

US ambassador visits shelter in Jleeb for expat women



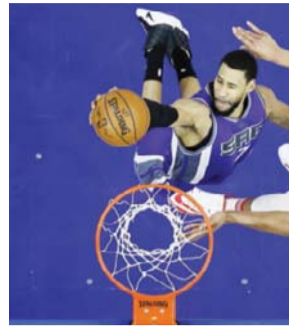
Hidden pain: Physical abuse against women in Kuwait



Smoking costs \$1.4tn in healthcare, labor loss



Love-less Cavaliers fall to Mavericks



SHEIKH SALMAN SAYS SPORTS BAN CAUSED BY CONSPIRACY

DEFIANT MINISTER REJECTS CHARGES IN MARATHON GRILLING



Min 06°
Max 17°
High Tide 01:53 & 15:12
Low Tide 08:59 & 21:08

IRAN REFUSES TO CONFIRM TESTING BALLISTIC MISSILE

TEHRAN: Iran's foreign minister yesterday refused to confirm whether his country recently conducted a missile test, saying the Iranian missile program is not part of a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. The White House said on Monday that it is studying the details of an Iranian ballistic missile test. During a joint news conference with visiting French counterpart Jean-Marc Ayrault yesterday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was asked if Iran had conducted a recent missile test.

"The missile issue is not part of the nuclear deal. As all signatories to the nuclear deal have announced, the missile issue is not a part of" the deal, he said. Iran's missiles, he added are, "not designed for the capability of carrying a nuclear warhead ... Our ballistic missile was designed to carry a normal warhead in the field of legitimate defense."

A US defense official said Monday that the missile test ended with a "failed" re-entry into earth's atmosphere. The official had no other details, including the type of missile. State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the US was looking into whether the ballistic missile test violates a 2015 United Nations Security Council resolution. Zarif yesterday said he hopes the issue is not used as, "an excuse for some political games by the new US administration."

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KUWAIT: Minister of Information and Youth Sheikh Salman Hmoud Al-Sabah smiles during a session of the National Assembly yesterday, during which he faced down a grilling filed against him over the sports ban. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Information and Youth Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Hmoud Al-Sabah yesterday brushed aside accusations that he caused the international suspension of Kuwaiti sports, and insisted that the government did what was needed and more to prevent the suspension. He was speaking during a marathon 10-hour heated grilling, after which 10 opposition lawmakers filed a no-confidence motion against him.

Sheikh Salman charged the 15-month ban was a result of a conspiracy hatched by some Kuwaitis who occupy senior positions in international organizations. He also defended personal attacks against him and stressed that he did not allow any concessions against Kuwait's sovereignty. He denied the allegations made against him and said that he decided to face the grilling although some of its contents are against the Kuwaiti constitution.

The minister reiterated the suspension of Kuwaiti sports was the result of complaints from inside Kuwait, adding that the problem began from within Kuwait. He said international sports organizations, where Kuwaitis occupy senior positions, were the ones that suspended Kuwaiti sports bodies, while the ones without Kuwaiti officials did not suspend Kuwaiti federations.

The MPs who signed the no-confidence motion are Khaled Al-Otaibi, Nayef Al-Merdas, Mubarak Al-Hajraf, Marzouq Al-Khalifa, Shuwaib Al-Muwaizri, Mohammad Al-Mutair, Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, Abdulkarim Al-Kandari, Abdullah Fahhad and Thamer Al-Suwai. The voting on the motion will take place on Feb 8 and requires the support of 25 MPs in the 50-member house to pass.

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ADDIS ABABA: King of Morocco Mohammed VI delivers a speech in the main plenary of the African Union yesterday. — AFP

MOROCCO KING HAILS 'RETURN HOME' TO AU AFTER 33 YEARS

ADDIS ABABA: "I am finally home", King Mohammed VI said yesterday as the African Union readmitted Morocco after a 33-year absence, deferring the issue of Western Sahara for another day. Morocco's return came a day after 39 of the AU's 54 member states agreed to allow it back in the fold, despite stiff resistance from countries such as South Africa and Algeria over the status of the disputed former Spanish colony.

Faced with the AU's decision, Western Sahara officials appeared to accept the new reality and cast it in a positive light, saying AU membership might help speed up efforts to end a protracted conflict. "It is a beautiful day when one returns home after too long an absence," Mohammed VI told the closing ceremony of the AU summit in Ethiopia. "Africa is my continent and my home. I am finally home and I am happy to see you. I missed you all."

His speech came after a long day of feverish speculation in the halls of the AU headquarters over whether he would indeed show up, and protocol confusion which saw his foreign minister given a talking to in front of some media after he tried to enter the main plenary hall during a heads of state meeting. Morocco quit the then Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1984 after the bloc admitted the former Western Sahara as a separate member. Morocco maintains that the territory under its control is an integral part of the kingdom, while the Polisario Front, which campaigns for independence, demands a referendum on self-determination.

Some had feared Morocco would seek the expulsion of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as a precondition for its own return to the AU, however the country agreed to return without conditions. "From the moment that Morocco did not impose conditions ... we take their word for it and accept that Morocco be admitted to the African Union," said Mohamed Salem Ould Salek, foreign minister of the SADR, which claims sovereignty over the entire territory of Western Sahara. Salek said Monday that having Morocco in the same room would allow the SADR to pressure them into fulfilling their obligations and hold a long sought referendum.

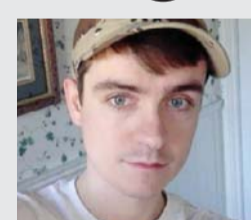
King Mohammed did not raise the issue of Western Sahara in his speech, choosing instead to highlight how Morocco as "one of the most developed African nations", could be a boon to the continent. "We do not ignore the fact that we do not have unanimity in this noble assembly. We do not want to create divisions as some have insinuated," he said. "My vision of South-South cooperation is clear and constant. Morocco...will be a motor for common economic growth. It is time that Africa's riches benefit Africa. For too long we have looked elsewhere to make decisions, commitments. Is it not time to turn towards our own continent?"

The busy AU summit also saw Chadian foreign minister Moussa Faki Mahamat take over from South Africa's Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as AU commission chief after a fierce election battle that eliminated four other candidates. Guinea's Alpha Conde took over the rotating presidency of the bloc, and called for the continent to express solidarity with Somalia, Libya and Sudan, which have been targeted by a United States travel ban. — AFP

MUSIC COMES BACK TO SAUDI ARABIA

CANADA SHOOTER RENTED FLAT NEAR QUEBEC MOSQUE

QUEBEC CITY: The French-Canadian student accused of killing six people during evening prayers in a Quebec City mosque had rented an apartment nearby, neighbors said yesterday, a sign he may have been targeting the house of worship.



Bissonnette

Alexandre Bissonnette, 27, was charged on Monday with six counts of first-degree murder and five counts of attempted murder with a restricted weapon after Sunday evening's massacre at the Centre Culturel Islamique de Quebec. Police said he acted alone.

The mass shooting, which was rare for Canada and which Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called a "terrorist attack," prompted an outpouring of support for the mosque and for the country's 1 million-strong Muslim community. Authorities in Quebec have called for a spirit of inclusivity and police have tightened security at all religious institutions in the province.

Bissonnette, who said he was a fan of US President Donald Trump and far-right French politician Marine Le Pen, had moved into an apartment in the beige block near the mosque in July and drove a Mitsubishi truck, said a neighbor, who asked not to be named.

Continued on Page 13

RIYADH: Concerts have long been an underground affair in Saudi Arabia, where official adherence to the Wahhabi school of Sunni Islam puts music in murky legal territory. But for six hours on Monday night, stretching into the wee hours of yesterday morning, some 8,000 men sang along to epic love songs in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah as the kingdom held its first large-scale concert in nearly seven years.

It was a grand homecoming for Saudi superstar Mohammed Abdu, popularly known as the "Artist of the Arabs", who has performed to packed houses abroad for over a decade - often mostly Saudis - but

could not appear on stage at home. Abdu was backed by a 60-man Egyptian orchestra and appeared with two other popular singers: Rabeh Sager, a Saudi, and Majid Al-Muhandis, an Iraqi who also holds Saudi citizenship.

Still, not all barriers had fallen. Security checkpoints around the venue blocked entry to the area for anyone without a ticket and women were barred from attending entirely. The concert came only two days after a jazz performance sold out the 3,300-seat King Fahd Cultural Centre in the more puritanical capital Riyadh, which has not held public concerts in some 25 years.

Continued on Page 13



JEDDAH: Saudi singer Mohammed Abdu performs during a concert on Monday. The portraits show King Salman bin Abdulaziz (right) and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. — AFP (See Page 40)

FIRED: TRUMP DUMPS ATTORNEY GENERAL

WASHINGTON: An embattled Donald Trump fired his government's chief lawyer for refusing to defend his controversial immigration orders late Monday, deepening a political crisis engulfing his presidency. In a caustic statement, Trump's White House said acting attorney general Sally Yates "betrayed" the Department of Justice in defying the president and had been relieved of her duties with immediate effect.

Yates - a career prosecutor promoted by president Barack Obama and held over by Trump pending confirmation of his own nominee, Senator Jeff Sessions - had refused to defend Trump's ban on immigration from seven Muslim nations. In a memo to Department of Justice staff, she expressed doubts about the legality and morality of Trump's decree.

"My responsibility is to ensure that the position of the Department of Justice is not only legally defensible, but is informed by our best view of what the law is," Yates wrote. "I am

not convinced that the defense of the executive order is consistent with these responsibilities nor am I convinced that the executive order is lawful," she added. "For as long as I am the acting attorney general, the Department of Justice will not present arguments in defense of the executive order, unless and until I become convinced that it is appropriate to do so."

In the end, her tenure lasted only a few more hours. The White House snapped back, accusing Yates of being "weak on borders and very weak on illegal immigration." Trump has replaced Yates with federal prosecutor Dana Boente as he awaits the Senate confirmation of Sessions. Boente said he would defend Trump's directive, stating that it was "both lawful on its face and properly drafted."

Trump's executive order suspends the arrival of all refugees for a minimum of 120 days, Syrian refugees indefinitely and bars citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan,

Syria and Yemen for 90 days. Several federal judges have since filed temporary stays against the decree's implementation. On Sunday, attorneys general from 16 US states, including California and New York, condemned Trump's directive as "unconstitutional" and vowed to fight it.

Trump's furious response may have lasting political repercussions, not least complicating Sessions' confirmation. He faced a vote yesterday on the Senate Judiciary Committee, and then has to be confirmed by the full Senate before taking up the post. Congress's top Democrat, Senator Chuck Schumer said Yates' firing underscored how important "it is to have an Attorney General who'll stand up to the White House when they violate the law."

The firing came as Trump said he would announce his pick to fill a Supreme Court opening. The unveiling was originally scheduled for tomorrow. — AFP

FEATURE

Kuwaitis seek roots in upmarket tents under the stars

KUWAIT: Nostalgic for their Bedouin roots, Kuwaitis like Ahmad Al-Shimmari are following in the footsteps of their desert-dwelling ancestors living in tents under the stars—but with a touch of modern luxury.

The former oil sector employee and 15 other men, all relatives and friends, are sharing one of six tents in a camp set up by his extended family for the entire winter close to the border with Saudi Arabia.

"This camp will remain pitched here for five months," the 49-year old said as he sipped black tea boiled on burning charcoal.

Others were watching football on a large flat-screen television connected to two satellite dishes or discussing the latest events in the oil-rich state. Shimmari's camp is just one of many set up in Al-Julaia, around 70 kilometres (45 miles) from the capital Kuwait City, on both sides of a narrow paved road leading deep into the desert. The area has its own police station, a small clinic and a fire department office. Al-Julaia bustles with life on weekends, holidays and school breaks as young quad bikers kick up clouds of dust racing in the sands.

'Just like home'

The 15-square-kilometre (six-square-mile) camp is one of more than 20 such

sites allocated for desert camping by the Gulf state's government.

Tens of thousands of Kuwaitis and foreigners flock to the desert during the annual camping season from November to the end of March, mostly rain-free months, before the scorching summer heat sets in.

"Four of the tents in the camp are for sleeping and two big ones are used as living rooms, one for men and the other for women," said Shimmari.

The tent in which he and the others are sleeping spans five by 10 meters (15 by 30 feet). Some families stay for days and even weeks at the camps, especially when there is a school break, while employees commute to their offices each morning.

"Here you can live like at home," said Shimmari's elder brother Mohamed, seated on a colorful, traditional bedouin woven mattress. "Here we have TVs, games, braziers (for the coal), coffee, tea and electricity... It's a normal home but without the concrete."

'We remember the past'

Camps also have running water supplied by tankers, toilets, showers and fully-equipped kitchens. The tents can come with modern beds, while some campers prefer to

use mattresses on the floor or to sleep on carpets. "We have a strong affection for the desert because a majority of Kuwaitis are Bedouins. We remember the past," the elder Shimmari said, harking back to the pre-oil discovery days.

Many ministries, government departments, state oil companies and private firms set up desert camps for their staff for the entire five-month duration.

"Desert camping has become a great experience for our children and families who come in large numbers to escape from small homes," said 71-year-old Abdulmajeed Al-Jareeri at one of the company camps.

It is also big business for local companies which supply tents and other facilities for individuals to rent and set up camps.

"There are various classes of camps, starting from ordinary to luxury ones for VIP and VVIP (very, very important person) standards," said Mohammad Al-Qaryouti, who runs a desert camping store.

He said some camps can cost over KD 100 (\$330) a day, more than a five-star hotel room. A regular camp for the season costs around \$20,000 but the price goes much higher for campers who require ceramic tiles, modern toilets and proper bedrooms. — AFP



Adults and children gather outside a tent in a winter camp in Al-Julaia. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Men watch TV, play games and drink tea while gathering at a tent in a winter camp in Al-Julaia, around 70 kilometers (45 miles) from Kuwait City.



Kuwaiti children play at a playground in a winter camp in Al-Julaia.



Men barbecue at a winter camp in Al-Julaia.



Women prepare food at a winter camp in Al-Julaia.



Kuwaiti children pose for a picture outside a winter camp in Al-Julaia.



Kuwaitis check items for sale at a shop selling camping material and furniture in Kuwait City, on January 8, 2017.



A general view shows tents set up by Kuwaiti families for the entire winter at a camp in Al-Julaia.

US AMBASSADOR VISITS MIGRANT WOMEN'S SHELTER

AROUND 300 WOMEN, PROVIDED BASIC NEEDS UNTIL THEY CAN GO HOME

By Finn McHugh

KUWAIT: The new United States Ambassador to Kuwait praised the Kuwaiti government yesterday for its ongoing efforts to combat human trafficking and domestic labor abuse.

Lawrence Silverman made the comments during a visit to the 'Expatriate Manpower Lodging Center' in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. The female-only shelter, opened in 2014, provides basic lodging and recreational areas for its inhabitants, who must remain within the facility's confines until they return to their home country.

It was Silverman's first visit to the center since taking up the post four months ago, describing his impression as "very positive." He was especially approving of the wide range of services provided by the shelter. "It is particularly important to me that in addition to the living facilities, there are the medical facilities, there are legal facilities and the government ministries are represented," he said. "All of the government ministries that might come in contact with people for the sake of protection are here and available."

300 women

According to its chairman, Falah Al-Mutairi, the center currently hosts around 300 women from 23 nationalities, the majority coming from the Philippines and Africa. He sees the ambassador's visit as a "commendation" of the center's work, and believes international help is vital.

"The work we are doing here is something that is new to the Middle East in general, so it is really beneficial for us to have close collaboration with international organizations and embassies here in Kuwait, to share their expertise and experience," Mutairi said.

In 2016, the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report placed Kuwait on its Tier 2 Watch List, meaning the country is making "significant efforts" to meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's minimum standards, but that the number of victims is "very significant or significantly increasing." It was the first time since 2006 the country had ranked above Tier 3, the report's lowest status, and Silverman believes initiatives like the shelter account for Kuwait's promotion.

Cause for optimism

Although the country's domestic labor reforms are yet to be implemented, Silverman believes their very existence is cause for optimism. "Kuwait is a regional leader in passing a domestic labor law [and] the fact that there is such a law is important," he said. "Clearly this was a recognition by the Kuwaiti government that there was a need for such a facility and that it should be done properly."

He was, however, more equivocal on whether the center alone was enough to tackle the issues. "It is hard for me to say, I am not an expert," he said. "But I think people are being cared for here. That is the most important thing."



KUWAIT: US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman meets with Falah Al-Mutairi, chairman of the facility. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Lawrence Silverman talks with a nurse at the facility.

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS REPORT 2016 - TIER DEFINITIONS

Tier 1

Countries whose governments fully meet the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's (TVPA) minimum standards.

Tier 2

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to meet those standards.

Tier 2 Watch List

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the TVPA's minimum standards, but are making significant efforts to meet those standards and:

a) The absolute number of victims of severe forms of trafficking is very significant or is significantly increasing

b) There is a failure to provide evidence of increasing efforts to combat severe forms of trafficking in persons from the previous year, including increased investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of trafficking crimes, increased assistance to victims, and decreasing evidence of complicity in severe forms of trafficking by government officials; or

c) The determination that a country is making significant efforts to meet the minimum standards was based on commitments by the country to take additional future steps over the next year.

Tier 3

Countries whose governments do not fully meet the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.



Lawrence Silverman tours the shelter.



UNIFIED FORM FOR RESIDENCY TRANSACTIONS

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Residency Affairs Department will use a unified form for all residency transactions starting from Feb 12 to help facilitate the process of verifying data and avoiding mistakes, Director Major General Talal Maarafi said in a statement. The form can be found on the ministry's website at www.moi.gov.kw. The new service comes as part of the department's efforts to develop its systems and facilitate procedures followed in all its transactions, Maarafi explained.

Illegal gatherings

In other news, the ministry's Relations and Security Media Department warned that severe penal measures will be taken against any expatriate who violates Kuwaiti laws that bars taking part in any gatherings such as protests and

ceremonial parades. Similar practices which take place following sports matches for example cause traffic jams and might include indecent practices. Therefore a foreigner who participates in them would be punished by deportation, the ministry warned in a statement.

No foul play

A forensic medical report found no evidence of foul play in the death of a person who was seen in video footage that recently went viral on social media being carried into his house. Police had investigated the video and discovered that the man who was being transported was dead. They arrested three persons who appeared in the video carrying the man, but later released them when the autopsy report came to show no evidence of homicide. The report showed that the man had died due to a stroke, and

also showed that his blood contained alcohol traces.

No injuries

A fire broke out in a fifth floor apartment in Salmiya, said security sources, noting that firemen rushed to the scene and managed to control the fire that started in the kitchen. The building was evacuated and no casualties were reported.

Suicides

A 35-year-old Indian was found hanging dead in a room annexed to his sponsor's house in Waha, said security sources, noting that initial forensic reports suggest that the man committed suicide. In a similar case, a Nepalese man was found hanging dead inside the dormitory of a company that employed him in Sabhan, the sources said, noting that the man's colleague told police that he was going through some financial problems.

ARMY CHIEF MEETS BANGLADESHI MPs

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khoder met yesterday with visiting Bangladeshi defense committee members.

During the meeting, they discussed major issues of mutual interest, particularly military ones, and ways of promoting and developing bilateral cooperation between both friendly

countries, the Defense Ministry's Moral Guidance and Public Relations Directorate said in a statement. The meeting was attended by several high-ranking army officers. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khoder meets with a Bangladeshi defense committee member. — KUNA

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KUWAIT: Green Line Group's Chairman Khalid Al-Hajri (second from left) poses with other officials at an archeological site in Subbiya that the group says is being destroyed by construction works.

CONSTRUCTION WORKS 'DESTROY' ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES IN SUBBIYA

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Environmental activists yesterday rushed to Subbiya after learning that construction works were taking place in an area of important historical significance. Green Line Group's Chairman Khalid Al-Hajri said construction activity at the Bahra 2 site in Subbiya will destroy ancient monuments and relics that are over 8,000 years old. Some of these have been unearthed, while others are still undiscovered. Head of the Archeological Department at the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr Sultan Al-Diweesh immediately informed the police after he found out

about the construction works. Hajri then went to the site and informed the media. He also called on the prime minister to stop these works. "We cooperate with the Archeological Department at the NCCAL, so they called Green Line to support them in this serious case," Hajri told Kuwait Times.

Police officers and officials from the Municipality went to the site to stop the works, that according to Hajri, were to pave a road to an oil derrick, which passed through the monuments and destroyed some of them. "Officials from Kuwait Oil Company came to the location and stopped the work on this road. They informed us that they will find an alternative

path to the derrick. But our work hasn't finished, and we will recheck the place again after a few days, as we care about our heritage and the environment," added Hajri.

NCCAL will tomorrow gauge the damage caused by the construction works. "The main problem is that many of the historical locations are not surrounded or marked with protective fences," Hajri explained. "The work has stopped, but we are cooperating with various public institutions to draw a map of all historical places and monuments in Kuwait. There are over 300 historical locations that are not protected and we need to secure them," he concluded.

'COLD WAVE' TO HIT KUWAIT

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait is expected to be struck by a cold wave, the coldest since the beginning of winter, starting from today evening, meteorologist Essa Ramadan said. The cold weather will be caused by a Siberian high-pressure front with strong North Westerly winds that will be dusty in desert and open areas, he added. Temperature is expected to drop to subzero levels at certain points and vary between 9-14 C degrees starting from tomorrow at dawn through Saturday, he indicated.

Environmental violations

The Environment Public Authority (EPA) launched an inspection campaign at Al-Shamlan harbor where it detected 180 environmental violations committed by fishing boats. EPA Director Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said that the campaign came within EPA's inspection tours to track all environmental violations such as oil spills and wastes produced by people living on fishing boats anchored at the harbor. Ahmad added that there was a

decision to move fishermen out of the harbor but the implementation was halted until an alternative place was found for them. "In view of such violations, they might be immediately forced out," he underlined. Environmental violators might be fined up to KD 50,000 and mandated to remove the wastes.

Security cards

The Central Apparatus for Illegal Residents Affairs suspended renewing security cards of senior bedoons (stateless) who do not have birth certificates, which are conditioned for the procedure. Elderly bedoons submitted 'age assessment' certificates from the Ministry of Health instead. The new decision has left many of them in distress as they suffer from certain medical conditions and need the cards to receive medical care.

Case adjourned

The constitutional court adjourned a case filed by former MP Bader Al-Dahoum challenging the blasphemy law, and set the next hearing on Feb 8.



KUWAIT: EPA Director Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah (right) oversees an inspection campaign at Al-Shamlan harbor yesterday. — KUNA

DGCA SIGNS BAGGAGE CHECK CONTRACT

KUWAIT: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said yesterday it has signed a contract with a general trade and contracting company for implementing the automated baggage check system at Kuwait International Airport. The system, which will be applied at second and third baggage weight areas and arrivals lounge at the airport, aims at upgrading the security level and streamlining passenger procedures, the DGCA said in a statement. The project is also intended to supply, operate and maintain three explosive detectors with a capacity of 1,000 bags per hour each, it pointed out. The explosive detectors have been approved by US and EU civil aviation departments, the DGCA added. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Indian Ambassador to Kuwait hosted a ceremony recently to celebrate India's Republic Day. Senior officials, diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT: Hydroponics farming in Kuwait is a vital alternative for traditional methods with various benefits. — KUNA



Strawberries



Tomatoes

HYDROPONICS FARMING BOOSTS PRODUCTION AT LOW COST: EXPERTS

KUWAIT: Hydroponics farming in Kuwait is a vital alternative for traditional methods with various benefits including an increase in production at lower cost, according to agricultural engineering specialists.

This method, which is not soil based, is one of the best methods used to boost production in such harsh weather conditions in the country, Director General of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Faisal Al-Hasawi said yesterday. Kuwait was the first Gulf country to use this method in 1955, running an experimental agricultural unit of 500 square meters, followed by four others of 2000 square meters in 1962, he said.

With encouraging results, Kuwait established the first hydroponic unit in the Middle East in 1976, stretching over 20,000 square meters to produce different kinds of vegetables and flowers, said Hasawi.

However, this method did not spread among farmers who committed to their traditional ways, as water resources were available at that time and soil-related infections were not common then as they are now, he also added. In 2003, Kuwait grew lettuce using this non-soil based method in a land of five donum (5,000 square meters) in Al-Wafra and Al-Abdali, while it increased to 50 donum in 2013-2014, the official said.

Hasawi noted that Kuwait worked on developing the use of this technology in a project executed in cooperation with the Gulf countries and Yemen, and funded by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Since 2008 until this year, 26 farms have adopted this technology in Kuwait, he added.

Meanwhile, PAAAFR's engineer Ghanem Al-Sanad said that hydroponic farming depends on growing plants in different nutrients-rich solutions and mediums. As farming became more difficult due to pollution in the meantime, people tend to grow plants at the rooftop of their homes, using hydroponic technologies, he added. In the meantime, head of the research department at the authority Mohammad Jamal said that non-soil agriculture offers larger farming space, faster production by 400 percent and preserves water consumption by about 90 percent. He added that the downside to this method is the high establishment cost and the need for constant observation. — KUNA



Cinnamon



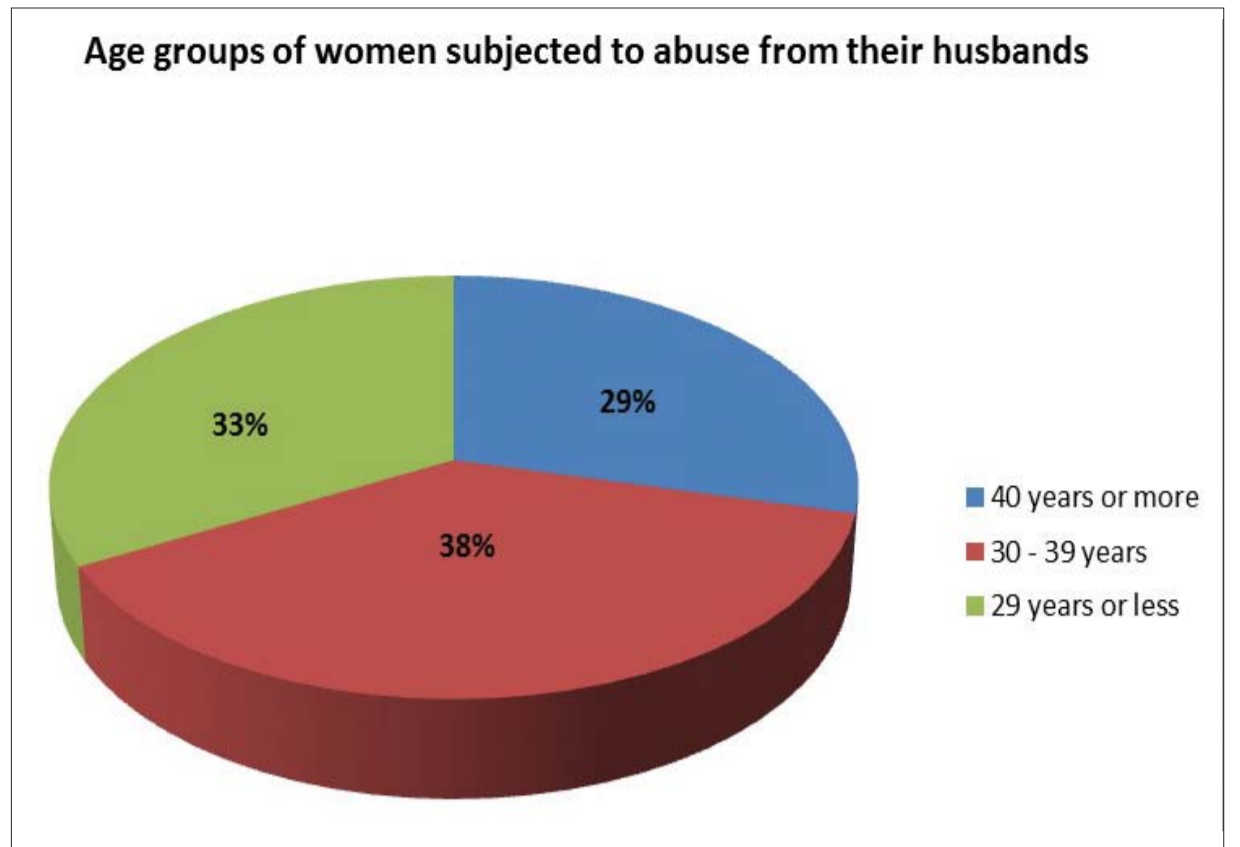
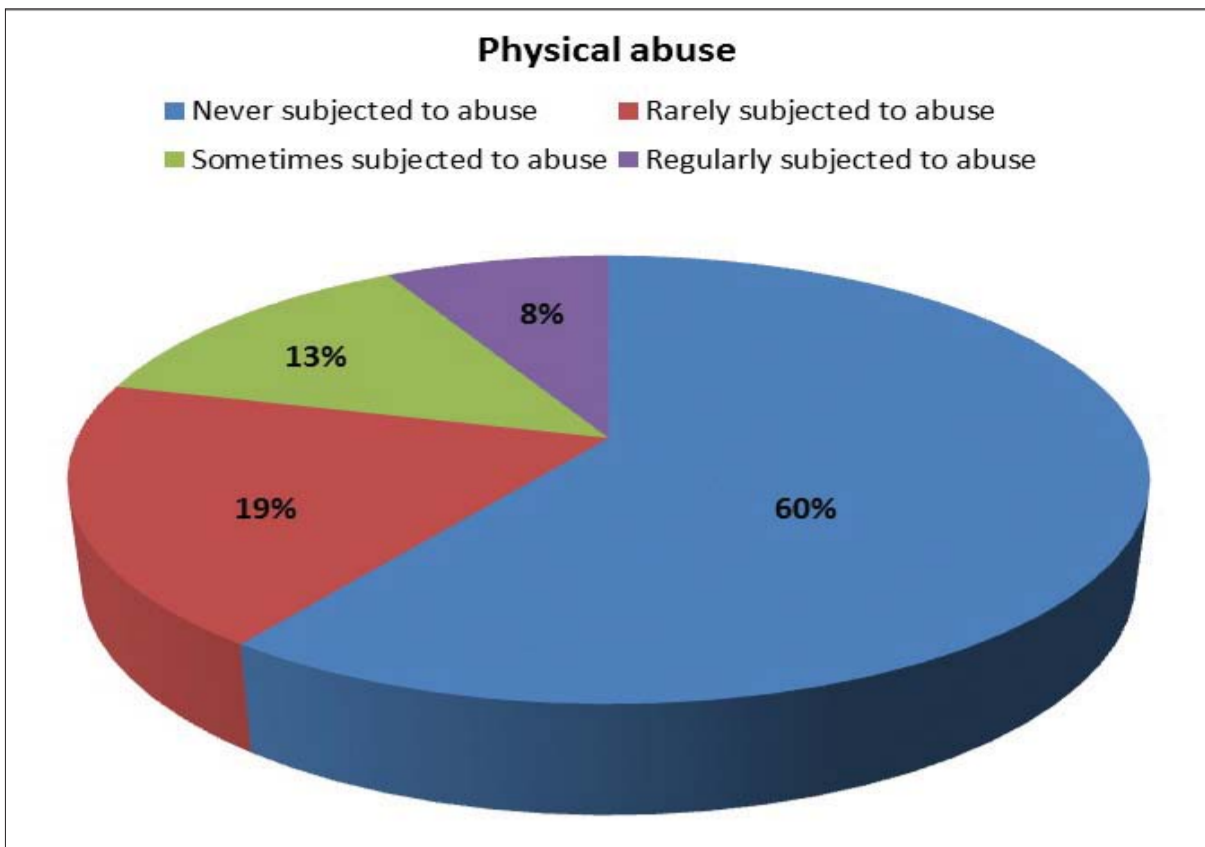
Bamboo plants

AUTHORITY TO HIRE 1,325 KUWAITIS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) expected that the total number of vacancies to be filled by Kuwaitis by the end of this fiscal year would be 1,325 with a total cost of KD 5,849,000. The

authority added that 27 vacancies were already available and are expected to be filled by March. "Ten leading positions are already occupied with annual wages of KD 76,000," added the authority, announcing its need for 27 Kuwaitis and 15 well-experienced expats.



KUWAIT: These pie charts show results of a study conducted by teacher of social studies at Kuwait University (KU) Haifa Al-Kandari on domestic violence in Kuwait. — KUNA

HIDDEN PAIN: PHYSICAL ABUSE AGAINST WOMEN RISING IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Perhaps the most demeaning kind of domestic violence against women is physical abuse which leaves victims in a state of pandemonium and confusion. Trapped between respecting the patriarchic nature of society and ending their pain, women usually prefer to keep suffering in silence. While victims of this kind of injustice see physical abuse more prevalent in society, the general populace are in disagreement whether to deem this problem as a phenomenon or not.

Speaking on the issue, a number of academics and specialists said that violence against women should not be overlooked by society, calling for measures to stop such ill-behavior. Teacher of social studies at Kuwait University (KU) Haifa Al-Kandari conducted a personal study recently which showed that around 40.2 percent of the 1,071 women participants were victims of various forms of physical violence carried out by their spouses. Kandari said that victims of the abuse think that this kind of maltreatment was more common in Kuwaiti society; however, there was no conclusive evidence to such claim.

No data

Virtually there were no official data showing the number of victims who formally asked the police and authorities to legally interfere and end violence against them,

Kandari pointed out, adding that most victims were too scared to report such abuse and preferred silence over social shame.

The KU official said that her study revealed wives between the ages of 30-39, around 38.1 percent, were more commonly abused by their husbands, adding that the most staggering reveal in her study showed that women with high educational degrees and salaries were increasingly being victimized. There was no justification whatsoever for such kind of behavior against women, said Kandari who added that international laws prohibited physical abuse against women in all shapes and forms. There is a need for a hotline to report any case of such crimes, said Al-Kandari who called on the authorities to save women from abusive husbands.

Increasing problem

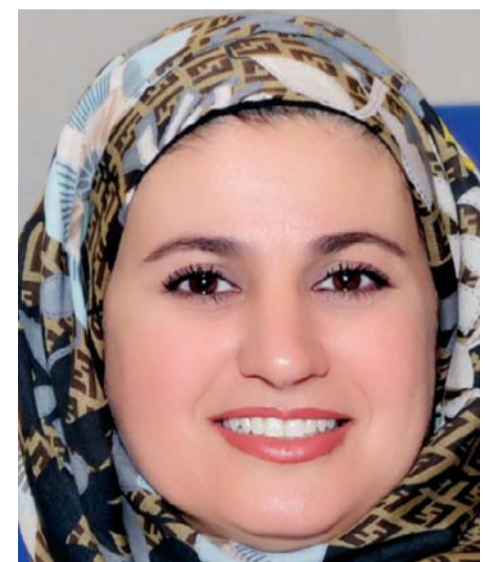
Meanwhile, dean of Social Studies in Kuwait University (KU) Dr Humoud Al-Qash'an said that he did not see physical abuse spreading in a manner that needed to be tackled quickly, but he agreed that the problem was increasing. In his 25 years as arbitrator in Kuwaiti courts, Dr Al-Qash'an said that many divorce cases did not result from physical abuse, revealing that there was a small percentage of cases that were attributed to this crime. Legal records must exist to keep track



Dean of Social Studies at Kuwait University (KU) Dr Humoud Al-Qash'an.



Psychological counselor and assistant teacher at the college of basic education Suad Al-Bsher.



Teacher of social studies at Kuwait University (KU) Haifa Al-Kandari.


of such happenings, he said, stressing that women should be reporting harm done against them if it came to a point that they could not handle it anymore.

Also providing her input, psychological counselor and assistant teacher at the college

of basic education Suad Al-Bsher expressed her disappointment in the lack of specialized center for women victims of physical abuse.

The social context and pressures prevent women in Kuwait from coming forward and talking about their hidden pain and suffer-

ing, said Bsher. Men who commit this act are not strong individuals, said Bsher who called for both men and women to partake in courses to prevent problems from escalating into violence that will destroy the futures of their families. — KUNA



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3	Cook / Assistant Cook Job Code: KDD/03	Knowledge in preparing Arabic, Indian, Chinese and Continental cuisines. Minimum 10 years' experience as a cook in any star hotel or catering company. Baladia card preferred.
4	Machine Operator Job Code: KDD/04	Good communication skills (speak, read and write) in English. Minimum 3 years' experience in plastics processing industry. Minimum education is Diploma / Technical certificate.
5	Merchandiser Job Code: KDD/05	Must speak and read Arabic. Minimum 2 years' experience. Must have Baladia card, Kuwait driving License & own car. Below 35 years.
6	Salesman Job Code: KDD/06	Knowledge of all routes. Must have Kuwait Heavy Driving License. Minimum 2 years' experience. Must have valid Baladia card. Age below 40 years.
7	Trailer Drivers Job Code: KDD/07	Transport goods over long distances. Knowledge of all routes. Must have Kuwait Heavy Driving License. Minimum 3 years' experience. Having a valid Iraqi visa will be advantage.
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Crime

Report

DETAINEE FALLS DEAD AT POLICE STATION

KUWAIT: A 37-year-old absconding Nepalese female, who had been arrested and detained a week earlier at Salmiya police station, collapsed in detention and was rushed to Mubarak Hospital where she was proclaimed dead. Forensic medicine investigations are in progress to determine the cause of death.

Employee sued

A female citizen working as a manager in a state department's office filed a complaint against one of the employees working for her, accusing him of insulting and threatening her because she refused to transfer him to another department.

Search for arsonist

Investigations determined that an arsonist set fire in two vehicles parked outside a house in Salwa, in a case reported earlier this week. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress to identify the suspect.

Escapee found

Detectives managed to arrest a drug addict who had escaped from a hospital after he was located in Ardhiya. The man was hospitalized after he reportedly swallowed a piece of hashish on arrest. He later managed to escape from the hospital after receiving treatment.

Brewery busted

Capital detectives arrested five Asian nationals for making homebrewed liquor in a rented house in Yarmouk. The house was busted and the tools used for brewing alcohol were confiscated.

Property damage

A female citizen filed a complaint at Mubarak Al-Kabeer police station accusing two of her friends of damaging her vehicle over old disputes. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Drug possession

An Egyptian man was arrested at Cairo International Airport while checking in to fly to Kuwait with the possession of 1,108 illicit pills. Another Egyptian man returning from Kuwait was arrested at Cairo International Airport as he was wanted for a life in prison sentence. — Al-Rai

'REDEEM 100% OF PURCHASES' CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) recently launched its 'Redeem 100 percent of Purchases' campaign for CBK's credit and pre-paid Visa and MasterCard cardholders on the occasion of the National Anniversaries during the month of February. Cardholders will be able to buy items for KD 500 or more and get a chance to redeem 100 percent of their purchases in cash.



NEW MILLIONS-WORTH RISK

By Dr Hassan Jouhar

We are required to deliberate recent news regarding liquidating state assets and withdrawing money from funds abroad with the excuse of meeting development needs, with a great deal of seriousness, responsibility, transparency and credibility. If those news turn out to be true, it would be the start of drying out our financial resources. Recent news indicated that the government made a decision to liquidate \$32 million from our financial assets abroad, to spend them on development projects. This story coincided with the International Monetary Fund's report that Kuwait does not currently suffer from any real deficit.

Nobody could deny that Kuwaitis of various age categories are eager to witness development projects become a reality. Each Kuwaiti does feel frustrated over the current situations in various fields compared with our neighbors, despite of our huge potentials and historic lead in many fields starting from the independence until the 1990 Iraqi Invasion. However, as soon as we liquidate our assets, they will be used as a never-ending excuse for the falling oil prices.

We also need to have major inquiries and get clear answers, starting with a detailed statement about the KD36 billion budget allocated for the 2009 development plan. What are the results of the plan? How was such a gigantic budget spent so far?

Prior to allocating new sums for any future projects, the government has to present a full plan, defining the sought development and its requirements, the projects involved, the presence of Kuwaiti citizens in them and their schedules. Otherwise, we will be facing another risk to be added to our previous record of bad risks. Therefore, lawmakers have a historic, ethical and constitutional responsibility to demand detailed data about this topic from the government; namely from His Highness the Prime Minister.

On the other hand, and according to our previous bitter experiences in tenders, project execution, contracting or changing programs, all such loopholes should be dealt with, through either legislation or reshuffling various administrative regulations and decisions, including that of auditing and follow-up, because all those who were responsible for Kuwait's projects that went horribly wrong have escaped accountability.

Finally, the Public Anti-Corruption Authority's legal and administrative status has to be reformed because this organization was already born premature with very limited liabilities and monitoring authorities. So, if this is our auditing bodies' performance and everyone's general impression about the government's performance, what development are we talking about and what is the fate of all those millions about to be spent?

—Translated by Kuwait Times

WELL-DESERVED PUBLIC INQUIRIES

By Saad Al-Mo'tesh

On each electoral campaign, candidates usually use stereotype cliches that are repeatedly used by all previous candidates with the same volume and tunes; that is 'citizens' interests and protecting their liberties'. One will hear those candidates shouting out those slogans so loudly, as if they were a very lively artist. However, once they win the parliamentary seats, they become entitled to file parliamentary inquiries that start with 'it came to my attention', because there is hardly any inquiry made without being based on rumors.

Since we are the ones who put them there, we are their partners in filing such inquiries (just like they are asking to be partners in funds and power). It is our right to inquire about the sources of such 'rumors' because we can also hear so many things and are not as deaf as they think we are.

Since a lawmaker represents the people, or namely those who vote for him, it is the people's right to ask the MP, and the latter should answer regardless of the nature of the question. MPs have to respond instead of avoiding citizens' inquiries. Why are they so afraid to do so?

It is the people's right to ask the MP, and the latter should answer regardless of the nature of the question

A message to MPs: In case someone tries really hard to defend some of you and is willing to take an oath on your behalf, I would like to remind you of an old saying that indicates that some things need not be sworn. Well, take an example from your own personal lives as none of you will tell the entire truth even to those closest to you.

—Translated by Kuwait Times from



ZAIN PARTICIPATES IN HUMANITARIAN TRIP TO AID SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

'TRIP REFLECTED ZAIN'S COMMITMENT TOWARD RELIEF PROJECTS'

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, participated in a humanitarian trip to Zaatari refugee camp in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The trip came as part of #ZainWithRefugees, a Corporate Sustainability initiative launched by Zain in strategic partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The field trip, which witnessed the participation of Zain Kuwait's Chief Executive Officer Eaman Al Roudhan, reflected His Highness the Amir of Kuwait's vision in supporting global relief projects as a Humanitarian Leader. The trip came in line with the commencement of Kuwait's National celebrations in February, and further strengthens the spirit of union and solidarity between nations.

This initiatives comes as an extension of the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Zain and the UNHCR during April of 2016. The agreement considered the best ways in which to contribute to the improvement of the living and social conditions of refugees and any other individuals who the UNHCR provides assistance to, and is considered an embodiment of the spirit of cooperation between private and global humanitarian sectors.

Zain took part in this humanitarian visit with the aim of observing the latest developments undergoing the relief and aid projects launched in Jordan by the UNHCR with the support of #ZainWithRefugees, a humanitarian initiative through which Zain launched an official online donation portal zain.unhcr.org to offer the public an opportunity to donate in aid of Syrian refugees.

120,000 families

Eaman Al-Roudhan, Zain Kuwait's CEO, said: "in the occasion of the commencement of Kuwait's National celebrations, and under the wise directives of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, we were honored to visit Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, where nearly

120,000 displaced Syrian families reside." Roudhan added: "the need for collaborative humanitarian aid to people going through war is essential nowadays. Zain's contribution to initiatives launched by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is a testament of the company's humanitarian and moral commitment". Roudhan explained: "through this trip, we witnessed the current refugee crisis on a close level. Zaatari camp is one of hundreds of similar camps that shelter thousands of families who live in harsh conditions every day. We hope to see more collaborations between the private sector and humanitarian organizations, such as the one between Zain and the UNHCR, as a contribution to the end of these peoples' suffering".

Roudhan stressed: "Zain is aware of the magnitude of this tragedy, and is doing everything in its power to support the needs of this community of people and uplift them. Our own efforts are well aligned with those of the nation, and we are proud of our long list of contributions in humanitarian areas, both on local and global levels". Roudhan concluded: "through our Corporate Sustainability strategy, we closely focus on supporting the UNHCR's contributions to the education of refugees. We have launched several contributions to aid them in learning and improving their skills. We treat this trip as a valuable opportunity to spread awareness of the situation refugees and their families are facing, and how crucial our support is in securing a better future for them".

Generous spirit

Head of the UNHCR office in Kuwait, Dr Hanan Hamdan, commented: "the contribution of Kuwait and its government in the refugee crisis reflects the good-will and generous spirit of the Kuwaiti people. This humanitarian visit coincided with a cherished occasion, which is the 11th anniversary of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's ascendancy to power. His Highness the Amir, recognized as a Humanitarian Leader by the UN, played a



great role in the biggest refugee crisis since World War I, which is the Syrian refugee crisis".

Hamdan explained: "the UNHCR's office in Kuwait was keen on partnering with private sector leaders, especially Zain, who we jointly signed an MoU with back in 2016 to defend the refugee case and further develop the initiatives we launch to help them".

Zain launched its humanitarian campaign #ZainWithRefugees in collaboration with the UNHCR. The campaign aimed at improving the living conditions of thousands of refugees in the region who suffer from the lack of essential supplies during the harsh winter season.

Donations were utilized to provide families with financial support, winter clothing, thermal blankets, heaters, and more.

Zain prides itself in its long list of joint collaborations with the UNHCR, including the extension of mobile telecommunications coverage to reconnect displaced families in the Middle East, offering telecom services in deprived areas, as well as awareness campaigns through SMS services and social media channels. The agreement between Zain and the UNHCR also focuses on the importance of raising awareness of the plight of refugees, and shedding light on the humanitarian initia-

tives in place to alleviate the suffering of this community of people around the world, as well as highlight the efforts of the State of Kuwait in creating a hub for humanitarian work under the umbrella of the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Coordinated action

The UNHCR was established on 4 December 1950, by the United Nations General Assembly in the aftermath of World War II. The mandate of the Commission was to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide, as the Commission seeks to ensure people are able to exercise their right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another state. The UNHCR is charged with overseeing the provision of protection, shelter, health care, education and other basic needs to refugees, in addition to supporting the communities hosting them.

The relationship between the UNHCR and the State of Kuwait has witnessed a long history of cooperation. There have always been bridges extending between the Commission and the State of Kuwait, its Amir, government, people and institutions. UNHCR enjoys good and productive relations with all stakeholders within the State of Kuwait, which made its task easier to deliver the contributions of the State of Kuwait to refugees, internally displaced persons and victims of disasters.

In relevance to the international refugee situation, Zain partnered with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) to organize a humanitarian trip that saw 12 of its volunteered employees visiting and supporting Syrian refugees in Lebanon to distribute food, clothes, blankets and cater to a number of KRCS-supported projects. Zain also continued its annual Clothes Donation Campaign and extended it this year to Kuwait University, were over 10.5 tons of clothes were donated and sent by Kuwait Society for Relief to displaced Syrian families.

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UK to embark on historic divorce

PHILIPPINES' PRESIDENT PULLS POLICE OFF DRUG WAR



LOS ANGELES: Noor Hindi (left) and Sham Najjar who were born in the US of Syrian parents, demonstrate against the immigration ban imposed by US President Trump at the Los Angeles International Airport, California. — AFP

TRUMP'S TRAVEL BAN JOLTS GLOBE

PRESIDENT DOWNPLAYS THE IMPACT AS FALLOUT DEEPENS

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday struggled to contain the political fallout from his ban on immigrants from seven Muslim-majority nations, as his own acting attorney general ordered the Justice Department not to defend the measure. In remarks at the White House and on Twitter, Trump variously tried to play down the impact of the order he signed Friday and defended the White House's decision not to give advance warning to border guards, diplomats and travelers.

But after a weekend of chaos at airports, mass protests and diplomatic outcries, criticism of Trump's proposal even came from his predecessor Barack Obama, who broke his silence for the first time since leaving office. "President Obama is heartened by the level of engagement taking place in communities around the country," spokesman Kevin Lewis said, adding that "American values are at stake" and noting Obama rejects faith-based discrimination.

Obama's foray back into politics will only add to the White House's sense of besiegement. For much of the last 48 hours, the embattled Republican president has been on the defensive. "We actually had a very good day yesterday in terms of homeland security," Trump insisted as he met with small business leaders early Monday. But in a defiant rebuke late in the day, acting US Attorney General Sally Yates, a holdover from the Obama administration, ordered Justice Department lawyers not to defend the travel ban, casting doubt over its legality.

"At present, I am not convinced that the defense of the executive order is consistent with these responsibilities nor am I convinced that the executive order is lawful," Yates wrote in a memo to department lawyers. Yates's directive means that the US government has no authorized courtroom representation in lawsuits and other legal challenges currently pending in the courts against Trump's order and its ensuing implementation.

The order—which affects nationals from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen—caused confusion among US officials and has so far led to at least four federal court injunctions. "If the ban were announced with a one week notice, the 'bad' would rush into our country during that week. A lot of bad 'dudes' out there!" Trump claimed. The new president moved up a decision on his pick of Supreme Court justice yesterday—two days earlier than planned—as he sought to change the topic.

'I'm stuck here'

Eltirmizy Mohamed, a 34-year-old Sudanese doctor, was traveling back to the United States when the order was rolled out. After three years training at the Atlanta Medical Center, he was returning to Georgia

to take up a full-time post, but was stopped while trying to catch a connecting flight in Qatar. "I have served many homeless and poor Americans," he said in Khartoum. "My plans were to work in a rural area of Georgia where there are many such Americans in need of a doctor. But now I'm stuck here."

Trump, a property tycoon who has never previously held elected office, sees the ban as making good on a promise to subject travelers from Muslim-majority countries to "extreme vetting." Around 48 percent of Americans support a freeze on immigration from "terror prone" regions, even if it means turning refugees away, according to a Quinnipiac poll released Monday. Senior national security officials from the Obama and George W. Bush administrations warned in a letter to top Trump cabinet members that the order "will do long-term damage to our national security."

Calling the measure a tragically "unnecessary" move that will fuel violent extremist propaganda, they said it "sent exactly the wrong message to the Muslim community here at home and all over the world: that the US government is at war with them based on their religion." Counterterrorism experts warn that the ban could make essential cooperation with governments in Muslim-majority countries more difficult, while doing little to prevent attacks. Iraq's parliament backed reciprocal restrictions if Washington does not change course. "It's going to be a recruitment boon for ISIS," said former CIA acting director Mike Morell, an outspoken critic of Trump, referring to the Islamic State group.

Mounting problems

Moral outrage over the ban has been amplified by criticism of the White House's competency—a potentially much more damaging charge for Trump's reputation as CEO-in-chief. Firms from Goldman Sachs to Google voiced their concern and the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.1 percent — below the 20,000-point threshold lauded by the president just days ago. Starbucks said it planned to hire 10,000 refugees worldwide over the next five years, while Airbnb said it would offer free accommodation "to refugees and anyone not allowed in the US."

Late Monday, a few thousand people chanted slogans and held up banners in front of the Supreme Court, which could ultimately rule on the measure. "No hate, no fear, refugees are welcome here," they chanted. One sign read "Impeach Trump Now," while another read "Immigrants make America great." Speaking on the Supreme Court's steps, top Democratic Senator Chuck Schumer said the ban was "against what we believe in America," and would encourage "lone wolves" to attack the country. — AFP

TRUMP'S WHITE HOUSE AND THE 5 TAKEAWAYS

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Monday attacked his second full week in the White House with a vengeance: he defended his controversial executive order on immigration, drawing a comment from his predecessor, and imposed sweeping limits on new regulations. Here are five takeaways from Monday's events in Washington:

Controversy

Trump has faced a firestorm of criticism since Friday, when he signed an executive order suspending the arrival of all refugees for a minimum of 120 days, Syrian refugees indefinitely and barring citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days. He fired back on Monday—with a trademark early-morning tweet barrage saying "all is going well" and lashing out at those who argued the measure was rolled out too quickly. "If the ban were announced with a one week notice, the 'bad' would rush into our country during that week. A lot of bad 'dudes' out there!" he tweeted. He even blamed a computer outage at Delta Air Lines for the chaos that gripped major US airports over the weekend as passengers were detained or stopped for questioning and federal judges moved to halt deportations.

Netanyahu in Washington

Trump will welcome Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House on February 15, the US president's spokesman Sean Spicer told reporters. The Republican president has moved quickly to befriend the Israeli leader, and the pair spoke by telephone on Sunday. Iran is likely to come up in their meeting. Trump has said he plans to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem—a measure that the Palestinians have fiercely condemned.

Trump has come under fire for failing to specifically mention in his Holocaust remembrance statement the six million Jews killed in the Nazi genocide.

New Supreme Court pick

Trump moved up his plans to reveal his nominee to fill the Supreme Court seat that has been vacant for nearly a year, since the death of conservative Antonin Scalia. Trump will make the announcement at 8:00 today at the White House—two days ahead of schedule, possibly as a means to change the headlines focused on his immigration measures. The nine-seat court has been at eight since Scalia died in February 2016, as Republicans refused to set up a confirmation hearing for Barack Obama's pick, Merrick Garland.

Regulations be gone

Trump signed an executive order that would impose sweeping constraints on any new US regulations, by requiring two rules be killed before any new one can be introduced and mandating zero cost

impact. The order paves the way for the fulfillment of a campaign pledge made by the CEO-in-chief. Some critics worried that the order would impose difficult choices on federal agencies as to which rules to keep—at the expense of other equally important measures.

Obama returns

Barack Obama said as he left office that he would only weigh in from the political sidelines on issues relevant to America's core values. He didn't wait long—just 10 days before breaking his silence. Without mentioning Trump, Obama—via his spokesman—said he was "heartened" by protests that had taken place across the country, and rejected the notion that Trump's immigration order was in any way associated with his own policies. "With regard to comparisons to president Obama's foreign policy decisions, as we've heard before, the president fundamentally disagrees with the notion of discriminating against individuals because of their faith or religion," his spokesman Kevin Lewis said in a statement. — AFP



DALLAS: People participate in a candlelight vigil at Thanksgiving Square in downtown Dallas. — AP

MCCAIN EMERGES AS TRUMP'S TOP REPUBLICAN NEMESIS IN CONGRESS

WASHINGTON: Sen John McCain has emerged as President Donald Trump's top Republican nemesis on Capitol Hill. Since Trump's inauguration, McCain has broken with the president on his immigration order, warned him against any rapprochement with Moscow, lectured him on the illegality of torture, and supplied only a tepid endorsement of Rex Tillerson, Trump's secretary of state nominee. Oh, and McCain also hammered Trump for backing away from - instead of embracing - international free trade agreements.

As Trump presses ahead with an ambitious and contentious agenda at home and abroad, McCain is pushing back, using his seniority in Congress and his characteristic bluntness. McCain, 80, cruised to a sixth Senate term in November, defeating a Democratic challenger who hounded the senator for standing by Trump even after the billionaire businessman insulted him as a "loser." Trump, who received several draft deferments during the Vietnam era, also said there was nothing heroic about McCain's military record after he was shot down during the Vietnam War and spent 5 1/2 years as a prisoner of war.

McCain dropped his support for Trump in early October after a 2005 recording surfaced in which Trump boasted about groping women. The move led to an outcry from conservative voters firmly behind Trump. But McCain overcame the backlash in what may have been his final election. He hasn't looked back. Trump's immigration order, signed by the president Friday, temporarily suspends all immi-

gration for citizens of seven majority-Muslim countries for 90 days. McCain, along with his close friend and Senate colleague Sen Lindsey Graham, R-SC, said they feared Trump's immigration order could "become a self-inflicted wound in the fight against terrorism."

"This executive order sends a signal, intended or not, that America does not want Muslims coming into our country. That is why we fear this executive order may do more to help terrorist recruitment than improve our security," McCain and Graham wrote. That elicited an angry tweet from Trump, who accused the two of "looking to start World War III." McCain said Monday that Trump's order bans Iraqi pilots from coming to the United States for training so they can join the fight against the Islamic State. "Right now, those Iraqis can't come to Arizona to train to be F-16 pilots to defend Americans," McCain said. "That's wrong."

As chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, McCain is one of the leading Republican voices in Congress on national security matters. Re-elected last year to another six years in office, he is free to challenge the president without fear of retribution from voters.

And perhaps on no issue has McCain been more unequivocal than of Trump's desire for a better relationship with Moscow. Trump's praise for Russian President Vladimir Putin before and after the election signaled that US-Russia relations could be getting a makeover - even after US intelligence agencies determined Moscow meddled in the campaign to help Trump win. — AP



WASHINGTON: US Senator John McCain (right), R-Arizona, talks with US Senator Jack Reed, D-Rhode Island, prior to the procedural vote to end the debate on Rex Tillerson for US Secretary of State on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC. — AFP



ARLINGTON: US Secretary of Defense James Mattis (right) participates in an enhanced honor cordon with (left) King Abdullah of Jordan at the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia. King Abdullah is on a visit in Washington. — AFP

TRUMP COURTS JORDAN KING AMID EMBASSY AND REFUGEE CONCERNS

TRAVEL BAN COULD EMBOLDEN MIDEAST EXTREMISTS

WASHINGTON: King Abdullah II of Jordan's visit to Washington this week is testing US President Donald Trump's ability to maintain key Arab alliances while cracking down on immigration from some Muslim countries and possibly moving the American Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. The next few days could provide an indication if Trump is willing to compromise. Abdullah, a close US ally, held meetings Monday with Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and Vice President Mike Pence. Trump and the king were to come face-to-face tomorrow at the National Prayer Breakfast, the White House said.

The king also planned to meet with US lawmakers this week. Abdullah's trip comes as the Trump administration is embroiled in its first major Mideast controversy, sparked by Trump's executive order temporarily halting all refugee admissions and suspending entry to the US for citizens of seven majority-Muslim countries. Although Jordan isn't among the seven, even US friends in the region fear Trump's move could embolden Mideast extremists and contribute to a perception that Washington is at war with Islam - which Trump's administration insists is not the case.

Trump's embassy decision looms even larger for Jordan. The kingdom, fighting as part of US-

led coalition against the Islamic State group, is closely watching to see if Trump fulfills a campaign pledge to move the US Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Doing so could trigger widespread protests among Jordan's massive Palestinian population, potentially even jeopardizing Abdullah's hold on power. "The US relationship is central to the internal stability of the kingdom," said Robert Satloff, who runs the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "This is really part and parcel of the national security fiber of the kingdom, and building this new relationship is really important to the king."

This month, Jordan warned in unusually brusque terms that moving the embassy would cross a "red line" and could entail "catastrophic" consequences. Information Minister Mohammed Momani said it would be a "gift to extremists," threatening US ties with Mideast allies. The embassy was a prime topic of discussion in Abdullah's meeting with Pence, officials said. The White House said they discussed Abdullah's "views on potential changes" and how to make progress on Israeli-Palestinian peace. The Jordanian Embassy in Washington said the US "committed to working closely with Jordan" on issues related to the conflict.

Jordan serves as the custodian of Islam's third holiest shrine, located in Jerusalem's eastern sector. Any US rift with Jordan could spill over to the kingdom's participation in the fight against IS, a campaign both Trump and Abdullah say they hope to accelerate. During his campaign, Trump pledged repeatedly to move the American Embassy in Israel, a promise former US presidents have made and broken. Since his inauguration, Trump has backtracked slightly, with White House spokesman Sean Spicer saying the administration is only in the "beginning stages of even discussing" such a move.

Although Israel considers Jerusalem its capital, the US and most countries maintain embassies in Tel Aviv. The US says conflicting Israeli and Palestinian claims to Jerusalem must be worked out in peace negotiations. Israel claims all of Jerusalem and annexed east Jerusalem after capturing it from Jordan in 1967, but the Palestinians want the capital of their future state in the city's eastern sector. The US relies on Jordan for major military and intelligence support in fighting IS, and the kingdom plays a major role in combating radicalization in the Middle East. Both Trump and Abdullah say they want close ties. — AP

IN THE NEW WHITE HOUSE, A LOOK AT TRUMP INNER CIRCLE

WASHINGTON: Since taking office 10 days ago, US President Donald Trump has moved to consolidate power within a small cadre of close aides at the White House. He's added a senior political adviser to the National Security Council and appears to have cut out Cabinet secretaries from decision making on some of his top policies, including the immigration and refugee order that led to protests, legal challenges and temporary detention of some legal US residents this weekend.

Trump has empowered a small group of advisers, some of whom have no experience in government, to tackle a broad range of issues - including national security, the immigration policy, US relations with Mexico and plans to repeal President Barack Obama's health care law. The inner circle includes loyal campaign aides, his son-in-law (Jared Kushner) and the advisers who ran Trump's populist, outsider bid for office. Here's a look at the Trump's inner circle and how they're shaping the policies that are shaking up Washington:

Steve Bannon

Every major decision at the new White House has involved Bannon, a media executive who became Trump's top political adviser in a shakeup in August and quickly infused Trump's campaign with an anti-establishment fervor. Bannon's power has only grown at the start of the administration. He is typically at Trump's side in the Oval Office. He helped write the new president's inaugural address - marked by the reference to "American carnage."

He shaped executive actions pulling the US out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal and freezing the US refugees program. Saturday's memorandum reorganizing the National Security Council extends Bannon's reach further. He will now have a seat at regular meetings on national security, while the incoming director of national intelligence and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will attend only as required by the subject matter.

Bannon is a former naval officer and Goldman Sachs executive who led Breitbart News before joining Trump's

campaign. Under his tenure, Breitbart became the voice of the alt-right movement and critics pointed to coverage they said espoused racist and sexist views. His rhetorical influence on the president was particularly clear last week. In signature style, Bannon referred to the media as the "opposition party" in an interview. Trump repeated the phrase a couple of days later.

Stephen Miller

Trump's policy rollouts and speeches also bear the fingerprints of Miller, a 31-year-old senior policy adviser who joined his campaign after working as a top aide to Alabama Sen Jeff Sessions, Trump's pick for attorney general. Miller played an influential, behind-the-scenes role in derailing efforts in the Senate to pursue an immigration overhaul after the 2012 elections. After joining Trump's team, Miller played multiple roles on the campaign, writing Trump's speeches, developing his policies and frequently serving as a warm-up act at rallies.

At the White House, Miller has been the new administration's policy guru with a heavy focus on immigration. He and Bannon were instrumental in the drafting of the executive order that established a temporary travel ban on citizens from seven Muslim-majority nations. Amid chaos at airports and confusion over the ban's impact on legal US residents, Miller was running Saturday night meetings on the order. But that has also made him the subject of criticism. MSNBC's Joe Scarborough accused Miller on Monday of not doing enough to loop in agency heads about the executive order and said the White House adviser had gone on a "power trip."

Jared Kushner

Considered a "first among equals" in the competing power circles in Trump's West Wing, Kushner often has the last word as his father-in-law makes decision and, as family, has unprecedented access to the president in the White House residence. Kushner emerged as one of Trump's most powerful campaign advisers during his father-in-law's often unorthodox presidential bid - a calming presence in an otherwise chaotic campaign. He was usually at Trump's side and on his plane during the campaign's final weeks.

At the White House, Kushner has played a key role dealing with foreign government officials and Trump has entrusted him to resolve the dispute with Mexico over the border wall and has indicated that he will take the lead in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. Asked about Kushner's involvement on foreign policy, a White House official said he was "particularly well-suited for sensitive negotiations and relationship building." Kushner also championed the pick of his friend Gary Cohn, the president of Goldman Sachs, for a top White House economic post.

Reince Priebus

Trump's chief of staff is a former chairman of the Republican National Committee and Republican operative from Wisconsin with close ties to House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis. If Bannon has become Trump's policy soul-mate, Priebus appears more focused on organization and implementation. When Trump signs executive orders in the Oval Office, it is often Priebus who hands the president the paperwork. The longest-serving chairman in Republican Party history, Priebus remains popular among RNC members and will help Trump stay connected with members of Congress, the party's establishment, fundraisers and activists across the nation. He is in frequent touch with Ryan, one of his oldest political allies, and will serve as a key emissary to House and Senate Republicans. — AP



WASHINGTON: Trump advisor Steve Bannon (left) and White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus walk through the colonnade of the White House in Washington, DC. — AFP

156 Youth, Kuwait's prospect.

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WITH ISLAMIC STATE GONE, EAST MOSUL RESIDENTS FACE AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

MOSUL: When Islamic State militants swept into Mosul in 2014, they wandered into Manaf Younes' billiards hall and declared it un-Islamic, taking away his billiard balls with a stern warning. A hall that was often packed with players until midnight was suddenly abandoned. Photographs of awards that made Younes proud gathered dust for two years and the billiard tables remained covered up. Iraqi government forces have now pushed the militants out of east Mosul and are poised to attack the west. While Younes is thrilled, like many other small businessmen in the city, his

joy is tempered by uncertainty as he tries to revive his former life.

Islamic State imposed a radical version of Islam in Mosul after establishing the country's second biggest city as its de facto capital: banning cigarettes, televisions and radios, and forcing men to grow beards and women to cover from head to toe. "I am broke. I had to sell my two cars to survive. Now my landlord is demanding two years of back rent," said Younes, picking up a trophy that reminded him of the old days. He frowned at explosions in the distance, where Iraqi forces and jihadists are exchanging fire

along the Tigris River that bisects the sprawling metropolis, once a trade hub and centre for higher learning.

"These explosions hurt the business. They shake the billiard tables and make them imbalanced," he said. The fighting has already caused widespread destruction. US-led airstrikes have demolished scores of buildings and left huge craters that destroyed roads. Rooftops have collapsed into the bottom floors. Other buildings have gaping holes from rockets or machinegun fire. Mortar bombs still land in the city and gunfire is heard. Across from Younes' billiard hall stands

what's left of Mosul University, once one of the finest education institutions in the Middle East.

Islamic State sold the university's ancient manuscripts and imposed its own form of education, banning philosophy books. When the army arrived, the jihadists burned down many of its buildings, leaving piles of ashes. A few pages of textbooks on hematology and diffusion were scattered on floors cluttered with debris. Upstairs in the cafeteria were blackened tables and chairs, below huge holes from airstrikes. A few bakers and restaurant owners in

the neighborhood stood mostly idle. They too recalled hardships under Islamic State rule. The militants and their wives would show up clutching AK-47 assault rifles and jump to the front of queues, demanding discounts, they said. One restaurant owner, Qusay Ahmed, said he was dragged away to an Islamic State jail and tortured for four months after militants accused him of stealing. "They ripped my toenails off with pliers," he said. The torturers may be gone, but there are new challenges. He and other restaurant owners have no potable water and scarce electricity, and hardly any customers. — Reuters

UK LAWMAKERS TAKE FIRST STEP TO STARTING BREXIT

BRITAIN TO EMBARK ON A HISTORIC DIVORCE

LONDON: Britain took a key step toward leaving the European Union yesterday as lawmakers begin debating whether to empower Prime Minister Theresa May to embark on the historic divorce. MPs will hold their first discussion on legislation giving the government the power to trigger Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, opening two years of negotiations on leaving the

opposed Brexit, but May has urged them to respect the result of the June referendum, when 52 percent of Britons voted to end the country's four-decade membership of the EU. "I hope that when people come to look at the Article 50 bill they will recognize it is a very simple decision: do they support the will of the British people or not?" she told reporters on Monday. May is

in the talks. Opposition Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn has promised not to block the bill, but his party-like the wider country-is deeply divided over Brexit and a large minority of his MPs are expected to rebel. Dozens of May's Conservative MPs are also opposed to her plan to pull Britain out of the single market when it leaves the EU, fearing the damage to one of the bloc's biggest economies.

But most have promised to back the government, as long as ministers keep parliament informed on their strategy and the course of the negotiations. "It is not a bill about whether or not the UK should leave the EU, or how it should do so," Brexit secretary David Davis said ahead of the debate. "It is simply about implementing a decision already made, a point of no return already passed." Several opposition MPs have submitted amendments to kill the legislation in its preliminary phase, but they are unlikely to succeed.

A vote today allowing the bill to move to its next stage is viewed as largely procedural. Over three days next week, however, the Commons will consider more substantive amendments on issues such as access to Europe's single market. There are also demands for greater involvement from the devolved parliaments of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, with the latter two voting in June for Britain to remain in the EU. The bill will then move to the Lords for debate from February 20, with the government hoping for their approval by March 7.

The Times newspaper said this could mean that Britain-the first country to vote to leave the EU-would trigger Article 50 at an EU summit on March 9-10. The Article 50 process gives Britain just two years to negotiate its departure and, it hopes, a new trade deal with the EU before it leaves. But the European Commission's Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier has said the talks must be wrapped up by October 2018 to give the EU and national parliaments time to ratify the final agreement. May has promised that parliament will be able to vote on the final divorce deal agreed with Brussels. — AFP



LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May leaves 10 Downing Street after the weekly cabinet meeting in central London yesterday. — AFP

bloc. While the bill is expected to pass the House of Commons, it could be delayed in the upper House of Lords as May's Conservative Party does not have a majority there. The government had sought to exclude parliament, insisting it had the power to trigger Article 50 on its own, but the Supreme Court last week ruled it must consult lawmakers.

A majority of both houses of parliament

under intense pressure to push the bill through quickly, having promised EU leaders that she will trigger Article 50 by the end of March.

'Decision already made'

At just 143 words, the European Union Notification of Withdrawal Bill has been tightly drafted, making it difficult to amend either to delay the government's plans or to tie its hands



DONETSK: Ukrainian medical servicemen stand on an Armored Personnel Carrier (APC) after they carried wounded servicemen to hospital in Ukraine-controlled town of Avdiivka, in Donetsk region. — AFP

8 KILLED AS SEPARATISTS BATTLE UKRAINE TROOPS

AVDIIVKA: Fighting between government troops and Russia-backed separatist rebels in eastern Ukraine escalated yesterday, killing at least eight people overnight, injuring dozens and briefly trapping more than 200 coalminers underground, the warring sides reported. Rebels in Donetsk said an electricity sub-station was damaged in shelling, cutting power to the Zasyadko coal mine in Donetsk. The mine is notorious for its safety standards; 33 people were killed there in 2015 by a methane blast.

With elevators not working, the miners had been trapped underground for several hours before local authorities found the backup generators outside the mine to get the elevators working. By midday yesterday, at least 152 of 200 men had been able to get out. Separatist military spokesman Eduard Basurin, in an interview with Russian state Rossiya 24 television yesterday, denied reports that separatist shelling cut power lines and heat-

ing stations in Avdiivka, saying they had been damaged earlier.

The artillery shelling, which appears to be the worst in many months, was concentrated around the government-controlled town of Avdiivka, home to a giant coking plant. Its director said on Monday that preparations were being made to stop production, something rarely done throughout the conflict that has claimed more than 9,600 lives since it began in 2014. A cease-fire deal struck in Minsk in 2015 has helped to reduce but not stop the fighting.

Oleksandr Turchynov, chairman of the Ukrainian Security and Defense Council, said yesterday that heavy shelling around Avdiivka, on the northern outskirts of the separatist stronghold of Donetsk, killed at least three troops and injured 24 more. The press office of the Ukrainian government's operation in the east reported an unspecified number of civilian casualties. It also said the rebels turned down the government's offer to cease fire to allow the

removal of the dead and wounded.

In Donetsk, the rebels' Donetsk News Agency reported four rebel fighters died and seven were injured overnight as well as three civilians. One civilian was killed in shelling in Donetsk, Basurin told Russian news agencies. Dmitry Peskov, spokesman for Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday accused the Ukrainian government of provoking the crisis. The Kremlin has "reliable information" that Ukrainian volunteer battalions crossed the front line Monday night and tried to capture rebel territory, Peskov told reporters in Moscow.

Salvos of heavy-caliber artillery were heard throughout the night and late morning in Avdiivka, where several thousand people have been without electricity for days. Fighting has cut water supplies for most of the town and it was left without heating in the dead of winter. Temperatures plunged to -18 Centigrade (0 Fahrenheit) yesterday morning. The local hospital was

flooded overnight with injured soldiers, who were operated on and taken to a town further away from the front line, according to an Associated Press reporter at the scene. Several private houses were damaged in the shelling. Kiev-based independent political analyst Vadim Karasyov said an escalation in the east could be beneficial to both the separatists and the Ukrainian government.

"Kiev is eager to win support of the new Trump administration, and for this they need to show that separatists and the Kremlin are derailing the peace accords," he said. "For the Kremlin, it's important to show that it holds war and peace in its hands - if the new US administration wants peace in Ukraine, it needs to offer something in return." Local water supply company Water of Donbass said on Monday the Donetsk Water Filtration Station, a crucial source of clean water for both sides of the conflict, came under shelling. — AP



LONDON: British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson arrives at Downing street in central London for the weekly cabinet meeting. — AFP

BREXIT: WHAT WE KNOW

LONDON: The British parliament is set to debate for the first time the government's bill to trigger the country's departure from the European Union, following a referendum last year in which a majority voted for Brexit. Prime Minister Theresa May has said Britain will leave the EU's single market and seek a new customs deal with the bloc. But the precise timings and terms of departure are uncertain as negotiations have yet to begin. Here is an outline of what we know so far:

Referendum

On June 23, 2016, Britons voted to leave the EU by 52 percent in favor to 48 percent against, although most voters in Scotland, Northern Ireland and London backed remaining part of the bloc. Britain has had a love-hate relationship with Brussels since joining what was then the European Economic Community in 1973. Former Prime Minister David Cameron, who took office in 2010, called the referendum in a bid to end long-standing divisions in his Conservative party but his campaign to stay in the EU failed.

Timing

Cameron's successor May has said she wants to trigger Article 50 - the formal procedure for leaving the EU under the Lisbon Treaty-by the end of March. Finance minister Philip Hammond has said he expects negotiations to begin before the summer. Article 50 foresees a maximum two-year time period for the negotiations. If no deal is in place by then, Britain would have to leave without any agreement on future ties with the EU, unless the timeframe for talks is extended by unanimous agreement of all member states. The EU's top Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier has said there should be an agreement in place ahead of the 2019 European Parliament elections.

Parliament

Britain's Supreme Court ruled earlier this month that May must receive parliamentary approval before triggering Article 50, and the government last week brought a short draft bill backing her timetable before the House of Commons-to be debated. Most MPs supported Britain staying in the EU but are expected to back the start of Article 50 talks-although opponents have already

tabled amendments that could slow up the process. May has also promised that any final deal on Britain's future relations with the EU would go before both chambers of parliament for a vote.

Transition deal

In a major speech on January 17, May said she wanted a "phased approach" to ensure stability for businesses between the moment Britain leaves the EU and the implementation of its new relationship with the bloc. "We will seek to avoid a disruptive cliff edge," she said. May added that all existing EU laws that apply in Britain will be turned into British laws under a "Great Repeal Bill" and parliament will then be able to choose which ones to keep, reject or amend.

Immigration

May has said she will make cutting immigration a priority in negotiations, after the issue dominated the referendum campaign. Hundreds of thousands of people, mainly from eastern and southern Europe, move to Britain each year. In her Brexit speech, she gave no detail of what the new entry criteria will be for Europeans, but acknowledged that this demand would mean Britain leaving the EU's single market. May has refused to confirm that EU citizens already in Britain will be able to stay after Brexit until similar guarantees are offered to Britons living elsewhere in the bloc.

Trade

May said she wants "maximum possible access" for British companies to the single market even though Britain will no longer be a member, and also called for a new customs arrangement with the EU. She said full customs union membership would prevent Britain from striking its own trade deals with other countries but said the country could remain a signatory to some parts of the customs union. May also warned EU member states against pushing for harsh exit terms for Britain, saying it would be "an act of calamitous self-harm" for the European Union. She warned that she could "change the basis of Britain's economic model"-for example by slashing business taxes-if British companies are excluded from accessing the single market. — AFP

MOSQUE SHOOTING: A SHOUT, HAIL OF BULLETS, THEN DEATH

QUEBEC: Abdi was sitting cross-legged on the floor reading the Quran with his friends when the shooting began - a staccato spray of bullets into the crowd of worshippers gathered on Sunday at the mosque in Quebec City, Canada. It was the shout from the doorway that alerted them: "Allahu akbar!" which means "God is greatest!" "We all turned and that's the point when they started shooting," said Abdi, a 22-year-old student who declined to give his last name, fearing for his safety.

Abdi hit the floor, arms over his head and ears. But he could still hear the men around him praying for their lives until gunfire cut them short. He felt a trio of bullets whisk over his head. "Everyone got down, and those people standing in prayer, two of them were in the same row as I was, and the bullets hit them," said Abdi, who spoke with Reuters Monday from his home in Montreal. He was in Quebec City visiting

friends when he was caught in the carnage. "People were praying to God, 'Save us from this hell; save us from this massacre.'" Again and again, Abdi heard the sound of reloading guns. He prayed the attackers would not go upstairs, where the women and children were gathered. "I thought I was going to die." Abdi is convinced he saw two shooters. Police say there was only one. It was not until police cleared the scene that Abdi opened his eyes. He stood and beheld "a graveyard" - dead, dying and injured people just feet from where he and his friends had lain. "It was a horrible moment."

The phrase "Allahu akbar" is a common religious invocation that has been uttered by some attackers in incidents inspired by Islamic State. But that night, Abdi said, he could tell it was not a Muslim speaking it. "The tone of voice is different for a person who speaks Arabic or who can recite the Quran." — Reuters



QUEBEC: A police officer looks for evidence under a car in the area of a Quebec City mosque yesterday. A shooting at a Quebec City mosque Sunday night left multiple dead and injured. One suspect was arrested at the scene and another nearby. — AP

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PHILIPPINES' PRESIDENT PULLS POLICE OFF DRUG WAR

DUTERTE SUGGESTS TROOPS MIGHT PLAY ROLE

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte suggested yesterday he may seek military support after withdrawing the national police from his war on drugs and handing the job to a much smaller anti-narcotics agency. More than 7,600 people, mostly users and small-time dealers, have been killed since Duterte took office at the end of June, vowing to crack down on methamphetamine use. About 2,550 of the deaths were in police operations while the others were vigilante killings or were unsolved murders. The Philippine Drugs Enforcement Agency (PDEA) would run anti-drug operations, according to presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella. Its 1,800 staff are equivalent to just over 1 percent of the 160,000-strong Philippine National Police (PNP).

After a high-level security meeting on Sunday, Duterte said the PNP was "corrupt to the core". A suspension of its drug operations came a few hours later. Duterte

is furious with the PNP for the kidnap and killing of South Korean businessman Jee Ick-joo by police drugs squad officers. Jee was killed within the PNP headquarters grounds. In a speech to soldiers yesterday, Duterte suggested he might need their help, saying he would be dead "if I don't include you in the game".

The mercurial Duterte has threatened several times to invoke military rule to help his war on drugs. Last week, he appeared to rule out declaring martial law, but said he could do so if he wished. Presidential spokesman Abella could not immediately confirm whether the military, which has played a minor supporting role in the drugs war, would be given more responsibility. Armed forces spokesman Brigadier-General Restituto Padilla said military involvement was discussed at the security talks, but it was not clear what that would be.

Duterte said police had been ordered

to stand down from anti-drugs operations. "No policeman in this country anywhere is allowed to enforce laws related to the drug campaign," he said, adding about 6,000 of them were "into drugs". Local radio stations, which routinely cover drug killings, said there were no reports of any deaths in what appeared to be a rare bloodless night on Monday, although police could not confirm whether or not there were casualties.

Official data yesterday showed four additional deaths in police operations, although it was not immediately clear when those took place. The attack on the PNP is a surprise about-face by Duterte, who had been unwavering in his support for police on the front lines of his drugs war. His spokesman said the president was fully aware of PNP corruption when he gave police the lead in fighting narcotics, but the drugs problem was so big, he had no other choice. "The president

had to act, he did act, to enforce his political will," Abella told a news briefing. "To avoid any of the apparent corrupt activities within the organization, he has now transferred (control) to PDEA."

A tough task

The anti-drugs campaign has caused international alarm due to the high death toll and disputed circumstances of many of the killings. Human rights groups say the police have been involved in widespread extrajudicial killings. The PNP and Duterte strongly reject that. Congressman Edcel Lagman described the sidelining of police as "a blessing" and said it was time to get tough.

"For the first time in six months there are no reports today of drug-related killings," Lagman said. "There should be no more kids gloves for police scalawags who deserve an iron fist." Police officials who spoke to Reuters said there had been

no written directive on the suspension of their role in the drugs war, but they were following the police chief's comments on television. "That is good as an order," said Senior Superintendent Roberto Fajardo at Manila's Northern Police District. "We now go after other crimes ... that's better for us, we fight all crimes."

One senior policeman said raids and sting operations on drug sellers had stopped and police operations had shifted toward reining in wayward officers, especially those reinstated following internal investigations. "The cleansing process will take a front seat by strengthening our counter-intelligence operations, checking lifestyles of police officers involved in drug operations," said the officer, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media. "This is a huge job. I'm not sure how long will it take to do this because our Internal Affairs Service lacks manpower." — Reuters



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani supporters of the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) organization burn Indian and US flags after JuD leader Hafiz Saeed was placed under house arrest by authorities in Islamabad yesterday. — AFP



LAHORE: Pakistani leader of the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) organization Hafiz Saeed (center) leaves after being detained by police in Lahore yesterday. — AFP

PAKISTAN CRACKS DOWN ON GROUP LINKED TO 2008 MUMBAI ATTACKS

CHIEF SUSPECT PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST

LAHORE: Pakistan has placed the chief suspect behind the 2008 Mumbai attacks under house arrest as it cracks down on the group linked to the carnage. Firebrand cleric Hafiz Saeed, who heads the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) group and has a \$10 million US bounty on his head, is to be placed under "preventative detention", according to the Interior Ministry order. Police took Saeed away from a mosque in Lahore late Monday and escorted him to his residence where they appear to be holding him under house arrest, an AFP journalist reported. "My detention orders are unlawful and we will challenge them in the court," Saeed told reporters before he was led away by police.

"These orders have come from Washington," he said. "Now more rallies and protests will be held on Kashmir issue," Saeed said, adding: "our movement will continue till Kashmir's independence." Pakistan and India both control part of Kashmir but claim the whole of the territory and have fought two of their three wars over it since independence from Britain in 1947. India blames Pakistan for sending militant groups to foment unrest in the part of

Kashmir controlled by New Delhi. JuD, listed as a terror outfit by the United Nations, is considered by the US and India to be a front for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the militant group blamed for the attack on India's financial capital.

The horror of the Mumbai carnage played out on live television around the world as commandos battled the heavily armed gunmen, who arrived by sea on the evening of November 26, 2008. It took the authorities three days to regain full control of the city and New Delhi has long said there is evidence that "official agencies" in Pakistan were involved in plotting the attack. Islamabad denies the charge. But for years JuD operated freely across the country, popular for its charity works especially in the wake of natural disasters, and testing Islamabad's vow to tackle militancy. Despite the bounty against him Saeed led a high-profile public life, regularly delivering fiery anti-India speeches.

'Obligated to take action'

The detention order surfaced hours after Interior

Minister Chaudhry Nisar hinted that a crackdown was imminent. He told reporters in Islamabad earlier Monday that, given the group had been under observation for years and was blacklisted internationally, Pakistan is "under obligation to take some action". "The situation will be clear on this by tomorrow," he said, without giving further details. The order from the interior ministry placed JuD and a foundation tied to it on a watch list, and also ordered the "preventative detention" of four other members in various cities in Punjab.

India has long seethed at Pakistan's failure either to hand over or prosecute those accused of planning and organizing the Mumbai attacks, while Pakistan has alleged that India failed to give it crucial evidence. Islamabad's decision in 2015 to release an alleged mastermind of the attacks, Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, was slammed as an "insult" by New Delhi. Pakistan has long been accused of playing a "double game" with militants by supporting groups it thinks it can use for its own strategic ends, particularly in disputed Kashmir. — AFP

News

in brief

Campaigners 'massacred'

BOGOTA: Colombian officials said yesterday that 17 civil campaigners have been murdered over the past two months in the country, amid tensions over its contested peace process. President Juan Manuel Santos has warned that fresh violence could destabilize the demobilization of the leftist FARC rebels under a historic peace accord. He signed the deal with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and pushed it through the legislature in December, defying criticism from conservative rivals. In the weeks following, reports emerged of killings by local civil campaigners by unidentified groups in conflict areas. On Monday the Victims' Unit, a state conflict resolution body, said in a statement that "17 civil leaders have been murdered since December 1, after Congress ratified the peace accord." The last known victim was Porfirio Jaramillo, leader of a group demanding rural land restitution. He was killed on Saturday in Antioquia department, in the northwest, it said.

Troops battle Taliban

LASHKAR GAH: Afghan forces said they were holding off a Taliban offensive in Helmand province yesterday, as reinforcements and air support arrived. Both sides reported heavy fighting as Taliban militants attacked government positions in Sangin district, an area where insurgents have made major gains in the past two years. "There is heavy fighting still ongoing between the Taliban and our forces but those places that were captured by the Taliban yesterday have been taken back," said Omar Zwak, a spokesman for the governor of the southern province. Among the reinforcements sent to the embattled district were new commando units, he said. A regional Taliban spokesman, Qari Yousuf Ahmadi, said fighters had captured at least 25 government checkpoints and killed more than 100 soldiers and police. The Taliban used tunnels dug from houses to attack the government's front-line checkpoints. General Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai, commander of the 215th Army Corps, said on Monday.

Yazidi MP could be barred

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi lawmaker who has campaigned prominently for fellow Yazidi women enslaved by the Islamic State group said yesterday that new US travel restrictions may prevent her from accepting a human rights award. Vian Dakhil had been due to travel to Washington to receive the Lantos Human Rights Prize next week for her work highlighting the plight of Yazidi women turned into sex slaves by the jihadists after their homes were overrun in 2014. But Friday's executive order by President Donald Trump barring nationals of Iraq and six other Muslim countries from entry to the United States has thrown those plans into question. "It is not clear yet if I will travel or not," Dakhil said. Trump said that the entry ban, which will apply for at least 90 days, will help make America safe from "radical Islamic terrorists".

MURKY INDONESIAN CULTS IN THE SPOTLIGHT AFTER SCANDALS

JAKARTA: Desperate and despondent after losing an Indonesian local election, Abdul Junaidi was the perfect prey for a charismatic cult leader promising great wealth and political success. Lured in with assurances that he would see his money multiply, the sugar cane farmer handed over 200 million rupiah (\$15,000) to the sect. But his cash disappeared, his political career stalled, and the leader of the group was arrested, accused of murdering one of Junaidi's friends for threatening to unmask him. "His promise was very tempting—that if I ran at elections, then I would win," the 50-year-old sugar cane farmer said.

The case is the latest example of a shadowy sect playing on the widespread belief of the supernatural in Indonesia to allegedly swindle people. Cult-like groups have long existed across the vast Indonesian archipelago, which is

home to hundreds of different ethnic groups and where belief in local spirits and black magic are often fused with the dominant religion of Islam. Belief in the supernatural is common across Asia. From China to Thailand, politicians often turn to soothsayers for advice.

But in recent times in Indonesia, the deep-rooted belief in the occult has taken a dark turn with several cases of sham cult leaders facing allegations ranging from murder to fraud and sexual assault. The most high-profile has been the one that embroiled Junaidi, who was among thousands persuaded to join a cult led by Taat Pribadi, who gave himself the Indonesian royal title "Dimas Kanjeng". From former lawmakers to army generals and police officers, Pribadi managed to attract a huge and influential following to his cult in Probolinggo on Indonesia's main

island of Java, with members living in his palatial residence and nearby buildings. He persuaded people to join the group with claims that he could bring them success in Junaidi's case by helping him win an election to head a small district on Java-and multiply money they gave him in an elaborate, supernatural ritual.

Magic money-making

The case attracted huge attention when videos went viral of Pribadi dressed in flowing white robes sitting on a chair and performing the ritual that ended with him producing fistfuls of money and throwing it onto the floor. His cult, which had existed for about 15 years, eventually fell apart when Pribadi was arrested in September for allegedly ordering the murder of two of his followers who had attempted to unmask him as a fraud.

He is scheduled to stand trial over the murders and police are also investigating fraud allegations against him. "I never got my original money back, and certainly did not see it multiply," Junaidi said. The killing of his friend finally pushed him to leave the cult after four years as a member, he added. Pribadi's case followed that of another alleged sham cult leader, Gatot Brajamusti, who attracted followers—including high-profile female entertainers—by styling himself as an Islamic spiritual guru. But he was arrested in August for allegedly sexually harassing his female followers and drug possession. Police say that he has admitted to engaging in sex parties and using crystal methamphetamine.

At times the belief in the occult in Indonesia has reached the highest levels of government. In 2014, then president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono recounted how he and his wife were attacked by mysterious black clouds while at home in an episode of black magic he described as like a "horror movie". Indonesian law even bans black magic, with violators facing up to three months in jail or a fine of 450,000 rupiah, and the government is seeking to strengthen legislation against the practice. — AFP



YANGON: Relatives of Ne Win, who was shot dead outside Yangon airport while trying to stop the gunman who assassinated Muslim lawyer Ko Ni, pay their respects at his funeral in Yangon yesterday. — AFP

MYANMAR HAILS TAXI DRIVER WHO DIED CONFRONTING AN ASSASSIN

YANGON: A Myanmar taxi driver was hailed as a national hero at his funeral yesterday, two days after he was killed trying to stop a gunman who murdered a prominent Muslim lawyer. Father-of-three Ne Win was shot dead outside Yangon airport as he chased a man who moments earlier had slain Ko Ni, an adviser to Aung San Suu Kyi, in what her party said was a political assassination. The daylight murders, in a country where political killings are rare, sent shockwaves through both Myanmar's already hard-pressed Muslim community and Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party.

There were emotional scenes yesterday as hundreds of mourners crammed into a Yangon cemetery to bury Ne Win, whose coffin was draped in the NLD's famous fighting peacock flag. His bereaved wife was swamped as mourners, monks and NLD figures crowded around the open coffin that bore his body. "He tried to catch an

evil man without thinking for his own life," the elderly patron of the NLD, Tin Oo, told mourners. "I praise Ne Win today for his brave work for the country on behalf of the NLD, other democratic forces and those who want peace."

Min Ko Naing, a student leader from the crushed 1988 anti-junta protests, described the taxi driver as part of a long line of Myanmar citizens who have sacrificed for a country that suffered under years of army rule. "Some people who give for the country become famous but there are many people who give for the country silently," he said. The alleged assassin, 53-year-old Kyi Lin, was arrested at the scene. Police have not said what his motivations were. Ko Ni was a prominent Muslim figure who spoke out against the increasingly vocal anti-Islamic sentiments of Buddhist hardliners and criticised the military's lingering grip on power. — AFP



JAKARTA: Photo shows various paraphernalia used by Indonesian faith healer Ki Raksa Manggala, who operates from a dark basement in Jakarta. — AFP

MUSIC COMES BACK TO SAUDI ARABIA

Continued from Page 1

The two events were bold steps forward for government plans to promote the entertainment and leisure sector, part of an economic and social reform drive aimed at creating jobs and weaning the country off its dependence on oil.

"It's an indescribable feeling," Muhandis, one of two other singers to perform, said after the show. "We were longing for such concerts in our beloved kingdom. The audience was longing for us and we were longing for them." The Jeddah concert was staged by Rotana, a company owned mostly by Saudi billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal. The kingdom's new General Entertainment Authority (GEA) has staged some 70 events since it was created last year, but mostly in smaller and protected semi-public spaces while officials are on the lookout for disapproval from religious conservatives.

Abdu was slated to perform in Riyadh in September, but the concert was cancelled at the last minute without explanation. Amr Al-Madani, the newly appointed GEA chief executive, declined to say whether a Riyadh concert was still in the works, but said the authority aims to double household spending on entertainment to 6 percent by 2030 and is com-

mitted to "experiences that Saudi families can enjoy together". Abdu first performed in the kingdom after a decade-long hiatus at the Souq Okaz festival in Taiz, near Makkah, in August.

Music in the kingdom was not always such a taboo. Summer festivals in Jeddah and other Saudi cities used to feature concerts. Musical instruments have been sold for decades at the popular Al-Halla market in downtown Riyadh. "Historically, Saudi society was rich in culture. There were many musical traditions, with different variations and subcultures," said Abdulsalam Al-Wayel, a professor of sociology at King Saud University. "People from throughout the Islamic world brought their traditions together in Makkah, somewhat like with jazz. This was part of people's identity for centuries."

But as conservatives gained power in the 1990s, the clerical establishment emboldened the kingdom's Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice (CPVPV) to crack down on performances and other activities they saw as immoral. The CPVPV's religious police chased after young men for playing music in their cars too loudly. Videos - regularly mocked by other Saudis - circulated online showing zealous men smashing musical instruments to pieces. — Reuters

CANADA SHOOTER RENTED FLAT NEAR QUEBEC...

Continued from Page 1

Another neighbor on the fourth floor never spoke to Bissonnette but frequently heard him playing the piano. A neighbor of his parents told the Canadian Broadcasting Corp he had lived in the apartment with his twin brother.

Police declined to discuss a motive for the shooting, but friends and online acquaintances told Canadian media that Bissonnette had expressed anti-immigration sentiments, especially toward Muslim refugees. Vigils were held in Quebec City, Montreal and other cities on Monday evening. The large turnout showed people rejected hate speech and wanted to be inclusive, Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard said. "I think it's a turning point for Quebec, to see people rallying around values like that," he told reporters in Quebec City, the provincial capital, yesterday. "Our society is not perfect. No society is perfect ... racism, xenophobia and exclusion exist here. We have to recognize that and act together to highlight the path we want society to take," Couillard said.

Bissonnette did not hide his hostility toward Muslims during his long interrogation by police, Montreal's La Presse newspaper said, quoting a source close to the investigation. He was also interested in guns, and practiced shooting at a local club near the provincial capital, La Presse reported. Police have not released specific details of the weapon used in the attack, other than to say it was a restricted firearm.

A social science student and former cadet known in online circles for his right-wing views, Bissonnette was

described by a former classmate as a "nerdy outcast". Bissonnette made a brief appearance in court on Monday under tight security. Prosecutors said all of the evidence was not yet ready, and Bissonnette, a student at Universite Laval, was set to appear again on Feb 21. No charges were read in court and Bissonnette did not enter a plea. His lawyer, Jean Petit, declined to comment at the courthouse on Monday.

Quebec's public safety minister, Martin Coiteux, said security at all religious institutions across the province had been heightened, particularly at mosques. He added that while police always treated reports of religious harassment and hate speech seriously, they had not always done a good job of letting communities know the results of their probes. "We will pay particular attention to feedback," he told yesterday's news conference.

In Montreal, Quebec's largest city, police were increasing their presence at mosques and other Muslim institutions and watching for possible hate speech online. "When you have an incident like the one in Quebec, people are worried ... we will maintain a very high level of vigilance," the city's police chief, Philippe Pichet, told French-language public broadcaster Radio-Canada.

Both law enforcement and intelligence agencies in the United States believe the suspect was sympathetic to right-wing nationalist ideology, and that this was likely a major factor in his motive for the attack, US officials said. On his Facebook page, Bissonnette indicated he liked Le Pen, Trump, the separatist Parti Quebecois, as well as Canada's leftwing New Democratic Party, the

SHEIKH SALMAN SAYS SPORTS BAN CAUSED...

Continued from Page 1

Cabinet ministers are not allowed to vote on no-confidence motions. If the motion receives the needed support, the minister will be automatically dismissed.

The three lawmakers who grilled the minister - Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei and Abdulwahab Al-Babtain - charged the minister of focusing on personal struggles in the sports field rather than trying to lift the suspension. They insisted that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the world football controlling body FIFA have slapped sanctions on Kuwait because the government interfered in local sports and violated the Olympic Charter. The lawmakers also stressed that the government - represented by Sheikh Salman - ignored many ultimatums sent by the IOC and refused to amend sports legislation seen as interference in sports by IOC, FIFA and other international sports federations.

During the debate, Babtain accused the minister of causing the international sanctions on Kuwaiti sports, saying that he has failed to respect international laws and charters which Kuwait had signed in the early 1960s. He said that under the Olympic Charter, Kuwaiti laws dealing with sports must be compatible with international sports laws and before introducing any change to the Kuwaiti laws, the IOC must be consulted in advance.

Babtain said that the minister was responsible for changing sports legislation that brought about the international sanctions. He also disputed the minister's argument that the IOC and FIFA decision was an act of interference in Kuwait's sovereignty, saying that abiding by the Olympic Charter does not mean conceding sovereignty.

The lawmaker recalled a letter by HH the Amir Sheikh

Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to the IOC in 2012 in which he pledged changes to the Kuwaiti legislation that enabled Kuwait to take part in the London Olympics. He asked whether the Amir's action conceded the country's sovereignty. Babtain also accused the minister of misleading the Kuwaiti people and the National Assembly by hiding some correspondence with IOC, adding that the IOC had asked the minister for a meeting two weeks before the suspension and he refused.

He said the minister has claimed that the suspension was caused by some Kuwaitis occupying positions in world sports bodies, but IOC clearly said in a letter on Oct 13, 2015 that the cause was contradictions between Kuwaiti sports laws and the Olympic Charter, adding that the minister did not disclose the letter to the Assembly. Babtain warned the minister that losing the cases filed against FIFA and IOC could result in the two bodies demanding compensation worth billions of dollars.

Subaei said that authorities in Kuwait have promised the IOC and FIFA to make the necessary amendments and did not fulfill their pledges. He cited several examples of countries like India, Iran and others that were forced to make legislative amendments to be compatible with the Olympic Charter. He charged that the minister has no plan to resolve the sports crisis and advised him to withdraw the two lawsuits against FIFA and IOC, and warned that Kuwait could end up paying a huge compensation.

Tabtabaei accused the minister of committing a large number of financial and administrative violations in the two ministries. He said that public freedoms have seriously deteriorated under the minister. He also cited a number of dubious contracts for which the ministry paid millions of dinars for what look like corrupt contracts.

IRAN REFUSES TO CONFIRM TESTING BALLISTIC...

Continued from Page 1

The Iranian people would never allow their defense to be subject to the permission of others."

And he slammed the new US administration's "shameful act of denying entry to people holding legal visas" for the United States. Speaking at the same news conference, Ayrault said France had made clear its disquiet over the missile tests. "France has expressed its concern at Iran's continuation of its ballistic missile tests on several occasions," he said. He said the continued tests are "contrary to the spirit" of the Security Council resolution on the nuclear deal struck in 2015 in the Austrian capital, and "hamper the process of restoring the confidence established by the Vienna agreement".

Washington called for the emergency UN meeting after a request by Israel which said the missile test violated UN resolutions that bar Iran from launching ballistic missiles that could have a nuclear capability. "The international community must not bury its head in the sand in the face of this Iranian aggression," said Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon. "The Security Council members must act immediately in response to these Iranian actions which endanger not only Israel, but the entire Middle East."

But Russia indicated it had little appetite for any move to censure Iran at the Security Council over the reported missile test. "Such actions, if they took place, do not breach the resolution," Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov told Interfax news agency. Ryabkov said that Moscow, which co-signed the nuclear deal, had not confirmed the missile test took place.

Zarif has said that its ballistic missile launches are not banned under UN Security Council Resolution 2231 because the prohibition only applies to missiles specifically designed to carry nuclear warheads. Iran has long argued that general missile tests are not banned, nor are those applying to ones capable of carrying nuclear warheads - so long as that was not their designated purpose. The US, which still maintains its own set of sanctions against Iran, has argued that previous ballistic missile launches are in defiance of the ban.

Meanwhile, the European Union called on Tehran to "refrain from activities which deepen mistrust". EU foreign policy spokeswoman Nabila Massrali said that a ballistic missile test would not be a violation of the nuclear deal with world powers. However she said it was "inconsistent" with Resolution 2231. "Whether it constitutes a violation is for the Security Council to determine," she said. —Agencies

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Focus

FREED GIRLS LEARN HINDI TO RETRACE TRAFFICKING ROUTES

Babli has a copy of a month-old Hindi newspaper under her pillow that she regularly pulls out to read about the Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's postponed visit to India - her finger running across the words, connecting her to her homeland. Trafficked from Bangladesh and sold into a brothel in Mumbai, Babli started learning Hindi last year at a shelter in Kandivali, a northern Mumbai suburb, where she was put up after being rescued.

She can now read, write and speak the language fluently thanks to Hindi classes that help girls identify their trafficking routes and record more accurate testimony. An inadvertent outcome of these lessons at the Rescue Foundation shelter is that a handful of the girls have also bagged places in regular schools this year. "I was brought to Kolkata from Bangladesh, but I couldn't read the names of train stations that I crossed on my way to Mumbai," Babli told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "I realized I was in Mumbai from snatches of conversations of people around me days after I reached the city."

Babli's mother tongue is Bengali, like thousands of girls trafficked to Mumbai every year from Bangladesh and the eastern Indian state of West Bengal - two culturally similar regions separated by a porous border. More than 80 percent girls sold for commercial sexual exploitation in India in 2014 were from West Bengal, according to government data. Illiteracy is a major obstacle to anti-trafficking efforts with most trafficked girls having never been to school or forced to drop out early, campaigners say.

"During the investigation, the girls were never able to recall places they crossed before they reached Mumbai," said Triveni Acharya of Rescue Foundation. "Now we use a map in Hindi, show them the border area and ask them to identify states or districts they may have crossed." A study by the Dasra NGO marked the northern Hindi-speaking towns of Varanasi and Gorakhpur as hubs in the trafficking routes towards Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai.

Activists say identifying routes is important to step up police vigilance in these areas but also to protect the girls who go back home after a court case, and are once again exposed to trafficking risks. Girls stay at the shelter until their matter is settled in court, which can take several years. Some go back home after they turn 18, while others choose to stay on to pursue a career.

Key Witnesses

Between 500 and 28,000 girls are trafficked from Nepal and Bangladesh into India annually, according to the estimates of various non-profit groups. "People living on the border of West Bengal and Bangladesh share the same culture, celebrate the same festivals and speak the same language - Bengali," said Vivian Isaac of My Choices Foundation, who has mapped India's trafficking patterns.

Acharya of Rescue Foundation hit the language barrier a decade ago and hired Bengali translators to understand what the rescued girls were saying. "Up to 2005, most girls trafficked to Mumbai were from Nepal. But after that, [they were] largely from Bangladesh, West Bengal and also the northeastern state of Assam," Acharya said. While Bengali translators helped, nuances that could enable an effective investigation were lost. And that's when Hindi lessons started at this shelter about a decade ago.

"The girls started understanding questions posed at them in courts," said Harish Bhandari, a lawyer who fights trafficking cases in lower and district courts, where although English and Marathi are used, judges switch to Hindi to enable communication. "These girls are key witnesses in trafficking cases and it is important for them to understand the court procedure and the real intent of questions they are asked." In two cases, girls revised their statements once the charge sheets were prepared, adding more information once they were able to express themselves better, Acharya said.

Back to School

What started as informal classes at the shelter is now an organized activity. Every morning, girls assemble for Hindi, English and Mathematics lessons given by trained teachers. This year, some girls have got into regular schools and 10 of the nearly 80 girls aged between 15 and 17 living here will sit the high school exam in March. The Hindi lessons have even helped Hindi-speaking girls like Pari, a teenager who grew up in Mumbai and is now at the shelter. She said she couldn't read the official papers she put her thumbprint on. "We should know what we are signing," she said. — Reuters

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A GIFT TO EXTREMISTS



US FLAILING IN ONLINE FIGHT AGAINST IS

A counter-propaganda program aimed at thwarting Islamic State recruiting over social media is plagued by incompetence, cronyism and skewed data, an AP investigation has found. Known as "WebOps", the program was launched several years ago by a small group of civilian contractors and military officers assigned to the information operations division at US Central Command's headquarters in Tampa.

But internal documents and interviews with more than a dozen people knowledgeable about WebOps suggest a program that appears aimed more at enriching contractors than thwarting terrorism. The people interviewed by AP requested anonymity because they are prohibited from speaking publicly about WebOps due to the sensitive nature of the work and they fear professional repercussions. WebOps relies on dozens of Arabic-speaking analysts who scour Twitter and other social media platforms for people whose postings suggest they are vulnerable to the Islamic State's siren call. Using fictitious identities, the civilian analysts then reach out to these potential recruits and urge them not to join the extremists.

But current and former WebOps employees cite examples of analysts who had scant experience in counter-propaganda, couldn't speak Arabic fluently and had so little understanding of Islam that they were no match for the Islamic State's online recruiters. The program ran into problems at times when the online targets noticed the lack of linguistic skills, the employees said.

'Palestinian salad'

"One of the things about jihadis: they are very good in

Arabic," said an Arabic specialist who previously worked on WebOps. It's hard to establish rapport with a potential terror recruit when - as one former worker told the AP - translators repeatedly mix up the Arabic words for "salad" and "authority". That's led to open ridicule on social media about references to the "Palestinian salad".

Four current or former workers told the AP that they had witnessed WebOps data being manipulated to create the appearance of success and that many other employees were aware of the problem. Yet the companies carrying out the program for Central Command have dodged attempts to implement independent oversight and assessment of the data. The information operations division that runs WebOps is the command's epicenter for firing back at the Islamic State's online propaganda machine, using the Internet to sway public opinion in a swath of the globe that stretches from Central Asia to the Horn of Africa.

Early last year, the government opened the bidding on a new counter-propaganda contract - separate from WebOps - that is worth as much as \$500 million. Months after the AP started reporting about the bidding process, the Naval Criminal Investigative Service told AP it had begun an investigation. NCIS spokesman Ed Buice said the service is investigating a whistleblower's "allegations of corruption" stemming from how the contract was awarded.

The WebOps program is run by the Alabama-based Colsa Corporation, which uses specialized software that mines social media accounts. Colsa referred questions about the program to Central Command. Central Command spokesman Andy Stephens declined repeated requests for information about WebOps and the new contract, and did

not respond to detailed questions the AP sent on Jan 10.

Conflicts of Interest

The whistleblower's complaint alleges multiple conflicts of interest that included division officers being treated to lavish dinners paid for by a contractor. The complaint also alleges routine drinking at the office where classified work is conducted. The drinking was confirmed by multiple contractors, who spoke to AP and described a frat house atmosphere where happy hour started at 3 pm.

One of the most damning accusations leveled by the whistleblower is against Army Col Victor Garcia, who led the information operations division until July 2016, when his tour at Central Command ended and he moved into a new military assignment. The whistleblower alleges that Garcia used his influence to steer the contract to a team of vendors that included a close friend's firm. The AP obtained a screengrab from a Facebook page that shows Garcia and the friend at a tiki bar in Key Largo two weeks before the winning team was officially announced. The photo was also turned over to NCIS investigators by the whistleblower, who contended the photo created a "clear impression and perception of impropriety."

Garcia, a West Point graduate and decorated officer, denied any wrongdoing, describing the complaint as "character assassination". Garcia, who moved to his new post two months before the contract was awarded, said he scrupulously avoided any discussions about the contract with his friend and his former deputy, who served on the five-member panel that reviewed all of the bids. "Because I was aware of these conflicts of interest, I intentionally kept myself out of that process, with any of these contract processes," Garcia said. — AP

'BAKED SLOP': DELAWARE STICKS TO PRISON LOAF

Dinner is served in cellblock 18, and one can't help but approach it with trepidation. It's finger food - not even sporks allowed - sitting unadorned on a piece of brown paper. The stuff of legend and lawsuits. "I would equate it to the zucchini bread my mom used to make, except for the surprise pineapple pieces," said Delaware corrections commissioner Robert Coupe. Prisoner No. 256265 has a simpler description. "Basically, it's baked slop," Kevin Dickens said as he picked at a hunk of nutraloaf during a recent prison interview.

Dickens is no stranger to the concoction also known as an alternative meal plan. He's been on a loaf diet for longer than any other Delaware inmate - five straight weeks. Prisons and jails in other states also have served "the loaf" to unruly inmates, typically for misbehavior involving food or bodily waste, but its use is on the decline following years of lawsuits around the country, some equating it to cruel and unusual punishment.

Prison officials maintain that the loaf is not meant as punishment. They consider it a behavioral management tool, used in response to disruptive conduct that threatens the safety of prison operations. Nevertheless, the New York Department of Corrections agreed to eliminate its "special management meal" in 2015 as part of a settlement of a broader ACLU lawsuit over prison conditions. Pennsylvania replaced the loaf with bagged meals in October, and Maryland prison chief Stephen Moyer last month rescinded a directive allowing its use following a query by AP.

"The secretary was unaware of the directive ... and just believes there are other disciplinary options," said Maryland DOC spokesman Gerard Shields, adding that the loaf had been used only sparingly. Virginia prison officials still use what they call "diet loaf," but a corrections spokesman said they

do not track its use and declined to provide a copy of related policy guidelines. According to American Correctional Association standards, alternative meal service should be based only on health or safety considerations, meet basic nutritional requirements, and be used for no more than seven days, absent administrative review and approval of a health care practitioner. It's unclear how many prisons and jails still use the loaf, but Prison Legal News, a project of the nonprofit Human Rights Defense Center, reported last year that at least a dozen state prison systems still have it. "It is my understanding that any use of nutraloaf by prisons and jails around the country is pretty limited," Jon Nichols, executive director of the Association of Correctional Food Service Affiliates, said in an email. Delaware, however, is sticking with its alternative diet. Coupe said it was served to 30 inmates in 2015 and to 17 last year. A first occurrence of misbehavior involving food or bodily waste is subject to a nutraloaf diet for three consecutive days. A subsequent occurrence can result in seven more days. Coupe said a decision to order a loaf diet requires a medical review and approval by the warden.

'Constructively starved'

Meanwhile, state officials are asking a federal judge to dismiss a lawsuit filed by Dickens over his treatment in prison, including a claim that he was "constructively starved" when placed on a nutraloaf diet for five consecutive weeks in 2009. "It started to affect my health. I lost like 60 pounds," said Dickens, who says he suffered from frequent blackouts and low blood pressure.

Prison officials maintain that they did not violate Dickens' rights and that the loaf provides the daily nutrients a prisoner needs. That doesn't mean it has to taste good. During the AP's visit with Dickens, prison officials served a loaf for a taste test. "They always bring out the best for the company," joked Dickens, saying the loaf was moist and well-cooked, with a better consistency than usual. This reporter found the "best" to be a bland, brownish, earthy, suet-like concoction, occupying a culinary space somewhere between a loaf and a casserole. A crumbly, zucchini bread-type mashup gone awry. Not as awful as feared, but sorely wanting some spicing or saucing up.

During a follow-up prison visit, the AP got a chance to taste another loaf, which had more of an orange tint, perhaps because of more cheese sauce or carrots, even though kitchen workers follow a strict recipe. This version was far tastier than the first, with prison staffers agreeing it was roughly com-

parable to lasagna. "It's all right. It will fill you up," inmate Antoine Money said after his first taste of nutraloaf. Money, who works as a diet cook in the prison kitchen, has prepared nutraloaf several times for other prisoners but, unlike Dickens, had never tasted it previously. "I think Mr Dickens was keeping the AMP in business for a while," food service director Chris Senato said jokingly. Dickens, who was sentenced to four years behind bars in 2002 for assault, has been convicted 18 times since then for assault in a detention facility, often involving flinging bodily waste.

Without those additional 18 charges, he would have been released in 2006 but is now looking at a release date of 2051.

Dickens says he's not a troublemaker and that guards frequently bait him and taunt him. "Rules go both ways. Your authority ends where abuse begins," said Dickens, who has developed a strategy for confronting the loaf: He first goes for the pineapple chunks, then picks around the corners and edges for whatever else he can stomach. "It's not something you swallow easily," he said. "After you take two or three bites, you want to gargle and barf!" — AP

DONORS PAY TO ERASE STUDENT LUNCH DEBTS

Ashley C Ford felt driven to act by a sad fact of life in the nation's school cafeterias: Kids with unpaid lunch accounts are often embarrassed with a substitute meal of a cold cheese sandwich and a carton of milk. Ford, a New York City writer, appealed to her 66,000 Twitter followers with a solution. "A cool thing you can do today is try to find out which of your local schools have kids with overdue lunch accounts and pay them off."

In the nearly two months since, people around the country have been inspired to donate thousands of dollars to erase debts owed by parents that can follow kids throughout their school careers. In Minnesota, an online fundraising effort has paid almost \$100,000 in lunch debt in Minneapolis schools and \$28,000 in St. Paul's. Donors, mostly anonymous, erased \$6,000 in debts in Topeka, Kansas, \$2,000 in Bellevue, Washington, \$1,200 in Wilmington, Delaware, and \$900 in Herminie, Pennsylvania.

"It really hit home for me," said Kristina Arwood, of Evansville, Indiana, who launched a campaign that raised \$20,000 to pay lunch debts in her region. "I grew up on free and reduced-price lunches, but even that 40 cents was hard to get together with four kids. There were times I wouldn't eat because I didn't have money and didn't want to be labeled as the poor kid." Jill Draper, a yarn maker in the

Hudson Valley town of Kingston, New York, said she was inspired by Ford's tweet to collect money toward the \$6,000 in debts owed by 600 students in her city's schools. "It seemed like a really easy way to make a positive difference locally," said Draper, who has no children. "It's amazing how one tweet became this crazy movement."

Draper said the effort drew some criticism from people who said some of the money is owed by parents who can afford the \$2.50 for lunch but let their accounts run into the red. "But the response has been mostly positive, with really sweet notes from people who donate," she said. Children from the poorest families get free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch. But some struggle to pay even reduced prices, and some families who would qualify for free or reduced prices fail to fill out the necessary paperwork. Some of the IOUs come from kids who simply forget their lunch money or parents who can afford to pay but neglect to keep prepaid accounts up to date.

Most school districts allow children to run a tab for a certain number of meals if they come up short. Others give them an alternate meal of a cheese or peanut butter sandwich and fruit. If parents ignore school notices about their child's overdrawn lunch account, the debt may be sent to a collection agency. Ultimately, taxpayers may have to cover it. — AP



A partially eaten chunk of nutraloaf sits in front of inmate Kevin Dickens. — AP

HULL CITY SIGN DEFENDER RANOCCHIA



LONDON: Hull City have signed Italian defender Andrea Ranocchia on loan until the end of the season from Inter Milan, the English Premier League club said yesterday. Ranocchia, who has 21 caps for Italy, will ease the defensive problems at Hull who have been left short of options in after Curtis Davies injured his hamstring during Sunday's 4-1 FA Cup defeat at second-tier Fulham. The 28-year-old Ranocchia has played nine times for Inter this season and has fallen out of favour with new manager Stefano Pioli. The tough-tackling defender will be available for selection, subject to international clearance, when Hull, who are second bottom in the league table, two points away from safety after 22 games, travel to face sixth-placed Manchester United today. —Reuters

LA LIGA TO INTRODUCE VIDEO REFEREES BY 2018

MADRID: Video referees are expected to be used in Spanish soccer by the 2018-19 season when they are fully approved by FIFA, La Liga president Javier Tebas has said. Tebas was speaking after Sunday's 1-1 draw between Barcelona and Real Betis, a game in which champions Barca appeared to have been denied a clear goal. Video replays showed that after Betis' Cristiano Piccini diverted Alex Vidal's pass toward goal the ball crossed the line by around a meter before defender Aissi Mandi slid in and scrambled the it away. "The tests are already underway. We have been working on video referees for the last eight months," Tebas told El Pais. "We will be testing it from next season in La Liga," he added. "If FIFA finally approve it, we will start using it from July 2018." Football's law-making body IFAB approved last March a two-year trial of the video assistant referee (VAR) system with access to replays to help match officials review key decisions. Unlike other top leagues in Europe, La Liga does not have goal-line technology available because it is considered too expensive to be put in place. Barcelona coach Luis Enrique believes the officials need assistance. — Reuters

UNHAPPY LEICESTER STRIKER ULLOA THREATENS STRIKE

LONDON: Leicester's unsettled striker Leonardo Ulloa has threatened to go on strike to force a deadline transfer yesterday. Ulloa handed in a transfer request two weeks ago but the Premier League champions have reportedly rejected a bid from Spanish club Alaves because manager Claudio Ranieri would prefer to keep him. The 30-year-old Ulloa posted on his Twitter account: "With all respect for LCFC FANS. I feel betrayed by Ranieri and let down by the club. "I will not play again for them..." Ulloa is disgruntled after starting just once in the Premier League this season and he has not been offered a new deal after helping the Foxes win the title last season. The Argentine added on Sky Sports News: "I can't understand the situation or why they don't let me continue playing my football somewhere else. "If I stay at the club it's going to affect seriously my career and my future. The best thing for both parties is that they sell me to another club." —AFP



KUWAIT TOPS MEDAL TABLE WITH 5 GOLD

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations, Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee of HH the Amir 6th Shooting Grand Prix congratulated HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on the 11th anniversary of his ascension to power, and wished him more success in leading Kuwait to more success and that may Allah grant him good health.

Al-Otaibi lauded the competitions all along the past days, adding that they were strong and highly competitive, and congratulated all winning shooters. Al-Otaibi wished that the competition continue as strong until the end.

Kuwait's shooter Talal Abadallah Al-Rashidi said he won gold and a bronze medal in the Arab Championship, and attributed his success to training camps he participated in, as well as efforts exerted by the shooting club that helped him to prepare very well.

Al-Rashidi dedicated his medals to the Kuwaiti people and promised to win more in the upcoming events. President of Egypt and African Shooting Federations

Hazim Hosni lauded HH the Amir Shooting Grand Prix as far as organization and hospitality are concerned and described as marvelous from all aspects.

He said Egyptian shooting is happy to be in Kuwait and hoped the Grand Prix continues for years and years to come. He said Egypt did not participate with a large number of shooters, but were able to win the air rifle gold, but did not win in the trap. On her part, Egyptian shooter Shaima Hashad, who won the women's 10m Air Rifle gold medal said the competition was very strong and results were close to each other as the numbers showed. She said she benefited from participating by getting in touch with outstanding shooters especially those from the Gulf region. Competition continued to be heated during events of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Sixth International Grand Prix being held at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex as the following results show:

In the women's individual 10m Air Rifle: Shaima Abdellatif Hashad from Egypt took first place

with the score of 206.9 points, followed by Nouf Al-Dousary from Bahrain with 204.9 points while Kuwait's Mariam Irzouqi ended in third with 184.4.

While in the teams event:

First place went to Bahrain, with shooters Nouf Al-Dousary, Sarah Al-Dousary and Safa Al-Dousary scoring 1229.9 points, while second place was won by Qatar as shooters Ayesha Al-Suwaidi, Noura Al-Muhannadi and Ayesha Al-Mutawa scored 1214.1 points.

In the individual trap event:

First place went to Morocco's Idris Al-Hafawi, second place to Kuwait's Abdelrahman Nasser Al-Faihan and third went to Talal Abdallah Al-Rashidi also from Kuwait.

The team trap event saw Kuwait's team of Abdelrahman Al-Faihan, Talal Al-Rashidi and Khalid Al-Mudhaf take first place. While Lebanon ended in second place with Alain Mousa, Haship Jabbar and Jad Hamada.

Third place was claimed by UAE with Hamad Al-Kindy, Waleed Al-Aryani and Ahmad Al-Hamadi.



Medals Tally

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Kuwait	5	2	5	12
Saudi Arabia	2	1	1	4
Bahrain	2	1	-	3
Qatar	1	4	1	6
Egypt	1	-	-	1
Morocco	1	-	-	1
Lebanon	-	2	-	2
Oman	-	1	4	5
Iraq	-	1	-	1
UAE	-	-	1	1.



BEARDED PRINCESS, 'FAKE BRADY' LAUNCH SUPER BOWL PARTY

HOUSTON: The final countdown to the biggest date on the US sporting calendar kicked off here Monday with a traditional media circus greeting the arrival of Super Bowl 51 opponents New England and Atlanta. Thousands of fans and several hundred journalists from across the globe thronged MinuteMaid Park, the home of the Houston Astros baseball team, as the Patriots and Falcons held court ahead of next Sunday's showpiece in Texas.

The Super Bowl protagonists have almost become secondary to the spectacle in recent years, with the prime-time event becoming a byword for the surreal. On Monday, two reporters from an Austrian television network dressed as prince and princess—the princess sporting a generous beard—before heading off for interviews.

Meanwhile, a reporter for Bleacher Report donned an eerily lifelike mask of New England quarterback Tom Brady while posing for selfies with onlookers who included Simone Biles, the pint-sized superstar US Olympic gymnast doing a guest stint for television.

Cooper Manning, the oldest brother of Super Bowl-winning quarterback siblings Peyton and Eli, popped up wearing a garish suit made of fake dollars.

On a stage, Patriots' billionaire owner Robert Kraft and his Atlanta Falcons counterpart, Arthur Blank, took questions about who was the most famous celebrity on each other's cellphone. (Blank named country music star Kenny Chesney; Kraft opted for Elton John).

Kraft, who is preparing for his eighth Super Bowl as Patriots owner, was later asked what was the best decision of his 23-year ownership of the team.

"Hiring Bill Belichick," he said without hesitation, naming the coach who on Sunday could claim his fifth Super Bowl victory guiding the Patriots.

BRADY CENTER STAGE

Almost an afterthought among the good-natured chaos were the players. The Falcons, preparing for only the second Super Bowl in the franchise's history, appeared first to a soundtrack of booming music and dry ice.

Unsurprisingly, a large scrum of journalists surrounded a riser where Falcons quar-

terback Matt Ryan took questions for nearly an hour. Among the nuggets Ryan coughed up was the fact that he has been in regular contact with New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning, who masterminded two defeats of Brady and the Patriots in past Super Bowls.

"We've been in touch, yes," Ryan said. But the unquestioned man of the hour remained Brady, who is chasing a fifth Super Bowl crown on Sunday at the age of 39, 15 years after first leading the Patriots to the title.

Unsurprisingly, many questions related to Brady's relationship with Roger Goodell, the NFL commissioner who imposed a four-game suspension on the quarterback at the start of the season for his role in the Deflategate saga.

Brady deftly sidestepped questions about whether Goodell handing him the Vince Lombardi Trophy on Sunday would be an awkward moment.

"Well, I just hope we win and that we're in that situation where we can go celebrate," Brady said. "I've just been thinking about the game, and the game I'm going to play. I'm not worried about post game or anything like that."

Asked for his opinion on why Goodell skipped visits to Gillette Stadium recently, Brady replied: "I just want to be positive tonight, and talk about how great a football team were playing. Just be positive, how's that?"

US gymnast Biles, meanwhile, wanted to know what Brady's favorite food was: "Cheeseburger. What's yours?" Asked by another questioner whether he ever exclaimed: "Don't touch the face!" when he was tackled, Brady replied: "No. We wear face masks."

He revealed that his supermodel wife, Gisele Bündchen, did harbor concerns for his safety, however. "She always says 'Throw the ball really fast. Really fast!'" he said. But Brady steadfastly refused to be drawn on the political turmoil engulfing the United States following US President Donald Trump's controversial travel restrictions. Asked for his views on the state of the world, he replied: "What's going on with the world? I haven't paid much attention to what's going on. I'm just a positive person. I just want the best for everybody." —AFP



Jon Rahm

JON RAHM QUICK STUDY AND A RISING STAR

SAN DIEGO: It took Jon Rahm four tournaments to secure a PGA Tour card out of college, and 12 events as a pro to deliver his first PGA Tour victory. And it was far from routine.

The 22-year-old from Spain roared out of the pack to shoot 30 on the back nine at Torrey Pines, one of the toughest tracks on the PGA Tour, and finish with a birdie and a 60-foot eagle putt to win the Farmers Insurance Open. He turned pro seven months ago and already is No. 46 in the world.

Rahm is on the fast track to stardom. Just don't get the idea it was an easy path. Rahm grew up in Berrika, a town of about 1,500 in the Basque country of northern Spain. He was recruited to play at Arizona State, which has more than 50,000 students at its main campus in Tempe. Rahm spoke barely enough English to process and sentence and answer either "yes" or "no." "When I showed up to my first class, there were 375 people," he said. "And I came from a high school where the biggest class was 30 people. It was pretty different. I thought I walked into a movie theater, to be honest. I thought it was just a movie theater and I was in the wrong place. I'll never forget that."

Sure, it was intimidating, but not enough to scare him away. Rahm stayed all four years as a Sun Devil. He won 11 times, won the Ben Hogan Award the last two years as the top male collegian and finished off his career with a degree in communications and the Jack Nicklaus Award for the NCAA Division I player of the year.

"I never thought I couldn't make it," he said. "I really don't think that I can't make it, really ever. That's probably what happened today." He was never too far off the lead, though his name didn't resonate because there were so many players with a chance on Sunday. At one point, 10 players were separated by one shot. Rahm got into the mix quickly with a tee shot into the bunker on the par-5 13th, which typically means laying up at the base of the hill. That was his plan, anyway.

PERFECT

But then he looked over at his caddie, Adam Hayes, who told him, "Right at it, all day." And what's what Rahm was thinking from 227 yards out. He rehearsed in his head how he wanted the 4-iron to feel and the flight it should take, and he pulled it off perfectly. It settled 18 feet behind the cup and he made it for eagle.

Just like that, he was tied for the lead, and he never gave it back until his birdie-eagle finish. So solid was his game that he hit his last 11 greens in regulation, and putted for birdie on all but one hole in the final round.

"Jon doesn't have weakness. Every part of his game is a strength," said Phil Mickelson, whose brother Tim was the golf coach at Arizona State to recruited Rahm and served as a father figure to him. Tim Mickelson now is Rahm's agent.

"When my brother coached him at Arizona State, he would go up to him and say, 'What do you need from me, coach?' He says, 'I need you to birdie three of the last five holes.' And he'd go do it. It's just a little something that it's hard to quantify. But he has that intangible."

He also has full command of English, another tribute to Tim Mickelson. Rahm knew he needed to learn English quickly, for his studies and his comfort level on the golf course. It didn't help that Alberto Sanchez of Mexico was on his team, making it easy to converse in Spanish. Mickelson laid down the law. For every word spoken in Spanish in front of the team, he had to do one "burpee" — a pushup, jumping to his feet, followed by another pushup. "So you say a sentence that has 10 words, you're making 10 burpees," Rahm said. "And they're not easy. They're tiring. And if he catches you having a five-minute conversation, you do not want to know what's going on next."

The ease of his English was helped along by studying not just his school work, but rap music—specifically Kendrick Lamar and Eminem. His favorite was Lamar's "Swimming Pools."

"I took me almost four years to memorize the entire song," he said. Now he returns to his second home in the Phoenix Open this week, where he finished three shots out of the lead as a junior at Arizona State. Rahm is in the Masters, The Players Championship, the PGA Championship and at least one World Golf Championship. Life can move pretty fast. Except with his talent, he's not going anywhere. —AP



HOUSTON: A fan holds a sign during opening night for the NFL Super Bowl 51 football game between the New England Patriots and the Atlanta Falcons at Minute Maid Park Monday, in Houston. — AP

RUSSIAN OLYMPIC BOBSLED CHAMPION BANNED FOR DOPING

MOSCOW: A Russian bobsledder who won a gold medal at the 2014 Olympics has been banned for four years for doping.

Dmitry Trunenkov, who won the four-man bobsled at the Sochi Games, tested positive last year and has been banned by the Russian Bobsled Federation, the Russian Anti-Doping Agency said yesterday. The ban won't affect his Olympic gold medal. Trunenkov said the banned anabolic steroid stanozolol was found in his sample, but denied doping and said he would consult lawyers about a possible appeal. He also suggested the test was faked to discredit Russian sports.

"This substance was used by athletes back in the 80s of the last century and you have to be a complete idiot to use it these days," he said in a statement on the army sports club website. "In my view it's yet another provocation aimed at the whole of Russian sports."

While stanozolol is best known as the substance which cost Ben Johnson his Olympic gold medal in the 100 meters in 1988, it has been involved in recent doping

cases for athletes around the world in sports as diverse as weightlifting, baseball, and Champions League soccer. Thirteen athletes, mostly from ex-Soviet countries, have tested positive for stanozolol in Olympic drug sample retests from the 2008 and 2012 Games.

Trunenkov's ban is backdated to April 2016, four months before he retired from competition to focus on his role leading a patriotic youth group set up by the Russian armed forces. The inquiry into Trunenkov was separate from ongoing investigations into allegations of widespread, state-sponsored doping by Russia at the 2014 Sochi Olympics, which allegedly involved 12 medalists.

RUSADA also announced a four-year ban for race walker Alexander Yargunkin, who tested positive shortly before he was due to represent Russia at the 2015 world athletics championships. Also, rower Yulia Solomentseva, who won silver at the 2014 world junior championships, was given a one-year sanction after being found guilty of failing to make herself available for testing. — AP



INNSBRUCK: In this Saturday, Jan. 18 2014 file photo Russia's third placed Alexander Zubkov, left, and Dmitry Trunenkov pose for media after the two-men bob race at the Bob World Cup in Innsbruck, Austria. The Russian Anti-Doping Agency said yesterday that Dmitry Trunenkov, who won the four-man bobsled at the Sochi Games, tested positive last year and has been banned by the Russian Bobsled Federation. —AP

DOCTOR AND COURIER IN WIGGINS ROW TO FACE PROBE

LONDON: The doctor and the courier at the heart of an inquiry into the contents of a medical package given to cycling great Bradley Wiggins are set to be questioned by a committee of British lawmakers. Dr Richard Freeman and Simon Cope, a former British Cycling women's team manager, will be asked about the drug in the Jiffy bag given to Wiggins in June 2011 and the alleged absence of why there appears to be no record of the contents. The February 22 hearing of the House of Commons culture, media and sport select committee, is also set to receive evidence on the same day from United Kingdom Anti-Doping chief executive Nicole Sapstead. UKAD's own investigation into "potential wrongdoing" during the incident is set to be completed by then.

The issue had become highly controversial amid general allegations that the therapeutic use exemption (TUE) procedure—official notes allowing athletes to use otherwise banned substances—may have been abused.

Cope, who now works for Team Wiggins, told Tuesday's edition of The Times: "I want to clear it up because I'm fed up with my name being dragged through the mud." "To this day, hand on heart, on my kids' hearts, I do not know what was in there. I was asked to do a job." UKAD launched an investigation into allegations of wrongdoing involving the team and the national governing body following a Daily Mail newspaper report about the delivery of a mystery package to the Sky team at the end of the Criterium du Dauphine race in June 2011, a month before

Wiggins' first TUE for triamcinolone.

Following two months' silence about what was in the package, Sky principal and former British Cycling performance director Dave Brailsford informed the same committee of lawmakers in December that he had been told it contained a legal decongestant.

Committee chairman Damian Collins, in a statement issued late Monday, said: "We need to know if UKAD has received documentary evidence which confirms what was in the package that was delivered by Simon Cope to Team Sky." "Without this evidence, I am concerned about how it is possible for the anti-doping rules to be policed in an appropriate manner, if it is not possible to review the records of medicines prescribed to riders by the team doctors." Last week former Olympic and world champion Nicole Cooke, in evidence to the committee, questioned Wiggins' TUE history, saying pointedly that he used the "same steroid before his main goals of the season". Cooke also slammed anti-doping authorities, including UKAD, for ineffective efforts being waged by "the wrong people, in the wrong way, with the wrong tools". She also questioned why Cope, who was being paid public money for his role with the women's team, travelled from London to Geneva, via Manchester, to deliver an over-the-counter medicine to a professional men's team at a time when she struggled to persuade him to set up a training camp for that year's world championships. Cooke's damning conclusion was that cycling was a "sport run by men for men". —AFP



Bradley Wiggins

ADELSON PULLS OUT OF VEGAS STADIUM DEAL FOR RAIDERS

LOS ANGELES: American casino mogul Sheldon Adelson, irked at a lease proposal from the Oakland Raiders, withdrew as an investor in a \$1.9 billion Las Vegas stadium project intended to lure the NFL team.

Adelson, chairman of the Las Vegas Sands Corporation, and his family were to have contributed \$650 million to a 65,000-seat domed stadium. The Raiders, who have been unable to settle on a deal for a new stadium in the San Francisco Bay Area, filed paperwork earlier this month to move to Las Vegas and NFL owners were expected to vote upon the request in March. Last week, the Raiders made a lease pitch to pay \$1 a year in annual rent, a likely starting point to negotiations that might have backfired in upsetting Adelson.

"The Oakland Raiders came before the LV Stadium Authority last week with a proposed lease agreement that has sent shockwaves throughout our community," a statement from Adelson said. "It was certainly shocking to the

Adelson family. We were not only excluded from the proposed agreement; we weren't even aware of its existence."

Adelson said he was "discouraged by the surprise submission" and "deeply disappointed for the disregard the Raiders showed our community partners." "It's clear the Raiders have decided their path for moving to Las Vegas does not include the Adelson family. So, regrettably, we will no longer be involved in any facet of the stadium discussion," the statement said.

Clark County Commissioner Steve Sisolak was optimistic despite the setback, telling the Los Angeles Times: "I remain hopeful that we will see our NFL dream come true."

The Bay Area News Group reported the Raiders have told NFL officials they have commitments from Goldman Sachs to replace Adelson in the proposed stadium project.

"The Raiders deeply appreciate the efforts of the Adelson family to bring the Raiders to Las Vegas," the team said in a statement. —AFP

NINERS, COLTS NAME NEW TOP EXECs TO REBUILD CLUBS

SAN FRANCISCO: John Lynch, a 15-year NFL defender who won a Super Bowl with Tampa Bay, was named Monday as general manager of the San Francisco 49ers by chief executive Jed York.

The move came hours after the Indianapolis Colts settled on their own new general manager, hiring Chris Ballard after four seasons as football operations director for the Kansas City Chiefs. Lynch, 45, is a nine-time Pro Bowl defensive back and this year is a finalist

for the American Football Hall of Fame but has spent the past eight years as a television analyst for Fox Sports before signing what reportedly is a six-year deal.

"During his 15 seasons as an NFL player, John epitomized what is so special about the game of football," York said. "A world-class competitor, his love and respect for the sport are unmatched.

"Having already helped lead a team to a Super Bowl title as a player, John is equipped with tremendous insight into what it takes to create a culture that breeds sustained success."

Lynch replaces Trent Baalke, who was fired along with coach Chip Kelly on January 1 after serving as the team's general manager since 2006.

Kelly went 2-14 in his lone season with San Francisco and while the 49ers have not yet hired a replacement, the

job will reportedly go to Atlanta Falcons offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan after the team faces New England in Sunday's Super Bowl 51.

At Indianapolis, Colts owner Jim Irsay named Ballard to replace Ryan Grigson, who was fired January 21 after five years in the post. Grigson selected quarterback Andrew Luck with the number one pick in the 2012 NFL Draft and the Colts made the playoffs the next three seasons but have stumbled to 8-8 the past

two campaigns.

"I am so thankful to Mr. Irsay and his entire family for this opportunity," Ballard said. The Chiefs were 12-4 this season but lost 18-16 to Pittsburgh in the second round of the NFL playoffs.

"He's a savvy, organized, and thorough talent evaluator, but beyond that, he's a terrific person our community will be proud of," Irsay said. Before taking charge of the Chiefs, Ballard worked 12 years for the Chicago Bears. — AFP

NGATAI STILL SUFFERING FROM CONCUSSION SYMPTOMS

WELLINGTON: One test All Blacks centre Charlie Ngatai is still suffering from concussion symptoms with no timetable set for his return, Waikato Chiefs coach Dave Rennie said yesterday.

The 26-year-old has been sidelined since last May when he suffered a head knock in the Chiefs Super Rugby match against the Otago Highlanders.

The injury cost Ngatai his place in the All Blacks last year. He had been named in Steve Hansen's squad for their June internationals against Wales but then released to continue his rehabilitation.

"He's had a few setbacks over the last period of time and there's a bit of light at the end of the tunnel, but we're not going to rush that," Rennie told reporters in Hamilton yesterday.

"What tends to happen if you push things a little bit too much you go backwards a bit. So it's been a frustrating time for him."

Rennie said Ngatai was not back in full training but was "starting to ramp things

up a bit" and it was too early to consider looking for a replacement in the squad.

"He got the knock in May, so it's a hell of a long time ago," he added. "Richie McCaw went through this, where he was out for a 12-month period, so his health is the most important here, so we're not going to rush it. "With Tim Nanai-Williams back, he can cover midfield, we've got Anton (Lienert-Brown) and Johnny Fa'auli, and Beaver (Steven Donald) has played a bit of 12 in Japan recently, so we've got other options."

The Chiefs first match of the new season is against the Highlanders in Dunedin on Feb 24. Ngatai joins Wellington Hurricanes lock James Broadhurst as All Blacks players still battling long-term effects of concussion. Broadhurst, who made his test debut against South Africa in July 2015, suffered two head knocks in a provincial game the following month and has not played since.

The Hurricanes said in December they had released him to continue his rehabilitation away from the team, though he is still contracted to the side for 2017. — Reuters



MARCOUSSIS: France's rugby coach Guy Noves, right, watches his players as they practice during a training session at the National Rugby Center in Marcoussis, south of Paris, yesterday. France will play against England during their Six Nations tournament match at Twickenham Stadium on Saturday. — AP

ROSSI, LORENZO MOVE UP TIMESHEETS AT SEPANG

KUALA LUMPUR: Suzuki's Andrea Iannone was the fastest rider on day two of the 2017 test season at Malaysia's Sepang circuit yesterday while Jorge Lorenzo and Valentino Rossi leapt up the timesheets. But the session was briefly red-flagged after Spaniard Tito Rabat crashed and was taken to hospital. The Marc VDS Honda rider fractured his hand and sustained injuries to his left knee, right foot and wrists, and will not take any further part in the testing.

Iannone, logged 1min 59.452 seconds — 00.406 seconds faster than Spaniard Maverick Vinales on a Yamaha.

Motorcycling superstar Rossi-debuting Yamaha's new fairing with "internal" winglets following the ban on external ones this year-registered 2min 00.254 seconds and was fourth fastest, an improvement from Monday's eighth spot.

"We tried a different frame, different chassis, different tyres and I finished in fourth and improved the lap time so it was a good day," said Rossi. "The fairing was not a big difference but the new chassis was a good difference. Compared to the old one, we've still not decided, we need to contin-

ue working tomorrow."

The Italian superstar is targeting an elusive 10th world title in a new MotoGP season dominated by riders switching allegiances and thereby changing bikes too.

Three-time world champion Lorenzo on a Ducati was the eighth fastest at 2min 00.484 seconds, an improvement from his 17th standing on Monday. "I'm really happy with the progress," Lorenzo said. "Today I understand the bike a lot better and I can extract more performance from it, although I'm still a long way off my limits." Damp conditions in the morning left riders pushing for faster timings in the afternoon.

Alvaro Bautista from the Pull and Bear Aspar Team was third fastest at 2 min 00.218 seconds while current world champion Marc Marquez on a Honda was tenth on the timesheets, logging 2min 00.531 seconds. The third and final day of the test session in Sepang will begin today. The second round of testing will be held on Phillip Island in Australia from February 15-17 and a third round in Qatar from March 10-12. The 18-race MotoGP season gets under way in Qatar on March 26. — AFP



SEPANG: A Malaysian woman (l) takes photographs of Movistar Yamaha MotoGP's Italian rider Valentino Rossi during the first day of 2017 MotoGP pre-season test at the Sepang International Circuit yesterday. — AFP

KYRGIOS STILL IN HUNT FOR COACH

SYDNEY: Australia's Nick Kyrgios said yesterday he was still looking to hire a coach after his spectacular Grand Slam meltdown in Melbourne, admitting it was "something I've got to do moving forward". The temperamental 21-year-old who plays in the Davis Cup World Group tie against the Czech Republic beginning on Friday-acknowledged after his second-round Australian Open defeat that he needed coaching. Kyrgios said he had "a couple" of candidates in mind, without naming anyone, but added that the right person needed to have Kyrgios's "best interests at heart".

"I think it's something I've got to do moving forward," he told Fairfax Media.

"I've got to (world number) 13 in the world without one, so hopefully with a coach I can improve my game and get there. "It's not so much me being a bad listener, it's just finding someone that I know has my best interests at heart.

"It's tough to bring someone on the

team that's not willing to care about me as a person first, and tennis second, so I've got to find the right person." Kyrgios has been without a coach since parting with Todd Larkham before Wimbledon in 2015.

Tennis greats slammed the current world number 15 after his early Melbourne Park exit, saying that he was highly talented but needed to deal with behavioural issues.

Kyrgios said he had time on his side but admitted that "there's a lot of work to do." "I've got to improve a lot of things in my game, I've got to work harder. "I take the easy way out a lot of times, so I've got to get more disciplined, hopefully get a coach soon.

"I think people tend to forget I've beaten nearly every best player in the world, so that gets overlooked."

The Davis Cup World Group opening-round clash takes place at Kooyong in Melbourne on February 3-5. — AFP

FAST HEALER MARLER DELIGHTS ENGLAND

LONDON: England received a boost ahead of their defence of the Six Nations, with prop Joe Marler set for an extraordinary comeback for the Grand Slam champions against France on Saturday. Marler was informed he would be out of action for five weeks after withdrawing from the warm-up of Harlequins' win over Sale on January 7 with what turned out to be a fractured leg.

That ought to have ruled him out of the first two rounds of the Six Nations but Marler was back in training with England during their recent warm-weather camp in Portugal and now the loosehead prop is in contention to start the opening match against France at Twickenham.

"Joe is looking good and has been taking a full part in training," England forwards coach Steve Borthwick said Monday.

"He's a fast healer. He's done really well, he has been incredibly diligent in terms of doing everything he can to get fit. That's great credit to him," said the former England captain.

Marler's return to fitness is timely given Mako Vunipola, the man who has displaced him as England's first-choice loosehead, is likely to miss the whole of the Six Nations with a knee injury.

"It's great that we have that competition for places at loosehead and we're trying to build that in every single position," explained Borthwick. "We want top international players competing hard and pushing each other.

That's what Joe and Mako did last year.

"There have been a couple of knocks and bangs since, but it's great to have players of that quality."

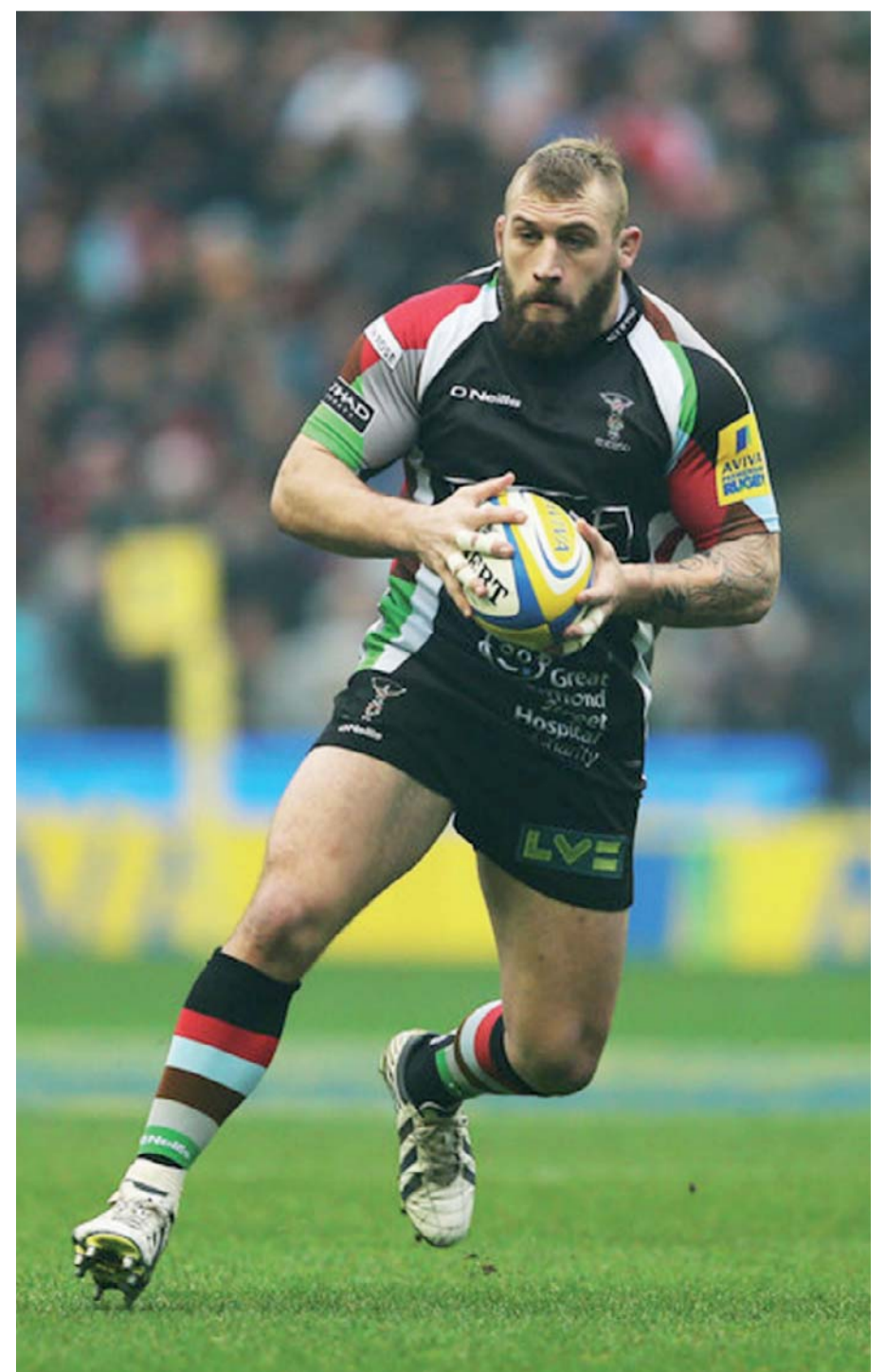
There was further welcome injury news for England with back-row forwards James Haskell (foot) and Jack Clifford (chest) both given the all clear to face France.

Haskell's lack of recent match time, however, means Tom Wood is likely to remain at openside flanker when England coach Eddie Jones names his side tomorrow.

Nathan Hughes is set to be in at No 8 in place of the injured Billy Vunipola rather than Clifford.

Meanwhile, the England squad marked Jones's 57th birthday on Monday by presenting the Australian with a non-slip bathroom mat. Defence coach Paul Gustard made the presentation after Jones attended last week's official Six Nations launch in London sporting a severely-bruised left eye.

Jones explained his injury by saying he had slipped in the bathroom of his hotel while getting out of a shower. — AFP



Joe Marler

EDULJI VOWS TO PUT BCCI'S SCANDAL-PLAGUED BODY'S HOUSE IN ORDER

MUMBAI: The first woman to hold a top post at India's powerful and immensely wealthy cricket board vowed yesterday to put the scandal-plagued body's house in order.

Former India captain Diana Edulji was appointed Monday to a four-member team tasked by India's Supreme Court to oversee the running of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).

"The first step we have to take is to get the house in order," Edulji, who played 20 Tests and 34 one-day internationals for India between 1976 and 1993,

told AFP outside her home in Mumbai.

"Let's hope we can bring justice and bring BCCI back to its glorious days," added the 61-year-old, saying it was time for Indian cricket to "look ahead" after years of turmoil.

The Supreme Court's appointment of the panel, headed by former government auditor Vinod Rai, was the latest development in its BCCI shakeup. The board has been embroiled in a series of scandals, including accusations of corruption in the Indian Premier League (IPL) and a betting scandal involving an

IPL team linked to its former head Narayanaswami Srinivasan. Charges of corruption and nepotism dented the BCCI's image in recent times, leading many activists to urge India's top court to intervene to reform the privately-run organisation.

The Supreme Court earlier this month sacked the BCCI's two most senior officials for failing to implement reforms aimed at improving governance and transparency.

Edulji, who joins prominent historian Ramachandra Guha, Mumbai-based

banker Vikram Limaye as well as Rai, on the new administrative body, said it was unclear how long the four would be in place. "Until we get the house in order, BCCI elections are done and everything (with) the state associations. Until the orders of the Supreme Court are implemented then only we will know."

Their exact titles were expected to become clear when the group meets for the first time in Mumbai yesterday.

Edulji added it was a "great honour" to be selected but that she was "a bit surprised" to be the only cricketer in the

group, pledging to work hard to improve all aspects of the game.

The Parsi is one of India's most-decorated women cricketers. As a left-arm orthodox bowler she collected 63 wickets in Tests and 46 in ODIs during an illustrious career.

Edulji said one of her focuses would be on growing the women's game. "I hope I can bring something that women's cricket can progress definitely, popularise the game, play more cricket and have a lot more international exposure," she said. —AFP

ALL PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS LINKED TO SEX ABUSE PROBE

LONDON: Allegations of historical sex abuse have been made involving all five London clubs in the Premier League, the capital city's Metropolitan Police Service announced on Monday. The five clubs swept up in the scandal that has rocked English football since former Crewe Alexandra youth player Andy Woodward went public in November last year are Arsenal, Chelsea, Tottenham Hotspur, Crystal Palace and West Ham. Some of the claims go as far back as the 1960s. The Met's figures mean the number of Premier League clubs who have been connected with the investigation has risen by one from last month when the global English figure given out by the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) said there were four.

In all the Met said the allegations involved 77 London-based clubs—three in the second tier Championship and three in League One and League Two—and have received 255 allegations of sex abuse.

"On 8 December 2016, the Metropolitan Police Service confirmed it had launched an investigation into allegations of non-recent sexual abuse at football clubs in London," read their statement.

"As of Monday, 30 January, the investigative team, with officers from the Sexual Offences, Exploitation and Child Abuse Command, have received 255 separate allegations.

"The allegations are connected with individuals at 77 named clubs or teams. The breakdown for those clubs is: Five in the Premiership; Three against Championship clubs; Three against clubs in Leagues One and Two; and there have also been 66 other named clubs which would include non-league or non-professional or amateur teams."

Detective Chief Superintendent Ivan Balhatchet of the Sexual Offences, Exploitation and Child Abuse Command,

said that each and every one of the allegations will be looked into but the Met would not be supplying a running commentary on the investigations or how many allegations have been made against a particular club. "The Met take all allegations seriously, and specialist officers will work through the information passed to them," he said. Overall the number of football clubs who have been brought up in the enquiry stood at 248 according to the figures released by the NPCC earlier this month.

The NPCC were at pains to point out that does not mean they are under investigation but have been 'referenced when information is submitted'. The number of alleged victims stands at 526 with the youngest aged four and 97 percent of them are male—there are 184 potential suspects who have been identified.

Not all the alleged victims or perpetrators come from football with 10 other sports implicated including rugby, gymnastics, the martial arts and athletics.

The scandal blew up last November when Woodward went public over the abuse he had suffered at the hands of a convicted child molester at Crewe Alexandra. Other ex-professional players have since gone public with several coming from Chelsea—in an era well before present owner Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich bought the club—claiming to have been abused by scout Eddie Heath in the 1970s.

Heath, who had similar allegations levelled at him from former youth players at another London club Charlton Athletic where he went after he was sacked by Chelsea in 1979 although not for sexual impropriety, cannot defend himself as he died in 1983 aged 54. Chelsea have launched an internal investigation over the slew of allegations of historic abuse made by former players. —AFP

CONGO'S FOOTBALLERS LEAVE MARK AT CAN

KINSHASA: They may be out of the tournament, but the Democratic Republic of Congo's footballers will be forever remembered by Africa Cup of Nations fans for their dance moves on the pitch. DR Congo players danced the "Fimbu" seven times at the CAN 2017 tournament in Gabon—once for each goal scored—as their supporters in the stands cheered with delight.

After each goal, the players would gather side by side, hold their left arm up and wave their right as they moved down the pitch in unison. The move is based on a much more elaborate dance accompanying the Congolese pop hit "Fimbu" by Felix Wazeka, which in a light-hearted music video with over half a million views on YouTube is performed by dozens of men and women in colourful dress.

"Everything about this dance is easy," singer Wazeka told AFP. "But what it expresses is huge. It's the fact that we won, and that we're looking for the best way to celebrate our goals." DR Congo's music is already known worldwide for its upbeat tunes—with superstar "rumba king" Papa Wemba leading the Kinshasa music scene for four decades until he died last year.

In the Lingala language, the word "fimbu" refers to a type of whip that was once a symbol of Belgian colonial violence in the vast central African nation and is still used in many schools and homes, despite a ban on corporal punishment.

Despite the dark overtones, football stars and fans say the "Fimbu" dance is all about fun. "The idea (behind the dance)

was never to mock the opponent or to go against the spirit of sportsmanship or fair play," said Kabulo Mwana Kabulo, director of sports at DR Congo's national radio and television service. "The goal is to entertain the audience, it's just a way to express joy," he said. Neeskens Kebano, the squad's number 10, is a little more provocative. "It means 'whip'—and quite simply, it's about whipping our opponents," he said.

The dance seems to be spreading around the world, with French player Blaise Matuidi of Paris Saint Germain and Cedric Bakambu, who plays for Spain's Villareal, doing the "Fimbu" to celebrate their goals.

WORLD CUP DREAMS

Congolese players first danced the "Fimbu" in 2016, during the African Nations Championship in Rwanda.

Far from being favourites, they surprised their fans by defeating Ethiopia 3-0 at the opening game. Winning one match after another, they ended up bringing the trophy back home to euphoric supporters in DR Congo.

This time, the team—nicknamed the Leopards—has fared worse, eliminated on Sunday by Ghana in the quarter-finals. But rather than mourn their loss, fans are already looking forward to the next big challenge: the 2018 World Cup in Russia. And just for the occasion, Wazeka is working with rappers Maitre Gims and Youssoupha on a new version of the dance. "My goal is for the 'Fimbu' to be danced at the World Cup," Wazeka said. —AFP



LIBREVILLE: Burkina Faso's midfielder Alain Traore (L) and Burkina Faso's defender Steeve Yago attend a training session in Libreville yesterday on the eve of their semi-final against Egypt during the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations football tournament in Gabon. — AFP

EGYPT SEEK ANOTHER SEMI-FINAL TRIUMPH

LIBREVILLE: Weariness will worry Egypt as they seek to extend an Africa Cup of Nations semi-finals winning streak to six matches by beating Burkina Faso in Libreville today. Surprise survivors Burkina Faso overcame Tunisia in the first quarter-final last Saturday evening, more than 24 hours before Egypt edged Morocco in the last. Many pundits believe this could give the west Africans an advantage at Stade de l'Amitié in the Gabonese capital, especially if the match went to extra time.

Argentina-born Egypt coach Hector Cuper admitted he was concerned about the shorter recovery time his team have compared to Burkina Faso. "It is not an ideal situation, but we have no choice but to adapt," said the greying 61-year-old former Valencia and Inter Milan manager. "The players will be given time to rehabilitate and hopefully they will be ready come Wednesday night."

A calf injury rules out Arsenal midfielder Mohamed Elneny and striker Marwan Mohsen is a doubtful starter owing to a knee problem. Despite the disadvantages, record seven-time African champions Egypt will be expected to continue a remarkably successful semi-finals run spanning 31 years.

The Pharaohs eliminated Morocco (1986), Burkina Faso (1998), Senegal (2006), the Ivory Coast (2008) and Algeria (2010) to reach finals, all of which they won.

Egypt have reserved some of their finest performances for the last-four stage, thrashing Didier Drogba-led Ivory Coast 4-1 in Ghana and Algeria 4-0 in Angola.

A wide winning margin against the Burkinabe Stallions is unlikely, however, as Egypt have clawed rather than cruised past opponents in Gabon. Following a 0-0 draw with Mali, they achieved three consecutive 1-0 victories against Uganda, 2015 runners-up Ghana and Herve Renard-coached Morocco.

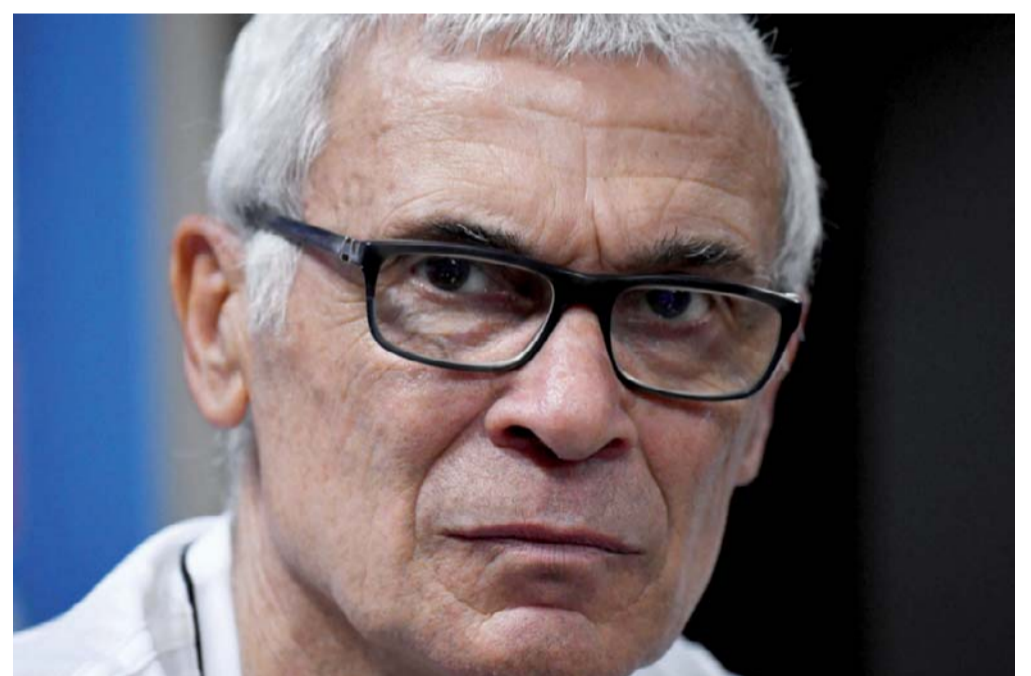
ROCK SOLID DEFENCE

While scoring only three goals—an average of one every 120 minutes—must trouble Cuper, his team are the only one not to concede a goal in this tournament.

Much credit for that goes to goalkeeper Essam El Hadary, who turned 44 this month and became the oldest footballer to play at a Cup of Nations. "He is first on to the training field and the last to leave," said Cuper in admiration of an Egyptian chasing a fifth Cup of Nations winners' medal. El Hadary was part of the squad that went to Burkina Faso 19 years ago, and beat the hosts 2-0 in the semi-finals en route to lifting the trophy. Morocco did give the veteran shot-stopper moments of severe anxiety from crosses—a fact that will not have gone unnoticed by Burkina Faso coach Paulo Duarte.

Given the outstanding semi-finals record of Egypt, the Portuguese handler studiously avoided making any gung-ho predictions. "We dream of doing better than in 2013," he said, referring to the 1-0 final defeat by Nigeria in South Africa after a giant-killing run. "My team is capable of producing fantastic football. There is quality and confidence among the boys."

Like Egypt, Burkina Faso enter the semi-finals boasting an unbeaten record after victories over Guinea-Bissau and Tunisia and draws against



GABON: Egypt's Argentinian coach Hector Raul Cuper holds a press conference in Libreville yesterday, on the eve of their semi-final football match against Burkina Faso during the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations football tournament in Gabon. — AFP

Cameroon and Gabon.

Goalkeeper Herve Koffi, 24 years younger than El Hadary, has conceded two goals, but none from open play.

Cameroon captain Benjamin Moukandjo beat him with a free-kick and 2015 African Footballer of the Year and Gabon captain Pierre-Emerick

Aubameyang converted a penalty. In front of Koffi, Burkina Faso have an experienced 'spine' in Bakary Kone, captain Charles Kabore, Prejuce Nakoulma and supersub Aristide Bance. Cameroon and Ghana, both four-time African champions, meet tomorrow in the second semi-final in southeastern city Franceville. —AFP

GRIFFITHS NEEDS TO FIGHT FOR CELTIC PLACE: RODGERS

GLASGOW: Celtic manager Brendan Rodgers has told Leigh Griffiths he must work harder if he is to force his way back into his plans for the rest of the season.

Last season the Scottish striker seemingly could do no wrong as his 40 goals for the Hoops propelled the Glasgow giants to the Scottish Premiership title and helped him claim a trio of player of the year awards.

But the 26-year-old has found life tougher since the arrival of Rodgers in the summer and has started just 10 league matches with the Hoops manager favouring French forward Moussa Dembele in the lone striker role.

Griffiths missed Sunday's 4-0 win over Hearts with a calf injury and his manager, who is preparing his side for the visit of Aberdeen today, said the former Wolves striker needs to put in some hard graft at training to improve his fitness. "What I've said to him is about making sure the talent is a working talent," Rodgers said. "Because talent's not good enough on its own. "You have to work at it—and it's a cycle. It's one where, when he's playing and fit, Leigh's very good but can still work harder in training. "The problem is if you're not getting the games and then if you're not quite

on it in training then you're losing fitness.

"But then the moment you're asked to come in and get up to speed in a real high-tempo, intense game, the moments that are there for you to risk injury are far greater.

"You have to work tirelessly every day or unfortunately you'll get left behind."

Despite his form last season Griffiths was warned by then boss Ronny Deila that he would have to become a 24-hour athlete to succeed in his career at Celtic.

And Rodgers, who has led his side to the League Cup and 22 points clear at the top of the Scottish Premiership following a record-breaking 27 match unbeaten run, echoed that sentiment. "It's a difficult period for him with that injury," the Celtic manager said. "But the only way you can overcome that is by working 24 hours a day for your profession, for your life. "He's a good kid, a great boy, but he understands where he's at. We all know the talent, but it won't be good enough on its own. "We speak a lot and it's not easy because he hasn't played maybe as much as he did last year. The reasons are simple for that.

"He's a player I really admire, a player we really want to have here.—AFP



MARSEILLE: Olympique de Marseille's new French defender Gregory Sertic (c) poses with his jersey flanked by Marseille's sporting director Andoni Zubizarreta (l) and Marseille's L1 football club President Jacques-Henri Eyraud, during a press conference yesterday at Robert-Louis Dreyfus training center in Marseille, southern France. — AFP

BUNDESLIGA GAMBLE ON YOUTH SENDS TRANSFER RECORD TUMBLING

BERLIN: German clubs shattered Bundesliga winter transfer spending records in January, forking out close to 100 million euros (\$107.6 million) and largely gambling on the potential of youngsters like Leon Bailey and Alexander Isak.

Promising Jamaican teenager Bailey joined Bayer Leverkusen on Tuesday for a reported 12 million euros (\$12.8 million), while Swede Isak-dubbed the 'next Zlatan Ibrahimovic'-turned down Real Madrid to sign for Borussia Dortmund.

France's Dayot Upamecano swapped Red Bull Salzburg for RB Leipzig for a reported 10 million euros, yet the trio are all in their teens and untested in Europe's top leagues.

The previous record set during the 2014/15 season saw Bundesliga sides pay out around 65 million euros, but that mark has been obliterated with several hours still to go before the deadline. Throw 20-year-old Riechedly Bazoer, who joined Wolfsburg from Ajax for 12 million euros, and new Hamburg signing Wallace, 21, into the mix and the focus on investment in youth is undeniable. Wolfsburg have spent the most of any club by stumping up 33 million euros to try and salvage a disastrous season. The 2009 Bundesliga champions drafted in five new faces-including French winger Paul-Georges Ntep-after offloading Germany international Julian Draxler to Paris Saint-Germain for around 40 mil-

lion. But despite the record outlay, the country's richest club Bayern Munich have largely stayed silent with no new arrivals this month. However, the defending champions did complete a double swoop for Hoffenheim pair Niklas Sule and Sebastian Rudy, who will join the league leaders at the start of next season. European transfer briefs yesterday, the final day of the January window:

ANWAR EL GHAZI (LILLE)

Dutch international forward Anwar El Ghazi penned a four-and-a-half-year deal with Lille after joining the French side from Ajax. The 21-year-old scored 23 goals in 101 matches for the Amsterdam club and has been capped

twice for the Netherlands.

LUCAS OCAMPOS (AC MILAN)

Italian giants AC Milan snapped up Argentine winger Lucas Ocampos on loan from Genoa until the end of the season. The 22-year-old was shipped to Genoa by parent club Marseille in June, with Ocampos scoring three goals in 17 appearances for the Serie A side. He arrives at the San Siro to offset the departure of French striker M'Baye Niang to Watford.

TAYE TAIWO (LAUSANNE SPORT)

Former Nigeria international Taye Taiwo could make his debut for Lausanne Sport on Sunday after signing a six-month deal with the Swiss

outfit following his exit from HJK Helsinki. The ex-Marseille left-back, who won the French league title in 2010, has earned 54 caps for Nigeria and played for his country at the 2010 World Cup.

TRENT SAINSBURY (INTER MILAN)

Australia centre-back Trent Sainsbury joined Inter Milan from sister club Jiangsu Suning, also owned by Chinese electronics retailer Suning, on loan for the remainder of the Serie A season. Sainsbury, 25, spent two years at Zwolle in the Dutch top flight before moving to China last January. He has played 21 matches for the Socceros and was part of the side that won the 2015 Asian Cup. —AFP

FERNANDINHO RETURN CAN FORTIFY MAN CITY

LONDON: Kevin De Bruyne believes Fernandinho's return from suspension will provide the foundation for Manchester City to get their spluttering Premier League campaign back on track at West Ham today.

Pep Guardiola's side have dropped out of the top four and trail leaders Chelsea by 12 points after winning just one of their last four league games. Guardiola wrote off City's titles hopes during that unexpected slump, but a comfortable 3-0 victory at Crystal Palace in the FA Cup fourth round on Saturday was a much needed tonic and De Bruyne anticipates the return of Brazil midfielder Fernandinho will be even more significant. Fernandinho has served a four-match ban after receiving his third red card in six games in a win against Burnley on January 2. During Fernandinho's absence, City looked alarmingly vulnerable and were thrashed 4-0 at Everton in Guardiola's heaviest league defeat as a manager. But the 31-year-old is expected to return to the starting line-up at the London Stadium, with De Bruyne predicting an upturn in City's fortunes. "Obviously we've missed him. De Bruyne said. "He's been an important player throughout his time at City."

"He plays a pivotal role for us in midfield and helps keep everything organised, plus he's also very good on the ball."

"Now he's served his ban and is available for us again, so it's a big boost for the team because he's missed seven games this season through suspension. "If you get a red card in England you're banned for three or sometimes four games which is unbelievable, but there's not much you can do about it. I think one game is enough but those are the rules, I suppose. "I think Fern's one of the best holding midfielders I've ever played with. We are very lucky to have him."

WINNING STREAK

Fifth placed City are two points adrift of

the top four and find themselves in a battle just to secure a Champions League spot after being widely tipped as likely champions following a blistering start to the season. However, De Bruyne is confident City can put together a long winning streak as they face Swansea, Bournemouth, Sunderland and Stoke after the Hammers clash. "Hopefully we can beat West Ham on Wednesday and then put a bit of a run together in the coming weeks," he said.

"I think we're playing much better than we did last season. We played so well against Tottenham but only got a point."

"That's how it'd been going for us this year, so it's a little bit frustrating. The important thing is we are creating chances so the goals will come." City return to east London less than a month after thrashing West Ham 5-0 in the FA Cup third round.

That chastening experience should ensure West Ham are fully motivated to make amends in their first match since the sale of star midfielder Dimitri Payet.

Payet was granted his wish to return to his former club Marseille after several weeks of rancour over his attempt to engineer the transfer. Hammers fans were furious with Payet, but Slaven Bilic's side coped admirably, defeating Palace and Middlesbrough without the France international to climb into mid-table.

"We now look forward to building on our recent good run of form with five league wins in the last seven matches as we focus on continuing our rise up the Premier League table," West Ham co-owner David Sullivan said. Bilic plans to replace Payet with Scotland midfielder Robert Snodgrass, who is in line to make his debut after training with his new team-mates for the first time on Monday following his transfer from Hull.

Jose Fonte, the Portugal central defender signed from Southampton, could also make his debut. — AFP



LILLE: Lille's French defender Sebastien Corchia (L) vies with Nantes' French forward Wilfried Moimbe during the French Cup football match between Lille (LOSC) and Nantes (FCN) at the Pierre-Mauroy Stadium in Villeneuve d'Ascq, near Lille, northern France, yesterday. — AFP

OLD FOES ATLETICO, BARCA CLASH FOR CUP FINAL PLACE

MADRID: Barcelona will be without Andres Iniesta and Sergio Busquets once more as they face old foes Atletico Madrid in a fifth two-legged clash between the sides in four seasons with a place in the Copa del Rey final at stake today. The presence of the Spanish international duo was badly missed as Barca slipped further behind Real Madrid at the top of La Liga in a controversial 1-1 draw at Real Betis at the weekend. Atletico have won only once in nine games against Barca in the three years since Luis Enrique took charge, but Los Rojiblancos have knocked Barca out of the Champions League in two of the past three seasons.

"They are always difficult to play against," said Enrique yesterday. "It will be a great atmosphere and it is a tie worthy of a semi-final." Barca got the better of Atletico 4-2 on aggregate in a bad-tempered tie when the sides last met in the Cup two seasons ago as the Catalans went on to win the treble.

And Enrique defended his decision to heavily rotate his squad during a demanding January if Barca are to have any chance of repeating that feat as they chase down

Madrid in La Liga and face Paris Saint-Germain on their return to Champions League action on February 14.

"If I don't rotate, we won't get to February 15. Between injuries, suspensions and tiredness, there is no other way. I rotate or we don't challenge in all competitions."

Enrique has at least been able to recall midfielder Rafinha from injury to help cover the gaps left by Iniesta and Busquets.

However, the one area the Barca boss has been reluctant to rotate is up front and all three of the superstar trio of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar look set to start again at the Vicente Calderon.

'MAGICAL NIGHT'

Atletico are also looking to bounce back as they were outplayed and held 0-0 by Alaves in league action at the weekend to slip 10 points back of Real in fourth.

However, their last season at the Calderon could still be salvaged by Cup success and Fernando Torres called on the Atletico fans to create a "magical" atmosphere on one of

the last big nights at the Calderon before moving to a new 67,000 capacity stadium next season.

"I am sure the Atletico fans will fill the Calderon and make us experience a magical night," said the former Liverpool and Chelsea striker. "The game on Wednesday ought to be our only concern and headache right now because we know how difficult the game against Barcelona will be, but we hope to get the win in front of our own fans."

Atletico will be without the injured Jan Oblak and Jose Maria Gimenez, but captain Gabi will return after being suspended on Saturday. Whoever goes through over the two legs will be huge favourites to win the Cup come May with Real Madrid's conquerors Celta Vigo facing Alaves in the other semi-final. Neither side have ever won the Copa del Rey with Alaves' run to the last four equalling their best ever return, whilst Celta have been runners-up on three occasions. Celta host the first leg on Thursday and will welcome back a host of first team regulars who were rested for Saturday's 2-0 win at Leganes. — AFP

MKHITARYAN PROMISES MAN UTD FIGHT ON FOUR FRONTS

MANCHESTER: Henrikh Mkhitaryan insists Manchester United are taking all four competitions they are involved in seriously as they struggle to cope with a demanding fixture schedule.

Jose Mourinho's club is the only one in England still retaining an interest in a quartet of competitions-the Premier League, Europa League, FA Cup and the League Cup, in which they can look forward to a Wembley final against Southampton next month. Their success means United could face as many as 67 games, should they advance to the finals of the other two cup competitions, and has led Mourinho to criticise the English fixture schedule as "nonsense". But after a weekend in which a number of Premier League teams were eliminated from the FA Cup after choosing weakened line-ups, Mkhitaryan claimed United want to succeed in every tournament. "We are taking all the competitions seriously," he said. "For Manchester United, every cup is very important."

"A trophy is a trophy. It doesn't matter if it is the League Cup, the FA Cup or the Europa League. We want to do our best to try to win them all." United face drop candidates Hull in the Premier League at Old Trafford on Wednesday, with Mourinho again likely to make sweeping changes to his team selection.

The weekend FA Cup win over Wigan saw the United manager make nine changes from his previous game, a League Cup semi-final, also against Hull, and hand debuts to young substitutes Axel Tuanzebe and goalkeeper Joel Pereira. Despite the Portuguese boss having expressed concerns about the lack of depth in his squad, Mkhitaryan claimed the competition for places, and the emergence of young players at Old Trafford, was healthy. "It's great for them to play their first game," said the Armenian. "You know as a player that, when young players come into the squad, you have to help them and offer them some advice and I thought they both did well on what is a great experience for them."

'GOOD IMPACT'

After a tough beginning to his United career, in which Mkhitaryan did not start a league game for nearly three months, the £26 million (\$32 million, 30 million euros) pre-season signing from Borussia Dortmund has emerged as a key member of Mourinho's squad. "Since he came into the team, we and Micki himself thought he was ready," said Mourinho.

"He had a good impact immediately, then he had a break with the injury against

Tottenham, and then he came back and played quite well. So we are happy with him." England full-back Luke Shaw was handed his first start in two months against Wigan but is far from certain to regain his place when United return to league action.

And Bastian Schweinsteiger, who started a game for the first time in over a year, is unlikely to be involved either despite Mourinho having confirmed that the German has been named in his squad, submitted to UEFA, for the knockout stages of the Europa League. Meanwhile Andy Robertson could become the latest player to leave Hull in January after Burnley launched a £10 million bid for the left-back. The Tigers have already sold Jake Livermore and Robert Snodgrass for a combined £20 million (\$25 million) during this month's transfer window, and they could now be joined by the Scotland international. — AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
West Ham United v Man City	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
Stoke City v Everton	23:00
beIN SPORTS	
Man United v Hull City	23:00
beIN SPORTS	
ENGLISH CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE	
Newcastle United v QPR	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
Blackburn Rovers v Leeds United	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
Burton Albion v Fulham	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
ITALIAN CUP	
Roma v Cesena	23:00
beIN SPORTS	
ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
Pescara v Fiorentina	22:45
beIN SPORTS	
SPAIN COPA DEL REY	
Atletico v Barcelona	23:00
beIN SPORTS	
AFRICAN NATIONS CUP 2017	
Burkina Faso v Egypt	22:00
beIN SPORTS	

WAYNE ROONEY GOING NOWHERE: MOURINHO

MANCHESTER: Jose Mourinho has confirmed Wayne Rooney will remain at Manchester United for the rest of the season despite reports linking him with a move to the Chinese Super League. The Chinese transfer window does not close until the end of February and the England forward's name has been linked repeatedly with astonishing offers from a country where professional football is enjoying an explosion in financial investment.

But Mourinho insisted yesterday that Rooney, 31, will stay in his squad until at least the end of the season, despite having long since lost his status as an automatic first-choice at the club where he has been such a key player for the last 13 years.

"Yes," said Mourinho when asked if Rooney, who recently became United's all-time leading goal-scorer, will see out the season at Old Trafford. "We don't have players in, we don't have players out, we lost two players from the squad," the United manager added. "You can say Memphis Depay (who joined Lyon in the January transfer window) and Morgan Schneiderlin (signed by Everton) did not play a lot, but the reality is they played some matches, and when they did, others didn't, and when they played, others were rested. "When Schneiderlin played, it meant (Paul) Pogba, (Michael) Carrick or (Ander) Herrera didn't. You lose players sometimes it does not look important because they were not first-choice players, but in the end they're important if a club is going to have a difficult season."

United are still active in four competitions-the Premier League, League Cup, FA Cup and Europa League-and Portuguese boss Mourinho has spoken repeatedly about his concerns at the lack of numbers in

his squad. Even though Rooney has seen his name linked with a move that could be worth up to £1 million a week in China, Mourinho has fought to keep him at the club, at least for the remaining four months of the campaign. However, it seems increasingly likely the veteran England forward could still be heading for the Far East in the summer.

'KNOW WHAT I WANT'

The only player Mourinho feared he would lose before the English transfer window closed at the end of January was winger Ashley Young, who was also linked with China as well as Premier League clubs Watford, West Brom, Swansea and West Ham.

"He's staying, he's selected for tomorrow," said Mourinho, speaking on the eve of Wednesday's league fixture with Hull. "He stays with me until the end of the season. It's finished." Mourinho, like most of the other managers near the top of the Premier League, has had a quiet January transfer window with the sales of Schneiderlin and Depay his only major business.

However, the United manager believes that January transfers are becoming increasingly difficult for the Premier League's leading clubs and the summer is now the more important period for team strengthening. "I cannot speak for the other teams, their decisions, what they think," he said. "In our case, we are more focused on the summer period. I like my players, so nothing for me."

"The market closed yesterday, so there is no point in me speaking about the next transfer window when we have so many matches to play, so much to fight for, so many good players to work with." — AFP



Wayne Rooney

Sports

Kuwait tops medal table with 5 gold



Rooney going nowhere, says Mourinho



WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2017

ALL PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS LINKED TO SEX ABUSE PROBE Page 18



MIAMI: Miami Heat forward James Johnson (16) and guard Goran Dragic (7) battle for a loose ball with Brooklyn Nets forward Trevor Booker during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, in Miami. The Heat defeated the Nets 104-96. — AP

HEAT PUSH STREAK TO 8, TOP NETS 104-96

MIAMI: Led by James Johnson's spectacular last-minute dunk, the Miami Heat won their eighth straight game, defeating the Brooklyn Nets 104-96 on Monday night at American Airlines Arena. After a missed jumper by Rodney McGruder, Johnson soared, grabbed the rebound with his left hand and dunked all in one motion, giving Miami a 101-93 lead with 57 seconds left. The Heat (19-30), who has the longest active win streak in the NBA, got balanced scoring. Goran Dragic had 20 points and eight assists. Dion Waiters had 19 points and a season-high nine assists, and Johnson added 17 points. Johnson, though, appeared to hurt his right shoulder on the final play of the game.

CELTICS 113, PISTONS 109

Isaiah Thomas performed more of his fourth-quarter magic and Boston blew an 11-point lead but held off Detroit for its fourth straight victory. Thomas, who entered the game averaging a league-best and record-pace 10.0 points per game in the fourth quarter, scored 24 of his 41 points in the final 12 minutes.

He scored on a three-point play to put the Celtics ahead to stay with 4:13 left in the game. Earlier in the quarter, Boston's little big man scored 11 straight Celtics points. It was his 32nd straight game with at least 20 points as he closes in on John Havlicek's club record of 40. He has scored under 20 just once this season and had 18 in that game. He has scored at least 20 points in the fourth quarter four times this season; while no one else in the league has done it more than once. He has also had nine 15-point fourth quarters.

MAVERICKS 104, CAVALIERS 97

Maybe LeBron James and Kyrie Irving should have just stayed in Cleveland after all. Wanting to build on the momentum of Sunday's win, Cleveland stars decided they wanted to make the trip to Dallas and play on the second night of a back-to-back. But the Cavs were by far the more listless team Monday night and were ultimately blown out by hustling Dallas. For Dallas, the win completed a surprising two-night sweep of the San

Antonio Spurs on the road and then the reigning NBA champions in front of a sellout crowd at the American Airlines Arena. Cleveland, which played without forward Kevin Love, dropped to 2-6 on the road against teams from the Western Conference.

TIMBERWOLVES 111, MAGIC 105 (OT)

Minnesota withstood a fourth-quarter rally from Orlando to escape with an overtime victory at Target Center. Andrew Wiggins led Minnesota with a game-high 27 points, including a game-tying jumper with 10 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter to force overtime. Wiggins was big in overtime for Minnesota, scoring six points in the extra session. He also had a key block on defense, one of several blocks by the Timberwolves in overtime. Minnesota center Karl-Anthony Towns had 23 points-his 30th 20-point game of the season-and 12 rebounds, while point guard Ricky Rubio added 22 points, eight rebounds and eight assists.

76ERS 122, KINGS 119

Robert Covington had 23 points and 10 rebounds as Philadelphia, playing without rookie center Joel Embiid, beat Sacramento. Dario Saric contributed 17 points off the bench for the Sixers, who rallied from a 16-point, second-quarter deficit and withstood the 46-point, 15-rebound, five-assist effort of Sacramento's DeMarcus Cousins. Ex-King Nik Stauskas had 16 points, and Gerald Henderson and Jahii Okafor chipped in 15 each for Philadelphia.

GRIZZLIES 115, SUNS 96

Mike Conley scored a career-high 38 points, and the Memphis Grizzlies hit 16 3-pointers while rolling to a 115-96 win over the Phoenix Suns on Monday. Conley tied a career high by hitting seven 3-pointers (on 10 attempts) and had nine assists for Memphis, which led by as many as 30 points and won back-to-back games for the first time since Jan. 6-8. Marc Gasol and Zach Randolph added 18 points each for the Grizzlies, who sank 10 or more 3-pointers for the 24th time this season. Memphis (29-21) hit 16 of 28 in the game, one shy of the franchise record for made threes. — Reuters

COE AIDE KICKED OUT OF IAAF OVER HIDDEN PAYMENT

LONDON: Nick Davies, one of IAAF president Sebastian Coe's closest aides, was expelled from world athletics' governing body yesterday for concealing a EUR30,000 payment from disgraced ex-head Lamine Diack linked to the Russian doping scandal. An International Association of Athletics Federations ethics board found that the influential former deputy secretary general had lied to the inquiry over the funds.



Nick Davies

Davies' wife and IAAF project manager Jane Boulter-Davies and medical manager Pierre-Yves Garnier were both allowed to resume working for the world body, with each ordered to pay 2,500 euros in costs. But the ethics board ordered that Davies, named by Coe as his chief of staff when he took over in August 2015, was "expelled from his position with the IAAF with immediate effect" and ordered to pay 5,000 euros in costs. Davies' downfall was "accepting a concealed remuneration" through Diack's son Papa Massata Diack, lying about it to the ethics board and failing to disclose it to French judicial authorities and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). Davies received EUR30,000 euros, EUR5,000 paid into his joint bank account with Boulter-Davies, while EUR25,000 went into his own account, without his wife's knowledge.

"Mr Davies has admitted misleading the investigation," said an ethics board report. "That is an extremely serious matter. It is all the more serious for the fact that Mr Davies only admitted his lie when his hand was forced upon requests being made of him for his

bank statements." Davies, the board said, "has admitted a serious error of judgment and has reflected upon and sincerely apologised for that error". Davies will be free to seek employment elsewhere in athletics and to be involved in IAAF organised competitions. He can also still appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The allegations stem from an email sent by Davies to Papa Massata Diack on July 19 before the 2013 World Athletics Championships in Moscow which outlined a plan to delay naming Russian doping cheats to avoid bad publicity. In the email to Papa Massata, a marketing consultant, Davies suggested a "very secret" five-point plan to manage media reaction to doping failures. Lamine Diack is now under house arrest in France on corruption and money laundering charges while Papa Massata is wanted by French authorities but is in his native Senegal. — AFP

NBA results/standings

Memphis 115, Phoenix 96; Dallas 104, Cleveland 97; Minnesota 111, Orlando 105 (OT); Boston 113, Detroit 109; Miami 104, Brooklyn 96; Philadelphia 122, Sacramento 119.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	Utah	30	19	.612	
Boston	30	18	.625	-	Oklahoma City	28	20	.583
Toronto	29	19	.604	1	Denver	21	25	.457
NY Knicks	21	28	.429	9.5	Portland	21	28	.429
Philadelphia	18	29	.383	11.5	Minnesota	19	29	.396
Brooklyn	9	39	.188	21				10.5
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	32	15	.681	-	Golden State	41	7	.854
Indiana	25	22	.532	7	LA Clippers	30	18	.625
Chicago	24	25	.490	9	Sacramento	19	29	.396
Milwaukee	21	26	.447	11	LA Lakers	16	34	.320
Detroit	21	27	.438	11.5	Phoenix	15	33	.313
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Atlanta	28	20	.583	-	San Antonio	36	11	.766
Washington	27	20	.574	0.5	Houston	35	16	.686
Charlotte	23	25	.479	5	Memphis	29	21	.580
Miami	19	30	.388	9.5	New Orleans	19	29	.396
Orlando	19	31	.380	10	Dallas	18	30	.375



DOUBLE CREDIT FOR ALL PREPAID OOREDOO CUSTOMERS

KFH ACHIEVES KD 165.2M NET PROFIT FOR 2016

17% CASH DIVIDEND, 10% BONUS SHARES, AND 32.01 FILS EARNINGS PER SHARE

KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Finance House (KFH) Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq said that KFH has, by the grace of Allah, realized a net profit of KD 165.2 million for the year 2016 for KFH shareholders as compared to KD 145.8 million for the same period last year i.e. an increase of 13.3 percent.

Finance revenues reached KD 717.9 million, i.e. a growth of 13.5 percent over the same period last year after the de-consolidation of ALAFCO due to de-consolidation as of end 2015. Net operating revenues reached KD 364.7 million, i.e. a growth of 8.2 percent over the same period last year, after excluding the revenues of nonrecurring investments. Earnings per share as of end 2016 reached 32.01 fils compared to 28.27 fils over the same period last year i.e. an increase of 13.2 percent.

In line with the cost optimization plan, KFH's total operating expenses have dropped for the second year in a row by 11 percent i.e. KD 35.5 million over the same period last year. The drop was KD 31.5 million, i.e. 8 percent in 2015 over 2014. KFH distributions for the year 2016 are as follows: 2.40 percent for "Al-Khumasiya" investment deposit, 2.20 percent for "Al-Mustamera" investment deposit, 1.50 percent for "Al-Sedra" investment deposit, 1.425 percent for the 6-month Dimah investment deposit and 0.650 percent for savings investment accounts. The Board of Directors has recommended 17 percent as cash distributions to shareholders and 10 percent as bonus shares subject to general assembly and concerned authorities approval.

Total assets reached KD 16.50 billion, the Finance portfolio reached KD 8.18 billion, Depositors' accounts reached KD 10.66 billion. Shareholders' equity reached KD 1.81 billion an increase by KD 31.3 million or 1.8 percent compared to year ended 2015. KFH's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) reached 17.88 percent, (after the recommended distributions) higher than the required limit of 15 percent, thus reiterating the strength of KFH financial position.

Al-Marzouq stated that the profits reiterate the commitment in implementing the successful strategy and plans of KFH Board of Directors for the past 3 years, which achieved its main goals. We have maintained the bank's key strengths by analyzing the potential risks. The year 2016 was the year of sustainable growth espe-

cially that KFH improved the service quality and enhanced the risk policies and the regulatory compliance standards. KFH has focused on achieving attractive returns for shareholders and customers in a sustainable and balanced manner, especially after putting the bank on track by targeting the core banking business, and the operating revenues from banking businesses now comprise a major part of the results.

Al-Marzouq pointed out that KFH indicators are characterized by stability and are in line with the bank's new strategy such as the operating income, the investment revenues, and the profitability indicators calculated on an annual basis, not to mention the reduction in the operating expenses in comparison to the revenues. This confirms the improved performance of the Group that has 481 branches over the world, of which 65 branches in Kuwait. KFH continued its prudent investment policy and efficient risk management in accordance with the best practices.

Al-Marzouq continued: "KFH managed to close most of the outstanding issues, mainly the nonperforming financing where the end of the year 2016 witnessed a drop in the non performing financing over the total credit portfolio, by using all the available means to achieve this. Also, KFH managed to structure the investment portfolio as per best standards to ensure asset quality and achieve sustainable profits, indicating rearranging the real estate portfolio recently has contributed in protecting such assets from the real estate market fluctuations". KFH aimed to settle the status of its subsidiaries and associates either by complete or partial divestiture, or by consolidating companies of same businesses, not to mention restructuring and developing other companies to be considered as investment arms. KFH has accomplished procedural and organizational issues such as the organizational structure of the bank to be consistent with the most recent developments, yet to identify the relationship on Group level including the compensation and benefits policy, the principles of cost optimization, centralized operations, systems automation and performance measurement.

Al-Marzouq stressed the ceaseless efforts of KFH in strengthening its role in boosting the national economy, primarily through corporate finance as per the credit and legislative regulations. KFH offered financing to



Hamad Abdulmohsen Al-Marzouq

large corporations and is currently studying financing other ones along with financing the country's large-scale development projects, of which is the Clean Fuel project where KFH's portion of the financing was the largest representing the Islamic banks. KFH shows interest in participating in financing the country's development projects of infrastructure, energy, transportations, real estate development, etc. The bank considers financing such projects is a national, economic and social goal. Moreover, KFH continues its unremitting efforts to offer credit facilities for SMEs where it has the largest share of SMEs segment. It is worth noting that KFH inked an agreement with the National Fund for SMEs Development.

He indicated that KFH has become a primary dealer and a global Sukuk market maker. KFH arranged and participated in several Sukuk issuances in the regional and global markets. KFH-Group volume traded in the Sukuk market reached \$11.4 billion for the year 2016. KFH participated in the sovereign debt issuances issued

by the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) to help bridge the budget deficit. KFH's share in the subscription was the largest among Islamic banks. The bank is continuing its efforts in innovating competitive products and services, and to increasing its market share and prioritizing customer services. KFH is keen on improving and honing the skills of its human resources, particularly the national labor by attracting, training and qualifying them in an attempt to build generations of leaders who are able to take responsibility.

Al-Marzouq said that the positive ratings from the international rating agencies and the awards KFH received last year confirm the healthy performance and the success in achieving the bank's goals.

He added that KFH Group is successfully achieving its goals based on the markets in which it operates. Every Group bank in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Germany is working in a way consistent with the nature of those markets, in line with the strategy of KFH. This adds more resilience to the modus operandi of the Group banks, yet qualifies them to tap opportunities and utilize any positive development. He explained that KFH is looking forward to further growth in the operations of its units in the upcoming period, indicating that markets diversification is an advantage and a source of strength. Al-Marzouq expressed his confidence that the Kuwaiti banking sector is capable of assuming the role of supporting the government's directives with respect to the economic vision, most importantly financing the budget deficit and the development projects. He added that the banking system in Kuwait remained sound and stable with a high liquidity level and strong asset quality. This allows the banks to take part in such issues, while strengthens the role of private sector and promotes harmony with the government to achieve its goals according to the plans and economic development vision. Al-Marzouq expressed his thanks and appreciation to all shareholders and clients for their support and confidence. He extended his thanks to the CBK and the regulatory authorities. He hailed the efforts of KFH's executive management and employees for their outstanding performance that yielded positive results, emphasizing the importance of maintaining the leadership position of KFH Group at all levels.

Praise be to Allah



2016 Results

	2016	2015	%
Net Profit for Shareholders "KD Million"	165.2	145.8	13.3
Earning per Share "Fils"	32.01	28.27	13.2
Financing Income "KD Million" *	717.9	695.1	3.3
Total Operating Expenses "KD Million"	294.9	330.4	<11>
Financing Receivables "KD Billion" **	8.176	8.095	1
Total Assets "KD Billion" **	16.499	16.494	0.03
Shareholders' Equity "KD Billion"	1.810	1.779	1.8

To Investors

KFH Board of Directors is pleased to inform the investors that it has been resolved to distribute profits corresponding for the financial year ended 31st Dec.2016 as follows:

Investment Deposits "Al-Khumasiya"	2.400%
Investment Deposits "Al-Mustamera"	2.200%
Investment Deposits "Al-Sedra"	1.500%
Investment Deposits "Al-Dimah" 6 Months	1.425%
Investment Savings Accounts "Al-Tawfeer"	0.650%

Profits will be credited to their bank accounts.

To Shareholders

KFH Board of Directors is pleased to inform the shareholders that it has been resolved to distribute profits corresponding for financial year ended 31st Dec.2016 as follows:

Cash Dividends	17%
Bonus Shares	10%

This recommendation is subject to the approval of General Assembly and other regulatory entities.

* The growth of Financing Income reached 13.5% compared to the same last year after excluding Alafco deconsolidation impact.

** The growth of Financing Receivables and Total Assets reached 6.6% and 4.5% respectively after excluding the impact of declining Turkish Lira.

Chart 4: Outstanding GCC debt securities (\$ billion)

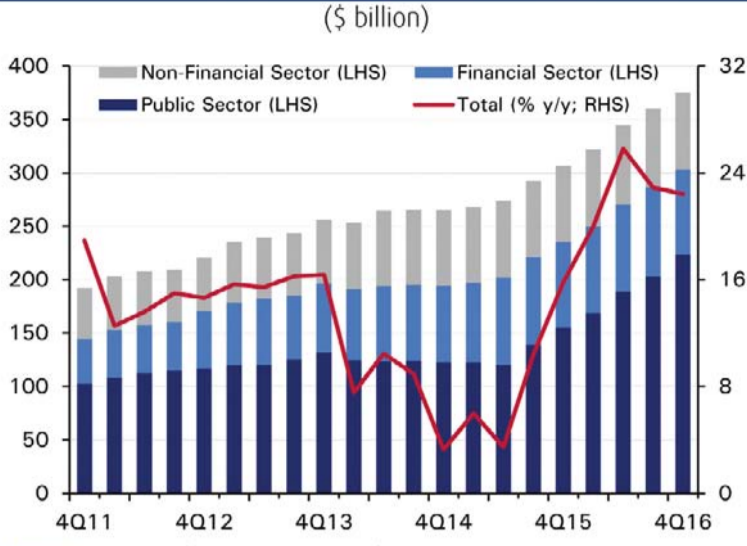


Chart 6: GCC interbank rates (%)

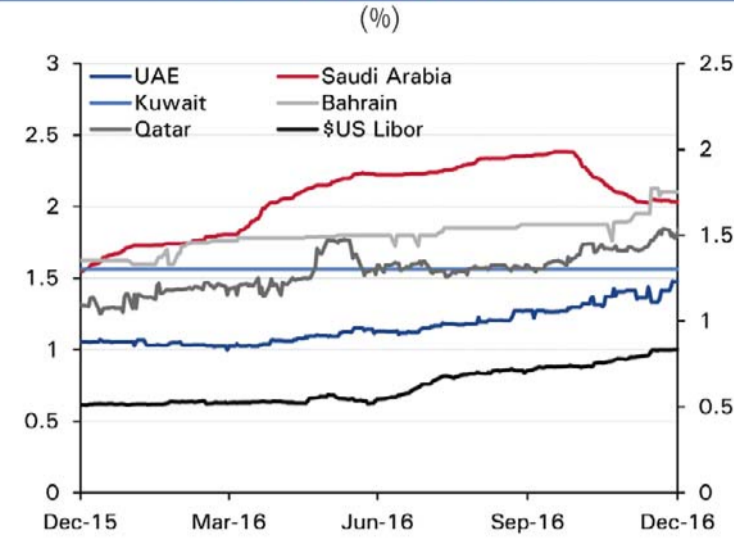


Chart 1: Global benchmark yields (%)



YIELDS LOWER IN 2016 ON IMPROVING OUTLOOKS

NBK report on GCC debt markets

KUWAIT: Global and GCC yields trended down for most of 2016 before picking up in 4Q16. The election of Trump, a Fed rate hike, and an OPEC agreement to cut output all helped yields higher towards the end of the year. Even with the pick-up, GCC yields ended the year lower, on the back of improving fiscal outlooks. Meanwhile, the large financing needs of GCC governments saw sovereign activity dominate issuance in 2016. International borrowing was strong, helping to ease domestic liquidity pressures. GCC debt activity is expected to remain robust in 2017; however, a stronger USD and a more hawkish Fed may weigh on sentiment. During most of 2016, concerns of slower global growth and deflation risks, combined with heightened political uncertainty saw global bond yields pressured to unprecedented lows. Indeed, both the 10-year US Treasuries and 10-year Bunds hit record lows of 1.37 percent and -0.18 percent, respectively, in July 2016. This followed Britain's surprise vote to leave the European Union in June, which saw averseness amplified by the unexpected decision. Global growth momentum turned during the second half of 2016.

The stream of relatively stronger economic data releases in 2H16, from advanced economies, had set yields on a steady upwards path. The positive change in economic outlook also drove commodity prices higher. This in turn set in motion a marginal upward shift in growth and inflation expectations. Upward pressures on yields were further catalyzed in 4Q16 by the election of Trump, with investors interpreting his presidency as inflationary. The President's economic policies were expected to focus on fiscal stimulus potentially funded through debt.

This prompted a sell-off in government bonds across the globe and saw yields on US 10-year bonds shoot up by 20 basis points (bps) on the day following the election and 53 bps during November 2016. The improvement in global economic sentiment culminated with the Fed's only rate hike in 2016. After much speculation, the Fed finally raised the federal

Table 1: Gross GCC Issuance by sector (\$ billion)

	1Q15	2Q15	3Q15	4Q15	1Q16	2Q16	3Q16	4Q16
Public	5.0	3.0	21.7	21.3	16.3	27.0	18.5	23.5
Financial	5.0	7.3	0.6	4.3	2.1	5.6	3.3	1.4
Non-Financial	0.9	0.9	2.0	1.0	1.0	3.5	0.3	2.3
Total	10.9	11.2	24.3	26.6	19.4	36.2	22.1	27.2

Table 2: Gross GCC issuance by country (\$ billion)

	1Q15	2Q15	3Q15	4Q15	1Q16	2Q16	3Q16	4Q16
Bahrain	1.5	0.9	2.0	2.0	0.5	1.2	0.8	2.8
Kuwait	1.0	2.2	1.2	0.9	2.1	4.6	2.5	4.4
Oman	0.5	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.4	3.3	2.0	0.3
Qatar	0.0	0.5	2.9	3.0	1.7	12.6	4.3	1.0
KSA	1.0	2.1	17.2	18.1	12.8	6.4	11.5	17.5
UAE	6.9	4.1	0.2	1.6	2.0	8.1	1.1	1.3
GCC	10.9	11.2	24.3	26.6	19.4	36.2	22.1	27.2

Sources: Zawya, Thomson Reuters Eikon, Central Bank of Kuwait, press

funds target by 25 bps in December 2016. The move had little impact on bond markets as it was largely priced-in. Still, a surprisingly more hawkish outlook for 2017, with expectations of three rate hikes rather than two, did help lift yields further supported by a string of strong data releases in December. This encouraged the protraction of the bond sell-off, pushing 10-year US Treasury yields higher, to finish the year at 2.43 percent, up 16 bps.

In the eurozone and Japan, central banks remained in quantitative easing (QE) mode, helping to keep yields down. The ECB, determined to steer inflation higher, extended its QE program by nine months in December 2016. The extension is expected to run through April 2017 to December 2017, although at a slower pace of EUR 60 billion. The BOJ offset unwanted movement in yields through its "yield curve control" mechanism. As such, yields on 10-year Bunds ended the year down 35 bps, while 10-year JGBs were down 22 bps. Uncertainty over Italy's leadership fol-

lowing the resignation of its PM and substantial capital shortfalls at its banks weighed on sentiment. In the GCC, yields were in line with international markets, yet ended 2016 lower, on the back of an improving fiscal outlook. Indeed, even with a pick-up late in the year, rates were dominated by a downward trend for most of 2016. This is best illustrated by Dubai's 2021 paper, which dropped 31 bps over 2016, despite increasing 15 bps in 4Q16. The buy-in into GCC paper was driven by their relatively attractive returns, supported by recovering oil prices and steadily more robust and transparent fiscal and economic mandates. The latter was crucial for competitive access into international debt markets, which in turn saw outstanding offers from GCC sovereigns, spearheaded by Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Saudi Arabia took advantage of the region's growing popularity, introducing the largest ever sovereign emerging market bond offering. It tapped international debt markets for \$17.5 billion, with an order book that totaled

\$67 billion. The successful bond sale reflected the turn-around in investors' outlook vis-à-vis the region, with the positive sentiment spilling over across the GCC. The overall improvement in confidence helped temper fears of sovereign default, with CDS rates falling for all tracked GCC countries. Many saw substantial improvement in the second half of the year. This coincided with many investment friendly and fiscally responsibly announcements, as well as the OPEC agreement to cut oil production. Dubai saw the largest drop, down 82 bps in 2016, followed by Bahrain and Saudi, down 42 bps and 37 bps respectively. Issuance in the region saw a large increase in 2016 on the back of growing government financing needs. Gross issuance totaled \$105 billion in 2016, up \$32 billion from the previous year, and double what was issued in 2014. This saw the stock of outstanding bonds jump \$69 billion, to settle at \$376 billion at the end of 2016. Sovereigns led the issuance, with GCC governments having tapped domestic and international bond markets for \$85 billion.

Sovereign issuances dominated 4Q16, with gross issuance topping \$23 billion. Saudi Arabia accounted for most of the activity, thanks to its sizeable issuance, while Bahrain and Kuwait borrowing accounted for the rest. With the exception of Kuwait, all GCC sovereigns tapped international debt markets in 2016, in a bid to cope with tightening domestic liquidity, issuing \$39 billion worth of dollar denominated bonds. The year saw first time issuer Saudi Arabia come to market with its international debt offer of \$17.5 billion, as well as Qatar's sizeable \$9 billion offering, while Abu Dhabi returned after a seven year hiatus, issuing \$5 billion. Meanwhile, Oman borrowed \$4.5 billion throughout the year, and Bahrain \$2.5 billion. This is not to mention their large forays into the international syndicated loan market, where Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman borrowed a combined \$26.5 billion. The pick-up in international issuance helped ease liquidity constraints across the GCC.

This helped moderate the climb in rates,

with Saudi seeing the biggest improvement following its issuance. The Saudi 3-month interbank rate dropped 35 bps from its peak of 2.38 percent, to settle at 2.03 percent. However, it still remains high in comparison to its 5-year average.

Private sector issuance was far more subdued, as bank appetite for debt diminished. Gross issuance of the private sector in the GCC eased for a third consecutive year, dropping to \$20 billion in 2016, from \$32 billion in 2013. The slowdown in activity was primarily due to the moderation of the non-oil sector, brought on by the decline in oil prices. This, and a diminished need to raise regulatory capital, saw issuance by banks decline. By contrast, issuance by non-financial companies picked up in 2016, after registering its worst performance in a decade in 2015. GCC debt is expected to remain robust in 2017, with issuers seeking to take advantage of the still favorable global rates environment supported by their improving fiscal sustainability. The GCC's financing needs remain large, estimated at \$87 billion for 2017. Oman has begun working on its next international issuance. Kuwait is close to issuing its international bond, which could raise up to \$10 billion. Talk of a sizeable international Saudi sukuk also emerged following the announcement of their 2017 budget. Meanwhile, weak fiscal pictures will continue to push government-related entities to debt markets, with Omani and UAE state owned firms expected to lead the way. Global risks in the form of continued strength in the dollar and a more hawkish Fed, both driven by uncertainties over US economic policy, will weigh on GCC yields. A stronger US dollar may deter non-USD investors, while a more hawkish Fed may see GCC rates move up in parallel. As a result, this may see GCC yields pushed up and issuance decline. Indeed, the region's peg to the dollar makes it very susceptible to US developments. This was observed following the most recent Fed rate hike. Kuwait, Saudi, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE all added 25 bps to their respective policy rates within days of the Fed move.

VISA ROW OVERSHADOWS IRANIAN INVESTMENT DRIVE, PLANE DEALS

ANKARA/PARIS: A row over US visa bans may further weaken Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's efforts to attract foreign investors to Iran, particularly if it slows the implementation of deals for Western aircraft, officials and analysts said. The deals for 80 Boeing jets and 100 from Europe's Airbus struck last year are seen by Western investors as a crucial test as they seek business in Iran in the wake of the nuclear deal that led to the lifting of most sanctions.

People involved in the airline deals say it is too early to assess the impact of the US visa ban but worry that hardening rhetoric in Tehran and Washington can only add to a list of complications that could slow, if not endanger, the jet sales. While Airbus planes come from Europe, the administration of US President Donald Trump can veto the sale of all the planes to Iran because of the widespread use of US parts in the aircraft which need US export licenses.

The visa ban could also prolong a hiatus in talks about financing deliveries of jets, with European and Chinese banks reluctant to put up money to back Iranian jet purchases for fear of a backlash against their US operations. "It will make people more nervous, more risk-averse, more inclined to wait and see," said a senior Western financier, who asked not to be named.

Iranian officials say that even before Trump imposed restrictions on travel to the United States from seven mainly Muslim countries, concerns about what the new US president might do had already put the brakes on post-sanctions business. During his election campaign, Trump criticized the nuclear accord six major powers struck with Iran and his victory in November increased uncertainty around Iran's investment drive.

FINAL RULING

"The process has been very slow ... foreign

investors were very interested to work in Iran, but since Trump's election the process has almost stopped. Investors are worried about possible US punishments if they work with Iran," a senior economy ministry official told Reuters. Final decisions on whether the plane deals go ahead may well lie with Trump and Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the ultimate broker in the country's faction-ridden politics who has the last say on key matters.

Since taking office this month, Trump has largely ignored the Iranian jet deals in public, even as he lambasted U.S. aerospace firms including Boeing about other projects. For now, at least, Boeing appears comfortable that Trump won't automatically block its deal, though questions also remain over further approvals from Iran, two industry sources said. Boeing and Europe's Airbus declined comment. — Reuters

ASIA IMPORTS OF IRANIAN OIL MORE THAN DOUBLE

TOKYO: Imports of crude oil by Iran's four major buyers in Asia more than doubled in December compared with the same month a year earlier, for the third straight month, with purchases by South Korea up sevenfold and India's more than three times higher. Iran's top four Asian buyers - China, India, South Korea and Japan - imported 1.89 million barrels per day (bpd) last month, data from governments and ship-tracking services showed.

In absolute terms, imports slipped for a second consecutive month, from a peak of just under 2 million bpd in October, which was the highest since at least 2010, according to data by International Energy Agency. Iran was exempted from an OPEC deal in January to reduce output by 1.2 million bpd, a boon for Tehran which had argued it needs to regain the market share it lost under Western sanctions targeting its

nuclear program.

Across the first full year since the sanctions were lifted, Iran has boosted exports to its biggest Asian customers by nearly 60 percent to 1.63 million bpd.

The country has been offering discounts to buyers in return for increasing their purchases, industry sources have said. Iran's crude oil imports cost Japan an average \$43.87 a barrel for December, the third cheapest after Ecuador and Columbia, trade data from Japan's Ministry of Finance showed on Monday.

Japan's trade ministry yesterday released official data showing its imports jumped more than 40 percent from a year earlier to 246,243 bpd last month. China's imports rose 30 percent to 689,530 bpd, meaning the country regained top spot among consumers after buying less than India for three consecutive months. — Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.660
Indian Rupees	4.500
Pakistani Rupees	2.916
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.038
Nepali Rupees	2.812
Singapore Dollar	214.740
Hongkong Dollar	39.443
Bangladesh Taka	3.848
Philippine Peso	6.144
Thai Baht	8.690

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.654
Qatari Riyal	84.101
ani Riyal	795.218
Bahraini Dinar	813.070
UAE Dirham	83.367

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.700
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.242
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.229
Tunisian Dinar	133.620
Jordanian Dinar	431.200
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.040
Syrian Lira	2.182
Morocco Dirham	30.940

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	306.000
Euro	329.410
Sterling Pound	386.330
Canadian dollar	234.030
Turkish lira	79.580

GOLD	
20 Gram	243.78
10 Gram	124.81
5 Gram	63.25

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.500
Canadian Dolla	232.980
Sterling Pound	384.965
Euro	328.400
Swiss Franc	306.830
Bahrain Dinar	809.855
UAE Dirhams	83.570
Qatari Riyals	84.790
Saudi Riyals	82.395
Jordanian Dinar	432.055
Egyptian Pound	16.386
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.036
Indian Rupees	4.493
Pakistani Rupees	2.913
Bangladesh Taka	3.864
Philippines Peso	6.131
Cyprus pound	167.770
Japanese Yen	3.655
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupees	3.805
Malaysian Ringgit	69.835

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.845
Thai Bhat	9.650
Turkish Lira	79.330

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.377848	0.387848
Czech Korune	0.004139	0.016139
Danish Krone	0.040073	0.045073
Euro	0.322395	0.331395
Norwegian Krone	0.032760	0.037960
Romanian Leu	0.084764	0.084764
Slovakia	0.009167	0.019167
Swedish Krona	0.030627	0.035627
Swiss Franc	0.300007	0.311007
Turkish Lira	0.074503	0.084803

Australasia	BUY	SELL
Australian Dollar	0.222602	0.234602
New Zealand Dollar	0.215753	0.225253

America	BUY	SELL
Canadian Dollar	0.227380	0.236380
Georgina Lari	0.138139	0.138139
US Dollars	0.301750	0.306150
US Dollars Mint	0.302250	0.306150

Asia	BUY	SELL
Bangladesh Taka	0.003650	0.004234
Chinese Yuan	0.043113	0.046613
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037349	0.040099
Indian Rupee	0.002738	0.004961

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002591	0.002771
Kenyan Shilling	0.002997	0.002997
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065510	0.071510
Nepalese Rupee	0.003083	0.003253
Pakistan Rupee	0.002716	0.003005
Philippine Peso	0.006071	0.006371
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.209517	0.219517
South African Rand	0.016806	0.025306
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001680	0.002260
Taiwan	0.009665	0.009845
Thai Baht	0.008327	0.008877

Arab	BUY	SELL
Bahraini Dinar	0.804702	0.813202
Egyptian Pound	0.013187	0.022440
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000186	0.000246
Jordanian Dinar	0.425719	0.434719
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000148	0.000248
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020121	0.044121
Nigerian Naira	0.001268	0.001903
Omani Riyal	0.787994	0.793674
Qatar Riyal	0.083198	0.084648
Saudi Riyal	0.080473	0.081773
Syrian Pound	0.001297	0.001517
Tunisian Dinar	0.130924	0.138924
Turkish Lira	0.075403	0.084803
UAE Dirhams	0.081847	0.083547
Yemeni Riyal	0.000994	0.001074

BOURSA KUWAIT REMAINS BULLISH IN JANUARY

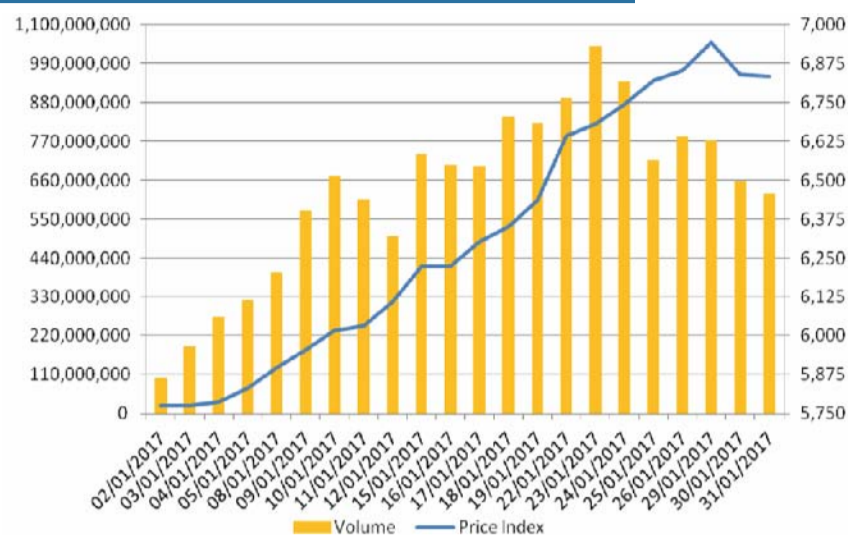
BAYAN MONTHLY REPORT ON BOURSA KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait ended January in the green zone. The Price Index closed at 6,832.22 points, up by 18.86 percent compared to the closing of the month before, the Weighted Index increased by 12.44 percent after closing at 427.38 points, whereas the KSX-15 Index closed at 985.40 points increasing by 11.34 percent. Furthermore, last month's average turnover increased by 235.16 percent, compared to the preceding month, reaching KD 53.88 million, whereas trading volume average was 629.89 million shares, recording an increase of 250.53 percent.

The Boursa indices outperformed to break many records last month and was able to realize noticeable gains, considered the largest in a while, as the Price Index reached in one session of the month its highest level since November 2014, and was able to break the 6,000 point level up for the first time in about 17 months, to end the month's trading at 6,832.22 point. Also, the Weighted Index increased and recorded its highest level since May 2015, as it ended the month's trading at 427.38 point, while the KSX-15 Index reached its highest level since August 2015, ending last month's trading activity at 985.40 points.

In addition, the traded cash liquidity reached its highest level since around mid of 2013, whereas it recorded on 23 January more than KD 97 million, and the traded volume reached about 1.04 billion share in the same session, its highest level since 2013 as well. The Boursa realized its gains in light of the purchasing trend that included most of the listed stocks, especially the stocks of the companies that expected to disclose profits for the year end 31 December 2016, in addition to the quick speculative operations executed on some stocks and caused it to increase and reach good levels. The continued quick speculation that concentrated on the small-cap stocks contributed also in enhancing the Boursa's gains during the last month, especially the stocks being traded at prices below its book and par values. On the contrary, the Boursa witnessed during some last sessions of the month partial profit collection operations that forced its indices to decline and record losses, however it could not drag it to the red zone on a monthly level.

Moreover, the Boursa was able to add about K.D. 3.09 billion to its market capitalization during the last month because of such performance, as the total listed



stocks value reached by the end of the first month KD 28.49 billion against KD 25.41 billion at end of the last month of the previous year, up by 12.15 percent.

The traders in the Boursa are watching for the listed companies' results for the year end 31 December 2016, expected to be disclosed during the coming period, where many investors are waiting for such results to define their investment objectives for the current year.

index achieved 27.19 percent growth, ending the week at 1,106.82 points. The Consumer Goods sector was the least growing as its index closed at 1,157.14 points with a 2.85 percent increase. On the other hand, the Health Care sector was last week's only loser as its index declined by 4.62 percent to end the week's activity at 1,186.94 points.

Sectors' Activity

The Financial Services sector dominated total trade volume during last month with 5.55 billion shares changing hands, representing 40.04 percent of the total market trading volume. The Real Estate sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 32.50 percent of last month's total trading volume, with a total of 4.50 billion shares.

On the other hand, the Financial Services sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of KD 339.50 million or 28.64 percent of last month's total market trading value. The Real Estate sector took the second place as the sector's last month turnover of KD 238.93 million representing 20.16 percent of the total market trading value.

Sectors' Indices

All of Boursa Kuwait's sectors ended last week in the green zone except for one sector. Last week's highest gainer was the Technology sector, achieving 47.08 percent growth rate as its index closed at 893.02 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Financial Services sector's index closed at 794.82 points recording 33.12 percent increase. The Real Estate sector came in third as its



KANSAS: Janae Melvin shops for gifts at Forever 21 in Kansas City, Kan. Americans expressed a bit less optimism about the economy in January 2017 after their confidence soared to a 15-year high in December, according to information released yesterday. — AP

INDIA SAYS CASH BAN HITS GROWTH

GOVT LOWERS GDP GROWTH FORECAST TO 7.1%

NEW DELHI: India's government acknowledged yesterday that its decision to pull high-value bank notes from circulation has caused pain in large parts of the economy as it lowered its growth forecast on the eve of the budget. Its annual economic survey concluded that the so-called demonetization scheme had hit a host of sectors including real estate and farming but also said tax revenues could be boosted in the long-run.



Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley

"The adverse impact of demonetization on GDP (gross domestic product) growth will be transitional," said the survey compiled by the government's chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian. In the survey, the government lowered its growth forecast for the 2016-17 fiscal year ending in March to 7.1 percent, down from 7.6 percent in the previous year.

But the survey said the estimate was based mainly on data for the first seven to eight months of the financial year, before the shock move in November to pull all 500 and 1,000 rupee notes from circulation.

That decision effectively removed around 86 percent of the cash in circulation at one stroke, triggering massive queues outside banks as the authorities struggled to print enough new notes.

The survey said cash-intensive sectors such as agriculture, real estate and jewellery were the worst affected and that there had been job losses and a decline in farm incomes in the broader



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

economy. "Growth slowed as demonetization reduced demand... and increased uncertainty," said the survey.

'Hardship and inconvenience'

Speaking at a press conference in Delhi, Subramanian said that "there have been short-term costs which are real and significant." "I think there has been hardship and inconvenience especially for those in the informal sector but there is also potential for long-term benefits," he added. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said in the survey he expected cash supplies would be fully "replenished" by the end of March and the economy should then "revert to normal," projecting growth in 2017-18 in the range of 6.75 to 7.5 percent. The cash crunch has already prompted the International Monetary Fund to knock a percentage point off its forecast for India's economy in the current fiscal year to 6.6 percent, bringing it below China's projected rate of 6.7 percent.

Sunil Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings & Research, said it was unusual for the government to give such "a huge range" in its growth projection.

"The very fact that it has used such a huge range of 75 basis points means that there are a lot of gaps in terms of estimating the effects of demonetization and it is quite obvious that the

spillover effect will be felt in the next fiscal year as well," he told AFP. "As a thumb rule, if such a wide corridor is given, one can expect growth to settle somewhere in the middle at best, assuming some of the positives play out."

However Sujana Hajra, chief economist at Anand Rathi Securities, said that the economic survey was "considerably conservative" and the final growth figure could be higher than 7.1 percent. "If you look at the corporate results for the third quarter, they were ahead of market expectations despite demonetization," said Hajra. "The longer-term impact of demonetization and introduction of GST should play out in the next year and help the GDP," Hajra added in reference to a long-delayed goods and services tax which should be rolled out later this year.

By painting demonetization as a blitz on corruption and cash-hoarding that will ultimately boost tax revenues, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has so far escaped a major backlash. While there were massive queues outside banks in the weeks afterwards, they have now subsided while limits on withdrawals have eased. India's central bank announced late Monday that it would loosen some of the restrictions on cash withdrawals although most savers are still only allowed to withdraw a maximum of 24,000 rupees in cash each week. — AFP

TURKISH CB SIGNALS NO END TO UNORTHODOX LIRA DEFENSE

ANKARA: Turkey's central bank signalled yesterday it would stick with its unorthodox steps to manage the fall in the lira, saying its moves to drive up funding costs were working and would continue until the inflation outlook improves.

The lira has fallen more than 7 percent this month after double-digit declines in both 2015 and 2016, making it one of the world's worst-performing currencies, while the economy shrank in the third quarter for the first time in seven years. Investors have been unnerved by insecurity, political uncertainty and a slowing economy. But they also worry the central bank is under political pressure to avoid taking decisive action to support the lira and tame inflation.

The central bank raised its main policy rate - the one-week repo rate - on Nov. 25 for the first time since 2014 but it has remained unchanged since and President Tayyip Erdogan has made it clear he wants borrowing costs to stay low to boost growth.

Instead, the bank has stopped holding one-week repos, closing off its main channel for funding the market, and raised overnight and last resort borrowing rates, pushing funding costs for banks higher without having to change the benchmark rate. "We will continue to use these steps as long as necessary. It should be expected for this framework to continue for a certain time," central bank Governor Murat Cetinkaya said.

"If no permanent and serious improvements are seen regarding inflation expectations in the foreseeable future, it seems tightening will continue," he told a news conference to announce the bank's quarterly assessment of the inflation outlook. With the lira continuing to weaken, the bank raised its

inflation forecast for the end of 2017 to 8.0 percent from 6.5 percent in its previous report. Its forecast for inflation at the end of 2018 stands at 6 percent. "Risks are upward, but the critical point is that monetary policy is having the necessary effect," Cetinkaya said, adding that the bank might take additional measures if needed and would use all available tools.

Data published yesterday also showed the number of tourists visiting Turkey slumped by nearly a third in 2016 following a spate of bombings and a failed coup, a significant hit for a key sector in the economy. Tourism accounts for 4-5 percent of gross domestic product and financed some 45 percent of Turkey's current account deficit in the first 11 months of 2016, according to central bank data.

COMPLICATED POLICY MIX

Pressure from the government to keep borrowing costs low is unlikely to relent ahead of an expected referendum in April on constitutional changes which would create a full presidential system and hand Erdogan greater powers.

Still, the central bank's efforts to tighten liquidity have raised short-term funding costs to their highest in nearly five years, helping support the lira even without the outright rate increase many in the market have been hoping for. The bank has said it is aiming, over time, to provide funding via a single rate, rather than the multiple rates it is using now. Cetinkaya said that was still the aim but it would only make the shift when conditions were suitable. "Simplification will be our preference once the right framework is set up and volatility has died down," he said. The currency firmed more than 2 percent

on Monday, although it pared some of those gains as Cetinkaya spoke and was unchanged at 3.78 to the dollar by 1245 GMT. It hit a record low of 3.9417 on Jan. 11. "The central bank governor sounded quite comfortable about the current monetary policy framework and it is good to hear tight monetary policy will prevail in the period ahead," said Deniz Invest chief economist Ozlem Deric.

"However ... simplification seems to be off the agenda in the foreseeable future. This might deter the impact of tightening as we think that the current unorthodox policy mix employed complicates making forecasts," she said in a note. Besides worrying about a perceived lack of independence, investors are also concerned that the very short-term levers being used by the central bank now make it hard to assess the actual impact of monetary policy. Economic growth in 2016 is expected to have been just 3.2 percent, a far cry from the high single-digit rates on which Erdogan built his reputation as prime minister from 2003-14. Officials have also said inflation is expected to reach double digits in the first quarter for the first time in almost five years, partly due to the weaker lira.

Ratings agency Fitch downgraded Turkey's sovereign debt to "junk" on Friday, snuffing out its last remaining investment grade, hours after rival agency Standard & Poor's lowered its outlook to "negative" from "stable". Both sounded concern about political insecurity after a failed coup last year, as well as pressure on the central bank. Cetinkaya described S&P's report as hurried, and dismissed concern about the bank's independence, saying its future steps would bring an end to such discussions. — Reuters

ALI AL-ZAHID APPOINTED AS CEO OF ZAIN IRAQ

BAGHDAD: Zain Iraq, the country's leading mobile operator, announces the promotion and appointment of Ali Al-Zahid as CEO of the company, effective today.

An Austrian national with Iraqi roots, Al-Zahid most recently held the position of Chief Commercial Officer of Zain Iraq, which he assumed in June 2015 having joined the organization as Director of Sales in September 2013. Al-Zahid brings 17 years of extensive experience with international telecom operators including Orange



Ali Al-Zahid

Austria, O2 Germany (Telefonica), and Zain Iraq to his new role. He also has experience in management consultancy, working with two European based firms for five years. Al-Zahid combines broad and in depth experience in organizational leadership and development, brand, marketing and commercial strategies in fast growing telecom markets across Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Commenting on the appointment, the Chairman of Zain Iraq, Mohammed Al Charchafchi said, "It is a pleasure to promote a young talented

leader with Iraqi heritage to the role of CEO at an important stage of Zain Iraq's evolution. Over the last three years he has played a vital role within the senior management ranks and proven to be a very capable professional, exceeding expectations on multiple fronts. We have the utmost confidence that Ali Al-Zahid has the right skill-sets and leadership qualities to take the operation to next phase of growth."

The Chairman continued, "The key shareholders and board of directors of Zain Iraq are committed to the continual investment and expansion of the 3G mobile network in providing vital telecommunications services to the communities we serve, playing our fundamental role in the economic and social development of the country."

Zain Group CEO, Scott Gegenheimer commented, "Ali Al-Zahid has an outstanding track record in one of Zain's most complex and challenging emerging markets. He has a strong background in mobile technology, strategy and management, and in exploiting commercial data-related opportunities. Thus I share the Chairman's confidence that he is a good fit to take Zain Iraq to the next stage of the company's development to enhance customer experience and solidifying Zain Iraq's market leadership."

Gegenheimer continued, "It is also a particular pleasure to promote an existing Zain talent, who has an impressive and successful track record to a senior position in one of our key markets, fulfilling our Group-wide human resources policy of capitalizing on and promoting our talented leaders from within."

Ali Al-Zahid graduated with a MSc in Management & Communication, from Danube University Krems (Austria) in 2004 and is currently part of the TRIUM Global Executive MBA with the London School of Economics, HEC Paris and NYU Stern.

TRUMP IMMIGRATION ORDER CAUSES RIFT WITH BUSINESS

NEW YORK: Many American businesses are publicly breaking with President Donald Trump over his anti-immigration policies, saying they could damage competitiveness by limiting access to the best and brightest employees. Criticism of Trump's order has been most virulent in Silicon Valley, where chiefs of tech firms Apple, Microsoft, Airbnb and Google were among those to blast the policy, unveiled late Friday, which prohibits people from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States, and includes a temporary ban on refugees.

Protests erupted at airports nationwide over the weekend, while lawsuits led to judges blocking parts of the order, which initially prevented some legal US residents from returning home.

Netflix CEO Reed Hastings called the policies "un-American." Executives outside of the technology industry have

joined in pointing out the perils of the immigration policies as well, although they are more cautious about provoking the administration, which is expected to pursue favored policies such as tax cuts and regulatory relief.

Any criticism could trigger blowback from Trump, who has frequently lambasted individual companies, including Ford, General Motors, Toyota, Boeing and Lockheed.

Company chiefs, in messages to employees, have emphasized the importance of a diverse workforce and promised to support employees. "This is not a policy we support," Goldman Sachs chief executive Lloyd Blankfein told employees in a recorded voice mail. "I want to assure all of you that we will work to minimize such disruption to the extent we can within the law and are focused on supporting our colleagues and their families who may be affected." — AFP

RETHINK ON TRUMP HITS DOLLAR AND WORLD STOCKS

LONDON: The US dollar headed for its worst start to a year in over a decade yesterday, while world stocks cemented their biggest losses in six weeks after widespread protests against President Donald Trump's stringent curbs on travel to the United States.

Thousands took to the streets of major US cities to oppose the travel ban, which also halts refugee arrivals, while marches in Britain added to pressure on Prime Minister Theresa May to

cancel a planned state visit by Trump.

A stream of US policymakers and business executives have also slammed Trump's stance. The dollar lost more ground against a basket of six major currencies yesterday, on track for a slump of over 2 percent this month - its worst start to the year since 2006.

Against the safe haven yen, the dollar slipped to 113.28 yen, set for a fall of over 3 percent this month. MSCI's gauge of the world's top 46 stock markets failed to recover any ground yesterday, after a 0.6 percent slide on Monday which was its largest loss in a month and a half.

Futures showed Wall Street opening around 0.2 percent lower, with the S&P 500 index set to

add to its biggest daily fall in a month, seen on Monday. "His actions over the last few days are another reminder that there were two sides to his campaign and Trump is just as adamant to follow through on those measures that will likely weigh on market sentiment in the coming months," said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at OANDA. Benchmark German government bond yields edged higher as the euro zone posted better-than-expected inflation and growth data, a trend that plays into the hands of a minority of policymakers calling for an end to the European Central Bank's ultra-easy stance.

European bourses clawed back some ground after big losses on Monday, buoyed by strong

results from the likes of British online supermarket Ocado. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.6 percent while Japan's Nikkei dropped 1.7 percent, its biggest fall in almost three months. Supported by signs of accelerating momentum in the global economy, most stock markets remained up on the month as a whole. MSCI's ex-Japan Asian shares index was up 5.8 percent this month while its index of world markets was up 2.7 percent.

over, a thing of the past," said Mizuho's head of hedge fund FX sales, Neil Jones. "Recent US concern over a strong US dollar versus China is now feeding into the euro zone with the comment on an undervalued euro." The British pound fell by almost a full cent after weaker than expected data on consumer credit added to a handful of tentative signs that the UK economy may finally be slowing on the back of last year's Brexit vote.

Elevated uncertainty about Trump's policies, including a lack of detail so far on his plans for tax cuts and fiscal spending, is tempering optimism on the US economy. Over half of the global investors polled by Reuters this month said they thought Trump's stimulus plans would fail to meet existing market expectations. Data on Monday showed US consumer spending accelerated in December while inflation showed some signs of picking up last month. — Reuters

DOLLAR RALLY OVER?

In other currencies, the euro edged up to \$1.0756 against the US dollar after Trump's trade adviser told the Financial Times that Germany was benefiting from a "grossly undervalued" exchange rate. It has bounced back from a 14-year low of \$1.0340 set on Jan 3.

"We sense the strong US dollar policy is

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Logo: Global. Tuesday 31 January 2017.

Summary table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low. Rows: Price index, Weighted Index, KSX 15, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades.

Table of stock trades with columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include MARIN, IKARUS, IPG, NAPESCO, ENERGIYH, GPI, ABAR, Oil & Gas, KFOUC, BPCC, ALKOUT, ALQURAIN, Basic Materials, KCEM, REFR, CABLE, SHIP, PCEM, PAPER, MRC, ACICO, GGMC, HCC, KBMMC, NICBM, EQUIPMENT, NCCI, GYPSUM, SALBOOKH, AGLTY, EDU, CLEANING, KGL, KPCC, HUMANSOFT, NAFAS, SAFWAN, GFC, MAYADEEN, CGC, MTCC, UPAC, ALAFCO, MUBARRAD, LOGISTICS, SCEM, GCEM, QIC, FCEM, RKWC, SFEPC, Industrials, KSH, NSH, PAFCO, CATT, DANAH, POUAT, FOOD, Consumer Goods, MHC, ATC, YIACO, Health Care, KCIN, KHOT, SULTAN, CABLETV, EYAS, IFARH, OULAFUEL, MUNTAZAHAT, JAZEERA, SOOR, FUTUREKID, ALRAI, ZIMAH, Mezzan, Consumer Services, ZAIN, QOREDOO, HISTI TELECOM, VIVA, Telecommunications, NBK, GBK, CBK, ABK, ALMUTAHFED, KIB, BURG, KFIN, BOUBYAN, AUB, ITIHMR, WARBABANK, Banks, KINS, GINS, AINS, WINS, KUWAITRE, FTI, WETHAQ, BKIKWT, Insurance.



TOKYO: Men walk past an electronic stock indicator of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. Asian shares slipped yesterday tracking a decline on Wall Street set off by jitters over President Donald Trump's travel ban. — AP

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report. At 02:00 PM Previous Day. Includes Global Stock Indices, MENA Stock Indices, Global Currencies Exchange Rate, MENA Currencies Exchange Rate, Global Interest Rates, Global Bond Yields, and Commodities.

BOJ LIFTS GROWTH FORECASTS ON GLOBAL OUTLOOK

TOKYO: Japan's central bank hiked its economic growth forecasts yesterday, citing an improved global outlook and a weaker yen but the country's finance chief warned of "uncertainty" caused by the arrival of Donald Trump in the White House.

After its first meeting of the year the Bank of Japan also held off any fresh monetary-easing measures, though earlier spending data highlighted the challenge facing officials trying to refire the world's number-three economy. The BoJ tipped expansion to hit 1.4 percent in the current fiscal year to March, compared with its previous one percent estimate, and 1.5 percent growth in the following 12 months, from its earlier 1.3 percent forecast.

In the year to March 2019 it saw 1.1 percent growth, up from an initially flagged 0.9 percent. "The projected growth rates are somewhat higher, mainly reflecting improvement in overseas economies and the yen's depreciation," the bank said in its quarterly outlook. The yen has lost about 10 percent of its value against the dollar since the bank's last forecast in November as traders bet Trump's planned infrastructure spending, tax-cutting measures will fire US inflation and force the Federal Reserve to ramp up interest rates.

A weaker yen is positive for Japanese exports as it makes them more competitive abroad. However, Trump's arrival in the Oval Office has also fuelled confusion in world capitals, with fears he will also follow through on promises to tear up free-trade agreements, throw up tariffs and spark a global trade war.

Focus on Trump

Yesterday Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso told parliament: "The economy is a living thing and Trump uncertainty has emerged and is globally recognized." However, he stressed the yen's weakness would continue well into this year, at least as he sought to reassure over the domestic economy's outlook. While the BoJ did not explicitly mention Trump in its report, the future in a world with the real-estate tycoon-turned-president is clearly on the minds of its policymakers.

"The BoJ is paying the most attention to what comes out of Trump, though it doesn't say this directly," Maiko Noguchi, an economist at Daiwa Securities, told Bloomberg News.

As expected, policymakers also kept monetary policy unchanged and their inflation projections



TOKYO: Bank of Japan (BOJ) governor Haruhiko Kuroda gestures as he answers questions during a press conference at the BOJ headquarters in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

largely unchanged as they struggle to bring an end to almost two decades of on-off deflation.

Kuroda, asked at a press conference about Trump's economic policies, said he would like to "closely monitor" them. "There are concerns that

protectionism might shrink global trade and slow the speed of growth of the world economy," he said. "But the importance of free trade is internationally recognized via the G7, the G20, the WTO and the IMF. So I don't think protectionism is likely to spread vigorously and widely in the world."

Trump has called, among other things, for taxes on some imports into the US and has targeted domestic and foreign companies with them if they set up factories in places such as Mexico.

Earlier Tuesday figures showed household spending fell in December for the 10th consecutive month, declining 0.3 percent, although that was better than expectations of 0.9 percent. Last week, Japan logged its first annual consumer price decline in four years. The data came as worrying reading for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who came to office in December 2012 with a blockbuster growth plan of massive monetary easing, government spending and red-tape slashing.

While the measures had a positive initial impact, growth remains fragile and inflation is still well below the BoJ's two percent target. Kuroda said it was "too early" to discuss exiting current monetary policy. — AFP

FRENCH GROWTH PICKS UP IN 4TH QUARTER

PARIS: France enjoyed modestly accelerating growth in the fourth quarter, data showed yesterday, but the eurozone's second-biggest economy still failed to match the government's target for the full year 2016. Gross domestic product rose by 0.4 percent in the final three months of the year, lifted by rising corporate investment and consumer spending, after 0.2 percent in the third quarter and a contraction of 0.1 in the second, the Insee statistics bureau said.

This took French growth for 2016 as a whole to 1.1 percent, short of the 1.4 percent President Francois Hollande's government had been forecasting. "For the second year running, economic activity was dynamic and allowed a reduction in unemployment and a cut in the public deficit," Finance Minister Michel Sapin said in a statement. French jobless numbers, while still around 3.5 million, declined for the first time since

2007 last year. Fourth-quarter growth figures showed "a recovery that is sustainable, and most of all, widening", Sapin said, predicting a "very dynamic start to 2017".

Insee said France was on track for 0.4 percent growth in both the first and second quarters of this year, and unemployment was set to edge lower. The French government is forecasting 1.5 percent growth for 2017, partly thanks to tax breaks for corporate investment, but economists are doubtful. "The various government measures have been positive for investor morale, but in macro-economic terms their impact is very weak," said Christopher Dembik, head of economic research at Saxo Banque.

A stronger euro, higher oil prices and likely interest rate rises will combine to make growth "weaker than the government is expecting, perhaps even weaker than in previous years", he said. — AFP



ATHENS: A man looks at newspapers bearing headlines reading 'The nightmare of Grexit' yesterday. — AFP

EUROZONE GROWTH PICKS UP, INFLATION AT 0.9%

DECEMBER UNEMPLOYMENT 9.6%, MORE THAN 7-YEAR LOW

BRUSSELS: Eurozone inflation jumped in January, economic growth picked up and unemployment fell to a seven-year low, but the rebound looks unlikely to prompt any early rethink of the ECB's stimulus program as rises in core prices were modest.

Inflation in the 19 countries sharing the euro accelerated to 1.8 percent year-on-year, Eurostat estimated, up from 1.1 percent in December, putting it within range of the European Central Bank's medium-term target of below but close to 2 percent.

It was the highest rate since February 2013. Core inflation, which excludes volatile prices of energy and unprocessed food and which the ECB focuses on in its policy decisions, was stable at 0.9 percent year-on-year, however.

ECB President Mario Draghi said last Thursday he would look past energy price fluctuations

until underlying inflation picked up in a "convincing" way. "With core inflation still weak, it seems unlikely that this will cause the ECB to change course" on its bond-buying program, said Bert Colijn, economist at ING bank. Barring some "serious upside surprise" in core inflation, he did not expect the ECB to start tapering the program until next year.

Energy prices jumped 8.1 percent year-on-year in January after a 2.6 percent increase in December and unprocessed food was 3.3 percent more expensive than a year earlier. Separately, the statistics agency said euro zone gross domestic product rose 0.5 percent quarter-on-quarter in the last three months of 2016, as expected, for a 1.8 percent year-on-year rise. In the whole of 2016, euro zone GDP rose 1.7 percent, down from a five-year high of 2.0 percent in 2015.

"We suspect the eurozone may find it difficult to sustain this momentum amid appreciable political uncertainties during 2017 and likely reduced consumer purchasing power due to higher inflation," said Howard Archer, economist at IHS Global Insight. Archer sees eurozone GDP growth of 1.6 percent in both 2017 and 2018.

Stronger economic growth also helped bring down the bloc's unemployment rate to 9.6 percent in December, the lowest since May 2009 before Greece's debt crisis broke out. "This starts to get closer to figures that would justify more wage pressures, but it seems unlikely that this will happen in a meaningful way in the first half of 2017," Colijn said. "Nevertheless, the ECB will look at this batch of data with a mix of joy and concern as it does show that the economy is moving in the right direction, but it will probably bring out the hawks early," he said. — Reuters

JAL SEES PROFITS FALL, FORECAST UNCHANGED

TOKYO: Japan Airlines yesterday said net profit dropped in the nine months to December due to a slump in income from international flights, but the carrier left its full-year forecast unchanged.

JAL posted a net profit of 108.3 billion yen (\$955 million), down 24.6 percent from the same period the year before. Revenue fell 4.7 percent to 975.5 billion yen. The airline said in a statement that income from international passenger flights dropped nearly 10 percent during the period, while that for domestic flights edged down less than one percent. JAL, which slashed its full-year earnings outlook three months ago, left its latest target unchanged, forecasting a net profit of 161 billion yen and sales of 1.28 trillion yen for the year to March. While the airline did not elaborate on negative factors behind the slump, analysts and local media said increased personnel costs, particularly rising salaries, were squeezing the bottom line.

"Increasing personnel costs are pressuring JAL's fiscal year profit," said Hiroshi

Hasegawa, an analyst at SMBC Nikko Securities in Tokyo. "JAL has been winding up the recovery stage from its crisis," he said. "JAL is now moving to the next stage where it may need to consider LCC (low cost carrier) businesses and expanding international routes."

JAL received a government bailout after a high-profile bankruptcy restructuring in 2010. The carrier relisted on the Tokyo bourse two years later.

In sharp contrast, rival carrier All Nippon Airways (ANA) last Friday said its net profit jumped 18 percent in the nine months to December thanks to brisk performance on international flights. However, ANA said it sees the policies of new US President Donald Trump as a risk factor, with many economists fearing his protectionist slant could hurt the global economy or even spark a trade war. JAL and ANA said yesterday they decided to bar passengers from seven Muslim-majority countries from taking their flights to the United States following Trump's entry ban. — AFP



NEW YORK: In this Nov 23, 2015 file photo, a woman passes Pfizer's world headquarters in New York. — AP

PFIZER SWINGS TO A Q4 PROFIT AFTER ROUGH YEAR

NEW YORK: Reduced spending on overhead and legal costs helped drugmaker Pfizer Inc end a difficult year with a fourth-quarter profit, after a loss a year ago, and the company forecast slightly higher revenue and profit for 2017.

The biggest drugmaker based in the US still missed the profit expectations of Wall Street, but it edged past revenue expectations. The maker of Viagra and pain treatment Lyrica yesterday reported net income of \$775 million, versus a loss of \$172 million a year ago. Profit was 13 cents per share or, adjusted for non-recurring costs, 47 cents per share. The average estimate of nine analysts surveyed by Zacks Investment Research was for earnings of 50 cents per share. Revenue totaled \$13.63 billion in the period, while analysts surveyed by Zacks expected \$13.55 billion.

Pfizer, based in New York, said it expects full-year earnings in the range of \$2.50 to \$2.60 per share, with revenue in the range of \$52 billion to \$54 billion. For all of 2016, Pfizer reported net income of \$7.2 billion, or \$1.17 per share, on revenue of \$52.8 billion. Pfizer was blocked last year by the Obama administration in its attempt to acquire the Irish drugmaker Allergan in a tax maneuver that would have put its headquarters, at least on paper, in Dublin. It also scrapped development of a high-priced new cholesterol drug once viewed as a big seller, as sales expectations dropped amid increasing pressure for lower prices from insurers and prescription benefit managers. Shares slipped more than 1 percent before the opening bell yesterday, and have declined almost 4 percent since the beginning of the year. — AP

AETNA TOPS Q4 FORECASTS, BUT 2017 PROJECTIONS LOW

NEW YORK: Aetna trumped fourth-quarter earnings expectations despite pressure from coverage it sells on the Affordable Care Act's exchanges, but the health insurer's 2017 forecast started well below Wall Street projections. The nation's third largest insurer said yesterday that it expects adjusted earnings of at least \$8.55 for the new year. Analysts forecast, on average, earnings of \$8.78 per share, according to FactSet. Aetna and other health insurers tend to start their forecasts conservatively because they don't factor in leftover claims from the previous year that have yet to be processed, while some analysts include that variable.

In the fourth quarter, Aetna earnings sank 57 percent to \$139 million, a drop attributed largely to restructuring costs that included \$215 million for a voluntary early retirement program. Aetna also faced "continued challenges" from its ACA-related business, Chairman and CEO Mark Bertolini said in a statement. He didn't provide details. Aetna and other big insurers like UnitedHealth Group Inc. have scaled back their presence on the ACA's public exchanges after losing millions of dollars.

Earnings, adjusted for one-time gains and costs, totaled \$1.63 for Aetna in the final quarter of 2017. The insurer's total revenue climbed 4.5 percent to \$15.73 billion. Analysts expected earnings of \$1.45 per share on \$15.87 billion in revenue, according to Zacks Investment Research. Aetna's total enrollment slipped less than 2 percent to 23.1 million in the fourth quarter. The insurer said it expects another drop of nearly 1 million people in this year's first quarter. That's due largely to a roughly 880,000 decline in its individual and small group business, which

includes the ACA exchanges.

Aetna also said yesterday that it continues to review a takeover bid for rival health insurer Humana. Last week, a federal judge rejected the roughly \$34-billion deal on the grounds that it would hurt competition in hundreds of Medicare Advantage markets. That decision may be appealed by Aetna.

The Department of Justice sued last summer

to stop Aetna's pursuit of Humana and a separate buyout attempt, Anthem Inc's \$48-billion bid for Cigna Corp. That case has yet to be decided. Shares of Aetna Inc, based in Hartford, Connecticut, climbed nearly 2 percent, or \$2.29, to \$119 in early morning trading. The stock had fallen almost 6 percent since the beginning of the year after topping \$136 and reaching a new all-time high late last year. — AP



HARTFORD: In this Aug 19, 2014 file photo, a pedestrian walks past a sign for Aetna Inc, at the company headquarters in Hartford, Conn. — AP

DOUBLE CREDIT FOR ALL PREPAID OOREDOO CUSTOMERS

OOREDOO CELEBRATES NATIONAL HOLIDAYS WITH OFFER THROUGHOUT FEBRUARY

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, is giving its prepaid customers double credit throughout the month of February in celebration of the national holidays. The offer comes in alignment with Ooredoo's strategy which is based on caring, connecting and challenging, and which aims to enrich the lives of customers through telecommunication services.

Recharge transactions will be doubled by 100 percent from 1 February to 28 February. The additional credit is valid for 5 days, and can be used for local calls, SMS and internet on a pay-as-you-go



basis. Commenting on this, Ooredoo stated its commitment to delivering the best in-class products to our customers, with the highest standards. The company feels committed to enriching the experience of its customers, including the prepaid segment. Ooredoo has recently simplified our prepaid plans to give our customers more flexibility and freedom.

The new plans give customers more freedom to add the features that suit their needs from different add-ons at different values, whether they are international minutes, local minutes, or internet.

Ooredoo has recently relaunched its Xpress prepaid plans, with streamlined simplified plans at KD 5 for a SIM card. Customers can subscribe to a main bundle that includes internet and local calls, starting at KD 3/month, and have the freedom to subscribe to add-on plans at competitive prices that include internet, international calls or local calls.

Ooredoo's prepaid plans and other products are available at Ooredoo branches or authorized resellers.

Ooredoo's operations in Kuwait date back to December 1999 when it launched wireless services as the second operator. The company today provides mobile, broadband internet and corporate managed services tailored to the needs of customers and businesses. Ooredoo is guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communications to help people achieve their full potential.

Ooredoo is a leading international communications company delivering mobile, fixed, broadband internet and



corporate managed services tailored to the needs of consumers and businesses across markets in the Middle East, North Africa and South-East Asia. As a community-focused company, Ooredoo is guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communi-

cations to help people achieve their full potential. Ooredoo has a presence in markets such as Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Algeria, Tunisia, Iraq, Palestine, the Maldives and Indonesia. The company was named "Best Mobile Operator of the Year" at the World Communication Awards 2013.



LA HABRA, Calif: A worker pushes shopping carts in front of a Wal-Mart store in La Habra, Calif. — AP

CHEVROLET ALGHANIM LAUNCHES 'YOUR GIFT, YOUR WAY' UP TO KD 1000

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS AND SHOPPING SEASON IN FEBRUARY

KUWAIT: In celebration of Kuwait's national and liberation days, Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons Automotive, the exclusive distributor of Chevrolet vehicles in Kuwait, is delighted to bring back "Your Gift, Your Way" offer for a limited time only. This extraordinary promotion allows fans and customers alike to get a gift worth up to KD 1000 when they purchase a brand new Chevrolet, an exceptional incentive that makes shopping for a new car during the festive month of February extra special.

The KD 1000 gift customers receive when they purchase a new Chevrolet can be spent on any or all of the following: accessories from Kromozone, service contract up to 5 years or as an additional amount on top of the trade-in value. This gift of choice from Chevrolet Alghanim beautifully complements the jubilant commemorations that take place throughout the month of February. It's worth mentioning that the offer is valid on Chevrolet Tahoe, Silverado, Impala, Cruze, Trax

and Aveo. With the Tahoe, drivers not only are empowered with exhilarating performance, thanks to its V8 5.3L engine with 355 horsepower (one of the most powerful engine in its segment) but also with an exceptional sense of comfort and the liberty that reflect their unique lifestyle with customizable accessories. Truck fans, meanwhile, can conquer the harshest terrains using the unbelievable capabilities of the Silverado. As for the new Impala, drivers will experience the best of luxury and performance, which is embedded in its V6 engine, allowing them to turn heads wherever they go. With the Cruze, innovative technologies and safety features are combined in one striking vehicle that meets the diverse needs of anyone who drives it. The city-smart Trax, in addition, will turn everyday ride into an exhilarating adventure full of discoveries and enjoyment. As for those who are looking for effortless simplicity and convenience, they should look no further than the sur-

prisingly roomy and compact Chevrolet Aveo. Thanks to this exceptional promotion, now is the perfect time to own the Chevrolet vehicle of your dream, starting by visiting any of Chevrolet Alghanim showrooms at the following locations: Shuwaikh, Al Rai (Safat Alghanim), Sharq, Fahaheel and Ahmadi.

Chevrolet Care

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A Alghanim & Sons will receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care Program, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance for 4 years.

WAL-MART OPTS FOR FASTER SHIPPING ON NECESSITIES

NEW YORK: Wal-Mart is replacing a program that offered free shipping but had an annual fee with one that has a lower free shipping threshold and faster delivery as it hopes to answer Amazon's powerful Prime membership success. The retailer says it will reduce shipping time to two days on 2 million of its most popular items including essentials like diapers and pet food as well as hot toys and Electronics. Wal-Mart's average shipping time has been three to five days. Starting yesterday morning, it's also reducing the spending necessary for free shipping to \$35 from \$50.

Wal-Mart's ShippingPass had allowed members to buy more than a million items for free shipping at Walmart.com. Last year, it trimmed its shipping time frame to two days from three, and it cut the annual fee by a dollar to \$49. Bentonville, Arkansas-based Wal-Mart said the service worked well, but that it concluded shoppers shouldn't have to pay a membership fee for free shipping.

The strategy shift is one of the first big moves by Walmart.com's CEO Mark Lore, who joined the company when Wal-Mart bought online retailer Jet.com last year. And it's an illustration of how Wal-Mart is trying to figure out a way to compete with Amazon and its dominant Prime plan.

Amazon's membership program costs \$99 a year, but includes services like streaming music and video that have created fierce loyalty. Analysts say Amazon Prime members buy more frequently and spend more money. Amazon doesn't disclose a Prime subscriber total, but it's estimated to be around 65 million. Wal-Mart wouldn't say how many ShippingPass subscribers it had, but all will receive a refund of their membership fee. Lore declined to comment on Amazon, but said lower prices, a wider assortment of eligible goods and faster shipping alone can build loyalty. Lore promised more moves ahead to spur Wal-Mart's online business.

"Two-day, free shipping is table stakes," he said in a conference call Monday. "We've upped the ante. On a very fundamental level, we don't have to charge for membership. We can save customers both time and money." Lore said he believes the new approach will dramatically increase sales. Wal-Mart's online sales had been slowing over the past two years, but notably accelerated during last year's third quarter. Wal-Mart reports fourth-quarter results next month. Wal-Mart said purchases outside the 2 million "essentials" will count toward free shipping, but won't get the faster delivery. — AP

DEUTSCHE BANK FINED FOR \$10BN SHAM RUSSIA TRADES

NEW YORK/FRANKFURT: Deutsche Bank has agreed to pay \$630 million in fines for organizing \$10 billion in sham trades that could have been used to launder money out of Russia, the latest in a string of penalties that have hammered the German lender's finances.

In two detailed reports, US and British regulators criticized the bank for not knowing the customers involved or the source of money for the trades, which helped buoy revenue during a slowdown following the global financial crash. The scheme involved so-called mirror trades carried out between 2011 to 2015 - for instance, buying Russian stocks in rubles for a client and selling the identical value of a security for US dollars for a related customer.

The New York Department of Financial Services outlined a web of trades "converting rubles into dollars through security trades that had no economic purpose" and stretched from Moscow, London and New York to Cyprus and the British Virgin Islands. "I have a billion ruble today ... will you be able to find a security for this size," the watchdog cited one party to a deal as telling a Deutsche Bank trader in Moscow.

The regulator said the bank had missed numerous opportunities to prevent the scheme. "These flaws allowed a corrupt group of bank traders and offshore entities to improperly and covertly transfer more than \$10 billion out of

Russia." It said the scheme - in which the parties involved often lost money on the trades due to fees and commissions - could have been used for money laundering.

While US and British regulators - which fined Deutsche \$425 million and \$204 million respectively - penalized the bank for not having adequate controls, they did not say top management was aware of the improper nature of the trades. The fines - which comes weeks after a \$7.2 billion US penalty for the sale of toxic mortgage debt - marks another step in Deutsche Chief Executive John Cryan's attempts to draw a line under the bank's misdeeds in the wake of the financial crisis, as it sought to carve and then keep a foothold on Wall Street. That has left a costly legacy of billions of euros of fines. Germany's biggest bank is expected by analysts to report a loss later this week for 2016 of more than 650 million euros. The bank's shares were up 1 percent at 18.82 euros at 1230 GMT.

MISSING DOCUMENTS

Karl von Rohr, Deutsche Bank's chief administrative officer, said the bank regretted its role in the Russian trades scheme and that it had since acted to address shortcomings. He cautioned, however, that other authorities were investigating the trades and that the matter was not yet closed. The US Department of Justice is not part

of the deal and is still looking into the trades. A spokesman declined to comment on its inquiry.

Among a host of legal claims, two large cases remain: an inquiry into alleged foreign exchange manipulation and an investigation of its processing of some dollar payments in countries under US embargo. The British fine, from the Financial Conduct Authority, is the largest financial penalty for anti money-laundering controls failings yet imposed by the regulator. In a damning report, it said Deutsche had failed to have proper controls to stop customers transferring billions from Russia to offshore bank accounts "in a manner that is highly suggestive of financial crime." It said Deutsche had been unable to determine who many of its customers were, citing missing identification documents, lack of information about corporate ownership and poorly understood foreign-language paperwork.

The US regulator found Deutsche Bank's Moscow traders facilitated the scheme, with most of the trades placed by a single trader representing both sides of the transaction.

Traders did not question the suspicious trades because it made for easy commissions, it said. Deutsche Bank has previously said it has taken disciplinary measures against certain employees. It has also cut back on its investment banking activities in Russia. The bank will report its financial results for 2016 tomorrow. — Reuters

UPDATE YOUR CIVIL ID INFO USING AN ABK ATM FOR A CHANCE TO WIN AN APPLE IPHONE7



KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) has announced its latest exclusive offer to customers for the month of February. Any ABK customers who update their Civil ID information at the Bank using ABK's branch ATMs in Kuwait will be included in ABK's exclusive February weekly draws to win one of four Apple iPhone 7 phones.

Customers just need to insert their Civil IDs at an ABK branch ATM and update their customer information to be part of the draw. Winners will be announced on a weekly basis. The promotion encourages customers to update their information on the Banks system through their Civil ID easily and conveniently, with the intro-

duction of the Bank's latest technical upgrade across the ATM network. ABK ATMs also offer a multitude of other services, in addition to now updating your information through your Civil ID instantly, ATM's provide a secure way to withdraw and deposit money, request an account balance and mini statement, changing a PIN number and transferring of funds to other accounts. ABK continues to invest in innovative technologies as part of the Bank's 'Simpler Banking' program to provide ease and convenience.

For more information about Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) please visit eahli.com or contact a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.

EXXONMOBIL Q4 EARNINGS DIVE ON LOW OIL PRICES

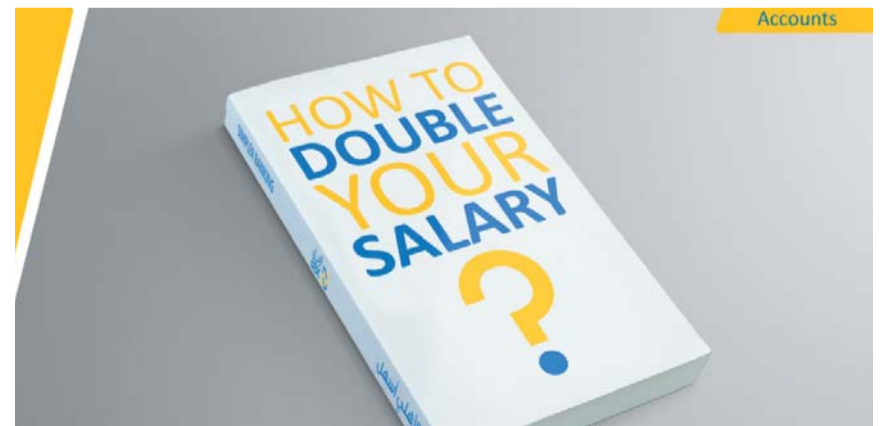
NEW YORK: ExxonMobil reported a big drop in fourth-quarter earnings yesterday, as low oil and natural prices continued to weigh on results. Net income in the fourth-quarter plunged 39.6 percent to \$1.7 billion, while full year earnings fell by more than half to \$7.8 billion.

Results also were marred by a \$2 billion asset downgrade due to low prices, much of it due to impairments in a natural gas region in the Rocky Mountains in the middle of the United States.

The asset write down resulted in a loss of \$642 million in ExxonMobil's normally lucrative upstream business, which explores for and produces petroleum.

That was countered by \$1.2 billion in earnings from ExxonMobil's downstream business, which refines crude oil into gasoline and \$872 million in chemicals. ExxonMobil chief executive Darren Woods said, "Financial results for the year were negatively impacted by the prolonged downturn in commodity prices and the impairment charge."

The charge followed a review of assets in the wake of "continued weakness in the upstream industry environment during 2016, continued weak financial results for several assets in North America, and a reduction in the mid-point of the ranges of the corporation's long-term oil and natural gas prices," the oil giant said. Shares of ExxonMobil were up 0.1 percent at \$84.90 in pre-market trading. — AFP



ABK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF 39TH 'DOUBLE YOUR SALARY' WEEKLY DRAWS

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held its 39th "Double Your Salary" weekly draw on 23rd January, 2017 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. The campaign will run until 27th June, 2017.

The winners this week are:

* Metwalli Mohammad Metwalli Madkour, xx University Branch

* Leena Kurian Pappy Kurian, 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.

DELL TECHNOLOGIES SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS REQUISITES TO SUCCEED IN A DIGITAL AGE

According to a new research by Dell Technologies, only 42 percent of businesses in the UAE and Saudi Arabia exhibit a strong growth on their journey to digital readiness. Furthermore, emphasizing on the overall regional capabilities, the research states that businesses in the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region are maintaining an average pace of digital adoption (41 percent), as compared to their counterparts in the Americas that present a marginally higher level of digital maturity (45 percent).

The findings result from an independent survey by Vanson Bourne of 4,000 business

leaders - from mid-size to large enterprises - across 16 countries, including UAE and Saudi Arabia, and 12 industries.

As we stand at the threshold of post-oil economy, the survey reveals how many businesses view technology and digital leadership skills as requisites to succeed and ensure sustainable business growth.

While the telecommunication and technology industry rise to the forefront of digital transformation at 46 percent and 45 percent respectively, the public healthcare sector lags behind in embracing the new digital wave (37 percent). This points to a bigger issue - digital transformation is not a central

strategic pillar to many organizations. The survey also highlights that only 4 percent of the many businesses surveyed in the UAE and Saudi Arabia are capable of acting digitally. While the vast majority admits to barriers, such as lack of digital expertise, hindering their progress towards becoming future-ready. Reflecting the growing digital skills gaps, more than two-thirds (65 percent) of the respondents agree that lack of in-house digital expertise and budget constraints hinder the advancement of their digital initiatives. To remedy this situation, 28 percent of the businesses are acquiring skills through mergers and acquisitions and

joint ventures, whereas 27 percent are investing in digital skills. To supplement these efforts, half of the businesses in the UAE and Saudi Arabia are integrating digital goals across all departments to measure the level of digital preparedness. Likewise, two in three (45 percent) businesses are creating digital profit and loss statement and 38 percent have invested in a dedicated executive committee to assess their digital transformation progress.

Mohammed Amin, Senior Vice President, Middle East, Turkey and Africa at Dell EMC says, "We believe the next industrial revolution is ripe with new opportunities and will

fundamentally transform every industry. We are already experiencing this change with the rise of digital start-ups and innovative business models. Therefore, it is imperative for every business to keep pace with the momentum by undertaking digital transition. It is critical for every business leader to invest in digital talent and advanced technology to stay relevant and competitive in this rapidly contesting marketplace. As an industry leader, Dell EMC is strongly positioned to provide organizations, regardless of their size, with the essential technology and infrastructure to modernize their business and support them at every step of their digital roadmap."



TOKYO: This file photo shows Honda Motors President Takahiro Hachigo poses with its new fuel cell vehicle (FCV), the Clarity Fuel Cell during a press preview at the company's headquarters in Tokyo. — AFP

GM, HONDA ANNOUNCE FUEL CELL VENTURE IN MICHIGAN

NEW YORK: General Motors and Honda announced plans Monday for the first "mass production" of an advanced hydrogen fuel cell system that could be used in future vehicles.

The two companies, which have collaborated on the technology since 2013, will launch the Fuel Cell System Manufacturing venture in an existing GM battery facility in Brownstown, Michigan, south of Detroit, the US auto capital. Production is expected to begin around 2020 and the venture will create nearly 100 new jobs, the companies said in a statement.

GM and Honda will invest \$85 million each in the technology. Fuel cell vehicles can operate on hydrogen made from a renewable source such as wind and biomass. The only emissions from these engines is water vapor.

"Over the past three years, engineers from Honda and GM have been working as one team with each company providing know-how from its unique expertise to create a compact and low-cost next-gen fuel cell system," said Toshiaki Mikoshiba, chief operating officer for Honda in North America.

Fuel cell technology has been under study for some 20 years as an alternative to the combustion engine. However, the technology so far has not made economic sense, in part because of a lack of infrastructure to recharge vehicles with hydrogen. Mark Reuss, GM executive vice president for global product development said, "The combination of two leaders in fuel cell innovation is an exciting development in bringing fuel cells closer to the mainstream of propulsion applications." — AFP

AMATEURS CAN HUNT RELICS WITH MODERN INDIANA JONES

SAN FRANCISCO: A technology-wielding archeologist billed as a real-world "Indiana Jones" on Monday launched an online platform that lets anyone help discover archeological wonders and fight looting. A "citizen science" platform that space archaeologist Sarah Parcak wished for a year ago as part of a coveted TED prize went live at GlobalXplorer.org. "The world's hidden heritage contains clues to humankind's collective resilience and creativity," Parcak said in a release.



Sarah Parcak

"With GlobalXplorer we are empowering a 21st century army of global explorers to discover and protect our shared history." A video of Parcak unveiling the wish was posted online Monday at www.ted.com. GlobalXplorer blends satellite imagery with pattern-hunting of a sort to make a game of spotting clues to the whereabouts of antiquities or looting. Visitors to the website are invited to sign in and take a quick tutorial before virtually hunting relics and thieves.

Spending time scrutinizing satellite imagery lets people "level up" as in video games and earn rewards such as a chance to virtually join archeologists on actual digs. "Parcak's wish has put the tools in everyone's hands to discover and protect humanity's rich history, effectively opening up a traditionally closed discipline," said TED prize director Anna Verghese. "Now our stories are safeguarded by millions rather than just a handful."

Eye on Peru

Only tiny sections of imagery are shown, along with broad location data

such as what country is involved, to avoid being a resource for looters seeking tips of where to search. DigitalGlobe, which specializes in capturing high-resolution pictures of the Earth from space, said that it provided more than 200,000 square kilometers of satellite imagery of Peru and a customized version of an online crowd sourcing tool. National Geographic and Sustainable Preservation Initiative were listed among collaborators on the project.

Archeologists will follow up on sites pinpointed by the "crowd," paving the way for protection from governments or law enforcement agencies. "As soon as they see new or destroyed sites from space, we will be there on the ground to investigate and protect them," said SPI founder and executive director Larry Coben. Sarah Parcak envisions a 21st century army of citizen scientists discovering and defending relics. Parcak condemned destruction of antiquities by the likes of violent extremists from the Islamic State group and saw looting done by the desperately poor as "heart-breaking."

The TED Prize provides a million dollars to kickstart a big vision and opens a door to call on the nonprofit organization's innovative, influential and ingenious community of "tedsters" for help. The TED community includes scientists, celebrities, politicians, artists, and entrepreneurs. Her work has caused some to refer to Parcak as a real-world version of the Indiana Jones character made famous in films starring Harrison Ford. Parcak is a professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, where she founded the Laboratory for Global Observation.

She has won attention for her work satellite mapping Egypt and uncovering hidden pyramids, tombs and settlements. The annual TED Prize has grown from \$100,000 to a million dollars since it was first awarded in the year 2005, to U2 band leader Bono and his vision of fighting poverty and disease. Since its inception in 1984, TED has grown into a global forum for "ideas worth spreading" and has won a worldwide following for trademark "talks" during which accomplished speakers deliver thought-sparking presentations. — AFP

INDONESIA TSUNAMI NETWORK COULD ADD CRUCIAL MINUTES
NEW PROTOTYPE TO DETECT NEAR-FIELD TSUNAMIS

JAKARTA: Indonesia's tsunami detection system, made up of seafloor sensors that communicate with transmitting buoys on the surface, has been rendered useless by vandals and lack of funding. Now Indonesian and US scientists say they've developed a way to dispense with the expensive buoys and possibly add crucial extra minutes of warning for vulnerable coastal cities. The prototype, nearly four years in the making, is designed to detect so-called near-field tsunamis and has been tested off Padang on the western coast of Sumatra. It awaits a decision on government funding to connect it to disaster agencies on land.

A tsunami triggered by a Dec 26, 2004 earthquake in the Indian Ocean that killed or left missing nearly 2,30,000 people, a large share in Indonesia, raised the urgency of ensuring communities have the fastest possible warnings. But when a sizeable earthquake struck near the Mentawai islands 170 kilometers from Padang in March last year, none of the buoys in the area meant to transmit tsunami warnings were working. A disaster official said all of Indonesia's 22 buoys, which cost several hundred thousand dollars each and are expensive to operate, were inoperable because of vandalism by boat crews or a lack of funds for maintenance.

That quake didn't cause a tsunami but there was a chaotic evacuation in Padang, population 1 million, and other cities, which have at most 30 minutes before tsunami waves hit. Because of lack of information, officials didn't cancel the tsunami warning for two hours. "Now we have no buoys in Indonesia. They are all damaged," said Iyan Turyana, an ocean engineer at BPPT, Indonesia's Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology. "Where do you live in Indonesia? Jakarta! It's ok. But if you live in Padang, if you live in Bengkulu, your life is very dangerous." Germany and the US provided 12 of the buoys, but did not maintain them, he said.

Mega thrust

For Indonesians, Aceh province in the north of Sumatra where more than 100,000 people died after 2004 earthquake, is synonymous with tsunami risk. Now, however, Padang and nearby cities face the greatest danger of being wiped out by giant waves. The magnitude 9.1 quake in 2004, centered in the north of a subduction zone where one major section of the earth's crust is being forced under another, released enough energy to make a similarly powerful quake in that area unlikely in the foreseeable future. In the section of that "mega thrust" off Padang, pressure has built relentlessly and an undersea earthquake greater than magnitude 8.5 is possible in the next few decades.

To boost its detection ability, tsunami-prone Japan has linked dozens of seafloor sensors off its eastern coast with thousands of kilometers of fiber-optic cable. That cost several hundred million dollars and a similar endeavor would be impossibly expensive for Indonesia, a vast but poor archipelago in one of most seismically active regions in the world. But with \$3 million of funding from the US National Science Foundation, a prototype network of undersea sensors has been deployed between Padang and the Mentawai islands. Buoys are not needed because the undersea seismometers and pressure sensors send data-laden sound waves to the warm surface waters.

From there they refract back into the depths, traveling 20-30 kilometers to the next node in the network and so on. At its final undersea point, the network needs a few kilometers of fiber optic cable to connect it to a shore station in the Mentawai islands where the cascades of data would be transmitted by satellite to the



JAVA ISLAND: In this file photo, a buoy which is a part of a tsunami warning system developed by GITEWS (German-Indonesian Tsunami Early Warning System) floats in on the sea as German RV Sonne is seen in the background during an installation simulation on Sunda straits off Java island, Indonesia. — AP photos

meteorology and geophysics agency, which issues tsunami warnings, and to disaster officials in Padang. "This entire process likely takes 1-3 minutes instead of the 5-45 minutes typical of the buoy system," said Louise Comfort, a University of Pittsburgh expert in disaster management who has led the project, which also involves engineers from the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.



JAKARTA: In this photo, Iyan Turyana, an ocean engineer at BPPT, Indonesia's Agency for the Assessment and Application of Technology, talks during an interview in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Crying wolf effect

"We get a more immediate record of the seismic movement and with that more immediate record we gain a few minutes of very valuable time," she said. "And we get a clearer signal of whether or not there is going to be a tsunami." Laying the cable will cost the Indonesian gov-

ernment about 1.5 billion rupiah (\$112,000), said Turyana, the ocean engineer. The Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education is considering a funding proposal. The system has not been deployed elsewhere, but could be an option for other poor countries or regions that are vulnerable to tsunamis.

Since 2004, the mantra among disaster officials in Indonesia has been that the earthquake is the tsunami warning and signal for immediate evacuation. Not everyone is convinced a tsunami detection system is essential. "Why? Because the tsunami is too quick to arrive to the land. After the earthquake, we evacuate. No need to detect the tsunami. Just evacuate. That is the second opinion."

That is why it is hard to have the budget," said Turyana. Memories of the 2004 tsunami are fresh enough that Indonesians living near the coast typically run for high ground whenever the land shakes, as it frequently does.

Yet without a reliable system that reduces false alarms, a "crying wolf" effect will eventually change people's behavior, say proponents of the detection network. Not least, it can give disaster officials give crucial information about a tsunami, such as the heights of its waves and where and when they will hit.

"This system is to make sure the tsunami is really coming," said Febrin Ismail, a structural engineer involved in earthquake mitigation and tsunami planning for Padang. "Sometimes after the earthquake, people are running and then they see the tsunami doesn't come. In the future maybe they don't run again. We are afraid the quake itself is not effective." — AP

HACKING TOOL INFO COULD BE OF USE TO HOSTILE ENTITIES

WASHINGTON: The FBI on Monday defended its decision to withhold documents on how it unlocked an iPhone used by one of the San Bernardino, California, shooters, saying the information could be exploited by "hostile entities" if released to the public.

The Justice Department earlier this month released heavily censored records in response to a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit from The Associated Press, Vice Media and Gannett, the parent company of USA Today. Among the information withheld were details about how much the FBI paid last year to a third party to unlock the work phone of Syed Rizwan Farook, who along with his wife killed 14 people at a holiday party in Dec 2015, as well as the identity of that vendor. In a court filing Monday that sought to justify those redactions, the Justice Department argued that the information it withheld, if released, could be seized upon by "hostile entities" who could develop their own "countermeasures" and interfere with the FBI's intelligence gathering. The government also argued that disclosure "would result in severe damage to the FBI's efforts to detect and apprehend violators of the United States' national security and criminal



WASHINGTON: In this file photo an iPhone is seen in Washington. — AP

laws through these very activities and methods."

"The withheld information is also very specific in nature, provided during a specific time period, and is known to very few individuals," Justice Department lawyers said. The FBI in its most

recent filing broadened the legal arguments it had used earlier this month, when it released about 100 pages of largely redacted documents, saying for the first time that national security was at risk and that the records were entirely exempt from disclosure under the law. It has moved to keep 23 additional pages fully secret. The Obama administration had imposed a "foreseeable harm" standard for withholding records under the Freedom of Information Act, saying that "openness prevails" in the face of doubt and that "speculative or abstract fears" are not sufficient for withholding documents.

The media organizations sued in September to learn how much the FBI paid and who it hired to break into the phone of Farook. The FBI for weeks had maintained that only Apple Inc. could access the information on its phone, which was protected by encryption, but ultimately broke or bypassed Apple's digital locks with the help of an unnamed third party. In the records released this month, the FBI censored critical details that would have shown how much the FBI paid, whom it hired and how it opened the phone. The files had been marked "secret" before they were turned over under the lawsuit.—AP

RENEWABLE ENERGY CAN'T DELIVER PARIS CLIMATE GOALS

PARIS: Expansion of renewable energy cannot by itself stave off catastrophic climate change, scientists warned Monday. Even if solar and wind capacity continues to grow at breakneck speed, it will not be fast enough to cap global warming under two degrees Celsius, the target set down in the landmark 2015 Paris climate treaty, they reported in the journal *Nature Climate Change*. "The rapid deployment of wind, solar and electric cars gives some hope," lead author Glen Peters, a researcher at the Center for International Climate and Environmental Research in Oslo, Norway, said. "But at this stage, these technologies are not really displacing the growth in fossil fuels or conventional transportation."

Earth is overheating mainly due to the burning of oil, gas and especially coal to power the global economy. Barely 1C of warming so far has already led to deadly heat waves, drought and super storms engorged by rising seas. The 196-nation Paris Agreement set a collective goal to cap warming, but lacks the tools to track progress, especially at the country level. To provide a better toolkit, Peters and

colleagues broke down the energy system into half-a-dozen indicators-GDP growth, energy used per unit of GDP, CO2 emissions per unit of energy, share of fossil fuels in the energy mix, etc. What emerged was a sobering picture of narrowing options.

Barely a dent

"Wind and solar alone are not sufficient to meet the goals," Peters said. The bottom line, the study suggests, is how much carbon pollution seeps into the atmosphere, and on that score renewable have so far barely made a dent. Investment in solar and wind has soared, outstripping fossil fuels for the first time last year. And renewables' share of global energy consumption has increased five-fold since 2000. But it still only accounts for less than three percent of the total.

Moreover, the share of fossil fuels-nearly 87 percent-has not budged due to a retreat in nuclear power over the same 15-year period. Even a renewables Marshall Plan would face an unyielding deadline: To stay under 2C, the global economy must be

carbon neutral-producing no more CO2 than can be absorbed by oceans and forests-by mid-century. Compounding the challenge, other key policies and technologies deemed essential for holding down temperatures remain woefully underdeveloped, the study cautioned.

In particular, the capacity to keep or pull carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere and store it securely-a cornerstone of end-of-century projections for a climate-safe world-is practically non-existent. Vetted by the UN's top climate science panel, these scenarios presume that thousands of industrial-scale carbon capture and storage (CCS) facilities will be up-and-running by 2030. As of today, there are only one or two, with a couple of dozen in various stages of construction.

Negative emissions

Another form of clean energy penciled into most medium- and long-term forecasts that does not yet exist on any meaningful scale is carbon-neutral bio fuels. The idea is that CO2 captured while plants

grow will compensate for greenhouse gases released when they are burned for energy. On paper, that carbon pollution will also be captured and stored, resulting in "negative emissions"-a net reduction of CO2 in the atmosphere. But here again, reality is dragging its feet. "It is uncertain whether bio energy can be sustainably produced and made carbon-neutral at the scale required," the researchers noted.

All of these technologies must come on line if we are to have a fighting chance of keeping a lid of global warming, which is currently on track to heat the planet by 3C to 4C, the study concluded. Market momentum alone is not enough, Peters added. "There needs to be a shift in focus," he said in an email exchange. "Politicians seem happy to support wind, solar and electric vehicles through subsidies. But they are not willing to put prices-a carbon tax, for example 'on fossil fuels.'" "Unless the emissions from fossil fuels goes down, the 2C target is an impossibility." In an informal survey last week of top climate scientists, virtually all of them said that goal is probably already out of reach. —AFP



WASHINGTON: A group of demonstrators calling for reproductive justice march through a crowd of anti-abortion protesters outside the US Supreme Court building during the 43rd annual March for Life in Washington, DC. —AFP

US RIGHT TO ABORTION STILL STRONG, BUT UNDER THREAT

'SERIOUS IMPACT ON POOR WOMEN WILLING TO ABORT'

WASHINGTON: US anti-abortion advocates have long dreamed of defeating their sworn enemy Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that enshrines a woman's right to the procedure across all 50 states. But even with Trump's expected nomination yesterday of an anti-abortion justice to the Supreme Court, abortion opponents will have inched closer to victory but not yet arrived at a cause for celebration. The nomination of a conservative to replace deceased justice Antonin Scalia would tilt the court, which is currently divided evenly between four conservative and four liberal justices.

But with conservative justice Anthony Kennedy sometimes joining the progressives when it comes to abortion issues, Trump will have no ironclad assurance on the matter. Only with the death or resignation of one more justice might Trump be able to stack the court against abortion. "There is now a serious risk to women's right to abortion, given what Trump has said about his intentions and the likelihood that there will be at least one retirement on the high court in the next four years," Sherry Colb, a professor at Cornell Law School, said.

"If one or more of the five more liberal-abortion justices should retire between now and the end of Trump's time in office (whether that be four years or eight years from now), then there would likely be five votes to overrule

Roe v. Wade." Under such a scenario, states would be free to restrict the right to abortion and a Republican Congress could pass national anti-abortion legislation. On Friday, Vice President Mike Pence hailed the new political era as a "historic" time for the anti-abortion movement.

Overturn unlikely

The Roe v. Wade decision was handed down on Jan 22, 1973, with seven justices backing it and two dissenting. Now firmly rooted in legal precedent by four decades of doctrine, the ruling will be challenging to completely overthrow. It is "unlikely that the Supreme Court would overturn Roe v. Wade altogether. But the constitutional right to an abortion would be cut back significantly," said abortion expert Michael Dell. In a study published this month by the Pew Institute, seven out of 10 Americans are opposed to canceling Roe v. Wade.

And according to a Quinnipiac survey published Friday, 64 percent of Americans believe that abortion should remain legal, while 31 percent believe the opposite. Roe v. Wade has had a hectic existence, with its scope diminished by subsequent Supreme Court decisions, and the right to an abortion under constant attack by legislatures in Republican states. Despite its legality, abortion restrictions take many forms

such as bans on certain forms of the procedure, lengthy waiting periods and administrative complications, among other issues.

Under new restrictions, "the gravest impact would be on poor women who lack the resources to travel to where abortion is legal," Colb said. The Roe v. Wade decision handed down 44 years ago ended a lengthy legal drama that began in the state of Texas three years prior, where abortions were permitted only if the pregnancy endangered the mother or child. Norma McCorvey, a single mother who had a rough childhood, was pregnant for a third time and wanted an abortion. Encouraged by two feminist lawyers, McCorvey filed suit under the pseudonym Jane Roe against Dallas district attorney Henry Wade.

Although her child was born, the case took on a life of its own, becoming one of the most important and best-known decisions ever made by the Supreme Court. McCorvey later became a fervent opponent to abortion, converting to evangelical Protestantism and then Catholicism before eventually coming out as a lesbian. Trump's announcement for his Supreme Court justice comes after optimistic anti-abortion advocates rallied on Friday in Washington at the 44th annual anti-abortion march, billed as the world's largest "pro-life" rally. —AFP

JAPAN 'SPACE JUNK' COLLECTOR IN TROUBLE

TOKYO: An experimental 'space junk' collector designed to pull rubbish from the Earth's orbit has run into trouble, Japanese scientists said yesterday, potentially a new embarrassment for Tokyo's high-tech program. Over 100 million pieces of garbage are thought to be whizzing around the planet, including cast-off equipment from old satellites and bits of rocket, which experts say pose a growing threat to future space exploration. Scientists at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) are testing an electrodynamic 'tether'-created with the help of a fishing net company-to slow the junk down and bring it into a lower orbit.

The hope was that the clutter-built up after more than five decades of human space exploration-would enter the Earth's atmosphere and burn up harmlessly long before it has a chance to crash to the planet. About 700 meters in length, the tether

was due to be extended out from a cargo ship launched in Dec carrying supplies for astronauts at the International Space Station. But JAXA says it is not sure if the tether, made from thin wires of stainless steel and aluminum, successfully deployed or not.

JAXA will continue trying to remedy the situation before the cargo ship is expected to reenter the atmosphere on Saturday, the agency added. The trouble comes just two weeks after JAXA had to abort a mission intended to use a mini-rocket to send a satellite into orbit after the spacecraft stopped sending data to ground control shortly after liftoff. A pricey ultra-high-tech satellite launched in February last year to search for X-rays emanating from black holes and galaxy clusters but was ultimately abandoned after researchers said contact with it had been lost. —AFP

PUSH AND PULL: HOW THE MILKY WAY FLIES

PARIS: It may not feel like it, but our Milky Way galaxy is barreling through the Universe at more than two million kilometers per hour. On Monday, astronomers said they had discovered a void in deep space that helps explain the direction in which we are headed, and our speed.

It turns out our galaxy is not only being pulled by galactic forces, but pushed as well, they wrote in the journal *Nature Astronomy*. The earth may feel steady under our feet, but humanity's small corner of the Universe is subject to an array of forces. The Earth spins on its axis at about 1,600 kilometers per hour and around the Sun at some 100,000 km/h. The Sun, in turn, travels at 850,000 km/h as it orbits the centre of our galaxy, zipping through the expanding Universe. For a long time scientists have

assumed a dense region of the Universe was drawing the Milky Way toward it through gravitational pull. In the 1980s, suspicion fell on an area called the Great Attractor-a cluster of half-a-dozen galaxy clusters some 150 million light years from the Milky Way. "But the direction (of the attraction) was not quite right," study co-author Daniel Pomarede of France's Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) said.

So astronomers turned their attention some 600 million light-years beyond the Great Attractor to an area of more than two dozen galaxy clusters called the Shapley Concentration. This still did not sufficiently explain the Milky Way's speed or direction. On Monday, Pomarede and a team said they had found the missing link: our galaxy is not only being pulled, but pushed as well. —AFP



CHILE: A handout image released by the European Southern Observatory shows a collection of highlights taken from a new infrared image of the Orion, a molecular cloud from VISTA telescope, where many curious structures are clearly seen, including the red jets from very young stars, dark clouds of dust and even tiny images of very distant galaxies. —AFP

SMOKING COSTS \$1.4TN IN HEALTH CARE, LABOR LOSS

PARIS: Smoking cost the world economy more than \$1.4 trillion (1.3 trillion euros) in 2012, and sucked up a twentieth of health care spending, a study said yesterday. The killer habit consumed the equivalent of nearly two percent of global economic output or GDP, according to experts from the World Health Organization (WHO) and the American Cancer Society, with almost 40 percent of the burden falling on developing

countries. These included a \$422 billion price tag for treatment and hospitalization, as well as indirect costs from labor lost to illness and death.

"Smoking imposes a heavy economic burden throughout the world, particularly in Europe and North America, where the tobacco epidemic is most advanced," said the study published in the journal *Tobacco Control*. "These findings highlight the urgent need for countries to implement

stronger tobacco control measures to address these costs." The authors say the study is the first ever to include low- and middle-income countries in a more accurate estimate of the tobacco epidemic's total, global cost. Most previous work has focused on rich nations.

The team used data from 152 countries representing 97 percent of the world's smokers in Africa, the Americas, the Eastern Mediterranean, Europe, Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific. They included UN and World Bank data on illness and death attributable to smoking, national employment rates and national GDP. In 2012, they found, "diseases caused by smoking accounted for 12 percent (2.1 million) of all deaths among working age adults aged 30-69 with the highest proportion in Europe and the Americas."

Public health threat

Almost 40 percent of the global economic cost was borne by low- and middle-income countries-a quarter by Brazil, Russia, India and China alone. China consumes over a third of the world's cigarettes and has a sixth of the global smoking death toll. The researchers said the real cost was likely much higher. They did not include data on the health and economic harm caused by second-hand smoke inhalation, or by smokeless forms of tobacco use, such as chewing. —AFP



SINGAPORE: Various brand of cigarettes are displayed at a shop in Singapore yesterday. —AFP

SWITZERLAND TO LIFT BAN ON GAY, BISEXUAL MEN GIVING BLOOD

GENEVA: Switzerland yesterday said it would lift its 40-year ban on gay and bisexual men giving blood but will still prohibit donations from those who have had sex in the last year. In shifting to a 12-month abstinence requirement for donors, Swiss guidelines fell in line with other European countries like Britain and France, which implemented bans following the discovery of HIV in the early 1980s. The policy change was approved by the Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products (Swissmedic), a federal regulator, following an appeal from Swiss Transfusion SRC, a division of the Red Cross responsible for blood products.

Switzerland's 1977 ban on blood donations from men who have sex with men (MSM) preceded the discovery of HIV. It was triggered by fears of other pathogens within the gay and bisexual male population, although concern over HIV's spread helped sustain the policy. In a statement, Swissmedic noted that MSM in Switzerland are still disproportionately at risk of con-

tracting HIV, accounting for roughly half of all new cases in the country. But the guidelines "will not lead to an increased risk for recipients of blood transfusions," the regulator said, adding that testing improvements have made it dramatically easier to detect infections.

Enforcing the one-year deferral relies entirely on prospective donors being honest about their recent sexual activity, and Swissmedic urged people to answer "truthfully" on the mandatory pre-donation questionnaire. For Swiss Transfusion chief Rudolf Schwabe, Tuesday's policy shift marked "a first change to discriminatory regulation" even if the new rules are "far from perfect." He echoed calls from elsewhere in Europe for blood donation guidelines to be completely detached from sexual orientation and focused strictly on discouraging donors who engage in high risk behavior, whether they are gay or straight. Swissmedic said the new rules will come into effect on July 1. —AFP

INDIA'S HEALTH BUDGET MAY RISE AFTER MINISTER WARNS OF FUNDING CRUNCH

NEW DELHI: India's health ministry is likely to see a substantial increase in funding, after it warned that its programs were short of cash and sought more than \$1.2 billion in additional money, according to government officials and documents. The final numbers could change when Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presents the budget for fiscal 2017/18 today. But one official familiar with the numbers said the health ministry is expected to get a \$1.5 billion, or 27 percent, increase in funding to around \$7 billion. The health and finance ministries did not respond to requests for comment.

An increase in the budget allocation, if finalized, would signal an acknowledgment from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration that the country needs to ramp up spending on the sector. Successive administrations have faced criticism from public health advocates for spending only around 1 percent of India's gross domestic product on public health, less in percentage terms than

countries like Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. More than a million Indian children die every year before reaching the age of five. Hundreds of millions of poor people rely on India's public health programs which provide basic services like vaccinations, disease prevention and free drugs.

Until May last year, Jagat Prakash Nadda, the federal health minister, had publicly maintained that the sector had no funding issues but needed to get better at spending the money it had. Between 2005 and 2013, the ministry only once spent all of its allocated funds. But letters sent by his ministry to the finance ministry between June and January, not previously disclosed, show that Nadda has also come around to the view that his department needs a larger pot to meet its public health objectives.

"These are the bare minimum requirements," Nadda wrote in a letter to Jaitley on Jan 10, outlining his request for additional funds. "There are several other significant programs experiencing paucity of

financial resources." The government has been increasing allocation to the health sector after criticism over its social sector cuts in 2015. But pressures on the budget are rising. It must also step up spending on roads, railways and irrigation projects to stimulate growth while keeping the fiscal deficit in check.

Repeated requests

In his letter, Nadda wrote that he needed an extra \$589 million to implement a program to screen patients for cancer and other illnesses, while the HIV/AIDS treatment program required an infusion of \$74 million. Nadda also wrote that there was an "urgent requirement" of around \$520 million for the current year's spending, the absence of which "will adversely impact key programs like malaria, tuberculosis, polio and other vector borne disease". Nadda's letter followed requests from other health officials in the preceding months.

In Nov, the health ministry's top bureaucrat, C K

Mishra, wrote to the finance secretary saying he had been informed that his ministry would receive less funds than were promised during mid-year reviews. The lack of adequate funding, Mishra wrote, "will give a serious setback" to new initiatives and existing programs. Health ministry officials also cited delays in getting funds to implement Modi's directive to upgrade dozens of district hospitals into medical colleges, in order to add new doctors.

India has seven doctors for every 10,000 people, half the global average, according to the World Health Organization. It is not clear how the federal budget for 2017/18, or individual state budgets that supplement it, will split health spending across various programs. The government official who has knowledge of the budget numbers said the increase in the health ministry budget would be sufficient for ongoing projects. "But given escalation costs, there is no space for new health innovations," the official said. —Reuters

MAIZE ALTERNATIVES FACE CHALLENGES IN ZIMBABWE

HARARE: After years of bad maize harvests as a result of worsening drought, farmer Dorothy Chihota switched a few seasons back to growing sorghum, millet, cowpeas and groundnuts on her 50-acre farm in Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe district. Since then she has had only good harvests, she said - but that doesn't always mean she has had good years as a farmer. "Small grains are giving us better yields but our problem is that there are no markets to sell our produce," she complained. "Prices for the grains are poor, and seeds are not available in shops."

Faced with failing maize harvests as climate change brings more droughts and other severe weather, Zimbabwe's government and a range of aid agencies have urged farmers to diversify the country's agriculture and plant more drought-hardy alternatives to maize, the staple crop. But the systems to support farming such alternative grains - from the creation and marketing of seeds to finding markets for what is grown - have not kept up, farmers say.

Too little seed

Figures from Seed Services, a Zimbabwean institute focused on improving agricultural production, show that in 2016-2017 only 460 hectares of certified sorghum seed were likely to be grown in the country, compared to 400,000 hectares of certified maize seed. Mujaju said a big problem holding back wider use of grains such as sorghum and millet is the tradition of holding onto part of last year's harvest to replant or sell to neighbors as seed in the coming season.

"A lot of small grain is retained (to replant), and because the quality of seed tends to degenerate, that affects yields. Because of seed retention, the power of seed companies to produce more seed is not there," he said at a meeting in Harare last month. "To them, there is no guarantee if they produce more their seed will be bought," he said. A lack of research funding to develop better varieties of small grains also is a worry, he said. Since 2000, only 11 new varieties of sorghum have been developed in Zimbabwe, compared to more than 140 varieties of maize, Mujaju said.

More work?

Marjory Jeke, a small-scale farmer in Murehwa, said another problem is that harvesting small grains can be a more tedious task than bringing in maize. "We can produce more if we have appropriate harvesting and processing technologies," she told Thomson Reuters Foundation. But Kizito Mazvimavi, a crop expert with ICRISAT - the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics - said the technology needed to har-

vest and process small grains already exists.

"It's not true that farmers have abandoned sorghum and millet because it is difficult to process. Way back in the 1980s we pushed de-hullers all over the place. The technology is there," he said. According to the Andrew Mushita, executive director of the Harare-based Community Technology Development Centre (CTDC), farmers in low-rainfall areas of Zimbabwe already grow and eat a lot of small grains. Mushita estimates that they are cultivated on more than 400,000 hectares of land or about 13 percent of the country's arable land.

"About 30 percent of the population derive their livelihoods from small grains - but this could increase as maize continues to fail because of climate change, making small grains the reliant cereal," he said. He believes small grains can effectively compete with or outperform maize if the country invested more in them. "If we invest more in research and crop improvement, small grains will perform very well. They can indeed be a replacement to maize," he said.

"With the advent of climate change they have a huge role to play," he said. Charles Dhewa, a markets expert and the CEO of Knowledge Transfer Africa, said that he believes a good market for small grains exists because people prefer to eat healthier food and most small grains are highly nutritious. The harvests themselves also are in increasing demand to make everything from beer to animal feed, he said.

Government push

Growing more sorghum, millet and other small grains is part of Zimbabwe's national climate change policy. Under the Presidential Input Support Scheme, farmers each season are entitled to 10 kg of either maize or small grain seed, said Pardon Njerere, an agricultural economist with the Ministry of Agriculture, Mechanisation and Irrigation Development. "The farmer has an option to take what they like. Government does not want to prescribe, though there is an outcry that we should give farmers small grain inputs only in all the dry areas," Njerere said at a meeting.

A 2009 government policy also sets the government purchase price for maize and other grains at parity, to encourage growing of alternatives to maize. A December paper on lessons from drought, jointly authored by the Community Technology Development Organization (CTDC) and Oxfam, suggests the government has been too focused on supporting the profit-making formal seed supply system and should instead focus on helping farmers to save, exchange, multiply and sell farm-saved seed. —Reuters



DHAKA: In this photograph, Bangladeshi patient Sahana Khatun, 10, poses for a photograph at the Dhaka Medical College and Hospital. —AFP

BANGLADESH TREATS FIRST CASE OF TREE GIRL SYNDROME

HOPE FOR QUICK RECOVERY FROM RARE SKIN CONDITION

DHAKA: A young Bangladeshi girl with bark-like warts growing on her face could be the first female ever afflicted by so-called "tree man syndrome," doctors studying the rare condition said yesterday. Ten-year-old Sahana Khatun has the tell-tale gnarled growths sprouting from her chin, ear and nose, but doctors at Dhaka's Medical College Hospital are still conducting tests to establish if she has the unusual skin disorder. Less than half a dozen people worldwide have epidermodysplasia verruciformis but none so far have been women, said Samanta Lal Sen, the head of the hospital's burn and plastic surgery unit. "We believe she is the first woman," Sen said.

Her father, a poor laborer from Bangladesh's rural north, said he didn't worry too much when the first wart appeared on his daughter's face about four months ago. But as the growths spread rapidly he grew concerned and brought Khatun from their village to the capital Dhaka for treatment. "We are very poor. My daughter lost her mother when she was only six. I really hope that the doctors will remove the barks from my beautiful daughter's face," her father Mohammad Shahjahan said. Another of Khatun's doctors said the young patient was displaying a

milder form of the disease, and it was hoped she would make a quicker recovery than those in the more advanced stages.

The hospital has been treating one man with a serious case of the disease for the better part of a year, conducting 16 surgical procedures to remove giant warts from his hands and legs. Huge growths weighing five kilograms each had consumed the hands of 27-year-old Abul

Bajandar, the first recorded Bangladeshi to be suffering from the disease. His plight has captured national attention and the interest of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who promised the patient would receive treatment free of charge. Doctors said last month that for the first time in a decade, Bajandar had been able to touch his wife and daughter, and was almost ready to leave the ward. —AFP

DEER'S HEAD FREED FROM CONTAINER IN MARYLAND

BEL AIR, Maryland: A deer that had a plastic pretzel container stuck on its head for several days has been freed in Maryland. The Baltimore Sun reports that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources on Sunday evening tranquilized and then freed the deer, nicknamed "Jughead" by residents of Bel Air who had been tracking it since the container got stuck on its head

since Jan 19. Department officials also spotted the deer several times, but weren't able before Sunday to capture it. Department spokesman Gregg Bortz says the Wildlife Response Team released the deer from the container, monitored him until he recovered from the tranquilizer and then released him into the wild with new ear tags. —AP

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Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



GUST HOSTS BULGARIAN CULTURAL NIGHT

KUWAIT: Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST), in coordination with the Bulgarian Embassy in Kuwait, organized a unique Bulgarian Cultural Night last week. The event was under the patronage and attendance of Bulgarian Ambassador, H.E. Boris Borisov. The event, first of its kind at GUST, aimed to introduce and highlight Bulgarian culture, traditions and arts.

The event began with a short film highlighting the rich

cultural heritage of the 1300 year old Bulgarian state. It also welcomed The Foundation, a 5-piece band, formed in 2013 by K. Marichkov and some of the most prominent pop and rock musicians in Bulgaria, and opening act for The Rolling Stones. Attendees also got the chance to sample Bulgarian culture, art, and history with a photography and art exhibition by S. Nitsolov. The event was organized by Dr. Maya Mitkova, Assistant Professor at GUST, and Mr.

PreslavPetkov, Woodwind Instrumental Tutor at Kuwait English School.

Dr. Maya Mitkova, said, "The cultural night captured the essence of the Bulgarian culture, and highlighted its beauty and richness in a lively and exciting manner. The relationship that has been built between GUST and the Embassy to create such a program is a promising one - and we hope to collaborate with the Embassy on many events

such as this in the future." The event opened the door to unique insights about a country and culture. GUST, as the number one private university, continuously focuses efforts on connecting with various parts of the community, and engage its students in extracurricular activities that expose them to different cultures and points of view, to help them grow and develop into well-rounded citizens of the world.



COSTA COFFEE LAUNCHES DELICIOUS NEW MENU

With the New Year settling in, Costa Coffee has launched a new range of scrumptious food items to their menu on Jan 10, 2017. These items cover a wide range of snacks, treats and meals to satisfy your cravings including new gourmet options, healthy breakfast and vegetarian choices, fresh and nourishing smoothies, Arabian inspired flavors and a diverse selection of savory and sweet goodies. Since Alghanim Industries' acquisition of the brand in July of 2013, Costa Coffee has committed itself to offering more than delicious coffee.

The UK's favorite coffee shop is dedicated to diversifying its offerings continuously to cater to

market trends and needs. Its new enticing food selection covers an extensive range of flavors including the famous Halloumi sandwich in ZaatarCiabatta bread, a mouthwatering Gourmet Toastie that comes with a blend of premium cheeses, a delicious Granola and Raspberry Compote mix and much more.

Costa Coffee also launched its new winter campaign that focuses on two of its signature drinks: Corto and Latte, both handcrafted by the most skillful baristas, the heroes of the UK's favorite coffee shop.

Corto, the small but mighty intense cup, provides

a powerful and intense hit of coffee to customers who need a pick-me-up while the Latte, a smooth and creamy coffee drink, allows customers to indulge in one of various flavors including caramel, vanilla and hazelnut. Costa Coffee now proudly offers lactose-free milk and almond milk in addition to soy milk for no additional charge. Costa Coffee welcomes you to any of its 33 stores across Kuwait to enjoy the ultimate coffee experience and meet the talented baristas behind it. Keep up with Costa's promotions, launches and all other entertaining and engaging activities on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook accounts at the following: @costakuwait.

MARINA HOTEL KUWAIT WINS AT HORECA KUWAIT 2017

The talented chefs of Marina Hotel Kuwait scooped three medals at Horeca Kuwait 2016. Marina Hotel an award winning, leading five star property, recently participated in the 2017 HORECA Kuwait; an exhibition for hospitality and catering organized by the Leaders Group in cooperation with Hospitality Services Company. The hotel participated in Horeca Kuwait 2017 for the sixth year in a row. Every year the exhibition witnesses the participation of all the leading hotels, food industries and food companies in Kuwait.

A culinary competition was organized for chefs attracting a large number of participants during the event. Marina Hotel chefs participated in this competition with great interest and enthusiasm and won 3 medals 2 of which were silver medals. Hammoud strongly praised the Horeca Kuwait exhibition and its ability to attract companies specializing in hospitality, food industries and hotel require-

ments in Kuwait, the region and the Middle East. He also noted that Horeca provides a golden opportunity to exchange expertise in a way that would help develop the business in view of the revolutionary development towards changing Kuwait into a regional financial and commercial hub.

Talking about their participation in the exhibition, Nabil Hammoud, General Manager of the hotel said: "We consider Horeca to be an important event and hence participate every year; it provides us with a platform for future business opportunities. We pride ourselves on the talents of our professional chefs." Horeca Kuwait 2017 is organized by Leaders Group in collaboration with Hospitality Services Company at Kuwait International Fair Grounds in Mishref, under auspices of the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.



CEREAL KILLER CAFE OPENS IN KUWAIT

Cereal Killer Cafe, located in Emad Center Kuwait City, opened its doors with a crowd full of excitement on Jan 18, 2017. The concept promises to re-imagine how people enjoy their cereal, by serving over 100 cereals, 30 different kinds of milk and 20 toppings allowing the customers to tailor a bowl to their exact taste or they can try the famous cocktails such as: 'Chocopotomus', 'S'more than words' and 'the luckier charm', amongst others.

Aside from pastries and cakes made out of cereal, barista coffee, tea, sandwiches, sodas and juices, Cereal Killer Kuwait added its own twist by creating 'Kuwait

Specialties' such as cereal based tacos and cereal cocktails with saffron, rehash, rose & pistachio. The opening ceremony was filled with entertainment, but what created a unique experience was the interior design of the restaurant, which is filled with memorabilia from the 80' & 90'S, making the invitees eyes feast with all the "oldies-goldies" cereal boxes displayed, amongst the nostalgic furniture and single bed seating.

Along with a wide list of distinguished guests, were the guest of honor H E Matthew Lodge-Ambassador of the United Kingdom and the owners and founders of Cereal Killer Cafe, Alan & Gary Kerry. Everyone was wel-

comed by the Chairman of Gourmania International, Dr. Emad Bukhamseen and his daughters Dana, Dalaya and Sadiqaa, responsible for bringing the Cereal Killer Café concept to Kuwait, after falling in love with the brand.

The CEO of Gourmania International, Mohammad Bseiso explained the concept further; "We are delighted to add a unique and creative concept to the ever rising new restaurant concepts in Kuwait. Cereal Killer Café delivers a distinctive experience that brings the 80's & 90's nostalgia back to life; in addition to some creative cereal based delicacies that will satisfy the most discerning taste buds."





MOHAMED NASER AL-HAJERY AND SONS DEBUTS ITS NEW-LOOK HAAGEN-DAZS BRANCH

Mohamed Naser Al-Hajery and Sons, the exclusive Haagen-Dazs dealer in Kuwait, unveiled the renovated Haagen-Dazs branch in The Avenues, phase II at the ground floor, while adding new ice cream creations, juices and other scrumptious choices to its menu. The new branch was designed and implemented by "Sparks" international which meets the highest international standards. The event was held in the presence of employees of Mohamed Naser Al-Hajery and Sons, along with media delegates who savoured the new offerings of mouth-watering ice cream and juices flavors.

Haagen-Dazs has been making quality ice cream like no other since 1961. The world's best-tasting ice cream is created in 24 flavors and from the best ingredients that are carefully selected from around the world. Every flavour from Haagen-Dazs starts with 100 per cent real cream, milk, free-range eggs, and sugar - simple ingredients for a creamy, intense, and tasty ice cream. The founder,

Reuben Mattus' vision was to create the best ice cream in the world using high quality, carefully selected ingredients.

Reuben believed that if you were going to indulge in ice cream, it should be a real and fulfilling experience rather than the 'cold and sweet stuff' of his time. Reuben's ambition was to create the world's best-tasting ice cream and his devotion to the highest standards changed the way people thought about ice cream. The Haagen-Dazs philosophy remains the same to this day. We believe that everyone deserves to experience pleasure that is fulfilling and real and this guides everything we do.

It's worth noting that Haagen-Dazs ice cream selection is available at 950 stores in more than 80 countries around the world. In Kuwait, Mohamed Naser Al-Hajery and Sons opened the first branch of Haagen-Dazs in 2000 in Souk Sharq, and today the company owns five branches that are perfectly situated in prime malls; Souk Sharq, Arraya Center, Al Hamra Tower, The Avenues and The Gate Mall.



LOTUS STOLE THE SHOW AT GULF RUN

One of the most anticipated car events of the year has been Gulf Run, a premier car show that has consistently drawn in regional enthusiasm by car aficionados since its inception. This year, Gulf Run took place in Murouj, from Jan 19 to 21 2017, as a one-of-a-kind event that was comprised of three segments, including the 24-hour karting endurance race, Gulf Run Bahrain, where a two-day test drive event had taken place in an inner, outer and GP circuit, and a car show in Murouj where Lotus was one of the main sponsors.

An essential component of the joy behind driving cars is the pure feeling of adrenaline that comes with being behind the wheel of an elegantly powerful ride, a sensation that is vital for thrill seekers who yearn to experience refreshingly new levels of exhilaration. That is what Lotus brought to the car show at Murouj. There, three Lotus cars were on display, including the Evora 400 and 2-Eleven. The new Lotus Evora 400 is the latest pure and focused supercar from Lotus, combining high performance with the legendary Lotus benchmark handling.



With a maximum speed of 186 mph and acceleration of 0-60 mph is just 4.1 seconds, the new Evora is a more agile and involving drive that enables it to lap the challenging test track at the Lotus Headquarters in Hethel, Norfolk at a scintillating six seconds faster than previous models. Over two thirds of the Lotus Evora 400 is new, including its supercharged and charge-cooled mid-mounted 3.5-litre V6 engine producing 400 horsepower and 410

Nm of torque. A new aluminum chassis incorporates a new interior and the lightweight composite body has changed significantly both front and rear.

The new Evora is 22 kg lighter, an accomplishment that has been achieved through careful and clever design and attention to detail. This weight reduction is even more impressive considering that the supercar has more power and a higher standard specification than before. Meanwhile, the Lotus 2-

Eleven that was displayed at the event, which is owned by a VIP client, takes the Chapman philosophy of 'Performance through light weight' to its most extreme level yet. Weighing in at just 670 kg or 745 kg and with 255 PS on tap courtesy of its supercharged and intercooled 1796 cc engine, the 2-Eleven boasts a power to weight ratio similar to that of a 1960s Formula One car.

Designed with the most serious of track day enthusiasts in mind, the Lotus 2-Eleven offers race car levels of performance coupled with legendary Lotus ride and handling to deliver a truly outstanding track day car. Introducing the Lotus to the Kuwait market reaffirms Alghanim Motor's commitment to providing its customers with only the best quality products, outstanding service and everything else in between. Visit Alghanim Motor's Lotus showroom at Shuwaikh Industrial 1, block 1, street 11 opposite of the Historical Vintage and Classic Cars Museum Saturday - Thursday from 9 am - 12.30 pm and 4.30 pm - 8.30 pm. Find out what's new by following us on Twitter and Instagram at @AlghanimLotusKW.

EMBASSY OF INDIA, KUWAIT LIBERALIZES GRANT OF VISAS

India has further liberalized grant of visas to nationals of USA, Canada and Japan. Fee structure is as below:

Visa fee for USA nationals:

Tourist visa: Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 36
Business visa: Multiple Entry of one year duration - KD 51
Business visa: Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 76

Visa fee for Canadian and Japanese nationals:

Tourist visa: Multiple Entry of six months duration - KD 14
Tourist visa: Multiple Entry of one year duration - KD 22
Tourist visa: Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 42
Business visa: Multiple Entry of one year duration - KD 39
Business visa: Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 64

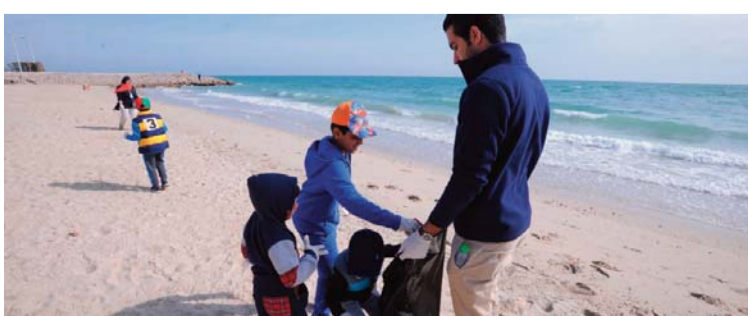
Visa fee for Kuwaiti nationals:

Tourist visa: Multiple Entry of six months duration - KD 14
Business visa: Multiple Entry of One year duration - KD 39
Business visa: Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 64

All applicants may visit Passport and Visa Centres of CKGS at 17 Floor, Behbahani Building, Sharq, Kuwait : Tel. No. 22440392 (e-mail: indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com) or; Complex Kais Alghanim, 4 Floor, Mecca Street, in front of Annod Complex, Fahaheel, Kuwait: Tel. No. 22909229 (e-mail: indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com) or; Jleeb Al Shuyoukh (Abbasiya) 2nd Floor, Jleeb Al Shuyoukh Block 1, Street 1, Xcite building, Kuwait Tel. No. 24342428 (e-mail: indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com). CKGS's website is <http://www.kw.ckgs.in>. In emergency cases, Indian Embassy accepts visa applications directly at its Visa Wing from applicants.



SCIENTIFIC CENTER SPRING CAMP KIDS CLEAN BEACHES



Within its spring camp activities, the Scientific Center of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science, launched a beach cleaning campaign last Thursday in Salmiya where kids removed all wastes. The campaign aims at boosting kids' awareness of cleanliness and the importance of protecting marine environment. A number of the center employees also took part in the activity.



ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 01:45 Bondi Vet
- 02:10 Bondi Vet
- 02:40 Up Close And Dangerous
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 O'Shea's Big Adventure
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 06:49 Up Close And Dangerous
- 07:36 Gonilla School
- 08:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 09:15 Up Close And Dangerous
- 10:10 O'Shea's Big Adventure
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Up Close And Dangerous
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 O'Shea's Big Adventure
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 18:25 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You
- 19:20 The Pool Master
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 O'Shea's Big Adventure
- 22:05 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 It Takes A Killer
- 01:00 Deadly Wives
- 02:00 Killer Kids
- 03:00 The First 48
- 04:00 It Takes A Killer
- 05:00 Deadly Wives
- 06:00 Killer Kids
- 07:00 Gangs Of Britain...
- 08:00 Soham: 10 Years On
- 09:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 10:00 It Takes A Killer
- 11:00 When Life Means Life
- 12:00 Soham: 10 Years On
- 13:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 14:00 It Takes A Killer
- 15:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 16:00 The First 48
- 17:00 The First 48
- 18:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 19:00 Soham: 10 Years On
- 20:00 My Crazy Ex

Discovery Family

- 00:30 Nextworld
- 01:20 Australia Smashes Guinness World Records
- 02:10 Guinness World Records Smashed UK
- 03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:00 How It's Made
- 05:05 How It's Made
- 05:30 Storm Chasers
- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 07:00 Do You Know?
- 07:15 Doki
- 07:35 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 08:00 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 08:45 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 Nextworld
- 10:20 Mythbusters
- 11:10 Storm Chasers
- 12:00 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 12:50 Ultimate Survival

- 18:30 How Do They Do It?
- 19:20 Boy To Man
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 The Liquidator
- 21:00 Blowing Up History
- 21:50 Mega Shippers
- 22:40 Impossible Engineering
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud

H2 HD

- 00:00 The Universe
- 01:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 02:00 Ancient Impossible
- 03:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 03:50 Ancient Aliens
- 05:30 The Universe
- 06:20 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 07:10 The Universe
- 08:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 09:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 10:00 Ancient Aliens
- 12:00 The Universe
- 13:00 World War II: Lost Films
- 14:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 15:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 16:00 Ancient Aliens
- 18:00 The Universe
- 19:00 World War II: Lost Films
- 20:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 21:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 22:00 Ancient Aliens
- 23:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain

H HISTORY

- 00:20 Time Team
- 01:10 Mountain Men
- 02:00 Swamp People
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 06:50 Shipping Wars
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Hunting Hitler
- 11:50 Time Team
- 12:40 Swamp People
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 16:00 Counting Cars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Mountain Men
- 18:30 Swamp People
- 19:20 Ax Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 Counting Cars
- 21:25 Car Hunters
- 21:50 Forged In Fire
- 23:00 American Pickers

food network

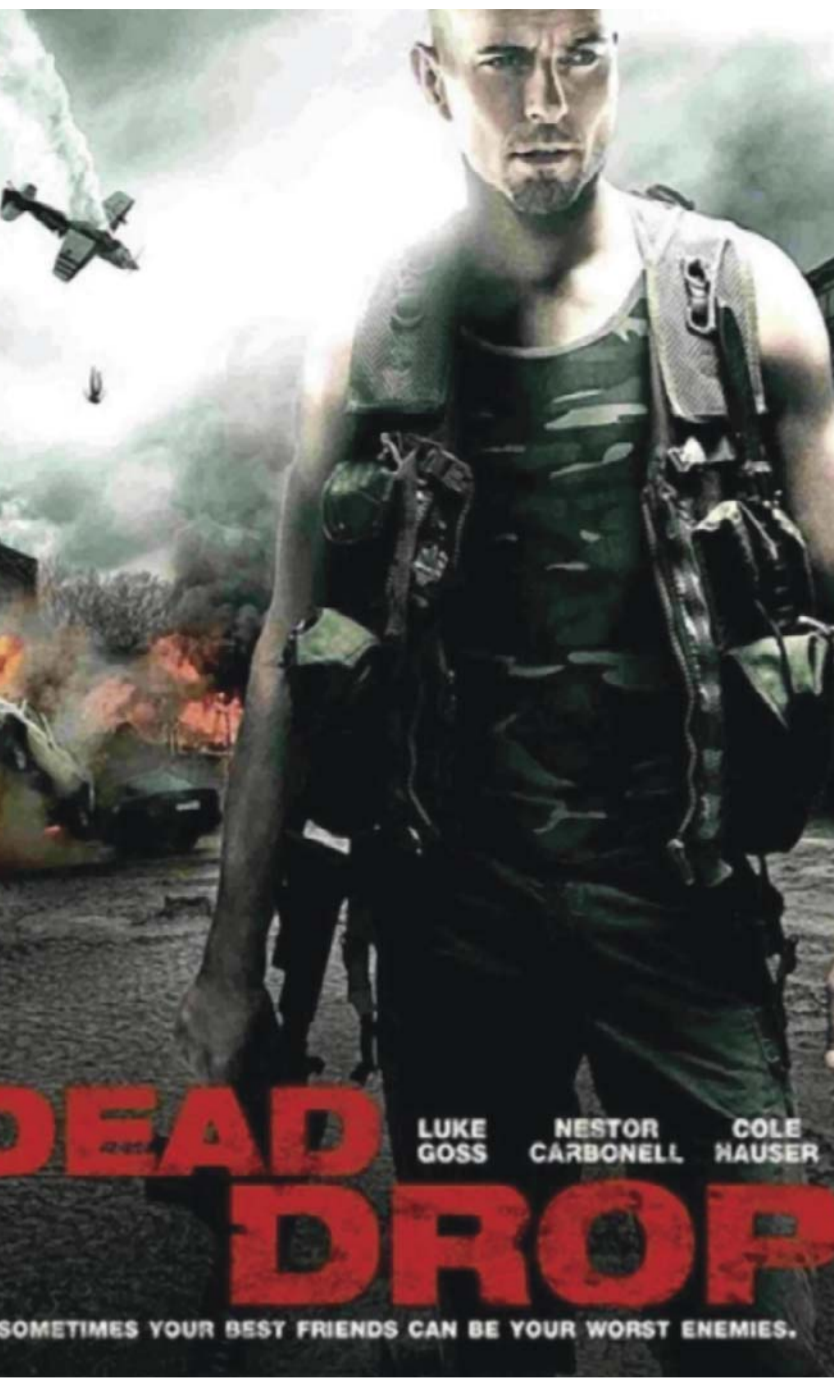
- 00:00 Private Chef
- 01:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 02:00 Chopped
- 03:00 Food Network Star
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 06:00 The Kitchen
- 07:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:00 Siba's Table
- 09:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 10:00 The Kitchen
- 11:00 The Pioneer Woman

Disney Channel HD

- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Violetta
- 01:05 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:30 Violetta
- 04:15 The Hive
- 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Violetta
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 Mouk
- 07:00 Jessie
- 07:50 Rolling To The Ronks
- 08:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 08:45 Bunk'd
- 09:10 Gravity Falls
- 09:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 10:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:05 Shake It Up
- 12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 13:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 13:15 Gravity Falls
- 13:40 Hank Zipzer
- 14:05 Frozen: Magic Of The Northern Lights
- 14:10 Austin & Ally
- 15:00 Jessie
- 15:25 Jessie
- 15:50 Rolling To The Ronks
- 16:15 Sunny Bunnies
- 16:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 16:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 17:10 Bunk'd
- 17:35 Descendants Wicked World
- 17:40 Girl Meets World
- 18:05 Bizaardvark
- 18:30 Liv And Maddie
- 18:55 Best Friends Whenever
- 19:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:25 The Next Step
- 19:50 Austin & Ally
- 20:15 Star Darlings
- 20:20 Shake It Up
- 20:45 Backstage
- 21:10 Liv And Maddie
- 21:35 Cracked
- 21:40 The Next Step
- 22:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 22:30 Mako Mermaids
- 22:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 23:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

Disney Junior

- 00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:35 The Hive
- 00:45 Loopdidoo
- 01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:15 Calimero
- 01:30 Art Attack
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Loopdidoo
- 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:35 Calimero
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:45 Zou
- 04:00 Art Attack
- 04:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:45 Loopdidoo



DEAD DROP ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 22:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 22:25 Gummi Bears
- 22:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 23:00 Miles From Tomorrow

Disney XD

- 06:00 Danger Mouse
- 06:25 Gravity Falls
- 06:50 The 7D
- 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:15 Counterfeit Cat
- 07:40 Supa Strikas
- 08:10 K.C. Undercover
- 08:35 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 09:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 09:50 Danger Mouse
- 10:20 Supa Strikas
- 10:45 Supa Strikas
- 11:10 Counterfeit Cat

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:20 World's Deadliest Snakes
- 01:10 Wild Russia
- 02:00 Tiger On The Run
- 02:50 Dangerous Encounters
- 03:45 Dangerous Encounters
- 04:40 World's Deadliest
- 05:35 Tiger On The Run
- 06:30 Dangerous Encounters
- 07:25 Dangerous Encounters
- 08:20 World's Deadliest
- 09:15 America's Deadliest
- 10:10 Badass Animals
- 11:05 Man And The Wild
- 12:00 Shark Eden
- 12:55 Dragon Island
- 13:50 Dangerous Encounters
- 14:45 Dangerous Encounters
- 15:40 World's Deadliest
- 16:35 Africa's Deadliest
- 17:30 Deadly Instincts
- 18:25 Man And The Wild
- 19:20 Dangerous Encounters
- 20:10 World's Deadliest
- 21:00 Africa's Deadliest
- 21:50 Deadly Instincts
- 22:40 Man And The Wild
- 23:30 Shark Eden

itv CHOICE

- 00:10 The Chase
- 01:00 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Coronation Street
- 02:30 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 03:25 Murdoch Mysteries
- 04:15 Together
- 05:15 Grantchester
- 06:10 The Chase
- 07:05 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 08:00 Murdoch Mysteries
- 09:00 Together
- 09:30 Together
- 10:00 Grantchester
- 10:55 The Chase
- 11:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 12:45 Emmerdale
- 13:15 Coronation Street
- 13:45 Coronation Street
- 14:15 The Chase
- 15:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 16:00 Doctor Thorne
- 16:50 Shetland
- 17:50 Code Of A Killer
- 18:45 Emmerdale
- 19:15 Coronation Street
- 19:45 Coronation Street
- 20:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 21:00 Doctor Thorne
- 21:50 Shetland
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Coronation Street

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

- 00:10 Operation Sumatran Rhino
- 01:00 Wicked Tuna
- 02:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 02:55 Live Free Or Die
- 03:50 Operation Sumatran Rhino
- 04:45 The Great Food Revolution
- 05:40 Paranatural
- 06:35 Dog Whisperer
- 07:30 Dino Death Match

- 08:25 Seconds From Disaster
- 09:20 The Great Food Revolution
- 10:15 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 10:40 Hacking The System
- 11:10 Operation Sumatran Rhino
- 12:05 Explorer
- 13:00 Seconds From Disaster
- 14:00 T. Rex Ultimate Survivor
- 15:00 Dog Whisperer
- 16:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 16:30 Desperate Hours
- 17:00 Mission Critical
- 18:00 Rise Up: The Legacy Of Nat Turner
- 19:00 Startalk
- 20:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 20:25 Desperate Hours
- 20:50 Mission Critical
- 21:40 Rise Up: The Legacy Of Nat Turner

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:00 Dead Drop
- 02:00 Inside
- 04:00 Swelter
- 06:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 07:45 Christmas Twister
- 09:30 Divergent
- 12:00 Legendary: Tomb Of The Dragon
- 14:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 16:00 Blunt Force Trauma
- 18:00 Hudson Hawk
- 20:00 Lucy
- 22:00 Predators

OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

- 00:00 House Of Cards
- 01:00 Quantico
- 02:00 Supergirl
- 03:00 Berlin Station
- 04:00 The Fosters
- 05:00 Good Morning America
- 07:00 Pitch
- 08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 09:00 Devious Maids
- 10:00 The Family
- 11:00 Pitch
- 12:00 The Fosters
- 13:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 14:00 Devious Maids
- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 C.S.I. Cyber
- 19:00 The Fosters
- 20:00 The Flash
- 21:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
- 22:00 StartUp
- 23:00 Berlin Station

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 00:00 Adventures Of A Pizza Guy
- 02:00 Pitch Perfect 2
- 04:00 A Lot Like Love
- 06:00 Just Married
- 08:00 My Girl 2
- 10:00 Serial (Bad) Weddings
- 12:00 Pitch Perfect 2
- 14:00 Pitch
- 16:00 It Boy
- 18:00 Ride
- 20:00 Death At A Funeral
- 22:00 A Short History Of Decay

OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

- 01:00 We Are Many
- 03:30 And Justice For All
- 06:00 The Village
- 08:00 The Help
- 10:45 Finding Forrester
- 13:30 The Wave
- 15:30 Testament Of Youth
- 18:00 The Man Who Wasn't There
- 20:00 Mystic River
- 22:30 Straight Outta Compton

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:30 Peggoland
- 03:00 The Good Lie
- 05:30 With This Ring
- 07:00 The Cobbler
- 09:00 The Benefactor
- 11:00 Hail, Caesar!
- 13:00 4 Minute Mile
- 15:00 Where Hope Grows
- 17:00 The Intern
- 19:15 Tumbledown
- 21:00 In The Heart Of The Sea
- 23:00 Crimson Peak

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 01:30 Bolts And Blip
- 03:00 Justice League: Attack Of The Legion Of Doom
- 04:30 Blackie And Kanuto
- 06:00 The Boxcar Children
- 07:45 Ghatotkach - Master Of Magic
- 09:45 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 11:15 Barnyard
- 13:00 Justice League: Attack Of The Legion Of Doom
- 14:30 Miffy The Movie
- 16:00 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 18:00 Scooby-Doo! And Kiss: Rock And Roll Mystery
- 19:45 Worms
- 21:30 Miffy The Movie
- 23:00 Ghatotkach - Master Of Magic

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 01:00 Captain Sabertooth And The Treasure Of Lama Rama
- 03:00 Batman Unlimited: Animal Instincts
- 05:00 Strange Magic
- 07:00 Hey Arnold! The Movie
- 09:00 Santa Claws
- 11:00 Strange Magic
- 13:00 Scooby-Doo! Moon Monster Madness
- 15:00 Peter Pan
- 17:00 Gulliver's Travels
- 19:00 The Amazing Wizard Of Faws
- 21:00 Chilly Christmas



THE GOOD LIE ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 13:40 How It's Made
- 14:30 Storm Chasers
- 15:15 Mythbusters
- 16:00 Doki
- 16:20 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 16:45 Do You Know?
- 17:00 Wildest Africa
- 17:50 Finding Bigfoot
- 18:40 Nextworld
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Wildest Africa
- 22:00 Finding Bigfoot
- 22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:40 Ultimate Survival

- 12:00 Siba's Table
- 13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:00 Chopped
- 15:00 The Kitchen
- 16:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 17:00 Chopped
- 18:00 Iron Chef America
- 19:00 Restaurant Stakeout
- 20:00 Mystery Diners
- 21:00 Restaurant Takeover
- 22:00 Iron Chef America
- 23:00 Restaurant Stakeout

Discovery science

- 00:40 Mythbusters
- 01:30 How Do They Do It?
- 01:55 Food Factory
- 02:20 Future Weapons
- 03:10 Weird Or What?
- 04:00 Origins
- 04:24 Origins
- 04:48 Mythbusters
- 05:36 Future Weapons
- 06:24 Weird Or What?
- 07:12 How Do They Do It?
- 07:36 Food Factory
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:26 Weird Or What?
- 09:14 Mythbusters
- 10:02 Origins
- 10:50 Origins
- 11:14 Food Factory
- 11:38 Future Weapons
- 12:26 Mythbusters
- 13:14 Weird Or What?
- 14:02 How Do They Do It?
- 14:26 Food Factory
- 14:50 Origins
- 15:14 Origins
- 15:38 Future Weapons
- 16:26 Weird Or What?
- 17:14 Mythbusters
- 18:02 Origins
- 18:26 Origins
- 18:50 Weird Or What?

- 07:00 Zou
- 07:15 Calimero
- 07:30 Loopdidoo
- 07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 08:15 PJ Masks
- 08:45 Goldie & Bear
- 08:30 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 08:45 Miles From Tomorrow
- 08:55 Sofia The First
- 09:20 Doc McStuffins
- 09:35 Goldie & Bear
- 09:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 10:15 PJ Masks
- 10:15 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 10:35 Sofia The First
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Doc McStuffins
- 11:50 Doc McStuffins
- 12:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 12:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 13:15 Gummi Bears
- 13:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 15:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 15:30 Little Mermaid
- 15:55 Unbungalivable
- 16:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 16:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 16:55 The Lion Guard
- 17:20 Goldie & Bear
- 17:50 PJ Masks
- 18:15 Sofia The First
- 18:40 Doc McStuffins
- 19:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:30 Little Mermaid
- 20:00 Doc McStuffins
- 20:30 Doc McStuffins
- 21:00 Unbungalivable
- 21:05 Goldie & Bear
- 21:35 Miles From Tomorrow

IDx

- 00:40 Jonbenet: An American Murder Mystery
- 01:30 Southern Fried Homicide
- 02:20 Is O.J. Innocent? The Missing Evidence
- 03:10 Is O.J. Innocent? The Missing Evidence
- 04:00 Jonbenet: An American Murder Mystery
- 04:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 05:36 On The Case With Paula Zahn



STRANGE MAGIC ON OSN MOVIES FAMILY HD

- 00:10 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 00:35 Wineroads
- 01:00 Glamour Puds
- 01:25 Places We Go
- 02:15 My Restaurant In India
- 02:40 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 03:05 Tom's Istanbul Delight
- 03:30 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 03:55 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 04:20 Carnival Eats
- 04:45 Eat Street
- 05:10 A Is For Apple
- 05:35 Eat: The Story Of Food
- 06:25 Miguel's Feasts
- 06:50 Glamour Puds
- 07:15 Places We Go
- 08:05 My Restaurant In India
- 08:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 08:55 Tom's Istanbul Delight
- 09:20 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 09:45 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 10:10 Carnival Eats
- 10:35 Eat Street
- 11:00 A Is For Apple
- 11:25 Eat: The Story Of Food
- 12:15 Miguel's Feasts
- 12:40 Poh & Co
- 13:05 Places We Go
- 14:00 Delinquent Gourmet
- 14:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 14:55 Tom's Istanbul Delight
- 15:25 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 16:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 16:25 Carnival Eats
- 16:50 Eat Street
- 17:15 A Is For Apple
- 17:40 Eat: The Story Of Food
- 18:35 Miguel's Feasts
- 19:05 Tom's Istanbul Delight
- 19:30 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 20:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 20:25 Carnival Eats

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 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (26/01/2017 TO 01/02/2017)

SHARQIA-1 xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film KAABIL- HINDI xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE WEAPONIZED	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 8:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM
SHARQIA-2 MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS FRI MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	1:00 PM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM
SHARQIA-3 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RAEES- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RAEES- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	11:30 AM 1:45 PM 4:30 PM 6:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM
MUHALAB-1 RAEES- HINDI BALLERINA FRI BALLERINA RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:45 PM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 8:45 PM 11:45 PM
MUHALAB-2 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter KAABIL- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter KAABIL- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:15 PM 2:30 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM
MUHALAB-3 MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	11:45 AM 2:00 PM 4:15 PM 6:30 PM 8:45 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM
FANAR-1 MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS	12:45 PM 3:00 PM

MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS	5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM
FANAR-2 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	11:45 AM 2:00 PM 4:45 PM 6:45 PM 9:00 PM 11:15 PM
FANAR-3 DANGAL- Hindi KAABIL- HINDI DANGAL- Hindi KAABIL- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:00 PM 3:15 PM 6:15 PM 9:30 PM 12:30 AM
FANAR-4 xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM
FANAR-5 RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI	11:30 AM 2:30 PM 5:30 PM 8:30 PM 11:30 PM
MARINA-1 RAEES- HINDI xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE RAEES- HINDI xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:00 PM 2:45 PM 4:45 PM 7:30 PM 9:30 PM 11:30 PM
MARINA-2 xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM
MARINA-3 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM

RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM
AVENUES-1 KAABIL- HINDI DANGAL- Hindi KAABIL- HINDI DANGAL- Hindi KAABIL- HINDI	12:00 PM 3:00 PM 6:15 PM 9:15 PM 12:30 AM
AVENUES-2 MONSTER TRUCKS-3D-4DX MONSTER TRUCKS-3D-4DX MONSTER TRUCKS-3D-4DX xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE-3D-4DX xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE-3D-4DX	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 10:00 PM 12:15 AM
AVENUES-3 RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI	11:30 AM 2:30 PM 5:30 PM 8:30 PM 11:30 PM
360°-1 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter -3D RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	11:30 AM 1:45 PM 4:00 PM 6:15 PM 8:30 PM 10:45 PM 1:00 AM
360°-2 DANGAL- Hindi MOANA FRI DANGAL- Hindi DANGAL- Hindi DANGAL- Hindi	1:15 PM 1:45 PM 4:30 PM 7:45 PM 11:00 PM
360°-3 AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film SING SING AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film	1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM
AL-KOUT.1 xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xx: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:30 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:30 PM 8:30 PM

REQUIRED

A Salmiya clinic
 seeks the employment of female nurses
 with valid professional licenses in Kuwait
 for handsome salaries plus commission.

For inquiries calls: 67760001

ACCOMMODATION

One room for rent in Hawally, kitchen and bathroom. Rent KD 120. Contact 66646229. (C 5263) 31-1-2017

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Joseph Lourito Michael Fernandes, holder of Indian Passport No. K-4651486 and Civil ID 25 101 1600403, issued at Kuwait on 16-03-2012, hereby confirm that I am also known by the following names Lawrie Fernandes, Joseph L M Fernandes, Joseph Laurito Michael Fernandes. (C 5261) 26-1-2017

FOR SALE

For sell new white faux fur (artificial) coat size M And pre owned like new black leather coat size M made in Turkey, Tel. No: 55020291

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 05:16
Shorook: 06:38
Duhr: 12:02
Asr: 15:05
Maghrib: 17:26
Isha: 18:45

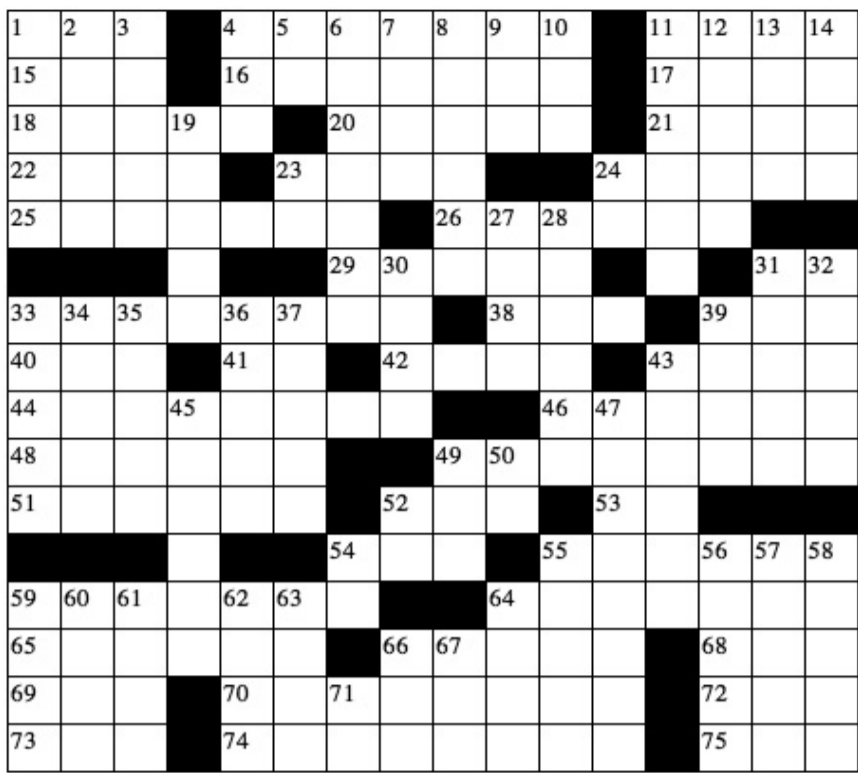
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

Flight Schedule

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 1/2/2017				Departure Flights on Wednesday 1/2/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
KAC	102	London	00:55	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	FDK	804	Damascus	01:55
FDK	803	Damascus	01:00	TXC	1624	IQA	02:00
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15				
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50				
DLH	635	Doha	01:55				
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00				
MSC	405	Sohag	02:30				
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30				
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30				
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55				
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55				
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05				
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25				
BAW	157	London	06:40				
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15				
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15				
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45				
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20				
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40				
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45				
KAC	362	Colombo	09:05				
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05				
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05				
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10				
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30				
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40				
IRC	6511	ABD	09:55				
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15				
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:40				
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40				
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10				
IRM	1188	Mashhad	11:15				
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30				
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55				
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00				
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10				
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40				
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50				
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50				
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00				
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:15				
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30				
KAC	564	Amman	13:40				
KAC	514	Tehran	13:55				
JZR	703	Taif	13:55				
KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55				
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10				
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15				
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20				
KAC	414	Bangkok	14:35				
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40				
IRC	6521	Lamerd	14:40				
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45				
KAC	672	Dubai	14:50				
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55				
KNE	683	Madinah	15:05				
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15				
KAC	286	Dhaka	15:20				
OMA	645	Muscat	15:35				
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45				
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50				

CROSSWORD 1508



ACROSS

1. A vacuum tube in which a hot cathode emits a beam of electrons that pass through a high voltage anode and are focused or deflected before hitting a phosphorescent screen.
4. A nobleman of highest rank in Spain or Portugal.
11. An inn in some Eastern countries with a large courtyard that provides accommodation for caravans.
15. The basic unit of money in Romania.
16. A Black woman or girl.
17. A demon who swallows the sun causing eclipses.
18. The fourth or lowest deck.
20. Make reference to.
21. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
22. Stem of plants of the Gramineae.
25. A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
26. Constituting or relating to a tail.
29. A formal expression of praise.
33. A large family of trees, shrubs, vines, and herbs bearing bean pods.
38. Support resembling the rib of an animal.
40. To make a mistake or be incorrect.
41. Before noon.
42. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
44. A small spoon used for stirring tea or coffee.
46. (ecology) The process by which a plant or animal becomes established in a new habitat.
48. A folded section placed between the leaves of another publication.
51. Any of several small ungulate mammals of Africa and Asia with rodent-like incisors and feet with hooflike toes.
53. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
59. A loose cloak with a hood.
65. Alloy of copper and tin and zinc.
68. A master's degree in business.
69. An independent agency of the United States government responsible for collecting and coordinating intelligence and counterintelligence activities abroad in the national interest.
70. Low stinging nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
72. A decree that prohibits something.
73. Range of what one can know or understand.
74. Below the dura mater but above the arachnoid membrane of the meninges.
75. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. A timepiece that shows the time of day.
2. A program that is broadcast again.
3. A fine (often starched) net used for veils or tutus or gowns.
4. Former measure of the US economy.
5. A rare heavy polyvalent metallic element that resembles manganese chemically and is used in some alloys.
6. Roman general who commanded the fleet that defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium (63-12 BC).
7. A recurring sleep state during which rapid eye movements do not occur and dreaming does not occur.

8. Mar or spoil the appearance of.
9. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
10. The rate at which red blood cells settle out in a tube of blood under standardized conditions.
11. An industrial city in southern Poland on the Vistula.
12. Relating to the deepest parts of the ocean (below 6000 meters).
13. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
14. Ctenophores lacking tentacles.
19. The ending of a series or sequence.
23. A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
24. A public promotion of some product or service.
27. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
28. An agency of the United Nations responsible for programs to aid education and the health of children and mothers in developing countries.
30. (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
31. Cooking by direct exposure to radiant heat (as over a fire or under a grill).
32. A liquid preparation used on wet hair to it a tint.
34. A particular environment or walk of life.
35. An alloy of copper and zinc.
36. An island (part of Campania) in the Bay of Naples in southern Italy.
37. Give expression or emotion to, in a stage or movie role.
39. A doctor's degree in music.
43. Consisting of or made of cedar.
45. A rosid dicot genus that includes moon carrots.
47. Relating to or existing on or affecting the skin.
49. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
50. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
52. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
54. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
55. Joint capital (with Riyadh) of Saudi Arabia.
56. A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
57. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
58. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
60. A member of an Iroquoian people formerly living on the south shore of Lake Erie in northern Ohio and western New York.
61. Lacking excess flesh.
62. A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
63. A man who is the lover of a girl or young woman.
64. Dense growth of hairs covering the body or parts of it (as on the human head).
66. A number of sheets of paper fastened together along one edge.
67. Any of various systems of units for measuring electricity and magnetism.
71. A soft gray ductile metallic element used in alloys.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You will be redefining who and what you are and should spend some time alone with these thoughts so you can gain insight. Also, expect some changes in business. If offered a new job, you should seriously consider it. For your own ease, research the institution. Dramatic and just happy to be here, you are warm of heart, gregarious, outspoken and independent. Your energies run effectively toward making yourself felt in the material, perceptible outer world. You are an action type of person who gains the attention of others and seems to get things moving. The circumstances of your life now suggest extroversion. You find yourself in a very practical mood-working with instead of against yourself. It is a great time to be with others in work or play.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

If you are looking for a job today... Smile. Have a supply of your new and revised resumes on hand. There are occasions for which you can become alerted. You know that occasionally there will be a payoff for paying attention to gossip. You may hear about someone leaving a department soon and if you think about it, this may be an opportunity to apply for the job opening. Most programmed work obligations are done by learned techniques and the desire to be approved and get paid. Today, there is a special interest in the competitive edge. Use your common sense, think carefully and proceed accordingly. Tonight, the natives at your place have tickets for everyone to an activity that is something you enjoy this evening is fantastic.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You seem to know how to find a witty side to a difficult living situation today. Many of your co-workers look up to you and try to find the secret to your positive frame of mind. Your company may be joining others in some type of convention soon and you may be asked to help at the table representing your company. This just means you will have literature or products in hand to help answer questions and make sales. In many cases it could also mean the way you present yourself will help represent the company in a positive way; higher-ups are watching. Good friends may visit this evening and you will want to join with them to see a movie or a play. You are appreciated and will look back on this time with pride. As you know, life is a roller coaster.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

This time encourages the urge to organize and discipline your mind and methods of communication. Perhaps you will become involved in some serious thinking, getting down to the essential thoughts. If you work part-time to go to school or are in school fulltime, studies of all kinds move your mind from one subject to another with great enthusiasm. This is a time for perspiration in the idea department. Not many people enjoy the scholastic parts of school but you do. It may be that one of your projects will call for you to be creative by calling on some of what you have studied to make a presentation. Just take a deep breath and depend on your own previous learning. Without any tools, you will achieve more than you thought possible!



Leo (July 23-August 22)

What has worked before today is no longer working take a survey and ask yourself where you are headed with regard to your goals. You can either change your goals or change your pattern of achieving those goals. It may be time for a professional career counselor or a credible person that can see you in the light that you cannot see. Help each other if you want... This will put a plug in an emotional leak or make time adjustments. Open up for clear thinking. You do not look for perfection, but you also do not want to waste time, and time-wasters get very little attention from you. This evening you enjoy some time with friends under very bright lights. This may mean taking more pictures. You are pleased to find new ways to organize and store your pictures.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Difficulties at work are common but if you stay too long on one glitch, you know that one can become unaware of the solution. Today you may teach the way of finding solutions and show others a good direction. Business is good and topics of accomplishment, direction and encouragement are important for all. The time has come to make a chart or schedule so that all involved in the day's work will be aware and recognize achievement. This means cooperation and organization, authority and discipline-responsibility. Your work will soon move along very well. Romance, recreation and creativity take on an inspiration, which happens this afternoon. Such experiences can be truly soul-stirring. Sharing is a good thing.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Before you announce a particular find from your experiments or studies, look at your results scientifically and technically before you put your name to the summation. This will tell you what is true. This is an exciting day and if you are not the one making discoveries, someone in your office is making discoveries. This is a good day and one that progresses quickly. You draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvements. Tonight there is a party that you can join and you think about what you will wear. There is a need to break with outmoded patterns from the past... A longing for the new, the different, the unique. This could mean new clothes or a new vehicle and party time might be held back for now.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

The young people entering the workplace now are called millennials. It is amazing that the evolution in this group is how they gather information. They separate from each other when there is a puzzle to solve and after they figure out a solution, then they move forward in some type of teamwork. The choices we make as we move through our life determine our success. A keen interest in what makes things tick and who or what pulls the strings is the encouragement you need to teach. If you like your own job, you might decide to tutor all ages and charge those that can afford to pay you. You are worth it and probably have a degree that would grant your requests. Figuring out ways to make your nest egg grow can be a preoccupation.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

A busy day with lots of questions causes you to wonder if there is some newsletter or internet site that would keep you updated on how to achieve or find the answers to some of the blocks you find while trying to complete your work. You have discovered lots of helpful avenues through the internet but none on the subject for which you need answers. Today you may need to create your own answer site and then advertise that steps to answers in the workplace are available. You will be able to help lots of people and the sharing of answers will be available soon. You draw emotional sustenance and a sense of security from ideals, friends and social involvement this evening. There is no need to change anything at home-it is your peace.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A clean break with the past in some respects is signaled by the cycle you have just begun. What you need, your freedom and independence, shattering old molds-these are the things that energize you and take priority in your life. Uniqueness and originality set you apart from the usual crowd. You will notice that the achievements you make in the workplace are mighty! Your creative side rules and you may find yourself setting down to an evening of playing with the gifts you received over this past holiday season. You may be an artist and have found yourself with new paints, frames, material for making pictures or picture frames, cooking books, hobby pieces, pottery tools, etc., etc. Tonight you might read some of your poetry to a young person-funny!



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You see what's wrong and you know what to do to correct or simply proceed with what may have been a long project. This could be an advertisement display or the best decorated cake, cookie or cupcake. Whatever the case, you always put your best creative thinking toward the best end results. When you take your break you may find yourself wandering around the shopping center that is close by. A little coffee input from a coffee shop and a variety of different people seem to calm what might have been the beginning of an overtaxed day. This afternoon and evening are full of surprises and it is fun to be the center of attraction. Take notice of how one or two people celebrate birthdays so that you might return the favor.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

The extra stress you may be feeling this month will not be so hard for you if you maintain your regular exercise program and eat often-but light. If you can find a good naturopath doctor, enjoy the results of the assessment for your better health. This is a time in your life marked by greater involvement with friends and groups who share some of your ideals about how people should live. Some of these friends or groups are likely to be way off the beaten path-at least unusual, maybe eccentric. Your social consciousness is raised. Financial well-being is among the brighter prospects looming before you now, and you focus in on how much things really mean to you. Be careful that you do not gain the feeling that the things you own, own you instead.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Hip-Hop Artists

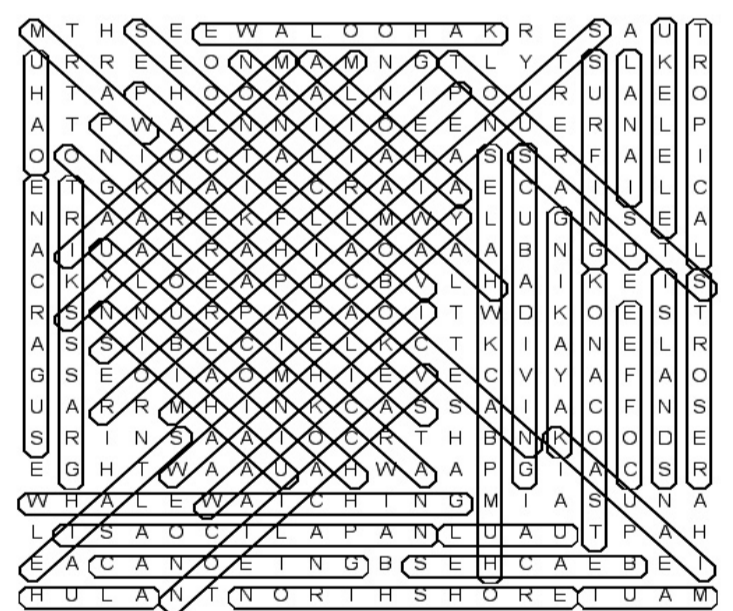
Find and circle all of the Hip-Hop Artists that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of a Lauryn Hill song.



- AFRIKA BAMBATA
- BRAND NUBIAN
- BUSTA RHYMES
- COOLIO
- CORMEGA
- CRAIG MACK
- DE LA SOUL
- DJ SHADOW
- ERICK SERMON
- FAT JOE
- FOXY BROWN
- GANG STARR
- GRANDMASTER FLASH
- HEAVY D
- KANYE WEST
- KILLARMY
- KURTIS BLOW
- LAURYN HILL
- LL COOL J
- MASTER P
- MISSY ELLIOTT
- MUGGS
- NATURE
- NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
- ONXX
- QUEEN LATIFAH
- REDMAN
- SALT N PEPA
- SPOONIE GEE
- STETSASONIC
- THE ALCHEMIST
- THE FAT BOYS
- THE FUGEES
- THE PHARCYDE
- THE ROOTS
- TLC
- WILL SMITH
- WU-TANG CLAN
- WYCLEF JEAN

Yesterday's Solution

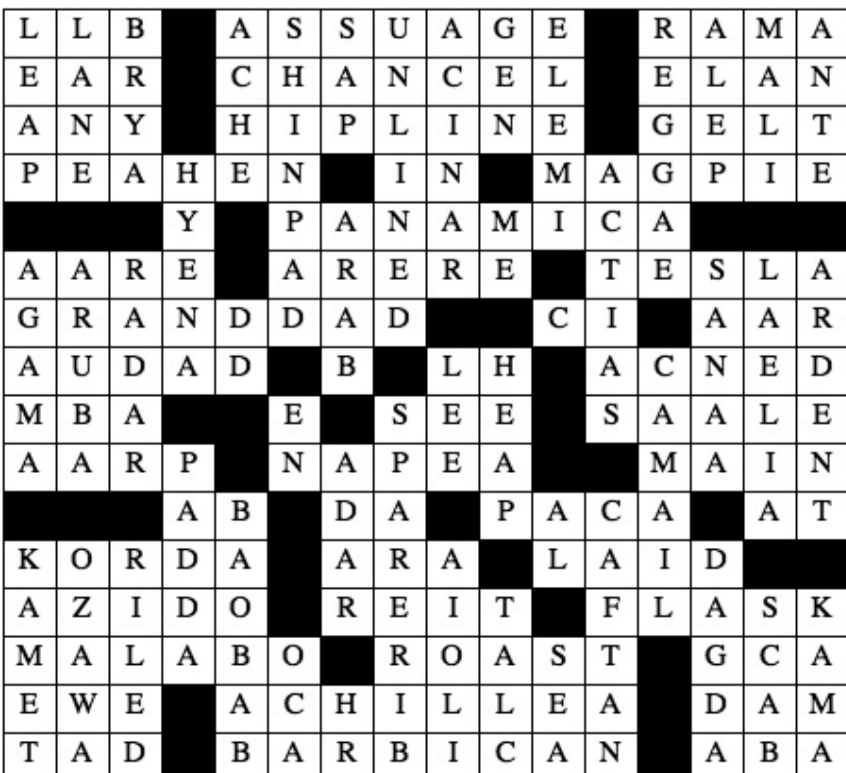
Hawaii



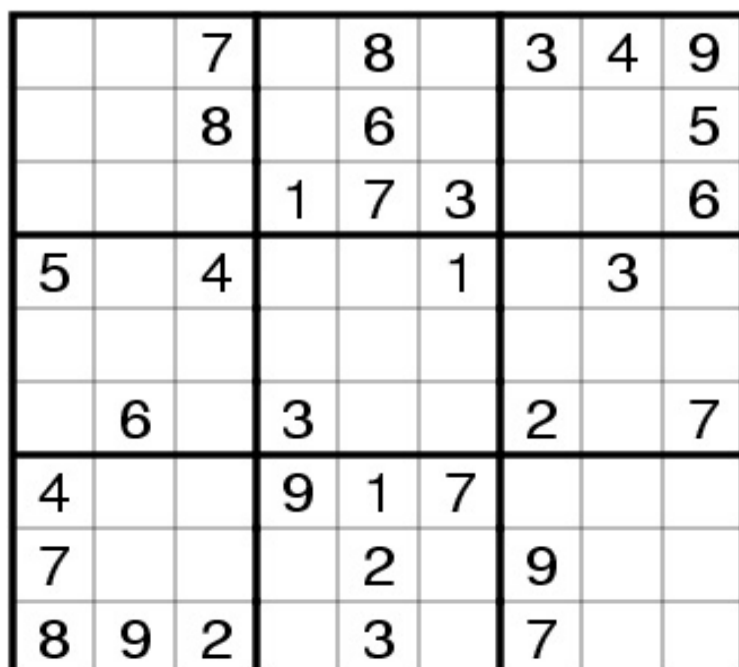
- ALOHA
- ARCHIPELAGO
- BEACHES
- CANDIDING
- COFFEE
- GRASS SKIRT
- HAWAIIAN
- HONOLULU
- HULA
- HUMPBAC WHALES
- ISLANDS
- KAHO'OLAWA
- KAUA'I
- KAYAKING
- KONA COAST
- LANAI
- LIUAI
- MACADAMIA NUTS
- MANTA RAYS
- MAUI
- MOLOKA'I
- NAPALI COAST
- N'IHAU
- NORTH SHORE
- O'AHU
- PACIFIC OCEAN
- PEARL HARBOR
- PINEAPPLES
- RESORTS
- SAND
- SCUBA DIVING
- SNORKELING
- STATE
- SUGARCANE
- SURFING
- TOURISTS
- TROPICAL
- UKELELE
- VACATION
- VOLCANOES
- WAIKIKI
- WAIIMEA BAY
- WARM
- WHALE WATCHING

The hidden message is: THERE ARE ONLY THIRTEEN LETTERS IN THE HAWAIIAN ALPHABET

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



MUSIC & MOVIES



Berlinalde Director Dieter Kosslick shows festival's merchandise during a press conference prior to the 67th Berlinalde film festival in Berlin. — AFP photos



Berlinalde Director Dieter Kosslick (center) speaks during a press conference prior to the 67th Berlinale film festival in Berlin.

Star-packed Berlin film fest promises laughs in dark times

Penelope Cruz, Hugh Jackman, Catherine Deneuve, Richard Gere and Robert Pattinson are among the high-wattage stars due on the red carpet at February's Berlin film festival, organizers said yesterday as they unveiled the line-up. The 67th Berlinale is the first major cinema showcase in Europe each year and presents nearly 400 productions from around the world. The 11-day event will kick off in the German capital February 9 with the world premiere of the French biopic "Django" about Gypsy-jazz great Django Reinhardt and his family's persecution in Nazi-occupied Paris.

Eighteen films will vie for the Golden Bear top prize, which last year went to harrowing Italian refugee documentary "Fire at Sea" from a jury led by Meryl Streep. This year Dutch direc-

tor Paul Verhoeven ("Basic Instinct", "Ella") will lead the seven-member jury including US actress Maggie Gyllenhaal, Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson and Mexican actor and director Diego Luna ("Rogue One: A Star Wars Story").

Berlinalde chief Dieter Kosslick told reporters that the event, known as the most politically minded of Europe's top festivals, would shine a light on what he called dark times in the West. "The program we have put together features films that deal with themes of courage and confidence and do it with a whole lot of humor," he said. "You never know what is going to be happening in the world when you start assembling the line-up but it's as if the filmmakers were able to look into the future and see current developments. But despite all the turmoil in the world, it's an upbeat program."

Veterans and popcorn fare

In keeping with its long post-war tradition, the festival will mix arthouse cinema from European veterans including Poland's Agnieszka Holland ("Europa Europa"), Britain's Sally Potter, Germany's Volker Schlöndorff, previous Golden Bear winner Calin Peter Netzer of Romania and Aki Kaurismäki of Finland with popcorn fare. The latest Wolverine installment of the X-Men superhero series "Logan" starring Jackman, Patrick Stewart and Richard E. Grant will have its world premiere in Berlin and "T2: Trainspotting", the sequel to the drug-fueled Scottish cult classic will get a gala screening.

Potter ("Orlando"), one of four women directors in competition, has pulled together a cast including Patricia Clarkson, Bruno Ganz, Kristin Scott Thomas and Timothy Spall for the

comedy "The Party" set in a house in present-day London. Gere stars with Steve Coogan, Laura Linney, Rebecca Hall and Chloe Sevigny in the thriller "The Dinner" by US director Oren Moverman ("Love & Mercy"), an adaptation of the Dutch novel by Herman Koch.

Cruz joins Mandy Patinkin ("Homeland") in the Spanish production "The Queen of Spain" set in the 1950s under Franco, screening in the Berlinale Special sidebar section. French production "The Midwife" by Martin Provost stars Deneuve as the mysterious former mistress of the title character's father. And Pattinson is due in Berlin for a screening of James Gray's "The Lost City of Z" — an adaptation of a bestseller by David Grann of the New Yorker. — AP

Keanu Reeves, Laurence Fishburne team again in 'John Wick Chapter 2'



Laurence Fishburne, left, and Keanu Reeves, cast members in "John Wick: Chapter 2," pose together at the premiere of the film at ArcLight Cinemas on Monday in Los Angeles. — AP

Fourteen years after their last onscreen pairing as mentor and Neo in the Matrix trilogy, Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne have reunited in "John Wick Chapter 2", and Reeves is especially excited about the prospect. The sequel to 2014's "John Wick" follows the legendary hitman of the title, who is once again forced out of retirement upon discovering a large bounty has been put on his head after he returns to the criminal underworld to repay a blood oath.

"What's the best bit? How about I'll just say that in the big picture of it, that that could actually happen, the chance to work with Laurence Fishburne again, to get to play John Wick again," Reeves said at the film's premiere on Monday night. Italian actor Riccardo Scamarcio, who plays a villain in the movie, joked about having spent a lifetime in preparation.

"As an actor, I'm training myself to die since I was five," he said. "Finally I have the possibility to do this in a big American movie, so it's a very important target." At the premiere, director Chad Stahelski spoke about already being on the lookout for ideas for a third movie in the franchise, saying, "We have a stack of notebooks for the third one, and we're currently raking through them to pull out the best ideas and where the story can go." "John Wick Chapter 2" hits theaters on February 10. — Reuters

Disney fans see romance bloom in 'Beauty and the Beast' trailer

Actress Emma Watson twirls on the dancefloor as heroine Belle in Disney's latest glimpse of its upcoming live-action remake of "Beauty and the Beast", the romantic fantasy film's final trailer ahead of its March release. "The Harry Potter" star joins "Downton Abbey" actor Dan Stevens, who plays the Beast, as well as Ewan McGregor, Emma Thompson and Stanley Tucci in the film, a remake of Disney's popular 1991 animated movie.

The trailer, released yesterday, follows Belle as she is

imprisoned by a beast in his large castle. She meets and becomes friends with its staff members, such as Lumiere the candelabra, voiced by McGregor, and gradually warms to the beast. In a nod to a key scene in the animated movie, Belle and the Beast are seen dancing together in the trailer, which also features the film's titular song. "Beauty and the Beast" hits cinemas worldwide from March 15. — Reuters

The Weeknd set to perform with Daft Punk at Grammys

The Weeknd will team up with Daft Punk for a performance at the Grammy Awards. The collaboration between the singer and the electronic music duo is one of a number of pairings announced yesterday. Anderson .Paak will take the stage with A Tribe Called Quest and Dave Grohl. Maren Morris is set to perform with Alicia Keys.

The Grammys previously announced that Adele, John Legend, Bruno Mars, Metallica, Carrie Underwood and Keith Urban would perform. James Corden of the "Late Late Show" will host the Feb 12 ceremony on CBS. The Grammys will be presented at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. — AP



In this Feb 28, 2016 file photo, The Weeknd arrives at the Oscars in Los Angeles.-AP

THE 35TH EDITION OF THE FAJR FILM FESTIVAL



Actors, actresses and the crew from the movie "Another House" by director Behnoosh Sadeghi pose for a photo as they arrive for a screening during the 35th edition of the Fajr Film Festival at Milad Tower in Tehran. — AFP photos



Iranian actor Sara Bahrami poses for a photo as she arrives for a screening during the 35th edition of the Fajr Film Festival.



Iranian actress Diba Zahedi



Iranian actress Mahtab Keramati



Iranian actress Shaghayegh Farahani poses for a photo as she arrives for a screening.

Ben Affleck is not directing Batman, but will produce, star

Ben Affleck is no longer directing the Batman standalone movie for Warner Bros in a statement Monday, Affleck said it "has become clear that I cannot do both jobs to the level they require" and that he and the studio are looking for a new director. "There are certain characters who hold a special place in the hearts of millions," Affleck said in the statement. "Performing this role demands focus, passion and the very best performance I can give."

Affleck made his debut as the superhero for the studio last summer in "Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice," and he had been attached to write and direct the Batman standalone movie for about a year. He attended Comic-Con this summer with his fellow DC Universe directors, like "Wonder Woman's" Patty Jenkins, "Justice League's" Zack Snyder, and Rick Famuyiwa, who this past fall also stepped away from directing "The Flash." The studio in a statement said that it "fully supports" his decision and "remains committed to working with him to bring a standalone Batman picture to life."

Warner Bros and Affleck have had a longstanding relationship. This past fall alone, Affleck made a cameo as Batman/Bruce Wayne in "Suicide Squad," starred in "The Accountant," and wrote, directed and starred in the period drama "Live by Night." Speaking to The Associated Press in December, Affleck said he was taking his time with the script for Batman, which he called an "exhilarating" challenge, "like jumping out of an airplane." Warner Bros has had a rocky start kicking off its expanded universe of DC Comics films. Both "Batman v

Superman" and "Suicide Squad" were savaged by critics, but they still managed to be decently profitable.

Affleck will appear next as Batman in "Justice League," which comes out on Nov 17. The Batman standalone doesn't yet have an official title or release date, but it was tentatively pegged for 2018. "I am still in this, and we are making it," Affleck's statement continued. "I remain extremely committed to this project, and look forward to bringing this to life for fans around the world." — AP



In this file photo, Ben Affleck arrives at the world premiere of "The Accountant" at the TCL Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. — AP

Israel's Arabs divided by film's portrayal of changing world

'It is the time now for women to come and speak up'

In Israel's Arab community, life is imitating art. A new award-winning film about Arab women battling their conservative society has touched off a real-life battle: The municipality of a major Arab city in Israel has called for a boycott of the film, and the film's director says she has received death threats for her unflinching portrayal of sex, drugs, parties, homosexuality and rape in her community. The film has also caught many Jewish Israeli audiences by surprise, exposing them to a vibrant world of fiercely independent young Arab women - what the film's director calls the "Palestinian underground."

"In Between," which has won accolades at Spanish, Canadian and Israeli film festivals, was written and directed by Maysaloun Hamoud, 35, and was inspired by her own experiences living in Tel Aviv for the last decade. "It is the time now for women to come and speak up," said Hamoud, who sports the title of her movie tattooed on her forearm in Arabic and English. "Until now, we were listening to men, and they were the ones to run everything." "In Between" is the film's English title. In Arabic, it is called "Land Sea," an expression meaning "Neither Here Nor There," the film's name in Hebrew.

The film tells the story of three Arab women who leave home to work and study in the live-and-let-live Israeli city of Tel Aviv. They find themselves stuck between an Arab society that often rejects nontraditional roles for women, and an Israeli society that while more open and Westernized, often doesn't treat Arabs as full equals. Arab-Israelis make up about 20 percent of Israel's citizenry. But they share the same ethnicity,

language and culture of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and many identify as Palestinians rather than Israeli. As a result, many Jewish Israelis see them as a subversive fifth column.

Charity in the city

In the film, there's Salma, a DJ and bartender who wears multiple piercings and comes from a conservative Christian family. There's her sharp-tongued roommate Laila, a lawyer who parties, drinks, chain-smokes, and dumps her boyfriend because he is embarrassed to introduce her to his family. And there's their shy, new roommate Nour, a religious Muslim girl from Umm Al-Fahm, a conservative Muslim city in northern Israel, who studies computer science at Tel Aviv University. Nour's fiancé, a devout Muslim who is affiliated with a charity in the city, considers Nour's roommates to be bad influences, and tries to pressure her to leave them and get married before she is ready. He is portrayed as violent and corrupt, and a religious hypocrite.

"The message that I want to reach Palestinian society is that we are very, very strong women," said Mouna Hawa, who plays the role of Laila. "We are not defects, our voice is not a defect, neither are our acts, responsibilities or decisions. We don't even know we are that strong, because it's as if we always need a man to be next to us." The movie is almost entirely in Arabic with Hebrew subtitles, and more and more cinemas in Israel are beginning to screen it. The director has been traveling across the country to speak to audiences at the screenings.

After one screening in downtown Tel Aviv, a Jewish

Israeli viewer wondered if the scenes of raucous Arab dance parties really reflected reality. When another asked the director if her movie was reaching Arab audiences, she asked if there were Arabs in the audience, and dozens raised their hands, heaping praise on the director. But much of the reaction from Arabs has been angry, with negative comments flooding the film's Arabic-language Facebook page. "This movie is a warehouse, it distorted the image of Islam," one commenter wrote. Some social media comments have threatened the director's life, Hamoud said. But some other comments were positive too. "All the respect, a great movie" another commenter wrote.

Mixed feelings

Riham Mahameed, a 22-year-old from Umm Al-Fahm who studies at a university in Beersheba, had mixed feelings about the film. "The characters are brave, representing the reality we're trying to hide in all kinds of ways," she said. But she complained the partying women of the film were not representative of all Arab women who like her leave home for studies and work. "The movie showed only the bad things about girls living outside the home. Parents will be scared of what their daughters are doing," Mahameed said.

Abd Al-Monem Foad, a spokesman for the Umm Al-Fahm municipality, said his city has called for a boycott of the movie because it gives the city, home to two central characters, a bad name. "It distorts the image of Umm Al-Fahm," he said. "It distorts our young men and women, it distorts their reputation, it depicts them in an immoral and indecent way." Foad himself did not



see the film. Even some liberal Arab-Israeli commentators, like popular columnist Sayed Kashua, have argued the film reinforces negative stereotypes, particularly with the film's villain, the bearded, religious Muslim fiancé.

Blogger Samah Salaime said a violent scene involving the Muslim man and his fiancée Nour is "juicy material for the budding Islamophobe," though she notes the film includes a positive male role model in Nour's father. She referred to the Hebrew title of the movie when offering her critique of the film. "I found myself neither here nor there," Salaime wrote. — AP

This undated hand-out photo provided by Deux Beaux Garçon Films shows a scene from the movie "In Between". — AP



This file photo shows Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar posing during a photocall for the film "Julietta" at the 69th Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.



This file photo shows Spanish film director Pedro Almodóvar receiving his award at the 26th European Film Awards ceremony. — AFP photos

Almodóvar: Flamboyant free spirit of Spanish cinema

Born in the dark days of Franco's dictatorship, Pedro Almodóvar has depicted the freeing up of Spanish society across 20 colorful films powered by quirky and dramatic heroines. Long synonymous with subversive stories that mixed humor, transgression and lots of drugs and sex, at 67 with his thick hair gone grey, the director now often finds himself accused of not being "Almodóvarian" enough in his later more serious films. Despite being a darling of France's Cannes film festival, whose organizers chose him yesterday to lead this year's jury, he has never won its top prize, the Palme d'Or.

Almodóvar burst onto the international scene with his 1988 Oscar-nominated "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown", a dark kitschy comedy about a woman who had just been dumped by her lover and whose apartment becomes the scene of hostage situations and accidental overdoses. The film, he later said, was about "masochism, homosexuality, masturbation, drugs, porn and attacks against religion". "All of these themes that are considered taboo belong to my life-I don't consider them to be prohibited or scandalous," the director added.

Mother as muse

One of the leaders of the "Movida", the explosion of creativity that followed the death of longtime Spanish dictator Francisco Franco in 1975, Almodóvar is openly gay. He soon became a symbol and chronicler of a modern and tolerant Spain that he also helped create. Born on September 24, 1949 in the arid region of La Mancha in the center of Spain, Pedro Almodóvar Caballero rarely talks about his father, who traded olive oil and wine off the back of a mule and who died in 1980, the year Almodóvar's first commercial film was released.

He grew up in the company of women and his mother has been a key reference throughout his life, with maternity a recurring theme of his movies, particularly in his 1999 masterpiece, "All About My Mother". "My passion for color is a response to my mother who spent so many years in mourning and blackness that goes against nature," he once said. Almodóvar was just 16 years old when he left home to move to Madrid.

The Spanish capital's film school was closed by the repressive Franco regime at the time, but it was here that Almodóvar discovered Alfred Hitchcock and Ingmar Bergman. While working at Spain's public telephone company he plunged into Madrid's underground cultural scene and in 1974 he began making short movies with a Super-8 camera. His debut feature film, the 1980 camp comedy "Pepi, Luci, Bom and Other Girls Like Mom", captured the newfound cultural and sexual freedom of the time. He was one of the first directors to include transsexuals and transvestites in his movies. Indeed, "All About My Mother", which recounts a mother's search for her dead son's transvestite father, won the Oscar for best foreign language film.

Ghosts

The heroines of the majority of his films are passionate, determined women who must reinvent themselves to confront a crisis and often improbable plot twists that Almodóvar loves to slip into his scripts. He won a second Oscar for best original screenplay for his 2002 film "Talk To Her". Almodóvar's recent work has tended toward more dark and thoughtful thrillers and dramas. His latest, "Julietta"-his biggest box office hit for years-recounts a mother's excruciating 10-year wait for a daughter who abandoned her.

To explain his new seriousness, he talks frequently of his life as an ageing single man who lives with a cat and his "ghosts". Some of those ghosts come from his childhood, when he would listen to his mother and the neighbors when they gathered to gossip and make lace. "Top on the list were babies born out of marriage and suicides," Almodóvar told the New Yorker magazine, as he explained his gift for storytelling. "People who threw themselves down the well or hanged themselves from the rafters... It was the origin of life and, at the same time, of fiction and fabulation." — AFP

So bad, they're good: Madrid celebrates trash films

You'd think the prospect of bad acting, a terrible script and rock-bottom directing would put movie buffs off. But if Madrid's CutreCon trash film festival is anything to go by-you'd be wrong. Lured by such films as the musical "Nudist Colony of the Dead" and Bollywood's "Action Jackson", some 3,500 people turned up at the five-day event. They also came to see one of the holy grails of the bad film world: "Troll 2"-with its rating of just six percent on review site Rotten Tomatoes, is considered one of the worst movies ever.

CutreCon, which ended Sunday, is one of several festivals in Europe dedicated to films so bad they're good, many of which have been pulled from oblivion by the internet, at times earning them and their protagonists cult status. Nostalgia for the era of low-quality, VHS films, dissatisfaction with mainstream cinema and a general desire to laugh and let off steam have contributed to the genre's rise in popularity. Also influential was Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodriguez's 2007 ode to trash cinema "Grindhouse."

Killer yoghurt, sharks

"The first time I came across a trash film... was when I was around 10 or 11, with a film by Larry Cohen called 'The Stuff', which is about killer yoghurt," says Carlos Palencia, a culture journalist and CutreCon's director. His interest in the genre eventually prompted him to create the festival, now in its sixth year, having evolved from a one-night-only film viewing to the current multi-location event. Keyvan Sarkhosh, senior research fellow at Germany's Max Planck Institute for Empirical Aesthetics who co-authored a research paper on the subject, says there are two types of trash films-the unintentionally bad and those deliberately made to be awful.

The man who perhaps best represents the first category is Edward Wood, whose "Plan 9 from Outer Space" film about aliens has been dubbed the best worst movie ever made. Wood died in 1978 a poor alcoholic, but achieved posthumous fame thanks in part to Tim Burton's biopic "Ed Wood" starring Johnny Depp. Then come films intentionally made to be incoherent and clumsy for "ironic consumption," says Sarkhosh. Cue the recent "Sharknado" franchise-films about freak storms that see sharks sucked up in water spouts and rained down on unsuspecting city dwellers. Bad taste? Not so, says Sarkhosh, whose research found that those who watched these movies were highly educated, cultural "omnivores" just as happy to watch arthouse films. "To enjoy bad cinema, you need to really like good cinema... you need good taste to appreciate bad taste and find the fun side (of a movie)," concurs Palencia.

Vegetarian goblins

For Angel-Luis Andres, a 40-year-old sales manager who turned up to see "Troll 2" at the festival, nostalgia is also part of the appeal. "My father would bring home a batch of videos at the weekend," he recalls. "He always brought back stuff



Posters advertising trash movies are displayed in the entrance of a cinema participating in the sixth edition of the trash film festival CutreCon, in Madrid. — AFP

that me and my brother liked-monsters, dinosaurs... These are nostalgia films," he says, before sitting down for a lively screening.

"Troll 2" is about a family that goes to a small, isolated village for a break, only to find it populated by evil goblins. The goblins are vegetarian but still want to eat humans, which means they have to surreptitiously feed people a green goo that turns them into green, vegan goo too. The laughter gets so loud at times during the screening that it becomes hard to hear the film itself. During a scene depicting a candle-lit seance to communicate with a dead grandfather, the audience spontaneously erupts into a rendition of "Happy Birthday".

A 2009 documentary about the film's rise to cult status said one of the actors was a patient at a psychiatric hospital and auditioned while on leave. Though it initially went straight to video in 1990, the film's new-found popularity has meant that its Italian director Claudio Fragasso, who was present at the screening, will direct a sequel.

'Oddly brilliant'

Others have also found belated fame from their initial embarrassment. Matt Hannon, a US actor who starred in the direct-to-video film "Samurai Cop" in 1991, dropped his career straight after. So desperate was he to be forgotten that when people started saying he was dead, based on the obit of another Matt Hannon, he did nothing to dispel the rumors. But with the rising popularity of his film some two decades after it was made, he finally came back into the limelight... and starred in the sequel "Samurai Cop 2: Deadly Vengeance".

Another example is actor, director and screenwriter Tommy Wiseau, who's 2003 drama "The Room" bombed. "This film is like getting stabbed in the head," one user on movie site IMDb said.—AFP

Tax breaks bring boom in Hollywood films shot in France

New tax breaks have brought a rush of Hollywood productions to France in the last year, with the World War II epic "Dunkirk" among a slew of big-budget movies made there. Director Christopher Nolan's epic about the evacuation of British and Allied troops from northern France was shot this summer on some of the same beaches where the action took place in 1940.

The five-week shoot-which involved 1,500 extras-was one of 36 foreign productions drawn to France in 2016 after tax breaks jumped from 20 percent to 30 percent of the cost of the film. Parts of the Oscar-nominated "Jackie", starring Natalie Portman as the late US First Lady Jackie Kennedy, were made in Luc Besson's Cité du Cinema studios in Paris, and several scenes in "Fifty Shades Darker", the sequel to the erotic blockbuster "Fifty Shades of Grey" were also shot in the city. France also hosted the eight-week shoot of the Bollywood romance "Befikre", and industry insiders have high hopes that it will also capture "Mission Impossible 6", the next episode in the Tom Cruise vehicle. Valerie Lepine, of the French film commission, Film France, said spending by foreign film companies "almost tripled"

to 152 million euros (\$162 million) from 57 million in 2015. "We have made massive progress this year," she added.

Animation leads way

But some of the most spectacular coups have been in animation, a sector in which France is already a world leader. DreamWorks forthcoming feature version of the children's classic "Captain Underpants"-about two children who transform their nasty school principal into a Y-fronted superhero-was made by Mikros Animation in France. The same studio is making "Sherlock Gnomes" for Paramount, a London-based whodunnit about the mysterious disappearance of garden gnomes voiced by Johnny Depp.

The comedies "Sing" and "The Secret Life of Pets" were also made in Paris for Universal by Illumination Mac Guff, the studio behind the "Minions" and the "Despicable Me" series. "Up to now it was mostly Illumination Mac Guff (now owned by Universal) which took advantage of the tax breaks," Lepine added.

"But it's spreading and we've seen a massive



This file photo taken on June 20, 2012 in Saint-Denis, outside Paris shows the then new studios of "La Cité Européenne du Cinema" (European City of Cinema). — AFP

entry of Americans." And the signs for 2017 are even more promising, she insisted. This month the French government dropped the minimum film budget requirement to take advantage of the breaks from 1 million euros to 250,000 euros (\$267,000). The measure is also aimed at helping boost the country's special effect industry, which has seen a hemorrhage of talent in recent years, according to a report by the

French National Cinema Centre (CNC).

While the special effects budget alone on Besson's sci-fi mega-production "Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets"-which will be released in July is some 100 million euros, the CNC found most young French creators emigrate to find work. Almost all of the special effects for the film have been created abroad.

Special effect talent

French films do not tend to use special effects, the report added, spending only 15 million euros overall in 2015 -- and more than half of that work went to foreign studios. Many of such studios in Belgium and Canada were staffed by graduates of the same French schools which feed its thriving animations industry. "There is a lot of talent in France and the measure will make us more competitive," said David Daneis, who heads Digital District, which worked with director Pablo Larrain on "Jackie".

For its part, the CNC has launched a three-year plan to encourage the local industry-which tends towards traditional naturalistic stories-to use more special effects. Already the rise in tax breaks has helped create up to 15,000 mostly temporary jobs in France, CNC president Frederique Bredin said, "well above what we had hoped for". And domestic productions, which are now offered the same tax breaks as foreign films, have also been staying at home rather than going abroad to save money, the French Cinema Industries Federation (Ficam) confirmed.—AFP

FEATURES



Drone racing champion Luke Bannister poses for a photograph in his workshop in Wiltshire.



Drone racing champion Luke Bannister poses for a photograph as he flies his first-person view (FPV) drone in Wiltshire, western England following an interview with AFP. — AFP photos



Drone racing champion Luke Bannister poses for a photograph in Wiltshire.



Drone racing champion Luke Bannister poses for a photograph with the radio control of his first-person view (FPV) drone in Wiltshire, western England.



Drone racing champion Luke Bannister's workshop is pictured in Wiltshire.

Boy racer drone champion flying high

"It's like you're a bird," says 16-year-old drone-racing champion Luke Bannister as he whizzes his quadcopter through the air with astonishing precision. As drone use proliferates around the world, first-person view (FPV) racing is really taking off—rather than watching the craft from the ground, the pilot puts on a headset and navigates with a real-time view from the camera mounted on board.

Drones are playing a growing part in everyday life, from parcel deliveries to video shoots, farming and security, so perhaps it was only a matter of time before they made their debut in the world of sport. FPV competitions pit pilots against each other on race tracks, each competing as if they were physically sat in a cockpit. With his goggles in place, Bannister, a British schoolboy who goes by the pseudonym "BanniUK", is practicing his skills at a park in Ramsbury, a picturesque village in Wiltshire in rural southwest England.

'Like a fighter jet'

With a characteristic waspish buzz, the small polycarbonate drone whizzes around a series of gates and obstacles that Bannister has set up. Most racing models are quadcopters, which have four propellers and are capable of reaching speeds topping 100 kilometers (60 miles) per hour. Each drone typically costs between \$250-\$375 (230-350 euros) with the headset another \$320-£435 (300-400 euros).

"When you put the goggles on it's like you're in the drone," says the youngster, wearing a tracksuit and body-warmer. "It's an amazing experience," he told AFP. "It could be compared to flying super-low and super-fast in a fighter jet. It's really exciting, and sort of like an extension of your body." Bannister first got into aerial acrobatics at the age of 10, using a radio-controlled polystyrene biplane. Then, at 11, he became the darling of his local model aircraft club, where he built his own planes and became their youngest pilot.

A few years later, he discovered the joys of FPV racing. And

things really took off when he won the glitzy World Drone Prix in Dubai in March last year, the world's biggest drone race. Set against the Dubai skyline, the futuristic-looking racetrack is full of neon lights and has many features in common with motor racing: hairpin bends, pit stops-for changing batteries, live onboard footage and commentators. Wearing the colors of his XBlades Racing team, Bannister scooped the \$250,000 (235,000-euro) top prize.

To fly, for real

"He made his name in Dubai," Vincent Sergere, from the French specialist website Course-de-drone.fr, told AFP, describing Bannister's flying technique as minimalist. "He has a very direct style as a pilot. You get the impression that he doesn't ask himself many questions, that he really gets straight to the point. "The most difficult thing will be to keep his place" in a rapidly-growing sport, he said.

Still at school, Bannister lives an unusual daily life, dividing

his free time between practice, competitions and working on his drones. He is cultivating a presence on social media and maintains a YouTube channel where he shows off his aerobatic skills. "I want to... enjoy myself, have fun with my friends, mess around, have some good racing, and fly to the best of my ability," he says.

But there is also schoolwork to be done, something this lively, ambitious teenager is careful not to neglect. "I have to balance my schoolwork and my drone racing," he admits after a practice session while walking back to his workshop which is filled with rotors, batteries and wires. "I spend the majority of my time on schoolwork" to get the best possible marks. All with one goal in mind: to fly, one day, for real. "The sport is expanding at a rapid rate right now, but it's a bubble so it could burst or it could keep expanding," he says. "So we'll see where it goes, but I'd like to go to university and become a pilot after that." — AFP

Malabar Gold & Diamonds unveils 'Heart to Heart' jewelry collection to celebrate the season of love

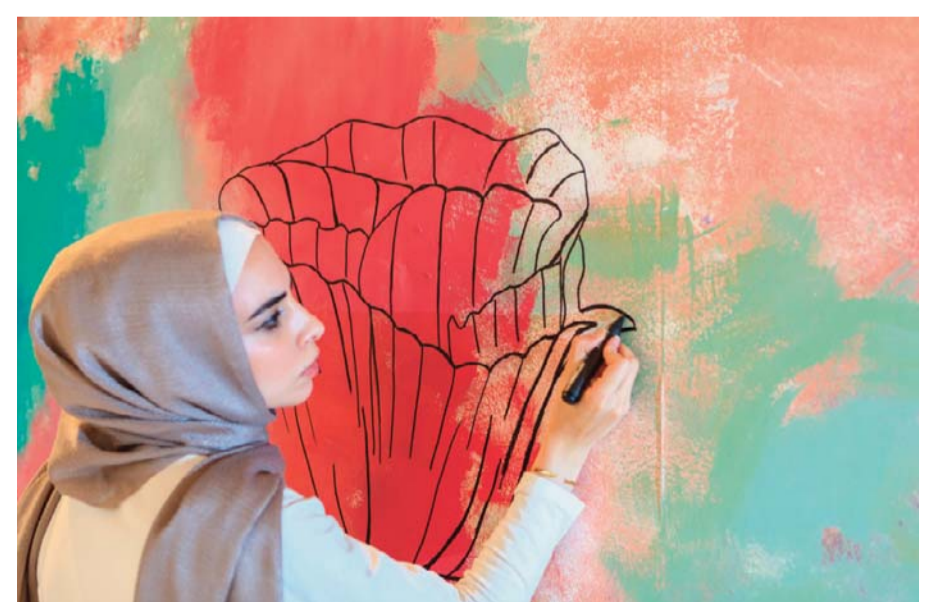
Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the BIG 5 jewelry retailers globally launched a special collection of diamond and 18K gold jewelry named 'Heart to Heart' to celebrate the season of love. 'Heart to Heart' jewelry collection showcases the exclusive heart shaped jewelry which symbolizes the best way to express your love. As the demand for heart shaped jewelry increases during this season of love, the jewelry retailer launched the exclusive collection to cater to the customer demand. This unique jewelry collection is a perfect gift to express true emotions to your loved ones. With prices starting

from KWD 55 to KWD 250, there is something to fit everyone's budget.

Customers can also choose from the diamond jewelry sets comprising of beautifully crafted pendant with chain, pair of earrings and finger ring, available from an affordable price of KWD 150 onwards. The company has also launched a special necklace in 18K gold jewelry which can be worn in 28 different ways. To add more delight to this occasion, the customers can also avail a branded Esprit or Westar watch absolutely free with this limited edition jewelry. These promotional sets will be available at their outlets in UAE, Qatar,

Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Singapore & Malaysia until 14th February 2017.

Apart from these, Malabar Gold & Diamonds also showcase an incredible collection of unique designs in gold and diamond jewelry from Italy, Singapore, Turkey, Bahrain, India, etc to suit the tastes and budget of its different customers. Customers can also choose gifts to their loved ones from their branded jewelry segment that includes Era - Uncut Diamond Jewelry, Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewelry, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Precia- Gem Jewelry and Divine - Indian Heritage Jewelry.



12 ARTISTS TAKE PART IN 'UNFRAMED' LIVE AT 360 MALL

Visitors of 360 MALL, Kuwait's iconic shopping center, were captivated by a unique artistic experiment that involved 12 artists transforming large internal store hoardings into public works of art.

The live art show 'Unframed', held in collaboration with Artspace, provided mall visitors with the opportunity to be part of this distinctive artistic experience. Five large hoardings located on the different levels of the mall were transformed by these artists who used their creativity and innovation to capture their understanding of the concept of

"growth and development".

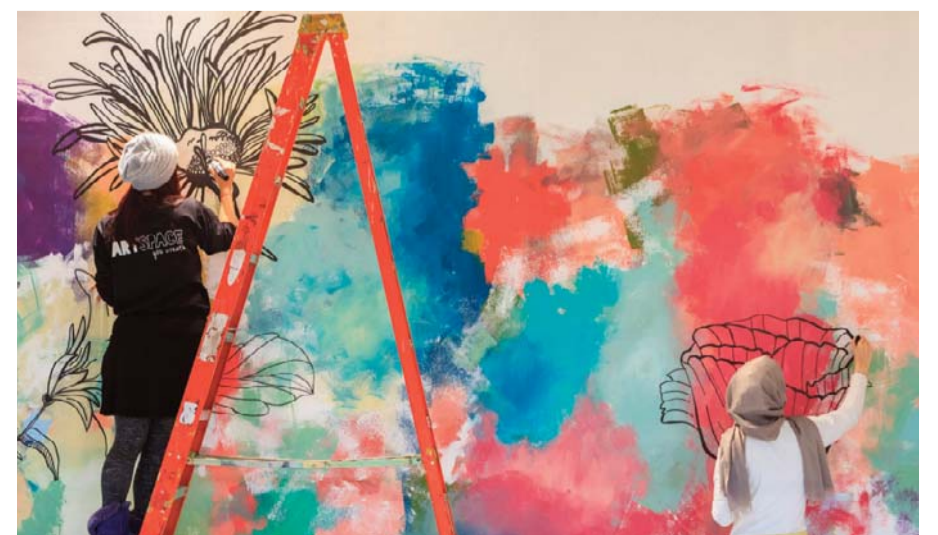
The initiative also reflected the mall's effort to attract artists in Kuwait and provide them with a platform and an opportunity to unleash their artistic brilliance.

Claudia Lopusinska, marketing manager, 360 MALL, explained: "360 MALL believes in the importance of endorsing art as a social and collective process within public spaces, thereby creating a culture of art appreciation in Kuwait."

She emphasized that 360 MALL will continue to encourage and contribute to the evolution of

young talent in the community and provide joint opportunities for creative collaborations in the future.

With guests appreciating these exclusive art pieces, one of the artists from Artspace commented: "The 'Unframed' live art show was truly every artist's dream. Working on conceptual murals with the ultimate freedom of expression is an unforgettable and inspiring experience for all of us. We at Artspace thank the 360 MALL management for supporting artists and for encouraging public audiences to appreciate the true value of art."





Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (left) watches Emiratis perform a traditional dance during the camel festival at the Sweihan racecourse, in Al-Ain on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi on January 30, 2017. The festival includes a camel beauty contest, a traditional souq, a camel auction and competitions for traditional handicrafts. — AFP photos



An Emirati woman performs a traditional dance during the camel festival.

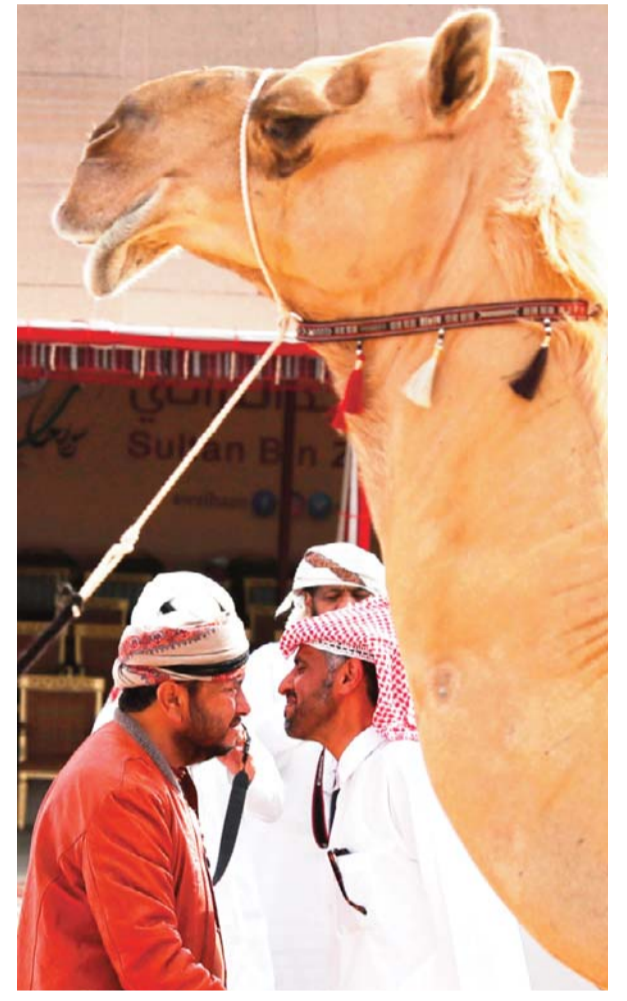
Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan camel festival



A camel that won a beauty contest is covered with saffron.



A camel that won a beauty contest is covered with saffron during the Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan camel festival.



Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan (left) is greeted during the camel festival.



Emiratis perform a traditional dance during the camel festival at the Sweihan racecourse, in Al-Ain on the outskirts of Abu Dhabi.



Asian workers gather camels at the Sweihan racecourse before a training race.



Asian workers gather camels at the Sweihan racecourse before a training race.



Emiratis perform a traditional dance during the camel festival.



An Asian worker gathers camels at the Sweihan racecourse before a training race.



Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan inspects a camel during the camel festival.

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2017

Israel's Arabs divided by film's portrayal of changing world

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In this file photo Afghan members of a Wushu martial arts group led by trainer Sima Azimi (center), 20, pose for a photograph at the Shahrak Haji Nabi hilltop overlooking Kabul. Afghanistan's first female Wushu trainer, Sima Azimi, 20, is training 20 Afghan girls aged between 14 - 20 at a Wushu club in Kabul, after learning the sport while living as a refugee in Iran. — AFP

Saudi 'Paul McCartney' in rare concert

Saudi Arabia's "Paul McCartney" took to the stage in Jeddah late Monday for a rare concert in a kingdom seeking to boost entertainment despite religious warnings of "depravity." The performance by Mohammed Abdu, a mustachioed singer popular throughout the Arab world, was the first major concert in seven years in Jeddah, the kingdom's second city, according to Arab News. About 8,000 enthusiastic and mostly young fans—all male-filled an indoor sports venue for Abdu's romantic and patriotic songs, an AFP photographer said.

He was backed by an Egyptian orchestra and performed alongside another Saudi artist, Rabeh Sager, and Iraqi-Saudi singer Majid Al-Muhandis. Abdu was to sing in Riyadh last September but the show was cancelled without explanation. It would have been the first live concert held in the capital in 24 years, local media said. The Islamic kingdom bans alcohol, public cinemas and theatres, and normally segregates men and women in public.

But as part of wide-ranging economic and social reform efforts started last year, a new entertainment authority has already brought in some foreign shows, seen by limited audiences. Those reforms are led by Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, 31, who faces resistance from religious conservatives. Saudi Arabia's highest-ranking cleric warned in early January of the "depravity" of cinemas and music concerts, saying they would corrupt morals. "We know that singing concerts and cinemas are a depravity," Grand Mufti Abdulaziz Al-Sheikh said, quoted by online newspaper Sabq which is close to the authorities. Eman Al-Nafjan, a veteran blogger on Saudi society, culture and women's issues, in 2008 compared Abdu to the legendary British musician and former Beatles member Paul McCartney. "What also made Abdu such a hit is his clean reputation for being a family man," Nafjan wrote. Jeddah, on the Red Sea, is widely considered somewhat more liberal than the capital in the kingdom's center. — AFP



Saudi singer Mohammed Abdu performs during a concert in Jeddah.



Saudi singer Majid Al-Muhandis performs during a concert in Jeddah.



Saudi singer Rabeh Sager, known as "Abu Sager" sings during a concert in Jeddah.



Saudis attend a concert in Jeddah on January 30, 2017. — AFP photos



Saudis attend a concert in Jeddah.