

SUBSCRIPTION

Kuwait Times



THE FIRST DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF



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Firefighters control blaze at Rai food warehouse



Divided America: The evolving face of US immigration



Small Iowa town a window into hunger problem in rural US



Future looks pink for Pak cricket ball-makers



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MOI RAISES MINIMUM WAGE FOR FAMILY VISA TO KD 450

MPS TO FILE REQUESTS TO GRILL PM, FINANCE MINISTER



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NEW CHALLENGES IN SYRIA AS MILITANTS WEAPONIZE DRONES

WASHINGTON: Groups like Hezbollah and the Islamic State group have learned how to weaponize surveillance drones and use them against each other, adding a new twist to Syria's civil war, a US military official and others say. A video belonging to an Al-Qaeda offshoot, Jund al-Aqsa, purportedly shows a drone landing on Syrian military barracks. In another video, small explosives purportedly dropped by Hezbollah target the militant group Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, formerly known as the Nusra Front.

A US military official, who spoke anonymously because he wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly, said the US military is aware of the development. Commanders have warned troops to take cover if they see what they might have once dismissed as a surveillance drone, and they have warned their partners to do the same, he said. Concerns are mounting after an incident involving coalition forces in Iraq this week. France's presidential spokesman, Stephane Le Foll, said yesterday that two French special forces were gravely injured by a drone that exploded once it was grounded near the northern Iraqi city of Irbil, where they are

Continued on Page 13



BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah waves at the airport after wrapping up an official visit to Brunei yesterday. Sheikh Sabah was received at Kuwait International Airport by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday after he returned home. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: The interior ministry yesterday raised the minimum salary required for expatriates to be able to sponsor their wives and children from KD 250 to KD 450 in a move expected to cut the number of foreign families in the country. Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah issued a decision amending the foreign residency law to raise the salary requirement for dependent visas, a step that will prevent thousands of low-paid expatriates from bringing their families to live with them on a permanent basis.

The decision said that the cases of expatriates already living in the country or those who were born here and draw salaries below KD 450 will be studied by the director general of the residence affairs department to decide whether they can be exempted from the salary condition.

Only a small percentage of the three million expatriates living in the country draw wages above the KD 450 level. According to the latest statistics, the average salary of a male expat in the private sector is only KD 247. The existing minimum family visa wage of KD 250 had been in effect since Dec 2004, when it was reduced from KD 400 in a bid to make it easier for expatriates to sponsor their wives and children in order to make Kuwait a family society, after complaints that Kuwait was predominantly a society consisting of single males.

During the past 12-year period, the number of expatriates increased to record levels of three million, constituting almost 70 percent of the total population of Kuwait.

Continued on Page 13

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KUWAIT: In appreciation and support to Kuwaiti Paralympics champions, Ahmadi Governor Sheikh Fawaz Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah recently received the Kuwaiti international diver Faisal Al-Mosawi.

KFH PARTICIPATES IN LAUNCHING OF PLASTIC BOTTLES RECYCLING PROJECT

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the launching of the implementation phase of the plastic bottles recycling environmental project (Omnia) as an environmental partner and the first sponsor for this national project. KFH is the first bank to embrace this idea that aims at increasing the awareness of the importance of collecting and recycling the plastic bottles in Kuwait.

In collaboration with KFH, Omnia installed 8 plastic bottles collection boxes at the main Cooperative Societies in different areas including Aledayliyah, Alsalam, Sabah Alsalem, Mubarak Alkabeer, Saad Alabdallah, and Abdullah Almubarak. KFH's partnership stems from its commitment to assume the corporate social responsibility,

and its keenness to increase the awareness of having a clean and healthy environment.

The project has 3 phases to recycle bottles that include spreading the awareness of trash sorting, distributing carton boxes at schools, houses, universities, hotels, hospitals etc. and recycling the plastic bottles in cooperation with the industrial authorities in an attempt for the latter to produce grains of plastic used to manufacture plastic bottles or new packaging materials. The project is based on an array of successful experiments and studies in several countries in the world. It is the initiative of a group of ambitious Kuwaiti youth who participate in raising the environmental awareness while assuring protecting and preserving the environment.



KFH and Omnia representatives launching the project

Arab Youth Survey

70 PERCENT OF GCC YOUTHS PREFER GOVERNMENT JOBS

'PRIVATE SECTOR NEEDS TO MATCH SALARIES, BENEFITS, HOLIDAYS'

DUBAI: More than two-thirds of young national Arabs in the Gulf states still hope to land jobs with government, despite initiatives to encourage them to seek out careers in the private sector. This new finding from the eighth annual ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey was unveiled by Sunil John, the CEO of ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller, at a presentation to the third Global Islamic Economy Summit, being held in Dubai on the 11th and 12th of October.

Across the whole Arab world, half (50 percent) of young people said they would prefer a government job to private sector work. However, this preference rises to 70 per cent across the Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. When asked what would entice them to work in the private sector, more than half of all young Arabs surveyed cited higher wages (51 percent), followed by better healthcare and other benefits (35 percent), more paid holidays (29 percent) and shorter working hours (27 percent).

In the GCC, where governments have traditionally employed the majority of the national workforce, only 15 percent of young people said they would prefer to work in the private sector, while another 14 percent had no preference and 1 per cent didn't know. "Persuading young people to take on roles in the private sector is essential to creating a strong, sustainable economy," said Sunil John.

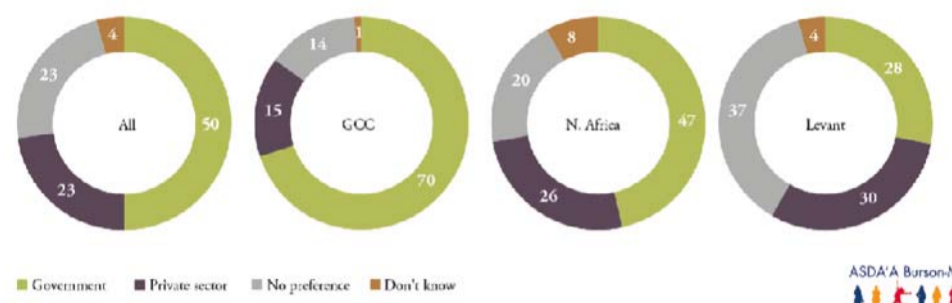
"These findings show that despite ongoing efforts to make the private sector more appealing to young Gulf Arabs, the message isn't getting through as fast as governments - or the private sector - would like. "New initiatives and policies, such as Saudi's Vision 2030, the removal of subsidies on fuel and introduction of VAT across the Gulf, show that governments are serious about new economic realities," he added. However, it seems balancing expectations about public sector work with the realities of private sector employment for those young nationals entering the workforce will require more effort."

Elsewhere in the Arab World, views towards public sector employment differ markedly. In the Levant, young people are almost evenly split between preference for the public and private sectors (28 per cent and 30 per cent respectively), while 37 per cent had no preference and 4 per cent didn't know. In North Africa, 47 per cent of young nationals would opt for the public sector, 26 per cent for private, 20 per cent had no preference and 8 per cent didn't know.

In another Survey finding unveiled at his presentation, John revealed that the majority of

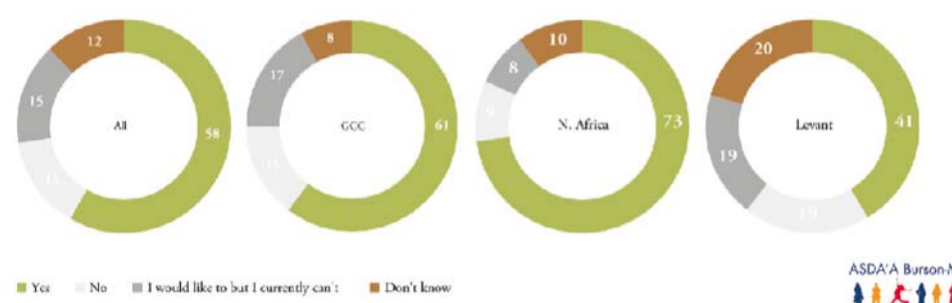
YOUNG GULF ARABS OVERWHELMINGLY WANT TO WORK IN PUBLIC SECTOR

Would you prefer to work in government or for the private sector?



MOST YOUNG ARABS WANT TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION

Do you plan on furthering your education, i.e. studying for a bachelor degree, Master's, PhD, or vocational diploma?



young Arabs - 58 per cent - want to further their education, be it university, vocational training or post-graduate degree. In North Africa, 73 per cent intend to further their education, against 61 per cent in the GCC and just 41 per cent in the Levant.

Of those who aren't seeking further education, 40 per cent of young people in the Levant say they are put off by the high cost of further education; in North Africa 19 per cent are concerned by teaching standards; while 62 per cent of young Gulf Arabs are keen to get on with their careers. Now in its eighth year, the ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey has established itself as a key referral source for businesses and

policymakers in the region and across the world.

For this year's survey, international polling firm Penn Schoen Berland (PSB) conducted 3,500 face-to-face interviews with exclusively Arab national men and women aged 18-24 in the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain; Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Yemen. The interviews were conducted from January 11 to February 22, 2016. In-depth results from the 8th Annual ASDA'A Burson-Marsteller Arab Youth Survey, including survey highlights and a white paper in Arabic and English, are available on www.arabyouthsurvey.com

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FIRE ENGULFS WAREHOUSE IN RAI



By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A huge fire broke out in the early hours of yesterday in a foodstuff warehouse in Rai over an area of 2,000 sq m, including a basement and two floors. Security sources said six fire teams were dispatched to the scene where they managed to contain the flames and prevent the fire from spreading to adjacent buildings. No casualties were reported. Security sources added that various safety violations were detected in adjacent stores and warehouses and that some of them were closed down.

GCC Security 1 drill

The head of Kuwait's delegation due to take part in the GCC Security 1 drill in Bahrain in November, Brig Waleed Ahmed Al-Saleh, his accompanying delegation and the heads of other delegations taking part visited the venue of the exercises, where they examined the construction, field facilities and preparations made for the drill.

Project inspection

As part of its efforts to inspect various development projects in Kuwait, a KFSD delegation visited the Sabah Al-Salem Academic City to check the progress of construction and ensure safety measures are fully observed at the site.

Car accidents

A 37-year-old citizen broke his leg in a car accident along Balajat Street. Another 46-year-old citizen broke his right arm in a collision along Sixth Ring Road. Meanwhile, a 41-year-old citizen was rushed to Jahra Hospital with chest and head injuries he sustained in a traffic accident in



Abdaly. Also, four citizens (aged 23-29) were injured when their vehicle turned over along Maghreb Expressway, said security sources, adding that their injuries varied between spinal fracture, wounds and head injuries.



Municipality inspection

Ahmadi municipality inspectors launched an inspection campaign in Fintas, Jaber Al-Ali and Fahd Al-Ahmad, which resulted in filing citations to street vendors selling fruit, vegetables, foodstuff and toys.

News

in Brief

2 Asian suspects freed after mistaken arrest

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti media is reporting two Iranians mistakenly arrested after taking "suspicious" photographs of Shiite congregation halls have been freed. The reports yesterday said the two had valid visas to live in Kuwait and described their arrests as a precautionary measure. Their arrests last week came ahead of the Shiite commemoration of Ashoura, which marks the death of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), at the Battle of Karbala in present-day Iraq in the 7th century. Tiny, largely peaceful Kuwait has increased security recently, worried about militant attacks. An Islamic State-claimed suicide bombing in 2015 in Kuwait City killed 27 people and wounded scores. On Saturday, an Egyptian who allegedly pledged support to the Islamic State group rammed a garbage truck into a vehicle carrying US soldiers, injuring only himself.



Kuwait Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with his Omani counterpart.

Kuwait ambassador to Italy technical contribution

ROME: Kuwait Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has praised the global technical and operational excellence-level of major Italian construction corporations in executing several Kuwaiti development projects. He made his remarks on the sidelines of his participation, by invitation from Italian Foreign Minister Paolo Gentiloni, in the annual meeting of the major Italian construction companies with operations and investments around the world. Ambassador Sheikh Ali Khaled highlighted growth of number of countries that deal with Italian construction technologies in carrying out mega and complex projects. Sheikh Ali also noted the growing interest shown by Italian companies and government in the contribution and cooperation to achieve an architectural renaissance in Kuwait and serving the country's development plans. The Kuwaiti ambassador and the Italian Foreign Minister both expressed deep satisfaction at the current level of bilateral ties between the two countries in various fields.



Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister on European Affairs Waleed Al-Khubaizi seen on the sidelines of a reception held by the Spanish Embassy in Kuwait, marking Spain's National Day. — KUNA

Kuwaiti investors in Spain are 'reliable'

KUWAIT: A Kuwaiti official said that Kuwaiti investors in Spain are 'reliable' among the Spanish business community. Al-Khubaizi, in a statement on sidelines of a reception held by the Spanish embassy to mark the country's national day, said Kuwaiti investors did not withdraw from Spain during the European country's financial crisis but kept their assets and investments. This was encouraged by the Spanish government's measures to further encourage Kuwaiti investment. Al-Khubaizi said the Spanish authorities facilitated the issuance of entry visas for Kuwaiti citizens, as well as offering residence permits for investors, and exempting taxes on direct investment. Trade exchange between Spain and Kuwait surged by 87 percent between 2003 and 2013. The two countries are bound to a series of agreements.

Arab Media Forum to honor winners

KUWAIT: The Executive body of the Arab Media Forum announced yesterday it planned to hold an honoring ceremony for voluntary teams that won the award of voluntary and humanitarian young initiatives, on October 29. The ceremony will be held under patronage of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, and in cooperation with the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs as well as the Arab Planning Institute, Secretary General of the Arab Media Forum's Madhi Al-Khamis said. The award aims to evaluate the non-profit voluntary activities in various areas, where the steering committee for the award received nearly 600 youth initiatives from various Arab countries, he added. The award comes within the framework of the forum keenness to support youth projects and create a competitive atmosphere among the young for their benefit and to society as well.

Arabs seek agreement on limiting disasters

TUNIS: Arab Interior Ministers Council yesterday stressed on the importance of cooperation in facing disasters and protecting the environment. The remarks came in a statement by the council's Secretary General Dr Mohammad bin Ali Koman on the occasion of the International Day for Disaster Reduction on October 13 and the Arab Environment Day on October 13. Koman noted the need for updating the terms of the Arab civil defense agreement signed in 1997 to limit disasters and protect the environment. He added that officials will meet on November to discuss signing an agreement on dealing with disasters.

Photo

of the day



Arab musicians perform a traditional song in this file photo. Arabic music is part of Kuwait Capital of Islamic Culture's festivals. — KUNA

BRUNEI BACKS KUWAIT'S UNSC NON-PERMANENT MEMBERSHIP

KUWAIT, BRUNEI CEMENT BILATERAL TIES, COOPERATION

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN: Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Wad'daulah expressed full support for Kuwait's non-permanent membership at the UN Security Council for the 2018-2019 term. The support was affirmed in a joint statement released yesterday on the sidelines of the official visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Brunei from 11 to 12 October. According to the statement, the two sides discussed the situation in Yemen, Iraq, Palestine and Syria, and the results of the second Asia Cooperation Dialogue summit held in Bangkok from 9 to 10 October. Meanwhile, the Bruneian sultan hailed Kuwait's hosting of the UN-sponsored Yemeni peace talks and the country's humanitarian role.

The deal prevents double taxation with respect to money or individuals, she said. She noted that the deal has several articles including (the resident article) which determine people benefiting from traits of the agreement. Among the articles also are "the income from immovable property" and "the business profit" which clarifies kind of spending discounted when taxes are estimated, she added. The agreement also has articles on (capital, profits of shares and diplomatic mission staff), she indicated. The Article 29 of the agreement stipulates that it is valid for five years and is renewed automatically for further five years, she said.

Bilateral ties, cooperation

Meanwhile, the two countries have agreed to further solidify their bilateral relations and pledged to expand mutual social and economic cooperation. The accord was affirmed in a joint statement released at conclusion of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's State official visit to the Sultanate. During the audience ceremony at the Istana Nurul Iman (Presidential Palace), His Highness the Amir and Sultan Bolkiah expressed satisfaction with the warm and friendly relations shared between Brunei Darussalam and Kuwait, and agreed to further strengthen these much-valued ties.

Prevention of fiscal evasion

A senior official at Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance has underlined the significance of the agreement of Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion signed by Kuwait and Brunei on Tuesday during the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Signing the agreement aims to remove financial obstacles so as to promote trade exchange between the two countries, Ghaidaa Al-Shamali, head of taxes agreements department at the ministry said yesterday.



Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador Ghanim Sagr Al-Ghanim

"Both Heads of State affirmed their efforts to support expanding social and economic cooperation between the two countries by exploring mutually beneficial opportunities, such as in the fields of trade, economic and investment, oil and gas, education, tourism, information technology, private sector linkages and Islamic affairs," the joint statement said. Sultan Bolkiah and His Highness the Amir witnessed the signing of several agreements and memoranda

of understanding (MOU) between the Government of Brunei Darussalam and the Government of Kuwait.

The inked cooperation MoUs are in the fields of higher education and scientific research, tourism, mutual exemption on visa for holders of diplomatic, special and official passports; protocol amending the agreement on the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income; establishing a joint commission for cooperation. Another memorandum stipulates cooperation between the two countries foreign ministries on training the departments' staff.

"Both Heads of State welcomed the signing of the agreements and memoranda of understanding as a positive step in further elevating and deepening bilateral engagement."

His Highness the Amir, along with accompanying delegation of senior officials, paid the visit to the Sultanate at the invitation of Sultan Bolkiah. It was Sheikh Sabah's first State Visit to Brunei Darussalam. His Highness the Amir was accorded an official welcoming ceremony at the Istana Nurul Iman (palace) on 11 October and was accompanied by a delegation of government officials including Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. — Agencies

KUWAIT'S OLYMPIC CHIEF EXTOLS TIES WITH SAUDI

RIYADH: Chairman of Kuwait's Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah said yesterday that he is impressed with the level of cooperation between his country and Saudi Arabia on issues related to sports.

Those remarks came in a statement Sheikh Fahad Al-Ali gave to KUNA after meeting with Chairman of the Saudi Public Authority for Sports Prince Abdullah bin Msaad in the Saudi capital. Moreover, he said that the meeting comes "against a backdrop of brotherly ties between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia."

On the meeting, Sheikh Fahad Al-Ali said it tackled issues of mutual concern as well as strategies to further develop the sports scene in Gulf nations. He also added that such meetings are crucial to help



Chairman of Kuwait's Olympic Committee Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah meets with Chairman of the Saudi Public Authority for Sports Prince Abdullah bin Msaad. — KUNA

bring collective goals to fruition, noting that visits will be routinely exchanged to enhance joint cooperation. — KUNA



CBK HOLDS POSITIVITY TRAINING COURSE

KUWAIT: In a bid to develop its employees' mental abilities and in collaboration with Alnowair Initiative, the Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently held a training course

on positivity at CBK Academy. CBK's Human Resources Manager Mona Al-Abdul Razzaq said that positivity makes employees work harder on achieving their goals and targets.



NBK SPONSORS MANDALA DRAWING WORKSHOP FOR CANCER PATIENTS

KUWAIT: The National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) recently sponsored an exceptional psychological therapy workshop for cancer patients through practicing Mandala drawing.

The workshop was launched by Al-Sidra Center. The workshop comes within

NBK's annual campaign titled 'Be Aware' that is dedicated to fighting breast cancer. NBK's PR officer Jawan Al-Abdul Jaleel said that NBK is always keen on taking part in such activities in order to boost public awareness about certain health concerns, including cancer.

KUWAITI WOMEN MARRIED TO NON-KUWAITIS 'MARGINALIZED'

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Municipal council member and head of Farwaniya committee Nayef Al-Sour said Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis are marginalized in various laws. He called for amending such laws to help these women get proper housing and income to help them face livelihood burdens.

KD 2,669,000 contract
MPW Undersecretary Awatef Al-

Ghunaim said that she has signed a contract to build and maintain the Civil Public Authority building in Ahmadi at a total cost of KD 2,669,000. Ghunaim added that the project would be concluded in two years.

Youth demo

A number of Kuwaiti youth groups announced they will demonstrate outside the housing welfare authority's headquarters on Saturday to urge Housing Minister Yasser Abul look into old housing applications.

KUWAIT'S FIRST-EVER TECHNOLOGY SEMINAR KICKS OFF

KUWAIT: Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and Belgium's Interuniversity Micro Electronics Center (Imec) organized a "Visionary Seminar, Exploring Technology for a Sustainable Future" yesterday. The first-ever event in the Arab World focuses on the importance of technology in developing engineering and health sectors, said KFAS Director General Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin in his opening speech.

Investment in infrastructure, but more importantly, in the development of human capital is key towards

advancements in science and technology, he said. The outcome of such investments is evidenced by the enormous progress that has been achieved by a great number of individuals and enterprises in many countries around the world, he added. As an example of such progress, the Intel processor today is the size of a finger nail and has over seven billion transistors (Xeon Broadwell), each is 14 nanometers in size. So what was once considered to be unimaginable, is today's reality, KFAS' official noted.

Kuwait strongly believes in the importance of global technological advancement to world economies, and KFAS believes that enabling Kuwaiti scientists, engineers, the business community and society at large with these technological advancements is the pathway to a sustainable, knowledge-based future for Kuwait, he added. KFAS encourages collaborative projects among national, regional and international institutions in areas of mutual interest particularly in water, energy and environment, Shihab-Eldin said.

He noted that in 2015, KFAS provided a total of KD 6.5 million in grants for funding mission-oriented collaborative research projects aimed at addressing key national priorities. The research is undertaken by local institutions such as Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and Kuwait University (KU) and international centers of research excellence such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). KFAS also, facilitates market penetration of technologies that can be of great benefit to Kuwait.

As an example, KFAS recently sponsored some vital pilot and demonstration projects to promote the expanded use of roof-top solar panels in residential buildings and parking areas in cooperative societies. The project will contribute to fulfilling the vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, which calls for reducing 15 percent of total electricity demand by 2030, he added. The one-day seminar, was attended by over 300 researchers and others involved in field of technology from private and public sectors.— KUNA

'EXPLORING TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURE'

KFAS ORGANIZES INTERNATIONAL FORUM

KUWAIT: In collaboration with imec, the world leading nanoelectronics Belgian research center, Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) organized a seminar yesterday, 2016 themed 'Exploring Technology for a Sustainable Future', which addressed several significant and vibrant areas such as health and energy. The one day forum was attended by more than 300 researchers, specialists and other interested parties such as ministries, governmental entities, research centers and academies, in addition to private companies, university students and representatives of embassies across Kuwait.

KFAS Director General, Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin, commenced the event with an opening statement stating that this forum is the first of its kind in Kuwait and the Arab world, and entails seven different lectures in relation to future applications of technology in



several areas including engineering, healthcare, and life sciences. In addition, two parallel discussion sessions were held to allow attendees to interact with Imec scientists and discuss technical issues in more detail.

Dr Shihab-Eldin also stated that the Seminar aims to deliver a strong foundation for promising scientific ideas and to allow participants to exchange knowledge and technicalities, in addition to delivering an interactive platform that creates an opportunity for scientists, technicians, industrialists and businessmen to discover new investment opportunities in future technologies.

He added: "We live in an exciting era, where technology drives the imagination and imagination in turn drives the development of technology, often disruptive, and where there is no limit as to how far we can progress, as long as we are willing to commit to our goals and nurture the culture of innovation. Investment in infrastructure, but more importantly, in the development of human capital is key towards advancements in science and technology.

The outcome of such investments is evidenced by the enormous progress that has been achieved by a great number of individuals and enterprises in many countries around the world. As an example of such progress, the Intel processor today is the size of a finger nail and has over 7 billion transistors (Xeon Broadwell), each is 14 nanometers in size. So what was once considered to be unimaginable is today's reality."

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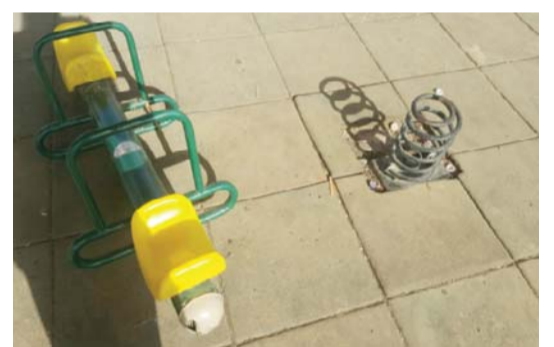
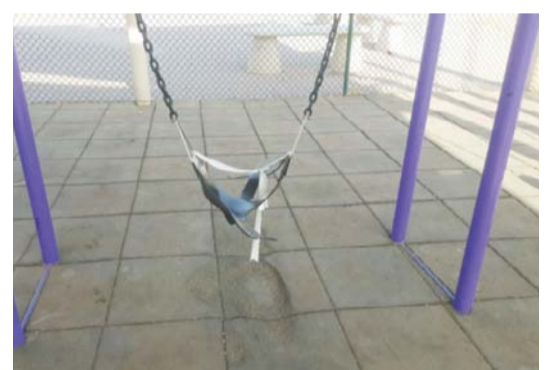
KFAS also, facilitates market penetration of technologies that can be of great benefit to Kuwait. As an example, KFAS recently sponsored some vital pilot and demonstration projects to promote the expanded use of roof-top solar panels in residential buildings and parking areas in cooperative societies. Dr Shihab-Eldin added: "In 2013, KFAS engaged with IMEC, and Kuwait University, in a three-year collaborative agreement targeting the field of photovoltaics and renewable energy. The collaboration between KU and imec scientists was part of a larger international research consortium, where imec aimed at developing advanced and more efficient photovoltaic solar cell technologies at lower manufacturing costs.

Upon the successful completion of the first phase, KFAS extended its support to the second phase of this project that commenced in 2016, which is expected to be completed by the end of 2018. This collaboration has led to the development of cutting edge silicon based solar cells with efficiencies of 23% and higher and at a competitive cost. As a result of the successful collaboration between KFAS, KU and Imec, KFAS anticipates cultivating additional scientific alliances in promising fields, some of which will be showcased today in this Seminar. The Kuwait-Imec Visionary Seminar consisted of seven different sessions presented by researchers from research centers. The first was entitled 'Imec and Smart Systems & Energy Technologies (SSET)', and focused on imecs history, mission, and activities as a technology enabler in the digital economy.

The second session was entitled 'Semiconductor Technologies for Healthcare Application', and addressed instruments available to make a precise diagnosis and prescribe a correct treatment and the Chip technology which offers a solution, as it excels making extremely complex instrumentation and data analytics available at the lowest possible cost. The third session under the title 'The Dawn of a New Healthcare System' focused on wearable sensors that have the potential to become a cornerstone technology in care, cure and true prevention.

The session themed 'An Intuitive Internet of Things' was the fourth session which focused on the possibility of making networks interoperate, having the right data available, making the interfaces more intuitive, realizing new sensors, or mining big data effectively, whereas the fifth session was entitled 'Technology Drivers for Thin-Film Flexible Electronics' and tackled the uses of thin-film, flexible electronics that can be fabricated on all types of substrates. The sixth session themed 'Enabling the Internet of Power Energy Research at imec' focused on the enabling technology developed by imec, that offers high-performance photovoltaic generation, highly reliable cost-effective electrical storage and high-performance power devices.

The seventh and final session themed 'Energy for Smart Cities' focused on the main trends in technology to arrive at such smart sustainable energy systems, including innovative power converters and smart grid implementations. Imec was founded in 1984 as an NGO and is considered one of the largest nanoelectronics research center, with a team of more than 2300 researchers, and works in collaboration with an estimate of 200 prestigious universities and 600 international private companies, across a broad scope of advanced technology fields, including roof-top solar panels.



KUWAIT: Several of Kuwait's public parks and playgrounds are in a terrible state of disrepair with broken slides, swings and play structures, torn and broken shading and overall poor condition. Its unclear despite repeated attempts by the Kuwait Times to ascertain who is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of each of the local community parks. These photos show the dangerous and unsafe conditions of a playground in the Mishref area. —Photos by



GCC Ministers of Tourism and Culture pose for a group photo. — KUNA photos

GCC ADOPTS TOURISM VISION

RIYADH: Kuwait's Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said yesterday that the meeting of the GCC tourism ministers had adopted a single strategic vision for joint tourism cooperation. Speaking to KUNA and TV following the meeting, he said an executive team would be set up to put this vision in place within one month's time, quoting the conferees as underscoring the significance of reactivating the tourism sector in the region thanks to its role in the promotion of Gulf identity.

He added that the meeting had decided a set of weighty resolutions chiefly aiming at consolidating Gulf tourism cooperation through a single vision for culture and tourism in the GCC member states. The Kuwaiti minister, highly appreciated Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz's interest in and keenness on revamping the sector of tourism and culture in the Gulf region. He also called for further strengthening and cementing coordination and cooperation among the GCC countries as a key tool for safeguarding regional security and stability and maintaining Gulf gains and assets. Meanwhile, Sheikh Salman Al-Sabah empha-



sized that it is imperative for the GCC countries to reactivate the role of national heritage in deepening Gulf national identity and consolidating bonds among the Gulf people. Speaking to KUNA and TV after touring the Handicraft Exhibition and National Museum at King Abdulaziz Historical Center in Riyadh, the min-

ister said the exhibition shows a set of handicrafts that are meant to promote Gulf identity and belonging and to link between past and present. In this context, the minister underlined the GCC countries' interest in encouraging and spurring handicrafts in the field of tourism and culture in the region.— KUNA



KISR LAUNCHES A CAMPAIGN ON ENRICHING FISH WEALTH

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has launched the 2016 second campaign on enriching fish wealth in the territorial sea waters, said KISR Director General Dr Sameera Ahmad Al-Sayyed Omar yesterday. She added that the campaign will continue during October and November, stressing the need to raise awareness of citizens and residents on preserving fish.

Dr Omar noted that the first campaign was launched last year under the auspices of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, in collaboration with several bodies. The 2015-2016 campaigns have a developmental dimension which seeks to increase fish reserve and an awareness one which

aims to achieve a wide societal participation from bodies and donors, she said.

The 2016 campaign is expected to release more than 135,000 different species of fish, she pointed out. She said that the campaigns of releasing fish into territorial water is part of KISR's contributions to enhancing food security. Omar noted that the institute is cooperating with some concerned bodies to intensify and unify efforts so as to face the continued decrease in local fish, mainly Zubaidi, grouper and squid. She urged bodies and authorities to preserve marine environment, asking both citizens and residents to stop overfishing and destroying marine environment.—KUNA



Kuwaiti political researcher Heba Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah

KUWAIT FULLY COMMITTED TO UN'S SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

LAWS TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC REFORMS 'PENDING'

NEW YORK: Kuwait is fully committed to achieve the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through executing several projects, said Kuwaiti political researcher Heba Sabah Al-Nasser Al-Sabah. Kuwait strongly believes in creating international partnerships to help less developed countries achieve sustainable development by 2030, said Al-Sabah in a speech at the Second Committee of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly late Tuesday.

Kuwait, having participated in setting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is also working on achieving the UN's plan by developing the social, economic and environmental sectors, she said. Meanwhile, Al-Sabah stressed on the importance of joining efforts to fight climate change in accordance with the Paris Agreement, set to be implemented in November. As part of its commitment to the SDGs, Kuwait is focusing on using renewable energy including the solar energy, finding dif-

ferent sources of power and reducing emissions. Using renewable energy will reduce 15 percent of Kuwait's energy needs by 2030, she added.

Economic reforms

A number of laws designed to buoy financial and economic reforms are awaiting final approval, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance Khalifa Hamada said yesterday. Speaking during the ninth meeting for treasurers of Middle Eastern and African countries, organized by the Ministry of Finance, Hamada revealed that the laws are germane to privatization, taxes levied on companies, commercial registry and bankruptcy.

Moreover, he noted that the meeting aims to bolster cooperation between the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the economies of the Middle East and northern Africa. On the meeting, Hamada said it provides an opportunity for representatives of participating nations

to share their knowhow with each other as it relates to plans for financial and economic development. Meanwhile, the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Finance added that Kuwait's economy has faced difficult times due to plummeting oil prices, which prompted the country to launch a series of reforms aimed to keep the economy afloat.

Elaborating on these reforms, he said that Kuwait has made budget amendments as a strategy to usher in increased economic growth, in addition to programs that help increase non-oil revenues. On other strategies employed, Hamada said they include endeavors that allow the private sector to contribute to the development of the economy, as well as methods to lure direct foreign investment in the country. In the span of two days, the meeting features participation of all 34 OECD member nations and tackles financial developments as well as ways to ensure administrative transparency and continued economic growth. — Agencies

US, GCC OFFICIALS DISCUSS COMBATING TERROR FINANCE, FINANCIAL STANDARDS

WASHINGTON: Government officials and financial sector representatives from the GCC met with their American counterparts on Tuesday at the US Treasury to continue a discussion regarding global anti-money laundering, combating the financing of terrorism, and correspondent banking. The meeting built upon conversations that began in November, 2015 regarding financial connectivity between Gulf and US banks and advancing best practices related

to implementation of anti-money laundering and combating terror finance standards.

"In particular, the Dialogue sought to explore banking issues as they relate to exchange houses, charities, and small- and medium- size banks in the Gulf," a statement from the Treasury said. "Discussions focused on developing a shared understanding between Gulf and US stakeholders regarding the issues that these Gulf-based entities face in order to appropriately address outstanding concerns."

Public and private sector participants have been included in the meetings since 2015. For the future, participants have agreed to explore "key issues related to effective information sharing, and will carry forward lines of effort focused on banks, exchange houses, and charities," the statement said. Earlier, Secretary Lew said that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should "fully and immediately" implement 2010 reforms which provide two emerging member nations seats at its executive board.

These "important" reforms, agreed by advanced European members, will render the executive board "more representative of the changing global economy," he said at a meeting of the IMF's policy steering panel, the IMFC. The IMF should also "more boldly and forcefully advocate for strong, sustainable, balanced and inclusive growth by exhorting member countries to utilize all available policy levers to boost demand," he said. Lew went on to urge both the IMF and World Bank to increase their own internal resources to support members impacted by withdrawal of correspondent banking relationships. —KUNA

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Crime

Report

SUICIDE NOTE
BLAMES HUSBAND

KUWAIT: Following up the case of a British legal advisor who was found hanging in her apartment in Salwa, security sources said the woman left a note blaming her husband for "ruining her life" and urged him to take care of their children.

A big hole in a wall

The owner of a women's accessories store in Fahaheel reported finding a big hole in a wall separating his store and a money exchange next door. Security sources said that on examining the scene, detectives found that burglars had targeted the money exchange, but failed to open the safe. They settled for stealing KD 350 in old currency notes.

Asian arrested at port

An Iranian was arrested at Doha port trying to smuggle huge amounts of subsidized food supplies, said security sources, noting that the smuggled items included rice, cooking oil and milk powder.

Policemen injured

Three policemen from the weapons squad were injured when they lost control of their patrol car while heading to arrest a suspect possessing illegal weapons. The car turned over along Sixth Ring Road.

Laborer found dead

A citizen reported that on checking the source of a foul smell emanating from the stairway leading to the roof of his brother's house, he found that a male domestic laborer working for his brother, who claimed to be out of the country on vacation, had been dead for a few days. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Kuwaiti stabbed

A citizen was stabbed in the back during a fight over traffic rights along Abdaly highway, said security sources, noting that the stabber fled the scene. A search is on for him.

Bottles of whiskey

A citizen was arrested in Farwaniya with two bottles of whiskey he tried to bribe a traffic policeman with. Security sources said that on filing a traffic ticket and asking the driver to step out to sign it, the motorist seemed inebriated. When asked if he was drunk, the man said "drinking is the best thing in the world" and gave the policeman the two bottles.

European prostitute

A European woman in Kuwait on a visit visa was arrested by vice police for practicing prostitution and referred to deportation. Security sources said the suspect confessed to making KD 25,000 in three weeks, during which she only worked five hours a day.

Nine bedoons arrested

Nine bedoons were arrested for fighting at Jahra Hospital's radiology department, where they had come with their children to examine the injuries the kids had sustained in a fight.

Weapon dumped in a trash

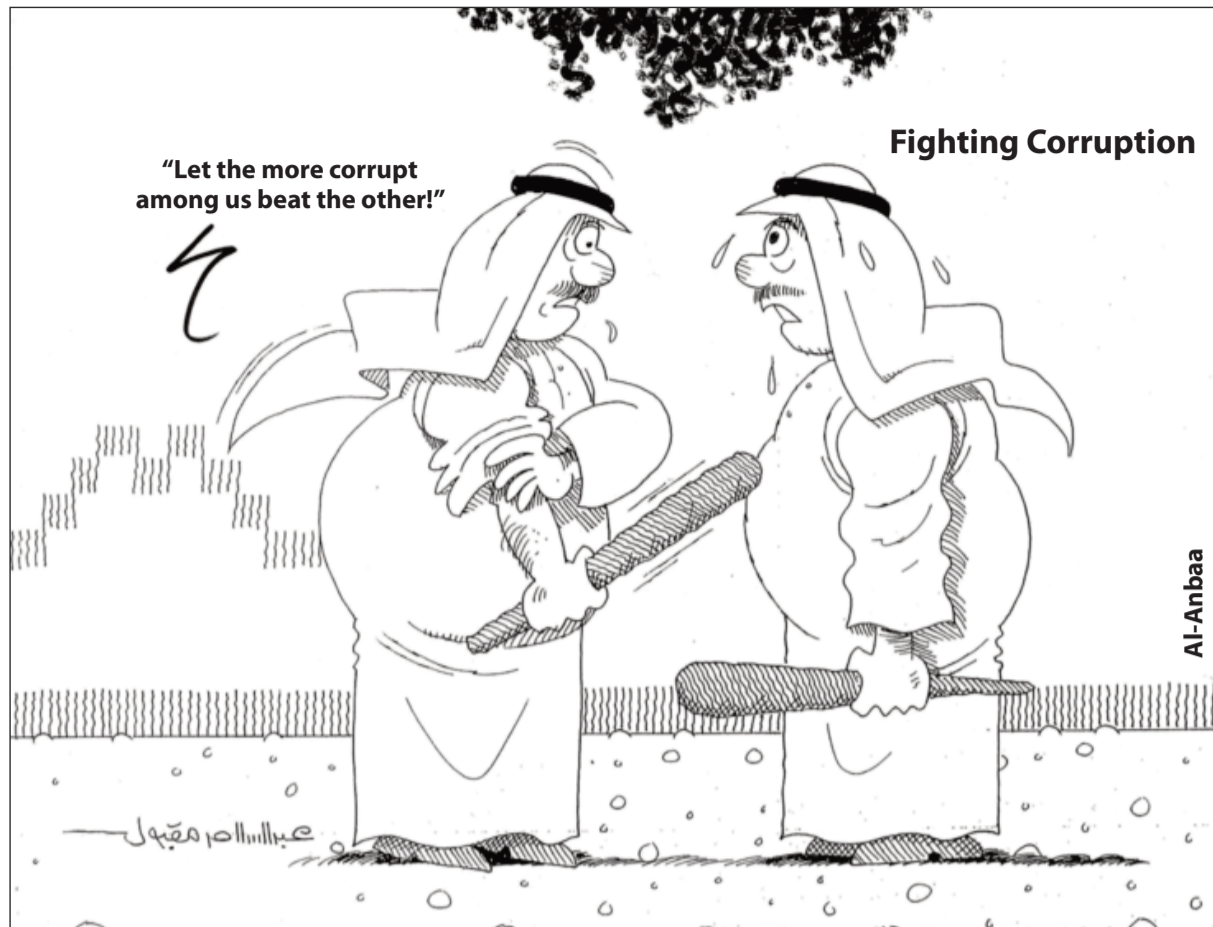
Cleaners working in Saad Al-Abdullah reported finding a weapon dumped in a trash container they were emptying. —Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

KUWAIT DONATES
\$795,000 TO CHARITIES

AMMAN: Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Hamad Al-Duaij has handed a sum of \$795,000 to Jordanian charities in order to alleviate the sufferings and woes of Syrian and Jordanian orphans. The ambassador said the financial aid, provided by Kuwaiti charities, is part of Kuwait's humanitarian efforts instructed by the Gulf nation's political leadership with a view to helping the needy in brotherly and friendly countries. Kuwait's fresh aid also aims to help the Jordanian government respond to the reflections of the current regional challenges and developments, he added. The money was provided by Kuwait's Social Reform Society and Islamic Heritage Revival Society, he pointed out. Kuwaiti charities have been providing humanitarian and relief aid to the needy and orphans in Jordan, especially since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis. —KUNA



KUWAIT: In collaboration with Kuwait Cardiologists Syndicate and Kuwait Cardiology Society, Sabah Al-Ahmed Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) will launch a full week activities to celebrate the World Cardiology Day (October 13-19) at the Avenues Mall. SACGC said that the activities would be on from 10:00am to 10:00pm.



Al-Anbaa

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

'TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT' PARLIAMENT

By Dr Hassan Abdullah Jouhar

The historic decision resulting from the meeting of executives and the legislatives at the speaker's office to discuss fuel price increases is supposed to be good news, as they decided granting every citizen holding a valid driving license 75 liters of free petrol monthly. Observers are disagreeing whether the value of this 'achievement' is KD 6, 7 or 8 every month!

It is obvious that the 2013 parliament's message is outstanding, unique, expressive and straightforward. This parliament is an achievement itself because it was the first elected by the one-vote electoral system. It was the replacement of the scary demagogic opposition. It was the achievement that promised to represent minorities in parliament, improve the language used in the Assembly, focus on development, stop corruption, expose bribe takers and threaten to grill the Cabinet and bring down the PM if the government came near citizens' pockets and income!

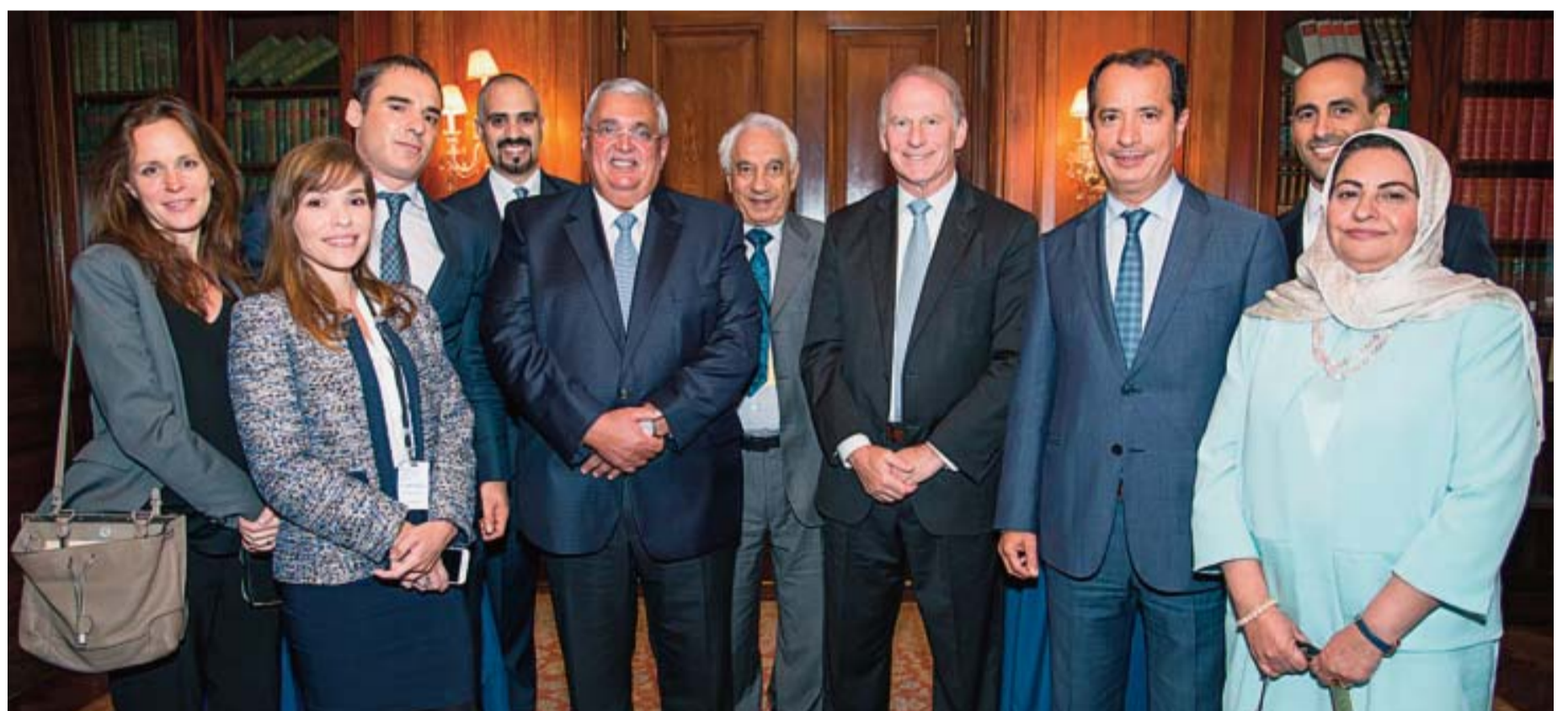
This is why the 2013 lawmakers called their parliament as the one of achievements. They started highlighting figures and statistics and laws they managed to pass. Therefore, the new KD 7 must be considered another achievement for them. Therefore, it would be unfair to criti-

cize the Assembly or its members' performance, because criticism angers them no more. It only angers those who relied on them and tried to make excuses for their performance and accused them of fault-finding!

Ever since its first day in office and up until the fuel joke, the current parliament's performance reflects its members' formation and potentials. After all, its members are doing their best and have passed laws after discussing them in specialized committees, but those laws were only hollow and meager ones. They have grilled ministers and even the prime minister himself, but none of those motions reached a no-confidence vote. Instead, they hailed those grilled. They demanded holding a special session and collected 35 signatures, and eventually met at the speaker's office and broke the good news to the Kuwaiti people. Well, they did their best and this is as far as they can go!

This is the result of the people's choice and trust in the one-vote parliament. Yet, can you possibly take one dinar and go to purchase whatever you want of international brands at the Salhiya mall? It seems that this is the 'take it or leave it' parliament!

—Translated by Kuwait Times



Faisal Al Ayyar seen with speakers and council representatives

KIPCO SPONSORS EVENT ORGANIZED BY COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS IN NY

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company - was a Platinum Sponsor of the 'Foreign Affairs LIVE: Gulf Economic Update'. The event, organized by the Council on Foreign Relations, recently took place in New York City. Through a series of panel discussions, Kuwaiti and US businessmen and experts came together to discuss the current political and economic environment in the Gulf, with a focus on Kuwait.

Commenting on the event, Faisal Al Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive) said: "As an independent think tank and publisher, the Council on Foreign Relations is a trusted resource for the global business community. We are delighted to be supporting CFR's inaugural event on the Gulf region, where financial experts from the world's finest organizations have come together with representatives of the Kuwaiti business community to discuss the opportunities and challenges for growth in the region." KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive) welcomed the delegates to a KIPCO-hosted breakfast. During the event, KIPCO Board Member and esteemed diplomat, HE Ambassador Abdullah Bishara, spoke about the history of Kuwait-US relations, the current political situation on the region and how it affected the economic outlook.

KIPCO's Group Chief Financial Officer, Pinak Maitra, participated in a discussion panel titled 'Foreign Affairs Briefing: The Gulf Cooperation Council'. Panelists included representatives of the Kuwaiti private sector, the World Bank and renowned US strategic advisory firms. The panel discussed how the region could deepen its reforms and continue its growth trajectory in the face of global economic uncertainty. Other panels discussed strategies toward creating sustainable growth, including infrastructure development, investment in education and skills training, and economic policies to encourage investment.



Pinak Maitra is pictured with other officials. (Inset) Abdullah Bishara

Al-Anbaa

Al-Anbaa

STOP THIS FARCE

By Hassan Al-Essa

Neither the government nor the parliament has shown any sign of confrontation with the reality of the disastrous drop in the state's sole source of income. They even co-starred in a farcical play of granting 75 liters of free petrol to each citizen. Both of them proved how hollow their political approaches are when they naively promoted such a proposal to grumbling citizens as if they were putting pacifiers in babies' mouths to stop them from crying, while at the same time, the speaker of house keeps pouting terms like 'smart solutions' and 'conservative citizens' on various media.

The other ugly face of the 75-liter pacifying solution, which is about 30 percent of the savings made by the state by increasing fuel prices, was to cut expat teachers' rent allowance from KD 150 to only KD 60. It came as if the government wanted to pass a message that it also deducted from the salaries of expat teachers that are already no more than half or one third of those paid to their Kuwaiti peers, so that it could eventually pay the difference to citizens in the form of those 75 liters of fuel. What an abusive way of dealing with citizens' awareness and minds and taking advantage of expat teachers' miserable lives, although they are expected to work hard on teaching future generations.

Kuwait currently needs statesmen and not political actors performing a comedy play during the worst times since the liberation. This nation needs people of principle and faith in aware and knowledgeable youth. The future requires sacrifices to provide economic and political security for both today's and tomorrow's generations.

Putting on some makeup to hide our bitter ugly situation will not do us any good and will never alter the truth that we are heading towards insolvency, bankruptcy and devastation we have been watching daily in nearby countries. The authorities must be convinced that that 'public showoffs' to maintain political loyalty and political affiliations in the same old manner when the authorities made miserable bargains with citizens giving them more money to keep them silent about mega corruption cases in various state-owned establishments will no more do them any good!

This nation really needs true statesmen nowadays to frankly and clearly tell us the truth regardless of how bitter it is, tell us how to deal with it and promise to start sacrificing themselves before asking citizens to make any. This is justice. Otherwise, we will cease to have a state in the near future. So, stop producing such weak plays!

—Translated by Kuwait Times



Thai junta chief to meet prince as king health fears grow

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MAY CHALLENGED OVER RIGHT TO IMPLEMENT BREXIT

FRANCE'S HOLLANDE CLAIMS 'PROBLEM WITH ISLAM'

PARIS: President Francois Hollande speaks of "a problem with Islam" in French society, in excerpts published yesterday of a book in which he also suggests that immigration needs to be curbed. "There is a problem with Islam because Islam requires (holy) sites and recognition," Hollande told two journalists from Le Monde newspaper for the book which will be published today.

"It's not Islam that poses a problem in the sense of its being a religion that is dangerous in itself, but because it wants to assert itself as a religion in the (French) republic," he is quoted as saying in "Un president ne devrait pas dire ca", which translates as "A president shouldn't say this". Elsewhere in the book, Hollande says he thinks "there are too many arrivals, immigration that should not take place."

Immigration and national identity are key themes in campaigning for next year's presidential election, which has echoes of the US race for the White House, with far-right leader Marine Le Pen riding high in the polls.

A string of jihadist attacks in France in the past two years, coupled with the Europe-wide migrant crisis, have stoked anti-immigration sentiment. A heated debate about Muslim integration in staunchly secular France came to a head over the summer when around 30 towns banned the body-concealing burkini swimsuit. France's highest administrative court later ruled that such a ban was a "serious" violation of basic freedoms.

The deeply unpopular Hollande has not yet declared whether he intends to stand for re-election. But his arch-rival Nicolas Sarkozy, bidding for the centre-right nomination, is campaigning heavily on populist anti-immigration themes.

Sarkozy on Sunday said that if elected he would call a referendum asking the French if they backed suspending the right for non-EU nationals to join family members in France—one of the main channels for immigration to the country. In the tell-all book, Hollande also attacks Sarkozy's "vulgarity, meanness and cynicism" and criticizes the rival he defeated in 2012 for his fascination for money and his legal entanglements.

The Le Monde journalists, Gerard Davet and Fabrice Lhomme, had exceptional one-on-one access to the president in 61 meetings. —AFP

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TURKEY WILL LIFT STATE OF EMERGENCY WHEN SITUATION 'NORMALIZES'

STRASBOURG, FRANCE: The state of emergency declared in Turkey after a July 15 coup attempt will be lifted only when circumstances permit such a move, Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said yesterday.

including police and military officers, judges, teachers, civil servants and journalists, have been arrested or lost their jobs under the state of emergency, which was extended last week for an additional three months.

The crackdown, aimed at people with alleged links to a US-based Islamic preacher accused of masterminding the failed coup, has alarmed Turkey's Western allies, including the European Union, which have warned Ankara that it must act within the rule of law.

Within Turkey, activists say the crackdown is being used to silence legitimate political opposition. "We cooperate with the Council of Europe, we inform (it) of all the legal actions we are taking and this process is very transparent and in the line of the Convention and the core values of the Council of Europe," Cavusoglu said.

While all EU states belong to it, the 47-member Council of Europe is a separate entity, with a focus on promoting democracy and the rule of

law, and enforcing the European Convention on Human Rights. Last week, the Council's human rights commissioner, Nils Muiznieks, urged Ankara to end its state of emergency "as soon as possible".

Cavusoglu said, "we had to extend the state of emergency because the situation is very complex. We had to make sure that this attempted coup never happens again." In a speech to the Council, the minister called on the body's members to visit Turkey so as 'to

grasp the gravity of the situation' for themselves. "The threat has not been entirely abolished," he said, referring to the movement of the US-based preacher, Fethullah Gulen. Cavusoglu conceded that some of those affected by the nationwide purges may in fact have been targeted in error. "It is true, mistakes have been made. Our responsibility is to correct them and respect the law," he said, adding that some 3,000 suspended civil servants had returned to their posts. —AFP

THE EVOLVING FACE OF US IMMIGRATION

LAND WHERE DREAMS COME TRUE

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA: When Manasi Gopala immigrated to America, she finally got the chance to row crew. As a child in India, she had dreamed of the sport from watching Olympic telecasts.

Gopala is among throngs of educated Indians who have moved in recent years to North Carolina's tech-laden Research Triangle and other areas across America. A 39-year-old software developer, she peppers her emails with an adopted "y'all."

For all of Donald Trump's talk of building a border wall and deporting 11 million unauthorized immigrants who are mainly Hispanic - and for all of the enduring contention over illegal immigration - immigrants to the US are now more likely to come from Asia than from Mexico

2000, according to Census figures. Simultaneously, more Mexicans without documentation are returning home. The number of Mexicans in the United States illegally tumbled nearly 8 percent in the past six years to 5.85 million, the Pew Research Center found.

With the share of US residents born abroad at its highest level in a century, immigrants increasingly defy the stereotypes that tend to shape conversations on the issue. Consider:

About 40 percent of Indian immigrants hold a graduate degree. Fewer than 12 percent of native-born Americans do. And earnings for a median Indian immigrant household exceed \$100,000 - more than twice the US median.

A majority of Chinese immigrants have come to the United States to seek education. China has become the dominant source of foreigners attending US universities, with 304,000 student

What economist say
Yet economists say immigrants from both ends of the divide are benefiting the economy. At a time when the growth of the US workforce has slowed, immigrants and their collective spending have become a key source of economic fuel.

These disparate groups of immigrants have helped reshape towns and cities, populated new suburban housing developments and revived main streets in some decaying rural communities. The changes flash into view on a visit to the political swing state of North Carolina.

None of these states approaches the more than 20 percent share in California and New York. Yet the transformations are evident in a drive across the dense highways that connect North Carolina's Research Triangle.

On evenings in the Research Triangle, many of the cars on Aviation Parkway pull off to stop at the 20-acre Hindu Society of North Carolina in Morrisville, which hosts yoga classes and religious services.

In 2000, when the society's temple was built, Morrisville was home to just 230 Indians. Now, there are 4,300. Those with roots in the community dating to the 1960s recall a period when a grocery run for authentic Indian ingredients required a five-hour drive to Washington, D.C. Those treks are no longer necessary.

Their rising numbers have established a broad community of Indians that has made it easier for new arrivals to integrate than it was for prior generations. "Now, you come from India, you don't really have to know anything else," said Pranav Patel, a 57-year-old software developer.

Asked how they have been received in the community, about a dozen Asian immigrants said they have generally been warmly accepted despite the national furor over immigration. One, oncologist, Dr. Neeraj Agrawal, said he could recall a patient having to overcome an initial reluctance to be treated by a foreigner.

In August, Gopala went to the Hindu Society to celebrate India's independence day. Over the entrance of the temple is the symbol for "om," representing knowledge - a reminder of education's vaunted status.



RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA: In this Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2016, photo, Manasi Gopala prepares for her sculling class at Lake Wheeler. —AP

or Latin America. And compared with Americans overall, immigrants today are disproportionately well-educated and entrepreneurial. They are transforming the nation in ways largely ignored by the political jousting over how immigration is affecting America's culture, economy and national security.

As of three years ago, Census figures show, India and China eclipsed Mexico as the top sources of US immigrants, whether authorized or not. In 2013, 147,000 Chinese immigrants and 129,000 Indians came to the US, compared with 125,000 Mexicans.

More likely to become citizens

Immigrants are also more likely now to be US citizens. Nearly half of immigrants over the age of 25 - 18 million people - are naturalized citizens, compared with just 30 percent back in

visas in the past academic year. India is second, with 133,000 visas. In addition, a quarter of immigrants from China hold graduate degrees.

Since 2011, a majority of Indian and Chinese immigrants have been between ages 15 and 29. Their youth means they're likely to have children born as US citizens, who will then become prime contributors to American population growth in the years ahead, according to an analysis by Census officials.

The influx of Asians has not only reshaped the face of America's immigrant population. It has also sharpened the divide within the immigrant population - between well-educated Asians and arrivals from Mexico and Latin America who have little money or education.

AS OFFENSIVE NEARS, ISLAMIC STATE RIGS MOSUL WITH BOMBS

ERBIL/BAGHDAD: Islamic State militants have placed booby traps across the city of Mosul, dug tunnels and recruited children as spies in anticipation of an offensive to dislodge the jihadists from their Iraqi stronghold, Iraqis and US officials said.

Mosul, home to up to 1.5 million people, has been the headquarters of Islamic State's self-declared caliphate in northern Iraq since 2014 and the militants are making complex preparations to prevent Iraqi security forces, backed by a US-led coalition, taking it back.

The battle for the city, expected later this month, will help shape the future of Iraq and the legacy of US President Barack Obama. Even if Islamic State is driven out, there is a real danger of sectarian strife, especially if civilian casualties are high in a mainly Sunni city wary of the Shi'ite led Iraqi government and the Shi'ite militias it depends on.

The jihadists, who swept into Mosul almost unopposed two years ago as Iraqi forces fled, have rigged its five bridges with explosives, prepared car bombs and suicide attackers and stepped up surveillance, according to four residents who spoke via telephone or social media.

They are digging in to fight for Mosul. They are more cautious, shaving their beards to blend in with the population and constantly moving their headquarters around, said former finance and foreign minister Hoshiyar Zebari.

Zebari, a senior member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party with access to intelligence on Islamic State movements in Mosul, and Col. John Dorrian, a spokesman for the US-led coalition,

both said the group was moving men and equipment through underground tunnels. "You see a fighter go in one place and pop up in another," said Dorrian. "The entrances are always exposed and those are a priority target."

Islamic State fighters have put up concrete bankaments and are using concrete T-walls to block points of entry for the attacking force, he said. Mosul residents said the militants have also

dug a two meter by two meter trench around the perimeter of the city to be filled with burning oil to make air strikes more difficult.

Aid groups have expressed concern over the prospect that many civilians could be killed in the fighting. About 200,000 people are expected to flee within the first two weeks of fighting, said Lise Grande, the UN humanitarian coordinator for Iraq. — Reuters



HIT, IRAQ: Iraqi government forces drive in the al-Bakr neighborhood north of Hit in Iraq's Anbar province after they cleared the area of Islamic State (IS) group fighters on October 10, 2016. —AFP



MADABA, JORDAN: This May 5, 2010 photo provided by Aerial Photographic Archive for Archaeology in the Middle East, APAAME, taken from a helicopter, shows extensive construction around archaeology. —AP

JORDAN'S AIRBORNE MONUMENTS MEN DISCOVER, PROTECT SITES

QASR BSHIR, JORDAN: The helicopter door opens and Robert Bewley leans out hundreds of feet above the Hisban Roman ruins outside Amman, Jordan. Feet on the struts, the Oxford University archaeologist begins snapping photos as the chopper circles the ancient stones.

Bewley and colleague David Kennedy aim to discover and preserve archaeology through a growing archive of sites across the Middle East and North Africa with 91,000 images. While Roman, Ottoman, Byzantine, Nabatean, Neolithic and British imperial sites have been uncovered, the pair has also revealed in the past 19 years both mysterious man-made rock structures and "catastrophic" urban sprawl.

Refugee damage

Refugees fleeing wars in the Palestinian territories, Iraq and Syria have decimated Jordan's land and water resources over the past few decades, Kennedy said. "I could see the archaeology was disappearing, and one of the things that's been quite shocking since then is to see that the process is accelerating," he said.

Their photographs show the northern city of Jerash slowly enveloping Roman ruins there. Other photos show site after site bulldozed, roads cut through Nabatean temples and Roman forts, and a Neolithic cemetery ransacked by looters.

US VOWS 'PROPORTIONAL' RESPONSE TO RUSSIAN HACKING

ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE: The United States will give a measured response to what it believes to be Russian interference in the US election process, including the hacking of Democratic Party computers, a White House spokesman said yesterday.

"We obviously will ensure that our response is proportional," spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters traveling with President Barack Obama on Air Force One. "It is unlikely that our response would be announced in advance," he added.

"The president has talked before about the significant capabilities that the US government has to both defend our systems in the United States but also carry out offensive operations in other countries," he said. The US statement, issued

Friday, said the American intelligence community "is confident that the Russian government directed the recent compromises of emails from US persons and institutions, including from US political organizations."

It also said the disclosures of allegedly hacked emails on WikiLeaks and other websites and by the online persona "Guccifer 2.0" were "consistent with the methods and motivations of Russian-directed efforts." Hillary Clinton, the Democratic presidential nominee, has accused Russia of trying to tilt the presidential election in Republican rival Donald Trump's favor through a series of email hacks.

The Obama administration has appeared prudent about the way it responds to hacking and computer attacks, seeking to avoid an escalating cyber war. The line sometimes is difficult to draw between traditional espionage - which the United States also practices, and must thus tolerate - and full-blown cyber assaults.

The Obama administration has repeatedly declared its right to respond with all the means at its disposal, and not only through technology measures. After North Korea hacked Sony Pictures in 2014, Obama responded with economic sanctions against the regime. —AFP

CLINTON, TRUMP TAX PLANS ARE 'MIRROR IMAGES'

RISE OR LOWER TAXES?

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO: Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump's tax plans are "mirror images" of one another, with the Democrat proposing steep tax hikes on the wealthy while the Republican candidate proposes even deeper reductions in the taxes paid by America's richest people, according to an analysis released Tuesday.

The Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center found that the top 0.1 percent of taxpayers would pay \$800,000 more in taxes on average under Clinton's plan while Trump's plan, their taxes would decline by more than \$1 million. It found that Trump's proposed cuts would cost \$6.2 trillion over 10 years while Clinton's would raise \$1.4 trillion in new revenue over that time period - money the Democrat proposes using for new government programs.

"Trump has a very, very large tax cut that's primarily focused on high income individuals. Clinton has a significant tax increase" for those people, said Len Burman, a former Treasury official under President Bill Clinton who is director of the center, a joint project between two nonpartisan Washington, DC think tanks. "In almost every meaningful respect these plans are mirror images."

The analysis does not account for the possible economic effects of the tax plans, but the authors nonetheless predicted that Trump's plan would cut into the economy by running up large deficits that cause interest rates to soar. The Trump campaign said the analysis is worthless because it lacks critical calculations.

Fraudulent analysis

The "Tax Policy Center has wasted everyone's time with a fraudulent analysis," Trump senior policy adviser Stephen Miller said in a statement. By contrast, an analysis by the Tax Foundation, which advocates for lower taxes, found Trump's proposal could create \$2 trillion in new tax revenues by triggering growth. But even that analysis found it would leave a net deficit and that more of its benefits would accrue to wealthier taxpayers.

The Tax Policy Center's new analysis found that Trump's proposals would focus on reducing tax on capital, which would encourage more work, investment and savings. It said Clinton's proposals could have the opposite effect by hiking up levies on capital. However, the analysts noted that Clinton has proposed new spending that could offset

some of the negative economic impact of high-end tax increases. Clinton's tax hikes would fall almost exclusively on businesses and taxpayers in the top 1 percent. The analysis found that some of the cuts in the plan - including a doubling of the child tax credit the Clinton campaign announced Tuesday morning - could lead to a 1 percent increase in income for the poorest 20 percent of U.S. households.

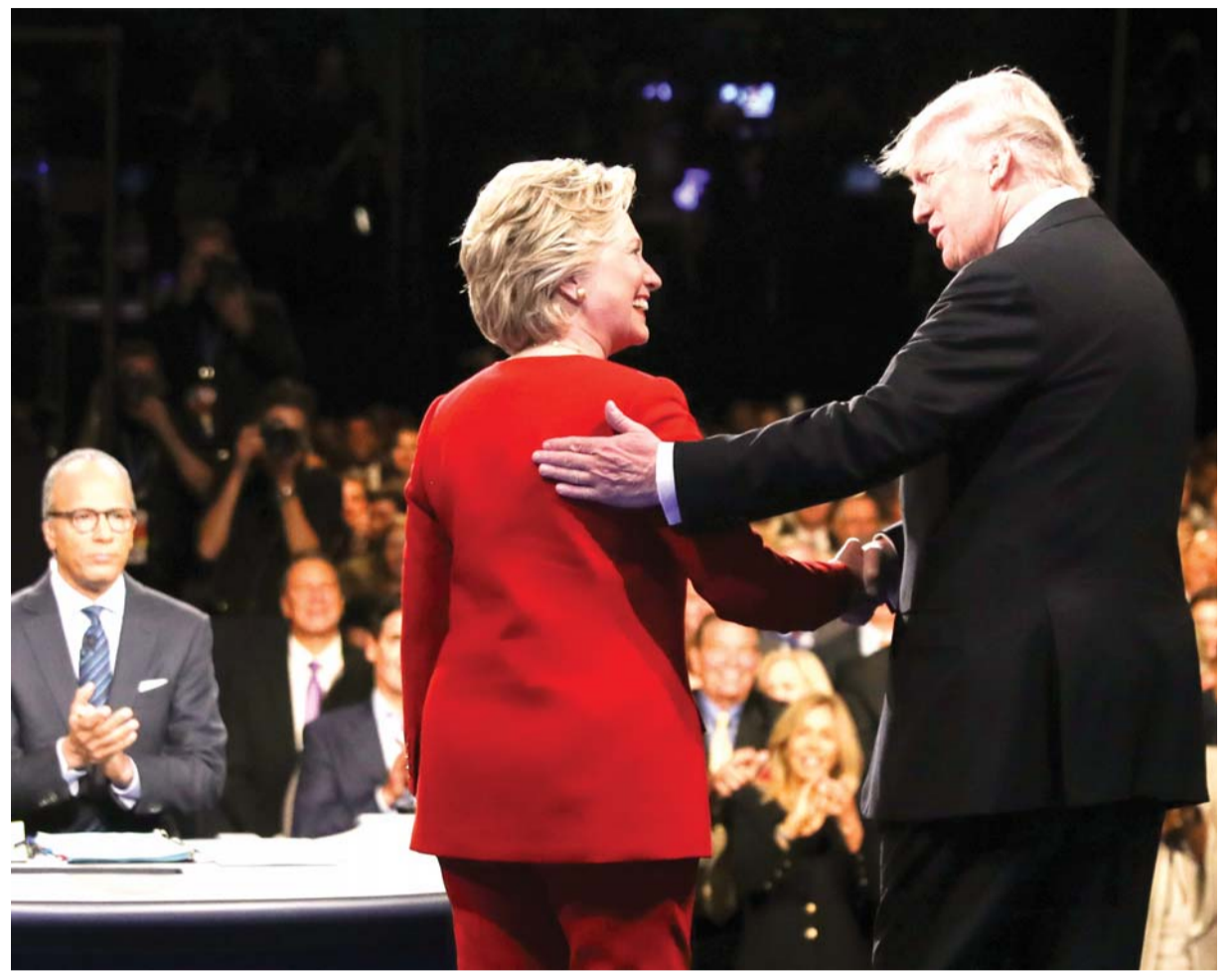
By contrast, Trump would cut taxes for most, but not all, Americans. The analysis found Trump would cut the average tax bill by \$2,940, or 4.1 percent. But those in the top 0.1 percent would have their bill reduced by 14 percent, or \$1.1 million.

Because of the way it changes standard deductions, the Trump proposal would actually raise taxes for an undetermined number of middle-class and lower-income households that have many children or are headed by a single parent, the analysis found.

Both candidates propose eliminating the carried interest provision of the tax code that allows hedge fund managers and others to be taxed at lower rates. But the Trump plan would open up a bigger loophole by allowing business partnerships like hedge funds to pay an even lower 15 percent corporate rate. In fact, the Tax Policy Center predicts that many high-paid individuals would essentially incorporate as freelance employees so they could pay 15 percent on their earnings, rather than Trump's top rate of 33 percent.

That "gives them a much better deal than carried interest," said Eric Toder of the Tax Policy Center. The Trump campaign has insisted it will create safeguards to ensure this does not happen, but has not explained how.

Overall, Clinton proposes a new 4 percent tax on earnings over \$5 million, requiring people earning over \$1 million annually to pay at least 30 percent of their income in taxes and face new limits on non-charitable deductions and exclusions. She'd double the Child Tax Credit, currently \$1,000 per child under 17, to \$2,000 per child under 4, and increase the amount low-income families get in refunds. She's also proposed hiking capital gains taxes as well as increasing the estate tax on large inheritances to 65 percent. Trump proposes consolidating the seven federal income tax brackets to three - at 33 percent, 25 percent



HEMPSTEAD, NEW YORK: In this Sept. 26, 2016 file photo, Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton and Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump shake hands during the presidential debate at Hofstra University. —AP

and 12 percent - and creating a flat 15 percent corporate tax. He'd cap deductions at \$200,000 per household, allow families to deduct the cost of child care and elder care and eliminate the estate tax. Trump, like Clinton, would still tax capital gains at death before they are passed onto heirs. —AP



DAME-MARIE, HAITI: A girl walks in front of a house that was destroyed by Hurricane Matthew on Monday, Oct. 10, 2016. —AP

HAITIANS AWAIT AID, HELP EACH OTHER REGAIN SOME NORMALCY

LES CAYES: People throughout Haiti's devastated southwest peninsula formed makeshift brigades Tuesday to clear debris and try to regain some semblance of their pre-hurricane lives as anger grew over the delay in aid for remote communities more than a week after the Category 4 storm hit. A community group that formed in the southern seaside community of Les Anglais began clearing tree limbs from streets and placing them into piles while others gathered scraps of wood to start rebuilding homes destroyed by Hurricane Matthew.

Carpenter James Nassau donned a white construction helmet as he rebuilt a neighbor's wall with recycled wood, hoping to earn a little money to take care of 10 children, including those left behind by his brother, who died in the storm. "My brother left five kids, and now I've got to take care of them," he said. "Nobody has come to help."

The scene repeated itself across small seaside and mountain villages dotting the peninsula, where people pointed out helicopters buzzing overhead and questioned why they haven't received any help.

Israel Banissa, a carpenter who lives near the small mountain town of Moron, said a Red Cross assessment team stopped outside his village to ask people questions but didn't leave any supplies. "There's no aid that's come here," he said as he sawed wood to help rebuild his home and dozens of others. "I don't think they care about the people up here." The UN humanitarian agency in Geneva has made an emergency appeal for nearly \$120 million in aid, saying about 750,000 people in southwest Haiti alone will need "life-saving assistance and protection" in the next three months. UN officials said earlier that at least 1.4 million people across the region need assistance and that 2.1 million overall have been affected by the hurricane. Some 175,500 people remain in shelters.

Death toll 473

The National Civil Protection headquarters in Port-au-Prince raised the official nationwide death toll to 473, which included at least 244 deaths in Grand-Anse. But local officials have said the toll in Grand-Anse alone tops 500.

Those who survived the storm still faced great challenges, including going days without food. Elancie Moise, an agronomist and director for the Department of Agriculture in southern Haiti, said between 80 to 100 percent of crops have been lost across the southern peninsula. "Crisis is not the word to describe it," he said. "You need a stronger word. It is much worse. There is no food for people to eat."

Food was slowly reaching remote communities, but there was also a growing need for medical supplies. In the western seaside village of Dame Marie, patients with festering wounds lay silently on beds at the main hospital waiting for medicine a week after the storm hit.

Among them was Beauvoir Luckner, a cobbler and farmer who walked 12 kilometers (seven miles) in three days after a tree fell on his house, crushing his leg and killing his mother. The leg might have to be amputated, but all doctors can do is clean his wounds because the hospital has run out of everything, including painkillers. "There's no water, no antibiotics," Dr. Herby Jean told The Associated Press. "Everything is depleted. ... We hear helicopters flying overhead, but we're not getting anything."

Meanwhile, Luckner lay on a mattress with no sheets, a bandage wrapped around his left leg. "It took a lot of misery to get here and now that I'm here, there's still misery," he said. Concern also was growing about an increase in cases of cholera, which has already killed roughly 10,000 people and sickened more than 800,000 since 2010. — AP

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LAWYERS GIVE UP DEFENCE OF PARIS ATTACKS SUSPECT ABDESAM

PARIS: The two lawyers for the main suspect in the Paris attacks, Salah Abdeslam, said yesterday they would no longer defend him given his uncompromising refusal to answer questions about the November massacre.

"We both decided to give up his defense," lawyer Frank Berton said in a joint interview with France's BFM TV with fellow lawyer Sven Mary. "We don't think that he will speak, and he will use the right to remain silent," said Berton.

"Given our position, what are we supposed to do? We said from the begin-

ning... that if our client remained silent we would quit his defense," he added. Abdeslam is the sole surviving member of the group behind the November 13 carnage at a Paris concert hall, bars and the national stadium that left 130 people dead and scores injured.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the atrocity, one of a string of attacks claimed by the jihadists that have put Europe on edge. Abdeslam has refused to answer questions since being transferred to France from Belgium in April.

Berton said he had seen his client around 10 times and had regularly spoken to him on the phone. He said the 27-year-old Belgian-born French national had written to the authorities to tell them he no longer wanted representation.

Just like 'social visits'

Mary, his Belgian counsel, said he had felt as if his role was just to "pay social visits to the prison". Abdeslam has protested at the round-the-clock CCTV surveillance of his jail cell in Fleury-

Merogis prison south of Paris, where he is being held in solitary confinement.

The CCTV surveillance was the "clear" reason why he was tightlipped, said Berton. "Authorization for the surveillance is valid for three months and the minister of justice is going to decide shortly on whether to renew it," Berton said.

"I sense that he (Abdeslam) will contest this as well." After four months on the run, he was arrested on March 18 in Molenbeek, a Brussels neighborhood notorious for being a hotbed of Islamic

extremism, where he grew up. He was transferred to France to face terror charges on April 27.

Investigators have yet to pin down his exact role in the worst terror attack in French history.

Abdeslam drove the three suicide bombers who blew themselves up outside the Stade de France to the stadium and then roamed the city before fleeing to Belgium the next day. He told investigators there he had also wanted to blow himself up at the Stade de France but had changed his mind. —AFP

MAY CHALLENGED OVER RIGHT TO IMPLEMENT BREXIT

PARLIAMENTARY VOTE FOR BREXIT MAY BE NEEDED

LONDON: Britain's government faces a court challenge on Thursday that could delay Brexit as lawyers argue Prime Minister Theresa May cannot take the country out of the EU without a parliamentary vote. England's most senior judges will hear arguments brought by lawyers for a number of different claimants, including an investment fund manager, a hairdresser and an expatriate living in France.

May has condemned their challenge as an attempt to "subvert" the result of the June referendum when 52 percent of Britons voted to leave the EU. But the claimants argue either that the vote was only "advisory" and must be implemented by elected lawmakers, or that only parliament can remove the rights accorded to Britons as EU citizens. "Parliament has taken us into the European Union and only parliament can take us out," said lawyer John Halford of Bindmans solicitors.

Most MPs campaigned for Britain to stay in the EU and, while many have now accepted the result, lengthy debates ahead of a vote could take months, upsetting the entire Brexit

timetable. May has said she wants to trigger Article 50 — the formal procedure for starting two years of talks on departure-by the end of March at the latest.

The government has argued its right to lead Brexit falls under "royal prerogative"—a type of executive privilege used in foreign policy. The case reflects growing pressure from MPs themselves, led by the main opposition Labour party, for a vote on the terms of Britain's exit over fears of an abrupt departure from the single market.

'Kill' Brexit by delaying it

The case will be heard by Lord Chief Justice John Thomas, Master of the Rolls Terence Etherton and senior Court of Appeal judge Philip Sales. After a three-day hearing, the judges will retire and likely deliver their verdict within a few weeks. The losing party is almost certain to appeal, but the seniority of the panel means it would probably go straight to the Supreme Court for a final decision.

Jo Hunt, a law lecturer at Cardiff University, said that although the power to trigger Article

50 "probably" does fall under royal prerogative "there are strong... arguments why it shouldn't". In the first few weeks after the referendum, there was much speculation by so-called "Remainers" about legal challenges that could overturn the result. This is now thought highly unlikely although May accused those behind Thursday's challenge of trying all the same. "Those people who argue that Article 50 can only be triggered after agreement in both Houses of Parliament are not standing up for democracy, they're trying to subvert it," she said.

"They're not trying to get Brexit right, they're trying to kill it by delaying it. They are insulting the intelligence of the British people."

'An unelected executive'

The case was initially brought by 37-year-old British hairdresser Deir Dos Santos, and Gina Miller, co-founder of SCM Direct investment managers, before being joined by a group of self-styled "ordinary citizens." "My client was very surprised at being labeled by the prime minister as trying to subvert democracy," said Dominic Chambers of Maitland Chambers, who represents Dos Santos.

In a sign of the persistent tensions between the two opposing camps, Dos Santos is keeping a low profile after being targeted by abuse on social media. The offices of Miller's lawyers, Mishcon de Reya, have also been picketed. A third group of claimants are represented by Halford and led by expat Grahame Pigney, a "committed European" who lives in France.

Together with his 22-year-old son Rob, a "Remain" campaigner from Gibraltar, a tree surgeon from Wales and a London student, they have raised almost £150,000 from more than 4,000 donors. "Parliament has given UK citizens certain fundamental rights, such as freedom of movement... and it's only parliament that can take this away," Pigney, a semi-retired former IT manager, told AFP.

"I would have thought 'Leavers' would support us because it's part of their argument that an unelected executive cannot act like this," he added. "They were talking about the European Commission," he said, making an ironic reference to May who replaced David Cameron in July through an internal Conservative Party leadership contest. —AFP



LONDON: A video grab from footage broadcast by the UK Parliament's Parliamentary Recording Unit (PRU) shows British Prime Minister Theresa May as she speaks during Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons yesterday. —AFP

FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL FAVORITES HEAD FOR DEBATE SHOWDOWN

PARIS: France's ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy and former prime minister Alain Juppe will come face to face today for a televised debate ahead of a November primary widely seen as the main battle for the presidency.

The stakes could not be higher, as pollsters say whoever wins the nomination for the centre-right Republicans party on November 27 is likely to take on-and defeat-far-right leader Marine Le Pen in the 2017 presidential election.

The brash Sarkozy, 61, is waging an uphill fight for a return to the office he held from 2007 to 2012, lagging far behind his mild-mannered 71-year-old rival in voter surveys. Polls show Juppe with a lead of between eight and 14 percentage points over Sarkozy for the first round of the primary on November 20, with five other candidates trailing behind.

All seven will take part in the debate on today, the first of four, including one on November 24, three days before the run-off for the nomination. Meanwhile the left is flailing without a viable candidate for the presidential vote in April and May, with the deeply unpopular President Francois Hollande yet to decide whether to stand for re-election.

Le Pen of the National Front, riding high in the polls thanks to a surge of anti-migrant sentiment, is expected to place second or even win the first round on April 23. With no left-wing figure likely to make it to the May 7 second round, the run-off is expected to pit Le Pen against either Juppe or Sarkozy, with the centre-right candidate forecast to prevail.

Sarkozy is struggling for traction and has been accused of borrowing Le Pen's themes, tapping into fears about immigration and Islam following a string of jihadist attacks in France in the past two years, coupled with the Europe-wide migrant crisis. The former president confronted both subjects during a rally

on Sunday, pledging to hold two referendums immediately after taking office—one aimed at curbing immigration and the other designed to make it easier to round up suspected Islamist radicals.

Juppe, currently France's most popular politician, is taking the opposite tack, positioning himself as a unifier and a moderate, notably on immigration. On Monday he said Sarkozy was merely helping Le Pen with his proposals. Sarkozy, who was faulted for flaunting his wealth in what was dubbed a "bling-bling" presidency, painted Juppe as an elitist on Sunday.

Without naming his rival, Sarkozy said: "I am running to talk about the daily lives of the French, not to represent an elite for whom everything is fine."

'Fire and ice'

Both men have been tarnished by scandal, though Sarkozy's are fresher. The ex-president faces inquiries into alleged influence-peddling and suspected illegal funding of his failed 2012 election campaign. Juppe too was involved in a party finance scandal, which saw him convicted in 2004. Those with longer memories will recall that Juppe's austerity policies as prime minister sparked the longest period of strikes and stoppages France had seen since May 1968, bringing the Paris metro to a standstill for a month in 1995.

Juppe got his job back as mayor of Bordeaux after sitting out politics for two years in Canada in the wake of the 2004 conviction. In a book out in September, he rankled

at being seen as a cold, insensitive technocrat. "With time, I have softened, at least psychologically," he wrote. Philippe Marcacci of the Est Republicain daily said: "Besides the (rivals') opposite styles of fire and ice there is the political wager." Marcacci wrote in an editorial that while Sarkozy has chosen to hammer away on security and immigration, Juppe "has made another choice—that of the centre".

Gael Sliman of the Odoxa polling firm told AFP: "Everyone expects Sarkozy, the outsider, to do a lot, even too much, to regain ground. He will have to be careful not to go overboard" during the debate. Juppe, on the other hand, "should put himself above the fray without coming across as arrogant." —AFP



BOULOGNE-BILLANCOURT, HAUTS-DE-SEINE, FRANCE:Thierry Solere (2nd L), president of the organising committee of the right-wing primaries, meets with candidates' campaign managers, including (from L) Michele Tabarot, Gilles Boyer, Patrick Stefanini and Sebastien Lecornu, during a lunch in Boulogne-Billancourt yesterday. —AFP



PARIS: In this July 25, 2016 file photo, French president Francois Hollande reviews troops at the army base and command centre for France's anti-terror 'Vigipirate' plan, dubbed 'Operation Sentinelle'. —AP

FRANCE CREATES NATIONAL GUARD TO IMPROVE SECURITY

PARIS: France's government has approved a decree creating a National Guard to bolster security against extremist attacks across the country. The Cabinet adopted the measure during its weekly meeting on yesterday.

The Guard, which is expected to grow to 84,000 people by 2018, is a new, enhanced version of the existing reserve forces. Following the Nov. 13 attacks in Paris last year, President Francois Hollande proposed creation of the force to include citizens willing to get involved in serving their country.

Defense minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said the creation of the Guard "is a response to the need for an adaptation of our security and defense strategy." "It is also a response to the patriotic spirit that was expressed after the attacks," he told reporters following the Cabinet meeting.

Guard members' tasks will vary from patrolling the streets of big cities to securing major sport and festive events to working in military staff offices. They will be fully

integrated into regular troops and police forces for a certain period of the year — from few days to several months. They can be students, job seekers, employees as well as retired police officers and military veterans.

Regular military and police reserves now include 63,000 people. Students under the age of 25 who join the Guard a minimum of 37 days a year for five years will get a state grant of 100 euros (\$110) per month.

Businesses which allow their employees to enlist — up to the legal limit of 10 days a year — will be granted tax cuts. Authorities want to be able to deploy more than 9,000 Guard members each day on the ground in 2018, through a rotation system.

The government hopes this will notably help relieving regular troops and police that face additional activity as the country is still under a state of emergency. Following Paris attacks last year, France has deployed 10,000 troops to patrol sensitive sites such as airports, train stations and tourist areas. —AP

POLISH OFFICIAL: FRENCH 'LEARNED TO EAT WITH A FORK FROM US'

WARSAW: Poland's deputy defense minister yesterday described the French as "people who learned to eat with a fork from us a few centuries ago," but denied the two countries are embroiled in a diplomatic war over a failed defense deal. While rejecting the suggestion that France and Turkey are at odds, Deputy Defense Minister Bartosz Kownacki said during an interview with the private broadcaster TVN24 that the French had compromised themselves and revealed their "class" since the deal's collapse. "They are a people who learned to eat with a fork from us a few centuries ago. So maybe this is why they are behaving in this way now," said Kownacki, who belongs to the conservative ruling Law and Justice party.

This week the Polish government and representatives of French aircraft producer Airbus have traded recriminations over a failed multibillion euro deal under

which Poland was to have bought 50 military helicopters from the company. The Poles say the deal was bad for Poland; Airbus says the government misled the company and that it will seek compensation.

Poland's opposition party, Civic Platform, chose Airbus helicopters in a tender before it lost power to Law and Justice. The party has called for a parliamentary commission to investigate why the deal with Airbus was rejected.

Civic Platform also called on the government Wednesday to immediately fire Kownacki for his remarks about the French people. "He debased French people, who are our allies in NATO," lawmaker Jan Grabiec, the party's spokesman, said. "Deputy minister Kownacki not only does not know history, he doesn't know the basic facts and he also does not know the basic rules of diplomacy," Grabiec said. —AP

FRANCE'S HOLLANDE CRITICISES HUGE US FINES AGAINST CORPORATE EUROPE

PARIS: French President Francois Hollande on yesterday accused the United States of abusing its power by demanding multi-billion dollar fines from European companies while shielding its own firms.

In an interview, Hollande said the fines — most recently \$14 billion against Germany's Deutsche Bank for selling toxic mortgage-backed securities in the United States — were one reason why he could not support a US/EU free-trade deal. "When the (European) Commission goes after Google or digital giants which do not pay the taxes they should in Europe, America takes offence," the Socialist leader told L'Obs magazine six months before presidential elections. "And yet, they quite shamelessly demand 8 billion from BNP or 5 billion from Deutsche Bank."

Hollande's comment contrasted with the far more muted reaction from Berlin. Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaueble said in Washington on Saturday there had been "far too much talk" about Deutsche Bank since the fine was imposed. Deutsche Bank has said it does not expect to pay the full \$14 billion and is negotiating a final sum with Washington. It has set aside 5.5 billion euros (\$6.16 billion) to cover all ongoing litigation cases against it.

The Department of Justice has also penalized major US banks over mis-selling MBS, with the highest fine, of \$5.9 billion, levied against Bank of America. BNP was fined for violating US sanctions against Iran and Sudan. The French president said Europe should adopt the same tools to be able to sanction American companies.

Google is expected to face a large fine from the European Commission for competition violations, while the EU executive ordered iPhone maker Apple to pay up to 13 billion euros in back taxes in August.

Hollande's comments come days after a French parliamentary report criticized what it called increasingly aggressive use by the United States of extra-territorial laws that have cost European companies billions in fines and other settlements.

Since 2009, European banks have paid about \$16 billion to the United States over breaches of sanction regimes and European firms have accounted for 14 of the 15 biggest penalties handed down, the report said. In the interview Hollande, France's most unpopular president on record, stuck to a December deadline to announce if he will run for a second term. —Reuters

MAN ADMITS MURDERING FRENCH WOMAN IN AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY: An Australian man pleaded guilty yesterday to raping and murdering a young French woman in Brisbane, whose naked body was found dumped in a park. Sophie Collombet was discovered near her apartment in the city's south in March 2014. Police said the 21-year-old business student had been

beaten to death. Benjamin Milward, then aged 25, was arrested shortly afterwards and yesterday pleaded guilty to one charge of murder and one of rape, a Supreme Court official told AFP. At his committal hearing in 2015, the court heard that Milward had smoked the drug ice and drunk alcohol on the day of the

killing, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation said.

Collombet was the fourth foreign student to be brutally murdered in Brisbane in almost as many months. Her killing followed the stabbing murder of Singaporean Meena Narayanan.

Just months before, South Korean

student Eunji Ban was found battered to death in a Brisbane park and weeks later the body of another South Korean, Min Tae Kim, was discovered in a shallow grave in a backyard.

There was no suggestion the deaths were linked, with police saying they believed the victims were simply in the

wrong place at the wrong time. Collombet had been making her way home after a night class at Griffith University when she was subjected to the random and fatal attack. Milward will be sentenced later this month, with Collombet's family expected to travel from France to attend court. —AFP

ADVISER RULES OUT TRUMP MEETING NORTH KOREA'S KIM IN NEAR FUTURE

WASHINGTON: An adviser to Donald Trump said on Tuesday he could not foresee any circumstances in the short or medium term in which the Republican presidential nominee would meet the leader of North Korea if he became president.

The remark appeared to take a step back from Trump's position in May, when he told Reuters he was willing to talk to Kim Jong Un to try to stop Pyongyang's nuclear program. Peter Hoekstra, a former Republican congressman and now an adviser to Trump, was asked at a debate on US policy towards North Korea under what conditions Trump would meet Kim. "I can't imagine any set of circumstances, in the short or intermediate future, that would see President Trump in a summit meeting with the leader of North Korea," he said.

Hoekstra avoided directly repeating suggestions by Trump that US allies Japan and South Korea could be allowed to develop nuclear weapons to defend themselves against North Korea, rather than relying on the US nuclear umbrella. "That will be decided once South Korea, Japan the United States identify what their objectives are going to be vis-à-vis North Korea and the tactics they are going to put in place to address that objective," he said, when asked to clarify where Trump stood on the issue.

However, Hoekstra added that it would be "stated very, very clearly, as we go into those discussions with South Korea and Japan, that everything's on the table."

Former Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia Kurt Campbell, a supporter of Trump's rival Hillary Clinton, said: "The real issue here is, 'Is this strategically wise?'"

According to Campbell, Trump had said "maybe in the heat of the campaign ... things that have been deeply unnerving to Asia." Hoekstra said Trump was not seeking to challenge US friendships in Asia, but it was necessary to sit down with allies to develop a successful North Korea strategy.

Asked about Trump's complaints that Asian allies were freeloading on the United States, he said Trump's business background meant some of his statements came out "a little bit more coarse than some of us in the political world might be comfortable with."

But allies would be expected to pay their "fair share" as US taxpayers could not subsidize the defense of others, he said. Asked if their candidates considered preemptive strikes a conceivable means of dealing with North Korea's nuclear program, both Campbell and Hoekstra said no options were off the table. —Reuters



JUBA: Japanese United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) troops wait for the arrival of the Japanese minister of defense at the UNMISS base on October 8, 2016. —AFP

UN WARNS OF INCREASING VIOLENCE AS TENSIONS RISE IN SOUTH SUDAN PRESIDENT SALVA KIIR RUMORED DEAD

JUBA: The UN warned yesterday of increasing violence in parts of South Sudan, as the government was forced to publicly dismiss rumors of President Salva Kiir's death to quell rising tensions.

"The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is extremely concerned over increased reports of violence and armed conflict in various parts of the country in the last few weeks," a statement said, mentioning fighting in the northern Unity State and the southern Equatorias.

The UN said it was being denied access to strife-hit parts of the country and "condemns in no uncertain terms these acts of violence and attacks against non-combatant civilians." UNMISS also said it had been denied access to an area where around 21 civilians were reportedly killed in an ambush on the road

between Juba and the southern city of Yei over the weekend.

Also on Wednesday information minister Michael Makuei held a press conference to deny rumors of Kiir's death that had circulated in recent days, triggering fear and tension in the capital Juba. "This is a mere lie, there is nothing as such, Salva Kiir has not even been sick," said Makuei, slamming "wild rumors" he said aimed to divide the people of South Sudan.

Later in the day Kiir, 65, was driven about town in the back of a pickup to prove he was alive. In recent days residents of Juba had reported a higher than usual presence of soldiers on the streets, as the rumors coincided with mounting concerns over an uptick in violence in the troubled nation.

"We are scared of the situation. You cannot know what is exactly

happening," said Moses Modi, a resident of Juba who was staying in his house over security fears. Another Juba resident, speaking on condition of anonymity, reported that some schools had sent pupils back home.

'On the edge of a precipice'

South Sudan, which gained independence in July 2011, descended into war just two and a half years later when Kiir in December 2013 accused his former deputy Riek Machar of plotting a coup.

Numerous attempts to shore up a fragile truce failed, and in a major setback to peace efforts, fierce clashes erupted in Juba on July 8 this year between Kiir's guards and troops loyal to Machar. The international community has expressed deep concerns over a spread in violence since the July clashes, which pushed the number of refugees from the

war-scarred nation past the one-million mark, according to the UNHCR.

In a further blow to peace hopes, Machar last month urged "a popular armed resistance" against his rival's government. Machar, who fled to Khartoum in the July fighting, on Wednesday left for South Africa for medical tests.

An influential group of South Sudanese politicians known as the "former detainees" after their arrest when war broke out in 2013, added their voices to the many raising concerns.

They said they were "greatly disturbed by the recent increase of war and violent conflict all over again; its ever deepening intensity and level of brutality; an apparently all-pervasive and creeping sense of resentment and hate." "The country is on the edge of a precipice," the group said. —AFP



JAKARTA: In this file photo taken in Jakarta on October 5, 2016 Indonesian murder suspect Jessica Kumala Wongso (C) enters the courtroom prior to her trial at the Central Jakarta court to hear the indictment of the public prosecutor. —AFP

WOMAN TEARFULLY DENIES 'POISONED COFFEE' MURDER

JAKARTA: An Indonesian woman accused of murdering her college friend by slipping cyanide into her coffee broke down in tears yesterday as she took the stand to deny carrying out the crime.

Prosecutors are demanding that Jessica Kumala Wongso, an Australian permanent resident, be jailed for 20 years for the murder of Wayan Mirna Salihin, who collapsed and died after being poisoned at an upmarket Jakarta cafe in January. The "poisoned coffee" case has generated huge interest in Indonesia, with crowds packing out the court during the trial and TV networks showing it live, and in Australia where the victim and alleged murderer studied together at a design college.

Wongso, 28, strenuously denies the premeditated murder of her friend and on yesterday took the stand in the Jakarta court to issue an emotional plea for the judges hearing the case to find her innocent. "I swear, I am not a murderer," she told the court, speaking through sobs. "I didn't kill Mirna so there shouldn't be any reason to treat me like garbage."

Wongso told how she had endured a nightmare since her arrest as she was locked up in a small police cell, and

labelled a murderer by the police and Salihin's family. "It makes me think, are they mean because they lost Mirna or did they lose Mirna because they are mean?" she told the court.

Prosecutors last week recommended the hefty jail term for Wongso, alleging that she decided to kill the victim after Salihin, 27, advised her to break up with her boyfriend as he was using drugs.

They accused the bespectacled design graduate, who lived in Sydney until last year, of planning the murder "meticulously" before inviting Salihin to a cafe at a mall, where she slipped cyanide into her Vietnamese iced coffee.

Salihin collapsed and began convulsing after drinking the coffee, dying soon afterwards in hospital.

The defense team in the trial, which began in June, asserts the case against their client is weak and lacks evidence to prove guilt. Australian authorities agreed to assist with the case after receiving assurances that Wongso would not be handed the death penalty if found guilty of murder, a capital crime in Indonesia. A verdict will be handed down at a later date. —AFP

SICK INDIAN LEADER HANDS OVER POWERS AS FANS HOLD VIGIL

CHENNAI: Ailing south Indian politician Jayalalitha Jayaram has handed many of her responsibilities to her deputy, her party said, as desperate fans held vigils for her recovery, with some resorting to self-harm.

The hugely popular chief minister of southern Tamil Nadu state, a former movie star, was admitted to hospital on September 22 suffering from fever and dehydration and is on respiratory support. Authorities have said little about the state of the 68-year-old's health after several of her supporters resorted to self-harm when she was briefly jailed in 2014 on charges of corruption. But that has not stopped some from performing sacrifices to try to change her fate.

Last week images in local media showed scores of children with metal arrows piercing their cheeks holding Jayalalitha's picture as they prayed for her recovery. One supporter was injured when he set himself on fire, while an elderly man suspended himself from a crane with steel hooks pierced through his skin.

The state's governor announced late Tuesday that her portfolios had been transferred to OP Panneerselvam, who has stepped in for her in the past, although she remains chief minister. Jayalalitha enjoys huge popularity in Tamil Nadu, where fans know her simply as "Amma" (Mother) thanks to a series of highly populist schemes and election-time freebies including electric blenders, goats and small amounts of gold. Her AIADMK party said on Wednesday she is "recovering and responding to the treatment." "Our party functionaries are performing whacky pujas and prayers as they are suffering to see the party leader admitted at the hospital for the past 21 days now," party spokesperson CR Saraswathy told AFP. —AFP

KAZAKHSTAN PRESIDENT CANCELS FOREIGN TRIP ON HEALTH CONCERNS

MOSCOW: The office of Kazakhstan's president says he won't participate in today's meeting of the Russian-led Collective Security Treaty Organization in the Armenian capital, Yerevan. According to an official statement, 76-year-old Nursultan Nazarbayev is undergoing "planned treatment in connection with a cold" and "until the end of this week the head of state's participation in international events is not planned." The statement was posted on the Facebook page of Nazarbayev's press service. Kazakhstan, which has strained relations with Armenia, had not previously announced such a visit, but Armenia had. Nazarbayev has ruled Kazakhstan, the richest nation in Central Asia, since 1989. —AP

POWER CUT TO 580,000 TOKYO HOMES IN MAJOR BLACKOUT

TOKYO: Tokyo was hit by a major blackout yesterday that temporarily knocked out power to a total 580,000 homes and some big office and government buildings, while two train lines were also brought to a halt.

Officials said the power outage could be traced to a fire at a facility run by utility Tokyo Electric Power. The cause of the fire was not immediately known. Television footage showed plumes of black smoke billowing from street-side grates linked to an underground facility operated by the firm in Niiza City, north of Tokyo.

Police received calls reporting an explosion shortly before 3 pm (0600 GMT), prompting 10 fire engines to fight the blaze, local media said. Work crews rushed to restore power in various parts of the metropolis and the problem was fixed within an hour, the utility said. There were no injuries, officials said.

Some central government buildings and downtown office towers, including the landmark Marunouchi Building, were also affected, officials said. Two train lines were briefly shut down during the blackout, which lasted for less than two hours. —AFP

S KOREA EXPANDING SPECIAL FORCES CAPABILITY TO HIT KEY N KOREA FACILITIES

TOKYO: South Korea's military will greatly expand the capabilities of its special forces to strike key North Korean command facilities and its leadership in the event of a crisis, Yonhap News Agency reported yesterday.

In a parliamentary audit, the army said it is striving to be ready to carry out independent special operations against the North's provocations, with a plan to secure hardware, such as the latest MH-47 series choppers, compact satellite links and advanced small arms. "The Army is seeking to have a special operations unit capable of infiltrating (enemy territory), completing its given mission and coming back in one piece," Army Chief of Staff Jang Jun-kyu was quoted as saying during the audit.

The MH-47 series helicopters are equipped with airborne refueling equip-

ment and a radar system that can detect topography, can carry 40 special forces troops and fly some 600 km into enemy territory.

In September when the North conducted its fifth nuclear test, the military said it was planning to create a special aviation unit capable of infiltrating the North's strategic military facilities and destroying them.

Currently, the army plans to secure capability to carry out special missions by 2018. The Army's Special Warfare Command said in the audit that the creation of a special operation unit is also under consideration to carry out critical missions. The missions could include the removal of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and his leadership should a war break out on the Korean Peninsula. —KUNA

CHINA REBUFFS S KOREA OVER SINKING OF COAST GUARD VESSEL

BEIJING: China said yesterday South Korea's coast guard should not have been operating in part of the sea where one of Seoul's patrol boats sank last week during an operation to crack down on a group of Chinese fishing boats.

South Korean coast guard vessels regularly chase Chinese boats for fishing illegally off its coast, at times resulting in violent confrontations. The disputes are an irritant in relations between China and US

ally South Korea, even as their economic relations grow close and they share concerns about North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs.

South Korea's Ministry of Public Safety and Security, which oversees the coast guard, said one of its patrol boats sank last week during an anti-illegal fishing operation off the Korean peninsula's west coast.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman

Geng Shuang said where the incident happened was an area where, according to a bilateral fishing agreement, South Korean vessels should not be carrying out law enforcement operations.

China had lodged a protest with South Korea and demanded the country "calmly and rationally" handle the incident, Geng told a daily news briefing. South Korea's coast guard said on Tuesday that its officers would be authorised to use firearms,

including handguns and onboard cannon, against illegal Chinese fishing vessels if deemed threatening.

Chinese spokesman Geng said such actions would not resolve anything and could only worsen the problem. "China again demands South Korea strengthen their controls on law enforcement personnel."

South Korea's coast guard captured two Chinese fishing boats illegally operat-

ing off the west coast early on Wednesday and brought them to a South Korean port, an Incheon Coast Guard official told Reuters by telephone.

Three Chinese fishermen were killed last month in a fire that broke out on their boat when a South Korean coast guard crew trying to apprehend them for illegal fishing threw flash grenades into a room in which they were hiding, according to a South Korean official.—Reuters

THAI JUNTA CHIEF TO MEET PRINCE AS KING HEALTH FEARS GROW

LEADER'S HEALTH 'NOT STABLE'

BANGKOK: Thailand's junta chief said yesterday he planned to hold talks with the Crown Prince following days of unprecedented concern over the health of ailing King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Bhumibol, 88, is the world's longest-reigning monarch and beloved by many in Thailand. But he has not been seen in public for nearly a year as he battles a series of ailments in a Bangkok hospital. An unusually pessimistic palace statement on Sunday described the king's health as "not stable" with doctors recommending he suspend all royal duties.

That sparked market jitters inside Thailand this week as well as public prayers for his well-being. Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn, who

spends much time outside the country, is his named successor. "The Crown Prince is returning (to Thailand) and I will wait for him to grant me audience so I can brief him on the government's work," Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha, a former army chief who seized power in 2014, told AFP via text message.

Thai media travelling with Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha in the eastern province of Chonburi said the junta chief had abruptly cancelled all official engagements Wednesday afternoon and returned to the capital.

No reason was given, according to media which reported the cancellation, including the major dailies Matchon and Thai Rath. Security outside the hospital where Bhumibol is

being treated was increased yesterday with a hospital official saying they expected the Crown Prince to visit his father. "The security has been stepped up because the Crown Prince is coming to the hospital," a spokeswoman at Siriraj hospital said, asking not to be named.

Taboo topic

Bhumibol's health is a taboo subject and palace officials maintain tight control on news about his condition. A draconian lese majeste law also makes public discussion of the succession all but impossible.

Sunday's statement was noticeably grim in its prognosis. Previous statements have tended to end on a positive note after successful treatment. The king has battled a range

of ailments in the last two years including regular infections, breathing difficulties, renal failure and hydrocephalus—a build-up of cerebrospinal fluid commonly referred to as "water on the brain".

The latest announcement caused Thailand's stock market to dip and the baht to fall against the dollar this week. The main bourse plunged after the lunch break on Wednesday, dropping as much as 6.8 percent. By mid afternoon it had recovered somewhat to 3.45 percent down. On Monday it declined 3.15 percent and on Tuesday it fell 1.02 percent.

The Thai baht was headed towards its steepest weekly drop in three years, trading at 35.90 on Wednesday, according to Bloomberg data. Privately many business leaders—both domestic and foreign—fret that his demise could lead to economic instability, especially as there is no official discussion on how the country will handle his passing.

Most Thais have known no other monarch and Bhumibol is widely seen as a unifying symbol in a country rocked by decades of political turbulence and divisions. The heir, 64, has yet to attain his father's widespread popularity.

Since Sunday's announcement, many Thais have started wearing pink in the belief it will bring the king good luck. A crowd of followers gathered outside the hospital to pray. "It feels like he is getting worse this time," said Somchit Naravichit, 58, tears welling in her eyes. "Millions of Thais are sending him supports, praying for him and wanting him to get well soon," she told AFP.

Suwanna Kaennumtiang, a 62-year-old woman holding a portrait of the king, added: "The king is very important to us because he has done everything for the people. He is like my angel. I pray to his photo on my bedside every day." —AFP



BANGKOK: A Thai woman holds a portrait of Thai King Bhumibol Adulyadej as she pray for his health at Siriraj Hospital, where the king is being treated, in Bangkok on October 12, 2016.—AFP

REBEL HONG KONG LAWMAKERS CHALLENGE CHINA IN PARLIAMENT

HONG KONG: Hong Kong rebel lawmakers swore, shouted, banged drums and railed against "tyranny" yesterday when they took their oaths of office in the city's parliament, as calls grow for a split from Beijing.

The chaotic first meeting of the new term of the Legislative Council (Legco) came after a citywide vote last month saw victories for several lawmakers advocating more autonomy or even independence for Hong Kong. The city is semi-autonomous under a "one country, two systems" deal sealed when Britain returned Hong Kong to China in 1997. The arrangement protects Hong Kong's freedoms for 50 years, but there are increasing concerns those liberties are disappearing as Beijing tightens its grip.

Lawmakers are required to recite a short oath in Legco before they can officially take up their seats. That oath declares repeatedly that Hong Kong is a "special administrative region" of China. The government had warned lawmakers in advance they risked losing their seats if they did not take the oath properly.

Impassioned speech

Nathan Law, 23, Legco's youngest lawmaker and a former pro-democracy protest leader, delivered an impassioned speech ahead of taking the oath. "You can chain me, you can torture me, you can even destroy this body - but you can never imprison my mind," he said, quoting India's independence leader Mahatma Gandhi.

Law, who is calling for self-determination for Hong Kong, was one of the main leaders of the 2014 Umbrella Movement rallies which brought tens of thousands to the streets calling for democratic reform. Two new pro-independence lawmakers, Baggio Leung and Yau Wai-ching, added their own words before the oath, pledging to serve the "Hong Kong nation".

Both displayed flags emblazoned with the words: "Hong Kong is not China". Leung took the full oath in English but refused to pronounce "China" correctly, instead calling it "Cheena".

Yau was distinctly heard saying "the People's Re-fucking of Zeena", instead of "the People's Republic of China" in her oath, although she denied that later, blaming her accent. Local media reported that they had used the word "Shina" instead of China, an

archaic, derogatory Japanese term for the mainland.

Risk to seats

New lawmaker Eddie Chu, who advocates a public referendum on Hong Kong's future sovereignty, shouted "Democratic self-determination! Tyranny will perish!" after taking his oath. Teacher Lau Siu-lai, also a former Umbrella Movement activist, read every word of the oath at a snail's pace, prompting some pro-Beijing lawmakers to walk out.



HONG KONG: (L-R) Lawmakers League of Social Democrat legislator Leung Kwok-hung also known as 'Long Hair', Fernando Cheung, Eddie Chu, Claudia Mo and Nathan Law sit at the secretariat's place demanding Andrew Leung, who was later voted Legco president, to produce proof he has given up his UK passport, during the first meeting of the new term of the Legislative Council (Legco) on October 12, 2016.—AFP

The Legco clerk told Leung, Yau and one other pro-democracy lawmaker that he was unable to "administer" their oaths, because they had modified them.

It is not yet clear whether any of the lawmakers deemed not to have taken the oath properly will be barred from taking up their seats. In a statement issued before the oath-taking, the government cited a law that stipulates "any person who declines or neglects to take an oath duly requested which he or she

is required to take shall vacate office or be disqualified from entering on it".

The session was suspended after Law refused to return to his seat, questioning why the clerk had objected to the three lawmakers' oaths. According to government rules, the clerk must now refer the invalid oath cases to the Legco president, who was elected Wednesday afternoon amid further chaos. The three lawmakers who did not have their oaths approved were told they could not vote for Legco president.



BEIJING: In this Feb. 4, 2013 file photo, Ilham Tohti, an outspoken scholar of China's Uighur minority, gestures as he speaks during an interview at his home.—AP

IMPRISONED CHINESE MINORITY SCHOLAR GIVEN HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD

GENEVA: A group of advocacy organizations has awarded its annual prize for human rights defenders to imprisoned Chinese Muslim minority economics professor Ilham Tohti, shining new attention on a case that has brought strong international condemnation.

The Martin Ennals Award is bestowed by 10 rights groups including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. A ceremony honoring the award, which was founded in 1994, was taking place in Geneva on Tuesday with his daughter in attendance. Tohti, 46, was given a life sentence on charges of separatism in September 2014 after a two-day trial. A member of the Turkic Muslim Uighur ethnic group, he taught at Beijing's Minzu University and was an outspoken critic of Beijing's ethnic policies in the far western region of Xinjiang.

Advocating separatism and violence

Tohti denied Beijing's relentless accusations of advocating separatism and violence. His daughter Jewher Ilham said she hadn't seen her father since they parted at the Beijing airport in February 2013, but her relatives had visited him in prison over the summer. While he and the visiting relatives were barred by Chinese officials from discussing his treatment behind bars, Tohti had clearly lost weight, she said.

"My family visited on July 7: They told me that he's gotten skinnier - he lost 40 pounds - and all his hair turned gray," she told reporters ahead of the awards ceremony. "He wasn't allowed to say anything," other than to discuss general topics like "children, studies, and life," she said.

She said she didn't expect the award would worsen an already bad situation because of the life sentence, or anticipate that the government would retaliate against the family. But she said she hoped the award would increase awareness about her father.

Chinese authorities could realize the international attention to Tohti's situation, and "they are scared that their reputation will get ruined," said Ilham, who is a student at Indiana University in the United States. "Either it will have better effects or maybe no change - they just ignore it - but I don't think things can get worse."

It could "make people believe that what the Chinese government has been telling people is a lie," she said, adding that her broader concern was that outside observers might lose attentiveness to Tohti's imprisonment long after Tuesday's prize ceremony.

In a statement announcing the award, the rights groups said Tohti has "sought reconciliation by bringing to light repressive Chinese policies and Uyghur grievances. This is information the Chinese government has sought to keep behind a veil of silence." The statement used an alternative spelling for Uighur.

"He remains a voice of moderation and reconciliation in spite of how he has been treated," it said. Prevented from publishing, Tohti turned to the internet, running the site Uyghurbiz.net to foster discussion about the economic, social and developmental issues Uighurs face.

Seven of Tohti's students were also sentenced in what was seen as a move to strengthen the government's case against him.

Authorities accused Tohti and his students of forming a criminal gang that sought to split Xinjiang from China. Tohti's sentence was one of the harshest handed down to a government critic in recent years and came amid a sweeping crackdown on dissent under President Xi Jinping. He was tried and imprisoned in Xinjiang, more than 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) from Beijing, making it difficult and expensive for his family to see him in brief bi-monthly visits.

Tohti's trial and sentencing brought statements of condemnation from numerous Western governments and the European Union, and in January several hundred academics petitioned China's government to release him.

Intense friction

Many pointed out that Tohti was a voice for moderation and understanding at a time of intense friction between Islam, the West and China. "The real shame of this situation is that by eliminating the moderate voice of Ilham Tohti, the Chinese government is in fact laying the groundwork for the very extremism it says it wants to prevent," said Dick Oosting, chairman of the foundation that presents the award, named after a former secretary general of Amnesty International.

Many Uighurs say Chinese government policies and an influx of migrants belonging to China's majority Han ethnic group have threatened their culture and left them economically marginalized. Such sentiments are seen as driving occasional outbursts of violence, including deadly riots in the regional capital of Urumqi in 2009.

At a regular briefing, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman reiterated the authorities' allegation that Tohti was inciting others to participate in terrorist activities. Geng Shuang said Tohti's case was backed by evidence and "has nothing to do with human rights."

The government was enraged by the awarding of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize to imprisoned pro-democracy activist Liu Xiaobo. China accused Norway, which hosts the award ceremony, of a deliberate insult, and relations between the two have yet to recover.

"The award not only duly recognizes Prof. Ilham Tohti's courageous work promoting minority rights and dialogues between Hans and Uighurs, it also highlights the Chinese government's increasingly harsh punishment against its critics," said Maya Wang, a Hong Kong-based researcher with Human Rights Watch. "Instead of reacting angrily to the news, the Chinese government should release Ilham Tohti and reverse its repressive policies in Xinjiang," Wang said.

The other finalists for the Martin Ennals award were Razan Zaitouneh, a rights advocate and defender of political prisoners in Syria who was kidnapped in December 2013 along with her husband and two colleagues, and the Zone 9 Bloggers of Ethiopia - an independent journalism collective that document cases of rights abuses there.

Tohti was one of five candidates for the European Union's prestigious Sakharov Prize for human rights awarded later this month, though he didn't make the cut of three finalists announced Tuesday.—AP



A Belarusian harvests cranberries in the village of Selishche, some 290 km south of Minsk, yesterday. — AFP

SMALL IOWA TOWN WINDOW INTO HUNGER PROBLEM IN RURAL US

STORM LAKE, Iowa: Storm Lake, Iowa, appears the picture of economic health, a place where jobs are plentiful, the unemployment rate hovers near 3 percent, busy shops fill century-old brick buildings and children ride bikes on tree-lined sidewalks that end in the glare of its namesake lake. But there's a growing problem in the northwest Iowa city of 11,000, one that's familiar to rural areas around the country: Thousands of working families and elderly residents don't have enough money to feed themselves or their children. The issue persists even as national poverty rates have declined in the past year and prices for many food staples have dropped slightly.

Storm Lake has responded strongly with a large, mostly volunteer effort to hand out free food - eggs, cereal, vegetables, juice - at a half-dozen pantries, along a city street and in an empty building on the edge of town. "You struggle to live one day at a time, to stretch the budget," said Hermelinda Gonzalez, 41, who relies on food from a monthly drive-up pantry to feed her seven children despite her husband's construction job. "I don't know what we'd do without this," she said while volunteers slid boxes into her car and her 1-year-old son slept in the back seat.

Tyson Foods' turkey and pork processing plants are Storm Lake's biggest employers - more than 2,700, many of

whom are immigrants attracted by wages of \$15 an hour or more. But many also have large families, and paychecks are eaten up by big grocery bills, heating and cooling costs and higher-than-expected rent due to increased demand for housing that hasn't been met by new construction. Not having access to enough food is more severe in isolated counties than urban, metropolitan areas - 64 percent of the counties with the highest rate of food insecurity for children are rural, according to data from national anti-hunger group Feeding America.

While federal statistics show incomes among the poorest 10 percent of US households increased 7.9 percent last year and the proportion of Americans in poverty dropped from 14.8 percent to 13.5 percent, small towns typically lag urban areas in job and income growth, especially in the Upper Midwest, said Gary Green, a University of Wisconsin-Madison professor who studies rural issues.

It's especially hard for immigrants, he said, because the communities often lack a support network found in large cities, and if there's an unexpected expense or reduction in work hours, there usually aren't relatives nearby to help. That makes it hard for hunger issues to be solved in rural areas, Green said. It all helps to explain why one pantry alone, Upper Des Moines Opportunity, provides food to

about 3,200 people in Storm Lake and nearby communities. "The shelves are as empty as I've ever seen it," pantry worker Melissa Keller said.

Finding a job isn't the problem in Storm Lake, which is hours from Des Moines and Minneapolis. It's finding one that pays enough to cover the bills. Shirley Ann Peter is among those who struggle to make ends meet. She grew

up in Micronesia, moved to Storm Lake with her father - who was drawn by the dependable meatpacking jobs - and began working at a plant while in high school. Peter's boyfriend provides for their four children, aged 6 months to 8 years, but after paying the \$600 in monthly rent and other expenses, they must seek food from a charity pantry every week. — AP

NEW CHALLENGES IN SYRIA AS MILITANTS...

Continued from Page 1

helping Kurdish forces aligned against Islamic State. The head of the Airwars project, which tracks the international air war in Iraq, Syria and Libya, said the weaponized drones are clumsy, but they can do damage. "There are a million ways you can weaponize drones - fire rockets, strap things in and crash them," Chris Woods said. He added: "This is the stuff everyone has been terrified about for years, and now it's a reality."

The US military official couldn't immediately authenticate the videos in question, adding that most of the incidents they are aware of involved weaponized drones that simply crash into their targets. But another former senior US military official who viewed the videos said there was nothing to suggest they were fake. A number of militant groups in the Middle East, including the Islamic State group, Jund al-Aqsa and Jabhat Fatah al-Sham, as well as Hezbollah and Hamas, have all released videos indicating that they have surveillance and reconnaissance drones.

Syrian anti-government rebels and militias loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad were also flying cheap quadcopters and hexacopters as early as 2014 to spy on each other. The surveillance drones allowed those groups to collect data on enemy bases, battlefield positioning and weaponry and improve targeting. The extremist Islamic State group launched a sophisticated propaganda video in 2014, "The Clanging of the Swords, Part 4", boasting about its capture of the Iraqi city of Fallujah. The video opens with drone footage over the western Iraqi city before cutting to violent ground footage depicting its advance across Iraq.

Lebanon-based Hezbollah has claimed to have armed-drone capabilities for nearly two years, but a recent video of bombs hitting a militant camp near the Syrian town of Hama is the first known documentation. The majority of these groups have access only to

store-bought drones, similar to those available in the US, ranging in price from \$1,000 to \$3,000 and weighing between 5 to 10 pounds - certainly not enough to support a large bomb or rocket. Hezbollah is an exception, receiving most of its munitions - including its drones - from Iran.

"It's not going to change the overall balance of power in the region, but it matters by the very fact that these are things that are normally beyond the capability of insurgents or terrorists groups," said Peter Singer, author of the book "Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century," and a senior fellow at the New America Foundation.

Syrian skies are already bustling with traffic. Coalition forces have launched some 5,400 airstrikes on IS targets since September 2014. Drones account for only about 7 percent of America's total air operations in Iraq and Syria because the US is "stretched really thin" with drone operations in Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan and elsewhere, Woods said. Russia is also showing off its own drone capabilities - albeit somewhat primitive compared to the US. Last month, the Russian Defense Ministry launched a live online broadcast of drone footage of the besieged Syrian city of Aleppo to "provide transparency of ceasefire regime implementation."

There is no question the militant groups are out-matched in the sky. But as cells linked to the Islamic State group pop up across Europe and the United States, the real concern is the potential impact these experimental small, flying bombs could have if launched over crowded cities. "You already see things happening in Ukraine, gangs in Mexico are using drones, and in Ireland, gangs there are using surveillance," said Wim Zwiijnenburg, a security and disarmament policy adviser at Netherlands-based PAX for Peace. "Add a small amount of explosives to a small drone, and even the psychological factor is pretty significant." — AP

MOI RAISES MINIMUM WAGE FOR FAMILY VISA...

Continued from Page 1

The new decision however exempts 14 groups of expatriates from the salary requirement to sponsor their families. These include:

Chancellors, judges, prosecution staff and legal experts working in the public sector; doctors and pharmacists; university and professors at higher institutes; public school directors and deputies, educational supervisors, teachers, social workers and lab assistants; academic, financial and economic consultants; engineers; imams, preachers, muezzins and Quran teachers; librarians at government bodies and private universities; health ministry staff including nursing staff, paramedics, technicians and social workers; social workers and psychologists in the public sector; journalists, media staff and reporters; coaches and players at sports unions and clubs; pilots and flight attendants; and washers and buriers of dead bodies.

In another development, MPs Abdullah Al-Turaiji, Ahmad Al-Azemi and Ali Al-Khamees are expected to file a joint request today to grill finance minister Anas Al-

Saleh over the government's decision to raise petrol prices, amid reports that the Assembly is highly expected to be dissolved and fresh elections called. Khamees said he and his two colleagues will go ahead and file the request, adding that they will not be affected by reports that the Assembly could be dissolved.

MP Abdullah Maayouf is also expected to file another request to grill Justice and Islamic Affairs Minister Yaqoub Al-Sane over administrative and financial violations. Maayouf has been targeting the minister for the past several months. MP Ahmad Al-Qudhaibi already filed a request on Sunday to grill Sane for delaying the bylaws of the Anti-Corruption Authority. MP Awdah Al-Awdah has also threatened to grill Education Minister Bader Al-Essa over a variety of violations.

Three other MPs - Saleh Ashour, Hamdan Al-Azemi and Jamal Al-Omar - are reportedly preparing to grill the prime minister over the petrol price hike and are expected to file it either today or early next week. Veteran MP Khalaf Dumaitheer on Tuesday said he believes that the Assembly will be dissolved "within days".



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Issues

MALIKI MAKING
COMEBACK AS
IRAQ KINGMAKER

By Ahmed Rasheed and Maher Chmaytelli

Nouri Al-Maliki is once again positioning himself as Iraq's most powerful man, poised to return as kingmaker in a fight for influence that could decide Iraq's fate as a unified country after the coming battle to recapture Mosul from Islamic State. Two years after he was pressured to leave office by both the United States and Iran for failing to stop Islamic State fighters from sweeping across the country, the former prime minister still leads a powerful Shiite parliamentary bloc.

In recent weeks his followers have been using their authority in parliament to dismantle the cabinet of his successor, Haider Al-Abadi. They have held corruption hearings, forcing out the government's leading Sunni and Kurdish figures, Defense Minister Khaled Al-Obeidi and Finance Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, who both deny corruption and say they were pushed out to hurt Abadi. Maliki's office denies that he has any plans to return to the premiership, and his allies say he is more likely to try to name an ally as the next prime minister rather than take back the role for himself.

But there is now little doubt that his aim is to sideline Abadi and restore the power of his own Iran-backed Shiite faction, which minority Sunni and Kurdish politicians say could put Iraq's future at risk even if it vanquishes Islamic State. Zebari, who served as foreign minister for more than a decade and was Baghdad's most senior Kurdish politician until he was forced out of the finance ministry last month, said Maliki was deliberately undermining the government on the eve of the campaign to recapture Islamic State's last major stronghold.

"They don't want this government to succeed in Mosul," Zebari told Reuters in Erbil, the capital of Iraq's Kurdish autonomous region, referring to the northern city where US-backed Iraqi forces are preparing for a major offensive. "Because Maliki was responsible for the fall of Mosul and the melting of the Iraqi security forces under his command. So any successes here would be a major rebuke to him and his future chances of a comeback."

In the latest victory for Maliki, the supreme court ruled on Monday that Abadi violated the constitution last year by scrapping three positions of vice-president. Maliki, who became one of the three vice presidents when he left office as prime minister, will now return to that job. Two politicians close to Maliki said parliament may soon summon Abadi himself to face questioning in parliament over his performance, as well as Foreign Minister Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, another former prime minister and potential rival to Maliki.

Maliki's media office denied that the campaign against ministers in Abadi's cabinet was part of an attempt by the former prime minister to return to power and said the moves demonstrated parliament exercising its role to hold the government to account. But allies say Maliki will seek to remove Abadi from office at the next election, whether or not Abadi, who lacks a strong political faction of his own, decides to campaign as part of an alliance with Maliki.

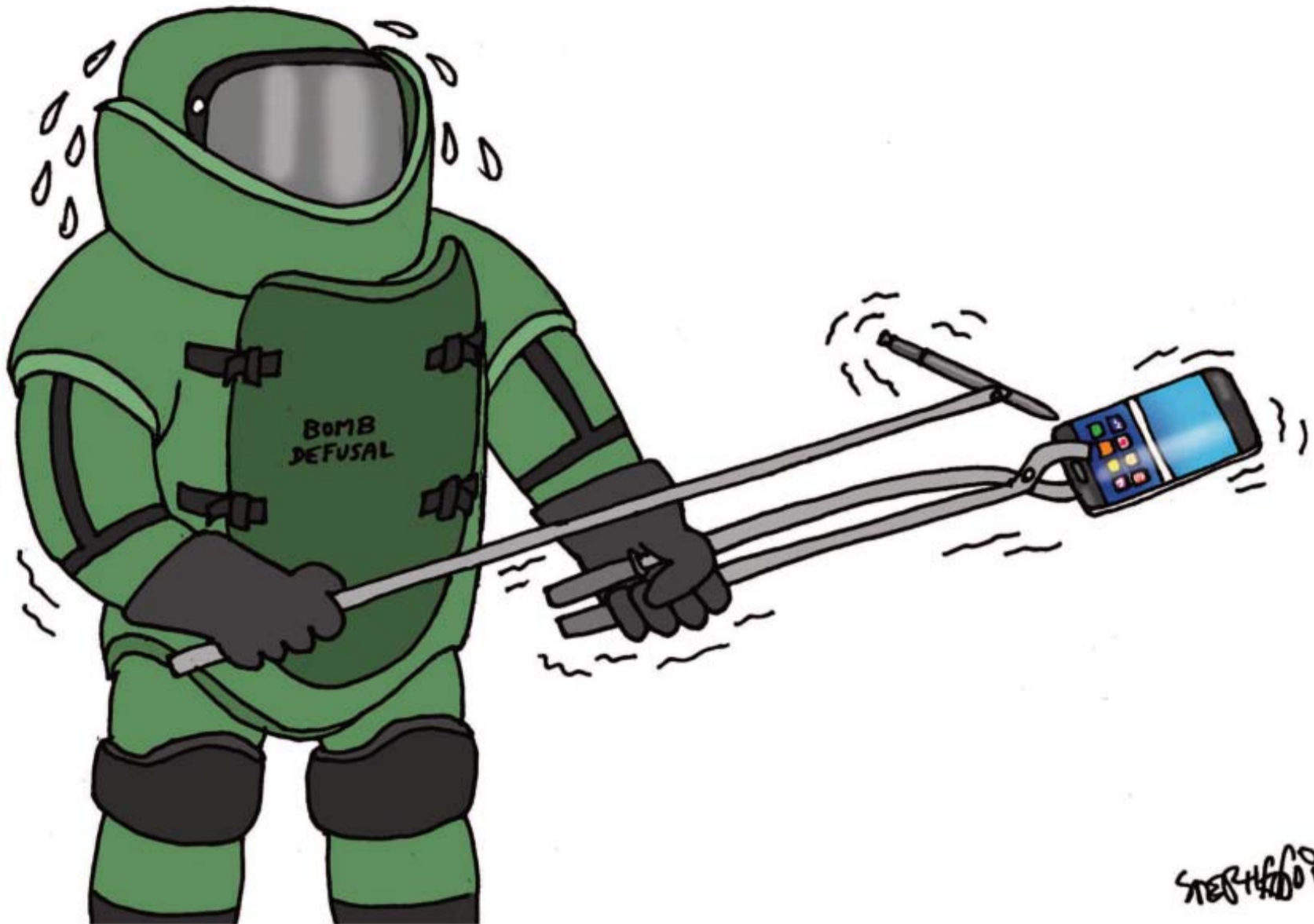
Maliki's "aim is not necessarily to become PM but to have the PM chosen supported by him," said Sami Al-Askari, a former lawmaker who has served as an advisor to Maliki. "If Abadi joins Maliki for the elections, Maliki will not choose him to be PM again; if Abadi runs without Maliki, he has no chance to win enough seats."

Conciliatory Technocrat

Maliki left office reluctantly in 2014 after the security forces crumbled and fled in the face of a lightning advance by Sunni Muslim fighters from Islamic State. His foes, including the Obama administration in Washington, accused Maliki of having run a sectarian government during eight years in power that alienated Sunnis, driving them into the arms of Islamic State, and undermined the morale of the army.

Abadi, a conciliatory technocrat, took office promising to reduce sectarian polarization. He swiftly introduced reforms to limit the patronage of sectarian parties by cutting the number of senior posts, although parliament has mostly fought to block or delay the changes. Abadi has won widespread credit for rebuilding the army with American support and recapturing most of the territory seized by Islamic State. But he has not built up a political power base of his own in the parliament, which was elected in 2014 and where Maliki's faction is still the largest.

A new national election is not due until 2018. But the two politicians allied to Maliki said it could be brought forward to as soon as April next year when provincial elections are due. Jasim Al-Bahadli, a Baghdad-based political analyst, said Maliki's ambition to shape the next government was realistic given the backing he still has among majority Shiites. Maliki "has still enough support from large sections of the Shiite community, not necessarily to return to power, but to have the upper hand to decide who should be the next prime minister," Bahadli said. —Reuters



SAMSUNG CRISIS VIOLATES PR RULEBOOK

By Juliette Michel

The first rule in a corporate crisis is to staunch the bleeding. However, PR experts say, Samsung Electronics bungled in not just misdiagnosing the fault afflicting its top-end phones but appearing uncommunicative with an aloof bedside manner. As a result, the South Korean company has its work cut out as it embarks on a vast and costly exercise to win back trust and prove that it is still a byword for quality at a time when its rivals are going full tilt in the smartphone wars.

"The basis of crisis management is to make sure that when you give a solution, it's the right solution and it is going to enable you to move forward," Andy Holdsworth, a crisis management specialist at the British PR firm Bell Pottinger, told AFP. That has not been the case with Samsung. Perhaps reluctant to lose too much ground to rivals such as Apple and Google, who were busy launching their own new models, the company rushed out replacements for its Galaxy Note 7 'phablet' series when some in the first global batch spontaneously caught fire.

The incendiary problem persisted, however, and now Samsung has been

forced to scrap the entire line in an embarrassing setback for a brand image that took years to build up. Some airplanes had banned passengers from boarding with the phones. Social media is rife with anger and ridicule. One video, of a Burger King employee in South Korea gingerly handling a smoking Note 7 with oven gloves, has gone viral.

Disjointed Response

Holdsworth said Samsung's response throughout had been "disjointed". "I would question the investigation and I would question why Samsung said last night the product is safe if this morning (Tuesday) they then decide to recall all units and stop production. There seems to be a slight miscommunication somewhere. You kind of lose faith in it because your remedy (suffered) the same problem and this problem is quite a dangerous one."

The family-run corporations, or "chaebol", which dominate the South Korean economy are used to running their businesses their own way. As companies like Samsung and LG have become global brands, their corporate governance and PR cultures have improved as they have adapted to the rigors of international markets, but analysts say the old family-

run structure, with its rigid top-down decision-making, leaves them vulnerable to a crisis.

Who's in Charge?

In Samsung's case a generational leadership transfer, with family patriarch and group chairman Lee Kun-Hee bedridden since suffering a heart attack in 2014, may have contributed to the company's failure to deal efficiently with the Note 7 crisis. "In chaebol like Samsung, the all-powerful chairman makes key decisions and these are swiftly translated into actions by his underlings," said Chung Sun-sup, head of corporate analysis group Chaeul.com.

"But if such a patriarchal leader is somehow absent, such a decision-making structure may fall into limbo. The current crisis at Samsung is related with this corporate structure. If Lee was in charge, he might have sorted it out, bringing in every available expert from both inside and outside the company. But Samsung just tried to tinker with the problem and failed," Chung said.

It could be worse. There has been no loss of life, unlike other PR disasters such as the 2010 explosion at BP's Deepwater Horizon oil rig which now features in a Hollywood movie. And other companies

have also struggled with the challenge of extracting more power and faster charge times from the lithium-ion technology used in smartphones today. Boeing suffered electrical fires from the lithium-ion batteries aboard its new 787 jet, and Dell with self-combusting laptops, noted Manmohan Sodhi, a professor of operations management and supply chain at Cass Business School in London.

But Samsung erred in striving to "fix the problem too quickly", he said. Now, with the total shutdown of Note 7 production, "it sends a bad signal to the market that there is panic in the boardroom". There may be no quick fix to undo the past few weeks, during which it appeared that Samsung's official response appeared to lag that of national regulators, airlines and mobile phone carriers.

But Samsung should at least shed any inhibitions it may feel about being more forthright with its customers, said Yves Robert-Paul, who heads crisis communications for French advertising group Havas. Since Samsung started recalling the phablets last month, he said, it has offered only "a pragmatic response, devoid of all emotion". "They've run it like an industrial disaster but they forgot to think about their customers." —AFP

BABY TRAFFICKERS THRIVING IN NIGERIA

By Anamesere Igboeroteonu and Tom Esslemont

A 16-year-old Maria strained under the anguish of labor in southeastern Nigeria, a midwife repeatedly slapped her across the face - but the real ordeal began minutes after birth. "The nurse took my child away to be washed. She never brought her back," the teenager said, gazing down at her feet. Maria said she learned her newborn daughter had been given up for adoption for which she received 20,000 naira (\$65.79) - the same price as a 50 kilogram bag of rice.

And Maria is far from alone. A Thomson Reuters Foundation investigative team spoke to more than 10 Nigerian women duped into giving up their newborns to strangers in houses known as "baby factories" in the past two years or offered babies whose origins were unknown. Five women did not want to be interviewed, despite the guarantee of anonymity, fearing for their own safety with criminal gangs involved in the baby trade, while two men spoke of being paid to act as "studs" to get women pregnant.

Although statistics are hard to come by, campaigners say the sale of newborns is widespread - and they fear the illegal trade is becoming more prevalent with Nigeria heading into recession this year amid ongoing political turbulence. "The government is too overstretched by other issues to focus on baby trafficking," said Arinze Orakwue, head of public enlightenment at the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP).

Record numbers of baby factories were raided or closed down in the southeastern states of Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo this year, NAPTIP said. A total of 14 were discovered in the first nine months of 2016, up from six in 2015 and 10 in 2014, the data showed. But despite the growing number of raids, the scam exploiting couples desperate for a baby and young, pregnant, single women continues with newborns sold for up to \$5,000 in Africa's most populous nation where most people live on less than \$2 a day.

Cultural barriers are also a factor in the West African nation, with teenage girls fearing they will be publicly shamed by strict fathers or partners over unwanted pregnancies if they do not give up their children, experts say. "In southeastern Nigeria a woman is deemed a failure if she fails to conceive. But it is also taboo for a teenager to fall pregnant out of wedlock," said Orakwue. Maria said in the home in Imo state where she gave birth pregnant teenagers were welcomed by a maternal nurse who liked to be called "mama" but went on to sell the babies they delivered.

Hidden Problem

"(After I gave birth) somebody told me that mama collected big money from people before giving them other people's babies," Maria told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in the grounds of a school compound in her village. "I do not know where my baby is now," said Maria, using a false name for her own protection. A lot of the trade is carried out in Nigeria but authorities suspect babies are also sold to people

from Europe and the United States because many foreigners continue to seek infants there despite the controversy around Nigerian adoptions.

The US Department of State alerted prospective adoptive parents to the issue of child buying from Nigeria in June 2014 after Nigerian media warned that people were posing as owners of orphanages or homes for unwed mothers to make money. "The State Department is aware of a growing number of adoption scams," an alert on its website read. Over 1,600 children have been adopted from Nigeria by US citizens since 1999, according to the State Department website, about a third of them aged between one and two years old.

A US official said the State Department facilitates contact between foreign officials and US authorities when foreign governments raise any concerns regarding the welfare of an adopted child. "To date, we are not aware of any concerns regarding the welfare of a child adopted from Nigeria," a State Department official told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in a statement. In Britain a couple was found by the High Court to have "fallen under the spell" of an elaborate fraud after paying 4,500 pounds (\$5,600) for herbal treatment in Nigeria that caused the woman's stomach to swell, media reported in 2014.

The couple only realized they had been duped nine months later when presented with a baby in Nigeria that actually was not theirs, the Daily Mail newspaper reported. Babies, whose biological parents or backgrounds are unknown, are offered to women who have not been able to conceive naturally, according to NAPTIP and interviews with three women. The British government said it was committed to stamping out what it calls the "miracle babies" phenomenon.

Herbal Treatment

"Specially-trained teams are working at the UK border to identify and safeguard babies and children who may be at risk of trafficking," said a spokesman for the Home Office (UK interior ministry) in a statement. Denmark suspended adoptions from Nigeria in 2014 citing concerns over forgery, corruption and lack of control by the authorities. Apart from the illicit trade in babies, Nigeria also faces the problem of domestic and international trafficking in women and children.

Human trafficking, including selling children, is illegal in Nigeria, but almost 10 years ago a UNESCO report identified the industry as the country's third most common crime after financial fraud and drug trafficking - and the situation appears to be getting worse, according to campaigners. The Nigerian government has not ratified an internationally recognised set of rules known as the Hague Adoption Convention which meant the laws governing adoptions remain murky and complicated, campaigners said.

"There is corruption in the adoption process and that is the individual (Nigerian) states' responsibility," said NAPTIP's Orakwue in a phone interview. "But central government should step up its funding to NAPTIP so we can increase sup-

port to victims," Orakwue said. Sophie, who was not able to conceive, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation she started to develop the symptoms of pregnancy after visiting a herbalist in Enugu state in 2014. However the traditional doctor told Sophie her swollen stomach contained gas resulting from the herbal treatment rather than a foetus - but she could arrange to buy a baby. "(The herbalist) said that she would bring me a newborn baby, girl or boy, depending on which one I wanted," she said in the grimy sitting room of her apartment in southeastern Nigeria.

The woman said a girl would cost 380,000 naira (\$1,250) while a boy would cost 500,000 naira (\$1,645), said Sophie who opted for a girl. But a sense of obligation to the woman who brought her a child prevented her from reporting the crime, she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "I considered everything and thought to myself 'why should I report (the herbalist) to the police?' She had helped me," she said.

NAPTIP does not have data on the number of domestic adoptions that have taken place, a figure it says is not held by central government. "In the southeastern states, the sale of babies is unarguably very prevalent as recorded by the agency," said Cordelia Ebringa, NAPTIP's commander in Enugu state.

Deadly Game

Men are also involved in the process of illicit baby trafficking, with sperm donors impregnating surrogate mothers who then sell their babies, according to two Nigerian men. Surrogacy is illegal in Nigeria. Jonathan, 33, said he was paid 25,000 naira (\$82) by his boss or "madam" every time he helped a client to become pregnant. "I don't see it as somebody exploiting me. The madams pay me for my work," said Jonathan, who withheld his full name. Jonathan said he did not know whether the women gave their babies away or went on to sell them although he was concerned what he was doing could be illegal. "I often think 'what if the police catch me?'"

Nigeria's anti-human trafficking agency said it did not have data or information on the role of sperm donors, but many women they spoke to did not want to reveal how they fell pregnant. "NAPTIP has no records of studs that impregnate the women at the baby factories as most of the pregnant women rescued and interviewed in such cases claimed unplanned pregnancies," said Ebringa.

Little information was made available by the Nigerian police or authorities in southeastern states about the number or identity of the people who run the "baby factories". No data was provided on the number of arrests by police in southern states of Enugu and Abia on baby trafficking offences despite repeated requests by the Thomson Reuters Foundation. But the dangers involved, both from the law and from trafficking gangs, are palpable, according to Jonathan, who estimates he has fathered about 15 children as a "stud". "These (baby traffickers) can be dangerous," said Jonathan, who was once threatened by a group of thugs who found out what he was doing. "They are ready to kill anybody if you stand in their way." —Reuters

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GOPPERTH EXTENDS STAY WITH WASPS



LONDON: New Zealand's Jimmy Gopperth signed a new deal with Wasps yesterday after making a superb start to the English Premiership season. Gopperth is the Premiership's top scorer this season after quickly mastering his switch from fly-half to inside centre following Danny Cipriani's return to the club. The length of the 33-year-old's contract extension wasn't disclosed by Wasps, who also recently tied up new deals with Dan Robson, Thomas Young and Kearnan Myall. "I believe there is a lot still to come from this squad," Gopperth said. "We've been learning our ways and making good progress, but I feel there's more to come. "We obviously have a few more people to come in which will help our cause, but we're just looking to improve every single week. We are on the right track, but we've still got plenty to learn." Wasps rugby director Dai Young paid tribute to Gopperth and underlined his importance to the team. "Jimmy is a very important player for us, on and off the field," Young said. — AFP

SCOTLAND STAR HOGG SIGNS NEW DEAL WITH GLASGOW

GLASGOW: Scotland full-back Stuart Hogg signed a two-year contract extension with Celtic League side Glasgow yesterday. Hogg's new deal will keep him with Glasgow until at least May 2019 and provided the ideal boost for the player and his club before their showdown with Leicester in the European Champions Cup tomorrow. The 24-year-old toured Australia with the 2013 British and Irish Lions and was last season's Six Nations player of the tournament. "Glasgow Warriors is such a big part of my life - I love this club," Hogg told Glasgow's website. "I've played for the Warriors for five years and it was an easy decision to sign for another two seasons. "It means a lot to me that the club and Scottish Rugby want me to stay and I am very happy that I'm going to be continuing my career in Scotland." Glasgow head coach Gregor Townsend, who will take over as Scotland boss next year, added: "Stuart works extremely hard in training every day to improve himself, and he gets real joy from playing the game. "He is entering the best years of his career as he is in great physical shape and he has become one of our most experienced players." —AFP

MIDFIELDER KROOS EXTENDS REAL DEAL

MADRID: World Cup-winning German midfielder Toni Kroos has agreed to extend his Real Madrid contract until 2022, the club said yesterday. Kroos joined the Spanish giants in 2014 from Bayern Munich for 25 million euros (27.5 million dollars) and has played 108 times for the club, scoring four goals. His contract was to expire in 2020. "Real Madrid and Toni Kroos have agreed on the extension of the contract which will keep the player at the club until June 30, 2022," Real said in a statement. Part of Germany's 2014 World Cup-winning team, Kroos has established himself as an automatic choice in midfield for coach Zinedine Zidane and played in the club's Champions League final victory against Atletico Madrid in May. — AFP



SABRES SIGN RISTOLAINEN, LIGHTNING SIGN KUCHEROV

DETROIT: The Buffalo Sabres signed defenseman Rasmus Ristolainen and the Tampa Bay Lightning signed forward Nikita Kucherov as NHL teams made final roster moves Tuesday on the eve of the regular season. Ristolainen signed a six-year \$32.4 million contract, while Kucherov signed a three-year deal that averages \$4.766 million a year. Both were restricted free agents whose rights were retained by their respective teams in June.

For Buffalo, the signing means the Sabres will have their top defenseman ready for their opener against Montreal today. The Lightning, meanwhile, have their nucleus intact in preparing to open their season by hosting Detroit today. Kucherov led the Lightning with 30 goals and 66 points in the regular season, and led them again in the playoffs with 11 goals and 19 points.

Their signings left three prominent restricted free agents still without contracts, including Winnipeg defenseman Jacob Trouba, who has asked to be traded. Also unsigned are Anaheim Ducks defenseman Hampus Lindholm and forward Rickard Rakell.

In another move Tuesday, veteran forward Pierre-Alexandre Parenteau was claimed by the New Jersey Devils a day after being placed on waivers by the New York Islanders. Parenteau is a two-time 20-goal scorer, who is joining his eighth team in nine NHL seasons. New Jersey freed up roster space by placing defenseman Seth Helgeson on waivers.

Elsewhere, Ruslan Fedotenko announced he is retiring after 12 NHL seasons split among five teams. Fedotenko is a two-time Stanley Cup champion who spent the past two seasons playing for Iowa of the American Hockey League. He had 173 goals and 193 assists for 366 points in 863 NHL games.

Los Angeles kept forward Devin Setoguchi. The veteran played his way onto the roster after nearly two years out of the NHL, during which he dealt with an alcohol problem. The Kings also sent veteran defenseman Rob Scuderi, a two-time Stanley Cup champion, to the minors after he cleared waivers.

Calgary signed free-agent forward Kris Versteeg to a one-year contract. Versteeg is a nine-year NHL veteran and a two-time Stanley Cup champion, who split last season with Carolina and Los Angeles.

Pittsburgh claimed Montreal goalie Mike Condon; Minnesota claimed Detroit forward Teemu Pulkkinen; Toronto claimed Boston forward Seth Griffith; and Carolina claimed Phoenix defenseman Klas Dahlbeck.

The New York Rangers placed forward Nathan Gerbe on waivers with the intention of terminating his contract. The Hurricanes acquired forward Connor Brickley from the Florida Panthers for forward Brody Sutter in a swap of prospects. Sutter is the 25-year-old son of former Panthers coach Duane Sutter and had no points in 12 games over two seasons with the Hurricanes. — AP

RUSSIAN OLYMPIC CHIEF TO STEP DOWN

MOSCOW: The head of Russia's Olympic Committee, Alexander Zhukov, is stepping down, in the biggest change at the top of Russian sport since a doping scandal led to the country's track-and-field athletes being excluded from the Rio Games. President Vladimir Putin said Zhukov had told him he wanted to leave the role so he could concentrate on his other job as first deputy speaker in the lower house of parliament. "This is without doubt the right thing, we support it completely," Putin told a meeting of sports officials attended by Zhukov on Tuesday, adding that he "has done a lot for sport and, I hope, will do more still."

Zhukov was given the tough task of trying to persuade the International Olympic Committee not to ban Russia entirely from the Rio Games despite damning reports from the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) that uncovered widespread state-sponsored cheating. His low-key, behind-the-scenes style was in contrast to the forceful approach of Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko, who is well known for emotional outbursts.

Russia was eventually allowed to send athletes in most sports other than track and field, but was banned from the subsequent Paralympics.

SOCHI COVER-UP

Whoever replaces Zhukov will play a key role in trying to clean up Russia's reputation and heal relations with the wider Olympic movement - an important priority for a country that sees sporting suc-

cess as a symbol of its power and world standing. Russian officials made no connection between Zhukov's departure and the doping allegations.

"In most of the cases, these were made up and were unfounded, in order to totally discredit Russian sport," Mikhail Mamiashvili, president of Russia's Wrestling Federation, told Reuters.

Zhukov, a Putin ally and former deputy prime minister, has been president of the Russian Olympic Committee since 2010, and was chairman of the Organising Committee for the 2014 Winter Olympics in the southern resort of Sochi. Russia lavished some \$50 billion on the Games, a prestige project for Putin, and finished top of the medals table. But a WADA-commissioned report this year described how, in a clandestine night-time operation, positive samples from athletes who had cheated were smuggled out of a lab through a hole drilled in the wall, and then replaced with clean samples. Russia acknowledged that there were shortcomings in its anti-doping operations, but Zhukov was among those who argued it was being unfairly singled out for punishment for political reasons while doping by other countries was ignored. Zhukov quickly rose through the ranks at the International Olympic Committee, which this year appointed him to an influential role as head of the commission overseeing Beijing's preparation to host the 2022 Winter Olympics. — Reuters



DOHA: Germany's gold medalist Tony Martin (C), Belarus' silver medalist Vasil Kiryienka (L) and Spain's bronze medalist Jonathan Castroviejo celebrate on the podium at the end of the men's elite individual time trial event as part of the 2016 UCI Road World Championships yesterday, in the Qatari capital Doha. — AFP

MARTIN WINS 4TH MEN'S WORLD TIME-TRIAL TITLE

DOHA: Germany's Tony Martin won the men's time-trial title in Qatar yesterday for a record-equalling fourth time. Martin obliterated the field of 66 riders, winning the 40km race by 45 seconds from last year's champion Vasil Kiryienka of Belarus, with Spain's Jonathan Castroviejo a further 25sec back in third. Martin previously won the title in 2011, 2012 and 2013, and joins Fabian Cancellara as the only four-time winners of the event. "It's amazing, I can't believe it," said Martin afterwards.

"Everybody knows that I haven't had a good year. "But this makes everything OK - the course was made for me." One of the pre-race favourites, Tom Dumoulin, the Olympic silver-medallist, finished way back in 11th place, more than two minutes off the pace. The race was surprisingly led for a long time by Ireland's Ryan Mullen, who eventually fin-

ished fifth. It is the second time this week Martin has taken gold, having also triumphed in the team time-trial in his last race for his Etixx-Quick Step outfit.

Martin told reporters that his first victory in Copenhagen was the most special to him, but he would try and beat the record he shares with Cancellara. "I am still motivated to go for the fifth or sixth title, I am not close to the end of my career, and after today I am more motivated to go for more titles."

He added that before this season his form was such that he had begun to doubt whether he was still a "really big time-trialler". The race began in temperatures of 37 degrees Celsius (99 degrees Fahrenheit) as the flat course took riders from just north of Doha to the finish on a man-made island on the fringes of Qatar's capital. Martin said he had prepared thoroughly for the conditions-

he said earlier in the week he had trained on rollers in a heated room and averaged almost 54 kilometres per hour throughout the ride. He was ahead of his rivals by the second checkpoint and his victory was never in doubt after that, yet the 31-year-old admitted he was surprised by the margin of victory.

Second-placed Kiryienka said he was very satisfied with his performance and placing, despite losing his world title, and had the "deepest respect" for Martin's victory.

"This (result) is not a surprise," he said. "The surprise was last year when Tony Martin did not stand on the podium." Martin finished seventh last year, more than a minute behind the Belarussian.

Castroviejo admitted he struggled with the heat in Qatar and called the course "very difficult". — AFP

WESTWOOD'S 2020 VISION FOR RYDER CUP CAPTAINCY

LONDON: Lee Westwood endured the least productive Ryder Cup of his 10-match career two weeks ago but it has not diluted the veteran campaigner's dreams of captaining Europe in the biennial event in 2020.

The former world number one was hoping to surpass Nick Faldo's record Ryder Cup points tally in Minnesota earlier this month. However, not only did his team slip to a 17-11 defeat, the Englishman failed to register a point in his three outings.

"I certainly wouldn't want to be the captain next time around, that's too soon for me," Westwood told a news conference on the eve of the British Masters at The Grove in Watford. "But I think 2020 is definitely on my radar. There are a lot of candidates for it but I'll be putting my name in the ring for sure, it's something I'd like to do."

Westwood's preference for the next edition in Paris in two years' time would be to qualify for his 11th consecutive Ryder Cup as a player. Failing that, he would like to move into the backroom team and gain experience as a deputy skipper.

"I've played in 10 and witnessed 10 different forms of captaincy," said the 43-year-old. "I'd like to maybe play again but if I can't play again, I'd like to do the assistant captain's role."

"I paid a lot of attention to what Darren (Clarke) and his assistant captains were doing this year." Despite the emphatic margin of

defeat, Westwood felt there was little to choose between Europe and the US at Hazeltine National.

"I thought both teams played well," he said. "The Americans did to us what we've been doing to them for the last 20 years. "They probably holed more putts than us, not a lot in it tee-to-green." Westwood suffered a fall-out from the Ryder Cup when he opened with a 75 and an 82 at last week's Dunhill Links

Championship in Scotland before going on to miss the three-round cut. He was, though, delighted to be back on home soil.

"I love playing tournaments in Britain," said Westwood. "The crowds are fantastic, they turn out in the thousands. "They create a great atmosphere and we play some lovely golf courses as well. This week is no different... it's nice to see the British Masters going from strength-to-strength." — Reuters



Alexander Zhukov



Lee Westwood

WU URGES FOREIGN ADVENTURE FOR CHINA'S FLOPS

SHANGHAI: Chinese number one Wu Di urged China's tennis authorities to send players abroad to gain experience after he went tumbling out of the Shanghai Masters yesterday. The wildcard's comprehensive 6-2, 6-2 defeat to Gilles Simon in round two ended local interest in the tournament as China's long wait for success in the men's game goes on.

Li Na won two women's Grand Slam titles, prompting rapid growth in the sport in China, before retiring in 2014. But China's men are yet to make an impact. Wu, China's highest ranked male at 182, said the country needed to look to the United States or Europe rather than trying to develop players at home. "There are many promising young players. They are in China," said

Wu, fielding familiar questions after his latest flop on home soil. "I think they need to work out and need to practise or play some matches in the United States and Europe which will be more helpful for them. "There are just that many players here in China. It's a small pool. So what you can do, you can only practise within this small circle." Li's run-away success came after she made the

tough and controversial decision to split from China's state sporting system and go it alone with her own coaching set-up. Wu and China's number two, 197th-ranked Zhang Ze, are the country's standard-bearers but Wu said they needed regular practice against tougher opposition. "Me and Zhang Ze, we are still very young, 25 and 26. We are still actually

relatively young players," he said.

"We may have appeared a couple of times, people think we are veterans, but really we are young. We need to get national team support and go abroad."

Wu has long carried China's hopes despite a dismal record on the senior ATP circuit, where he won his first main-draw match in seven years of trying at last month's Chengdu Open. — AFP

TOP-FOUR COMEBACK TOUGH FOR FEDERER, WARNS STAN

SHANGHAI: Roger Federer won't find it easy to get back to the top of tennis as he battles to recover from his biggest injury yet, fellow Swiss Stan Wawrinka warned yesterday.

Federer, 35, has been out since July for knee rehabilitation after undergoing the first operation of his career on a torn meniscus in February.

The record, 17-time Grand Slam title-winner suffered a freak injury while he was helping bathe his twin daughters after being knocked out of January's Australian Open. "I think he's practising. I don't know if he's gonna be back in the top four. We will see," said Wawrinka, after beating Kyle Edmund 6-3, 6-4 in the Shanghai Masters' second round.

"It's the first time he has a big injury. It's not easy to come back after that. But if he's fit and 100 percent, for sure he will be really dangerous." Federer will play the Hopman Cup mixed-teams event in January alongside Wawrinka, his sometime doubles partner, and Belinda Bencic as he makes his return. The top four is missing both Federer (ranked seventh) and Rafael Nadal (fifth) for the first time since 2003 as signs grow that a new era is evolving.

US Open winner Wawrinka is third in the world behind Novak Djokovic and Andy

Murray, but some young new challengers are climbing the rankings.

Wawrinka, who has shaken off the back injury which kept him out of last week's China Open, saw off Britain's Edmund, 21, in just over an hour in Shanghai.

He said he had no problems with his motivation, unlike top-ranked Djokovic who has admitted to burn-out after some adverse results and injuries in recent months.

"The motivation is easy, for sure. I'm really happy with what happened in the US Open," Wawrinka said. "But there are still a lot of challenges this year with here, with Basel, Paris, London.

"I'm excited to keep playing, especially trying to keep the confidence that I have and trying to push myself the maximum to keep doing some great results."

While Wawrinka motored into the third round, Czech seventh seed Tomas Berdych became the first big casualty when he lost 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/1) to Marcel Granollers.

David Goffin beat Benoit Paire 6-1, 7-6 (7/0) and Gilles Simon ended Chinese hopes when he beat wildcard Wu Di 6-2, 6-2. Nadal is in action later against Viktor Troicki, before Murray takes on Steve Johnson in the late match on the Shanghai centre court. — AFP

TEARS AND JEERS AS NADAL, KYRGIOS CRASH

SHANGHAI: Andy Murray rose above a day of chaos at the Shanghai Masters yesterday as Rafael Nadal fell at the first hurdle and Nick Kyrgios melted down in spectacular fashion. Murray, seeking to wrest the world number one ranking from Novak Djokovic by the year's end, moved fluently past America's Steve Johnson 6-3, 6-2 to reach the third round.

It was a very different story for Nadal, who departed grim-faced and with his ardent fans in tears after a shock 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) defeat to Viktor Troicki. Chinese fans brandished pictures of Nadal-including one of him in his underwear-but they looked on in dismay as the 14-time Grand Slam champion was well beaten.

Afterwards Nadal, now 30 and with a catalogue of injuries to his name, vowed to return to top form by next season, mainly by putting the zip back in his forehand and movement.

"I know what I have to do and I'm going to do it," scowled the Spaniard, who has had little to smile about at the big tournaments this year. "I've got two-and-a-half months until next season starts so I have got two-and-a-half months to put myself at the level I want to be. "And I'm confident I'm going to do it."

Earlier Australia's Kyrgios lashed out at fans and insisted "I don't owe them anything" after he was booed off court in one of the biggest flare-ups of his volatile career. The hot-headed world number 14 clashed with the chair umpire and a heckler and admitted not trying after he lost 6-3, 6-1 to German qualifier Mischa Zverev, the world number 110.

Kyrgios was slapped with a code violation for an audible obscenity, and was

warned to play properly after he patted a child-like serve into his opponent's court.

'BIG DEAL'

He later admitted "taking the easy way out" after he gave up on several points during the match, including one Zverev serve which he walked away from before it had landed. But when asked whether he could understand why fans were upset, he shot back: "Not at all. "I feel like if they knew what they were talking about they'd be on the tennis court and being successful, as well. "No, I can't really understand it at all. They don't know what I'm going through." Kyrgios added: "I'm good at hitting a tennis ball at the net. Like, big deal. I don't owe them anything. It's my choice," he said. "If you don't like it, I didn't ask you to come watch. Just leave. If you're so good at giving advice and so good at tennis, why aren't you as good as me? Why aren't you on the tour?"

Kyrgios is known for his poor behaviour on court. Last year he received a suspended one-month ban for making a lewd and personal comment during a match with Stan Wawrinka.

Wawrinka, by contrast, moved through with minimal fuss as the US Open champion mastered Britain's Kyle Edmund 6-3, 6-3 to reach the third round. Canada's Milos Raonic beat Paolo Lorenzi 6-2, 6-4, but Czech seventh seed Tomas Berdych tumbled 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/1) to Marcel Granollers.

Canadian qualifier Vasek Pospisil upset Grigor Dimitrov 7-5, 7-6 (7/2), David Goffin beat Benoit Paire 6-1, 7-6 (7/0) and Gilles Simon ousted Chinese wildcard Wu Di 6-2, 6-2. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: In this multiple exposure, Los Angeles Dodgers starting pitcher Clayton Kershaw throws to a Washington Nationals batter during the fifth inning in Game 4 of a baseball National League Division Series in Los Angeles, Tuesday. — AP

CUBS COMEBACK SINKS GIANTS AS DODGERS LEVEL SERIES

SAN FRANCISCO: The Chicago Cubs moved a step closer to ending their century-old World Series drought by taking a dramatic 6-5 comeback victory at San Francisco on Tuesday, sealing a 3-1 win in their National League Division Series.

The identity of the Cubs' opponent in the NL Championship Series will be decided Thursday when Washington hosts the Los Angeles Dodgers in the winner-takes-all Game 5 of that series. The Dodgers forced the decider by beating the Nationals by that same 6-5 scoreline on Tuesday.

Chicago trailed 5-2 entering the ninth inning, but scored four runs in that final frame to stun the Giants, whose symmetrical run of World Series titles in 2010, 2012 and 2014 will not be repeated in 2016.

Giants starter Matt Moore held the Cubs to just two hits over the first eight innings but the San Francisco bullpen unraveled quickly in the ninth Kris Bryant singled off Derek Law, who was replaced on the mound by Javier Lopez who walked Anthony Rizzo to put runners on first and second. Another pitching change saw Sergio Romo come in, but he gave up a doubled to Ben Zobrist which drove it Bryant to make it 5-3. Yet another pitching change saw Will Smith pitch to pinch-hitter Willson Contreras, who drove a hit up the middle to bring in two runs and tie the game. Jason Heyward then ground into what looked like being double play, but after Contreras was forced out at second, Brandon Crawford's throw to first sailed past, allowing Heyward to advance to second. Javier Baez then got a hit that brought home Heyward

for the go-ahead run.

In the bottom of the ninth, hard-throwing Cubs closer Aroldis Chapman retired the Giants in order to cap a stunning victory.

Chasing their first World Series title since 1908, the Cubs will open the NL Championship Series at home on Saturday. They made the NLCS last year but were swept in four games by the New York Mets.

The defeat ended a remarkable run by the Giants in playoff games that would have meant elimination if they lost; they had won their previous ten. Los Angeles' Chase Utley drove in the tiebreaking run with two outs in the eighth inning to lift the Dodgers to a 6-5 victory over Washington on Tuesday, squaring their National League Division Series at 2-2 and forcing a decisive Game 5.

The score was tied with two outs in the eighth when Andrew Toles got hit by a pitch from Blake Treinen. Andre Ethier followed with a single to left and Utley got a hit into right field, scoring Toles from second base for the winning run. Desperate to avoid another early playoff exit, the Dodgers turned to pitching ace Clayton Kershaw on three days' rest.

Like his performance in Game 1, he was below his best but still ended on the winning side. He gave up five runs in 6-2/3 inning, striking out 11. Kershaw opened the game by giving up a leadoff single and a walk, and Daniel Murphy drove in the game's first run.

The Dodgers took a 2-1 lead in the bottom of the first inning on Adrian Gonzalez's two-run homer that scored Justin Turner, who was on base after being hit by a pitch from Joe Ross.

The Nationals drew level in the top of the third as Jayson Werth drove in a run. Los Angeles again replied immediately in the bottom of the inning. Kershaw got the rally going with a double, clenching his fists in a rare show of emotion.

Kershaw scored on Turner's single with two outs. Joc Pederson got hit by a pitch from Ross with the bases loaded, forcing in Turner and making it 4-2 to the hosts.

Ross made his postseason debut for the Nationals, giving up four runs and being pulled after just 2-2/3 innings.

Trailing 5-2 in the seventh, the Nats had runners on first and second against Kershaw with two outs. The crowd chanted Kershaw's name before Bryce Harper drew an eight-pitch walk to load the bases and end the day for Kershaw, who walked off with his head down.

That's when the Dodgers bullpen nearly gave the game away.

Pedro Baez came in and hit Jayson Werth with his only pitch, forcing in a run to make it 5-3. Baez got booed off the field. Murphy's single off Luis Avilan dropped safely in left-center field, scoring two runs to tie it at 5-5. Avilan also heard boos. Joe Blanton retired Anthony Rendon on a swinging strikeout to finally end the inning.

Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen worked a scoreless ninth for a save, one day after giving up four late runs in a Game 3 loss. Game 5 is Thursday in Washington, with 20-game winner Max Scherzer expected to pitch for the Nationals. Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said he will use left-hander Rich Hill and rookie Julio Urias, but did not announce which one will start. — AP



SHANGHAI: Andy Murray of Britain hits a return against Steve Johnson of the US during the men's singles match against Viktor Troicki of Serbia at the Shanghai Masters tennis tournament in Shanghai yesterday. — AFP

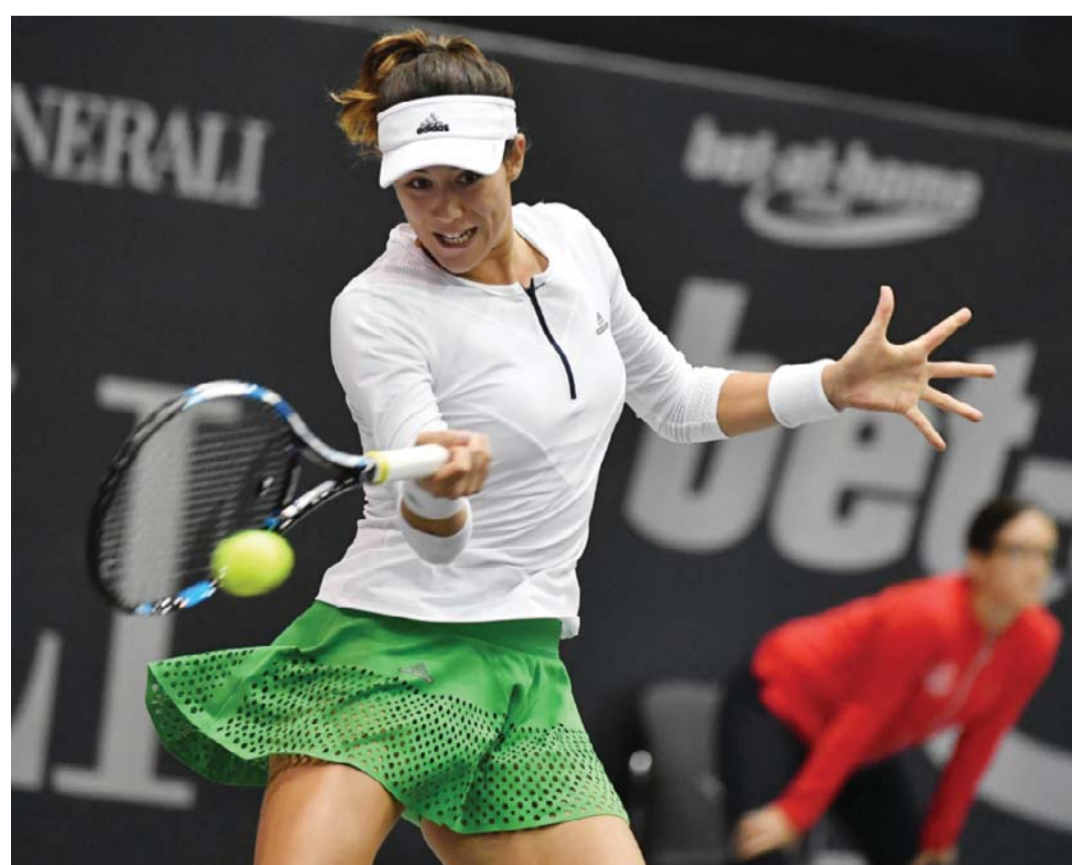
PLISKOVA TO SPEARHEAD CZECHS IN FED CUP FINAL

PRAGUE: World number five Karolina Pliskova will lead reigning champions the Czech Republic in the Fed Cup final against France in Strasbourg on November 12-13, team captain Petr Pala said yesterday.

Pala has also called up 11th-ranked Petra Kvitova, 20th-ranked Barbora Strycova and Lucie Hradecka, ranked 193rd for singles and 14th for doubles.

"It's a pleasure to travel to the finals in France with a team like this," Pala told reporters. "We have a really strong team and I think we're going there as favourites." The 24-year-old Pliskova reached the US Open finals this year and made her way to the WTA Finals in Singapore at the end of October. The 26-year-old Kvitova, the Wimbledon champion in 2011 and 2014, has sacked two coaches this year as she has been struggling to return to the top 10. The Czechs have won four Fed Cup trophies out of the last five editions.

France last lifted the trophy in 2003 with a team led by Amelie Mauresmo—the current team captain—and Mary Pierce. In their last encounter, the Czechs won 3-1 at Ostrava in the 2015 semi-finals. The two teams are 3-3 head-to-head in the competition. Led by Pliskova and Strycova, the Czechs beat Switzerland 3-2 at Luzern in the April semi-finals, while France saw off the Netherlands 3-2 at Trelaze, betting on Caroline Garcia and Kristina Mladenovic. — AFP



LINZ: Spain's Garbine Muguruza returns a ball during the match against Turkey's Cagla Buyukakay at the WTA Generali Ladies Tournament, yesterday in Linz. — AFP

BOWLER LEFT DAZED BY FATAL DELIVERY TO HUGHES

SYDNEY: Australian cricketer Sean Abbott was left upset and dazed for days after he bowled the ball which fatally injured batsman Phillip Hughes, a coroner's inquest has been told.

Abbott, now aged 24, wrote in a statement released yesterday that he had always looked up to Hughes, and had run to the batsman and held his head as he lay on the pitch at the Sydney Cricket Ground.

"Once in the changeroom I felt confused and upset, I had a headache, people kept coming up to me but I cannot

remember what they said," Abbott said. "It was all a bit of a blur and I felt like I was in a bit of a daze. I felt super tired. These feelings stayed with me for the next few days." Hughes, 25, died two days after the rising delivery hit him in the neck during a domestic Sheffield Shield match between New South Wales and South Australia in November 2014.

The blow caused a bleed on the brain from which death was likely "inevitable", the inquest has been told. The inquest, in which the coroner is examining the manner of Hughes' death and can make rec-

ommendations to improve safety, has looked into whether he had been targeted with short balls or "sledged" with unsettling comments from opponents.

Questions have been raised about whether Hughes was told by one of the bowlers, "I am going to kill you", but Abbott said he did not recall any such backchat. "I felt the game that day was being played within the laws and spirit of cricket," he said. Abbott said Hughes had been "a bit early through the shot" when he took the delivery, which made him think that the ball had been travelling

slower than the batsman had anticipated. "I don't remember the ball being fast or slow. Maybe the wicket was a little bit slower that day. That's the type of wicket at the SCG," he said.

Abbott, who has not been called to appear at the inquest, said he had avoided watching the distressing video of the incident but stressed there would always be risks in the game.

"I know there has been a suggestion that the laws of the game be changed so that bouncers should not be bowled, but the same cricket ball will be hit and flying

around whether bouncers are bowled or not," he said. In his statement, Australian vice-captain David Warner said Hughes had been one of his "closest mates" and he missed him every day. But he said he could not think of any way that a similar freak accident could be completely avoided. "I don't think a helmet could protect where Phil was hit and still allow a batsman to move his head properly or face up properly," he said. The inquest is due to finish tomorrow. The coroner's findings may come then, but it could take weeks. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh: Scoreboard of the third one-day international between Bangladesh and England at Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium in Chittagong yesterday.

Bangladesh	
Tamim Iqbal c Vince b Rashid	45
Imrul Kayes c Sub b Stokes	46
Sabbir Rahman c Buttler b Rashid	49
Mahmudullah c Bairstow b Rashid	6
Mushfiqur Rahim not out	67
Shakib Al Hasan St Buttler b Ali	4
Nasir Hossain c Vince b Rashid	4
Mosaddek Hossain not out	38
Extras (b4, lb3 w11)	18
Total (six wickets, 50 overs)	277
Fall of wickets: 1-80 (Kayes) 2-106 (Tamim), 3-122 (Mahmudullah), 4-176 (Sabbir), 5-184 (Shakib), 6-192 (Nasir)	
Did not bat: Mashrafe Mortaza, Shafiqul Islam, Taskin Ahmed	
Bowling: Woakes 8-0-66-0 (w2), Ball 8-0-44-0, Plunkett 9-0-51-0 (w2), Ali 10-0-42-1 (w1), Stokes 5-0-24-1 (w4), Rashid 10-0-43-4 (w2)	
England	
J. Vince lbw b Nasir	32
S. Billings c Kayes b Mosaddek	62
B. Duckett c Rahim b Shafiqul	63
J. Bairstow b Shafiqul	15
B. Stokes not out	47
J. Buttler b Mortaza	25
M. Ali c Mahmudullah b Mortaza	1
C. Woakes not out	27
Extras (w6)	6
Total (six wickets, 47.5 overs)	278
Fall of wickets: 1-63 (Vince), 2-127 (Billings), 3-172 (Bairstow), 4-179 (Duckett), 5-227 (Buttler), 6-236 (Ali)	
Did not bat: A. Rashid, L. Plunkett, J. Ball	
Bowling: Mortaza 10-1-51-2, Shafiqul 9.5-0-61-2 (w3), Shakib 8-0-45-0 (w1), Taskin 9-0-46-0 (w1), Nasir 7-0-53-1 (w1), Mosaddek 4-0-22-1	
Result: England won by four wickets.	



CHITTAGONG: England's cricket players pose for a group photograph with the winner's trophy for their series against Bangladesh after the third one-day international cricket match in Chittagong, Bangladesh, yesterday. — AP

ENGLAND WIN ODI SERIES TO END BANGLADESH'S HOME RUN

CHITTAGONG: England's Chris Woakes hit a six off Shafiqul Islam to seal a series-clinching four-wicket victory in the third and final one-day international against Bangladesh yesterday.

Sam Billings justified his selection with his maiden fifty and Ben Duckett registered his second half-century of the series but it was Ben Stokes' unbeaten 47 off 48 balls that helped England pull off a tricky 278-run chase with 13 balls to spare.

Put into bat in Chittagong, Bangladesh

had posted a strong 277-6 on the back of a string of top order cameos and Mushfiqur Rahim's unbeaten 67 down the order.

The 2-1 ODI series defeat was Bangladesh's first at home in two years. England's chase got off to a good start before Nasir Hossain dismissed James Vince for 32. Having added 63 runs with Vince, Billings added another 64 with Duckett, the duo helping themselves to fluent half-centuries in the process.

At 227-4 in the 41st over, England looked

heavy favourites but Mashrafe Mortaza struck twice, dismissing England captain Jos Buttler (25) and Moeen Ali (one) in quick succession to inject fresh excitement into the contest.

Stokes, however, maintained his composure and hit two sixes and a boundary while running hard between the wickets to keep England on course. Woakes proved a worthy partner as the duo added 42 runs in 32 balls to seal the victory.

Earlier, Buttler won the toss and decided

to field but had to wait until the 19th over for a breakthrough.

Tamim Iqbal (45) and Imrul Kayes (46) added 80 runs for the opening stand before the guile of Adil Rashid (4-43), combined with some poor shot selection by the home batsmen, pegged back Bangladesh.

After Stokes sent back Kayes, Rashid dismissed Tamim, who became the first Bangladesh batsman to reach 5000 ODI runs, with a short and wide delivery.

Mahmudullah opened his account with a

six off the leg-spinner but Rashid had the last laugh as the batsman drove a long-hop to short cover.

Sabbir Rahman (49) could not bring up his fifty either, becoming Rashid's third victim as Bangladesh lost momentum.

Mushfiqur and Mosaddek Hossain (38 not out) enjoyed a busy seventh wicket partnership that yielded 85 runs to take the hosts past the 275-mark. The teams now face off in a two-test series starting in Chittagong on Oct 20. — Reuters

ASHWIN REGAINS BOWLING TOP SPOT

NEW DELHI: Ravichandran Ashwin regained his number one spot in the bowling world rankings yesterday after his career-best performance in the final Test against New Zealand spurred India to a series whitewash.

The lanky spinner leapfrogged South African pacer Dale Steyn and England's Jimmy Anderson at the top of the International Cricket Council rankings in an update released a day after he recorded match figures of 13-140.

The 30-year-old Ashwin was also named man of the series after India's 321-run triumph over the Black Caps in the third and final match in Indore which cemented the hosts' position as the number one Test team.

He took 27 wickets in the course of the three-match series, including figures of seven for 59 in New Zealand's second innings in Indore.

Ashwin last topped the chart in July and is also the top-ranked allrounder thanks in part to his stellar performances with the bat during India's recent tour of the West Indies, where he scored two centuries.

While Australian skipper Steve Smith remained at the top of the batting rankings, Ajinkya Rahane's career best 188 in Indore saw the right-handed Indian batsman move up five places to sixth in the chart. — AFP



CAPE TOWN: Australia's David Warner makes a run during their 5th One Day International cricket match against South Africa in Cape Town, South Africa, yesterday. — AP

FUTURE LOOKS PINK FOR PAKISTAN'S BALL-MAKERS

SIALKOT: As cricket stages its second day-night Test this week, factory workers in Pakistan will be among the avid television viewers—they might even have made the innovative pink balls being used by their heroes.

Pakistan host West Indies in Dubai in a five-day/night Test featuring the pink ball, starting today. It is a match that will be closely followed in Sialkot, the city that is the country's sports manufacturing hub.

Pakistan's sports goods industry is positioning itself to be the top supplier of the new pink balls aimed at dragging the traditional format—the five-day game—into the 21st century.

"We are probably making 15,000 to 20,000 pink balls per year. The numbers of pink balls are growing," said Khawar Anwar Khawaja, chief executive of Grays of Cambridge, who has been making cricket balls since 1953.

The high visibility balls made their Test debut last year when Australia played New Zealand in Adelaide, to mixed reviews. But cricket's bosses are committed to increasing the number of day/night Tests as they bid to reverse the trend of falling attendances.

After years of trials, the governing body have plumped for pink to replace traditional red under lights, as it is visible against both dark skies and the traditional Test-match white kits. Two major factories and dozens of small units in Sialkot are on the case.

NEW COLOUR, OLD FORMAT

"Last year we produced about 120,000 cricket balls (all colours), but our demand is growing. We hope to do this year minimum hopefully around 150,000 balls," Khawaja added, beaming with pride as his workers stitched the balls by hand behind him. Test cricket is the sport's longest format with matches that despite being scheduled for five days of play, can still end in a draw.

With breaks for lunch and tea, Tests evoke a bygone era and are losing support to the modern, shortest, form of the game, Twenty20.

The high-octane Twenty20 matches last around three hours, feature coloured kits, live performances, loud music and

cheerleaders. The first ever Test match was played in 1877 between England and Australia.

Outside of these two countries and India, filling stadiums across five days and attracting advertisers has increasingly become a problem.

Pakistan in particular has suffered because it has been forced to play its home fixtures in neutral venues such as the United Arab Emirates since militants attacked the touring Sri Lanka team's bus in Lahore in 2009.

Misbah-ul-Haq, Pakistan's celebrated captain who last month took them to number one in the rankings, is a firm believer that the "future belongs to night Tests". "Since the game is played for the fans and for the audience, this night cricket is the future and it's definitely good for cricket," he told reporters last week.

Proud history

The history of sports goods manufac-

turing in Sialkot dates back to the 19th century when locals first began to produce footballs for the British army, then the occupying power.

Today, the city's sports exports are worth \$900 million annually, according to official figures, and have supplied balls for international competitions such as 2014 FIFA World Cup.

Established in 1953, Grays of Cambridge is Pakistan's premier brand and produces red, white, pink and orange balls for the leading markets in Australia and England for top international brands such as Dukes and Gray-Nicolls.

And local manufacturers expect a deluge of orders.

"We have been producing pink for the last seven (or) eight years and exporting them to mainly Australia and to England as well," said Khawaja. Cricket balls, weighing between 142 to 163 grams depending on the category are sold for between \$4 and \$25. They are stitched from four

leather pieces which are converted into two round shaped cups after colouring the raw leather—usually from cattle—and moulding it on machines, before the final stitching by hand or machine.

The balls are then wrapped in crystal polythene covers and packed in hard-board boxes—ready to be shipped overseas. The use of pink balls has been trialled by some domestic leagues, but has had its share of teething problems.

Both the Australian and New Zealand teams complained about the pink ball's ability to swing (move in the air) and that it became too soft too soon, making it harder for batsmen to score runs.

Misbah, however, said players would adapt to the conditions in time. "Since the game is played for the fans and for the audience, this night cricket is the future and it's definitely good for cricket," he said.

"The more frequently we play under lights, it will give more exposure and allow players to get used to it." — AFP



SIALKOT: In this photograph taken on May 27, 2016, Chief Executive of 'Grays of Cambridge', Khawar Anwar Khawaja inspects a pink cricket ball at the factory in Sialkot. Pakistan's sports goods industry is positioning itself to be the prime manufacturer of pink cricket balls — a high-visibility alternative for use in day-night Test matches aimed at dragging the game into the 21st century. — AFP

GREEN SCORES AGAIN, US SETTLES FOR DRAW VS NEW ZEALAND

WASHINGTON: After a second exciting performance, US soccer coach Jurgen Klinsmann says 21-year-old winger Julian Green is "back in the picture." Green scored his second goal in two matches, before Monty Patterson's equalizer forced the US to settle for a 1-1 draw in an exhibition against New Zealand on Tuesday night.

Lynden Gooch also impressed Klinsmann in his US debut as a second-half substitute. The match followed a 2-0 victory over Cuba on Friday, and was the Americans' last before they open their final round of World Cup qualifying against Mexico on Nov. 11. "We wanted to get some answers to a couple of

things toward the Mexico clash a month from now," Klinsmann said. "And I think we found a couple very interesting answers." Green scored his third career goal for the US in just his eighth appearance. He's seen the field in international play just five times over the last two years, after he was invited to the 2014 World Cup and scored a late overtime goal in a 2-1 second-round loss to Belgium. But the German-American earned an invite to Klinsmann's camp after repeatedly making the 18-man roster for German power Bayern Munich during the start of their new season. "I'm really happy about it," Green said. "It's my goal to always be here in this team, and

when I'm here I want to give my best. And I think I did very well."

After scoring the second goal against Cuba, Green put the US ahead Tuesday in the 27th minute when he reached forward Jozy Altidore's knock-down header on the left flank. Green dribbled to goal while defender Liam Graham retreated, cut to his right, and then fired a low, 18-yard shot that sneaked between wrong-footed goalkeeper Stefan Marinovic and the left post. "Every training session he's becoming more mature," Klinsmann said. "He's becoming stronger. He has far more confidence. So it's really nice to see." New Zealand tied it in the 72nd minute. Altidore failed to clear a corner kick

aimed at New Zealand's Michael Boxhall, and Patterson popped up to thump the loose ball into the net from about 5 yards out. "When they start throwing more numbers at us and they start in some ways becoming even more direct and more desperate, that combined with some subs on both sides just means that the game becomes hectic," said US captain Michael Bradley. "We gave away a bad goal, and ultimately that's the difference between winning and tying."

Gooch, a 20-year-old who has appeared seven times this season for Sunderland of England's Premier League, came on in the 59th minute.

The California native - whose Irish

mother and English father give him three international options - created several lively sequences on the right, drawing chants of "Goooooch!" from the announced crowd of 9,012 at RFK Stadium. In the 64th minute, his cross found Green, who looped a shot well high of the goal. And in the 89th, his corner found Omar Gonzalez, whose header also soared above the crossbar. "Gooch confirmed what we saw in training already," Klinsmann said. "He's fearless. He takes people on. Very physical as well, doesn't shy away from physicality. You know, so there are a couple things that we saw that we didn't know before that camp." —AP

PRIDE ON DISPLAY AT ALGERIAN DERBY

ALGIERS: MC Alger and USM Alger may be fierce city rivals from the Algerian capital but they nonetheless share a history intertwined with their country's revolt against French colonialism.

Today marks the 100th derby between the bitterly divided neighbours from the Algiers port communities of Casbah and Bab El Oued.

And while this particular derby can divide families to the point of fistcuffs, the two sides share an eerily similar past of politically motivated struggle.

Mouloudia Club d'Alger are the older of the two whose name is a reference to the birth of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). They were founded in 1921 and even play in the green of Islam, alongside white and red, thus making up the colours of the national flag.

They claim to be the first Muslim football club formed in then-colonised Algeria.

Not to be outdone, Union Sportive Medina d'Alger were originally named Union Sportive Musulman (Muslim) at their founding in 1937.

Originally decked out in a red strip, they added black as a sign of eternal mourning in memory of those killed in the Setif Massacres in 1945, sparked after local French police fired on anti-colonialisation protestors.

With such fiercely patriotic beginnings, it is perhaps unsurprising each side's fans can be fanatically passionate.

So much so that the match due to be hosted by USM will actually take place 50km away in Blida, by order of the Algerian police.

USM have been punished for past fan

violence. But even the nation's government backed daily newspaper El Moudjahid lamented the venue switch, which it said would "kill" a normally white-hot atmosphere generated by 60,000 fans gathered in the Stade du 5-Juillet, the national stadium used for Algeria games and the big derbies. Even USM's regular stadium, which holds just 17,500 but is located right on the seafont with a hill behind from which fans can watch the game, would have been a preferable venue to the one in Blida.

SIBLING RIVALRY

Even so, interest in the match is at fever pitch in the old town of Casbah, predominantly MC-supporting, and the poorer neighbourhoods at Bab, who follow USM.

While most Algerians are a little wearied by such fearsome rivalry, the mood in the old town and the city itself lifts around derby day with a boost to the local economy.

Fans in the two adjoining neighbourhoods have been parading their colours and singing songs in a glorious display of irreverent anarchy for days already.

Family rivalries related to the derby are legendary.

Perhaps the most amusing surrounds the Hassan brothers when Tahir played in attack for MC and his younger sibling Kamel turned out in goal for USM in the 1970s but could no longer bear to see each other.

In the present day, Amir Meddour, who spoke from Casbah, claimed he had banned his MC-supporting son from hanging out with his maternal uncles, fans of USM, ahead of the match to offset the possibility of fights breaking out. —AFP



CORDOBA: Argentina's forward Paulo Dybala, left, and Paraguay's midfielder Rodrigo Rojas vie for the ball during a 2018 World Cup qualifying soccer match in Cordoba, Argentina, Tuesday. — AP

BRAZIL GO TOP, ARGENTINA STUNNED IN WC QUALIFIERS

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil recorded its fourth straight win under its new coach on Tuesday to become the new leader of South America's World Cup qualifying group after 10 matches. Arch rival Argentina, however, was shocked 1-0 at home by Paraguay and is in a precarious fifth place. The two heavyweights will face each other in Brazil in their next games.

Despite the absence of Barcelona star Neymar, Brazil had little trouble in winning 2-0 at Venezuela. Previous group leader Uruguay slipped to second after a creditable 2-2 draw away to Colombia. Brazil is now one point ahead of Uruguay in the table.

Elsewhere, third place Ecuador managed to come from behind and stop ninth place Bolivia in the altitude of La Paz with a 2-2 draw. Copa America champions Chile took a much-needed 2-1 home victory over Peru.

BRAZIL

It took only seven minutes for Brazil to forget the suspended Neymar's absence, keep up its new-found momentum and prove Venezuela deserves the bottom position in the South American qualifiers. Teenage striker Gabriel Jesus, recently signed by Manchester City, scored his fourth goal in his fourth international appearance with a classy lob over goalkeeper Dani Hernandez, who had given the ball to away easily. Winger Willian, who replaced Neymar, scored the second at 55 minutes after a cross by midfielder Renato Augusto.

It was Brazil's least impressive performance under new coach 'Tite' but he is enjoying a honeymoon period as the new coach, having lifted the Selecao from sixth in the standings to top spot. The match was interrupted at 67 minutes when the light went out in the economically troubled country. It took 22 minutes to restart the game.

ARGENTINA

Argentina finds itself in fifth place, which yields only a further playoff position rather than automatic qualification for Russia 2018.

After two disappointing draws and still without the injured Lionel Messi, new coach Edgardo Bauza's team was even worse in the defeat to a hardworking Paraguay side 1-0 in Cordoba. The winning goal was scored by the visitors at 17 minutes by Dynamo Kyiv striker Derlis Gonzalez. Argentina had a chance to equalize with a penalty early in the second half but Sergio Aguerro's attempt was blocked.

Argentina struggled in the absence of experienced defenders Pablo Zabaleta, Nicolas Otamendi and Ramiro Funes Mori. One of their replacements, Martin Demichelis spelt out the predicament clearly.

"We have to be honest with ourselves, we have to improve quickly," Demichelis said. We have to make a big self-criticism. We have things to correct."

In November Argentina will have tough matches away against Brazil and home against Colombia. Messi is expected to return for those two. The victory in Cordoba offers some relief to Paraguay, which remains in

sixth place, but now only one point behind Argentina.

URUGUAY

In Barranquilla, coach Oscar Tabarez' Uruguay played against Jose Pekerman's Colombia for the fifth time. Each had won two. The first draw between them was one of the most exciting games of the South American qualifiers so far. In rainy conditions, Colombia went ahead with a header by Abel Aguilar (16). Uruguay responded with another header by Cristian Rodriguez (27). In a typical bulldozing goal of his, Barcelona star Luis Suarez put the visitors ahead in the 73rd, before Colombia defender Yerry Mina scored the final goal in the 84th.

"We are firm, we are strong and I believe that this match shows that the World Cup is much closer to us," central defender Diego Godin said.

Suarez equaled Argentinian Hernan Crespo as the top goal scorer in South American World Cup qualifiers with 19 goals.

"This was a great point, we have to enjoy this," Suarez said.

CHILE

Bayern Munich's Arturo Vidal gave renewed World Cup hope to Chile by scoring both goals in a 2-1 home win against Peru.

Before 35,000 tense fans in Santiago, he

opened the score for the Copa America champions with a header at 10 minutes. But when Peruvian Edison Flores dribbled through Chile's defense and leveled the score from the edge of the box at 76 minutes, those fans would have feared the worst. Vidal came to the rescue with a 15-meter shot in the 86th minute.

Chile remains in seventh place with 14 points, now two behind fifth place Argentina, who so far has the playoff spot. Peru still lags at eighth, with eight points.

The Chilean football federation still claims the three points from the 0-0 home draw with Bolivia in September. Chile's executives claim that Bolivia fielded an ineligible player, defender Nelson Cabrera.

ECUADOR

In the 3-0 victory over Chile on Thursday, Ecuador's Enner Valencia was removed in an ambulance in what some claimed was an attempt to elude police who were chasing him for alleged avoidance of alimony payments. With his legal situation sorted back home, he was news for a different reason on Tuesday with a brace that delivered a draw in the altitude of La Paz. Bolivian Pablo Escobar opened the score for the hosts at 3 and 42 minutes. Valencia leveled at 47 and 89. Ecuador stays in third place, with 17 points, and Bolivia lags in ninth, with eight. — AP



MERIDA: Brazil's Paulinho, left, fights for the ball with Venezuela's Tomas Rincon during a 2018 World Cup qualifying soccer match in Merida, Venezuela, Tuesday. — AP

CHINA SOCCER COACH RESIGNS AFTER LOSS TO UZBEKISTAN

SHANGHAI: China's ambitions to become a global soccer power are facing a stark reality check after the national team's coach stepped down following defeats to Uzbekistan and war-torn Syria, leaving in tatters a bid to qualify for the 2018 World Cup.

Chinese coach Gao Hongbo resigned after a 2-0 defeat to Uzbekistan on Tuesday night in Tashkent, days after losing to Syria. The slump underlines the challenge facing President Xi Jinping, who wants China to host - and win - the World Cup.

With Xi's blessing, China had been in a bullish soccer mood. It invested billions of dollars to develop grassroots soccer academies, brought high-profile players and managers into China from overseas, and is buying into global soccer assets from Italian club Inter Milan to England's Manchester City.

Beijing wants China to compete with the best teams in the world by 2050, while investors like Inter Milan's new Chinese owner Suning Commerce Group talk about setting global soccer supply chains from clubs to media outlets and merchandising deals.

But many sports industry insiders question whether China can live up to its bold ambitions. "The massive investment in football, and in particular President Xi's personal involvement, has raised expectations to wholly unrealistic levels," said Mark Dreyer, Beijing-based founder of sports information website China Sports Insider.

China, ranked 78th in the world behind St. Kitts and Nevis and Libya, has qualified just once for the World Cup finals. That was in 2002, when the team lost all three games without scoring a goal.

"This isn't going to change for years,

and no coach - foreign or otherwise - can perform the sort of miracles that would be needed, no matter what Chinese fans or President Xi might expect," Dreyer added.

'FAKE BUBBLE'

Sentiment amongst Chinese fans was more one of resignation than anger on Wednesday morning, a reflection of how local supporters have long had to put up with rampant graft and low quality in the domestic game.

"Now the coach has resigned, why don't we just disband the whole team and let the FA officials go home," said one person on China's popular microblog site Sina Weibo. "Let's stop wasting taxpayers' money and use it for something more important."

Tuesday's defeat left the Chinese team at the bottom of its qualifying group, below Iran, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Syria and Qatar after the first four games in Asia's third round of qualification with six games remaining.

The state-run Global Times newspaper said the seeming prosperity of domestic football, which has seen huge sums spent on player transfers and star foreign managers, was just "a fake bubble" pumped up by "crazy capital" and imported talent.

The broader Chinese investment splurge into soccer, which has sparked up to \$3 billion worth of Chinese deals for global sporting assets since the end of last year, is also facing road bumps.

China's richest man, Wang Jianlin, threw cold water over investments in overseas soccer clubs in August, saying it was tough to actually make any money. Wang's Dalian Wanda Group has a stake in Spanish club Atletico Madrid. —Reuters



RAMALLAH: Palestinian Football Association (PFA) head Jibril Rajoub holds a press conference yesterday in the West Bank city of Ramallah. — AFP

UNITED CAN BE CHAMPIONS UNDER MOURINHO: CANTONA

LISBON: Former Manchester United great Eric Cantona has backed Jose Mourinho's squad to get back to challenging for top honours, three years since they last won the Premier League.

"It's just the beginning. Manchester can still be champions. Jose Mourinho is a

successful manager at a successful club which this year has successful players," the former French international said in an interview published Wednesday in Portuguese daily newspaper Publico.

"But this is an extremely difficult championship, full of great teams and

great managers like (Manchester City coach) Pep Guardiola," he added.

Since Alex Ferguson retired after winning the league in 2013, Manchester United have finished seventh, fourth and fifth, their only major trophy during that time being last season's FA Cup.

The club kicked off their league campaign this season with three straight wins under Mourinho, but slumped to back-to-back defeats against Manchester City and Watford. They are in sixth place in the English Premier League table with 12 points after seven matches.

After the international break, Manchester United travel to Liverpool on October 17. Cantona, 50, won four league titles with United prior to retiring in 1997 at the end of a colourful career in which he became a cult figure at Old Trafford. He now lives in Lisbon. — AFP

HALILHODZIC SAFE AFTER JAPAN DRAW

MELBOURNE: Japan's 1-1 draw with Asian champions Australia on Tuesday has made safe coach Vahid Halilhodzic's job at least until the next round of World Cup qualifiers. The 63-year-old Bosnian, who took over in March last year, had come under fire after the Blue Samurai started the final round of Asian qualifying with a shock home loss to the United Arab Emirates.

A 2-0 win away at Group B whipping boys Thailand and a scrappy 2-1 home victory over the similarly unfancied Iraq were not enough to ease the pressure on Halilhodzic. The draw in Melbourne, however, prompted Japan Football Association technical director Akira Nishino to confirm the coach would still be in place when group leaders Saudi Arabia visit Saitama on Nov. 15.

"Of course," he told Kyodo news agency. "This is not a bad result at all." Halilhodzic certainly felt he and his team had won the tactical battle with the Australians, who led the group unbeaten going into Tuesday's match.

"I thought we played a fantastic match. We managed the game with good tactics," the former Algeria coach told reporters. "If we had been a bit fresher and had more

pace, we could have won. I wanted to throw a surprise, tactically. We needed to be efficient.

"Australia can only score from free kicks and corners. I gave very specific instructions ... on set pieces. Australia are Asian champions and we could not afford to take many risks." The Australian players expressed surprise that a Japanese team with attacking talents such as AC Milan's Keisuke Honda had played so defensively after taking a fifth minute lead through Genki Haraguchi.

Halilhodzic, though, was unapologetic if disappointed not to come away with the win. "I don't regret a thing," he said. "It's a little bit frustrating. We prepared well tactically. The boys played well, especially in defence. We let them have the bulk of possession. We should have two more points.

"They had very few chances because we maintained our defensive discipline."

The Blue Samurai have seven points after four of the 10 matches in the round and sit behind the Saudis (10) and the Socceroos (8) in Group B. Only the top two qualify directly for Russia in 2018, which would be Japan's sixth successive finals appearance. —Reuters

FIVE MEMORABLE LIVERPOOL, MANCHESTER UNITED CLASHES

LONDON: Liverpool and Manchester United meet at Anfield on Monday in a fixture widely regarded by supporters and players as fiercer and more important than the clubs' respective city derbies. Both teams have enjoyed dominant periods in the top flight - Liverpool before the dawn of the Premier League - but now are bidding to recapture past glory after relatively fallow periods. This season's clashes will have added spice with Liverpool's Juergen Klopp and United's Jose Mourinho - two of the world's most highly regarded managers - trying to outwit each other in a battle that is sure to add to the list of great matches. Here are five memorable clashes between the arch-rivals.

February 2012 - United 2 Liverpool 1

The two Premier League matches between the clubs in the 2011-12 season highlighted the worst of feelings on the pitch. After their meeting in October 2011, Liverpool's Luis Suarez was banned for eight games after being found guilty of directing racist abuse at United's French full back Patrice Evra. Suarez's first game back was the return at Old Trafford and, with all eyes on the pre-match handshakes, Suarez raised the stakes, deliberately avoiding Evra's outstretched hand. Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish denied seeing the incident, and laid into a TV reporter for questioning him about it. Wayne Rooney's double earned United a 2-1 win and Evra celebrated loudly. United boss Alex Ferguson called Uruguay's Suarez, who scored 10 minutes from the end, a disgrace.

September 2010 - United 3 Liverpool 2

Dimitar Berbatov's hat-trick for United, including a spectacular overhead kick, in a personal wonder show trumped Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard's brace as the hosts headed towards one of their more comfortable title successes. A header from a corner was followed by a stunning bicycle kick. But, as has become a familiar pattern in these clashes, it heralded a stunning comeback as Gerrard scored with a penalty and a free kick.

Another header made Berbatov the first United player for more than half a century to grab a hat-trick against Liverpool, and earned a vital three points on the way to their historic 19th title - surpassing the record jointly held with Liverpool.

March 2009 - United 1 Liverpool 4

Liverpool still harboured hopes of a first Premier League title, but champions United were the team to beat, and when Cristiano Ronaldo put the home side in front, it looked like another false dawn for Rafael Benitez's side. But Fernando Torres, enjoying possibly his best game for Liverpool, equalised and a Steven Gerrard penalty then put the visitors ahead before halftime. Old Trafford was in for a shock. Late goals by Fabio Aurelio and Andrea Dossena, following United defender Nemanja Vidic's red card, put the icing on the cake for Liverpool though United once again had the last laugh, pipping their rivals to the title.

February 2006 - Liverpool 1 United 0

Memorable less for on-field brilliance than the festering of wounds opened up by Gary Neville's goal celebration in front of the Kop in their Premier League clash a few weeks earlier. The bad feeling spilled over into the FA Cup fifth-round tie at Anfield, with Liverpool later apologising after sections of the crowd threw coins at United supporters. "I expected abuse, but I also got a hamburger and about 4.50 pounds (\$5.60) in change," Neville said after United's defeat. But there was more unpleasantness when United's Alan Smith broke his leg, prompting taunts from some Liverpool fans, who also attacked the ambulance in which he was taken to hospital.

January 1994 - Liverpool 3 United 3

Not for the first, or last, time the fixture produced a memorable comeback. United were 3-0 up inside half an hour at Anfield but Liverpool's Nigel Clough scored twice before the break and defender Neil Ruddock crowned a stunning fight back with the equaliser 10 minutes from time. United still won the league. —Reuters



TEHRAN: Iran's Jalal Hosseini, left, and South Korea's Lee Chung Yong, right, jump for the ball during their World Cup qualifying soccer match at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran, Iran, Tuesday. — AP

SAUDIS, IRAN GO TOP AS CHINA LOSE AGAIN

TEHRAN: Saudi Arabia took full advantage of an earlier draw between Australia and Japan by beating neighbours United Arab Emirates 3-0 to storm to the top of Group B in Asian World Cup qualifying on Tuesday.

Iran earlier delighted 75,000 fans at a jam-packed Azadi stadium in Tehran when Sardar Azmoun's goal earned a 1-0 win over South Korea that sent Team Melli clear in Group A after four of 10 matches.

The top two in each group reach the 2018 finals with the two third-placed sides meeting over two legs for the chance to face a CONCACAF team in a final playoff for a ticket to Russia.

Saudi Arabia had been expected to be battling it out for third when they were drawn with Australia and Japan but late goals from Fahad Al Muwallad, Nawaf Al Abed and Yahya Al Shehri in Riyadh on Tuesday gave them three wins from

four matches. Bert van Marwijk's side now stand two points clear of Asian champions Australia, who remained undefeated only after rescuing a point from their heavyweight clash with the Blue Samurai in Melbourne courtesy of Mile Jedinak's second half penalty.

Genki Haraguchi put Japan ahead in the fifth minute on the counter-attack but was also responsible for the clumsy challenge on Tomi Juric that allowed the Australia captain to make it 1-1 from the spot in the 52nd minute.

The Saudis top the group with 10 points ahead of the Socceroos (8) and Japan (7) with the United Arab Emirates also still very much in contention on six points.

Mohamad Abdulraheem scored all four goals in Tehran as Iraq secured the first points of their campaign with a 4-0 win over winless Thailand, who were reduced to 10 men after Koravit

Namwiset was sent off.

In Tuesday's other qualifier in the Iranian capital, the home side dominated the first half and took a deserved 25th-minute lead through Azmoun, who capped a flowing move when he met a low cross from the right and side-footed it into the net.

The Koreans, bidding for a spot at a ninth straight World Cup, pressed forward after the break but failed to create a clear-cut chance against a packed Iranian defence.

China's fading hopes of qualifying for the finals for a second time received another blow when they were beaten 2-0 by Uzbekistan, who moved up to second in Group A a point behind Iran. Second half goals from Marat Bikmaev and substitute Shukurov Otabek in Tashkent left the Chinese bottom of the six-team group with a solitary point. — Reuters

POLAND BEAT ARMENIA 2-1, MONTENEGRO STUNS DENMARK

WARSAW: Robert Lewandowski proved once again to be Poland's lethal weapon on Tuesday, scoring deep in stoppage time to earn his team a 2-1 victory over 10-man Armenia in their World Cup qualifier.

The Poland captain struck in the 95th minute at the National Stadium in Warsaw, scoring for the eighth consecutive qualifier and just three days after his hat trick secured a 3-2 win over Denmark.

Armenia's Gael Andonian was sent off in the 30th minute after he received two yellow cards in two minutes, but the hosts struggled to use the numerical advantage until Lewandowski's goal. Armenia's Hrayer Mkoyan netted an own goal to put the hosts 1-0 up in the 48th minute and Marcos Pinheiro's answer was quick, leveling the score just two minutes later. With only the winner qualifying automatically, Poland is tied atop the group with Montenegro as it chases its first World Cup appearance since 2006. Romania trails by two points while Denmark is another two points behind. Armenia is at the bottom without a point.

Other matches in Group E: DENMARK 0, MONTENEGRO 1

After claiming the biggest home victory, a 5-0 rout of Kazakhstan at home on Saturday, Fatos Beciraj's goal in the 32nd minute lifted Montenegro to an away victory, its first over Denmark. Beciraj also netted one on Saturday.

The tiny Balkan nation, currently 105th in the FIFA ranking, has never qualified for the final World Cup tournament. It has seven points from three games.

KAZAKHSTAN 0, ROMANIA 0

Favorite Romania dropped two points in a goalless draw at Kazakhstan. It was the second home draw for Kazakhstan, which drew 2-2 with Poland before being thrashed 5-0 in Montenegro in the previous round. It was the

eighth winless home match for the Kazakhs since September 2014.

Romanian TV network DolceSport reported that money and other objects had been stolen from players and staff at the national team's hotel before the match.

Andrei Vochin, personal adviser to Romanian Football Federation chairman Razvan Burleanu, told DolceSport that "we didn't find out who stole the money and all the objects. Anyway, we don't have much hope." —AP



SANTIAGO: Chile's Alexis Sanchez, right, fights for the ball with Peru's Aldo Corzo during a 2018 World Cup qualifying soccer match in Santiago, Chile, Tuesday. — AP



WARSAW: Poland's Lukasz Teodorczyk, center, is challenged by Armenia's Arsen Beglaryan, left, Hrayer Mkoyan and Vahagn Minasyan, right, during their World Cup Group E qualifying soccer match in Warsaw, Poland, Tuesday. — AP

Sports

England win ODI series to end Bangladesh's home run



Brazil go top, Argentina stunned in WC qualifiers



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LJUBLJANA: England's Theo Walcott, left, is challenged by Slovenia's Bostjan Cesar during the World Cup Group F qualifying soccer match between Slovenia and England, at Stozice stadium in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Tuesday.— AP

GERMANY WIN AGAIN, ENGLAND STUMBLE

MANCHESTER: With a third straight win in qualifying, defending champion Germany is enjoying a comfortable ride on the road to the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Things just got a bit tougher for England, though. While England's winning start to Group F ended with a poor display in a 0-0 draw at Slovenia on Tuesday, Germany maintained its 100 percent record after three rounds by beating Northern Ireland 2-0. Only three other teams - Belgium, Greece and Switzerland - have opened European qualifying with three successive victories.

Goals in the first 17 minutes from Julian Draxler and Sami Khedira gave Germany a commanding lead that was never really threatened in Hannover. Joachim Loew tied Sepp Herberger's record of 94 wins as Germany coach and it couldn't be going much better for the world champions' settled team: Three wins from three games, eight goals scored and none conceded.

England also leads its group but the displays are hardly encouraging for its fans. Three days after a tedious 2-0 win over Malta, England required a brilliant performance from goalkeeper Joe Hart to earn a point in Ljubljana. One of

Hart's saves was sensational, when he tipped Jasmin Kurtic's header onto the bar off a corner and then clawed the loose ball away from the line in his next movement. Hart also denied Slovenia in two one-on-one chances, gifted by slack England back-passes.

England's national team is in a state of flux, just a few months after an embarrassing last-16 loss to Iceland in the European Championship. Gareth Southgate is in interim charge after Sam Allardyce left as coach last month - after just 67 days in the job - following a newspaper sting, and captain Wayne Rooney was dropped against Slovenia because of poor form.

England's young team is still the favorite to qualify from Group F and has a two-point lead after three games. Here's a look at the rest of the action on the final night of qualifiers in this latest period of internationals.

GROUP C

The only team close to Germany is Azerbaijan, which settled for a 0-0 draw against the Czech Republic in Ostrava after opening with two wins.

In the other match, Norway defeated San Marino 4-1 in

Oslo for its first points in qualifying. There was still time for celebrations for the 201st-ranked visitors, who scored their first away goal in World Cup qualifying since 2001 when Mattia Stefanelli equalized nine minutes into the second half. Norway scored three goals in the final 13 minutes, through Adama Diomande, Martin Samuelsen and Joshua King.

GROUP F

Slovenia stayed two points behind England after three games and was joined on five points by Lithuania, which beat Malta 2-0 for its first win in the group.

Fiodor Cernych and Arvydas Novikovas, from the penalty spot, scored in the final 14 minutes to leave Malta without a point so far.

In the other game, Robert Mak scored two goals and set up the third for Adam Nemec as Slovakia beat Scotland 3-0 to earn its first points in qualifying. It was Scotland's first loss, coming three days after a disappointing 1-1 draw at home to Lithuania. Only two nations, Portugal in 1985 and England in 2001, have recorded wins over the Germans in their 86 World Cup qualifiers. — AP



HANNOVER: Germany's Sami Khedira, left, and Northern Ireland's Steven Davis challenge for the ball during the World Cup Group C qualifying soccer match Tuesday.— AP

BRONCOS HEAD TO SAN DIEGO WITHOUT COACH GARY KUBIAK

SAN DIEGO: Going on the road on a short week against a division rival is usually a challenge for most teams. For the defending champion Denver Broncos, it is extra difficult this week. Coming off their first loss of the season, the Broncos will be without coach Gary Kubiak when they visit the reeling San Diego Chargers to night.

Kubiak is taking a week off after experiencing a "complex migraine condition" Sunday night shortly after Denver's 23-16 loss to the Atlanta Falcons.

Kubiak was sent home from the hospital Monday and issued a statement saying he was feeling much better, thanking his team's medical staff and expressing his confidence in Joe DeCamillis. DeCamillis, the special teams coordinator, is serving as interim head coach.

Trevor Siemian is expected to return as quarterback for Denver after rookie Paxton Lynch struggled against the Falcons. The Broncos (4-1) have won 15 consecutive division road games, the longest such streak in NFL history.

The Chargers (1-4) are coming off a 34-31 loss at Oakland, where rookie Drew Kaser botched the hold for a potential game-tying field goal late in the game. It was the 10th straight AFC West loss for San Diego going back to 2014.

The Broncos (No. 5 AP Pro32) are 31/2-point favorites over the host Chargers (No. 27, AP Pro32).

KNOCKOUT LEAGUE TIP

Tom Brady and the Patriots had no trouble

with the injury-riddled Browns last week, so we'll take another first-place AFC team this week. Big Ben and the STEELERS are the choice here.

No. 3 Steelers (minus 8) at No. 29 Miami. The Steelers have been one of the AFC's top teams. The Dolphins, who had aspirations of making the playoffs entering the season, are one of the AFC's biggest disappointments so far.

STEELERS, 31-10

No. 13 Baltimore (plus 3) at No. 19 New York Giants. Both teams are reeling, with Giants losing 3 in a row and the Ravens' skid at two. Ravens' offense gets going with new offensive coordinator Marty Mornhinweg.

RAVENS, 24-17

No. 16 Bengals (plus 9) at No. 2 New England. Bengals had a no-show in Big D. Going into New England for Brady's home opener? That's a Big L.

BEST BET: PATRIOTS, 48-10

No. 31 San Francisco (plus 8) at No. 11 Buffalo. 49ers get a lift from Colin Kaepernick's first start of the season.

49ERS, 24-13

No. 8 Philadelphia (minus 3) at No. 14 Washington. Redskins have won three in a row, but Carson Wentz cools them off.

EAGLES, 27-21

No. 32 Cleveland (plus 71/2) at No. 23 Tennessee. Josh McCown could return for



DENVER: Denver Broncos wide receiver Demaryius Thomas reaches across the goal line for a touchdown as Atlanta Falcons cornerback Robert Alford (23) defends during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday.—AP

Cleveland. Browns are bound to win at some point.

BROWNS, 21-20

No. 21 Carolina (minus 3) at No. 25 New Orleans. With Cam Newton's status uncertain, Saints find a way in a matchup of one-win division rivals.

SAINTS, 28-17

No. 28 Jacksonville (plus 3) at No. 30 Chicago. Another meeting of one-win teams. Brian Hoyer wins it for Bears. — AP

BRUCE REPLACES DI MATTEO AS ASTON VILLA MANAGER

LONDON: Aston Villa have appointed Steve Bruce as manager, replacing Roberto Di Matteo who was sacked last week, the Championship club said yesterday.

The 55-year-old Bruce, who had a successful spell at Villa's local rivals Birmingham City, has been without a club since he quit as manager of Hull City in July after leading the team to Premier League promotion with a playoff victory over Sheffield Wednesday.

"It's a wonderful opportunity. It is one of the big clubs of this country. To be given the opportunity to manage it is terrific," Bruce told the club website (www.avfc.co.uk).

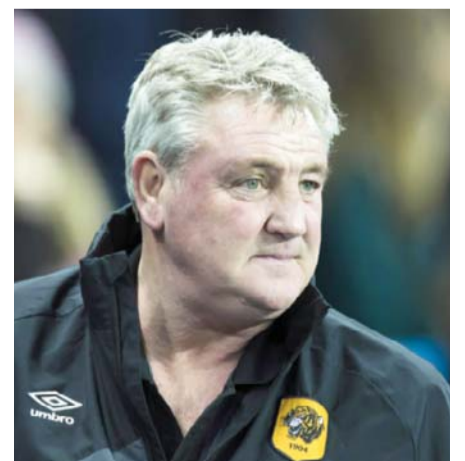
Villa appointed Di Matteo in June after their relegation from the Premier League, but sacked the Italian after just 124 days in charge.

The Midlands club are currently 19th in the 24-team Championship table with 10 points from 11 games.

Bruce added: "I relish the challenge of trying to take the club where it wants to go and needs to be-and try to turn around the misfortune we seem to have had over the past few years."

"I am absolutely delighted to have been given the chance. I hope I can do my stuff."

Villa owner Tony Xia added: "With his



Steve Bruce

track record, not only at leading teams to promotion from the (second-tier) Championship, but also vast experience in the Premier League, I believe we have secured the services of an excellent manager."

Chief Executive Keith Wyness told the club website: "In the recent transfer window we focused on character, personality and experience."

"These three words can be applied in spades to Steve Bruce and I look forward to working closely with him as we turn the club around and get us back to where we all want to be." — Reuters



OWN AN INFINITI AND BENEFIT FROM ITS STRONG OFFER



ISTANBUL: Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak (second left), Mohammed bin Saleh Al-Sada, President of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Qatar's Energy Minister, Algeria's Minister of Energy, Nouredine Boutarfa (second right) and OPEC Secretary General Nigeria's Mohammed Barkindo (r) attend a press conference during the 23rd World Energy Congress yesterday in Istanbul. — AFP

OPEC INVITES RUSSIA TO CRUCIAL MEETING

CARTEL SEEKS TO BUILD MOMENTUM FOR GLOBAL OIL FREEZE

ISTANBUL: OPEC said yesterday it was inviting Russia and other key non-members to a meeting later this month as the oil cartel and Moscow seek to tighten cooperation to boost historically low crude prices. The announcement came after a meeting in Istanbul between several top OPEC energy ministers with their Russian counterpart Alexander Novak aimed at advancing joint efforts to bolster oil prices whose lows have hurt the highly-dependent economies of crude producers.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the World Energy Congress in Istanbul, which on Monday saw a vow by Russian President Vladimir Putin for Moscow to impose curbs on energy output to match OPEC cuts that caused a spurt in oil prices. "We agreed to have a technical meeting of OPEC... on 28-29 of this month (October). An invitation is going to be sent to some key non-OPEC countries,"

Qatar Energy Minister Mohammed Saleh Al-Sada said after the talks.

"This meeting is meant to give a better understanding of the best way of how to move towards the rebalancing of the market to the interest of all," added the Qatari minister. Other than Russia, he did not elaborate on what other non-OPEC countries were being invited to the meeting but indicated he wanted a wide turnout.

"We have a list of non-OPEC countries and we are yet to refine it further. We intend to expand it get the feelings of as many non-OPEC countries as possible." He gave no indication however the meeting would be attended by the United States, the world's number three oil producer.

"The US attending is something we cannot assure you of," he said.

The prospect of Russia, one of the world's

top two oil producers alongside Saudi Arabia, coordinating policy with OPEC has boosted global oil markets in the last few days and briefly brought crude to its highest levels for a year. The cartel had last month at a meeting in Algiers agreed its first production cut in eight years, although it remains to be seen how this will be complied with and implemented.

Novak confirmed that Russia had been invited to the October meeting in Vienna which would try and "work out a roadmap for the cooperation of our countries" in the rebalancing of prices.

The upcoming talks will be a technical meeting, with the next general meeting of OPEC ministers planned for November 30 in Vienna. Novak had on Tuesday evoked a possible six month freeze of production levels by Russia to match OPEC's own output curbs.

He said that no concrete figures were dis-

cussed at the meeting. "As for figures, that is in the future and I think (at the October meeting) we will discuss more or less concrete parameters." Putin said yesterday in Russia that a freeze of production at current levels was in the interest of the Russian economy. "If OPEC countries agree a production freeze we will join that decision," he said, adding the key obstacle was to find agreement between Saudi Arabia and its regional foe Iran.

'Rebalance the market'

The energy ministers of OPEC members including United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Suhail al-Mazroui, Qatar Energy Minister Mohammed Saleh al-Sada and Venezuelan Oil Minister Eulogio del Pino all attended the talks at an Istanbul hotel chaired by OPEC Secretary General Mohammed Barkindo.

Of non-OPEC countries, Mexico was also represented. However there were notable absentees from the talks, with the energy minister of the cartel's kingpin Saudi Arabia, Khalid Al-Falih, having already departed from Istanbul and Iraq and Iran also not attending.

Al-Falih had also made clear at the congress earlier in the week that Saudi Arabia was against any drastic output cuts by OPEC, warning the cartel not to "crimp too tightly". Oil prices had plunged to historic lows over the last two years with an excess of supply partly due to new and cheaper technologies coming at a time of a global economic slowdown.

"We are doing our very best now to rebalance the market," said the Qatari minister Al-Sada, adding that the current "overhang" in excess supply was holding back much-needed investment. — AFP

STERLING BOUNCES OFF LOW AS MPs FLEX BREXIT MUSCLES

LONDON: Sterling rebounded from a record low in trade-weighted terms yesterday after Britain's prime minister said she would give lawmakers some scrutiny of the Brexit process and would seek "maximum possible access" to Europe's single market. The pound surged by as much as 1.5 percent against the dollar and the euro on the moves by May concerning a parliamentary debate initially read as handing MPs a substantial opportunity to undermine the "hard Brexit" scenario that has scared investors over the past fortnight.

A "hard Brexit" is seen as leaving Britain out of European Union's single market and threatening London's role as a major financial centre. The gains eased, however, around midday in London when May and her Brexit minister, David Davis, sounded some less concessionary notes in a pair of appearances in parliament.

To many dealers and analysts the gains for the pound still looked like just a brief pause after four days which have sent the currency to its weakest on record, according to the trade-weighted index run by the Bank of England.

Against the dollar alone, it remains, at around \$1.21, some way from an all-time low of just above parity hit in 1985. "You could say there was some kind of backtracking to at least allow parliament some greater profile," said Lee Hardman, currency economist with Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ in London. "But you would have to be very optimistic to think that it will have a big impact on the process, to expect that it means they will ultimately give parliament greater say."

Sterling was just 0.8 percent higher, almost

halving its gains on the day to stand just over a cent above Tuesday's low of \$1.2090.

FULL AND TRANSPARENT

The currency has plunged almost 18 percent against the dollar since Britain's shock vote in June to leave the European Union. After a brief period of stability the sell-off has worsened again in the past fortnight on a series of signs that the government would prioritise controls on immigration over access to the European single market. May moved late on Tuesday to appease some lawmakers in her

ruling Conservative Party by allowing a motion proposed by the opposition Labour Party for a "full and transparent debate" on how the government will enact the public vote to leave the EU. But while that agreed to demands for parliament to debate her government's plans, it also ruled out letting it vote on triggering the formal Brexit procedure. Brexit Minister Davis also banged home the message that it is the government that will decide when to trigger Article 50, the formal legal process for leaving the European Union, before beginning exit negotiations. — Reuters



LONDON: A currency exchange board with washed out rates in London yesterday. — AP

SAUDI BANKS RISE, OTHER MARKETS EDGE LOWER

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Saudi Arabian banking shares rose yesterday after a major bank posted earnings in line with analysts' estimates, while other regional stock markets retreated in line with global shares.

Riyadh's index rose 0.7 percent as all but one of the 12 listed banks advanced. Banque Saudi Fransi, the second major Saudi lender to report third-quarter earnings, gained 2.8 percent after posting net profit of 1.01 billion riyals (\$269 million), a 1.0 percent drop from a year ago but in line with analysts' average expectation of 1.04 billion riyals. The bank cited higher expenses and impairment charges.

Saudi Fransi's results reassured the sector. Riyadh Bank had dropped 2.1 percent on Tuesday after it reported an 18.9 percent slide in third-quarter profit. Riyadh closed up 0.5 percent yesterday.

Telecoms company Zain Saudi climbed 3.5 percent after it signed a letter of intent with a unit of utility Saudi Electricity Co (SEC) to use SEC's fibre optic network, conduct mutual marketing of products and services, and obtain new locations for telecommunications towers.

Last week, the government said it would provide telecommunications operators with "unified licenses" allowing them to offer a full range of services. Analysts said that could help Zain Saudi compete against

market leader Saudi Telecom, which was down 1.4 percent.

The sombre mood in global markets hit Dubai's index, which retreated 1.1 percent. Drake & Scull, which had risen over the last three days, fell 1.4 percent.

Shares in the builder are still up 9.9 percent since it announced the replacement of its chief executive this week. Abu Dhabi's index fell 0.2 percent, with large-cap shares the main drag. Aldar Properties fell 0.8 percent and telecommunications giant Etisalat lost 0.5 percent.

But Abu Dhabi National Energy Co (TAQA) soared 10.3 percent. Bankers said it planned yesterday to tap a bond issue that it completed in June to raise an additional sum of at least \$500 million. In Qatar, the main index edged down 0.3 percent with Qatar National Bank, which earlier this week reported a 10.2 percent rise in third-quarter net profit, pulling back 0.2 percent.

Egypt's index of the 30 most valuable shares fell 0.6 percent, taking its losses since the start of the week to 2.2 percent. The largest lender, Commercial International Bank, fell 2.4 percent. But investment firm Qalaa Holdings, which had fallen for several days since it announced a wider quarterly net loss, rebounded 5.7 percent. Bahrain's bourse was closed for a public holiday. — Reuters



ISTANBUL: Algeria's Minister of Energy Noureddine Boutarfa (C) speaks to the press as he arrives to attend a press conference during the 23rd World Energy Congress yesterday in Istanbul. —AFP



ISTANBUL: Venezuela's Minister of Petroleum Eulogio Del Pino (C) smiles next to journalists as he arrives to attend a press conference during the 23rd World Energy Congress yesterday. —AFP

News

in brief

Saudi's Arab National Bank meets estimates with 5.6%

DUBAI: Arab National Bank, Saudi Arabia's seventh-largest lender by assets, reported a 5.6 percent fall in third-quarter profit yesterday that was broadly in line with analyst forecasts. Net profit in the three months to Sept. 30 was 721.7 million riyals (\$192.48 million), compared to 764.2 million riyals a year earlier, according to a bourse statement. Average forecast of five analysts: 796.8 million riyals.

Aramco awards long-term contract to NPCC

DUBAI: National oil giant Saudi Aramco has awarded a long-term contract to National Petroleum Construction Co (NPCC) of Abu Dhabi for work on Aramco's offshore facilities, it said yesterday. NPCC will help to build offshore oil and gas platforms, pipelines, power cables and other infrastructure, Aramco said in a statement, without giving a monetary value or details of the work. The contract has a duration of six years with options to extend it for up to 12 years. It is the fifth such deal signed by Aramco; in June last year, it awarded four such contracts to other engineering companies.

GASC postpones rice tender until Monday

CAIRO: Egypt's state grain buyer GASC postponed yesterday an international rice tender until Monday, the head of GASC told Reuters. GASC was seeking at least 100,000 tons of white medium-grain rice for arrival by Nov. 30 in a tender yesterday. "The tender was postponed due to supplier requests to complete documents for the tender," the head of GASC said, without specifying further.

Emirates NBD joins India's ICICI on block chain project

DUBAI: Dubai's largest bank, Emirates NBD, is working with India's ICICI on a pilot project to use blockchain technology for global remittances and trade finance, in what they say is a first for banks from the Middle East and India. The project showed banks can significantly cut transaction costs and time, while demonstrating a near real-time transfer of invoices and purchase orders for trade finance purchases, Emirates NBD said. Blockchain, which originates from digital currency bitcoin, works as an electronic transaction-processing and record-keeping system that allows all parties to track information through a secure network, with no need for third-party verification.

Several banks have announced plans to use the technology, with Microsoft joining forces with Bank of America Merrill Lynch to build and test the technology and create a blockchain-based framework that could eventually be sold to other businesses, the pair said last month.

BIG OIL TRADERS DOUBT OPEC DEAL WILL BRING SUPPLY CUTS

OUTPUT INCREASES FROM LIBYA, NIGERIA CAST NEW DOUBTS

LONDON: OPEC's deal to cut oil production is unlikely to result in a substantial reduction in supplies, some of the world's biggest oil trading companies said this week, meaning the market is unlikely to rebalance until well into 2017.

The price of crude oil has stabilized around \$50 a barrel since the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries agreed the output deal on Sept 28. But rising production from OPEC members Libya and Nigeria is casting doubts over whether the agreement can be effective.

"Clearly, they have put a floor on the market," Gunvor Chief Executive Torbjorn Tornqvist told the Reuters Commodities Summit. "But I don't think they can do any substantial cut. There are too many uncertain factors involved. These two countries can wipe out any other deal that has been agreed."

Any agreed reduction will not affect actual supplies until next year, Tornqvist said, because the OPEC meeting in Vienna on Nov. 30 to set supply policy will be too late to adjust cargo loading dates before 2017. "Realistically, they can't do anything till January. We're going to have quite a lot of oil in the market until then. I don't have high expectations of sustained higher oil prices, certainly for the

medium term," Tornqvist said. Mercuria Chief Executive Marco Dunand said prices could fall to the low \$40s if OPEC failed to agree anything at the November meeting but could rise to the high \$50s and above should it remove as much as 1 million barrels a day from the market.

"Saudis wanted to take back control of the market. But whether they can convince OPEC and non-OPEC to manage inventories and price is still a big question," Dunand told the summit.

"WORK TO DO"

Glencore's head of oil, Alex Beard, was also skeptical OPEC's deal was a game changer. "We need to see the real deal in November rather than the talk of the idea of doing a deal," he said. "Libya's production is certainly going up at the moment and Nigeria is obviously off its lows as well. So I guess my outlook on the OPEC meeting is they've still got their work to do to come up with the detail that will convince the market."

Gunvor's Tornqvist said the oil market was unlikely to rebalance until the middle or second half of 2017, giving a time frame similar to that expected by Vitol's chief. Vitol Chief Executive Ian Taylor said on Monday that the oil price

could reach the high \$50s to low \$60s if OPEC and other producers cut supplies by 1 million barrels per day.

"But can they really give us a million between OPEC and non-OPEC? It's a tough call," Taylor said. The head of BB Energy, Mohamed Bassatine, told the summit that he did not expect a rapid rally, or an early rebalancing of supply and demand.

"I do think that the market will probably have found some kind of bottom between \$45 and \$50," he said. "It probably will go higher, but it still needs time to rebalance ... I don't see it rebalancing until probably second half of 2017." Asset manager Pierre Andurand, whose energy fund has some \$1.36 billion in assets under management, said he believed non-OPEC supply was well on the way to shrinking quickly enough, while demand looked healthy, so the OPEC agreement would help speed up any oil price recovery.

"With the capex cuts that we've seen, and have carried on seeing, I think the non-OPEC declines are structural. So we don't see a wall of supply coming in 2017. We see the opposite," he said. "Even without an OPEC cut the markets were getting better and we were going to go up further." — Reuters

TURKISH LIRA HITS RECORD LOW ON POLITICAL, SECURITY FEARS

ISTANBUL: The Turkish lira hit a record low against the dollar yesterday on fears that political uncertainty could be triggered by a fresh government move to push through legislation introducing an executive presidential system, dealers said. They said such political debate could distract attention from addressing an economy losing momentum. Prime Minister Binali Yildirim signalled the reform move in a speech to members of his ruling AK Party in Ankara.

The lira weakened as far as 3.0974 to the dollar before edging back to 3.0940 by 1315 GMT. It hit its previous record low on July 20, five days after a failed coup attempt. The lira has been under pressure for weeks following a rating downgrade by Moody's, concern over the extension of a state of emergency after the coup attempt, and the expectation that the central bank will continue cutting interest rates despite the currency's depreciation.

Tension with Baghdad over Turkey's military presence in Iraq, its incursion into northern Syria against Islamic State, and clashes in southeastern Turkey with Kurdish militants have also weighed on investor sentiment. "At a time when regional risks are running so high, and a potential military operation into (Iraq's) Mosul is being discussed, the last thing Turkey needs is a dispute over the executive presidential system," said one Istanbul-based banker.

The markets would be closely watching developments on the proposed presidential system, he said. Turkey's benchmark 10-year bond rose 15 basis points to 9.96 percent in Thursday-dated trade. The main share index was trading down 0.45 percent at 77,295.39 points by 1356 GMT. — Reuters



SEOUL: A currency trader walks by the screen showing the Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI), at the foreign exchange dealing room in Seoul yesterday. — AP

OMAN TO RAISE ELECTRICITY TARIFFS FOR CORPORATE USERS

MUSCAT: Oman, seeking to bolster state finances as low oil prices slash its revenues, will raise electricity prices for large government, commercial and industrial users at the start of next year, an official said yesterday. All government, commercial and industrial consumers of at least 150 megawatts per year will pay the higher tariffs, Qais Al-Zakwani, executive director of the Authority for Electricity Regulation, told reporters, adding that the measure was initially expected to affect

10,000 consumers. "These consumers represent 1 percent of the current total of electricity consumers in Oman, but they consume 30 percent of the supply of electricity," he said.

That group of consumers accounts for around 20 percent of government subsidies for power generation every year so the new tariffs are expected to save 100 million rials (\$260 million) annually, he added.

The new prices will depend on the nature of consumers and

whether they are using electricity in off-peak hours. They will be revised every year and announced in November of each year.

Zakwani said authorities did not intend to change tariffs for residential customers. Since last year Oman has been cutting state subsidies and introducing other austerity policies to curb a budget deficit that totalled 4.02 billion rials in the first seven months of 2016, up from a deficit of 2.39 billion rials a year earlier. — Reuters

IRAN UNEMPLOYMENT HIT 12.2% IN JUNE

TEHRAN: Iran's unemployment rate rose to 12.2 percent as of mid-June, according to recent figures, in a blow to government efforts to show economic progress ahead of elections next year. The rate from March 20 to June 20 was up 1.4 points from 10.8 percent the same time last year, a report by the Statistical Centre of Iran said. Experts say the real number of jobless among the country's 25.7 million-strong workforce could be more than six million, as the report counted anyone over the age of 10 who had worked for an hour or more in the week prior to the study as "in work".

Poor economic data is likely to be seized upon by hardliners opposed to President Hassan Rouhani, whose government signed a historic deal in January to end international sanctions in exchange for curbs to Iran's nuclear program. Rouhani, who touted the economic benefits of an end to sanctions to win domestic support for the deal, faces a presidential election next May.

Since coming to office in mid-2013, his government has slashed inflation from more than 40 percent in 2012 to a more manageable 8.3 percent, with 4.4 percent economic growth.

But his hopes the deal would quickly create thousands of jobs have so far gone unrealized. Foreign businesses including Royal Dutch Shell and the makers of Citroen cars have rushed to invest in Iran. But remaining US sanctions mean international banks are still wary of doing business in the Islamic Republic-making it difficult for firms to finance major projects. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.96
Indian Rupees	4.560
Pakistani Rupees	2.898
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.074
Nepali Rupees	2.853
Singapore Dollar	220.670
Hongkong Dollar	39.080
Bangladesh Taka	3.866
Philippine Peso	6.264
Thai Baht	8.669

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	80.896
Qatari Riyal	83.331
ani Riyal	787.942
Bahraini Dinar	805.630
UAE Dirham	82.593

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	26.350
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	34.532
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.218
Tunisian Dinar	137.350
Jordanian Dinar	427.800
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.021
Syrian Lira	2.0162
Morocco Dirham	31.583

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	303.200
Euro	338.670
Sterling Pound	374.910
Canadian dollar	230.570
Turkish Lira	99.080

Swiss Franc	310.180
Australian Dollar	230.740
US Dollar Buying	302.000

GOLD

20 Gram	255.560
10 Gram	130.700
5 Gram	66.190

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	303.650
Canadian Dollar	229.850
Sterling Pound	373.960
Euro	336.130
Swiss Franc	299.445
Bahraini Dinar	802.725
UAE Dirhams	82.900
Qatari Riyals	84.115
Saudi Riyals	81.695
Jordanian Dinar	427.870
Egyptian Pound	34.098
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.069
Indian Rupees	4.548
Pakistani Rupees	2.898
Bangladesh Taka	3.862
Philippines Peso	6.240
Cyprus pound	160.040
Japanese Yen	3.920
Syrian Pound	2.421
Nepalese Rupees	3.842
Malaysian Ringgit	73.928
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	45.540
Thai Bhat	9.605
Turkish Lira	99.731

OIL EDGES UP ON INDIAN IMPORTS, OUTPUT CAPS

LONDON: Oil prices edged up yesterday, supported by record Indian crude imports and talks between OPEC producers and other oil exporters on curbing output to end a glut in the global market.

Global benchmark oil futures, the Brent and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) contracts, have both risen more than 10 percent since the end of September on prospects major crude producers would freeze or cut production to stem an oversupply in the market. However, doubts remain as to the intentions of major suppliers such as Saudi Arabia and Iran and the effectiveness of any agreement in reining in output from record highs.

Brent crude futures were up 33 cents, or 0.6 percent, at \$52.74 a barrel at 0639 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 20 cents, or 0.4 percent, from their last settlement at \$50.99 per barrel. Traders in Asia said oil prices were boosted by record Indian oil imports, which rose 4.4 percent in September from the previous month

to a record high 4.47 million barrels per day (bpd) and surged 17.7 percent from a year ago. The prospect of countries from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-OPEC members such as Russia coordinating a production curb will support prices above the \$50 mark, market participants have said since an initial agreement was struck at the end of last month.

Government officials from major oil producers, including Russia, are meeting in Istanbul this week to try to lay out more details of production cuts ahead of an official OPEC meeting in November.

Still, analysts cautioned that a deal might fall through especially as Russia's participation remained uncertain. "Lots of questions to answer and noises coming from the parties involved can be contradictory. Volatility is all but guaranteed," analysts at PVM said in a note.

Much would depend on the timing of any cut, said Alan Gelder, vice president for refining, chemicals and oil markets at Wood Mackenzie,

which could deter participation. "Timing is key for Russia to provide non-OPEC support to re-balancing the oil market, as September was, momentarily, at

unprecedented production levels. The production reference (month) could require (Russian state oil producer) Rosneft to curb its current drilling program, which is contrary to the interests of its private shareholders," he said. Oil has rallied more than 13 percent in less than two weeks since OPEC proposed the first production curbs in eight years. But prices remain at about half of mid-2014 highs above \$100 a barrel as questions remain over when the market will return to balance.

Goldman Sachs added its doubts on Tuesday, saying in a note that the planned oil output cut by OPEC and other exporters has become a "greater possibility". But it warned a production cut probably won't be deep enough to re-balance markets in 2017, and that oil prices may fall back into the low \$40s per barrel. — Reuters



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, speaks at the 8th annual VTB Capital "Russia Calling!" Investment Forum in in Moscow yesterday. —AP

PUTIN HAILS 'STABILIZATION' OF RUSSIAN ECONOMY

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin praised the "stabilization" of the Russian economy yesterday but said more can be done to promote growth.

Russia's economy contracted by 3.7 percent last year on the back of Western sanctions and a slump in the price of its oil exports. It has stabilized somewhat since then thanks to a rebound in energy markets, but remains weak - the IMF predicts a contraction of 0.8 percent this year before growth of 1.1 percent in 2017. Speaking to Russian and foreign business leaders in Moscow, Putin praised drops in inflation and capital outflows but said "the stabilization that has been achieved has not yet transformed into steady growth."

Putin added that Russia still needs to increase labor productivity and limit government spending. Earlier yesterday, two leading

ministers disagreed publicly on possible privatizations. Finance Minister Anton Siluanov saying only "modest plans" were in place for the period through 2019, while Economic Development Minister Alexei Ulyukaev said selling parts of government stakes in the VTB bank and the Russian Helicopters company was possible and would be attractive for investors.

The dispute comes days after the planned privatization of a majority government stake in oil producer Bashneft led to the government approving the sale to larger oil firm Rosneft, which is itself majority state-owned. The deal, worth over \$5 billion, was defended yesterday by Putin, who said that because Rosneft has minority foreign investors, it was not simply a transfer of assets from one part of the state to another. —AP

EGYPT POUND TUMBLES ON BLACK MARKET AS SAUDI SUSPENDS AID

CAIRO: Egypt's pound has tumbled more than 10 percent to unprecedented lows in the past week after a sudden suspension of Saudi oil aid raised fears of a deeper political rift that could sever the government's much-needed financial lifeline. Black market traders said they sold dollars at 15 pounds on Tuesday, down from 14.20-14.25 a week earlier. But several importers told Reuters yesterday they paid 15.20 to 15.68 to secure dollars amid an acute shortage and plummeting confidence.

The steep depreciation means the gap with the official rate of 8.8 pounds per dollar has

widened, increasing pressure on Egypt to devalue its currency and end uncertainty that has discouraged foreign investment. Egypt has struggled to earn dollars since a 2011 revolt drove away tourists and foreign investors. Its efforts to defend the pound drained reserves from \$36 billion before the uprising to \$19.6 billion at the end of September. Egypt has averted crisis largely thanks to billions of dollars in aid from Gulf Arab allies including Saudi Arabia since mid-2013, when the army overthrew the Muslim Brotherhood, a common enemy. — Reuters

HUAWEI LAUNCHES ICT TRAINING CENTER, SEEDS FOR THE FUTURE

CSR INITIATIVE BY CHINESE TECHNOLOGY COMPANY

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Huawei Kuwait announced the creation of an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) training center as well as the Seeds for the Future program, a corporate social responsibility initiative promised by the company to Kuwait as a long term feedback. Huawei, a Chinese multinational telecommunications equipment and services and fastest growing smartphone company, continues to support Kuwait ambitions and development strategies by providing end-to-end ICT solutions that give Kuwait organizations cutting-edge computing and connectivity capabilities.

Speaking with reporters at its headquarters at Al-Hamra Tower, Trevor Liu, Chief Executive Officer of Huawei Technologies Kuwait, said with the launch of the Huawei's global CSR program, the company is excited to be contributing to the development of young Kuwaiti talents, while introducing them to new career opportunities in ICT. Our focus for the coming years is to work with the Kuwait government on key smart city initiatives and Internet of Things (IoT) adoption and deployment, as we believe that these technologies are instrumental to achieving its 2035 strategy and plan, Liu said.

He also lauded Huawei's plan to launch its first training center in Kuwait before the end of 2016 to advance ICT skills among Kuwaiti professionals, helping to support localization initiatives to increase the ratio of Kuwaiti professionals in the private sector. The target is to train more and more Kuwaiti young people on ICT technology, said Liu.

Liu noted that Huawei Kuwait continues to grow in the Middle East. We are the fastest-growing company in the Middle East. In a short period, we were able to capture the market quickly, and we are now the third largest smartphone/mobile telecom company worldwide. We acknowledge the challenges and competition in the market, but we will overcome them by supporting our customers with our best efforts. We have made a great impact on the market, he said.

Innovation

As the company faces challenges, innovative solutions and the promise of long-term commitment to customers are being recognized. We believe that if we have a



Trevor Liu, Chief Executive Officer of Huawei Technologies Kuwait.

long-term commitment plus a stable team in Kuwait - we have around 800 people currently working at the Kuwait office alone - it means a lot to the company, said Liu. He believes that the customer is the most important part of their everyday business in Kuwait. We do not want to focus on how our market share grows - we are more focused on how to satisfy customers. If you have a satisfied customer, then automatically you will have a fair share of the market, he said.

Since the new investment law was established in Dec 2014, Huawei has benefited in receiving its Kuwait company license. Huawei is proud to be one of the first companies to obtain a company license as a 100 percent-owned limited liability company in Kuwait. Considered to be the Pearl of the Gulf for its strategic location, Kuwait's economy has large growth prospects that can be helped through an advanced ICT infrastructure that can help the state to fully capitalize on the economic opportunities. This is where Huawei is keen to support through continued investments in education, knowledge-transfer and by supporting the Kuwait government transform its energy-driven economy to one that is based on knowledge, he said.

Since it entered the market in 2005, Huawei has had long-standing partnerships with many government organizations, regulators and operators, to provide them with latest technologies while pro-

viding cutting-edge communications capabilities to all Kuwaitis. Kuwait's Ministry of Communication commissioned Huawei in 2015 to complete the second phase of the GPON project, which saw more than 5,600 buildings and 60,000 houses connected through a high-speed, fixed-line fiber network. On the consumer side, Huawei is also seeing tremendous growth in sales of its Mate 8 and P9 smartphones, which are enjoying great success in Kuwait, Liu added. According to Liu, Huawei devices are currently ranked third in Kuwait with a 15 percent market share.

Cyber Threat

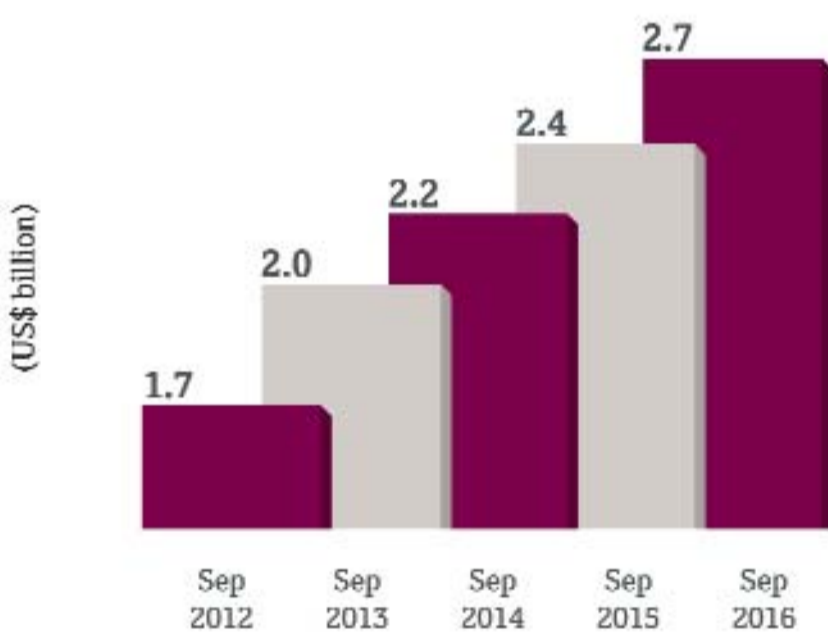
On the issue of cyber threats, Liu noted that accusations against Huawei are groundless. To date, not a single individual or organization that has questioned our integrity has ever provided any evidence to substantiate their allegations. We did nothing wrong, but let us accept the fact that cyber technology is quite a challenge to all of us, to many countries and parties. We believe all governments, industry stakeholders and customers should work together in an open and transparent manner to jointly address global cyber security challenges and raise those standards in order to ensure that network technology benefits consumers, he said.

He pointed out that Huawei's efforts in cyber security have been widely recognized, and in fact they have received the following awards: Cyber Security Organization of the Year Award from the Malaysian government, 10-Year Excellence in Information Security Testing Award by ICASA Labs and Transparency Award for cyber security in Germany. We have cooperated with Cigital, a third-party security evaluation company in the US, in BSIMM. According to the latest BSIMM evaluation results, we have performed well above industry average across 11 of the total 12 areas and on par with industry average in the remaining area, Liu noted.

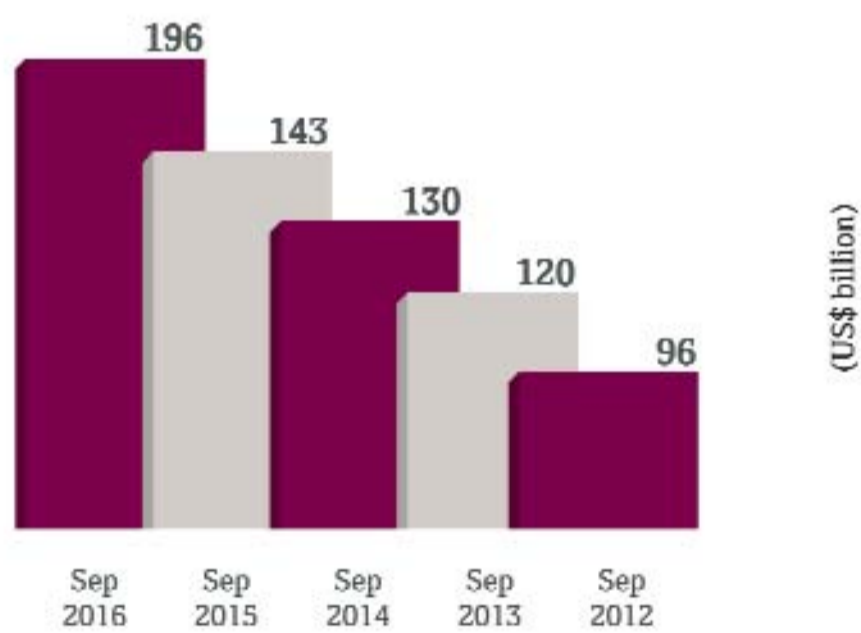
By the beginning of next year, several new smartphones will be launched by Huawei. We have several cutting-edge smartphones ready to be unveiled by January or February next year. The features are yet to be announced as we do not want to preempt the launch, but it will be better than other products in the market and even better than we already have, Liu concluded.

QNB Group strengthens its position as the largest financial institution in the Middle East and Africa region

Net Profit US\$2.7 billion, up 11% from September 2015



Total Assets US\$196 billion, up 37% from September 2015



QNB Group achieves strong financial results for the period ended 30 September 2016

- QNB Group, the largest financial institution in the Middle East and Africa region, is currently present in more than 30 countries across 3 continents
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MARKETS WEIGHED BY TECH STOCKS; FED IN FOCUS

LONDON: Technology stocks led a broad reverse in global markets yesterday after Samsung downgraded its profit estimates and networks company Ericsson warned on its outlook. Investors will later look to the minutes of the US Federal Reserve's last meeting for hints on how quickly interest rates might be raised.

yesterday, although Sweden's Ericsson led the region's technology stocks down to a one month-low after issuing a profit warning. The STOXX 600 index struggled to find direction and traded flat in percentage terms by 0848 GMT, having fallen in the previous session. Germany's DAX also fell 0.2 percent, while Britain's blue-chip FTSE 100 index dropped 0.5 percent. The UK's FTSE 250 mid-cap index was down 0.4 percent. Telecoms equipment maker Ericsson dropped more than 16 percent to its lowest point since 2008 after warning that its third-quarter profit would be "significantly lower" than expected after a downturn in its

mobile broadband business had accelerated. The world's biggest maker of mobile network equipment reported a 94 percent plunge in quarterly operating profit and tumbling sales at its core networks division. "They're near the bottom of the pile in terms of mobile now, in the age of Apple and Samsung, Ericsson don't really have a look-in," Jonathan Roy, advisory investment manager at Charles Hanover Investments, said. "They haven't really come up with any new or exciting products, so I wouldn't be surprised to see them go further down." Peer Nokia also dropped, down 4.6 percent, set for its biggest

daily loss since June 27. Among the top risers, however, Deutsche Lufthansa gained 3.1 percent after an upgrade from Kepler Cheuvreux, while budget airline easyJet also rose after a bond issue. UK staffing firm PageGroup extended its gains from the previous session, up 5.2 percent following a spate of target price upgrades. The company reported a set of better than expected results in the previous session. "Trading in the third quarter was better than expected as demand in the UK held up better than feared," analysts at Barclays said, adding that they expected a more gradual decline in demand over 2017 and 2018.

slipped 1.0 percent to 23,324.95. The Shanghai Composite lost 0.2 percent to 3,058.50. In Sweden, networks maker Ericsson also warned about its profits and said it expected no improvement in the short term. Its shares plunged 17 percent.

FED MINUTES

The release of the Fed's minutes will later get investors' attention as they estimate when the central bank will raise interest rates next. US economic indicators have been relatively upbeat in recent weeks, strengthening perceptions that the Fed could hike in December.

Stock markets are becoming nervous about the prospect of rising interest rates against a background of moderate profit growth and relatively high valuations, particularly in the US," Ric Spooner, chief market analyst for CMC Markets, said in a commentary.

CURRENCIES

The pound remained volatile, gaining ground after the British prime minister said she would open to parliamentary debate the issue of how the country approaches its exit from the European Union. It was up 1 percent on the day at \$1.2250. The dollar weakened to 103.90 yen from 103.94 late Tuesday in Asia. The euro fell to \$1.1022 from \$1.1128. —Agencies

SAMSUNG WOES

Shares in Samsung, which plunged 8 percent the day before, lost another 0.7 percent yesterday. South Korea's biggest manufacturer is struggling with recalls and a discontinuation of its premium smartphone, the Galaxy Note 7, which has proven prone to catch fire. The company revised its profit forecast for the third quarter yesterday, to 5.2 trillion won (\$4.6 billion), down from the 7.8 trillion won profit estimate it announced Friday. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 1.1 percent to finish at 16,840.00, and Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.1 percent to 5,474.60. South Korea's Kospi inched up 0.1 percent to 2,033.73. Hong Kong's Hang Seng

Global Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Wednesday 12 October 2016. Table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades. Includes sub-tables for Trades, Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KWD), Trades, Last, Change.

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Includes Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities. Source: National Bank of Kuwait



OWN AN INFINITI AND BENEFIT FROM ITS STRONG OFFER

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babbain Co, the exclusive agent of Infiniti in the State of Kuwait's has a new campaign and strong offers for its clients this month.

For October, Infiniti Al-Babbain clients will get a very good offer upon the purchase of the new Infiniti vehicles available. Customers will get 1 year full insurance, 5 years' service up to 50,000 km, Window tinting and body protection, iPhone 7 and Third party insurance and free registration.

Infiniti belongs to the category of luxury vehicles that gained international publicity for its luxury features, elegant design, and attractive inspiration. All its models combine elegant comfort, capturing luxury, strong performance and smooth acceleration.

Infiniti depends on the latest technology in the world, which ranks it on top of the most advanced smart vehicles with super technology.

The features of the luxury QX80 provides the driver with more power and efficiency, as it was designed to improve the life of its owner to better levels. Due to its stunning V8 engine (8 cylinders) with 5.6 liters producing 400 horsepower with four-wheel drive system for all situations and its innovative smooth detour system, the driver gets a unique excitement in all directions and safe environment.

The multipurpose luxury Infiniti QX70, which is the first of its kind in the world combines exceptional elegance with tremendous performance. With its unique features, it is the

perfect combination of sports vehicle and multipurpose SUV. It is also a unique harmony combining breathtaking elegance and high performance.

The new Infiniti QX60 is completely redesigned from the exterior and also features a host of new features and technologies that enhance comfort, convenience and safety. At the front, the redesigned double-arch grille is flanked by standard-fit bi-xenon headlights. There is greater use of LED lighting, including new LED Daytime Running Lights as well as front fog lamps which feature LED lighting and chrome finishers. It also features the signature brand design cues such as double-wave bonnet, and crescent-cut D-pillar. On the interior, the QX60 offers the signature



driver-oriented cockpit, highlighted by thin chrome accents as well as an upper instrument panel has been wrapped in soft-touch material with contrast stitching.

From an exterior design perspective, the QX50 LWB has been enhanced for 2016 with a new front and rear bumper and lower front and rear fascia, new.

LED Daytime Running Lights, new signature Infiniti-style double-arch front grille, new side mirrors with integrated LED turn signals and updated side sill styling. Significant inroads have also been made on its size. The wheelbase increases by 81mm whilst overall length is boosted by 114 mm. The perfect location of the showroom combines attractive design with great content while a complete independent service center was set for Infiniti service and maintenance, which is equipped with latest tools to provide best and most accurate services quickly and easily.

EU-MERCOSUR TRADE DEAL IN TWO YEARS: ARGENTINA

BRUSSELS: Free trade talks between Europe and South America could yield a deal within two years, Argentina's senior trade official said, taking a more positive view of trade alliances between Buenos Aires and its neighbors. The European Union and the Mercosur bloc led by Brazil launched trade negotiations in 1999, but they have faced multiple setbacks, partly due to more than a decade of leftist rule in Argentina. That government has now replaced by a more pro-business government since late 2015 that advocates trade.

"There is a conviction among political leaders of Mercosur and among business people...that we need more integration into the global economy and to upgrade our technology," Argentina's Commerce Secretary Miguel Braun told reporters in Brussels.

Asked whether a deal by the end of 2017 was possible, as Spain has suggested, he said it was feasible, not guaranteed. "In terms of negotiations, I am optimistic we can move forward at a good pace, maybe one or two years," he said mid-way through this week's talks between the European Commission and negotiators from Mercosur members Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. Braun recognized there was resist-

ance to trade deals in Europe, with large demonstrations against planned accords with the United States and Canada, and a challenge from Britain's plan to leave the bloc, which he said made the EU a smaller and less attractive trade partner. Trade specialists, he said, needed to do a better job showing trade deals were good for the majority of people and for job creation. For sectors for which trade deals pose a risk, he said, governments had to work on complementary policies to less potential blows. "Of course in the EU, there are challenges in public opinion... but at the same time, going back to the Brexit question, I wonder whether this deal isn't an opportunity to show the European project is still dynamic and moving forward," Braun said.

The EU and the Mercosur exchanged market access offers in May this year, including lists of imports that each side was prepared to liberalize. The EU was looking for more than 90 percent of goods and sectors to be opened up, however the details have not been made public. It was the first exchange of offers since 2004. Difficult areas include access to Mercosur for European manufactured goods and EU access for Mercosur's agricultural products, which today face high EU farm subsidies. — Reuters

AL-SAYER ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE TOYOTA RAFFLE DRAW

KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer, one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies organized a raffle draw in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce & Industry for Consumer protection on 9th October to announce winners of the September promotion.

According to Johan Heislitz Senior Business Director "Along with Toyota peace of mind ownership experience, our special benefits package has driven huge customer interest and engagement. The success of our unique offers and deals compliments the leading position of the brand globally embodying the spirit of ever better cars. We will continue to offer prizes and value added deals this October for customers to come forward and benefit from this great Toyota opportunity."

Best Offer, Best Dealer, Best Brand unified in September: Best September deals entitled customers purchasing a Toyota during the promotion period between 4th to 30th September 2016 to enter the raffle draw for a chance to win an attractive prize including: one of the two Accessorized Prado, cash prizes up to KD 3000, 50 gm gold, Bose Home Theater, Microsoft Surface Pro or LED TV.

In addition to the above customers received guaranteed scratch and win prizes to win host of other amazing benefits and rewards such as: up to KD 100 fuel cards, power banks, Canon cameras, Caribou coffee vouchers or 10 gm gold coins and more benefits with Konica Minolta sun film protection, KD 33 fuel card, 5 years warranty, 3rd party insurance, car registration, T-Connect service for 1 year, Musaada roadside assistance.

Winners of the September raffle draw are as below:

Great Value from Win, win and win with Toyota August Deals: The best deals in September was following the success of attractive win with Toyota August promotion. Customers buying any Toyota during the promotion period between 4th and 31st August, entitled them to participate in the raffle draw for a chance to win one of the three 2016 Fortuner in addition to the guaranteed scratch and win as well as value added benefits.

List of names selected from the August raffle draw are as follows:

Ruqayah Sharyan Ghoulum — Winner of Fortuner Super White (Chassis number 240413)
Shaikh Mohammed Salman Mohammed Al-Sabah — Winner of Fortuner Silver Metallic (Chassis number 240419)
Salah Hassan Alobaid — Winner of Fortuner Grey Metallic (Chassis number 240302).



Raffle Draw Gifts	Winner Names
2016 Prado – Accessorized model	Meshari Nafil Abdullah Al Hathairi Alazemi
2016 Prado – Accessorized model	Zainab Hussain Abbas Buloushi
Cash Prize 3000	Mohammed Hussain Ahmad Alkandari
Cash Prize 2500	Mohammed Ahmed Ali Alnajdy
Cash Prize 2000	Nafea Helail Ayedh Alharbi
Cash Prize 1500	Abdulrahman Falah Marzouq Al Azmi
Cash Prize 1000	Mohamed Hflal Ghos
Cash Prize 1000	Mariam Hezam Khudur Almutairi
Cash Prize 1000	Fatemah Mubarak Abdullah Alazmi
Home theatre-Bose [525 Series III]	Bashar T A Alamir
Home theatre-Bose[525 Series III]	Saad Abdallah Mohesn Almekhyal
Home theatre-Bose[525 Series III]	Nadiah Abboud Mohammad Abdulhaleem
Microsoft Surface PRO 4	Mohamad Ibrahim Mfarrej Almufarrej
Microsoft Surface PRO 4	Abdullah Eid Mbrej Al Azmi
Microsoft Surface PRO 4	Arnel Pasion Quiambao
Gold [50 gms]	Abduallah Mohammad Ayedh Alazmi
Gold [50 gms]	Ghadeer Kh O Alhujailan
Gold [50 gms]	Fahad Rashed Neair Alahajri
Gold [50 gms]	Wael Hussein Abbas Baron
Cash Prize 500	Mohammad Eissa Mohammad Al Hussaini
Cash Prize 500	Adel M Gh Alqattan
Cash Prize 500	Bader Mahya Mowsim Aldayhani
TCL LED TV - 55 inch	Ghadah Saeed Talaat Abdulfattah Salem
TCL LED TV - 55 inch	Eman Ahmad Mohammad Alkandari
TCL LED TV - 46 inch	Meqeid Sultan Mohsen Alotaibi
TCL LED TV - 46 inch	Bader Mohammad Hassen Al Zaid



KUALA LUMPUR: A general view shows afternoon rush of commuters at the Kuala Lumpur city's main and largest Central station yesterday. — AFP

EUROZONE WITNESSES BIG INDUSTRIAL REBOUND IN AUG

LONDON: Industry looks set to give third-quarter economic growth in the 19-country eurozone a lift after figures yesterday showed output up a whopping 1.6 percent in August alone.

The increase reported by Eurostat, the European Union's statistics agency, more than offset the previous month's 0.7 percent decline. Expectations were already high at 1.5 percent on account of a 3.1 percent rebound reported by Germany. The scale of the increase across the eurozone - the biggest since January - is welcome news for a region that has seen growth ease this year from a quarterly rate of 0.6 percent in the first quarter to 0.3 percent in the second. Few economists are expecting a return to the healthy first-quarter tick anytime soon - even after the industrial production figures.

Still, there will be relief that the sector, which when combined with construction accounts for around a quarter of the eurozone's GDP, looks set to help third-quarter growth. On a year-on-year basis, Eurostat said the sector was 1.8 percent bigger in August. The first estimate of overall eco-

nomical growth during the July to September period will be published at the end of October. Fears had been raised that growth would grind to a halt in the wake of Britain's vote to leave the EU in June.

Yesterday's figures suggest that those concerns may have been overdone, though the sharp fall in the pound against the euro since the vote - particularly over the past week or so - is likely to weigh on eurozone exports to Britain in the months ahead. And uncertainties over the future trading relationship between the EU and Britain as well as concerns over the future of the EU itself haven't gone away, meaning the region remains susceptible to a drop in confidence. The industrial figures also have a tendency to be volatile, so economists are careful not to read too much into one month's data. Many think the outlook for the sector remains problematic.

"With the impact of the UK's Brexit vote weighing on demand for eurozone exports, and higher oil prices raising manufacturers' costs, we do not expect industry to provide a major boost to the region's economic recovery," said Jack Allen. — AP

ETIHAD AIRWAYS TO INCREASE DALLAS/FORT WORTH SERVICE

DALLAS/ FORT WORTH: Etihad Airways, the national airline of the United Arab Emirates, will increase frequency on the Dallas/Fort Worth - Abu Dhabi route to a daily service early next year in response to heightened demand from guests travelling between the two destinations.

Beginning 2 February 2017, the Abu Dhabi-based airline will add four new flights each week on the route to support the existing Wednesday, Friday and Sunday services.

Etihad Airways, which launched the non-stop route in December 2014, will continue to operate a Boeing 777-200 Long Range aircraft featuring eight First Class seats, 40 Business and 191 seats in Economy Class. The additional frequencies will also provide 96 tons of more cargo capacity each week to facilitate the movement of international freight to and from Dallas/Fort Worth.

Kevin Knight, Etihad Aviation Group Chief Strategy and Planning Officer, said: "Since launching our Dallas/Fort Worth service less than two years ago, the response from our guests travel-

ling between Dallas/Fort Worth and our home Abu Dhabi and beyond, has exceeded expectations. We are therefore delighted to further expand this service into a daily operation to meet strong market demand.

"The increased frequency will provide greater convenience and more options to business and leisure travellers throughout the Texas region, and will also cater to the huge travel market from India and the subcontinent to and from our Dallas/Fort Worth gateway and beyond."

Abu Dhabi's unique geographical position, along with the airline's extensive route network and that of codeshare partner American Airlines, ensures guests are provided easy access between two major worldwide hubs and reinforces its commitment to the United States, a key global market. Sean Donohue, Chief Executive Officer of Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), added: "We are excited by the news that Etihad Airways will soon increase their service from Dallas/Fort Worth to Abu Dhabi to daily flights.

This move shows the strength of the North Texas market for international business and leisure travel, and further demonstrates that a great amount of global business flows through DFW. We thank Etihad for their continuing partnership and their service to our customers, our region and our airport."

Etihad Airways currently offers 45 return flights each week between Abu Dhabi and six American cities - Chicago, Dallas/Fort Worth, Los Angeles, New York JFK, San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Through Etihad Airways' hub in Abu Dhabi, the airline offers passengers from the United States direct access to the UAE capital, and seamless connections to the Middle East, Africa, Indian subcontinent and South East Asia.

Furthermore, all guests flying Etihad Airways to the United States are processed through pre-clearance US Immigration and Customs facilities at Abu Dhabi International Airport, ensuring they arrive in America as domestic passengers and avoid lengthy arrival formalities.



MERCEDES-BENZ 'COMMERCIAL VEHICLES' TAKES PART IN BIG5 2016 EXHIBITION IN KUWAIT

COMPANY CELEBRATES ACHIEVEMENT OF SELLING 10,500 ACTROS TRUCKS IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: With a distinguished and exceptional participation of Mercedes-Benz 'Commercial Vehicles' in Big5 2016 exhibition in Kuwait, where the biggest event in the field of building and construction in Kuwait took place in the Kuwait International Fairground (KIF) in Mishref and opened in a special attendance of Sheikh Faisal Al-Homoud Al-Sabah, Governor of Farwaniya.

A R Albisher & Z Alkazemi Co has celebrated with its customers the achievement of the third place ranking in MENA in the group-sales of the Mercedes-Benz Actros Truck, the most popular truck in the world, as it has sold more than 10,500 in Kuwait out of more than 100,000 trucks that have been sold through-

out MENA, which reflects a strong achievement since the sales of the State of Kuwait, through A R Albisher & Z Alkazemi Co, have exceeded bigger countries in the Region with more than 10 percent of the total region sales.

Commercial Vehicles Department at A R Albisher & Z Alkazemi Co was keen on displaying the latest products of the famous International German Brand Mercedes-Benz through its second consecutive participation, and in attendance of the management and the executives team of the Commercial Vehicles for answering the customers' inquiries and providing them with the required explanations and information. The Company has participated through two unique platforms

reflecting the most modern brand identity design of Mercedes-Benz, the trucks were displayed in the outdoor platform in the external exhibition area which dedicated for PMV, while, inside Hall (6) The indoor platform which was reflecting luxurious & professional atmospheres for getting the required and complete information on the various products and services of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait which meet the entire needs of the various construction projects and logistic services.

The Company has displayed the latest Mercedes-Benz Actros Truck featuring Mercedes PowerShift technology which incorporates over 30 years of Mercedes-Benz experience and expertise in the production of

automated manual transmission for trucks with rugged gearbox technology and a superior shift strategy, which is available with a 12-speed and a 16-speed version, Mercedes PowerShift(r) is the best choice even in the most demanding operating conditions, thus contributing to low fuel consumption and reduce emissions. "The Exhibition has given the participants the opportunity of watching the new and approved products and meeting with hundreds of companies and factories, both domestic and international, in addition to communication with the specialists in the construction fields from exhibitors and distributors to the major purchasers and leading persons on this field, as well as meeting with new

and current suppliers" said Michael Ruehle, CEO of A R Albisher & Z Alkazemi Co, in his comment to its second participation.

On his part, Ralph Geyer, General Manager of the Commercial Vehicles Division at A R Albisher & Z Alkazemi Co, has expressed his pleasure for the second consecutive participation in the Big5 Exhibition, esteeming the importance of the Exhibition as regards coping with the development and growing of the construction projects and offering huge opportunities for the construction companies seeking expansion of their businesses in Kuwait and that the Exhibition has been held for opening the field for meeting and exchanging expertise for commencement of business and investment.



AHMAD AL-MATROOD WINS NEW CADILLAC CTS IN GULF BANK'S RED & SALARY ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank welcomed Ahmad AbdulAziz Qasem Al-Matrood, the third quarterly Red and Salary Account draw winner of 2016, at the Cadillac showroom in Al Rai Area. Susana Al-Barrak, Manager, Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank congratulated him on winning the Cadillac CTS car.

New Red Account or Salary Account customers who open an account and transfer their student allowance or salary will also

be eligible to enter the monthly cash draws for a chance to also win up to KD 1,000. In addition, the quarterly car draw will be for 1 lucky winner who will have a chance to win a new Cadillac.

For further information about Gulf Bank's red account and other prize draws, visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805, or go online at www.e-gulfbank.com.

GLOBUS FAMILY OF BRANDS ENTERS KUWAIT'S MARKET

AL-AFRAH AL-SHARQIYA GEN TRADING & CONTRACTING CO NEW GENERAL SALES AGENT

KUWAIT: The Globus Family of brands, a leading provider of escorted travel products has announced its entry into Kuwait through an association with Al-Afrah Al-Sharqiya Gen. Trading & Contracting Co. W.L.L. as our General Sales Agent in Kuwait, which takes care of The Globus Family of brands operations that aim to make it easy for the travelers in Kuwait to book and pay for their vacations locally.

The Globus family of brands, including Globus, Cosmos, Monograms, and Avalon Waterways, is the world's largest, most experienced and trusted travel organizations with over 460 vacations to 82 countries - Europe, North America, South America, Asia, Australia, New Zealand and Africa. For more than 85 years, the Globus family of brands has been providing a variety of vacations that address the needs of today's diverse traveler with unparalleled vacation experiences, full of discovery and insight.

Whether it's a fully escorted tour, independent vacation package, or river cruise vacation, with Globus, Cosmos, Monograms and Avalon Waterways you will get unmatched value, insider knowledge, and world-class customer service with every journey. Each of our Brands - Globus, Cosmos, Monograms, and Avalon Waterways - offers an authentic destination experience with an international flavor. Travelers experience the cosmopolitan way of travel with companions of several nationalities and experienced Tour Directors who show around like a local and introduce travelers to regional cuisine.

Globus Family of Brands, the world's largest escorted coach tour company which markets vacations under the Cosmos, Globus, Monograms and Avalon

Waterways brands, has a strong presence in the Middle East including the UAE, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Sultanate of Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and have consolidated their market share in the region by partnering with Al-Afrah Al-Sharqiya Gen. Trading & Contracting Co. W.L.L. in Kuwait to focus on the outbound leisure travel segment. The Globus family of brands office in India is responsible for the Middle East region and will provide support to Al-Afrah Al-Sharqiya Gen. Trading & Contracting Co. W.L.L. Kuwait to help garner sales of Globus family vacations worldwide.

"By establishing this relationship, our goal is to strengthen the Globus family of brands' presence in Kuwait and increase outbound traffic on our various brands that offers numerous worldwide destinations," said Varesh Chopra, Regional Director - South Asia & Middle East markets for the Globus family of brands.

"By opening an exclusive set-up for Globus family in Kuwait under a new infrastructure, we want to ensure that we can concentrate more to provide high quality services to our customers and introduce this new experience of travel packages. Tours designed by Globus family provide value for money to travelers without compromising on sightseeing and basic holiday needs. Their Professional & experienced Tour Directors take care of you while on tour", as per the CEO of Al-Afrah Al-Sharqiya Gen. Trading & Contracting Co. W.L.L. Globus Family of Brands office is located in Sharq, opposite to Uduppi Restaurant, Block 1, Crystal Tower on 25th Floor, led by experienced holiday experts to make your travel packages a memorable experience.

DAMAC COMPLETES FIRST-EVER PROJECT IN DUBAI SOUTH

DUBAI: DAMAC Properties yesterday announced the first-ever project to be completed in Dubai South, with the handover of DAMAC Maison de Ville Tenora hotel apartments. The developer also announced that DAMAC Maison de Ville Celestia, another hospitality project in the area, is at an advanced stage of construction, with both projects offering investors the first opportunity to take delivery of properties in Dubai South and start yielding returns immediately.

DAMAC Maison de Ville Celestia and DAMAC Maison de Ville Tenora are strategically located at the heart of Dubai South, the emerging urban area of Dubai that is at the centre of Dubai's strategic plans for development.

The last units in these two projects will go on sale in Dubai from the 13th to 15th October at DAMAC Properties' stand located in WAFI Mall from 10:00 am till midnight, and also on 15th October from 10:00 am till 4:00 pm at three of DAMAC Properties' sales centres including Park Towers, Ocean Heights and AKOYA. Ready to move in hotel apartments in Tenora will be offered at a starting price of AED 587,000, while Celestia units, with substructure already completed and delivery set to be in 2018, are priced to start at AED 560,000.

Ziad El Chaar, Managing Director, DAMAC Properties, said: "With Dubai's strategic plan to create a key new hub for business and investment, and complemented by world-class facilities, there will naturally be a need for hotel accommodation in the centre of this vital area of the city. Our hotel apartment offering in Tenora and Celestia is uniquely attractive as they benefit from prime, high-demand locations at the centre of Dubai South and a return on investment can be realised immediately leading up to and during the Expo 2020 Dubai. Tenora units are completed and handed over while Celestia will be delivered in 2018, making them the premiere completed projects in Dubai South and allowing investors the first opportunity to benefit and reap the returns from such properties in this strategic location."



DUBAI: First project completed in Dubai South — DAMAC Maison de Ville Tenora.

Rapid progress

The free zone of Dubai South is rapidly progressing to become the nerve centre of Expo 2020 Dubai site as well as being home to the world's largest aviation hub that is served by a vast infrastructure network including Al Maktoum International Airport and a host of first-class facilities, including Jebel Ali Port and Dubai Metro. It is also importantly being positioned and accordingly prepared to be a venue that will facilitate business while being an appealing place to live, work and invest with features that promise an unparalleled quality of life. Residents of Celestia and Tenora will stay connected to the city with accessibility via three major roads including Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Road (E311), Sheikh Zayed Road (E11) and the Emirates Road (E611).

With the pace at which the area will develop in the lead up to 2020 and beyond, guests can expect a unique and never-the-same experience

every time they stay at those properties, with the evolving surroundings and activities. Suitable for both short and long-term stays, DAMAC Maison de Ville Hotels & Resorts presents a relaxed experience where guests benefit from all the amenities of home, along with the highest standards of hotel service.

Stellar service, spectacular amenities and plush spaces strike the perfect balance at DAMAC Maison de Ville Tenora, combining the comforts of home with a five-star hotel experience. With 964 units to be delivered by 2018, Celestia will bring an entirely new dimension to serviced living. A 145-square-kilometre master-planned city and host to the first World Expo in the Middle East, Dubai South is set to become one of the world's most desirable destinations. A city based on the happiness of the individual, it aims to change the fundamental concept of a community and its purpose, in line with Dubai Plan 2021.

RENAULT-NISSAN ALLIANCE NAMED OFFICIAL COP22 PASSENGER CAR PARTNER WITH ZERO-EMISSION FLEET

DUBAI: The Renault-Nissan Alliance, world leader in zero-emission mobility, will provide a fleet of 50 all-electric vehicles as the official passenger-car provider for the United Nation's COP22 Climate Conference in Marrakech, Morocco. The fully electric fleet will shuttle delegates.

More than 25,000 participants from 195 countries are expected to attend the annual climate summit Nov. 7-18. It marks the second time the United Nations will use a zero-emission shuttle fleet in support of public transport at one of its major conferences.

The COP22 fleet will feature the Renault ZOE subcompact car, the Nissan LEAF compact car and the seven-seat Nissan e-NV200 van. The vehicles will be available to shuttle delegates 24 hours, seven days a week to key venues at the conference, as a complement to public transportation.

The Alliance will also provide a network of more than 20 accelerated and standard charging stations at strategic locations. The accelerated charging stations will be able to charge the EVs from 0 to 80 percent in about one hour.

The Renault-Nissan Alliance is the global leader in zero-emission vehicles. With six models, it has already sold more than 360,000 electric vehicles worldwide. Nissan LEAF, launched in 2010, remains the industry's best-selling EV. Renault ZOE is the best-performing EV in Europe. The Alliance has sold about half of the electric vehicles on the road globally today including the Renault Twizy two-seat, urban commuter vehicle, and the Nissan e-NV200 van, which has been on sale in Europe and Japan since 2014.

In addition, the Renault-Nissan's Tangier,



Morocco, plant is designed to move towards "zero CO2" emissions through the use of renewable resources, for thermal energy produced on site, as well as its purchased electricity. The plant began operations in 2012, and its approach remains unique in the automobile industry.

In Morocco, Renault Group is the only major automaker to market a fully electric range of vehicles. Thanks to COP22 and the desire of the Kingdom to develop low-carbon energy, several companies have decided to bet on the 100 percent electric car by buying fleets.

Electric mix

"The Renault-Nissan Alliance is proud to contribute to COP22 by providing a fleet of 50 100 percent electric vehicles," said Marc Nassif, managing director of Renault Morocco Group and Alliance COP22 leader. "This technology, coupled with an increasingly decarbonized electric mix, is the solution for individual mobility to address the issue of global warming and enhance air quality in our cities." Isao Sekiguchi, managing director of the North Africa Region and Egypt for Nissan Group, agreed. "Climate change is one of the most press-

ing issues facing the world today," Sekiguchi said. "The Renault-Nissan Alliance was not only quick to recognize the important contribution the automotive industry could make to the collective effort to tackle emissions, but was also quick to act."

The Alliance was also an official partner of COP21. The fleet of 200 electric vehicles from the Alliance represented the world's largest EV fleet ever provided for an international conference. This fleet shuttled more than 8,000 delegates, media and negotiators during the two-week United Nations annual climate change conference in Paris last year. In doing so, it traveled at least 175,000 kilometers without emitting any CO2 tailpipe emissions and without using any petroleum, which saved nearly 182 barrels of oil and avoided 18 tons of CO2 being emitted.

The Alliance will also participate in Solutions COP22, an international exhibition on climate-change solutions, to be held in the Green Zone in Marrakech. The exhibition, which will take place Nov. 7- 18, will feature CO2 solutions from cities, businesses and other organizations around the world. In addition, the Alliance will have electric vehicles available for public test drives.

KUWAIT'S INC TECHNOLOGIES ACHIEVES MICROSOFT'S GOLD STANDARD

KUWAIT: Microsoft yesterday called for businesses in Kuwait to use cloud services to innovate and compete in the Gulf nation's still-growing economy, as the company awards Kuwaiti based INC Technologies with Gold competency in Microsoft Dynamics and Cloud Productivity.

"While it is certainly true that the oil crisis cannot be ignored, strong SME sectors across the GCC have a huge role to play in growing non-oil GDP," said Charles Nahas, General Manager, Microsoft Kuwait. "A National Bank of Kuwait report from last year predicts non-oil GDP growth will reach 4 percent to 5 percent in 2016 and 2017, so the time has never been better for Kuwaiti start-ups to get creative. This starts with technology, with the cloud at its centre. Cloud services can

allow small businesses to operate at scale, behaving like large-scale enterprises and pulling the economy forward."

Nahas believes the Kuwaiti cloud services market is growing progressively stronger and moving closer to maturity, as national cloud providers adopt international best practice standards. Earlier this year, Microsoft certified Kuwait-based INC Technologies, with Gold competency in Microsoft Dynamics and Cloud Productivity. As a Microsoft Dynamics and Cloud Solution Provider, INC Technologies stands as an example of global best practice among Kuwaiti cloud services companies. The firm has built its success on offering solutions that allow national organisations to redesign their business processes more quickly, leading to strong growth spurred by enhanced workforce productivity.

"The Microsoft certification is an important milestone for us, but not the end of the journey," said Mohammed Zaim, Deputy Chairman & CEO, INC Technologies. "We will keep moving forward, building creative solutions for our customers, so they, in turn, can bring value to their customers. Our rich experience in Microsoft Dynamics implementations allows us to play a pivotal role in shaping the competitiveness of Kuwaiti businesses across all sectors, and sustain the country's success story. And, to achieve all of that, cloud is key."

Moving to cloud

"INC Technologies stands as perfect evidence that Kuwaiti companies do not have to wait until next year or the year after that - they can innovate right now,

today, using the power and flexibility of the cloud," said Nahas.

Investment in cloud computing has been proceeding at a blistering pace across the Gulf region. Kuwait, according to BMI, will see compound annual growth of 1.4 percent to reach a total national outlay of \$1.11 billion by 2020 and \$407 million of this will be sales from the service segment. IT spend has seen a sharp decline in Kuwait since 2013, but software and services are now expected to see modest growth, suggesting a move to cloud. Additionally in 2013 IT service sales grew by 4.3 percent to reach KD88m (\$309.42m), according to market researcher Business Monitor International. Cloud computing, e-government and machine-to-machine services are expected to be key growth areas for the sector

through 2017, with new infrastructure investments creating a wide variety of opportunities for cloud service providers. Gartner is forecasting cloud services industry in MENA to grow by 105 percent and reach \$1.1bn in annual spending by 2017, from \$534m in 2013.

"At Microsoft, we define success through our partners. We succeed together. We are partner-centric, partner-led and pro-partner at our very foundation. INC Technologies is a great example who have proven themselves capable of building value-added solutions for our mutual customers." Added Nahas "In Kuwait, we see a vast opportunity for partners that are investing in the cloud and we are constantly innovating to enable them to acquire new customers and achieve more."



SEOUL: A customer enquires about returning a Samsung Note 7 mobile phone at a Samsung store in a mall beneath the company's headquarters in the Gangnam district of Seoul yesterday. —AFP

SAMSUNG SENDS FIRE-PROOF BOXES FOR GALAXY NOTE 7 RETURNS

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics said yesterday it is sending fire-resistant packages to its customers in the US as a precaution against possible fires or explosions from Galaxy Note 7s they return to retailers.

Samsung is offering prepaid shipping boxes as an option for US consumers who purchased the phones on its website, Samsung.com. It said consumers who purchased their Note 7 phones from mobile carriers should visit the carriers' websites for recall instructions.

On Tuesday, Samsung said it was discontinuing the Note 7 phones just two months after their launch, after two recalls and many reports of fires. Samsung must now deal with receiving back more than 1.5 million Galaxy Note 7 phones, both the original ones and those issued as replacements. Most were sold in the US and South Korea.

A video on YouTube dated Tuesday shows a man it says is at the XDA Developers office in the US, unpacking a kit containing a static shield bag, thermally insulated boxes, gloves and instructions for ground shipping only. "We have just received this crazy Galaxy Note 7 return kit," the person said in the video.

According to the XDA Developers forum, Samsung's packing instructions say the Note 7 should be put in the static shield bag and then in a box labeled "OEM Replacement" to be put inside an "Inner Box" and a "Recovery Box." Shipping companies reportedly had complained they did not want to handle Note 7 returns because of fire concerns.

Samsung said the packaging kits conform with US requirements for shipping lithium-ion batteries or devices containing them that are subject to a recall. —AP

CISCO TO SHOWCASE ITS EXTENSIVE SECURITY PORTFOLIO AT GITEX

DUBAI: Cisco announced its participation in the 36th edition of GITEX Technology Week 2016, to be held at Dubai World Trade Centre from October 16 - 20, 2016. Cisco will showcase "Threat-centric Security," which includes threat detection, defense and secure remote access. The

efficiency, and agility. Security is foundational to seizing these emerging opportunities. Security must be everywhere - embedded into the heart of the intelligent network infrastructure from the service provider, throughout the extended enterprise network, and across supply chains. Security needs to be as pervasive as the IoT itself. This requires a new architectural approach and active engagement at the highest levels within organizations," said Scott Manson, Cyber Security Leader for Middle East and Turkey, Cisco.

At GITEX 2016, Cisco plans to demonstrate how an integrated threat defense architecture can help businesses see 100 percent of their extended networks and defend it faster. Cisco makes security effective by making it simple, open and automated. Cisco offers intelligence-led security in order to reduce time to detection and time to resolution via Talos, which has essentially the biggest security research team focused on threat intelligence, globally. Intelligence must be shared and span the extended network and new, connected devices - empowering security technologies and security services teams with intelligence that is actionable and specific to the organization.

Cisco security specialists and partners will be available at their stand in The Security and Network Hall, Hall 1 Stand B1-1 to share their global experiences and success stories.



Scott Manson, Cyber Security Leader for Middle East and Turkey, Cisco.

global technology leader will use the GITEX platform to show how it delivers advanced threat protection across the entire attack continuum - before, during, and after an attack.

"Ever-expanding connectivity, digitization and the Internet of Things (IoT) is transforming our world, creating new business models through greater speed,

AMAZON LAUNCHES FOR-PAY STREAMING MUSIC SERVICE

NEW YORK: Amazon is launching a paid streaming music service, the latest entry in an increasingly crowded field. Amazon Music Unlimited is being positioned to compete against existing services such as Spotify and Apple Music. It will cost \$8 per month, or \$80 a year, for members of Amazon's \$99-a-year Prime loyalty program. Non-Prime members will pay \$10 a month, the same monthly fee charged by Spotify and Apple Music.

Owners of Amazon's Echo smart speaker, meanwhile, will be able to get the unlimited music service on one device for \$4 per month.

The steaming service is one more perk-like two-day free shipping and Amazon Video - that the Seattle-based company hopes will attract people to its Prime program and thus encourage them to spend more on its flagship site. Amazon already offers Amazon Prime Music for free to Prime members, but that includes about two million songs, while the new service boasts a catalog of "tens of millions" of songs.

"Think of this as two different levels: Prime is now the introductory service and Unlimited is the full service," said Steve Boom, Amazon's vice president of digital music. —AP

SAMSUNG SLASHES Q3 PROFIT ESTIMATE AFTER RECALL CRISIS

EXPERTS SAY FAULT MAY HAVE BEEN WITH UNDERLYING TECHNOLOGY

SEOUL: Samsung Electronics yesterday slashed its latest quarterly profit estimate by one third in the wake of a highly damaging recall crisis that ended with the scrapping of its latest flagship smartphone.

In the first indication of just how much the Galaxy Note 7 fiasco might end up costing the world's largest smartphone maker, Samsung revised its operating forecast for the third quarter to 5.2 trillion won (\$4.6 billion), compared to the 7.8 trillion won it announced just last week.

The company said the revision reflected the expected impact on sales and earnings of its decision on Tuesday to permanently discontinue production of the Note 7. Song Myung-Sup, an analyst at Hi Investment & Securities, said the impact would be felt for many quarters to come.

"Halted production of the Note 7 will damage Samsung's brand image and trust and eventually hurt future sales of its smartphones," Song said. "Given that it needs to spend more on research, development, inspection and marketing down the road, this crisis will affect its earnings until late 2017," he added.

The company also slashed its third-quarter sales estimate by four percent to 47 trillion won from 49 trillion won. The announcement came after the close of trade Wednesday which saw Samsung's share price fall 0.7 percent, following an 8.0 percent plunge the day before.

Yesterday's revision would reflect a 30-percent drop in Samsung's quarterly operating profit from a year ago, compared to a 5.5-percent rise according to the earlier esti-

mate. Samsung announced a recall of 2.5 million units of the oversized Galaxy Note 7 smartphone in early September after several devices exploded or caught fire.

When replacement phones also started to combust, the company eventually decided to scrap the Note 7 line entirely. The company blamed faulty batteries made by an unnamed supplier-widely believed to be its sister company Samsung SDI.

But reports in the Wall Street Journal and Financial Times cited analysts, experts and other sources

who suggested the fault may have been with the underlying technology-possibly the processor or voltage control system.

"If you try to charge the battery too quickly it can make it more volatile. If you push an engine too hard, it will explode. Something had to give," a source who had spoken to Samsung executives told the Financial Times.

Discontinuing the Note 7 leaves Samsung extremely vulnerable as the highly-competitive market for premium smartphones enters the holiday buying season. Arch-rival

Apple launched its latest iPhone 7 last month, and Google just came out with its Pixel smartphone, which runs on the same Android software as Samsung's devices.

Numerous analysts have suggested that the rush to release the Note 7 ahead of the iPhone 7 left Samsung's engineers little time to test the device's new built-in battery. The Note 7 was meant to underpin growth this year as Samsung struggles to boost sales, squeezed by Apple in the high-end sector and Chinese rivals in the low-end market as profit has stagnated. —AFP



SEOUL: Two women wearing traditional hanbok dresses pose for a selfie before Gyeongbokgung palace in Seoul yesterday. Samsung Electronics slashed its latest quarterly profit estimate by one third in the wake of a highly damaging recall crisis that ended with the scrapping of its latest flagship smartphone. —AFP

SONY TAPPING VIRTUAL REALITY WITH PLAYSTATION HEADSET

TOKYO: Sony is set to launch its new virtual reality headset, joining Facebook, Samsung and Google in a market that analysts say could boost the global gaming sector. The electronics giant-which has been leaning on its videogames business to claw back to profitability-will start selling its PlayStation virtual reality (PSVR) headset on Thursday in home market Japan and North America.

Priced at \$399, the headset is significantly cheaper than rival offerings and Sony is hoping the gadget will fly off the shelves during the crucial holiday season. PlayStation VR headsets work with PS4 consoles, more than 40 million of which have been sold globally.

Dozens of software titles for the device are in the pipeline, allowing players to fly like an eagle, drive sports cars in high-speed races, and explore castles. Gamers can also indulge in fantasy by flirting with virtual females thanks to increasingly realistic VR technology. But with bulky headsets required to immerse players in the action, virtual reality games with segments lasting just a few minutes are currently the norm.

Developers are trying to determine how far they can extend play without causing fatigue or nausea. Sony has promised that more than 50 games will be available for the PlayStation VR within months of its launch, including zombie-shooter "Resident Evil", and games based on the "Star Wars" franchise.

Some of the first titles already in store are "Batman: Arkham VR" and "Until Dawn: Rush of Blood", which early reviewers have said use the virtual reality headset successfully to increase the element of surprise and fear for gamers.

Sony is getting a head start because it has a well-established PlayStation brand and the headset works with consoles already sitting in millions of homes, analysts said. Earlier this year, Facebook-owned Oculus began selling its Rift virtual reality headsets for \$599, a price which does not include the cost of a computer that can handle the processing and graphics demands of the technology.

Taiwan's HTC set a price of \$799 for Vive VR gear, which also requires computer systems that can handle the rich experience. Google has unveiled its Daydream View virtual reality headset that is compatible with smartphones and a direct challenge to Samsung Gear VR. Microsoft

announced yesterday that it was taking pre-orders for its HoloLens-an augmented reality headset it says will allow users to interact with holograms-and would start shipping the device in November.

'Dawn of virtual reality'

"This year is going to be the dawn of virtual reality games," said Hiroshi Sakai, a senior analyst at SMBC Friend Research Center. "Tomorrow's launch could signal the day when VR becomes

set, it was lightweight and comfortable but complicated to install with numerous cables that need to be hooked up to allow it to work. It may be initially confusing for gamers to adapt their playing style to virtual reality, the reporter said, and users will also need to buy a PS4 camera, which is not provided.

For Sony, the new headset could be key to driving the PlayStation brand, which is essential to its finances as it recovers from years of losses largely tied to an ailing TV unit and consumer electronics.



TOKYO: A journalist wearing a PlayStation VR head-mounted display playing a virtual reality game at Sony's booth at the Tokyo Game Show 2016 in Chiba, in a suburb of Tokyo. —AFP

more mainstream." Sony has not released global sales forecasts for the headsets.

The technology, which is still unfamiliar to many consumers, will likely supplement the industry rather than transform it, Sakai said. "Instead of being a game-changer, VR is likely to give a boost to the gaming industry," Sakai told AFP. According to an AFP reporter who had tried the new head-

As Sony battles to stay ahead of Microsoft's Xbox gaming console, PS4 has seen the fastest and strongest adoption since the first generation of the console was introduced more than 20 years ago.

"(PSVR) is likely to be a significant factor when you look at the bigger picture of Sony's future business," Sakai said. —AFP

NY AGENCY HAS NO RECORD OF REQUIRED REFERRALS OF ABUSE CASES



DELMAR, NEW YORK: This Jan. 11, 2016, file photo, shows the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special needs building.—AP

ALBANY, NEW YORK: New York's oversight agency for the disabled has no record of forwarding abuse or neglect reports to the state Medicaid inspector general, a legally required step that's a key part of cracking down on problem facilities. Such reports are vital to protecting the more than 120,000 disabled people in state care because the inspector general's office has the power to cut off Medicaid funding to troubled facilities to force them to change their ways. "The law requires them to report," said Michael Carey, an advocate for the disabled who requested the records of the inspector general and the Justice Center, the agency created by Gov. Andrew Cuomo in 2013 specifically to protect the disabled in state care.

Carey said all 18,000 confirmed cases of abuse and neglect since the Justice Center opened should have been forwarded, and the failure to do so constitutes fraud against the federal govern-

ment, which pays half of New York's \$65 billion annual Medicaid bill.

Criminal investigation requested

Carey has requested a criminal investigation by Manhattan US Attorney Preet Bharara. His office declined to comment on whether it is investigating. In its response to Carey earlier this year, the Justice Center said its document search for the number of forwarded cases "failed to yield any responsive records."

The Office of the Medicaid Inspector General, in its responses to Carey, said its search showed it received "no substantiated reports" of abuse since the Justice Center opened. Both agencies told The Associated Press that there have been "case-by-case" referrals but they don't track them. Neither agency provided numbers or even estimates of case referrals requested by the AP. The Medicaid inspector general removes about 1,000 health and service providers from the program every year,

mostly individuals, cutting off their funding, according to the office. The Justice Center reported recently that it had substantiated nearly 2,800 abuse and neglect cases through the first eight months of this year. They include 90 involving serious physical or sexual abuse or other serious misconduct by caregivers. The law that established the Justice Center says: "For substantiated reports of abuse or neglect in facilities or provider agencies in receipt of medical assistance, such information shall also be forwarded by the Justice Center to the office of Medicaid inspector general when such abuse or neglect may be relevant to an investigation of unacceptable practices." The inspector general's main focus is financial fraud and misconduct. But it also authorizes immediate removal from the program when it is determined "the health or welfare of a recipient would be imminently endangered by the continued participation of any person in the program."—AP

RIGHTS GROUPS: DECRIMINALIZE USE OF ALL ILLICIT DRUGS

BOLDER STEP FOR DRUG CONTROL

NEW YORK: As Americans debate the expanding campaign to legalize marijuana, two of the nation's most prominent human rights organizations are urging a far bolder step - the decriminalization of possession and personal use of all illicit drugs.

Human Rights Watch and the American Civil Liberties Union jointly issued the call Wednesday in a detailed report contending that enforcement of drug laws has unjustifiably ruined lives, torn families apart and fueled racial discrimination while failing to curtail rampant drug abuse in the US.

"Every 25 seconds someone is funneled into the criminal justice system, accused of nothing more than possessing drugs for personal use," said Tess Borden, the report's author. "These wide-scale arrests have destroyed countless lives

as cocaine and heroin. Possession of them is often classified as a felony. According to the new report, state law enforcement agencies make more than 1.25 million drug possession arrests per year - one of every nine arrests nationwide. Regarding racial disparities, the report said black adults use drugs at similar or even lower rates than white adults, yet are more than twice as likely to be arrested for possession.

The report argues that the decades-long "war on drugs" has failed, with rates of drug abuse still high. It says criminalization of drugs tends to drive people who use them underground, making it less likely they will get treatment and more likely they will be at risk of disease and overdoses. However, Michael Ramos, district attorney of San Bernardino County in California, said decriminalization would pose "huge dangers."

interviewed 149 people prosecuted for using drugs in Louisiana, Texas, Florida and New York, 64 of them in custody.

Among them was Corey Ladd, who - because he had two prior drug arrests - is serving a 17-year sentence in Louisiana for possessing a half-ounce of marijuana. He has a 4-year-old daughter who has never seen him outside prison; she's being raised by her grandmother.

"The sheer harshness of the sentence shocks the conscience," Louisiana's appeals court wrote in April, when it asked that Ladd be sentenced to a lesser term. But prosecutors held firm and appealed that ruling; Ladd's case is now headed to the state Supreme Court.

Highest-in-the-nation

Ladd's public defender, Kenneth Hardin, said Louisiana's highest-in-the-nation incarceration rate stems directly from its hard line approach to drug abusers. "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result," he said. "We've been throwing these drug users in jail. Has that made the streets feel safer? Has that changed the crime rate?"

Mario Moreno, spokesman for the Office of National Drug Control Policy, said the Obama administration favors a balanced approach that would divert non-violent drug offenders into treatment programs rather than prisons. "We cannot arrest our way out of the drug problem," he said in an email.

One such diversion program is being launched in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, by Rob Reardon, a former director of corrections in nearby Lafayette Parish. "If we're able to engage with these people before entanglement with the criminal justice system, everybody's a winner," he said. "Some people have to go to jail because they are dangerous - but the vast majority are there because they're poor decision-makers."

In Western Europe, many countries have adopted approaches to drug abuse that are less punitive than in America. Portugal has gone the furthest, deciding in 2001 to decriminalize the acquisition, use and possession of illicit drugs in quantities up to a 10-day supply. Rather than facing prosecution, drug abusers are likely to be referred to treatment programs.

According to various evaluations, including a United Nations study, the policy has been a success, lowering the number of overdose fatalities, encouraging more people to seek treatment, and reducing the financial toll of drug abuse. However, Steven Belenko, a professor of criminal justice at Temple University, noted that the US differs dramatically from Portugal, where there was a consensus in favor of decriminalization that spanned much of the political spectrum and extended to law enforcement agencies.

"We don't have a consensus," said Belenko, though he suggested that an increasing number of Americans were questioning the efficacy of a punitive approach to drug abuse. "We've got to see it more as public health problem, not as a crime problem," he said.—AP



MANILA, PHILIPPINES: A Filipino smokes a cigarette on Tuesday, Oct. 11, 2016.—AP

THE PHILIPPINE PRESIDENT'S NEXT CAMPAIGN: PUBLIC SMOKING BAN

MANILA, PHILIPPINES: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte is turning to another battle aside from illegal drugs: Smoking. Health Secretary Pauly Ubial told the Associated Press on Tuesday that she hopes the president can sign the draft executive order banning smoking in public nationwide before the end of the month.

The department is pushing for the ban to start before the law providing for graphic health warnings on tobacco products is fully implemented on Nov. 4. Ubial said Duterte wants a 100 percent smoke-free environment in public places similar to Davao, the southern city where he was formerly mayor.

Away from public

Designated smoking areas are to be outdoors and away from the public, and local government units will be asked to issue ordinances to enforce the smoking ban and set penalties. She said e-cigarettes will be included in the ban because they too produce smoke.

Ubial said there is no reason for smokers and tobacco companies to oppose the ban. "I don't see any reason why they will oppose that," she told the AP. "We're not stopping them from smoking, we are just telling them not to smoke around non-smokers."

Ubial said the smoking ban was successful in Davao because the city government

strictly enforced it and created a task force of enforcers specifically to implement the ban. It was not just an add-on work for the police. It will be up to provinces and towns to determine if they will follow that example, and what penalties they will impose for violators, she said.

The executive order takes effect immediately after Duterte signs it, but the rules to implement it will need to be crafted by national government agencies and by local governments through ordinances. Assistant Health Secretary Eric Tayag said the order aims to protect the public from secondhand or thirdhand smoke - that inhaled when a smoker is nearby or when smoke lingers afterward.

Duterte took office on June 30 vowing to expand policies from Davao such as his anti-drug campaign. The crackdown has left about 3,600 suspected drug pushers and users dead, including more than 1,500 suspects killed in gunbattles with police. The killings have been widely condemned by human rights advocates, and the United States, European Union and United Nations.

Many have wondered if Duterte would also expand a Davao ban on powerful firecrackers during New Year's Eve revelry. If the ban is imposed nationally, he would bring a major change in a violent celebratory tradition that has caused deaths and hundreds of injuries each year.—AP



ST. GABRIEL, LOUISIANA: This March 2015 photo provided by the family shows Lisa Ladd, left, and her son, Corey, with his daughter, Charlee, at the Elayn Hunt Correctional Center. Ladd, who because he had two prior drug arrests is serving a 17-year sentence in Louisiana for possessing a half-ounce of marijuana. He has never seen Charlee outside prison; she's being raised by her grandmother.—AP

while doing nothing to help people who struggle with dependence."

Borden acknowledged that broad decriminalization of drug use, whether by Congress or state-by-state, is unlikely in the near future. She hopes the report will spur action at the state and federal level to invest more funds in treatment programs and to reclassify drug use and possession as misdemeanors rather than felonies.

Five more states

Though four states have legalized recreational marijuana use, and five more will vote on that step next month, no state has decriminalized personal use of other common illicit drugs such

He predicted that property crime would increase as drug users carried out thefts to maintain their habits. He also said rehabilitation programs would wither if drug abusers no longer had the threat of incarceration as an incentive to participate. "Once you legalize all drugs, there's no motive for those people to get help," he said. However, Ramos acknowledged that most state prisons and jails should be doing a far better job of providing effective rehabilitation programs for convicted drug users.

"Right now, what we're doing is putting them in and turning the key," he said. "There's not much help there." In compiling their report, Human Rights Watch and the ACLU said they

plagued by sleeplessness, nausea and other problems. "The vertigo was pretty much all the time, but if we had a lot of noise, the dry heaves would be more often," Luann Therrien said. Steve Therrien gave up his job as a trash truck driver - too sleepy to drive, he said. They abandoned their home in 2014 and have been unable to sell it. A group opposed to large-scale wind projects, Energize Vermont, is planning to set up sound monitoring equipment at the Therriens' former home to try to document their concerns with data.

Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin and fellow Democrats who control the Legislature have promoted renewable energy. Three big wind power projects - all of which have drawn complaints similar to the Therriens' - have been built on Vermont mountaintops during Shumlin's six years in office, with five more in planning or construction. The state is pursuing a goal of 90 percent renewable energy by 2050. Luann Therrien said the couple has not sued turbine owners because they can't afford to hire a lawyer and have not found one willing to take the case for free. But another person living near the Sheffield Project, Paul Brouha, has sued, saying the noise is "out of character with the surrounding area, is excessively loud and continues unabated for long periods of time both day and night." Brouha declined to comment, citing the pending lawsuit. Lawyers for the turbines' owners have denied his claims in court filings.

The Therriens - he is 54, she is 47 - and their two young children now live in nearby

VERMONT CABIN BECOMES LAB TO STUDY WIND TURBINE NOISE

SHEFFIELD, VERMONT: Once it was just another cabin on a Vermont hillside. Now it's an emblem in the debate over noise from the growing wind energy industry. Studies have repeatedly found no evidence connecting noise from wind power turbines to human health problems. But critics question the soundness of those studies. Among them are Steve and Luann Therrien, who say a wind farm near their home made their lives hell.

The case has created a fissure among environmentalists in this liberal state with a reputation for green thinking, pitting those who see wind energy as key to reducing reliance on pollution-spewing fossil fuels against those convinced audible noises and inaudible "infrasound" present health threats to those living nearby. And each side questions the objectivity of the other's research.

How it effects people

The Therriens' old cabin is up 5 miles of dirt road from town, but is just a quarter-mile from a rural stretch of Interstate 91. The highway noise largely didn't bother them. But after the 16 turbine towers of the Sheffield Wind Project went up on a nearby ridge in 2011 - the closest about three-quarters of a mile away and five within a mile - things changed, the Therriens say.

Deep in the night, when things were quiet on the highway, a low hum came from the opposite direction, punctuated occasionally by louder noises, the Therriens say. Soon, they say, they and their two small children were



SHEFFIELD, VERMONT: In this Oct 26, 2011 file photo, wind turbines line the hillside at First Wind's project.—AP

Derby and receive government assistance. The toll from his years of work as a trash collector, coupled with the more recent health problems, means he can't work, Steve Therrien said. Luann Therrien said she has been depressed since the symptoms took hold. A psychiatric nurse practitioner who has treated the Therriens wrote in a letter this year that both "suffer from a form of trauma-induced and stressor-related disorder." The

nurse compared their condition to post-traumatic stress disorder, saying the wind turbines caused lasting sleep and mental health issues.

The Therriens are now activists. They founded the group Victims of Industrial Wind and post frequently on social media. Luann traveled to the Statehouse last winter to testify to a Senate committee, and they go occasionally to testify at public hearings in other communities.

No scientific link

Vermont's health commissioner, Dr. Harry Chen, told lawmakers this year that "no scientific research has been able to demonstrate a direct cause-and-effect link between living near wind turbines, the noise they emit, and physiological health effects."

Studies commissioned by public health agencies in Canada and Australia have reached similar conclusions, though Australia's National Health and Medical Research Council suggested more research could be done on possible health effects for those living closest to wind farms. Since July, more than 100 doctors, other scientists and activists worldwide have signed a letter urging the World Health Organization to recommend new sound guidelines for wind turbines. State regulators in Vermont have adopted a standard acceptable wind turbine noise level averaging 45 decibels during the course of an hour, quieter than a normal conversation. Renewable energy supporters, including the Vermont Public Interest Research Group, have attacked the plan for sound monitoring research at the Therriens', saying it won't be objective. Mark Whitworth, board president of Energize Vermont, which is sponsoring the research, has said it will start with some built-in assumptions. "We would like to understand how they bake prejudice or bias into their monitoring program," he said. Separately, lawmakers this year appropriated \$50,000 for sound-monitoring equipment to be used by Lyndon State College, providing the college finds matching funds.—AP



LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA: This Wednesday, July 22, 2015, file photo shows St. Jude Medical corporate headquarters. —AP

ST. JUDE WARNS OF BATTERY DEFECT IN SOME HEART DEVICES

WASHINGTON: Medical device maker St. Jude Medical is warning doctors and patients about a rare battery defect in some of its implantable heart devices that can cause them to fail much earlier than expected. The company said Tuesday that two deaths have been linked to the problem and 10 more patients fainted because the devices stopped working.

St. Jude said the batteries should be replaced immediately after patients receive an electronic, vibrating alert from the device. Normally patients have up to three months to have batteries replaced. But the company said a small subset of its heart-shocking defibrillators can fail within 24 hours of the alert. The problem affects a subset of its Fortify, Quadra and Unify devices. Specific model and serial numbers are available on St. Jude's website.

The metallic implants are used to treat dangerous heart rhythms that can lead to cardiac arrest, heart failure and death. The design flaw is caused by buildup of deposits around lithium batteries that power the devices. St. Jude said it fixed the issue in May 2015 and removed all affected devices from distribution and hospital inventories.

350,000 patients affected
Nearly 350,000 patients worldwide could have devices affected by the issue, according to a separate statement from the Food and Drug Administration. As in similar

cases, regulators are not recommending that patients with the devices have them preemptively removed. That's because the risks of the surgical procedure are generally much higher than the potential harms of the defect itself.

St. Jude noted the actual prevalence of the issue is very rare: "the vast majority of devices sold worldwide have not experienced premature battery depletion." Jefferies analyst Raj Denhoy estimated the actual number of devices affected by the problem is likely 2,000 - at the most - based on prior estimates of lithium battery deposits published in the medical literature. "It seems unlikely that St. Jude will experience any protracted impact to its market share," Denhoy said in a note to investors.

All major manufacturers of implantable heart defibrillators have reported malfunctions and recalls, including competitors Medtronic Inc., Boston Scientific and St. Jude itself. In 2010, the St. Paul, Minnesota-based company stopped selling defibrillators with certain wires because they could prematurely crack and fail. Last year the company paid \$14.5 million to settle hundreds of lawsuits filed by customers who received devices with the wires.

Earlier this year Abbott Laboratories announced it would acquire St. Jude for approximately \$25 billion. Tuesday's announcement is not expected to affect the deal. Shares of St. Jude Medical Inc. fell 3.27 percent, to close at \$78.41. —AP

HOSPITAL INDUSTRY SAYS IT, TOO, IS SLAMMED BY DRUG COSTS

DRUG SPENDING INCREASES BY 23 %

WASHINGTON: Hospitals, too, are getting slammed by sharp price increases in prescription drugs, and the industry is urging the next president and Congress to take up the issue.

Consumer groups and insurers were already complaining loudly about drug costs. Now hospitals are turning up the volume as well, leaving the pharmaceutical industry more politically isolated.

A study released Tuesday by the two biggest hospital lobbying groups found that overall, hospitals' average annual inpatient drug spending increased by more than 23 percent between 2013 and 2015. The NORC study for the American Hospital Association and the Federation of American Hospitals found higher prices were primarily responsible for the spending increase, not the quantity of medications used.

Shocking increases

Measured on a per-admission basis, the increase was even more striking, nearly 39 percent. Per-admission spending on medications increased from \$714 in 2013 to \$990 two years later. NORC at the University of Chicago, which conducted the study, is an independent research organization.

Hospitals say they can't easily pass on the cost of pricey drugs because private insurers and government programs like Medicare usually pay a pre-determined amount per case. "The system is clearly broken," Scott Knoer, chief pharmacy officer at the Cleveland Clinic, said in a teleconference sponsored by the two hospital lobbying groups. "The (pharmaceutical) industry has proven time and time again it can no longer regulate itself."

Calling the recent spate of price increases "egregious," Knoer said there's no way hospitals can get on top of it. When the price of one drug stabilizes, another zooms up. "It's like playing whack-a-mole," he said. The drug industry criticized the report, saying it focuses on "unrepresentative, older" medicines and gives a "distorted" picture of costs.

"Further, the report fails to acknowledge that hospitals often significantly mark up medicines

charged to patients and payers," Holly Campbell of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America said in a statement.

In the study, one-third of hospitals said drug prices had a "severe" impact on their budgets. Leaders of the two hospital groups said they want to avoid an outcome in which the government directly regulates drug prices, but they add that a debate is clearly needed.

"The concern about the rising cost and prices of prescription drugs has been a bipartisan issue," said Rick Pollack, president of the hospital association. "We are hoping this study will help inform policy makers as to the nature of the problem."

The NORC study was based on data from 712 of the nation's more than 4,300 community hospitals. It also analyzed drug purchase costs for 28 drugs from two major group purchasing organizations, which

allow hospitals to maximize volume discounts for commonly used supplies. The study found that price increases seemed to be "random, inconsistent and unpredictable." It found sizable price increases both for highly used drugs and some that get less use, as well as for branded and generic drugs. Inpatient drug spending grew more rapidly than retail prescription spending in 2014 and 2015.

Among the examples:

The unit price hospitals paid for acetaminophen, a commonly used pain reliever, rose by 135 percent from 2013 to 2015. Researchers developed a "per-unit" benchmark to measure prices across different dosages.

The drug that saw the highest per-unit increase was Daraprim, an infection-control medication that was originally approved in 1953. The study said its unit price jumped 3,695 percent, from \$919.10 to

\$34,882.24 after it was acquired by Turing Pharmaceuticals.

Turing was formerly run by Martin Shkreli, a brash entrepreneur whose indifference to complaints about the company's aggressive pricing earned him a reputation as pharma's bad boy. He has pleaded not guilty to federal charges in an unrelated securities fraud case.

More than half of US adults take prescription drugs, and according to a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll most of those patients report no major problems affording their own medications.

But consumers have been alarmed by the introduction of breakthrough drugs costing tens of thousands of dollars a year, along with a spate of seemingly arbitrary price hikes for older medications. More than 3 out of 4 say the cost of prescription drugs is unreasonable. A majority favors government action to curb costs. —AP



WILLINGBORO, NEW JERSEY: In this June 14, 2011 file photo, various prescription drugs on the automated pharmacy assembly line at Medco Health Solutions. —AP

USE OF CONTROVERSIAL PROSTATE CANCER TEST MAY BE HOLDING STEADY

NEW YORK: Doctors at one large US medical center didn't cut back on their orders of a controversial prostate cancer test even though a government-backed panel advised against its use, according to a new study.

Orders for prostate-specific antigen (PSA) tests didn't significantly change at UT Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas after 2012, when the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommended against it, warning with "moderate certainty" that the benefits of PSA-based screening for prostate cancer do not outweigh the harms. "It was important for us to have a good understanding of how we're using PSA testing and the impact of US Preventive Services Task Force,"

said senior author Dr. Yair Lotan, who is chief of urologic oncology at UT Southwestern.

Prostate cancer is the most common malignancy in US men, according to the National Cancer Institute. An estimated 180,890 men in the US will be diagnosed with the cancer in 2016, and 26,120 will die of it.

A PSA test measures the amount of a protein known as prostate-specific antigen in a man's blood. Elevated levels sometimes signal prostate cancer. Often, however, the test incorrectly suggests there is cancer, according to the group. Those so-called false positives can cause anxiety and lead to unneeded additional tests.

Also, most prostate cancers tend to be

slow-growing. Even if PSA testing leads to a diagnosis of prostate cancer, it's not possible to know if that cancer will ever cause a problem - but worried patients may opt for unneeded treatments such as surgery, radiation or hormone therapy.

Recently, actor Ben Stiller wrote online that a PSA test "literally" saved his life by catching his early prostate cancer. The USPSTF says there is no way to know which cancers will go on to be deadly, though. To see if the USPSTF recommendation had an effect on test-ordering patterns at their medical center, the researchers analyzed data from 275,784 hospital visits made between 2010 and 2015.

63,722 orders

During that time, there were 63,722 orders for PSA tests. Primary care providers ordered 17,315 of those tests and there were 858 referrals to urologists.

Before and after the 2012 USPSTF recommendation, the researchers saw similar numbers of PSA tests ordered per visit, similar numbers of men being advised to see a urologist and similar average age at the time of referral. The researchers say adoption of external recommendations is slow and incremental.

There are also some conflicting recommendations from other panels and organizations. Both the American Cancer Society and the American Urological Association recommend

more nuanced approaches to PSA testing that involve discussions between patients and doctors. Lotan said men should realize the risks of prostate cancer differ depending on the person. For example, African Americans, men with a family history and people with certain genetic predispositions are at higher risk.

Proceeding with PSA testing is "a personal decision and the important factor here is that men become informed about the significance of it," he said. He also cautioned that the new study can't speak for other medical centers across the country. "We can only report on the men at our institution and how the Task Force's recommendation impacted our population," he said. —Reuters

CLINIC
PAGE

248 33 199

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DAIRY PRODUCERS UNION

The Dairy Producers Union recently received a delegation from the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Dundee Scotland who paid a visit to one of the union's farms and reviewed the production process. The delegation was received by union deputy chairman Dr Abdul Aziz Al-Ateqi, the farm manager, Reja'ee Al-Qawsmi and the farm's vets.



KDNA CELEBRATES ONAM, EID



Kozhikode District NRI Association celebrated Onam and Eid at ICSK Amman branch auditorium. The event was marked by formal inauguration function, cultural programs and a sumptuous 'Onasadya.' The program was aimed at instilling bond between its members and others and to propagate the good message of these festivals. The message of love and compassion was well portrayed in the articulation of this event. The event was spectacular in terms of people's participation, quality of various cultural items and dignitaries' presence from various walks of life.

The event started with national anthems of Kuwait and India followed by silent prayers for the soldiers who safeguarded the country. It paid condolences on the sad demise of Badriya Najeeb (W/O KDNA member Najeeb Nediya). It was inaugurated by BEC Exchange General Manager Mathews Varghese by lighting the traditional lamp. The symbolic Mahabali was escorted to the stage with much fanfare accompanied by guests. The function was presided by Aziz Thikkodi. Ilyas Thottathil and Sajeewan Kunimimal delivered Onam and Eid messages respectively.

Advisory board members Krishnan Kadalundi, Zubair MM, Basheer Batha, Treasurer Saheer Alakkal, Vice president Suresh Mathur along with other organizations' representatives Varghese Puthukulangara, Naganadhan, Aslam Kuttikattoor, Hamza Payyannur, Grand Hyper country head Ayyoob Kecheri, Prominent Singer from Kerala Kanoor Shereef, Thablist Hakeem Thiroor, Harmonist Aslam Thiroor delivered felicitation speeches. Gen Secretary Sathian Varoonda Varoonda welcomed the audience and program convener Praju T M extended vote of thanks.

Sameer Vellayil led the orchestra with singers Srinivasan, Merlin, Anna Arjun, Alona. Sabitha Jayesh, Sandra Bijoy, Thara Thulaseedharan performed singular dance items. Anagha Krishnan, Brindha Krishnan, Chaithra Krishnan, An Maria performed group dance. Sahal Muhammed and Suhail Muhammed performed cinematic dance. The oppana was performed by Riga Sana group. Kalathil Abdul Rahiman and vice president Ali Koya along with Executive members and Area Unit Representatives coordinated the delicious lunch for all.



KUWAIT MARRIOTT HOTELS CELEBRATE MARRIOTT AND STARWOOD MERGER



The JW Marriott Kuwait, Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait, Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait and the prestigious Arraya Ballroom held "Together we're better" event to celebrate Marriott and Starwood merger. The celebration took place on October 9, at Arraya Ballroom and was attended by more than 200 associates from the different Marriott properties in Kuwait.

"Together we're better" event was kicked off by a speech given by the Cluster General Manager of Kuwait Marriott Hotels, George Aoun, in which he explained all the details related to the merge and what it means for both guests and associates. After that, all the attendees enjoyed a delicious cake which was tailored to fit the theme of the celebration "Together we're better". The acquisition of Starwood makes Marriott International the world's largest and best hotel company. Marriott now offers the most comprehensive portfolio of brands including leading lifestyle brands, a significant global footprint, and leadership in the luxury and select-service

tiers as well as the convention and resort segment.

In addition, the company now has best-in-Class Loyalty Programs. Marriott Rewards - which includes the Ritz-Carlton Rewards - and SPG are the most recognized and awarded loyalty programs in hospitality. Together, these programs will offer members more benefits when they link their accounts, as well as new destinations such as Aruba, Tuscany's Serchio Valley and Kruger National Park in South Africa for SPG members and the Maldives, Bora Bora and Santorini, Greece for Marriott Rewards and The Ritz-Carlton Rewards members.

"We are happy to join thousands of Marriott associates around the world to celebrate this historic milestone. The combination of Marriott and Starwood means more than just adding scale to our business. The company now offers the best brands, best loyalty programs, and best opportunities for guests and associates. Said George Aoun, Cluster General Manager of Kuwait Marriott Hotels.



KNES BEACH CLEAN-UP EVENT

Teamwork, energy and enthusiasm were evident in abundance from pupils at Kuwait National English School as they helped out at the annual Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and their Habitat beach clean-up. This was the 11th year that the event has taken place and it was a great celebration of the efforts of the Society and the pupils taking part to make a difference at the beach.

Bashayer, the program manager explained that the pupils would be helping to protect the important beach and mudflat environment for the Crab, Mud Skipper and Flamingo species

that live in this habitat. Instructions were given on the safe way to remove all kinds of rubbish and waste from the beach, plastic, bottles, cartons and even a huge tyre stuck in the mud.

The pupils worked really hard and filled many bags of waste and the beach looked clean and sandy by the time the event finished. The team of 16 pupils, supported by numerous staff, were all really pleased with the result and signed the pledge to continue to support the environment. Well done year 5 and 6 from Kuwait National English School.

ARMS4U KUWAIT TO FOCUS ON PHILANTHROPY

A not-for-profit organization named 'Active Resource Management Society (Arms4u)', was formed with a clear mission to provide philanthropic assistance to the needy in the society and promote art and culture in Kuwait. Registered with the Embassy of India in Kuwait, Arms4u aims to create an impact in the society by leveraging resources and channelizing it to where it is needed the most.

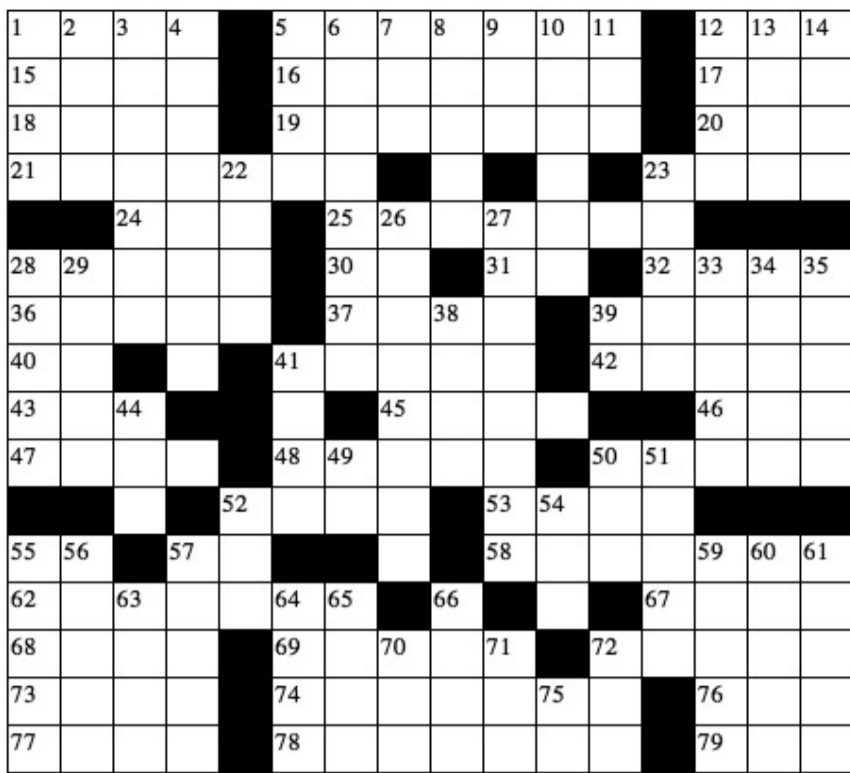
The idea of Arms4u was conceived and given shape by a group of like-minded individuals such that it turned out to be different from the usual run-off-the-mill organizations. Quite the opposite, Arms4u doesn't believe in gathering fame or attention but in the selfless service for the wellbeing of the society. Arms4u has a clear vision and mission to educate the people especially students in art and culture, caring for the environment and to provide philanthropic assistance to those sec-

tions of the society that have been neglected throughout history.

Providing leadership and direction to Arms4u are its core committee members namely S Venushankar (President), M S Krishnakumar (Secretary), Prasanth Jayaram (Treasurer), Sajeev S Nair, Jayakrishnan Ravindran, Jitesh Nair and Alex John. Arms4u began its activities with a noble act of donating blood at the Central Blood Bank in Jabriya. It also sponsored a special feast (Onasadya) on the festive occasion of Onam for the inmates (girl students) along with their parents and teachers of Balika Sadanam, a hostel for tribal girls at Agasthyavanam in the Thiruvanthapuram district of Kerala. They also provided traditional festival dress for all the students. Future programs include apart from the aforementioned, conducting workshops aimed at developing leaders for tomorrow is also high on the organization's agenda.



CROSSWORD 1398



- ACROSS**
- 1. Slightly wet.
 - 5. An employee who sweeps (floors or streets etc.).
 - 12. Piece of solid food for dipping in a liquid.
 - 15. The twelfth month of the civil year.
 - 16. Flesh of pompano.
 - 17. An accountant certified by the state.
 - 18. An inflammatory disease involving the sebaceous glands of the skin.
 - 19. Relating to or produced by ergot.
 - 20. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
 - 21. Salt pork from the back of a hog carcass.
 - 24. Of the blackest black.
 - 25. Used of persons.
 - 28. A genus of Platatea.
 - 30. A person forced to flee from home or country.
 - 31. A state in the eastern United States.
 - 32. A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
 - 36. A Roman Catholic priest who acts for another higher-ranking clergyman.
 - 37. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
 - 40. Before noon.
 - 42. Connected with or belonging to or used in a navy.
 - 43. Group insurance that entitles members to services of participating hospitals and clinics and physicians.
 - 45. (Norse mythology) Goddess of old age who defeated Thor in a wrestling match.
 - 46. Relating to or containing the azo radical.
 - 47. The eighth month of the civil year.
 - 48. Small genus of hairy herbs with yellow flowers.
 - 53. (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
 - 55. A radioactive element of the alkali-metal group discovered as a disintegration product of actinium.
 - 58. Excessive desire to eat.
 - 62. Type genus of the Juglandaceae.
 - 67. An elaborate song for solo voice.
 - 68. A slender double-reed instrument.
 - 69. Of or relating to alga.
 - 73. Cause annoyance in.
 - 74. Someone who helps to open up a new line of research or technology or art.
 - 76. Government agency created in 1974 to license and regulate nuclear power plants.
 - 77. Informal or slang terms for mentally irregular.
 - 78. The great hall in ancient Persian palaces.
 - 79. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- DOWN**
- 1. Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
 - 2. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
 - 3. Small Asian deer with small antlers and a cry like a bark.
 - 4. Of the common people of ancient Rome.
 - 5. A detailed description of design criteria for a piece of work.
 - 6. Found in the ordinary course of events.
 - 7. A graphical record of electric currents associated with muscle contractions.
 - 8. A period marked by distinctive character or reckoned from a fixed point or event.
 - 9. Having only superficial plausibility.
 - 10. Something that baffles understanding and cannot be explained.
 - 11. Mythical bird of prey having enormous size and strength.
 - 12. A mark left by the healing of injured tissue.
 - 13. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
 - 14. Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
 - 22. Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
 - 23. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
 - 26. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
 - 27. Pertaining to filberts or hazelnuts.
 - 29. A short crowbar.
 - 33. Being in competition.
 - 34. Affect with wonder.
 - 35. Gallery where works of art can be displayed.
 - 38. A rapid series of short loud sounds (as might be heard with a stethoscope in some types of respiratory disorders).
 - 39. An associate degree in nursing.
 - 41. Dutch postimpressionist painter noted for his use of color (1853-1890).
 - 44. An awkward stupid person.
 - 49. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
 - 50. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
 - 51. United States screenwriter and filmmaker (born in 1944).
 - 52. A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.
 - 54. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
 - 56. Type genus of the Rubiaceae.
 - 57. Moving very fast.
 - 59. A native or inhabitant of Iran.
 - 60. A crown-like jewelled headdress worn by women on formal occasions.
 - 61. West Indian evergreen with medium to long leaves.
 - 63. A game played on a large open course with 9 or 18 holes.
 - 64. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
 - 65. A socially awkward or tactless act.
 - 66. The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
 - 70. A state of southwestern India.
 - 71. A unit of length of thread or yarn.
 - 72. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
 - 75. Half the width of an em.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Acting with self-discipline can be a real challenge today. Thankfully, you won't likely get any complaints from others because they are so involved with their own issues they might not even notice yours. Although relationship issues may require your attention, it's difficult to turn your great ideas into solid plans since the information you are working with isn't as accurate as you first thought. Instead of trying to impress everyone with your pragmatism, spend time exploring abstract concepts now and leave the practical realities for another day.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your personal goals will come into focus soon-continue to work on what it is that you really want to accomplish in this lifetime. Ask yourself what it is that you become passionate about-listen to your heart. If you are not involved in a love relationship now you may enjoy a new one by the end of the month. You will want to work on a more self-reliant identity. Self-confidence and having a plan for the future are winners these days when it comes to relationships. Somehow a friend must have been thinking about you because by the time your evening is complete, you and your friend may decide to have an adventurous holiday as soon as you can both coordinated a time and agree to a place. The more adventurous of the two of you has a surprise.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There are challenges today. You will pull on your talents and capabilities to handle difficult situations. Others may cut you off or make it difficult for you to express yourself. Somehow, you just don't worry. Debate situations are fun and if the other side is willing, can be quite stimulating and eye-opening. It may be fun to be the last speaker-this is where the power is found today. Positive results are in the works. Status and security goals need rethinking now, to take advantage of changing circumstances. Finances, purchases, investments and credit in particular could stand some clear thinking-keep an eye on the bottom line. If there are other people sharing your income, you might be wise to gather round to work on a budget.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may find yourself at odds with others regarding matters in a conference meeting. Be very watchful-it could be everything is political this morning. Look at the facts and take statistics with a grain of salt, so to speak. Approach the subjects by looking at the long-term effects. People do not like change but will be more willing to adjust if the long-term effect of change is rewarding. Rewarding days make up for all the stress that comes with those challenging days. This is a rewarding day. A lot of energy goes into getting things scheduled and organized this afternoon. Your creative expression is strong this evening and you may find yourself involved in some fun activities with young people. Ideas are plentiful.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Daring to be different gets you noticed and could get you ahead in ways you never expected; careful. It could even land you in hot water if you are not discreet. A high-tech or idealistic approach sets you apart. Your inner resources and emotions are accented. An older person or higher-up gives you good points. Expect a sense of support and goodwill from those around you. The next item on the extinct and rare list could be the people that enjoy reading books. Didn't you like to read books at one time? The energies are ripe for grasping new ideas or learning about the long past authors, artists or civilizations. If you go to a library in town you may be helpful in reinstating a bookmobile or some service for senior citizens.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Give yourself some credit-you are able to use good common sense to feel the way business trends are moving. You are able to make the right decisions in this area. Things are happening, and your career or path depends upon your own drive-which is strong. The energies at this time are toward the learning adventure. You may decide to try your hand at a job in some sort of investigative work, whether that is in reporting or in detective work. This could however, be a part-time volunteer job with the city until you find out whether you will enjoy the information your inquiring mind brings forth. You can expect a little boost, some sort of extra support or recognition from those around you. You feel a positive connection with many people.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Important financial decisions require more information than you have at this time. If you are being pushed to make a quick decision, remember that the best answer is a no, until you are sure about parting with your time or your money. Obstacles that slow you from achieving your best need your attention. Perhaps you have a little extra fund to hire some help to eliminate the obstacle: an accountant, a yard person, a plumber, etc. Professional decisions in your workplace are much easier to decide upon. Social relationships are a special focus this evening. Travel and animated discussions play a part in this and could be most satisfying in many respects. Harmony is a wonderful sound!



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Political issues in your work world may slow your own personal progress just now-pace yourself. Others may find you especially witty and eccentric. You are also valued for your independence and unique qualities. This is a great time to reflect and understand your own situation, just how you feel about your plans and accomplishments. You may have insights or breakthroughs concerning your work or living situation. Your mind is quick and sharp and your words are the only tool you will need all day long. You may want to help one or two students with their assignments from school today and in helping them better understand you gain insight as well. Remember, they are interested in your memories but not for too long a time.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

If you look around and think you could improve on things in your place of business, start writing just how those changes or additions might work. Some of your ideas may be very helpful toward increasing productivity. Some of the ideas may only be just passing thoughts, such as a tv in the break room. Take only those special ideas that you think would truly help your place of business and keep ongoing notes, referring to them until you have a plan to present these ideas to higher-ups. Write down the date and time of each entry, you may need it later. You are in a good position to communicate concerning groups in general. You could be teaching, counseling or mentoring to the people around you without even realizing it.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may be in charge of the progress in the office this day. The problems that come up will not disturb you one bit as you find clever ways to get your message over to others so that there is understanding and no argument. You may like this temporary situation so much that you spend a little time to research teaching jobs on the internet you may find reputable business schools that are conducting classes you think you might need. You have a desire to learn and become a more important part of an important group and more education is indicated. Your business sense is enhanced and you are able to really get down to what is important. Financial gain and material well-being are among the brighter prospects. Time, will and a humble attitude is all about you.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may have asked your co-worker friends recently for advice or perhaps their opinions. Today they may be asking you for advice. Each person has a job to do and sometimes when paths are crossed there is a need to know about the other person's special touch. You may want to know how a paint color looks so much like fingernail polish or how to repair the binding in a book, etc. You enjoy the attention and make a good go-between for others to gain helpful information. You might enjoy performing as a tour guide. If you find a place you love, be a helpful guide or lecture on a creative site from the internet. Unconventional hobbies and other forms of self-expression that break from the norm play a bigger part in your life. Pay close attention to the time tonight.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Seeking professional advice is a wise move today. Professional challenges and knowing the right moves to make may take more than your expertise. A conference call or meeting could be in order. You may have trouble understanding those who seem a bit emotional or sentimental, yet your own practicality and factuality may attract just such types into your life. Challenges provide you with many choices and this is a good time to be creative and secure the positive choice. Consider taking a class in business or reading some book about the subject matter that concerns you. You will benefit from a time of study. Circumstances today may bring some wonderful surprises that result in your successful decisions. You are a natural in business matters.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Roller Coasters

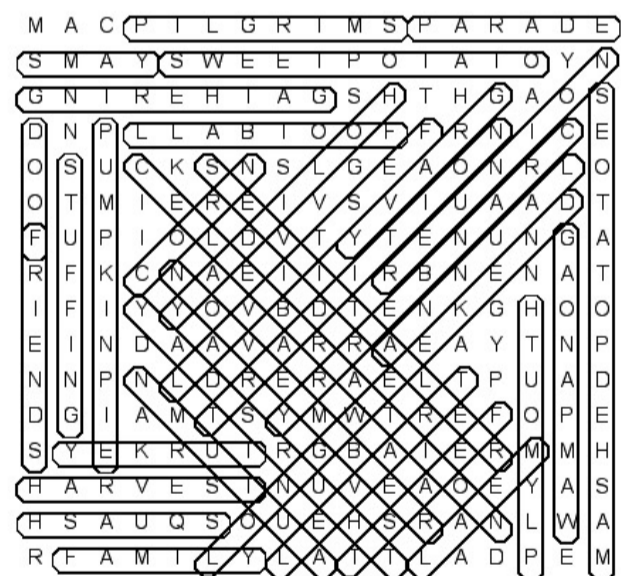
Find and circle all of the roller coasters that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 20 letters spell a Ernest Hemingway quotation.

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

- AFTERBURN
- ALPENGEIST
- BALDER
- BIZARRO
- COLOSSOS
- COMET
- CYCLONE
- DESPERADO
- DIAMONDBACK
- EL TORO
- GHOSTRIDER
- GOLIATH
- GRIFFON
- HADES
- INTIMIDATOR
- JUPITER
- KATUN
- LEVIATHAN
- MANTA
- MAVERICK
- MIND BENDER
- MONTU
- NEMESIS
- NITRO
- PHOENIX
- PROWLER
- RAGING BULL
- RAPTOR
- RENEGADE
- ROAR
- SHEIKRA
- TATSU
- THUNDERBOLT
- TITAN
- TREMORS
- TROY
- TWISTER
- VIPER
- XCELERATOR

Yesterday's Solution

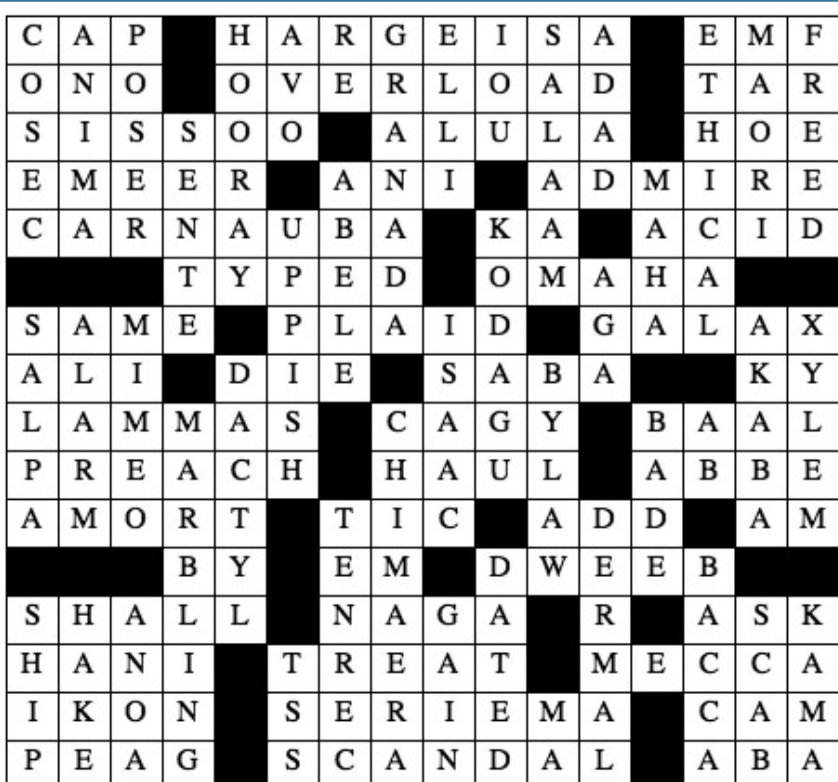
Thanksgiving (U.S.)



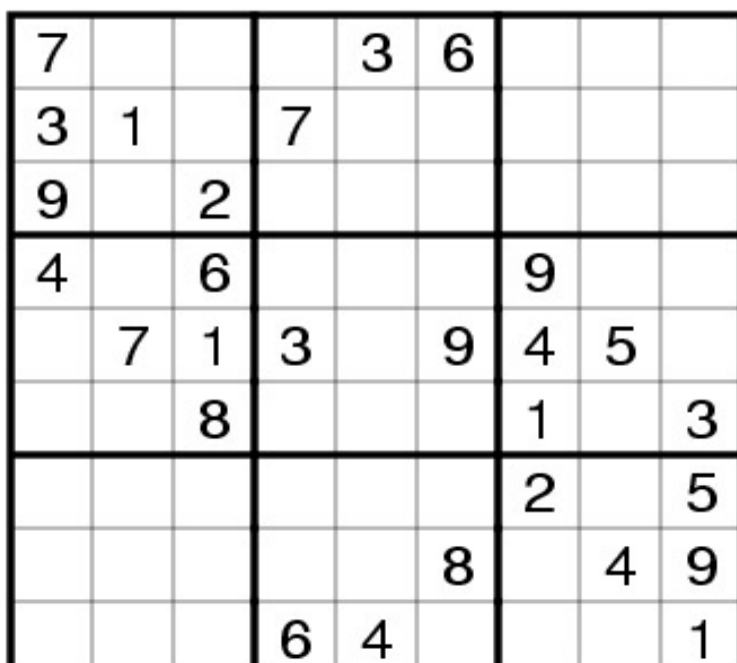
- ANNUAL
- AUTUMN
- CELEBRATION
- CORN
- CRANBERRY
- FAMILY
- FEAST
- FESTIVAL
- FOOD
- FOOTBALL
- FRIENDS
- GATHERING
- GRAVY
- HARVEST
- HOLIDAY
- LONG WEEKEND
- MASHED POTATOES
- MEAL
- NOVEMBER
- PARADE
- PILGRIMS
- PLYMOUTH
- PUMPKIN PIE
- RELATIVES
- REUNION
- SQUASH
- STUFFING
- SWEET POTATO
- THURSDAY
- TRADITION
- TRAVEL
- TURKEY
- WAMPANOAG
- YAMS

The hidden message is: MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Table listing hospitals such as Sabah Hospital, Amiri Hospital, Maternity Hospital, Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital, Chest Hospital, Farwaniya Hospital, Adan Hospital, Ibn Sina Hospital, Al-Razi Hospital, and Physiotherapy Hospital with their respective phone numbers.

Clinics

Table listing various clinics including Kaizen center, Rawda, Adaliya, Khaldiya, Kaifan, Shamiya, Shuwaikh, Abdullah Salem, Nuzha, Industrial Shuwaikh, Qadsiya, Dasmah, Bneid Al-Gar, Shaab, Qibla, Ayoun Al-Qibla, Mirqab, Sharq, Salmiya, Jabriya, Maidan Hawally, Bayan, Mishref, W Hawally, Sabah, Jahra, New Jahra, West Jahra, South Jahra, North Jahra, North Jleeb, Ardhiya, Firdous, Omariya, N Khaitan, and Fintas with their phone numbers.



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

Table of 24-hour pharmacies with columns for GOVERNORATE, PHARMACY, ADDRESS, and PHONE. Includes locations like Ahmadi, Jahra, Capital, Farwaniya, and Hawally.

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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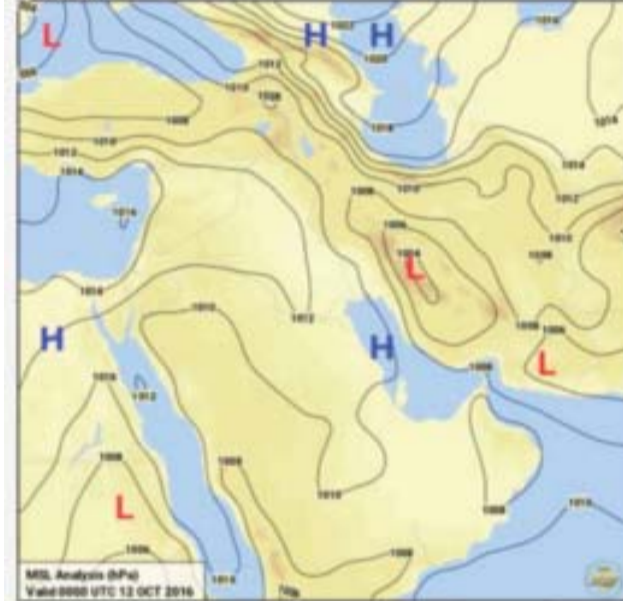
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 12/10/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 39 °C

By Day: Hot with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 10 - 32 km/h By Night: Fair with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 28 km/h and some high clouds will appear

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

Table showing a four-day forecast with columns for Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, including weather icons, temperature ranges, and wind directions.

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Table of Kuwait Forecast with columns for Station, MIN °C REC, and Max °C EXP. Lists stations like Kuwait City, Airport, Abdaly, Bubyah, Jahra, Failaka Island, Salmyah, Ahmadi, JAL ALIYAH, QAROH ISLAND, UMM AL-MARADEM, NUWAISSIB, WAFRA, MANAGISH, SALMY, and HUTRIBA.

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Table of recorded weather from the previous day, including Max Temp (40°C), Min Temp (20°C), Max Rel Hum (29%), Min Rel Hum (07%), Max Wind Speed (39 km/h W), and Total Rainfall (0 mm).

Prayer Times

Table of prayer times for Fajr, Sunrise, Zuhr, Asr, Sunset, and Isha.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Large table listing international phone numbers for various countries and regions, including Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Anguilla, Antiga, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bermuda, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Burkina, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Cayman Islands, Central African, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Cyprus (Northern), Czech Republic, Denmark, Diego Garcia, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, England (UK), Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands, Fiji, Finland, France, French Guiana, French Polynesia, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Gibraltar, Greece, Greenland, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guam, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Holland (Netherlands), Honduras, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ibiza (Spain), Iceland, India, Indian Ocean, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Macau, Macedonia, Madagascar, Majorca, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Martinique, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montserrat, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar (Burma), Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, Norfolk Island, N. Ireland (UK), North Korea, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Helena, Saint Kitts, Saint Lucia, Saint Pierre, Saint Vincent, Samoa US, Samoa West, San Marino, Sao Tome, Saudi Arabia, Scotland (UK), Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Serbia, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tonga, Tokelau, Trinidad, Tunisia, Turkey, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, USA, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Virgin Islands UK, Virgin Islands US, Wales (UK), Yemen, Yugoslavia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



PRIVATE CLINICS

Table listing various medical specialists in private clinics, including Ophthalmologists, Plastic Surgeons, Paediatricians, Endocrinologist, Family Doctor, Psychiatrists, Gynaecologists & Obstetricians, Dermatologist, Dentists, Physiotherapists & VD, Rheumatologists, Internist, Chest & Heart, Neurologists, Gastrologists, Urologists, and Consultant Cardiologist.

Contact information for Soor Center (info@soorcenter.com), Kaizen center (25716707), Noor Clinic (23845955), and William Schuilenberg, RPC (2290-1677).

Jacob Whitesides blazes his own music path

If you're a fan of singer-songwriter Jacob Whitesides and wondering when he next tours, who's joining him on the road, how much tickets will cost and even the price of T-shirts, turn to one guy - Jacob Whitesides. The Tennessee-bred rising star who started out posting simple covers on YouTube has refused to sign a traditional record deal and has created his own label, which he heads. He might be only 18 but the buck stops with him. "I want to be able to have a say in that stuff," he says. "It's stressful and it's very exhausting being a part of all of that. My email is constantly full and I'm constantly being called, like, 'We need your decision on this.' I get so mad whenever they approve something without asking me."

That fiercely independent spirit has led Whitesides to build a grassroots social media following, put out two EPs and now a debut album, "Why?" that landed atop the iTunes singer-songwriting chart and earned him a spot on the "Today" show. The 13 songs showcase Whitesides' skill at heartfelt, romantic and lyrical songs, in the vein of Ed Sheeran and John Mayer. He wrote the album following his second European tour and in the midst of heartache during a breakup with musician Bea Miller.

"It was a very stressful time and a lot of the stress leaked over into my relationship, which was very difficult for me to handle," he said. "I wasn't making music for anyone but myself. I was making music that I thoroughly enjoyed." The songs range from the infectious "Focus" and flirty "Levitate" to the R&B-tinged and first single "Lovesick." But Whitesides isn't

interested in a monster breakthrough single. "I feel like a hit will come whenever it does but I don't want to sit in a studio trying to figure out the magic formula and mixing spices and trying to come up with the perfect song." Whitesides' co-writer David Spencer has cheered as the young artist charts his own course. "He's always wanted to be a singer-songwriter, not a pop star, so the music has always been important and that's really led all of his decisions," said Spencer.

First guitar

Whitesides' musician-dad took him - forced is more like it - to a bluegrass festival in east Tennessee when he was 13 that changed his life. One of the bands was The Steeldrivers, led by Chris Stapleton, which left him in tears. He begged to get his first guitar and his dad taught him some chords. Soon, Whitesides was joining his father onstage in bars and clubs. That gave him the confidence to sit in his room, turn on a camera and make music to post online. His first videos would get 400 views and maybe 12 comments and Whitesides would contact those 12 people. "I still do that to this day. Although the views have gone up and the comments have gone up, I never drop a project and disappear," he said.

Whitesides' first EP, "A Piece of Me," landed in the Top 10 on the iTunes Top Albums chart and he was soon on the move. He did two sold-out tours without any promotion, including having 400 fans waiting for him when he landed at the

Copenhagen airport. He now has 400,000 YouTube subscribers, 2.1 million Twitter followers and 1.6 million Facebook likes. The music industry took notice but Whitesides was in no hurry. He had been invited multiple times to audition for "The X Factor" but thought he wasn't ready. When he finally caved, he got through an early round and took his first plane ride to the next round. He didn't go further but learned a lot. He also learned what he didn't want his career to look like.

"I noticed nine times out of 10 that the artist who made it far in the show and gained a following would kind of be forced into a major deal. Without any original music, they were signed to a record deal. I was like, 'That's odd. That's really weird to me.'" Even his ex-girlfriend, whom he met at "X Factor" and signed a major record deal after going further than Whitesides, was miserable. So he created his own label - Double U Records, partnering with BMG. "The control game has just been changed. The artist has a lot more control than the label, which is special. I feel like the fans crave that. I feel like they can tell when it's not genuine," he said. — AP

Photo shows Jacob Whitesides poses for a portrait to promote his new album, 'Why?', in New York. — AP



Melissa Helser of Hillsong United accepts the award for Worship Song of the Year.



Karen Peck accepts the award for Southern Gospel Artist of the Year. — AP photos

Singer Lauren Daigle repeats with 3 wins at Dove Awards

For the second year in a row, Christian singer Lauren Daigle won three awards at the Gospel Music Association's Dove Awards on Tuesday night, including artist of the year. "Honestly, just looking back at last year and being completely new to the Dove Awards, it was my very first time, to this year, it was such an embrace by the industry," Daigle said backstage after the show. Two worship groups, Hillsong UNITED out of Australia and Bethel Music from California, took home two awards apiece during the 47th annual award show held at Lipscomb University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Daigle went from the winning the new artist award last year to the top award this year, a seemingly overnight success for the popular singer and songwriter. Her 2015 debut album "How Can It Be" earned her a Grammy nomination as well and won a Billboard Music Award. Daigle also won songwriter of the year, non-artist, and pop/contemporary recorded song of the year. "Just cause I was so new, I didn't know what I was doing and I still feel really new to all of this," Daigle said.

Hillsong UNITED won worship album of the year and recorded music packaging of the year, while Bethel Music won worship song of the year and instrumental album of the year. "I feel like this should be the people's award - the church - cause if anything worship represents our collective song, it should bring us together, and more than ever, a world that is divided needs a church that is united... that's the prayer," said



Lauren Daigle accepts the Artist of the Year Award at 47th Annual GMA Dove Awards at Lipscomb University.

Joel Houston of Hillsong UNITED in a statement.

Songwriter Pat Barrett and Tony Brown won song of the year for "Good, Good Father," and for King & Country won for contemporary Christian artist of the year. TobyMac won the pop/contemporary album of the year for his album, "This Is

Not A Test," and then reunited for the first time in about 15 years with his bandmates in DC Talk, Michael Tait and Kevin Max. The trio combining Christian rock and rap are one of the most popular Christian acts of all time. The three performed a rousing rendition of "Love Feels Like" and got a standing ovation from the crowd.

Genre veteran Chris Tomlin was honored for having his songs played more than one billion times on digital radio services, according to the digital song royalty organization SoundExchange. The only other artists to receive the recognition from SoundExchange have been Garth Brooks, Justin Timberlake and Pitbull. "I am most proud of what this recognition says about the genre of Christian music," Tomlin said. "It signals that the church is alive and well and strong."

Jordan Feliz was named new artist of the year and Grammy winner Kirk Franklin was named gospel artist of the year. During his acceptance speech, Franklin led the crowd in a prayer for racial healing in the country. "When black boys are killed, we need to say something," Franklin said. The award show was hosted by Tye Tribbett and brothers Joel and Luke Smallbone from the duo for King & Country. Performers included Natalie Grant, Hillsong UNITED, The Isaacs, Jonathan McReynolds, Bethel Music and Anthony Brown. — AP

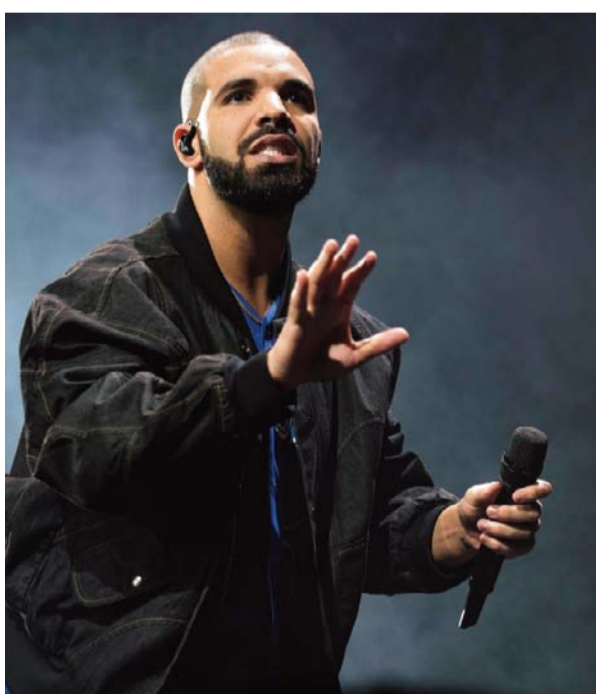
Tanya Tucker in hospital for respiratory infection

Country singer Tanya Tucker is in a Nashville hospital recovering from a respiratory infection that has forced her to postpone six upcoming concerts. The 58-year-old entertainer became ill before a concert date in South Dakota and was treated by local doctors before heading back to Nashville. Upcoming concerts scheduled for South Dakota, Idaho, Oregon, Washington state and Saskatchewan in Canada were scrubbed.

In a written statement, Tucker apologized to fans who bought tickets. She added, "I just feel terrible, but I'll get even worse if I don't take care of myself. I love you all." Tucker is known for such hits as "Delta Dawn," "Soon" and "Strong Enough to Bend." — AP



File photo shows Tanya Tucker poses for a photo at the 10th Annual ACM Honors at Ryman Auditorium, in Nashville, Tenn. — AP



File photo shows Drake performs on stage in Toronto, Canada. — AP

Drake nabs 12 Soul Train Awards nominations; Beyonce gets 8

Drake has nabbed 12 nominations for the 2016 Soul Train Awards. Nominations for the rapper-singer, who canceled three shows this week due to an ankle injury, include video, album/mixtape and song of the year. Beyonce follows Drake with eight nominations, while Rihanna, Kanye West, Adele, Chance the Rapper, Bryson Tiller and Anderson.Paak will compete for multiple awards.

Erykah Badu will return as host of the show, which is set to tape Nov 6 at the Orleans Arena in Las Vegas. And Teddy Riley and Brandy will receive special honors. The 2016 Soul Train Awards will be preceded with performances from Jill Scott, Monica and others at Mandalay Bay from Nov 3-6. The show will air on BET and Centric Nov 27. — AP

Christopher Guest's 'Mascots' fails to really cheer

Review

It should be a match made in comedy heaven - director and writer Christopher Guest, whose fake documentary films explore the sad desperation in American subcultures, turns his attention to the wacky world of sports mascots. But this time, heaven is missed by quite a lot. "Mascots" relies on the same formula that gave us deadpan looks at life behind the scenes at folk music bands, community theater productions and dog shows but lacks the spark of Guest's previous films. "Mascots" never really gels, with only a few notable skits and characters.

In the film, the lovable weirdos under the microscope are a motley group of sad, delusional losers who arrive at the World Mascot Association Awards in hopes of winning the top prize, the Gold Fluffy. There's a bickering couple (Zach Woods and Sarah Baker); a nerdy sweetheart of a guy who always sees the glass as half-full (Christopher Moynihan); an Englishman (Tom Bennett) who is carrying on a family tradition; a devoted modern dancer (Parker Posey) who performs as an armadillo; and the bad-boy of mascotting (Chris O'Dowd).

The first half of the film (written by Guest and Jim Piddock) introduces the characters



This image released by Netflix shows a scene from 'Mascots.' — AP

with interviews that reveal their sad yearnings and petty resentments. ("Mascots don't die; they just hang in a closet," says one.) The second half follows their awards-show performances, like an episode of "Glee." It's hard to pin down exactly what has gone flat here. Many of Guests' usual squad of actors like Posey, Jane Lynch, Bob Balaban, Fred Willard, John Michael Higgins and Ed Begley Jr. are here, but they seem deflated. There's no pep.

Missing are Guest regulars like Michael McKean, Eugene Levy and Catherine O'Hara, and one wonders if they might have enlivened "Mascots." Even Guest himself, who makes an appearance as Corky St Clair, the deluded director from "Waiting for Guffman," is strangely uninteresting. In previous films, Guest's actors somehow stammered their way into grace, but here the script is a little too heavy with bodily functions - vomiting, yeast infections, even toilet waste. The filmmaker at one point stoops low to get a laugh at the expense of blind kids, and a potential comedy goldmine by having the mascots mix with Furries is abandoned.

There are some bright spots, notably the excellent Irish actor O'Dowd as the brutish mascot The Fist and Susan Yeagley playing the half-sister of Posey's character beautifully, almost as if she was in another movie. Lynch, as a brittle judge, is perfect, as always. But Guest is not at his best here. The film tries to get us amped up, but there's a deep hollowness under the funny suit. "Mascots," a Netflix Original Film, is unrated. Running time: 94 minutes. One star out of four. — AP

Daniel Craig would miss James Bond role 'terribly'

Daniel Craig apparently isn't ready to retire as James Bond. The actor told the crowd at the New Yorker Festival that playing 007 is "the best job in the world." He said if he were to stop playing the role that he "would miss it terribly." Craig played coy about returning to the long-running spy franchise while promoting his last Bond installment, "Spectre." The British actor told Time Out magazine last year that he would only make another Bond movie "for the money."

However, when he was later asked by Britain's Press Association about reprising the role, Craig joked: "Do I have a choice?" Craig blamed his previous will-he-or-won't-he comments at the New Yorker Festival on being away from his family and the physical strains of the role. — AP

In this file photo, Daniel Craig participates in AOL's BUILD Speakers Series to discuss the James Bond film 'Spectre,' at AOL Studios in New York. — AP





A sample gift box for sale at the Alp and Dell cheese store in Monroe, Wis.



Photo shows the Alp and Dell cheese store in Monroe, Wis.



Photo shows the Milwaukee Art Museum in Wisconsin.



Photo shows the Milwaukee Art Museum in Wisconsin.



Photo shows the Dane County Farmers' Market in Madison, Wis, which takes place Saturdays around the state Capitol building. — AP photos

Cheese curds and Frank Lloyd Wright: Welcome to Wisconsin

Walking around Madison, Wisconsin, I suddenly felt a sharp pain in my leg. What was poking me? Turned out my pocket was full of toothpicks from all the cheese curds I'd sampled at the farmers market. It was one of several "Welcome to Wisconsin!" moments, starting with a display of orange "cheesehead" gear - worn by fans of Wisconsin's NFL team, the Green Bay Packers - that greeted me at Milwaukee's airport. Later in my trip, I got these directions to a cheese store: "Take a right and look for the cow."

Milwaukee museum

I spent as much time admiring the Milwaukee Art Museum outside as I did looking at the art inside. From one angle, the white, winged Santiago Calatrava-designed building on the Lake Michigan waterfront looks like a bird in flight. From another angle, it's a ship setting sail. Inside, white ribs form a futuristic tunnel with a lake view.

But don't forget the art: the spooky hooded figure of "Saint Francis of Assisi in His Tomb"; an excellent Georgia O'Keeffe collection, including a striking photo of her shot by her husband Alfred Stieglitz; and a suitcase propped open on the floor, an untitled work by Robert Gober that reveals an entire subterranean world.

I bookended my museum visit with two terrific meals: lunch at The National cafe and an outstanding dinner of farm-to-table small plates at Braise, owned by chef Dave Swanson, a James Beard Award nominee.

Madison farmers market

It's so crowded at the Dane County Farmers' Market that you can't choose which way to walk. You can only flow with the sea of humanity in one direction past tables overflowing with fruits, veggies, flowers, baked goods and of course, cheese curds, those squeaky bits of fresh cheese goodness, in flavors ranging from dill to Sriracha. The market runs Saturdays until 1:45 pm through Nov 5 around the state Capitol, then moves indoors to Madison's Monona Terrace, Saturdays Nov 12-Dec 17.

I peeked inside the Capitol at its beautiful dome, then walked down State Street to the University of Wisconsin campus, stopping at Babcock Hall for ice cream, climbing Bascom Hill and hanging out with the beer-and-bratwurst crowd at the lakeside Memorial Union Terrace.

I drove to nearby Middleton for a quick stop at



Photo shows Taliesin in Spring Green, Wis.

the National Mustard Museum (free admission, goofy mustard-inspired art and every type of mustard imaginable). Then, with a credit card and app, I rented a bike from a Madison BCycle kiosk and biked 12 miles around Lake Monona. The lake trail often detours from the waterfront and it's hilly (you thought the Midwest was flat?). But the exercise felt good after eating all that cheese.

Spring Green

America's most famous architect, Frank Lloyd Wright, spent his teenage summers working on his uncle's Wisconsin farm. You can see how that landscape of farms and rolling hills influenced Wright's style and aesthetics at Taliesin, his house and estate in Spring Green. Wright set out to replace the vertical boxy shape that dominated home design in the

late 19th and early 20th centuries with modernist structures that flowed horizontally like the Midwestern prairie. Taliesin was a lab for his ideas: open floor plans rather than walled-off rooms, large windows with expansive views and a structure built to suit the terrain. House tours are offered daily through Oct. 31 and Friday-Sunday through November.

Taliesin was also the site of a shocking crime: A butler murdered Wright's mistress and six others in 1914 and set fire to the house. But Wright was resilient. He rebuilt and kept going. His final work, New York's Guggenheim Museum, was being built when he died at age 89 in 1959. Nearby Taliesin is the quirky attraction House on the Rock. Its creator, Alex Jordan Jr, amassed a collection of strange artifacts - weird carousel animals, machines that play creepy music - and they're displayed in a series of odd rooms and buildings, some ornate, some musty and dark. An hour here was enough for me, but if you go, don't miss the infinity room, a disorienting cantilevered structure lined with windows, 154 feet off the ground.

New Glarus and Monroe

I caught the tail end of Oktoberfest in New Glarus, a town so proud of its Swiss heritage that street signs are in German and storefronts are decorated with Swiss flags and cowbells. I downed a Spotted Cow, a popular beer from the New Glarus Brewing Co., and dined at the Glarner Stube restaurant, which serves fondue, raclette, schnitzel and sauerbraten. The Chalet Landhaus Inn provided a good night's sleep, nice breakfast and complimentary Swiss chocolates.

In Monroe, I went hunting for the Emmi-Roth Kase cheese factory. But I couldn't find it. I asked a local for directions and was told: "Take a right and look for the cow." There was a cow - though not a real one - outside the Alp and Dell Cheese Store, which is connected to the factory. I bought seven types of cheese from the shop's overflowing coolers and bins, including cheese curds, chipotle gouda, Emmi-Roth's award-winning grand cru cheese and a butterscotchy cheese called Prairie Sunset. Then I shipped it all back to my office in New York. When I got back, I gave a Wisconsin cheese party. — AP

Max launches its collection for winter 2016 across all stores in Kuwait



MAX, the largest & most trusted value fashion brand in the region, has announced the launch of its latest collection for Winter 2016 for men, women and children. The new collection borrows its theme from the fashionable bygone era of the 1970s, and is available across all MAX stores in Kuwait. The collection features a range of apparel and diverse color palette that epitomize the casual style of daytime and the classic sophistication of the evening.

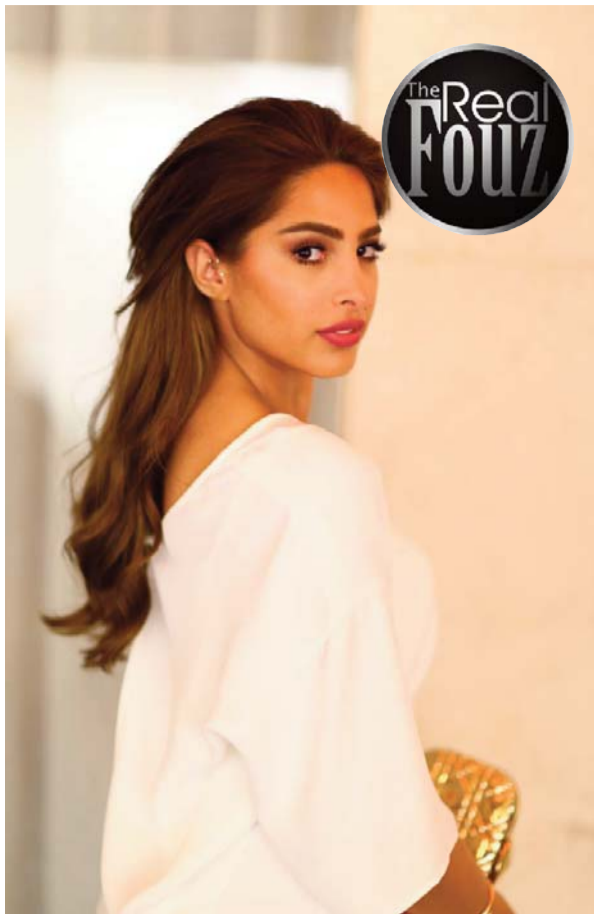
The range for ladies, has adopted a relaxed look to capture the beautiful spirit of the winter season. The focus is on rich browns, ochres and camel tones and muted greys. There is a hint of midnight blue offering an urbane statement and the use of teal and dark espresso brings depth to the collection. This season also sees the return of the layered look, with longer hemlines and belted waistlines paying homage to the classic silhouette. Furthermore, the line between casual and formal attire is blurred, with luxury applications such as embellishment and dulled metallic adding appeal to day-wear items.

The men's range of smart casual styling reverberate the retro theme. The collection has a relaxed feel, accentuated by comfortable shapes and cuts that have continued to be a trend for the past couple of seasons. The combination of gunmetal and lumberjack red has become an essential theme color for the season. Harmonized with the fashion range for women, camel brown emerges as an important accent tone for menswear. The collection embodies casual understatement with pine green and an injection of mustard yellow adds brightness and vitality.

The fashion collection for children features fun hues of sour green, teals and rusted woodland dark hues. There is quilt detailing in dresses, trousers and skirts, suggesting a strong comeback of the 70s fashion era. The Winter 2016 clothing line is now available in store from today across Kuwait.



You are what you eat



The most important aspect in a woman is her confidence, but what if we have small things that cut down the confidence in us? What I want to emphasize in this article is the little beauty problems that we neglect but could be associated with bigger health problems. A lot of women suffer from extra facial hair, sudden weight gain, mood swings, acne, hair loss, or irregular menstrual cycle. Women go for laser removal or facials, but what is a very underrated and unexplained condition is PCOS (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome). It is a condition in which a woman's levels of the sex hormones estrogen and progesterone are out of balance. This leads to the growth of ovarian cysts (benign masses on the ovaries). This condition is found in 1 out of 3 women in the world. If this condition is not treated and taken care of, it eventually causes women to have trouble getting pregnant.

Many women have the question of "What causes PCOS?" Well, unfortunately the reason is still unknown, but doctors believe that it is genetic, it could be your mother, sister or aunt who had this condition before, and had been carried over to you. One of the doubtful reasons is that the hormone androgen (a male sex hormone) could be overproduced in the women's body, which can affect the development and release of eggs during ovulation. Also, excess insulin: which is a hormone that helps convert sugars and starches into energy, may cause high androgen levels. What many women don't know is this condition doesn't start in your 20's or 30's, but some of us are born with it.

Thyroid hormone

The symptoms may differ from acne, to excess hair on the face or chest, decrease in breast size, thicker or deeper voice, or thin hair. Also weight gain, high cases of anxiety or depression, infertility or pelvic pain. These symptoms are the normal usual ones that most women have. Other symptoms (which are related to insulin resistance and weight gain) can differ from diabetes, hypertension, and high cholesterol.

If these symptoms are shown, then the best next step is to visit the doctor to check for 3 things: 1) Visible cysts in the ovaries (Done by Ultrasound) 2) Check thyroid function to check the thyroid hormone production 3) Glucose tests (measures your blood sugar levels) 4) Cholesterol amount.

Now the biggest question is "How do I get rid of Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS)?" The first solution doctors come up with is surgery, which is not a trusted result for a long time, as some cysts reoccur after a while. Also some cysts are too small to be removed surgically. Some doctors suggest ovarian drilling which is done with a small needle that carries an electric current to destroy part of your ovary. However this is a short-term solution as well.

Balance your hormones

The treatment of PCOS is a tricky one, as there are several ways to do so. Some treatments are more harmful than the others, such as birth control pills that can control or balance your hormones. Now these are prescribed for women who are not planning on getting pregnant. What the birth control pills do is they regulate the menstrual cycle, help with acne and

lower the testosterone hormone: Which is the male hormone. The side effects of these pills are way more complicated than women know. These side effects can differ from mood swings, weight gain or loss, anxiety, depression, nausea, fatigue, joint pain or in some cases, a stroke. This is why many women try their best to avoid this option. Also, one of the options is insulin resistance medication that lowers and regulates the level of insulin in the woman's body.

However, since PCOS causes a high risk of diabetes, breast cancer, heart attacks, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, anxiety and depression, sleep apnea, or endometrial cancer, the best way to treat it is to find a long-term solution. The best way to treat this condition is diet and exercise. What many women don't know, is food plays a huge role with their hormones. Anything we eat, is shown physically externally and internally.

The food that women with PCOS should avoid is food high in sugar, such as carbs, chocolate, and sodas. Other food they should avoid is spicy food, dairy and red meat. The best diet is a healthy protein and vegetable diet. Also a healthy living that includes walks, and exercise such as yoga, pilates, and cardio.

The longer women stick to this healthy living, the faster their body gets rid of PCOS symptoms, and eventually gets rid of the cysts themselves. They also shouldn't judge from the first week, but from the first month, and make this is a life style decision and not a temporary decision. So remember ladies, eat healthy, exercise, and drink lots of water. You really are what you eat at the end of the day!

Peter Dundas leaves Italy's Roberto Cavalli

Roberto Cavalli's creative director Peter Dundas has stepped down after just three seasons in the job, the Italian fashion house said yesterday. The Spring/Summer 2017 collection, presented during Milan Fashion Week in September, was the last the Norwegian designer will do for the high-end brand, the company said in a statement. His replacement has not yet been named. "As Roberto Cavalli goes through a period of transformation, the design team will carry on and the appointment of a new creative director will be made in due course," said chief executive Gian Giacomo Ferraris.

"We thank Peter Dundas for his contribution to the brand, and we wish him well for his future." Dundas was appointed to the Florence-based company in March 2015 and seen as a good fit for his love of rock-sexy designs and penchant for animal prints. He was quoted as thanking the fashion house for the "valuable experience" and "adventure". Before joining Cavalli, Dundas had spent seven years as artistic director of Pucci, a subsidiary of LVMH. He had also worked with Roberto Cavalli as head designer between 2002 and 2005.

Dundas' departure is the latest in a series of major changes for the brand. In April last year it was taken over by Italian private equity group Clessidra Capital Partners, and former Versace head Gian Giacomo Ferraris was named new CEO in July in a bid to relaunch the struggling house. — AFP



Roberto Cavalli fashion house creative director Peter Dundas acknowledges the applause of the audience after presenting the Roberto Cavalli women's Spring-Summer 2017 collection, in Milan, Italy. — AP photos



In this file photo, Roberto Cavalli fashion house creative director Peter Dundas acknowledges the applause of the audience after presenting the Roberto Cavalli men's Fall-Winter 2016-2017 collection, in Milan, Italy.



Russian designer Slava Zaitsev, center, walks surrounded by models after a fashion show of his creations at the Russian Fashion Week in Moscow, Russia. — AP photos



In this photo taken Wednesday, Oct 22, 2014, Russian designer Slava Zaitsev, center, walks behind the scenes after a fashion show of his creations at the Russian Fashion Week in Moscow, Russia.

Russian fashion legend Zaitsev to show latest collection

At 78, fashion designer Slava Zaitsev may look frail and complain that he has left his cane at home but he still makes two new collections every year, one of which will premiere today at Russian Fashion Week. The son of a laundress, Zaitsev grew up in a communal apartment in the Soviet Union, where fashion was officially outlawed. "It was a bourgeois influence. A Soviet person was not supposed to look at it because (fashion) puts personality first," Zaitsev, dressed in a black military-style jacket, told The Associated Press at his House of Fashion headquarters in central Moscow.

Zaitsev was barred from most schools as the son of an "enemy of the people" - his father was a Soviet prisoner of war in Germany who was sent to a Gulag camp once he got back home. The designer was accepted to a local chemical technical school - where he got straight A's - before being sent to Moscow to study at the Textile Institute. In the 1960s, Zaitsev was producing bold designs and colors in a country uniformly dressed in drab clothing, attracting the admiration of rare foreign visitors. A French magazine profiled the young designer, calling him a "Russian Dior."

That enraged Zaitsev's boss at Moscow's one and only hub of fashion design. Reflecting the Soviet Union's disdain for individual personalities, his boss wrote "we have 60 Diors!" in a local paper, according to Zaitsev. Zaitsev was one of the first Soviet designers to show his collection on catwalks in the West as the Iron Curtain fell in the 1980s. But he was dis-

appointed in what he saw as the money-driven nature of the American fashion industry. On his first visit abroad, Zaitsev presented his collection at New York's Waldorf Astoria in 1987. The friendly staff that was assigned to him to help with the show had all disappeared by the time it was over, he recalls. Zaitsev, a typical Russian who was eager for a late-night heart-felt conversation after the show, was stunned.

"They got their money and left. This was a complete disappointment for me that money was more important in the West - I still can't get used to the idea," he says. Despite his age, Zaitsev is dreaming of venturing into the mass market. His House of Fashion - which makes made-to-measure clothes - is looking for investors to launch a mass market collection, something "not too cheap but really good quality," he says. Zaitsev has even already found production facilities in his hometown of Ivanovo, about 250 kilometers (155 miles) north-east of Moscow. "The biggest dream of my life," he says, "is to dress as many people as I can, to give joy to them and to myself too." — AP



A model displays a creation of Russian designer Slava Zaitsev at the Russian Fashion Week in Moscow, Russia.



In this photo taken on Thursday, Feb 11, 2016, Ksenia Shklyeva, a clothing construction specialist, works in Russian designer Slava Zaitsev's House of Fashion in Moscow, Russia.



Russian designer Slava Zaitsev makes marks on a dress during fitting at his House of Fashion in Moscow, Russia.



A model displays a creation during fitting at Russian designer Slava Zaitsev's House of Fashion in Moscow.



Russian designer Slava Zaitsev, center back, makes comments during fitting at his House of Fashion in Moscow, Russia.



Russian designer Slava Zaitsev, center back, smiles as a model displays his creation at his House of Fashion in Moscow.



Russian designer Slava Zaitsev, left, looks at a model as she displays a creation during fitting at his House of Fashion in Moscow, Russia.



Indian commuters wait for their train as they sit on a platform inside the Mathura Railway Junction in Mathura. — AFP photos



A restaurant owner, Pradeep Faujdar, reacts as he poses in his kitchen at a local restaurant in Mathura.



An Indian employee prepares food inside a kitchen of a local restaurant in Mathura.



An employee of Indian Railways carries food to sell on a platform inside the Mathura Railway Junction.



An elderly Indian man cooks chapati outside the Mathura Railway Junction premises in Mathura.



Indian women cook food outside the Mathura Railway Junction premises in Mathura.



Ram Krishan Rai (right), an employee of TravelKhana delivers food to the passengers inside the train at the Mathura Junction in Mathura.

Food delivery apps spice up Indian train journeys

Passengers on India's vast railway network have long complained of the terrible meals on offer to sustain them on long journeys, but a slew of new services bringing fast food to their seats is changing the way they dine. From Kentucky Fried Chicken to Domino's pizza and a host of local delicacies, today's train passengers have access to a vast array of hot dishes, all at the click of a smartphone app. For passenger Amit V, who has ordered a vegetarian curry dish to be delivered to his seat, the new services are a godsend after years of buying railway food that he says was often inedible.

"This food is 100 times better than the railways food," the mathematics teacher told AFP as he prepared to board a train for the 19-hour journey from Mathura, a major rail hub in northern India, to his home town in the west of the country. It is all a far cry from what was on offer just a few years ago, when there were reports of cockroaches being found in dishes, and a leaked internal report said food was cooked in "dirty, smelly and waterlogged pantry cars". In one case, the samosas—a popular snack—were kept in a basket with cleaning mops.

There is demand too for a greater variety of options, with customers craving international cuisine, fast food, as well as local fare. The new services are part of the process of modernizing India's state-owned railway network, which carries around 23 million passengers a day. Asia's oldest rail network is a lifeline for India's 1.2 billion people, but is creaking from decades of neglect and chronic underinvestment. Last year the government announced a \$137-billion five-year modernization plan that includes introducing free wifi in some stations in partnership with Google. Google says the service will cover 100 stations by the end of this year, with an eventual target of 400 — a further boost to online food delivery services.

Kitchens at stations

Last year Indian Railways invited major chains such as KFC to sign up to its e-catering service, which allows passengers to pre-order online or by phone for delivery at major stations. The next step will be to set up "base kitchens" in major stations to allow companies to prepare freshly cooked food for delivery on the trains, railway ministry spokesman Anil Kumar Saxena told AFP. A host of private entrepreneurs are also trying to tap the market, among them Pushpinder Singh, who founded TravelKhana (Travel Food) with his wife in 2012.



The company signs up individual restaurants close to stations on busy routes, providing a delivery service for a fee. "There are around 5,000 long distance trains with an average journey of around 770 kilometers (480 miles), but only six percent of them have a proper food service," Singh told AFP. "This is the section we are targeting." The key to success is speed—delivery services have just a few minutes to track down their customers before the train leaves the station. At Mathura station, deliveryman Aman Singh Badhorie takes it all in his stride. Within two minutes he pushed his way through an overcrowded carriage to locate his customer's seat, delivered his order and taken payment, leaving him a full 60 seconds to disembark before the train pulls away. — AFP

An employee of Indian Railways prepares food at the food stall on a platform inside the Mathura Railway Junction.



An Indian employee packs food for delivery at a local restaurant in Mathura.



Indian women cook food outside the Mathura Railway Junction premises in Mathura.



Employee of TravelKhana rides a scooter as he delivers the food to Mathura Junction in Mathura.



A worker packs food for delivery inside a kitchen of a local restaurant in Mathura.

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2016

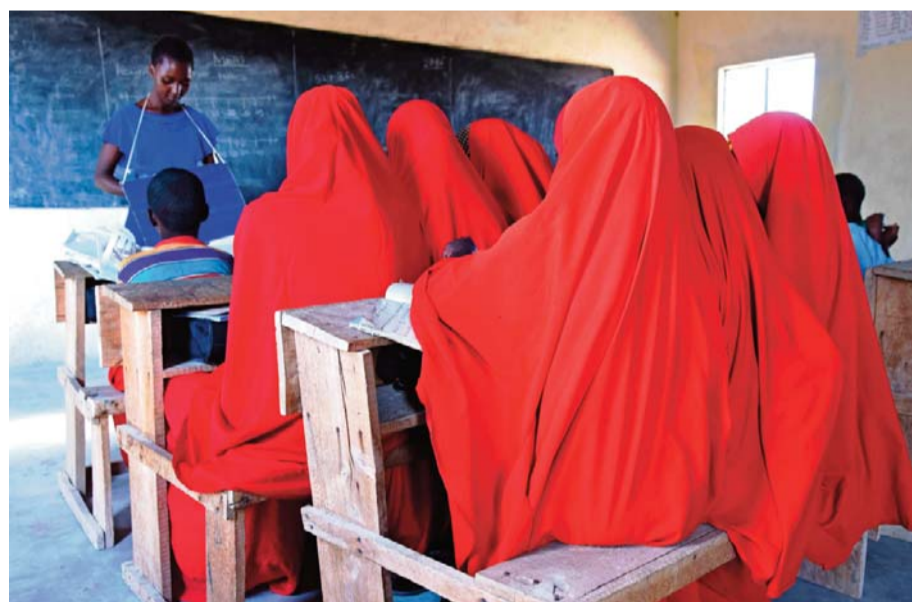
Food delivery apps spice up Indian train journeys

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A stuffed bear is on display after restoration, at the Paris National Museum of Natural History on the eve of the opening of the exhibition 'Species of Bears' (Espèces d'ours) which will run from October 12, 2016 until June 19, 2017. — AFP

FOR KENYA'S CHILD BRIDES, SCHOOL OFFERS A BREAK FROM TRADITION



Halima who was married at the age of 13 to a man 12 years her senior, sits with fellow pupils during lessons at a school in Wajir.



Halima (center right) who was married at the age of 13 to a man 12 years her senior, studies with fellow pupils during lessons at a school in Wajir.

Halima's future at 13 was foretold: A pastoralist's daughter, she was married to a man 12 years her senior. Next would surely come the first of many pregnancies, and a life of domestic hardship. Such a destiny is common for girls in Kenya's tough, arid north-east-but Halima dodged this fate. Instead, she can be seen at the village school, where she stands out, a head taller than her mostly younger classmates, her slender face framed by a bright red hijab, overlooking the crowded classroom. "I had never been to school," Halima, now 16, said with a shy smile. That changed in July last year when, with the support of charity Save the Children, she won a place at a local school-and the eventual acceptance of her husband.

"I was living in the bush taking care of the livestock and then when I turned 13 I was married," she said. Nothing in Halima's life suggested she might ever attend the local school, one of the few concrete buildings in this small, isolated village in Wajir, where the sandy ochre soil is scattered with stunted thorn trees, twisted anthills and igloo-shaped homes made of sticks and grass. This semi-desert, predominately Muslim and ethnic Somali region has suffered generations of marginalization by the government in Nairobi, leaving it undeveloped, insecure and burdened by the weight of Islamic and pastoralist traditions that discriminate against women. More than four in 10 women here are married before the legal age of 18 — twice the national average-and 98 percent of women undergo circumcision, or female genital mutilation (FGM). Four-fifths of women are illiterate, a figure nearly seven times higher than elsewhere in Kenya.

Rare dreams

In this environment, Halima's experience, and her dream for the future, is rare. "When I'm older I want to become a teacher, in order to educate my whole community," she said. The drive to get girls into school began in June 2015 and has reached 80 of the estimated 3,000 villages in this region bordering Somalia. Girls are taught the benefits of marrying later, the dangers of early pregnancy and the basics of saving money to allow for a greater degree of independence. "Wajir is one of the places that is regarded as hard to reach, based on the security situation, therefore it is very difficult to reach some of the children, especially along the border," said Save the Children's Evans Kibet, who said the area is plagued by Islamist militancy and armed rivalries among pastoralist clans.

To achieve its aim, religious leaders have been co-opted into the girls' education program. "I prefer our ladies go to school, and decide for themselves who to marry and when they want to marry," said Abdiwahab Mursal, a local imam and government-appointed Kadhi in charge of the traditional Muslim family court in Wajir. "At first it was hard for me to accept the idea that she should go to school, simply because

we were nomads, always moving from one place to another," said Adan, Halima's 78-year-old father who is now too old to care for the family's herd of camels.



'A brave girl'

A wizened old man with a bright orange, henna-dyed beard and nine children, Adan said he married off his daughter when she turned 13, "because that is what we do, according to religion and our culture." He said he has since changed his thinking and, with a daughter who is able to read and write, hopes she might one day get a job and earn money for the whole family. "Halima's education will bring added value to her life and to all our lives," he said. "One day we might even build a house."

Halima's husband Hussein admitted that at first he feared that attending school might prevent his wife from performing her domestic duties, but in the end he was won over by the \$30 (27 euros) paid per-term to the families of girls who join the program. "Let her learn things in school, and then we can have children," he said. At the school, Halima has made an impression on her unmarried counterparts. "I think Halima is a brave girl," said Yousra, a classmate who is a year younger than Halima. "Halima is a special pupil in our school. She's a very hard working girl, very disciplined," said headmaster Hussein Khalif. "She's a role model for the girls, they are very proud of her and that motivates them to learn." — AFP

Halima who was married at the age of 13 to a man 12 years her senior walks with fellow pupils to school in Wajir. — AFP photos

Gabrielle Union sues BET, claims 'Mary Jane' contract breach

Gabrielle Union is suing Black Entertainment Television, alleging the cable network wants to combine the fourth and fifth seasons of her series "Being Mary Jane" into a single season of 20 episodes in an effort to extend her contract. The actress claims in the suit filed Tuesday in Los Angeles County

Superior Court that BET promised it would shoot no more than 13 episodes a season. She says those promises came in spite of a contract Union signed allowing up to 26 episodes per season.

The filing claims BET wants to combine the seasons to kick in an option to extend her contract another year. The lawsuit also says BET

wants to avoid paying Union a contractually obligated, per-episode raise. Union wants unspecified damages. A BET spokeswoman says in a statement that the network feels it's contractually within its rights. — AP



File photo shows Gabrielle Union, a cast member in 'The Birth of a Nation,' poses at the premiere of the film in Los Angeles. — AP