

Kuwait Hospital in Gaza helps patients amid Israeli blockade



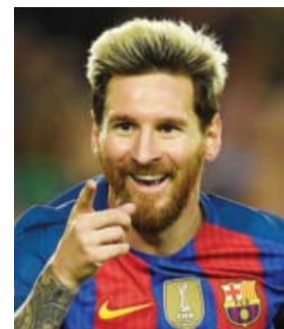
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AMIR INSTRUCTS PREMIER TO RE-EXAMINE DNA TEST LAW

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40 PAGES

KUWAIT INCHES CLOSER TO EXPAT ONLY HOSPITALS

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: Kuwait's plan to achieve complete nationality-based segregation at its medical facilities is on track, with the first steps set to take place early next year when clinics run by a medical insurance company will begin offering services exclusively for expatriates.

In addition to the 15 clinics that will be spread across Kuwait, the Health Insurance Hospitals Company, a public shareholding firm for health insurance established in accordance with a decision by the Cabinet, will provide medical care for expatriates through three hospitals to be officially opened by late 2019, CEO Dr Ahmad Al-Saleh said during a conference sponsored by the health ministry.

When those hospitals become operational, the plan is to prohibit expats from receiving medical attention at public hospitals and clinics, making access to those facilities - where services are mostly offered free of charge - exclusive to Kuwaiti citizens. This step also comes at an additional cost for foreigners. Once the new company takes over the duties of offering health services to expats from the health ministry, expats' annual health insurance fees will increase to KD 130, Saleh confirmed, without giving an exact date for its implementation.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: Candidates register for the upcoming parliamentary elections yesterday. (Inset) Ruling family member Sheikh Malek Al-Humoud Al-Sabah files to run in the polls. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah yesterday ordered HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah to review the controversial DNA law that was passed by the National Assembly earlier this year that required all citizens, expats and visitors to undergo mandatory DNA tests. The Amir said the revision must safeguard people's privacy. HH the Amir also instructed the premier that the re-examination of the law should be in a manner that would serve public interests, social security and the objective that had been set for drafting it.

Meanwhile, in a rare event of its kind, a member of the ruling Al-Sabah family was among 71 candidates who filed nomination papers to stand for the 50-seat Assembly elections on the first day of candidate registrations. Sheikh Malek Al-Humoud Al-Sabah criticized the outgoing Assembly for failing to protect the interests of Kuwaiti people and said he has decided to run as an ordinary Kuwaiti citizen to defend the interests of the people. He said he had given up his special passport for a regular one and that he does not mind losing other benefits.

Sheikh Malek said that the constitution does not bar ruling family members from contesting parliamentary polls and they are considered similar to other Kuwaiti citizens. Only a handful of ruling family members have filed to run in elections during Kuwait's 54 years of parliamentary democracy. However, all of them dropped out of the race before the elections were held. The last royal to register his candidacy was Sheikh Fahd Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, who withdrew before the 2006 election.

Continued on Page 13



DOHA: Iraqi artist Dia Al-Azzawi poses for a picture with his work titled 'Mission of Destruction' at the Arab Museum of Modern Art in the Qatari capital yesterday. — AFP

TOP IRAQI ARTIST WARNS OF 'SCENARIO OF DESTRUCTION'

DOHA: Acclaimed Iraqi artist Dia Al-Azzawi, who exhibits almost 550 of his works in Qatar this week, says his country faces a bleak future and the assault on Mosul is "a scenario of destruction". "I am the cry, who will give voice to me?" showcases paintings, sculptures and drawings for the next six months across two Doha museums. It is potentially the largest ever solo exhibition by an Arab artist and is the first major retrospective of Al-Azzawi's work. The exhibition charts a career spanning more than 50 years by a politically conscious artist, and the division of work across two museums neatly represents two distinct phases of his career.

The exhibition at Doha's the Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art highlights his

interest in Iraqi folk figures and legends. The second half, in the Al Riwaq gallery, charts the 77-year-old's more politicized work from the late 1960s onwards. One major theme is the momentous political events which have engulfed the Middle East over the past few decades as well as the fate of his own nation, about which Baghdad-born Azzawi is steadfastly pessimistic. "We have destruction, we have tragedy, sectarian mentality, faith mentality," he says of Iraq.

"All that is created by the interests of the West, I have no problem with that, but to support parties, Islamic parties, the mentality of Daesh (the Islamic State group), the mentality of ethnic

Continued on Page 13

MALALA URGES MUSLIMS TO UNITE

SPENDING CUTS A MUST DESPITE OIL RECOVERY: IMF

DUBAI: A modest recovery in oil prices falls short of filling budgetary gaps in crude-exporting Gulf countries, the International Monetary Fund said, stressing the need to cut spending. The price of the region's main commodity has partially rebounded and is hovering around \$50 per barrel having hit a 10-year low of less than \$30 in January, from a peak of more than \$100 in mid-2014. The recovery "will definitely help in terms of the financial numbers for this year" for the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, said Masood Ahmed, the IMF's director for the Middle East.



Masood Ahmed

"But it doesn't really change the fundamental outlook for GCC countries or the challenges that face them," he told AFP in an interview Tuesday. Oil was expected to stabilize at around \$60 per barrel in the medium term, he said, a rate lower than the budgetary breakeven point for some of the six nations. In its regional economic outlook report released Wednesday, the IMF cited a breakeven price for Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates at \$79.7, \$62.1 and \$58.6 respectively.

The level drops to \$47.8 per barrel in the case of Kuwait, but it shoots to \$77.5 and \$93.8 in the case of Oman and Bahrain respectively. "(This) means that GCC countries as a group still have to try and balance their budgets," said Ahmed.

Continued on Page 13

SHARJAH: Pakistan's Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai, giving a speech yesterday in the Emirates, urged Muslims to respect the "true message of Islam" and unite against wars in their countries. The 19-year-old, who was shot in the head by the Taleban in 2012 after she had publicly advocated education for girls, urged the world's Muslims to "come together... and follow the true message of Islam as they join hands in the struggle for peace".

"We cannot talk about investing in our future in this region without calling for an end to these bombings and these attacks," she told a conference in the southern Gulf emirate of Sharjah on the future of women in the Middle East. "We must not forget that the majority of those suffering because of these conflicts and wars are Muslims," said Malala, referring to conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen. "I cannot stop thinking of those 500,000

children in Mosul right now under a threat to be used as human shields," she said of the Iraqi city where an offensive has been launched to retake it from the Islamic State group.

She called for empowering the younger generation, especially women, with the education needed "to bring peace and prosperity to their countries". The youngest-ever Nobel recipient stressed the need for men to support women in their attempt to receive "quality education". Malala, who moved to England where she received medical treatment after the shooting, is both admired and hated in her native Pakistan, where some conservatives view her as a Western agent on a mission to shame her country. She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 jointly with India's Kailash Satyarthi, a fellow education activist who made similar calls at the Sharjah conference yesterday. — AFP



SHARJAH: Pakistani activist for female education and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai delivers a speech during a conference yesterday. — AFP



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani tea seller Arshad Khan is seen in this image posted on Instagram by Javeria Ali.

'CAT-EYED' TEA SELLER SPARKS SOUL SEARCHING

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani tea seller with velvet eyes saw his life changed this week when his portrait spread around the Internet, sparking ardent debates on class, objectification, and the place of ethnic Pashtuns in society. Arshad Khan had no idea he had set the Internet alight from Pakistan to India and beyond: He has no phone, and cannot read. "It was a real surprise," the young "chaiwala", or tea seller, told AFP. "I was aware that I am handsome but you can't do anything when you are poor," he said, adding that the image has "changed the way I think".

In the candid photograph, snapped by a passing photographer and posted on Instagram, Khan prepares Pakistan's ubiquitous milk tea, his blue green eyes looking frankly into the camera. It set social media users swooning, with the 18-year-old's image shared tens of thousands of times since Oct 14. By Tuesday, the Islamabad market where photographer

Javeria Ali took the fateful shot was swarmed by dozens eager to gawk at the young worker.

But in a country where women have long fought for rights and rarely express their feelings publicly, that fervor soon morphed into an intense debate on what it meant to reduce a poor man to a beautiful object. "We are more used to seeing this happen to women, it is still creepy when it happens to a boy," feminist columnist Bina Shah told AFP. "Just because people are bored does not mean you can play with someone's life."

Columnist Maria Amir concluded that "reverse sexism is still a form of sexism" on the website of Pakistan's biggest-selling English language newspaper, Dawn. But she also echoed many in noting that the true "ick factor" was in social class rather than gender. "The elite getting excited over a hot #ChaiWala reeks of class privilege and the objectification of working class men," tweeted @nidkirm, who described himself as a sociologist based in Lahore.

And in a column in the Express Tribune Farahnaz Zahidi mocked the "surprise" that someone poor could be good-looking. "(T)he upper tier bourgeois of Pakistan have come to believe that even looks and God-gifted attributes are co-dependent on money and affluence?" she wrote. Indeed, in his first appearance on television, viewers laughed at Khan's awkward speech and the Western suit in which he appeared uncomfortable. "No girl would agree to marry him," wrote Twitter user @ItsMahah.

Even the color of Khan's cool gaze provoked discomfort in some like columnist Amir, who wrote "apparently there is no expiry date on our colonial baggage".

Continued on Page 13

FRANCO-GCC FORUM URGES CLOSER TRADE, OTHER LINKS

PARIS: Meeting for wide-reaching discussions on trade and investment relations between France and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), participants in a forum held in Paris yesterday urged closer ties in many areas, although it was recognized that there have been some noteworthy improvements in the recent past.

Scores of representatives of the French and GCC business communities gathered for the 3rd France-Gulf Countries Economic Forum to discuss, in particular, ways to boost mutual investment and trade links, a meeting that was held under the aegis of the Franco-Arab Chamber of Commerce.

Opening the event, the Chamber's Secretary-General Dr Saleh Al-Tayar told participants that he was optimistic about the future and that he was sure the meeting would enhance contacts and foster closer cooperation on both sides. "The road is open," he said. "There are no limits." Chamber of Commerce President Vincent Reina also stressed the importance of the GCC for France and he underlined the Gulf region is "essential on a geostrategic plane."

The Gulf region and its stability, from a political view point, "conditions a large part of the equilibrium in the world and in our societies," Reina said. He pointed out that it was not just the fact that 40 percent of world oil reserves were located in the GCC, but the post-oil era will be of huge importance to countries like France because of the economic policies now being implemented in the Gulf.

This is an opportunity for French enterprise and investors who should capitalize on the emerging conditions to work with Gulf countries he added, and he underlined the attractiveness for investment there. "The Gulf countries are today among the most advanced in the world in matters of financial regulation," he said, noting some differences between the pace of change in some countries but stressing "a lot of progress has already been accomplished."

Diversification

Speaking specifically on Kuwait, the Chamber President said ongoing economic diversification plans indicated that projects were now envisaged to move out of a solely oil-based economy and France was active in several sectors. In line with the 2015-2019 development plan, he identified these sectors as "energy, water treatment, health, transport, infrastructure and security-defense."

Reina also noted the Kuwaiti role in favor of the environment and said "sustainable development" would be getting particular attention as "Kuwait actively participated in the UN Conference on Climate Change" which got an important global agreement at the Paris Conference in December 2015.

Speaking on behalf of the Gulf Countries, GCC Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Negotiations, Dr Abdulaziz Al-Auwaisheg said "France has been a very important partner in 2014" for trade but volumes have dropped off by about 6 percent in 2015 because of the drop in oil prices. He also stressed "very modest" investment levels between the partners and he said "we have to concentrate on this."

Auwaisheg also underlined the need for cooperation in several other areas, among them on political issues like Syria and Yemen, where there are very close views. He praised the high level of security cooperation which he said was "very close," including in the fight against terrorism and efforts to combat the propaganda discourse of terrorist groups.

But he urged more security for maritime traffic which he said was vulnerable to attack. "We need to tighten up this security, especially on maritime routes," he cautioned. The GCC official also encouraged more should be done on education cooperation and communications and media to better highlight the positive sides of the Gulf region. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing Mongolian ambassador Sondom Enkhbat. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Executive Secretary of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Awadi.

AMIR MEETS OUTGOING MONGOLIAN AMBASSADOR

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday the outgoing Mongolian ambassador Sondom Enkhbat. The audience was attended by the Deputy Amiri Diwan Affairs Minister, Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Earlier, His Highness the Amir received His Highness

the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-

Sabah and the Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. His Highness the Crown Prince also received the Executive Secretary of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Awadi. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah presided over the 112th meeting of the Supreme Petroleum Council (SPC), held at Bayan Palace yesterday. —KUNA

KUWAIT SPORTS TO BE IMPROVED DRASTICALLY: SHEIKH SALMAN

KUWAIT: Sports in Kuwait will be drastically improved regionally and internationally in the foreseeable future, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah said yesterday.

Sheikh Salman made this remark to the press during a ceremony to honor Kuwaiti athletes who participated in the Rio 2016 Olympics. He added that despite the challenges imposed on Kuwait, athletes have been able to excel in many sporting events. Honoring those sportsmen by the leadership is an indication

to the great appreciation given to them, he added.

Head of Kuwait Banking Association Majid Al-Ajil, whose association organized the participation of Kuwaiti athletes to the Olympics, said that supporting sports is the social responsibility. Double trap shooter Fahad Al-Dihani, skeet shooter Abdullah Al-Rashidi and 100-meter wheelchair racer Ahmad Al-Mutairi all were present at the ceremony and they all expressed their appreciation to be part of these international sporting events where they scored high records. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah is pictured with Kuwaiti athletes who participated in the Rio 2016 Olympics and Paralympics. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Heli Pelaez Castro, Ambassador of the Republic of Peru to Kuwait hosted a reception Tuesday night to celebrate his country's national day. State officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. —Photos by Joseph Shagra



PERU BACKS KUWAIT'S BID FOR UNSC NON-PERMANENT SEAT



KUWAIT: Kuwait's acting assistant foreign minister for the two Americas' affairs Fadhel Al-Hassan said Tuesday that Peru is supportive of Kuwait's candidacy for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council for 2018-19.

During a reception hosted by the Peruvian Embassy in Kuwait to mark the 195th national day of Peru, the Kuwaiti diplomat appreciated the longstanding friendship between the two countries, recalling the support offered by Peru to Kuwait during the Iraqi invasion in 1990. "Peru plays a distinguished role in its region and is an active member of the regional and international organizations notably the United Nations," he said.

On the bilateral ties, Hassan said they have been growing since the two countries established their diplomatic relations in 1975. The political and economic relations gained momentum after Peru founded its embassy in Kuwait in 1989, he said, commending the role of Ambassador Heli Adolfo Pelaez Castro in strengthening the friendly ties. Hassan expressed hope for even greater trade exchanges and more joint investments, and invited the Peruvian businesspeople to visit Kuwait in order to explore the investment opportunities. —KUNA





KUWAIT: Kuwaitis wait in front of the election affairs department yesterday as Kuwaiti candidates arrive to register for the upcoming parliamentary elections. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Former MP and minister Roudhan Al-Roudhan registers as a candidate in the third constituency.



Former MP and minister Ahmad Al-Mulaifi registers as a candidate in the first constituency.



Former MP Dr Yousuf Al-Zalzalah registers as a candidate in the first constituency.



Former MP Abdullah Al-Tamimi's information are seen on the monitor as he registers as a candidate in the fifth constituency.



Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad is pictured with former MPs Abdullah Mayouf (right) and Abdullah Al-Turajji after they registered as candidates in the third and first constituencies respectively.



Interior Ministry's spokesman Brigadier Adel Al-Hashash addresses reporters outside the elections affairs department.



Former MP Faisal Al-Duwaisan registers as a candidate in the first constituency.

71 CANDIDATES REGISTER ON FIRST DAY

KUWAIT: A total of 71 candidates registered to run for parliamentary elections yesterday. The third constituency saw the largest number of candidates in the first day of registration with 18, followed by the fifth with 16, the fourth with 15, and then the first and second with 11 each. The list of candidates include:

First Constituency

- 1- Ahmad Al-Mulaifi
- 2- Bader Al-Shuqaihi
- 3- Hussein Al-Huraiiti
- 4- Khaled Al-Khamees
- 5- Salman Al-Attar

Second Constituency

- 1- Ahmad Bughaith
- 2- Ahmad Al-Hamad
- 3- Bader Al-Mullah
- 4- Jaleel Ali
- 5- Khaled Al-Enezi
- 6- Rakan Al-Nisf
- 7- Salem Al-Shuwaiker

- 8- Adel Al-Kharafi
- 9- Adnan Al-Mutawa
- 10- Fahad Al-Khanna
- 11- Mohammad Al-Hajeri

Third Constituency

- 1- Jamal Al-Omar
- 2- Hamad Al-Tuwajiri
- 3- Roudhan Al-Roudhan
- 4- Saadoun Al-Otaibi
- 5- Sanad Al-Otaibi
- 6- Abdulkareem Al-Kandari
- 7- Abdullah Al-Kandari
- 8- Abdullah Al-Maayouf
- 9- Abdulmohsen Al-Saied

- 10- Abdulwahab Al-Rushaid
- 11- Adnan Al-Salem
- 12- Ali Al-Omar
- 13- Faris Al-Otaibi
- 14- Mohammad Al-Yousuf
- 15- Muhallhal Al-Mudhaf
- 16- Hesham Al-Saleh
- 17- Yaqoub Al-Sane
- 18- Yousuf Al-Fadhalah

Fourth Constituency

- 1- Khalil Al-Shemmari
- 2- Saad Al-Enezi
- 3- Abdullah Al-Mutairi
- 4- Ujail Al-Shemmari

- 5- Amash Al-Shemmari
- 6- Ghaleb Al-Mutairi
- 7- Faraz Al-Daihani
- 8- Falah Al-Muaseb
- 9- Fahad Al-Harbi
- 10- Fuhaid Al-Ajmi
- 11- Marzouq Al-Khalifa
- 12- Mefreh Al-Mutairi
- 13- Nayef Al-Mutairi
- 14- Nayef Al-Harbi
- 15- Hashem Al-Sulaili

Fifth Constituency

- 1- Ahmad Al-Azmi
- 2- Al-Humaidi Al-Subaie

- 3- Bader Al-Khuraiej
- 4- Barrak Al-Azmi
- 5- Hussein Al-Rashidi
- 6- Seif Al-Azmi
- 7- Daifullah Al-Otaibi
- 8- Abdullah Al-Tamimi
- 9- Ali Nasser Ali
- 10- Faisal Al-Kandari
- 11- Malek Al-Sabah
- 12- Marzoqu Al-Azmi
- 13- Meshari Abdullah
- 14- Meshari Al-Dousari
- 15- Mahdi Al-Ajmi
- 16- Nouri Al-Qallaf —KUNA

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In Brief

MINISTER, US CONGRESSMEN DISCUSS MILITARY ISSUES

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah held talks yesterday with visiting US Congressmen, especially in the military aspect. Sheikh Khaled Jarrah conversed on a number of related issues with the US Congressmen Mike Conaway, Ralph Abraham and Gwen Graham and their accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by Kuwaiti Army's Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Abdullah Nawaf Al-Sabah, and several other senior military officers. —KUNA



JORDANIAN OFFICIAL CONCLUDES VISIT

KUWAIT: Jordanian Senate President Faisal Al-Fayez and his accompanying delegation left Kuwait yesterday after concluding an official visit. Fayez was seen off by Secretary General of the National Assembly Allam Al-Kandari and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Jordan Mohammad Al-Kayed. Fayez started his visit last Sunday, where he met with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA



AMBASSADOR MEETS UANI REPRESENTATIVE

ROME: Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and representative of United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI) and Italian Ambassador Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata discussed yesterday the risk of proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world. Terzi called on the Kuwait embassy and GCC diplomatic delegations to take part in the international conferences and forums held by UANI to work on halting weapons proliferation. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Traditional musical instrument used in Kuwait in the past, showcased at a local museum. —Photo by Joseph Shagra



The Kuwaiti hospital in Gaza.



Medics operating on a Palestinian child at the Kuwaiti Hospital in Gaza.

KUWAITI HOSPITAL IN GAZA: A DESTINATION FOR PATIENTS IN LIGHT OF ISRAELI BLOCKADE



Medics treating a Palestinian infant at the Kuwaiti Hospital in Gaza.

GAZA: Over the past ten years the Kuwaiti hospital in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, healed wounds and soothed pain of many Palestinians, thanks to efforts by dedicated staff serving at multiple departments, where the hospital receives thousands of cases per month, amid poor health conditions in the enclave due to the Israeli blockade.

The Kuwaiti hospital was the first defense line in Rafah, which experienced like the rest of Gaza cities and towns, three Israeli wars in five years. During the wars, it admitted hundreds of injured people,

despite limited resources and equipment. The hospital was established in March 2007 with support by Al Rahma Association for Relief and Development-Palestine Branch. Annual reports said that the hospital receives about 2,000 to 2,300 emergency cases and 100 births monthly, in addition to conducting 130 to 140 surgeries per month along with hosting 1,200 to 2,000 patients monthly for regular checkup and nearly 1,400 patients at the dental clinic.

The hospital operates 24 hours a day and provides 24 beds and two ambulances

transporting emergency service free of charges to Palestinian citizens. It also offers low costs for medical treatment to Palestinian citizens due to the difficult living conditions, high levels of poverty and unemployment because of the ongoing Israeli siege for more than ten years. And during a meeting with a number of patients, they expressed their happiness for presence of the Kuwaiti hospital in Rafah, in time where the town suffers from lack minimum levels of health care.

Meanwhile, Director General of the Kuwaiti hospital, Dr Abdullrahman Al-

Dahoudi said despite what the hospital offers to patients of the Gaza Strip, it still suffers from lack of the capability of receiving more patients and needs an additional building along with more medical devices.

The hospital is also suffering from a shortage in the number of beds and power outages, and needs maintenance for its departments, along with the monthly operational requirements and the payments of about 84 employees' salaries. The Kuwaiti hospital opened in March a solar energy project to alleviate suffering of patients as a result of frequent power outages. —KUNA



Young patients treated at the Kuwaiti hospital in Gaza.



The Kuwaiti hospital in Gaza has three ambulances to transport patients.



EVACUATION DRILL AT RESIDENCY DEPARTMENT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Medical Emergencies Department held a mock evacuation drill in cooperation with the Fire Department at the Farwaniya Residency Department in Dajej. The exercise simulated a fire in an office that injured a person. Dr Abdullah Al-

Jassar said the drill was successful. In other news, the road occupancy department at the Jahra Municipality branch carried out a campaign in Mutlaa, Naeem, Taima, Industrial Jahra, Kabd and Salmi, resulting in the removal of 577 abandoned cars and 14 truckloads from Kabd.

SPECIAL PANEL EXAMINES CANDIDATES' PAPERS

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Sabah ordered yesterday forming a special panel to examine nomination papers of the candidates vying for seats in the upcoming 50-member National Assembly (Parliament). The commission, to be presided by the first public attorney, justice Sultan Majed Boujarwa, will check the candidacy papers to ensure all the required terms and specifications for the nominees are met and available, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) said in a statement. The panel, which will hold its sessions at the headquarters of the election department, is entitled to seek any information or documents from any authority, and will report to the Ministry of Interior.

The MoI statement came as the electoral process kicked off early today, when candidates started submitting their registration papers at the set centers across Kuwait. Candidates' papers' submission will proceed till October 28, pending the balloting due on November 26th.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has recently dissolved the parliament citing various challenges and regional critical conditions. At least three Cabinet members desiring to take part in parliamentary elections have already resigned from their executive posts.

Law number 35/1962, which deals with parliamentary elections, permits candidates to file their candidacies to contest elections, a statement issued by the Ministry of Interior said. Moreover, all eligible candidates should be Kuwaiti citizens below 30 years of age and are required to be fluent in written and spoken Arabic, the statement added.

On further prerequisites, the statement pointed out that all candidates should have no criminal history, as those found with criminal records are prohibited from contesting the elections. Furthermore, all candidates should register at the elections affairs office in Shuwaikh Residential area from 7:30 am to 1:30 pm, with their citizenship certificates and two recent photos in hand. A KD 50 fee is also



Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled

required to register, the statement noted. Parliamentary life in Kuwait saw the light in the early 60s, thus putting the State of Kuwait on the world's democracy map. —KUNA

OPPOSITION 'ON VERGE' OF ENDING BOYCOTT: SOURCES

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Opposition representatives met at Ammar Al-Ajmi's diwaniya in Kaifan without the attendance of former MPs Ahmed Al-Saadoun and Khaled Al-Sultan, well-informed sources said. The sources explained that 11 former MPs including Mohammad Al-Dallal, Badr Al-Dahoum, Jamaan Al-Harbash, Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, Hamad Al-Mutar, Osama Al-Menawer, Adel Al-Damkhi, Osama Al-Shaheen, Mohammad Hayef, Nayef Al-Merdas and Ajmi attended the meeting and discussed taking part in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

The sources quoted Harbash urging his colleagues to be realistic and note that people have been avoiding their seminars and rejecting their calls to go to Irada Square. "My brothers and myself have been affected very much by the boycott," he said, pointing out that he had received a call from former MP Musallam Al-Barrak urging them to take part in the elections, because having opposition MPs in parliament would be a golden opportunity for Barrak to run in the following elections that will be held when the opposition wins seats and manages to create a crisis in the new parliament and have it dissolved.

The sources added that a discussion was held about how to take part in the elections and that it was agreed to run in the elections provided that Barrak issues a written statement urging the opposition to do so. "Harbash called Barrak and he promised to make the statement," said the sources, adding that former MP Faisal Al-Mislem said that he was embarrassed to declare his intentions to take part because he had just urged people to boycott the elections two days earlier. "Let me be the last to announce my participation," the sources claimed he said, as if yielding to public pressure.

The meeting's host and former MP Ajmi

said that the opposition MPs who attended the meeting decided to take part in the elections except for Tabtabaei, who decided to consult his voters, and Merdas, who has not made up his mind yet. Ajmi added that six of the majority bloc members, including Saadoun, Sultan, Abdullatif Al-Ameeri, Mohammed Al-Kandari, Faisal Al-Yahya and Obaid Al-Wasmi, will not take part in the upcoming elections. Ajmi added that another meeting would be held at his diwaniya tomorrow. In addition, Ajmi noted that the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) general assembly had selected Harbash to take part.

PETROLEUM COLLEGE OVERCROWDED

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Dean of the College of Petroleum and Engineering at Kuwait University Prof Abdullatif Al-Khlaifi said that the college's labs need periodic maintenance according to a special contract and that the delay in the college's budget

has been holding up maintenance operations, although studies are highly dependent on lab apparatuses. Khlaifi added that the total number of students at the college is 5,000, which is beyond its capacity of 3,600. "This means that some sections include 45 students though the ideal number should be 18," he underlined.

OBITUARY

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Crime

Report

TRIO SOLD PHONE LINES TO INMATES

KUWAIT: Acting Interior Ministry Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Evidence Major General Shihab Al-Shimmari ordered two women and a man be sent to the public prosecution after they registered phones in the names of citizens and expats, then sold them to central prison inmates, leaving innocent people to bear the charges. A security source said a citizen told Khaitan police that she was surprised to find there were two phone lines in her name, and the company was demanding payment. The source said investigations led to discovering that a bedoon and two women, both citizens, were behind this scam.

Cabby mugged

A roaming taxi driver was stabbed by three unidentified persons after he resisted them. They robbed him of his money and other belongings. The taxi driver picked up the three from Industrial Shuwaikh, and as soon as they got in, one pulled out a knife, and when he resisted, he was stabbed in the shoulder. The suspects then escaped. Detectives are investigating.

Fight

After a fight broke out between a Filipino and a Bangladeshi, friends of the former rushed to help him and caused injuries to the Bangladeshi, who was taken to hospital. The fight was over a taxi fare. The Bangladeshi cabbie took the Filipino from Salmiya to Fintas, but he refused to pay what the driver demanded, so a fight broke out and residents rushed to help their compatriot.

Driver 'punished'

An unidentified person 'punished' an Egyptian by damaging his car after he blocked the road in Salmiya. A security source said the Egyptian lodged a complaint. He said that he parked his car behind another vehicle in front of a Salmiya building, and when he returned, he found his car was damaged.

Drug users caught

Special missions men arrested a citizen and an Emirati woman after stiff resistance and insults. Both were under the influence of drugs and had 20 illicit tablets on them. Both were sent to the Drugs Control General Department.

Suicide attempt

Police rescued a citizen in his 40s who flung himself into the sea in an attempt to commit suicide, and rushed him to Mubarak Hospital. They found his suicide bid was due to divorce and accumulated debts. The incident took place near Balajat Street, and the man was charged and will be questioned after he recovers. —Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

News

in brief

TEACHERS TO RECEIVE REDUCED PAY IN NOV

KUWAIT: Arab public school teachers will receive their salaries in full this month, including their rent allowance intact, as the Ministry of Education is yet to officially receive the decision to cut the allowance from KD 150 to KD 60, despite the fact it became effective on October 13, 016. As a result, not only will teachers receive reduced rent allowances next month, but the ministry will also deduct KD 55 from each teacher's pay for applying the decision retroactively. —Al-Qabas

No decrees

KUWAIT: The Cabinet is not expected to issue emergency decrees concerning issues that go in contradiction with the state's budget for 2016/2017, high ranking government sources said. They made their remarks in response to speculations that the Cabinet might restructure the public sector's payroll or reduce subsidies through emergency decrees issued before a new parliament is elected. —Al-Anbaa

Oil sector's budgets

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) Board of Directors starts discussions next Sunday to adopt the oil sector's budgets for the fiscal year 217/2018. Meanwhile, sources revealed that KPC demanded excluding the Kuwait Gulf Oil Company (KGOC) from the budget in an attempt to avoid losses resulting from halting production at the divided zone, adding that production is not expected to resume before a year from today. —Al-Anbaa

Airport security

KUWAIT: G45 started operation at Kuwait International Airport as part of a deal with the Interior Ministry to offer security services there. The company has already provided 97 inspectors assigned at the entrance and before the passports' counter. The remaining 303 inspectors, who will be assigned to all gates at Kuwait International Airport, the Saad Al-Abdullah Airport and the new terminal (under construction) are set to arrive to Kuwait within two months, sources said. —Al-Rai

Kuwaiti fighters

KUWAIT: The number of Kuwaiti fighters is increasing among the 'Jund Al-Aqsa' group fighting in Syria, at a time in which their numbers are dwindling within the Islamic State (IS) and Nusra Front, Al-Rai daily reported yesterday quoting 'jihadi sources'. 'Jund Al-Aqsa has become the favorite destination for Kuwaitis travelling to Syria for jihad,' the sources said, adding that four Kuwaiti members of the radical group were killed in fighting during the past couple of years. —Al-Rai



Al-Jarida

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

LET'S NOT GET LOST IN DETAILS

By Hassan Al-Essa

Along with the accelerated tensions due to the nearness of parliamentary elections, the government is expected to open its arms wide for a large number of lawmakers to renew their affiliations, and the best channel to do so is through overseas medical treatment. For example, the health minister will not mind being a link between current and new lawmakers and decision makers amongst ministers and sheikhs regardless of the government's promises to block the financial drainage caused by treatment abroad, with a few exceptions, according to the government's wishes.

In a recent article, my colleague Kamel Harmi said: "The growth in touristic medical treatment patients, according to statistics recorded in August, from 2,500 to 6,000, means sending 120 patients for treatment abroad per lawmaker at a monthly cost of KD 70 million. So, tell me about the silly talk about saving expenses, increasing fuel prices and cutting expat teachers' rent allowances!"

Political bribes, such as treatment abroad, is not the point. Neither are the other forms of gifts and corruption facilitators. So much has been written in the local press and so many people have talked about corruption and favoritism and about how the authority sometimes legalizes it or turns a blind eye to it. What matters now is whether there is any use of our debates and discussion about how the country is being run. In other words, have we noticed any change and intentions to reform despite the oil price disaster? Was there any reaction on the government's or the parliament's part towards this drainage of public funds other than worthless lawmakers' talk about strong rejection of overburdening citizens and protecting public funds?!

We all know that you cannot get blood out of stones, and our political administration is made of stone. All what is being said and written by the so-called reformists, politicians and former MPs are only media tranquilizers meant to act as tools to cool our tensions.

It is mandatory not to get overwhelmed by too many details about the coming elections; about who is for and who is against, because eventually, the elections are only a tool of political amusement in a state full of political emptiness and boredom, as long as the political administration has no visions about the future or a real project that would save it from the unknown future.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

النبا

Al-Anbaa

SANE'S FILTERS

By Saad Al-Motesh

On building a new house, those close to the owner start offering free advice to help him avoid mistakes they had made, such as taking care of the quality of electrical wiring because of its significance to safety. However, the most important piece of advice they offer is about installing a central water filter.

Nevertheless, regardless of the quality of that central filter, one will still have to install smaller ones in the kitchen or for water coolers to get the purest drinking and cooking water and to ensure the safety of family members. Therefore, we see many houses install more than one filter next to each other.

The idea of using multilayered filters was the same used by former Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Yaaqoub Al-Sane, with a slight difference that he did not use it in his house - it is up to him if he does not even install a single filter there. Sane used the idea at his ministry, where he formed four committees to decide who deserves to be appointed in leading positions.

The first committee Sane formed is responsible for listing candidates who match the conditions set for the position. The second committee is responsible for checking the first committee's work. The third committee interviews candidate and finally the fourth committee endorses the final selectees. These four committees act as a four-process filter to make sure only the best get through.

Four-layer water filters at home ensure that drinking water will be purer than spring water on top of Everest and Tibet. Similarly, Sane's four filters are the main reason behind severe criticisms and accusations pointed at Sane, questioning the committees' decisions!

—Translated by Kuwait Times



CELEBRATING COLLABORATION IN PLASTIC FOOD PACKAGING

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), EQUATE Petrochemical Company, Americana - Meat Cluster and Plastic Industries Company (PIC) celebrated their collaboration for an advanced solution in plastic food packaging.

The collaboration involved a partnership among KFAS, EQUATE, Americana - Meat Cluster and PIC (a local plastic manufacturer) to devise an optimal solution in plastic food packaging. The solution was developed based on plastic raw material production, film conversion and food packaging. The results included developing and enhancing the food packaging plastic properties through EQUATE's Research and Development (R&D) Center.

KFAS Director-General Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin said, "KFAS believes that innovation and R&D are essential for the growth of the private sector's scientific and technical capacities that are needed to build a



Americana Meat Cluster CEO Mohamed Mahrous Awad

knowledge economy. KFAS established programs to help companies achieve such capacities. We have been utilizing our contacts with local, regional and international entities to find the best technology and knowledge providers that can assist the companies in identifying the technology suitable for their businesses. Last year we



introduced both EQUATE and Americana to the German Institutes in hope that they find new technologies that can be of value to both companies individually. Furthermore we co-funded feasibility studies for both companies. KFAS is pleased to be the catalyst that activated the cooperation between EQUATE, Americana and PIC. We are honored to be part of this celebration and will continue to be a partner in the success with companies."

On his part, EQUATE President and CEO Mohammad Husain said, "Diversification is critical for our economy and we consider it a real opportunity for success. In order to achieve success, we need very robust collaboration within a framework of innovation-based partnership. This collaboration is a milestone for us as it promotes the overall sense of ownership. We really appreciate KFAS for being the catalyst that enabled all participating entities to achieve their final goal. Today, this collaboration should not stop as it is an embodiment of our slogan 'Partners in Success.' This is in line with EQUATE's constant drive to develop differentiated products and solutions to advance the local industry and support its growth. Our real story is to be told and used as a power for more achievements."

Americana - Meat Cluster CEO Mohamed Mahrous Awad said, "Americana being the Regional leading food brand for the last 6 decades, through understanding the market needs and using the state-of-art technology, has achieved various milestones through product innovation, offering the market different products and solutions that makes life of our consumers better. Our collaboration with the technical and industrial experts like EQUATE and PIC, through the scientific platform of KFAS, merging their solid scientific and technical experience with our practical and technical industrial environment would only lead to the best quality solutions benefitting the industry, environment and the society."

PIC General Manager Hassan Jaber said, "PIC is excited to announce the successful completion of the Americana collaboration with KFAS and EQUATE for the plastic food packaging application. This significant achievement was made possible on a foundation of trust and a strong commitment to the project's success, as well as the technical and processing guidance from all sides. We would like to thank KFAS, Americana - Meat Cluster and EQUATE for the opportunity to be part of this project. PIC's mission is to provide our customers responsive and innovative execution of their projects."



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Undersecretary Lieutenant General Suleiman Al-Fahad recently welcomed Lieutenant Colonel Dr Tariq Al-Doub from the ministry's Research and Studies Center, who presented to him copies of his publications on security information and statistics.



The children of Albania's brutal blood feuds

OBAMA: WE SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST



COLUMBUS: In this Oct 10, 2016 file photo, Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton smiles while speaking at a rally at The Ohio State University. —AP

CLINTON CAMPAIGN TOOK SHAPE IN SECRET

HACKED EMAILS SHOW A CAMPAIGN THAT WAS YEARS IN THE MAKING

WASHINGTON: Back in early 2014, a media leak revealed Robby Mook was being considered to run a possible presidential campaign by Hillary Clinton. In fact, the 36-year-old was already on the job—almost three years before the vote. “You are right abt a long term press strategy. Need a different voice responding to this stuff,” Mook wrote to Cheryl Mills, Clinton’s longtime aide, in February 2014. Mook’s message was among the thousands of gmail messages hacked from the account of John Podesta, Clinton’s campaign chairman, and released in recent days by WikiLeaks.

The Clinton campaign say the hack was carried out by Russian cyber spies bent on tilting the race in favor of the Republican candidate. But the emails offer a fascinating window into the development of a presidential campaign that has been years in the making, with a tiny group of insiders working in secret to prepare Clinton’s bid to become the first woman president of the United States.

The emails show that the candidate and her closest collaborators were determined not to repeat the errors of Clinton’s unsuccessful presidential bid in 2008, when she lost to a charismatic newcomer, Barack Obama. The former secretary of state let speculation build about her possible run for the White House, coyly deflecting questions about her future plans by saying she was enjoying time with her granddaughter.

Obama and Hilary differences

Nevertheless, the press was already alert to signs of a Clinton candidacy. Mook’s message about press strategy was prompted by a news story that examined growing differences between Clinton’s camp and Obama’s inner circle. By March 22, 2014, Mook was starting to work on a campaign strategy, the emails show. He urged Clinton not to run for the presidency, as she had in 2008, as a woman seeking to make history, warning that would be a “mistake.” Instead, Mook argued, Clinton should run as a champion of the middle class—a line she would embrace about a year later.

At the time, Clinton was busy shuttling from paid speaking engagement to paid speaking engagement, and readying a promotional tour for her memoir as secretary of state—nothing that would suggest any direct political agenda. But in April 2014, Mook already was thinking about how Clinton’s campaign should be set up and where.

“I anticipate that about two dozen staff will need to be in place and working six to eight weeks prior to an official campaign announcement,” he wrote. But he said they should not act before November 4, 2014 midterm elections. In May 2014, Hillary Clinton was summoning her closest advisers. Even they were unaware that Mook was hard at work behind the scenes. “The only person in this group that knows about you besides me is John,” Mills wrote Mook, presumably referring to Podesta.

Influencing the media

In late 2014, as Clinton campaigned for fellow Democrats in congressional elections, her speechwriter Dan Schwerin worked up a 20-page document on possible “narratives” for her campaign strategy. “The goal is for you to begin crystalizing the ideas and motivations that are most important and compelling to you, which will then provide direction for policy development, midterms messaging, and

further research,” he wrote. One suggestion was: “I’m running for president to restore America’s fundamental bargain with the middle class and get government working for everyone again, not just a wealthy few.”

Another was “I’m running for President to renew the American Dream.” And “That’s why we need a fighter in the White House.” Then the pace of hiring picked up. “Madame Secretary, Congratulations—you have a very enthusiastic Communications Director and Deputy Communications Director,” Mook messaged Clinton in January 2015, referring to Jennifer Palmieri and Kristina Schake.

The press strategy also had begun to take shape. “We are all in agreement that the time is right to place a story with a friendly journalist in the coming days that positions us a little more transparently while achieving the above goals,” wrote Nick Merrill, formerly at State, in a memo. Focus groups were set up in New Hampshire in January 2015 to start fleshing out the campaign messages, but Clinton’s pollsters found a problem after one messaging test.

“For an audience of core supporters, the enthusiasm is somewhat muted and we don’t appear to be generating the excitement or a sense of a fresh, new candidacy we had

hoped for,” wrote pollster Joel Benenson. A week before the campaign launch, daily calls were being held to coordinate strategy. Emails piled up in Podesta’s mailbox as the April 12, 2015 launch date loomed. Just one day before, Podesta and others spoke on condition of anonymity to at least one influential journalist. Then, on the big day, Clinton sent this message on Twitter: “I’m running for president. Everyday Americans need a champion, and I want to be that champion. -H”. The “H” was intended to mean that the tweet was from her personally. But it was pre-written, and pre-approved at the highest level, at least a week before. —AFP

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LEBANON'S HARIRI BACKS AOUN FOR PRESIDENT

BEIRUT: Former Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Al-Hariri intends to endorse Michel Aoun for the vacant presidency, senior political sources said, and the Hezbollah ally could be elected head of state later this month. Long an opponent of the Iran-backed Shiite group Hezbollah, Hariri would become prime minister again under the plan that could reshape Lebanese politics. It has drawn opposition in his party and a final decision has not yet been taken, allies said.

The presidency, which is reserved for a Maronite Christian in the country's sectarian power-sharing arrangements, has been vacant for 2 1/2 years due to political conflicts. Aoun, a veteran politician in his 80s, has long coveted the post. It was not immediately clear if

Aoun's candidacy would enjoy enough support among other politicians to secure the necessary two-thirds quorum for the vote in the 128-seat parliament. The next scheduled parliamentary session to elect a president is set for Oct. 31. Opponents of Aoun's candidacy include Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, head of the Shiite Amal Movement and a close ally of Hezbollah, which itself has yet to comment. Hariri, 46, led the "March 14" alliance against Hezbollah and its allies, after the 2005 assassination of his father Rafik Al-Hariri. He remains a fierce critic of Hezbollah, which is fighting in Syria in support of President Bashar Al-Assad.

The proposal, unthinkable until recently, casts new light on the predicament facing Hariri, whose

standing as Lebanon's most influential Sunni politician has been shaken by a financial crisis at his Saudi-based construction business. The troubles at Saudi Oger, which has been hit by falling oil prices and cuts in Saudi state spending, have led to a cash crunch in Hariri's Future Movement. Diplomats say Hariri has fallen from favor in Saudi Arabia, which these days cares far more about confronting Iranian influence in the Gulf and Syria than about Lebanon.

Opposition from within

Two senior politicians told Reuters that Hariri had expressed his intention to nominate Aoun for the presidency as part of the power-sharing deal. A third source, a member of Hariri's Future

Movement, confirmed Hariri had expressed this intention, but members of his own parliamentary bloc opposed it. Fouad Siniora, a former prime minister and head of the Future Movement's parliamentary bloc, told the newspaper Daily Star that Hariri had told his MPs on Tuesday that he had decided to support Aoun's candidacy, but added that there was "no final decision yet on this matter". One of the senior sources said Hariri would announce his support for Aoun "within the coming few days".

The current government of Prime Minister Tammam Salam has been paralysed by rivalries exacerbated by regional conflict. Hariri became prime minister for the first time in 2009, but his cabinet was toppled in 2011 when Hezbollah and its allies resigned. Since

then, he spent most of his time abroad. Last year, he nominated Hezbollah ally Suleiman Franjeh for the presidency, but Hezbollah stuck by Aoun.

Aoun, a former army commander, heads the largest Christian bloc in parliament and has a large following in the divided Christian community. He has been a political ally of Hezbollah since 2006. A significant figure in Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, Aoun led one of two rival governments during the final years of the conflict. In 1990, the Syrian army forced him into exile. He returned in 2005 after Syrian forces withdrew under international pressure following the Hariri assassination. Aoun's main Christian rival, wartime enemy Samir Geagea, earlier this year also endorsed Aoun's candidacy. — Reuters



An Iraqi forces M109 self-propelled howitzer fires towards the village of Tall Al-Tibah, some 30 kilometers south of Mosul, during an operation against Islamic State (IS) group jihadists to retake the main hub city. — AFP

IRAQI FORCES POISED FOR ASSAULTS AROUND MOSUL

NOOSE TIGHTENS ON IS STRONGHOLD

QAYYARAH: Iraqi forces prepared yesterday to retake several key areas around Mosul, including the country's largest Christian town, to tighten the noose on the Islamic State group's stronghold. Kurdish and federal troops have made quick progress since the offensive was launched on Monday but officials have cautioned that Iraq's largest military operation in years could last months. Hundreds of thousands of civilians were still trapped in the city with dwindling supplies, many sheltering in basements as air strikes intensified on IS targets.

"We couldn't sleep last night because of the air strikes. The explosions were huge but I'm not sure what the targets were," said Abu Saif, a 47-year-old resident contacted by AFP. "Many families are starting to run out of some basic food goods, there is no commercial activity in Mosul-the city is cut off from the world," he said. East of Mosul, forces were poised for an assault on Qaraqosh, which lies about 15 kilometers and was once Iraq's largest Christian town.

News of the move to recapture Qaraqosh sparked jubilation among Christians who had fled the town, with many dancing and singing in the city of Arbil on Tuesday night. Units from Iraq's elite counter-terrorism service, which has done the heavy lifting in most recent operations against IS, were poised to flush jihadists out of the town yesterday, officers said. "We are surrounding Hamdaniya now," Lieutenant General Riyadh Tawfiq, commander of Iraq's ground forces, told AFP at the main staging base of

Qayyarah, referring to the district that includes Qaraqosh. "There are some pockets (of resistance), some clashes, they send car bombs but it will not help them," he said.

Qaraqosh was the largest of many Christian towns and villages seized by the jihadists who swept across the Nineveh Plain east of Mosul in August 2014. The mass exodus it sparked displaced a large proportion of Iraq's already dwindling Christian minority, sending most into the neighboring Kurdish region.

Displaced families

Qaraqosh was home to around 50,000 people in 2014 and has at least seven churches, making it a key hub for the more than 300,000 Christians still in Iraq. Kurdish peshmerga forces prepared to attack IS positions on several fronts north of Mosul while federal forces worked their way up the Tigris Valley. Some families recovering their freedom from IS for the first time in more than two years cautiously approached security forces waving white flags.

In one village in the Al-Shura district south of Mosul, the men were promptly isolated and herded into a handful of buildings for screening. The families were being dispatched to various temporary camps, including near Qayyarah. The "caliphate" that IS leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi proclaimed in Mosul's Great Mosque in June 2014 once covered more than a third of Iraq and parts of Syria. But it has been shrinking steadily for more than a year and retaking Mosul would

be a major setback for IS, all but ending its experiment in statehood. "IS simply has too many enemies with the world arrayed against it," said Ayman Al-Tamimi, a jihadism expert at the Middle East Forum.

No safe exit

Tens of thousands of personnel are involved in the operation to retake Mosul, where the jihadists have an estimated 3,000 to 4,500 fighters. World leaders and military commanders warned that despite signs that early progress in the Mosul offensive was faster than predicted-the battle could be long and difficult. "Mosul will be a difficult fight. There will be advances and there will be setbacks," Obama said on Tuesday.

After clearing towns and villages on the outskirts of Mosul with air support from a US-led coalition, Iraqi forces are expected to besiege the city before entering it. Iraqi forces may allow fleeing IS fighters an exit to the west in a bid to minimize human and material losses from the fighting inside the city. But the chief of Russia's General Staff Valery Gerasimov argued it was "necessary not to drive terrorists from one country to the other but to destroy them on the spot".

Russia, he said, was focusing on "possible attempts by fighters to break out of Mosul" and "freely leave the city in the direction of Syria". Many civilians have been able to flee the wider Mosul region to safer areas, with some desperate enough to seek refuge over the border in war-torn Syria. — AFP

DEADLY CLASHES BEFORE LATEST YEMEN CEASEFIRE

ADEN: Heavy fighting rocked Yemen hours before a UN-brokered ceasefire was due to begin yesterday, as warring parties come under mounting pressure to end a conflict that has raged for more than two years. The truce will be the sixth attempt to end the bloodshed since a Saudi-led Arab coalition intervened in March 2015 to support the government of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi after rebels overran much of Yemen. Civilians have paid the highest price in a country that was already the Arabian peninsula's poorest.

Almost 6,900 have been killed-more than half of them civilians-while another three million are displaced and millions more need food aid. A United Nations report said air strikes by the coalition were suspected of causing around half of all civilian deaths, while rebel-affiliated groups were responsible for about a quarter. The UN special envoy for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, on Sunday announced the truce from 23:59 (20:59 GMT) for an initial three days, subject to renewal. But clashes involving heavy artillery and air raids killed at least five people across the country yesterday, including fighting near the Saudi border and around the capital Sanaa, military sources said.

The last ceasefire attempt began in April alongside UN-brokered peace talks in Kuwait but both the rebels and the coalition accused each other of breaches. After peace talks collapsed in August, fighting escalated until an October 8 coalition air strike which the UN said killed more than 140 people and wounded at least 525 at a funeral in Sanaa. The United States announced an "immediate review" of its intelligence and refueling assistance to the coalition, whose investigative team then released unusually quick findings from a probe of the incident. It said a coalition aircraft "wrongly targeted" the funeral based on "incorrect information". In another major development, the US Navy for the first time targeted Huthi rebels directly. On October 13 it hit radar sites which, the US said, were involved in missile

launches against a US warship and other vessels. Yemen's Houthi rebels are allied with members of the security forces loyal to ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

'More optimistic'

They control the capital Sanaa and other territory but coalition-backed forces earlier pushed them back from the southern port of Aden and adjacent areas. Both the rebels and pro-government forces have come under increased international pressure to silence their guns. On Tuesday, US Secretary of State John Kerry hailed the announcement of the new truce and echoed an urgent plea from the UN envoy for unfettered humanitarian access throughout Yemen. "We ask the parties to take all steps necessary to advance the implementation of this cessation, call on them to sustain it, and strongly encourage its unconditional renewal," Kerry said.

Hadi's government said it would agree to the truce if rebels also adhered to it, and also called for the insurgents to monitor the ceasefire and end their siege of Yemen's third city, Ta'ez. The rebels, in a statement on Tuesday night, expressed readiness for a "lasting ceasefire, comprehensive and without conditions". Military sources however said rebel positions in the northern Saada province were struck by coalition raids yesterday. At least three strikes also hit a convoy of rebel reinforcements in Omran province, north of Sanaa.

At least two loyalists were killed and 15 wounded in fighting near the Red Sea, in Hajja province, the sources said. And in Ta'ez, at least two rebels and a pro-government fighter were killed during overnight fighting, according to witnesses and military sources. In spite of yesterday's violence, Mustafa Alani, a senior adviser to the Gulf Research Centre, said the prospects for peace were growing. "I am more optimistic, actually, because the environment is completely different from the previous one," he told AFP. "At the same time, both parties in the conflict are getting tired." — AFP

IMAM RISKS JAIL FOR 'INSULTING' SENEGAL MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD

DAKAR: Senegalese prosecutors requested a six-month sentence yesterday for an imam accused of insulting the country's most powerful Muslim brotherhood, in a case that has underlined the group's outsized influence. The Mourides are one of four important Sufi brotherhoods followed by Senegal's Muslims, who overwhelmingly practice a moderate version of Islam while following the teachings of local spiritual guides.

The case relates to a video posted in September by imam Cheikh Mbacke Sakho in which he accused Mouride elders of taking money from Muslims to further their own business interests, and of "swindling" followers. Now in "fear of his life", according to a close friend contacted by AFP, Sakho could face a six-month suspended jail sentence and a fine of a million CFA (\$1,673) for abusing a religious group on a digital platform, prosecutors said.

They added this would be the minimum sentence possible "taking into account the apologies" the imam had already offered in another online video.

Sakho was not present at the hearing in Dakar for security reasons after threats of lynching by Mouride members. His case will be decided on October 26. The Mourides are highly entrepreneurial and best known outside Senegal for selling trinkets and counterfeit goods on the streets of New York, Paris and Rome, where they have built up significant networks.

In Senegal they are highly influential in government and business. Former president Abdoulaye Wade is among the country's most high-profile Mourides. Many Senegalese looked to the brotherhood for leadership in the fight against French colonial authorities in the late 19th century. The Mourides' holy city of Touba, created by founder Ahmadou Bamba Mbacke in 1888, has grown to be Senegal's second-largest after Dakar, with some 1.5 million inhabitants. Senegal's Sufi movements have no relation to the Sunni Islamist Muslim Brotherhood popular across the Middle East and Africa and currently considered a terror organization in several nations. — AFP

ALEPPO BOMBING PAUSE HOLDS INTO SECOND DAY

ALEPPO: A pause in Russian and Syrian strikes on Aleppo was holding for a second day yesterday, ahead of a brief ceasefire aimed at allowing civilians and rebels to quit the devastated city. Moscow announced it would extend an eight-hour truce planned for Thursday to 11 hours and said Syrian and Russian warplanes were giving Aleppo a wide berth. French President Francois Hollande said he would work with Germany to persuade Russia to adopt a long-lasting truce around Syria's second city. But Russia's ceasefire plan was met with skepticism and the United Nations said it would be insufficient to allow humanitarian aid to reach encircled Aleppo inhabitants.

Moscow is backing President Bashar Al-Assad's regime in its war with a wide range of rebel groups, including with air strikes in the divided northern city. Under growing international pressure over the devastation and civilian deaths caused by strikes, Moscow announced early Tuesday that Russian and Syrian warplanes would stop bombing rebel-held parts of the city to pave the way for a "humanitarian pause".

That window, starting at 0500 GMT on Thursday, was initially meant to last eight hours and is expected to see all fighting stop to allow civilians and rebels to exit opposition-held districts via six corridors. Senior Russian military official Sergei Rudskoi said yesterday that the ceasefire had been extended "by three hours until 7:00 pm (1600 GMT)". He also said Russian and Syrian planes were keeping 10 kilometers from Aleppo. An estimated 250,000 people live in Aleppo's eastern districts and have been under near-continuous government siege since July.

Clashes continue

AFP's correspondent in east Aleppo said yesterday that although clashes between rebels and pro-government forces involving heavy artillery continued in several neighborhoods, the pause

in air strikes extended into late afternoon. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based monitoring group, said pro-regime fighters were pressing their ground assault in the Old City as they vied to shift the front line. — AFP



BERLIN: An activist wearing a mask depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin kneels amidst teddy bears during a protest on October 19, 2016 in front of the chancellery in Berlin ahead of a meeting of leaders of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany. — AFP

IRAN REJECTS US DEMAND FOR RELEASE OF DUAL NATIONALS

TEHRAN: Iran said yesterday it would accept no US "interference" after Washington demanded the release of a dual national and his 80-year-old father given 10 year sentences for espionage. The State Department demanded the immediate release of Siamak and Baqher Namazi, both Iranian-American dual nationals, after their sentences were announced on Tuesday. But foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi told Iranian media:

"The government and the Iranian people give no importance to the statements and interference of American officials and their efforts to divide the ranks of the Iranian people. 'The American threats only add to the wall of mistrust Iranians have regarding the United States.' Washington expressed concern over the health of the elder Namazi, a former UN Children's Fund employee who also served as the governor of an Iranian province before the Islamic

revolution of 1979. Both were jailed for 10 years for "espionage and collaboration with the American government", Tehran prosecutor Abbas Jafari Dolat-Abadi announced on Tuesday. Three other Iranian-American dual nationals-Farhad Abd-Saleh, Kamran Ghaderi and Alireza Omidvar-were also sentenced to 10 years on the same charges, along with a US resident from Lebanon, Nezar Zaka.

Siamak Namazi, a well-connected business consultant who has supported Iranian reformists and sought to promote ties between Iran and the United States, was arrested as he arrived in Tehran a year ago. His father was detained in February when he came to Iran to seek his son's release. Conservatives in Iran have criticized attempts by the moderate government of President Hassan Rouhani to improve ties with the West following a nuclear deal with world powers last year. — AFP

ARGENTINE GIRL'S BRUTAL RAPE, MURDER SPARKS NEW DEMOS

BUENOS AIRES: The brutal killing of a 16-year-old girl who was allegedly raped and impaled on a spike by drug dealers has sparked outrage in Argentina, where protesters plan a "women's strike" yesterday. Lucia Perez, a high school student in the resort city of Mar del Plata, died on October 8 after being brought to the hospital by two men who said she had overdosed on drugs. But after doctors noticed signs of violent sexual penetration, investigators pieced together a different story.

Prosecutors say the two men drugged, raped and impaled her through the anus, causing pain so excruciating that she went into cardiac arrest and died. The lead prosecutor, Maria Isabel Sanchez, could barely hide her disgust. "I know it's not very professional to say it, but I'm a mother and a woman, and I've seen a thousand things in my career, but nothing equal to this litany of abhorrent acts," she said. The killing is just the latest incident of horrific gender violence in

Argentina, which has seen more than a year of mass marches to protest brutality against women.

Last year in June, protests broke out nationwide over a trio of gruesome killings: a kindergarten teacher whose estranged husband slit her throat in front of her class; A 14-year-old girl whose boyfriend allegedly beat her to death because she got pregnant; and a woman whose ex-boyfriend stabbed her to death in broad daylight at a Buenos Aires cafe. In the latest protest, 50 activist groups have called on women across the country to go on "strike" at 1:00 pm (1400 GMT), taking to the streets dressed in black.

One organizer, Sabrina Cartabia, said the goal was to protest not only Perez's killing, but a culture that values women less than men. That is visible in statistics such as the unemployment rate, she said: 9.3 percent nationally, but 12 percent for women. "In a context of social insecurity, with children to care for and no access to economic autonomy, it's much

more difficult to overcome domestic violence," said Cartabia, a lawyer for an advocacy group called the Women's Network.

'Barbarity'

Perez met her alleged killers a day before her death, when she and a friend approached them to buy a marijuana joint, prosecutors say. The men-Matias Farias, 23, and Juan Pablo Offidiani, 41 — were known for selling drugs near her school and had prior convictions. Investigators say they forced Perez to consume a large amount of cocaine to incapacitate her, then had a violent orgy with her. "Her nose was purple from all the cocaine they made her take," said her father, Guillermo.

"We can't understand such barbarity. It's impossible to understand," said her mother, Marta Montero. Together, the couple led a protest Saturday in Mar del Plata that drew 1,000 people demanding the

judge deny bail for the alleged killers.

Every 36 hours

Despite the protest-and a long string of others in recent months-at least four other women in Argentina have been killed by their husbands or exes since Perez's death. Nationally, domestic violence kills one woman every 36 hours on average. Argentina is one of 16 Latin American countries that have written the crime of "femicide" into their penal codes, setting down harsher punishments for the killing of a woman by a man when gender plays a part in the crime. But the authorities are not doing enough, argued Cartabia, who says Argentine society needs a wake-up call on women's vulnerable place within it. A decade ago, the activist said, women who suffered domestic abuse took six years to report it on average. "Today, that average has gone down-by one year," she said. — AFP

'RIGGING' ELECTION EASIER SAID THAN DONE: EXPERTS

WASHINGTON: Republican candidate Donald Trump has made the insistent claim that the US presidential elections are being "rigged," but experts say massive voter fraud is highly unlikely in a system as decentralized as the United States. "There are a lot of safeguards in place that would preclude that from happening, from federal laws to local and state laws as well," said Jo-Renee Formicola, a political scientist at Seton Hall University.

The US election system is far from perfect, as illustrated by the imbroglio over the vote count in Florida during the 2000 presidential election between George W Bush and Al Gore. A conservative-majority Supreme Court finally ruled in favor of Bush, but the sense of a "stolen" election lingered on among some Democrats-who never fully accepted the Republican president as legitimate. But 16 years later, the chances of mass fraud marring the contest between Trump and his Democrat rival Hillary Clinton are remote, experts say.

Even national elections like the one on November 8 are organized not by the federal government but by US states, and they tend to delegate the task to a welter of local authorities. "The fact that every single voting district would be involved in a fraud is virtually impossible because there are so many different kinds of districts," Formicola said. A mosaic of voting systems-some using electronic voting machines, others paper ballots, and still others both-add a level of complexity that would tend to thwart any attempt at wholesale voter fraud, the experts say.

Besides, Republican election officials oversee the vote in most of the key battlegrounds of the 2016 presidential elections, states like Colorado, Iowa, Michigan and Arizona. "In person voter fraud-that's when

someone shows up and pretends to be someone else-is incredibly rare, almost never happens and there is no evidence that it happens in numbers that are anywhere close to having an effect, even in a close election," said Cornell Law School professor Zachary Clopton.

Evidence lacking

Trump's charges of impending voter fraud have escalated as he has sunk below Hillary Clinton, his Democratic rival, in the polls. While providing no evidence to back his claims, the New York billionaire has cast suspicion on voting in urban areas where Clinton enjoys strong backing from black and Hispanic voters.

"Mr Trump, for example, has called out Philadelphia as a place where he thinks there might be fraud," said Clopton. "I think there is virtually no evidence of in-person voter fraud at all, but I guess the idea would be that it would happen in a few places." President Barack Obama on Tuesday derided Trump's attacks. "I have never seen in my lifetime or in modern political history any presidential candidate trying to discredit the elections and the election process before votes have even taken place. It's unprecedented," Obama said. "If, whenever things are going badly for you and you lose, you start blaming somebody else? Then you don't have what it takes to be in this job," he said.

While the risk of in-person fraud is seen as minimal, there are more serious concerns that hackers could pose a threat on Election Day-fueled by recent intrusions attributed to Russian hackers in voter registration databases in Illinois and Arizona. Those incidents have spurred federal authorities to offer local authorities their expertise in protecting their systems against hackers. — AFP



WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama pose for a photo as they greet Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and his wife Agnese Landini on the North Portico for a State Dinner at the White House. — AP

OBAMA: 'WE SAVED THE BEST FOR LAST' AT FINAL STATE DINNER

FINAL GALA MEANT EVERYTHING WAS BIG OR BIGGER

WASHINGTON: "Bittersweet" was the word of the night, the one often used to describe President Barack Obama's final State Dinner. "We saved the best for last," he said Tuesday as he welcomed Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi and his wife, Agnese Landini, to the White House. He wasn't joking. The final gala meant everything was big or bigger, from the personality of the guest chef (Mario Batali) who collaborated on the menu to the size of the white tent (huge) on the South Lawn where the soiree was held, to the guest list (nearly 400 people).

Rep Gerald Connolly, D-Va, said it's "a little sad" that it's Obama's last State Dinner. But to make the occasion even more memorable, he said: "For tonight only, I pronounce my name 'Canoli,' not 'Connolly.' Michelle Obama's hairstylist, Johnny Wright, also described the moment as "bittersweet," but he was still excited to have been invited. The first lady also invited her makeup artist, Carl Ray; her trainer, Cornell McClellan; and Meredith Koop, who helps Mrs. Obama with her wardrobe. "I'm excited that it's the last State Dinner, so it's a bittersweet thing," said actress-comedian Alexandra Wentworth. "I love the Obamas."

Others, meanwhile, sought to inject some levity into the evening. "We're Jews, but we identify as Italian," joked Jerry Seinfeld. By way of explaining why the Obamas may have invited the comedian and his wife, Jessica, Seinfeld said

the couple spends a lot of time traveling in Italy "and we almost exclusively go out for Italian food, but that's as far as I can figure." After tripping while climbing stairs and then cutting off the lining of her dress, celebrity chef Rachael Ray joked that "I should only come here in sneakers." Ray has done numerous events with Mrs. Obama to support the first lady's "Let's Move" anti-childhood obesity initiative.

Obama has had one dinner bigger than Tuesday's - a 2014 event for African heads of state to which more than 400 people were invited. Tuesday's guest list included a touch of everything: celebrities, lawmakers, senior administration officials, White House staff, a larger-than-usual contingent of journalists and others, and it had the feeling of having been designed as one big final "thank you" to all. In fact, Mrs Obama was overheard thanking her guests "for eight magnificent years." "This has truly been a successful final State Dinner," she said between dinner and the entertainment.

Guests of Italian descent included House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif, the highest-ranking Italian-American in US politics; former race car driver Mario Andretti, who sported socks designed like a checkered racing flag; fashion designer Giorgio Armani; actor John Turturro; New York Gov Andrew Cuomo; and actor-director Roberto Benigni.

Once again, the first lady dazzled - literally - in her evening gown, a rose gold chainmail num-

ber by Italian designer Versace, the White House said. Other female guests also went Italian in their choice of attire, clothing themselves in Valentino, Roberto Cavalli and others. Batali helped the White House kitchen crew prepare the meal, and Grammy-winning pop singer Gwen Stefani opened the after-dinner segment with her hit, "The Sweet Escape," as her boyfriend, country superstar Blake Shelton, looked on from the audience. After that song, she talked about her dad being Italian American and said "I'm trying to, like, figure this out, how I got here," referring to the dinner.

A few guests, including fellow cook Sandra Lee, Cuomo's partner, said they were mostly looking forward to eating Batali's food. In his pre-dinner toast, Obama said American democracy had been graced by a touch of Italy. He noted that the Lincoln Memorial and the interior of the U.S. Capitol dome were done by Italians, and raised a glass to the "enduring alliance" between the U.S. and Italy.

Renzi alluded during his toast to a speech the first lady gave last week in New Hampshire in which she criticized Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump for boasting on a 2005 video about being sexually aggressive toward women. "Michelle, your tomatoes are great. But after the last weeks, let me be very frank, your speeches are better than your tomatoes," Renzi said, thanking her as the father of a young daughter. — AP



COLORADO: Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump arrives to speak at a rally at the Norris-Penrose Event Center in Colorado Springs. — AFP

CAMPUS ASSAULTS STIR DEBATE ON WHEN TO ALERT STUDENTS

SAN FRANCISCO: When a student athlete at San Jose State University in California was accused of sexually assaulting two women at an off-campus party over Labor Day weekend, school officials acted decisively. The student was ordered to stay away from the women involved and was moved from his dorm into a staff housing facility. He was also temporarily suspended from campus and team events pending the result of an investigation.

University officials also acted quietly, prompting many students to ask why they were kept in the dark about the alleged assaults. Fueling the criticism, the suspect - identified as an international student - left the country as authorities investigated. The case has renewed focus on the problem of sexual assaults involving college students and raises questions about what obligations a university has to inform students and when it's time to go public about an alleged assault.

University officials and legal experts say it's a delicate issue. On one hand, students have an interest in knowing immediately if a perpetrator is on their campus. But schools also need to protect students' privacy before an arrest is made or charges filed. One proposed solution is for schools to notify students of suspected assaults in police-blotter style, without divulging details that could identify suspects or victims.

San Jose campus president Mary Papazian addressed student concerns in an email sent

Monday to the university's 35,000 students and 5,000 faculty and staff. "I am determined to do everything possible to ensure that SJSU is a safe, caring, inclusive community," she said. "We will look comprehensively at how to improve communication."

Notification policies

The school has said the male student was immediately interviewed by police and school officials. Since no arrests have been made and the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office is still reviewing the case for possible charges, the school felt there was no imminent safety threat to the campus community. Still, given the student concerns, the university will review the way it responds in sexual assault cases. "I believe it is time to re-examine and consider changes to notification policies," Papazian said. The case follows the high-profile trial of former Stanford University athlete Brock Turner, who was convicted of attacking a woman while she was passed out near a trash bin on campus in January 2015. Turner's six-month prison sentence sparked national outrage and ignited a debate about campus rape and the criminal justice system.

The California State University system, which includes San Jose State and 22 other campuses, has no systemwide policy on notifying the campus community about alleged assaults. But the schools adhere to the federal Clery Act, which requires universities to issue

"timely warnings" of situations seen as a threat to the campus, said Toni Molle, spokeswoman for the California State University system. The decision of when to issue warnings is up to each campus. The Stanford case did not become public until Turner was charged, said Stanford law professor Michele Dauber, who favors some public disclosure early on after assaults are reported.

"As long as student privacy is protected, schools should err on the side of greater transparency and issue the timely warnings," said Dauber, a friend of the woman Turner assaulted who has been outspoken against the judge's sentencing. Families Advocating for Campus Equality, which works on behalf of students accused of assault, says it's important not to name names prematurely. "I think it's OK for a campus to notify in the abstract. Take more precautions, say there's been a report," said Cynthia Garrett, a co-president at the group. "But to put somebody's name and face out there, you need to be pretty sure something has happened. Imagine if you're innocent. Just imagine, how that could ruin a life."

Most universities will wait until there is a clear public safety issue to sound an alarm. But publicizing an assault could lead more victims to step forward, says Fatima Goss Graves, an attorney at the Washington DC-based national Women's Law Center. In San Jose, one of the women came forward immediately, and the second woman waited two weeks. — AP

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RUSSIA OPENS NEW CATHEDRAL COMPLEX IN PARIS SANS PUTIN

PARIS: Russia unveiled a new state-financed Orthodox cathedral complex in a prime position near the Eiffel Tower in Paris yesterday without the intended guest of honor, President Vladimir Putin. He cancelled his trip last week after French President Francois Hollande said Russia's bombing of the Syrian city of Aleppo could amount to war crimes.

In a statement from Moscow, Putin said the more than 100-million euro (\$110 million) complex, built around the cathedral which has five golden domes, was a "visible testament to the cultural and human ties between France and Russia". The theme was taken up by speakers at the low-key event yesterday, where Russian Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky overlooked current tensions to say the project was "testament to the solidity of our bilateral relations."

The Saint-Trinite cathedral, which will be consecrated by the patriarch of the Russian Orthodox church in December, sits on a prime location by the

river Seine and is a striking illustration of Kremlin support for its national church. It has raised eyebrows not only because its five giant cupolas covered with 90,000 sheets of gold leaf rise up in front of the Eiffel Tower when viewed from the surrounding area. The project has also reportedly sparked concerns among France's intelligence agencies because of its proximity to nearby government buildings, including the foreign ministry just a short walk along the Seine.

Putin has given it strong political and financial backing, acknowledging it was "very difficult" to realise but thanking France for its "continuous support". The Russian president has developed close bonds with the powerful Russian Orthodox church, whose patriarch Kirill has backed him personally and his policies such as military intervention in Syria. "We thank President Putin in particular. Without his personal commitment, it would never have happened," said bishop Antoine from the town of Bogorodsk, who was representing patri-

arch Kirill at the ceremony. Only the cultural centre was officially opened yesterday, but journalists were allowed inside the cathedral for the first time ahead of its consecration on December 4.

Politics and religion

The growing Orthodox community in France, swelled by immigration from Russia as well as the Middle East and the Balkans, is not united behind the new cathedral, which will only be fully completed in 2017. Antoine Arjakovsky, an Orthodox historian in Paris, commented on the "strange and problematic ambiguity" of the project, financed by a theoretically secular Russian state.

Speaking to AFP, he said it "mixes religion and politics a stone's throw from the Elysee (presidential palace) and the foreign ministry". Paris already has an Orthodox cathedral, the Saint Alexandre Nevsky built by the Russian community in 1861, but it is aligned with a different branch of Orthodoxy based in Istanbul. Until 1931, it was

aligned with Moscow but has since refused to return, seeing the Russian church as more socially conservative and politicised.

"You could link this project to pastoral needs, but it also likely a desire by Russia to open a cultural and religious showpiece in Paris beyond its embassy," writer and Orthodox priest Christophe Levalois told AFP. As well as opening at a difficult time in Franco-Russian relations, the striking new place of worship was unveiled as France engages in a feverish debate about the role of religion in public life after a string of attacks by Islamic extremists. Last week, Hollande was quoted in a book as saying there was a "problem with Islam" in France because it required holy sites and recognition. "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 republic," he was quoted as saying in: "Un president ne devrait pas dire ca" ("A president shouldn't say this"). — AFP



In this Friday, Oct 7, 2016 photo, Albanian teacher Lijana Luani teaches her student who asked not be identified, isolated in the family house fearing a blood feud vendetta in northern Albania. — AFP

FEARLESS TEACHER HELPS CHILDREN OF ALBANIA'S BRUTAL BLOOD FEUDS

HELPING FAMILIES MARKED FOR MURDER

SHKODRA: Where most people and even police fear to set foot, Lijana Luani takes books, household supplies, and a lifetime of experience on how to help families marked for murder. The 56-year-old school teacher from Shkodra in northern Albania uses her spare time to travel to remote hillside villages where children are trapped in a centuries-old tradition of blood feuds and hidden by their families. The guard dogs recognize her and villagers barely react as she opens the metal gate and steps into a protected house. But the sense of danger is constant.

"I am aware that my job is like walking through land mines. If I slip somewhere my family will pay for it," Luani told The Associated Press, speaking in the home of a young boy hidden away to protect him from a vendetta after giving him a lesson in math, grammar and the ancient Greek tale of "The Odyssey." "I am a teacher and teaching is not a profession for me. It's a mission."

While often related to criminal rivalry, generation-spanning feuds in Albania stem from an ancient code of conduct known as the Kanun, a detailed but primitive form of self-administration. Typically only men are targeted or tasked to take revenge. But blood feuds, largely suppressed during Communism, have been revived mainly in remote areas where the rule of law is perceived as weak. Victims are typically pursued over years and eventually ambushed, gunned down in the street, in a country awash with unlicensed weapons.

Cycle of reciprocal killings

Police don't report figures on the motives of murders, but revenge killings are blamed for dozens of deaths every year. A cycle of reciprocal killings may be started from a number of causes, including murder, causing accidental death, land disputes, and making a grave false accusation. Women are generally exempt from vendettas, allowing Luani to travel without being targeted or followed. But post-communist revenge killings have occasionally strayed from traditional rules and the male blood-line to include women, minors, multiple killings and the use of assassins.

Luani says she is still haunted by the memory of a teenage boy who insisted on attending school and was shot dead in an ambush. For that reason, she doesn't give specifics about the victims she visits or why they are embroiled in blood feuds, because she's scared that they will be identified. AP journalists also met with some blood feud targets who asked not to be identified for fear they would be found and killed. On a typical weekday, she finishes classes, cooks at home for her family, and then sets off into what locals call the "Accursed Mountains," steep and inhospitable, traveling by taxi van for up to an hour to reach the stranded children.

Several years ago, she helped start and support a pioneer shelter school in southern Albania, in some cases taking additional risks to persuade parents to let their kids travel. "On three or four occasions, I used my son as a guar-

antee to the families," she said, noting that she traveled with her son on some visits to families in hiding. "The school was a miracle, but it closed after three years due to corruption in public administration." She fought in court to have it reopened, insisting that private donations were squandered through mismanagement by regional authorities. Despite winning the case, no action was taken.

'They miss freedom'

Groups from civil society estimate that several thousand people, including young children, live in isolation due to the feuds. Treated by many as outcasts, they often only venture out at night to get firewood, food and other supplies. "Confined children do not grow up the way normal children do," Luani said. "They miss everything. They miss freedom. They grow up fearing they will be killed or are focused on how to kill ... Imagine that life."

On one recent visit, she called in on a rundown house where a 40-year-old woman stays with her three teenage sons, aged 14 to 19. They use a small yard to grow vegetables, and keep chickens and a cow. Neighbors and relatives provided some assistance, while Luani persuaded the power company to offer electricity at a discount. The woman's husband is in jail for murder and the family is unaccustomed to visitors. The mother cried frequently, while the two older boys disappear into another room, apparently ashamed to admit they never leave the house. — AP

BATACLAN SURVIVORS CONFRONT FEARS ON RETURN TO PARIS ATTACK SCENE

PARIS: Some survivors froze and some wept when they returned to the Bataclan music hall in Paris this month, nearly a year since they witnessed jihadist gunmen slay dozens of concertgoers. But all were determined to face their fears at the place where 90 people were shot dead on November 13 in the culmination of the Islamic State group's slaughter of 130 people across Paris.

"When I left the Bataclan, I imagined it as a bloodthirsty monster which wanted to consume me," said Caroline Langlade, of the victims' association Life for Paris. "In fact it's just a room with walls where something tragic happened. It's not the building itself which is tragic," she said. When the trio of jihadists brandishing Kalashnikovs burst into a concert by Californian group the Eagles of Death Metal, Langlade and around 40 other people among the crowd of 1,500 barricaded themselves in a room upstairs.

Returning for the first time 11 months later, she was astonished to find that the staircase she had charged up in a terrified state was not wooden and spiral as she had recalled. "In fact, it was as it has always been—made of concrete and dead straight," she said. Another survivor, 28-year-old Maureen, who did not want to give her full name, had a similar sensation: "The hall was not as I left it. The emergency exit was only seven meters away, but in my memory the distance seemed infinite. "I went back there—I didn't have to, but it feels like a sort of victory over what we lived through that day." AFP spoke to survivors after a group of 260 visited the Bataclan earlier this month. A smaller group of nearly 130 visited in March.

Re-living the fear

Florence Deloche-Gaudez, part of the

team of psychiatrists who have been working with survivors, said going back to the Bataclan had had a "calming effect" on many of them, despite the terrible memories it re-awakened. "It allowed them to relive the event and feel those sensations again—the noises, the smells, what it looked like, the fear," she said. "Some froze while others were walking around, re-tracing the route they had taken that night." The visit also gave survivors a chance to talk to other survivors. "In many cases, that was the Bataclan security staff, who replied to their questions," the psychiatrist said. Such experiences "help them to feel less powerless and to ease the trauma of experiencing death," she added.

The survivors filed into the concert hall in groups of five or six and led to a specially reserved area. Psychiatrists were on hand to assist them. Some of the survivors stayed there for as long as an hour. A few people lit candles or left notes and flowers. The Bataclan will defiantly reopen for concerts in November, but despite the building work the venue's management said it had "tried to respect the various requests from victims and to respond to them wherever possible". Maureen said the visit had helped her. "When you do something like that, you don't know what good it is going to do. "When I came out, I felt calmer. It might sound morbid to say so, but I felt it helped in my rehabilitation."

Other survivors, like 37-year-old Anthony, who also did not want to give his full name, said he only wanted to return to the Bataclan under happier circumstances. "I want to go back for concerts and definitely not when I am surrounded by victims," he said. "Everyone has their own way of dealing with it." — AFP



PARIS: This file photo taken on November 14, 2015 shows people being evacuated through rue Oberkampf near the Bataclan concert hall in central Paris, early on November 14, 2015. — AFP

BUHARI'S ROW WITH WIFE SIGNALS NIGERIAN INERTIA FRUSTRATIONS

LAGOS: A row between the Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari and his wife has brought cracks in the ruling party right into the open, as frustration grows over government inertia in trying to drag the country out of its first recession in 25 years. Aisha Buhari publicly criticized her husband's record in office, saying she might not support him if he seeks re-election in 2019 unless he shakes up his administration, which she said had been hijacked by a "few people".

The president tried to laugh off the rebuke from his wife of 27 years, saying "she belongs in the kitchen" — but without addressing the substance of her remarks, made last week in an interview with the BBC. The 73-year-old won last year's election promising a new era in the West African nation, where graft has enriched an elite while most of the 180 million Nigerians live in poverty despite the OPEC member's oil wealth.

Buhari came to power backed by his All Progressives Congress (APC) party, a broad coalition of politicians who united to remove his predecessor, Goodluck Jonathan, without having a joint plan on how to run the country. Now, 17 months into office, there are few signs of Buhari's promised reforms to diversify the econ-

omy away from exporting crude, prices of which have halved since 2014.

Already the naira is down 35 percent this year, making it one of the worst performing currencies in the world, and the National Bureau of Statistics forecasts the economy will shrink by 1.3 percent in 2016. But criticism of the government goes beyond an apparent lack of urgency in tackling the economic crisis. A belief is growing that power is concentrated among Buhari's chief of staff and an inner circle at the presidential villa, making it difficult for ministers to get the attention of the president.

The First Lady is not alone in her views. Senate President Bukola Saraki, the third most senior politician in Nigeria, took to Twitter to express his concerns. "It has become clear that there is gov't within gov't of @MBuhari who've seized apparatus of Executive powers to pursue their nefarious agenda," he tweeted in June. Buhari's spokesmen declined to comment while the president himself has defended his economic record in general terms. "I believe that this recession will not last," he said this month. "We have identified the country's salient problems and we are working hard at lasting solutions." — Reuters

EX-CONGO VP, AIDES GUILTY OF BRIBERY IN WAR CRIMES TRIAL

THE HAGUE: International judges yesterday found former Congolese vice president Jean-Pierre Bemba and four close aides guilty of bribing and corrupting witnesses in a bid to derail

his landmark war crimes trial. The case was "about the clear, and downright criminal behavior of the five accused... that resulted in serious offences against the administration of justice,"

judge Bertram Schmitt told the International Criminal Court while handing down the verdict. "No legal system in the world can accept the bribing of witnesses, the inducement of witnesses to lie or the coaching of witnesses," he told the five men, who were all present in the court in The Hague.

Each of the men stood in turn and remained impassive as Schmitt pronounced them guilty of most charges, although there were acquittals on some of the lesser charges against two of the defendants. "Today's judgment sends a clear message that the court is not willing to allow its proceedings to be hampered or destroyed," Schmitt said. And he further warned that those who sought to undermine the court would "not go unpunished".

Prosecutors charged that from his prison cell, the ex-rebel leader Bemba masterminded a network to bribe and manipulate at least 14 defense witnesses to lie during his trial at ICC based in The Hague. Bemba was sentenced in June to 18 years in jail on five charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by his militia in Central African Republic. Once the powerful leader of the Congolese Liberation Movement (MLC) and a wealthy businessman from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Bemba, 53, remains behind bars in The Netherlands and is appealing his sentence. — AFP



KINSHASA: A policeman walks in front of a police truck as the Congolese capital Kinshasa was gripped by a strike called 'Villes mortes' (Dead cities) in a protest over plans by the president to stay in power beyond the end of his term in December. — AFP

MYANMAR FERRY DISASTER DEATH TOLL NEARS 50

YANGON: The death toll from a ferry disaster on a river in central Myanmar four days ago has risen to nearly 50, officials said yesterday, with most of the deceased identified as women and at least two dozen others still missing. The overloaded vessel, whose passengers included scores of teachers and university students, went down early Saturday while it was travelling on the Chindwin River in Sagaing region. Some 150 people were rescued alive on that day but officials believe the ship was carrying up to 250 passengers when it sank on its way to Monywa, a city around 72 kilometers south.

"We have found altogether 48 dead bodies so far," said local MP Tun Tun Win, a jump up from the 32 people pronounced dead on Monday. "Many more could be dead," he said, adding that local monks have begun leading memorial services for the deceased. An official from the local relief and resettlement department

said two thirds of the dead were women. At least 23 people — 17 of whom are women—are still missing, the official said, requesting anonymity.

One end of the brightly-painted ferry has been raised above the river's surface, with bloated bodies found trapped inside, but most of the vessel remains submerged. Yesterday rescuers continued efforts to raise the rest of the ship using cranes. "The boat still can't be lifted out (completely)," Sa Willy Frient, the director of the relief department, told yesterday morning. At least four of the boat's staff have been arrested and will face legal action, according to local authorities. Shipwrecks are common in Myanmar, a mostly rural and poor country with rudimentary transportation infrastructure. Many living along the nation's flood-prone river systems rely heavily on ferries, which are often overcrowded and poorly maintained. — AFP



In this photograph taken on October 18, 2016 rescue workers are seen on the sunken ferry partially lifted from the water near the river bank. — AFP



DOHA: This June 18, 2013 file photo, shows a general view of the Taliban office before the official opening. — AP

AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, TALEBAN OFFICIALS HOLD TALKS IN QATAR

AIMED AT RESTARTING PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

KARACHI: Taliban officials and the Afghan government have held new secret talks in Qatar aimed at restarting peace negotiations to end the country's long war, three officials say, though questions remain over which faction of the insurgency is doing the talking. Talks between the US-backed government in Kabul and the militants fell apart in July 2015 after Afghan officials announced the death years earlier of the insurgency's longtime leader, the Taliban's one-eyed founder Mullah Mohammed Omar. In the time since, a leadership struggle within its ranks broke into the open and Omar's successor was killed in a US drone strike in Pakistan.

Now, the Taliban itself is denying the new talks while its fighters continue to battle government forces, suggesting another break with the insurgency. How much power that splinter group wields may prove to be the crucial question in how far this new effort goes. The Guardian newspaper of Britain first reported on the talks Tuesday, saying the first happened in September and second this month in Doha, the capital of Qatar. The small, natural-gas-rich country on the Arabian Peninsula hosts a Taliban political office, whose earlier insistence to fly the white flag of Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and use the term the "Islamic

Emirate of Afghanistan" derailed earlier peace talks in 2013.

Long relationship

A senior Pakistani intelligence official, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorized to release the information, said he was aware of recent meetings in Doha between "mid-level Taliban and Afghan officials." He said a US official also attended the meetings, though he did not know specifics of what was discussed as Pakistan did not take part.

"We wish them a success in bringing peace in Afghanistan as peace in our neighbor is good for all," the official said. Pakistan long has been viewed with suspicion in neighboring Afghanistan over its intelligence services' long relationship with the Taliban. An Afghan government official, who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity as the talks were supposed to remain secret, also confirmed the meetings took place, without elaborating.

Mohammad Haroon Chakhansuri, a spokesman for Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, said in a statement that "despite the continued fighting, we pursue different channels for peace talks." He declined to answer any questions

regarding the Doha talks. Qatar's government, which also helped mediate the 2014 Taliban prisoner swap that freed US Army Sgt Bowe Bergdahl, did not respond to a request for comment. The US Embassy in Qatar declined to comment. Mark Toner, a deputy spokesman at the State Department in Washington, declined to answer questions about the talks or identify the American official who took part.

"We are committed to promoting a negotiated settlement to end the Afghan conflict," Toner said in a statement. News of the talks apparently sparked confusion among the ranks of the Taliban. Zabihullah Mujahid, the insurgency's spokesman, described reports of talks taking place as "baseless news" as the Qatar office's chief did not take part. Another Taliban official, speaking on condition of anonymity as he wasn't authorized to talk to journalists, confirmed the talks took place and said that office chief's absence from them reflected a continuing power struggle within the movement over who should run the Qatar office. That likely comes as part of larger questions about the group's direction, years after the Sept 11, 2001, attacks and the subsequent US-led invasion of Afghanistan over the Taliban harboring Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. — AP

INDIA OFFERS MYANMAR'S SUU KYI HELP IN ENERGY AND AGRICULTURE

NEW DELHI: Myanmar is struggling to establish full democracy after 50 years of military rule, de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi said yesterday following a deadly military lockdown in restive Rakhine state. State media say security forces have killed at least 29 people in a military crackdown after raids on guard posts along the Bangladesh border which the government blamed on Islamist insurgents. The area is home to many Rohingya, a persecuted Muslim minority in the overwhelmingly Buddhist country.

"We as a nation are struggling to make the democratic culture take root," Suu Kyi told reporters after meeting Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on her first official visit to New Delhi. "We too have many challenges to face, but we are confident that these challenges can be overcome because our people are determined to overcome them." Suu Kyi won a historic election victory last year and her administration is managing a difficult transition from a military-run pariah nation to full-fledged democracy.

After spending much of the last few decades under arrest, she is now officially foreign minister and self-appointed state counsellor—a role akin to prime minister. But her country remains riven with ethnic and religious violence and she has disappointed some of her supporters by refusing publicly to recognize the Rohingya as legal citizens. Tens of thousands of stateless

Rohingya have spent the past four years trapped in bleak displacement camps with limited access to health care and other basic services. Suu Kyi said her country had suffered from a lack of peace and stability for many decades

and looked to neighboring India for help in developing as a democracy. Modi said India, which strongly supported Suu Kyi during her time in opposition, stood "shoulder to shoulder" with Myanmar. — AFP



NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (R) shakes hand with Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi before a meeting. — AFP

PAKISTAN ARRESTS TWO FOR SPREADING IS PROPAGANDA

PESHAWAR: Police arrested two men suspected of distributing pamphlets for Islamic State (IS) following a raid in the northwestern city of Peshawar, officials said yesterday, amid lingering fears that the Middle East militant group was making inroads in Pakistan. Last month, the military said that it had stemmed Islamic State's attempts to expand in the country, having arrested more than 300 people suspected of plotting attacks against government, diplomatic and civilian targets.

Following Tuesday's raid, however, police in the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province said militants were operating in parts of Peshawar, including some from Islamic State. "Some of areas in the provincial capital including Tehskal, Palosai, Charsadda Road and Regi are known for activities of militant groups such as IS," police official Ishtiaq Ahmed told Reuters. Another police official, speaking on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media, said two other suspects managed to escape during the raid.

There are fears that some of Pakistan's home-grown Sunni militants could be drawn to Islamic State, as already seen in neighboring Afghanistan. Pakistan has long suffered from sectarian violence, with Sunni militants targeting the country's minority Shiites, as well as non-Muslim religious minorities. In August, the official Islamic State news service claimed responsibility for a suicide bombing at a hospital in the southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta that killed 74 people. The attack, however, was also claimed by a breakaway faction of the Pakistani Taliban, Jamaat-ur-Ahrar, which at one time had declared support for Islamic State's Middle East leadership, but later switched back to the Taliban. — Reuters

S LANKA EXHUMES BODY OF FORMER SPY OVER MURDER

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan police yesterday exhumed the body of a retired army spy whose supposed suicide note claimed responsibility for the 2009 murder of a prominent anti-establishment newspaper editor, a police officer said. The 52-year-old former military intelligence officer was found hanging at his home in central Sri Lanka five days ago and was buried shortly afterwards, the senior police source said. But police now suspect the suicide note found in his pocket at the time of his death may not be genuine and want to determine his link to any criminal activity that could have led to his murder.

"There had been lapses in the first autopsy and the body is exhumed to carry out fresh forensic tests," the officer told AFP on condition of anonymity. "We are looking at his fingerprints to see if he had been involved in any criminal activity." Investigators have begun checking his phone records and bank accounts since his retirement nine years ago. Last month authorities reopened the investigation into the January 2009 killing of Editor Lasantha Wickrematunga, a fierce critic of the then-strongman president Mahinda Rajapakse.

A serving military intelligence officer is already in custody in connection with Wickrematunga's death, which sparked an international outcry and shone a spotlight on violence against the media. Last month authorities also exhumed Wickrematunga's body to conduct a fresh autopsy after fears that forensic evidence may have been tampered with or falsified to mislead the investigation.

Wickrematunga was the chief editor of the Sunday Leader newspaper which had accused Rajapakse's then-powerful defense secretary brother Gotabhaya of kickbacks in arms purchases, including an aircraft deal. Last year a former minister in Rajapakse's government accused Gotabhaya of running a death squad and ordering the hit against the editor. — AFP

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		NUMBER OF UNITS: 73	
RECALL REASON	Replacement of passenger Airbag Inflator on RX350 2016 model year only. Vehicles are equipped with a "hybrid" type front passenger air bag inflator and it may have been improperly welded and / or misassembled. Lexus Center will replace passenger airbag with new one at NO Cost to you.		
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HK INDEPENDENCE LAWMAKERS BLOCKED FROM TAKING OATH

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's legislature again descended into chaos yesterday as pro-Beijing politicians blocked the swearing in of two new lawmakers who want a split from China, in an increasingly divided parliament. It comes as fears grow in the semi-autonomous city that Beijing is tightening its grip, fuelling an independence movement in Hong Kong. Yesterday saw rival lawmakers clash in a heated shouting match after the pro-Beijing camp walked out of the swearing-in session.

The walkout led to the meeting being cancelled, preventing pro-independence lawmakers Yau Wai-ching and Baggio Leung from taking the oath that would allow them to take up their seats. In the ensuing confrontations one veteran pro-democracy legislator threw slices of luncheon meat at his opponents while

another was surrounded by security after turning China and Hong Kong flags displayed on pro-Beijing lawmakers' desks upside-down.

Meanwhile, pro-Beijing lawmakers chanted "Apologise!", demanding Yau and Leung say sorry for their failure to take the oath properly at last week's swearing-in ceremony. The pair had their oaths rejected last Wednesday after they draped themselves in "Hong Kong is not China" flags. The oath states Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China.

Both refused to pronounce China properly, and Yau was heard to replace the words "the People's Republic of China" with "the People's ref****g of Zeena". They were given permission to retake their oaths Wednesday, but the session was abandoned after the pro-

Beijing walkout left an insufficient number of legislators in the chamber. "If they want people to respect their oaths, they have to express regret over their behavior last week and to apologize to all Chinese around the world," pro-Beijing lawmaker Priscilla Leung told reporters.

Hundreds of pro-Beijing supporters waved Chinese flags and stamped on pictures of the two outspoken lawmakers outside the legislative council building. The pair said they wanted to complete their oaths, but would not apologize for last week's behavior. "We are empowered by the people to enter the Legco," Baggio Leung said.

Court challenge
The former British colony was handed back to China in 1997 under an agreement protecting its freedoms for

50 years, but there are concerns those liberties are being eroded. Leung and Yau are part of a new wave of lawmakers advocating independence and self-determination who won seats in the Legislative Council (Legco) — Hong Kong's lawmaking body — in citywide polls last month. Five legislators, including the pair, had their oaths rejected at last week's swearing in.

Of those five, one pro-Beijing lawmaker and one pro-democracy lawmaker, whose oaths were declared invalid the first time round, were allowed to retake them Wednesday morning. The Beijing camp then walked out, forcing the session to be abandoned before Yau, Leung and pro-democracy teacher Lau Siu-lai, who read her oath at a snail's pace last week, took the stand. The chaotic scenes came after a late-night

court bid Tuesday by city leader Leung Chun-ying and justice secretary Rimsky Yuen to block Yau and Baggio Leung from taking up their seats.

That went directly against a decision by the pro-Beijing president of Legco, who had already given the green light for them to have a second chance at the oath. The court refused to grant an injunction against Wednesday's oath-taking, but gave permission for a judicial review into whether the pair should be disqualified, putting their future as lawmakers into question. In a separate case Wednesday, former pro-democracy lawmaker Raymond Wong was convicted of throwing a glass at city leader Leung Chun-ying inside the Legco in 2014. Wong, 64, was convicted of common assault and will be sentenced on Tuesday, local media reported. —AFP

DUTERTE PRAISES CHINA

'CRITICISM ALL PROPAGANDA PRODUCED BY THE WEST'

BEIJING: Visiting Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte had praise for China yesterday, setting aside a maritime dispute as the combative leader reconfigures his country's diplomatic alliances. The Asian giant was "good", he said. "It has never invaded a piece of my country all these generations," Duterte added in an apparent comparison to the Philippines' former colonial ruler the United States. "During the Cold War, China was portrayed as the bad guy," he added. "And all of these years, what we have read in our books in school were all propaganda produced by the West."

Duterte is in China for a four-day trip that is expected to confirm his

tilt away from Washington and towards Beijing's sphere of influence. Foreign policy under Duterte has dramatically shifted from that pursued under predecessor Benigno Aquino, who took Beijing to an international tribunal over its extensive territorial claims in the South China Sea and won a resounding victory.

The move infuriated Beijing. But Duterte, who took office in June shortly before the tribunal ruling, has made a point of not flaunting the outcome, even though China seized Scarborough Shoal a fishing ground within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone in 2012. The judgment, Duterte said, was "a piece of paper with four corners"

"The arbitral award gives us the right. China has the historical right. And they're insisting. In this situation, do we argue, or do we just talk? I would say, let us put it (off) to some other day."

As Duterte has cozied up to Beijing, he has repeatedly denounced the United States and President Barack Obama for criticizing his deadly war on crime. He has also suspended joint US-Philippine patrols in the South China Sea, and has threatened an end to joint military exercises. The South China Sea is of intense interest to Washington and it has repeatedly spoken out on the various territorial disputes between China and its neighbors over the strategically vital waters.

Rising tensions
Tensions have risen between the US and China over Washington's so-called "pivot" to the Asia-Pacific, a move that Beijing says is intended to contain it. Duterte will meet top leaders including President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang during his stay. Hours before he spoke, Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular briefing that Beijing was pleased to move towards resolving the territorial dispute "through consultation and dialogue."

"This is how two friendly neighbors should treat each other," she added. "Anyone who truly wishes for peace, stability, development and prosperity in the Asia Pacific" should welcome Duterte's visit. In an editorial yesterday, China's nationalist Global Times newspaper said Washington had treated Manila "as a pawn", adding Duterte was now "redesigning Philippine foreign policy based on Philippine interests". Duterte has said his China trip will focus on promoting economic ties.

The Philippines is hoping, among other things, that Beijing will repeal a ban on imports of its bananas — an economic sanction intended to punish Manila for its South China Sea stance. Hua said Wednesday announcements on infrastructure cooperation and economic development projects could be expected during the Philippine leader's visit. Beijing has also enthusiastically endorsed Duterte's war on drugs, which has seen more than 3,700 people killed and led the International Criminal Court to warn that those responsible could face charges. Hua praised Duterte yesterday for "rolling out policies to ensure social order and public security", adding that the two sides were already in close communication about cooperating on drug control and anti-crime issues. —AFP



BEIJING: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte addresses members of the Philippine community. —AP

MILLIONS IN PHILIPPINES ON ALERT FOR SUPER TYPHOON

MANILA: Millions of people in the Philippines were on high alert yesterday for one of the strongest typhoons to ever hit the disaster-battered country, with authorities warning of giant storm surges and destructive winds. Super Typhoon Haima was forecast to hit remote communities in the far north of the country about 11:00 pm (1500 GMT) yesterday, bringing winds almost on a par with catastrophic Super Typhoon Haiyan that claimed more than 7,350 lives in 2013.

"It's not just heavy rain and strong winds that we are expecting. It's also floods, landslides and storm surges in coastal areas. Those in these areas, you are in danger. Find safer ground," Allan Tabel, chief of the interior ministry's disaster and information coordinating centre, told a nationally televised briefing. With Haima having a weather band of 800 kilometers more than 10 million people across the northern parts of the Philippines' main island of Luzon will be affected, according to the government's disaster risk management agency. Haima was approaching the Philippines with sustained winds of 225 kilometers an hour and gusts of 315 kilometers an hour, according to the state weather bureau. Authorities warned coastal communities to expect storm surges of five meters or higher.

"It's already started. The wind is strong, the waves are big," said Julie Hermano, manager of a small resort in Santa Ana, a coastal town of about 30,000 people that is in the typhoon's direct path. "Some residents have been panic-buying food in markets because we were told it's going to be a super typhoon. We've already tied down our water tank and prepared our (power) generator set." The Philippine islands are often the first major landmass to be hit by storms that generate over the Pacific Ocean. The Southeast Asian archipelago endures about 20 major storms each year, many of them deadly.

The most powerful and deadly was Haiyan, which destroyed entire towns in heavily populated areas of the central Philippines. "We are possibly dealing with a typhoon that is even stronger than Typhoon Yolanda (as Haiyan was known in the Philippines) in 2013. We must therefore brace ourselves for the possible effects of a

makeshift evacuation centers as authorities raised the highest typhoon alert of "signal five". Flights to the north were also suspended and schools were closed. The Philippine capital of Manila is about 450 kilometers south of where Haima is forecast to make landfall. Authorities said the city, with about 12 million people, was not



BAGUIO CITY: A resident holding his pet cats sits in a temporary shelter, after local authorities ordered a pre-emptive evacuation of affected residents hours before Super Typhoon Haima is forecast to hit. —AFP

typhoon of this magnitude," government executive secretary Salvador Medialdea said in a statement. "We call on all government agencies to be on highest level of preparedness and to take all necessary precautions."

In the northern regions expected to be worst hit, tens of thousands of people sought refuge in schools and other

expected to be badly hit although it would be hit with some rain. Haima was forecast to exit the Philippines Friday, then track towards southern China. Haima is the second typhoon to hit the northern Philippines in a week, after Sarika claimed at least one life and left three people missing. —AFP



MANILA: Protesters lie on the ground after being hit by a police van during a rally in front of the US embassy. —AFP

PHILIPPINE POLICE VAN RAMS PROTESTERS AT US EMBASSY

MANILA: A Philippine police van rammed into protesters, leaving several bloodied, as an anti-US rally turned violent yesterday at the American Embassy in Manila. At least three student activists were taken to a hospital after they were run over by the van driven by a police officer, protest leader Renato Reyes said.

Associated Press TV footage showed the van repeatedly ramming the protesters as it drove wildly back and forth after activists surrounded and started hitting the vehicle with wooden batons they seized from police. In front of horrified crowds, including video journalists and photographers, the van suddenly charged backward then sprinted forward twice over a space of about 20 meters (60 feet), barreling through the scattered protesters and hurtling some to the side like bowling pins. A few were run over but somehow managed to stand.

Some screamed in surprise, others hurled stones at the van and yelled invectives. A speaker called the police "puppies of imperialists" on a loudspeaker. "There was absolutely no justification for it," Reyes said of the violent police dispersal of about 1,000 protesters. "Even as the president vowed an independent foreign policy, Philippine police forces still act as running dogs of the US."

'US troops out now'

Police lobbed tear gas and arrested at least 23 protesters who broke through a line of riot police and hurled red paint at the officers and a US government seal at the start of the rally at the seaside embassy compound. A firetruck doused the rowdy protesters with water to push them back,

but they took hold of the water hose and confronted the outnumbered police with rocks and red paint. After breaking through the police corridor, they scribbled "US troops out now" and other slogans at the embassy's tall fence with red paint.

The protesters, consisting of students, workers and tribespeople, were demanding an end to the presence of visiting US troops in the Philippines and to support a call by President Rodrigo Duterte for a foreign policy not dependent on the US, the country's longtime treaty ally. The activists came from the largest left-wing umbrella group called Bayan (Nation), which has organized regular anti-US protests in front of the embassy for decades, most of which are peaceful.

Duterte was on a state visit to China, where he is seeking to repair relations strained under his predecessor over territorial conflicts in the South China Sea. He is also seeking to expand two-way trade and investments and financing for badly needed infrastructure projects. Amid an uneasy relationship with the US, Duterte has tried to reach out to China and Russia, bringing uncertainty to his country's long alliance with America.

But the protesters also opposed the president's effort to lean toward China. "The Philippines will not be dictated on, whether by the US or China," they said in a statement. The Philippine National Police did not comment immediately yesterday. The violence happened as the police and Duterte are under increased international scrutiny for their alleged role in the killings of thousands of drug suspects and pushers as part of the president's war on illegal drugs. —AP

THAILAND STEPS UP ITS WEB SURVEILLANCE

BANGKOK: Thai "cyber-scouts" have flagged scores of websites for alleged royal defamation since the death of King Bhumibol Adulyadej and are monitoring all communication channels, a junta official said yesterday. A crackdown on perceived royal insults has been enforced following the king's death last Thursday, which has plunged the nation into mourning for a beloved monarch.

Thailand's monarchy is protected by a draconian lese majeste law that outlaws criticism and muzzles detailed discussion on the monarchy — including by all media based in Thailand. Surveillance by authorities is routine but appears to have been stepped up. There have also been vigilante actions by pockets of royalist hardliners. Police say they have opened a dozen cases under Section 112 — the broadly worded royal defamation law that carries up to 15 years in jail for each infringement — since the king died aged 88. But the number may rise as authorities scour the internet for infringements of the law.

"During this time we have centers to monitor 24 hours a day," Prajin Jantong, a deputy prime minister, told reporters. "We are monitoring all channels, websites, all communication channels including LINE," he added, referring to the messaging app widely used by Thais. On October 14 officials found 52 websites deemed to have broken the law and the following day 61 websites were flagged, he said, adding "some were closed" using special powers granted to the junta.

"When (the public) sees these kinds of

website, they should inform authorities and do not like or share them," Prajin said, adding some of the sites were hosted outside the country. Prosecutions for lese majeste have surged under the military which seized power two years ago, with record-breaking sentences handed down in some cases. Critics say the junta has largely targeted its political opponents.

Witch-hunt

Thais have been overwhelmingly dignified in grief following the king's death, with people donning black and so far abiding by an order to "tone down" the country's nightlife and entertainment. But concerns about a lese majeste witch-hunt have grown since the king's death. Five videos have emerged of angry mobs beating people alleged to have insulted the monarchy. In the latest example of mob justice, a live broadcast on Facebook on Tuesday morning showed a man dragged, kicked and forced to prostrate himself in front of a portrait of the king for allegedly insulting the monarchy in a social media post.

The same day Justice Minister Paboon Koomchaya urged Thais to "socially sanction" those who defame the monarchy, pledging to track down "those people who violate the law". But on Wednesday the junta sent a more conciliatory message. "The Prime Minister (Prayut Chan-O-Cha) is upset over attacking clips," junta spokesman Sansern Kaewkamnerd told reporters. "By attacking people it damages our image in the eyes of foreigners," he said. —AFP

MARS LANDER MAKES RISKY TOUCHDOWN ON RED PLANET

FRANKFURT: The search for life on Mars took a giant leap yesterday when a space lander touched down on the red planet in Europe's first attempt to land a craft there since the Beagle 2's "heroic failure" more than a decade ago.

The disc-shaped 577-kg Schiaparelli lander, which is testing technologies for a rover due to follow in 2020, landed on Mars after a risky descent, but scientists are still waiting to find out what shape it is in.

During the six minutes descent to the surface, it used a parachute and thrusters to slow from a speed of nearly 21,000 km per hour. "We have to wait a little bit to see what happens with the test lander. But this (mission) is already a success so far," European Space Agency (ESA) Director General Jan Woerner said at ESA's Space Operations Centre in Darmstadt, Germany.

The lander is named for Giovanni Schiaparelli, the Italian astronomer who in 1877 began mapping the topography of Mars, extending study of what are now known as the planet's canals, a mistranslation of the Italian word canali, or channels.

"Mars has already inspired people for centuries," ESA's Woerner told Reuters TV.

Schiaparelli is part of the European-Russian ExoMars programme, which will search for signs of past and present life on Mars and represents only the second European attempt to land a craft on the red planet. Britain's Beagle 2 was ejected from the Mars Express spacecraft in 2003 but never made contact after failing to deploy its solar panels upon landing.

At the time it was dubbed "a heroic failure". Landing on Mars, Earth's neighbor some 56 million km away, is a notoriously difficult task that has bedevilled most Russian efforts and given NASA trouble as well.

A seemingly hostile environment on Mars has not detracted from its allure, with US President Barack Obama recently highlighting his pledge to send people to the planet by the 2030s.

Life on Mars

The primary goal of ExoMars is to find out whether life has ever existed on Mars. The spacecraft on which the Schiaparelli lander travelled to Mars, Trace Gas Orbiter (TGO), carries an atmospheric probe to study trace gases such as methane around the planet.

The second part of the ExoMars mission, delayed to 2020 from 2018, will deliver a European rover to the surface of Mars. It will be the first with the ability to both move across the planet's surface and drill into the ground to collect and analyze samples.

The prime contractor is Thales Alenia Space, a joint venture between Thales and Finmeccanica. The cost of the ExoMars mission to ESA, including the second part due in 2020, is expected to be about 1.3 billion euros (\$1.4 billion). Russia's contribution comes on top of that.



An artist's impression yesterday shows the Schiaparelli module on the surface of Mars. — AP

KUWAIT INCHES CLOSER TO EXPAT ONLY...

Continued from Page 1

At present, expatriates must pay KD 50 per year for health insurance before they can renew their residency. This allows them basic services in the public healthcare system including polyclinics and government hospitals.

Under the ministry of health's law No. 1/1999 pertaining with health insurance for foreigners, obtaining medical insurance is obligatory in order to issue or renew a resident's visa.

The Health Insurance Hospitals Company was established according to the public-private-partnership (PPP) model with a KD 230 million capital, and the government owns 24 percent of its shares, while 26 percent is owned by strategic investor Arabi Holding Group.

Furthermore, most expats are likely not going to find the option of buying insurance policies from private companies financially feasible as well.

KD 255 according to official statistics, while the minimum average cost for private health insurance in Kuwait reaches KD 140 a year, and goes up the older the buyer is.

The idea to establish expat-exclusive hospitals came after the government decided it was the best solution to the problem of its heavily overcrowded public medical facilities. The current health sector's capacity is 7,000 beds in public hospitals and 1,000 in private hospitals, with an average of three beds for every 10,000 in Kuwait.

Meanwhile, the three planned hospitals for expatriates will have a bed capacity of 700 each, and will be built in Ahmadi, Jahra and Farwaniya governorates. They will serve only around two million expatriates working in the private sector, while non-Kuwaiti public sector employees and domestic helpers (nearly one million) are either going to continue to be treated at public hospitals or through an alternative health plan.

AMIR INSTRUCTS PREMIER TO RE-EXAMINE DNA...

Continued from Page 1

Sheikh Malek said he is determined to fight the election battle until the end and is ready for any outcome.

The first day of registration did not see the return of opposition groups that had boycotted polls since Dec 2012, but at least two former opposition MPs - Marzouq Al-Hubbaini and Fahd Al-Khanna - registered as candidates.

A large number of candidates blasted the outgoing Assembly as weak and for having passed several unconstitutional legislations like the DNA law. Candidate Hamad Al-Tuwaijri said the outgoing Assembly failed to protect the interests of the Kuwaiti people.

Assembly will be a "tough" one. Former MP Roudhan Al-Roudhan acknowledged that the people were upset by the Assembly and expected an up to 70 percent turnover.

Many candidates expected economic issues to top the election campaigns, which will start next week. Former MP Faisal Al-Kandari said any economic reform must not be at the expense of the Kuwaiti people, "not now and not any time in the future".

Deputy director of the election department Col Salah Al-Shatti said there are 483,186 eligible voters, of whom 252,756 or 52.3 percent are women and 230,430 voters or 47.7 percent are men.

'CAT-EYED' TEA SELLER SPARKS SOUL SEARCHING

Continued from Page 1

Light skin and eyes are the attribute of many Pashtuns, tribal inhabitants of northwest Pakistan and southern Afghanistan, romanticized as warriors by the British.

Vegetable seller Saeed Ahmed worked in the market alongside Khan. "His eyes were so beautiful that we used to make fun of him and call him 'cat eyes,'" he told AFP.

TOP IRAQI ARTIST WARNS OF 'SCENARIO...'

Continued from Page 1

cleansing - it cannot be accepted." Speaking on the eve of the launch of the battle for second city Mosul, Azzawi, asked if there is any reason for hope in Iraq, responds simply: "No, none at all. This is the scenario, the scenario of destruction."

"He adds: "I am not saying Saddam (Hussein) was fantastic, no. But we have now 100 Saddams." The exhibition is curated by Catherine David of Paris' Pompidou Centre and runs until April 2017.

SPENDING CUTS A MUST DESPITE OIL RECOVERY...

Continued from Page 1

GCC countries had to cut back their spending "one way or another" over the next five years and find ways of raising non-oil revenues, he said.

civil servants. Its measures represent one of the ways for GCC countries "to address this issue of how to bring their budgets into balance," said Ahmed.

The IMF regional chief said economic growth in the GCC as a whole was expected to be at just under two percent in 2016. Next year would see a "modest improvement," rising to between two and 2.5 percent.

In the longer term, GCC countries should aim to cut their wage bills through encouraging nationals to seek jobs in the private sector "rather than automatically thinking that their future lies in the public sector," Ahmed said.

Record-high oil prices in the past few years have allowed GCC economies to expand rapidly, and governments were able to invest heavily on infrastructure projects. But the drop in oil revenues pushed these governments to shelve many of them.

"Over two million young people are going to come into the labor market over the next couple of years in the GCC," said Ahmed, highlighting the need for a "competitive private sector" that could create jobs.

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ACCOUNTS : 24835619
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P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.
E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Issues

WITH COUP DEFEATED, ERDOGAN EYES VOTE ON REVAMPED POWERS

Just three months after seeing off a failed coup, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has put right back at the top of the agenda a plan to increase his powers through constitutional change. The plan to create a presidential system means Turkey is likely to be heading to a referendum in the first half of next year, analysts say. This may create more instability for Turkey's fragile economy and exacerbate already simmering tensions in society, after Erdogan defeated the biggest challenge to his 13-year rule.

But it will also allow the leader to settle for once and for all the question of his powers. Only a month after becoming prime minister in March 2003 Erdogan told an interviewer that his "desire" was for a presidential system in Turkey, similar to the one in the United States. After being elected president in August 2014 and defeating the coup bid in July, Erdogan is more determined than ever to fulfill his desire and push forward with his plans.

Government officials argue a fully presidential system is needed to legalize what has become a de-facto situation, with Erdogan Turkey's undisputed number one after transforming the office of head of state. To change the constitution the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) co-founded by Erdogan needs a super-majority of 367 votes. The AKP only has 316 seats (excluding the speaker Ismail Kahraman) in the 550-seat national assembly.

But to put forward the changes to the public in a referendum, the party needs only 330 votes, which could happen if the 40-seat Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) of Devlet Bahçeli gives its support. The two other opposition parties are likely to be against. Bahçeli has not indicated whether his party's MPs will give the government their support but on Tuesday gave his firmest indication yet it could be prepared to allow the referendum to go ahead.

'Increase Polarization'

Fadi Hakura, Turkey expert at Chatham House think tank in London, said that so far the Bahçeli's statements indicate "willingness to collaborate" with the AKP to bring about a referendum. He added there was a "real possibility" the system would be approved in a referendum but warned that the current polarization in Turkey would worsen. "The presidential system will further intensify the ideological polarization and entrenched conservatism. (It) will further intensify the existing political, ideological and sectarian divisions bedeviling Turkish politics and society," he said.

The uncertainty since the issue rose back to the top of the agenda has also hurt the Turkish lira, which has lost over four percent in value against the US dollar over the last month. Some experts suggest the president could even be tempted to call early legislative elections in 2017 although the government has denied having any such idea.

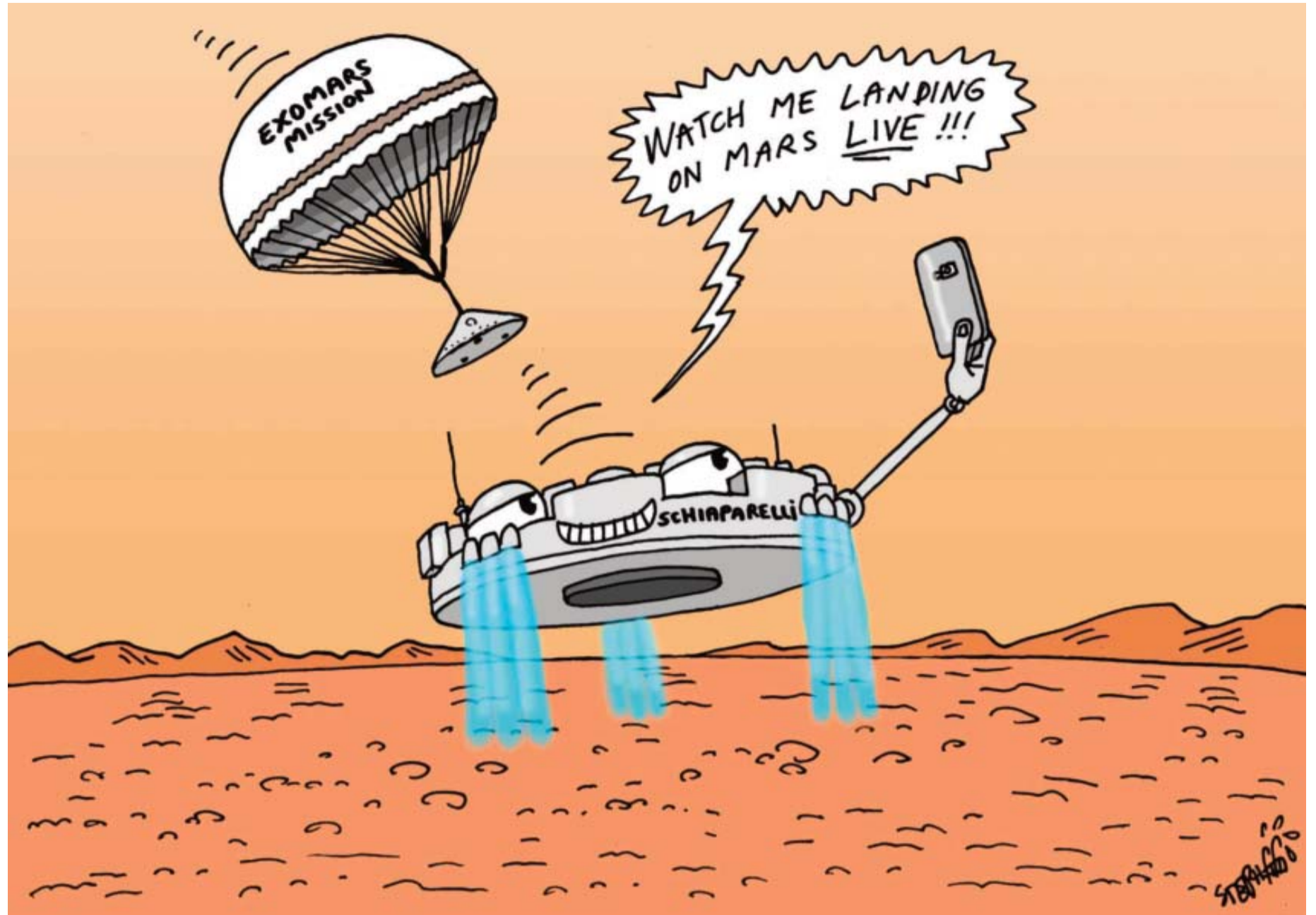
Michael Harris, global head of research at investment bank Renaissance Capital, warned in a note that the Turkish economy was "on hold" until Erdogan achieved his objectives. According to Harris, if Erdogan tries to win a super-majority through an early election, it would be the "crux of why we continue to recommend investors take money out of the country". But if Erdogan is able to achieve the executive presidency in an accelerated and smoother process, Turkey could find "political equilibrium in 2017", he said.

'People Support Erdogan'

Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım on Tuesday said it would be brought to parliament "very soon" because the changes were needed to "eliminate confusion from the system". Justice Minister Bekir Bozdağ suggested last week a referendum on a presidential system could come as early as spring 2017. The authorities are confident of winning a symbolic and convincing victory, which would be Turkey's fourth major national poll in as many years.

Polls after the coup showed that its defeat had substantially bolstered Erdogan's ratings while a poll published on Tuesday in the pro-government Daily Sabah newspaper said 63 percent supported the presidential system. "In Turkey people see a close relationship between Erdogan and the presidential system," said Mehmet Ali Kulat, the head of the MAK research company which conducted face-to-face interviews with 5,400 people between Oct 10 and 15. "What they support more is Erdogan rather than a presidential system," he said. — AFP

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ONLINE SHARING TREASURE TROVE FOR SNOOPS

They show what we like, reveal who we've been with and flag where we are going. Social networks offer windows into people's lives, and exploiting those insights is big business - with some sounding the alarm over the ever-growing intrusion from corporations and governments alike. "There is a thin line of difference between surveillance of individuals and monitoring for research purposes," Gartner analyst Jenny Sussin told AFP.

Even when espionage is not the original goal, nothing prevents someone from creating streams of Twitter posts based on where information is shared or who is doing the sharing. Twitter and Facebook last week revoked data access for an analytics firm which, according to a civil liberties group, helped law enforcement track people protesting the police shooting of black men in several US cities.

The American Civil Liberties Union reported that Geofeedia had been marketing its services to US police agencies to help track activists using their social media posts and location data. According to internal documents published by the ACLU, Geofeedia boasted that it "covered Ferguson/Mike Brown nationally with great success," referring to the wave of protests in the Missouri community after the shooting

of an unarmed African-American man.

The ACLU documents showed that Geofeedia claimed to have access to the Twitter "firehose" or full stream of data which can be analyzed and interpreted by location and other factors. Geofeedia is one of an array of companies built on the ability to mine insights from the massive amount of information freely shared on social networks. Twitter had previously barred US intelligence from using the Dataminr analytical tool to scan missives sent via the one-to-many messaging service.

The ACLU, however, wants online social networks to ramp up efforts with moves that include the blocking of applications used as tools for spying or police surveillance. Companies processing people's personal data have a responsibility to find out who the end user is going to be, Sophia Cope, a lawyer specializing in civil liberties at the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF). She encourages firms to ask specific questions to find out what use the data will be put to.

Privacy vs Security

The degree to which internet firms should cooperate with police or intelligence services is a long-running debate. In France, there were concerns that data-mining companies put their software to work

for parties interested in monitoring opponents of regimes in Libya or Syria. Internet pioneer Yahoo was recently accused of scanning messages at its email service for a snippet being sought by US authorities. Social networks, however, differ in that the data being perused is typically on public display and not private.

The US government has employees who monitor social networks, but the time and effort involved has created business opportunity for companies such as Geofeedia. Analytics firms often have the advantage of being directly connected, usually for a fee, to streams of data at social networks. This lets the process of drawing out details, insights or patterns be done automatically with software that promises to only get smarter due to improvements in artificial intelligence.

Use of the data can range from benign to troubling. Data mined by firms can help target ads, meaning that people see marketing messages that might spark interest instead of annoyance. Researchers can seek clues to causes or spreads of illness, or measure public sentiment during political campaigns. IBM announced this summer a collaboration with a Brazilian research center to track the spread of diseases such as Zika, dengue or chikungunya

by studying Twitter posts. In Los Angeles, the Department of Justice funded research to see if the police could prevent racist crimes by figuring out where hateful comments on social networks were originating to determine at-risk neighborhoods. Analysis of social media data can also be abused, Cope cautioned. For her, any kind of monitoring is problematic but government keeping tabs on people comes with the added offense of violating constitutional rights.

Think Before Posting

Facebook, Twitter and other online venues use terms of service that set limits on what those tapping into data are permitted to do with the information. Sussin would like to see Internet firms do more to make people mindful of moments when they are sharing their locations. "You voluntarily participate in your own monitoring," said Endpoint Technologies Analyst Roger Kay. "Many people live their lives quite publicly," allowing spies, or criminals to track them, the analyst maintained. In one dramatic illustration: Images shared by social media queen Kim Kardashian were believed to have played a role in her being robbed in Paris recently. She has since become much more discreet. — AFP

FROM MOSUL TO RAQQA? A COMPLEX, RISKY BATTLE

Simultaneous attacks on the Islamic State-held cities of Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa, the de facto capital of the militant group's self-proclaimed caliphate across the border in Syria, would make military sense: such assaults would make it harder for the extremists to move reinforcements and deny them a safe haven. When preparing for the Mosul operations this summer, US officials said a push against IS in Raqqa could be almost simultaneous, putting additional pressure on the group by stretching its ability to defend two strongholds at once.

While the long-awaited Mosul offensive began earlier this week, there's no sign of an imminent campaign against Raqqa. Perhaps that's because Syria is proving to be a more daunting terrain than Iraq. Going after IS-held Raqqa would mean moving deeper into an explosive mix of regional and international rivalries, including a proxy war that has pitted the United States against Russia and its allies.

The fight against IS in northeastern Syria also underlines a US reliance on its one effective partner there - Syria's Kurds. Such an alliance for a Raqqa campaign threatens to ignite a new conflict, with another US partner, NATO member Turkey, and its allied Syrian rebels. In Iraq, the US offers logistical and other support for the military in its fight against IS. In Syria, Washington views President Bashar Assad's government as illegitimate and cannot partner with him.

Even if IS were to be driven out of Raqqa, finding someone to administer the city would be problematic, said Noah Bonsey, a Syria expert with the International Crisis Group think tank. Mosul is the largest city under IS control, with an estimated population of up to one million and no more than 10,000 fighters. Oil-rich Raqqa is home to nearly 200,000 people, most Sunni Arabs, and an estimated 5,000 militants.

Bonsey said retaking Raqqa is key to defeating IS militarily, a US priority, but that among the warring factions in Syria "everybody else has other geostrategic interests that take higher priority." In recent weeks, US-led coalition airstrikes targeted half a dozen bridges in Syria's largely IS-controlled Deir el-Zour province between Raqqa and the Iraqi border. The strikes were aimed at cutting the road between Iraq and Syria for fleeing militants.

Activist Hussam Eesa reported increased IS activity in Raqqa, including more night-time checkpoints, and said some wounded and IS families arrived from Mosul before the start of the offensive. He said there was no sign of panic in Raqqa. Most fortifications in Raqqa, such as trenches, were built long ago, said Eesa, who is not in the city and whose group, Raqqa Is Being Slaughtered Silently, relies on leaked reports from residents.

Refuge

Raqqa could serve as a refuge for IS fighters fleeing



Iraqi forces deploy in Bajwaniyah village, about 30 km south of Mosul, on Tuesday after they liberated it from Islamic State (IS) group. — AFP

Mosul, even if roads are harder to access, said Jennifer Cafarella of the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War. Retreating fighters could also hide among fleeing civilians, or travel in small groups to evade coalition aircraft, she said. Others could withdraw to desert areas between Syria and Iraq for staging future attacks.

Since the summer's discussions in Washington about a possible double-strike against IS, Turkey has entered the fray. Starting in August, Ankara has backed Syrian opposition fighters with tanks and aircraft. This has complicated planning for a possible Raqqa campaign and threatened America's main ally on the ground, the Kurds. The rivalries are dangerous because IS is deft at exploiting divisions among its enemies, said Cafarella.

Kurdish fighters, mostly the well-trained and highly organized People's Protection Units, or YPG, have been the US partner in the anti-IS fight in Syria since 2015 when they freed the town of Kobani. In return for leading the battle for Raqqa, the Kurds demand to be armed by the US and to win political recognition of their right to self-rule.

That would enrage Ankara, which considers the Syrian Kurdish forces as an offshoot of its domestic rebels it deems a terrorist group. Cafarella said directly arming the Kurdish forces would simplify logistics during planning for a major offensive. But the potential for direct confrontation between the Kurds and Turkish and Ankara-backed Syrian forces "would cause a huge ripple in the strategy" and would be difficult for the US to mitigate while conducting a major operation on the Iraqi side, she said.

Ilham Ahmed, a senior Syrian Kurdish official who was in Washington last month, claimed that preparations by Kurdish-led forces for such an offensive are in their final phase, suggesting US recognition and arming are a matter of time. She did not provide details. Fighting elsewhere in Syria has further complicated the situation, including a Turkish push in the northern Aleppo province and a bid for Al-Bab, an IS-run town in the area. The Kurds are also vying for control of Al-Bab, in hopes of connecting separate cantons they hold along the Syrian border with Turkey.

'Terror-Free Zone'

Meanwhile, Turkish troops and Syrian rebels argue that by advancing on Al-Bab, they can break the Syrian government's hold on the rebel-held besieged city of Aleppo city, 30 km to the west, while also denying the Kurds their continuous territory. "Both actors want to grab more territory to prevent the other from grabbing more territory and both want to improve the depth and breadth of coordination with the US against the interest of the other," Bonsey said. Since August, Turkey-backed efforts have driven IS militants and Kurdish rebels from a large swath along the border. The aim, Ankara said, is to set up an even larger "terror-free zone" of as much as 5,000 sq km inside Syria, trampling on the Kurdish aspirations. — AP

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AS ALL BLACKS SOAR, SCANDAL-HIT NZ RUGBY REELS

WELLINGTON: While the All Blacks are reaching new heights, recent off-field scandals have left New Zealand Rugby struggling to maintain the sport's image, particularly with women.

The NZR admits the game needs to change its macho culture after a series of player incidents involving strippers, street violence and casual sex. Pundits have dubbed it "the season from hell", distracting attention from the All Blacks' bid this weekend to set a new record of 18 consecutive Test victories. It is an uncomfortable position for rugby administrators, who are used to New Zealanders backing the sport with an almost religious fervour.

New Zealand Herald rugby writer Gregor Paul said the backlash had been

exacerbated by NZR's poor handling of various crises. "They have been accused of being lenient and guilty of condoning abusive behaviour by doing so little to punish it," he wrote this week.

"They have had their failings pointed out by just about everyone, but most tellingly by some of the most influential women in the country."

The problems began in August, when a stripper known as Scarlett said she was abused and demeaned at a Waikato Chiefs end-of-season "Mad Monday" party.

The Chiefs initially suggested her word could not be trusted because of her occupation, then an internal NZR review dismissed her claims and cleared the players. "A lot of the language immediately

after the Chiefs incident was around victim blaming and shaming," Human Rights Commissioner David Rutherford said at the time. The NZR soon found itself in the spotlight again over its response to a teenage star's violent rampage on a Wellington street.

The player, Losi Filipo, savagely attacked four people, including two women, but escaped conviction because a judge said it might harm his rugby career.

Officials at first stood by Filipo, only to perform an embarrassing U-turn and agree to terminate his Wellington Rugby contract as public outrage grew.

There were further blows to the game's image when one provincial player was jailed for masturbating in public and

another was charged with intent to commit rape.

'SERIOUS MISCONDUCT'

In such a heated atmosphere, the timing of an indiscretion by All Blacks half-back Aaron Smith could not have been worse. The 54-Test veteran was seen entering a disabled toilet cubicle with a mystery woman at Christchurch Airport while he was travelling with the national team the day after a recent Test against South Africa.

While there was no hint of criminal wrongdoing, Smith's actions was deemed "serious misconduct" that damaged the reputation of the All Blacks and its sponsors. He was suspended for one Test and voluntarily stood down from another this

Saturday's blockbuster match against Australia where his teammates are chasing the record win. In response to its recent woes, the NZR is setting up an independent panel to review "respect and responsibility" in the game. Politician Louisa Wall, a former rugby international once named New Zealand women's player of the year, said cultural change needed to begin at the top. She said the NZR needed to include women at board level and take their contribution to the game seriously. "The way that women have traditionally been viewed, they're in the kitchen preparing the food, they wash the uniforms," she told Wellington's Dominion Post newspaper.

"We're not seen as the administrators, the coaches, the umpires." — AFP

NORDIC CHAMPION JOHAUG SUSPENDED OVER DOPING

OSLO: Norway's cross country skier Therese Johaug, a former Olympic gold medallist, has been suspended for two months after failing a drug test, the Norwegian anti-doping agency said yesterday. The seven-time world champion tested positive for traces of the banned anabolic steroid clostebol during an out-of-competition control on September 16. The steroid was contained in a lip cream called Trofodermin, which she used to treat burns during a training session at altitude in Italy late August. The temporary suspension is pending a final verdict, Norway's anti-doping committee, in a statement. The use of anabolic steroids is punishable by a four-year ban.

Johaug's attorney Christian Hjort told TV2 this week that the Trofodermin tube had been provided in its original package, which includes a warning showing that the product is on the list of substances prohibited by the World Anti-doping Agency.

National skiing team doctor Fredrik

Bendiksen has taken responsibility and resigned last week from his post.

Hjort said Johaug respected the decision to impose a temporary ban. "We will now focus on the main case which is to prove her innocence," he said. The suspension of 28-year-old Johaug will last until December 18, ruling her out of the first race of the World Cup in Ruka, Finland, on November 26 and 27, a race she won in 2015. The skier has won seven world titles, including three last winter (skiathlon 2x7.5 km, 30 km classic and relay 4x5 km). She also has three Olympic medals, including one gold unhooked with the relay at the Vancouver Games in 2010.

It is the second doping incident to shake the Norwegian federation recently after cross country skier Martin Sundby was suspended for two months and stripped of his 2015 overall World Cup and Tour de Ski titles for unauthorised use of medication to treat asthma. — AFP



TOKYO: International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Thomas Bach (L) answers questions beside President of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics Organizing Committee (Tokyo 2020) Yoshiro Mori (C) and IOC Vice President John Coates (R) during a press conference at the Tokyo 2020 headquarters after their meeting in Tokyo yesterday. Bach is in Tokyo to look at preparations ahead of the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020. — AFP

IOC BOSS DUCKS S KOREA ROW IN TOKYO 2020 VISIT

TOKYO: International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach yesterday dodged questions over reports some Tokyo 2020 events could be held in South Korea, a move which would further embarrass beleaguered Games organisers.

The IOC is considering staging rowing and canoeing in the South Korean city of Chungju, according to Japanese media, as they try to slash a Tokyo 2020 budget which has skyrocketed to an estimated \$28 billion-four times that of the initial bid. But Bach was hurriedly ushered out of a scheduled press briefing in the Japanese capital after answering prepared questions from Tokyo Olympic officials that hinted at further friction between local organisers and city politicians.

With the Korean bombshell-which cited unnamed sources-making headlines, a media gathering was quickly shut down as nervous Tokyo organisers refused to allow more than 100 journalists to question Bach about the reports.

Stripping Japan of events would be seen a

major humiliation for Tokyo organisers, although a Seoul sports ministry official told AFP the reports came as a "surprise" to them.

Bach and Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike on Tuesday agreed to set up a four-party working group comprising Tokyo's metropolitan government, the IOC, Games organisers and the Japanese government to try to rein in snow-balling costs. Koike, who became Tokyo's first female governor in July after promising to slash wasteful spending, then proposed national and international sports federations be added to that working group, but Bach clearly felt otherwise.

"There was an agreement on a four-party working group," insisted Bach. "This was very well received by the Tokyo metropolitan government and the governor, and of course this happened in agreement with the organising committee. Therefore we will follow this agreement." The option of moving rowing and canoeing to South Korea comes after a panel of experts proposed

moving the events to northeast Japan, several hundreds of miles away, instead of building a new venue in Tokyo Bay.

The panel also called for existing venues in Tokyo to be renovated to stage volleyball and swimming to help cut costs further, as it predicted the total cost for the 2020 Games would hit nearly \$30 billion, almost three times higher than the 2012 London Olympics.

Tokyo organisers have lurched from one crisis to another since beating Madrid and Istanbul in the race to host the Games, with Abe forced to rip up initial plans for the Olympic stadium amid public anger at its \$2 billion price tag.

The Tokyo Olympic logo was then scrapped after accusations of plagiarism before French prosecutors launched an investigation into \$2 million in payments which they suspect were made to help Tokyo secure the Games.

Japanese Olympic officials have denied any wrongdoing. — AFP



Shooters seen during practise.

OTAIBI THANKS CROWN PRINCE FOR HIS SUPPORT AND CARE OF SHOOTING

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: The higher organizing committee of HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Shooting Tournament, which starts today at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting

evident in preparations that were being made for the start of the season, with one of the most important events which is the CP tournament, who sponsors this major tournament in which all Kuwaiti shooters participate including shooters of Saad Al-Abdallah Shooting Academy in the various Olympic skeet, trap, double trap, rifle, pistol and archery.

He said Kuwait shooters are known for making significant achievements in most of their participations at the Gulf, continental and international events.

Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi, on behalf of Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Board members and all those involved in the shooting sport, thanked HH the Crown Prince for his continued support and care for shooters, and for this very important tournament which declares the start of the 2016/2017 season.

He also thanked the representative of HH the Crown Prince, Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, for his keen interest in developing Kuwait sport in general and shooting in particular, and shooters are always happy to see Sheikh Salman among them.

Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi thanked Public Authority for Sports and its Director General Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his deputies for their support.



Duaij Al-Otaibi

Complex, inspected facilities and ranges to make sure all is set and ready.

President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Chairman of HOC Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi said efforts of all committees are



Shooter seen in action

MUNSTER TO RETURN TO ACTION AFTER COACH FOLEY'S DEATH



File photo shows Keith Earls of Munster takes on Seremaia Bai during a match. Munster will play its first rugby game since the sudden death of coach Anthony Foley.

LIMERICK: Munster will play its first rugby game since the sudden death of coach Anthony Foley when the Irish province takes on Glasgow in the European Champions Cup on Saturday.

Foley, who was 42, was found dead in the early hours of Sunday in a Paris hotel, ahead of a match against Racing 92 in the French capital that day. The match was canceled.

The prosecutor's office in Nanterre, a suburb of Paris, told The Associated Press yesterday that post-mortem tests on Foley showed "a heartbeat disorder probably led to fluid buildup in his lungs." Foley's funeral will be on Friday in his hometown of Killaloe, and Munster will return to action the following day at its Thomond Park ground. "As difficult as it will be to play the next

game, no matter the time, the opposition or the venue, we have an opportunity to play there this Saturday," Munster director of rugby Rassie Erasmus said yesterday. "That's something that's hugely important to all of us.

"He would never want us to say that the game is secondary - it's just not the man he was - but it will be. It's all about Anthony, now, and this weekend, and will be for a long time," Erasmus said. Munster's players "had so much respect for him that they are trying to get on with it," adding: "That's what drives us and makes us committed to get a proper performance out there." Ireland and Munster flanker Peter O'Mahony broke down as he tried to put into words what the late coach meant to him and the

club. "He was a man that wanted a Munster jersey win," O'Mahony said. "I'm not going to do him justice here. It's all the words I can say, to be honest." Foley was a Munster great who represented Ireland 62 times.

Glasgow coach Gregor Townsend said Saturday's match "is an occasion to remember Anthony ... a chance for everyone to show respect for what a great man he was." The Nanterre prosecutor said further toxicological analysis has been ordered, in accordance with classic procedures, and that there was no sign of a break-in at his hotel room or of any lesions on his body. Foley's remains were being flown back to Ireland and taken to the family home in Killaloe. — AP

MARCELLO LIPPI SET FOR CHINA POST: REPORT

MILAN: Former World Cup-winning coach Marcello Lippi is being tipped to take over as coach of China after being offered the job following the resignation of Gao Hongbo, reports said yesterday. "Lippi, coach of China," ran the headline on the front page of Italy's second most popular sports daily Corriere dello Sport.

It claimed the Italian maestro was "inclined to accept the offer" and added: "In the coming days, the former Italy coach will travel to Beijing to pore over the details of the Chinese football association's offer." However, the China Football Association's Huang Shiwei told AFP the

selection process for a new coach was continuing.

"Only two things I can tell you now. Firstly, we have accepted Gao Hongbo's resignation.

Secondly, for the coach candidate of the national football team, we are doing relevant selection work and our selection has not been finished," he said.

Former China coach Gao resigned on October 11 following a 2-0 World Cup qualifying defeat to Uzbekistan. The result left China's chances of qualifying for the 2018 World Cup in Russia looking slim. Sitting a lowly 78th in FIFA's rank-

ings, China have claimed just one point from four games and dropped to bottom place in a Group A which includes Iran, Uzbekistan, South Korea, Syria and Qatar.

Lippi, who steered Italy to their fourth and most recent World Cup triumph in 2006, is not new to working in China.

The 68-year-old coached Chinese top flight side Guangzhou Evergrande to three consecutive Super League titles between 2012 and 2014.

Corriere dello Sport said last month Lippi was set to return to the club on a three-year deal worth 20m euros net per season-a salary that would have put Pep

Guardiola's world-beating 17.7m euro (£15m) annual salary at Manchester City in the shade.

But the Chinese football federation may be about to capture Lippi at a time when they are looking to make huge strides forward in the game.

Often a source of national embarrassment, improving the level of football at club and national level has been one of the priorities of China President Xi Jinping.

Even before taking office, Xi underlined his ambitions for Chinese football in 2011: to qualify for the World Cup, to host

the event and to one day win it.

China have qualified only once for the World Cup, quietly departing the 2002 edition without scoring a goal. Last year officials declared football a compulsory part of the national curriculum, with pledges to open 20,000 football-themed schools by 2017 with the aim of producing more than 100,000 players. There has also been a splurge of Chinese investment in some of Europe's top clubs-Inter Milan, Manchester City, Aston Villa, Espanyol and Atletico Madrid to name but a few-and some of the sport's top stars have been lured to China. — AFP

FAMILY LOBBYING BRINGS HOPE FOR AUTISTIC FANS

LONDON: Peter and Kate Shippey's successful lobbying of Sunderland to install a room dedicated to largely autistic football fans could see more Premier League clubs follow suit.

Alex White, Premier League Charitable Fund Executive, said the Shippeys had served as an example and funding has been made available to other clubs to set up similar rooms for home and away fans.

"Their success has been inspirational," White said at the Beyond Sport Summit, the leading movement for sport for social change. "With BT (the telecom company who provide the specialist equipment) we want to extend it into other clubs in the Premier League," he said. "We have made funding available to them for both home and away teams."

The Shippeys decided to take action after two abortive trips to Sunderland home matches with Nathan, one of their three boys-all of whom are autistic.

"Two years ago I took Nathan to a home game even though we knew it would be a problem with all the noise," said Peter Shippey. "We gave him ear defences to try and see if they worked. However, it was a big game which we won and so ensured we stayed up. Thus the noise was louder than ever and he couldn't cope." The Shippeys thought that the experiment was over, but Nathan's passion for football grew after he watched the World Cup through the summer of 2014.

"So I bought season tickets for the 2014/15 campaign which aren't cheap," said

Peter. "However, the first game with the music and other noise we had to leave early. Then it struck us why couldn't the club put in a sensory room like he had at his school where children go when they're having a meltdown and it helps to calm them down."

Thus the campaign started, including talks with Sunderland and also garnering support from the community, including a petition signed by 3,000 backers including schools dealing with similar problems.

"That told the club that we weren't just acting for ourselves...," he said. He told the club the flood of cash flowing into the league would allow them to set aside a corporate box costing about £30,000. Instead the club opted for a purpose-built room in one of the lounges for the 2015-16 season.

"I think it's the first one ever built," he said Sunderland's example-the room can fit three people with sensory illnesses along with a parent and a carer and for which there was a waiting list at the end of last season-has been followed Shippey says by fourth tier Notts County. "It has transformed his (Nathan) life, although it got interesting when there was a Newcastle fan in the room for the derby last season!" said Shippey. Kate Shippey says the room has revolutionised life for other parents.

"It's had a massive and positive impact," she said. "One father brought his 24-year-old son to a game for the first time because before it had not been worth the risk."

"There was not a dry eye in the room, the boy was awe-struck." — AFP



BANGALORE: Bengaluru's captain Sunil Chhetri (2nd R) heads a ball during the 2016 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Cup semi-final second leg football match between Bengaluru FC and Johor Darul Ta'zim at the Shree Kanteerava stadium in Bangalore, yesterday. — AFP

SAINTS CHASE FAMOUS WIN AT SAN SIRO, VAN PERSIE RETURNS

PARIS: Southampton goalkeeper Fraser Forster is looking for the Premier League club to make "a massive statement" by beating Italian giants Inter Milan in the Europa League today.

The Saints travel to the San Siro-and as many as seven thousand of their fans are expected to follow them-knowing a win at the home of the three-time European champions would be a big step towards progressing to the knockout phase from Group K.

It would also be another memorable result for a club who were in the third tier of English football just five years ago. "If we go and do that (win) it will be a massive statement. You look where the club was just a few years ago and even in the time since I've joined the club-you meet the owner and you meet the chairman, and when we came to the club that's what they said, that they wanted to move the club forward and get into Europe, and every summer they've backed us," goalkeeper Forster told the club's website. "They've bought players, and step by step we're achieving those goals and hopefully we can do ourselves proud in the game, and if we can come out of it with three points that will be a massive achievement."

Southampton, who are fresh from beating Burnley 3-1 in the Premier League at the weekend, have so far beaten Sparta Prague 3-0 and drawn 0-0 away in Israel to Hapoel Beer-Sheva.

In contrast, Inter are struggling. Frank de Boer was only appointed in the summer but the Dutchman's side have lost two out of two in the Europa League and are in the bottom half of the Serie A table after a 2-1 home defeat to Cagliari at the weekend.

Meanwhile, star striker and captain Mauro Icardi's future at the club is in the air after Inter supporters reacted furiously to comments he made about them in a recently-published autobiography.

DUNDALK 'ON THEIR KNEES'

It is all a far cry from the days under Jose Mourinho when Inter won the Champions League in 2010. Mourinho's current side

Manchester United entertain Fenerbahce in Group A at Old Trafford.

United have four points from two games before a rematch with the Turkish giants, with whom they have a bit of history.

Fenerbahce inflicted a first ever European home defeat on United back in 1996, while eight years later Wayne Rooney hit a hat-trick against the same team on his European debut.

drawn away to AZ Alkmaar and beaten Maccabi Tel Aviv in Group D to stay in touch with leaders Zenit. But as they close in on another Irish league title, boss Stephen Kenny admits the number of games they have faced is beginning to take its toll. "Hopefully we can be energised by the crowd. I think it will be a full house and we will need that because on Sunday we have an opportunity to win the league against



MILAN: Southampton's Dutch defender Virgil Van Dijk takes part in training session at the San Siro Stadium in Milan yesterday, on the eve of the UEFA Europa League football match against Inter Milan. — AFP

The Istanbul side are not in good form as they travel to England with former United striker Robin van Persie, now 33, in their baggage.

In Dublin, Irish surprise package Dundalk must try to shake off fatigue as they host 2008 UEFA Cup winners Zenit St Petersburg.

After falling just short of reaching the Champions League group stage, Dundalk have

Bohemians," Kenny told RTE.

"It is great to be involved in these games but the players are on their knees. They are exhausted." In other action French league leaders Nice are looking for their first win in Group I when they visit Salzburg but will be missing star striker Mario Balotelli in Austria due to an adductor problem. — AFP



SUNDERLAND: This file photo taken on April 2, 2013 shows the gates of the Stadium of Light, home of Sunderland Association Football Club, in Sunderland, northeast England. Peter and Kate Shippey's successful and historic lobbying of Sunderland to install a room dedicated to largely autistic football fans could see many more Premier League clubs follow suit. — AFP

KOREA'S MOTORS ROAR INTO ASIAN FINAL

SEOUL: Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors stormed into the AFC Champions League final with a 5-3 aggregate victory over FC Seoul despite losing the all-Korean semi-final's second leg 2-1 yesterday. After Jeonbuk had dominated the first leg 4-1, Brazilian marksman Adriano gave the home side hope when he slotted a record-equalling 13th goal of the tournament in the first half.

But Jeonbuk's Ricardo Lopes doused any hopes of a comeback by equalising on 59 minutes, before Seoul's Ko Kwang-Min grabbed a consolation goal for Seoul in injury time. Jeonbuk, the 2006 champions, now go into a blockbuster two-legged final next month against fellow former winners Al Ain and their feted playmaker Omar Abdulrahman. The K-League leaders also reach their third Asian final despite a domestic scandal. They were deducted nine points

and fined after one of their scouts was convicted of bribing referees.

"We fought hard and were looking good in the first half," said FC Seoul's coach Hwang Sun-Hong. "The second goal was important and we were pushing for that."

"So I am sorry for the fans who came out to support us in good numbers. We had a good campaign and the players did their best... we have learned from this experience and we will come back stronger."

FC Seoul's Adriano was in the thick of it during an electric first half in front of a noisy crowd as the hosts pressed for the goals they needed to overturn their first-leg deficit.

The Brazilian shot just wide on 16 minutes and headed off-target eight minutes later. Elsewhere, Jeonbuk midfielder Kim Bo-Kyung was bloodied by a flailing elbow before playing on with a bandaged head. — AFP



SEOUL: Go Yo-han, right, of South Korea's FC Seoul fights for the ball against Jang Yun-ho of South Korea's Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors during the second leg of AFC Champions League semifinal soccer match at Seoul World Cup Stadium in Seoul, yesterday. — AP

MOURINHO ISSUES RASHFORD WITH ENGLAND UNDER-21 WARNING

MANCHESTER: Jose Mourinho does not want Marcus Rashford to be selected for next year's European Under-21 Championships if the Manchester United striker is a regular in the senior England squad.

The United manager was responding to stories that England's governing Football Association were keen to include Premier League stars, such as Rashford, in their Under-21 squad for the tournament in Poland in June.

Mourinho has no problem with Rashford, who turns 19 on the last day of this month, being a part of that squad - but only if he has not established himself in the senior set-up. "We are in mid-October, the Championships will be in the summer," United manager Mourinho said Wednesday.

"I think we have to wait and see what happens until then. Because if the player becomes a regular in the 'A' national team, if you want to call it that, then to say it is important for his development (to be) with the Under-21s, makes no sense." Gareth Southgate has been promoted from his

post as England Under-21 boss to be the manager of the senior England team on an interim basis, with the FA still to announce if the former England defender will succeed Sam Allardyce on a permanent basis after the veteran coach was forced out after just one game following indiscreet comments made to undercover reporters. "If he's an Under-21 player in the national team, then he is an Under-21 player and there is no discussion about that," said Mourinho of Rashford. "But if he becomes a regular choice for Gareth Southgate in the first team, then we have to speak because we don't want him going." Rashford has five England caps to his name, four of them as a substitute in competitive internationals.

ROONEY 'WORKING WELL'

Mourinho was speaking as he put the finishing touches to plans for the Europa League group game with Fenerbahce at Old Trafford on Thursday. The game could be the opportunity for

Wayne Rooney and Henrikh Mkhitaryan to feature in the starting side as Mourinho juggles his squad ahead of Sunday's trip to Chelsea.

Rooney has not started the last four United games and has also seen his place in the England run-on XI disappear under new manager Southgate.

"Wayne is working well, he is one of those responsible for the atmosphere for the players," insisted Mourinho. "He is positive, he is a good example. We count on him to start or be on the bench. He will be there tomorrow (Thursday)."

As for Mkhitaryan, a £26 million (\$34.5 million, 30.7 million euros) pre-season signing from Borussia Dortmund, the Armenian has not been involved since defeat in the Manchester derby in early-September as he struggles to recover from a thigh injury. "He was injured and was injured for quite a long time," said Mourinho. "Now he is not injured anymore. He has been training with the team without any limitation. I cannot confirm if he plays tomorrow." — AFP

BESIKTAS BEAT NAPOLI FOR FIRST CL WIN IN 7 YEARS

NAPLES: Vincent Aboubakar scored twice and Besiktas beat Napoli 3-2 in the Champions League on Wednesday to deny the Italian club a chance at advancing from the group stage in record time.

Aboubakar, a Cameroon international on loan from Porto, scored the winner four minutes from time after having also restored Besiktas' lead late in the first half. It was the Turkish side's first win in the

competition since 2009.

If Napoli had won, it would have become the first team in Champions League history to advance from its group after just three matches. Now, Napoli has just a one-point lead over Besiktas, with Benfica two points back after its 2-0 win at Dynamo Kiev. While Napoli missed injured center forward Arkadiusz Milik, the Partenopei were most lacking on defense.

Adriano scored on Besiktas' first opportunity 12 minutes in, redirecting a low cross from Ricardo Quaresma that found its way through a crowded area.

Dries Mertens equalized for Napoli on the half-hour mark, finishing off a beautiful exchange that began with captain Marek Hamsik and ended with Jose Callejon cutting the ball the back for Mertens to prod home. Eight minutes lat-

er, Besiktas took the lead again through Aboubakar, who took advantage of a dreadful back pass by Napoli midfielder Jorginho. Besiktas goalkeeper Fabri made a diving save to stop a penalty from Lorenzo Insigne early in the second half and preserve the lead.

Napoli substitute Manolo Gabbiadini converted a penalty to make it 2-2 five minutes after he replaced Insigne.

Fullback Caner Erkin was booked for tugging Mertens' shirt in the area. Aboubakar's second came with a header following a free kick from Quaresma, although the striker may have been off-side. It was Napoli's first home loss in the competition, having won eight and drawn four games stretching back to the old European Cup. Napoli has also lost two straight in Serie A. — AP

CELTIC'S CL HOPES IN TATTERS AFTER KOLO TOURE BLUNDERS

GLASGOW: Celtic's Champion League hopes were in tatters yesterday as Borussia Monchengladbach produced a clinical performance to inflict a 2-0 home defeat on the Scottish champions.

The Germans arrived in Glasgow with a horrendous injury list and struggling for form following defeats by Manchester City and Barcelona in their opening Group C fixtures. However, the Bundesliga side dominated the match from the start as they played with the kind of intensity that had helped Celtic claim a thrilling 3-3 draw with Manchester City on match day two.

Following a goalless first half, captain Lars Stindl rifled his side into a deserved lead in the 57th minute after a mistake from veteran defender Kolo Toure.

The former Liverpool defender was caught out again 20 minutes later as Andre Hahn pounced to grab the second and inflict only Celtic's fourth home defeat in 26 Champions League games.

Monchengladbach move to within one point of Manchester City in second, who lost 3-0 to Group C leaders Barcelona thanks to a Lionel Messi hat-trick on Pep Guardiola's return to the Nou Camp, while Celtic are rooted to the bottom on one point. The Hoops flew out of the traps against City but any hopes for a similar start were thwarted by the Monchengladbach players who seemed to have the measure of their opponents.

Much was made of the visitors' injury problems with key forwards Raffael, Thorgan Hazard and Josip Drmic missing, but their replacements were impressive as twice within the opening minutes the Celtic defence was torn apart.

Only a last-ditch block from Toure prevented a Hahn shot from reaching Craig Gordon, but the keeper didn't have to wait

long to be tested.

Ibrahima Traore's effort had the Hoops stopper at full-stretch to make a fingertip save before he smothered the danger as Hahn looked to pounce on the loose ball.

The Bundesliga side seemed to cut through Celtic with ease and Jonas Hoffman was next to try his luck but his rising shot failed to trouble Gordon.

The Hoops looked to be in trouble as Stindl latched on to a poor backward header by Bitton, but the Foals' captain over hit his pass to Hahn whose shot from a tight angle was tipped over by Gordon.

The Celtic fans, who seemed to drive their side forward against Man City with their raucous support, were silenced as their side struggled to cope with the relentless pressure from the Germans.

However, they came alive again just before the break as Rogic's clever pass behind the Borussia defence played in Sinclair but the English forward sent his effort sailing over the bar.

The home support tried their best to rouse their side at the start of the second half but the Germans' slick one-touch passing play stifled their opponents.

The visitors took a deserved lead in bizarre circumstances. Toure was caught trying to usher the ball out inside the six-yard box but Hahn's perseverance allowed him to dig the ball back into play for the advancing Stindl who lashed the ball through the legs of Gordon.

Another costly mistake from Toure allowed the visitors to increase their advantage. The experienced defender was caught dithering on the ball by Hahn who robbed him of possession near the halfway line and raced away to blast a strike into the top right-hand corner of Gordon's net. — AFP



LONDON: Ludogorets' Madagascan midfielder Anicet Abel (C) tackles Arsenal's Spanish defender Hector Bellerin during the UEFA Champions League Group A football match between Arsenal and Ludogorets Razgrad at The Emirates Stadium in London yesterday. — AFP

OZIL TREBLE, SANCHEZ GEM INSPIRE RAMPANT ARSENAL

LONDON: Mesut Ozil and Alexis Sanchez showed why their value to Arsenal is priceless as the peerless duo inspired a 6-0 thrashing of Bulgarian minnows Ludogorets in the Champions League yesterday.

Gunners boss Arsene Wenger has urged Ozil and Sanchez not to get greedy after reports they both plan to demand Arsenal increase their wages to £250,000-per-week (\$307,000, 279,000 euros) when contract talks are reopened later this month. Sanchez and Ozil's current deals expire in 2018, but Arsenal want their prize assets to commit their long-term futures to the club and on the evidence of their swaggering displays at the Emirates Stadium, they should pay them whatever they want. Sanchez was the catalyst for Arsenal's romp as the former Barcelona star netted his sixth goal of the season with a quite brilliant first half chip, while German midfielder Ozil smashed a second half hat-trick.

Theo Walcott and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain were also on the scoresheet for rampant Arsenal, who are top of Champions League Group A after three matches and well on course for the last 16. Unbeaten in Europe this season, Arsenal have now won seven successive matches in all competitions. Making four changes from the team

that beat Swansea on Saturday, Wenger called for his players to keep their foot on the gas after building some impressive momentum in recent weeks and the response was emphatic.

After scoring twice against Swansea, Walcott had a golden opportunity to extend his hot streak when Sanchez picked him out unmarked inside the penalty area.

With only Ludogorets goalkeeper Vladislav Stoyanov to beat, Walcott strangely opted for a cross and his scuffed delivery was easily cleared.

Walcott's faux pas was never likely to derail Arsenal for long as they cut through the Ludogorets defence time and again before taking the lead in the 12th minute.

PRIME FORM

Taking possession on the left edge of the Ludogorets penalty area after beating the Bulgarians' attempted offside trap, Sanchez looked up and lofted a majestic chip that arched over Stoyanov before nestling into the far corner. While Arsenal were in prime form going forward, they were less convincing at the back and Wanderson threatened with a stinging drive that forced David Ospina into action.

Breached again moments later, Arsenal were

saved by Ospina, who raced off his line and barely got to the ball before colliding with Virgil Misidjan, who appealed in vain for a penalty.

Ospina also had to be alert to block on the edge of the area before Wanderson fired against the woodwork from the rebound. Walcott misfired again when he blasted straight at Stoyanov from close-range, but he made amends in the 42nd minute. Given time to size up his shooting chances 25 yards from goal, Walcott punished Ludogorets' slack marking with a superb shot that flashed past the slow-to-react Stoyanov.

With their chances of taking even a point looking forlorn, Ludogorets faded in the second half and Oxlade-Chamberlain pounced on Kieran Gibbs' half-cleared cross to score Arsenal's third goal from 10 yards in the 46th minute.

Wenger's men weren't finished yet and Ozil made it four when he raced onto Santi Cazorla's superb long pass and drilled a low strike past Stoyanov in the 56th minute.

There was still time for Ozil to improve his own bid for a bumper new deal as he struck again with a cool finish in the 83rd minute.

Ozil completed his hat-trick in the 87th minute when he blasted home with a fierce close-range volley. — AFP



GLASGOW: Celtic's Erik Sviatchenko, right, jumps for the ball ahead of Moenchengladbach's Lars Stindl during the Champions League group C soccer match between Celtic and Borussia Moenchengladbach at Celtic Park, Glasgow, Scotland, yesterday. — AP

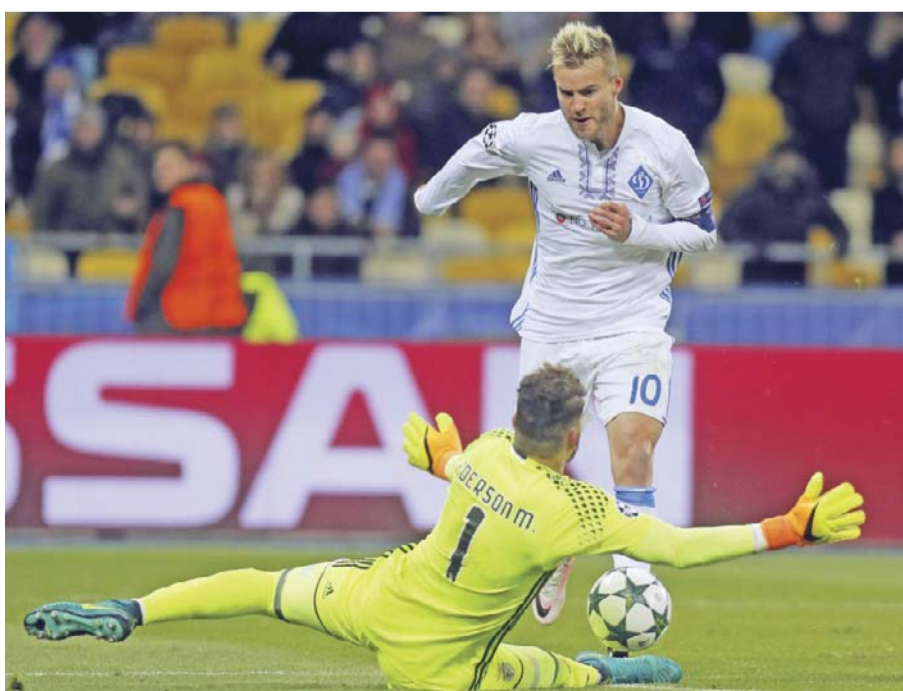
'BENFICA BEAT DYNAMO KIEV

KIEV: Eduardo Salvio converted a penalty and Franco Servi also scored as Benfica beat Dynamo Kiev 2-0 yesterday for a first win in the Champions League this season.

GonAalo Guedes was brought down by Antunes, allowing Salvio the chance to score from the spot in the ninth minute. Conceding early disrupted Dynamo's

rhythm and the hosts fell further behind in the 55th, when Servi scored at the second attempt after his first effort struck his own player, Kostas Mitroglou.

Benfica moved up to third in Group C, a point behind Besiktas and two behind Napoli after three games. Dynamo has one point. — AP



KIEV: Benfica goalkeeper Ederson makes a save in front of Kiev's Andriy Yarmolenko during the Champions League Group B soccer match between Dynamo Kiev and Benfica at the Olimpiyskiy stadium in Kiev, Ukraine, yesterday. — AP

DI MARIA POINTS THE WAY FOR PSG

PARIS: Angel Di Maria's first goal of the season set Paris Saint-Germain on their way to a 3-0 Champions League victory against an unlucky Basel side at the Parc des Princes yesterday.

Di Maria grabbed the opener late in the first half and Lucas doubled PSG's lead just after the hour mark before Edinson Cavani's late penalty sealed the victory as the French giants moved closer to qualifying for the last 16 from Group A.

They remain level on seven points at the top of the group with Arsenal, who crushed Ludogorets 6-0 in London, with Basel and the Bulgarians both six points behind. A draw when they play Basel away in their next outing will likely secure their progress to the next round, and yet the outcome of this game could have been very different, with the Swiss side hitting the woodwork three times.

The home side were without the injured Thiago Motta, and while the elegant Adrian Rabiot started in his place, they missed his ability to dictate the tempo of a game and keep possession. Indeed, a side that had appeared so accomplished in previous seasons under Laurent Blanc again looked a shadow of their former selves for much of this game.

Paris have not yet convinced under Unai Emery and they could not afford to underestimate a Basel outfit utterly dominant in their domestic league and who have pulled off some impressive results in Europe.

The visitors were the better team in the first half but missed several chances, first when Birkir Bjarnason kept alive a corner at the back post and Michael Lang headed against the bar.

Ivory Coast striker Seydou Doumbia then out-muscled Thiago Silva before releasing Renato Steffen, but Alphonse Areola came out to deny the winger before Doumbia fired over the loose ball. Di Marla did flash a volley just past after being teed up by Lucas on a quick breakaway but Basel hit the woodwork again in the 36th minute, this time from a Doumbia header after a Matias Delgado cross.

Rabiot was denied by Tomas Vaclik seconds

later but Paris were poor, and yet they went in front five minutes before the interval.

Cavani tried to convert a low ball in by Blaise Matuidi but his touch turned into an assist for Di Maria, who finished emphatically.

Cavani saw a header graze the near post on its way past as he connected with a Di Maria free-kick at the start of the second half.

He then robbed Eder Balanta and bore down on goal but could not beat Vaclik. Instead, it was Lucas who made it 2-0 moments later, slotting

low into the net after Basel failed to cut out a Serge Aurier centre.

It was not Basel's evening, and they hit the frame of the goal for the third time in the 66th minute. Marek Suchy's header following a free-kick struck an upright and then rebounded off an unwitting Areola on the line.

Cavani then added gloss to the score-line by converting a stoppage-time penalty for his 17th goal this season for club and country after he had been fouled in the box. — AFP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Argentinian forward Angel Di Maria (2nd-L) and Paris Saint-Germain's Uruguayan forward Edinson Cavani (2nd-R) control the ball moments before scoring during the UEFA Champions League group A football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Basel at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris yesterday. — AFP

IOC boss ducks
S Korea row in
Tokyo 2020 visitOzil treble, Sanchez
gem inspire
rampant Arsenal

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2016

TAYLOR HALL SCORES TWICE IN HOME DEBUT FOR DEVILS

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BARCELONA: Barcelona's Lionel Messi kicks the ball during a Champions League, Group C soccer match between Barcelona and Manchester City, at Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona, yesterday. — AP

MESSI HAT-TRICK PUNISHES MAN CITY

BARCELONA: Manchester City's Claudio Bravo and Pep Guardiola endured a nightmare return to Barcelona as Lionel Messi's hat-trick spearheaded a 4-0 Champions League rout for the Spanish champions yesterday.

Guardiola led Barca to 14 trophies in a glorious four-year reign between 2008 and 2012, but his homecoming was undone by a series of shocking defensive errors and Messi's clinical touch on his return from injury.

Messi pounced on Fernandinho's slip to give Barca a half-time lead before goalkeeper Bravo was sent off for handling Luis Suarez's shot outside the area.

Two more sumptuous Messi finishes soon followed and Neymar made amends for missing a penalty with a brilliant individual run and finish for Barca's fourth after Jeremy Mathieu's red card left both sides with 10 men. City now trail Barca by five points at the top of Group C.

Guardiola's decision to jettison England number one Joe Hart to bring in Bravo at the start of the season will

once again come under the spotlight as the Chilean's difficult start to life at City cost the visitors dearly.

However, early on it looked as if Guardiola was to get one over on his former teammate, Barca coach Luis Enrique, as City hemmed the hosts inside their own half and enjoyed the vast majority of possession.

The course of the game changed with one huge error on 17 minutes, though, as Fernandinho's untimely slip left Messi free inside the area and he calmly rounded Bravo to slot home on his first start for a month after a groin injury.

Barca's injury problems continued as Jordi Alba and Gerard Pique limped off before the break due to hamstring and ankle problems respectively.

Bravo rushed from his line to deny Neymar latching onto Samuel Umtiti's brilliant ball over the City defence, whilst Ivan Rakitic headed wastefully wide from a Messi free-kick as Barca threatened a second.

Yet, City could easily have been level as Marc-Andre ter Stegen turned Nolito's angled drive behind before the German made a stunning stop from international teammate Ilkay Gundogan.

John Stones then headed a golden chance wide, but City were grateful to Bravo again when his outstretched leg denied Suarez before he reacted in time to turn the rebound over his crossbar just before half-time.

There was no reprieve for Bravo eight minutes into the second half when he gifted possession to Suarez and then saved the Uruguayan's effort whilst outside his box to prompt an obvious red card.

City were still reeling from that blow when Messi curled home at the near post-a finish reminiscent of his opening goal when Guardiola also suffered a 3-0 drubbing on his only previous return to the Camp Nou as a visiting coach with Bayern Munich two seasons ago.

By contrast, Ter Stegen continued to shine at the oth-

er end as he produced another stunning save to turn Kevin de Bruyne's low effort to safety.

Messi completed his second hat-trick in as many Champions League games this season 21 minutes from time thanks to another City gift. Gundogan this time presented the ball to Suarez, who unselfishly squared for Messi to slot home.

Mathieu picked up two yellow cards in three minutes to balance up the numbers on each side.

But by then the damage had already been done as after winning his first 10 games in charge, Guardiola's men have now gone four matches without a win.

Willy Caballero looked to have saved City from further embarrassment as he stopped Neymar's penalty three minutes from time.

But the Brazilian responded in style by dancing past a series of tired City defenders before slotting into the far corner. — AFP

BAYERN THUMP EINDHOVEN TO BREAK WINLESS STREAK

MUNICH: Bayern Munich broke their three-game winless streak with an emphatic 4-1 win at home to PSV Eindhoven yesterday in the Champions League with winger Arjen Robben outstanding.

Thomas Mueller and Joshua Kimmich put Bayern ahead at the Allianz Arena before Luciano Narsingh netted for Eindhoven before the break, but Robert Lewandowski made it 3-1 on the hour mark.

Robben, who created two goals, capped an eye-catching display with a fourth goal as Bayern got their Group D campaign back on track after their 1-0 defeat at Atletico Madrid three weeks ago.

After talk from the German media of a 'mini-crisis', following three games without a win in all competitions, this was the result and performance Bayern needed.

But the German league leaders were aided and abetted by an Eindhoven defence which left acres of space to exploit, especially early on, allowing Bayern 28 shots on goal, while the Dutch managed only eight in reply. Bayern remain second in Group D, three points behind leaders Atletico, who won 1-0 at Rostov, while Eindhoven are third with a single point.

Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti had hinted at changes from the side which drew 2-2 at Eintracht Frankfurt on Saturday, a Bundesliga

performance chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge had branded "unacceptable".

Lewandowski was the only change to the starting line-up in a 4-3-3 formation as Mueller switched to the wing and Kingsley Coman dropping to the bench.

Eindhoven coach Phillip Cocu made two changes from their 1-1 Dutch league draw with Heracles Almelo as Netherlands striker Narsingh and Mexico winger Andres Guardado returned.

Bayern needed just 12 minutes to take the lead thanks to quick thinking from Mueller and Robben, who fired in a short pass from a corner.

Eindhoven goalkeeper Jeroen Zoet parried Mueller's shot, but the Germany international snapped up the rebound and slotted home off his right foot.

Bayern exploited the space Eindhoven generously gave them at the back. David Alaba's cross clipped a defender, but Kimmich tracked the looping ball to header over the line on 21 minutes for his seventh goal in eight games. Eindhoven then tightened their defence and started to attack.

Uruguay winger Gaston Pereiro had the ball in the Munich net on their first meaningful attack on 39 minutes, but the goal was incorrectly ruled off side.

The Dutch clawed one back two minutes later when Narsingh's superb shot from outside the area crashed in off the post to the annoyance of Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer to make it 2-1 at the break.

Lewandowski fired wide in the first two minutes after the break, but only Neuer's reflex save denied Pereiro at the other end.

Just as PSV were gaining momentum, Bayern extended their lead. Robben beat two defenders before Zoet parried his shot before Lewandowski headed in the rebound on 59 minutes. Zoet's saves, to deny Alaba and Mueller, kept the score respectable before Thiago Alcantara's chip saw Robben nudge the ball over the Eindhoven keeper on 84 minutes. — AFP



ROSTOV-ON-DON: Atletico Madrid's Argentinian midfielder Angel Correa (L) and Rostov's Ecuadorian midfielder Christian Noboa vie for the ball during the UEFA Champions League football match between FC Rostov and Club Atletico de Madrid in Rostov-on-Don yesterday. — AFP

CARRASCO FIRES ATLETICO TO WIN OVER ROSTOV 1-0

ROSTOV-ON-DON: Top of La Liga and now with three wins from three in the Champions League, Atletico Madrid's season so far is going to plan after beating FC Rostov 1-0 yesterday.

Yannick Ferreira Carrasco fired in the winner on a cold night in Russia on Wednesday, and at the halfway point in Group D Atletico is all but assured of qualifying for the knockout stages with an eight-point lead over third place.

Carrasco now boasts five goals from his last four games for Atletico after having failed to score in his first seven outings of the season. Against Rostov, the Belgium winger was all action from the start, forcing a save from Rostov goalkeeper Soslan Dzhanayev early on and twice helping to set up good chances that were missed by

Angel Correa. Against a tenacious Rostov team which had not lost at home for 26 games, the breakthrough came in the 62nd minute when Carrasco met Juanfran's cross with a fierce shot on the bounce after Fernando Torres had failed to convert from close range.

Atletico's star attacking midfielder Antoine Griezmann started the game slowly but played an increasingly valuable role in the second half and could have scored Atletico's second in the 83rd, but Dzhanayev made the save.

Defensively minded Rostov has one point from three games in its Champions League debut campaign and rarely threatened to score against Atletico, barring a couple of late efforts easily dealt with by goalkeeper Jan Oblak. — AP



MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Dutch midfielder Arjen Robben (L) and Eindhoven's Mexican defender Hector Moreno vie for the ball during the UEFA Champions League group D football match FC Bayern Munich vs PSV Eindhoven in Munich, yesterday. — AFP



Property, credit booms stabilize China growth

ROSNEFT ENTERS INDIA WITH \$13 BILLION ESSAR DEAL



TRIPOLI: Libyans ride a horse-pulled-cart on Martyrs' Square in the capital Tripoli. When the 2011 uprising toppled the regime of dictator Muammar Gaddafi, Libyans dreamt of transforming their country into another Dubai, but the political stalemate and the conflict rocking Libya are preventing the North African country from taking advantage of its vast oil resources and pushing the economy towards collapse, experts say. —AFP

CHAOS-RIDDEN LIBYA'S ECONOMY ON THE BRINK

LIBYAN ECONOMY NEARS COLLAPSE AMID LOW OIL PRICES

TRIPOLI: Political stalemate and the conflict rocking Libya are preventing the North African country from taking advantage of its vast oil resources and pushing the economy towards collapse, experts say. When the 2011 uprising toppled the regime of dictator Muammar Gaddafi, Libyans dreamt of transforming their country into another Dubai. Today, they have somewhat lower expectations. "To live in security, have electricity, fuel and a salary, and send our children to school. We're not asking for anything more than that," said Mahmoud, a 35-year-old Tripoli resident.

Long queues form every morning at banks, which do not have enough cash to meet customers' needs, and the people face unprecedented high prices. The World Bank reports a "substantial loss in real purchasing power of the population", with basic food prices leaping 31 percent in the first quarter of the year. Meanwhile, in the absence of

police or army, crime is rife in the capital. Car theft, kidnapping for ransom and vendettas between armed groups are common. After 42 years in power, Gaddafi left behind a dilapidated infrastructure, an economy totally dependent on oil revenues and a poorly skilled workforce. In the five years since he was killed, most foreign investors have fled.

'Mired in recession'

"The Libyan economy is near collapse as political stalemate and civil conflict prevent it from fully exploiting its sole natural resource: oil," the World Bank warned. Libya may have Africa's largest oil reserves, estimated at 48 billion barrels, but production and exports have slumped dramatically through years of crisis. Libya pumped around 1.6 million barrels of crude a day before Gaddafi's overthrow, but the ensuing chaos hit production which fell as low as 290,000 in recent months, according to

the National Oil Company (NOC).

Coupled with low global oil prices, this has left the economy "mired in recession since 2013", with record high deficits, the World Bank said. Libya has lost more than \$100 billion (91 billion euros) in oil revenues since 2013, according to NOC chairman Mustafa Sanalla. Oil income has fallen to record lows, hitting just \$2.25 billion (2.05 billion euros) in the first seven months of 2016, according to the World Bank. That is far from the \$50 billion (45 billion euros) per year oil revenues brought Libya under Gaddafi.

The sector, which used to bring in 95 percent of state revenues, has fallen victim to fighting between militias and rival governments that have torn the country apart. Oil production fell to near zero during the 2011 uprising. In the following months it came close to pre-revolution levels, but in 2013 tumbled again as protests and violence

erupted around key export terminals in eastern Libya's so-called Oil Crescent. In September, the four terminals were seized by forces loyal to Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, who is allied to an authority in the east that opposes the internationally recognized unity government based in Tripoli.

Damaged infrastructure

After Haftar's takeover, exports quickly resumed-a development welcomed by the NOC which has sought to remain neutral despite the two governments' intense rivalry. But repairing infrastructure damaged by fighting will take time, and the World Bank does not expect production to return to capacity until 2020. Even as exports resume, the crisis is likely to continue as revenues struggle to match vast public spending, Karima Munir, an independent Libyan expert said.

"The country is a massive welfare state and

alternative sources of income need to be found," she said. "The reliance on oil has had a severe impact on the economy and put pressure on (capital) reserves." To bridge the revenue gap, the authorities have drawn on dwindling currency reserves which the World Bank says have fallen from \$107.6 billion (97.7 billion euros) in 2013 to \$43 billion (39.0 billion euros) in 2016.

Currency exchange restrictions and speculation are pushing the economy into a vicious cycle and boosting a flourishing black market. Most Libyans no longer trust the banks and almost all transactions happen on the black market. Supermarket shelves are empty as traders cut imports for fear of losses in a wildly fluctuating market. One of the few business leaders still in Tripoli warned that things could deteriorate further. "The situation could get even worse if a quick solution isn't found to the problem of liquidity," he said.—AFP

INDIAN POLICE FEAR THE US TAX SCAM SPREAD ACROSS COUNTRY

MUMBAI: A multi-million-dollar racket that used fake Indian call centers to trick US citizens into paying bogus tax bills may be the tip of the iceberg, with police warning similar scams could be operating across the country. School leavers or college dropouts would be trained to speak with an American accent, posing as US Internal Revenue Service officials and scare people into believing they owed the government cash, detectives said. The scheme, which had been operating for over a year, netted more than 10 million rupees (\$150,000) a day, they added.

More than 70 people have been arrested after police this month swooped on call centers in western India, from Mumbai to the Gujarat capital of Ahmedabad, but they suspect the network could stretch even further. "We believe that the racket is spread across India, including in the north," Parambir Singh, commissioner of police in the Mumbai suburb of Thane said. Police from Thane, on the outskirts of India's financial capital, rounded up at least 770 employees of bogus call centers on October 4. Most were let go pending further investigations but 72 were arrested while another suspect

was detained this week as police try to close in on the 23-year-old alleged mastermind.

It is claimed the accused would berate victims for falsely failing to pay taxes and then threaten them with jail if they did not cough up immediately. The con artists would use an altered caller ID number that made it look like they were ringing from the United States and often quoted IRS badge numbers to make them appear legitimate. The fraudsters would trick the victim into sending money, often through pre-paid debit cards that can be purchased at stores like Walmart, or even by buying Apple iTunes gift cards. In both instances transfers are made by the victim handing over the card's registration number.

The iTunes scam has even led Apple to issue a global warning on its website urging people not to give the number to someone they do not know. The IRS has been warning about identical scams for a few years with reports in US media that such schemes might have been operating out of India. In January, the US Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration said it was aware of more than 5,000 victims who had paid a total of more than \$26.5 million in such scams since October 2013.—AFP

SABIC PROFIT BOOSTS SAUDI AS QATAR HIT BY WEAK EARNINGS

MIDEAST STOCKS

DUBAI: Saudi Basic Industries (SABIC) helped lift Riyadh's stock market yesterday after it reported a third-quarter net profit at the top end of forecasts, but a loss at Qatar's third-largest bank dragged that market lower. Egypt slid for a fourth straight session. Riyadh's stock index rebounded 1.1 percent, ending three days of declines and trimming its loss since Sunday to 3.0 percent. SABIC, the Gulf's largest petrochemical producer, climbed 1.8 percent to 84.00 riyals after posting a net profit of 5.22 billion riyals (\$1.39 billion) in the three months to Sept. 30, down 6.8 percent from a year ago. Analysts polled by Reuters had on average predicted 5.05 billion riyals.

Riyad Capital said in a note that although SABIC's sales dipped on a quarterly and yearly basis, margins expanded to offset some of that negative impact. It raised its target price for SABIC to 86.00 riyals from 80.00 riyals but maintained a "neutral" rating. "We have increased gross margin assumptions for the full year and beyond as global petrochemical spreads have been healthy." Roughly two-thirds of Saudi

petrochemical producers have now reported third-quarter earnings, with generally weak results. Nama Chemicals, a mid-sized producer, said yesterday it made a loss of 32.6 million riyals versus a loss of 24.0 million in the same period of 2015; its shares closed flat.

Middle East Healthcare jumped 7.8 percent after its quarterly net income rose 1.4 percent to 92 million riyals. The positive mood spilled into some shares that were hit earlier this week by disappointing results. Lender Saudi Hollandi rebounded 2.4 percent. But Emaar the Economic City, developer of an industrial city near Jeddah, dropped 1.6 percent after reporting a third-quarter net loss of 81 million riyals versus a profit of 8 million riyals a year ago.

In Dubai, the index built positive momentum in the last hour of trade to close up 0.1 percent. No major companies posted fresh results; DXB Entertainment's climbed 3.3 percent ahead of opening its theme parks at the end of this month. Gains in blue chips helped boost Abu Dhabi's stock index 0.9 percent.

First Gulf Bank added 1.8 percent, trimming its losses to 1.3 percent since Sunday.

Qatar, Egypt Underperform

In Qatar, the index closed down 0.3 percent as Commercial Bank of Qatar dropped 4.8 percent. The bank made a net attributable loss of 1.04 million riyals (\$285,612) in the third quarter versus a profit of 275.9 million riyals a year earlier; analysts polled by Reuters had forecast a profit of 281.7 million riyals. The bank cited provisions for non-performing loans, after former Australia and New Zealand Banking Group banker Joseph Abraham was appointed chief executive in July. Medicare Group sank 2.9 percent after reporting an 85 percent drop in third-quarter net profit to 4.8 million riyals. Qatar Insurance fell 0.7 percent on a 6 percent drop in third-quarter profit to 108.8 million riyals, considerably below EFG Hermes' forecast of 312 million riyals. In Cairo, the index of the 30 most valuable shares pulled back 0.7 percent in modest volume. Heliopolis Co for Housing lost 0.6 percent after reporting a 47.9 percent drop in quarterly net profit.—Reuters

PROPERTY, CREDIT BOOMS STABILIZE CHINA GROWTH

GDP GROWS 6.7 PERCENT AS EXPECTED

BEIJING: China's economy expanded at a steady 6.7 percent in the third quarter and looks set to hit Beijing's full-year target, fueled by stronger government spending, record bank lending and a red-hot property market that are adding to its growing pile of debt. Yesterday's data painted a picture of an economy that is slowly stabilizing but increasingly dependent on government spending and a housing boom for growth, as private investment and exports remain stubbornly weak.

Some economists believe Beijing has had to "double down" on stimulus this year to meet its official growth range of 6.5 to 7 percent, and say the government's obsession with meeting hard targets may hurt both planned reforms and the long-term health of the world's second-largest economy. "So far this year they have clearly chosen to do everything they can to meet the growth targets, and now there is a little bit of an upward surprise from the housing market which actually will help them with GDP growth this year," said Louis Kuijs, head of Asia economics at Oxford Economics in Hong Kong.

"The question really is, is the leadership willing to move to somewhat lower growth targets in order to put growth on a more sustainable footing, or will it feel obliged to continue to hang on to those very high growth targets?" The economy grew at the same clip in the third quarter year-on-year as in the first and second quarters, as analysts polled by Reuters had expected. Government infrastructure projects and the property boom have spurred prices and demand for raw materials and goods from cement and steel to furniture. On a quarterly basis, it grew 1.8 percent, again in line with expectations but easing slightly from the previous period.

Biggest risk

Economists believe the greatest near-term risk for China is a possible correction in the high-flying property market, which accounts for about 15 percent of GDP. Real estate investment accelerated in September and home sales soared, highlighting persistent investor demand even as more cities tighten measures to curb prices. Property investment growth ticked up to 7.8 percent in September on-year, and property sales surged 34 percent, though new construction starts fell 19.4 percent, suggesting sentiment among builders may be shifting as the government looks to cool the buying frenzy.



ZHENGZHOU: People ride electric bikes as they pass next to property condominiums (back) in Zhengzhou yesterday. China's growth slipped to a seven-year low of 6.6 percent in the third quarter, according to an AFP survey, despite ample stimulus and a red-hot property market in the world's second-largest economy. — AFP

A wave of restrictions imposed on buyers in major cities since early October has resulted in a sharp drop in sales and authorities are stepping up pressure on speculators. Shanghai said on Tuesday it had punished some property agencies for falsifying contracts and had launched probes into some developers suspected of raising prices without authorization. Most economists do not expect house prices to collapse, arguing the market is supported by steady migration to bigger cities, but memories are still fresh of authorities' heavy-handed attempt to cool surging stock markets last year, which triggered a crash and an unprecedented government rescue.

The property craze has also heightened concerns about China's growing debt and the risks to its financial system, as much of the record loan growth has been driven by mortgages. China's debt has soared to 250 percent of GDP and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) warned in September that a banking crisis was looming in the next three years. "We think that the cooling measures in property market will weigh on China's economy over the coming quarters," Commerzbank econo-

mist Zhou Hao in Hong Kong said in a note. But statistics bureau spokesman Sheng Laiyun said "the impact (of property adjustment measures) on the economy will not be very big" in the short-term.

Modest improvement

Consumption contributed 71 percent of GDP growth in the first three quarters of the year, compared with 66.4 percent for 2015. The increase is partly due to contracting net exports but also indicates some success in Beijing's attempts to rebalance the economy from an over reliance on investment-led growth. September indicators were mostly in line with expectations and improved slightly from August, but industrial output growth unexpectedly cooled to 6.1 percent from a year earlier, versus expectations for 6.4 percent. Fixed-asset investment rose 8.2 percent in January-September from a year earlier, as expected, as the government cranked up infrastructure spending to support the economy. Fiscal spending in the nine-month period climbed 12.5 percent.

Private investment growth picked up to 4.5 percent in September after falling to

record lows in recent months, but still significantly lags investment by state-owned firms. For the first nine months, private investment rose just 2.5 percent. Retail sales rose 10.7 percent in September on-year, beating expectations of 10.6 percent as home buyers bought appliances and decorated, while subsidies fueled strong sales of new cars. China's economy expanded 6.9 percent in 2015, the slowest pace in a quarter of a century.

While analysts expect China to meet its growth target this year, as usual, many remain skeptical of the official numbers, especially as growth has remain unchanged for three straight quarters even as the country attempts a major economic transition. "The official GDP figures remain too stable to tell us much about the performance of China's economy. Our own measure of economic activity suggests that growth actually picked up last quarter, though the improvement clearly won't last," Julian Evans-Pritchard, China economist at Capital Economics in Singapore wrote in a note. Capital Economics' calculations suggest the economy is growing at around 5 percent. — Reuters

THE COMMERCIAL BANK REPORTS NET PROFIT OF QAR 491 MILLION

DOHA: The Commercial Bank QSC (Commercial Bank or The Bank), its subsidiaries and associates yesterday announced its financial results for the nine month period ended 30 September 2016. The Bank reported a net profit of QAR 491 million as compared to QAR 1,341 million for the same period in 2015, a decrease of 63%. Key financial highlights compared to the same period in 2015; Net operating income down 11% to QAR 2,733 million; Net profit of QAR 491 million; Total assets up 4% to QAR 123.9 billion; Customer loans and advances up by 4% to QAR 76 billion; Customers' deposits up 4% to QAR 66.7 billion and Earnings per share of QAR 1.04.

His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Ali bin Jabor Al Thani, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Commercial Bank, said, "Commercial Bank has proudly served the financial needs of its customers for over 40 years by always looking forward to the future. I, together with my fellow Board members, are resolved to maintain the development of Commercial Bank. Through our new executive leadership, and under the guidance of the Board, we are taking necessary decisions now to reshape a strong Commercial Bank for the future. Commercial Bank continues to have great potential to generate long term value for our customers and investors. Our decisions now will ensure that we unlock the Bank's full potential."

Financial performance

Hussain Al Fardan, Commercial Bank's Vice Chairman and Managing Director, added, "Commercial Bank reported an operating profit of QAR 1.4 billion for the nine months ended 30 September 2016. During this period, we aligned our local market strategies to the current challenging realities, pursuing only those opportunities which meet our returns criteria. Our discipline will be maintained as we continue to serve our customers." Net operating income decreased by 11% to QAR 2,733 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2016, down from QAR 3,058 million achieved in the same period in 2015.

Net interest income was QAR 1,800 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2016, 5% lower than the same period of 2015, mainly due to an increase in cost of deposits. Net interest margin decreased to 2.3% as compared to 2.5% in the same period in 2015. Non-interest income was down by 19% to QAR 933 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2016 compared with QAR 1,155 million. The overall decrease in non-interest income was due to lower net fee and commission income. Total operating expenses were up by 2% at QAR 1,235 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2016 compared with QAR 1,256 million for the same period in 2015.

The Bank's net provisions for loans and advances were QAR 1,108 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2016, up 104% from QAR 544 million for the same period in 2015. The non-performing loan (NPL) ratio has increased to 5.3% at 30 September 2016

compared with 3.6% at the end of September 2015 and the coverage ratio was 78.8% as at 30 September 2016 compared to 81.3% as at 30 September 2015. Impairment provisions on the Bank's investment portfolio increased to QAR 68 million for the nine months ended 30 September 2016 compared with QAR 25 million for the same period in 2015.

Commercial Bank delivered balance sheet growth of 4% at the end of September 2016 with total assets at QAR 123.9 billion, compared to QAR 119.2 billion at the end of September 2015. Total asset growth was driven mainly by an increase of QAR 2.6 billion in loans and advances and QAR 3.6 billion in due from banks and offset by lower investment in securities by QAR 2 billion. Loans and advances to customers were up by 4% to QAR 75.9 billion at 30 September 2016 compared with QAR 73.4 billion at the end of September 2015. The growth in lending has been generated, mainly in Services and Commercial Sectors.

Investment securities was down 12% to QAR 16.2 billion as at 30 September 2016 compared with QAR 18.4 billion at the end of September 2015. The decrease is mainly in Treasury bills issued by the Central Bank. Customers' deposits increased by 4% to QAR 66.7 billion at 30 September 2016, compared with QAR 64.1 billion as at 30 September 2015. The increase was mainly in time deposits. Joseph Abraham, Commercial Bank's Chief Executive Officer, commented, "Since joining Commercial Bank in July, we are completing a review of the Bank's strategy, performance and future direction and we will update the market with the results of our review later this year."

However, one clear action became evident early in the process, which was the need for us to recognize a number of non-performing loans. The decision we have taken to provide for an additional QAR 505 million of loans in the third quarter has consequently impacted our financials. Both the Board and the Bank's leadership team view this as the necessary first step in aligning the business for the current and future economic environment and ensuring Commercial Bank builds sustainable earnings and is well positioned for the future." He added, "During the period, we continued to manage the business conservatively, reflecting both the challenges and opportunities of the current market. Qatar generated a solid financial performance excluding provisioning with QAR 431 million operating profit for the third quarter. Our Turkish subsidiary, ABank, has been aligned more closely in its working with Commercial Bank and with the injection of new equity and a Tier 2 issuance raised in the first half of the year, we had the funds to pursue loans in the corporate mid-market. However loan growth was limited as we remained highly selective of opportunities. Most importantly, we brought operational costs down by 5% at ABank during the period. UAB continues to successfully recover as its management team execute upon the realignment of the business to the UAE's corporate market, whilst NBO in Oman has performed well."



ZHENGZHOU: A vendor sells clothes as she stands on a ladder at a shopping mall complex area in Zhengzhou yesterday. —AFP

CHINESE FIRMS RAMP UP INVESTMENT; COSTS RISE

HONG KONG: Official investment figures may be feeble, but exporters at China's largest trade fair say they are ploughing more money into robotics, industrial automation and new product development to offset rising costs. At the Canton Fair, which kicked off this weekend for companies in the household electronics, decorative materials and building sectors - other sectors follow later in the month - more than 80 percent of companies quizzed by Reuters said they would be spending more next year.

That would represent a significant shift if matched throughout China's economy. Official data yesterday showed private sector investment in fixed assets in the first nine months grew just 2.5 percent, picking up from a record low of 2.1 percent in the first eight months. Kison Van said his company, Ningbo Cixi Import and Export Holdings, which makes fans and heaters, needs to develop three to four new products every year to stay competitive. "It's important to continuously invest in R&D because once a new product comes out, you see it everywhere at the Canton Fair," said Van, one of tens of thousands of salesman at a fair that sprawls over 1.2 million square metres, almost twice the size of the world's largest mall.

More than 65 percent of the 103 exhibitors polled by Reuters in China's southern city of Guangzhou expect to boost spending by up to 20 percent in 2017, while 16.5 percent expect to raise spending by more than 20 percent. That will be welcome news to leaders in Beijing, as China's private companies, which make up the bulk of exhibitors at the fair, are a crucial engine of growth for the economy, unlike the largely inefficient and indebted state-owned sector.

Chinese growth slowed to a 25-year low of 6.9 percent last year, and third-quarter figures released yesterday put it on track for about 6.7 percent this year. Economists say the country's mid-sized private companies are the primary source of investment, innovation and productivity growth. Heavy machinery manufacturers at the fair said they spend over 30 percent of their investment capital upgrading production lines each year, while many building materials and household equipment makers said they were pumping money into automation.

China is achieving average annual growth of 18 percent in research and development (R&D) spending, compared with just 1.4 percent across the rest of the world's upper-middle-income countries, according to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. While most exporters surveyed aim to boost spending, around 20 percent said they planned to cut investment. Other sectors that may be under pressure as global growth slows, such as textiles and apparel, will feature later at the fair, which runs until Nov 4.

Rise of the robots

China is increasingly moving to modernize its manufacturing industry with robotics and automation, driven in part by a shortage of skilled workers and rapidly rising wages that threaten to erode its appeal as a low-cost workshop to the world. "Robots do a better job than workers; the quality is more stable," said Zhejiang Momali Sanitary Utensils Co general manager Selina Song. Song said, however, that a drop in sales was slowing the company's push to boost automation. Some economists said new and emerging sectors such as high-end manufacturing equipment would see more room for development. —Reuters

News

In brief

Qatargas signs 5-year LNG sale, purchase agreement

DOHA: Qatargas, the world's largest LNG producer, signed a five-year sales and purchase agreement with Petronas LNG UK yesterday, expanding a strategic import deal to Europe in the face of a looming global glut of gas supplies. Under the agreement Qatargas will deliver 1.1 million tons of liquefied natural gas (LNG) per year to the UK-based venture until Dec 31 2023, extending a current five-year contract that was due to expire on Dec 31 2018. Qatargas is looking to Britain and the Netherlands in an effort to weather an impending global gas glut through expanding import deals into Europe's most liquid markets, industry sources told Reuters in March. Qatar must lock in buyers for its unsold supply just as new Australian and US producers muscle into its prized Asian markets. Petronas UK is a subsidiary of Petronas, the national oil and gas company of Malaysia. The LNG will be supplied from Qatargas 4, a joint venture between Qatar Petroleum and Shell and will be delivered to Dragon LNG terminal at Milford Haven in the United Kingdom.

Doha Bank net profit misses expectations

DUBAI: Doha Bank, Qatar's fifth-largest lender by assets, yesterday reported a 8.9 percent fall in third-quarter net profit, missing analysts' expectations. The bank earned a net profit of 310.6 million riyals (\$85.3 million) in the three months to Sept 30 against 340.9 million riyals in the same period a year earlier, according to its full financial statement. Reuters had earlier calculated a third-quarter figure from a preliminary statement from the bank yesterday, which gave results for the nine months to Sept. 30 and did not break out the third quarter. Four analysts polled by Reuters had forecast on average the bank would make a quarterly net profit of 354.1 million riyals. Banks in Qatar are battling against the fallout from a prolonged weakness in energy prices, which has dented growth in lending and constrained liquidity. Loans at the end of September stood at 55.6 billion riyals, gaining 2.1 percent on the same point in 2015, while deposits fell 6.6 percent to 48.6 billion riyals over the same period.

S Korea's troubled STX put up for sale

SEOUL: South Korea's troubled STX Offshore and Shipbuilding Co was put up for sale by public tender Wednesday along with its profitable French shipyard unit, with buyers offered the choice of buying the companies separately or as a package. STX France, which specializes in building cruise ships, is the only profitable unit of STX Offshore, which filed for receivership in May. On the orders of the Seoul Central District's bankruptcy court, the tender notice was published in a local newspaper, inviting potential bidders to send letters of intent by November 4. "Bidders can tender for either one of the two companies or both of them," the notice read. A bankruptcy court spokesman had earlier suggested a preference for a package sale. In 2008 STX bought a 66.6 percent stake in a huge naval shipyard in the western French port of Saint-Nazaire, later named STX France. The French state holds a 33.3 percent share and is extremely concerned about the future of the shipyard, which is a major local employer with a healthy order book for large cruise liners.

Saudi Arabia targets \$17.5 billion in first bond issue

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia plans to raise up to \$17.5 billion from its first international bond issue, Bloomberg News reported yesterday, citing two people familiar with the offering. It would make the Saudi issue the largest ever from an emerging-market nation, said Bloomberg News, whose sources were not identified. The figure exceeds the \$15 billion which an analyst had previously said could be the value of the issue. The kingdom, the world's largest oil exporter, projected a deficit of \$87 billion this year after a fall in oil revenues, which still accounts for most of its income. To cover the shortfall, Saudi Arabia has imposed unprecedented subsidy cuts, slowed government projects, and last month cut cabinet ministers' salaries, among other measures. Saudi Arabia has already issued domestic bonds.

GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'WIN CASH THIS SUMMER SEASON'

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank recently announced the names of the 20 lucky winners of its exciting summer promotion "Win Cash this Summer Season", whereby credit and debit cardholders were offered the chance to win Cash during the summer season, by entering a raffle draw upon using their cards locally or abroad. The draw was held on Sunday 16 October 2016 in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Gulf Bank would like to congratulate Nawaf Abdullah Abdullah Abdulkarim, who won the grand prize, which is KD 15,000, in addition to the four lucky winners who won KD 3,000 each: Khaled Ahmad Abdullah Dashti, Yousef Jassem Essa Alsaraf, Mohammed Ebrahim Ebrahim Majid, Shaker Edan Mohammed Alkhaleefa.

The bank also announced other 15 lucky winners who won KD 1,000 each: Mohammed H S Moftah, Tariq Mohammad Ayham Alshawa, Bader Ali Hassan Ibrahim, Fawzi Dawoud Humoud Ibrahim Al Mutawa, Dalal Salah Khalefa Aljeri, Jaber Ghuloum Abulmalak, Amal Ibrahim Mahmoud Hayat, Faraj Hatha Mesfer Al Mufrah, Haya Jassem Mohammed Alghanem, Jumana Ahmed Bahbahani, Khalil Michel Amiouni, Ahmad Jassem Mohammad Khalaf, Bader Hussain Abdulrahman Alsafer, Hattab Dwaish Woqayan Alshammari, Azizah Baqar Abdullah B Almousawi.

Gulf Bank is committed to providing its customers with exceptional value and exciting offers that meet their needs, in addition to presenting them with one of the widest ranges of financial products and banking services currently available in Kuwait. To find out more about Gulf Bank's promotions and offers, you can visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches; contact the Customer Contact Center on 1805805, or go on to the bank's bilingual website at www.e-gulfbank.com.

OIL RISES AS CHINA OUTPUT DROPS; US INVENTORIES SHRINK

LONDON: Oil rose by around 1 percent yesterday, boosted by evidence of declining production in China and falling US inventories, while an upbeat OPEC statement on its planned output cut also supported the market. A slightly weaker dollar reinforced the strength in oil as well, traders said, as it makes fuel purchases cheaper for countries using other currencies, potentially spurring demand. Benchmark Brent crude futures were at \$52.42 a barrel, up 74 cents on the day by 0922 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil futures were up 73 cents at \$51.02 a barrel.

Saudi Arabian Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said yesterday that oil markets were at the end of a considerable downturn as fundamentals were

improving and supply and demand were rebalancing. He called on non-OPEC producers to help stabilize the market saying their role was as critical as the role of OPEC members. "Market forces are clearly working after a testing period of sub-\$30 oil prices... Oil demand is expanding at a healthy rate despite slower global growth," he said.

As the world's largest exporters prepare to discuss the first cut in output in eight years next month, the pressure of persistently low oil prices on higher-cost producers is becoming apparent. China's crude output fell 9.8 percent to 3.89 million bpd, to near its lowest in six years in the second-biggest year-on-year decline on record. "The fall in Chinese crude oil production is probably attributable to the low price

level, which makes parts of production unprofitable. This makes it all the harder to understand why OPEC is talking prices up with its current debate about production cuts, and is thus helping precisely those oil producers it would ideally like to force out of the market," Commerzbank analysts.

Adding to the support to crude prices from lower output, refining rates in the world's largest commodities consumer rose last month. China processed 43.8 million tons (10.7 million bpd) of crude oil in September, up 2.4 percent from a year ago. US crude stockpiles fell 3.8 million barrels in the week to Oct 14, to 467.1 million barrels, the API reported late on Tuesday. The US Energy Information Administration (EIA) is due to release

official crude and fuel storage data later.

If the figures show another drop, this will be the sixth fall in inventories in seven weeks. Mohammed Barkindo, secretary general of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), gave the market a boost by saying he is confident about the prospects of a planned production cut following an OPEC meeting on Nov 30. "I am optimistic we will have a decision," he said. In its first output cut agreement since 2008, OPEC said it plans to reduce production to 32.50 million to 33.0 million barrels per day (bpd), compared with record output of 33.6 million bpd in September. The group also hopes non-OPEC producers, especially Russia, will cooperate in a cut. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report
Wednesday 19 October 2016
Index Change Closing Last Closing High Low
Price Index 31.64 5,315.23 5,283.59 5,317.76 5,282.86
Weighted Index 1.64 344.74 343.10 345.50 343.10
KXSX 15 3.31 799.05 795.74 803.79 794.48
Trades Security High Low Volume Value (KD) Trades Last Change
MARIN 0.0 0.0 0 0 92 -- 0.0
IKARUS 29.0 27.0 20,000 550 3 29.0 ▲ 2.0
IPG 350 345 12,000 4,180 2 345 -- 0.0
NAPESCO 0.0 0.0 0 0 780 -- 0.0
ENERGYH 45.0 45.0 2,600 117 3 45.0 ▲ 1.0
GPI 38.5 36.0 3,801,254 142,937 67 38.5 ▲ 2.5
ABAR 85 85 4,625 393 1 85 -- 0.0
Oil & Gas 3,840,479 148,177 76 753.38 ▲ 9.47
KFOUC 166 164 298,000 48,914 10 164 ▼ -2.0
BPCC 455 455 8,475 3,856 5 455 -- 0.0
ALKOUT 0.0 0.0 0 0 600 -- 0.0
ALQURAIN 196 194 91,235 17,701 10 194 -- 0.0
Basic Materials 397,710 70,471 25 894.16 ▼ -1.75
KCEM 370 370 21,197 7,843 1 370 -- 0.0
REFRI 0.0 0.0 0 0 300 -- 0.0
CABLE 365 365 111,479 40,690 11 365 ▼ -5.0
SHIP 158 156 191,047 29,983 5 156 ▼ -2.0
PCEM 930 930 3,000 2,790 2 930 ▼ -10.0
PAPER 0.0 0.0 0 0 250 -- 0.0
MRC 0.0 0.0 0 0 66 -- 0.0
ACICO 0.0 0.0 0 0 280 -- 0.0
GMMC 0.0 0.0 0 0 350 -- 0.0
HCC 0.0 0.0 0 0 128 -- 0.0
KBMM 0.0 0.0 0 0 190 -- 0.0
NICBM 0.0 0.0 0 0 206 -- 0.0
EQUIPMENT 44.0 42.0 810,533 34,631 55 42.0 -- 0.0
NCCI 0.0 0.0 0 0 50 -- 0.0
GYSPUN 0.0 0.0 0 0 102 -- 0.0
SALBOOKH 55 54 177,140 9,566 24 55 ▼ -1.0
AGLTY 465 460 279,807 129,350 14 465 -- 0.0
EDU 0.0 0.0 0 0 192 -- 0.0
CLEANING 38.0 38.0 500,000 19,000 4 38.0 -- 0.0
KGL 47.5 46.0 27,000 1,267 7 47.0 -- 0.0
KPCP 0.0 0.0 0 0 170 -- 0.0
HUMANSOFT 1,600 1,600 890 1,424 1 1,600 -- 0.0
NAFAIS 0.0 0.0 0 0 182 -- 0.0
SAFWAN 0.0 0.0 0 0 380 -- 0.0
GFC 33.0 33.0 12,000 396 3 33.0 ▲ 2.5
MAYADEEN 29.0 28.0 2,945,136 83,933 35 28.5 ▲ 0.5
CGC 0.0 0.0 0 0 650 -- 0.0
MTCC 51 48.0 333,674 16,465 33 49.5 ▲ 1.5
UPAC 670 670 10,000 6,700 1 670 -- 0.0
ALAFCO 216 216 121,878 26,326 7 216 ▲ 2.0
MUBARRAD 51 47.0 369,169 17,576 31 47.0 ▼ -1.0
LOGISTICS 0.0 0.0 0 0 73 -- 0.0
SCEM 80 80 50,000 4,000 4 80 ▼ -2.0
GCEM 74 74 100,000 7,400 2 74 ▲ 1.0
QIC 0.0 0.0 0 0 68 -- 0.0
FCEM 0.0 0.0 0 0 78 -- 0.0
RKWC 94 94 18,000 1,692 2 94 ▲ 1.0
SPEC 79 77 11,000 851 4 79 ▲ 2.0
Industrials 6,092,950 441,884 246 1177.46 ▲ 0.41
KSH 0.0 0.0 0 0 138 -- 0.0
NSH 0.0 0.0 0 0 64 -- 0.0
PAPCO 0.0 0.0 0 0 92 -- 0.0
CATTI 204 204 5,180 1,057 1 204 -- 0.0
DANAH 87 85 112,000 9,594 8 86 ▲ 2.0
POULT 0.0 0.0 0 0 176 -- 0.0
FOOD 2,600 2,580 263,500 685,000 12 2,600 ▲ 2.0
Consumer Goods 380,680 695,650 21 1102.23 ▲ 0.87
MHC 0.0 0.0 0 0 200 -- 0
ATC 0.0 0.0 0 0 920 -- 0
YIACO 0.0 0.0 0 0 198 -- 0
Health Care 0 0 0 1046.80 -- 0.00
KICN 950 940 2,127 2,000 3 950 -- 0
KHOT 0.0 0.0 0 0 300 -- 0
SULTAN 54 53 128,000 6,789 6 53 -- 0
CABLETV 0.0 0.0 0 0 61 -- 0
EYAS 0.0 0.0 0 0 385 -- 0
IFAHF 0.0 0.0 0 0 158 -- 0
OULAFUEL 110 108 8,850 961 8 108 -- 0
MUNTAZHAT 75 71 35,300 2,533 10 75 ▲ 5
JAZEERA 830 820 17,539 14,536 3 830 -- 0
FOUR 108 108 19,231 2,077 9 108 -- 0
SUTOREKID 0.0 0.0 0 0 97 -- 0
ALRAI 146 142 91,605 13,302 11 146 ▲ 6
ZIMAH 41.5 39.0 5,124,384 209,340 70 41.5 ▲ 3
UFIG 0.0 0.0 0 0 170 -- 0
Mezzan 0.0 0.0 0 0 990 -- 0
Consumer Services 5,427,036 251,538 120 912.87 ▲ 11.75
ZAIN 345 335 4,376,643 1,488,554 100 345 ▲ 10
OOREDOO 1,120 1,100 3,474 3,861 7 1,100 -- 0
HITSTELEC 35.0 33.5 2,850,584 87,397 35 34.5 ▲ 1
VIVA 820 820 34,533 28,317 38 820 -- 0
Telecommunications 6,965,234 1,608,129 180 554.98 ▲ 4.10
NBK 580 570 1,665,299 949,695 91 570 -- 0
GBK 230 228 582,436 133,795 28 228 -- 0
CBK 0.0 0.0 0 0 380 -- 0
ABK 310 305 12,142 3,708 4 310 -- 0
ALMUTAHED 380 375 41,261 15,873 3 380 -- 0
KIB 182 180 934,365 170,053 28 182 -- 0
BURG 320 310 700,434 220,734 20 320 -- 0
KFIN 465 460 1,465,526 676,975 45 465 ▲ 5
BOUBAYAN 380 370 2,866,617 1,074,940 45 370 ▼ -1
AUB 192 192 386,461 74,201 15 192 ▲ 2
ITHMR 32.5 31.5 2,499,400 80,148 48 32.5 ▲ 2
WARBABANK 172 162 4,965,022 842,521 172 172 ▲ 10
Banks 16,119,963 4,242,444 499 772.23 ▲ 7.00
KINS 236 236 8,328 1,965 3 236 ▼ -1.0
GINS 630 630 1,936 1,220 2 630 -- 0
AINS 0.0 0.0 0 0 475 -- 0.0
WINS 106 106 979 104 3 106 -- 0.0
KUWAITRE 0.0 0.0 0 0 184 -- 0.0
FTI 39.5 39.5 500 20 1 39.5 ▲ 2.5
WETHAQ 0.0 0.0 0 0 29.0 -- 0.0
BKIKWT 0.0 0.0 0 0 355 -- 0.0
Insurance 11,743 3,309 9 946.68 ▼ -0.69

For more information, call Global Investment House on 1 80 42 42, www.globalinv.net



GUIZHOU: Chinese farmers carry crops from their paddy fields in a village in Congjiang county, southwest China's Guizhou province. — AFP

DOLLAR RECEDES FROM A SEVEN-MONTH PEAK

EURO ZONE STOCKS BRUISED BY WEAK EARNINGS

LONDON: The US dollar fell from a seven-month peak yesterday, combining with signs of an easing supply glut to help lift oil prices back towards a one-year high. A weaker dollar boosts crude prices, which gained over 1 percent to top \$52 a barrel, since it makes fuel cheaper for countries using other currencies. The bounce in oil pushed a key market gauge of long-term euro zone inflation expectations to a multi-month high, keeping bond yields elevated above record lows seen in the wake of Britain's vote in June to leave the European Union. Wall Street was set to open a touch higher but neither the rise in commodity prices nor a barrage of data confirming China's economy, the world's second largest, was stabilizing could prevent a dip in euro zone stocks after a series of poor earnings reports.

"Oil is a good indicator of expectations for growth next year," said Frederik Ducrozet, a senior European economist at Swiss wealth manager Pictet. "It is comforting for markets that oil is above \$50 a barrel and looking stable at those levels." Against a basket of major currencies, the US dollar fell 0.2 percent to 97.665, off Monday's seven-month high of 98.169, after consumer price data showed underlying inflation had moderated. That prompted markets to trim bets on a Federal Reserve rate hike later this year.

Traders said that had helped lift oil, which was also supported by a report of a drop in US inventories and declining production in China. An upbeat OPEC statement on its planned output cut also supported the market. International Brent crude futures were at \$52.35 a barrel at 1040GMT, up 67 cents, or 1.3 percent, and heading back towards a one-year high of \$53.73 seen earlier this month. US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil futures were trading at \$50.96 per barrel, also up 1.3 percent, having been below \$40 a barrel at the start of August.

European shares fell early yesterday after a slew of weak updates weighed on British companies Travis Perkins and Reckitt Benckiser. Akzo Nobel's results were hit by a weak pound. The pan-European STOXX 600 index edged down 0.1 percent, following a 1.5 percent rise in the previous session. Earlier, Asian shares edged up for the second straight day after data showing Chinese gross domestic product expanded 6.7 percent in the year to September, exactly as forecast. Other data showed retail sales rising 10.7 percent and urban investment 8.2 percent. Industrial output disappointed by growing only 6.1 percent.

"The upshot from today's data is that economic activity seems to be holding up reasonably well, with few signs that a renewed slowdown is just around the corner," said Julian Evans-Pritchard, China economist at Capital Economics. "Nonetheless, the recent recovery is ultimately on borrowed time given that it has been driven in large part by faster credit growth and a property market boom, both of which policymakers are now working to rein in." MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan added 0.4 percent on top of Tuesday's 1.4 percent jump.

The recent bounce in oil prices has helped lift a key market gauge of long-term euro zone inflation - the five-year, five-year forward rate - above 1.44 percent, its highest level since early June. That remains well below the European Central Bank's inflation target of just below 2 percent, but it has taken the heat off the bloc's policymakers - who meet on Thursday - to introduce more easing measures. Worries that they may eventually scale back their stimulus has seen German 30-year bond yields climb more than 20 basis points in the last fortnight, already on track for their biggest monthly rise in fourteen months.

Dollar retreat
The retreat in the dollar came after a report on US consumer prices showed underlying inflation - stripping out food and energy - moderated slightly in September to 2.2 percent, leading the market to slightly pare back bets on a December rate hike. Fed fund futures imply around a 65 percent probability of a move, down from 70 percent. Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen said last week the US central bank could allow inflation to run above its target. The euro was slightly higher against the weakening dollar at \$1.0985. Sterling, which plunged to a record low on a trade-weighted basis last week, continued to recover and hit an eight-day high yesterday after a UK government lawyer said that parliament would have to ratify any deal to take Britain out of the EU. — Reuters

Disappointing earnings
European shares fell early yesterday after a slew of weak updates weighed on British companies Travis Perkins and Reckitt Benckiser. Akzo Nobel's results were hit by a weak pound. The pan-European STOXX 600 index edged down 0.1 percent, following a 1.5 percent rise in the previous session. Earlier, Asian shares edged up for the second

GOLD RISES AS US DOLLAR WEAKENS

LONDON: Gold rose yesterday as the dollar weakened and Treasury yields ticked lower amid uncertainty around the timing of a US interest rate increase. Spot gold gained 0.6 percent to \$1,270.20 an ounce at 1153 GMT. US gold futures rose \$8.70 to \$1,271.50 an ounce. Spot prices had shed about 7 percent over the past three weeks, as markets re-priced the likelihood of a Federal Reserve's rate hike in December. The metal is highly sensitive to rising rates, which lift the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding assets.

However, a retreat in the dollar, which fell 0.3 percent against a basket of six main currencies after US consumer prices showed a moderation in underlying inflation, prompted markets to trim bets on a December Federal Reserve rate hike. Fed fund futures imply around a 65 percent probability of the Federal Reserve raising interest rates by December, down from 70 percent before the CPI data. "The market is keeping an eye on the potential

ROSNEFT ENTERS INDIA WITH \$13 BILLION ESSAR DEAL

MOSCOW: In a spectacularly costly gamble aimed at boosting Russia's strategic position, state-controlled giant Rosneft is investing in India's Essar Oil to muscle into a promising market with outlets throughout Asia. Russian President Vladimir Putin returned from last week's BRICS summit in Goa with one of the largest deals the oil sector has seen in the last two years of falling prices: 98 percent of Essar Oil at a valuation of \$12.9 billion. Rosneft-Russia's biggest oil company led by Putin's close ally Igor Sechin will buy 49 percent of Essar Oil, which owns the Vadinar refinery in western India.

Vadinar is one of the country's largest refineries and one of the world's most modern, with access to a port navigable by the largest vessels. Essar Oil operates 2,700 petrol stations and was controlled until now by billionaire brothers Shashi and Ravi Ruia. A further 49 percent will be acquired by a group of investors led by Trafigra oil traders, one of Rosneft's partners. "Rosneft is entering one of the most promising and fast-growing world markets," Sechin said, according to a statement. Rosneft said the Vadinar refinery will allow it to process its crude oil produced in Venezuela, which is heavy and more difficult to refine.

It could also serve as a base for exporting to the Asia-Pacific region, including Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Australia. While the deal represents an unprecedented foreign acquisition from the Indian perspective, for Russia it is "an important strategic victory," said Emily Stromquist, an analyst at Eurasia Group. "It sends a signal to the EU and US that Russia

has alternative market opportunities despite sanctions" imposed over Russia's actions in Ukraine, she wrote in a note. "It also provides a much-needed opportunity for export diversification as European demand flattens and Chinese growth becomes more unpredictable."

Allied nations

With its 1.2 billion inhabitants, India is the world's fourth largest consumer of hydrocarbons, with demand constantly growing. It is increasingly dependent on crude imports, despite authorities taking steps to encourage foreign investment and seeking to diversify its suppliers, currently mainly in the Middle East. Indian companies in turn this year bought almost half of Vankor, one of Rosneft's most promising oil fields in Siberia.

"Rosneft has the ambition to develop itself into a global energy group... but the opportunities to develop business abroad are limited, especially in Western countries," said Valery Nesterov, an analyst at Sberbank CIB. "The markets that are promising are in Asia," he said, while Rosneft "acts in the interests of the state and develops cooperation with countries that are friends with Russia." The Russian group has already grown considerably in recent years. It took over the ruins of oil magnate Mikhail Khodorkovsky's group after his jailing and has since increased its acquisitions, notably TNK-BP in 2013 for \$55 billion.

Due to the weak ruble, it is sitting on large cash reserves that soften the effect of oil prices falling in dollars. It has just proved its influence by pushing the reluc-



VADINAR: Photo shows an Indian Oil Refinery of Essar Oil at Vadinar village, near Jamnagar, some 380 km from Ahmedabad. In a spectacularly costly gamble aimed at boosting Russia's strategic position, state-controlled giant Rosneft is investing in India's Essar Oil to muscle into a promising market with outlets throughout Asia. —AFP

tant government to allow it to buy a majority stake in Russia's number six oil company Bashneft, which the state wanted to privatize. Internationally the Ukrainian crisis has struck a blow to Rosneft's policy of forming

partnerships with Western giants such as BP, Exxonmobil and Statoil hence the need to invest in emerging markets that are not affected by sanctions. Pavel Kushnir, an analyst at Deutsche Bank, did not conceal

his skepticism over Essar, saying he could not remember a single "example of an outright successful acquisition or investment that a Russian energy company made abroad." —AFP



SEOUL: A couple looks at their mobile phones as they sit before the Han river in central in Seoul. 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

AT CRISIS-HIT SAMSUNG, NERVES JANGLE; ANNUAL REVIEW LOOMS

SEOUL: The next few weeks are traditionally a tense time at Samsung Electronics Co as executives wait to see if their work over the year is rewarded with promotion at the South Korean firm's annual performance review. This year, that tension has been ramped up several notches as the year-end ritual comes on the heels of the debacle over Samsung's flagship Galaxy Note 7 smartphone. The world's top smartphone maker this month pulled the plug on the near-\$900 device after phones overheated and caught fire. With some replacement phones suffering the same problem, Samsung has forecast a \$5.4 billion hit to its operating profits. Some analysts predict the smartphone business may post a first quarterly loss for July-September.

"Everyone's afraid to be heard even breathing," said one Samsung employee. "There will be punitive measures; someone will have to take responsibility for this." None of the Samsung employees Reuters talked to for this article wanted to be named as they were not authorized to speak to the media. Samsung's annual personnel decisions - a common practice in South Korea around December - is a secret more closely guarded than even details of its new products. Executives are told about any changes only at the last minute.

Samsung insiders say there is more nervousness this year than normal, and talk internally of sweeping changes, with a cull both in the executive suite and on the ground level. "There's a lot of talk there could be major turnover in the executive ranks on the hardware side," said an insider at the mobile division. "There's also a lot of concern among the working-level employees about a major restructuring." Samsung said it was not considering any management changes or restructuring in response to the Note 7 crisis.

Frustration

The sense of frustration among Samsung staff has been heightened by the company's inability to find the cause of the fires in replacement Note 7s that began shipping last month with what Samsung said were safe batteries, insiders said. "We are working around the clock to analyse the causes of the reported cases," Samsung said in a statement to Reuters, adding it is premature to speculate on what went wrong.

In an internal Oct 11 email apologizing to staff, mobile chief Koh Dong-jin - who

has been in the job for less than a year - wrote of the "big wound" the scrapping of the Note 7 would be for executives and employees. Samsung confirmed Koh wrote to staff, but did not comment on what he said. Some Samsung workers said there were already rumours circulating internally about which executives might be ousted. Some investors and analysts have said top executives including Koh may be held responsible at the year-end review.

Others said they felt ashamed when people they know ditched the Note 7 for a rival product or when they heard news announcements about the phones being banned from aeroplanes. Koh and other Samsung executives have been active on internal messaging boards, discussing with employees how to deal with the Note 7 crisis, insiders said. About 70 percent of Samsung's more than 325,000 employees work outside South Korea. It is not clear how overseas jobs or those at subsidiaries might be affected by the Note 7 storm; Samsung said it has no plans to cut jobs this year in Vietnam, a major smartphone manufacturing base.

Taking it slow

Internally, the mobile business was criticized by some for changing product specifications without delaying launch schedules, putting staff and suppliers under pressure to deliver fast. "Some people who work in other business divisions feel something like this was bound to happen," said a Samsung employee at the consumer electronics division, noting mounting pressure on the mobile business to overcome slowing growth amid strong competition from rivals including Apple Inc and Huawei Technologies Co Ltd. A person familiar with the development of the next Galaxy S smartphone, expected to launch early next year, said the process has now slowed as Samsung is anxious to avoid any repeat of the Note 7 problems in its future premium handsets.

"Depending on the cause (of the Note 7 problem), certain configurations may need to be altered," the person said. "So the specifics for the (next) phone have not been finalized." Samsung is not likely to bring forward the launch of the next Galaxy S smartphone to make up for lost Note 7 sales, the person added. Samsung told Reuters it will take "any and all necessary steps" to ensure product safety, but did not comment on whether the Note 7 fallout was affecting the next Galaxy S phone's development. —Reuters

UK JOBLESS RATE HOLDS AT 4.9% DESPITE BREXIT

BRITISH BUILDING FIRM SAYS 600 JOBS AT RISK

LONDON: Britain's jobless rate held at 4.9 percent in the three months to the end of August, official data showed yesterday, signaling little impact thus far from the shock Brexit vote. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said the June-August rate - a low for 11 years - matched the 4.9-percent figure for the three month period that ended in July. The nation's jobless total meanwhile stood at 1.66 million people over the same period. That was 118,000 fewer than a year earlier. "All in all this (data) suggests that Brexit has hardly had any measurable impact on the UK labor market yet," noted economist Kay Daniel Neufeld, at the Centre for Economics and Business Research think tank.

"Unemployment has been low throughout the year and wages continue to grow at a subdued but steady rate," British Prime Minister Theresa May has already stated that she will trigger the two-year process to exit the European Union by the end of March 2017, after the surprise approval of the Brexit referendum on June 23. Commentators also warn that the jobless rate could head higher before the end of this year.

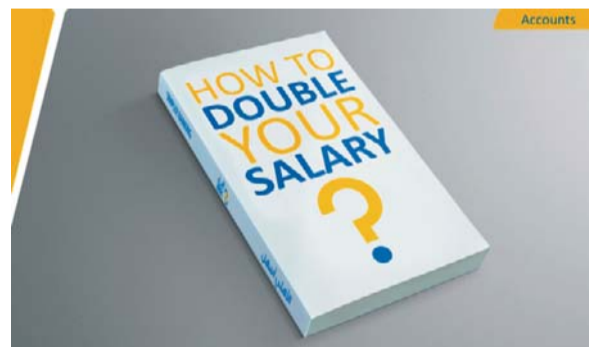
"We suspect both the economy and the labor market will be increasingly pressurized by mounting uncertainties over the coming months - particularly once the government triggers Article 50," said IHS Markit economist Howard Archer. "We also expect growth to slow as consumer purchasing power is increasingly squeezed." "Consequently, we see the unemployment rate starting to trend up before too long and suspect that it could reach 5.0 percent by the end of 2016."

Meanwhile, British building materials supplier Travis Perkins said yesterday that up to 600 jobs were at risk from the uncertain economic outlook arising from Brexit. The company which serves professionals and consumers employs a total of 28,000 people at 2,060 stores that include Tile Giant, Tool Station and Wickes. A company spokeswoman said that the Brexit was one of the major factors behind the gloomy outlook, adding that affected jobs were at trade-facing businesses.

Travis Perkins also warned annual underlying profit, or adjusted earnings before interest, tax-

es, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA), would be below market expectations of £415 million (\$509 million, 462 million euros) - and blamed weak plumbing and heating results. The news sent the group's share price sliding almost seven percent in morning deals on the London stock market, topping the fallers' board on the FTSE 100 index.

"Given that levels of future demand remain difficult to predict, the group has chosen to implement a number efficiency programs and branch closures to further optimize the network," Travis Perkins said in a statement. "This work includes the closure of ten smaller distribution and fabrication centers, the write off of certain IT legacy equipment and over 30 branch closures in our trade businesses. "All of the 600 affected employees are aware of the changes." British Prime Minister Theresa May declared last month that she would trigger the two-year process to exit the European Union by the end of March 2017, after the surprise Brexit referendum that was held earlier this year. —Agencies



ABK 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' WINNERS

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its 25th 'Double Your Salary' weekly draw on 17th October, 2016 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce, announcing the names of the winners for this week. The promotion includes weekly draws, with two winners per draw. Given the success of the campaign it has been decided to extend it until 27th June, 2017.

The winners this week were: (1) Abdulsadeq Jumaah Mahdi Abdulsadeq - Salmiya Branch and (2) Mohammed Ali Abdul Samat - Jleeb Al Shyukh Branch. New customers who transfer their salary to ABK receive KD 100 and will automatically be entered into the weekly draws to double their salaries. Existing customers who are already transferring their salary to ABK are entered into a separate draw.

The next 'Double Your Salary' draw will be held on 24th October, 2016 where two new lucky winners will be announced. All winners will be contacted personally and a weekly announcement will be made through the media with the winners' names. For more information about ABK please visit eahl.com or contact an ABK customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.

AHLI UNITED BANK \$200 MILLION PERPETUAL ADDITIONAL TIER 1 SUKUK OVERSUBSCRIBED

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank KSCP (AUB) has successfully concluded the subscription of its issue of a \$200 Million Perpetual Additional Tier 1 Sukuk. The Bank's Chairman, Dr Anwar Al Mudhaf, commented "We are very proud of this achievement as it represents a major success for the Bank, and for Islamic Banking in general, notwithstanding the prevailing economic challenges. Furthermore, it reconfirms that the State of Kuwait enjoys the necessary components to attract international investors to enter the Kuwait market."

Dr Al Mudhaf went on to say: "I would like to express my appreciation for the continued support extended to the Bank by our regulators, the Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority, in the process of the Sukuk issue, to our many investors both in Kuwait and abroad and to the Bank's team whose efforts were rewarded by our achieving this excellent result within a record time."

Richard Groves, the Bank's Chief Executive Officer said: "The successful issuance of AUB's Sukuk has been demonstrated through being oversubscribed by over three times more than the tar-

getted amount. This was achieved in less than one week from the date of the announcement of the transaction both locally and internationally, with a roadshow covering meetings in Asia, the Middle East and Europe." Groves added: "The Perpetual Additional Tier 1 capital issue Sukuk is issued in compliance with the requirements of Basel III, the regulations of the Central Bank of Kuwait as well as in compliance with the regulations of the Capital Markets Authority."

To enable the secondary market trading subsequent to the issuance, the Sukuk will be listed on both the Irish Stock Exchange and NASDAQ Dubai. The Sukuk adds a new source of cost effective funding for AUB's capital which will further diversify its capital and funding base. The strong demand generated for AUB's Sukuk is a clear indication of the confidence of both local and global investors in the Bank's diversified business model, its robust financial performance, and overall credit worthiness. The successful closure of this issue will assist AUB in both sustaining its growth momentum and optimizing its capital resources."



AHLI UNITED'S 'AL HASSAD ISLAMIC SAVING' WINNERS

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank held its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic Saving program on October 12 2016. This program offers the biggest prize amount to the largest number of winners. The prize program succeeded in becoming the first prize account in Kuwait compliant with the Islamic Sharia principles. The program has been developed to fulfill the needs of the Bank customers and increase their opportunities in winning sizeable and attractive prizes in addition to enjoying the latest banking advantages that Ahli United Bank provides.

On this occasion, the bank issued the following press release: Al Hassad Islamic Saving program offers the highest amounts of prizes which amount to KD 3.4 Million per year. This Program also offers 26 weekly prizes, with the highest number of weekly winners. The Islamic Hassad Saving Account may be

opened by the lowest amount to open an account, which is KD 100.

The winner of the weekly grand prize in the amount of KD 25,000/- is: Ibrahim Ahmad Almul. The winners of the KD 1,000 Prize Each are: Khaled Awadh Mlaihan, Ahmad Awadh Almutairi, Abdullah Yousef Alsaif, Awatef Hamad Alsubeeh, Husain Abbas Alsaif, Salem Eid Alenezi, Mohd Hanif Shamsuddin, Taleen Karkoz Karkosian, Abdullah Murshed Al Murshed, Tharwat Hasan Ali, Khaled Mohammad Alsaqubi, Fawziyah Yousef Alkandari, Sami Khalid Aljamsi, Ali Jdaie Alajmi, Mortada Ali Mohamed, Omar Laif, Rawan Ali Ibrahim, Abdul Hadi Mirza Khalil, Ahmed A Ridha Yusuf, Mohd Salman A Hussain, Salah Abdulla Hassan, Batsco, Badriya Ebrahim Abdulla, Fatima Ahmed Ali, Abbas Abdulla Isa.

The Prize program of 'Al Hassad Islamic Saving'

from Ahli United Bank offers a weekly grand prize worth KD 25,000/- in addition to 25 weekly prizes worth a total of KD 25,000 distributed to 25 prizes, KD 1,000 for each winner. In addition, prizes of Al Hassad Islamic saving program from Ahli United Bank offer 4 quarterly grand prizes announced in quarterly draws. Each is a "Salary for Life" prize which is worth KD 250,000/-.

In general, Ahli United Bank continues to offer innovative tools and means to meet the needs of its customers to match the Bank's long history of distinctive services which extend over 74 years during which the Bank managed to take the lead among local banks. For further information about "Al Hassad Islamic Saving" account, customers may call at any Ahli United Bank branch, or call: "Hayakom" service at Tel: 181 2000.



KFH ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 'BANKING CARDS CAMPAIGN'

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced the 8 winners of the last draw of the new banking cards campaign themed "Use KFH Cards and You May Win up to 2 Mercedes-Benz SUV's and Cash Prizes up to KD 60000 aiming at encouraging its customers to use KFH credit, prepaid and debit cards while making purchases in Kuwait and overseas.

The winners are: Husain Alkindari, Nawaf Alotaibi, Mohammad Alqattan, Saud Shoaib, Ayad Alhoud, Mubarak Alhajri, Khaled Alahmad and Saleh Alkindari. For every KD 10 spent on their KFH cards, clients will gain a chance to enter a draw and win up to 2 Mercedes-Benz cars and a chance to win the value of their purchases up to \$2000 daily for 100 days. It is worth noting that KFH Credit and Prepaid cards used in domestic and international purchases and KFH Debit cards used in international purchases are eligible for the daily draw.

Moreover, clients will gain the chance to enter 2 draws to win 2 Mercedes-Benz cars. The first draw will be for the first car Mercedes Benz GLE 400. This draw will be held after 50 days of the launch for purchasing transactions conducted from day 1 to day 50, while the second draw will be for

the second car Mercedes Benz GLE 450 Coupe, and will be held after 100 days of the launch for purchasing conducted from day 51 to day 100 of the campaign. KFH strives to continuously offer its clients new promotions and offers that differentiate them among peers, whilst also bolstering the bank's pioneering position in the field of banking cards. KFH marketing campaigns play a significant role in underlining KFH's principles that include boosting sales, while benefitting clients and merchants.

This new campaign is part of KFH's efforts to reward its clients and grant them additional value; thus achieving higher customer satisfaction. The campaign also aims at enhancing the bank's presence, especially that it dominates the largest market share in the field of banking cards in Kuwait. KFH has won several awards in the field of banking cards which reinforces its success and efficiency in banking cards market. KFH enjoys high confidence and leadership in the market in addition to high quality products which have enabled it to achieve growth in cards market and increase the number of customers. KFH occupies the leading position as the issuer of banking cards and one of leading banks at the GCC level.



FITCH AFFIRMED NBK LONG TERM RATINGS AT AA-, OUTLOOK STABLE

KUWAIT: Fitch Ratings, the international credit rating agency (Fitch), once again affirmed National Bank of Kuwait's (NBK) Long-Term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'AA-', the highest in the Middle East and North Africa, with a Stable Outlook. Fitch highlighted the strength of NBK's regulatory capital achieved through a rights issue and by issuing additional tier 1 securities and subordinated bonds, noting that NBK's regulatory capital ratios and Fitch Core Capital (FCC) have improved.

Moreover, the agency added that NBK's Viability Rating (VR) is underpinned by its flagship status and dominant franchise, which supports its revenue generation capacity and ability to finance better quality assets than its peers. The rating also factors in the bank's strong management, consistent strategy and solid funding profile.

The report confirmed that the Stable outlook on the bank's Long-term IDR reflects the outlook on the Kuwaiti sovereign rating at (AA/Stable), due to the

agency's expectation of support from the authorities and Kuwait's strong ability to provide support to its banks, combined with Fitch's belief that there would be a strong willingness to do so, in addition to the authorities' record of support for the domestic banking system in case of need.

Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) also played a vital role as per the report, with its strict regime and hands-on monitoring approach, leading to the continued improvement of the asset quality in the banking sector. Additionally, reserves for NPLs continue to be extremely high due to the prudent actions of CBK's requiring the build-up of precautionary general provisions. Finally, in its reflection on the economic scene in Kuwait, Fitch concluded that despite the impact of lower oil prices, Kuwaiti banks in general continue to benefit from a fairly stable operating environment, thanks to the government's continuing capital spending plans which managed to partially offset the pressures.

EGYPT ALLOCATES \$1.8 BILLION TO BUILD UP STRATEGIC GOODS STOCK

LONDON: Egypt's central bank has allocated \$1.8 billion to ensure six months of reserves in all strategic goods, Supply Minister Mohamed Ali El-Sheikh said yesterday, after widespread sugar shortages prompted talk of an impending food crisis. Egypt already has five months worth of wheat and vegetable oil reserves and would ensure that Egyptians receive a steady supply of essential foods, Sheikh said at a news conference. The \$1.8 billion has already been allocated and the supply effort would be made in coordination with the armed forces, said Sheikh, a military major general who took charge in September of a ministry rocked by a wheat corruption scandal.

Sheikh said his ministry would seek to end procurement of wheat to open air silos by next year's buying season and move to more sophisticated climate-controlled silos that are designed to minimize waste and prevent fraud. The move comes as Egypt, the world's largest wheat importer, tries to clamp down on alleged corruption in its strategic wheat supply chain that has wasted billions of pounds in public funds. Egyptian prosecutors are investigating allegations that millions of dollars intended to subsidize local wheat farmers were used to purchase more

wheat on paper than was found in silos.

The public prosecutor has charged several private silo owners and others with profiteering, forgery and enabling embezzlement. Parliamentarians who formed a fact-finding commission to investigate the suspected fraud have said upwards of 2 million tons, or 40 percent of the locally procured crop, may be unaccounted for. Sheikh said a committee composed of officials from the supply, agriculture and finance ministries had been established to determine the proper price for local wheat to be procured next year.

However, he said Egypt had yet to decide if it will shift to a system where it pays farmers the global wheat price plus the government subsidy. The plan was mooted earlier this year as part of efforts to minimize opportunities for corruption along the supply chain but was never implemented. Egypt was also reviewing eligibility for a smart card system through which low income Egyptians access state-subsidized food, Sheikh said. He said the ministry would cut waste by cancelling cards allocated to people who have since died or emigrated and would review eligibility criteria for everyone else. He did not elaborate on what the new criteria may involve. — Reuters

EURONEXT FACES A BIND OVER LSE CLEARNET SALE

RIVALS LIKE CME GROUP SEEN AS POSSIBLE BIDDERS

LONDON: The London Stock Exchange's move to sell off its French clearing business has left France's stock market operator Euronext facing a dilemma. The Paris-based exchange has begun talks with LSE to buy LCH Clearnet SA according to sources familiar with the negotiations. The British bourse has put the platform up for sale to help get its \$28 billion merger with Deutsche Boerse approved by European competition authorities, and Euronext is seen as the faraway favorite to buy it.

The deal would strengthen Euronext's position in the competitive European clearing market following its acquisition of a 20 percent stake in Netherlands-based clearing house EuroCCP. It would also give it control of a platform that it provides much of the revenue for and would allow it to avoid relying on a competitor's clearing house for an essential service.

Clearing forms a critical part of the financial system's plumbing, guaranteeing a trade is completed even if one side of the transaction goes bust. Clearing is becoming a growth sector in trading as new rules intended to apply lessons from the financial crisis mean far more derivatives will have to pass through a clearing house, ensuring their volumes will swell in coming years. But there's a catch. If Euronext buys Clearnet SA, the chances of LSE getting the nod from competition regulators to merge with Deutsche Boerse increase as it would ease concerns about a concentration in the clearing market. But the deal would still leave Euronext a minnow compared with a combined Anglo-German exchange.

"Of course Euronext is keen to acquire Clearnet," said a source directly involved in the talks. "But Euronext is probably even more keen to see the LSE-Deutsche Boerse merger fail."

Euronext said in a statement that it is "obviously considering this situation (LCH.Clearnet SA), because this asset belonged to Euronext until 2003." But it declined to comment on

whether the company is currently in talks with LSE. "We are a natural buyer but not at any price, especially since our clients represent approximately half of the revenues of the company," it added.

Politics at play

A decision by Euronext, which also operates exchanges in Belgium, Netherlands, and Portugal, to buy Clearnet would be watched not just by the London and German exchanges - politicians in France also have an interest. The French government wants critical market infrastructure to be locally owned, and President Francois Hollande and other European policymakers say euro-denominated derivatives contracts should be cleared in the single currency area.

The bulk of euro-denominated swaps are currently cleared by the London half of LCH Clearnet. But Euronext buying up Clearnet in France could help drive euro clearing to Paris and a French-owned exchange. But like Euronext the French government - as well as those in Portugal and Belgium - have also spoken out against LSE and Deutsche Boerse combining, saying a deal would create an exchange so large it could make it more expensive for some companies in Europe raise money on the capital markets.

Buying Clearnet would not be enough to instantly transform Euronext's footprint in the industry though - and the merger of the London and Frankfurt exchanges would be a ready-made channel for shifting euro-denominated clearing from London to Deutsche Boerse's Eurex clearing unit in any case. People familiar with Euronext's thinking say the exchange's management does not feel under obligation to buy Clearnet and has "alternative options", pointing to the EuroCCP deal as an example, though the latter clears shares and has no immediate plans to move into derivatives.

Euronext could take its time and wait until there's more clarity on whether the LSE-Deutsche Boerse deal will go through - last month the European competition regulator raised a series of concerns about the proposed merger. But LSE is unlikely to offload the asset if the deal with Deutsche Boerse is rejected, so there is only a limited time to decide. It would also be easier for Euronext to secure a deal now as its clearing contract with LCH Clearnet expires in December 2018, which in market structure time scale is a very short time frame given all the tests and authorizations required if it is to find an alternative clearing house.

Britain's decision to leave the European Union has also made LCH's French arm more attractive to non-EU players as it would allow them to operate in the continent without having a so-called "passporting" deal in place. Chicago-based CME Group, which was touted as a possible rival bidder for Deutsche Boerse, might want to bid, sector bankers said. CME declined to comment. The cash-rich exchange has been slowly building up a presence in London, where it already has a clearing house. Industry officials say Asian exchanges might also be interested in Clearnet as a gateway into the EU.

That leaves Euronext with limited bargaining power and time with LSE, as others might seize the opportunity if they fail to agree a deal. Analysts at KBW say Euronext is under-leveraged compared to other exchanges, so has the firepower to ensure a deal goes through. The whole of LCH-Clearnet is estimated to be worth around 600 million euros (\$650 million) based on what LSE paid for its controlling stake in 2012, with Clearnet expected to sell for less than that. One banker in the exchange industry estimated it could be worth 400 million euros. The question is whether they see the platform as a good enough consolation prize for an LSE-Deutsche Boerse merger. — Reuters

KAMCO ACQUIRES GE GLOBAL OPERATION CENTER IN US

KUWAIT: KAMCO Investment Company, a leading investment company with one of the largest AUMs in the GCC region, successfully acquired General Electric's (GE) Global Operation Center building located in the United States of America. KAMCO, established in the heart of Kuwait City with an international office in the UAE, announced that the 12-story office tower housing GE's Global Operation Center, located within The Banks "Work, Live, Play" mixed-use development area in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio is categorized as a Class A trophy property.

The strategic location provides returns expected to deliver a 6.5% per annum net yield to investors and a projected net IRR of 7.1% after a total investment period of 5 years. The newly built-to-suit state of the art facility is equipped with the latest building techniques and necessary infrastructure to accommodate a large number of offices, and consists of 339,678 sq feet of usable commercial space. The property, leased to GE on a triple net 15-year lease, started from October 2016 until 2031 with five additional terms of 5 years with each option extended.

Commenting on the acquisition, Chief Executive Officer of KAMCO, Faisal Mansour Sarkhou, said that the acquisition was yet another landmark in KAMCO's expansion plan that the firm implemented during the beginning of 2016. He also affirmed KAMCO's strategic focus on the regional and international real estate investments across the identified core markets that provide sustainable returns to the firm's shareholders.

Also commenting on the acquisition, Chief Investment Officer of KAMCO, Khaled Fouad, said, "This investment opportunity emphasizes KAMCO's ongoing determination in providing new diverse and innovative income generating asset streams, and we believe that this prime asset offers long-term value in combination with attractive current yields." Fouad also added that the Alternative Investments Department at KAMCO is keen to resume developing and expanding its renowned track-record of experience in different alternative asset classes on a local, regional and global basis.

The investment transaction was orchestrated by the Atlanta office of Eastdil Secured, act-



KAMCO's CEO Faisal Sarkhou



Chief Investment Officer at KAMCO Khaled Fouad

ing on behalf of Carter and 90 North Real Estate Partners acting on behalf of KAMCO. JLL Capital Markets Debt & Equity team, based in Chicago, coordinated the financing, on behalf of KAMCO, with Des Moines, Iowa based Principal Real Estate Investors. The local Cincinnati office of CBRE, led by Steven Thornton, will provide property management on the asset.

Assisting KAMCO in completing the transaction, Ice Miller LLP acted as legal advisors for all practices in the United States. Ernest and young provided tax advisory services for the acquisition, while BDO USA LLP, Centrum Investment Group, and Jones Lang LaSalle financial and professional services firm specializing in commercial real estate services, assisted in completing the transaction. GE is a global digital industrial company that is ranked 8th in the Fortune 500 with investment grade ratings from Standard and Poor's (AA+) and Moody's (A1). The company's diversified stream of income from its clients in over 180 countries has led GE to reach a market cap of approximately USD 296.5 billion.

Strategic Location

The real estate property acquired by KAMCO is located in the vital area of Cincinnati,

Ohio called "The Banks". The Banks is vibrant, mixed-use development on the banks of the Ohio River. The ideal location consists a combination of residential real estate, entertainment venues, retail stores, offices and national parks. It is also situated between the Cincinnati Reds' baseball stadium, the Great American Ball Park and the Paul Brown Stadium. The development has also transformed downtown Cincinnati's riverfront to a true live-work-play environment.

When fully completed, The Banks will feature 1,800 residential units, 400 hotel rooms, 1 million square feet of office space and 400,000 square feet of retail space. The 592 residential units have been completed to date, along with over 100,000 square feet of retail. The location has multiple bus and shuttle services and a new bike-sharing program, Cincy Red Bike, with recently installed stations across the downtown Cincinnati area providing over 260 bicycles for public use. The new \$112 million, 3.6-mile streetcar track will link The Banks to Downtown and eventually to the University of Cincinnati. The amenities The Banks has to offer allows GE to access a broader and wider pool of quality staff, in a modern working environment while encouraging a work-life balance.

QATAR BANK CBQ SWINGS TO LOSS

BAD LOAN PROVISIONS ALMOST TRIPLE

DOHA: Commercial Bank of Qatar (CBQ) swung to a third-quarter net loss, it reported late on Tuesday, as the Gulf Arab state's third-largest lender by assets was forced to set aside more cash to cover bad loans. The results, the first since the appointment of former Australia and New Zealand Banking Group banker Joseph Abraham as chief executive, continue the bank's dismal earnings run, having posted falling profits in the preceding four quarters.

The bank made a net attributable loss of 1.04 million riyals (\$285,612) in the three months to Sept. 30, the bank said in a financial statement. That compared with a net attributable profit of 275.9 million riyals a year earlier, while the average forecast of four analysts polled by Reuters was for a quarterly

profit of 281.7 million riyals. Reuters had earlier calculated the earnings based on a separate statement which did not provide a quarterly breakdown. Weighing on the bank's earnings was a near-tripling of net impairment charges against bad loans, which jumped to 504.9 million riyals in the third quarter from 167.6 million a year earlier.

Provision levels in the Gulf are being carefully watched as the region's banks feel the fallout of lower oil prices on the wider economy, which has forced cutbacks in state and consumer spending, as well as layoffs in a number of industries. Saudi banks have been hit hard by third-quarter impairments, although other Qatari lenders which have so far reported earnings have not registered significant jumps. In a statement, Abraham said a

review of the bank since he joined had identified a need to recognize a number of non-performing loans.

"Both the board and the bank's leadership team view this as the necessary first step in aligning the business for the current and future economic environment and ensuring Commercial Bank builds sustainable earnings and is well positioned for the future," Abraham said. The bank will update the market with other aspects of the review later in the year, Abraham said. Quarterly net interest income fell by 13.5 percent to 563.2 million riyals and net fee and commission income fell by 30.7 percent to 170.7 million. Loans and deposits levels both increased by 4 percent to 75.9 billion riyals and 66.7 billion riyals as of Sept 30. — Reuters

IN FUME-CHOKED KOCHI, A SOLAR RICKSHAW GLIDES TO THE RESCUE

NEW ITEM ROLLING ONTO THE STREETS

KOCHI, INDIA: The inventor of an innovative solar chick incubator, solar milking machine and solar-powered boat now has his newest item rolling onto the streets in this southern Indian city: A solar rickshaw taxi.

Georgekutty Kariyanappally, the founder of Lifeway Solar Devices Private Ltd., so far has just one prototype operating on the streets, but has supplied another 20 to a nearby tourist resort.

In a city where traffic fumes are a worsening problem, the solar rickshaw, Kariyanappally said, is a way of ensuring people don't have to choose between effective transport and environmental protection. Usually "you have to choose between development or the environment," he said. "But I have an answer."

Solar vehicles are not entirely new in Asia. Solar rickshaws are on the road in a number of countries, particularly Thailand; in Cambodia, a solar-adapted auto rickshaw has even become a mobile coffee cart. Earlier this year another Indian engineer drove a solar rickshaw he'd constructed from Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) to the UK. But Kariyanappally, known in Kochi as "Solar Man", has come up with his own version - just the latest creation in more than 14 years of work on renewable energy innovations, some of it backed financially by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The fledgling solar rickshaw - a three-wheeled, five-seater motorized rickshaw with a solar panel on the roof - has gained a particular public following in Kochi since its launch in August because it is quiet and non-polluting.

'Breathing fresh air'

In a country where more than half a billion people don't own motorized vehicles and rely instead on hailing taxis - usually auto rickshaws - the invention could have a big impact on air quality, noise, health and climate change, backers say.

Altogether more than five million auto rickshaws - favored because they are cheap, ubiquitous and able to get through narrow lanes - ply India's roads, according to the Indian Ministry of Surface Transport. Kochi has about 15,000, according to the road transport office in the city.

"It's quite similar to an ordinary auto (rickshaw) journey except that I am breathing fresh air instead of polluted air. This gives me immense pleasure," said Vijayakumari, who recently took a ride in Kariyanappally's prototype.

The solar rickshaw can run up to 80 kilometers a day with six hours of charging, with the range extending to 120 kilometers on a sunny day, Kariyanappally said. Solar rickshaws could potentially find a home in cities such as Mumbai and Kolkata, where their more polluting cousins have been banned, replaced with battery-operated electric rickshaws, backers say.

"Think how much carbon would be reduced if all the autos in the city were remodeled as solar autos," Kariyanappally said. He noted that a switch to solar transport potentially could also net the country carbon credits.

Cost for drivers?

Some auto rickshaw drivers in Kochi say they're interested in the solar models - but only if they're affordable and improve incomes for drivers. "Tell me in simple language how could it

helpful in my daily life," said Biji, one driver in Kochi, asked about whether he'd consider a solar vehicle.

Like most rickshaw drivers in Kochi, Biji doesn't own his vehicle, but instead rents one for 12 hours a day for 250 rupees (\$3.75). He spends another 250 rupees a day on diesel while driving his vehicle 80 to 100 kilometers, he said, and takes home about 500 rupees (\$7.50) a day for his work.

Ditching diesel costs would be great, he said, but not if it means paying a higher daily rent for a solar taxi. "I am ready to shift from a traditional auto to a solar one. But I should not have to pay more," he said.

Still, he can see other benefits of making the switch. In a city suffering what the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute calls "severe" air pollution, even his own 5-year-old son is struggling with bronchitis, he said.

Kariyanappally, the solar vehicle's inventor, says solar rickshaws need not be more expen-

sive. He believes his invention could be sold for 125,000 rupees (about \$1,875), compared to about 200,000 to 250,000 for a traditional new auto rickshaw.

Even with drivers saving \$3.75 a day in fuel costs, that's still a steep upfront cost, but emerging green policies in India could lead to the government providing cheaper loans or subsidies for clean transport such as solar auto rickshaws, he believes.

For now, Kariyanappally's invention faces a few barriers - including that his prototype vehicle is technically on the streets illegally, as the Kerala Motor Vehicle Department has not yet recognised solar as a legal vehicle fuel. "We are treating the solar auto service as a trial," said Sadiq Ali, a Kochi road transport officer.

Whether solar taxis will take hold in Kochi remains to be seen, residents say. But for now they've driven another innovation: researchers, environmentalists and investors coming to Kochi to have a look, Kariyanappally said.—Reuters



DELL EMC AND NEXGEN GROUP JOIN FORCES TO DRIVE REGIONAL SMART AGENDA

DUBAI: Dell EMC today announced a strategic alliance with neXgen Group, the region's leading Smart Cities advisory and managed services organization aimed to drive the region's advancing innovation agenda.

neXgen Group specializes in extending smart city technology solutions as a service to governments, real estate and enterprise customers across the region and has been actively involved in flagship projects such as Smart Dubai and Smart Riyadh, contributing its regional consulting expertise and in-country Smart City managed services. The company offers an integrated portfolio of technology, intelligence and insights to help some of the region's most prominent government entities, telcos and public sector organizations conceptualize, execute, monitor and deliver smart applications, services and infrastructure.

According to a recent report by Frost & Sullivan, Smart Cities will represent a market value of USD 1.5 Trillion by 2020 driven by investments in sectors such as Smart Districts, Utilities, Healthcare, Security and Governance. The GCC is already witnessing the innovation-powered transformation of cities across the region to improve the quality of life for their citizens, stimulate business and drive economic growth in the future.

As part of its Smart City managed services offering, neXgen Group aims to introduce a first of its kind Application-As-A-Service offering to empower innovation agenda's across the GCC region and has announced Dell EMC as an infrastructure partner to empower its in-country Managed Smart-City and Smart-District Services for Governments. neXgen Group's unique offering extends the essential ICT framework and foundation to new services in a number of areas including smart security, smart real estate, smart education and healthcare verticals in addition to smart metering and energy management.

With this alliance, neXgen Group and Dell EMC commit to enabling governments and cities across the region establish the instrumental ICT pillars to accelerate innovation adoption; deliver superior, fast and personalized services for citizens and businesses while enabling agility and sustainability.

To that end, neXgen Group has structured its platform deployments around Dell EMC VxRack(tm), hyper-converged rack-scale engineered systems purpose built to enable customers quickly deploy Infrastructure-as-a-Service archi-

ture, in addition to Dell EMC Isilon(tm) scale out storage, to provision the need for a robust and elastic storage architecture. The platform is completed with Dell EMC Data Domain(tm) in addition to Dell EMC Avamar(tm) to create a performance backed data protection and availability environment.

In addition, neXgen Group has selected Pivotal Cloud Foundry(r), open source cloud native platform to extend a production-ready application platform that enables the development and delivery of faster composable services designed for independent deployment, scaling and recovery

Customer Quote

Ghazi Atallah, CEO, neXgen Group

"At neXgen Group we are committed to helping governments and developers across the region build cities that are powered by innovative smart services. Our strategic partnership with Dell EMC allows us to bring governments and city authorities closer to realizing their digital agenda and strengthening their concerted efforts to create not only smart, but sustainable cities with higher quality of life.

Dell EMC Quote

Habib Mahakian, Vice President, Gulf and Pakistan, Dell EMC

"As the digital era brings about unprecedented changes in customer and business expectations, the Middle East is making headway in building future-forward cities powered by innovation. We are excited to be working together with neXgen Group and have the opportunity to create "smart societies" that foster innovation, collaboration and open engagement between governments and citizens, visitors and businesses alike."

Dell EMC

Dell EMC, a part of Dell Technologies, enables organizations to modernize, automate and transform their data center using industry-leading converged infrastructure, servers, storage and data protection technologies. This provides a trusted foundation for businesses to transform IT, through the creation of a hybrid cloud, and transform their business through the creation of cloud-native applications and big data solutions. Dell EMC services customers across 180 countries - including 98% of the Fortune 500 - with the industry's most comprehensive and innovative portfolio from edge to core to cloud.

UNDERWATER DRONE TO INVESTIGATE SONAR CONTACTS IN MH370 HUNT

SYDNEY: A ship involved with the deep-sea sonar search for missing Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 is being fitted with a drone that will examine several sonar contacts of interest on the remote seabed west of Australia, officials said yesterday.

None of the sonar contacts exhibit the characteristics of a typical aircraft debris field, said the Australian Transport Safety Bureau, which is heading up the hunt for the Boeing 777 in a desolate stretch of the Indian Ocean. But some of the contacts do exhibit man-made properties and therefore must be investigated before they can be eliminated as having come from the plane, the agency said in a statement.

Officials have previously said that more than 20 sonar contacts that crews have picked up in recent months require closer examination by a sonar-equipped underwater drone. They are between 2,700 kilometers (1,700 miles) and 1,900 kilometers (1,200 miles) from the Australian port of Fremantle where the search ships are based.

Poor weather during the southern hemisphere winter has, until now, prevented the ships from deploying the drone. With the weather improving, the Chinese vessel Dong Hai Jiu 101 is being fitted with a video camera-equipped remotely operated vehicle that will scrutinize the sonar contacts.

Crews have picked up hundreds of

sonar contacts of interest throughout the two-year hunt. The contacts are grouped into three classification levels based on their likelihood of being linked to the plane. Contacts dubbed "classification 1" are considered the most likely to have come from the aircraft. None of the recent sonar contacts that the drone will investigate are classification 1. There have only been two contacts that fit into that category thus far; one turned out to be an old shipwreck, and the other was a rock field.

Search crews have so far come up empty in their attempt to find the main underwater wreckage of the plane, which vanished on March 8, 2014, during a flight from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing with 239 people on board. The ships have less than 10,000 square kilometers (3,900 square miles) left to scour of the 120,000-square kilometer (46,000-square mile) search zone.

Officials previously said the search would be finished by December. On Wednesday, the transport bureau said it is now likely to take until January or February to complete, due to the long stretch of poor winter weather that has hampered search efforts.

Malaysia, China and Australia agreed in July that the hunt would be suspended after the crews finish scouring the current search zone, unless credible new evidence emerges that identifies the plane's location.—AP

YAHOO RAKES IN PROFITS AS IT PREPARES FOR VERIZON DEAL

SAN FRANCISCO: Yahoo's quarterly profits shot up by more than double to \$163 million even as it prepares for a takeover by Verizon. The faded internet pioneer skipped its usual quarterly earnings call with analysts due to the pending takeover by the US telecommunication company, for which chief executive Marissa Mayer said Yahoo is busy preparing despite recent revelations about a major data breach that may affect the deal.

"We launched several new products and showed solid financial performance across the board," she said in an earnings release, which beat expectations despite only a slight rise in revenue.

Shares were up 1.49 percent to \$42.30 in after-market trades following the earnings report release, reflecting confidence the breach is not prompting a significant number of users to abandon Yahoo.

Revenue for the quarter that ended on Sept. 30 came to \$1.3 billion, up from the \$1.2 billion in the same period a year earlier. Mobile revenue during the quarter reached \$396 million, up from \$271 million the previous year. The boost in profits came from cutting workers and costs, not from the strength of its core business. They hit the mark nevertheless, according to independent Silicon Valley analyst Rob Enderle. "For the most part, people were expecting a burning crater where Yahoo used to be," he said. "This is the kind of financial report they needed to not increase the probability that Verizon runs away screaming from the deal."

Hacks and scans

The beleaguered internet company agreed in July to sell its core assets to Verizon for \$4.8 billion, ending a 20-year run as an independent company after several attempts

to refocus failed to help it catch up to Google and Facebook in key segments of online advertising.

The deal would separate the Yahoo internet assets from its more valuable stake in the Chinese online giant Alibaba. However, Verizon said last week that a recently revealed hack affecting 500 million Yahoo customers worldwide could have a "material" effect on the deal.

The comments from Verizon general counsel Craig Silliman suggest the telecom company could seek to reduce the purchase price or walk away from the deal. Although the hack took place in late 2014, Yahoo announced it only last month, dealing the company a fresh blow.

The attack was probably "state sponsored," it said, although some analysts have questioned the source. "We're working hard to retain their trust," Mayer said of Yahoo's users, "and are heartened by their continued loyalty as seen in our user engagement trends."

Yahoo's image took another hit recently from allegations of mass email surveillance that triggered an outcry from privacy activists. Yahoo has denied doing any such thing, rejecting as "misleading" a report that it secretly scanned hundreds of millions of email accounts to help US intelligence.

"We narrowly interpret every government request for user data to minimize disclosure," the company said in a statement to AFP. "The mail scanning described in the article does not exist on our systems."

Some activists described the allegation as a "bombshell" that if proven true could reveal a new level of surveillance by the National Security Agency, already roiled by disclosures in 2013 by former contractor Edward Snowden.—AFP



Alex Bender, SVP of Global Marketing, Mimecast

MIMECAST HOSTED A HUMAN FIREWALL EVENT AT GITEX 2016

HACKING EMAIL ACCOUNTS DEMONSTRATED

DUBAI: As part of its GITEX Technology Week 2016 plans, Mimecast Limited (NASDAQ: MIME), a leading email and data security company, held a Human Firewall breakfast event on October 19 at the Dubai World Trade Centre from 8am to 11am. The event targeted organizations with email users covering the latest threat trends, how users can prepare their email defences and the newest solutions available to prevent these attacks.

Speaking on the necessity of educating people on the importance of email security, Brandon Bekker, Managing Director at Mimecast MEA said, "91% of cyber-attacks

start with an email. Companies are being attacked by malicious cyber criminals with more frequency and sophistication than ever before. The threat of spear-phishing, whaling and socially-engineered email attacks is real and could happen to any company and hence making people aware of the latest threats, and how they could prepare these attacks is important."

"We know that routine security training doesn't work and technology is less effective without proper training. Only when organizations start to get users to think for a fraction of a second longer than normal before per-

forming a task, running an attachment or clicking a link, that they can drive a behavior change in them. With the Human Firewall event, we want to educate our customers on the threats, encourage a behavior change towards security and invoke a human firewall to help protect their business and de-fang the threats that target them," Mr. Bekker added.

Mimecast is showcasing its full-range of email and data security solutions and services, at GITEX Technology Week 2016, being held from October 16-20, 2016 at the Dubai World Trade Centre. Mimecast is exhibiting at stand C1-20, Hall 1.

CALIFORNIA CAPITAL COULD REAP BILLIONS FROM LEGALIZED POT, STUDY SAYS

SACRAMENTO: California's state capital region could reap 20,000 jobs and generate \$4.2 billion in business if it becomes a hub for a legalized marijuana industry, a study released on Monday showed, weeks before voters decide whether to allow recreational use of the drug.

The report from the University of the Pacific in Stockton was commissioned by the cannabis investment company Truth Enterprises, one of hundreds of businesses counting on voters to legalize pot next month.

"The Sacramento region should be to cannabis what Detroit is to automobiles in

terms of both a center of innovation as well as production," said Daniel Conway, who left his job as chief of staff to Sacramento Mayor and former NBA star Kevin Johnson to become Truth Enterprises' managing partner. "This region has the ability to be to cannabis what Sonoma and Napa are to wine."

If local leaders choose to limit the number and type of marijuana businesses, the study showed, legalization would bring as few as 1,600 jobs and generate about \$322 million in revenues, wages and other economic impacts.

Polls indicate voters in the most popu-

lar US state are likely to legalize marijuana on Nov. 8, instantly creating a massive marketplace and making California the fifth US state to permit recreational pot use.

Centering some of that business in the Sacramento region would take advantage of the area's proximity to farmland and agricultural processing facilities as well as such population hubs such as the San Francisco Bay Area and tourist destinations like Lake Tahoe and the Napa Valley, the study said.

Local business and political leaders have for years searched for ways to rein-

vestigate the slightly faded feel of Sacramento area, where empty storefronts mar numerous shopping centers and abandoned houses sport boarded-up windows despite nearly a decade of slow recovery from the Great Recession.

Downtown is undergoing a massive facelift around a new arena for the NBA Kings, with dozens of new shops and restaurants planned. The city is close to winning a major league soccer franchise, and its restaurant scene is growing. "The entire Sacramento business community is looking at this with different eyes today," said Joshua Woods, chief executive officer

of the Sacramento Region Business Association. "With this many jobs, you can't ignore it."

The University of the Pacific report offers the first hard look at the potential economic impact of the marijuana business on the Sacramento region, Woods said. But that does not mean his group - or other business and political leaders - is ready to make the area a hub.

For that to happen, policymakers would need to be persuaded that a busy marijuana growing and processing industry would not also be a magnet for crime, addiction and other problems.—Reuters



SANTA CRUZ DO CAPIBARIBE, PERNAMBUCO STATE, BRAZIL: In this Dec 23, 2015 file photo, Angelica Pereira, left, holds her daughter Luiza, who was born with microcephaly because of the Zika virus, as she sits with her husband Dejalison Arruda, at their home.—AP

WHERE ZIKA STRUCK HARDEST, BRAZIL MOMS SAY MORE HELP NEEDED

FINDING AND AFFORDING DRUGS MAIN ZIKA PROBLEM

RECIFE, BRAZIL: As the sun dyes the early morning sky a reddish hue, Angelica Pereira carries her 1-year-old daughter out of the tiny white house sitting on a dirt road where piles of garbage float in puddles.

The driver sent to fetch her and other mothers with babies disabled by the Zika virus is two hours late, which could mean less time with the therapists who help her daughter move rigid limbs and a floppy back.

While battling these logistical challenges, Pereira also struggles to find and afford expensive drugs that families must pay for because government health plans don't cover them. "We are always chasing something. We have to drop everything else, all our chores, our homes," said the 21-year-old. "There are so many of us with children with special needs. (The government) is forgetting about that."

Initial reaction

Zika initially was known only to cause flu-like symptoms in some people. But a surge late last year in cases of babies born with small heads in northeast Brazil set off worldwide alarm about the virus, which was later linked to a birth defect known as microcephaly. When the connection was made, then-President Dilma Rousseff promised that affected families would get the help

they needed.

While the government has provided therapy and some financial assistance, mothers such as Pereira say it doesn't come close to meeting their overwhelming needs caring for children with severe development delays.

Some families plan to sue the government to get more families with disabled children the \$275 a month now currently provided to households earning less than \$70 a month. They also want the government to pay for medication for babies with epilepsy, increasingly common in children whose mothers were infected with Zika during pregnancy.

"These are women in need of financial aid, who are from remote towns and are finding new problems every day with their children," said attorney Viviane Guimaraes, who is helping several families enroll in a program for the disabled.

State-run health care in Brazil is woefully underfunded, and patients often wait months for treatment. People who can afford get care through private health plans. Jusikelly da Silva says she is desperate to get a brain scan for her 10-month-old Luhandra, who was sitting up and eating solid foods before a seizure several months ago left her virtually motionless. Silva has tried for three months to get the radiology test and an appointment with a specialist. "It's

horrible because I feel that the longer I wait for these exams, the worse it can get, and I won't be able to take care of her," said Silva.

Many mothers end up borrowing money from relatives to pay for private hospitals and doctors for specialized treatment. Silva says that isn't an option for her; just trying to buy baby formula is a struggle. She and her five children live on the \$250 her husband earns each month working at a warehouse.

The health secretary for Recife state, Jailson Correia, says the city has yet to receive funds from the state or federal government for a special child development division. The plan is to create a group of pediatricians, child neurologists, social workers and physical, speech and occupational therapists who treat children with congenital Zika syndrome.

Correia says the city has offered epilepsy drugs on a case-by-case basis because they are not provided through the public health plan, but that help won't last forever. "The city's financial resources are already strained," Correia told The Associated Press. "We need the state and federal levels to take a more active role."

No response from officials

Federal officials didn't respond to repeated requests for additional information about how they are responding to the crisis. The Zika crisis comes as Latin America's largest nation weathers a two-year recession that has pushed inflation and unemployment to over 10 percent. A proposal under consideration by Congress would cap public spending, raising fears about cuts for health and education.

Treating children with neurological problems is not cheap. Researchers exploring the health burden for governments fighting Zika conclude that each child with microcephaly in Brazil would cost about \$95,000 in lifetime medical expenses, a little more than half the \$180,000 it would cost in the United States.

Jorge A. Alfaro-Murillo, a researcher at the Yale School of Public Health, said the estimates are based on cases of mental disability, adding that microcephaly is a more severe condition. He said total costs, including special education and income loss, can add up to much more.

Brazil has confirmed more than 2,000 cases of microcephaly so far, and Health Minister Ricardo Barros says almost all of these babies are enrolled in rehabilitation centers to stimulate development. More than half of the children are from poor households with a monthly income of less than \$70.

Ana Carla Maria Bernardo, 24, says she had to close her beauty salon when a test taken shortly after her daughter Carla Elisabeth was born showed the child had brain damage caused by a Zika infection while still in the womb. Carla's father was recently fired from his job as a doorman, but Bernardo says the government won't provide financial aid because his former salary was over minimum wage.

Meanwhile, Bernardo says it takes her nearly two hours each way on buses to get from her Recife suburb to the rehabilitation center. "I wish the government would help us," said Bernardo. "They have the resources. It's just a matter of them taking some interest in us."—AP

HUMANS EATING WILD MAMMALS INTO EXTINCTION

PARIS: Some 300 wild mammal species in Asia, Africa and Latin America are being driven to extinction by humanity's voracious appetite for bushmeat, according to a world-first assessment released yesterday.

The species at risk range from rats to rhinoceros, and include docile, ant-eating pangolins as well as flesh-ripping big cats.

The findings, published in the journal Royal Society Open Science, are evidence of a "global crisis" for warm-blooded land animals, 15 top conservation scientists concluded. "Terrestrial mammals are experiencing a massive collapse in their population sizes and geographical ranges around the world," the study warned.

This decline, it said, was part of a larger trend known as a "mass extinction event," only the sixth time in half a billion years that Earth's species are dying out at more than 1,000 times the usual rate.

Besides eating them, humans are robbing mammals of their natural habitats through agriculture and urbanization, and decimating them through pollution, disease and climate change. According to the Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of endangered species, a quarter of 4,556 land mammals assessed are on the road to annihilation.

For 301 of these threatened species, "hunting by humans"—mainly for food, but also as purported health and virility boosters, and trophies such as horns or pelts—is the main threat, according to the comprehensive review of scientific literature.

The likelihood of extinction, the team found, depends on body size: the bigger the animals, the greater the danger.

More than 100 primates, including gorillas and snub-nosed monkeys, and dozens of hooved animals from oxen to antelope, are at dire risk from hunting. "These species will continue to decline unless there is major global action to save them," Bill Ripple, a professor at Oregon State University and lead author of the study, told AFP.

Cascading effects

All 301 species identified are found exclusively in developing countries, with the highest concentration in southeast Asia (113), followed by Africa (91), the rest of Asia (61) and Latin America (38). The countries with the most native species under siege from hunting were Madagascar (46), Indonesia (37), the Philippines (14) and Brazil (10).

The scale of the problem is daunting: some 89,000 tonnes of wild meat—with a market value of about \$200 million (180 million euros) — is butchered every year from the Brazilian Amazon alone, the study found.

On current trends, the prospects for these and other mammals is not bright, the authors said. "Forty of these species were already classed as critically endangered by 1996, indicating that there has been little or no conservation progress in reversing their fate," they note.

This, despite dozens of major conservation conferences and summits, and the expansion of protected areas. The impact of extinction may be felt well beyond the loss of individual species, the scientists cautioned. "Through cascading effects, the loss of these mammals is altering the structure and function of the environments in which they occur," the study notes.

The result could be a loss of food security for humans. The research echoed a recent study which showed that more than two-thirds of 9,000 threatened species—including plants, birds and insects—faced over-exploitation from commerce, recreation or subsistence.

Ripple and colleagues call for increased legal protection of threatened mammals, better education and family planning, and the provision of alternative foods to local populations. Giving local communities stronger land rights—so that they have a more direct interest in conservation—is also key, they said.—AFP

SHARKS ARE BEAUTIFUL, DIVER SAYS DESPITE NARROW ESCAPE

SHANGHAI: A diver whose near miss with a great white shark became a viral video sensation, viewed more than 15 million times on Youtube, says the ocean's apex predator is "beautiful". Chan Ming was on a shark-watching excursion off the Mexican coast when the animal broke into the metal cage protecting him.

Despite their fearsome reputation, sharks do not normally feed on humans, and have to be drawn in with bait. The shark seized the bait and crashed into the cage, breaking part of it. Unable to swim backwards, it carried on inside, where Chan was alone. The advertising executive and part-time diving instructor told AFP on Monday that he tried hard to stay calm, "because if I get panicked it will be very horrible in there." "When the great white shark was breaking into the cage, the inside of its mouth was getting jammed in the cage, and at that moment I was thinking 'Hey, don't think about coming in here,'" he said.

The video shows the shark apparently bleeding as it thrashes its way out through a gap on top of the cage, which was opened by a crew member. An ago-

nizing 20 seconds pass before Chan, who is from Hong Kong but lives in Shanghai, emerges safely.

The harrowing incident did little to diminish Chan's fondness for the great white and he went back into the water the next day. "You know in Chinese we say that 'Where you fell down, (is) where you need to stand up,'" said the 51-year-old. "I still think the shark, the great white, is so beautiful, they're very beautiful and cute."

In a company statement posted on Facebook, operator Solmar V Luxury Live-Aboard said the shark did not suffer any serious injuries. "Shark breaches of this magnitude are a one in a million occurrence," it said. "As unfortunate as it was, it was still an accident." The company—whose priority is to offer "unique life experiences"—said

its cages have been reinforced following the breach, and bait would be thrown further away from them in future. After his October 4 brush with the great white Chan wrote on his Facebook page that he had been "reborn" and was savoring Cantonese noodle soup and beer, adding: "Everyday are good days." —AFP

62-YEAR-OLD WOMAN IN SPAIN GIVES BIRTH TO THIRD CHILD

MADRID: A 62-year-old Spanish woman has given birth to a healthy girl and encourages women in their later years to imitate her if they want to.

Lina Alvarez left the Lucas Augusti Hospital in the northwestern city of Lugo on Tuesday with her third child in her arms, saying she felt wonderful. She said baby Lina, born Oct. 10, was in perfect health. The 2.4-kilogram (5.3-

pound) Lina was born by cesarean section.

Alvarez's first child, now 27, was born with cerebral palsy. Her second child is now 10. Her second and third pregnancies were through in-vitro fertilization treatment. Alvarez, a doctor, said that women who are well enough to have a baby in their later years shouldn't be afraid to do so, adding that they should let nature, not gynecologists decide.—AP



MADRID: In this screen grab taken from video on Tuesday, Oct. 18, 2016, Lina Alvarez leaves Lucas Augusti Hospital with her new born baby.—AP



SHANGHAI: This picture taken on October 18, 2016 shows Chan Ming, who survived a close encounter with a great white shark while cage diving off Guadalupe Island, Mexico, watching the viral video of the great white shark on his computer.—AFP



UTRECHT, PROVINCE DE UTRECHT, NETHERLANDS: Professor of Earth Sciences at Utrecht University and former director of Rotterdam's Museum of Natural History biologist Jelle Reumer poses on August 10, 2016.—AFP

ROBOTIC SCAN FOR HORSES COULD HOLD PROMISE FOR HUMAN HEALTH

DETAILED ANATOMICAL VIEWS IN NORMAL STATE NOW POSSIBLE

KENNETT SQUARE: Veterinarians hope an innovative type of CT scan can advance medical care for horses and possibly be adapted for humans, eliminating the need for people to lie still inside a tube. Robotic CT at the University of Pennsylvania's veterinary school allows a horse to remain awake and standing as scanners on two mechanical arms move around it. The resulting high-quality images, including some in 3D, for the first time offer detailed anatomical views of the animal in its normal, upright state.

That's a huge difference from the standard CT for a horse, which requires administering anesthesia, placing the animal on its side and maneuvering a scanning unit around the affected area. Not all body parts fit in the machines.

Robotic CT "is much less stressful," said Dr. Barbara Dallap Schaer, medical director of Penn Vet's New Bolton Center. "It's a pretty athletic event for horses to recover from general anesthesia." The New York-based company 4DDI created the Equimag system with components from robot manufacturer ABB. First unveiled at Penn last spring, 4DDI now has orders for more than a dozen units at equine facilities around the world, according to CEO Yiorgos Papaioannou. "The word is spreading," Papaioannou said.



KENNETT SQUARE, PENNSYLVANIA: In this Thursday, Sept. 15, 2016, photo, Medical Director Dr. Barbara Dallap Schaer, right, and Radiologist Dr. Kathryn Wulster hold a horse as a computerized tomography scan is conducted at the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton Center Hospital for Large Animals.—AP

OUT OF THE COUNTRYSIDE, WILDLIFE RETURNING TO AMSTERDAM

AMSTERDAM: Seals peep from Amsterdam's famous canals, while rare bats huddle in the eaves of houses, next to nesting birds. Wildlife-of the animal kind-is on the rise in the teeming Dutch capital.

More than 10,000 different animal species roam the city's nooks and crannies, sharing space already packed with around 800,000 Amsterdammers and millions of annual tourists, according to a new study. And it appears to be an exodus out of the countryside, providing a potent illustration of the natural world's extraordinary resilience, experts and scientists say.

Since 2012 small grey or brown furred harbor seals have occasionally been known to travel down from the North Sea coast, arriving in Amsterdam after slipping through locks at the town of IJmuiden and swimming down the North Sea Canal to the city.

And on a rare occasions a lucky few spot the bigger grey seals, a protected European species with their distinctive mottled coat, or even the occasional porpoise. "Biodiversity in Amsterdam has increased in the last decades, which has not been the trend nationally or even internationally," said Geert Timmermans, head of the city's ecology and landscape architecture project. The new study of Amsterdam's biodiversity shows more than a quarter of all animal species living in The Netherlands, including some 300 protected kinds, are found in the densely populated city.

Part of the recovery of biodiversity is attributed to a ban on using pesticides to control weeds, as well as on farmland beyond the city limits. And according to WWF Netherlands, the damage caused by humans appears to be more limited in Dutch cities where animal populations have only fallen by 30 percent since 1990, compared to the hedgerows and dunes which have seen a drop of 50 percent and 40 percent in the countryside. Urban planners meanwhile have also increased their focus on maintaining so-called "ecological corridors" or green spaces.

Natural evolution

"Nature always exists. It adapts, it uses new situations to ensure that it can install itself," said biologist Jelle Reumer, the former director of Rotterdam's museum of natural history. He created waves earlier this year by suggesting that people should not try to intervene to save endangered animals like the panda or rhinoceros, but

should allow things to evolve naturally. "Extinction is normal. More species have become extinct throughout geological history than are alive today," Reumer, a professor in Earth Sciences at Utrecht university, told AFP. It is Amsterdam's leafier, wetter outskirts which have proved the most fertile ground for animals looking to set up home. Here natterjack toads, red squirrels, foxes and voles along with the blue-winged grasshopper can be spotted trying to keep out of the clutches of birds of prey like hawks and peregrines. A soprano pipistrelle bat was spotted in Amsterdam for the first time last year, while there is "a cautious recovery" of the swift and sparrow population which had gone into decline.

In cities, where several different microclimates can exist, buildings have replaced cliffs as homes for the pigeons. While the warmer temperatures-sometimes 10 degrees C higher than in the countryside-have caused fig trees to flourish in Utrecht and attracted an Italian grasshopper to The Netherlands. But other experts argue the situation is much more complex and it is hard to compare ecosystems. "There is less biodiversity in the Arctic compared to tropical rainforests. But it is just as unique," stressed Martin Poot, a researcher with the Dutch statistics office. "That is the same for the town or the country."

The Exterminator

But in the countryside, the large-scale industrialisation of agriculture has led to the disappearance of two-thirds of the wild birds since the 1960s. Sightings of cranes, oystercatchers, redshanks and larks are increasingly rare. It is mankind turning the countryside into an "agricultural desert of cornfields, and cows and only one kind of grass," said Reumer.

Still, as time passes, species will evolve, he insisted, adding that "cities are very young in geological time. Evolution takes thousands, if not millions of years."

The Earth is now facing "its sixth wave of mass extinction," said Reumer, but it is not caused by a meteorite such as wiped out 40 to 60 percent of living species at the end of the Cretaceous period, or a volcanic eruption which killed off 90 percent of species in the Permian period some 252 million years ago. Today's exterminator-in-chief is mankind. The International Union for Conservation of Nature estimates some 28 percent of mammal species are currently facing extinction.—AFP

Procedure

At Penn, the large white robotic arms are installed at a barn at New Bolton Center, the vet school's hospital for large animals in the Philadelphia suburb of Kennett Square. Horses are given a mild sedative and walked into the facility for a scan that lasts less than a minute.

CT, or computed tomography, gives pictures of soft tissues that X-rays can't. While traditional CT requires the subject to be still, this new system compensates for slight movement. Eventually, vets hope they'll be able to capture CT images of a horse running on a treadmill.

The ease of imaging means more horses can get preventive scans, said Dr. Dean Richardson, chief of surgery at New Bolton. As it stands, he said, many owners are reluctant to have their horses anesthetized for a diagnostic procedure because recovery can be treacherous. As the animals emerge from unconsciousness and woozily struggle to find their footing, they risk cata-

strophic injury if they stumble.

"So the whole beauty of this technology, we hope, is that we're going to be able to scan much greater numbers of patients much, much earlier in the process of things like stress-related injuries in a racehorse," Richardson said. For humans, the technology could be helpful when dealing with squirming children or claustrophobic adults. Doctors could also get clearer views of, say, spinal problems in a standing patient instead of relying on CT performed while the person is lying down. Penn's translational research team has partnered with other hospitals to look at the possibilities.

"This is an interesting concept - the ability to image in your natural state," said Dr. Raul Uppot, an assistant professor of radiology at Harvard Medical School who is not involved in the research. "It does offer something that doesn't currently exist in the market (for humans)."

Equimag's base cost is \$545,000, according to Papaioannou, though he said some new cus-

tomers are getting the equipment in exchange for a per-scan fee. The company plans to make another version of the system for smaller animals, he said.

Penn's system was made possible through a donor, said Dallap Schaer, noting the cost was comparable to standard CT scanners. Overall cost for the images will be less than CT scans that require anesthesia, she said.

Dennis Charles, of Allentown, brought his horse Bert to Penn Vet for an MRI earlier this year, before robotic CT was available. The procedure required anesthesia, and Charles said he was incredibly nervous watching a wobbly Bert regain consciousness afterward.

Last month, the horse again needed imaging but was able to have robotic CT. Charles, who described the robotic system as looking like something out of "Star Wars," said the scans assured him Bert's leg injury had healed. "They get really precise images," he said. "I think it's a tremendous piece of equipment."—AP

IN FUME-CHOKED KOCHI, A SOLAR RICKSHAW GLIDES TO THE RESCUE

KOCHI, India: The inventor of an innovative solar chick incubator, solar milking machine and solar-powered boat now has his newest item rolling onto the streets in this southern Indian city: A solar rickshaw taxi.

Georgekutty Kariyanappally, the founder of Lifeway Solar Devices Private Ltd., so far has just one prototype operating on the streets, but has supplied another 20 to a nearby tourist resort.

In a city where traffic fumes are a worsening problem, the solar rickshaw, Kariyanappally said, is a way of ensuring people don't have to choose between effective transport and environmental protection.

Usually "you have to choose between development or the environment," he said. "But I have an answer." Solar vehicles are not entirely new in Asia. Solar rickshaws are on the road in a number of countries, particularly Thailand; in Cambodia, a solar-adapted auto rickshaw has even become a mobile coffee cart. Earlier this year another Indian engineer drove a solar rickshaw he'd constructed from Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) to the UK. But Kariyanappally, known in Kochi as "Solar Man", has come up with his own version - just the latest creation in more than 14 years of

work on renewable energy innovations, some of it backed financially by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.

The fledgling solar rickshaw - a three-wheeled, five-seater motorized rickshaw with a solar panel on the roof - has gained a particular public following in Kochi since its launch in August because it is quiet and non-polluting.

'Breathing fresh air'

In a country where more than half a billion people don't own motorised vehicles and rely instead on hailing taxis - usually auto rickshaws - the invention could have a big impact on air quality, noise, health and climate change, backers say. Altogether more than five million auto rickshaws - favoured because they are cheap, ubiquitous and able to get through narrow lanes - ply India's roads, according to the Indian Ministry of Surface Transport. Kochi has about 15,000, according to the road transport office in the city.

"It's quite similar to an ordinary auto (rickshaw) journey except that I am breathing fresh air instead of polluted air. This gives me immense pleasure," said Vijayakumari, who

recently took a ride in Kariyanappally's prototype. The solar rickshaw can run up to 80 kilometers a day with six hours of charging, with the range extending to 120 kilometers on a sunny day, Kariyanappally said.

Solar rickshaws could potentially find a home in cities such as Mumbai and Kolkata, where their more polluting cousins have been banned, replaced with battery-operated electric rickshaws, backers say. "Think how much carbon would be reduced if all the autos in the city were remodeled as solar autos," Kariyanappally said. He noted that a switch to solar transport potentially could also net the country carbon credits.

Cost for drivers?

Some auto rickshaw drivers in Kochi say they're interested in the solar models - but only if they're affordable and improve incomes for drivers. "Tell me in simple language how could it help in my daily life," said Biji, one driver in Kochi, asked about whether he'd consider a solar vehicle. Like most rickshaw drivers in Kochi, Biji doesn't own his vehicle, but instead rents one for 12 hours a day for 250 rupees (\$3.75). —Reuters

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Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم

Consultant Pediatrician إستشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM



Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



UNMATCHED MEALS LAUNCHED IN KUWAIT ... TO SUIT ALL TASTES AND OCCASIONS

"Shrimpy, a leading local Kuwaiti fast food chain serving seafood, launched its all new menu, revealing a new variety of delicious cuisine, drinks and desserts as well as healthy meals providing different options to please all appetites.

Shrimpy announced the launch of a variety of new sandwiches such as "Shrimpino", the latest twist on fried butterfly shrimp combined with Pico de gallo sauce, crunchy red cabbage, as well as the "Mix Sub" that combines fried shrimp, fish, and calamari with lettuce and tasty tartar sauce, in addition to the "Black Burger", "Po Boy", and "Shrimp Roll".

Not only that, but the new menu included new items such as a variety of salads, sweets, drinks, and

new side dishes. Of these items, a delicious "Shrimp Cocktail" salad, "Mix Berry Cheese Cake", "Creamy Oreo Cake", "Lotus Cheese Cake", as well as drinks such as a refreshing "Mojito" or "Cherry Cola" are served. The restaurant also offers new side dishes created by the expert chefs such as "Dynamite Shrimp", "Shrimp Tempura", and "Buffalo Shrimp".

The General Manager for Al Thiqa Co., Mr. Mohammed Farraj, has declared that the Executive Management is working hard to be able to meet the customers' needs and exceed their expectations in providing a cuisine that is able to compete in such a market, as we have proven worthy for years by providing our local infamous shrimp based meals for the past years.

The head of Marketing at Al Thiqa Co., Mr. Hussein Elsayed, said "The new menu launch, with our strategic marketing campaign, aims at promoting Shrimpy as well as welcoming back our beloved customers and seafood enthusiasts."

The Manager of Operations, Mr. George Nassar, added saying "We push ourselves to be able to provide the necessary possibilities and ideas from which has allowed us to yield such delicious seafood cuisine, priced competitively in the market, was a challenge we imposed on ourselves to please our customers as well as to increase our sales and market share belonging to our chain."

In the end, the Senior Brand manager, Mr. Basel

Homeidan, clarified "We have been able to facilitate a change for the brand "Shrimpy" through evolving the look and brand as well as introduce new social media tools to reach a vast majority of customers. In addition to that, the amount of information regarding our products spread through the use of either social media or through printed flyers has helped us in the introduction of the all new menu to the vast majority."

Last but not least, Shrimpy released new children's characters called "Shummy, Bubby, and Crush" to have fun and share happy times together which show a strong sense of caring towards children as well as the willingness to cater to the whole family showing a sense of goodwill."



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF KUWAIT, COUNTRY PARTNER FOR CHALLENGE 22 FOR THE 2ND CONSECUTIVE CYCLE



For the 2nd consecutive cycle, the American University of Kuwait (AUK) will be the Country Partner in Challenge 22, a Qatar-led initiative, launched by the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy (SC). Challenge 22 promotes innovation through awarding generous research and development grants to participants with the best ideas. Challenge 22 is in association with country ambassadors in each of the ten participating countries and strategic partners including the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), Wamda and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Enterprise Forum Pan-Arab. The innovation award provides entrepreneurs, scientists and pioneers from across the Arab world with the tools and resources they need to turn their ideas into a lasting positive legacy.

AUK hosted an information session on October 17th, where representatives from Challenge 22 introduced the initiative to the public and provided an overview of the application process and criteria for participation. The representatives also shared

success stories from the cycle in early 2015. In its role as Country Partner for Challenge 22, AUK will promote the initiative locally, and encourage local innovators to participate and represent Kuwait. The event was open to members of the AUK community and the public.

"The American University of Kuwait under its mission is committed to fostering a culture of innovation and accordingly we are very proud to be a country partner for Challenge 22. We believe that Challenge 22 offer excellent opportunities to students at AUK and Kuwait not only to showcase their ideas and talents but to connect to other talented students in the region," said Professor Nizar Hamzeh, AUK President.

"Engaging with the participants from Kuwait was an inspiring and encouraging experience and further supports Challenge 22's belief in the potential the Arab world has to offer in the field of innovation," said Fatma Al Nuaimi, Legacy Senior Manager at the SC, "Thanks to our collaboration with AUK and its support, we were able to spark exciting discussion

and dialogue with the attendees and encourage them to pursue their ideas, no matter how small or large they seemed. We look forward to seeing the submissions coming from Kuwait."

The second cycle of Challenge 22, which runs from 27 September, 2016 to 11 May, 2017, aims to inspire innovative solutions in four key areas: sustainability, health & safety, the internet of things, and tourism experience. For this cycle, Challenge 22 has also expanded its reach beyond the six Gulf countries to include Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. The submission deadline for the first phase is December 12th, 2016.

The SC, with its partners that will host the innovation award, have always believed that young people in the Arab world have great creativity and potential. Challenge 22 will ensure that when the world is watching the Middle East in 2022, Arab innovation is in the spotlight.

For more information and how to apply, please visit the award's official website at: www.challenge22.qa



JW MARRIOTT KUWAIT OPENS 'CROSSROADS' RESTAURANT

JW Marriott Kuwait has officially opened its new and much awaited restaurant "Crossroads", adding a whole new dimension to Kuwait dining scene.

The ribbon cutting ceremony was held on October 17, and was attended by Mr. Ghazi Al Nafisi, the Chairman and Managing Director of Salhia Real Estate along with a huge number of invitees from different companies in Kuwait and media representatives.

Crossroads Restaurant features a wide range of distinctive cuisines, including Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Indian and Mediterranean. The culinary delicacies of these cuisines have dominated the world for many centuries and still proving to be the most popular. The restaurant also offers an open kitchen to enable guests to see and smell their food choices while chefs are preparing them. This concept is the first of its kind in Kuwait, offering a world of authentic cuisines under one roof.

The menu includes regional and global flavors with a universal appeal, and a special emphasis is placed on freshly

cooked foods. A la carte menu is also available offering dishes like latin churrasco, five-spice rosemary bbq ribs, Sicilian style seabass, pan-roasted salmon and cilantro prawns.

In addition, the menu features decadent desserts, including bitter chocolate mousse cake, exotic fruit platters, crême brûlée and the famous New York cheese cake. And for beverages, the menu provides an array of exotic fruit and vegetable drinks.

Furthermore, the different food stations at Crossroads are seamlessly fused within the large and elegant dining space, to allow guests to enjoy an exciting and fun experience.

Cluster General Manager of Marriott Hotels in Kuwait, Mr. George Aoun said 'with this new addition, we are looking to move away from the traditional dining concept and provide guests with a more enjoyable dining experience.' 'Crossroads' open kitchen will allow guests to enjoy the cooking process of their dishes from start to finish, and see for themselves how fresh and delicious our food is.'



ASSE KUWAIT CHAPTER CONDUCTED TECHNICAL MEET ON 'DYNAMIC BARRIER MANAGEMENT'



American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), Kuwait Chapter is a premier voluntary, Non-profit Health, Safety and Environmental organization, which strives to provide professional guidance, training, consultancy and resources to the industrial and social sectors in the region.

As a part of continuous efforts in its professional journey, ASSE-Kuwait Chapter organized its 213th Technical Meet (3rd in the term 2016-17) on "Dynamic Barrier Management" in Kohinoor Banquet hall, Fahaheel Kuwait on 13th October 2016.

The Technical Meet began with the Opening address by Mr. Sunil N Sadanandan, Chapter Acting Secretary, who also briefed about recently held and upcoming events of ASSE Kuwait Chapter. Mr. CH. Rama Krushna Chary, President ASSE Kuwait Chapter in his welcome address emphasized the importance of attending such technical events to enhance knowledge of ASSE Members. Mr. Adnan Yousaf, Head of Technical Events

committee introduced the speaker for the evening Mr. Mark Fisher.

Mr. Mark Fisher has been working in the upstream and downstream oil & gas industries since July 1992. He has held many posts in the areas of facilities integrity management, operational safety, project management and consultancy. As an employee of M/s DNVGL, he has spent much of his career seconded to senior operational supervisory and management roles within client organizations. He held major project roles, from leading the conception, development and implementation of safety, health and environmental, process safety and enterprise risk management systems with major energy companies in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Mr. Mark in his presentation explained the concept of Safety barrier management which is an important activity to maintain or reduce process safety risk of an operating facility. Barriers can be hardware, human or organizational, or some combination of these.

Dynamic barrier management uses the full suite of information available, including direct and indirect indicators of barrier performance to infer barrier status in near real-time. Higher Importance barriers (i.e. risk affecting) would be assigned higher priority than other barriers. This can achieve better safety at lower cost than current barrier management processes.

The presentation followed with a question and answer session. As an Honor of Appreciation, ASSE Kuwait President CH. Rama Krushna Chary honored the speaker Mr. Mark Fisher with a Memento for his excellent presentation. Technical Meet concluded with close out speech of Mr. Muhammad Alamgir, Vice-President of ASSE Kuwait Chapter who thanked Mr. Mark Fisher for giving an insight on the topic Dynamic barrier Management and M/s DNVGL for organizing the same. He thanked the Technical Events committee for the arrangements and all the participants, who attended the technical meet.

For more detail visit www.assekuwait.org



CLASSIFIEDS



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2016

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KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (20/10/2016 TO 26/10/2016)			
SHARQIA-1 JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK SACRIFICE SACRIFICE ASAL ABYAD ASAL ABYAD SACRIFICE	1:30 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM	FANAR-2 INFERNO INFERNO ASAL ABYAD ASAL ABYAD ASAL ABYAD INFERNO	12:15 PM 2:45 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM
SHARQIA-2 JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK	11:45 AM 2:15 PM 4:45 PM 7:15 PM 9:45 PM 12:15 AM	FANAR-3 PRECIOUS CARGO PRECIOUS CARGO THE MERMAID PRINCESS THE MERMAID PRINCESS PRECIOUS CARGO PRECIOUS CARGO	12:30 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:15 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:15 AM
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MUHALAB-2 PRECIOUS CARGO PRECIOUS CARGO INFERNO PRECIOUS CARGO INFERNO PRECIOUS CARGO PRECIOUS CARGO	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 6:15 PM 8:15 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM	MARINA-1 KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM
MUHALAB-3 JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK	12:15 PM 2:45 PM 5:15 PM 7:45 PM 10:15 PM 12:45 AM	MARINA-2 JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK JACK REACHER: NEVER GO BACK	11:30 AM 2:00 PM 4:30 PM 7:00 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM
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360°-1 KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES	12:30 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM 7:15 PM 9:30 PM 11:45 PM	360°-2 INFERNO INFERNO INFERNO INFERNO	12:15 PM 2:45 PM 5:15 PM 7:45 PM 10:15 PM 12:45 AM
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CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Mohamed Baruk Mohamed Asraf**, holder of Indian Passport No. J6973017 & Civil ID No. 270021203341 has changed my name to **Mohamed Baruk Ashrafali** hereinafter in all my dealings and documents I will be known by the name of **Mohamed Baruk Ashraf Ali. (C 5223) 18-10-2016**

I **Zahra** holding Indian Passport No. Z3218479 issued at Kuwait on 29/11/2015, would like change my name to **Albertina Fernandes. (C 5219) 17-10-2016**

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**



PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	04:32
Shorook:	05:52
Duhr:	11:33
Asr:	14:48
Maghrib:	17:14
Isha:	18:31

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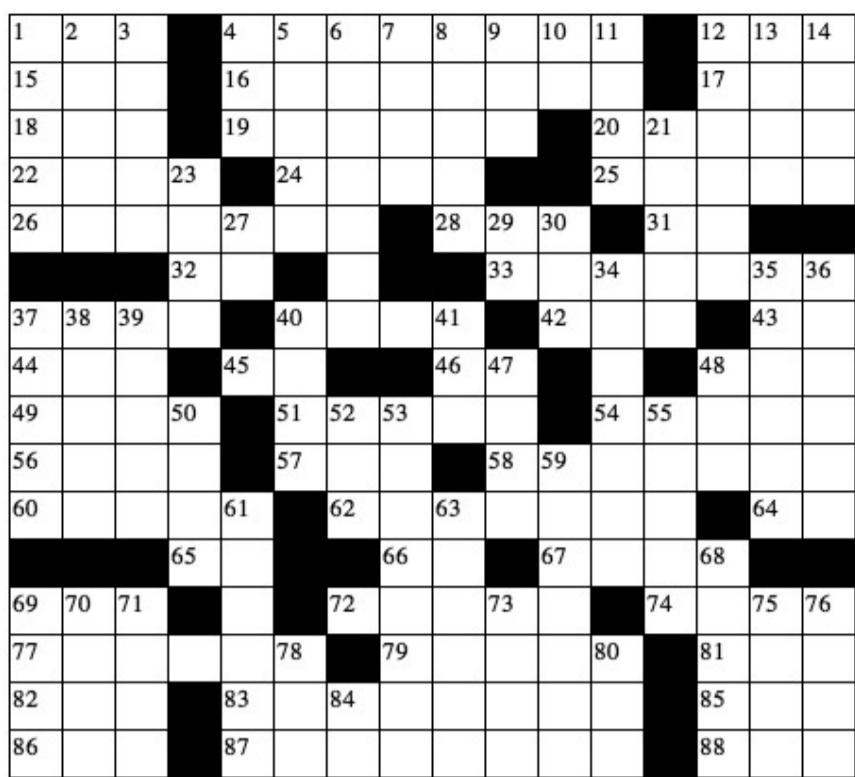
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Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Thursday 20/10/2016				Departure Flights on Thursday 20/10/2016			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
MSC	415	Sohag	00:10	AAG	147	Baghdad	14:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:10	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
FDB	069	Dubai	00:55	PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	14:45
DLH	635	Doha	01:00	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:45
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	KNE	382	Taif	14:55
JZR	539	Cairo	01:20	KAC	773	Riyadh	15:00
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	FDB	058	Dubai	15:05
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	01:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:45	KAC	673	Dubai	15:05
JZR	553	Alexandria	01:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:15
AXB	395	Kozhikode	01:50	KAC	617	Doha	15:15
THY	1464	Istanbul	01:50	JZR	188	Dubai	15:50
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:00	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	418	Manila	02:15	SVR	505	Jeddah	16:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:15	KAC	613	Bahrain	16:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:25	OMA	646	Muscat	16:10
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:05	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:15
OMA	643	Muscat	03:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
MSR	612	Cairo	03:15	NIA	252	Alexandria	16:50
FDB	067	Dubai	03:15	RJA	641	Amman	16:55
QTR	1076	Doha	03:25	FDB	052	Dubai	17:00
KAC	544	Cairo	03:40	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	266	Beirut	17:10
RBG	551	Alexandria	04:05	JZR	512	Sharm el-Sheikh	17:15
AVV	653	Alexandria	04:30	QTR	1073	Doha	17:25
DHX	170	Bahrain	04:35	KNE	532	Jeddah	17:25
THY	770	Istanbul	05:15	UAE	858	Dubai	17:40
JZR	529	Asyut	06:00	SVR	511	Riyadh	18:15
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	06:25	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	412	Manila/Bangkok	06:30	JZR	184	Dubai	18:20
QTR	8511	Doha	06:35	JZR	538	Cairo	18:30
BAW	157	London	06:40	FDB	8054	Dubai	18:40
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	KAC	563	Amman	19:00
JZR	503	Luxor	07:25	QTR	1081	Doha	19:05
KAC	382	Delhi	07:30	JZR	238	Amman	19:15
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	07:35	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:20
KAC	204	Lahore	07:40	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	206	Islamabad	07:40	KAC	285	Dhaka	19:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	07:50	GFA	218	Bahrain	19:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:50
SVR	512	Riyadh	07:50	KAC	124	Sharjah	19:55
KAC	344	Chennai	08:15	ABY	060	Dubai	20:30
KAC	332	Trivandrum	08:15	UAE	876	Dubai	20:35
KAC	352	Kochi	08:20	JAI	571	Mumbai	20:35
KAC	362	Colombo	08:20	KAC	331	Trivandrum	20:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:25	DLH	634	Doha	20:50
IRA	673	Ahwaz	08:35	KAC	343	Chennai	20:55
KAC	784	Jeddah	08:50	KAC	353	BLR	20:55
KAC	284	Dhaka	09:00	KAC	351	Kochi	21:00
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:00	KAC	543	Cairo	21:00
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KNE	232	Riyadh	21:10
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:05	MEA	403	Beirut	21:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:20	OMA	648	Muscat	21:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	554	Alexandria	21:15
SYR	341	Damascus	10:05	MSR	619	Cairo	21:30
UAE	873	Dubai	10:40	QTR	1089	Doha	21:45
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	11:00	FDB	5054	Dubai	21:55
JZR	561	Sohag	11:25	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	21:55
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:30	ALK	230	Colombo	22:20
FDK	801	Damascus	11:45	UAE	860	Dubai	22:25
JZR	165	Dubai	11:50	KLM	417	Dammam/Amsterdam	22:25
AVV	651	Alexandria	12:05	KAC	381	Delhi	22:25
FDB	075	Dubai	12:25	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:45	GFA	220	Bahrain	23:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	23:00
KAC	620	Doha	13:10	ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:55	NIA	152	Cairo	23:10
KNE	231	Riyadh	14:00	QTR	1083	Doha	23:20
KAC	672	Dubai	14:05	KAC	411	Bangkok/Manila	23:25
QTR	1078	Doha	14:05	MSC	502	Alexandria	23:30
KAC	178	Vienna	14:15				

CROSSWORD 1405



ACROSS

- 1. (used especially of persons) Having lived for a relatively long time or attained a specific age.
4. Pasta in the form of slender tubes.
12. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
15. A user interface in which you type commands instead of choosing them from a menu or selecting an icon.
16. Type genus of Agaricaceae.
17. The residue that remains when something is burned.
18. 4-wheeled motor vehicle.
19. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
20. (folklore) A corpse that rises at night to drink the blood of the living.
22. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
24. British informal.
25. Intelligence derived from non-communications electromagnetic radiations from foreign sources (other than radioactive sources).
26. Covered with paving material.
28. A doctor's degree in dental surgery.
31. Half the width of an em.
32. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
33. Crowd or pack to capacity.
37. Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
42. The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
43. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
44. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
45. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
46. The use of bacteria or viruses of toxins to destroy men and animals or food.
49. A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
51. A genus of Lamnidae.
54. A linguistic element added to a word to produce an inflected or derived form v 1.
56. A distinguished female operatic singer.
57. A master's degree in business.
58. A popular island resort in the Netherlands Antilles.
60. A unit of current equal to 10 amperes.
62. Of or relating to anions.
64. A radioactive gaseous element formed by the disintegration of radium.
65. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.
66. A state in east central United States.
67. (Old Testament) Cain and Abel were the first children of Adam and Eve born after the Fall of Man.
69. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
72. The 3rd letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
74. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
77. The environmental condition.
79. A constitutional monarchy in northern Europe on the western side of the Scandinavian Peninsula.
81. Something that remunerates.
82. Electrical conduction through a gas in an applied electric field.
83. Suffering from a partial loss of memory.
85. The compass point midway between northeast and east.
86. Type genus of the family Myacidae.
87. Widespread genus or herbs or soft-wooded arborescent shrubs cultivated for their showy flowers.
88. An associate degree in applied science.

DOWN

- 1. English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
2. Wild or domesticated South American cud-chewing animal related to camels but smaller and lacking a hump.
3. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
4. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
5. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
6. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
7. Any of various strong liquors distilled from the fermented sap of toddy palms or from fermented molasses.
8. Aroused to impatience or anger.
9. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
10. The 13th letter of the Greek alphabet.
11. A small island.
12. A thin plate or layer (especially of bone or mineral).
13. The seventh month of the Hindu calendar.
14. An informal conversation.
21. The 1st letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
23. The (prehensile) extremity of the superior limb.
27. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
29. A person who announces and plays popular recorded music.
30. Experiencing or showing sorrow or unhappiness.
34. An infective disease caused by sporozoan parasites that are transmitted through the bite of an infected Anopheles mosquito.
35. Salted roe of sturgeon or other large fish.
36. A kind of loud horn formerly used on motor vehicles.
38. A member of an American Indian peoples of NE South America and the Lesser Antilles.
39. An anti-TNF compound (trade name Arava) that is given orally.
40. Any of various aromatic resinous substances used for healing and soothing.
41. The compass point that is one point north of due east.
47. A city in east central Texas.
48. A fluorocarbon with chlorine.
50. God of love and erotic desire.
52. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
53. The site of three famous battles among Greek city-states.
55. A sheet or band of fibrous connective tissue separating or binding together muscles and organs etc.
59. Poorly stated or described.
61. Relating to the pineal body.
63. Being deepest within the self.
68. Greek mythology.
70. Open to or abounding in fresh air.
71. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
73. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and northwest Pennsylvania and western New York.
75. Type genus of the Ranidae.
76. Opinion or judgment.
78. A benevolent aspect of Devi.
80. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
84. A state in the western United States.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

There is a feeling that time is slipping away this afternoon and you may want to accomplish more than there is time for this day. Make a list and leave some of the projects for another day. Relax! A drive to the outskirts of town with a friend or loved one may find some foliage that you can take home with you for decorations representing the fall season. If you can treat this foliage with a spray of sorts, it will remain beautiful for some time. Make a fun project out of your day. This may also include painting or repair of some sort. There will still be time to set aside later for a different sort of relaxation. You find yourself quick-witted. There is a chance to give attention to your family through games or time around the dinner table. This is a special time.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are favored today. Good luck and positive results are in the forecast. This is one of your best overall days. Much can be accomplished in the workplace and if you need any help, just ask. There is a feeling that anything is possible if you set your sights high enough. You are encouraged to go the extra mile for a boss that would do the same for any employee. There is a sort of exploring your feelings, a kind of restlessness for new emotional experience. You may find yourself looking for a little romance this evening or at least enjoying some emotional release. You can appreciate feelings and movement. Perhaps dancing is your specialty. You may want to just get out and walk or exercise. Enjoy the sunset. This is a good day for love.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You are at your mental best with sharp ideas and clear thoughts. You get all the important work out of the way as quickly as possible. This is an excellent time to make decisions and take care of any mental work. You have a clear-minded insight into your own plans and methods and can express a "take-charge" manner whenever needed. There are plenty of opportunities to communicate your goals and put them into words-a good time for decisions. Appointments, meetings or social events can be inserted throughout the day. Your emotions are clear and it is easy for you to understand and work with those around you. Music plays a big part in your life this evening-perhaps you are scheduled to perform soon or attend a performance. A nice time.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

There are many more rewarding days ahead of you. You will be reaping the rewards of your hard work, even though it may only be the good feeling that comes when you do your best. You may wish there were more days like today. There is an opportunity to advance your career now-look before you leap. This is also the best time to join that club, group or activity. If you have become involved in a community effort, now is a good time to plot your activity or involvement. Leave yourself time for some personal freedom, however. You do not have to say yes to everything surrounding this activity-that is what a task force or committee involves. You could be most persuasive with others today. The energies available at this time lean in your direction.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

This day could be a bit frustrating. You will find yourself constructing problem-solving bridges to successful results over and over this day. Good things happen with patience. Perhaps with the challenges you muster up the energy and the knowledge to rise above any difficulty. You may find plenty of support flowing to you-perhaps even too much at times. Keep notes of your ideas and visions-they may be appropriate for use again. A little question of whether to make a loan to a friend may come up this afternoon-you might think about the history of the relationship before you decide. An animal gains your attention this evening; perhaps it is your animal. Now is the time for training and the exercise is good for the both of you-enjoy.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Increased confidence and a more outgoing manner may be the key that opens many a new door in your career. There are opportunities to discover your talents through creativity and self-expression. You will be pleased at the recent progress you have made in many areas of your life-just take a look! In a simple disagreement about philosophical, religious or legal possibilities, it would be wise to agree to disagree. Avoid such situations as much as possible and if you need to become more involved in heavy discussions, find facts to support your ideas. Settle up front rather than dragging things through to the bitter end-you will be glad you did. There may be an opportunity to gain important information this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This morning seems to lean in the direction of production, and lots of it. Whether you are on an assembly line, granting loans, planting seeds or studying for a test or a class, you will find time passes very quickly and production or results are positive. Your management and directional abilities are in high focus. Learning the psychology of people is fascinating. It seems to give you an inside track into the understanding of people. Your instinctive orientation at this time is in getting down to the facts and eliminating the emotional, thereby destroying the roots of a disturbance. Real insight into your own inner workings could surface today as well-and in a manageable form. Enjoy your beautiful friends this evening.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Intense emotional drama is available-if that is what you need. Your emotions are not in tune with the more sensitive and private areas of your life. Push on now and you risk some very turbulent emotional scenes. Obtaining professional advice is a move in the right direction at this time. The impressions you make on the outside world may bring attention to your professional life as well-keep your activities positive. This is a great time to consider involving yourself and perhaps a loved one in a class of some sort-something fun! This can be something that will bring you both toward a closer relationship. If you are dating and find yourself in several relationships, it may be time to begin to focus your attention on one particular person.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

Communicating with others is at a high today. You manifest your ideals and dreams in an organized and clear-headed manner. You would be great at giving the public a sense of the ideal via films, advertising, spiritual work. There is a tendency to be too strict with yourself and to insist that whatever does not contribute to security and other long-term goals is trivial. Your ambition is intensified. Your practical skills are linked to your almost mystical inner vision. Have fun shopping for a few diet meals this evening. Choices that include pretty colors, fruits, lots of different sorts of greenery will have the whole family wanting to join you in your venture. You may all be very pleased with the weighing in process toward year's end.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You could have difficulty getting outer recognition for your efforts or accomplishments. This does not mean they are worthless; it does mean you should throw your efforts into work or ventures you really love doing, not necessarily for others. You will prosper by pursuing your ideals and most deep-seated dreams of how life could be. Don't be afraid to show off your talents-someone will support or encourage your growth in this respect. Group cooperation could further your career at this time. Opportunities appear all around you but may seem to challenge your status quo. You must decide whether the risk is worth the change it will bring about in your situation. A new romantic relationship is practically within your grasp!



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Everything may be pouring in at once, and it's all good news. Your career direction gets some encouragement and life's problems should find easy solutions. You may benefit from an older person or one in authority. Life could assume a dreamlike stance. You are a solid supporter, always gravitating to the heart of things. You may have trouble getting moving, but once rolling, others had better step aside. You have an amazing strength that finds you lending a hand and working through all types of situations. Good fortune is near and things open up in a very natural way for you. Driving home this evening, some view or activity or animal stirs your attention for a short while. This may be the instigator that pushes you in the direction of some fun decisions.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Now may be best to begin to dig in and strengthen your current work position rather than expand outward just now. You will find yourself concentrating more on your work. From time to time you consider how to maintain and strengthen your position. If you are working to push an important issue in front of the public, now is the time you will begin to gain success. A relative or friend hooks up with you this afternoon in an attempt to catch up on the news and the types of things your family enjoys. This person may even treat you to a meal. Any attempt on this person's part to get information is to help and support, not to gossip and tell. At home this evening it might be fun to plan on some future trip or adventure, even if it is only for a weekend.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Movie Actors 3

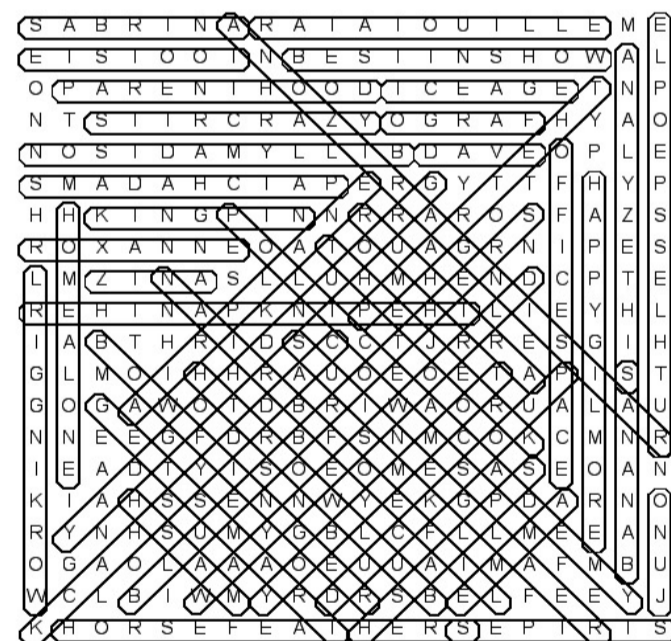
Find and circle all of the Movie Actors that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a movie for which Forest Whitaker won an Oscar.

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

- ARKIN, Alan
BALE, Christian
BANDERAS, Antonio
BRODBENT, Jim
BRODERICK, Matthew
BRODY, Adrian
BYRNE, Gabriel
CRAIG, Daniel
DAY-LEWIS, Daniel
EASTWOOD, Clint
FIRTH, Colin
FISHBURNE, Laurence
FRASER, Brendan
GLOVER, Danny
GOODING JR, Cuba
HARRIS, Ed
HAWKE, Ethan
KINGSLEY, Ben
MACY, William H.
MALKOVICH, John
MCGREGOR, Ewan
MURPHY, Eddie
MURRAY, Bill
NICHOLSON, Jack
NORTON, Edward
OLDMAN, Gary
PACINO, Al
PAXTON, Bill
PITT, Brad
QUAD, Dennis
RADCLIFFE, Daniel
SINISE, Gary
SLATER, Christian
STRATHAIRN, David
THORNTON, Billy Bob
WALKEN, Christopher
WASHINGTON, Denzel
WHITAKER, Forest
WILLIS, Bruce

Yesterday's Solution

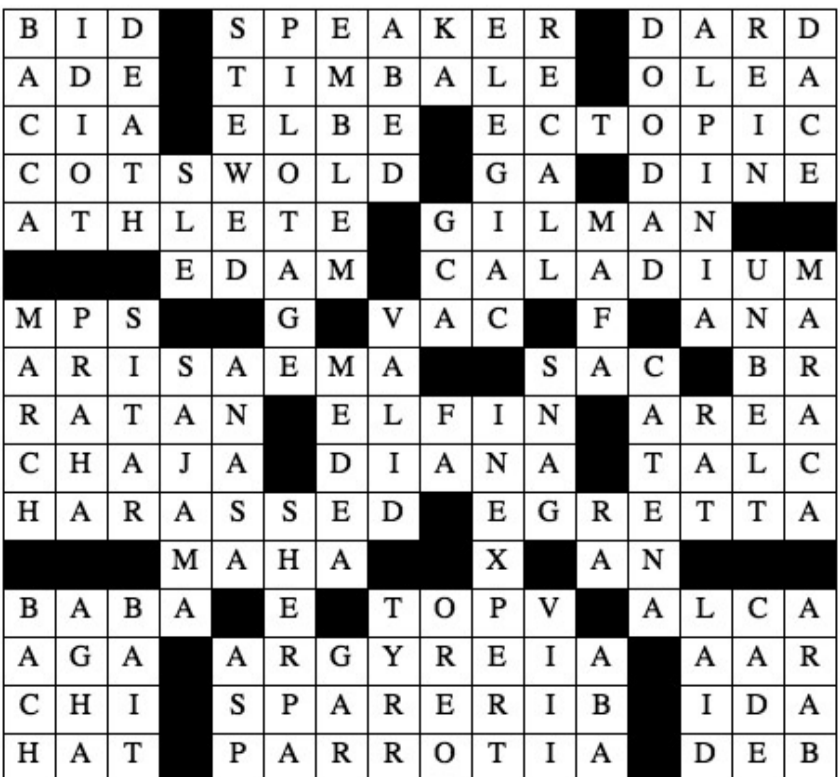
Comedy Movies 2



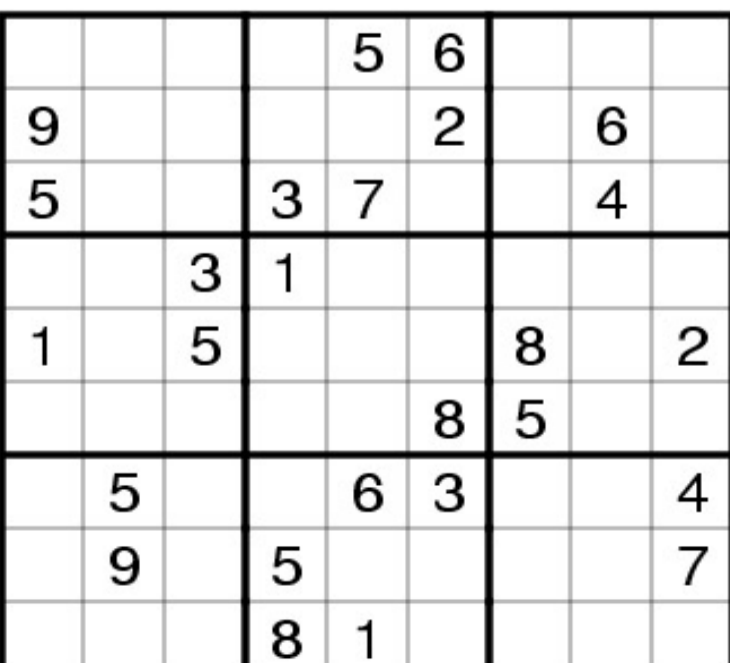
- AIRPLANE
ANALYZE THIS
ANTZ
ARTHUR
BANANAS
BEST IN SHOW
BILLY MADISON
BLUES BROTHERS
BOWTIE
BULWORTH
CADDYSHACK
DAVE
DUCK SOUP
EMMA
FARGO
GET SMART
GROUNDHOG DAY
HAPPY GILMORE
HOME ALONE
HORSE FEATHERS
ICE AGE
JUNO
KINGPIN
LIFE OF BRIAN
MASH
OFFICE SPACE
PARENTHOOD
PATCH ADAMS
POLICE ACADEMY
RAISING ARIZONA
RATATOUILLE
REAL GENIUS
ROXANNE
RUTHLESS PEOPLE
SABRINA
SPLASH
STIR CRAZY
STRIPES
THE JERK
THE PINK PANTHER
THE TRAMP
TOMMY BOY
TOOTSIE
WAYNES WORLD
WORKING GIRL

The hidden movie title is: MONTY PYTHON'S THE MEANING OF LIFE

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Hospitals

Table with 2 columns: Hospital Name, Phone Number. Includes Sabah Hospital, Amiri Hospital, Maternity Hospital, Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital, Chest Hospital, Farwaniya Hospital, Adan Hospital, Ibn Sina Hospital, Al-Razi Hospital, Physiotherapy Hospital.

Clinics

Table with 2 columns: Clinic Name, Phone Number. Includes 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, Fintas.

Table with 4 columns: GOVERNORATE, PHARMACY, ADDRESS, PHONE. Lists pharmacies in various governorates like Ahmadi, Jahra, Capital, Farwaniya, Hawally.

Table of international calls with columns for country and phone number. Lists countries from Afghanistan to Lesotho.

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



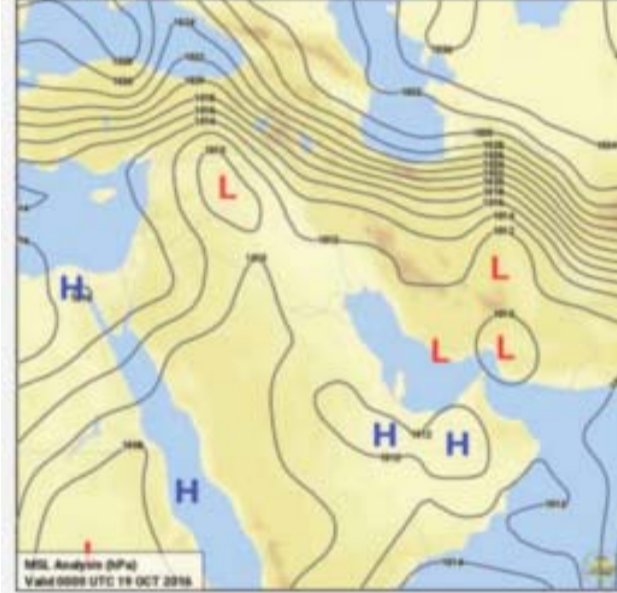
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630 Fax: (+965) 24348714 www.met.gov.kw



Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 19/10/2016-07:00 LT UTC +3hr Max Temperature 38 °C. By Day: Hot with variable wind... By Night: Relatively humid weather...

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

Forecast table with columns for Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. Includes expected weather, temperature, wind direction, and speed.

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Table with 3 columns: Station, MIN °C REC, Max °C EXP. Lists temperatures for various stations like Kuwait City, Kuwait Airport, Abdaly, Bubyah, Jahra, etc.

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Table with 2 columns: Metric, Value. Lists max/min temperature, humidity, wind speed, and rainfall.

Sunrise & Sunset

Table with 2 columns: Event, Time. Lists sunrise at 05:52 and sunset at 17:14.

Prayer Times

Table with 2 columns: Prayer, Time. Lists times for Fajr, Sunrise, Zuhr, Asr, Sunset, and Isha.



PRIVATE CLINICS

Table of Ophthalmologists: Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor, Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea, Dr. Masoma Habeeb, Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy, Dr. Mohsen Abel, Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl, Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly, Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT): Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner, Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali, Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel, Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah, Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory, Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary, Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz, General Practitioners: Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi, Dr. Yousef Al-Omar, Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazem, Dr. Kathem Maarafi, Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah, Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi, Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Rfae, Urologists: Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy, Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul, Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi, Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C), Dr. Leons Joseph.

Table of Plastic Surgeons: Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf, Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari, Dr. Abdel Quttainah, Family Doctor: Dr Divya Damodar, Psychiatrists: Dr. Esam Al-Ansari, Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan, Gynaecologists & Obstetricians: Dr. Adrian arbe, Dr. Verginia s.Marin, Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan, Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami, Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly, Dr. Salem soso, General Surgeons: Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer, Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher, Internists, Chest & Heart: Dr. Adnan Ebil, Dr. Mousa Khadada, Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan, Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra, Dr. Mobarak Aldoub, Dr. Nasser Behbehani.

Table of Paediatricians: Dr. Khaled Hamadi, Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed, Dr. Zahra Qabazard, Dr. Sohail Qamar, Dr. Snaa Maarroof, Dr. Pradip Gujare, Dr. Zacharias Mathew, Dermatologists: Dr. Mohammed Salam, Bern University, Dentists: Dr. Anil Thomas, Dr. Shamah Al-Matar, Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed, Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer, Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan, Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash, Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan, Dr. Bader Al-Ansari, Neurologists: Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri, Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan, Gastrologists: Dr. Sami Aman, Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly, Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali.

Table of Endocrinologist: Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman, Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari, Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr, Physiotherapists & VD: Dr. Deyaa Shehab, Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees, Rheumatologists: Dr. Adel Al-Awadi, Internist, Chest & Heart: DR.Mohammes Akkad, Consultant Cardiologist: Dr. Mohammad Zubaid, Assistant Professor Of Medicine, Head, Division of Cardiology, Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, Dr. Farida Al-Habib, Inaya German Medical Center.



Designer Christelle Kocher (front third right) poses with models during her KOCHÉ AW16 and SS17 mix collection show presented by H BEAUTY&YOUTH at Amazon Fashion Week in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP photos

FRENCH LABEL STOPS TRAFFIC WITH OUTDOOR TOKYO CATWALK

French label Koche made its Japan Fashion Week debut yesterday, transforming part of Tokyo's famed Harajuku district into a catwalk-stopping traffic to unveil street cool with a French twist. Paris-based designer Christelle Kocher brought her two-year old fashion house to the heart of Japanese youth culture, taking over a street lined with boutiques, which until shortly before the show had been bustling with teenage girls dressed in Japan's distinctive school uniforms. Lanterns lined the open-air runway and a sound system blasted out a techno beat, but otherwise there was no adornment to the display of street wear-part locker room, part French boudoir.

Kocher cast real people to personify the concept of street fashion, including a Japanese DJ, a photographer and a designer, in a high-energy show presenting more than 40 looks for summer and winter. Her casting was similar to her 2015 Paris debut, when she turned part of Les Halles into a runway, using

models that included what Vogue called a "girl handpicked off the street" and one of her neighbors.

Tokyo yesterday saw net leggings, jogging bottoms reimagined as lace flares, patchwork dresses cut on the bias and textured cream silk trousers for men and women, described by Kocher as a unisex look. There were delicate negligee-style slip dresses and vest tops, paired with denim or sportswear, fabrics with sequins and feathers, and crepe ruffled shirts-again for both men and women. "The idea was to bring the energy of Paris together in Tokyo," Kocher explained to reporters backstage after the show. "We wanted to have this really powerful, symbolic connection between the two countries and show that we can be altogether." Kocher started the label in 2015 after working for fashion giants Emporio Armani, Chloe, Bottega Veneta and Dries Van Noten. — AFP



Models display creations by designer Christelle Kocher during the KOCHÉ AW16 and SS17.

Belgian author creates stir with tale of ice-cold revenge

She's a literary sensation whose debut novel has sold over 100,000 copies, yet unless you speak Dutch you've probably never heard of writer Lize Spit. But all that's about to change as publishers line up to translate her dark tale of friendship and betrayal. Why would a traumatized young woman return to her home town with a block of ice in her car? It is this question at the heart of "The Melting" that has gripped readers and caused a stir unlike any other Dutch-language debut in recent years. Reviewers in Belgium and the Netherlands have hailed Spit as the voice of her generation, while international publishers have jostled to snap up the translation rights to the haunting coming-of-age story.

The 27-year-old author attributes her success partly to the book's universal themes of small-town life and growing up in a dysfunctional family, but says the Flemish literary world "was also waiting for someone new, a young new voice." "I'm a bit stunned by it all," she told AFP in a phone interview ahead of this week's Frankfurt Book Fair, where Flanders and the Netherlands are the guests of honor and where "The Melting" will get its first big outing on the international stage.

The story opens with the main character, twenty-something Eva, driving back to her home village, determined to settle the score over childhood wrongs. Weaving between the past and the present, Spit takes the reader back to the sweltering summer of 2002, when Eva's only two friends-both teenage boys-embark on a chilling game of sexual exploration. A sense

of creeping dread fills the pages until the shocking climax.

'Unprecedented'

Since it was first published in January, the book has sold over 100,000 copies-a remarkable achievement for any debut author. But it's an astronomical figure in a country where most novels have a print run of 2,000 and any book that sells over 10,000 copies is considered a hit. "After more than nine months it's still the best-selling novel in Flanders," said Spit's publisher Daniel van der Meer of the Dutch publishing house Das Mag. The film rights were sold three days after "The Melting" appeared in stores, and nine countries have since bought the translation rights-including France, Spain and England.

In Germany, interest was so strong that the book went to auction. "The extremely fast foreign sales, including to the very difficult English-language market, are unprecedented for a Flemish debut," said Michiel Scharpe of the Flemish Literature Fund, which will be showcasing Dutch-language works in Frankfurt. Van der Meer expects to add more countries to the list at the fair, where Spit will appear in a documentary that takes her back to her home town to visit some of the locations that inspired the book.

'The Melting' tourists

Critics have been unanimous in their praise for Spit's vivid prose and keen observations, drawing comparisons with Ian

McEwan and the late Hugo Claus who wrote the Flemish classic "The Sorrow of Belgium". Wary of being written off as hype, Spit stresses the hard work that went into "The Melting", noting that she read the entire book out loud three times before settling on a final version. Much has been made in local media about the graphic nature of some of the scenes, and Spit herself admits parts of the book are "quite intense." "But you need something like that, at the end, where everything goes horribly wrong."

Questions have inevitably been raised about how much of the story is based on true events, but Spit has resisted talking about her own past. "I think it's very important to keep that distance," she said, expressing disbelief at fans of the book who tour her childhood village of Viersel in northern Belgium expecting to see all the same places as on the page. With her frequent media appearances and a weekly newspaper column, Spit-who is invariably pictured wearing her hair in a messy bun-has become a celebrity at home, but says she tries to keep "a cool head" about fame. "I know that it won't last. People forget quickly." She is already planning her second novel. "The idea is already bubbling. This time it won't be about a small village, but about something else completely. I think I have said everything there is to be said about that village." — AFP



British artist David Hockney poses with his book "SUMO - A Bigger Book" during the Frankfurt Book Fair in Frankfurt am Main, western Germany, yesterday. — AFP



Cyrus Zaveih, also known as Cido the Clown, poses for a photo. — AP photos



Cyrus Zaveih, also known as Cido the Clown, applies his make-up.



Cyrus Zaveih, also known as Cido the Clown, poses for a photo.

Crying inside? Creepy craze no joke for real clowns

Send in the frowns. This year's nationwide creepy clown craze has become a nightmare before Halloween for actual, working clowns, who say their bookings at parties and other events have dropped sharply, even after many of the social media-fueled scary clown sightings have turned out to be hoaxes. Some fear going out with their greasepaint makeup and red noses will make them a target of police, or even marauding mobs who take to the streets on so-called "clown hunts." "It's definitely a scary feeling leaving your house and you fear you are going to get jumped because you're dressed as a clown," says Cyrus Zaveih, a New York City hospital administrator who also performs professionally as "Cido the Clown."

"You're there to make them happy, to make them have fun, and now they are saying, 'Aaaagghh!'" Zaveih says. "All of a sudden these stories are putting fear into kids. ... Before they'd just look the other way, but now it's like, 'You're a scary clown

and I hate you.'" The World Clown Association - comprised of more than 2,000 members in 30 countries - has been flooded with calls from scared performers. It's been sending out safety tips, suggesting clowns consider changing into their costumes when they arrive at a party or go with a handler.

Association president Randy Christensen says clowns are also increasingly getting requests for "modified performances" in which they entertain without makeup and traditional clown attire. This week, retail giant Target took the step of pulling scary clown masks from its shelves. And McDonald's says its signature clown character, Ronald McDonald, will be keeping a lower profile. All of the fallout follows a phenomenon in the US involving dozens of stories, many fabricated, about clowns stalking or attacking people. In multiple states, people have called police to report being menaced by people in clown costumes. In Kentucky, a man dressed as a clown was arrested after lurking in the woods. Children in Ohio and Texas have

been charged with making clown-related threats to school classmates. A New York City teen told police a clown threatened him with a knife in the subway.

Clown sightings

"They aren't clowns. They are clown impersonators," said Wendy Pincus, who has performed in New York City for the last 20 years. "We're here to make people happy. We don't threaten people. We bring joy." Pincus, whose clown alter ego is "Crazy Daisy," says she's seen a 30 percent to 40 percent decrease in just the past few weeks. Clown sightings, hoaxes and pranks - especially around Halloween - aren't new. In fact, they've become a recurring staple of crime blotters since serial killer and working clown John Wayne Gacy was convicted in 1980 of killing 33 people. In 2012, James Holmes dyed his hair red as Batman's Joker when he opened fire at a Colorado movie theater, killing 12 people.

Those high-profile cases notwithstanding, experts say it's relatively common for people to feel creeped out by clowns. "It primarily has to do with the exaggerated makeup and features. We recognize it, but there is something abnormal," says Dr Kristie Golden, associate director of operations for psychiatry and neurosciences at Stony Brook University Hospital. "We can be drawn in by that or we can be repelled." World Clown Association's Christensen says this year's clown scares seems to be reaching new heights, and suggests working clowns repel them the same way they always have, by spreading a message of happiness and boundless. "Go out and clown and show people what this is," he says. "Show them what good entertainment is - show them what a caring clown does." — AP



French chef Alexandre Couillon poses in his restaurant La Marine in Noirmoutier-en-l'Île, western France. — AFP photos



French chef Alexandre Couillon blows on a barbecue using pine cones in the kitchen of his restaurant.

'Monsieur Idiot' named France's chef of the year

Chef Alexandre Couillon has a name that he himself admits "is not easy to carry". But the man whose surname translates as "Idiot" was named yesterday as France's cook of the year, having turned his family's humble "moules frites" joint into one of the country's best seafood restaurants. His triumph is all the more remarkable because the restaurant is at the farthest end of the unpretentious island of Noirmoutier off France's west coast, a favorite for bucket and spade family holidays. The 40-year-old chef, who featured on the Emmy-winning Netflix show "Chef's Table" last month, has built a worldwide reputation for the simple but ingenious way he cooks ingredients from his garden and the little fish-

ing port of L'Herbaudiere his eatery overlooks.

The first year he and his wife Celine took over the then seasonal La Marine restaurant "we didn't have a single customer one night in July", Couillon told AFP. "You don't come here by accident. Now we have people coming 800 kilometers (500 miles) for dinner. "It's amazing... we have five or six emails from abroad every day to book tables next year," the fisherman's son added. Dishes like black oyster poached in Colonnata lard with squid, sardine crackers and cauliflower ice cream and equally creative deserts using local seaweed won over the judges from the Gault and Millau guide who named him best chef.

The guide is France's most trusted gastronomic

benchmark after the Michelin guide. Couillon, who has two Michelin stars, said the couple started with nothing. "We had pink tablecloths, old rush seat chairs and the cutlery came from a self-service place," he recalled. And he insisted success had not changed him. He would still be keeping things simple with "no snobbishness, no truffles nor caviar." "Nothing is going to change. I remain an artisan. I just want to get up every morning and keep that same pleasure of going to work," said the father of two. — AFP

Kickstarter campaign aims to save Dorothy's fading ruby slippers

Wishful thinking and three heel-clicks whisked Dorothy back home in "The Wizard of Oz," but it will take hard cash to restore her ruby red slippers. The sparkling shoes dazzled audiences of the 1939 film classic as Dorothy, played by Judy Garland, danced down the yellow brick road. Now the US

Smithsonian's Museum of American History in Washington where they are on public display has launched a crowdfunding Kickstarter campaign to raise \$300,000 for restoring their pizzazz.

The shoes, made nearly 80 years ago, are in dire need of repair as well as a new display case to protect them from environmental harm, the museum said. The Smithsonian Institution - which oversees museums and research centers in and near Washington - receives federal funding to support its core operations, but that money will not cover repairing the shoes, it added. The institution often solicits corporate and private donations to pay for projects beyond its budget. Conservators say the shoes' sequins are flaking, leaving them more of a washed-out auburn than the glittery ruby color for which they're known.

The Smithsonian had raised just over \$85,000 as of Tuesday afternoon, with slightly under a month left in the fundraising campaign. MGM Studios' prop department created the low-heeled shoes by dyeing commercially manufactured low-heeled slippers red and attaching red

sequined netting. The slippers became one of the film's most iconic props, on near-constant display at the museum since they were anonymously donated in 1979. Millions of visitors view them each year, and they are slated to be part of a new 2018 exhibition on American innovation in music, sports and entertainment. The Kickstarter campaign is the Smithsonian's second, after it raised \$719,779 last year through crowdfunding to conserve Neil Armstrong's space suit. The museum issued its appeal with the words of the Wicked Witch of the West: "These things must be done delicately - or you hurt the spell." — AFP



'The Wizard of Oz' ruby red slippers became one of the film's most iconic props, on near-constant display at the museum since they were anonymously donated in 1979. — AFP



Splash at the Avenues gets a new look

Splash, the Middle East's largest high-street fashion retailer hosted an event at its recently refurbished and renovated Avenues store which saw attendance from the local media and management from Landmark Group. Attendees were treated to an exclusive preview of Splash's latest autumn/winter collection which offers an amalgamation of the latest fashion trends with an updated look in menswear, ladies wear, children's wear, footwear, accessories and other products.

During the launch, Saibal Basu, Chief Operating Officer, Landmark Group Kuwait said: "We are delighted to unveil the new look of Splash at the Avenues. We have been constantly adapting and expanding to meet the demand and recognize the burgeoning fashion interests of our patrons. Our aim to achieve proximity to our customers pushed us to revamp the store which in turn will provide shoppers with an easy access and better understanding of our collections. The refurbished facilities will only add to a customer's enhanced shopping experience. We look forward to welcoming our customers to this newly renovated store."

Speaking about the new collection Saibal added: "This Autumn Winter, we want to provide the fashion savvy consumer complete unmatched fashion solutions with an experience that entices them to come back to our store. With the launch of our new collection, we are certain that our customers will keep stylishly warm and comfortable."

Splash's Autumn Winter collection for women are filled with silhouettes and textures for the season and are reflective of the free-spirited gypsy-vibe of the 70s influenced by artisanal craftsmanship using spice shades of cinnamon, saffron and mustard blend. Midseason the colour palette becomes much richer using the jewel tones of deep burgundy, brighter crimson, emerald, teal and celestial blue. Moving into peak winter the colour palette is offset by pale parfait pink, subdued grey and soft winter white. Taking inspiration from the season's runways, the brand's womenswear offers knitted capes, pleated skirts with cold shoulder detailing. Fringe details, eyelets and ruffled sleeves make its way in to the collection giving it a romantic Victorian vibe. Our glamorous evening wear dresses

form an integral part of the range.

Moving on to men's collection, Splash's menswear range is dominated by the fall trends of Bespoke Tech with unstructured blazers and technical joggers being the key pieces followed by Future Folklore which combines a mix of traditional country influences and modern workwear. The Grunge Core trend is all about the muted tones with torn elements, androgynous cardigans and Parkas being the core pieces. For the ultimate masculine appeal the Minimal Military makes a strong comeback which promotes clean lines, understated military elements and boxier silhouettes. Key pieces you can own are Cargo Joggers, aviator bomber Jacket and slim biker pants. The colour palette comprises the trusted olives, tans, rusty reds, greys and black.

The renovated new store highlights Splash's exceptional service in Kuwait. This autumn/winter Splash is the definitive destination for the family's fashion and lifestyle needs.

The entire collection is available at all Splash stores in Centrepoint, Splash -The Avenues, Phase II and at Splash - Salam Mall.



Hundreds mourn top filmmaker Andrzej Wajda in Poland



People pay their respects to late Polish filmmaker Andrzej Wajda attend a mourning Mass, in Krakow, Poland yesterday. — AP photos

Hundreds of people mourning for Poland's leading filmmaker Andrzej Wajda are paying their respect by passing in silence before an urn with Wajda's ashes at a church in southern Poland ahead of his funeral. Poland's President Andrzej Duda, foreign diplomats, actors and intellectuals attended the funeral Mass at the Dominican friars' church in Krakow. Later Wajda will be laid to rest at the city's historic Salwator Cemetery, where the movie director's mother is buried.

Wajda died in a Warsaw hospital Oct 9 at the age of 90, just months after finishing "Afterimage," Poland's entry for a foreign language Academy Award. In 2000 he received an honorary lifetime achievement Oscar. On Tuesday, hundreds of people in Warsaw, where he lived, bid Wajda farewell in a special Mass. — AP

The urn with the ashes of Poland filmmaker Andrzej Wajda is set out during a farewell ceremony.



Michael Jordan's 'Space Jam' returning to theaters

Michael Jordan, Bugs Bunny and friends are returning to the court, and theaters, to mark the 20th anniversary of "Space Jam." The 1996 basketball-themed adventure, which combined the real life Jordan with animated Looney Tunes characters, will be back on screens in select theaters for two days next month.

Fathom Events and Warner Bros. say the screenings will take place on Sunday, Nov 13, and Wednesday, Nov 16. Basketball greats Larry Bird, Charles Barkley and Patrick Ewing also appear in the film, as does Bill Murray, who joins with Jordan to defeat a team of aliens. — AP



File photo shows Michael Moore attends the 20th Annual Webby Awards at Cipriani Wall Street in New York. — AP

MOORE DEBUTS FILM ON TRUMP WEEKS BEFORE VOTE

Michael Moore has premiered a surprise film discussing the presidential election just three weeks before Americans head to the polls. Moore debuted "Michael Moore in Trumpland" in New York on Tuesday night in front of an audience of his fans. According to The Hollywood Reporter, the film features Moore speaking about both Republican nominee Donald Trump and Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton on stage earlier this month in Wilmington, Ohio, a hotbed of Trump support.

The liberal documentarian urged the crowd at Tuesday's premiere to vote for Clinton next month. The Hollywood Reporter says the film will screen for one week at the IFC Center in Manhattan beginning today. It will also be shown at a theater in Encino, California. Moore says he hopes more theaters will be announced soon. — AP

Leonardo DiCaprio cooperating in 1MDB probe

Leonardo DiCaprio is aiding the investigation into a Malaysian embezzlement scam that involved his hit film about financial market fraud, "The Wolf of Wall Street," according to his spokesperson Tuesday. The Hollywood star contacted the US Justice Department in July just after it filed a lawsuit to seize more than \$1 billion in allegedly ill-gotten assets tied to Malaysian state investment fund 1MDB, including rights to the film, DiCaprio's spokesperson said.

Allegations of a vast international scheme of embezzlement and money-laundering involving billions of dollars of 1MDB money began to emerge two years ago, rocking Malaysia's political establishment. In a July lawsuit, the US Justice Department detailed how "Malaysian Official 1" later identified by officials as Malaysian Prime Minister Najib

Razak-family members, and close associates diverted billions from the now-stricken fund.

Najib launched the fund, 1Malaysia Development Berhad in 2009 and closely oversaw it. Both he and 1MDB deny any wrongdoing. The money allegedly siphoned from 1MDB was used to buy hundreds of millions of dollars worth of assets around the world, and allegedly financed the production of "The Wolf of Wall Street." DiCaprio's 2013 film about Wall Street corruption and greed was financed by Red Granite Pictures, co-founded by Riza Aziz, stepson of the Malaysian prime minister. DiCaprio reportedly was friends with Aziz associate Jho Low, also named in the lawsuit.

The Justice Department wants to seize royalties from the film, as well as real estate in Beverly Hills, New York and London, artworks by Monet and Van Gogh, and a Bombardier jet. A Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation spokesperson said that after hearing about the lawsuit, DiCaprio's had his representatives contact the Justice Department "to determine whether he or his foundation ... ever received any gifts or charitable donations directly or indirectly related to these parties, and if so, to return those gifts or donations as soon as possible."

The move to seize the funds, which is subject to what could be lengthy legal proceedings, emerges from a 2010 Justice Department anti-kleptocracy initiative intended to confiscate the ill-gotten gains of world leaders which pass through the US banking system. The Bruno Manser Fund, a Swiss NGO campaigning against corruption in Malaysia, said Tuesday it welcomed DiCaprio's announcement but called on the actor to fully disclose his financial ties to Low, Aziz and Red Granite Pictures.

"DiCaprio's public statement leaves key questions open," said Lukas Straumann, the executive director of the Bruno Manser Fund. "How much money did Leonardo DiCaprio and his foundation get from Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) from Malaysia and why didn't he conduct due diligence upon receiving these funds?" The organization also questioned whether DiCaprio would pay back the estimated \$25 million he received for his role in "The Wolf of Wall Street." "While we appreciate the statement and his cooperation with the Department of Justice, there is clearly more DiCaprio could do to end this disgraceful chapter in Hollywood history," the statement said. — AFP



In this file photo, actor Leonardo DiCaprio poses for photographers during a photo call to promote the film 'Before the Flood,' showing as part of the London Film Festival in London. — AP



In file photo, Garth Brooks sings 'Ain't Going Down' during a concert at Yankee Stadium in New York. — AP

Garth Brooks joins Amazon's streaming service

A week after launching its paid streaming music service, Amazon announced a deal with one of streaming music's biggest holdouts: country superstar Garth Brooks. Brooks, the best-selling solo artist in US history with 138 million albums sold, has kept his music off streaming services. Yesterday, select albums and songs will be available on Amazon Music Unlimited. His albums, previously available only through his GhostTunes service, will be sold digitally via Amazon Music.

Brooks said he waited until the right partner came along before he was ready to dive into streaming. "I love retail to death, but retail will never tell me what my stuff is worth and will never tell me how to sell it," Brooks said in a telephone interview from Los Angeles. "That's the tail wagging the dog for me." "This is a landmark moment for both Amazon Music and Garth Brooks," said Steve Boom, vice president of Amazon Music, in a statement. "Garth Brooks is a legendary country music superstar who continues to shatter industry records and amaze fans three decades into his career. We are honored to make his music available for streaming for the first time ever, exclusively on Amazon Music."

Brooks entered semi-retirement in 2000 near the height of his popularity to spend more time with his children and wife, Trisha Yearwood. In 2014, he returned with a major tour and a new album, "Man Against Machine." His upcoming albums, "Gunslinger" and "Christmas Together" with Yearwood, will be added to the streaming service later this year. Two of his best-selling albums, "Ultimate Hits" and "Double Live," will be available for streaming. They include his popular hits "Friends in Low Places," "The Dance" and "The Thunder Rolls." His current single, "Baby, Let's Lay Down and Dance," will also be available on streaming. — AP

'The Joneses' is another studio comedy misfire

The modern studio comedy increasingly feels limp, suffocated by the financial imperatives of high-concept plots and desperately in search of signs of life. Greg Mottola's "Keeping Up With the Joneses" is, like many before it, fine enough. But it mostly goes down as another collection of funny people stuck in too narrowly clichéd roles in an overly familiar story. It's now been more than 10 years since "The 40 Year-Old Virgin" and five since "Bridesmaids." (Feel old yet?) There have, undoubtedly, been good comedies since, namely things with Melissa McCarthy in them, Noah Baumbach's "Frances Ha" and anything Wes Anderson is putting out. But there has been perhaps no greater casualty to the constrictions of blockbuster-centric Hollywood than comedy. The freedom necessary for comedy to thrive is mostly found on television; the action is with "Broad City," "Atlanta," "Inside Amy Schumer" and others.

Mottola, the director of "Adventureland" and "Superbad," has been at the center of comedy on both the big screen and on TV ("Arrested Development," the underrated "Clear History"), but "Keeping Up With the Joneses," written by Michael LeSieur ("You, Me and Dupree") doesn't have much of the naturalism that has distinguished his best. Zach Galifianakis and Isla Fisher play Jeff and Karen Gaffney, a regular suburbanite couple experiencing an empty nest for the first time with their kids away at summer camp. An impossibly stylish and accomplished couple moves in next door, the Joneses (Jon Hamm and Gal Gadot, taking a break from her Wonder Woman duties). He's a travel writer who can blow his own glass; she writes a cooking blog and wears cocktail dresses to neighborhood barbecues.

But what makes the Joneses most jealous of them is their easy affection with one another. Though its name is taken from the status-obsessed phrase first made famous by a 1913 comic strip and coopted by the Kardashians, this "Keeping Up With the Joneses" is a comedy about marital passion rekindled. That the Joneses are putting up a facade is evident from the start, but the movie cleverly subverts the nature of their secret identities. They are elite government spies of some sort, but not as far removed from the normal squabbles and challenges of marriage as you might think.

The collision of international espionage thrills and quiet suburban life has become familiar by now thanks to the likes of "The Matador," "Mr. and Mrs. Smith" and "The Americans." When the bullets start flying, "Keeping Up With the Joneses" has some moves of its own, thanks to the talents of Galifianakis (here playing a naive, aw-shucks character that limits him) and the always game Fisher. Only Hamm manages to create a three-dimensional character: a James Bond secretly yearning to be a regular guy. But whatever is cramping the style of "Keeping Up With the Joneses" - whether it's the PG-13 rating, the stock characters or a thin script - the feeling never leaves that everyone here could do better if they were really let loose. Alas, it's going to take more than Wonder Woman to save the studio comedy.

"Keeping Up With the Joneses," a 20th Century Fox release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "sexual content, action/violence and brief strong language." Running time: 101 minutes. Two stars out of four. — AP



This image released by Twentieth Century Fox shows, from left, Jon Hamm, Zach Galifianakis, Isla Fisher and Gal Gadot in 'Keeping Up With the Joneses.' — AP

Khloe Kardashian calls sister Kim's robbery 'a wake up call'

Khloe Kardashian is calling her sister's robbery in Paris "a wake up call for everybody" but is pushing back against criticism that Kim Kardashian West had been too public in displaying her wealth. "Pulling back on social media I think is a personal choice. ... No matter what you post or don't post. ... That shouldn't give someone a reason to feel like they could do anything like that to you," she said in an interview Tuesday. "But we definitely are just being more aware and I think just making changes to our lives."

Armed robbers forced their way into West's hotel room, tied her up and locked her in a bathroom before making off with more than \$10 million worth of jewelry. Khloe Kardashian, 32, said the Oct. 3 robbery was "an incredibly traumatic experience for Kim and she's definitely taking some well needed and much deserved time off." She said she isn't sure when

Kardashian West, 35, would make another public appearance, but she batted down rumors that her sister would be leaving the family's reality series "Keeping Up With the Kardashians."

Kardashian made the comments while promoting her new fall denim line Good American with co-designer Emma Grede. She said she agreed to partner up with Grede to design the brand for the curvy woman. The jeans range in size from zero to 24. "I was always body shamed, and that was something that was super important to me to really teach girls to love themselves and love their bodies," said Kardashian, who has publicly chronicled her issues with weight. "I was always kind of told I couldn't wear certain jeans because I was too fat to be trendy, which was always really hard on me." — AP

MUSIC & MOVIES



This picture shows people walking by the Thwin cinema in downtown area of Yangon. — AFP photos

People waiting for tickets at Thwin cinema in the downtown area of Yangon.

People queue for tickets at Thwin cinema in downtown area of Yangon.



People walk past movie posters at the downtown area of Yangon.



A couple standing next to movie posters at the Naypyidaw cinema in downtown area of Yangon.

Myanmar's storied film industry gears up for a sequel

With turquoise columns propping up a pink and yellow portico, Myanmar's art deco style Thwin cinema is a rare relic from a golden age of movie-making that dazzled audiences more than half a century ago. Myanmar's film industry, once the most vibrant and prolific in the region, shriveled under a military regime that smothered the arts and ravaged the economy during its ruthless 50-year reign. Now as the fledgling democracy emerges from the doldrums of junta rule, the stage is set for a film industry renaissance.

But the first step is repopulating the poor country with cinemas. In its heyday Myanmar had nearly 400 theatres spread across its hilly terrain. Today only some 50 remain, mostly in urban Yangon. "That is not enough for 53 million people," said Tin Maung Win, a garrulous businessman trying to bring movies back to the masses with a plan to build 100 new cinemas in two years. The Thwin is the only theatre still selling tickets on what used to be known as Yangon's "cinema row"—a major city artery that once boasted six movie houses.

The others have been knocked down to make room for more lucrative development, while one stately cinema dating back to the 1920s has been boarded up for years. The dearth is even more pronounced in the rural and impoverished provinces, where theatres have all but vanished after they were sold off by the former military regime. Tin Maung Win and his business partners were inspired to take up the "100 cinema project" after hearing about a 2012 film shot near the border with Thailand, where local actors were unable to see their work because there was no screen for miles. "We got this idea that we needed to create cinemas all over

Myanmar," he told AFP, sitting next to a model of the low-cost, one-screen theatres with 300 seats, where tickets will go for around a dollar each.

Losing the plot

While they will not rival the grand movie houses built during the industry's peak, the hope is that a rapid increase in theatres will inject cash into an industry where the majority of movies now go straight to DVD. Myanmar's motion picture industry reached its acme in the 1950s—a time when optimism was flowing after independence from Britain and before the army seized power and clung on for five decades. Stylish stand-alone cinemas like the Thwin cropped up in towns across the country, with crowds filling their teak wood chairs to watch romances, thrillers and foreign flicks.

In the country's inaugural Academy Awards ceremony in 1952, the first best picture award went to 'Chit Thet Wai', a tale of love between a city boy and a country girl who must contend with a jealous sister. But after its 1962 power grab, the junta increasingly leaned on the industry to crank out socialist propaganda. Scripts were vetted by censors, who issued stringent and often bizarre bans on everything from ghost stories to blue jeans in a bid to ward off foreign influence.

"The quality kept decreasing," said Mighty, a director who has been in the business since the 1980s and feels his generation was robbed of the chance to reach their creative potential. "They intentionally made it so we did not become educated people," the 51-year-old, who only goes by one name, said of the country's military oppressors. "Now there is no one who knows about the art of film perfectly," he added.

A second act?

Censorship has eased since the end of junta rule in 2011 and horror flicks are now a box office favorite. But many say that despite growing freedoms and improved technologies, mainstream production houses have yet to veer off script and grapple with political issues or other sensitive topics. A class of Burmese students at the Yangon Film School responded with an emphatic "no!" when asked by AFP if they liked contemporary Myanmar movies during a break from analyzing scenes of 'Taxi Driver', the 1976 American classic starring Robert De Niro. "They (Myanmar films) are somehow good in technical skills, like color grading, and sound design," said student Myat Minn Khant.

"What annoys me are the stories and casting. The keep making the same cheesy stories", Myanmar's leading man Lu Min, who looks to Tom Hanks an idol, concedes that many directors still rely on tired story tropes and cost-cutting shortcuts. But he says the desire is there to raise the bar. "Some people are trying hard to improve our industry," he told AFP during a break from filming his latest action thriller.

He and hundreds of other actors, producers and directors recently gathered to discuss industry reforms at a three-day forum called "Time to Change". Many are pushing to see the government's censorship board revamped as a ratings committee that only warns viewers of racy or violent content. Lu Min is also hoping that rebuilding the country's network of cinemas will be the launchpad. "Our film industry depends on the quantity of theatres," he added. — AP

TV makers forced to rethink 'damaging' princess shows for girls

The Disney princess may not be dead yet, but children's television makers are under pressure to create more adventurous female characters as fears grow over the damage gender stereotyping may be doing to girls. Last week Disney tried to tackle head on fears that its relentless merchandising was fuelling a damaging "princess culture" that limits even very young girls' horizons and contributes to "body esteem" issues.

It launched a 10-point guide for would-be princesses in posters which urged girls to "Right wrongs" and "Believe in yourself". But analysts and program makers gathered at the world's biggest entertainment market in Cannes on the French Riviera this week warned that young girls and their parents were impatient for more fundamental change. Several warned that if there weren't given better role models, girls would simply turn off.

Emma Worrollo of London-based strategy company Pineapple Lounge said her detailed research conducted with thousands of children across the globe showed girls' frustration. "Their idea of gender is much more fluid (than previous generations). They don't want gender to be a factor at all," she said.

'Gender fluid'

Both older girls and boys idolize the crusading character of Katniss Everdeen from the "Hunger Games" films, she told AFP. But girls search in vain to find similar figures they can identify with on television, which they

see as unjust. They are right to be upset. On average three-quarters of cartoon heroes are male, industry insiders say. Yet there is a huge hunger for better and more gender fluid stories among children, Worrollo insisted.

"Generation Z children (who are now aged 10 to 16) tell us that boys can now be girls and girls boys, but 'we don't see that on TV,' she added. Some channels, however, are determined to force change. France Televisions put out a formal call to producers for series revolving around female heroes after realizing its output—"like everyone else's"—was completely imbalanced. Its head of children's programs Tiphaine de Ragueneil told AFP that "we are trying not just to have princesses, fairies and tomboys".

Even new "girlie" cartoon series are trying to up their empowerment message. "SpacePop" an American cartoon series about an intergalactic girl band is marketing itself at the MIPCOM TV industry meeting as a "not your average princesses" show. Its heroines may be into "fashion, music and friendship" but they are also out to save the universe.

Self-image problems

The problem can start very early, experts say. A US study of pre-school children published this year said princess merchandise can begin affecting children's behavior as young as three. "Girls who strongly adhere to female gender stereotypes feel like they can't do some things," researcher Sarah M. Coyne said. Lisa Henson, head of the Jim Henson Company, said producers had to address the issue.

She said their new animated undersea series "Splash and Bubbles" was picking up her father Jim Henson's work for diversity on such legendary shows as "The Muppets" and "Sesame Street". "We have an equal number of boy and girl characters and each of them have characteristics which cross genders, so it is quite gender neutral in that way. Splash as his name suggests is a boy and Bubbles is a girl but she is equally as adventurous," she added.

She said the Henson company took its mission to pass on "good values" to children in a fun way very seriously. "You would not believe how diverse the ocean floor is... There are seahorse single dads with 499 children," she joked. "And it is the seahorse dads who give birth. There is so much weird stuff there." — AFP



St Louis County Police officers, outfitted in tactical equipment, monitor the situation in Ferguson, Missouri on August 10, 2015. — AFP

'Do Not Resist' highlights crisis of police militarization

Officers with assault rifles, backed by a huge armored grenade launcher, square up to a crowd furiously denouncing the killing of a young black neighbor. It is a scene which could have been taken from archive footage of Mogadishu in 1990s Somalia or countless other battles, but this conflict is closer to home—the streets of small-town America.

The images, captured in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, open "Do Not Resist"—a disturbing documentary charting the transformation of police across the US into forces that look like military units. The explosive film is set to fuel an already bitter debate raging in America over heavy-handed law enforcement, following a litany of police killings of black men that have sparked protests from Ferguson and Charlotte to Chicago. Director Craig Atkinson, whose movie is opening across the US having won best documentary feature at the Tribeca Film Festival, says the American law enforcement ethos has changed "from a mentality of peacekeepers to that of an occupying army."

Another eye-opening scene shows officers in black fatigues firing volley after volley of automatic rounds at cardboard targets, as if they were preparing for war rather than to "protect and serve." A khaki-clad instructor explains that security forces must prepare for all kinds of attacks, "including the Islamic State." MRAPs, the armored trucks that protect troops from roadside bombs planted along the dusty roads of Iraq and Afghanistan, are now ubiquitous across the US.

Growing backlash

They are provided by the Pentagon through a program of surplus giveaways that has amounted to \$5 billion since former president Bill Clinton signed it off in 1996. In another shocking scene, a SWAT team arrives in an MRAP at a tree-lined street in Columbia, South Carolina, to execute a search warrant in a drug case. The officers, whose equipment looks barely distinguishable from that of an infantry division, end up badly damaging a family home in a raid that nets a small amount of loose cannabis.

Atkinson's father, a retired policeman from Detroit, Michigan, spent over a decade in one such SWAT team, the New

York-based filmmaker explains. "In his time, his team intervened 29 times in 13 years. Now they are taking part in 200 raids a year," Atkinson tells AFP. Faced with a growing backlash against police killings, particularly in black communities, Terrence Cunningham, the president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), has admitted that law enforcement officers have been "the face of oppression to far too many of our fellow citizens." He told a conference in San Diego on Monday that police needed to apologize for "the actions of the past and the role that our profession has played in society's historical mistreatment of communities of color."

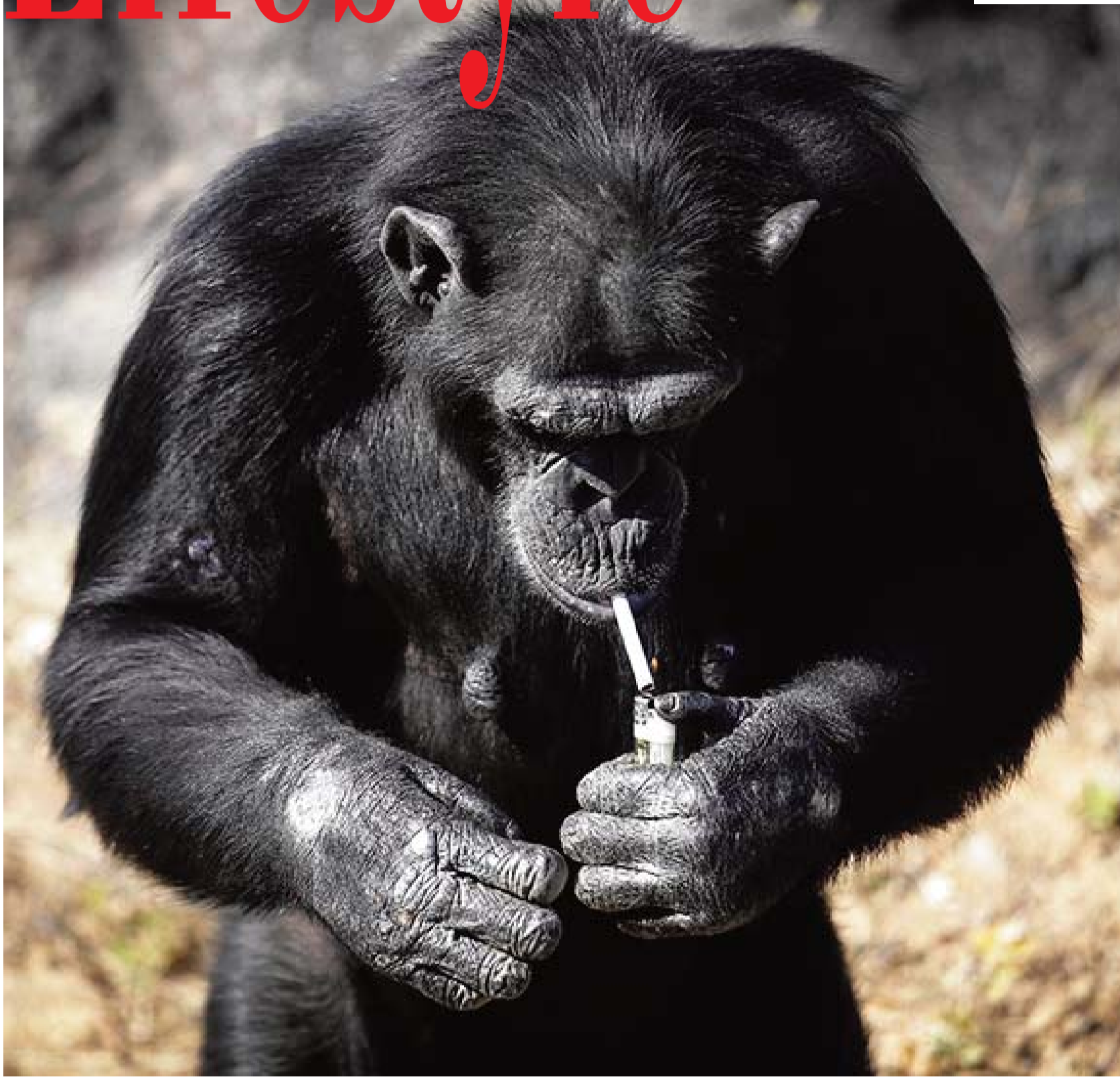
'Warrior culture'

Campaigners against police militarization accept that SWAT teams and their heavy-duty hardware have a vital role in combatting the rare instances of terrorism in the US. But they point out that, due to prolonged mission creep, this is no longer how these resources are used. Peter Kraska, a criminology professor at the University of Eastern Kentucky, says there are now at least 50,000 SWAT raids a year, up from 3,000 in the 1980s. Most of the activities of these highly specialized units have little to do with the reasons for their inception, such as dealing with hostage situations, terrorist attacks and drug cartels.

According to Atkinson, one of the architects of the "warrior culture" is a hugely successful police trainer named Dave Grossman, head of a consulting firm called the Killology Research Group. "We are at war and you are the frontline troops in this war. What do you fight violence with? Superior violence," Grossman hollers at an audience of mesmerized police in one session filmed for the documentary.

The retired army lieutenant colonel has lectured throughout the US, according to his website, and Atkinson believes his influence has spread to every American law enforcement agency. "There are 63 million police interactions with citizens each year in the United States, and if we take that kind of mentality during a routine traffic stop, that's how there are people getting killed," he said. — AFP

Myanmar's storied film industry gears up for a sequel



Azalea, whose Korean name is 'Dalle', a 19-year-old female chimpanzee, lights a cigarette at the Central Zoo in Pyongyang, North Korea yesterday. — AP

MEET AZALEA THE SMOKING CHIMP, NEW STAR AT PYONGYANG ZOO

Pyongyang's newly opened zoo has a new star: Azalea, the smoking chimpanzee. According to officials at the newly renovated zoo, which has become a favorite leisure spot in the North Korean capital since it re-opened in July, the 19-year-old female chimpanzee, whose name in Korean is "Dalle," smokes about a pack a day. Dalle is short for azalea. They insist, however, she doesn't inhale. Thrown a lighter by a zoo trainer, the chimpanzee lights her own cigarettes. If a lighter isn't available, she can light up from lit cigarette if one is tossed her way.

Though such a sight would be cringe-worthy in many other locales, it seemed to delight visitors who roared with laughter yesterday as the chimpanzee, one of two at the zoo, sat puffing away as her trainer egged her on. The trainer also prompted her to touch her nose, bow thank you and do a simple dance. The zoo is pulling in thousands of visitors a day with a slew of attractions ranging from such typical fare as elephants, giraffes, penguins and monkeys to a high-tech natural history museum with displays showing the origins of the solar system and the evolution

of life on Earth. Another of the most popular attractions that might come as a surprise to foreign visitors is the dog pavilion, which has everything from German shepherds to Shih Tsus. The zoo also has performances featuring other animals trained to do tricks, including a monkey that slam dunks basketballs, dogs trained to appear as though they can do addition on subtraction on an abacus and doves that fly around and land on a woman skating on an indoor stage. Renovations for the new zoo began in 2014, as part of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's efforts

to create more modern and impressive structures and leisure centers around the capital. The zoo actually dates back to 1959, when Kim Il Sung, the nation's first leader and the grandfather of Kim Jong Un, ordered it built on the outskirts of the city. According to its official history, the zoo started off with only 50 badgers. — AP



David Teie, a US composer and cellist, drinks a cup of tea during an interview to promote his new album "Music for Cats".



David Teie, a US composer and cellist, looks on during an interview to promote his new album "Music for Cats".

What a purr-formance! Cellist creates album for cats

David Teie plays a few high-pitched notes on his cello before passing to the low ones, stopping Lizzy, a small black cat with white paws, in her tracks. Donnie, a white and ginger tomcat, abandons his favorite plaything—a toy mouse bouncing on a piece of string—to approach the American musician. Curious, he raises up on his back legs and puts his paws on Teie's knees during an unusual performance in Lady Dinah's cat cafe in Shoreditch, east London.

Despite an allergy to cats, Teie has created the world's first album entirely for felines and is distributed by a major label, Universal Music. Though initially cautious, the 13 furry visitors to "Lady Dinah's Cat Emporium" appeared satisfied at this week's premiere. The purring and murmuring sounds which make up "Music for Cats" take inspiration from the noises kittens hear like birds chirping or their mother's purr.

"I have something like 26 different purr instruments," Teie, a music teacher based at the University of Maryland who has performed with the US National Symphony Orchestra, told AFP. The 60-year-old, dressed in a tie and with his wavy grey hair neatly combed, picked a cat paradise to unveil his work. The cat retreat includes an enormous artificial climbing tree. The residents are kept entertained with walkways, hiding places, baskets, scratching boats and a vast array of toys.

"Chihuahua music and labrador music are very different. I use ten acoustic instruments but nearly all of the sounds have to be modified in electronics and software to make animal sounds," he said. "I thought if I write music that cats like but cat owners think is irritating, they just won't put it on. So I put a layer of human music to make it hearable and in fact calming for people as well." Lauren Pears, owner of Lady Dinah's, said Teie's music is not dissimilar to the music she would usually play in the cafe. At first she had her doubts about how the animals would respond to the music, but she found the felines curious and engaged.

"All morning they have been sort of watching him and they seem really, really interested in it," said Pears, who opened the cafe after taking inspiration from similar cat venues in Asia. Poppy Childs, a 21-year-old nursery nurse, said she is always looking for new purchases to keep her elderly cat entertained. "I try to find things to keep her going so I would love to buy the

album and make her listen to some music. It would be great, it sounds pretty cool," she said.

"Music for Cats" was released on October 14. "We're thrilled to be part of this world-first project and break into the massive untapped market of non-human music fans," said a spokesperson for Universal Music. Cats are big business in Britain, with £4 billion pounds (4.5 billion euros, \$5 billion) spent by owners on the country's seven million cats every year, according to one report. For Teie, the animal music market need not be limited to cats. "I have designed music for horses and I'm ready to start recording... I'm doing research for dogs. They are next but it's going to be a challenge because, for example, chihuahua music and labrador music are very different," said the composer. — AFP



David Teie, a US composer and cellist, looks on during an interview to promote his new album "Music for Cats" at Lady Dinah's Cat Emporium in London. — AFP photos