay. But it really hit its stride in 2010, unveiling logs of US military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and a video showing a US helicopter crew mowing down a group of unarmed civilians - including two journalists - in Baghdad. — AFP

GOOGLE LAUNCHES PIXEL SMARTPHONE

Continued from Page 1

"Aside from the camera, the new Google Pixels are pretty undifferentiated compared to Samsung and iPhone 7th generation phones," Moorhead said. "They don't exactly swing anyone around the room." Google announced an exclusive deal with US telecom provider Verizon for Pixel sales and said it would also be available through carriers in other countries. Versions for sale at Google's online shop are "unlocked" to work with various carriers.

As part of its expanded hardware push, Google also showed off a new Daydream View headset that compatible smartphones can be slipped into to serve as screens for virtual reality experiences. View headsets are made of soft cloth, purportedly inspired by casual clothes. Daydream View bundled with a controller device will be available in

November, priced at \$79. Google added to the coming hardware line-up with a modular Wi-Fi system that lets a set of inter-connected mini-modems be spread around homes to make signals strong in all spots.

"Unlike a single, central router, multiple Google Wi-Fi points do a better job of delivering connectivity to all parts of the home," said Google executive Mario Queiroz. The Internet giant also introduced its Google Home virtual assistant that will be a direct challenge to popular Amazon Echo devices. Google described Home as a voice-activated cyber assistant that lets people tap into the company's online capabilities to answer questions, manage tasks, control devices in homes, stream videos and more. Google Home was priced at \$129, with pre-orders starting in the United States yesterday. Google Home will begin shipping and be available in retail shops on Nov 4. — AFP

'STRANGE STATES' OF MATTER EARNS TRIO PHYSICS...

Continued from Page 1

Thouless won half of the eight million Swedish kronor (around \$931,000) prize, while Haldane and Kosterlitz share the other half. Topology is a branch of mathematics that investigates the physical properties of matter and space - shape in essence - that remain unchanged under certain deforming forces. These include stretching, compressing and bending, but not piercing, tearing or gluing. An often-used example is a rubber coffee cup being bent, twisted and reshaped into a donut - for topologists the two shapes are indistinguishable, though to the rest of us they are completely different.

In practical terms, these properties of matter may one day lead to the reshaping of common materials into "topological states" that can transport energy and information in very small spaces without overheating. The trio's pioneering work "boosted frontline research in condensed matter physics, not least because of the hope that topological materials could be used in new generations of electronics and superconductors, or in future quantum computers," said the Nobel jury.

In the early 1970s, Kosterlitz and Thouless overturned the theory that superconductivity or superfluidity could not occur in very thin layers of material. Superconductivity is when electricity flows through a material without experiencing any resistance or losing energy as heat, while superfluidity is when a fluid flows without any friction. For his part, Haldane discovered how topological concepts applied to chains

of small magnets in certain materials.

Haldane said his prizewinning discovery had been serendipitous. "Most of the big discoveries are done that way: you stumble on it and you have the luck to recognise you have something very interesting," he told reporters at the Nobel press conference via videolink. "It's so surprising that it takes a while to grip, but when you see it you realize why no one had seen it before." Thouless, 82, is professor emeritus at the University of Washington in Seattle. Haldane, 65, is a professor at Princeton University, and Kosterlitz, born in 1942, teaches at Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

For Laurent Levy, physics professor at France's University of Grenoble, the trio's work had yielded "a conceptual revolution". "They introduced new ideas and physics which have, later, resulted in heaps of new discoveries," he told AFP. "Above all, it advanced our understanding of the properties of matter." Last year, the physics prize went to Japan's Takaaki Kajita and Canada's Arthur McDonald for determining that neutrinos have mass, a key piece of the puzzle in understanding the cosmos.

The physics prize is the second of the Nobels for 2016 to be awarded, after the medicine prize on Monday went to Yoshinori Ohsumi of Japan. He was honored for his pioneering work on autophagy - a process whereby cells "eat themselves", which can result in Parkinson's and diabetes when disrupted. Today, the chemistry prize will be announced, to be followed by the peace prize on Friday, the economics prize on Oct 10 and the literature prize on Oct 13. — AFP

ARMY ADVANCES IN ALEPPO, IS WEDDING...

Continued from Page 1

half of Aleppo, once the country's commercial hub. Yesterday, loyalists seized high-rise buildings from rebels in the city center, pushing north towards other opposition districts. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said regime forces were "gradually advancing" after street battles on the front line dividing the rebel-held east from the government-controlled west.

"They are focusing on the tall buildings, which were once government administration buildings, because they can monitor entire streets and neighborhoods from there," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman. State news agency SANA reported rebel shelling on the government-held west, including on the Aleppo University campus, killed six people.

More than 300,000 people have been killed since the conflict erupted in March 2011, and the latest attempt at securing a diplomatic solution to the war has fallen apart. Washington announced late Monday that it would suspend joint efforts to reinstate a nationwide truce, accusing Moscow of abetting strongman Bashar al-Assad's assault on Aleppo. "Everybody's patience with Russia has run out," White House spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters.

A US official said US Secretary of State John Kerry is "laser-focused" on finding a diplomatic solution, but his talks with Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov on the crisis were over. Kerry said yesterday the decision was one "we did not come to lightly". "We are not abandoning the pursuit of peace, we are not going to leave the multilateral field, we are going to continue to try to find a way forward in order to end this war," he added, offering fierce criticism of Moscow. "People who are serious about making peace behave differently from the way Russia has chosen to behave," he said.

The Kremlin meanwhile said it "would like to hope for the presence of political wisdom and the continuation of exchanges on particularly sensitive issues that are necessary for maintaining peace and security". And Lavrov said Moscow was "not shirking our responsibility but consider that the crisis can only be resolved collectively." Russia's defense ministry said later it had sent an S-300 missile system to its naval facility in the Syrian city of Tartous, a measure it says is meant to bolster its security. Russia and the US will keep a communications channel open solely to ensure their separate anti-jihadist bombing campaigns do not get in each other's way.

UN rights chief Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein decried the "ghastly avalanche of violence and destruction" in east Aleppo, saying 100 children had been killed there in the

past 10 days. He urged the Security Council to introduce a limit on its members' veto power, to prevent countries like Russia blocking the referral of Syria's conflict to the International Criminal Court in The Hague. On Monday, the largest hospital in the rebel-held side of Aleppo was completely destroyed in an aerial attack, according to the Syrian American Medical Society, which supports the facility. Only five hospitals remain operational for the estimated 250,000 people living under a crippling government siege in east Aleppo. Arab League chief Ahmed Abul Gheit told an emergency meeting that the situation in Aleppo was "carnage," calling for an "urgent ceasefire".

In northeast Syria, the toll in a suicide attack at a wedding rose to 34 people, the region's Kurdish government said. The Islamic State group claimed the attack, saying one of its members had fired on a gathering near Hasakeh city before blowing himself up, though it did not mention a wedding. The bombing left rows of seats covered in blood at the wedding hall in Hasakeh province. "I was taking pictures of the party, and all of a sudden I felt a huge explosion," said wedding photographer Walid Mohammad. "I saw so many people die - small kids, old people."

Rows of seats in the hall that hosted the party were still covered in blood yesterday morning when an AFP photographer visited the scene. Broken tiles littered the floor and torn fabric hung from the ceiling. A thick layer of dust covered a sound mixer and keyboard. "As the bride and groom were exchanging their vows I saw a man wearing a thick black jacket pass beside me," a witness named Ahmad said. "I thought he looked strange and a few seconds later there was an enormous explosion. People had fallen on the ground and I saw bodies torn to bits."

Both the groom and bride were safe, but the groom's father and brother were killed in the attack, a relative told AFP. "The groom's wounds are light, and he and his new wife are staying at a relative's home. He doesn't want to see anyone," he said. "They are really shaken up by this." Mohamed Kassar, a wedding singer, struggled to hold back tears as he described the aftermath of the attack. "I'm still in shock. They were children and women," he said.

At a local hospital, the injured crowded the halls, with a woman in a sparkly gold party dress gripping the rails of a staircase, her face pale. The groom, Zardesh Mustafa Fatimi, hails from a prominent family deeply involved in the autonomous administration run by Kurdish factions in Syria's north. According to an official from the autonomous administration, Fatimi works for a local Kurdish party. The Observatory said he is also a member of the Syrian Democratic Forces, an Arab-Kurdish coalition battling IS in northern Syria. — Agencies

SAUDI ARABIA HOLDS LIVE-FIRE DRILLS...

Continued from Page 1

"We have capabilities and we are part of an international scene," he said. Iran has begun negotiations on technical cooperation with the space agencies of various European countries, as well as Russia, China and Japan, Bahrami said. He also said Iran had started negotiating with international satellite operators.

Iran has long harbored ambitions to put its own satellites into orbit to monitor natural disasters in the earthquake-prone nation, improve telecommunications and expand military surveillance. The US and its allies worry that the same technology could be used to develop long-

range missiles. Iran's Defense Ministry, which is in charge of launching satellites, has denied that it is using its space program to develop new weapons. Iran says it is willing to share its scientific findings and satellite data with other countries.

Over the past decade, Iran has sent dummy satellites into orbit. Bahrami said Iran plans to send three domestically-made mini-satellites into a low Earth orbit by early 2018. At least three Iranian universities are working to develop satellites, sponsored by the Iranian space agency. In 2013, Iran sent a monkey into space and set up its first space tracking center to monitor objects passing in orbit overhead. — Agencies



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Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher
YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN

Editor-in-Chief
ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7
FAX : 24835620/1
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163
ACCOUNTS : 24835619
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P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL : info@kuwaittimes.net
Website : www.kuwaittimes.net

Issues

UNDER THE INFLUENCE: DRINK CULTURE LIVES ON AT UK PARTY MEETS

By Edouard Guihaire and Katherine Haddon

After days filled with lofty speeches, Britain's political party conferences take on a very different feel at night, when alcohol flows freely at gossipy parties stretching into the small hours. In one of the stories of debauchery that are a staple of the events, outgoing UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage went swimming in his underwear at his party conference after a drinking session last month.

At the Conservative Party's conference in Birmingham, central England, Britain's departure from the European Union has been the talk of the town this year - often over French, Spanish or Italian wine. The festival atmosphere helps smooth out some of the glaring divisions between Conservatives that emerged during a bitter campaign ahead of Britain's shock vote in a June referendum to quit the European Union.

"The most important thing is that people are getting along, are not allowing any divisions to affect anything at this conference. It's a genuine environment," added Eric Gilinsky, a 25-year-old Conservative supporter who works in banking. "Networking happens everywhere," said Gilinsky as he chatted to friends outside Birmingham's luxury Hyatt Regency hotel - a hub of networking and political chat during the four days of the conference.

Party loyalists in black tie and cocktail dresses crowd the hotel's bars and a pile of empty beer bottles on the piano grows as the night wears on. The revellers earlier in the evening were at a "Beers of Europe" event hosted by the think tank Open Europe and a pub reception featuring performances of traditional sea songs sponsored by a ports operator. The Brasshouse, a red-brick pub along one of Birmingham's famous canals, was heaving with young Conservatives pushing to get to the bar. "It's good to have young people in the party," said Aaron Watkins, a smartly-dressed 25-year-old, who works in online marketing and is also a local councillor in eastern England.

PM not a Big Drinker

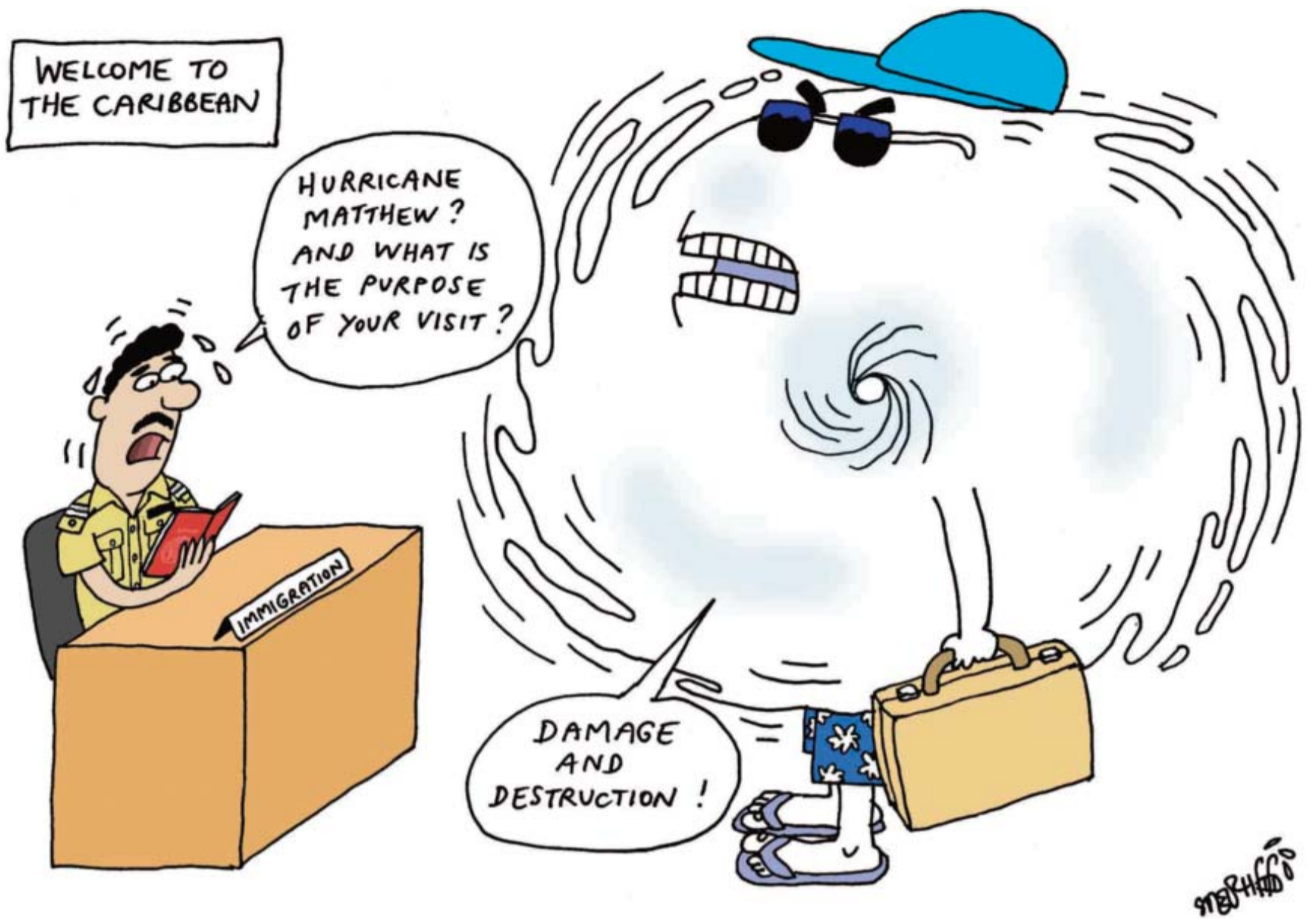
Party conferences used to be held in faded seaside resorts like Blackpool, where popular nocturnal attractions included a seaside light show and Funny Girls, a nightclub featuring drag acts. Early in David Cameron's coalition government from 2010, ministers tried to avoid being photographed sipping champagne at the party conference as they imposed biting austerity cuts on Britain's economy. But champagne - or at least sparkling wine - is now back on the menu for thirsty guests at many receptions.

But in recent years, they have moved to major provincial cities like Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool, which offer conference facilities and plentiful hotel rooms in a more modern setting. It is not just the Conservatives who like a tippie after a hard day listening to choreographed addresses. Late-night drinking is a fixture at all of Britain's party conferences, reflecting a wider, lingering alcohol culture in politics.

There are around a dozen places where MPs and staff can drink around London's Houses of Parliament, even if more female MPs, the introduction of family-friendly hours and a 24-hour news media means they are less crowded than in the past. May, who became prime minister in July, made a virtue of the fact that she was no big drinker during her pitch for the leadership. "I don't gossip about people over lunch. I don't go drinking in parliament's bars. I don't often wear my heart on my sleeve. I just get on with the job in front of me," she said in June.

She has limited herself to a few low-key appearances at evening receptions in Birmingham. For most of the ordinary activists, party conferences are a chance to rub shoulders with politicians and journalists at receptions sponsored by think-tanks, pressure groups or companies. Particularly for younger ones, nursing a hangover over a cup of coffee the next morning is as much of a ritual as debating Brexit or grabbing a selfie with their favorite MP. —AFP

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SCRAPED KNEE LIFE OR DEATH MATTER IN VENEZUELA

By Hannah Dreier

It was just a scraped knee. So 3-year-old Ashley Pacheco's parents did what parents do: They hugged her, cleaned the wound twice and thought no more of it. Two weeks later, the little girl writhed screaming in a hospital bed. Her mother stayed day and night in the trauma unit. Her father scoured Caracas for scarce antibiotics. They had no idea how much worse it was going to get. If Venezuela has become dangerous for the healthy, it is now deadly for those who fall ill. After years of mismanagement and a plunge in the price of oil, the economy has stalled out. The socialist administration calls the medical crisis an invention peddled by opponents, and has refused to let in humanitarian aid.

Yet the government's own reports say that one in three people admitted to public hospitals last year died. The number of operational hospital beds has fallen by 40 percent since 2014. And the country is running short on 85 percent of medicines. "I really don't know of any other country where things have deteriorated so quickly, to such an incredible extent," said Rafael Perez-Escamilla, a Yale University School of Public Health professor.

A week after her fall in mid-July, Ashley started to run a fever. At the local clinic, doctors said she would soon be on the mend. Yet the fever kept rising, and her knee was swelling. So Maykol and Oriana Pacheco sat her between them on their motorcycle and tried three other hospitals. None had the medicine or room to take Ashley in. The next morning, her temperature had spiked to 103 degrees. Desperate, her parents took her to a fourth hospital. When they arrived, she was whisked into emergency care.

University Hospital was filthy. The staff had run out of bleach to clean the floors. Stray dogs wandered the building, and cockroaches scuttled by on the walls. The water in the bathroom sometimes came out black. In Ashley's room, the sink was broken, and the soap and glove dispensers were empty. Yet with the hospital so crowded that women in labor were sharing beds, her parents felt lucky she had been admitted at all.

Staph Infection

Doctors diagnosed Ashley with a staph infection and gave her the last of the hospital's supply of vancomycin, a widely-used antibiotic. But as night fell, she got worse. Her heart monitor line zigzagged wildly. Her breathing sounded like gasping hiccups. And her chest collapsed inward with each inhalation. Doctors suspected bacteria had traveled to her lung, but the hospital's last X-ray machine had given out the month before. So an ambulance took Ashley to a private clinic, where the test cost the family a week's wages.

The X-ray confirmed the doctor's fears: Ashley's right lung had collapsed. Making do with a trick from battlefield medicine, doctors slid a needle into Ashley's chest to let out the trapped air. Then they told her parents that without more antibiotic and a chest drainage machine, she wouldn't live to see the next evening. The family frantically called around to anyone who might help. After midnight, a friend found the drainage machine at a private clinic. With it, Ashley started to breathe easier. But her leg had turned an ugly purple and swollen to the diameter of a dinner plate.

If doctors could not stop the infection, surgeons would have to amputate. So Ashley's father joined the thousands of Venezuelans racing against personal clocks, standing in line for hours outside pharmacies. The antibiotic vancomycin was the hardest to find. Maykol heard that a public hospital across town might have a supply. When he arrived, the pediatric unit had flooded. There was no medicine to spare. In wet jeans, he rode to another hospital. Nothing. But as he was leaving, a man in a white coat gave him three precious vials.

In addition to medicine, Ashley now needed surgery to drain her infected knee. Only two of the hospital's 27 operating rooms were fully functional, and 150 children were waiting for a spot. Her doctors pushed until she was booked. Two residents sterilized a used needle and injected her with anesthetic. But the next week, the fever was inexplicably worse again, 102 degrees. Soon, she was quaking under her Dora the Explorer sheets, with a fever of 106 (41 Celsius).

Heart Infection

Red spots spread across her still-swollen skin - the telltale sign of a heart infection. There had

n't been enough antibiotics to stop the staph bacteria from quietly spreading all this time. Without three doses of vancomycin daily for three weeks, it could ruin her heart and spread to her brain. Maykol spent August crisscrossing Caracas in his quest to find the drug. In the meantime, five other children died on the pediatric surgery ward due to the lack of proper antibiotics.

Finally, nearly a month after she was hospitalized, Ashley's fever subsided. Her heart was scarred, and she would likely eventually need a valve replaced. Exhausted, her mother filed that information away for later. The day before Ashley was to be released, Oriana left the 9th floor for the first time in two weeks. Doctors would not discharge Ashley until she had an ultrasound test of her leg. But only one public hospital still had a functioning machine, and the clerk there said the first slot was in November, two months away.

Fungal Infection

Perez's shoulders slumped. "This is madness," she said under her breath. After she returned, a new doctor had more bad news: Ashley had picked up a fungal infection in her lungs. She needed a medicine that was no longer possible to find in Venezuela. For the first time since Ashley was admitted, Maykol lost his temper. "What do you mean she needs a medicine we can't find here?" he said. "At least tell me the name, so I can try to find it."

He spent the next days looking for ways to import the non-existent medicine. But in the end, help came from the next room over. A mother donated the medicine to Ashley. Her son had died. In late September, doctors declared Ashley infection-free. Oriana sold the supplies the family still had to other mothers to pay for an ultrasound at a private clinic and Ashley's future treatment. "We have nothing left," she said.

After years of putting it off, Maykol and Oriana planned to have Ashley baptized. It would be a celebration of her recovery - and a safeguard in case she fell ill again. As Ashley and her parents left the ward, the residents and nurses shouted after the family. They called out not "goodbye," but "good luck." —AP



In this Aug 24, 2016 photo, Ashley Pacheco, 3, cries as she receives an injection as her mother Oriana watches at the University Hospital in Caracas. —AP

WHY A MAN IN PAKISTAN KILLED HIS SISTER

By Kathy Gannon

Even now, the men at the steel mill where Mubeen Rajhu worked laugh at how easy it was to make him lose his temper. Some people had seen his sister, Tasleem, in their Lahore slum with a Christian man. She was 18, a good Muslim girl. This couldn't be allowed. Ali Raza, a co-worker at the mill, can barely contain a smile as he talks about the hours spent taunting Rajhu about his sister. It went on for months. "He used to tell us, 'If you don't stop, I will kill myself. Stop!'" Raza says.

He raises his voice to compete with the sounds of the mill, and other workers gather to listen. They too smile. A few laugh at the memory of Rajhu's outbursts. "The guys here told him, 'It would be better to kill your sister,'" Raza says. Rajhu told them he had bought a pistol, and one day in August he stopped coming to work. Rajhu discovered that his sister had defied the family and married the Christian. For six days he paced. His rage grew. How could she? On the seventh day, on Aug 14, he retrieved the pistol from where he had hidden it and walked up to his sister and with one bullet to the head he killed her.

'Honor' Killings

For generations now in Pakistan, they've called it "honor" killing, carried out in the name of a family's reputation. The killers routinely invoke Islam, but rarely can they cite anything other than their belief that Islam doesn't allow the mixing of sexes. Even Pakistan's hard-line Islamic Ideology Council says the practice defies Islamic tenets. It doesn't matter: in slums and far-off villages, away from the cosmopolitan city centers, people live in a world where religion is inextricably tied to culture and tradition.

As modernity pushes against tradition, Pakistan has seen an increase in the number of women and girls killed in the name of honor: last year, 1,184 people died, only 88 of them men. The year before that the figure was 1005, and in 2013 it

was 869, according to the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. The true numbers are believed to be higher, because many cases go unreported. The killings have fueled a growing public outrage at the practice. Activists are working to close the legal loophole that lets killers go free. But for many who have been fighting this practice, it is the mindset of the boy who could kill his sister, or the parent who could kill a daughter, that has to be understood, and changed.



Mubeen Rajhu

rebelled against her family. He gave her a chance, he says; he demanded that she swear on the Holy Quran, that she would never marry the man. Frightened, she swore she wouldn't.

"I told her I would have no face to show at the mill, to show to my neighbors, so don't do it. Don't do it. But she wouldn't listen," he says. Rajhu, who thinks he's 24 but isn't sure, occasionally wavers when he tells his story, revealing a hint of remorse. It is brief, however; only when he speaks of her as a child is his voice soft and his gaze somewhere in the

distance. Then his eyes harden and his voice becomes steely. "I could not let it go. It was all I could think about. I had to kill her," he says. "There was no choice." Tasleem was sitting with her mother and her sister on the cracked concrete floor of their family kitchen. "There was no yelling, no shouting," he says. "I just shot her dead."

Outrage

The Rajhu family lives in a dirt-poor neighborhood on the northern edge of Lahore where water buffalo compete with cars for space on mud-clogged roads. In the kitchen of the home, Tasleem's blood still stains the rough wall. In the cramped room next to it, the siblings' father, Mohammed Naseer Rajhu, talks about the killing. His outrage grows - all of it directed at his daughter. He is angry that his son killed his sister for two reasons only: The young man is in jail and no longer earning nearly \$200 a month, and his family, spread throughout Pakistan, will soon learn of Tasleem's indiscretions.

"My family is destroyed," he says, his voice rising. "Everything is destroyed only because of this shameful girl. Even after death I am destroyed because of her." After his son killed Tasleem, the elder Rajhu went to the police and filed a complaint. In Pakistan, parents often do so not to see the killer punished, but to lay the legal groundwork so they can forgive the culprit - the legal loophole that activists are fighting. He wouldn't explicitly say he forgives his son, but it is clear that he thinks the young man had every right to kill his sister.

At the Lahore police station, Rajhu's jailors return. It is time. He must return to his cell to prepare to be taken the next day to Lahore's Kot Lakput prison, where he will await trial. Darkness has settled on the sprawling station that was humming with activity when Rajhu began his story. A policeman grabs hold of Rajhu's chains to lead him down the concrete stairs. His father is hanging behind in the shadows. He has been waiting. He comes to his son's side. —AP

STRUGGLING CARDIFF SACK PAUL TROLLOPE

LONDON: Cardiff manager Paul Trollope was sacked yesterday after just 12 matches in charge of the struggling Championship club. Trollope succeeded Russell Slade in May but he paid the price for a disappointing five-month reign that left Cardiff languishing in the second tier relegation zone. The 44-year-old won only two of his 11 Championship games in charge, while Cardiff also suffered a disappointing League Cup exit against his old club Bristol Rovers. A 2-0 defeat at Burton on Saturday left Cardiff second bottom of the table and that proved the final straw for the Welsh club's Malaysian owner Vincent Tan. "Cardiff City Football Club can confirm that Paul Trollope's contract has been terminated with immediate effect," a statement on the club's website read. "We'd like to thank Paul for his efforts and wish him the very best of luck for the future. Assistant coach Lennie Lawrence and Performance Director Ryland Morgans have also left the club with our best wishes."



WALES' CAPTAIN WARBURTON NEEDS CHEEKBONE SURGERY

LONDON: Wales captain Sam Warburton will have surgery on his fractured cheekbone but is still expected to feature in his country's forthcoming international. Warburton clashed heads with Josh van der Flier in Cardiff's defeat against Leinster on Saturday and has been told by a specialist he will be sidelined for no more than a month after the operation. "Warburton will have a small plate inserted in his cheekbone. It is estimated he will be out of action for approximately two to four weeks," a Cardiff statement read yesterday. Barring any setback, Warburton should be available for the opener against Australia in Cardiff on November 5. And if the best possible prognosis proves correct, he could yet feature for Cardiff once more before the international break begins. Wales interim head coach Rob Howley had already indicated Warburton would be back for a series of games that also sees Argentina, Japan and South Africa visit the Principality Stadium in Cardiff. The 27-year-old flanker was British and Irish Lions captain in 2013 and is a leading contender to reprise that role in New Zealand next year. — AFP

SUNDERLAND HIT BY KIRCHHOFF INJURY BLOW

LONDON: Premier League strugglers Sunderland suffered another injury setback yesterday when German midfielder Jan Kirchhoff was ruled out for up to eight weeks. Kirchhoff, 26, was stretchered off during Saturday's 1-1 draw with West Bromwich Albion and scans have revealed the full extent of the damage to his hamstring. "Jan Kirchhoff has been ruled out for a minimum of six weeks after suffering a hamstring injury during Sunderland's draw against West Bromwich Albion," a Sunderland statement read. "The former Bayern Munich player was stretchered off in Saturday's game at the Stadium of Light and in order to assess the extent of the injury, the 26-year-old underwent a scan which revealed he will be out for six to eight weeks." Kirchhoff's long-term absence comes after Sunderland manager David Moyes had already been deprived of Adnan Januzaj, Vito Mannone, Sebastian Larsson, Lee Cattermole, Steven Pienaar, Victor Anichebe and Fabio Borini in recent weeks. — AFP



MERCEDES REAPING REWARDS ON AND OFF THE F1 TRACK

LONDON: Formula One world champions Mercedes are reaping the financial rewards of their track dominance, according to the team's latest accounts. Figures published by Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Ltd yesterday showed a loss after tax of 22.3 million pounds (\$28.5 million) in 2015 from a previous 76.9 million with the team remaining on course to break even.

Turnover grew by 66.3 million pounds thanks to additional sponsorship revenues and more money from the sport's commercial rights holder as a result of the team's improved 2014 performance.

Mercedes said their agreement with the commercial rights holder meant revenue flows based on sporting performance would be "significantly increased" from 2016 onwards as a result of their track dominance.

"The future outlook for sponsorship revenues is also very promising," the team added. Turnover, which does not include any contribution from majority shareholder and Mercedes' parent Daimler, has grown 86 percent since 2011 - a current 213 million pounds compared to 115 million.

Operating costs rose by 8.1 million pounds, or 3.5 percent, mainly due to inflationary increases in salary costs. Mercedes said that as of Dec. 31, the company had

negative net liquid assets of 130.1 million pounds, compared to 90.1 million in 2014, with net liabilities of 109.3 million (vs 87 million). Last year was another record-breaking season on the track for drivers Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg, who remain dominant this year as well.

Hamilton won his third world championship, and the Briton's second in a row with Mercedes, in 2015 while Germany's Rosberg again finished runner-up.

Between them they won 16 of the 19 races, with a record 12 one-two finishes. The team also set records for most points in a season (703), most one-twins in qualifying (15), podium finishes (32) and equalled the record for pole positions (18). Mercedes put the team's advertising value equivalent (AVE) from broadcast alone at \$3 billion in 2015, which they said represented 10 times the team's operating costs. The net cost of the team to Daimler was around \$30 million, effectively the net loss.

"Success is never down to one individual-it's the product of an incredible collective effort," said Mercedes motorsport head Toto Wolff, who has a 30 percent stake in the team. "Now we can see that the company is reaping the rewards on the business side, like we have done on the track for the past seasons." — Reuters



DANANG: This picture taken on September 27, 2016 shows spectators watching as players compete during a men's 3-on-3 basketball match between Nepal (red) and Indonesia (white) at the Asian Beach Games in Vietnam's central coastal city of Danang. Asia's growing fascination with three-on-three basketball, the game's half-court version which is already hugely popular in streets and backyards the world over, has given the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) fresh hope that it can get the sport into the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. — AFP

THREE-ON-THREE BASKETBALL TAKES OLYMPIC SHOT AFTER ASIAN BOOST

DANANG: Asia's growing fascination with three-on-three basketball, the game's half-court version which is already hugely popular in streets and backyards the world over, has given the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) fresh hope that it can get the sport into the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

FIBA's previous attempts to win Olympic status for the abbreviated format have failed, but the governing body is more optimistic than ever before because of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) stated desire to include more sports that appeal to younger generations.

Although three-on-three basketball fits that criteria and has its own roots in urban America, Asia has been the driving force behind the inclusion of the high-speed game in major multi-sports events. The sport has already been featured at the Asian Beach Games, Asian Indoor Games and Asian Youth Games and will be on show at the next Asian Games in 2018. It was also included at last year's inaugural European Games in Azerbaijan and, significantly, was played at the first two Youth Olympics, which were both held in Asia.

The IOC has introduced new rules giving Olympic hosts more power and flexibility in choosing their own sports and disciplines, and a decision on the final programme for Tokyo is expected in June 2017 with three-on-three hoops among the list of candidates.

"There's a lot of discussions going on," Nicolas Widmer, a three-on-three development assistant for FIBA, said. "It won't replace five-on-five, it would be an addition. It's a new discipline so it doesn't mean adding a new sport, it's a new discipline from the sport of basketball and that's how we are bidding."

Widmer was among a FIBA delegation that travelled to central Vietnam to monitor the three-on-three tournament at the Asian Beach Games. Played outdoors in a temporary venue next to Danang's main tourist beach, Widmer said the tournament was a great advertisement for the sport's popularity and increasing diversity, with the stands packed at every session.

in thrilling fashion, with their Texan-based centre Abdullah Hassan Ali draining a buzzer-beater from outside the arc to seal his team's one-point win. China, which has already started a national programme to develop specialist three-on-three players, won the women's gold, beating Thailand in the final, while Taiwan collected the bronze.

"It's a new opportunity for new countries, and we've seen some really good examples at the Asian Beach Games," Widmer said. "The level of the competition was surprisingly high and we can see that teams prepared and practised specifically for this type of basketball. They didn't just bring players that know basketball, they brought players that train specifically to play three-on-three."

"It's a universal discipline played in a lot of different countries, and it's a sport where smaller countries can perform because you don't need a

lot of infrastructure, and it's a cheap event that can be played anywhere." Widmer said it was too early to speculate on whether NBA players would play three-on-three at the Olympics if it was included.

He said FIBA's expectation was that most countries would follow the lead of sevens rugby and beach volleyball by developing separate squads, although he expected a lot of established five-on-five stars would be tempted to try the shortened format. "We have good examples where teams and players that are totally focused on three-on-three beat players that are better known and very good at five-on-five," Widmer said. "We expect most NOCs (National Olympic Committees) will develop specialist players but I'm sure there will be some very good five-on-five players who will want to do it because it's a new opportunity for them as well." — AFP



DANANG: This picture taken on September 26, 2016 shows players competing during a women's 3-on-3 basketball match between Vietnam (white) and Thailand at the Asian Beach Games in Vietnam's central coastal city of Danang. — AFP



Al-Abdulrazzaq during announcing of the partnership.

KFH SPONSORS JET SKI WORLD CHAMPION AL-ABDULRAZZAQ

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) sponsored the Jet Ski world champion Yousef Al-Abdulrazzaq who came first and second in two different events at the third round competitions of the world Jet Ski event held in China, Shanghai.

KFH's strategic partnership with Al-Abdulrazzaq reiterates the ongoing commitment of the bank towards supporting the sport and the athletes who hoist Kuwait's flag high in several international competitions.

Meanwhile, Al-Abdulrazzaq hailed

KFH's support and sponsorship which resonated significantly in achieving further Kuwaiti achievements in the international forums. He indicated that the fourth round of the competition will be held in China, Liuzhou next month, while the 5th and final round will take place in the UAE, Sharjah.

KFH spares no efforts in putting Kuwaiti National teams and individual athletes at the forefront of its priorities and pledges to continue motivating them to achieve further titles for the country.



UNIVERSAL DISCIPLINE

Qatar won the men's gold medal, beating Mongolia in the final, while Iraq won the bronze

AUSSIES PARTYING IN BRIEFS ARRESTED AT F1 IN MALAYSIA

CANBERRA: Nine Australians, including a government adviser, have been arrested in Malaysia for stripping down to their briefs and drinking beer from shoes after Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo won the Malaysian Formula One Grand Prix, officials said yesterday.

Government officials confirmed that Jack Walker, adviser to Defense Industry Minister Chris Pyne, was among the men aged 25 to 29 who were arrested after they stripped down to Budgy Smuggler-brand swimsuits decorated with the Malaysian flag in full view of thousands of spectators at the Sepang race track Sunday.

Pyne's office said the matter was being "handled appropriately" by the Australian High Commissioner in Malaysia. "Until we have a clearer picture of the process at hand, it would be unwise to comment further," a government statement said.

District police chief Abdul Aziz Ali said Tuesday that the men were being investigated for "inten-

tional insult with intent to provoke a breach of peace" and public indecency.

He said police would submit a report to prosecutors, who will decide tomorrow if the men will be charged. Abdul Aziz told the AP that the men face up to six months in jail, a fine or both if they are found guilty. Sepang International Circuit chief executive Datuk Razlan Razali told the New Straits Times website the men deserved to be locked up and have action taken against them.

"This shows a huge lack of respect to us as Malaysians; this is stupid behavior from foreigners who have no sense of cultural sensitivity and respect," he said. "It embarrasses their own country as well - it gives Australians a bad name," he said.

Australian Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce said the men's decision to strip down was inappropriate and ill-advised. "You're in another nation, you've got to be careful in what you do," Joyce told reporters in Canberra. "But I'm sure - well, I'm hop-

ing - the Malaysians will understand that I don't think there's any real malice in it. Stupidity? Obviously. Malice? No." Treasurer Scott Morrison told Sydney Radio 2GB the arrests were a reminder for travelers to know local laws and respect them. The government already warns travelers that there are conservative standards of dress and behavior in many parts of Malaysia.

Opposition leader Bill Shorten declined to discuss Walker's behavior, saying he did not want to jeopardize a complex situation.

"It's incredibly serious when an Australian gets arrested overseas," he told reporters. Don Rothwell, an Australian National University expert on international law, doubted Malaysian authorities would treat the Australians harshly. "The Malaysian government will be sure to make sure that its international reputation as a tourist destination for the Grand Prix is not too damaged," Rothwell told Australian Broadcasting Corp. — AP

BECKHAM IS UNDER A MICROSCOPE AFTER LATEST OUTBURST

MINNEAPOLIS: Odell Beckham Jr. took exception to getting tagged by Xavier Rhodes just after he ran out of bounds, got up, and exchanged a couple of words with the Minnesota Vikings cornerback.

It was a benign confrontation by Beckham's nuclear standards, but still drew an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty from the officiating crew. And with that, the message was clear: the extremely talented and extremely volatile New York Giants receiver is a marked man now, his reputation cemented as a player who needs to be closely watched for all the wrong reasons.

"It's always, it's just my fault. That's all I look at it as, it's my fault. Whatever you want to call it," Beckham said after having just three catches for a career-low 23 yards in New York's 24-10 loss on Monday night. "I just have to understand if I sneeze the wrong way, it'll be a flag, it'll be a fine. If I tie my shoe the wrong way, it might be a fine or a flag. It is what it is. You have to

understand that." Playing a position that has long been known for outsized egos, Beckham is following in the footsteps of receivers like Terrell Owens, Chad Johnson and Randy Moss, who made a thunderous return to Minnesota as an ESPN analyst on Monday night. His talent is undeniable and his production is top notch - Beckham already has more receptions, yards receiving and touchdowns than any Giants player has put up in his first three seasons, and Beckham's third year is only four games old. But the price the Giants pay for the elite playmaker comes in the form of tantrums, outbursts and penalty flags.

Last year he was suspended for a game after drawing three personal foul penalties in a vicious matchup with then-Carolina cornerback Josh Norman. It also prompted Commissioner Roger Goodell to back a new rule that allows referees to eject a player after drawing multiple personal fouls. He has already lost \$130,000 in salary

due to fines and suspensions in his young career and was so unruly on the sideline in a loss to Norman and the Washington Redskins last week that coach Ben McAdoo had to speak with him several times to try to calm him down.

Eli Manning backed Beckham earlier this week. But what should be worrisome to Beckham and the Giants is that officials are watching him more closely than ever now that his reputation as a hot head has been established, and Manning said after the game that his receiver has to adjust.

"He's got to be aware," Manning said. "People are looking for him and he's got to be smart. He can't afford to do anything that they're going to call. He's brought that on himself, so he's got to be aware of that." And there are signs the negative attention is starting to wear on other teammates. "I'm not answering any Odell, those types of questions," receiver Victor Cruz said. "Ask me about him as a player, or me as a player

or our team, I'm not answering any Odell-infraction questions."

Beckham wasn't even targeted until a 9-yard reception on a slant more than seven minutes into the second quarter. Later in the drive, he caught a short pass and was bumped by Rhodes just after he hit the sideline.

His confrontation with Rhodes was a pillow fight in comparison to the haymakers he exchanged with Norman last year, but he still drew a damaging 15-yard penalty that short-circuited a Giants drive, and he clapped sarcastically after referee Brad Allen announced the infraction.

"I've just got to know it's all against me," Beckham said. "It's going to be that way. I have to assume that I'm always in the wrong no matter what. That's something, it's a tough pill to swallow, but you have to understand it, you have to be able to cope with it and just keep it moving."

When he reached the sideline,

Beckham was quietly pulled aside by receivers coach Adam Henry for a chat and linebacker Mark Herzlich also approached him to try to calm him down. Rhodes appeared to come unglued as well, needing to be restrained on the sideline by several coaches and later pushed back off of the field by linebacker Chad Greenway after jawing with Beckham.

"Got to keep your composure," Rhodes said. "He tries to get to you by getting on you, fighting with you and trying to get you out of your game." The outbursts from both players were kept to a minimum the rest of the game, and so was Beckham's impact in the Giants' offense.

"The refs are looking to call anything, and they're not looking to call anything the other way," Beckham said. "You have to know that, you have to know that, you have to be OK with it. Unfortunately you have to be OK with it, but that's just the position I'm in." — AP



MINNEAPOLIS: Minnesota Vikings running back Matt Asiata (44) dives for extra yardage between New York Giants defenders Trevin Wade, left, and Jonathan Casillas (52) during the second half of an NFL football game, Monday, in Minneapolis. — AP

VIKINGS REMAIN PERFECT, SHUT DOWN VISITING GIANTS

MINNEAPOLIS: The only place the Minnesota Vikings look perfect is in the win-loss column. But for new quarterback Sam Bradford, that is enough for now. Bradford threw for a touchdown and played turnover-free football on Monday as the Vikings beat the New York Giants 24-10 at US Bank Stadium.

The win moves Minnesota to 4-0, where they join the Eagles and Broncos as the NFL's only remaining unbeaten teams. Jerick McKinnon and Matt Asiata, the running back committee carrying the load for Minnesota with Adrian Peterson out for the long term, each had a rushing touchdown as the Vikings never trailed for the first time this season.

McKinnon led all rushers with 85 yards on 18 carries, while Bradford was 26-of-36 for 262 yards in the air. "It doesn't matter who's playing, we expect them to perform," said Vikings coach Mike Zimmer of his makeshift lineup, having lost Peterson and Bridgewater before Week 3.

"I say it all the time, because it's true about this football team, it's so important to have the right kind of guys in here - guys that when we get down to it, they fight."

The Giants (2-2) protected quarterback Eli Manning throughout, not allowing a Vikings sack, but were generally held in check otherwise

and lost their second consecutive game. Manning was 25-of-45 for 261 yards and directed one touchdown drive, but was intercepted once and now has thrown five touchdowns and 15 interceptions in eight career starts versus Minnesota.

"I was trying to get the ball out quickly," Manning said. "They were playing a lot of two-highs and they weren't bringing as much pressure as they had been."

"We saw things well and tried to pick it up, tried moving the pocket a little bit. The offensive line did a nice job of picking it up. They were dropping seven, eight guys into coverage sometimes also, which should give you time to throw the ball, it just takes a little longer to find the open man."

WALSH REDEEMS HIMSELF

Vikings kicker Blair Walsh, who has had a rough season, missed a 46-yard attempt on the opening drive of the second half, but redeemed himself later in the third quarter with a 44-yarder that gave Minnesota a 17-3 lead.

They took that advantage into the fourth quarter, but the Giants' first play of the fourth was a 67-yard catch-and-run by Paul Perkins down to the Vikings 4-yard-line. Orleans Darkwa

scored from a yard out three plays later, cutting the Minnesota lead to 17-10.

But the Vikings answered with a 76-yard drive of their own, capped off when McKinnon scampered into the end zone from four yards out, re-establishing a two-touchdown lead. The Giants turned the ball over on downs with 1:51 to play and Minnesota was able to run out the clock. The Giants' defense held Bradford and company to three-and-out on Minnesota's first possession, but a special teams error gave the Vikings a second chance. Giants returner Dwayne Harris muffed the punt, and Minnesota recovered at the New York 41, which led to Asiata's 1-yard run and a 7-0 Vikings lead.

The Minnesota defense forced a trio of New York punts, then Bradford led a nine-play, 65-yard drive in the second quarter, finishing with a 7-yard pass to tight end Kyle Rudolph for a 14-0 advantage.

The Giants broke the shutout with two seconds left in the half, when Josh Brown hit a 40-yard field goal. Minnesota's defense, averaging five sacks a game coming into the contest, was held without a first-half sack. The Vikings host Houston on Sunday, while the Giants stay on the road in the NFC North, traveling to Green Bay. — Reuters

NFL result/standings

Minnesota 24, NY Giants 10.

American Football Conference						National Football Conference								
AFC East						NFC East								
	W	L	OTL	PF	PA	PCT								
New England	3	1	0	0	81	61	.750	Philadelphia	3	0	0	92	27	1.000
Buffalo	2	2	0	0	87	68	.500	Dallas	3	1	0	101	77	.750
NY Jets	1	3	0	0	79	105	.250	NY Giants	2	2	0	73	85	.500
Miami	1	3	0	0	71	89	.250	Washington	2	2	0	99	112	.500
AFC North						NFC North								
Pittsburgh	3	1	0	0	108	80	.750	Minnesota	4	0	0	88	50	1.000
Baltimore	3	1	0	0	84	72	.750	Green Bay	2	1	0	75	67	.667
Cincinnati	2	2	0	0	78	82	.500	Chicago	1	3	0	62	97	.250
Cleveland	0	4	0	1	74	115	0	Detroit	1	3	0	95	102	.250
AFC South						NFC South								
Houston	3	1	0	0	69	73	.750	Atlanta	3	1	0	152	124	.750
Jacksonville	1	3	0	0	84	111	.250	Tampa Bay	1	3	0	77	128	.250
Tennessee	1	3	0	0	62	84	.250	Carolina	1	3	0	109	118	.250
Indianapolis	1	3	0	0	108	125	.250	New Orleans	1	3	0	114	130	.250
AFC West						NFC West								
Denver	4	0	0	0	111	64	1.000	Los Angeles	3	1	0	63	76	.750
Oakland	3	1	0	0	108	106	.750	Seattle	3	1	0	79	54	.750
Kansas City	2	2	0	0	83	92	.500	San Francisco	1	3	0	90	107	.250
San Diego	1	3	0	1	121	108	.250	Arizona	1	3	0	92	80	.250



Derrick Rose

DERRICK ROSE RAPE TRIAL STARTS DAY OF KNICKS PRESEASON START

LOS ANGELES: On the same day the New York Knicks' preseason begins, the NBA team's newly acquired star Derrick Rose will begin trial in a \$21 million rape lawsuit.

Rose and two friends are accused of gang raping an incapacitated woman he once dated. Jury selection in the case begins today.

Rose and the woman, identified so far only as Jane Doe, had dated on and off in the two years prior to the August 2013 incident at her apartment. Rose and his friends denied the allegations and said the sex was consensual.

"I feel like I'm innocent and I feel like I didn't do anything wrong," Rose told reporters two weeks ago. Rose is expected to attend portions of the trial, though his lawyer said he may miss jury selection because it conflicts with the Knicks preseason opener in Houston.

In addition to overshadowing Rose's attempts

to bounce back from injuries that sidelined him the past few seasons, the case threatens to expose details of his sex life, including text messages discussing his desire to have group sex. The woman said that she had been drinking vodka, tequila and wine before returning from a house Rose rented in Beverly Hills and passing out in her apartment. She said Rose and his friends, Randall Hampton and Ryan Allen, let themselves into her apartment in the early morning and raped her. She said she was confused when she woke up the next morning with her dress over her head and a saw used condom on the floor. "I felt just dirty," she told the AP. "I didn't want to believe it was true."

The woman claimed she was drugged, though Rose's lawyers said there's no evidence of any drugs. Rose's lawyer said she let the trio in through two locked doors and was alert and cleaned up after sex.

Rose's lawyers said the woman is hiding behind a cloak of anonymity while trying to extort millions from the former MVP. The woman has wanted to remain anonymous because she was harassed online after her name was leaked and she didn't want her conservative Mexican immigrant parents to learn about the incident. She said they don't know anything about the alleged rape or her relationship with Rose.

She didn't report the incident to police until last year - two years after the incident - which is when she filed suit. The Los Angeles Police Department still has an open investigation. The federal judge overseeing the case said he would allow her to remain anonymous until trial. If he kept her identity from the jury, he said it might appear he was protecting her and jurors might assume he believed her and that could hamper Rose's defense. — AP

TEST PLAYERS MUST PROVIDE EXCITEMENT: KOHLI

KOLKATA: India must play exciting Test cricket to entertain the crowds, skipper Virat Kohli said after defeating New Zealand, amid waning interest in the game's longest form. India regained the top spot in the world rankings in Tests and sealed the three-match series against New Zealand with a comprehensive 178-run victory in Kolkata on Monday.

The series against the Black Caps marks the start of a packed programme of international cricket for India who also host England, Bangladesh and Australia

later this season. Kohli said players needed to interact with the crowd during Tests, in a similar fashion to the high-energy, limited-overs games. "You saw how engaged the crowd was, they like to see exciting cricket, and we have to provide it," Kohli said after winning the second match in Kolkata to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series.

"You have to interact with them, you have to make sure they are a part of the whole thing. You feed off their energy. It happens so much in limited overs, so why

not in Test cricket?" The comments come as Test cricket struggles to find an audience in the Twenty20 era, prompting last year's introduction of day-night Tests played under lights with a pink ball in Australia.

Former cricket greats including Shane Warne and some cricket board chiefs have also flagged slashing the format from five to four days. But controversial plans to create a two-tier Test system have been scrapped by cricket's world governing body after India's powerful board led a backlash. Kohli's comments came as the

third Test between India and New Zealand was thrown into doubt Tuesday, with a row raging between the Indian board and a Supreme Court-appointed panel charged with its reform.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said it was unclear if the match would go ahead on Saturday after it said the panel had ordered banks to block payments to its state associations.

"This is a very unfortunate situation for the BCCI," BCCI president Anurag Thakur told reporters. "State unions will need to

decide on this matter—whether they will host matches or not, in what condition they will host, with or without money." But former chief justice Rajendra Lodha, who heads the panel, said banks had been directed to halt "large" payments not "routine" ones, meaning matches could still go ahead. "There is absolutely no prohibition," Lodha told local media. The panel issued the order following weeks of frustration over the BCCI's decision to ignore several of its reforms that were recommended following corruption scandals last year. — AFP



DHAKA: England cricketer Jos Buttler plays a shot during the warm-up cricket match between BCB XI and England at The Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah, Dhaka yesterday. — AFP

ENGLAND BEGINS BANGLADESH TOUR WITH FOUR-WICKET VICTORY

DHAKA: Jos Buttler and Moeen Ali scored half-centuries as England began their tour of Bangladesh yesterday with a comfortable four-wicket victory against a strong line-up picked by the host board. Skipper Buttler scored an unbeaten 80 while Ali added a quickfire 70 off 51 balls as England reached 313 for 6 in 46.1 overs, having restricted a Bangladesh Court Board (BCB) XI to 309 for 9 in the 50-over match.

Opener Imrul Kayes scored 121 off 91 balls for the hosts while Bangladesh's Test captain Mushfiqur Rahim, who was a late call-up, made 51 to ensure the the BCB XI posted a competitive score at Dhaka's Fatullah Stadium.

The BCB had appeared on course for a much higher total but only managed 49 runs in their last 10 overs as England's seamers took six wickets. Chris Woakes picked up three wickets for 52 runs while David Willey and Ben Stokes grabbed two apiece. Openers Jason Roy and James Vince gave England a positive start by putting on 72 for the first wicket but the innings then lost momentum. Ali joined Buttler at the crease after the fifth wicket fell with the score on 170 and the duo gradually regained control and stitched together a 139-run partnership. Ali was dismissed as the scores were level but Buttler, who hit three fours

and four sixes in his 64-ball innings, polished off proceedings by striking a boundary off the first ball of the 47th over. The uncapped Ebadat Hossain was the pick of the Bangladeshi bowlers, taking 2-26. Brief Scores: BCB XI 309-9 in 50 overs (Imrul Kayes 121, Mushfiqur Rahim 51, C. Woakes 3-52) and England 313-6 in 46.1 overs (J. Buttler 80 not out, Moeen Ali 70).

Meanwhile, the Professional Cricketers' Association (PCA) wants English players to snub the 2016 Bangladesh Premier League over security fears. PCA chief executive David Leatherdale believes the absence of any details on security measures to be put in place for the tournament means it would be wise for players to stay at home. Samit Patel, Ravi Bopara, Tymal Mills, Rikki Wessels, Josh Cobb and Richard Gleeson are among the England-qualified players who were in line to join the latest edition of the BPL, which starts in November. Leatherdale has also taken account of current Foreign and Commonwealth Office information.

England's Test and one-day international tour of Bangladesh received the go-ahead only after a fact-finding mission by the national team's security expert Reg Dickason, accompanied by Leatherdale, concluded it should do so, in the



FATULLAH: BCB XI cricketer Ebadat Hossain (R) celebrates the dismissal of England cricketer Jason Roy during the warm-up cricket match between England and Bangladesh Cricket Board XI at Khan Shaheb Osman Ali Stadium in Fatullah yesterday. — AFP

aftermath of July's deadly terror attack on a Dhaka cafe. Even then, England's one-day captain Eoin Morgan and opening batsman Alex Hales have opted out of the trip.

"It remains unclear whether a similar level of security will be provided for the Bangladesh Premier League, which will involve a number of teams playing at different venues around the country," Leatherdale said yesterday. "The political and security landscape in Bangladesh is volatile and needs to be constantly monitored in the lead-up to the event."

"The latest advice from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office is that there is a heightened risk of further terrorist attacks against westerners - and visitors to the country should remain vigilant, monitor local and social media and follow any specific advice from local security authorities to avoid certain areas."

"In those circumstances the PCA is advising its members not to travel to Bangladesh to play in the BPL. "However, those who do decide to travel as individuals do so at their own risk - and, as in previous years, will be required to sign a disclaimer to that effect before they receive a No Objection Certificate from the England and Wales Cricket Board." — AFP

PAKISTAN COACH TARGETS TOP FOUR

ABU DHABI: Pakistan's head coach Mickey Arthur Monday set his team's goal at attaining top four position in the one-day rankings as they target another whitewash over the West Indies. Leading the three-match one-day international series 2-0, Pakistan looks favourite to win the third and final match in Abu Dhabi. They beat an off-colour West Indies by 111 and 59 runs respectively in the



Mickey Arthur

first two matches with complete dominance. Pakistan will replace West Indies at number eight in rankings if they win 3-0 and displace their opponents to ninth. Hosts England and top seven teams in one-day rankings will get direct berths in the 2019 World Cup while the rest vie for the remaining two places in a qualifying tournament.

Arthur, who replaced Waqar Younis as head coach in May this year, said top four rankings was the goal. "We don't want to think that we

have won the series so back off because we have got so many more goals as a one-day unit to achieve and to be amongst the top four is one of them," said Arthur, also a former South African and Australia coach.

But for Arthur it's a work in progress, as Pakistan slumped to ninth after losing to Bangladesh and England twice since the 2015 World Cup. "We have to continuously push the players as a group. We will keep hammering them so they keep getting better."

"We have to make sure to keep ticking off our goals that we set for ourselves and only then will we be comfortable that we can be get into the top, not eight, but in the top four and then sustain that so we have a lot of work to do to get there."

Arthur was specifically pleased with Pakistan reducing the percentage of dot balls in batting. "It's very pleasing to see us meeting those challenges. We had 36 percent dot balls the other night (second one-day match on Sunday) which is nearly the best since I have been coaching," said Arthur.

Pakistan had a 48 percent dot balls during their 4-1 one-day defeat in England in August-September. Arthur believes Pakistan had put West Indies under pressure in the series. "I would like people to write that we played well rather than say the West Indies were playing poorly because they are a good team and we put them under pressure," said Arthur.

Arthur hoped out-of-form skipper Azhar Ali will fire. "Watching him bat in the nets Azhar is hitting the ball very, very well," said Arthur of Ali who was dismissed for a first-ball duck and nine in the two matches.

INDIA BOARD ACCOUNTS NOT FROZEN, SAYS PANEL

NEW DELHI: A panel appointed by the Supreme Court to assess the operations of India's cricket board (BCCI) has confirmed it blocked it from making two payments from its bank accounts but says it is otherwise free to use its funds for "routine expenditure".

Following local media reports that quoted unnamed BCCI officials as saying they might have to cancel the ongoing series against New Zealand, former chief justice RM Lodha said yesterday the board's accounts had not been frozen.

The panel, headed by Lodha, ordered banks to halt the disbursements after the BCCI ignored some of the panel's recommendations for reforming the world's richest board, which has been criticized for a perceived lack of transparency.

"So far as our email and directions are concerned, it does not restrain BCCI from incurring routine expenditure and expenses on games, matches, series etc," Lodha told India Today news channel.

"I'm clarifying that BCCI should not have any doubt that they are free to deal with their bank accounts so far as game and routine matters are concerned. There is absolutely no restraint direction by us," he added.

BCCI President Anurag Thakur and Secretary Ajay Shirke were unreachable by

telephone yesterday and did not reply to messages left by Reuters.

Yesterday, the Indian Express newspaper quoted an unnamed board official as saying that the BCCI's accounts had been frozen and that the rest of the New Zealand series would have to be scrapped.

"How can we function, how can we hold any games now?" the official said. "Who will make the payment? Freezing a bank account is no joke. An international team is here, and there is so much at stake."

A New Zealand Cricket spokesman said they had heard nothing from the BCCI. "It's the first time we've heard of it," the spokesman told local media. "At the moment we are preparing to play the third test at Indore as scheduled."

India sealed the three-test series 2-0 on Monday with a 178-run victory in Kolkata. The third test is scheduled to start in Indore on Saturday, with a five-match one-day international series to follow.

The BCCI on Saturday said it would incorporate some of the Lodha panel's recommendations but ignored several key measures aimed at reforming the board, which is run largely by politicians and industrialists.

In their report, Lodha and two colleagues recommended age and tenure restrictions for top officials, as well as banning them from serving successive terms. — Reuters



Karun Nair

NAIR IN INDIA SQUAD AFTER DHAWAN RULED OUT

NEW DELHI: India opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan has been ruled out of the third test against New Zealand with a broken hand and replaced in the squad by the uncapped Karun Nair.

Dhawan had sustained a "minor fracture" on his left hand, the team said in a statement. His place in the team could go to Gautam Gambhir, who was drafted into the squad for the first time in two years after opener Lokesha Rahul suffered a hamstring strain during the first test win in Kanpur.

The hosts completed a 178-run victory in Kolkata on Monday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. The third test is scheduled to start in Indore from Saturday but has been thrown into some confusion by a local media report that the Indian board (BCCI) had cancelled the remainder of the tour due to financial problems. — Reuters

DIAMONDBACKS FIRE STEWART, HALE AFTER ANOTHER LOSING SEASON

PHOENIX: The Arizona Diamondbacks have parted ways with general manager Dave Stewart and manager Chip Hale after a second consecutive losing season.

The team announced in a release on Monday that it will discuss an appropriate role for Chief Baseball Officer Tony La Russa in the future. "We are very grateful to Dave and Chip who are widely respected throughout the game of baseball," Diamondbacks managing general partner Ken Kendrick said in a statement. "Ultimately, the results have not been what we had hoped and while that

responsibility is shared by all of us, we have decided that a change is necessary." La Russa was hired by the Diamondbacks in 2014 and among his first moves was to bring in Stewart and Hale, elevating them to positions they had never held at the big-league level before.

After finishing 79-83 last season, Arizona had upgraded expectations this year after signing 2009 AL Cy Young Award winner Zack Greinke to a \$206 million contract and adding right-hander Shelby Miller. The Diamondbacks got off to a slow start and underachieved all season, finish-

ing with a 69-93 record to miss the playoffs for the fifth consecutive season.

"Stew and Chip are quality individuals who I consider friends and I respect greatly," Arizona CEO Derrick Hall said. "I thank them for their tireless efforts while wearing our logo on their chests. We will look to move quickly as we turn the page and begin another chapter for this proud franchise." A four-time 20-game winner as a player, Stewart had previously worked in the front offices of Oakland, San Diego and Toronto before landing his first general manager's job. Hale played seven

major league seasons with Minnesota and the Los Angeles Dodgers before getting into coaching. He worked as Bob Melvin's bench coach for three seasons before being hired as a big-league manager for the first time with Arizona. He previously worked nine seasons in Arizona's organization and spent two seasons with the New York Mets. Arizona has made some questionable moves over the past couple of seasons, including an \$8.25 million contract with Cuban right-hander Yoan Lopez, who has considered leaving the game. The Diamondbacks also were criti-

cized for the deal that brought Miller to the desert, which sent outfielder Endy Inciarte and shortstop Dansby Swanson, Arizona's top draft pick in 2015, to Atlanta. Miller struggled his first season with Arizona, going 3-12 with a 6.15 ERA.

Arizona did pull off the most surprising offseason deal prior to the 2016 season, luring Greinke away from top teams that had been pursuing him. Greinke showed flashes of still being one of baseball's best pitchers, but was inconsistent most of the season. He won a team-high 13 games, but also had a 4.37 ERA, second-highest of his career. — AP

MIKE TROUT OR PLAYOFF-BOUND MOOKIE BETTS FOR AL MVP?

NEW YORK: Mike Trout has an MVP problem: He needs more help. Widely considered baseball's best all-around player, with modern metrics consistently supporting that assertion, the Los Angeles Angels center fielder has been runner-up in the American League three of the past four years. The only time he took home the prize was 2014, when the Angels won 98 games and the AL West. They came in third place the other three seasons, leaving Trout to finish second despite his outstanding numbers.

It's a similar scenario this year. Trout led the league in runs (123), on-base percentage (.441) and wins above replacement (10.6), as calculated by Baseball-Reference.com. But he did all that for a fourth-place team that went 74-88 and was never in the playoff hunt.

With other top contenders on clubs that reached the postseason, Trout could be denied yet again - perhaps in favor of dynamic outfielder Mookie Betts or retiring bopper David Ortiz from AL East champion Boston.

"It's not really defined a certain way, so people are going to have opinions different ways. For me, I think it should go to someone that is on a winning team and has a chance to go to the playoffs," Cleveland slugger Mike Napoli said.

"But then again, you can't take away from people that really can't control other people having down years and you having a really great year.

So I think you can go either way." Over in the National League, it shapes up much the same. Kris Bryant and Anthony Rizzo of the Chicago Cubs, who led the majors with 103 wins, are joined in the MVP discussion by Daniel Murphy from NL East champion Washington and rookie shortstop Corey Seager of the NL West champion Dodgers. Some of their stiffest competition comes from players on losing clubs: Colorado's Nolan Arenado, Atlanta's Freddie Freeman and Cincinnati's Joey Votto.

Both Cy Young Award races are close, too, with Justin Verlander, Rick Porcello, Jon Lester and Max Scherzer among those in the mix.

Poor teams have produced MVPs before - Chicago Cubs outfielder Andre Dawson (1987) and Texas shortstop Alex Rodriguez (2003) even won for clubs that came in last place. But until Washington slugger Bryce Harper was a unanimous winner in the NL last season, nobody in either league had been elected MVP from a team that missed the playoffs since Albert Pujols with St. Louis in 2008.

"Is it the best player in the particular league? When you look at the numbers, Trout obviously is the best player and that's hard to argue," said Dave Roberts, a strong candidate for NL Manager of the Year in his first season running the Dodgers.

"But for a winning team, there's got to be some weight put on that and what that particular person means to that particular winning team. I kind of fluctuate season to season," he added.

Voting by the Baseball Writers' Association of America is conducted before the postseason begins Tuesday, and results will be announced in November. Here are our choices for all the big awards:

AMERICAN LEAGUE MVP

The nod goes to Trout (29 HRs, 100 RBIs, 30 for 37 in steals, .991 OPS) despite his team's flaws. He scored 17 percent of the Angels' runs this season, the highest percentage for an AL player since Rickey

Henderson with the 1985 New York Yankees. Taking nothing away from his achievements, Betts (31 HRs, 113 RBIs, 26 for 30 on steals, .897 OPS) benefited from hitting in a loaded Boston batting order, while Trout had little protection outside of Albert Pujols and Kole Calhoun. It's not fair to look past Trout simply because the Angels pitched poorly and fielded a thin lineup. But if Betts wins, no complaints.

NATIONAL LEAGUE MVP

Some of the stats for Bryant and Rizzo are incredibly identical. They both batted .292 with a .385 on-base percentage, while Bryant had 39 homers and 102 RBIs to Rizzo's 32 homers and 109 RBIs. Bryant also led the league in runs (121) and WAR while providing versatility on defense. He wins MVP honors one season after he was the NL Rookie of the Year. Arenado and Murphy warrant a close look, too, though.

AL CY YOUNG

Tigers ace Justin Verlander (16-9, 3.04 ERA) nips Boston right-hander Rick Porcello (22-4, 3.15) and 2014 winner Corey Kluber (18-9, 3.14). Verlander led the league with 254 strikeouts and a 1.00 WHIP while throwing a few more innings than either of the other two. Porcello was fantastic but relied more on his defense, fanning 189.

NL CY YOUNG

Clayton Kershaw's back injury might be the only reason this is a race - but it's a close one. Some wonder whether Lester (19-5, 2.44) and Cubs teammate Kyle Hendricks (16-8, 2.13) could split first-place votes and knock each other out after running 1-2 in ERA. Freeman said he favors Hendricks, while Philadelphia first baseman Ryan Howard went another way and picked Scherzer. We think Howard's got it right.

Washington's ace went 20-7 with a 2.96 ERA while leading the league in strikeouts (284), innings (228 1/3) and WHIP (0.97). He even matched a major league record with 20 Ks in one game. Neither Lester nor Hendricks reached 200 strikeouts or 205 innings.

AL ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Two months in the majors are not enough for Yankees catcher Gary Sanchez, even with 20 home runs and a 1.032 OPS in 201 at-bats. Detroit right-hander Michael Fulmer (11-7, 3.06 ERA, 159 innings) is the pick - but check out overlooked Houston reliever Chris Devenski (2.16 ERA and 104 Ks in 108 1/3 innings).

NL ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

At one point it appeared this could be quite a race between a trio of talented young shortstops. Seager, however, ran away with it when Trevor Story and Aledmys Diaz got hurt.

AL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Terry Francona wins with Cleveland for the second time in four years. His team overcame several significant injuries in winning the AL Central over World Series champion Kansas City and a Detroit squad that outspent the Indians by \$107 million on player payroll.

NL MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Roberts edges Terry Collins of the New York Mets. Both clubs were severely depleted by health problems and still made the playoffs, but the Dodgers were four wins better and won their division. — AP



NEW YORK: New York Islanders' right wing Steve Bernier (8) congratulates goalie Thomas Greiss (1) and Islanders' center Stephen Gionta (24) after the Islanders defeated the New Jersey Devils 4-3 in a preseason hockey game, Monday, in New York. — AP

LADD, GIONTA AND BARZAL LEAD ISLANDERS TO WIN OVER DEVILS

NEW YORK: Andrew Ladd had the tying goal late in the second period, and Stephen Gionta and Mathew Barzal scored 2:35 apart early in the third to lead the New York Islanders to a 4-3 exhibition victory over the New Jersey Devils on Monday night.

Ladd, who signed with the Islanders in the offseason, scored his first of the preseason with 5:31 remaining in the middle period to tie it 2-2.

Gionta tipped in a shot from fellow former Devils player Steve Bernier to put New York ahead at 3:55 of the third. Barzal then tipped in another shot by Bernier to make it 4-2 at the 6:30 mark. Colin Markison scored in the first period for the Islanders. Thomas Greiss stopped 25 shots in his preseason debut after returning from the World Cup of Hockey following Team Europe's loss to Canada in the finals.

Reid Boucher and Miles Wood scored 2:37 apart to give the Devils a 2-1 lead just past the midpoint of the second period. Devante Smith-Pelly pulled New Jersey within one with 8:17 to go in the third, and Cory Schneider finished with 26 saves.

VORACEK'S OT GOAL LIFTS FLYERS PAST RANGERS

In Philadelphia, Jakub Voracek's second goal 27 seconds into overtime gave the Philadelphia Flyers a 4-3 win after giving up a three-goal lead against the New York Rangers.

Jordan Weal, Voracek and Travis Konecny scored 3:21 apart in the second period to give the Flyers a 3-0 lead. Steve Mason had 27 saves.

Ryan Graves got the Rangers on the scoreboard with about 3 1/2 minutes to go in the middle period, and Brandon Pirri and rookie Jimmy Vesey scored in the third to tie it with 9:09 left. Leading 1-0, the Flyers went on a 5-on-3 with about 9 1/2 minutes left in the second after Vesey was called for tripping and J.T. Miller got a double-minor for high-sticking 13 seconds apart.

Voracek took advantage with a slap shot less than a minute later, and Konecny converted a wrist shot with just under 8 minutes remaining.

The Flyers' Radko Gudas was ejected in the final minute of the first period after receiving a misconduct for boarding Vesey from behind.

Henrik Lundqvist stopped 17 of 18 shots over the first 30:18 for the Rangers, and Mackenzie Skapski gave up three goals on 15 shots the rest of the way.

CAPITALS BEAT BLUES

In Washington, T.J. Oshie and Andre Burakovski scored in the shootout to lift the Capitals to a 2-1 victory over the St. Louis Blues. Paul Casey scored in regulation for Washington, tipping in a shot by Zach Sill to tie the score 1:50 into the third period.

Braden Holtby had 13 saves on the 14 shots he faced over the first 31:50. Philipp Grubauer stopped all seven shots he faced through overtime, and then had three saves in the shootout - including a stop on Kenny Agostino in the fourth round for the win.

Dmitrij Jaskin's second of the preseason gave the Blues the 1-0 lead with 5:47 left in the first. Carter Hutton sopped 37 shots through overtime and then gave up two goals on four shots in the tiebreaker. — AP

HUMBLER WALLABIES RETURN TO TWICKENHAM FOR FINAL MATCH

SYDNEY: A year after leaving Twickenham with heads held high following their surprise run to the World Cup final, a more humble Wallabies side will return to the storied venue for their final Rugby Championship match against Argentina on Saturday.

Michael Cheika's team have a far different complexion to the swashbuckling band that swept aside all in their path at last year's global showpiece before they ran into the familiar brick wall of the All Blacks in the decider.

Australia left the tournament with high hopes of challenging the All Blacks' superiority the following season and continuing rugby's revival at home after a tumultuous period on and off the field. However, an unprecedented series white-wash by England in June shattered their newfound confidence, eight months after the Australians had sent the same opponents crashing out of their home World Cup.

The Europe-based internationals who played a big part in Australia's renaissance were recalled for the start of the Rugby Championship in August but back-to-back thrashings by the rampaging All Blacks were proof the old guard's time had passed. The Wallabies appeared on the verge of collapse ahead of their match against South Africa in the third round of the Championship last month, weighed down by a six-game losing streak and a raft of injuries.

Like so many times before, however, they found a way to crawl out of the abyss and secured a 23-17 victory in Brisbane. The retooled side, steered by the retro halves pairing of Quade Cooper and Will Genia, then carved out a win over Argentina in Perth and were in the box seat to break a 50-year hoodoo at Loftus Versfeld at the weekend but for wastefulness in attack and the lethal boot of Morne Steyn.

GREAT TIMES, TOUGH TIMES

The Pretoria disappointment showed the Wallabies remain vulnerable as they continue their rebuild but another win over the Pumas on Saturday would back Cheika's claim that better



Michael Cheika

times lie ahead.

"I think they have been good," the 49-year-old told local media in London when asked about the roller-coaster 12 months. "I can't complain at all. I know everyone sees things always-and I understand totally from a results point of view but part of this year for us was going to be about change. We knew we had to bring in new players with a view to the future.

"In my experience in this game, you go through great times and then you can go through tougher times and they'll always lead to giving you the scars on the inside to have better times later on."

The Wallabies' mounting injury toll has proved a blessing in disguise, with Cheika blood- ing 10 debutants and a number of them have shown they belong at test level.

Only eight of the starting 15 in last year's

World Cup final played at Pretoria on Saturday and more changes are tipped for this weekend.

Bath-based backrower Leroy Houston has been drafted into the squad after number eight Sean McMahon was sent home from Pretoria with an ankle injury. Tonga-born rookie Lopeti Timani, who debuted off the bench against the Pumas in Perth last month, is tipped to slot into the number eight position but could also play as blindside flanker or lock, offering Houston hope of his own test debut at the age of 29.

"Leroy is a contender for sure," said Cheika of the Queensland Reds' recruit. "He's a very good footballer, he understands the game and he's a traditional number eight. We've mixed and matched in that position over the past year or so but he is definitely a player I'm looking at, not just for this year, but going forward over the next couple. — Reuters



Mike Trout

'ZLINCESTER': CZECH LEAGUE'S ANSWER TO LEICESTER

PRAGUE: After only nine matches, a provincial soccer club from eastern Czech Republic is starting to draw comparisons with Premier League champion Leicester.

FC Fastav Zlin, a 900-1 shot to win the Czech league title and already dubbed "Zlincester," is in the early title hunt with the country's traditional powers. "It's a nice comparison," Zlin coach Bohumil Panik said in a recent interview. "It pleases me."

Leicester is, for a small club like us, an example to follow." Leicester surprised just about everybody last season, starting well in the Premier League and holding on to win the English title for the first time in its history. Zlin, a town of 75,000 where in 1894 Tomas Bata founded what was to become a global shoe empire, started as a soccer team in 1919 and made its debut in Czechoslovakia's first division in 1938. The team has never won the title, and did well to even stay in the top league after finishing only three points above the relegation zone last season. "We hit the

bottom in the spring," Panik said, referring to a winless streak in early 2016.

"The players will remember that and don't want to go through it again. The team has learned a lesson."

This season, Zlin is five points ahead of Sparta Prague and trails leaders Mlada Boleslav and Viktoria Plzen by only one point. With its budget estimated to be less than \$2 million a year, a stadium that seats just over 6,000 spectators and no big successes in the past, Zlin is a very unlikely candidate to challenge the Czech heavyweights. Under the name Gottwaldov, it only once played in major European competition, and was eliminated in the first round of the Cup Winners' Cup by PSV Eindhoven in 1970.

Yet this season, the Cobblers beat defending champion Viktoria Plzen 2-0, held Sparta Prague to a 1-1 draw and so far have six wins and three draws. Similar to Leicester, Zlin's unheralded players rely on a well-organized defense and fast counter-attacks, punishing any defensive

ZLIN: In this Oct. 1, 2016 file photo Zlin coach Bohumil Panik shouts during the Czech First League soccer match between Zlin and Jablonec in Zlin. The top Czech league has a candidate to win the title against all odds, and emulate Leicester's stunning triumph in the English Premier League. — AP



mistakes. But the team has also proved it is ready to adapt, like when visiting Jablonec altered its tactics and focused on defense and

counters on Saturday. Zlin trailed 2-0, but in a display of undying fighting spirit, the team rallied for two goals in the final six minutes to sal-

vage a draw. "Given the development of the game, it's a victory for us that the team managed to come back," Panik said. Panik is an admirer of some great coaches, including Italian master tactician Giovanni Trapattoni and Karel Bruckner, known for his free-flowing attacking soccer as Czech national team coach.

The 59-year-old Panik, who has experience from coaching several Polish clubs, including Lech Poznan, applies tactics that suit the players he has available at Zlin.

For instance, attacking midfielder Vukadin Vukadinovic, one of the fastest players in the league, has become a lethal weapon under Panik by creating chances from his runs down the right flank. Vukadinovic's previous club, Slavia Prague, failed to find use for his speed.

"It'll take a team effort to win the title, but Zlin is on the right track so far - just like that team from England last year. "Leicester is a story that reminds me of a fairytale," Panik said. "I like fairytales." — AP



BOGOTA: FIFA's President Gianni Infantino takes selfies during a friendly football match with former Colombian players and international football stars in Bogota, on Monday. Infantino arrived in Colombia to attend the final of the Colombia 2016 FIFA Futsal World Cup. — AFP

INFANTINO SUGGESTS 48-TEAM WORLD CUP

GENEVA: World Cup expansion plans got even bigger Monday, and the 2026 tournament could have 48 teams playing instead of 32. FIFA President Gianni Infantino outlined the idea that would see 16 teams go home after playing just one game in a new opening playoff round.

The 16 playoff winners would join 16 seeded teams to begin a 32-team group stage that follows the current World Cup format. Expanding to 48 means "more countries and regions all over the world would be happy," Infantino said in a speech in Bogota, Colombia. Infantino's suggested format would create a tournament of 80 matches instead of the current 64 - driving up the price broadcasters would pay for rights to the world's most-watched sports event. FIFA earned around \$5 billion from the 2014 tournament in Brazil. The 2026 World Cup format and bidding process will begin to be discussed next week when Infantino chairs a FIFA Council meeting in Zurich.

The United States, Canada and Mexico are potential bidders for a tournament that the North American soccer body CONCACAF believes it is overdue to host for the first time since the US staged the World Cup in 1994.

The FIFA ruling council's decision on the 2026 format is expected within months and is set to be a defining issue of Infantino's presidency before he is due for re-election in 2019.

Infantino wooed FIFA voters by promising a 40-team World Cup before winning election in February. He is completing the mandate of Sepp Blatter, who supported a 32-team World Cup. Now Infantino believes that "with 40 teams, the math doesn't work." "You could have a tournament in which the 16 best teams advance to a group stage and the other 16 will come out of a 'playoff' ahead of the group stage, and the World Cup could end up with 48 teams," Infantino said at a university in the Colombian capital.

How to define the "best" teams could ignite debate if seeding is decided on the merit of recent results, or a national team's historical record at past World Cups.

On current FIFA rankings, the 16 best teams all come from Europe and South America, except for 15th-ranked Mexico. Infantino's previous employer, UEFA, provoked anger in recent weeks by changing future Champions League seeding and prize money distribution rules that favor traditional powers over emerging teams.

EMOTIONAL BONUCCI CALLS ON SPIRIT OF EURO FOR SPAIN TEST

MILAN: Juventus defender Leonardo Bonucci believes Italy will have to reproduce their stirring Euro 2016 last 16 victory over Spain if they are to beat 'La Roja' in Turin tomorrow.

Italy began their World Cup 2018 qualifying campaign against Israel last month when Bonucci, despite undergoing a family crisis, was part of the team that secured a precious win 3-1 in Haifa. Giam Piero Ventura's men now face the much tougher task of a Spain side that has its sights firmly on claiming top spot and automatic qualification for Russia 2018.

The sides last met at Euro 2016 where Italy, then under the helm of Chelsea manager Antonio Conte, ended Spain's chances of a hat-trick of titles with a 2-0 win in the last 16. Bonucci hopes the familiar surroundings of Juventus Stadium will be beneficial.

"Walking out into Juventus Stadium is always a special feeling, it feels like home and gives me a different kind of energy," Bonucci said yesterday. But he warned: "Spain will be in a new state of mind and will be looking to avenge their Euro 2016 defeat to us." "We will have to step up a gear with respect to how we played against Israel."

In the wake of their Euro 2016 exit, Vicente del Bosque was replaced by former Porto manager Julen Lopetegui, who steered Spain to an 8-0 win over Liechtenstein in their Group G opener in Leon last month.

Chelsea striker Diego Costa, Real Madrid striker Alvaro Morata and Manchester City midfielder David Silva all hit a brace, with Barcelona defender Sergi Roberto and City striker Nolito adding one apiece.

It left Spain top of the group-synonymous with automatic qualification for Russia 2018. Bonucci said there will only be one team to beat in this qualifying campaign.

"They have the best players. All you need is a look at their squad list to tell you that. To upset the predictions, we're going to have to produce



FLORENCE: Italy's Graziano Pelle, left, and Leonardo Bonucci attend a training session of the Italian national soccer team ahead of tomorrow's World Cup Group G qualifying match against Spain, at the Coverciano training center, near Florence, Italy, Monday. — AP

a similar performance to the one at Euro 2016," he said. "We need to be fast, and clinical."

Italy conclude their autumn qualifiers with back-to-back trips to Macedonia and Liechtenstein on Sunday and Wednesday respectively. For Bonucci, it will amount to more time spent with his family - a welcome luxury only two months after he and wife Martina had to rush their two-year-old son Matteo to hospital for an emergency operation.

Despite the 29-year-old's commitment to the Juventus and Italy cause, Bonucci was

emotional as he admitted the experience had put the importance of professional sport into perspective.

"What happened in the past two months has made me stronger, and I want to thank my son and my wife because we faced a tough time and fought through it together," said Bonucci.

"It's time like these you realise what is important in life. Hearing criticism always makes you try to improve your performance but what happens in real life is more important than a bad pass." — AFP



BURTON-UPON-TRENT: England's caretaker manager Gareth Southgate (C) watches his players during a training session at England's training facility at St George's Park in Burton-upon-Trent, in central England yesterday, ahead of England's 2018 World Cup qualifying football match against Malta on October 8. — AFP

ROONEY WANTS UNITED FRONT AFTER SAM ALLARDYCE EXIT

LONDON: Wayne Rooney has called on England's stars to stick together as they get back to work following Sam Allardyce's shock departure. Allardyce was forced to resign as England manager after just 67 days and one game in charge following his controversial comments to undercover newspaper reporters investigating football corruption.

Gareth Southgate will serve as England's interim boss for the next four matches and one of his first decisions was to retain Manchester United striker Rooney as his captain.

Rooney is set to lead England in Saturday's World Cup qualifier against Malta at Wembley and the 30-year-old is eager to focus on football after a difficult period for the national side. "We need to build on the three points we won in the last game (against Slovakia), and the other side of it isn't our issue, it's nothing for us to be con-

cerned about," Rooney said on Tuesday.

"It's a shame, everyone could see how excited Sam was for the job and he came in and showed that enthusiasm to the players. "It's a shame it's happened and I'm sure he deeply regrets it. It was a decision for the FA to take."

"As a group of players we need to stick together and concentrate on the football. For the FA I'm sure it has been a tough couple of weeks but for the players we've been with our clubs and we have to focus on the games."

The start of Rooney's England career intersected briefly with the end of Southgate's international days just over a decade ago.

And Rooney backed the temporary appointment of the England Under-21 boss as the ideal solution to a difficult situation.

"When I first got into the squad he was in the squad then. He's done a very job with the Under-

21s, and he's got an opportunity to show what he can do at senior level," Rooney added.

"He'll bring his own way of working, it's going to be good to see what that is in the next week. We have to buy into his ways and take his ideas on board." Rooney's role with England has been under heavy scrutiny since his lacklustre displays during a disappointing Euro 2016 campaign.

Relieved that Southgate remains firmly on his side, Rooney hopes to repay his faith against Malta and then Slovenia in another qualifier next Tuesday. "There was a lot of talk over whether I'd be captain or not, so it was good Gareth put that to bed quite early and there wasn't the speculation," Rooney said. "We've got two games this week that we have to win. Whether that was with Gareth or Sam we have to try and get six points. If we do that Gareth will be happy and we'll be happy." — AFP

CONFIDENT BRADLEY READY FOR SWANS CHALLENGE

LOS ANGELES: If self-belief was any guarantee of footballing success, Swansea may have picked a winner in appointing Bob Bradley as their new boss.

The 58-year-old became the first American ever to be appointed as head coach of a team in one of Europe's top five leagues on Monday when he was named to take over from the sacked Francesco Guidolin at the English Premier League side. For Bradley, the appointment is the opportunity he has long craved to prove he is capable of mixing it at the highest level after a career which has included spells as the coach of both the USA and Egypt as well as stints in Major League Soccer, Norway and France.

In an interview with Sirius XM radio earlier this year, Bradley maintained that despite his relatively modest CV, he believes he is in the same sort of bracket as some of the leading coaches in world football. "When I have a chance to observe different managers, the ones that do good work, I mention (Mauricio) Pochettino, (Jurgen) Klopp, (Thomas) Tuchel that took over for Klopp at Dortmund, he's a fantastic young manager," Bradley said.

"We haven't even talked about the (Pep) Guardiola and the (Carlo) Ancelotti. But I'll tell you what, maybe I'm stupid, but I think I'm a manager in and around that level. "I'm not saying I'm better than these guys - I haven't had those types of opportunities - but I think people that have played for me have always felt that the experience in the team was different, that training was challenging, that there were a lot of things done to help them become better players and better people."

GLOBE-TROTTER CAREER

Bradley, who did not play professionally, has endured highs and lows during a globe-trotting coaching career.

He took the USA into the last 16 of the 2010 World Cup, qualifying from the first round ahead of England. Bradley was fired from the US job in 2011 after a disappointing defeat to Mexico in the final of the Gold Cup, ultimately paying the price for the perception

that his team had stagnated under his reign. The Princeton graduate was not out of work for long however, taking over as coach of Egypt in 2011. He earned respect for opting to continue to live in Cairo during the unrest in the years that followed the country's revolution, eyes fixed firmly on the prize of helping the Pharaohs reach the World Cup for the first time since 1990.

Ultimately though, Bradley's reign ended in disappointment, his team soundly beaten 7-3 on aggregate in their play-off with Ghana.

Bradley returned to club football after that setback, spending a year with Norwegian side Stabaek and helping them qualify for the Europa League after securing a third place finish. In 2015, Bradley headed to France, and came within a whisker of gaining promotion to Ligue 1 with second tier side Le Havre. Le Havre just missed out on a place in the spotlight after a wild final day of the season, when his team won 5-0 but fell one goal short of supplanting Metz for the final promotion spot. Perhaps understandably, Bradley's appointment has so far failed to capture the imagination of Swansea fans.

SHREWD FOOTBALLING MIND

Announcement of his appointment on the club's Twitter feed on Monday drew howls of anguish from supporters, many of whom expressed anger at the summary dismissal of Guidolin by the club's new American owners after only nine months. Those who have worked with Bradley, however, speak of a shrewd footballing mind who would have been granted a job in one of Europe's top leagues before had it not been for his nationality.

"I am 100 percent convinced if he wasn't American he would have got a big job somewhere," Le Havre assistant Pierre Barriere told the New York Times in January. "There is this US tag on his back." Other observers are less sure. Gary Lineker, the former England captain turned broadcaster, was among many who questioned the appointment. "As gambles go, this is right up there," Lineker wrote on Twitter. — AFP

Sports

Three-on-three
basketball
takes Olympic shot
after Asian boost



Emotional Bonucci
calls on spirit of
Euro for Spain test



WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2016

LADD, GIONTA AND BARZAL LEAD ISLANDERS TO WIN OVER DEVILS Page 18



BEIJING: Rafael Nadal of Spain hits a return against Paolo Lorenzi of Italy during the first round of the China Open tennis tournament in Beijing yesterday. — AFP

NADAL SEEKS REDEMPTION IN BEIJING

BEIJING: Rafael Nadal barrelled through his opening match of the China Open yesterday as he seeks to redeem his injury-blighted season with a strong run in Beijing. Nadal dropped just two games to 39th-ranked Italian Paolo Lorenzi, beating him 6-1, 6-1 to reach the round of 16. Top seed Andy Murray booked his place in the second round with a 6-2, 7-5 win over Andreas Seppi who failed to capitalise on a late surge as he double faulted twice in the final game.

Fourteen-time Grand Slam champion Nadal is approaching the end of his second consecutive season without a Slam title since he won his first aged 19 at Roland Garros in 2005.

He has repeatedly fended off questions about his

future in the sport since he was forced out of the French Open third round with a wrist injury that also saw him miss Wimbledon.

"When you get injury for two months and a half in the middle of the season (it) is tough," Nadal said after his first round match in Beijing. "(There) remains a little bit to finish the season. Today is an important victory. There are points to try (and win) to qualify for the World Tour Finals," he added.

Nadal is currently eighth on the leaderboard for the London ATP Finals—which features the year's top eight players—and needs to pick up some points in Beijing to ensure his qualification.

Until the wrist injury forced him off the court,

Nadal had showed signs of a renaissance this year after his worst season as a professional in 2015 saw him plummet to his lowest ranking in a decade.

But he has failed to get past the fourth round of any of the Grand Slams this year and just missed out on a bronze medal at the Rio Olympics. Murray is also targeting a strong Beijing run, which could put him in striking distance of dethroning world number one Novak Djokovic. The Scot added a second Wimbledon title and Olympic gold medal to his collection, and also reached the final of the Australian and French Opens this season. But September was a month of disappointments as he was ousted in the quarter finals of the US Open by Japan's Kei Nishikori and missed

out to a second consecutive Davis Cup win, losing to Argentina. "What I needed after that stretch was a break. I needed some time away from the court to rest and recover, freshen up a bit, hopefully have a strong finish to the year," Murray told reporters in Beijing.

Meanwhile on the women's side, double Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova—fresh from her victory at the Wuhan Open last week—showed little mercy for home hope Wang Yafan beating her 6-4, 6-1 to reach the round of 16.

As the evening drew in, play finally got underway on the outer courts, which got a heavy watering as rain enveloped the Chinese capital for most of the day. — AFP

SHARAPOVA TARGETS APRIL RETURN AFTER BAN REDUCED

LAUSANNE: Russian tennis star Maria Sharapova hailed the reduction of her two-year doping ban yesterday as one of the "happiest days" of her life, immediately targeting a return to action in April 2017.

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) cut Sharapova's ban to 15 months saying she was not an "intentional doper", after the 29-year-old tested positive for the banned medication meldonium during January's Australian Open — throwing her glittering, money-spinning career into serious jeopardy. "I've gone from one of the toughest days of my career last March, when I learned about my suspension, to now, one of my happiest days, as I found out I can return to tennis in April," said Sharapova, who has racked up 35 WTA singles titles and more than \$36 million in career earnings. An April return means she

would be able to compete at the French Open in May-June next year—she is a two-time champion at Roland Garros. Sharapova, whose ferocity on court, business acumen and glamorous looks all combined to make her a marketing juggernaut, was hit with a two-year ban by an independent tribunal appointed by the International Tennis Federation (ITF). Reducing the ban, the Lausanne-based CAS "found that Ms Sharapova committed an anti-doping rule violation and that while it was with 'no significant fault', she bore some degree of fault, for which a sanction of 15 months is appropriate".

And in the panel's more detailed, formal decision, it said significantly: "Under no circumstances, therefore, can the player be considered to be an 'intentional doper'."

Sharapova openly admitted she had been

taking meldonium, an over-the-counter drug made in Latvia, for 10 years to help treat illnesses, a heart issue and a magnesium deficiency.

She always maintained that it had entirely escaped her attention that the product had been added to the banned substance list published by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on January 1, just before the Australian Open. "I have taken responsibility from the very beginning for not knowing that the over-the-counter supplement I had been taking for the last 10 years was no longer allowed," Sharapova said in her Facebook post Tuesday. "But I also learned how much better other (sports) Federations were at notifying their athletes of the rule change, especially in Eastern Europe, where Mildronate (the trade name of meldonium) is commonly taken by millions of people."

Sharapova added: "Now that this process is over, I hope the ITF and other relevant tennis anti-doping authorities will study what these other Federations did, so that no other tennis player will have to go through what I went through."

Steve Simon, CEO of the WTA, said he backed the CAS decision. "We are pleased that the process is now at completion and can look forward to seeing Maria back on court in 2017," he added.

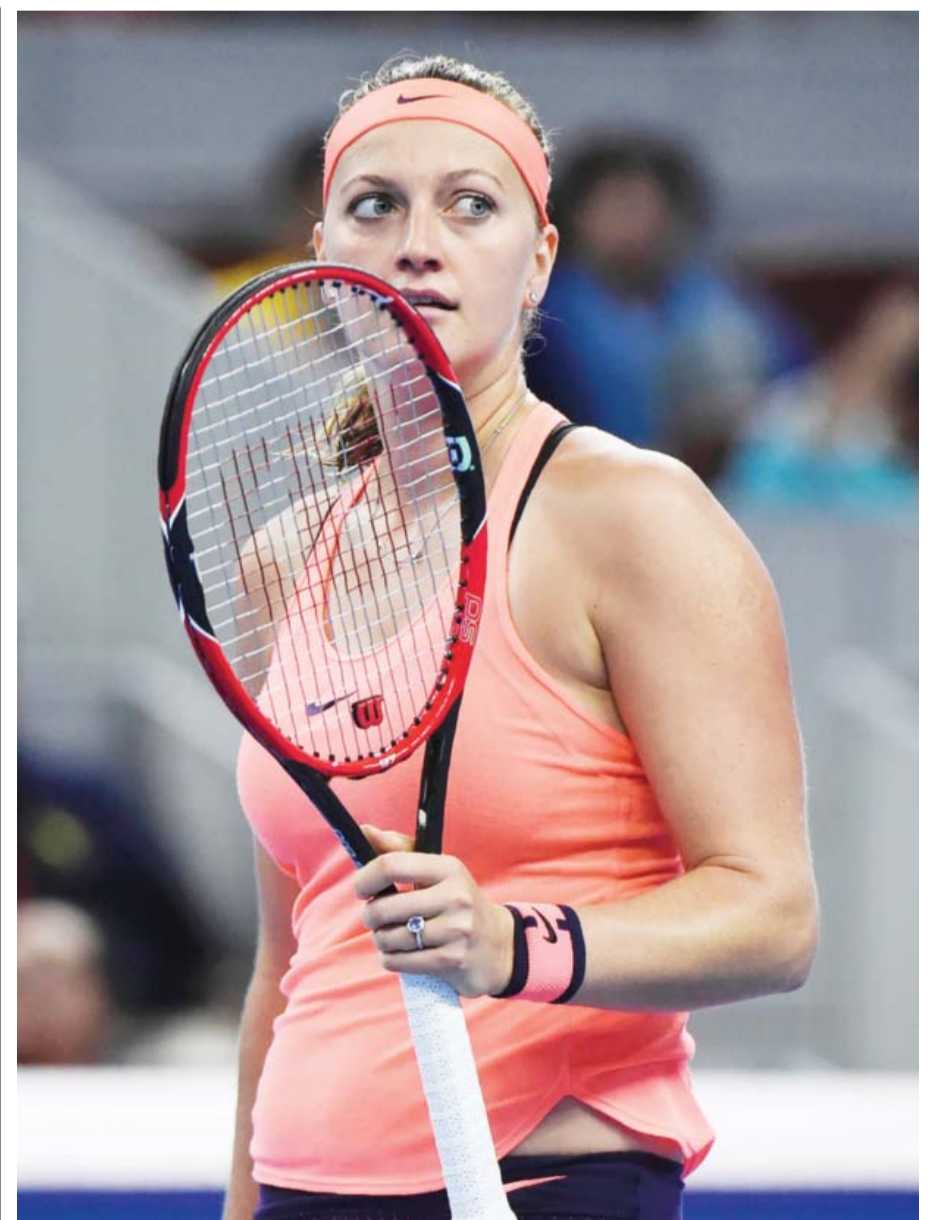
'COUNTING THE DAYS'

Sharapova, who off the court enjoyed successful ventures such as her "Sugarpova" line of candy, helping her amass a fortune estimated at \$200 million, said she was itching to get back on court. "I'm coming back soon and I can't wait!" she said. "In so many ways, I feel like something I love was taken away from me and it will feel really good to have it back."

"Tennis is my passion and I have missed it. I am counting the days until I can return to the court." Russian Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko told TASS news agency: "I'm very happy for Maria, although I think that CAS should have fully lifted her suspension for a drug like meldonium." — AFP



MELBOURNE: This file photo taken on January 26, 2016 shows Russia's Maria Sharapova serving during her women's singles match against Serena Williams of the US on day nine of the 2016 Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne. — AFP



BEIJING: Petra Kvitova of the Czech Republic reacts after beating China's Wang Yafan during their women's single second round match at the China Open tennis tournament in Beijing yesterday. — AFP



FRENCH TRAIN FACTORY ALSTOM BACK ON TRACK



KUWAIT: A panel discussion during the ArabNet Kuwait forum yesterday. (Inset) Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah inaugurates the two-day forum. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat (See also Page 23)

ARABNET KUWAIT 2016 FORUM KICKS OFF

KUWAIT SEEKS TO BOLSTER DIGITAL CREATIVITY: SHEIKH SALMAN

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Kuwait is looking to bolster investment in cognitive development on issues related to technology and digital creativity, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said yesterday.

Inaugurating the two-day ArabNet Kuwait 2016 forum, Sheikh Salman said that such events reflect the painstaking efforts taken by the country to transform Kuwait into a financial and commercial hub.

Speaking on the formation of a national fund dealing with development projects, he said it is part of the government's strategy to ratchet up support for Kuwait's youth and provide that segment of society with an environment conducive to doing business. On Kuwait's commercial development, he said that the country is one of the Arab world's most prosperous nations, thanks to the contributions from the youth sector.

ArabNet kicked off its annual conference yesterday for the first time in Kuwait, focusing on the Kuwaiti and GCC market, while emphasizing on startups, opportunities, local trends and local rising stars. The two-day conference at the Courtyard Hotel's Arraya Ballroom includes TechFair, an exhibition area for leading digital companies and rising startups to connect, as well as a number of keynote speeches and panels discussing digital media trends in technology and digital marketing; while eBusiness topics will cover mobile enterprise, digital banking, and the state of ecommerce and entrepreneurship in Kuwait.

Kuwait Times spoke with decision-makers, innovators and top leaders in the MENA region in the Backstage Pass Booth. The Backstage Pass is an interview booth that hosts some of the conference speakers after their onstage sessions for interviews about their market, industry and expertise.

SME Development

Abdulaziz Al-Loughani, Vice Chairman and Executive Director of the \$7 billion Kuwait National Fund for SME Development, shared his experiences and insights about the evolution of MENA entrepreneurship. He said that the region is investing in the startup ecosystem. "The role of the state is to serve as a catalyst for growth until enough depth is created in private markets." He pointed out that the private sector needs to drive implementation. The design of programs and strategy will need to be delivered by the private sector to be most efficient and time-sensitive. "The role of government should be to invest and fund these initiatives. We should have a forward-looking vision when building an entrepreneurial ecosystem," said Loughani.

Loughani noted that the government of Kuwait allows for and provides technical and strategic guidance for entrepreneurs throughout the lifecycle of a company. They make a contribution to the top line by finding ways to design preferred procurement policies to benefit all the entrepreneurs supported by Kuwait, thereby giving access to both capital and markets.

Loughani was a Managing Partner of Talabat.com and Director at Global Capital Management, the alternative investments arm of



Founder and CEO of ArabNet Omar Christidis.

Global Investment House "Global", where he established a venture capital practice. He has served as an executive and board member of many MENA companies and is a member of the World Economic Forum Global Shapers Community - Kuwait chapter.

Digital media

Kuwait Times also spoke with Tarek Amin, CEO - Digital, Adline Media Network and Founder, Dubai Angel Investors, about how the times have changed since the agricultural age and the industrial revolution. "Market conditions are also fueling the need for alternatives, and Arab startups, VCs, corporates and governments are all responding," Amin noted that there is an ever-growing interest from advertisers, agencies and media owners in digital media and ad tech startups as well.

About his participation, Amin said ArabNet has the largest footprint at regional events. "Digital marketing has the capability to transform products and processes through technology and in a more cost-effective manner. This capability gives them the edge over other marketing channels and is exactly what a startup needs to grow and sustain in this highly competitive market."

Amin is a successful serial entrepreneur and angel investor who founded CareerMidEast.com before the turn of the millennium. Following his passion for startups, in 2016 Amin founded and is a permanent member of the Investment Committee of Dubai Angel Investors (DAI). His experience includes establishing Connect Ads, serving as managing partner and executive producer at Alkarma Edutainment, founding Zanad.tv, and currently CEO - Digital at Adline Media Network. He also serves as an advisor, strategist and mentor to startups and entrepreneurs around the world.

Innovation strategist

Ousama Itani is a Senior Innovation Strategist at Aljazeera Media Network, where he researches and experiments with the use of new and alternative technologies in the media industry, including digital-first content and future audio formats. He explained to Kuwait Times how digital media outlets need to be aware of what's happening within social networks and understand their policies before diving in.

"Reaching audiences on the platforms they already use is a focal point of many news organizations' digital strategies. AJ+, Al Jazeera's distributed



KUWAIT: Sheikh Salman, Kuwait Times Marketing Manager Adnan Saad and other officials at the booth of IAA. Kuwait Times is one of the media sponsors of the ArabNet 2016.



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah visits the Hall A of the day the ArabNet Kuwait yesterday.

news arm, was a success with Facebook video, and has made it one of the organizations other media outlets name as an inspiration for their own strategies and social video formats, which puts pressure on AJ+ to constantly innovate," Itani said.

Itani said AJ+ is constantly adapting changes to the social platform to ensure it maintains a presence and continues to draw a significant readership. Within its strategy, AJ+ is exploring new types of content. He also outlined some of the challenges facing AJ+ and other digital media companies that have their content live on third-party platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat. "I explore the intersection of people and technology, minds

and media, while creating and managing the innovative solutions that bind them together."

Founder and CEO of ArabNet Omar Christidis said that the government's support of business is evident in the endeavors and projects it has undertaken, adding that the conference helps to create a link between the Kuwaiti market and the rest of the world. The two-day conference features discussions over issues that run the gamut from e-commerce to social media and the internet, as well as interviews with some of the most standout companies in the world of e-commerce.

ArabNet is a yearly conference held in a Middle Eastern city to celebrate startups, founders, tech-

nology and share knowledge. It was founded in 2009, and the vision of ArabNet is to help grow the Web and mobile sectors in the Arab world through its activities. It also aims to build business bridges across the MENA, stimulate the growth of the Arab digital knowledge economy and support the creation of new businesses and job opportunities for aspiring youth.

ArabNet Kuwait will hold a full-day of workshops and discussions today on parallel tracks dedicated to entrepreneurs and marketers. The workshops focus on building skills and expertise in addition to delving into the latest and hottest topics in media and entrepreneurship with market leaders.

QATAR AND DUBAI RALLY WITH GLOBAL MARKETS, SAUDI DIPS

NBK GCC MARKETS REPORT

KUWAIT: GCC markets, with the exception of Saudi's Tadawul, continued their recovery in 3Q16 in line with international equity markets and stabilizing oil prices. The poor Saudi performance and its sizable weight in the index weighed on the region's MSCI total return index, which retreated 4 percent on the quarter. Total GCC market capitalization stood at \$846 billion at the end of the quarter, having shed \$31 billion during 3Q16.

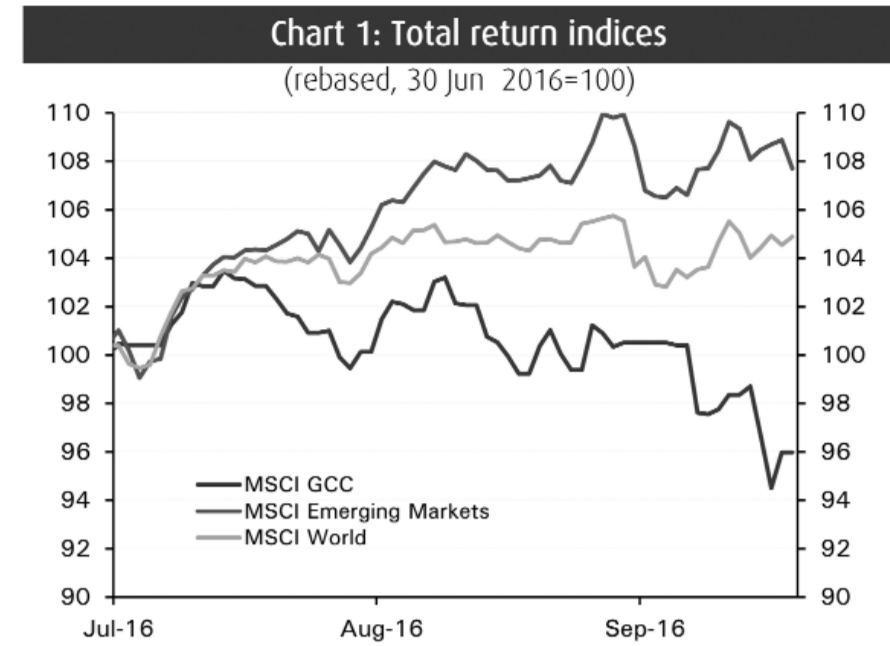
Internationally, most equity markets continued to rally in 3Q16 with US equities reaching historic highs before retreating some. For one thing, the Brexit vote didn't upset markets neither as badly nor for as long as was initially feared. Markets continued to benefit from the accommodative monetary policies of major central banks. Most recently on this front, the Fed's decision at its September meeting to leave policy rates unchanged, hence almost completely ruling out the possibility of two rate hikes this year (as was being signaled earlier in the year). On the same day, Bank of Japan (BOJ) announced some new tactics aimed at further pumping up the monetary base on top of the aggressive quantitative easing measures and negative rates already in place. The MSCI World total return index which captures the performance of equities in developed markets gained 5 percent in 3Q16. Volatility continues to come off the levels seen in late 2015 and earlier this year, despite the occasional spikes around big events like the Brexit vote and Fed meetings.

Flows to emerging markets strengthened against the backdrop of constant accommodation from major central banks. According to the IIF's EM portfolio tracker, net inflows to emerging equity markets (which do not include flows to GCC) in July and August were \$14.6 billion and \$11.3 billion respectively, compared to a monthly average of \$5.9 billion ytd. Emerging markets' equities made solid gains in 3Q16 outperforming developed markets with the MSCI EM total return index up 8 percent.

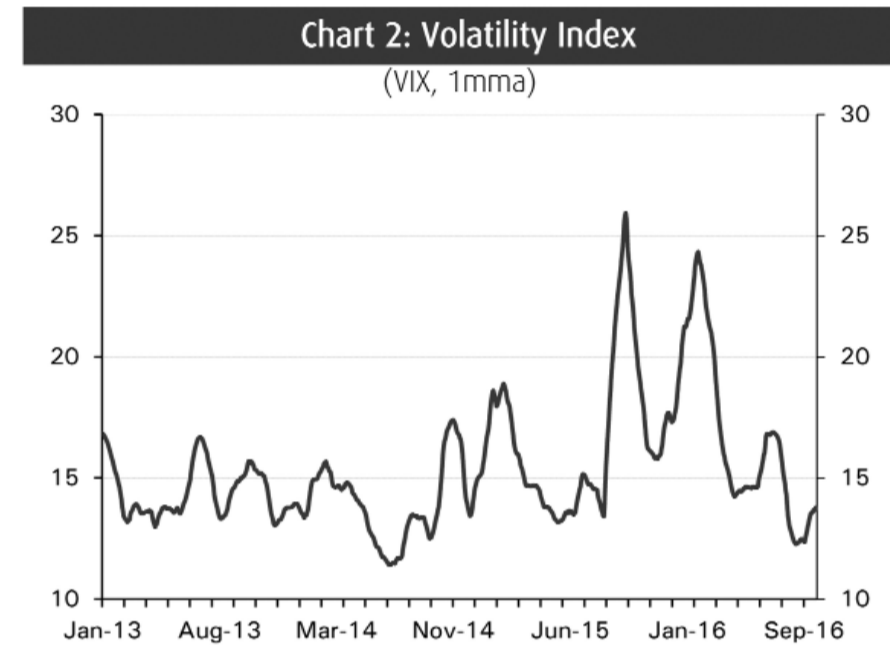
Risk appetite

Flows to GCC markets were also supported by improving risk appetite. According to EFG Hermes, net inflows to GCC equities in July and August were \$373 million and \$436 million respectively, compared to a monthly average of \$284 million since January. Qatar and UAE drove the inflows in the first two months of 3Q16. Inflows to Qatar have also picked up notably in anticipation of the FTSE upgrade to "emerging market" status which took place in mid-September. Meanwhile, UAE equities continue to benefit from a relatively favorable outlook driven by healthy non-oil economic growth.

Of course, GCC markets are also benefiting from stabilizing oil prices. Oil prices have been hovering around the \$45/barrel level (Brent) for months now, up around 70 percent from their January low. GCC markets have kept their close tie to oil prices for well over a year now (see chart 4). But despite the recent rise in oil prices, they remain relatively tame and as such the oil outlook con-



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream



Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream

tinues to raise concerns about fiscal sustainability and regional growth. A prolonged period of low oil prices could force governments to further reduce capital spending and benefits, and further pressure liquidity. This has been more of a concern for investors in Saudi, Oman, and Bahrain than in the other markets.

The Saudi market, the most sensitive to oil prices, came under pressure toward quarter-end when the government announced cuts in benefits to public sector employees, and when unfavorable US legislation was passed over Obama's veto. However, new hopes of OPEC production cuts drove oil prices higher and...The Tadawul-All-Share index was the only regional index to close the quarter in negative territory, having

retreated a notable 14 percent (down 21 percent ytd). Corporate earnings of listed companies for 1H16 showed a decline of 9 percent compared to the same period last year with weakness seen across various sectors. Meanwhile, the Kingdom's liquidity issues have deteriorated somewhat over the past few months, with contractors facing payment delays and talks about compensation cuts in the public sector. Two large construction conglomerates, dominated headlines recently as they struggled to meet obligations and pay salaries. Nonetheless, recent data out of Saudi still suggest a decent growth environment. The purchasing managers index (PMI) for both July and August show two months of improvement with August's reading being the highest in a year.

Declining liquidity

Qatar led the gains in regional markets following a poor performance in the 1H16. The Qatari price index advanced 6 percent in 3Q16. The shift in the market direction was very closely tied to the market's upgrade to "emerging market" status by FTSE. Fundamentally, data continued to signal softness amid lower project spending and tighter liquidity conditions. Banking, QSE's biggest sector, is being pressured by declining liquidity with some banks grappling with capitalization issues. Corporate earnings of a sample of listed companies for 1H16 had shown a drop of 12 percent compared to a year ago, the biggest decline in the region.

Dubai Financial market (DFM) also outperformed in 3Q16, which put it well ahead of its regional peers so far this year. The DFM price index gained 5 percent on the quarter. Earnings of a sample of listed companies show an increase of 1 percent in 1H16 over the comparable period last year. All other major GCC markets saw notable declines in total profits. The outlook for the UAE continues to look more favorable than its peers thanks to a more diversified economy (particularly Dubai); non-oil growth is expected to average around 4.2 percent in the coming two years compared to a GCC average of 3.4 percent. The PMI for UAE point to steady growth in recent months after moderating throughout 2015.

Despite rather disappointing 1H16 profit announcements, GCC markets remain undervalued compared to other emerging markets. Price-to-earnings per share (P/EPS) for global emerging markets is around 19, well above P/EPS for any of the GCC markets. Regionally, UAE equities continue to look the most underpriced among the main GCC markets despite the outperformance of DFM, while Kuwait equities remain the most expensive by that measure.

Saudi volume drops

Market liquidity continues to be low. The daily turnover in 2Q16 averaged \$1.1 billion, down 31 percent from 2Q16 average. With banks and sovereigns turning to fixed-income markets to issue Basel III-compliant perpetuals and other bonds, and sovereigns tapping capital markets to help finance deficits, some liquidity is bound to be directed away from equities. Also, with GCC interest rates now starting to rise in tandem with US rates, fixed-income assets are becoming more attractive.

Transaction volume also tends to be lower in the summer and during Eid period. Saudi volumes were particularly low dropping 36 percent compared to 2Q16 but the decline was partially offset by a notable pickup in activity in the Qatari market. Important events await markets in the last quarter of the year and moves by the major central banks will remain in focus, alongside the US presidential election, and an important OPEC meeting in November. The Fed's December meeting is the next big thing on the central banks front.



TOKYO: A pedestrian looking at a screen showing movements for the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Tokyo. — AFP

ADNOC TO CONSOLIDATE 2 KEY OFFSHORE OIL FIRMS

DUBAI: Abu Dhabi National Oil Co (ADNOC) said yesterday it planned to consolidate the operations of two of its offshore oil companies into a new entity, as part of a bigger restructuring of the OPEC member's main equity firm in the era of cheap oil. The consolidation of Abu Dhabi Marine Operating Co (ADMA-OPCO) and Zakum Development Co (ZADCO) "aimed at capitalizing on synergies to drive operational efficiency and maximize value," ADNOC said in a statement. "The new company resulting from this integration will be more agile, better able to respond to changing market demands, and be well positioned to take advantage of strategic opportunities for future growth."

Current production for the ADMA-OPCO and ZADCO offshore oil fields is around 1.2 million barrels per day and ADNOC's plan is to boost output potential to around 1.6 million bpd in 2017-18.

The United Arab Emirates currently produces about 3.2 million bpd. The consolidation comes after ADNOC reshuffled its leadership in May, the first major shake-up since the appointment of Sultan Al Jaber as chief executive earlier this year. The sharp drop in crude prices since mid-2014 has forced the oil industry to become more efficient amid tough competition. "With ADNOC's recent focus on driving efficiency, performance and profitability... the consolidation of ADMA-OPCO and ZADCO is a logical step," said Al Jaber, who is also UAE Minister of State, in the statement. A steering committee will be formed by ADNOC and its joint venture partners - BP, ExxonMobil, Japan Oil Development Company (JODCO) and Total - to oversee the integration.

Yaser Al-Mazrouei, current chief executive of ADMA-OPCO, will be joint chief executive of ADMA-OPCO and ZADCO. The consolidation is expected to conclude by early 2018, ADNOC said. "The existing concession rights of our partners in the concessions currently operated by ADMA-OPCO and ZADCO will not be affected by the consolidation," Al-Jaber said. "ADNOC will continue to review and consider all options, and pursue partners for concessions expiring in 2018," he added. ADNOC has a 60 percent share in ADMA-OPCO, with the remainder owned by BP, JODCO, and Total. ADNOC has a 60 percent stake in ZADCO, while ExxonMobil and JODCO hold the rest. "This timely integration will serve to streamline operations, leading to greater efficiency and benefits for all stakeholders involved," said Hiroshi Fujii, President and CEO of JODCO, which is owned by Japan's INPEX. — Reuters

SAUDI CB STUDYING HOW TO RESCHEDULE MORTGAGES

DUBAI: Saudi Arabia's central bank is studying how commercial banks should reschedule housing mortgage loans after government austerity measures reduced many borrowers' incomes, a Saudi newspaper reported yesterday. The report underlined how Saudi commercial banks are being required to bear much of the economic burden as the government cuts spending to curb a big budget deficit caused by low oil prices. Last week the cabinet decided to reduce allowances for public sector employees. In response, the central bank issued instructions to banks on Sunday on how they should reschedule the consumer loans of customers whose incomes had shrunk.

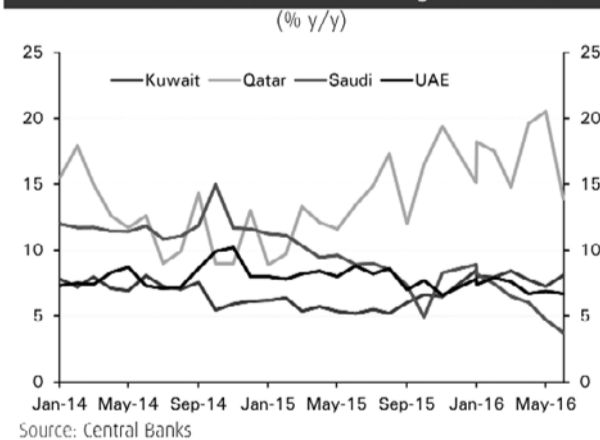
Al-Riyadh newspaper, quoting unnamed sources at the central bank, said it was trying to achieve a balance between mortgage borrowers' financial situation and creditors' loan policies. The newspaper added that the central bank felt the most important element of rescheduling should be that interest paid by borrowers should remain unchanged as a percentage of their incomes. The central bank expects the rescheduling of mortgages to take longer than the process for consumer loans, it added. The central bank did not respond to a request for comment. Outstanding real estate loans extended by banks to retail customers totalled 108.2 billion riyals (\$28.9 billion) at the end of August, central bank data shows. Consumer loans, a different category of lending, were worth about three times that sum. — Reuters

Table 1: GCC Markets Indicators

Market	Cap (\$ bn)	Average Daily TO (\$ mn)	Growth in 1H16 Profits (%)	P/EPS
Bahrain (BSE)	18	1	-4	10.7
Kuwait (KSE)	81	22	-11	15.6
Oman (MSM)	22	8	9	11.1
Qatar (QE)	153	80	-12	13.6
Saudi (Tadawul)	352	815	-9	13.5
Abu Dhabi (ADSM) & Dubai (DFM)	220	127	-5	12.8
GCC	846	1053	-	-

Source: Thomson Reuters Datastream.

Chart 8: Bank Lending (% y/y)



Source: Central Banks

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.959
Indian Rupees	4.554
Pakistani Rupees	2.896
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.070
Nepali Rupees	2.851
Singapore Dollar	222.090
Hongkong Dollar	39.017
Bangladesh Taka	3.858
Philippine Peso	6.284
Thai Baht	8.765

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.736
Qatari Riyal	83.160
UAE Dirham	786.383
Bahraini Dinar	804.040
UAE Dirham	82.430

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	29.900
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	34.023
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.215
Tunisian Dinar	137.860
Jordanian Dinar	426.950
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.017
Syrian Lira	2.0158
Morocco Dirham	31.587

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	302.600
Euro	340.120
Sterling Pound	389.450

Canadian dollar	230.990
Turkish lira	1005.300
Swiss Franc	311.640
Australian Dollar	233.610
US Dollar Buying	301.400

GOLD

20 Gram	264.390
10 Gram	135.120
5 Gram	68.400

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

US Dollar	302.450
Canadian Dollar	229.805
Sterling Pound	392.985
Euro	340.530
Swiss Frank	294.247
Bahrain Dinar	799.545
UAE Dirhams	82.575
Qatari Riyals	83.785
Saudi Riyals	81.375
Jordanian Dinar	426.180
Egyptian Pound	33.962
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.071
Indian Rupees	4.527
Pakistani Rupees	2.881
Bangladesh Taka	3.848
Philippines Peso	6.270
Cyprus pound	159.409
Japanese Yen	3.985
Syrian Pound	2.410
Nepalese Rupees	3.830

Malaysian Ringgit	73.990
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.695
Thai Bhat	9.700
Turkish Lira	102.000

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.389705	0.404705
Czech Korune	0.004466	0.016466
Danish Krone	0.041251	0.046251
Euro	0.0331946	0.0340946
Norwegian Krone	0.032268	0.037468
Romanian Leu	0.075610	0.075610
Slovakia	0.009018	0.019018
Slovenia	0.031427	0.036427
Swedish Krona	0.301266	0.312266
Swiss Franc	0.097608	0.107908
Turkish Lira	0.097608	0.107908
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.219217	0.231217
New Zealand Dollar	0.212884	0.222384
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.225725	0.234725
Georgina Lari	0.136691	0.136691
US Dollars	0.298550	0.303250
US Dollars Mint	0.299050	0.303250
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003289	0.003873
Chinese Yuan	0.043702	0.047202

Hong Kong Dollar	0.036926	0.039676
Indian Rupee	0.004259	0.004648
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002852	0.003032
Kenyan Shilling	0.002978	0.002978
Korean Won	0.000261	0.000276
Malaysian Ringgit	0.071019	0.077019
Nepalese Rupee	0.002809	0.002979
Pakistan Rupee	0.002699	0.002989
Philippine Peso	0.006307	0.006607
Sierra Leone	0.000051	0.000057
Singapore Dollar	0.216485	0.226485
South African Rand	0.014836	0.023336
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001641	0.002221
Taiwan	0.009414	0.009594
Thai Baht	0.008417	0.008967

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.796216	0.804716
Egyptian Pound	0.023748	0.028866
Iranian Riyal	0.000084	0.000085
Iraqi Dinar	0.000181	0.000241
Jordanian Dinar	0.422712	0.431712
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000150	0.000250
Moroccan Dirhams	0.019618	0.043618
Nigerian Naira	0.001248	0.001883
Omani Riyal	0.779684	0.785364
Qatar Riyal	0.082319	0.083769
Saudi Riyal	0.079620	0.080920
Syrian Pound	0.001283	0.001503
Tunisian Dinar	0.133987	0.141987
Turkish Lira	0.097608	0.107908
UAE Dirhams	0.080975	0.082675
Yemeni Riyal	0.001368	0.001448



KUWAIT: The two-day ArabNet Kuwait 2016 forum started off yesterday providing a platform for entrepreneurs in digital technology and media. Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah inaugurated the forum. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

AUSTRALIA'S CB CHIEF HOLDS INTEREST RATES

SYDNEY: Australia's central bank kept interest rates at a record low yesterday in the first meeting for newly-minted chief Philip Lowe, amid solid domestic growth and signs that commodity prices have passed their trough. Australian growth has remained robust despite the economy's uneven transition away from mining-driven expansion, but a recent run of sluggish inflation figures drove the Reserve Bank of Australia to cut rates in May, and then again in August to 1.50 percent.

"The board judged that holding the stance of policy unchanged at this meeting would be consistent with sustainable growth in the economy and achieving the inflation target over time," Lowe said in a statement after the monthly RBA board meeting. The decision to sit on the sidelines was widely tipped by economists, and the Australian dollar drifted slightly lower to 76.67 US cents, from 76.76 US cents, after the statement was released.

It also reflected Lowe's comments to a parliamentary hearing last month, where he struck a cautious note about further cuts to rates and added that the central bank was not "nutties" about keeping inflation in a tight range. Australia, like other economies, is battling low inflation amid weak wages growth, subdued oil prices and tepid global trade.

Inflation rose by one percent year-on-year in April-June, a 17-year low, far below the Reserve Bank's target of 2.0-

3.0 percent. The next CPI (consumer price index) data will be released in late October.

"This was always going to be an interesting meeting as it's Phil Lowe's first as the RBA governor," JP Morgan economist Tom Kennedy told AFP. "The fact that the board has delivered a statement that is pretty close to what they've delivered in the previous six months when they haven't cut... suggests the message they want to convey is one of consistency and that the way monetary policy will be managed going forward is not going to be significantly different."

Lowe highlighted elements of softness in the labor market despite the unemployment rate falling to 5.6 percent, its lowest level in almost three years, in August. He noted that jobs growth was considerably varied across the nation and the increase in full-time positions was subdued even as part-time roles were growing strongly. The Australian dollar has risen in recent months alongside a rebound in commodity prices after sharp falls, but Lowe warned that an appreciating exchange rate could put pressure on growth in non-resources sectors as the economy rebalances. Even so, the improvement in commodity prices-including of Australia's largest export iron ore-has shored up the economy and could boost government revenue as Canberra seeks to rein in its budget deficit. —AFP



SYDNEY: A man is reflected on a wall underneath the Reserve Bank of Australia sign in Sydney yesterday as Australia's central bank kept interest rates at a record-low in the first meeting for newly minted chief Philip Lowe, amid solid domestic growth and signs that commodity prices had past their trough. —AFP

'HARD BREXIT' FEARS PUSH POUND TO 31-YR DOLLAR LOW

LONDON: The pound slumped to a 31-year low against the dollar yesterday on concerns over the timing and terms of Britain's planned exit from the European Union, traders said. Britain's currency also struck a fresh three-year low point against the euro, while the drops helped push London's benchmark FTSE 100 stocks index up to a 16-month high beyond 7,000 points as British exporters stood to benefit from a weaker pound.

The British economy has shown signs of improvement in the months since the shock vote to leave the EU but there are concerns about the wider long-term impact of the bloc losing its second-biggest economy. Underscoring the uncertainty, the International Monetary Fund yesterday cut its 2017 growth forecast for Britain, blaming Brexit and warned the damage could be greater if negotiations led to trade barriers.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said at the weekend that her government would start the process of leaving the EU within the next six months-possibly leading to Britain severing ties with the single market. The pound yesterday struck \$1.2740 — its lowest level since 1985. Sterling meanwhile traded at 87.66 pence to the euro-the weakest level since 2013.

"It seems that it is going to be hard to provide a tourniquet for sterling's recent wounds given the solidity of the newly announced Brexit timeline," said Connor Campbell, analyst at traders Spreadex. "In terms of silver linings, the pound's protracted demise has continued to lift the multinationals that make up the FTSE 100, leaving the index back above 7,000 for the first time in 16 months."

'Worth more in pounds'

The FTSE rallied to a gain of 1.8 percent in mid afternoon deals, compared with Monday's close. "The reality is the biggest stocks in the



LONDON: Pedestrians walk past a board displaying the price of Euro and US dollars against British pound Sterling, outside a currency exchange store in central London yesterday. —AFP

index dominate its performance, and the likes of HSBC, Royal Dutch Shell, and British American Tobacco all have international earnings which are now worth more in pounds and pence thanks to sterling's decline," said Laith Khalaf, senior analyst at stockbrokers Hargreaves Lansdown. In the eurozone, Frankfurt's DAX 30 stocks index won 0.9 percent compared with Friday's finish. The DAX was shut Monday for a German public holiday.

Deutsche Bank shares were 3.6 percent higher in midafternoon trades, at 11.85 euros, after last week plunging to historic lows on fears for

its financial health. Elsewhere Asian stock markets rose with Japanese stocks boosted by a weaker yen. The dollar won support from a rebound for US manufacturing, which helped turn attention back to US monetary policy, days ahead of the release of a closely watched jobs report.

Traders took the data as a sign that the world's top economy is getting back on track and would be able to withstand an increase in borrowing costs. The Fed had considered a rate hike last month but held off, saying it wanted to see more evidence of strength. —AFP

TURKEY SLASHES GROWTH FORECAST FOR TROUBLED 2016

ISTANBUL: Turkey yesterday cut its growth forecast for 2016 to just above three percent, as the global economic environment and effects of the July failed coup take their toll on the economy.

The substantial snip of the growth forecast was the latest in a slew of bad news for Turkey's economy after Moody's downgraded its government debt to junk status and with the Turkish lira coming under new pressure. "The growth that we are going to have is not the one that we were targeting," Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said in Ankara. "Global negative factors also have an effect on us," he said.

Yildirim said gross domestic product (GDP) would grow 3.2 percent in Turkey in 2016 compared with the previous forecast of 4.5 percent. In 2017 GDP would expand 4.4 percent and from 2018-2019 is expected to return to a rate of five-percent growth, Yildirim said. The prime minister did not directly refer

to the July 15 attempted putsch and plunge in tourism following extremist attacks this year, which economists expect have eaten into Turkey's GDP growth in 2016.

With tourism making up 4.4 percent of Turkey's GDP, the plunge of almost 40 percent in foreign visitor numbers to the country over the summer is a major issue for the economy.

Statistics showed last month Turkey's economy grew 3.1 percent in the second quarter, slowing sharply from the strong figure of 4.7 percent the first quarter.

'Hard to achieve'

Gokce Celik, chief economist at Finansbank in Istanbul, said in a note to clients that the government's 4.5-percent full-year growth forecast had already been "too ambitious". "Economic activity already started to lose steam in the second quarter and a more substantial slowdown-a negative sequential

figure-was very likely recorded in the third quarter."

"Even the revised projection might prove hard to achieve," she said, adding there were downside risks to the bank's own 2016 growth forecast of three percent. Turkey has enjoyed robust growth for much of the last decade in one of the key achievements of the ruling party of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the source of much of his popularity. Erdogan is banking on strong growth in the next years to realise his strategic target of making the country one of the world's top 10 economies by 2023.

'Rubbish!'

The move by Moody's last month to downgrade to Ba1 its assessment of Turkey's capacity to pay back debts brought the rating into the speculative junk status. Ankara has reacted with fury to the move, particularly stung by suggestions Turkey's institutional stability could

be weakened by the crackdown in the wake of the coup.

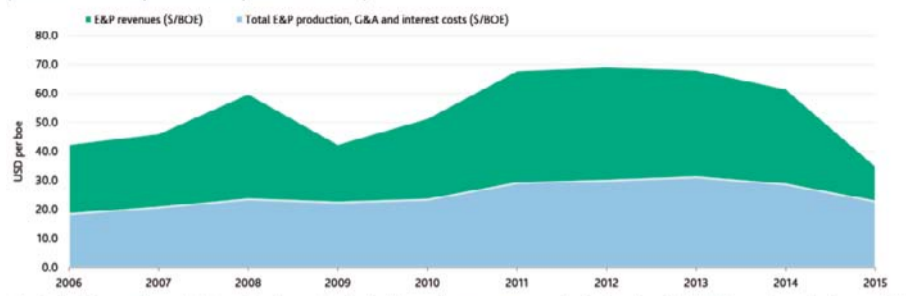
Speaking to his ruling party later in Ankara, Yildirim accused ratings agencies of having an "unfair attitude" towards Turkey. "The last ratings cut was said to have been justified by institutional weakness," Yildirim sneered. "Rubbish!"

He pointed out that a 10-year Turkish bond auction launched after the downgrade was three-and-a-half times over-subscribed. However the negative news flow put the Turkish lira under substantial pressure yesterday, losing 4.4 percent against the dollar to trade well above three lira to the greenback. The currency is now at its lowest value since July when investors in Turkey were rattled by the coup. As well as seeking to stimulate growth as consumer demand drops, the government and central bank however also need to keep a close eye on inflation even as it eased to 7.3 percent in September. —AFP

RIISING COST CUTS PUT UPSTREAM ACTIVITIES ON ROAD TO RECOVERY

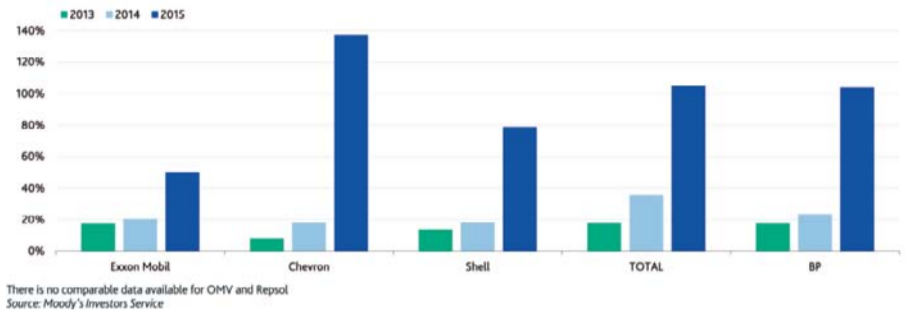
MOODY'S INVESTOR SERVICE OUTLOOK

In 2015, the Integrated Sector's Leveraged Margins* Touched a 10-year Low Despite Accelerated Cost-reductions (E&P revenue and total production costs per barrel since 2006)



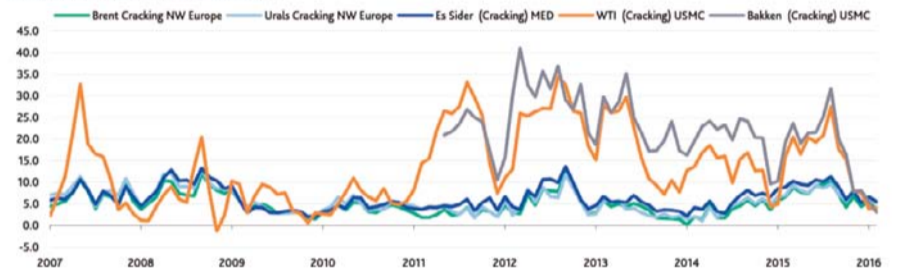
* We calculated the average leveraged cash margin for the sector based on the difference between average reported exploration and production (E&P) revenue/boe and total reported E&P production, G&A and interest costs/boe. Source: Moody's Investors Service

The Percentage of Downstream Contributions to EBIT Rose Sharply in 2015



There is no comparable data available for OHV and Repsol. Source: Moody's Investors Service

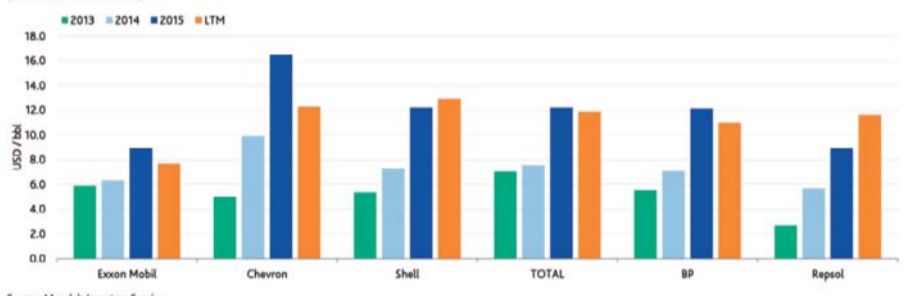
Refining Margins Have Weakened in 2016



Source: International Energy Association

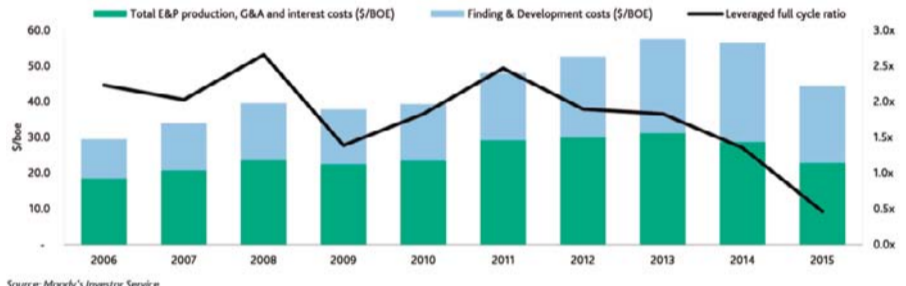
However, we expect chemicals and trading operations to remain resilient and continue to support downstream EBIT (see Exhibit 6).

Continued Solid Performance by Chemicals and Marketing Supports Downstream Margins (EBIT/boe 2013-16 LTM)



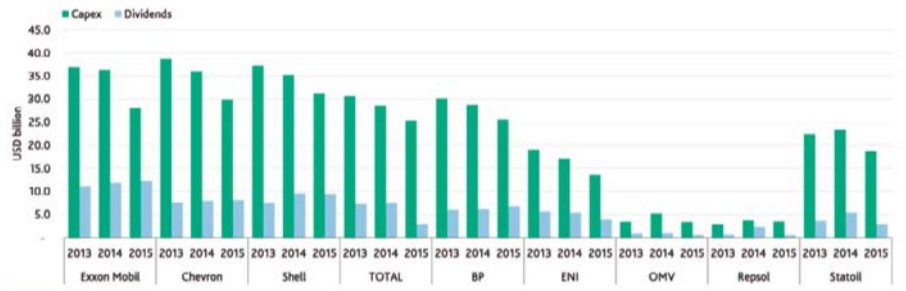
Source: Moody's Investors Service

Low Oil Prices Are Keeping Reinvestment Returns Weak Despite the Decline in Full-cycle Costs



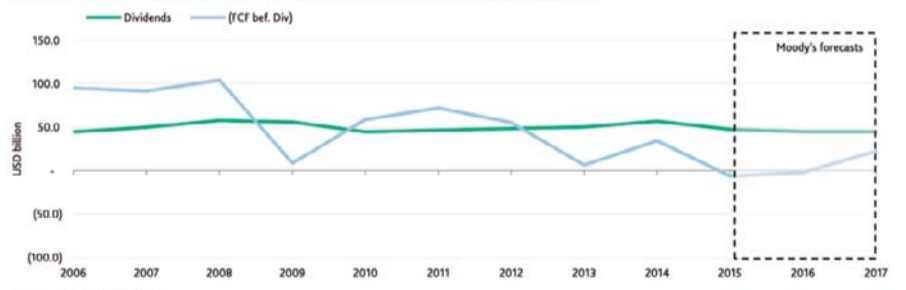
Source: Moody's Investor Service

Capex Has Been Cut Significantly by All Integrated Companies while Dividends Have Been Maintained



Source: Moody's Investor Service

The Integrated Sector's Cash Flow Remains Too Low to Fund Dividends Despite Lower Capex



Source: Moody's Investors Service

KUWAIT: Our outlook for the global integrated oil and gas industry is stable. This outlook reflects our expectations for the fundamental business conditions in the industry over the next 12 to 18 months. EBITDA for the global integrated oil and gas sector is stabilizing and we expect it to modestly improve from recent historical lows. Although EBITDA for the sector,1 is likely to decline by around 5 percent-10 percent in 2016, following a roughly 40 percent drop in 2015, we expect higher oil prices and lower operating costs to lead to a steady improvement in the companies' dominant upstream divisions over the next 12 months. The integrated companies have substantially realigned their cost structures to the lower oil price environment and have mostly reported a return to positive net income generation in their upstream operations in the second quarter of 2016. We expect the sector's aggregate EBITDA to recover to 2015 levels in the next 12 months. As a result, we changed the outlook for the sector to stable from negative in August 2016.2

Cuts in production costs in the upstream segment are likely to slow. Further reductions achieved are likely to be more modest than in 2015 when companies cut upstream production costs by an average of about 26 percent per barrel of oil equivalent (boe). Exxon Mobil Corporation (ExxonMobil, Aaa negative), BP plc. (A2 positive) and ENI S.p.A. (Baa1 stable) were able to deliver larger reductions in production costs/boe than their peers on the back of significant production growth.

Downstream performance

Weaker downstream performance will put a drag on expected EBITDA recovery. The EBITDA contribution will decline modestly from last year's record levels, driven by an oversupply of refined products in Europe and North America amid sustained high operating rates. However, we expect the companies' gas trading, marketing and chemicals businesses to remain resilient and support downstream margins.

Delivering long-term growth and raising reinvestment returns pose challenges. We don't expect to see volume growth from the sector because capital expenditures (capex) are still being cut due to low reinvestment returns and there is a limited number of projects that are sufficiently profitable amid lower oil price environment. Most companies are still reducing capex to support dividend payments. While oil prices and operating cash flows declined in 2015/16, integrated companies maintained a high level of dividend payments, even as European peers opted to introduce scrip dividends in 2015. Although we expect capex to decline by 20 percent on aggregate in 2016 and by 10 percent-15 percent in 2017, we project that the sector's cash flow will still remain too low to fund dividends. This view is based on our oil price estimates of \$40 per barrel (bbl) in 2016 and \$45/bbl in 2017 and assumes there is no change in current dividend policies. We project that the sector will generate about \$65 billion in negative free cash flow (FCF) in 2016 and in 2017. We expect ExxonMobil to be FCF positive next year, while TOTAL S.A. (Aa3 stable) and Royal Dutch Shell Plc (Shell, Aa2 negative) are likely to be close to breakeven next year. In the meantime, the integrated companies are likely to fund the deficit in FCF from divestment proceeds from assets sale, new debt issuances and their cash balances. Companies' credit profiles will only recover gradually. The industry's net debt load has risen, but should stabilize as we expect companies to use the proceeds from targeted divestments to fund operations and to reduce

debt after acquisitions. Improving EBITDA, backed by better cost positions and recovering oil prices, will support the stabilization of companies' credit profiles over the next 12 months. A recent tentative agreement by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to cut output, if implemented, would support our medium-term oil price estimates band of \$40-\$60/bbl.

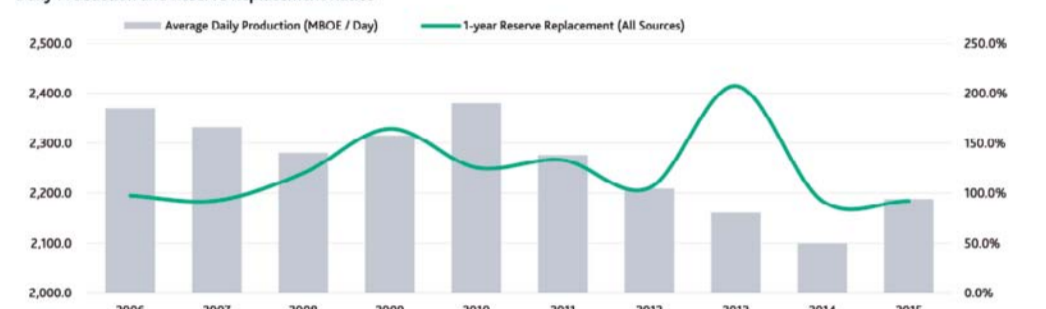
Stronger recovery

We could move the outlook to positive if we projected that EBITDA for the integrated oil and gas sector would grow by over 5 percent annualized over the next 12-18 months, based on a stronger recovery in oil and natural gas prices than we currently expect. Our expectations of 5 percent-or-greater decline in the sector's EBITDA would lead us to change our outlook to negative.

A negative industry outlook indicates our

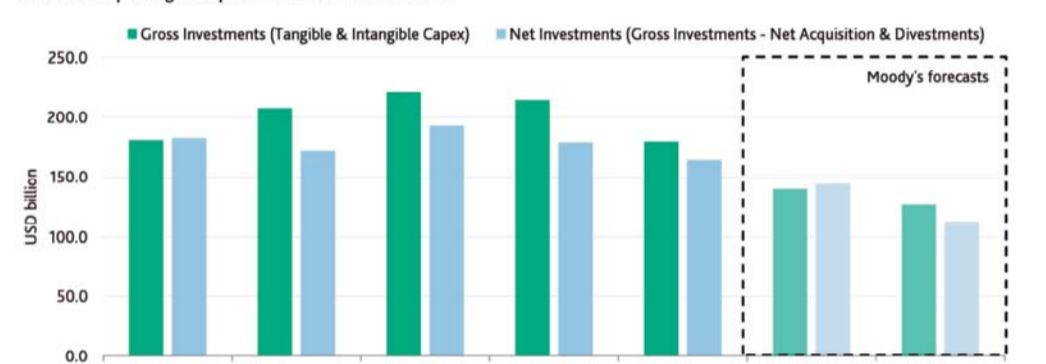
performance. Companies are executing strongly on plans to realign their production cost structures to the lower oil price environment, reduce capex and improve operating cash flow generation so that they are able to maintain and sustainably cover dividends. Nevertheless, in the longer term, we think the sector will continue to face multiple challenges as we expect oil prices to remain in the range of \$40-60/bbl. These include improving returns on capital and delivering long-term growth in production beyond 2020, as well as finding ways to enhance the replacement of reserves. Cuts in production costs in the upstream segment are likely to slow The integrated companies are executing strongly on their announced plans to reduce operating costs. In 2015, the sector reduced total costs (including production, general and administrative (G&A) and interest costs) by around 20 percent per boe in the upstream segment

Daily Production and Reserve Replacement Ratios



All Sources reserve replacement includes exploration and development, revisions and acquisitions. Source: Moody's Investors Service

The Sector's Spending on Capital Investment Peaked in 2013



view that fundamental business conditions will worsen. A positive outlook indicates that we expect fundamental business conditions to improve. A stable industry outlook indicates that conditions are not expected to change significantly.

Since industry outlooks represent our forward-looking view on conditions that factor into ratings, a negative (positive) outlook indicates that negative (positive) rating actions are more likely on average. The integrated sector's EBITDA declined by around 40 percent in 2015 and troughed at the start of this year. Although we still expect the sector's EBITDA to fall by around 5 percent-10 percent in 2016, owing mainly to lower average oil prices and the weaker performance of the companies' downstream operations, we expect it to recover to 2015 levels in the next 12 months. Recent capital investments should support a flat production profile by the industry in the next three to five years. A stronger recovery in oil prices beyond our estimates of an average Brent price of \$45/bbl next year would be the main driver of a faster improvement in EBITDA and cash flows.

Historical performance

Operating conditions in the integrated oil and gas sector are stabilising, although at a low level compared to recent historical per-

against a backdrop of an average decline of 40 percent in revenue/boe.

Average production costs declined the most by around 26 percent to below \$15/boe average at the end of 2015. We think the sector is likely to be approaching the limit of production cost reductions and that the pace of improvement in cost positions is likely to slow in 2016/2017. Because we expect the sector's production to be flat over the next 12-18 months, improvements in upstream cash margins and cash flow generation are likely to be driven mainly by the pace of the recovery in oil prices during this period.

At around \$12/boe average, the industry's leveraged margins touched 10-year low in 2015 and were well below the \$20/boe level in 2009 and at around one-third of the \$37-\$39/boe margin level that the industry enjoyed in the 2012-2014 peak years. We calculated the average leveraged cash margin for the sector based on the difference between average reported exploration and production (E&P) revenue/boe and total reported E&P production, G&A and interest costs/boe. Based on our oil price estimates of an average Brent price of \$40/bbl in 2016 and \$45/bbl in 2017, and assuming further improvement in cost positions, we expect margins to improve modestly in the next 12 months.

IT'S THE ECONOMY, DUTERTE NOT MAIN CAUSE OF MARKET SELLOFF

PHILIPPINES MARKET CONTINUES TO BE BEARISH SINCE JULY

SINGAPORE: Philippine markets have been heavily sold down since July, primarily for economic reasons, not the festering row between new President Rodrigo Duterte and traditional ally the United States over his war on drugs, money managers say. A slowdown in remittances from Filipinos working overseas, which have historically been a big driver of growth in the Southeast Asian nation, is a cause of concern.

For bond investors, a bigger concern is the heavy correlation between Philippine bonds and US Treasuries, and the potential for Philippine bond prices to drop as market participants prepare for the Federal Reserve to raise its near-zero rates. "Everybody's pointing to Duterte," said Erwin Balita, a fund manager at BPI Asset Management in Manila. "But for me, it's really the fundamentals of the country. The drop in remittances is a big game changer," he said. BPI manages around 700 billion pesos (\$14.5 billion) in the Philippines.

The stock market, one of Asia's outperformers in 2015, has fallen 4 percent since late July. In the same period, MSCI's Asia ex-Japan index has risen 5.3 percent. The peso has borne the brunt of the exodus of foreign investment and is down 5 percent against the dollar since July. It is down 2.4 percent this year, making it the worst performing currency in the region after the yuan.

Yields on 15-year dollar bonds issued by the Philippine government, one of the most liquid on the market, have risen 17 basis points since July. The Philippines is one of Asia's most active issuers of US dollar-denominated bonds. With Asia's second-highest growth rate, it has been a haven for yield-hunting foreign investors over the past couple of years.

Yet, those bonds have been volatile in recent weeks. "People think that Treasury rates are going to

go up and that is the reason why the role of Philippine bonds being a Treasury proxy is negatively affected," said Arthur Lau, a fixed income portfolio manager at PineBridge Investments. PineBridge, which has \$42 billion of Asian assets under management, has been neutral to underweight on Philippine assets across its funds this year.

ADDITIONAL FACTOR

The low yields and already tight spreads on Philippine bonds would leave holders vulnerable to a rise in dollar yields, and the selling showed investors were protecting themselves against a possible Fed rate rise, Lau said. Duterte's rhetoric was an additional factor, he said.

"People are somewhat concerned about the near-term political environment," Lau said, adding the market was reacting defensively for both fundamental and technical reasons. "That is why we see the underperformance." Duterte took power on June 30 and his focus on building new infrastructure won him plaudits from business leaders. Even his war on drugs and crime was seen as a positive at the time.

But over 3,400 people have been killed by police and suspected vigilantes since then and Duterte has insulted US President Barack Obama, the United Nations and the European Union for questioning his campaign. The new president has also courted Russia and China and said he would end joint military exercises with the United States. For now, US officials say they are doing their best to ignore Duterte's hostile rhetoric and taking comfort in the fact that he has yet to translate his words into less military cooperation.

Prashant Singh, a Singapore-based senior portfolio manager at fund manager Neuberger Berman, said the peso's decline was due to a

sharp fall in the Philippines current account surplus in the past few months and the possibility that Duterte's proposals on improving investment and infrastructure could lead to more imports. But he added: "The geopolitics is not helping the peso at the margin," referring to the Duterte administration. Neuberger Berman switched to being underweight on the peso two months ago.

The Philippines' current account surplus in the second quarter shrank to \$65 million from \$3.2 billion in the year-ago period, mainly owing to a rise in imports and flat remittances.

Remittances from millions of Filipinos working overseas have traditionally funded the private consumption that drives three-fourths of the Philippine economy. However, flows until July totalled just \$15.32 billion, up only three percent against the year-ago period, because of the slow global economy and a depreciation in currencies of host countries. That means the hitherto stable economy, which is expanding at seven percent, will eventually have to wean itself off its dependence on remittances and find new growth drivers.

Meanwhile, one fallout of Duterte's erratic behaviour is likely to be the Philippines' sovereign ratings. Standard & Poor's rating agency has warned that the unpredictability over his policies could undermine the chances of an upgrade for the Philippines and might even lead to a downgrade of the country's BBB/A-2 investment grade rating. "Rating downgrade risks are among the highest risks for the Philippines which would lead to more outflows across Philippine assets - equity, bonds and FX," said Alvin Maala, senior portfolio manager with the Asian fixed income team at Nikko Asset Management in Singapore. —Reuters

INDIA'S CB CUTS INTEREST RATES TO SIX-YEAR LOW

MUMBAI: India's central bank cut interest rates to a six-year low of 6.25 percent yesterday, citing a good monsoon, in its first monetary policy decision under new governor Urjit Patel. The Reserve Bank of India said the benchmark repo rate-the level at which it lends to commercial banks-would be brought down by 25 basis points from 6.50 percent.



MUMBAI: Reserve Bank of India Governor Urjit Patel speaks during a news conference in Mumbai. —AP

The rate was last at 6.25 percent in November 2010. The decision was expected to please Narendra Modi's government who had become frustrated at the pace with which Patel's predecessor, Raghuram Rajan, had reduced rates during his three-year tenure.

"The outlook for agricultural activity has brightened considerably," the RBI said in a statement, adding that 85 percent of the country had received "normal to excess precipitation" during India's four-month-long monsoon. Good monsoon rains are vital for Indian crops and a particularly dry season can reduce farm output, raising food prices which can be crippling for the tens of millions of India's poor.

The above average rains have brought relief to millions of rural farmers who were reeling from two years of drought, helping to push inflation down to a five-year low in August. Lower interest rates boost consumer spending which can cause an uptick in inflation. Rajan, who stepped down last month, made controlling inflation a priority. Despite cutting rates four times, he came under government pressure to make deeper cuts to help stimulate spending.

Yesterday's interest rate decision was the first to be made by a new Indian monetary policy committee, which was estab-

lished last month, rather than the chief of the central bank. Previously the governor would decide whether to cut rates. Now they are set by a six-member committee, including Patel, two RBI executives, and three independent economists appointed by the government.

Quickening growth

Patel enjoys a deciding vote in the event of a tie, but cannot veto or overrule the committee. The panel is similar to a committee in Britain that sets rates for the Bank of England. All six members of the monetary policy committee voted in favor of cutting rates to 6.25 percent, said the RBI statement.

"Today's decision implies a slight dovish bias among the new MPC, which contrasts with the more hawkish approach of the previous governor," said Shilan Shah of Capital Economics. "This suggests that we could see further modest, loosening over the coming months. But the scope for aggressive rate cuts is limited," the economist added in an emailed statement. —AFP

GLOBAL MARKETS MIXED AMID WEAK DATA

NBK Capital Monthly Equity Market Report

KUWAIT: Global equities were mixed for the month of September; UK equities and emerging markets gained 1.7 percent and 1.1 percent respectively, while Japanese and Euro stocks fell by 2.6 percent and 0.7 percent. Commodities were notably higher for the month, led by Brent and gold. Brent oil continued on its August momentum and rose by 6.2 percent, supported by OPEC's agreement to cut production for the first time in eight years. The organization held an informal meeting in Algeria this month and agreed to cut production levels to a range of 32.5 million to 33 million barrels a day.

In September, the US market saw a sequence of weak data, including an unexpected contraction in the US ISM Manufacturing Index, lower than expected jobs report and a slowdown in services, therefore pausing any Fed rate hike for the month.

The August US ISM Manufacturing Index, released in September, came in lower than expected at 49.4, below 50, signaling a contraction in US manufacturing, after six

months of positive readings. The August Nonfarm Payroll came in lower than expected at 151 thousand versus expectations of 180 thousand.

The ISM Non-Manufacturing Index for August also came in lower than expected at 51.4, however exceeding 50, suggesting a steady expansion in services. US retail sales added to the weak data, as it came in lower than expected, falling by 0.3 percent month over month. Furthermore, US housing data came in softer than expected as building permits and existing home sales unexpectedly fell. On a positive note, the third estimate of the second quarter 2016 Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) released at the end of September was revised upward to 1.4 percent, better than the previously reported 1.1 percent increase.

The US Fed did not raise rates in September, but indicated that a hike is coming soon, signaling a rate hike probability in December. Interest rate futures showed that the probability of a federal rate hike in December has dropped from 65 percent in August to 59 percent.

In September, US equity markets had a volatile month, swinging between gains and losses, but ended the month flat. The UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers



Index (PMI) for August showed a strong gain over the previous month, with the overall index rising from 48.3 to 53.3. The Bank of England left monetary policy unchanged at its September meeting,

expressing the view that the economy had performed better than expected in August; although the central bank signaled the possibility of another rate cut in the near future.

UK equities ended the month with gains, rising by 1.7 percent as measured by the FTSE 100. The European Central Bank President, Mario Draghi reiterated that the central bank will keep rates low, continue buying assets, and keep supporting lending in the region. The Eurozone showed a better than expected manufacturing sector in September; the preliminary manufacturing PMI number for the month came in at 52.6 compared to 51.7 in August. The service sector PMI was slightly weaker than expected, coming in at 52.1 compared to 52.8 but remained in expansionary territory.

European equities were down by 0.7 percent, as measured by the Euro Stoxx 50. The Bank of Japan announced that it will attempt to anchor the 10-year Japanese government bond yields at close to current levels of zero percent, with the short rate unchanged at a negative 10 basis

points. Japanese stocks, as measured by the Nikkei 225, finished the month lower by 2.6 percent.

The Chinese Caixin manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) came in at 50.1 in September, slightly above the 50 reading recorded in August. New home prices in China's 70 major cities climbed 9.2 percent in August from a year earlier. Emerging market investment inflows are at a three-year high, driven by a rebound in commodity prices and a weaker dollar. The MSCI emerging market index is up nearly 14 percent year to date and 1.1 percent for the month.

The GCC equity markets were the worst performers, ending the month down by 4.1 percent. The market was dragged by Saudi and Qatari equities, declining 7.5 percent and 5 percent respectively. Saudi Arabia announced further reductions in subsidies, cuts in minister salaries and reductions in financial benefits for public sector workers under an austerity drive. Qatari stocks were mostly lower on profit taking after sharp year to date gains.

EU'S RICHEST COUNTRIES GETTING LION'S SHARE OF BLOC'S INVESTMENT PLAN

BRUSSELS: Nearly all of the money spent so far from the European Union's 315 billion euro investment plan has gone to the 15 richest countries in the bloc, leaving the other 13 poorer ones out in the cold, a report by the European Investment Bank has found. Italy and Spain benefited have benefitted the most in financing for projects in infrastructure and innovation, along with Britain, which voted to leave the bloc in June.

The report, a copy of which has been seen by Reuters, also found, however, that spending is on track for completion by its mid-2018 target date. The investment plan, launched in the middle of last year, seeks to attract private funds to finance investments, the more risky parts of which are covered by the European Fund for Strategic Investment (EFSI) using 21 billion euros of public money.

By the end of June, one year into the three-year scheme, the program generated 104.75 billion of investment, or one third of the planned outcome, the EIB said in an evaluation report on the scheme, which it co-finances. "If past trends continue and if the EFSI strategy in terms of new products and new forms of cooperation materialize as planned, it can be expected that EFSI's target for total investment will be reached in terms of approvals, with signatures and disburse-

ments following later," the EIB said.

The report said, however, it was worrying that most of the EFSI investment went to projects in the 15 richest European countries rather than the poorer 13.

"It is concerning that EFSI's aggregated portfolio is highly concentrated (92 percent) in the EU15, and under-serves (8 percent) the EU13," the EIB report said. "This is particularly problematic as most of the less developed regions in Europe are found in the EU13's Central and Eastern European countries," the report said. The EFSI's infrastructure and innovation portfolio has the most of the fund's money assigned to it and is supposed to generate 240 billion out of the total 315 billion investment.

The remaining 75 billion to reach the total is to be generated through financing small and medium sized enterprises. Germany, France and Italy got the most in support for SMEs, accounting for 54 percent of all such financing by EFSI. So far, EFSI money has been used to generate investment mainly in the European energy sector, which absorbed 46 percent of all EFSI financing in the fund's infrastructure and innovation portfolio. "EFSI's eligible sectors ... may need to be expanded in order to improve the EIB Group's outreach to EU13 countries," the report said. — Reuters



ABU DHABI: Mubadala and FSHAD executives alongside honorary guests at Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al-Maryah Island during the official opening yesterday.

FOUR SEASONS HOTEL ABU DHABI AT AL-MARYAH ISLAND OPENS

LUXURY HOTEL LATEST LIFESTYLE DESTINATION IN ABU DHABI

ABU DHABI: Bringing Four Seasons legendary service and hospitality to the UAE capital's business and lifestyle destination, Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al Maryah Island celebrated its official opening yesterday.

The opening ceremony was attended Khaldoon Khalifa Al-Mubarak, Mubadala Group CEO and Managing Director; Waleed Al-Mokarrab Al-Muhairi, Mubadala Deputy Group CEO & Emerging Sectors CEO; Ali Eid AlMheiri, Executive Director, Mubadala Real Estate & Infrastructure and Simon Casson, President, Hotel Operations, Europe, Middle East & Africa, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts. The ceremony featured speeches from Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi management and Mubadala executives. Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi is located on Al-Maryah Island, a mixed-use development which meets the demands of businesses and consumers alike, and is home to the world's newest financial free zone.

"We are honored to open our new Hotel in the heart of the UAE capital, and delighted to

work with Mubadala who shares our vision of introducing a new level of luxury hospitality to the city. Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi at Al-Maryah Island is dedicated to being a key member of the local community, bringing the best of Arabian and western culture and hospitality to our guests, and offering the warm, friendly service for which we have come to be known around the world," said Simon Casson, President, Hotel Operations, Europe, Middle East & Africa, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

"The official opening of Four Seasons Hotel Abu Dhabi is a significant milestone not only for Al Maryah Island, but also for Abu Dhabi. We are proud to partner with a reputable international brand renowned for its excellent service and impeccable amenities, adding a new dimension to Al-Maryah Island's vibrant offerings. This is yet another step in our vision to create a world-class destination for UAE residents and visitors from the region and beyond to enjoy," said Ali Eid AlMheiri, Executive Director, Mubadala Real Estate & Infrastructure.

As the city's first Four Seasons address, the 34-storey Hotel was unveiled earlier this year in May as a striking new landmark building in the heart of Al-Maryah Island. Occupying an enviable location with easy access to the capital's most prominent corporate centres, leisure destinations and attractions, Four Seasons is an exciting waterfront destination with amenities that make it ideal for residents as well as business and leisure travellers. The Hotel features 200 rooms including 38 suites, a collection of six dining concepts including the newly opened Cafe Milano and Butcher & Still, a world-class spa, rooftop pool and premium venues for business meetings, weddings and social functions.

The hotel offers direct access to the Island's diverse amenities including businesses, a state-of-the-art hospital, boutiques and a wide variety of restaurants and cafes. Since delivery in 2008, Al Maryah Island has seen a number of milestones, including the opening of two new bridges earlier this year, with another seven due for completion by 2018.

EXCLUSIVE OFFER FOR GULF BANK'S PRIORITY CUSTOMERS AT SIX SENSES SPA KUWAIT

Enjoy a 20% discount at Six Senses SPA
Exclusively for Gulf Bank's Priority Banking customers
This offer is valid until 28 February 2017

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank's priority customers can now receive an exclusive offer when they visit Six Senses Spa, Kuwait's leading luxury spa and wellness centre, which is located on the second floor of the stylish five-star Symphony Style Hotel. This latest offer is part of Gulf Bank's commitment to its priority customers, providing them with the widest range of new and exciting experiences, services and offers.

Priority Banking Customers enjoy a 20 percent discount on many Six Senses Spa services, including massages and facials, fitness and yoga private and group sessions and annual membership. In addition they will have access to the Symphony Style Hotel swimming pool, Six Senses Spa scheduled group classes, as well as personalized wellness packages, visiting practitioners' sessions, retail items at the Spa Gallery and the hotel restaurants.

To get the discount, customers must pay for services or treatments using one of Gulf Bank's premium cards such as Visa Infinite, Visa Signature, Visa Platinum, MasterCard

World, or MasterCard Platinum. This latest offer will run until 28 February 2017. Six Senses Spa is located on the second floor of the stylish five-star Symphony Style Hotel and features 13 treatment rooms including two hammams, separate areas for men and ladies, and a celebration room including salon, pedicure and manicure areas. The 1,500-square meter spa also houses a fitness center with a mixed and ladies-only gym, yoga studio, experience showers, sauna, steam rooms and luxurious relaxation areas.

By partnering with the Six Senses Spa, Gulf Bank is seeking to reward its customers by offering them a skilled and dedicated spa team to help them reconnect with themselves through an extensive range of signature treatments, specialist and result-driven therapies.

Gulf Bank has always prided itself in delivering customers exceptional value as well as a wide choice of exciting offers that meet their daily needs.

US AUTO SALES DECLINE IN SEPTEMBER

CHICAGO: US auto sales dipped in September after a summer of slow growth, according to figures released Monday. As the summer driving season drew to an end, the pace of sales slowed 0.5 percent over September 2015, to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 17.8 million units, according to figures from Autodata.

Among major auto makers, Ford faced the worst. Overall sales at the second largest US producer were down 8 percent

year-on-year at 204,447 vehicles for the month. General Motors boasted of growing market share and strong retail sales but also recorded a 0.6 decline, with 249,795 units sold, putting total sales for the year to date down 3.8 percent from 2015.

GM said monthly retail sales for flagship brands were up, with Chevrolet posting a 0.9 percent gain in deliveries to individual customers while retail sales for Buick and Cadillac also rose 6.7 percent and 4.7 percent respectively. — AFP

BELFORT, France: The French state placed a huge order yesterday for high-speed trains to save an Alstom factory where up to 400 jobs were under threat, its latest bid to shore up the country's shrinking manufacturing base. The deal for the plant in Belfort, eastern France, includes orders for 15 high-speed trains for a regional service and another six for the Paris-Turin-Milan route.

The package also entails Alstom investing 40 million euros (\$45 million) in the historic Belfort factory, which was the pride of locals and the envy of Europe after producing France's first TGV high-speed train in 1978. "Thanks to the mobilization of the state and the commitment of everyone, the Alstom site at Belfort is saved!" Prime Minister Manuel Valls tweeted after the deal was announced.

The future of the plant had threatened to become a major issue in the campaign for next year's presidential election after Alstom, which is 20 percent state-owned, announced last month it would halt production at the plant by 2018. There were cheers at a rally of Alstom workers in the city when the news of the deal came through. The senator for the region, Cedric Perrin of the opposition right-wing Republicans party, gave a cautious welcome to the new orders. But he added: "From now on, Alstom is going to have to win new markets." Alstom caused dismay last month by announcing it planned to cease train production in Belfort and move the activity to a factory 200 kilometres (125 miles) away in Alsace.

The company had cited a lack of orders in France for its decision and promised to offer workers in Belfort jobs at other sites. But trade unions fought hard to keep trains rolling out of Belfort, putting pressure on the Socialist government to come up with a rescue package. President

Francois Hollande had promised to do everything to save the site.

'Artificial' order

The orders confirmed yesterday are intended as the government's riposte to accusations that it has failed to halt France's industrial decline. But opposition politicians were quick to question the motivations behind the state's largesse. "It's good news for the business, but you can see that nothing has been resolved," former president Nicolas Sarkozy who is

campaigning to return to the Elysee Palace next year on the Republicans ticket, said. "This hastily patched together plan is not up to the challenge," of saving France's rail industry, he said in a video posted on Twitter, calling the orders "artificial." As part of the deal, the state rail operator SNCF has also ordered 20 diesel locomotives for repair work on trains. In all, this represents an investment of 30 million euros (\$33 million) by the government and SNCF over two years, with another five million euros over three years to modernize the plant. — AFP



BELFORT: Alstom's employees leave at the end of a general meeting at the Belfort factory yesterday in Belfort, eastern France. — AFP

YAHOO ADDS NEW SOCIAL FEATURES TO ITS RENAMED MOBILE APP

SAN FRANCISCO: Yahoo has overhauled its main app for smartphones and tablets by emphasizing "social" features aimed at people who like to share and chat about news topics online.

The revamped Yahoo app, now called Yahoo Newsroom, will augment its general news feed with more than 200 specialized channels that users can choose to follow on particular topics - such as a favorite celebrity, a political issue of interest or a breaking news event. The format encourages users to post comments on news items Yahoo displays for each topic, as well as on links that users find and re-post from other news sites. Yahoo's new app is part of a broader strategy that the company hopes will increase "engagement" and social interaction on its websites and mobile apps,

which are struggling to compete for advertising dollars that have increasingly flowed to social media sites like Facebook.

The overhaul comes as Yahoo is preparing to join a stable of internet properties owned by Verizon, which is buying Yahoo for \$4.8 billion. That deal is set to close early next year, but Yahoo says the redesign was in the works before the sale was negotiated.

The new app will give prominence to stories that attract more comments from users, among other factors. While many people already turn to Facebook and Twitter for sharing and commenting on news stories, Yahoo says its service is different because the Newsroom app features only "public" news, without posts from individual users about their family, pets or personal activities. —AP

GOOGLE READIES GADGETS FEATURING ITS SOFTWARE

SAN FRANCISCO: Google may be getting serious about selling its own hardware gadgets. Yesterday, the search giant will ramp up its consumer electronics strategy with expected announcements of new gadgets including new smartphones and an internet-connected personal-assistant for the home similar to Amazon's Echo speaker. All are intended to showcase Google's software and online services.

A new virtual reality headset and other devices, such as a home router, could also be on tap, according to analysts and industry blogs. Google has declined to confirm any specifics, although it previously described some of these products back in May.

Google makes most of its money from online software and digital ads. But it's putting more emphasis on hardware as it faces rivals like Apple, Amazon and South Korea's Samsung.

HARDWARE IS HARD

New devices could help Google keep its services front and center in the battle for consumers' attention, said analyst Julie Ask at Forrester Research. Unlike a new mobile app or other software, she noted, it can be an expensive gamble to build and ship new hardware products. "But if you're Google, you can't afford to stop placing bets."

Google already sells smartphones and tablets under the Nexus brand, which it launched in 2010 as a way to show off the best features of its Android software. But it's spent relatively little effort to promote those devices, which have mostly ended up in the hands of Google purists. Tech blogs are reporting the company is now planning to launch two smartphone models under a new brand, Pixel, and Google has hinted it may invest in an extensive marketing campaign intended to introduce the phones to the mass market.

Android already powers the majority of smartphones sold around the world. But Samsung, the biggest maker of Android phones, has increasingly been adding more of its own software - even its own Samsung Pay mobile wallet - on the phones it sells. Another big rival, Apple, has built its own services, such as online maps and its own Siri personal assistant, to replace Google's apps on the iPhone.

HOME, BUT NOT ALONE

Google is also likely to begin selling a voice-activated "smart speaker" called Home, apparently modeled on Amazon's Echo. Analysts are expecting Google will announce more details, including price and availability, at Tuesday's event.

The "Home" device will feature Google's digital "Assistant" service, a voice-activated personal butler that can search the internet, play music or perform other useful tasks. "Assistant" is the company's answer to similar concierge services from rivals, including Siri, Amazon's Alexa and Microsoft's Cortana. The leading tech companies are all competing to assist consumers in their online activities such as shopping, since that gives the companies a better chance of selling advertising or other services. Home-based systems like the Echo are taking on more importance with the advent of improved voice technology, said Forrester's Ask. "You can't assume somebody is going to go sit down at a computer or pick up a phone and type in a question anymore," she said.

Google may also provide a closer look yesterday at some other products, including a new virtual-reality headset that it teased in May. Like the other devices, Google's virtual reality system could be a platform for a wide range of games and applications that are built on Google's software. —AP



TOKYO: Katsumori Sakakibara (left) wearing a head-mounted display to demonstrate a prototype remote-controlled robot called "Caiba" (right), during a press preview of the Combined Exhibition of Advanced Technologies (CEATEC) Japan in Chiba, in suburban Tokyo. —AFP

ROBOTS GALORE AS ASIA'S BIGGEST TECH FAIR OPENS

FAIR OFFERING COUNTERPOINT TO MAJOR TECHNOLOGY FIRMS

CHIBA, Japan: A Japanese inventor is hoping a robot that still needs humans will win over Asia's largest tech fair, offering a counterpoint to major technology firms pushing the boundaries of artificial intelligence (AI). Katsumori Sakakibara was showing off his little droid called Caiba at the Cutting-Edge IT & Electronics Comprehensive Exhibition (CEATEC), which kicked off yesterday near Tokyo.

Waist-high Caiba-whose name means hippocampus, a key area of the brain, in Japanese-is controlled by a human wearing a virtual reality headset and mechanical arms. If the person waves their arms, the little robot follows suit. But whatever Caiba does, it depends on a human to control it.

"People say what an amazing AI (artificial intelligence) we're using for the robot. So I tell them: 'well, it's actually a middle-aged guy,'" Sakakibara told AFP during a press preview this week.

"Humans are more flexible in that they can recognise a huge amount of different information, but so far AI can only be used in limited situations" such as playing chess, he added. "We thought it would be better to use humans instead of AI." Google, Apple, Facebook and Microsoft are among a growing number of technology firms that have been investing in making machines smarter, contending the goal is to improve lives through artificial intelligence. Some critics, however, have warned that AI could turn on humanity and be its ruin instead of a salvation. Less risky to the future of humanity was a robot arm made by automation parts maker Omron that can play-and-coach humans at ping pong.

'A perfect serve!'

The machine is now a Guinness World Record holder as the first robot table tennis tutor, according to the company. "It can now understand if a player is a beginner or experi-



CHIBA: Robot-shaped smartphones called "RoBoHoN", developed by Sharp, on display at a press preview of the Combined Exhibition of Advanced Technologies (CEATEC) Japan in Chiba. —AFP

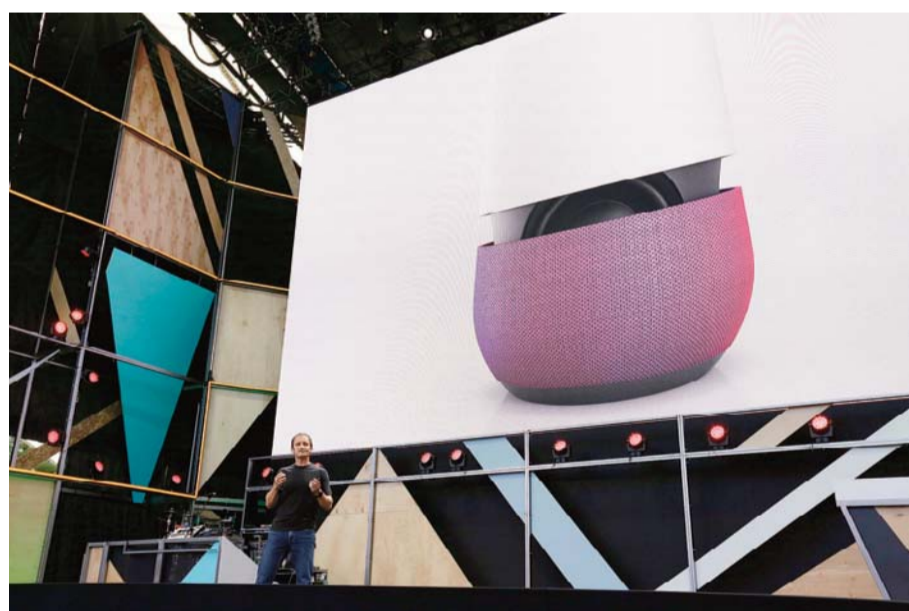
enced and change how it plays," said Omron's Taku Oya, referring to the robot's AI capabilities. It can even give a compliment or two in text that appears on a screen beside the ping pong table.

"A perfect serve!" it says, or apologises for missing a ball. "But its AI is not good enough so that it could beat professional table tennis players," Oya warned. Meanwhile, Sharp is taking aim at the housing market with pint-sized Rinchan, which can operate home appliances based on its owners' feelings. For example, if a house dweller says "it's too hot," the robot will

turn on the air conditioning.

Another star of the show is a mug-sized, doe-eyed robot called Kirobo Mini made by Toyota as a chatty companion for its human owners. The 10 centimetre (four inch) tall robot will go on sale next year in Japan for 39,800 yen (\$400). Meanwhile, Sakakibara hopes his little firm's AI-free droid could be used as a translator or guide at airports and other tourist spots.

"This way, translators don't have to run around-they can just sit at a central office and connect with the robots," he said. "It's a more efficient use of manpower." —AFP



MOUNTAIN VIEW: Google vice president Mario Queiroz gestures while introducing the new Google Home device during the keynote address of the Google I/O conference in Mountain View, Calif. yesterday. —AP

KARDASHIAN SUFFERS PRICE OF SOCIAL MEDIA EXPOSURE

NEW YORK: On her way to a fashion show, selfies of her diamond teeth grillz, or casually Snapchatting with family back home - Kim Kardashian documented her days in Paris in detail on social media, right up until about an hour before she was held at gunpoint and robbed of some \$10 million worth of jewelry. The pre-dawn robbery on Monday highlighted the pitfalls of notoriety built on heavy use of Twitter, Instagram and other social media that has made Kardashian one of the most visible celebrities in the world, security experts say.

Even when she is not appearing on her "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" reality show, or being trailed by paparazzi, Kardashian shares details of her day with her 84 million Instagram and 48 million Twitter followers.

That openness may have made her vulnerable to the thieves in Paris who robbed her. "With social media, everyone is posting updates all the time on an almost near real-time basis. You are essentially sending out a beacon as to your whereabouts," said Brian Calkin, vice president of operations at the Center for Internet Security.

"Kim may even have let people know she was alone at the time this happened," said Calkin, referring to a Snapchat video that was posted by Kardashian, curled up on a couch in a white bathrobe, about an hour before the masked gunmen broke in to her Paris resi-

dence. In the video, Kardashian was clearly wearing the 15-carat diamond engagement ring given to her by Kanye West in 2013. She had also shown off the ring, valued at around \$3 million, on Instagram a few days before.

It was not on her finger when the 35-year-old returned to her apartment in Manhattan on Monday, raising speculation that it may have been one of the items among the robbery haul.

Paris police on Monday were hunting for the five robbers and investigating how they located Kardashian in an exclusive private residence. However, security experts have long advised people to limit the amount of information they release on social media, especially with regard to vacations or expensive possessions.

"We have made it very easy for anyone, anywhere, to gather intelligence and follow our every move," said Robert Siciliano, who runs a security firm in Boston. "It is beyond irresponsible. It is just trying out to be robbed." The biggest danger is geotagging photos or video, or keeping cellphone location data switched on. "Every modern smartphone has full GPS capabilities that can tell you within 100 feet exactly where a person is," said Calkin. Even when Kardashian doesn't geotag, her social media accounts advertise her movements, if celebrity media hasn't done so already. —Reuters

FINANCIAL TIMES HOPES FASTER WEBSITE WILL BOOST READERSHIP

NEW YORK: Financial Times, one of the pioneers of charging for digital content, is betting that speeding up its website FT.com will help it retain and grow online readership, Chief Executive Officer John Ridding told Reuters. The London-based publication, which is expected to unveil its new website Tuesday, has halved the time it takes a story to load on desktop to slightly over one second. Mobile devices can now load a story in a little over 7 seconds, down from over 9 seconds.

FT hopes boosting the speed of its site and adding more personalization will help it retain and grow its digital subscriber base at a time when more people are accessing news content online for free.

FT has found that readers are 5 percent more engaged in the site when the time it takes to load an article is reduced by just one second, Ridding said in an interview on Friday.

Financial Times is launching the faster digital site at a time when readers are increasingly going online for content, often to other platforms like Facebook Inc. Ridding said Financial Times, like many publications, must balance working with social media sites to raise awareness of its content with making sure it has a direct rela-

tionship with readers and access to the data around their viewing patterns. To that end, FT posts article on Facebook, but is not part of that site's Instant Articles news offering. "It's a great marketing opportunity," Ridding said of platforms like Facebook. "But established publishers have to be careful of being disintermediated from their audience."

Financial Times has more than 800,000 subscriptions, two-thirds of which are digital. "We have had double digit growth year over year," Ridding said.

At the same time, revenue from advertising versus subscriptions has flipped over the past six years. "In 2010, well over half of (overall) revenue was advertising," Ridding said. Now that is closer to 40 percent, with 60 percent coming from subscriptions.

In an effort to boost advertising, Financial Times has started focusing more on charging advertisers based on how much time readers spend on their ads as opposed to how many people clicked through an ad. Ridding said FT can also inform advertisers about specific segments of readers, such as board members or German business travelers, who viewed and ad for a specific period of time. —Reuters

APPLE TV GETS FIRST TICKETING APP WITH LAUNCH OF STUBHUB

LOS ANGELES: Users of the fourth-generation Apple TV can now purchase tickets to thousands of concerts and sporting events available on StubHub, marking the launch of the first ticketing service on the connected-TV device. StubHub, which lets ticket owners resell their tickets in its online marketplace, is positioning the Apple TV app as designed to spur consumers to browse and discover events nearby on a big-screen HDTV. The app features a side-scroll interface for browsing within a seating section of a specific event, and includes high-resolution seat maps on the listing cards so users can get a sense of what the view from the section will be.

With digital-ticket sales are increasingly shifting to mobile, StubHub's Apple TV experience was designed to provide a "custom interface to reflect the emotional nature of event discovery," said Marcus Shelksohn, director of mobile product. StubHub sells tickets via its apps for iPhone, iPad, Apple Watch and Android devices. The company has partnerships with more than 60 teams in the MLB, NBA, NHL, Major League Soccer and NCAA, as well as AEG, AXS and Spectra Ticketing & Fan Engagement. The company was acquired by eBay in 2007. —Reuters

MIT TO HOLD VIRTUAL REALITY HACKATHON

LOS ANGELES: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is holding a hackathon for virtual and augmented reality in Cambridge, Mass. this week that counts 20th Century Fox's Innovation Lab amongst its sponsors. The three-day event, dubbed "Reality, Virtually," will bring together developers to spend three days to build applications for a wide variety of fields, including social networking, education, art, film and journalism as well as health and medicine. Winners will get more than \$15,000 in cash and product prizes. —Reuters

STUDY REVEALS ASIAN ANCESTRY OF PACIFIC ISLANDERS



PORT VILA, SHEFA, Vanuatu: This undated handout photo received from the Australian National University yesterday shows a skeleton from Vanuatu's oldest cemetery outside the capital Port Vila. —AFP photos



PORT VILA, SHEFA, Vanuatu: This undated handout photo received from the Australian National University yesterday shows a skeleton from Vanuatu's oldest cemetery outside the capital Port Vila.

WELLINGTON: Ancient DNA has revealed the first inhabitants of Vanuatu and Tonga came from Asia, not other Oceanic populations as has long been assumed, a study published yesterday found. The study sheds light on the last great human migration into unpopulated lands, when a people called the Lapita fanned out into the South Pacific about 3,000 years ago. Little is known of the mysterious culture beyond their distinctive dotted pottery and the human remains they left behind. Scientists had speculated that they were an offshoot of Australo-Papuan populations of Australia, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, who arrived in the region 40,000-50,000 years ago.

But analysis of three skeletons from Vanuatu's oldest cemetery found they came from Asia, with no trace of DNA from their Pacific neighbors. "Their original base population is Asian. They were straight out of Taiwan and perhaps the northern Philippines," said Matthew Spriggs, a professor at the Australian National University and

one of the researchers involved in the study. "They travelled past places where people were already living, but when they got to Vanuatu there was nobody there. These are the first people."

Spriggs said another DNA sample from a Lapita skeleton in Tonga returned similar results. "We know this because testing conducted by two different laboratories in the United States and Germany confirm that the samples are of the same people," he said. He added that it now appeared the Asiatic Lapita first colonized the South Pacific, then intermingled with a second wave of Australo-Papuan settlers to create the region's modern genetic mix. Professor Ron Pinhasi from University College Dublin said the study, published in *Nature*, was made possible by improved methods of extracting material from skeletal remains. "The unexpected results about Oceanian history highlight the power of ancient DNA to overthrow established models of the human past," he said. —AFP

OBAMA, DICAPRIO TALK ABOUT 'RACE AGAINST TIME' ON CLIMATE

WASHINGTON: Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio and US President Barack Obama joined forces Monday night on the White House lawn, calling for a strong and rapid mobilization to curb rising worldwide temperatures. "We are really in a race against time" said the US president, who has made the fight against global warming a priority of his two-term administration. Obama's appearance with DiCaprio, who visited the White House to screen a new documentary, occurred as the Paris agreement on climate change is soon to come into force. Nearly a decade after his first environmental documentary "The 11th Hour" hit screens, the actor and producer, who won an Oscar earlier this year for his role in "The Revenant," screened his new climate change flick "Before the Flood," which

includes cameos by Obama and Pope Francis.

The meeting between Obama and DiCaprio took place as part of a festival on the White House lawn titled South by South Lawn, which is meant to celebrate creativity and innovation and is modeled after the tech, movie and music conference South by Southwest, which is held every year in Austin, Texas.

"Urgent action must be taken," said DiCaprio, a vocal Democrat, before turning his sights on the US presidential election on November 8. "If you do not believe in climate change, you do not believe in facts or in science... and therefore in my humble opinion you should not be allowed to be in public office" he said. The reference was a thinly veiled allusion to Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, who has

openly questioned the existence of global warming and the impact human activities have on it. Obama has long insisted that world leaders take bold steps against global warming, acting against inertia or recalcitrance. "Climate change is almost perversely designed to be very hard to solve politically" Obama said. "The natural inclination of political systems is to put that stuff off as long as possible" he added.

'Energy efficiency of Japan'

Obama did however warn against a too austere approach, acknowledging that some people had legitimate concerns on the impact of an environmental transition, such as those who can't afford to buy a low-emission Prius or Tesla. He also urged against the temptation to wait for revolutionary technological advances before adopting change, noting that an energy transition, by definition, would come bit by bit. "If we just had the energy efficiency of Japan, we could reduce our energy consumption by 20 percent" he said.

The main component of Obama's "Clean Power Plan," which requires US power plants to undergo drastic reductions in CO2 emissions, has been placed on hold as it works its way through the US court system. Critics of the plan say the restrictions it imposes are too costly, both in terms of implementation and job losses, for regions that live off the production of fossil fuels. The Paris Agreement on Climate Change-in which Obama was a key player by sealing an agreement with the world's other biggest polluter, China-is on the verge of entering into force.

India, the world's third-largest producer of greenhouse gas, ratified the agreement on Sunday, making it the latest big polluter to formally sign on.

The accord, sealed last December in Paris, needs ratification from 55 countries that account for at least 55 percent of the planet's greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change. With India's move, a total of 62 countries accounting for almost 52 percent of emissions have now ratified the agreement to commit to take action to stem the planet's rising temperatures.

"I anticipate that this agreement will actually go into force in the next few weeks... much faster than many of us anticipated" Obama said Monday evening. The Paris agreement requires all countries to devise plans to achieve the goal of keeping the rise of temperatures within two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels and strive for 1.5 C (2.7 F) if possible. —AFP



WASHINGTON, District of Columbia: US President Barack Obama speaks during a discussion on climate change with actor Leonardo DiCaprio (right) and climate scientist Katharine Hayhoe (center) during the "South by South Lawn" (SXSL) festival at the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP

SANOFI LAUNCHES ADVANCED CHOLESTEROL TREATMENT (PRALUENT) - A FIRST IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Under the patronage of Kuwait Cardiac Society, Sanofi yesterday launched a breakthrough therapy for the treatment of uncontrolled low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, in adult patients at high risk for developing cardiovascular diseases. The drug's trade name is Praluent (scientific name of Alirocumab). Sanofi's most recent innovation addresses the need in a wide array of patients suffering from Hypercholesterolemia. The PCSK9 inhibitor (Praluent) is a fully human monoclonal antibody (antibodies identical to the immune cell). Following its approval by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) & The European Medicines Agency (EMA), Praluent was launched in USA & EU in 2016. Kuwait is among the first countries to see the introduction of this treatment in the rest of the world. The introduction is part of Sanofi's efforts to improve lives of patients worldwide and provide them with innovative solutions in disease areas of public health concern.

"In alignment with the ongoing efforts to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular diseases in Kuwait, the introduction of the new therapy will especially help patients who have not been able to lower their LDL (bad) cholesterol to optimal levels," said Professor Mohammad Zubaid, President of Kuwait Cardiac Society and Gulf Heart Association. "It will provide more and better options for doctors and will enable physicians to tailor the treatment based on individual patient needs. Together with Sanofi, we are pleased to make this available to our patients in the country," added Professor Zubaid, professor of Medicine at Kuwait University and head of the division of cardiology at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital in Kuwait.

Treatment along with diet

Despite treatment with currently-available medications, control of hyperlipidemia (abnormally elevated levels of any or all lipids) is far from optimal. A majority of patients (82.6%)

remain at high risk of cardiovascular events and almost two-thirds of the patients on treatment in the region continue to have inadequately controlled lipid levels. Praluent works differently from the well-known cholesterol lowering class of drugs known as statins. It works by blocking a protein (PCSK9) that may contribute to high LDL cholesterol. It is indicated for treatment along with diet and the highest tolerated dose of a statin in adults with heterozygous familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) (an inherited condition that causes high levels of LDL cholesterol in adults and can affect youngsters as well) or atherosclerotic heart problems such as heart attacks or strokes, who require additional lowering of LDL cholesterol.

Professor Zubaid said "The presence of persistently high levels of cholesterol in the blood, over the span of several years, can lead to dangerous accumulation of cholesterol and fat in the walls of the arteries of the heart and other organs like the brain and limbs. These deposits can reduce blood

flow through the arteries and cause complications such as heart attack and stroke. With the rising incidence of cardiovascular diseases in the region leading to fatal outcomes, innovative and effective treatment for better control of lipid levels is needed." "Sanofi has a strong cardiovascular heritage, and we are committed to bringing advanced therapies that aim to deliver better health outcomes for patients. With the introduction of Praluent, we look forward to addressing previously unmet patient needs and reduce the risks associated with cardiovascular diseases in Kuwait," said Jean-Paul Scheuer, Country Chair and General Manager, Rx for Sanofi Gulf.

Globally, a large number of patients are faced with the challenge of achieving LDL cholesterol levels recommended by healthcare experts. The approval of Praluent was based on data from the pivotal Phase 3 ODYSSEY program, which showed consistent, positive results compared to placebo and included current standard of care therapy (statins).



Dr Akbar Moussa



Professor Mohammad Zubaid, President of Kuwait Cardiac Society and Gulf Heart Association.



LOS ANGELES: File photo shows vegetables left over by students on their cafeteria trays at the Roosevelt High School in Los Angeles. —AP

ANGRY PARENTS CLAIM SCHOOLS ARE POLICING LUNCHES AND SNACKS

TORONTO: Goldfish crackers, granola bars and banana bread are among the snacks some angry parents in the Toronto area say their children have been discouraged from bringing to school.

The Toronto Sun reports one mother says her son was told he couldn't eat a small piece of banana bread for his snack because it contained chocolate chips. Another parent says her daughter was told Goldfish crackers and chocolate chip gra-

nola bars weren't welcome. Parent Janae Brangman says her child's lunch has been confiscated and replaced with a piece of fruit on one occasion. She says she felt "it was more unhealthy for a child not to eat at all, than to eat a granola bar with chocolate." Education officials in the region say snack choices remain with students and parents. A large part of Ontario's health and physical education curriculum is healthy eating. —AP

WHY THE ZIKA VIRUS IS CAUSING ALARM

Global health officials are racing to better understand the Zika virus behind a major outbreak that began in Brazil last year and has spread to almost 60 countries. The following are some questions and answers about the virus and current outbreak:

How do people become infected?

Zika is transmitted to people through the bite of infected female mosquitoes, primarily the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, the same type that spreads dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) said *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes are found in all countries in the Americas except Canada and continental Chile, and the virus will likely reach all countries and territories of the region where *Aedes* mosquitoes are found. The virus can also be transmitted through sex, from either a male or female partner who has been infected, and a few cases of apparent infection via blood transfusion have been reported.

How do you treat Zika?

There is no treatment or vaccine for Zika infection. Companies and scientists are racing to develop a safe and effective vaccine for Zika, but a preventative shot is not expected to be ready for widespread use for at least two or three years.

How dangerous is it?

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention concluded that infection with the Zika virus in pregnant women is a cause of the birth defect microcephaly, a condition defined by unusually small heads that can result in developmental problems, and other severe brain abnormalities in babies. The CDC said that since the causal relationship had been established, several important questions must still be answered with studies that could take years.

The World Health Organization in an updated assessment said the "most likely explanation" is that Zika virus infection during pregnancy is a cause of congenital brain abnormalities including microcephaly. In addition, the agency said infection is a trigger of Guillain-Barre syndrome (GBS), a rare neurological disorder that can result in paralysis.

The update from the WHO came after considering months of research. Its previous statement, based on a rapid assessment of evidence, said there was strong scientific consensus that Zika virus caused GBS, microcephaly and other neurological disorders. Brazil recently reported 1,949 confirmed cases of microcephaly believed to be linked to Zika infections in pregnant women. It is inves-

tigating more than 3,030 suspected cases of microcephaly.

Current research indicates the greatest microcephaly risk is associated with infection during the first trimester of pregnancy, but health officials have warned an impact could be seen in later weeks. Recent studies have shown evidence of Zika in amniotic fluid, placenta and fetal brain tissue.

What are the symptoms of Zika infection?

People infected with Zika may have a mild fever, skin rash, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain and fatigue that can last for two to seven days. But as many as 80 percent of people infected never develop symptoms.

How can Zika be contained?

Efforts to control the spread of the virus focus on eliminating mosquito breeding sites and taking precautions against mosquito bites such as using insect repellent and mosquito nets. US and international health officials have advised pregnant women to avoid travel to Latin American and Caribbean countries, sections of Miami, Florida in the United States and Singapore where they may be exposed to Zika. They are also advising that men and women who have traveled to Zika outbreak areas use condoms or abstain from sex for six months to prevent sexual transmission of the virus.

How widespread is the outbreak?

Active Zika outbreaks have been reported in at least 59 countries or territories, most of them in the Americas, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Brazil has been the country most affected.

Africa(1): Cape Verde

Americas (49): Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Aruba, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bolivia, Bonaire, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Curaçao, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Martinique, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Saba, Puerto Rico, Saint Barthelmy, Saint Lucia, Saint Martin, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Eustatius, St Maarten, St Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos, United States, US Virgin Islands and Venezuela.

Asia(1): Singapore

Oceania/Pacific Islands (8): American Samoa, Fiji, Kosrae, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga. —Reuters



ABK MAIN SPONSOR OF TEDDY BEAR HOSPITAL INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE EARLY LEARNING THROUGH PLAY



KUWAIT: Taking its community support to another level, Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait was recently the strategic partner in the Teddy Bear Hospital event which was held at 360 mall on 29th, 30th and first of October, 2016. The Teddy Bear Hospital is a world-wide program that provides primary school students with the opportunity to interact with young doctors and experience the atmosphere of a hospital without being patients themselves.

ABK's support of this initiative comes in line with its strong belief in the importance of investing in youth of all ages, and educating them through a playful yet impactful manner, which in turn ultimately broadens their level of understanding of the medical field and the levels of compassion and knowledge needed to be a doctor.

The Teddy Bear Hospital program grants children the opportunity to use their imaginations when describing their teddy bear's illness or injury and experience the 'hospital' in a comfortable and educational environment. The children are tended to by a group of volunteers from the Kuwait University Health Science Center.

For more information on Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait please contact an ABK representative via 'Ahli Chat' or contact a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.



TRUDEAU UNVEILS CANADA CARBON PRICE PLAN FOR 2018

OTTAWA: Canada will impose a national minimum carbon price in 2018 in order to meet its Paris accord commitment to slash greenhouse gas emissions, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said Monday. "All Canadian jurisdictions will put a price on carbon pollution by 2018... To get there, the government will set a floor price for carbon pollution," he said in a speech to parliament. Each province will have a choice in how they implement the pricing, he added, for example, by imposing a carbon tax or adopting a cap-and-trade system. The federal government, Trudeau said, is proposing a minimum price of Can\$10 (US\$7.63) per ton of carbon pollution in 2018.

This price would rise by Can\$10 each year to a maximum of Can\$50 per ton in 2022. Opposition parties and several provinces immediately pushed back, saying a new tax would sink the economy while accusing Trudeau of overstepping federal jurisdiction. "Canadian families are struggling to make ends meet," said Conservative MP Ed Fast. "The last thing they need is a massive carbon tax forced down their throat." Canada's ratification of the landmark Paris accord on climate change is expected to come later this week, after the debate in parliament. Canada accounts for 1.95 percent of global emissions, according to United Nations figures. An independent parliamentary watchdog said in April that the country's

carbon emissions linked to global warming have stabilized at just over 700 million tons per year. That's 208 million tons short of Trudeau's commitment at the climate summit in Paris last December, which was to reduce emissions by 30 percent compared with 2005 levels, by 2030.

Different goals

Trudeau's government has reached out to Canada's 13 provinces and territories, which share responsibility for the environment with Ottawa, to hammer out a national climate strategy. But each has insisted they would tailor plans for their respective regions, which have vastly different economic circumstances and goals. Also, some have already imposed a carbon tax, while others have joined a fledgling continental cap-and-trade system with the US state of California. Provincial environment ministers meeting on Monday in Montreal with their federal counterpart Catherine McKenna to try to find consensus on climate action had mixed reactions to Trudeau's bombshell announcement. Saskatchewan province, which has been developing carbon capture technology on a massive scale, remained adamantly opposed to any carbon tax. Oil-rich Alberta, meanwhile, said it supports a national carbon price in principle for creating a level playing field, but put conditions on agreeing to Trudeau's scheme. — AFP

TAX FOSSIL FUELS OR RISK KIDS' FUTURE: US CLIMATE SCIENTIST

'THE SCIENCE HAS BECOME CRYSTAL CLEAR'

MIAMI: The planet's three most dangerous greenhouse gases are rising, and fossil fuels must be taxed to protect children from the costly turmoil of rising seas and extreme storms, world-renowned climate scientist James Hansen warned yesterday. Otherwise, young people face the "dubious" proposition of somehow sucking carbon dioxide from the air at a price tag of hundreds of trillions of dollars in the next century, said Hansen, who leads the climate science program at Columbia University's Earth Institute.

"The science has become crystal clear," Hansen told reporters on a conference call to discuss his latest research paper, titled "Young People's Burden: The Requirement of Negative CO2 Emissions." "We have to phase out carbon emissions over the next few decades," said Hansen, describing the actions of the US government up until now as "grossly inadequate." Hansen, formerly of NASA, is suing the US government along with 21 youths across the country, including his 18-year-old granddaughter.

The suit alleges that US leaders are not doing enough to curb climate change and are failing to protect essential "public trust" resources such as clean air and water, thereby depriving future generations of their constitutional rights to life, liberty and property. The paper, published yesterday in Earth Systems Dynamics Discussion, has not yet been peer-reviewed, but Hansen said

he wanted it released now because time is of the essence. "Some people might object to discussing such a paper before it has gone through the peer-review process, but I am going to do that simply because we are running out of time on the climate issue," Hansen said.

Leaving 'a mess' for young people

The paper, authored by Hansen and 11 prominent climate scientists, warns that the global average temperature is already 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 Fahrenheit) warmer than pre-industrial times, defined as 1880-1920. That is perilously close to the level agreed during last year's Paris talks, when global leaders committed to "holding the increase of global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels." Meanwhile, the heat-trapping gases of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide are all rising, ensuring more global warming in years to come.

Already, fossil fuel burning has unnaturally propelled the Earth to a temperature range last seen 115,000-130,000 years ago, "when sea level was six to nine meters (20-30 feet) higher than today," said the paper. As a result, glaciers and ice sheets are melting, the oceans are acidifying and rising seas will engulf coastal cities worldwide in the coming centuries. "That's not fair. Today's adults benefit from fossil fuel burning and leave

the waste for young people to clean up," said Hansen's granddaughter, Sophie Kivlehan, in a video message released along with Hansen's paper. "We should be moving on to clean energy, leaving dirty energy in the ground."

'Like a cancer'

"The assumption that young (people) will somehow figure out a way to undo the deeds of their forebears has crept into and spread like a cancer through United Nations climate scenarios," said the paper. In the absence of sharp cuts to emissions, future generations are saddled with figuring out some way to extract CO2 from the atmosphere in order to limit climate change, Hansen argued. That would require risky, unproven technologies such as bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), at a price tag of between \$104-570 trillion this century. "It is a very dubious idea and the cost of it is not negligible," Hansen said.

Proposed solutions

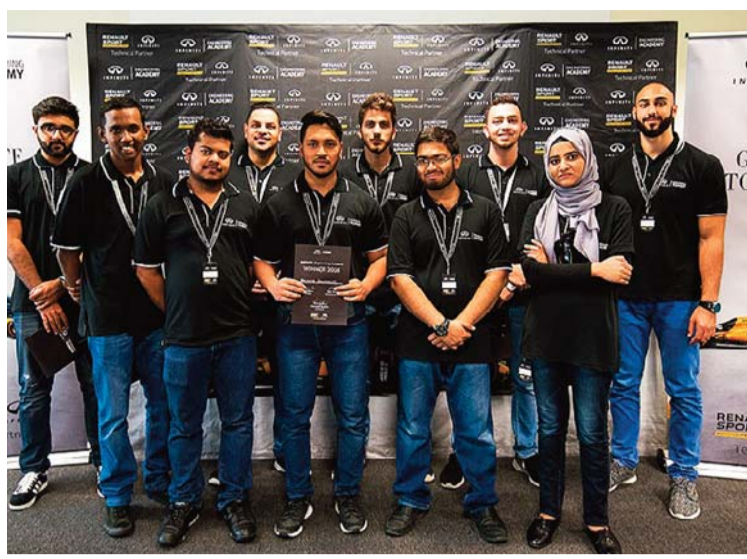
Hansen said the way to reverse course is to place a gradually rising tax on carbon and end government subsidies for polluting fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas. "Make the price of fossil fuels honest. Stop subsidizing them. And make them pay their cost to society," Hansen said. — AFP

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم

استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FACP. PEM



INFINITI GIVES STUDENT THE CAREER OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME

A university student from the United Arab Emirates has been awarded the career opportunity of a lifetime in Formula One™, as INFINITI announces Shihab Solaiman as the UAE winner of the INFINITI Engineering Academy 2016. Having been selected from hundreds of entries and beating nine other finalists from across the Emirates in an intense shootout event at the Dubai Autodrome, 23-year-old Shihab Solaiman from Abu Dhabi, becomes the INFINITI Engineering Academy 2016 Middle East winner and the first ever winner from the Arab Emirates.

Shihab will spend six months working at the Formula One™ team's headquarters in Enstone and six months working at INFINITI's European Technical Center in Cranfield. With F1 Technology more relevant to the automotive industry than ever, he will play a key role in the ongoing transfer of technical knowledge and expertise between the Renault Sport Formula One™(tm) Team and INFINITI.

The INFINITI Engineering Academy, now in its third year, is a one-of-a-kind global search for the world's best up-and-coming engineers. For 2016 seven placements have been



made available with one winner chosen each from USA, Canada, Mexico, Europe (incl. Russia), United Arab Emirates, China and Asia-Pacific to work with the team.

This unique automotive-to-motorsport training program for brilliant young engineers, possible thanks to INFINITI's Technical Partnership with the Renault Sport Formula One™(tm) Team, has attracted 4,108 registrations from 44 different countries. A number of previous winners have gone on to secure full time careers in the automotive and motorsport industries.

"The continued growth of this program on both on a global and regional level is testament to how successful it has been over the last few years," said Juergen Schmitz, Managing Director, INFINITI Middle East. "At INFINITI, we believe in initiatives that help us to actively engage with our wider community and the 420 registrations from the UAE this year is yet again a great indication of how well it has been received."

After a series of interviews, ten finalists were selected to attend a gruelling assessment day. They were put through their paces individually and as groups, by a panel of judges from INFINITI and Renault Sport Racing, including: David Moss, Vice President, Vehicle Design & Development, INFINITI Technical Centre Europe, Francesca Claudano, Deputy General Manager, Marketing & PR, INFINITI Middle East and Rene

Torcaso (Head of R&D, Renault Sport Racing).

Commenting on his win, Shihab said: "It's an incredible feeling, I still can't believe that I have won! All of the other contestants were extremely prepared and competitive. I now have to concentrate and do my very best to prove that I am a worthy winner, and make the most of this fantastic opportunity."

Tommaso Volpe, Global Director, INFINITI Motorsport, commented: "The extraordinary level of interest in this year's INFINITI Engineering Academy has been absolutely fantastic. Students have seen the accomplishments of our Academy's graduates, who have gone on to forge successful careers in the automotive industry. This has meant that more students than ever want to use the Academy to gain vital engineering experience and launch their own careers. "With F1 becoming more and more relevant to the automotive industry and an increased focus of the placements this year being on the road car development, we are training a new generation of engineers who will play a key role in the crossover between the two industries", concluded Volpe.



NAFO CELEBRATES 13TH ANNIVERSARY

NAFO Kuwait (National Forum Kuwait) celebrated its 13th Anniversary in a colorful and splendid manner on September 23 at the Indian Community School (Senior) auditorium, Salmiya. The inaugural meeting started with the national anthem of Kuwait and India, followed by prayer song by NAFO Symphony kids. A brief audiovisual documentary, conceived and directed by O N Sureshkumar was presented, paying tribute to former NAFO President late Dr T S Srikumar. The meeting observed a minute's silence to pay respects to the deceased Indian soldiers in Kashmir.

Chief Guest Senior Advisor and former Chief of CRPF, K Vijayakumar I P S inaugurated the function by lighting the traditional lamp, along with the Indian embassy official AK Srivastava, NAFO office-bearers, advisory board, program convener and ladies' wing coordinator Smitha Sashikumar. President O N Nandakumar briefed about NAFO'S socio-welfare activities and the program as a whole. General Secretary Vijaykrishnan welcomed the audience while Jt Secretary Anish Nair introduced the Chief Guest Vijayakumar IPS. Pramod Menon, Joint Secretary and Vijaykumar Menon, Jt Treasurer respectively received the chief guest and Srivastava to the dais.

In his inaugural address Vijayakumar, congratulated NAFO for their commitment towards extending welfare assistance to the downtrodden and oppressed sections of the society. He praised the NAFO team for their continued efforts in carrying out such noble services. On behalf of NAFO, K Vijayakumar was honored with a ponnada by

Srivastava and a memento by President Nandakumar for his commendable leadership and contributions to the social and administrative advancements of mother land India.

The Indian embassy official Srivastava in his speech appreciated the NAFO family for its services to the humanity and promoting rich Indian heritage in Kuwait. He also wished all success to its future socio-welfare activities. A memento to Sunil Jain, Ambassador of India in recognition and appreciation of his valued services rendered to the Indian diaspora, was handed to Srivastava by Dr Prasad M Nair.

The chief guest released 'Amrutham Gamaya' souvenir by collecting a copy from the editor Pramod Kumar and handed over it to the dignitaries and officials of main sponsors who were invited to the dais. Program convener M S Nair proposed a vote of thanks. Bhavana Menon anchored the show.

Treat of music

This year's celebration was unique with a rare treat for music connoisseurs staged with a peppy musical show by Kerala's sensational music band 'Amrutham Gamaya' led by the duo sisters and popular singers Amritha Suresh and Abhirami Suresh grooving with the band Amrutham Gamaya. Capturing the audience of all ages and classes 'Amrutham Gamaya' - the sovereign sound of independent music induced nostalgia with their exclusive re-mix compositions of Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam film and folk songs.



TRAK CELEBRATES EID/ONAM FEST 2016



TRAK, Kuwait organized their Onam and Eid Fest on 30th Sept 2016. Mr Subashish Goldar, Deputy Chief of Mission of Indian Embassy Kuwait inaugurated the daylong event by lighting the lamp. President Sri Vidhukumar Presided over the meeting. Sri PC Hareesh Delivered Onam / Eid message. Chairman Sri M A. Hilal, K P Balakrishnan gave facilitations.

Mr A Hakim a successful business man and M Anwar Sadat, well known photographer in Kuwait was honored by TRAK during the event for their achievements. M/s Hudson, Subhash, Dr Shukkur and Ms Celin

Francis distributed prizes to the participants. Mr VijayKumar, Shamir Salam and Ms Rose Mary, Shaju and Anil Kumar controlled the whole proceedings. Ms Babitha compared the event in her style and entertained audience till the end.

Various traditional cultural programs including dances and music were presented by TRAK members. Special lunch (Ona Sadya) served to all guests on Banana leaf. Mr Binu was the chief program conveyor for this well organized event. Mr MA Nizam welcomed the audience and Treasurer Mr. Francis delivered the vote of thanks.





One of the participants performing during the event



Chris Njokwana while performing



Karam Humaidani celebrates victory

KARAM HUMAIDANI TO REPRESENT KUWAIT IN RED BULL STREET STYLE

The fourth edition of the football free style tournament Red Bull Street Style which took place in Al Kout Mall concluded with the winning of participant Karam Humaidani. Humaidani, who outclassed his opponent Abdulwahab Al Otaibi in the final round, entertained the audience and impressed the jury with a variety of outstanding performances. Towards the finals, Humaidani was able to win against 3 other freestylers and has proven to be the best can-

didate to get through the battles towards the final as he displayed amazing tricks and showed superb control with the ball. By winning, Humaidani will have joined other contestants from more than 40 countries around the world in the World Final of Red Bull Street Style which will be held in London on 7th and 8th November.

"I'm very happy to be the winner, I have previously represented Kuwait in 2012 in the World Final in Italy and I will be

maximizing my training for the World Final. I would like to thank Red Bull for supporting the youth by holding special events and workshops". The participants have displayed a variety of skills and styles as each presented something different such as foot, head or neck control, while others flipped the ball around their feet in addition to taking off their t-shirts while keeping the ball fixed on their necks.

The judging jury consisted of freestyler Chris Njokwana

from South Africa, Everton Academy Director Mike Fin and Head of the Sports Section at Al Rai Newspaper Sohail Houwayeck, who assessed the participants and their skills in football free styling. Chris Njokwana who entertained the audience with his outstanding shows in free styling, awarded Humaidani the boarding pass. "The championship was special and fun. I advise all the freestylers to give more time to this game and to come up with their own tricks," he said.



EMBASSY OF INDIA OBSERVES GANDHI JAYANTI

Gandhi Jayanti was observed in the Embassy from 0900-1000 hours on 2 October 2016. After garlanding the statue of Gandhiji, Ambassador highlighted the importance of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, India's ratification of Paris Accord on Climate change and the inauguration by PM of Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi. Over 300-350 Indian nationals participated. The students from Sound of

Music Academy, Delhi Public School, Indian Community School Khaitan Junior Branch, Indian Community School Amman Branch, Integrated Indian School-Abbasiya and Indian Community School Senior Branch-Salmiya presented soulful bhajans and patriotic songs on the occasion. A Flute performance by Miss Tanya Mishra was a remarkable feature of the event.

KOC CHIEF CHEMIST HONORED WITH LEGACY AWARD FROM PETROLEUM

Kuppusamy Uthaman, Chief Chemist at Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) was awarded the prestigious "Honorary Legacy award" by the UK-based energy journal Petroleum Economist. The award was announced in September at a formal function in London. The award ceremony was hosted by Gyles Brandreth, broadcaster and former MP along with Michael McCaw, managing editor of Petroleum Economist.

Uthaman is a native of Kallappalayam village in the outskirts of Coimbatore and has spent more than 40 years in the oil/petrochemical industry including his current role with KOC. He had earlier

served in Pioneer Fertilizers-Coimbatore, FACT- Cochin, ARAMCO-Saudi Arabia and Shell- Al-Furat Oil Company. He was judged based on his lifelong achievements, international conferences attended /chaired, papers presented and his contribution to the oil industry for operational excellence, innovation and improvement.

Petroleum Economist shortlists candidates based on demonstrable long-term commitment to the energy industry; excellent leadership skills; a commitment to innovation; and a commitment to improving operations, whether that be within a company, sector or across the sector as a whole.



MARINA HOTEL REVAMPS ITS BREAKFAST MENU

In the presence of local media representatives and invited guests, Marina Hotel yesterday celebrated the launch of its new revamped breakfast menu. Featuring a range of breakfast specialties, guests were able to sample dishes all made by the hotel's experienced chefs using the freshest of local premium ingredients.

On the occasion, General Manager, Mr Nabil Hammoud said: "Breakfast is the first meal of the day hence we revamped our breakfast offerings and invite guests to a wholesome scrumptious experience at Six Palms. Guests will have a perfect start and delight in a menu that is fun, trendy and very progressive."

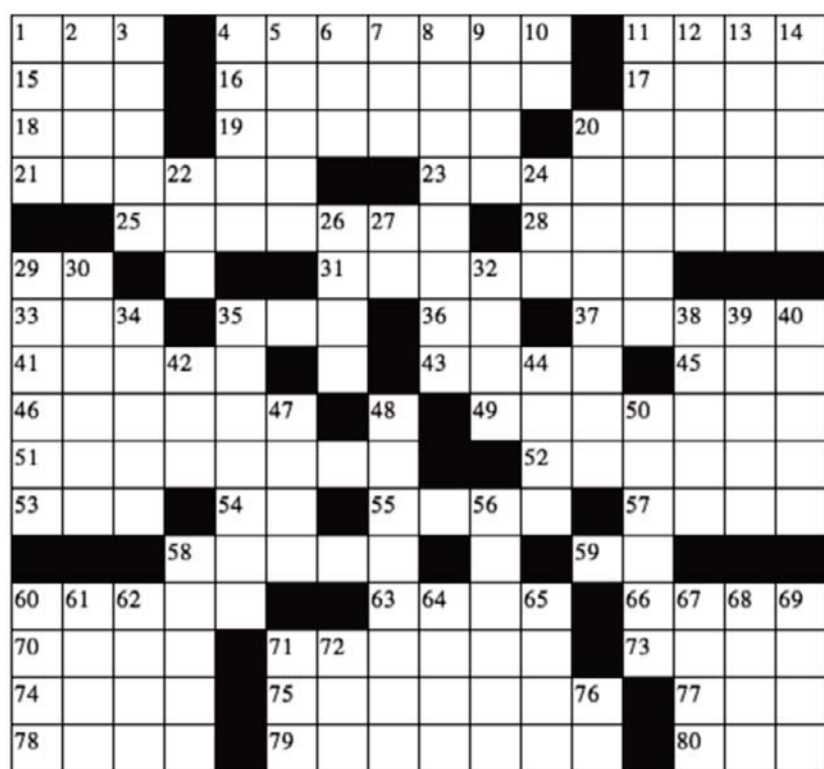
From light and simple to savory and sophisticated, the revamped breakfast menu caters to all tastes and desires. Guests will be afforded new offerings that will energize, fortify and satisfy even the pickiest of palates. Fresh-cut strawberries, grapes, melons and pineapple top the list of delights available on a regular basis. A daily rotation of proteins such as chicken cordon bleu, turkey or beef bacon, chicken or beef sausage and corn beef hash will surprise and excite famished diners. Fluffy scrambled eggs in mini cups, baked beans, gluten bread and diet yoghurt complement the breakfast staple providing a healthier alternative.

Assorted croissants and freshly baked bread pudding will tempt the sweet tooth, while waffles and pancakes can soon be topped with Nutella, honey or maple syrup for a special treat. A variety of dried fruits, nuts and dates are among the delicacies that visitors will be able to enjoy. The food stations and the desserts will not disappoint either with its excellent fulmedames, saj, waffles, pancakes and egg stations.

Enjoy the relaxed setting of the Six Palms Restaurant and start your morning with steaming coffee and an extremely delicious breakfast buffet featuring international cuisine. The breakfast buffet is offered daily from 06:00 am to 11:00 am.



CROSSWORD 1390



ACROSS

- 1. A depression in an otherwise level surface.
- 4. (of non-living objects) The state of being free of pathogenic organisms.
- 11. A small constellation near the South Pole between Tucana and Ara.
- 15. An inflammatory complication of leprosy that results in painful skin lesions on the arms and legs and face.
- 16. A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
- 17. An open vessel with a handle and a spout for pouring.
- 18. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 19. Popular music originating in the West Indies.
- 21. South American shrub having edible greenish plumlike fruit.
- 23. Shrubby lichens of the family Usneaceae having a flattened thallus.
- 25. The quantity contained in (or the capacity of) a tank or tanks.
- 28. Exultantly proud and joyful.
- 29. Informal terms for a mother.
- 31. A binary compound of carbon with a more electropositive element.
- 33. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- 36. A state in midwestern United States.
- 37. Covered with a firm surface.
- 41. Measuring instrument in which the echo of a pulse of microwave radiation is used to detect and locate distant objects.
- 43. Common Indian weaverbird.
- 45. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- 46. A port city in southwestern Turkey on the Gulf of Antalya.
- 49. A feeling of dissatisfaction that results when your expectations are not realized.
- 51. A race between candidates for elective office.
- 52. The dialect of Ancient Greek spoken in Thessaly and Boeotia and Aeolis.
- 53. The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
- 54. A bachelor's degree in religion.
- 55. Pretentious or silly talk or writing.
- 57. Something causes misery or death.
- 59. A hemoprotein composed of globin and heme that gives red blood cells their characteristic color.
- 60. Something (often something deceptively attractive) that catches you unawares.
- 63. A Bantu language spoken in Cameroon.
- 66. The United Nations agency concerned with civil aviation.
- 70. A sock with a separation for the big toe.
- 73. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- 74. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- 75. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
- 77. A city in north central Morocco.
- 78. A Chadik language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- 79. The great hall in ancient Persian palaces.
- 80. The capital and largest city of Japan.

DOWN

- 1. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
- 2. English prelate noted for his pessimistic sermons and articles (1860-1954).
- 3. A hairdo formed by braiding or twisting the hair.
- 4. A city in northeastern Ohio.
- 5. Marked by quiet and caution and secrecy.
- 6. A graphical record of electrical activity of the brain.
- 7. A wooden pin pushed or driven into a surface.
- 8. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- 9. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
- 10. A silvery malleable metallic element that resists corrosion.
- 11. Genus of chiefly small rock-loving ferns.
- 12. Look forward to the probable occurrence of.
- 13. French writer who is considered the father of science fiction (1828-1905).
- 14. (Greek mythology) One of the mountain nymphs.
- 20. A person whose head is bald.
- 22. Immense East Indian fruit resembling breadfruit of.
- 24. Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
- 26. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- 27. A rare silvery (usually trivalent) metallic element.
- 30. A port city in southwestern Iran.
- 32. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- 34. American Revolutionary patriot.
- 35. Easily broken into small fragments or reduced to powder.
- 38. Any of the numerous plants of the genus Viola.
- 39. King of Northumbria who was converted to Christianity (585-633).
- 40. An artistic form of nonverbal communication.
- 42. Any high mountain.
- 44. Not only so, but.
- 47. An officer who acts as military assistant to a more senior officer.
- 48. The Palestinian uprising (beginning in 1987) against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.
- 50. A quiet plodding workhorse.
- 56. Roman statesman and philosopher who was and advisor to Nero (circa 4 BC - 65 AD).
- 58. Any plant of the genus Erica.
- 61. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
- 62. Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing.
- 64. Lacking sufficient water or rainfall.
- 65. The mother of your father or mother.
- 67. A small restaurant where drinks and snacks are sold.
- 68. In bed.
- 69. Anise-flavored Greek liquor.
- 71. A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
- 72. (informal) Informed about the latest trends.
- 76. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your work or career is in real harmony with the rest of your life. You could gain from observing the more experienced as well as the young people today. Experience combined with new vision will motivate you forward into new horizons. You will enjoy creating new goals. Suggestions and proposals may be accepted from the company in which you work. Perhaps some monetary rewards can be expected as your proposals may save the company much money. You will have some good opportunities to move forward in your career. Community problems come to your attention this afternoon and changes here are possible as well. This may involve transportation situations: school buses, city buses, parking, etc. Plan ahead and gather support.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Emotional seriousness, a sober orientation and a practical awareness of time management are keynotes of your deepest feelings. There is a tendency to be too strict with yourself at this time. You may insist that whatever does not contribute to security and other long-term goals is trivial. Obtaining and exchanging information takes on more significance. Making decisions based on the facts will bring you much recognition. Be prepared to have a busy day. The positive results will depend on your actions. You attract money just now. You may have insights with regard to your living situation or life circumstances and now is a good time to discuss any changes or ideas with your loved ones. Your loved ones see and value your unique qualities.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Faith, optimism and the desire to explore all kinds of new horizons are some of the focal points in your life. Just hearing from a co-worker who may be in another country or another state has your heart skipping a few beats. Thinking of the next vacation or the opportunity to travel for the company keeps your mind traveling. It is a good thing you have a routine to follow in your work or there would be too many mistakes as your mind travels over the next trip opportunity. This is a rewarding day in that much can be accomplished. If you get ahead of yourself you might be able to knock off a little early toward the end of the week and do a little camping or find a weekend job that will help create a little extra traveling money.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

If you need a loan, today is a good day to request one. Positive results come from your investments and earning potential-a raise is also in the works. There is a desire to be in control this morning as you will want to participate in some decision or important vote. You make a positive difference as you speak and guide others with your insight. It is good to have a presentation available for others to review and to influence the group toward a good decision. You would make a good manager and you wait your time until it happens, soon. This can be an expansive, creative and even romantic phase-a time you will look back on with pride. You may find yourself being put to good use by your friends this afternoon.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

If professional advice is needed you will have positive results. Challenges provide you with choices to either move in a new direction or work to overcome the challenge. This is a good time to be creative and secure the positive. Your current situation may demand some reevaluation or otherwise challenge your ideas. You will overcome any difficulty in communication. Any frustration with connections or timing will be of short duration. You may find this a crucial time during which-depending on circumstances of your standing or growth in the company for which you work-you reach new heights of accomplishment. This will bring about great discipline and a concentration or focus. New opportunities open up soon that will show off your talents.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

If you want to begin a new work or personal project, today and tomorrow are good times. You appreciate an inventive approach and may value joint or unconventional ideas. Thinking you may need some health improvement, consider a hair analysis to discover which nutritional foods would be most important and beneficial for you. Physical complaints can be helped through proper supplements. You will naturally lose weight as you go along with a healthy program. A need to be healthy and more energetic takes hold now. As you begin to get healthier you encourage others. A co-worker friend may have unique ways of displaying pictures and you could find that you enjoy checking out the latest. You may want to display a few pictures.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

You may become the center of attention in several different circumstances today. You might even wonder what created the attention. Your ideas are constructive and affecting and trigger others to contribute ideas. Not just you but your whole team gets praise for work well done. Of course, you have something grand to celebrate and that is your birthday. You feel successful and able to handle difficult situations. Good advice from a guide or older person is welcomed. This is a good day. There is a feeling of being connected that may come from a good deed you accomplished with lost animals or funds to help the upkeep of a zoo, etc. One of those animals would make a good pet. These little critters bring lots of smiles!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You have contact with many people today and are privy to stimulating information-professional and personal. You have no trouble putting your feelings into words; in fact, you may have to exercise some control over your tongue. As you gain information, you gain insight into the different personalities you see. If you are in a position to hire people you will be reading resumes as well as communicating personally with people. Take notes of each interview and then you can review the interview honestly. You keep busy today and you are absorbed in your work. If you are a detective, it won't take you very long to line up all the clues by dates and come up with the right answer. You might find something for your own investment while shopping with a friend.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

Do not confuse me with the facts," is your motto now, as you tend to lose sight of the details in favor of seeing the underlying connections that link them together. This can make the way you think and communicate very inspired and inspiring, but it can also lead to confused decision making and difficulties in making yourself understood by others. Circumstances could dictate your taking action-much can be accomplished with your insight. A need to be the center of attention takes hold and there is a craving to give and to be appreciated for your gifts. This can be an expansive, creative and even romantic phase-a time you will look back on with pride and fondness. You are able to enjoy and feel especially kind toward a friend or loved one.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

The good life and all that is fine and luxurious are what many of us try to achieve. You may have plans but you will find they will need adjusting from time to time in order to see the end result more clearly in your mind's eye. Today you will get some insight into one or more adjustments to your future plans. They will be positive as you begin to get a better perspective on your plans. Investments can be good, well-built furniture that needs a new coat of varnish or some slight repair. This furniture could make a nice addition to the furniture in your home or it could make a good resale item. Some issue that needs to be brought to the attention of the city council may be in discussion around your house tonight; you have ideas.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

There are good practical job-related thoughts. You have the ability to communicate with superiors or describe what you see. Others may want you to speak for them. You are appreciated for your ability to quickly step in and accomplish what is needed. Everything may be pouring in at once and it's all good news. Your career direction gets some encouragement and life's problems should find easy solutions. You may benefit from an older person or one in authority. If you live by yourself, you might consider the company of an animal or create some relaxing space, perhaps for reading or just meditation. You could fill this area with a beautiful fish tank or perhaps plants with lighting that you could change according to mood.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Work and career should be a primary focus at this time. An opportunity to make good decisions, and to make clear choices, is yours. You will prosper by pursuing your dreams of how life could be. Don't be afraid to project your image and make those dreams real. Ideas of group cooperation could further your career. A group meeting may give you the opportunity to speak up and show off your talent to be expressive and have good ideas. You are at your most practical and what happens now may have a lasting effect on your life direction. A change in financial status is possible and can lead in unexpected directions. There are new spending patterns, perhaps focused on high-tech interests. You need extra sleep and wholesome meals at this time.

WORD SEARCH

Las Vegas

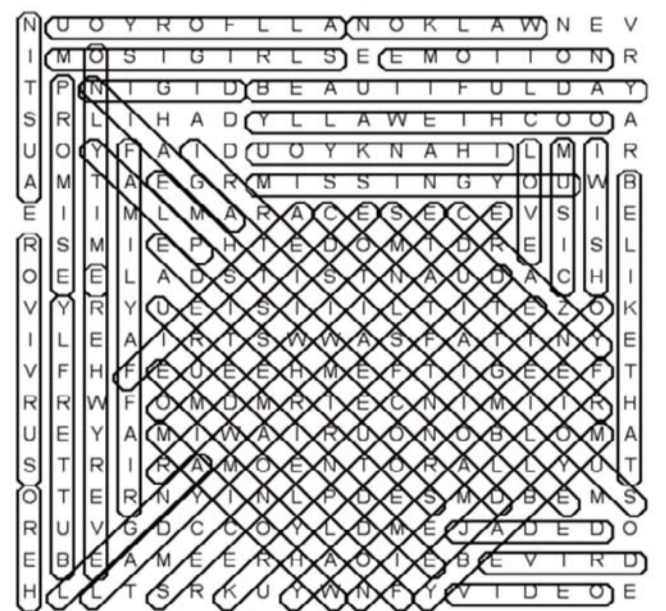
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 24 letters spell something you might see in Las Vegas.



- ATTRACTIONS
- BUFFETS
- CASINOS
- CELEBRITIES
- CLARK COUNTY
- COMEDIANS
- CONCERTS
- CONVENTIONS
- DESERT
- DINING
- DRINKS
- ENTERTAINMENT
- FOOD
- FREMONT STREET
- HOTELS
- IMPERSONATORS
- LAS VEGAS STRIP
- LIGHTS
- MAGICIANS
- MARRIAGES
- MUSICALS
- NEON SIGNS
- NEVADA
- NIGHTLIFE
- PERFORMERS
- PLAYS
- RESTORTS
- RESTAURANTS
- SHOPPING
- SHOPS
- SHOWS
- SINGERS
- SOUVENIRS
- SPRING MOUNTAINS
- SUNNY
- TOURISTS
- TOURS
- TRIBUTE ACTS
- VACATION
- WARM
- WEDDING CHAPELS

Yesterday Solution

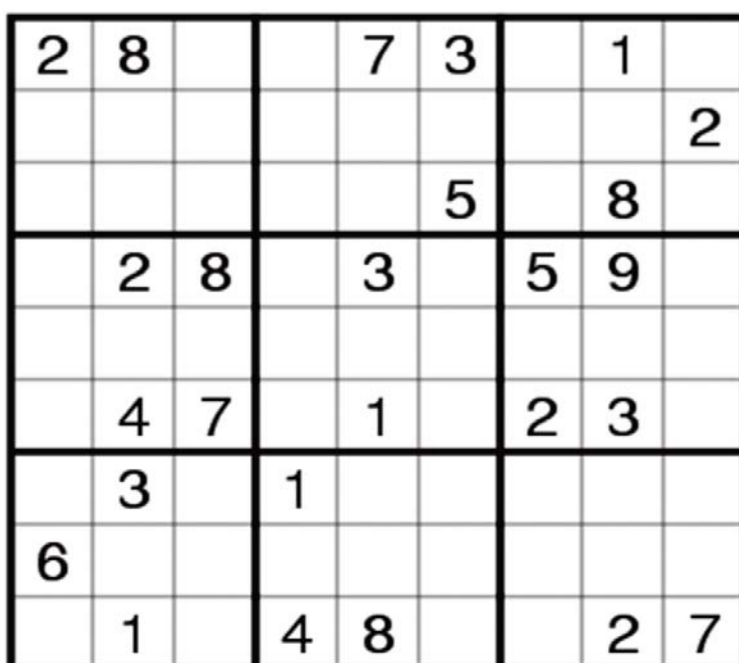
Songs From the Year 2001



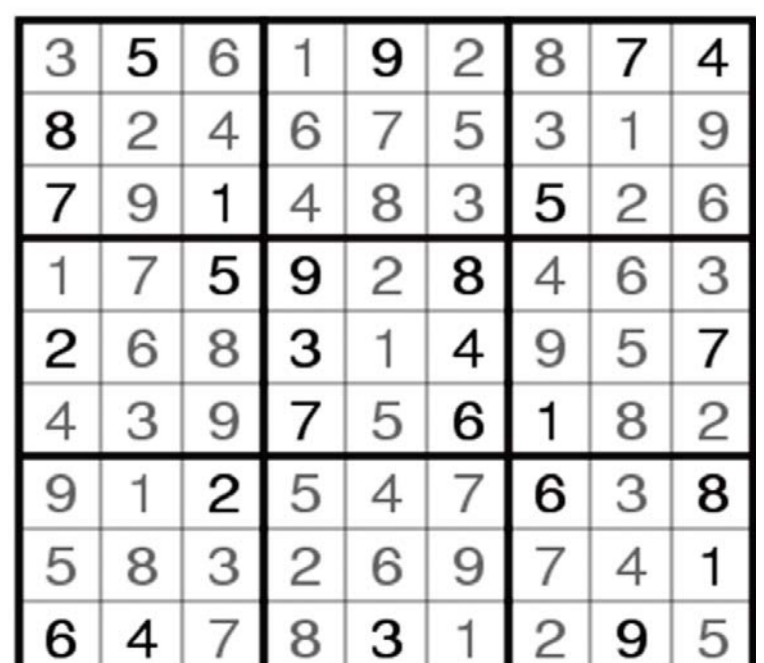
- AGAIN
- ALL FOR YOU
- ANGEL
- AUSTIN
- BE LIKE THAT
- BEAUTIFUL DAY
- BUTTERFLY
- CONTAGIOUS
- CRAZY
- DANCE WITH ME
- DIFFERENCES
- DIG IN
- DRIVE
- EMOTION
- EVERYWHERE
- FAMILY AFFAIR
- FIESTA
- FILL ME IN
- FOLLOW ME
- HERO
- I WISH
- IRRESISTIBLE
- JADED
- KRYPTONITE
- LADY MARMALADE
- LOVE
- MISSING YOU
- MOST GIRLS
- MUSIC
- MY BABY
- ONE MORE DAY
- ONLY TIME
- OOCHIE WALLY
- OUTSIDE
- PLAY
- PROMISE
- RISE WITH ME
- SOUTH SIDE
- STUTTER
- SURVIVOR
- THANK YOU
- U REMIND ME
- VIDEO
- WALK ON
- WHO I AM

The hidden song title is: NEVER HAD A DREAM COME TRUE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





Kardashian robbery casts gray cloud over Paris Fashion Week



The ordeal of Kim Kardashian West - who was left tied up after a \$10 million jewel heist in her private Paris residence - dominated talk among editors at Fashion Week. It cast a gray cloud over collections that otherwise were meant to exude joy and creativity. Here are Monday's highlights.

Kim Kardashian's robbery

Some editors raised questions about the security in a city that remains under a state of emergency following a spate of extremist attacks, and others said the heist would discourage celebrities from coming back to Paris in the future. Then there were those who said that life in the Paris Fashion Week "bubble" would continue as normal. But for all, the Kardashian ordeal provoked shock and surprise - and all agreed there were lessons to be learnt to prevent another such crime. "Total shock. We've been talking about it in every front row I've sat in," said Christina Binkley, the Wall Street Journal fashion columnist.

"Celebrities here are dripping in jewels. They are a great target. I bet you there's going to be higher security. You're not going to be seeing them walking in on their own. Who would walk around Paris on your own knowing there's people casing you for your \$5 million ring? Of course, in the future, they'll think twice about coming," she added. Cathy Horyn, former New York Times Fashion Editor, expressed incredulity that Kardashian's security detail didn't avert it. "She already had (celebrity accoster Vitalii Sediuk) bothering her this week. I'm sure she is now questioning how she could have been more careful, how she behaves, because Kim tends to travel with more fanfare and more publicity around her, purposefully. That's been part of her shtick," she said.

Others played it down. "I don't think it was discouraging other celebrities from coming to Paris because Kardashian is a uniquely high profile person whose career is all about showing her personal life to the public. Everyone knows where she stays, so it's easy for her to make herself the target for this kind of robbery," said Yoanna Liu, Fashion Editor of Harper's Bazaar China. "Unlike Kim Kardashian, I don't have millions of dollars of jewelry in my bag," said Luke Lietch of Vogue Runway. "But, yes it's definitely something that's affected the texture of fashion week. There's no doubt that people have said today that it presents a bad image of Paris," he said.

Alexander McQueen's homage to Shetland

The wild, rugged magic of the Scottish Shetland Islands was conjured up by Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen's typically dream-like fashion voyage. Models sporting narrow gossamer fine Shetland Lace dresses walked slowly down the runway tapestry of an isolated barren island. Leather harnesses holding jingle bells, featured motifs of cockle shells, spider webs and ocean waves evoked the local traditions of the ancient archipelago.

Oversize paneled dresses were brought into life with vividly colored patches of what the designer identified as Fairisle Knit. And local resident Shetland clans were given perhaps their first ever high fashion homage in the form of Celtic checks in sharp tailoring with a masculine edge - with wild rose and thistle threadwork. It made for a complex and endearing display.

'Rykiel forever' - Parisian label remembers late designer

The late designer Sonia Rykiel was front and center at the runway show for her eponymous label on Monday at Paris Fashion Week, as red-haired models wearing black jumpers with letters spelling the slogan 'Rykiel Forever' kicked off the show. The models wearing the Sonia Rykiel Spring/Summer 2017 collection, paid homage to the late designer with their long, flame-colored coiffures. The collection, designed by the label's artistic director Julie de Libran, included many Rykiel staples, from billowing dresses, wide-legged trousers and oversized hats with platform heels to her striped knitwear once sported by Brigitte Bardot and Audrey Hepburn. Rykiel died in August at the age of 86 after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. — Agencies



Models present creations for Alexander McQueen during the 2017 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show in Paris. — AP/AFP photos

FASHION



Models present creations for Sonia Rykiel during the 2017 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show.

All about fame and fortune for the Kardashians

From reality TV, to cosmetics, video games, clothing lines and paid appearances, the Kardashians have built an empire estimated at more than \$100 million, thanks to savvy marketing and social media. The famous family was in the headlines on Monday after Kim Kardashian—the 35-year-old diva of the Kardashian sisters and wife of rapper Kanye West—was robbed at gunpoint in Paris by thieves who made off with millions of dollars worth of jewelry. The heist cast the spotlight on the wealth of the Kardashian/Jenner clan, masters at monetizing their fame who grab every business opportunity that comes their way—from a sex tape to a mobile app.

On any given day, one member of the family is likely to feature on a magazine cover, in celebrity gossip sheets or send social media buzzing, with all this attention keeping the cash flow going. Their sensational reality TV show “Keeping Up With the Kardashians,” which follows the trials and tribulations of the family, is currently in its 12th season. The family is reportedly paid \$25 million a season for the show that drives their other businesses. “They are all masters at branding, especially Kim and her mother Kris Jenner,” said Christine Kirk, CEO of Social Muse Communications, a social media marketing and public relations firm.

‘From joke to entrepreneur’

“Kim has taken herself from a sort of joke, if you will, into an entrepreneur and business woman, branching out into fashion lines and technology.” She’s kind of the queen of social media.” According to Forbes, Kim—whose net worth is estimated at \$85 million—earned \$51 million in 2015, landing her at number 42 on the list of the 100 top paid celebrities. Some 40 percent of her yearly paycheck came from a video game, “Kim Kardashian: Hollywood,” according to Forbes. The reality TV star who has

84 million Instagram followers reportedly can also command six figures for making an appearance and has earned huge sums from endorsement deals including perfume, lollipops and weight-loss pills.

She has also cashed in on a book of selfies entitled “Selfish” and with her sisters has launched the DASH clothing store. Kim first came to public notice thanks to a notorious leaked sex tape with her former boyfriend, singer Ray J. She sued the company that released the tape and settled for a reported \$5 million. The Kardashian family’s initial fortune can be traced back to Kim’s late father Robert Kardashian, a high-powered entertainment lawyer who was part of O.J. Simpson’s defense teams during his murder trial.



Kardashian reportedly left his family a \$100 million estate in trust. Kim’s mother, Kris Jenner, married athlete Bruce Jenner (now known as Caitlyn) after her divorce from Kardashian and the couple had two girls together—Kendall and Kylie. Kris and Bruce Jenner ended their 23-year marriage in 2014. Kris Jenner has been credited with handling much of the family’s lucrative business and endorsement deals and her daughters have closely followed in her footsteps, milking every opportunity for all it’s worth.

“Kris Jenner is managing all of them, she’s sort of the mastermind behind all this,” Kirk told AFP. “But Kim certainly has a lot of control over her brand and her business.” According to various reports, the Kardashians are even paid to tweet—Kim allegedly can get up to \$10,000 per tweet—and the sisters can pull in six-figure sums for sponsored posts on Instagram. But while Kim today can claim to be the queen of social media—posting everything from pictures of her two children with West to her bare backside—her half-sister Kendall Jenner is quickly catching up and setting up her own social media kingdom.

Jenner has nearly 76 million followers on Instagram and is dominating Snapchat with some 10 million followers. And while reports of the family’s every move has led to Kardashian fatigue across the country, Kirk says they will continue bringing in the cash, at least for the foreseeable future. “If they keep doing what they are doing and if Kim continues making smart decisions, they’ll continue to stay relevant,” she said. — AFP

In this May 16, 2016 file photo, Kim Kardashian West attends the 20th Annual Webby Awards in New York. — AP

LAGERFELD CHASTISES KARDASHIAN FOR FLAUNTING HER DIAMONDS

Fashion icon Karl Lagerfeld ticked off Kim Kardashian yesterday for flaunting her wealth, a day after the reality television star was robbed at gunpoint in Paris of \$10 million worth of jewelry. “You cannot display your wealth and then be surprised that some people want to share it with you,” the designer told reporters after his Chanel show. Lagerfeld had written Kardashian a note on Monday saying: “Dearest Kim, we are all with you,” after she was tied up and robbed at a luxury apartment in Paris. But he criticized the celebrity for showing off her jewelry to her more than 100 million social media followers.

“If you’re that famous and you put all your jewelry on the net, you go to hotels where nobody can come near to the room,” he said. Kardashian tweeted a picture last week of a diamond ring worth around four million euros (\$4.5 million) which police said had been stolen in the early morning raid along with five million euros worth of other jewelry. “I think it’s a very bad thing for Paris but I don’t understand why she was in a hotel with no security,” Lagerfeld said of the robbery, which made headlines across the world.

The multi-millionaire mother of two and wife of the US rap superstar Kanye West had been in Paris for fashion week, where she was a front row guest at Balenciaga and Givenchy on Sunday. The outspoken 83-year-old German-born designer and photographer, who is known as “the kaiser” for his mastery of the fashion world, has previously been complimentary about Kardashian and her family. He even did a photo shoot with her this summer for the American magazine Harper’s Bazaar in which he had West taking a picture with his mobile phone of Kardashian draped across a bed.

Kardashian’s half-sister Kendall Jenner also modeled for him in Chanel’s Paris haute couture show last year. Her mother Kris Jenner is also known to be a client of Chanel. Lagerfeld has previously said that “Kim’s contribution to beauty and fashion is the fact that you don’t have to be super slim and very tall to be beautiful.” “I like her mother a lot and I adore her little half-sister Kendall. I don’t know the rest of this astonishing family,” he told the celebrity news site Page Six. — AFP



German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld acknowledges the audience at the end of the Chanel 2017 Spring/Summer ready-to-wear collection fashion show yesterday in Paris. — AFP

ART



Brazilian artist Kobra's mural is seen on a corner of the Wynwood neighborhood of Miami, Florida.



A mural by artist Didi covers the side of a building in the Wynwood neighborhood of Miami, Florida. — AFP photos

In Miami, warehouse district becomes art haven

A decade ago, Jessica Goldman Srebnick was afraid of walking through Wynwood, a derelict warehouse neighborhood in Miami. Today, she is the virtual curator of an open-air art gallery that has turned the area into one of the hippest places in the United States. Windowless factory warehouses in the bleak urban district have become a venue where artists, including internationally famous ones, paint murals that raise street art to new heights.

The flourishing neighborhood—which recently made headlines as the first place in America where the Zika virus was locally transmitted—has about 70 art galleries and 20 restaurants. As it gentrified, rents skyrocketed, going from \$3 to \$6 per square foot to between \$65 and \$95 today. How did this transformation occur? The alchemy lies in buying up a critical mass of properties and having the vision of revitalizing a neighborhood while respecting its character.

That is what Tony Goldman, the late father of Goldman Srebnick, did in the 2000s, when he focused his Goldman Properties, specialists in turning downtrodden areas into trendy hotspots, on Wynwood. The real-estate pioneer, for example, was the force behind the transformation of New

York City's SoHo neighborhood in the 1970s and Miami Beach in the '80s.

After beginning to buy up properties in Wynwood in 2006, Goldman Properties now owns 30, says Goldman Srebnick, who became chief executive after her father's death in 2012. "It's part of our model, where we buy a critical mass of real estate. Usually 18 is the minimum because that's what you need to really make a change," she said. One of its properties is Wynwood Walls, a warehouse-turned-art showcase that greets visitors with a mural by Shepard Fairey, the celebrated artist of the "Hope" poster for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign.

Preserving the 'soul'

Unlike New York or Miami Beach, "with Wynwood there was nothing interesting about the architecture," Goldman Srebnick told AFP. "What was really interesting was the street art. So we took that, because that was part of the soul of the neighborhood," she said. "We invited the greatest street artists in the world to paint the canvases of our buildings."

The CEO emphasized that whenever the company focuses on an area "it's not about coming in and imposing what we

want on that neighborhood. "It's about looking at what is there, and just improve it and see what it could be at a more advanced level."

Behind her at Wynwood Walls is the Fairey mural portrait of her father, smiling, his hands extended in welcome against a backdrop of golden beams. "One of the things my dad taught me was to see things how they could be, as opposed to what they are," she said. "You might see crime, dilapidation and rundown neighborhoods. Someone else can see the opportunity and the tremendous possibilities." Forbes magazine named Wynwood to its list of "America's Best Hipster Neighborhoods." Vogue dubbed it one of "the world's coolest neighborhoods."

'Different experience'

"Wynwood has been an amazing place for art," said muralist Chaz, 41, a member of the British-based duo The London Police. His painting features cartoonish figures set in a futurist world with realistic touches. Other murals feature the works of Japan's Aiko, the Chilean Inti, France's Miss Van, a Toulouse-born artist known for her sensuous women in masks, and Ron English, an American whose work features a "Hulk"-like baby. For Chaz, the place "has such a good reputation for bringing some of the world's best artists and showcasing our work alongside one another."

Wynwood Walls and its extension, Wynwood Doors, is changing the way the public interacts with art in general, and with street art in particular. It is hard to view one of the works without there being someone in front of it taking a selfie. "When you think of street art, you're driving by it in a car, or you're on a train," said Goldman Srebnick. "Here people can walk through this living, breathing museum. They can touch it. They can explore it. They can come up close. It's a very different experience to what people are used to with art." Without knowing it, a Venezuelan tourist agrees with her totally. "Here you can take selfies and share them. When you're in a museum, you can't, for example, start jumping up and down in front of the painting that you are viewing," said Erika Freijah, 17, after a picture-snapping session with her family. — AFP



A portrait of Wynwood Walls founder Tony Goldman graces the center of a mural by artist Shepard Fairey.



This mural by artists The London Police can be found in the Wynwood doors section of the Wynwood neighborhood.



A photo shoot takes place in front of a mural by artist Ron English in the Wynwood neighborhood.



An unidentified man rides a bicycle in front of a mural by Brazilian artist Kobra in the Wynwood neighborhood.

STREET ART GRADUATES TO PARIS GALLERY

Not content with spray painting its way into the urban collective consciousness, street art is at last graduating to the gallery as Paris opens its first permanent exhibition of the genre. After a Rome exhibition for British graffiti king Banksy, French counterpart JR's trompe l'oeil wrapping of the Louvre Pyramid and a feast of "Urban Exploration" at Villa Medicis, now comes a Parisian sequel — 150 works on permanent show at the Art 42 peer-to-peer learning center.

The exhibition which opens this month is a further sign of how street art is establishing itself as an art form in its own right, some 50 years after early proponents used metro tunnels and handy walls as blank canvases. Street art's earliest incarnations may well conjure up visions of artists toiling surreptitiously in quasi-derelict surroundings on work that was merely decorative. But British artist Banksy has notably and astutely used his creations to make powerful political points, not least with his unique take on the refugee crisis. He recently depicted Steve Jobs as a migrant at the infamous Jungle camp in the French port of Calais to underscore that the late Apple guru's biological father was a Syrian immigrant to the United States.

'Militant wallscapes'

"The essence of street art is its militant wallscapes," said Nicolas Laugero-Lasserre, who has lent 150 works from his own personal collection for the Paris exhibition. But remaining faithful to its "edgy" traditions hasn't stopped street art from moving into the more formal world of museums, from Amsterdam and Saint Petersburg and now Paris with Berlin to follow next year. Some, not least 1980s US American pioneer Futura 2000, have consciously chosen to head from the streets into the galleries. Laugero-Lasserre has amassed a sizeable collection of works from the likes of Frank Shepard Fairey, who was behind the "Hope" mural for Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign, and Italian artist Blu, who allowed his Berlin murals to be painted over fearing they might fuel soaring real estate values.

The new permanent exhibition will feature works by Banksy and JR but also a range of lesser-known, emerging names from an ever-growing graffiti globe. The idea is to showcase upcoming and established talents' eye-catching and sometimes outlandish creations, tableaux worth in many cases thousands of euros (dollars) which can be seen for free during guided visits. Despite entering the shop window provided by exhibitions, Magda Danysz, who runs galleries in Paris and Shanghai, says street art has not quite arrived yet.

'Big-hitting exhibition'

"Street art is not three graffiti-sprayers on an empty bit of terrain. It is an artistic phenomenon which has managed to adorn walls right across the globe," Danysz said. "(But) in terms of recognition, we are still waiting for the big-hitting exhibition on the subject." Now, the genre, whose raison d'être French artist JR has

termed "bringing art to people who never go to museums", is looking to broaden its general appeal beyond the fringes.

"The more you talk up street art the better," quips Mehdi Ben Cheikh, a gallery owner behind the Tour Paris 13 project, a block transformed into a huge temporary exhibition area in 2014 which brought together some 100 artists before its eventual demolition. That was also what happened at the 5 Pointz mural space on Long Island, New York, used by some 1,500 artists who made artistic hay before the area was demolished in 2013 for construction of a condominium complex. Ben Cheikh was also involved in the "Djerbahood" project, bringing dozens of international street artists to the Tunisian island of Djerba two years ago.



Though Ben Cheikh welcomes the spreading of the message indoors there are others who believe that the outdoors is a more natural habitat. "The street remains essential for artists, it's what gives them their inspiration. There remain many places in the world where street art is illegal," notes Danysz. The barely legal tag is underscored by the run-ins with police experienced by the likes of French urban artist Invader, whose 'pixellated' works using bathroom tiles hark back stylistically to early video games such as "Space Invaders". Some of his Stateside "invasions" have resulted in him being questioned by police. Similarly, one of compatriot Monsieur Chat's laughing feline daubings at a Paris railway station undergoing renovation may yet earn him a three-month residency, not in a gallery—but in jail. — AFP

Students chat next to street art that is part of the collection of French collector Nicolas Laugero Lasserre at the street art museum, housed at the 'Art 42' Urban Art museum in Paris, on September 12, 2016. — AFP photos



Pieces of street art (from left) Doves (Black) by US artist Shepard Fairey, Loading... by French artist Rero and 'Spray on DUREX metal dispenser' made from a condom dispensing machine and showing a portrait of former French Economy Minister Dominique Strauss Kahn by French artist C215, are displayed at the Street Art Museum, housed at the 'Art 42' Urban Art museum in Paris.



French urban art collector Nicolas Laugero Lasserre posing in front of a wall decorated with street art at the 'Art 42' Urban Art museum.

FEATURES

Australian gamers shift from megabytes to 'live action'

A high-pitched scream pierces the air as a "zombie witch" in a dirty, white dress sprints down a street at a Sydney university, hair whipping around wild eyes as she chases a group desperately scrambling to get out of her way. Welcome to "Zedtown"—an adventure event where competitors play out a zombie apocalypse: people race to reach an evacuation point to ensure their survival, but must also avoid being caught and turned by the "undead".

Described interchangeably as a giant game of zombie-themed tag and a 'live-action' video game, the events capitalize on an emerging legion of gamers who have grown up battling virtual enemies on computer screens—and now want to experience such fantasies in real life. "It's a great feeling having hundreds of fully grown men and women running away in legitimate fear from you. It's really exhilarating," the woman who plays the zombie witch, Katerina Halkeas, tells AFP.

"Video games themselves are becoming so much more immersive. And then when you have something like this, it's really the next step," adds Halkeas, who took her inspiration from a character in the "Left 4 Dead" video game. But unlike computer games, in real life players can't hit pause or pull the plug, or even head to the toilet without risking their "lives". They have to keep running to escape the threats in the game, adding to the heightened intensity. The events kick off with humans, dubbed "survivors", outnumbering zombies, though all that is required to turn someone into the undead is to tag or touch them.



A 'zombie' having makeup applied in 'Zedtown', a real-life adventure event based on a video game.

everyone goes to make it a very fun experience," he tells AFP during the Zedtown game held at the University of New South Wales. Such is the demand to play, tickets for the most recent event at UNSW, which cost Aus\$45 (US\$34) each, sold out within minutes.

Entertainment and escapism

Shooting games such as laser tag or paintball have been around for some time but Zedtown taps into a trend blending vintage video game concepts with reality. Pokemon Go, which is based on software first launched in 1996 for Nintendo's iconic Game Boy console, uses players' smartphone cameras and satellite location to enable them to see cartoon monsters to capture in real-world settings.

Escape the Room computer games such as the Submachine Series and Mystery of Time and Space, where players have to solve riddles and puzzles to reach the next level and ultimately leave, have spawned physical adventures—known as Escape Rooms—where participants are locked in a room and have to solve problems to get out. The next generation of games though, will see consumers playing in the physical world but immersing themselves in settings and against foes in the virtual world, industry experts say.

Oculus Rift, the virtual reality system and headset owned by Facebook, was released in the US in March and the UK in late September to favorable consumer responses. "VR isn't a thing you do, it's a place you visit," one gamer said in an online review of the US\$599 device. Tim Ruse, chief executive of start-up Zero Latency, says he has seen huge interest in his firm's virtual reality system.

Competitors-sporting headsets and carrying backpacks with a computer as well as fake guns—enter a large warehouse and explore different simulated settings. These include battling zombies, an arcade-style game where you defend a fort, and an outer-space exploration scenario. Just a year after launching in Melbourne, Zero Latency are expanding their model to the United States, Spain and Japan at Sega's amusement park in Tokyo. "I guess humans have always—from storytelling to cinema to gaming—sought to remove themselves from reality," Ruse tells AFP, adding: "I think this next generation of fully immersive experiences are that next level of entertainment or escapism."—AFP



A "zombie" having makeup applied in "Zedtown", a real-life adventure event based on a video game.



A "zombie" chasing people in "Zedtown", a real-life adventure event based on a video game.



Gamers looking out for "zombies" in "Zedtown", a real-life adventure event based on a video game taking place at Sydney university in Sydney.



Gamers looking out for 'zombies' in 'Zedtown', a real-life adventure event based on a video game taking place at Sydney university in Sydney.



A "zombie" having makeup applied in "Zedtown", a real-life adventure event based on a video game.

Both sides are in an assortment of costumes and in high spirits. The organizers add jeopardy at the start of the game by anointing a small faction, who appear to be survivors, as secret zombies. This, players say, sows mistrust and quickly swells the number of those hunting, versus the number of those hunted.

Adrenaline rush

"You find yourself talking to people you wouldn't have otherwise spoken to and relying on those people for your life and... you form intense relationships quickly," says Zedtown creator David Harmon, who has plans to roll out the event in other cities. Tasks and challenges are set for people to progress through the event space, and to try to make sure they don't simply stay hidden. As darkness falls, tensions rise and the ranks of the undead thicken—sometimes chanting "one of us" in hordes to scare the few remaining survivors as they make a last-gasp attempt to reach the evacuation point.

"Emotionally, it's an absolute rush," says player Ian Kilburn, whose long, tattered black-hooded cloak "Death" costume, which includes a sickle tossed over his shoulders, is well-known among Zedtown participants. "I've always been blown away by the costumes and the effort that



Katerina Halkeas, playing a zombie witch in "Zedtown", a real-life adventure event based on a video game.



Photo shows "zombies" chasing people in "Zedtown", a real-life adventure event based on a video game taking place at Sydney university in Sydney.



Katerina Halkeas (second left) playing a zombie witch in "Zedtown", a real-life adventure event based on a video game taking place at Sydney university in Sydney.



Photo provided by Dean Fosdick, shows a succulent mix in Fosdick's Langley, Wash, greenhouse. — AP photos

Sublime succulents: For lasting beauty in the garden, try these low maintenance options

Tired of blossoms in your flower garden that dazzle and sizzle but are quick to fade? Maybe it's time for some dependable succulents - the enduring plants that last through the good times but also, especially, the bad. More than 10,000 plant species have been classified as succulents, including the extensive cacti (Cactaceae) family. Some are tall and irregularly shaped like living sculptures; many remain small, making good ground covers. Scores bloom, a few resemble rocks. But most are tough-as-nails survivors - the so-called camels of the plant world, capable of retaining water in their fleshy leaves, stems or roots.

There's a growing appreciation among gardeners of plants "for their shape and their form and their geometry and the elegance that comes with that, as opposed to the 'I just want to grow annuals' or 'Give me my petunias or roses,'" said Debra Lee Baldwin of Escondido, Calif, author of "Designing With Succulents" (Timber Press, 2007).

"That's especially the case down here in the Southwest. It's a very practical plant for our homes and gardens because of droughts." What defines a succulent? Succulents sometimes are referred to as "fat plants" because they are able to survive arid regions by storing water internally, hence their "fleshy" look. Many also developed hard outer layers or skins to minimize evaporation. Succulents are tough not to love. They're easy to grow and easy to maintain. They do well indoors or out and can survive dry desert sands or cold Ontario winters. Some prefer partial shade; the majority can handle full sun.



Photo provided by Dean Fosdick shows a succulent assortment in Fosdick's Langley, Wash, greenhouse.

Midsummer

Common easy-care examples include aloe (ornamentals said to have some medicinal qualities but that also look good in pots), sedums (many of which flower and make good ground covers) and the blue agave, which provides the makings for a drink. "It has been years since I gave someone a house key to come in and water my potted plants when I'm away because I've converted all my containers to succulents," Baldwin said in an exchange of e-mail messages. "I just water them before I go (if I remember) and they're fine the entire time, even if it's midsummer, they're on the patio and I'm gone for three weeks." Succulents are also among the most accommodating plants, generally willing to be placed anywhere, from rocky slopes to the simplest of con-

tainers (think bricks and concrete blocks). They're versatile enough to thrive in trendy rooftop gardens, be shaped into topiary or serve as blaze-resistant fences around wildfire-prone residential areas. Certain kinds of cacti, notably the prickly pear, can act as a barrier plant for security-conscious gardeners who don't mind working around their many barbed spines.

"You can also cultivate succulents very easily once you get them started," Baldwin said. "They're ideal for people with brown thumbs. They don't require a high degree of maintenance. In fact, they kind of resent it if you fuss with them too much. These are not Bonsai." Succulents propagate readily from the smaller "pups" or from cuttings, the latter not unlike geraniums, she said.

"Because the cuttings are viable for weeks, they are well suited for shipping, provided they're not exposed to freezing temperatures. So thanks to the Internet, a wide variety of succulents - which used to be a regional specialty - now are available to people who live anywhere in the world." Many people who specialize in succulents favor cacti, with their entertaining shapes and spiky skins. While all cacti are succulents, not all succulents are cacti, Baldwin writes. "Unlike other succulents, cacti have areoles - points from which spines (which are modified leaves), pads, flowers or new branches grow. Another important distinction is that cacti are indigenous to the Americas." Cacti generally prefer more light and less water than other succulents, Baldwin said.

Agricultural lime

Succulents grow well in soil mixtures containing sand, peat moss and wood chips - coarse combinations that drain well. Moisture-retaining clays, for example, simply won't do. Succulents also prefer a soil pH low in acids, or a growing medium augmented with agricultural lime. Try for a pH somewhere between 6 and 7, she said. Baldwin's hillside garden in north San Diego County is slowly evolving into a succulent-rich setting. It's within USDA hardiness Zone 9, a decomposed-granite and clay setting where temperatures dip below freezing in winter and top out above 100 F in summer. Rainfall averages about 12 inches a year, so water is a constant concern, she said.

"My focus initially was flowers, but as sophistication with design and the look of landscape grows, you realize it's more about foliage and not with flowers, which come and go. You want some contrast year-round. Hardscape. Some structure. A large plant with dominant foliage. "My garden is now at its spring peak," she said. "I still have about 40 rose bushes and everything is blooming. The rest of the year, though, the succulents are the most interesting and everything else is cut back. Succulents add interest to your garden nine months of the year."

For a long time people had the idea that a garden had to consist of a grassy lawn with flowers and annuals arrayed around it, Baldwin said. "That was the English style of gardening - something that required a lot of love and maintenance. "What do you see in the Southwest and around San Diego? You see a lot of Eastern gardens that have been transferred westward. But that culture is changing. Not only is aesthetic appreciation changing, but lifestyles are changing, too. People don't want high maintenance (plants) anymore."—AP

Lifestyle

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Australian gamers shift from megabytes to 'live action'

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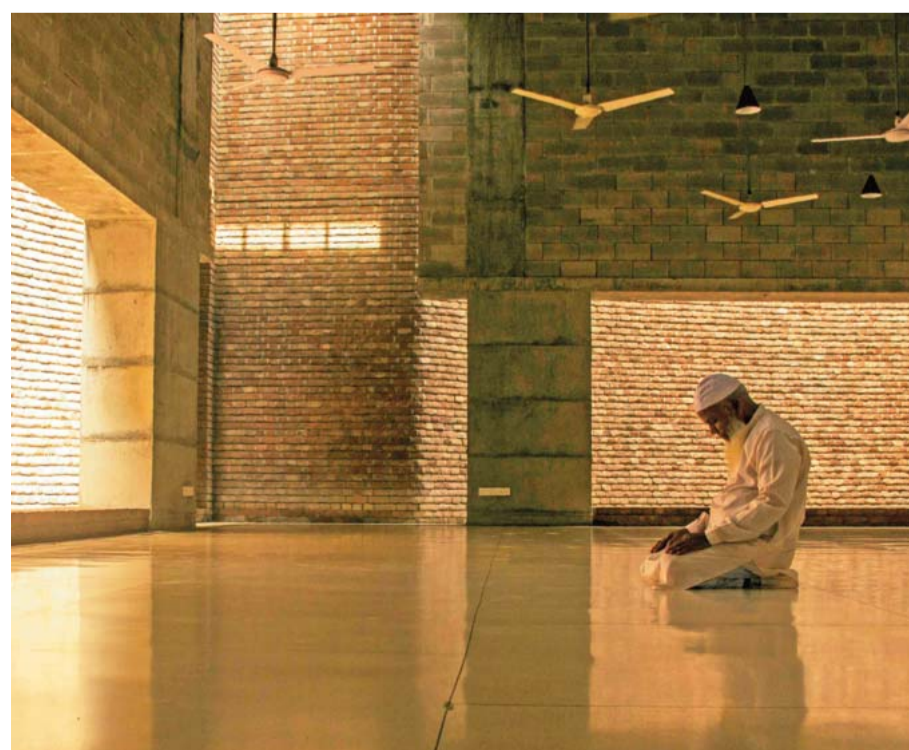


Figures forming an art installation entitled 'Black & Blue: The Invisible Man and the Masque of Blackness' by artist Zak Ove, are pictured during a press preview to promote the forthcoming 1:54 Contemporary African Art Fair, in the courtyard at Somerset House in London yesterday. — AFP.

Bangladeshi mosque architect smashes glass ceiling



This photograph shows a general view of the exterior of a mosque designed by Bangladesh architect Marina Tabassum in Dhaka. — AFP photos



A man offers his prayers in the mosque designed by Bangladesh architect Marina Tabassum in Dhaka.

As one of the only female architects in a country where women rarely even enter mosques, Marina Tabassum was an unconventional choice to design Bangladesh's new Baitur Rouf Mosque, which has just won a prestigious international prize. But there is little of the conventional about the 45-year-old Tabassum or her design, which eschews traditional minarets and domes in favor of a single-storey terracotta brick structure that is suffused with light and remains cool even in the scorching summer months.

Like most women in deeply conservative Bangladesh, Tabassum had barely set foot in a mosque when she was commissioned to design the building in 2005 after her grandmother donated a piece of land. Few of Bangladesh's mosques have dedicated sections for female worshippers, and most women pray at home. But Tabassum visited over 100 before setting pen to paper for the Baitur Rouf Mosque in north Dhaka, focusing on creating a haven of peace in a poor neighborhood of one of the world's most congested cities.

"We may not have a tradition of women going into mosques to pray in the Indian subcontinent, but I have experienced some really beautiful spiritual spaces. That has always been a great inspiration to me," she told AFP in a recent interview. "The whole idea of spirituality as an element in design has always been something very intriguing and I like working with spiritual spaces." The 45-year-old, who emerged as one of Bangladesh's top architects after designing Dhaka's Museum of Independence, says her sex has not constrained her career. "I think of myself as a professional. This whole notion of me being a woman really does not exist in my mind. It just does not exist," she said.

'Natural air conditioning'

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture is handed out every three years and rewards excellence in architecture serving Muslim communities. This year the \$1 million prize was shared between six projects around the world. The jury said the Dhaka mosque "challenges the status quo", praising its "robust simplicity that allows for deep reflection and contemplation in prayer". Officially secular but mainly Muslim Bangladesh has a rich history of mosque building, dating back to the Turkish invasion of the 13th century.



The earliest combined their own designs with elements found in local traditions, such as the use of brick and small domes that span the roof, creating a unique style. Tabassum said she tried to fuse those "glorious lost traditions" of mosque design with contemporary architectural practices. Since it was completed in 2012, the Baitur Rouf Mosque has attracted visitors from around the country-to the obvious delight of the



A general view of the interior of a mosque designed by Bangladesh architect Marina Tabassum in Dhaka.

imam, Deen Islam. "Unlike other mosques in the country, it does not have a minaret, or a dome, or a platform to deliver Friday prayers. Yet to these visitors it is one of the most beautiful mosques of the country," the 38-year-old imam told AFP on a recent visit.

"The mild light that enters the mosque is very soothing. Even during a hot summer day, the temperature inside remains mild. You feel like you're in natural air conditioning." Dozens of tiny windows in the roof and walls create a soft light that changes through the day as the sun passes over the building, while the traditional terracotta bricks keep the interior cool. Tabassum also teaches architecture students and says she is highly selective about the projects she takes on, and every one must have some social value.

"We are a very young nation and an architect's responsibility goes beyond just designing beautiful buildings," she said. "We can design buildings like the ones designed by Frank Gehry. But I would question whether that would be the right thing to do in a country like Bangladesh, whose economy is still not developed. "In the Bangladesh context, that would be an ugly thing to do." — AFP

Bangladesh architect Marina Tabassum speaks with AFP during an interview in Dhaka.