

Chinese naval fleet arrives in Kuwait



India boosts spending on rural poor as cash ban bites



Alghanim Industries opens flagship Wendy's store



Chahal sinks England as India clinch series 2-1



## EMIRATI FOREIGN MINISTER DEFENDS TRUMP VISA BAN

### RUSSIA CALLS FOR SYRIA'S RETURN TO ARAB LEAGUE



Min 06°  
Max 12°  
High Tide 02:83 & 14:40  
Low Tide 09:35 & 21:52

#### DELAYS IN HEALTH INSURANCE TO END AFTER KEY MEETING

KUWAIT: The health ministry finally responded to calls to act and end the crisis resulting from halting quick services at health insurance departments that had resulted in unbearable crowds and long queues outside these departments. The delay has affected transactions of thousands of companies, Al-Rai said in a report published yesterday. During a meeting held on the instructions of Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi, who is currently abroad, on Tuesday evening between the health ministry and the Public Services Company (PSC), both sides agreed to resume swift services for companies' transactions.

Health Ministry Undersecretary Dr Khaled Al-Sahlawi stressed that although the minister was abroad to attend WHO meetings and was checking on Kuwaiti patients receiving medical treatment in various countries, he was very keen on resolving the problem and contacted both the health ministry and the company's officials to reach a legal solution.

Sahlawi said he met PSC CEO Musaed Al-Saeedi and agreed on resuming the quick services from yesterday at the Jabriya health insurance center. Sahlawi strongly commended PSC, noting that, as a Kuwait Finance House subsidiary company, it has been providing the service for 14 years without costing the ministry or the state budget anything.

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#### AMIR ATTENDS JANADRIYAH FEST IN RIYADH



RIYADH: (From left) HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa attend the Janadriyah festival yesterday. — SPA (See Page 2)

ABU DHABI: US President Donald Trump's travel ban on citizens of seven Muslim-majority nations is not anti-Islam, the United Arab Emirates foreign minister said yesterday. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, whose country like neighboring Saudi Arabia is a close ally of Washington, said it was "wrong to say" that the decision by the new US administration was "directed against a particular religion."

"The United States has made... a sovereign decision," he said at a joint press conference with his Russian counterpart, Sergei Lavrov, pointing out that it was "provisional" and did not apply to "the large majority" of the world's Muslims. In his defense of the ban which has stirred widespread protests across the globe, Sheikh Abdullah also said that some of the countries on the blacklist had "structural challenges" on the security front that they still had to overcome. "This is a temporary ban and it will be revised in three months, so it is important that we put into consideration this point," he added.

Trump's controversial executive order on Friday singled out citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen to prevent "radical Islamic terrorists" from entering the United States. But the 90-day ban, which could still extend to other states, has exempted Muslim-majority nations associated with major attacks in the West.

Of the five major Gulf oil monarchies, the only one to express even mild disapproval in public was Qatar, whose foreign minister was quoted during a visit to Serbia as saying he hoped Washington would reassess it. Some Gulf officials even backed it openly. Dhahi Khalfan, a senior Dubai police official, tweeted on Monday "complete support" for Trump's ban. "Every country has the right to protect its security ... Trump, what you're doing is right."

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Israeli police clash with settlers in the West Bank outpost of Amona yesterday. Israeli forces began evacuating this controversial settlement, which is the largest of about 100 unauthorized outposts erected in the West Bank without permission but generally tolerated by the Israeli government. — AP (See Page 8)

#### FOR ISRAELI SETTLERS, KUSHNER'S THEIR MAN

BET EL, West Bank: For many in the Israeli settlement of Bet El, deep in the occupied West Bank, Donald Trump's choice of Jared Kushner as his senior adviser on the Middle East is a sign of politics shifting in their favor. They regard Kushner, whose family's charitable foundation has donated tens of thousands of dollars to their settlement, as part of a diplomatic rebalancing after what they view as eight years of anti-Israel bias under the US administration of Barack Obama.

"He will stand up for our interests. I suppose he will lean in our favor," said Avi Lavi, 46, who has lived in Bet El for more than 40 years. "He'll be fair, as opposed to Obama, whose policy leaned always towards the Arabs." New US President Trump says his son-in-law Kushner, 36, is capable of brokering the "ultimate deal" to deliver peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Roi Margalit, manager of the Bet El Yeshiva, a seminary complex with around 400 students, said Kushner, an Orthodox Jewish father of three, understood the position of Israeli settlers better than previous envoys. "At least now we have someone who knows us," the 43-year-old added. "He will now have to study the other side (the Palestinians) and see if there is any common ground."

Trump's pick for Israeli ambassador has

sparked particular enthusiasm in the community: David Friedman, who chairs the American Friends of Bet El Institutions fundraising group. The White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment from Kushner and Friedman. Kushner, a businessman who built his career on real estate and publishing, has said little about his views about one of the world's most intractable conflicts, either during the campaign or since Trump took office.

The big question for the Palestinians is whether he can be an impartial actor given his family foundation's past financial ties to Bet El. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has been careful to say he looks forward to working with the Trump administration, but others are less optimistic. Wasel Abu Youssef, a senior official at the Palestine Liberation Organization, the main Palestinian political umbrella body, said Kushner could not be a neutral envoy if he was supportive of Israeli settlements.

Hani Al-Masri, a political scientist and director of the Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies, said Kushner would be a representative of Israel rather than of the United States. "If he attempts to resume negotiations, he will seek to hold them at a lower level than previous negotiations."

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Jared Kushner

#### TRUMP NAMES PICK FOR TOP COURT GORSUCH TO SHIFT SUPREME COURT BALANCE

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump has nominated Judge Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court, seizing an unusual early opportunity to put conservatives back in the majority on America's top court. In a primetime address late Tuesday that was part jurisprudence, part reality show, Trump tapped the 49-year-old appeals court judge from Denver, Colorado. If confirmed by the Senate, he will fill the seat made vacant by the death of Antonin Scalia nearly a year ago and tilt the balance of the court five-to-four in conservatives' favor.

The elegant, silver-haired jurist with a flair for writing incisive rulings is the youngest nominee in a generation. His appointment could have a major impact on cases ranging from business regulation to gender rights to gun control. After unprecedented hyping of the announcement, Trump invited Gorsuch and his wife to emerge dramatically before an audience in the East Room of the White House. "Here they come. Here they come. So was that a surprise? Was it?" said Trump, ever the showman.

"He could have had any job at any law firm for any amount of money, but what he wanted to do with his career was to be a judge, to write decisions, and to make an impact by upholding our laws and our Constitution," Trump said. Despite the razzmatazz, Gorsuch was a remarkably orthodox pick for a president who has scythed through norms and precedent during his brief time in office. Like Scalia, Gorsuch is considered an "originalist" — guided in his legal thinking by the constitution's original intent and meaning.

Continued on Page 13



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump applauds as he stands with Judge Neil Gorsuch in East Room of the White House on Tuesday after announcing Gorsuch as his nominee for the Supreme Court. — AP

#### UN CHIEF CALLS FOR LIFTING US BAN

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday called for lifting a US ban on travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries, saying the measures would not prevent terrorists from entering the United States. "I think that these measures should be removed sooner rather than later," Guterres told reporters. "Those measures indeed violate our basic principles and I think that they are not effective if the objective is to, really, avoid terrorists to enter the United States," he said.

The appeal to end the travel ban came amid a mounting international outcry over the 90-day US entry restrictions on citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. US President Donald Trump signed an executive order on Friday enacting the immediate ban and also suspending the arrival of all refugees for a minimum of 120 days while Syrian refugees were barred indefinitely.

Addressing the US suspension of refugee resettlement and the ban on Syrians, Guterres again appealed to the US administration to reverse course. "Resettlement is the must from the point of view of refugee protection," said

Guterres, who served as UN refugee chief for 10 years before his election as secretary-general. "I strongly hope that the US will be able to re-establish its very solid refugee protection in resettlement and I hope that the Syrians will not be excluded in that process."

Trump's decision triggered protests and chaos at airports while UN human rights chief Zeid bin Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husseini declared it illegal and "mean-spirited". Guterres, who took over from South Korea's Ban Ki-moon on Jan 1, argued that banning citizens from Muslim countries would not prevent terrorist organizations from mounting an attack on the United States.

"We are dealing with very sophisticated terrorist organizations," he said. "If a global terrorist organization will try to attack any country like the United States, they will probably not come with people with passports from those countries that are hotspots of conflicts today. They might come with the passports from the most - I would say - developed and credible countries in the world or they might use people who are already in the country."

Guterres had been criticized by human rights

groups for failing to quickly condemn the travel ban and make a pressing appeal to Trump to scrap it. His first formal statement on the issue came on Tuesday, four days after the ban was enacted. The UN chief met with new US ambassador Nikki Haley on Friday for what he described as a "very constructive" conversation about the relationship between the new administration and the United Nations.

Asked about the US threat of a major funding cut, Guterres declined to comment, saying he did not want to speculate on what possible decision lay in store. The United States is by far the UN's biggest financial contributor, providing 22 percent of its operating budget and funding 28 percent of peacekeeping missions, which currently cost \$7.8 billion annually. "It's no surprise that the UN has to treat the refugee ban very delicately," said Martin Edwards, director of Seton Hall University's Center for United Nations and Global Governance Studies. "The UN faces hostility from both the legislature as well as the White House," he said. Guterres said he was hoping to visit Washington to meet with Trump, but that no date had been set for the talks. — AFP



RIYADH: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is pictured with Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah waves as he prepares to leave back to Kuwait.

## AMIR ATTENDS 'JANADRIYAH 31' FESTIVAL IN RIYADH

RIYADH: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah attended yesterday the opening ceremony of the National Festival for Heritage and Culture 'Janadriyah 31', which was patronized by King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud of Saudi Arabia.

The event is to see participations by Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar and Oman, in addition to

Egypt as this year's guest of honor. The festival, organized by the National Guard, includes races and local music performances, is expected to draw over one million visitors.

The event highlights heritage and modernity of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The opening ceremony kicked off with camel racing, which is one of the most promi-

nent sport competitions at the event. The festival also includes cultural activities, symposiums, lectures, seminars, and dancing of Ardha (folk dance), in addition to an honoring of three Saudi distinguished personalities; Ahmad Mohammad Ali, a banker, Abdulrahman Al-Shebaili, media figure, and Sofia bint Said bin Zegar, a formative artist. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud attend a camel race held as part of the 'Janadriyah 31' festival.



Members of the accompanying delegation of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.



A scene from a camel race held as part of the 'Janadriyah 31' festival.

## AUTHOR CELEBRATES AMIR'S ANNIVERSARY



KUWAIT: (From left) Dr Mustafa Behbehani, Salah Al-Oufan, Author Dr Abdullah Bowair, and veteran meteorologist Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi attend the ceremony. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Dr Abdullah Bowair honors Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi.

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the 11th anniversary of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's assumption to power, author Abdullah Bowair released his latest book 'The

Speeches of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah' during a ceremony on Tuesday at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Bowair spoke about the various posts His Highness the Amir has held. "His Highness the Amir has occupied many important positions including the Minister

of Finance, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister, Prime Minister and finally assumed power on January 29, 2006," he said during the ceremony.

Dr Saleh Al-Ojairi, the oldest and most famous Kuwaiti astronomer, also attended the ceremony. Aged 97, he can still recall

some memories with His Highness the Amir. "Now I only see with one eye, hear with one ear, and walk with one foot, but I remember many funny incidents. When I was a teacher at the Sharqiya School, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad was a young boy, and when the boys were naughty, I punished them, and

he was one of them," he quipped.

The attendees congratulated the author for publishing the book. This was followed by a documentary about His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah, his life and his speeches. Then the author also signed copies of his book.



Dr Abdullah Bowair honors guests at the event.





Chinese officers from the 24th Chinese navy pose for a picture with Kuwaiti officials next to a Harbin destroyer. —KUNA



Chinese officers from the 24th Chinese navy are welcomed upon their arrival.

# CHINESE NAVY FLEET ARRIVES AT SHUWAIKH PORT

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** A reception ceremony was held yesterday at Shuwaikh Port in the presence of the Chinese ambassador, fleet commander and a representative of the Kuwaiti armed forces for a Chinese naval fleet that arrived on a five-day friendly visit to Kuwait. The three Chinese navy vessels, which include a helicopter carrier, docked at Shuwaikh Port with 700 servicemen aboard. "The visit is part of a program to exchange military expertise between the two countries," said Navy Squadron Commander Hazza Mutlaq Al-Alati.

He said Kuwait and China have a long history in various fields like politics, economy, culture and military, and Kuwait is proud it was the first country in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that established diplomatic relations with China back in 1971. "Kuwait will have the chance to exchange experiences

between the two navies through identifying maritime capabilities and modern technology used in our units. We also have an opportunity to conduct moves in Kuwait's territorial waters and economic zone during the visit," Alati said. He stressed that Kuwait's navy is looking to strengthen and increase cooperation between the two navies at the operation and strategic level.

### Second time

Chinese Ambassador Wang Di said that this is the second time for Chinese naval ships to pay an official visit to Kuwait, after an earlier visit five years ago. "We wish to improve relations between the two countries. During the visit, naval officers from the two countries will exchange views to enhance friendship and further learn from each other," he said. "Chinese vessels have played an important role in keeping pirates at bay in the Gulf of

Aden, which is where the three ships operated immediately prior to the tour. China's growing military export business is seeking to establish a foothold in the Gulf states, which have some of the highest defense budgets in the world," Wang added.

The guided-missile destroyer Harbin, the guided-missile frigate Handan and the comprehensive supply ship Dongpinghu, forming the 24th escort taskforce of the Chinese PLA Navy, embarked on their foreign port-call voyage after completing the mission of providing escort for merchant ships in the Gulf of Aden and the waters off the Somali coast. While China's navy regularly tours the world and its ships patrol off the coasts of Yemen and Somalia as part of international anti-piracy operations, such visits to Gulf Arab states are rare. Kuwait is the last leg of the Chinese naval fleet's visit to Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.



**KUWAIT:** Chinese officers from the 24th Chinese navy are seen onboard a Harbin destroyer, which arrived as part of the Chinese fleet at Shuwaikh Port yesterday. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Chinese Ambassador Wang Di poses with Chinese Naval Task Group Commander Rear Admiral Bai Yaoping.



Chinese Ambassador Wang Di delivers his speech.



Navy Squadron Commander Hazza Mutlaq Al-Alati delivers his speech.

## COURT ORDERS ALTERNATIVE HOUSE FOR POLLUTED AREA RESIDENT

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) contacted the Fatwa and Legislation Department demanding follow up of a court order mandating it to allocate an alternative house to a citizen who sued it on grounds that Um Al-Haiman, where the original house is, is too polluted. The authority sources said the environmental expert commissioned to assess pollution levels in the area made a mistake, and if all judiciary procedures are completed and the verdict remains the same, the authority will only compensate this particular citizen. Notably, Director of Industrial

Environment at the Environment Public Authority (EPA) Mohammed Al-Enezi had previously announced that the area had never been polluted according to studies conducted by EPA, the Ministry of Health, Kuwait Institution for Scientific Research and Kuwait University.

### Certificates

Kuwait University announced providing graduates certificates quickly so that they could join the local labor market and find suitable jobs. KU's graduates department and the records department exerted considerable efforts to issue the certificates before the set date on Feb 5 on hearing that the

oil sector had started recruiting.

### Licenses

The companies sector at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry stressed that co-ops could have independent commercial licenses issued to practice any commercial activity with the condition that a separate license is issued per activity. This came in response to an inquiry made by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor about the legality of such activities at various co-ops, said informed sources, noting that this would help improve co-ops' revenues, but at the same time might create competition between co-ops and small entrepreneurs.

## 32,237 TRAFFIC TICKETS ISSUED IN ONE WEEK

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Traffic police launched several inspection campaigns in various areas from Jan 22 to 28, said security sources noting that the campaigns resulted in filing 32,237 tickets, impounding 147 vehicles, arresting 51 drivers for committing serious traffic violations, and referring two expats to deportation for driving without driver's licenses.

### Worker injured

A construction worker was injured when he lost control and fell near a building under construction that he worked at in Jaber Al-Ali area, said sources at the Kuwait Fire Services Directorate, noting that the man who was unable to move was rushed to Adan hospital for treatment.

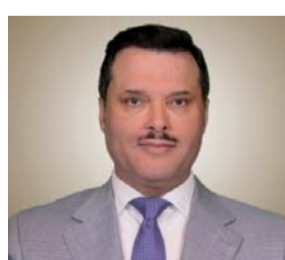
### Cleaning operation

Kuwait Municipality announced launching a cleaning operation at Kubbar Island, during which they removed 40 bags of garbage and leftover wastes. Commenting on the operation, the cleaning manager, Meshaal Al-Azmi said that the campaign led by him, included three other municipality officials and 10 cleaning workers.

## HEALTH MINISTER VALUES LONDON'S OFFICE EFFORTS

**LONDON:** Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi valued yesterday the financial and security responsibility efforts exerted by the director of the Kuwait Health Office in London recently to protect public funds. Dr Faisal Al-Shahab, the Office's director, in cooperation with the British police, was able to bust the foreign employees involved in embezzlement acts in the office, Harbi said, adding that legal charges have been filed against these workers by the British authorities.

As a result of that incident, the health ministry is going to adopt strict measures, including strict auditing and revision on the financial statements of cases of medical treatment abroad at all Kuwaiti health offices, he affirmed, noting that the ministry is to contract international audit institutions in that regard. The ministry will also implement the e-linking application between its health offices and departments of medical treatment abroad and financial affairs departments in order to prevent reoccurrence of such incidents involving financial frauds on public funds, said the Kuwaiti minister. — KUNA



Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi

## SMOKING KILLS SIX MILLION EVERY YEAR: DR AWADHI

GLOBAL ANTI-SMOKING CONFERENCE OPENS IN KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** The Global Anti-Smoking International Alliance Conference kicked off yesterday, under the auspices of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In a speech to open the conference, Chairman of Kuwait Society for Smoking and Cancer Prevention Dr Abdulrahman Al-Awadhi said that smoking is one of the leading causes of death around the world.

Moreover, he cited a report by the World Health Organization (WHO) as showing that the epidemic claims the lives of six million people every year. On global efforts to stifle growing nicotine addiction, Al-Awadhi revealed that most nations have now spiked prices for cigarettes and tobacco products, a measure he described as an effort to kick the habit for good.

Meanwhile, regional advisor for WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative (TFI) in the Middle East Dr Fatima Al-Awa noted a global commitment to stave off diseases causing premature death.



**KUWAIT:** Chairman of Kuwait Society for Smoking and Cancer Prevention Dr Abdulrahman Al-Awadhi speaks during the conference. —KUNA

She also pointed out that 40 percent of men in the Middle East are smokers, foreboding that the figure is expected to quadruple by the year 2025. The WHO official explained that the tobacco industry is a "cutthroat business with a tremendous following."

Similarly, Secretary General of the Gulf Anti-Smoking Committee Anwar Burahma said that people of all age groups are susceptible to smoking, noting that the number of deaths caused by smoking could skyrocket to 10 million people by the year 2025. — KUNA

## NEW CANCER CONTROL CENTER TO BE COMPLETED BY 2019

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Al-Sabah Medical Zone Director Dr Afrah Al-Sarraf announced the completion of 15.12 percent of the new Cancer Control Center that is expected to be finished by 2019. Speaking on the sidelines of marking GCC Cancer Awareness Week at Faisal Sultan bin Essa Center for Radio Diagnosis and Radiotherapy under the auspices of Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi, Sarraf said the new center would include 618 beds including 90 in ICU,

multi-floor parking for 2,000 vehicles, 23 wards and 11 surgery rooms built over a total area of 293,000 sq m.

Sarraf stressed that the GCC Cancer Awareness Week reflects Kuwait's and GCC states' keenness on boosting awareness on cancer. KCCC director and the head of the GCC Cancer Awareness Week's joint committee Dr Ahmed Al-Awadhi said MoH has been annually marking this week in February. He also pointed out that rates of healing from cancer have reached 80 percent in Kuwait and that it was a wrong concept to

associate cancer with death.

Also speaking on the occasion, the head of GCC Cancer Awareness Week's executive supreme committee Dr Khaled Al-Saleh said this week's slogan is '40-40', which means that reducing and avoiding carcinogenic elements would reduce the incidence of cancer by 40 percent, while early detection will reduce another 40 percent, especially since 102 out of every 100,000 annually develop cancer-related diseases in Kuwait, with breast cancer the most common.

In Brief

AMIR CONGRATULATES NEW AU CHIEF, DEPUTY

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable to Guinean President Alpha Conde, congratulating him on being elected as a new chairman of the African Union (AU) during its recent 28th session in Addis Ababa. He also sent a cable to Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, congratulating him on being elected as a new deputy chairman of the AU. — KUNA



AMIR CONGRATULATES NEW AUC CHIEF

**KUWAIT:** His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a cable to newly elected chairman of the African Union Commission (AUC) Moussa Faki Mahamat. Similar cables were also sent to him by His Highness the Deputy Amir and Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



WARD OPENED AT IRBIL HOSPITAL

**IRBIL:** Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity society announced yesterday that it had sponsored the opening of a ward at a private hospital in Irbil which receives people injured in the military operations in the city of Mosul. The society is set to open several other humanitarian projects in the city in the coming months, head of the health committee at Al-Najat said yesterday. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A multicolored butterfly captured in a photo. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Helal Al-Sayer meets with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman. — KUNA



Dr Sayer and Ambassador Silverman discuss issues during their meeting.

# US ENVOY APPLAUDS KUWAIT'S HUMANITARIAN INITIATIVES

**KUWAIT:** US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence R Silverman has lauded the positive effects of Kuwait's humanitarian initiatives on regional and international humanitarian action. Kuwait has been a backer of global humanitarian

action and an outstanding and pioneering player in this domain, Silverman told reporters following his meeting with Chairman of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Helal Al-Sayer on Tuesday. He

expressed admiration of the KRCS's efforts to aid refugees in Iraq, Yemen, Syria and neighboring Syrian countries.

Silverman noted that he follows up the role played by the KRCS in Iraq, Yemen, Syria to effectively and responsibly respond to the deteriorating humanitarian situation there. He added that he got acquainted with the KRCS's contributions to the international efforts to deal with natural and man-made disasters. The KRCS's humanitarian and relief efforts are distinguished and crucial for countering international humanitarian challenges, he said.

The US envoy stated that he, and his accompanying delegation, have discussed with the KRCS chief means for boosting cooperation and coordination for the betterment of international humanitarian action.

Meanwhile, Sayer stated that the US delegation was briefed about the KRCS efforts in the region and worldwide. The delegation was thoroughly informed about the KRCS relief programs for Yemen, Iraq, Syria, and Somalia, he told reporters adding that the KRCS would expand its regional and international efforts in the coming stage.

He stressed that the KRCS is doing an impressive job in many disasters-hit countries around the world. He reiterated the KRCS's commitments towards helping people in distress and cooperating with the relevant regional and international agencies to deliver aid to them in the right time. — KUNA



Dr Sayer and Ambassador Silverman discuss issues during their meeting.

## KUWAITI ACADEMICS LAUD ORGANIZATION OF ABU DHABI'S GLOBAL SPACE CONGRESS

**ABU DHABI:** Kuwaiti academics partaking in the Abu Dhabi's Global Space Congress lauded yesterday the organization of the event which will hopefully lead to the launch of several space programs in the region.

Speaking on the sideline of the event, which began yesterday, the Kuwaiti academics said that they had participated in several workshops held on the sideline of the congress, stressing that such participation was crucial for the development of more scientific and space programs within the GCC.

Dr Halah Al-Jasser, from the Physics Department of Kuwait University (KU), said that Kuwait was keen on partaking in events promoting space programs in the region, adding that recently a Kuwaiti delegation

took part in the celebrations to launch an Arab-funded satellite at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) and KU were part of the team that funded the satellite project, said Jasser.

Meanwhile, KFAS official Dr Bassem Al-Faili said that he was impressed by the congress and the UAE's ability to host such grand events. The fellow GCC and Arab country is taking the right steps towards partaking in the world's space ambition especially after it launched its own Space Agency in 2014, he said. The Global Space Congress began Tuesday with the participation of 600 scientists, experts, and academics. — KUNA



Dr Halah Al-Jasser



Dr Bassem Al-Faili

## MUNICIPALITY TO DEVELOP VITAL PROJECTS IN KUWAIT CITY

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Municipality is set to execute several projects to boost economy and commerce as well as attract tourists to the capital, Kuwait City. The projects' plan includes establishing a center for entertainment, culture and education in Abdullah Al-Ahmad Street, the municipality's Director-General Ahmad Al-Manfouhi said yesterday. Another vital project is the first business zone in Mirqab residential area, where foreigners could have full ownership of tax-free residences, he added.

Meanwhile, the municipality's deputy director-general for projects Engineer Nadia Al-Shereeda said the Abdullah Al-Ahmad street projects will involve a residential area and a heritage village to showcase Kuwait's history. She added that it will also include a center with cinemas, a conference area, an ice-skating rink, restaurants, coffee shops and other means of entertainment. Shereeda also noted that the municipality will develop Souk Al-Mubarakiya traditional market and its surrounding areas. — KUNA



The project's location on Kuwait City's map.

## KUWAIT ACKNOWLEDGES YOUTH EFFORTS IN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS: AMBASSADOR

**NEW YORK:** By engaging the youth in many international and local events, Kuwait acknowledges the efforts by this sector of society, and calls for gearing their energy towards achieving the country's sustainable development goals for 2030, in addition to realizing the United Nations' conventions and laws, said a Kuwaiti diplomat.

Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the UN Ambassador Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi made this remark in his speech at the 6th UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum, which kicked off January 30. Otaibi lauded the UN for taking the youth under its wings and encouraging them to promote the organization's and its subsidiary bodies' goals towards sustainable development. Following the steps of the UN, Kuwait has strived to promote the role of its youth in all domains. It established the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in 2013 to collaborate efforts and to encourage initiatives that guarantee young adults' participation in mapping their coun-

try's future policies. Some of these initiatives are the launch of two e-portals: one for encouraging volunteerism and the other for youth training. The goal behind creating these e-portals is to invest in their time and to raise the level of their competence, the Kuwaiti diplomat said.

The country has other strategic plans geared toward revising international laws, legislations and agreement related to youth in order to create a supportive environment for this segment of the society, he added.

Otaibi also said that the Youth Ministry has been active in many international youth forums and events and has signed many local, regional and international agreements related to youth. The Youth Forum is held annually by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2012. It offers young people an opportunity to voice their opinions, share ideas, and think together about what they can do to achieve sustainable development. — KUNA



Rasha Al-Roumi, Chairperson and CEO of Kuwait Airways (center) poses with flight and cabin crew.

# KUWAIT AIRWAYS' THIRD BOEING 777-300ER ARRIVES

OFFICIAL NATIONAL CARRIER MAINTAINS DELIVERY SCHEDULE; TO BE IN SERVICE Q3 2017

**KUWAIT:** Following the arrival of its first two Boeing 777-300ER aircraft, in December 2016 and January 2017, Kuwait Airways, the official national carrier of the State of Kuwait, has welcomed the arrival of the third of 10 aircraft on order, landing at Kuwait International Airport (KWI) at 16:30 hours local time, on Tuesday.

Sporting Kuwait Airways' new livery and branding, the third wide-bodied, "Extended Range" aircraft has been named "Kathma" - following the theme of naming the new aircraft after place names in the country. Kathma is a town situated just North West of the capital, Kuwait City.

The new Boeing 777-300ER will enter service within the week and will be immediately deployed on some of Kuwait Airways' most popular, long-haul routes, including: New York, London, Paris and Rome; with other routes - namely to the airline's Far East destinations - to have use of the new aircraft sometime during the upcoming Summer Schedule. The arrival of the third aircraft matches the schedule outlined between Kuwait Airways and Boeing to have all 10 aircraft delivered and in commercial service before the end of Q3 2017.

Kuwait Airways' "Transformation Strategy", as revealed in September of last year, is the driving force behind the many changes and fleet additions being seen at the airline, over the last few months; additional fleet acquisitions with Airbus - 10 A350 and 15 A320neo aircraft - will also be part of a 35-strong fleet of brand new aircraft.



The new 'Kathma' - B777-300ER.

The Airbus aircraft are set to start delivery in 2019. With these new additions, Kuwait Airways' claim is that it will have the youngest commercial airline fleet, in the world, by 2021.

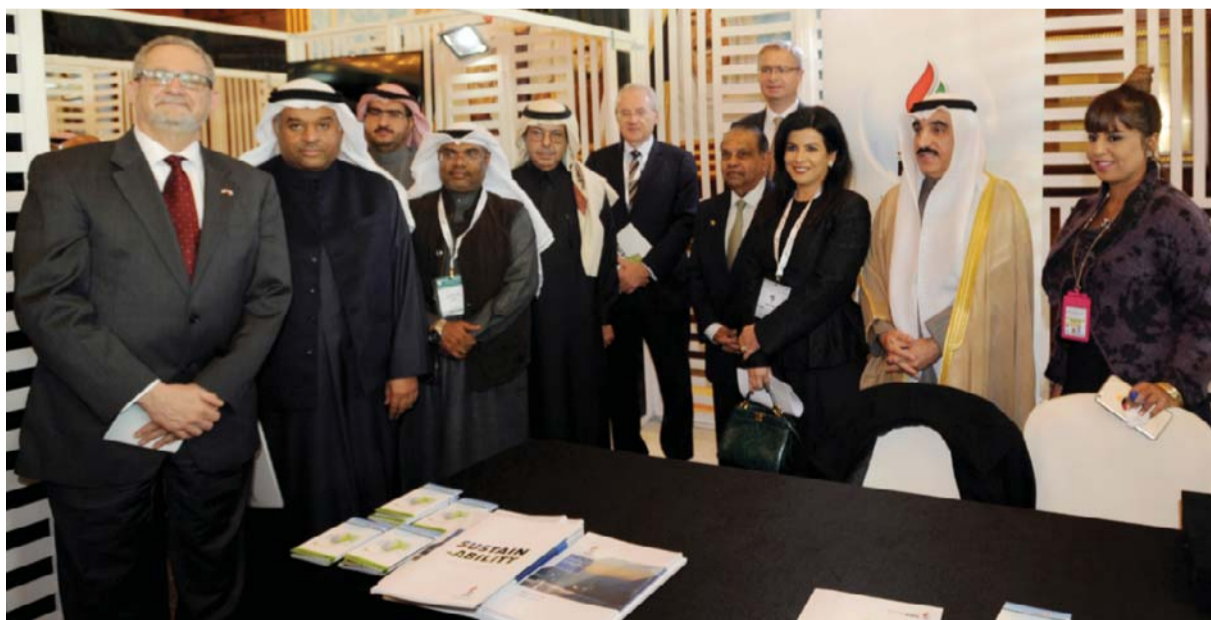
"The ongoing progress we have been witnessing at Kuwait Airways, in recent months, is something of great pride that we want to share with the Kuwaiti people and the nation as a whole. These new fleet acquisitions are part of the bedrock of our new philosophy and commitment to see the official national carrier of Kuwait continue to grow market share, passenger num-

bers and regain its place as a competitive regional player in the aviation sector," said Rasha Al-Roumi, Chairperson and CEO of Kuwait Airways.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the stakeholders - and true patriots of Kuwait - who continue to offer their unwavering support for Kuwait Airways' ambitions; a mission that will reassert a sense of pride in the official national carrier, as well as the country's international standing in both the aviation and travel communities," Roumi added.



**KUWAIT:** Information Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary for the Department of Media Services Yousef Mustafa inaugurates Kuwait's second conference and exhibition on social responsibility. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



Assistant Undersecretary Yousef Mustafa and other officials pose for a photo at Kuwait National Petroleum Company's booth at the exhibition.

## SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY LINCHPIN OF DEVELOPMENT: OFFICIAL

**KUWAIT:** Social responsibility is a virtue that is incumbent upon the nation's public and private sectors to attain development, an official in the Ministry of Information (MoI) said yesterday. In a speech to open Kuwait's second conference and exhibition on social responsibility, Assistant Undersecretary for the Department of Media Services Yousef Mustafa said that this notion is embedded in

Kuwait's national strategy for sustained development.

Moreover, he noted that the two-day conference, which is sponsored by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, will delve into this virtue given how crucial it is for overall growth and development. On social responsibility, Mustafa said that it is not limited to

philanthropy and volunteerism, rather, it encompasses abidance by laws and respect of human rights. Meanwhile, Chairman of the Arab Society for Social Responsibility Sultan Al-Bazghi applauded Kuwait for hosting such events that center around admirable qualities. He also described social responsibility as a form of conduct that is obligatory on all segments of society. — KUNA



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Crime

Report

Man deported for 'peeping'

**KUWAIT:** An Egyptian man was arrested for peeping into a ladies' fitting room while a female diplomat was trying some garments, said security sources. Although the diplomat dropped charges to avoid repeated visits to the police and court for legal procedures, the expat was referred to deportation. Meanwhile, further investigations revealed that the man is also wanted for a KD 700 financial claim.

Search for thief

A Bangladeshi man reported that an unidentified person stopped him in Zahra area showing a police ID and searched him. The man added that the suspect, who turned out to be a thief, assaulted him and stole KD 1,720 in cash that were in his possession. A case was filed and a search is on for the suspect.

Teenagers arrested for theft

The criminal court sent two teenage girls to a juvenile care house after they were arrested while breaking to open some vehicles and stealing their contents.

Fight

A Syrian man and a Lebanese salesman were arrested for fighting in Nugra, said security sources. The Syrian customer engaged in an argument with the salesman after noticing that a pair of trousers he bought from his shop was damaged. The salesman refused to exchange it, which caused the fight, the sources added.

Singer hurt

A young Kuwaiti singer is currently hospitalized at Al-Razi hospital pending a surgery after he sustained pelvic and nose fractures when his vehicle collided into a truck while he was driving on the way back from Julaia. The singer said that he was checking WhatsApp messages on his phone while driving at 120 kilometers per hour when he drove into the back of a truck.

Family feud

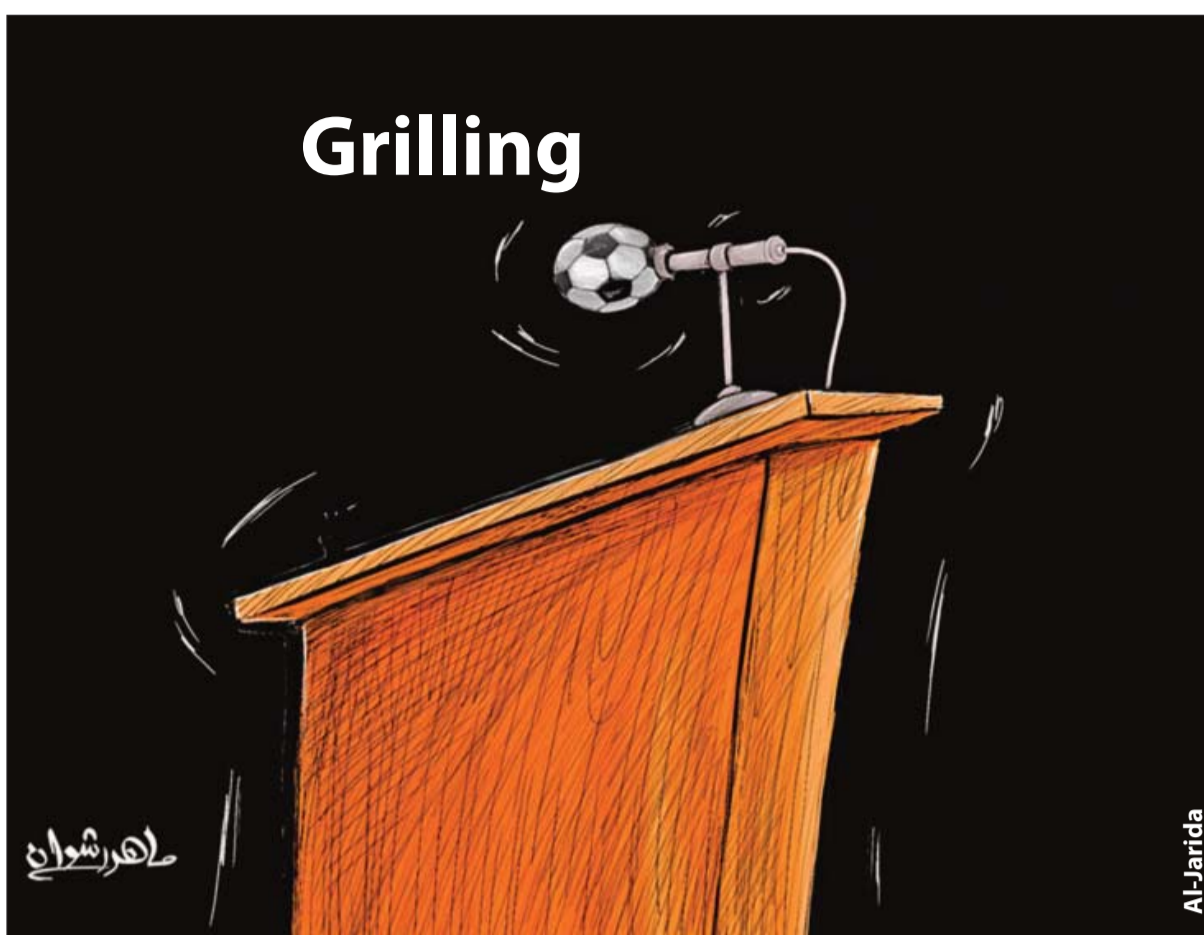
A fierce fight took place amongst cousins attending a wedding ceremony in Farwaniya, said security sources, noting that none of them pressed charges despite the fact that some of them sustained injuries during the melee.

Expired residencies

Farwaniya detectives arrested three expats whose residencies were expired a year ago, said security sources.

Employee insulted

A female employee at the Ministry of Interior filed a complaint against a citizen accusing him of insulting her while on duty. A case was filed. —Translated from the Arabic press



Grilling

النباة

Al-Anbaa

SHOCKING ANSWERS

By Saleh Al-Sayaji

Of the seven countries subjected to the 90-day ban on entry to the United States, only Iran made threats against the US. And in an expected action, the parliament in Iraq - that is heavily influenced by Iran - called for discussion on President Donald Trump's executive order.

In fact, taking into account how shocking its followers' reactions usually are, perhaps Iran's threats are not all that strange. For instance, Hamas threatened Israel with a 'shocking' reaction to the killing of Ahmed Yaseen 13 years ago. That was followed by another threat for the killing of Abdul Aziz Al-Rantisi. Israel is still waiting for both!

The Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon is also addicted to 'shocking' responses, threatening Israel after the assassination of Emad Mughniyya and issuing a series of threats whenever a party leader is assassinated. Those threats have accu-

mulated, piling up while Israel is still waiting. I believe Israel is about to file a complaint at the UN, urging Hamas and Hezbollah to carry out their 'shocking threats'!

Back to the US. What steps can Iran take in response to President Trump's ban? What does it have as leverage, or is it merely the same old fuss from Tehran and its followers that the world has grown accustomed to? Why doesn't Iran focus on the interests of its people, instead of making idle threats it is incapable of carrying out?

For over 40 years now, Iran has been carrying out all forms of evil. All it has got in return is the misery of its people, poverty and the world's hatred. How long will its leaders maintain this disgraceful situation? The great nation of Persia, which greatly contributed to building civilization, deserves more!

—Translated by Kuwait Times

النباة

Al-Anbaa

RAPID-FIRING TRUMP

By Salah Al-Sayer

A few days ago, I mentioned that the threats made against 'Radical Islam' by US President Donald Trump during his inauguration are directed at us Arabs more than at anybody else. But Arab countries do not represent all Muslims, who mainly live in countries like Indonesia, India, the central Asian republics, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey and China.

Whenever news breaks about a terrorist act associated with Islam, all eyes turn to the Middle East because of the amount of extremism in our societies, which have turned into venues for violence and reservoirs of radicalism.

President Trump's inaugural speech, which also mocked US elite politicians, confirmed that Arabs were the ones targeted by his threats, rather than all Muslims. He banned entry visas for

*This does not mean that countries not listed on this ban list have been given international approval*

Iranian passport-holders, along with those of several other Arab countries: Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia and Libya. This American decision might soon turn into an international one, especially given that Trump intends on forming an anti-radical Islam alliance from 'civilized' nations!

The purpose of the ban is to spread chaos in the targeted countries because of the dominance of radical Islam, which provides safe-havens for extremism and eventually begets terrorism. However, the world realizes that political Islam does exist in other Arab countries. So, this does not mean that countries not listed on this ban list have been given international approval. If some political analysts' predictions prove true, the war against anti-radical Islam is progressing, will take many forms and will run on many fronts at a rapidly accelerating pace. This is made clear by Trump turning his electoral promises into action! —Translated by Kuwait Times from Al-Anbaa



KIB PROVIDES WHEELCHAIRS TO AL-AMIRI HOSPITAL

**KUWAIT:** On a recent visit by the bank's Corporate Communications Unit team to the Hospital, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) donated wheelchairs to Al-Amiri Hospital, as part of an ongoing initiative aimed at providing moral and financial support to the local healthcare sector.

During the visit, a team from KIB's Corporate Communications Unit met with Hospital Director Dr. Fatima Al-Asoumi, who expressed her gratitude for the Bank's ongoing efforts to support the healthcare sector, praising KIB's various social responsibility initiatives dedicated to promoting health awareness and healthcare development.

Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: "KIB is constantly working to enhance the lives of different segments in the community through ongoing pro-

grams and initiatives; a concept embedded in the very essence of our social responsibility philosophy. Healthcare continues to be one of our biggest platforms, as we are keen on promoting a greater sense of health consciousness across the community in Kuwait."

KIB believes that its role goes beyond the provision of banking services, as it adopts an array of social initiatives that serve to better the community and cater to the needs of people across all segments. The Bank has devoted a major part of its leading social responsibility program to the area of health. Throughout the year KIB offers its strategic sponsorship to leading healthcare organizations and initiatives, and focuses on promoting awareness regarding key health issues affecting Kuwait's society, such as cancer and diabetes.

NBK LAUNCHES NATIONAL SONG ON NATIONAL DAY OCCASION

A COMMEMORATIVE GIFT TO THE PEOPLE OF KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** On the occasion of Kuwait's anniversary of independence and the anniversary of liberation, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), in another first-of-its-kind initiative, launched a special musical production presented as a commemorative gift to Kuwait.

Titled 'Baqoon', the national production, consists of a series of tableaux that depict the social responsibility carried by Kuwait. The song is revealed on Al-Rai and Kuwait TV stations as well as in cinemas. Social media

followers can watch the song through NBK social media channels on YouTube NBKGroup and Facebook NBKGroup or Instagram @NBKGroup and Twitter @NBKpage. Special competitions are held with valuable prizes for NBK social media followers.

It is worth mentioning the participation of Kuwaiti swimming champion Fai Al Sultan and world champion in free skydiving Osama Najaf in this national production. Both heroes reflected the cultural progressive side of the country. Also, to be noted the efforts of the Ministries of Interior, Defense, the Red Crescent Society and many other partners who also had a remarkable contribution in this initiative.

Manal Al-Mattar, NBK Public Relations Assistant General Manager said: "This unprecedented musical work featuring

numerous cultural, community and social activities and charities carried by Kuwait is performed by the famous Kuwaiti singer Abdullah Al-Rewaished as a commemorative gift for Kuwait and to raise awareness towards social responsibility and to encourage youth to volunteer."

"The unprecedented National song is a piece of art that is rich in connotations and invokes remarkably vivid community-related associations. It will be a part of NBK's social program on the occasion of National Day that includes a host of activities and functions that highlight the spirit of the celebration," Mattar added. NBK reinforced its position as a lead contributor to the development of the Kuwaiti society through its commitment to corporate social responsibility.



#باقون

الوطني NBK



**KUWAIT:** The Interior Ministry concluded yesterday the 38th training course on aircraft safety and protection. A total of 45 officers from different Interior Ministry department participated in the course, which took place at the General Department of Special Forces' building.



**Dissident US diplomats defy Trump travel ban**

**INDONESIAN WOMEN SEEKING TO BECOME IS SUICIDE BOMBERS**



**MOSUL: An Iraqi officer inspects drones belonging to Islamic State militants in Mosul, Iraq. — AP**

**IS USING DRONES, OTHER INNOVATIVE TACTICS**  
**ISLAMIC STATE FLYING MACHINES GUIDE SUICIDE BOMBERS**

**MOSUL:** First the tiny drones buzz overhead to observe Iraqi soldiers. Then, the Islamic State group's flying machines return to drop a small explosive device to sow panic among security forces - or deadlier still, to help guide a suicide car bomber to a target. And the innovations are expected to keep coming since IS has been spending freely on technology, even as their fighters face intense pressure from coalition forces, according to Iraqi military officials. The extremist group is hacking store-bought drones, using rigorous testing protocols and innovating tactics that mimic those used by US unmanned aircraft to adapt to diminishing numbers of fighters and a battlefield that is increasingly difficult to navigate on the ground.

The Associated Press visited a warehouse this week in the Shura neighborhood, the largest drone workshop uncovered so far, and saw accounting spreadsheets with purchases totaling thousands of dollars a month for drone equipment. One receipt dated just a few months before the Mosul operation began recorded the purchase of wires, silicon, electrical plugs, cables, rotors and GoPro cameras. Other receipts logged in spreadsheets included food delivery orders of fried chicken, taxi fares and repair costs to the house's hot water heater.

**'Air observation division'**

Scattered among the stacks of paper were bits and pieces of the drones themselves. Most were destroyed by IS as they retreated, Iraqi officers at the factory said. But pieces of styrofoam wings, fins and radio transmitters remained, piled up in the corners of the factory on a recent visit. All the accounts were headed "board of development and military manufacturing," some sub-headed "air observation division." Handwritten notes instructed IS drone operators to write daily "mission reports" and monthly reports "about the challenges and difficulties you face as well." In all, a half-dozen of the storehouses to make and modify the drones have been found recently in Mosul.

A cache of documents also obtained this month in a

smaller makeshift factory by a researcher in Mosul, Iraq, indicates that the group is testing small drones, which are normally used as playthings, with deadly intent. The researcher, Vera Mironova, is a labor economist by training and said her discovery of the drone paperwork - which includes lists in English and Arabic of parts and one file marked 'Tool Kit' that is a checklist of several dozen of the essentials - is a sign of what is essentially a program to let machines make up for a shortage in manpower. Items 1-5 were GoPro and chargers; battery cable; laptop; explosives; and devices.

Mironova, a fellow at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, said the use of drones to both drop explosives and to direct more deadly payloads is an adaptation to the decrease in the number of attackers available. Early in the Mosul fighting, she said, suicide bombers tended to be deployed haphazardly more to frighten than to kill. But it didn't take the group long to need a new approach. Iraqi security forces report seeing drones used by IS for surveillance as early as 2015 in the fight for Ramadi in Iraq's western Anbar province.

The first hints of the new tactics came in early 2016, when Turkish forces in northern Iraq saw toy-like drones overhead and then, within 15 minutes, were attacked by accurate incoming fire, according to Jonathan Schroden, director of the Center for Stability and Development at the Center for Naval Analyses. "From there it was pretty clear where that was headed," Schroden said. "They will look to continue to mimic what the US and Western militaries have done with drones. They would look to integrate the kill chain."

**Drones direct attackers**

With Mosul's streets filled with debris, the drones can serve as a way for their operators to direct people on the ground - including suicide attackers - to an open path to bloodshed. The planes loaded with explosives do less actual damage, but can sow panic among troops fighting the



**An Iraqi officer holds a book found in a drones workshop - belonging to Islamic State militants in Mosul, Iraq. — AP**

extremists. "First they come to observe and then they will return carrying bombs," Maj Firas Mehdi said, cautioning the AP journalists with the Special Forces unit to remain under cover during an outing in December. Mehdi himself had been hit with shrapnel in his leg when a drone dropped a small bomb on his position a week earlier.

A small, black rotary drone flew over their position from the IS held neighborhood just a few hundred meters away. Two Iraqi Special Forces soldiers rushed Mehdi into a concrete house for cover while half a dozen more spread out into the street and fired wildly into the air. An Iraqi Special Forces officer told the AP this week that at least three Iraqi troops had been killed by the drones and dozens injured. Iraqi Special Forces Brig Gen Haider Fadhil said in addition to conducting surveillance and dropping bombs, the drones were being used to guide car bombs in real time.

**Purchased in Turkey?**

"They were giving instructions by radio to the suicide driver and following his progress" by video feed. "But many of these planes were shot down by our forces, and we jammed their control frequencies, which made some of them crash," Fadhil said. An Iraqi intelligence officer, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to journalists, said he believes most of the drone parts were being purchased in Turkey and smuggled into Iraq through Syria while others were being largely made from scratch. "Some of the designs are so simple, there's very little technical difficulty," he said.

The little fixed-wing planes and choppers have appeared in several IS videos online showing the drones observing Iraqi troop movements from the air and suicide car bombs hitting their targets. In a Skype interview, Mironova, who contributed to an analysis of the documents for the Countering Terrorism Center at West Point,

said that IS has shown itself to be innovative both with men and equipment. "It's pretty amazing to see how they are mimicking Western militaries do just using commercial off the shelf technology," Schroden said. "All of this is sort of driven by what the commercial sector develops." — AP



**MOSUL: An Iraqi officer holds a drone belonging to Islamic State militants in Mosul, Iraq. — AP**

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## ISRAEL EVICTS SETTLERS FROM WEST BANK OUTPOST

**AMONA:** Israeli police began evicting dozens of hardline Jewish settlers from a wildcat outpost yesterday, just hours after unveiling plans for 3,000 new homes in other West Bank settlements. Hundreds of officers marched into the Amona outpost near Ramallah to carry out the evictions ordered by the High Court after it determined the homes were built on private Palestinian land.

It marked the end of months of attempts by government hardliners to legalise the outpost, and the announcement of the new homes elsewhere in the occupied Palestinian territory was widely seen as a sop to their supporters. There had been fears of violence after hundreds of hardline sympathizers of the settlers slipped past army roadblocks on foot and lit tyres around the outpost. Some threw stones at the media as residents started packing their belongings, an AFP correspondent reported.

Police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld told AFP there were around 3,000 officers in and around Amona to move the 42 families, "and hopefully people will evacuate the area peacefully and quietly." He estimated that another 600 people who were not from the outpost had arrived for the eviction. "We're hoping that things will go relatively calmly and quietly. We're ready to respond if neces-

sary to any violence," he said.

Youths confronted the forces with chants such as "How will you feel tomorrow after you evacuate a Jew from his home?" and "Today it's me, tomorrow it will be you," as police began evacuating them from the area. Earlier, some women holding children left their homes, as youths barricaded themselves inside. Teenage girls wrote slogans about their right to the land of Israel on the walls of the caravan homes, soon to be demolished.

Protesters said that they would not leave willingly but that they would not resort to violence against the police. "We won't be going, they'll have to take us," Amona resident Rivka Lafair, 19 said. Far-right lawmaker Moti Yogeve, whose Jewish Home party is part of Israel's governing coalition, joined the settlers in a show of solidarity. He said that the demolition of the outpost was "a bad decision" but that the new homes announced by the defense ministry late on Tuesday were some compensation. "Yes, Amona will be destroyed, but against Amona we are going to build 3,000 new homes," he said. The former US administration of Barack Obama despaired of Israel's accelerating settlement expansion which it regarded as the biggest obstacle to Middle East peace. — AFP



**AMONA:** Hardline Jewish settlers, supporters of the Amona outpost, northeast of Ramallah, are moved away by Israeli security forces at the wildcat settlement, in line with a High Court ruling that determined the homes were built on private Palestinian land. — AFP

## 'PROFITS OF DOOM'

### MOSUL MECHANICS SWAMPED AS BOMBS SHATTER CITY

**MOSUL:** Business is booming for Mosul car repair shop owner Khaled Younes, a sign of the havoc wreaked on the Iraqi city that has become the focus for the international war on Islamic State. Suicide bombers, improvised explosive devices, mortar attacks and airstrikes have wiped out everything in their path, including parked cars, and pulverized much of the northern city that was once a bustling trade hub.

The twisted metal wreckage of vehicles can be seen on many streets. "Business is great. It is up by 50 percent," said Younes, instructing workers to attend to customers as he frantically glued together the windshield of a vehicle damaged by a mortar bomb. He and fellow car repair business owners are just about the only people turning a profit as US-backed Iraqi forces press ahead with an offensive to drive Islamic State out of their last urban stronghold in Iraq.

Mosul's public transportation has been devastated by months of fighting. The mechanics are struggling to keep up with a growing number of customers who desperately need their cars to get to work and bring home food and other provisions. Demand is set to rise further. So far, Iraqi forces have cleared Islamic State out of eastern Mosul. The next phase of the operation - attacking western Mosul - is bound to bring in even more destruction. Mosul is the largest city held by the jihadists and could prove pivotal to the fate of its self-declared caliphate of land of seized in Iraq and Syria.

Iraqi military officials say the militants will put up a ferocious fight to preserve their hold on the city. That means more suicide bombs, car bombs and mortar and rocket attacks. The widespread damage to cars in Mosul speak volumes about the intensity of battles over the last three months. Islamic State car bombs often wreck other vehicles parked along streets. US-led airstrikes cleave rooftops, sending heavy pieces of cement crashing down on cars. Mortar attacks fire shrapnel at great speed across streets - it tears through everything in its path, often killing or maiming people.

#### Families need cars

Several car repair shops are located along a grimy, dusty lane on the eastern outskirts of Mosul, overlooking a potholed highway. They have been there for decades. Some businesses there were closed after Islamic State swept into Mosul in 2014, largely unopposed by the army. Others went bust or were subject to the whims of the militants, who often imposed new taxes to fund their war against Baghdad. For those shops that remain open, profits have never been so hefty. One rickety truck arrived with about a dozen bullet holes in its windshield, probably the work of one of the many Islamic State snipers

posted around the city.

The cost of vital repairs can hammer families' finances, especially at a time when many people are unemployed and waiting for the local economy to recover while the government struggles to find funding for reconstruction. "A rocket hit my house and part of the house landed on my car," said Raghid Mohamed, a 35-year-old teacher, referring to his battered 1990 Mazda. Beside him, market trader Nizzar Jassem, 50, said it would cost him 600,000 Iraqi dinars (\$500) to fix his car, damaged by a piece of rubble that crashed on it after an airstrike, while his monthly income is only 200,000 dinars. — Reuters



**KHAZIR:** A displaced Iraqi woman, who fled the violence around the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, sits inside a trolley as she waits to receive food aid at the Al-Khazer refugee camp some 40 kilometers east of Arbil. — AFP

## IRAN CONFIRMS MISSILE TEST, DENIES BREACH OF NUKE DEAL

**TEHRAN:** Iran confirmed yesterday that it had tested a ballistic missile, but denied that was a breach of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. The comments from Defense Minister Hossein Dehghan came after the UN Security Council met Tuesday to discuss the weekend test, which Washington described as "absolutely unacceptable." The action was in line with boosting Iran's defense power and is not in contradiction with the JCPOA (the nuclear deal) or Resolution 2231, Dehghan said.

He was referring to a UN Security Council resolution that bans Iran from developing missiles that can carry nuclear warheads. "This test was in line with our ongoing programs," Iranian media quoted him as saying. "We have previously announced that we will execute the programs we have planned in production of defense equipment meant for our national interests and objectives. Nobody can influence our decision. We will not allow foreigners to interfere in our defense affairs."

Iran's ballistic missile program has been a bone of contention with the West since the nuclear deal took effect in January last year, triggering the lifting of international sanctions. Iran says its missiles do not breach United Nations resolutions because they are for defense purposes only and are not designed to carry nuclear warheads. It has missiles with a range of up to 2,000 kilometers, sufficient to reach Israel as well as US bases in the region.

#### 'Not naive'

US ambassador Nikki Haley told Tuesday's Security Council meeting that Washington would not stand idly by while Tehran pursued its missile

program. "The United States is not naive. We are not going to stand by. You will see us call them out," she said. Tehran warned Washington against using the issue to fuel tensions. "We hope that Iran's defense program is not used by the new US administration... as a pretext to create new tensions," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said ahead of the meeting.

The row comes against a backdrop of already strained relations between Washington and Tehran over US President Donald Trump's travel ban on citizens from Iran and six other Muslim-majority countries. Some 220 Iranian lawmakers signed a motion yesterday endorsing the boosting of Iran's defense capabilities, the Fars news agency reported. "The Islamic Republic of Iran's only way to deter the enemy's aggression is its missile power," the motion said, calling the program "an unavoidable necessity" for protecting national security. The European Union, which helped broker the nuclear deal, had appealed to Tehran to refrain from activities such as the missile tests, "which deepen mistrust."

Visiting French top diplomat Jean-Marc Ayrault said Tuesday he had made clear to Zarif his disquiet over the missile tests, calling them "contrary to the spirit" of the Security Council resolution. Britain also said the test was "inconsistent" with UN resolutions, but stopped short of calling it a violation. But Moscow, which is fighting alongside Tehran's forces in Syria, leapt to its ally's defense. Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Iran's missile test did not breach Resolution 2231 and accused Washington of "heating up the situation." — AFP

## AFTER SETBACKS, WHERE DO SYRIA REBELS STAND?

**BEIRUT:** Forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad have dealt another blow to the faltering Syrian rebel movement, regaining control of a strategic area near Damascus at the weekend. The capture of the Wadi Barada area is another setback for rebels after the loss of the second city of Aleppo in December, the biggest blow to the opposition since the conflict began with anti-government protests in March 2011.

#### What happened in Wadi Barada?

Syrian government forces took back Wadi Barada outside Damascus on Sunday after a deal that saw hundreds of rebels leave for opposition-held Idlib province in northern Syria. Wadi Barada is the main source of water for the capital, and the government accused rebels of deliberately cutting off supplies since December 22, leaving 5.5 million people without water. Rebels said government strikes had damaged pumping infrastructure. But they eventually agreed a deal that saw 700 rebels and 1,400 civilians leave Wadi Barada for Idlib, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The government has struck similar so-called reconciliation deals in at least six other areas around the capital in

recent months. "The rebel movement has definitively lost Damascus," said Fabrice Balanche, an analyst at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He said that Syria's army and allied militia-like Lebanese movement Hezbollah have methodically chipped away at rebel-held towns around the capital since 2013. "The most rational rebels are seeking a way to negotiate an amnesty with the Syrian government. For others, their only hope is to be moved to Idlib," Balanche said.

#### Where does this leave rebels?

Nearly six years since Syria's uprising broke out, many of the opposition movement's most important gains have been rolled back. They have lost much of the territory they had captured around Damascus, and suffered their biggest defeat yet in December when government forces took full control of Aleppo. Rebels now hold just 13 percent of Syrian territory, according to Balanche, including the province of Idlib where former Al-Qaeda affiliate Fateh Al-Sham Front holds sway. Elsewhere, the armed opposition holds part of the Eastern Ghouta region near Damascus and some territory in central and southern Syria. "In 2013, rebels' repeated attacks

threatened central Damascus and the lines of communication towards the outside," Balanche said. "But today, they are on the defensive, divided, encircled and without hope of victory," he said. Assad's regime had essentially won a war of attrition, Balanche said, "counting on being able to wear down communities bombarded, besieged, and at the mercy of rebel groups." "It took more than four years, but the regime can consider itself victorious, even if it faces pockets of resistance."

#### What is happening in Idlib?

Northwest Idlib province, which borders Turkey, is the main remaining bastion for Syria's weakened opposition fighters. But the province has been rocked by opposition infighting for more than a week, as Fateh al-Sham Front battles former rebel allies. Aymenn Al-Tamimi, an expert in jihadist movements, has said the fighting could escalate to an existential war that Fateh al-Sham would not be willing to lose. Some rebels have sided with Fateh Al-Sham, while others have supported the powerful Ahrar Al-Sham, once a key ally of the former Al-Qaeda affiliate. — AFP



**ALEPPO:** United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi (right) visits the old city of the northern Syrian city of Aleppo yesterday. — AFP



### Announcement from Ministry of Commerce & Industry Consumer Protection Department

Ministry of Commerce & Industry - Consumer Protection Department, in accordance with Law No. 39/2014 and in cooperation with Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. (Authorized Distributor and Provider for TOYOTA in Kuwait).

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## CURITIBA PRISON - HUMBLE HOME TO BRAZIL'S FALLEN MIGHTY

**CURITIBA:** The list of inmates' names looks like the members' directory at an exclusive club. But these former Brazilian ministers, congressmen and executives are not clinking glasses - they're cooling their heels in prison. The Penal Medical Complex in the southern city of Curitiba houses some of Brazil's most illustrious or infamous prisoners, men who until recently knew power and wealth but after being snared in a huge corruption probe now live three to a 12 meter square cell.

They include the once powerful Jose Dirceu, who was chief of staff for then president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. On the other side of the political divide there's Eduardo Cunha-the seemingly untouchable speaker of the lower house who engineered the impeachment last year of Lula's chosen successor Dilma Rousseff.

Men used to giving orders and speeches are submitted to long periods of enforced silence, with two hours a day outdoors and a shared television screen as their few creature comforts. The best known prisoners here are targets of Brazil's gigantic anti-corruption drive codenamed Operation Car Wash. Prosecutors have unraveled a network of bribes and embezzlement centered on state oil giant Petrobras and involving politicians, lobbyists and executives.

In Curitiba, suspects and convicted men are spared the real horrors of many Brazilian prisons thanks to an odd law which sends people with university diplomas to better facilities. However, one big name brought down in unrelated bribery allegations-Brazil's former richest man Eike Batista-was

jailed this week in a standard Rio de Janeiro institution. Unlike many other white collar crime suspects he dropped out of university, a decision he may now regret as he sits crammed in an overcrowded cell.

Even for the luckier college graduates, prison must feel a very long way from their past lifestyles of chauffeurs, bodyguards, glitzy mansions and fancy cars. "They all need time to adapt and some can suffer a certain amount of depression," Luiz Moura, the prison chief for Parana state where Curitiba is the capital said. "If they need psychological treatment we give it so that they can accept their new reality and realize that the social conditions they had outside no longer matter."

### Honest wages

Men accused of stealing millions can now earn more modest amounts with a bit of honest work. Dirceu was one of the country's biggest high-fliers, at one point touted as a possible successor to Lula before Rousseff took that slot. He was incarcerated in Curitiba after being convicted of receiving an illegal payment of \$3.12 million, part of which was meant to pay for a Cessna airplane. One of currently eight Operation Car Wash prisoners in Curitiba, he is serving a 20 years, 10 month sentence.

He gets paid 45 reais (\$14) a month to deliver books to other inmates-although he doesn't escape a 25 percent tax on his earnings. "It's not a librarian's job because he isn't qualified for this. It's just distributing books, bringing them to cells and taking them back, as well as cleaning and maintaining

the books," Moura explained. There's a good reason why these prisoners might want to read: If they complete one book a month they knock four days

off their sentence each time. Even though, the system makes sure no one cheats: Inmates are tested on whether they really read the text. —AFP



**CURITIBA:** Demonstrators protest against corruption in front of the Federal Justice Palace in Curitiba, Brazil with signs that read "STF (Supreme Federal Court), don't give in to the criminals" and "Car Wash, thank you, we support you!" Brazil's federal police have a relatively new tradition of coming up with creative titles for their operations, with a focus on original names that are attractive to the public, such as "Lava Jato" or "Car Wash" - the investigation into the Petrobras corruption scandal. — AFP



**WASHINGTON:** Sen Cory Gardner, R-Colo (center) joined by (from left) Sen John Barrasso, R-Wyo, Sen John Thune, R-SD and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky speaks during a news conference on Capitol Hill in Washington. — AP

## WHAT CONTROVERSY? TRUMP'S US REPUBLICAN BASE STILL ON HIS SIDE

**WASHINGTON:** Though Donald Trump's first week in office has ignited nationwide protests and condemnation from elected officials at home and abroad, the Republican's initial moves have left one group all smiles. The conservative base that launched the new US president to his shock November victory has by and large voiced satisfaction with Trump's bold executive actions-including his controversial decree that closed United States borders to refugees and barred entry to travelers from seven Muslim-majority countries. "I couldn't be happier," said Josette White, a 44-year-old owner of an online crafting business from West Virginia. "He's doing exactly what he said he was going to do."

"Except for convicting Hillary, but I understand that," she added, referring to Trump's Democratic former rival. Last May, White waited in line more than six hours to attend one of the billionaire's campaign rallies. And she remains convinced that the CEO-turned-commander-in-chief will change business as usual in Washington. "Most politicians promise, promise, promise," said the Republican voter, whose father and grandfather worked in coal mines.

"But right now, he's still speaking to the working men." Interviews with several voters across the nation back up what polls indicate: more than 80 percent of Republicans approve of Trump's initial presidential performance, according to a recent Quinnipiac poll. Nearly three-quarters of Republicans said they believe it is "strongly" or "somewhat" necessary to ban those from Muslim-majority countries to prevent terrorism, showed a Reuters/Ipsos poll. Just 19 percent of Democrats agreed. Other studies also indicate a stark division among US voters: Republicans support the president, and Democrats roundly reject him.

"We need to keep our country safe, whatever it takes," said Milan Davich, a 66-year-old Pennsylvanian who considers himself a political independent. For Davich, that includes Trump's order to build a wall on the US-Mexico border: "they should electrify the damn thing, and put machine guns and barbed wire on top of it." And when it comes to the hundreds of thousands of people who have taken to the streets in outcry over the new president's policies, Davich has little patience. "They'll protest every damn thing he does for the next four years." —AFP

## DISSIDENT US DIPLOMATS DEFY TRUMP TRAVEL BAN GET BEHIND OR RESIGN, WHITE HOUSE WARNS

**WASHINGTON:** A group of US diplomats declared their opposition to President Donald Trump's travel ban Tuesday, despite the White House warning that they should get behind his agenda or resign. A large group of diplomats from posts around the world submitted a "dissent memo" through an official State Department channel, a spokeswoman confirmed. When it was reported on Monday that such a memo was being prepared, Trump's spokesman Sean Spicer issued an extraordinary warning that the officials "should either get with the program or they can go."

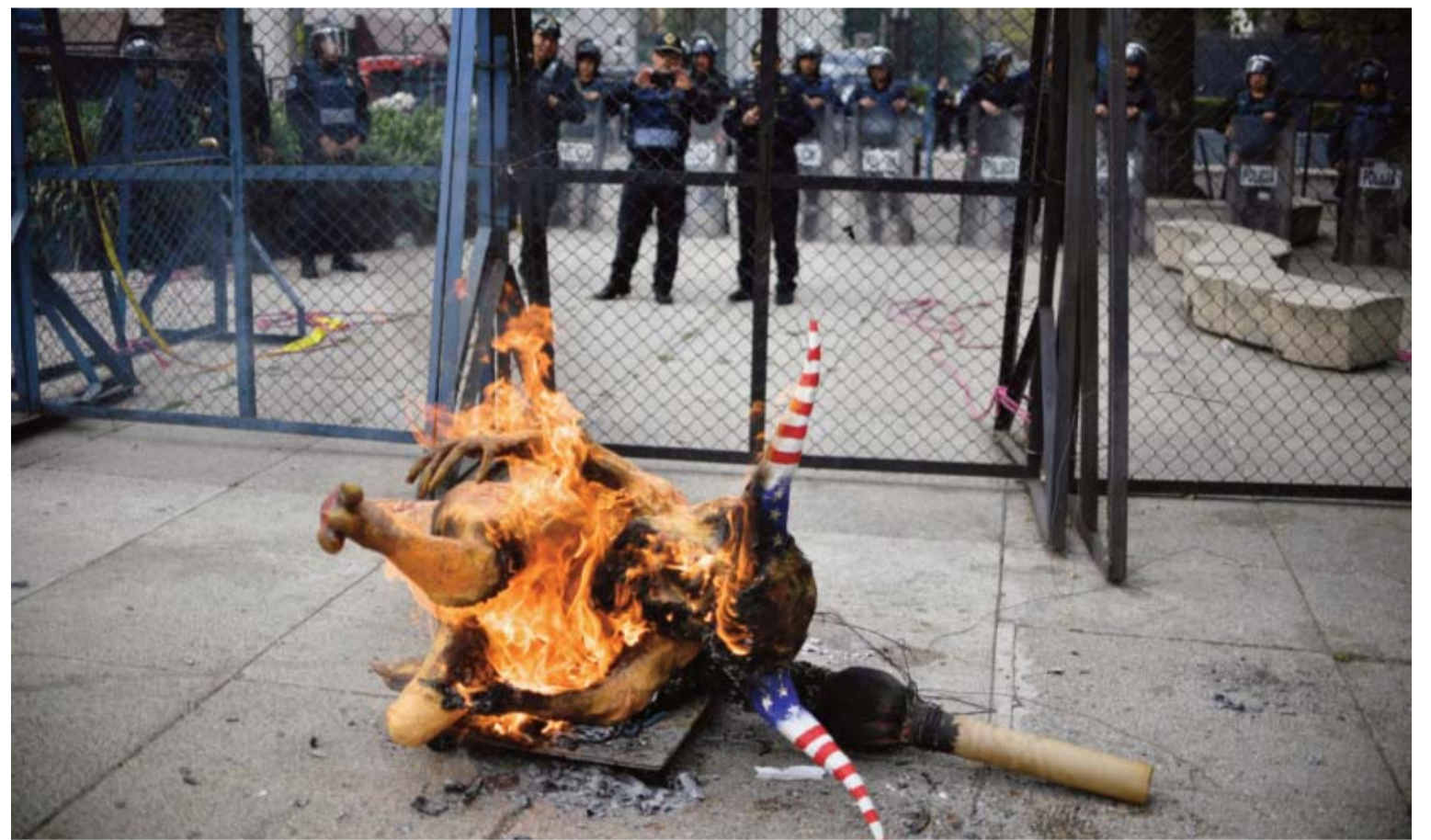
Trump's White House argues that the ban is necessary to slow arrivals from countries plagued by violent extremism while his administration draws up tough new rules to weed out potential terrorists. "If somebody has a problem

with that agenda, that does call into question whether they should continue in that post or not," Spicer told reporters. "This is about the safety of America." According to leaked drafts of the memo, the US envoys argue that Trump's decision to suspend refugee arrivals and ban visitors from seven mainly-Muslim countries is a betrayal of American values.

"We are better than this ban," they declare, scolding Trump's plan to introduce "extreme vetting" for visa applicants as a "high, vague and nebulous bar" for travelers from the seven countries to meet. "A policy which closes our doors to over 200 million legitimate travelers in the hopes of preventing a small number of travelers who intend to harm Americans from using the visa system to enter the United States will not achieve its aim of making our country safer," the

memo reads. Trump's order bans the arrival of citizens from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for at least 90 days. All refugees are barred for 120 days, while Syrian refugees are blocked indefinitely.

The order triggered mass protests at US airports, as arriving refugees and travelers from the targeted countries were turned away, and stoked outrage around the globe. The State Department's internal "dissent channel" was created during the Vietnam War. The last time it was used was in June 2016, when about 50 diplomats urged president Barack Obama to reconsider his opposition to US military strikes against Syria. But its use just 10 days after a new president was inaugurated-and even before Trump's nominee for secretary of state has been confirmed-is unprecedented. —AFP



**MEXICO CITY:** Mexican peasants burn an 'Alebrije', traditional Mexican figure, with the face of US President Donald Trump in front of the US embassy building during a protest against the wall between Mexico and US borders, in Mexico City. — AFP

## 'VIVA MEXICO!' - TRUMP'S WALL AWAKENS MEXICAN PATRIOTISM

**MEXICO CITY:** Mexicans are replacing profile pictures on social media with their country's flag. Others are calling for boycotts of American products like Coca-Cola and Starbucks. US President Donald Trump's vow to make Mexicans pay for a massive border wall has not only caused a diplomatic row, it has sparked patriotic fervor south of the border. On Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, people are using the hashtag #WeAreAllMexico, punctuating anti-Trump tweets with cries of "Viva Mexico!" and boasting that they live in "the best country in the world." President Enrique Pena Nieto's spokesman, his foreign and finance ministers, and government departments have made the country's green, white and red flag their profile photo on Twitter.

A slew of hashtags encourage Mexicans to stay away from American goods: #AdiosProductosGringos (goodbye gringo products), #AdiosStarbucks, #AdiosMcDonalds and #AdiosCocaCola. Telecommunications magnate Carlos Slim, the world's fourth richest man, called a rare news conference to express his "great pleasure" at the burst of national pride and support for the president, even though Pena Nieto's economic reforms have chipped away at the billionaire's telephone empire. "This is the most surprising display of national unity

that I have seen in my life," Slim said, urging Mexicans to support Pena Nieto's negotiations with the US administration.

### 'Proud to be Mexican'

Pena Nieto, whose popularity fell to 12 percent earlier in January after protests erupted over an increase in gasoline prices, has seized on the renewed patriotic pride. In a video message late Monday, he touted this "national unity" and said it "must be the cornerstone of our strategy and our actions inside and outside the country." He boasted: "Today like never before, I feel proud to be Mexican." Pena Nieto vowed to be firm in his defense of Mexico's "dignity and independence" from the US government, though he said that his phone conversation with Trump on Friday "opened spaces" for the two governments to continue their dialogue. Jesus Velasco, an expert on US-Mexico relations at Tarleton State University in Texas, said that fixing ties "will take a while" because "the damage has been done."

Mexicans praised Pena Nieto for canceling a meeting with Trump in Washington scheduled for this week, after the US president ordered the construction of the wall and insisted that Mexico pay for it. Opposition leaders rallied behind Pena Nieto and even his longtime rival, two-time leftist

presidential election runnerup Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, applauded the move. But Pena Nieto's popularity appears to have had a limited bounce. An opinion poll published in the daily Excelsior on Tuesday showed his approval rating rising by a handful of points to 16 percent-though the survey was conducted only among 400 Mexicans and had a five-point margin of error.

### Wrapped in flag

"Mexico tends to be a nationalist country when it is attacked from outside," said Damaso Morales, a foreign relations expert at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. "Throughout our history, we have wrapped ourselves in the flag and thrown ourselves into a nationalism that could even be irrational," Morales said. Morales was referring to the story-some say legend-of a cadet who draped himself with the Mexican flag and jumped to his death from the Chapultepec Castle in Mexico City rather than live to see US forces grab it during a war in 1847. But Javier Oliva, a Mexican political and security expert at the London School of Economics, said Mexico's nationalism is merely "reactive" and does not pose a threat. "One of the things that we have to thank Trump for is that the world now knows where Mexico is," Oliva said. — AFP

## CANADA 'TRASH RADIO' UNDER FIRE AFTER MOSQUE ATTACK

**QUEBEC CITY:** In the wake of recent carnage at a Quebec City mosque, the Canadian province's popular conservative talk radio hosts have come under fire for allegedly spreading intolerance and hate. Critics say the talk shows fuel a divisive climate that allows extreme ideologies to take root and flourish-a claim that has taken on heightened relevance after a gunman with far-right sympathies opened fire on Muslim worshippers, killing six and wounding eight more.

While not pointing a finger at any particular person or organization, Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard emphasized Tuesday that "words do matter." Residents of Quebec City tend to vote more conservatively than the rest of the province. Some say that radio stations like local FM93 and Radio X-which are respectively the region's second and third-most listened to in the region, with a combined 30 percent market share-simply reflect their audience's views. But others say the shows stoke dangerous beliefs.

"These are right-wing talk radio stations with little substance but a lot of opinions," said Stephane Leman-Langlois, a criminologist at Laval University, where the alleged shooter studied. These "trash radio" stations, as they have become known locally, "contribute to legitimize increasingly adversarial discourse against minorities in general and Muslims in particular," he said. They tout "white supremacy, white victimology and

repeat over and over that Quebec is in grave danger."

Station managers did not respond to requests for an interview. There is no indication that the suspect arrested in connection to the attack at the Quebec City mosque on Sunday listened to these radio stations. His online activities, however, suggest that he supports political leaders including Republican US President Donald Trump and French far-right politician Marine Le Pen. Muslims in the Canadian province lay the blame for rising Islamophobia squarely at the foot of local right-wing talk radio. Some stations "have made it their mission to increase distrust and hate of Muslims," said Mohamed Yangui, head of the Islamic cultural center and mosque that was attacked.

### 'Spokesperson for racism'

"Their comments are often over the top and blundering," said Leman-Langlois, recalling a one-hour episode last fall in which Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was said to be an agent of the Muslim Brotherhood determined to Islamize Canada. "There is really an examination of conscience to do on the part of these radio stations." His words echo media research group Project J, which has called on the stations to take a hard look at themselves and reflect on how they cover communities-Muslims in particular. —AFP

## THOUSANDS PROTEST AS ROMANIA RELAXES CORRUPTION LAW

**BUCHAREST:** Thousands of Romanians took to the streets Tuesday night after the government issued a controversial emergency

decreed reducing the penalties for corruption in a move which will allow several politicians to avoid criminal prosecution.

In Bucharest protesters gathered spontaneously in front of the seat of government, chanting "thieves" and calling for the resignation of the social democrat government, which has been in power for less than a month, AFP reporters saw. Protests also took place in several other cities, including Cluj, Sibiu, Timisoara and Iasi, according to Romanian media reports. They erupted immediately after the announcement of the emergency decree which could allow many politicians to escape criminal prosecution.

Justice Minister Florin Iordache justified the changes, which bypass parliament and will enter into force almost automatically, as needed "to bring the legislation in line with the decisions of the constitutional court". Earlier this month the government of Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu published the emergency decrees, sparking angry protests across the country and criticism from Romania's centre-right President Klaus Iohannis, who was elected in 2014 on an anti-graft platform.

"It is a day of mourning for the rule of law, which has received a hard blow from the opponents of justice and in the fight against corruption," the head of state said in a statement Tuesday. Iohannis

had even taken part in the first demonstrations against the legal changes. "This government has chosen to pass its ordinances secretly because it is afraid," said Martina, an international relations student at the demonstration in Bucharest, fearing a "backtrack" in the fight against corruption. "Nothing gives them the legitimacy to do that... It's a return to the period of 15 years ago," echoed Cristian Clot, an IT employee. The gatherings dispersed without incident.

### Changes benefit party leader

The legal changes decriminalise several offences and makes abuse of power punishable by incarceration only if it results in a monetary loss of more than 44,000 euros (\$47,500). The changes will notably allow social democrat leader Liviu Dragnea, who went on trial Tuesday for abuse of power, to avoid prosecution. Prosecutors have put the amount of money involved in his case at 24,000 euros, well below the new threshold.

The government did, however, send for parliament's approval another pardon law which would free inmates serving sentences of up to five years for non-violent crimes to help ease pressure on Romania's overcrowded prisons. The

government had earlier announced that this too would be the subject of an emergency decree. Dragnea's leftist PSD party romped to victory in December elections but President Iohannis refused to appoint him prime minister because of his previous voter fraud conviction in 2012, for which he was handed a suspended jail sentence. Tens of thousands of people had protested in Bucharest and other Romanian towns on Sunday calling for both proposed changes to the penal code to be scrapped.

Both texts have also been denounced by several Romanian officials and institutions, including the attorney general Augustin Lazar, anti-corruption chief prosecutor Laura Codruta Kovesi, and High Court president Cristina Tarcea. On Tuesday the government's Department for the Fight against Fraud (DLAF) joined the critics, arguing that the easing of the rules limits its capacity "to efficiently protect the interests of the EU in Romania". In its annual report released last week, the European Commission, which is closely monitoring justice reforms in Romania, warned against any proposals that seek to slacken the fight against corruption in one of Europe's poorest countries.—AFP



**BUCHAREST:** People throw snow toward jandarmes protecting government headquarters as they demonstrate in front of Romanian Government headquarters against controversial decrees to pardon corrupt politicians and decriminalize other offenses. —AFP

# GLOBAL ALARM AS FIGHTING ESCALATES IN EAST UKRAINE

## DEATH TOLL HITS SIXTEEN

**AVDIIVKA:** The death toll from the latest escalation in fighting in Ukraine rose to 16 yesterday as international alarm rang out over the spike in bloodshed in the European Union's backyard. Government forces and pro-Russian separatists exchanged mortar and grenade fire for a fourth day on Wednesday around the flashpoint town of Avdiivka that sits just north of the rebels' de facto capital Donetsk in eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian military said one of its soldiers had died overnight while the rebels said two civilians had been killed.

The clashes have left more than 20,000 people without heat or water in freezing winter weather with no signs of relief in sight. The sudden surge comes at a potential watershed moment for Ukraine as fears mount in Kiev that staunch US support could be set to wane with President Donald Trump looking to mend ties with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin. An emergency UN Security Council meeting on Tuesday called for an immediate end to fighting in a near three-year conflict that has plunged Moscow's relations with the West to a post-Cold War low.

The council expressed "grave concern" about the resumption of serious battles in one of the bloodiest conflicts since the 1990s Balkans wars. "The intense fighting around Avdiivka in the last few days... is a blatant violation of the ceasefire, as stipulated by the Minsk agreements," the EU said on Tuesday. The deal signed in the Belarusian capital Minsk in February 2015 has been repeatedly broken but still remains the West's best hope of bringing peace to a country that was once a bridge between Russia and the West. The war began shortly after Ukraine ousted its Russian-backed president in February 2014 and aligned itself with the West.



**KIEV:** A woman kisses the body of one of the seven Ukrainian servicemen who died during fighting in the eastern Ukrainian town of Avdiivka during a mourning ceremony on Independence Square yesterday. —AFP

### 'Kids awoken by shelling'

The industrial hub of Avdiivka came under its first assault on Sunday by rebels seeking to recapture territory held by Kiev during the nearly three-year war. Yesterday, residents such as 62-year-old Larisa Mykhailivna were packing up to find shelter from the cold and violence. "We slept very badly last night, the kids were awoken by shelling," she said as she left town with her two granddaughters.

"A shell landed under our window but thank God it did not explode." The Ukrainian military yesterday accused the rebels of firing Grad multiple rocket systems and artillery at its positions around the northern outskirts of Donetsk. The fighting has severely damaged a coke plant that provides heating for the blue-collar town of 25,000 people. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is responsible for monitoring ceasefire violations and organizing peace talks between envoys from Russia and Ukraine.

Its mission to Ukraine said that 22,000 people had been left without heating or water and electricity as temperatures dropped to minus 20 degrees Celsius. Local official Pavlo Zhebrivskiy wrote on his Facebook page that the level of heating in the town remained low. He added that the town had access to water but that pressure systems were too weak to make them accessible in the higher floors of tall buildings.

The conflict has killed nearly 10,000 people—more than half of them civilians—since it erupted in April 2014. The Kremlin has repeatedly denied supporting the insurgents and only admits that Russian "volunteers" and off-duty soldiers have entered the war zone of their own volition. —AFP



**HARARE:** Zimbabwean judges in long red robes and horsehair wigs - a throwback to an era of British Colonial rule, at the official beginning of their 2017 duties in Harare. President Robert Mugabe has sparred with Britain for decades and denounces the West for what he calls a neo-colonial attitude, but he has a soft spot for a traditional etiquette and a dress code in the courts that even Britain has partly dropped. —AP

## IN WIGS AND ROBES, ZIMBABWEAN JUDGES EVOKE BRITISH COLONIALISM

**HARARE:** Zimbabwean judges recently filed into court for the official beginning of their 2017 duties, wearing long red robes and horsehair wigs, a throwback to an era of British colonial rule. President Robert Mugabe has sparred with Britain for decades and denounces the West for what he calls a neo-colonial attitude, but he has a soft spot for a traditional etiquette and a dress code in the courts that even Britain has partly dropped.

Judges in Britain now must wear wigs only when hearing criminal matters as part of dress code reforms in 2008, ending a centuries-old tradition. Some Commonwealth countries such as Kenya and South Africa have also moved away from wearing wigs in the courts. In 2003, Zimbabwe pulled out of the Commonwealth, a group made up mostly of former British colonies. In

Zimbabwe, there have been no such curbs on the old fashion.

"It's an archaic and unnecessary practice that has even been abandoned by those who exported it to us as a nation. It does not improve jurisprudence or enhance the thinking capacity of judges," said Arnold Tsunga, a Zimbabwean lawyer and International Commission of Jurists regional program director for Africa. Scrapping the traditional dress code could save money in financially troubled Zimbabwe, Tsunga said. In 2013, Zimbabwean judges appealed for new regalia to replace worn-out, secondhand robes and wigs given to them by retired judges. "Mugabe gives an impression that he hates the British; he is really fond of their culture and traditions," said Alex Magaisa, a law lecturer at Britain's University of Kent. —AP

## TRUMP LOOMS OVER EU'S MALTA SUMMIT

**BRUSSELS:** Fears that US President Donald Trump's policies pose an existential threat to Europe are set to overshadow EU leaders' talks on multiple crises at a summit in Malta this week. Curbing migration from Libya and dealing with the aftermath of Britain's vote to leave the European Union were meant to be the dominant themes of tomorrow's summit in Valletta. But at their first meeting since the new US president took office, the national leaders will now also discuss the need for unity amid worries about Trump's commitment to the decades-old transatlantic alliance.

In an extraordinary sign of concern, EU President Donald Tusk on Tuesday ranked Trump along with Russia, China, Islamic extremism and domestic populism as the biggest "threats" to the bloc in its 60-year history. From his controversial ban on migration from seven mainly Muslim countries, to backing a break-up of the EU and dismissing NATO as obsolete, Trump is barely able to open his mouth without ringing alarm bells in Europe. "Worrying declarations by the new American administration... make our future highly unpredictable," former Polish premier Tusk wrote in an almost apocalyptic letter to the EU leaders. One EU diplomat said: "This is a new way of governing—each tweet a political act, or just the expression of a particular mood?"

### 'Future of the EU'

The letter sets out European Commission chief Tusk's thoughts in relation to a debate on the "future of the EU" that 27 of the leaders—minus British Prime Minister Theresa May—will have in Malta. Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel,

whose country is one of the EU's founding members, also confirmed that "transatlantic relations" including Trump's migration ban would be on the agenda. "I have spoken to several of my European partners and we share the same position: we do not approve of any order that also concerns Europeans with dual nationality," he said. Yet one question facing the EU leaders will be how strongly they can condemn Trump's migration policies, when they are themselves discussing how to put up their own barriers.

The EU slashed migrant numbers coming through Greece through a controversial deal with Turkey, and the Malta summit will discuss how to stop those making the dangerous crossing from north Africa, especially from Libya. The EU leaders are expected to issue a declaration with steps including increasing support for the Libyan coastguard and pushing on with migration deals with other African countries. Summit host Malta's calls for a Turkey-style deal with Libya are however unlikely to bear fruit, since the chaos following the 2011 fall of Muammar Gaddafi makes it hard for the EU to know who to even deal with there. But pressure is growing on the EU to act on what Germany called the "catastrophic" human rights system for migrants in Libya, amid reports of "concentration camp-like" conditions in smuggler-run camps. Tusk said in his invitation letter that EU leaders must "protect our external border while helping the Libyan authorities provide decent reception facilities on their territory." German Chancellor Angela Merkel called Tuesday for the EU to make more efforts to stabilize Libya. "We can't just talk, we must also do something," she said. —AFP

## News

in brief

### Taleban kills woman accused of adultery

**KABUL:** The Taleban has shot dead a woman accused of adultery in northeastern Afghanistan, officials said yesterday. Ahmad Naweed Frotan, a spokesman for the Badakhshan provincial governor, said Amir Begum was killed late Tuesday in the remote Yumgan district after being accused of having an affair. "We strongly condemned the brutal killing of Amir Begum in front of the eyes of her family members," said Frotan. He said if there was any truth to the allegations they should be taken up by a court, not armed men. Elsewhere in Afghanistan, an insurgent rocket attack killed a civilian in the southern Helmand province, which has seen heavy fighting in recent months. Ghulam Nabi Charkhi, head of the provincial counterterrorism department in Helmand, said three others, including a small child, were wounded in the attack in Lashkar Gah, the provincial capital. The attack took place as Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah was about to leave Lashkar Gah with other officials after a visit to assess security in the province.

### Islamic State suspect arrested in Germany

**BERLIN:** A Tunisian man suspected of being a recruiter for the Islamic State group and building a network of supporters to carry out an attack in Germany was arrested yesterday as authorities raided dozens of locations. Frankfurt prosecutors said that their investigation was directed against 16 people aged between 16 and 46. The main suspect, a 36-year-old Tunisian whom authorities didn't identify, was arrested in Frankfurt on suspicion of supporting a foreign terrorist organization. Investigators believe that he had been a recruiter and smuggler for the IS group since August 2015. They suspect that he had built up a network of supporters with the aim, among other things, of carrying out an attack in Germany. However, they say that plans for an attack were at an early stage and no specific target had been chosen. Yesterday's raids covered 54 apartments, business premises and mosques, largely in Frankfurt and the surrounding region. Officials said the raids followed a four-month investigation.



**ROTE:** Abraham Louhenapessy, commonly known as 'Captain Bram', attends his trial on Rote island, eastern Indonesia yesterday. —AFP

### Indonesian smuggling 'kingpin' goes on trial

**ROTE:** A suspected Indonesian people-smuggling kingpin went on trial yesterday accused of organizing an illegal migrant boat journey in a case that sparked a diplomatic row with Australia. Abraham Louhenapessy, commonly known as "Captain Bram", is allegedly a notorious figure in the illicit trade that involves sending boatloads of migrants from Indonesia, a staging post on long-established people-smuggling routes, typically to Australia. Australian officials say he has been involved in sending boatloads of migrants from Indonesia to the country as far back as 1999. He has been arrested several times in Indonesia but has only ever served one brief jail term. In the latest case, Louhenapessy appeared in court on the eastern island of Rote for allegedly buying a boat and helping to find a crew for a voyage intended to take 65 migrants to New Zealand in 2015. He faces up to 10 years in jail if found guilty of breaking laws designed to stop people-smuggling.

### Bangladesh arrests IT expert linked to siege

**DHAKA:** Bangladeshi security forces yesterday arrested a computer engineer said to run the social media operations for a group accused of mounting a deadly attack on a Dhaka cafe. Ashfaq-e-Azam and three other suspects were detained in a raid in the capital in which guns, explosives and ammunition were also seized, officials said. "Azam is the information technology chief of the Sarwar-Tamim group," said Mufti Mahmud Khan, a spokesman for the elite Rapid Action Battalion which carried out the raid. Sarwar-Tamim is a new faction of Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), the Islamist outfit blamed for a string of deadly attacks including a siege at an upscale Dhaka cafe last July in which 22 people—mostly foreigners—were killed. Azam, 25, had been involved with the group since 2011, running its website and social media accounts, a senior official at the anti-terrorism battalion said.

## RECORD YEAR FOR MYANMAR METH PILL SEIZURES

**YANGON:** Myanmar police made record meth pill seizures last year, data obtained by AFP showed yesterday, underscoring the country's ongoing and pivotal role as a major global narcotics producer. Police confiscated a record 98 million tablets, nearly double the 50 million seized in 2015, according to police data. Myanmar is one of the world's top drug-producing nations, churning out huge quantities of methamphetamine as well as heroin, opium and cannabis—much of it bound for consumers in Asia and beyond.

Most production takes place in remote border territories controlled by ethnic minority militias or rival armed groups allied to the powerful military. While low-level smugglers are often arrested, few cartel leaders have ever been brought to justice over the past three decades. Given the powerful vested interests involved, tackling the trade remains a major hurdle for the newly installed civilian administration of Aung San Suu Kyi. Myanmar's cheap and abundant meth pills—which contain methamphetamine in low dosages—are

hugely popular across Asia, from wealthy clubbers to exhausted blue-collar employees working long shifts.

In addition to the tablets, documents show some 759 kilograms of heroin, 945 kilograms of opium and 2,464 kilograms of pure methamphetamine—the stronger variant known as “ice”—were seized last year. Drug prosecutions jumped from some 8,800 in 2015 to 13,500. Narcotics officers say the latest figures show policing is making inroads into the problem. “But still trafficking is increasing,” one senior officer said, asking not to be named. The officer said key hurdles include a lack of manpower and high-quality detection technology, plus the difficulties of working in areas controlled by armed ethnic minority groups.

“It certainly tallies with our data,” Jeremy Douglas, regional representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, said adding Myanmar saw a noticeable increase in meth pill production over the past year and a leap in the stronger crystalline variant. Trafficking routes through the country were also shifting, he

said, with smugglers targeting growing domestic demand as well as looking for new markets to the west of Myanmar. Neighboring Thailand yesterday announced two major drug seizures made during raids last week. In the southern province of Hat Yai police found 87 kilograms of methamphetamine and 25 kilograms of cannabis.

They also confiscated 720,000 amphetamine tablets and arrested three local suspects in a raid in the northeastern province of Udon Thani. Officers said the three men were part of a network run by Xaysana Keopimpha, a Laos national detained at Bangkok's main airport last month and described by Thai police as a regional drug kingpin. Thailand, Myanmar and Laos share a porous, remote and largely mountainous zone dubbed “The Golden Triangle” which has long been a major drugs-producing region. While seizures are fairly common, analysts say the overall battle is hampered by endemic official corruption and drug syndicates' ability to bounce back from raids with ramped-up production. —AFP



Bags of ‘yaba’ tablets, or methamphetamine mixed with caffeine, are displayed for the media in front of the Narcotics Suppression Division in Bangkok yesterday. —AFP



**PUNCAK:** Iraqi asylum seeker Ayman (right) chats with his brother (left) and friend during an interview with The Associated Press at a temporary home in Puncak, West Java, Indonesia. —AP

## TRUMP POLICY DIMS HOPE FOR REFUGEES IN INDONESIA LIMBO

**PUNCAK:** After getting death threats from Al-Shabab militants, Mohamed Dahir Saeed and his wife fled their native Somalia with plans to seek safety in Australia. They arrived in nearby Indonesia, only to be told “the sea is closed” for anyone attempting to make the perilous boat journey south. That was two years ago. Now another chance may be disappearing for Saeed and thousands of other asylum seekers who have made it to this Southeast Asian country with dreams of finding better lives elsewhere.

“The majority of people here, the US takes them,” Saeed said. “Now in US they say no Somalian, no Iraq, no Syrian, no Iran, no Sudan. ... So maybe we will go to another place. I hope,” he said, seated outside his tiny house perched above the Ciliwung River. For thousands of asylum seekers and refugees from Iraq, Somalia and other conflict-scarred countries, Indonesia is an often yearslong hiatus as they wait for the US or another country to accept them. President Donald Trump's travel ban on citizens of seven Muslim countries and suspension of the US refugee program has now made their tenuous situation even more uncertain.

Indonesia is home to nearly 14,000 men, women and children seeking resettlement in other countries, according to UNHCR, the UN refugee agency. About 7,500 have been recognized as refugees, giving them the prized UN card that inches them closer to realizing their dreams of a better life. But last year just 610 were resettled in other countries such as the US, Canada, Germany and New Zealand. At least 2,700 of those in limbo here are from countries listed in Trump's 90-day travel ban: Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Syria and Libya.

Asylum seekers in general are affected by

his 120-day suspension of the US refugee program, and by his decision to cut the number of refugees the US accepts this budget year by more than half, to 50,000. Some 3 million refugees have been resettled in the US since Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980, according to the Pew Research Center. Saeed, 31, said that if he had the chance he'd tell the US president that as a Somalian he's a “peace man.” He said he left Somalia after Al-Shabab militants fighting the government pressured him to join their group, and that one of the militants wanted Saeed's wife for himself.

### Possibility no longer exists

“Now in Somalia there is a war from Al-Shabab and government. So these Somalis who run from Somalia, they need peace because they need to work, they need to feed their family. They are looking for a better life.” Indonesia, a vast but poor archipelago country of more than 250 million people in Southeast Asia, might seem an unlikely refuge. Initially, many people fled there because they believed it would be a jumping-off point to reach Australia by boat. That possibility no longer exists: Since September 2013, the Australian government has turned back the often barely seaworthy vessels.

Puncak, a small West Java city nestled beneath a mountain that tempers Indonesia's tropical heat, is a magnet for men from the Middle East seeking sex and a pleasant climate. Because of its proximity to Jakarta, where asylum seekers can be summoned for a refugee interview, and because of the low cost of living, many families from Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Pakistan and other nations also scrape out an existence there. —AP

## INDONESIAN WOMEN SEEKING TO BECOME SUICIDE BOMBERS

**JAKARTA:** Indonesian women are taking on a more active role in violent extremism, with some seeking to become Islamic State (IS) group suicide bombers, a leading security think tank has warned. The growing problem was highlighted after the arrest in December of two women with links to IS allegedly planning suicide attacks in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, according to a report from the Jakarta-based Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC). Many from Indonesia—which has long struggled with Islamic militancy—have flocked to join IS in the Middle East, while radicals in the country have pledged allegiance to the group and attacks and plots have been linked to the jihadists.

But the increasing eagerness of Indonesian women to get involved in radicalism themselves, rather than merely support their extremist husbands, poses new risks, said the report from IPAC, which is headed by veteran Indonesian security analyst Sidney Jones. “Indonesian women in extremist organizations are now catching up with the lethal practices of their sisters in other parts of the world,” according to the study. Increasing female involvement is linked to the appeal of IS but also to the growing sophistication of social media, which allows more women to read the jihadists' propaganda and take part in

radical chat forums, said the report, which was released late Tuesday.

The most high-profile cases were the arrest of two former domestic workers, Dian Yulia Novi and Ika Puspitasari, who had allegedly volunteered to become suicide bombers in Jakarta and Bali. Leading Indonesian IS radical Bahrin Naim, who has been accused of directing a series of mostly botched terror plots in his homeland from Syria, had given them instructions and financial support, the report said. Authorities detained Novi and her husband the night before a planned attack on the presidential palace in Jakarta and later picked up Puspitasari, who was part of the same network and had been planning to carry out a bombing on the holiday island of Bali, the report said.

Other women have been arrested for offences including setting up a pro-IS charity, helping to make a bomb, and being fighters with a militant group on Sulawesi island. IPAC called for the Indonesian government to try to find out more about female radical networks, including interviewing the many women who have been deported from Turkey after allegedly trying to cross into Syria to join IS. “The need to know more about Indonesian extremist women suddenly has become urgent,” it said. Indonesia's national counter-terror agency declined to comment. —AFP

## BANGLADESHI POLICE WARNS BOOKSELLERS

‘DON'T OFFEND MUSLIMS’

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh's largest book fair began in Dhaka yesterday, with police warning organizers against selling books that hurt “religious sentiment” in the Muslim-majority country. The month-long Ekushey Book Fair draws hundreds of thousands of visitors to the crowded capital, making it one of Bangladesh's keynote cultural events and giving readers a chance to interact with authors.

But the fair has incurred the wrath of Islamist extremists, who hacked and critically injured a top secular writer in 2004 and killed a US-based atheist blogger moments after he signed books for readers in 2015. Last year a 73-year-old publisher was arrested and his stall at the fair was shut down after a book called “Islam Debate” triggered protests by Islamists who said the work was offensive to Muslims. Police said they have tightened security for the annual fair in a park on the campus of Dhaka University, the country's main secular bastion.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police Commissioner Asaduzzaman Mia visited the fairground on Tuesday and asked the authorities to “scrutinize” the books before they are cleared to be displayed at stalls. “Therefore no book hurts civic, social and religious values,” Mia said, according to a statement posted on the Dhaka police website. “Hurting religious sentiment is a punishable offence.” The Dhaka police chief offered “special security” to writers and publishers and said that the park, except for the fairground, would be vacated by late afternoon as part of a series of safety measures. There was no immediate com-

ment from the Bangla Academy, a state-run publisher and research-based organization which has been organizing the event for decades. But one leading publisher reacted angrily to the police's decision to scrutinize the content of books, saying such a move was “brutal and uncivilized”. Robin Ahsan, owner of the Shraban Prakashani publisher, told the New Age daily there was no other country

in the world where “police are the watchdog over books”, adding that such action would encourage extremists to launch attacks on writers and publishers.

Bangladesh has been reeling from a wave of attacks by Islamist extremists who have killed some 80 people, including around a dozen secular bloggers and writers. Police say the writers were tar-

getted for their blogs or books which were critical of Islam or the Prophet Muhammad. Many of these attacks have been claimed by the Islamic State group or a local wing of Al-Qaeda. But Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's secular government has blamed local militants and denies that international jihadists have gained any foothold in the country. —AFP



**DHAKA:** Bangladeshi shoppers read books at a stall during the country's largest bookfair in Dhaka yesterday. Bangladesh's largest book fair began in Dhaka yesterday, with police warning organizers against selling books that hurt ‘religious sentiment’ in the Muslim-majority country. —AFP

## FATALITIES SOAR FOR AFGHANISTAN FORCES

**WASHINGTON:** The death rate among Afghan troops and police soared last year as the Kabul government's overall control of the country declined significantly, an official US watchdog said in a report yesterday. The grim new statistics paint a picture of a beleaguered nation still in the grip of a security crisis, despite many years and billions of dollars spent building up Afghanistan's army and police.

According to the US government's Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), 6,785 Afghan soldiers and police officers were killed between January 1 and November 12, with another 11,777 wounded. That is an increase of about 35 percent from all of 2015, when some 5,000

security forces were killed. The Afghan forces have a total of nearly 316,000 men, according to SIGAR. “We are very concerned,” said General Charles Cleveland, spokesman for NATO forces in Afghanistan.

He blamed “poor leadership” for the casualties as well as corruption, though he noted many officials have been removed at all levels. “Afghan forces continue to be incredibly resilient and they made success in achieving their main goals, such as securing the populated areas,” he added, saying there had been progress but it would take years.

Afghan police and army units in 2015 took over from NATO the task of providing security for the country. Their first year was something of a disaster, the

nadir coming when the regional capital Kunduz in northern Afghanistan was briefly captured by the Taliban. US and NATO officials had been hoping the Afghans would fare better in 2016, but clearly the security situation remains perilous. The Pentagon, however, insists the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) are improving and points to successful efforts to repel Taliban attacks on regional capitals.

### Losing their grip

Most of the fatalities among the ANDSF came from “direct-fire” assaults, meaning local troops were directly attacked by the Taliban and other insurgent groups, instead of dying in roadside bomb and mine blasts. In addition to the high death rate in the ANDSF, the report found that the number of Afghan districts under insurgent control or influence is increasing. US Forces Afghanistan reported that 57.2 percent of the country's 407 districts were under Afghan government control or influence as of November 15, the report states. That marks a drop from the 63.4 percent reported in late August, and a nearly 15-point decline since November 2015. A Western observer who has lived in Afghanistan for years said that the provinces under Taliban control could ultimately split from those held by the Kabul government. “Everybody here thinks this country will collapse in a matter of two or three years,” he said. The report also found civilian casualties remain high.

According to a UN body, there were 8,397 conflict-related civilian casualties between January 1 and September 30, a slight drop compared to the same period in 2015. The report also cites an Asia Foundation survey last year that found only 29.3 percent of respondents nationwide felt their country was moving in the right direction, down from 36.7 percent in 2015. “This represents the lowest level of optimism recorded since the survey began in 2004,” the SIGAR report notes. The Taliban have been especially active in Helmand province—a global center for opium production, which is on the rise. —AFP



**KANDAHAR:** An Afghan shepherd herds his sheep along a dirt road in the Kandahar province. —AFP

## 'CRIMINALS NOT HUMAN,' SAYS PHILIPPINE JUSTICE SECRETARY

**MANILA:** The Philippine justice secretary yesterday brushed aside accusations that police killings of thousands of drug suspects may be crimes against humanity, stating criminals were not human. Amnesty International earlier in the day accused police of murdering defenseless people or paying others to kill as part of President Rodrigo Duterte's drug war, and said the deaths may amount to crimes against humanity.

"The criminals, the drug lords, drug pushers, they are not humanity. They are not human," Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre told reporters when asked to comment on the Amnesty report. "In other words, how can that be when your war is only against those drug lords, drug addicts, drug pushers. You consider them humanity? I do not."

Among a litany of alleged crimes, Amnesty accused police of shooting dead

defenseless people, fabricating evidence, paying assassins to murder drug addicts and stealing from those they killed or the victims' relatives. It also said police were being paid by their superiors to kill, and documented victims as young as eight years old. "The police are behaving like the criminal underworld that they are supposed to be enforcing the law against," the report said. Police have reported killing 2,555 people since Duterte took office seven months ago and immediately launched his war on crime, while nearly 4,000 others have died in unexplained circumstances, according to official figures.

Duterte has repeatedly made comments echoing similar sentiments to Acuirre's, urging police to kill drug users as well as traffickers. "Crime against humanity? In the first place, I'd like to be frank with you: are they humans? What is your definition of a human being?" Duterte said in August last year referring to drug offenders. "Human rights? Use it properly in the right context if you have the brains." The next month Duterte said he would be "happy to slaughter" three million drug addicts, and likened his campaign to Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's efforts to exterminate Jews in Europe.

However the Philippine National Police and the presidential office issued statements yesterday rejecting many of the assertions in the Amnesty report. "The PNP has always observed and upheld respect for human rights," a police statement said. National police chief Ronald Dela Rosa also rejected

accusations that the police officers were getting secret bonuses for killing alleged drug offenders. He insisted only two percent of the police force was corrupt.

### Killings persist in Manila

A young man's body lay in a pool of blood, surrounded by bullet casings. A loved one rushed to the scene in the dark, run-down Manila neighborhood and howled in anguish as onlookers huddled behind a police cordon. It's a scene that has been replayed thousands of times in Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's brutal war on drugs over the past seven months.

But this was on Tuesday night, a day after Philippine police were ordered to halt anti-drugs operations that have left more than 2,500 people dead in what police say are shootouts. Thousands of users and small-time dealers have also been killed outside of the police anti-drugs missions. Human rights groups say many are by assassins paid by police, or are police themselves. Police deny involvement in extra-judicial killings.

Aldrin de Guzman, 24, was gunned down outside his home before midnight on Tuesday in circumstances all-too-familiar for the dwellers of Manila's poorest neighborhoods. Another man was shot and killed in a crumbling shophouse not too far away, at around the same time. Mystery gunmen on a motorcycle shot de Guzman repeatedly, according to police, following the same pattern as thousands of other vigilante-style

killings of drug dealers and users. De Guzman's mother, Elisa, said her son had no enemies, but had used drugs in the past. "That's a long time ago. If the person is already reforming, they still do this?" she said, tears building in her eyes.

"They should stop all these shootings... many are caught in between, just like my son. They should stop claiming lives." No witnesses saw the killers. The attack bore the same hallmarks as many of the other killings over the past seven months activists believe are carried out by hit men working in cahoots with police, or by officers in plain clothes. The Philippine National Police (PNP) has said allegations that hit men were on the police payroll "are obviously not the norm" and the PNP was making "significant breakthroughs" in investigations into killings.

### Killing in a shophouse

Duterte has suspended drug operations to allow a purge of corrupt police following the kidnapping and killing of a South Korean businessman by counter-narcotics officers. He has handed over charge of the anti-drugs campaign to the Philippine Drugs Enforcement Agency, a body a fraction of the size of the national police. A report by Amnesty International yesterday said its investigation showed drug killings were "systematic, planned and organized", and police had even received money for murders and for delivering bodies to funeral homes. —Agencies



**MANILA:** Photo shows a body of an alleged drug user on the ground after unidentified gunmen shot him dead in Manila. —AFP

## 'ABDUCTION' OF CHINESE BILLIONAIRE SPARKS FEAR

### NEWSPAPER ADVERT PLEDGES LOYALTY TO CHINA

**HONG KONG:** The mystery over the reported abduction from Hong Kong of a Chinese billionaire deepened yesterday after a newspaper advert appeared in his name pledging loyalty to China, in a case that has heightened fears over Beijing's meddling. The whereabouts of financier Xiao Jianhua-one of China's richest men-are unclear after reports in overseas Chinese-lan-

Ming Pao, attributed to Xiao, said he had "always loved the (ruling Communist) party and the country" and would soon meet with media. "I personally believe the Chinese government is civilized and has rule of law," the advert read. "I have not been kidnapped." Xiao, who said in the statement he was a Canadian citizen, insisted he was being treated for an illness overseas.

disappearance of five booksellers known for publishing salacious titles about Beijing's leadership in 2015 prompted widespread criticism China had overstepped that line.

### 'Credible suspicion'

One of the men, Lee Bo, vanished from Hong Kong, triggering international condemnation and local protests. Lee always insisted he had

The South China Morning Post reported Xiao was currently in mainland China, not receiving medical treatment, and was only in contact with his family. Xiao had wanted to move some of his businesses to Japan after feeling unsafe in Hong Kong. In a news site said. His wife was now in Japan after reporting his case to Hong Kong police then withdrawing it, the report said.

According to the Financial Times Xiao was led away by Chinese public security agents from an apartment at the Four Seasons. The hotel said there was an "active police investigation" when asked about the case. Hong Kong police said they had received a request for assistance over a "mainland citizen" Saturday, but a family member had later retracted it. They said the person it referred to had crossed a border control point between Hong Kong and China on Friday.

The Canadian consulate said it was aware of the reports and its officials were "in contact" with authorities. Xiao said in the Ming Pao statement he was a permanent resident of Hong Kong, and held a diplomatic passport. In 2015, he was made "ambassador-at-large" for Antigua and Barbuda, according to news site Caribbean360, which pictured Xiao at the time with the country's prime minister Gaston Browne. Hong Kong-based analyst Willy Lam said Xiao may have been targeted because he knew "potentially embarrassing details" about financial actions involving major Chinese political clans.

China's anti-corruption drive was launched after Xi took power in 2012 and has brought down government officials and corporate executives. Billionaire Guo Guangchang, chairman of one of the country's biggest private-sector conglomerates Fosun, vanished from public view in 2015 in connection with an investigation by authorities, and then re-emerged. In 2016 the chairman of one of China's most prominent fashion firms also disappeared, returning to work a week later amid speculation he had been caught up in the anti-corruption campaign. —AFP



**HONG KONG:** Xiao Jianhua, a Chinese-born Canadian billionaire reads a book outside the International Finance Centre in Hong Kong. Mystery surrounds the whereabouts of Xiao reportedly taken away from his Hong Kong hotel by mainland police, in a case that could rekindle concerns about overreach by Chinese law enforcement in the semiautonomous city. —AP

guage media that he was taken from Hong Kong by mainland security agents last week. The reports suggested Xiao's disappearance was part of China's ongoing anti-corruption campaign, which some critics believe has been used to target President Xi Jinping's political opponents.

Xiao had been staying at Hong Kong's Four Seasons hotel and was looked after by female bodyguards, local media reported. A front-page advert in Hong Kong newspaper

The founder of Beijing-based Tomorrow Group, Xiao was previously reported to have denied allegations he fled to Hong Kong in 2014 to escape the corruption crackdown. He is said to have acted as a broker for the Chinese leadership, including for Xi's family. But overseas Chinese-language news site Bowen Press said Xiao could also have been connected to an "anti-Xi coalition". It is illegal for mainland agents to operate in semi-autonomous Hong Kong, but the

gone over the border voluntarily. Hong Kong's security bureau said the government "will not allow non-Hong Kong law enforcement officers to take law enforcement actions in Hong Kong". But James To of the Democratic Party said there was a "credible suspicion" Hong Kong's "one country, two systems" deal had been breached. "After the Lee Bo fiasco people are very concerned about whether Hong Kong residents or people lawfully staying in Hong Kong will be protected," To said.



**MANILA:** Boys hitch a ride on a pedicad at the Divisoria market in Manila. — AFP

## PHILIPPINES COMMUNIST REBELS END CEASEFIRE BUT SUPPORT PEACE TALKS

**MANILA:** The Maoist-led rebel group in the Philippines said yesterday it was terminating a unilateral ceasefire it declared five months ago and resuming a protracted guerrilla warfare that has killed tens of thousands of people. The New People's Army said in a statement that the ceasefire agreed to last August would expire on Feb 10, but added the rebels would still support peace talks with the government of President Rodrigo Duterte. "In our experience and in the experience of other peoples, it is possible to negotiate while fighting until the substantive agreements are forged to address the roots of the armed conflict and lay the basis for a just and lasting peace," the group said.

It said the decision was made because the government failed to comply with its "obligation" to pardon and release all political prisoners and "has treacherously taken advantage" of the ceasefire to encroach on its territory. Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, said he was "dismayed" with the move, which came after peace negotiators agreed to further discuss a bilateral ceasefire. But he said he would recommend to Duterte that the government's unilateral ceasefire be maintained to provide an "enabling and conducive environ-

ment" to peace talks. "The road to peace is not easy to traverse. What is important is that we all stay the course," Dureza said.

Defence Minister Delfin Lorenzana said in a statement that the army will continue to enforce the government's unilateral truce and "will not actively operate against the New People's Army while our ceasefire is in effect". He said soldiers will defend themselves if attacked and will pursue all lawless groups to maintain peace and order. The communists accused the military of occupying 500 barrios, or town districts, that are supposedly within their control and that government forces were allegedly engaged in "hostile actions" and other "offensive operations".

Military spokesman Brigadier General Restituto Padilla said the NPA was still involved in extortion, recruitment and attacks on plantations, mines and other businesses. He cited nine incidents showing rebel violations of their own truce, including abducting a soldier in the south and killing two others in a northern province. From September to November last year, the military reported zero armed encounters with communist guerrillas but it has observed an increase in rebel attacks in the last two months. —Reuters

## JAPAN SECURES EXTRA COST CUTS ON US F-35 FIGHTER JET PACKAGE

**TOKYO:** Tokyo has secured cost cuts on support equipment for its next batch of six US F-35 stealth fighter aircraft of around \$100 million, according to sources and Japanese budget papers, on top of savings being finalized for all buyers of the high-tech jets. The deal represents a rare case of Tokyo negotiating down the price of military hardware from its US ally and underscores progress for the Lockheed Martin Corp - run F-35 program, which has faced criticisms over cost overruns and other problems.

US President Donald Trump, who lashed the program as "out of control" in December, said on Monday he had been able to shave some \$600 million from the latest US deal to buy about 90 F-35s from Lockheed. But defense analysts and sources downplayed news of those cuts, saying the discount hailed by Trump was in line with what had been flagged by Lockheed for months and would apply to other countries committed to the program. Lockheed and the Pentagon did not directly respond to questions regarding the Japanese deal. A spokesperson for the US Defense Department office which runs the F-35 program said negotiations over the current batch of fighters, known in the industry as LRIP 10, was continuing.

"For every nation that buys an F-35 in LRIP 10, the base price of the F-35 will be the lowest in F-35 history," Lockheed spokesman Michael Rein said. The price of the F-35 has been dropping with each new batch as Lockheed and the US government ramp up production, helping to lower overall costs. Four sources told Reuters Japan had further trimmed the price for its latest order, largely on

ground support costs such as parts, logistics and technical assistance. "We went through each item in detail and negotiated with the US," said one of the sources in Japan with knowledge of talks.

### Costs down

In a budget request last year, Japan's Ministry of Defense pegged the price of the six F-35s at 15.7 billion yen (\$136.81 million) each. That had been cut to 14.6 billion yen when the budget was approved in December, in line with the 6-7 percent plane reduction flagged by the Pentagon late last year. The cost of support equipment dropped significantly, to 30.9 billion yen from 42.3 billion yen, according to the publicly available documents. Cost cuts on such deals are typically done by removing some equipment or swapping out expensive components for cheaper ones. Officials from a new Japanese defense procurement agency and Pentagon personnel met several times in Tokyo between August and December before agreeing on the lower price, said one of the sources, who were not authorized to speak publicly about the deal.

The total cost for the Japanese deal was just over \$1 billion, around 12 percent lower than budgeted in August. The cost to the United States for its latest F-35 contract is expected to be around \$9 billion, with the price per plane falling below \$100 million. Japan's higher budgeted per aircraft costs of around \$128 million include the aircraft's engines and additional funds to have 38 of the 42 F-35s it plans to buy assembled in Japan by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries. —Reuters

## NEW PENTAGON CHIEF SEEKS TO REASSURE NERVOUS ASIAN ALLIES

**WASHINGTON:** By visiting Japan and South Korea on his first official overseas trip, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis is seeking to reinforce key alliances after US President Donald Trump's campaign-trail complaints that defense treaties disadvantaged the United States. The visits also reflect the urgency of concerns on both sides of the Pacific about North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Mattis, a retired four-star Marine general, inherited a North Korea problem that has grown more worrisome as the communist nation's leader, Kim Jong Un, claims progress toward fielding a ballistic missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the United States. Former Secretary of State John Kerry said in early January the US may need "more forceful ways" of dealing with North Korea if it develops a ballistic missile of intercontinental range.

Mattis, who entered office hours after Trump on Jan 20, took off from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland before daybreak and is due to arrive today in Seoul, where he will meet with his coun-

terpart, Defense Minister Han Min Koo, amid a swirl of political turmoil. President Park Geun-hye was impeached in December and the constitutional court is reviewing whether to formally end her rule. Later in the week, Mattis is to hold talks in Tokyo with Defense Minister Tomomi Inada and other senior Japanese government officials.

North Korea is expected to be at or near the top of Mattis' agenda. Beyond its long-range missile aspirations, the North already has missiles capable of hitting South Korea as well as US bases in Japan. Trump said during the campaign that while he supports the alliances with Japan and South Korea, he would not rule out abandoning them if they refuse to pay more for their own defense. "It could be that Japan will have to defend itself against North Korea," he told a campaign rally in August. The first foreign leader he met as president-elect was Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe; they'll meet again in Washington on Feb 10.

Mattis has said little in public since taking office. But he has left no doubt that America's

security alliances, including those in Asia, are a top priority. He is the first recently retired military officer to serve as defense secretary since George C Marshall in 1950-51 during the Korean War. Pentagon chiefs regularly visit South Korea and Japan, reflecting their status as US treaty allies. Chuck Hagel, who visited the heavily guarded Demilitarized Zone between North and South Korea as defense secretary in September 2013, said in an interview that Mattis is making the right move.

"It was a smart decision" to visit these allies early, Hagel said. He believes officials in Tokyo and Seoul are wondering: "Can we rely on the US? What is the future here?" The US has about 28,000 troops stationed in South Korea and about 50,000 in Japan. Hagel said Tokyo and other US allies in Asia have been particularly upset by Trump's decision to pull the US out of a Pacific Rim trade initiative, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the centerpiece of former President Barack Obama's effort to strengthen US economic ties in the region. —AFP

## FOR ISRAELI SETTLERS, KUSHNER'S THEIR MAN

Continued from Page 1

It will be more biased to the Israeli position in an era where Israel is more extreme."

Palestinians want the West Bank and Gaza Strip for an independent state, with its capital in East Jerusalem. Israel has built about 120 settlements in the West Bank. About 350,000 settlers live there and a further 200,000 in East Jerusalem, among about 2.6 million Palestinians. Most countries consider the settlements illegal and an obstacle to peace as they reduce and fragment the territory Palestinians need for a viable state.

Israel disagrees, citing biblical, historical and political connections to the land and security interests. Bet El, a community of 1,300 families perched on a hillside where many believe God promised Jacob the land, has been financed in part by donations from American backers. Among its donors have been the Donald J Trump Foundation, which gave \$10,000 in 2003, and the foundation of Charles and Seryl Kushner, the parents of Jared, which gave \$38,000 in 2013, US tax records show.

The New York-based American Friends of Bet El Institutions hosts dinners to raise funds for the settlement, which over-

looks the Palestinian city Ramallah. Kushner has left it up to his father-in-law to comment on what role he might play. "Jared is such a good kid and he'll make a deal with Israel that no one else can," Trump told The Times of London newspaper last month. "He's a natural dealmaker - everyone likes him."

Middle East analysts say the settlement donations by Kushner's family foundation are not necessarily deal-breakers. After decades of failed negotiations, the real test is whether he is prepared to rethink the way the Middle East peace process is conducted, said Hugh Lovatt, a fellow of the European Council on Foreign Relations. "If he reverts to pushing for a process for the sake of process and diplomatic prestige, then he will prove no more successful than his predecessors," Lovatt told Reuters. "If he acquiesces to Israeli territorial demands and gives a green light to more settlement activity, he could even do irreparable damage to the prospects of long-term peace."

A key diplomatic factor will be whether the Trump administration commits itself to a two-state solution - Israel and an independent Palestinian state living side-by-side. This remains firmly the goal for the Palestinians and, according to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israelis. — Reuters



GAZA: Ramadan Edwan, a Palestinian barber, uses fire in a hair-straightening technique with a client at his salon in the Rafah refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. —AFP

## TRUMP NAMES PICK FOR TOP COURT

Continued from Page 1

Gorsuch says he was on the ski slopes when he learned of his mentor's death last February: "I couldn't see the rest of the way down the mountain for the tears," he remarked in a speech soon after. For Trump, the selection is payback to evangelical Christian and conservative Republicans who backed his bid for the presidency - at times reluctantly. "Millions of voters said this was the single most important issue to them when they voted for me for president," Trump said. "I am a man of my word. I will do as I say - something that the American people have been asking for from Washington for a very, very long time."

The Supreme Court is the final arbiter of many of the most sensitive issues of US life and law. Its members are named to life terms so their influence is long-lasting. Given the advanced age of several sitting justices, Trump could potentially make several appointments during his term, shaping the court's direction for a generation. Once confirmed, however, justices enjoy independence and some have proved politically unpredictable.

With an eye to a bitter Congressional fight, Gorsuch presented himself as someone who is fair-minded and self-deprecating. "A judge who likes every outcome he reaches is very likely a bad judge, stretching for results he prefers rather than those the law demands," he joked.

Much Democratic opposition to Gorsuch is likely due to the refusal by Congressional Republicans, following Scalia's death, to give then president Barack Obama's court pick a confirmation hearing. Democrats, who are in a minority in both chambers of Congress, are still smarting from Republican treatment of Obama's pick, Merrick Garland. Garland has since returned to his old job as chief judge of the US Court of Appeals for the

District of Columbia Circuit in Washington, but Democrats could yet pick a fight.

Although Republicans hold 52 seats in the Senate, they need 60 to confirm a nominee. That means Gorsuch must be able to win some Democratic votes - a task made tougher by the row over Trump's ban on travelers from several Muslim countries. "A little more than a week into the Trump presidency, the new administration has violated our core values, challenged the separation of powers, and tested the very fabric of our Constitution in unprecedented fashion," said Senate minority leader Chuck Schumer.

Schumer said it was up to Gorsuch to "prove himself to be within the legal mainstream" and "vigorously defend the Constitution" from presidential abuses. He added: "Given his record, I have very serious doubts about Judge Gorsuch's ability to meet this standard."

House Democratic minority leader Nancy Pelosi called Gorsuch "hostile to women's rights" and said the consequences of confirming him "could not be more serious or far-reaching". Democrat Elizabeth Warren said that Trump "had the chance to select a consensus nominee," but instead chose someone who "has sided with employers who deny wages, improperly fire workers, or retaliate against whistleblowers for misconduct."

Republicans welcomed the decision. "He has an impressive background and a long record of faithfully applying the law and the Constitution," said Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell. "When the Senate previously confirmed him to the appellate court, the bipartisan support in the Senate was so overwhelming, a roll call vote was not even required," McConnell added. Senator Ted Cruz described Gorsuch as "a home run", and promised to thwart any move by Democrats to prevent his appointment. — AFP

## DELAYS IN HEALTH INSURANCE TO END AFTER...

Continued from Page 1

Saeedi stressed that out of its strategic partnership with the health ministry, PSC had not cost public funds a single dinar and that it had been collecting health insurance fees

and depositing them in the health ministry's account at the Central Bank daily in return for nominal fees collected from expats per transaction. Saeedi added that he will meet Harbi on Sunday to review the documents PSC had previously sent to the health ministry to resume the service.

## EMIRATI FOREIGN MINISTER DEFENDS TRUMP...

Continued from Page 1

Sheikh Abdullah and Lavrov discussed a range of regional issues including the war in Syria during their meeting, which included Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit. Trump's order also includes a suspension of refugee admissions for 120 days, and bans Syrian refugees from entering indefinitely.

Lavrov called for Syria's return to the Arab League, saying its membership would allow the organization to help find a political solution to the country's conflict. "The League could play a more important, more effective role if the Syrian government was part of the organization," Lavrov, whose country is a key ally of the Damascus regime and also a broker in peace efforts, told the press conference in the Emirati capital. He said Syria was a "legitimate" member of the United Nations and yet "cannot take part in discussions inside the Arab League". "This does not help our joint (peace) efforts," said Lavrov.

But Aboul Gheit, speaking at the same press conference, ruled out an early return of Syria to the Cairo-based organization. Any decision was up to the League's 21 other mem-

bers, he said, adding that the issue was not on the current agenda and would only be raised when "a political settlement" was in sight for Syria's almost six-year-old civil war.

The Arab League suspended Syria's membership at the end of 2011 following months of brutal repression of anti-regime demonstrations and an opposition movement supported by Gulf monarchies. Turning to Trump's proposal of establishing safe zones for refugees in Syria and Yemen, another war-torn Arab nation, Lavrov expressed skepticism. "The Trump administration still has to work out a concrete approach. The idea of safe zones was studied at the onset of the Syrian crisis, something that would reproduce the sad experience of Libya," he said. "Everyone understood this when Libya was destroyed," the Russian foreign minister said.

But Lavrov said he remained convinced that Russia could "re-establish a complete and regular dialogue with the United States to lead to pragmatic results towards settling the situation in Syria, Libya and Yemen". He said such cooperation would "not be dictated by the ideology of democratization for example", referring to the role of past US administrations in the overthrow of dictators such as Iraq's Saddam Hussein and Muammar Gaddafi in Libya. — Agencies

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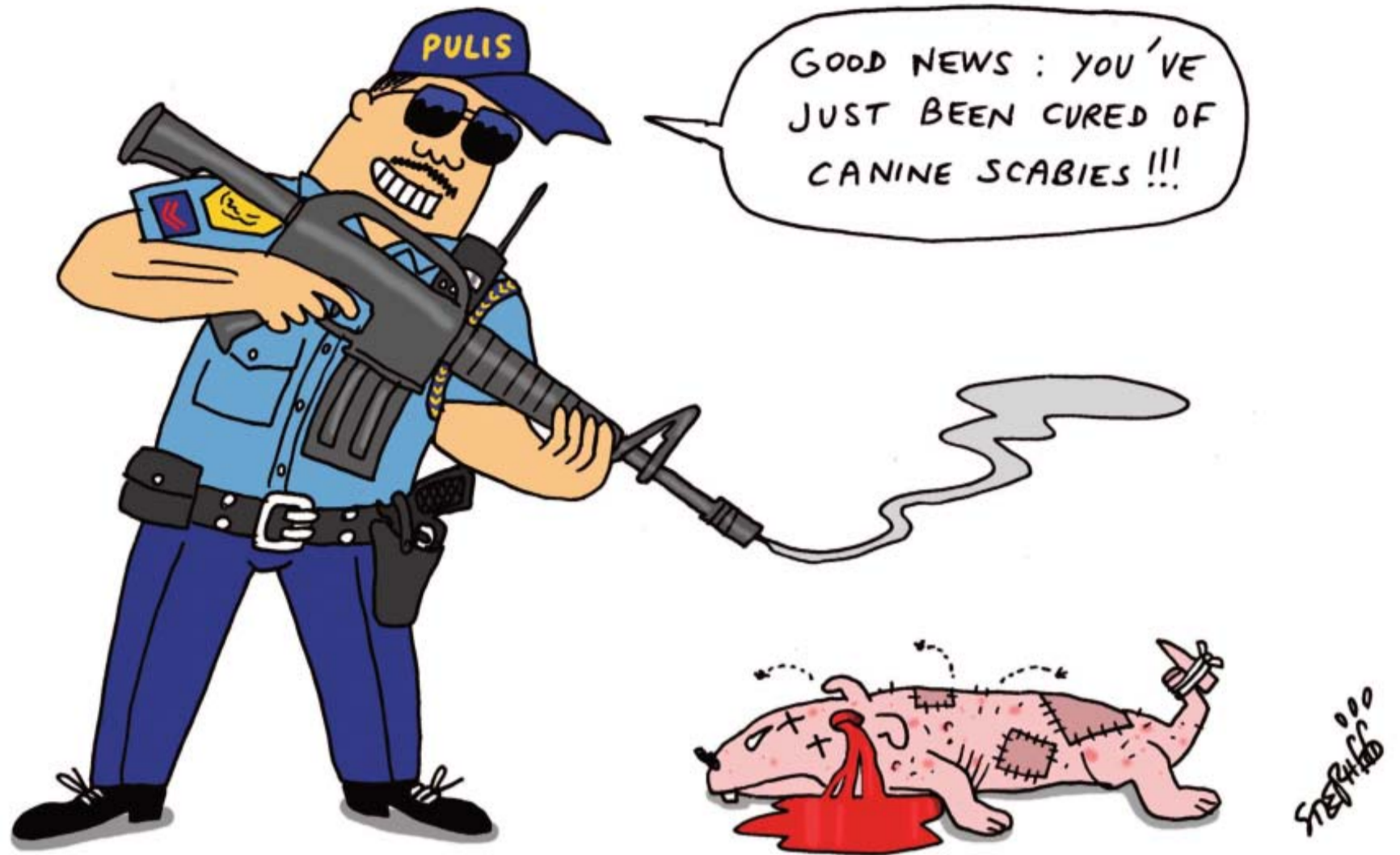
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**PHILIPPINES' WAR ON DRUGS ON THE POOR !!!**



**Focus**

**ONE INCOME FOR ALL: FAR-FETCHED, OR FUTURE FACT?**

It is a utopian idea, literally, but is enjoying a renaissance as politicians and policy wonks grapple with technology-driven changes that could redefine our very understanding of work. If robots and machine intelligence threaten to render many white-collar jobs obsolete, then what will people do for money? Enter the concept of a "universal basic income", a flat sum paid to all regardless of your existing wealth or ability to work. It is one of the rare ideas that has support from both the libertarian right - which favors tearing up the welfare state - and the left wing.

In France, Benoit Hamon has emerged as the surprise Socialist candidate for April's presidential election first round, on a radical program that includes such an income - to be funded in part by a new tax on industrial robots. National or local governments in other countries such as Finland, the Netherlands, Canada, Scotland and Brazil are already evaluating how such a revenue might work in practice.

Finland is furthest down the road. On Jan 1 it started a two-year trial to give 2,000 unemployed Finns a monthly unconditional payment of €560 (\$590). At the least, advocates argue, a basic income could replace the thicket of unemployment benefits currently on offer in many advanced economies. Those can, perversely, discourage people from retraining in new fields or taking on lower paid work that society needs, such as care for the elderly.

**Less is more**

At its most ambitious, the proponents say, it would give everyone a safety net and encourage new modes of thinking: work might no longer define our lives and instead we might find productive existences in volunteering for the greater good, or in the creative arts. "There's a whole new suite of technologies coming on stream and people will need to adapt somehow," said Anthony Painter, director of the Action and Research Centre at the Royal Society of Arts in London, which in December released a research paper after a year-long study into the idea.

"The basic income just gives them a fighting chance," he told AFP, stressing the more immediate benefits that would come from redrawing the existing tangle of support for the jobless. If mass unemployment and fears of technology are modern trends, the concept of a universal income goes back centuries. In his 1516 book "Utopia", English philosopher and statesman Thomas More imagined an ideal republic where private property is abolished and all receive a basic stipend. It is a pre-industrial society, of course, where agriculture is the foundation of the economy and people's needs are basic. Things are more complicated today.

**Who pays?**

A December study by OFCE, an economics think tank linked to the Sciences Po university in Paris, said that to ensure nobody loses out from the elimination of existing benefits, a universal income for French adults would need to start at 785 euros per month. That is a little over what Hamon is proposing - although pollsters give him little chance in the election given the dismal standing of the Socialist party under the departing president, Francois Hollande.

OFCE found that that level would translate into supplemental spending of 480 billion euros, or an extra 22 percentage points of French GDP - "which is unrealistic in practice". There are also philosophical objections. In June, Swiss voters rejected a proposed universal income in a referendum after critics slammed the idea as rewarding the lazy and the feckless. "If a large number of people choose not to work, or to work less, where will the money come from to finance their income?" commented Charles Wyplosz, economics professor at the Geneva Graduate Institute.

But evangelists argue there will be plenty of scope to innovate tax-gathering in the new economy, and say our current regimes for welfare are ridden with inefficiencies that could, with a radical overhaul, free up money for the proposed stipend. "As new technologies replace work, the question for the future is how best to provide economic security for all," economist and former US labor secretary Robert Reich wrote in a blog post. "A universal basic income will almost certainly be part of the answer." —AFP

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**TRUMP ADMIN ON EU COLLISION COURSE**

For seven years, the United States has fought to keep the euro zone intact, urging European officials toward action and supporting international bailout programs to keep the 17-nation currency union from cracking apart. That appears to have changed less than two weeks into Donald Trump's new administration. A sharp shift in tone toward Germany, casting the euro as fuel for that country's massive trade surplus, has raised concerns that the US president's trade-centric world view may see the euro not as a geopolitical plus, but as another needless bit of multilateralism.

While Trump has refrained from commenting directly on the euro, he praised Britain's decision to exit the European Union as a "great thing" and predicted that others would leave the bloc as the result of an influx of refugees. In comments published in the European press on Tuesday, Trump trade adviser Peter Navarro said the "grossly undervalued" euro served as a currency for Germany alone, allowing the country to "exploit" the United States and others.

On Capitol Hill, Treasury Secretary-designate Steven Mnuchin softened the traditional US "strong dollar" mantra, suggesting that the dollar's current strength may be working against what has become perhaps the administration's central economic priority: reviving US manufacturing and exports.

Framed narrowly, that could put the United States on a clear collision course with Germany, the world's fourth-largest economy and home to companies that rival top US industrial giants, as it is with Mexico or China. "There seems to be this desire to go back to a divide and conquer style strategy where the US negotiates against individual countries," said Douglas Rediker, executive chair of International Capital Strategies and a former US executive board member at the International Monetary Fund.

"To single (Germany) out when they don't have authority to manipulate their currency, requires you to make a leap - which is to say that 'We don't care that there actually is a common currency. We are going to take you to account.'" Monetary policy in the euro zone is set by the European Central Bank, and it is the ECB's money creation policies that have contributed to the euro's recent decline in value. Like the US Federal Reserve's quantitative easing, those efforts have been regarded internationally as a reasonable response to the region's dangerous economic weakness - not as an effort to cheapen the currency to gain a trade advantage.

"The question is how far will the new administration go with this?" said Jeromin Zettelmeyer, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics and a former German economic official. Trump could, for example, try to tax German goods to offset any perceived advantage gained from a cheap euro, Zettelmeyer said. An import duty has already been suggested as a way to redress alleged currency manipulation by China. "Trump seems to think that having a trade deficit with another country means that the other country is somehow stealing or at least getting the better deal," said Zettelmeyer.

**Trump concerns on the rise in Europe**

The first days of Trump's administration have touched off a wave of anxiety in Europe. European Council President Donald Tusk went so far as to list the new government in Washington among the chief "external" threats faced by Europe. Criticism of Germany's trade surplus, however, is not unique to Trump. The Treasury Department under President Obama added Germany to a "watch list" because of its large trade imbalances. The US trade deficit with Germany stood at \$77 billion as of 2015, three times that of other European Union countries combined, and \$20 billion more than the deficit with Mexico, one of Trump's other economic nemeses.

But for Obama officials, the aim was to get Germany to spend more and boost its imports of goods from the rest of Europe and the rest of the world. It was not to target the euro's value and, by extension, the steps taken by the ECB to revive European growth more broadly. Partly under American influence, the Group of 20 nations, including China, has in recent years agreed to consensus language that countries would "refrain from competitive devaluations."

They have also generally avoided criticizing each other's central banks. That diplomacy is credited at least in part for China's recent shift toward a more flexible currency regime that organizations like the International Monetary Fund feel have brought the renminbi currency close to fair market value. In their last report on the euro zone, IMF staff said they did think the euro was undervalued. But they said the range could be anywhere from 0 to 10 percent, though likely larger for Germany. "The consequences (of a protectionist United States) affect us Germans as a leading export and import nation particularly hard," Federation of German Industries chief Dieter Kempf said in a speech in Berlin after the Navarro comments. —Reuters

**'TOOTH FAIRY' OR 'DISASTER'? BRITAIN'S TRUMP GAMBLE**

Hailed last week as an ace up the sleeve for Britain in the upcoming Brexit negotiations, relations with US President Donald Trump are turning into a diplomatic headache for Prime Minister Theresa May. Trump's rejection of the European Union and his enthusiasm for a swift post-Brexit trade deal with Britain appeared to boost May, demonstrating that she had other options if EU leaders offered an unattractive deal. "Trump has come along like the tooth fairy, this is one massive, magnificent gift," one Brexit-supporting MP told the Spectator magazine last week.

The bond between the two leaders was reinforced on Friday when Trump hosted May in the White House, and pictures of them holding hands were splashed over the front pages of Britain's newspapers. But instead of arriving home to plaudits, she flew into a firestorm as Trump announced a temporary measure preventing refugees and travellers from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the country, sparking global protests.

May initially refused to condemn the move, but then issued a statement saying she did "not agree", highlighting the peril of pinning her fortunes on the US president in the eyes of some commentators. "The election of Mr Trump has transformed Brexit from a risky decision into a straightforward disaster," wrote Financial Times columnist Gideon Rachman. "The emperor Nero has now taken power in Washington - and the British are having to smile and clap as he sets fire and reaches for his fiddle."

**Queen dragged into row**

The diplomatic tangle is further complicated by May inviting Trump for a state visit later in the year, when he will be hosted by Queen Elizabeth II. More than 1.7 million people have signed a parliamentary petition demanding that the trip be downgraded over concerns that he will damage the reputation of the highly popular queen. The petition is to be debated in parliament on Feb 20.

"Anything that embarrasses the queen plays badly in British politics," said London School of Economics (LSE) professor Iain Begg. Scaling down the visit would also

likely go down badly with the US leader, who has spoken of his admiration for the British monarch. May "doesn't want to upset Trump... and he will be watching how she behaves very carefully," LSE fellow Brian Klaas told AFP. "She will have to be very careful."

Teaming up with Trump was therefore a "political risk", said Begg, drawing a comparison with former prime minister Tony Blair, who was branded George W Bush's "poodle" during the 2003 Iraq invasion. "She's not tied to him yet but she has started tying the knot," Klaas said. "She can untie it, but right now, the picture of them holding hands is one that's not easy to distance yourself from."

**Anti-establishment rage**

There is also no guarantee that any eventual trade deal with the United States will boost Britain's economy, particularly given Trump's "America First" policy against free trade agreements. "May is caught in a dilemma: she wants something quickly because it will look impressive to those worried about her negotiation strategy but she needs to get something good so she doesn't get criticized for being soft," said Begg.

May will ultimately be judged by the British people, and has plenty of breathing space with the next general election not due until 2020. Ties with Trump may also play well with many voters in a country where immigration and anti-establishment anger were key issues in the decision to leave the EU. A YouGov poll published yesterday found 49 percent of Britons thought the state visit should go ahead, compared to 36 percent who wanted it cancelled. Meanwhile 50 percent thought Trump's refugee ban was a bad idea, but 29 percent approved.

Trump has credited Brexit with paving the way for a popular revolt against the establishment, which could also give May leeway in their relationship, Klaas added. "He wants to repay Britain... as a way to say 'well done, good job'," he said. The relationship will therefore boil down to one calculation: "The question that Brits have to ask themselves is values versus their wallets." —AFP

**TRUMP ORDER ON IMMIGRATION: IS IT LEGAL?**

US President Donald Trump's executive order temporarily halting refugee arrivals and blocking immigrants from seven majority Muslim nations marked perhaps the most contentious moment of his provocative new tenure. The declaration triggered an international uproar as more than 100 immigrants, refugees, and even legal permanent US residents were ensnared in a web of detention in several airports. Some were turned away and put on departing flights, but many were released into the United States, often with the help of US attorneys, after a delay.

Critics savaged Trump's order as haphazardly written, un-American, even unconstitutional. Supporters argue it is merely a temporary measure similar to restrictions put in place by Trump's predecessor Barack Obama in 2011, and aimed at boosting national security at a time of heightened global concern over terrorism. But is it legal? We take a look at both sides.

**'Not a ban' on Muslims**

The US Constitution's First Amendment protects the right to freedom of religion, speech and the press, a section now known as "the establishment clause". Supporters insist Trump's "Executive Order Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States" abides by such a rule. "This is not - I repeat, not - a ban on Muslims," Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly said Tuesday, adding that religious liberty is a "fundamental treasured value".

The order indeed does not explicitly ban Muslims, something Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George

Washington University, noted in defense of the order. "The law favors Trump on the constitutionality," he told MSNBC. "On the statutory side, there's an argument under a 1965 law," he added, referring to the Immigration and Nationality Act that prohibits discrimination based on religion or national origin. But experts also say that law focused on removing the skewing of immigration quotas, not national security priorities. "There's compelling arguments... supporting the president," Turley said.

Benjamin Wittes, editor-in-chief of Lawfare, said in his national security blog that despite the "malevolent" nature of the order for its potential to adversely impact so many innocent lives, it passes legal muster. "The president's power over refugee admissions is vast," Wittes wrote. "His power to restrict visa issuances and entry of aliens to the United States is almost as wide."

**'Violating' provisions**

But round one of the constitutional fight nonetheless has gone to the order's opponents. Following immediate legal challenges by the American Civil Liberties Union, judges barred any deportations of legal refugees already in the country, including at airports, or of immigrants with legal visas from the seven nations listed in the order. District Judge Ann Donnelly, in issuing a stay, wrote that the order "violates (petitioners') rights to due process and equal protection guaranteed by the US Constitution."

Michael Price, counsel of the Liberty and National Security program at the Brennan Center for Justice, said that many of

the arguments about a president's plenary power over immigration are "misplaced". He said there are two related questions - whether the president has statutory authority and whether he has constitutional authority - and that Trump is wrong on both counts.

Congress has repeatedly enacted laws to prevent the president from excluding people based on ideology, he said, and Section 212 of the current immigration law code places clear prohibitions excluding immigrants based on their beliefs. "The president is violating that provision," Price told AFP in an interview. On the broader issue of constitutionality, courts have warranted that the president has broad powers, but that if he was acting "based on religious animus or discriminatory intent, then that constitutional analysis would change."

Several Republican lawmakers have argued that Trump is merely taking steps to keep Americans safe, but Price called that a "fig leaf" on a larger problem. Trump's comments on the campaign trail calling for a ban on Muslims, and statements by his supporters including former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani saying Trump sought a Muslim ban and wanted to do it legally, "give lie to that argument," Price said.

While the order makes no mention of Islam or Muslims, it prioritizes "minority religion" refugee claims when immigration resumes from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Such an appearance of prioritizing Christian immigrants adds to the argument that Trump is discriminating, Price said. "You are going to see a lot of additional legal challenges to this executive order in the coming days," he said. —AFP

**CHELSEA'S IVANOVIC JOINS RUSSIA'S ZENIT**

**MOSCOW:** Defensive stalwart Branislav Ivanovic ended his hugely successful Chelsea career yesterday when he signed for Zenit Saint Petersburg for an undisclosed fee. The 32-year-old Serbian has signed a two-and-a-half-year contract with an option of another year. "I had a strong desire to return to Russia," Ivanovic, who scored five goals in 54 matches for Lokomotiv Moscow in 2006-07 before joining Chelsea in 2008, told the Zenit website. "I feel high motivation and a desire to continue playing at the highest level." Ivanovic won two Premier League titles, one Champions League, one Europa League, three FA Cups and one League Cup during his spell at Chelsea. He is one of only five foreign players-along with Didier Drogba, John Obi Mikel, Petr Cech and Gianfranco Zola-to reach the 300-game landmark for the Blues. Chelsea tweeted that Ivanovic, who has 82 caps and is captain of Serbia, was "a true Chelsea legend". Zenit are second in the Russian Premier League, five points off leaders Spartak Moscow. The Russian league is on a three-month winter break and will resume in March. — AFP



**BLUES FIRE COACH KEN HITCHCOCK, PROMOTE YEO**

**ST LOUIS:** The St. Louis Blues have fired coach Ken Hitchcock. Assistant and coach-in-waiting Mike Yeo replaced him ahead of schedule. Yeo was supposed to succeed Hitchcock after this season, the veteran coach's final in St. Louis. General manager Doug Armstrong announced the abrupt change yesterday morning. The Blues are 24-21-5 and in eighth place in the Western Conference. Despite being in a playoff spot through 50 games, St. Louis has lost five of six and went 5-8 in January. The Blues lost at home to the Winnipeg Jets on Tuesday night. Hitchcock took the fall for the Blues' underachieving season, which had a lot to do with goaltending struggles. Goalies Jake Allen, Carter Hutton and Phoenix Copley have combined for an .887 save percentage, which is the worst team mark in the NHL. The 65-year-old Hitchcock was in his sixth season as Blues coach. They went 248-124-41 and made the playoffs in each of his five seasons, reaching the Western Conference final last spring. Fired by the Minnesota Wild last February, Yeo was brought on to Hitchcock's staff in the offseason to be his successor beginning in 2017-18.—AP

**VONN READY FOR RISKS IN GOLD HUNT**

**BERLIN:** US ski queen Lindsey Vonn admits she is conscious of reinjuring the arm she broke last November when her quest for medals begins at next week's world skiing championships. "I have not changed my racing style, but if I were to fall, I was told I should keep my arm close to my body, if at all possible," Vonn told German magazine Sport Bild. "The risk of breaking the arm again in a fall is very high. I'm ready to take the risk and have absolutely no doubts about my decision." Vonn walked away from a crash in Saturday's downhill at Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy. The 32-year-old will be racing at the world championships in St Moritz, Switzerland from Monday until February 19, where she will be battling last year's Swiss overall World Cup winner Lara Gut for downhill gold. "A medal in St Moritz would be the cherry on top of the cake-the crowning moment of my comeback and a great achievement," Vonn added with the women's downhill race on February 12. She has had just five World Cup races back since breaking her right arm in training last year, which followed a fractured knee in February 2016.—AFP



**KUWAITI SHOOTERS CONTINUE THEIR SUPREMACY IN AMIR'S GRAND PRIX**

by Abdellatif Sharaa,

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait shooters continued their dominance of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Sixth Grand Prix. Kuwait increased its chance of gold medals with the women's skeet team event, while Qatar was second and Bahrain third. In the 10 meter air pistol, Saudi team took the gold and silver medal and Jordan took bronze. In the singles event Saudi shooter Atta Al-Enezi

won the gold medal with the score of 197.5 while his teammate Safar Al-Dousary took silver with the score of 196.8 and Tunisian Alaa bin Ali the bronze.

Bahraini shooter Mariam Hassani won the gold medal in the women's individual skeet event and she was seconded by Kuwait's Eman Al-Shamma and Qatar's Reem Al-Sharshari ended with bronze.

Competitions will conclude today with the double trap event and 50 meter prone position

competition for men and those are expected to be the strongest and will see a strong fight for the gold.

Kuwait continued to top the medal table with 14 medals (6 gold, 3 silver, 5 bronze), Saudi Arabia in second place with 7 medals (4 gold, 2 silver, 1 bronze). Qatar third with 7 medals (1 gold, 5 silver, 2 bronze). Bahrain fourth with 5 medals (3 gold, 1 silver and 1 bronze) Egypt and Morocco fifth with one gold each. Lebanon sixth with 2 silver, Oman seventh with 2 silver and four bronze. Iraq 8th with 1 silver. Jordan, Tunis and UAE ninth with 1 bronze.

Kuwaiti Shooter Afrah bin Hussein said she received support from Kuwait Shooting Sport Club besides providing all requirements were a major reason for her winning the gold medal. She said the training team played an important role in working with her and correcting her approach. She said HH the Amir Grand Prix has become an annual event of good reputation all over the world with the participation of outstanding shooters.

President of Iraq's Shooting Federation Zahid Nouri said HH the Amir Grand Prix is an event for all Arabs, as its continued success at world level both technically and at the organizational level.

Moroccan shooter Yasmeen bint Abdelaziz said she was happy to participate in HH the Amir Grand Prix adding that the competition is so strong and enjoyable as world best shooters participate.



## TIGER WOODS IN DUBAI WHILE ALL THE FANS ARE IN PHOENIX

**DUBAI:** No player attracts a larger audience than Tiger Woods. No tournament attracts a larger audience than the Waste Management Phoenix Open. Imagine putting those two together. That has happened only four times in the last 20 years, and this won't be one of those occasions.

Woods has taken his talents to the Middle East to play in the Omega Dubai Desert Classic. The Phoenix Open is left with an expected 600,000 patrons to see some of the rising young stars in the game, from Jordan Spieth to Justin Thomas, from Hideki Matsuyama of Japan to Jon Rahm of Spain.

The Phoenix Open is known as the

"Greatest Show on Turf," partly because the TPC Scottsdale has a stretch of closing holes as compelling as any on the PGA Tour, and mainly because there are so many fans and such a party atmosphere that the golf sometimes is an afterthought.

The biggest crowd is on Saturday. The biggest stage is the par-3 16th hole, which has been turned into its own stadium. This is where players are tested, even if they're not in contention. Miss a putt and the fans can be brutal, as Chris DiMarco found out in 2009. Make a putt, and players can become stars by their reaction. James Hahn has won twice on the PGA Tour, yet he's still known largely

for his Gangnam Style dance. Make a hole-in-one when you're Tiger Woods? Pandemonium.

Not to be overlooked are the players, and there are plenty of them. Thomas hasn't lost all year, a winner at both Hawaii events he played. He's been gone for two weeks and already another young player is attracting a ton of attention. That would be Rahm, whose 60-foot eagle putt at Torrey Pines will be shown every time he gets in contention this year. Matsuyama is the defending champion and No. 5 in the world, the first Japanese player in 20 years to crack the top 5. With so much of the spotlight on youth, there's still room for the old guard.

Phil Mickelson is a three-time winner of the Phoenix Open. Television (all times EST): Thursday-Friday, 3-7 p.m. (Golf Channel); Saturday-Sunday, 1-2:30 p.m. (Golf Channel), 3-6 p.m. (CBS Sports).

### EUROPEAN TOUR

Woods is back in Dubai for the eighth time, and while he has two victories, his first visit didn't end so well. Thomas Bjorn was paired with him all four days in 2001, and it was one time that Woods blinked first. He hit into the water on the 18th hole and made double bogey to finish second. But he had his share of big moments, such as his 30-foot birdie putt on the final hole in 2008 to beat Ernie Els.

Even though he is No. 666 in the world, Woods is a big deal. That's why the European Tour put together a video clip on its website of Woods' greatest moment in Dubai. And he's not even a European Tour member.

Woods is playing the opening two rounds with the defending champion, Danny Willett, and former U.S. Amateur champion Matt Fitzpatrick. That threesome alone has combined for five green jackets and four US Amateurs. Willett says he has never properly been introduced to Woods. Rory McIlroy was supposed to play until a rib injury. Henrik Stenson at No. 4 is the highest-ranked player in the field. —AP

## PATRIOTS DEFENSE UNFAZED BY HIGH-FLYING FALCONS

**HOUSTON:** Something has got to give on Super Bowl Sunday when the National Football League's top-scoring Atlanta Falcons face a New England Patriots defense that allowed the fewest points in the league.

The Patriots would lose in the glamour department, but count on their know-how and synchronicity to get the job done in US sport's biggest event. "There's not a lot of flash to us," said linebacker Dont'a Hightower. "We're a very competitive team. What we do is make it hard for the other team to score, and we do a great job of that." "The biggest thing for us is that we kind of gelled together. That chemistry, that brotherhood and accountability really grew and took off.

"We're not just a good football team, we're a smart football team." Safety Devin McCourty said the Pats' defense built momentum as the season progressed. "We got off to a slow start, but you do not want to peak during Week 1 or Week 5. You want to peak towards the end of the season," said McCourty.

"We just play as a team. That is what it is all about, playing as a team. The numbers

show it." In the seven prior instances where the NFL's top offense faced the stingiest defense in the Super Bowl the defense has prevailed six times.

While Atlanta averaged nearly 40 points a game, New England allowed less than 17 points a game on average, getting extra stingy once opponents closed in on the end zone. "That chemistry we built, we're able to know where guys are going to be," said Hightower. "We're able to just kind of look at each other and just know, 'Hey bro, I'm rushing.' 'Hey, I'm dropping.'"

Hightower also said having the luxury of practicing against prolific passer Tom Brady helped their cause. "We feel that we go against one of the best if not the best offense every day in practice with Tom and that outstanding pass team that we have," said Hightower. "It's good we get that test every day."

McCourty said the defensive secondary had the same knack of knowing how their colleagues would react. "It starts with us hanging out in the locker room, us hanging out off the field, going to dinners together, building that bond and that trust it takes to play together," said McCourty. —Reuters



The contender for the Six Nations for 2017 will be a tournament to savour.

## BOLT RESIGNED TO LOSING RELAY GOLD

**MELBOURNE:** Usain Bolt says he is resigned to the fact that he's lost one of his nine Olympic gold medals, but isn't holding any grudges against drug-tainted Jamaican relay teammate Nesta Carter.

Carter has said he will appeal after re-analysis of his sample from the 2008 Beijing Games using more advanced scientific methods returned a positive test to the prohibited stimulant methylhexanamine.

The result announced by the International Olympic Committee last week meant Jamaica was stripped of the 4x100-meter relay gold, one of Bolt's unprecedented three gold medals at three consecutive Olympics at Beijing, London in 2012 and Rio de Janeiro last year.

Bolt and fellow Jamaican sprinter Asafa Powell arrived in Melbourne on Wednesday for a Nitro Athletics meet which begins Saturday.

"Initially (I was) disappointed, of course," Bolt said at Melbourne airport. "But in life, things happen ... I'm not sad, I'm waiting to see if Nesta is going to appeal or whatever," Bolt added. "So right now I'm just waiting to see what's going to happen. But I gave up my medal."

Carter teamed with Bolt on three straight world championship relay-winning teams, from 2011 through 2015. He also took an individual bronze in the 100 in 2013 in Moscow, behind Bolt and Justin Gatlin of the United States.

Carter, who did not compete at the Rio

de Janeiro Olympics last year, faces a ban from the IAAF. Bolt, Powell and Michael Frater, the fourth member of the relay team which crossed the line in a world record time of 37.1 seconds at the Beijing Games, are all in Melbourne to compete in the Nitro Athletics series.

The meet held over three nights will feature six teams of 24 track and field athletes - 12 women and 12 men - from Australia, an international team representing the Bolt All-Stars, China, England, Japan, and New Zealand.

Organizers say the team-based competition "combines strength, endurance, power and extreme energy" and includes sprint, distance, field and para-athletic events. The series continues on Feb. 9 and 11, also at Melbourne's Lakeside Stadium.

Former 100-meter world record holder Powell also served a doping ban in 2014 after testing positive to the stimulant oxilofrine, although his sanction was reduced from 18 months to six following a successful appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"We went out there as a team and we did what we had to do," Powell said yesterday. "It's very unfortunate and we have to look to the future. We've accomplished a lot and we just need to be positive about everything right now. I'm in no position to say what should and should not be (banned). It is what it is. Some things aren't fair." — AP



Usain Bolt

## ENGLAND, IRELAND SET TO SLUG IT OUT FOR TITLE

**DUBLIN:** Ireland and England are gearing up for a Grand Slam decider in the final match of the Six Nations on St Patrick's weekend in Dublin.

The Irish seeking a second straight title and a world-record 19th straight win. There are six weeks, 14 matches, and likely a whole load of drama before that could happen, and it's often dangerous to make too many long-range predictions ahead of the northern hemisphere's annual rugby tournament.

The prospect is enticing, nevertheless. And current form suggests it's a distinct possibility. England and Ireland have been the standout teams in the European game over the past year, emerging as genuine rivals for the superpowers of the southern hemisphere approaching the midway part of the Rugby World Cup cycle.

England is on a 14-match winning run, 13 of which have come under the stewardship of Eddie Jones since the 2015 Rugby World Cup, while Ireland beat New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa in a memorable second half of 2016. No wonder all roads are leading to Dublin on March 18. "I would think that England would still be favorites," Ireland coach Joe Schmidt said, assessing the Six Nations contenders, "but I am sure our odds would have shortened as compared to last year because I think there has been some visible growth in the team."

England starts out as odds-on favorites with all British bookmakers, with Jones having injected self-belief and a street-wise edge to the team that was in crisis after its elimination from its home World Cup at the pool stage. Injuries have hit the English going into the tournament - No. 8 Billy Vunipola and flanker Chris Robshaw have been ruled out of the whole thing, for example, and winger Anthony Watson will miss the first two rounds at least - but such is the titleholders' strength in depth that it might not show.

Jones is promising a "daring" brand of rugby. "It's a big part of how we want to develop our game because we want to be a side that has the courage to play our sort of rugby from the very first game of the tournament," the Australian said. "Daring doesn't mean flair ... Daring to me is having the mindset of going out to win the game, not relying on the opposition to make mistakes." After all, England totaled 159 points in successive wins over South Africa, Fiji, Argentina and Australia in the autumn internationals, and averaged 35 points in its series sweep of the Wallabies Down Under in June.

Only Ireland's players look close to the level of their English counterparts. And they won't be short of confidence either, having ended New Zealand's 18-match winning streak in Chicago in November.

The emergence of tighthead prop Tadhg Furlong has given the Irish strength in an area where they've previously been light, while the impressive form of Leinster and Munster in the European Champions Cup suggests Ireland is ready to hit the ground running against Scotland in the tournament opener on Saturday.

Hopes that the French might rise as potential title contenders on the back of an encouraging autumn series - they thrashed Samoa 52-8 and pushed Australia and New Zealand all the way in defeat - were hit by an Achilles tendon injury to Wesley Fofana that rules the dynamic center out completely. That could affect coach Guy Noves' ambitions of France rediscovering its running game out wide.

The Welsh have a new captain in Alun Wyn Jones, as well as a temporary head coach in Rob

Howley while Warren Gatland focuses on his role as British and Irish Lions coach. It is Italy's first Six Nations under coach Conor O'Shea, whose reinvented side beat South Africa for the first time in November to boost hopes of avoiding the wooden spoon for the 12th time in 17 editions of the tournament, especially given its three home matches. As for improving Scotland, Vern Cotter will look to end his coaching stint on a high before his return to club rugby with Montpellier. It is the most competitive Scottish team for some time, but early losses to Ireland and France might see doubts return to a team that often doesn't live up to expectations.

Two other factors provide extra intrigue to

this Six Nations. For a one-season trial, bonus points will be on offer for teams either scoring four tries or more, or losing by fewer than seven points. Organizers hope this experiment, bringing the Six Nations in line with the scoring system in the Rugby Championship and most other leagues, will deliver more tries and place the emphasis on an attacking style of play. Jones, though, is among those thinking it will make little difference.

And then there is the carrot of the Lions tour to New Zealand in June. Gatland will be watching intently and there'll be no better stage for players from England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales to prove themselves. —AP

## VINALES TOPS FIRST TEST OF 2017 IN SEPANG

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Yamaha's Maverick Vinales topped the timesheets on the final day yesterday of the 2017 test season at Malaysia's Sepang circuit, ahead of teammate Valentino Rossi and Marc Marquez. The Spaniard, who put in 72 laps, clocked 1min 59.368 seconds — 0.138 seconds faster than reigning world champion Marquez on a Honda who put in 85 laps. "Today again, like yesterday, we worked mainly on the race pace. We improved the pace a lot," said Vinales.

"We are developing the bike, trying to better the package that we have, and I think for sure we have the best bike at the moment for one lap and on race distance."

Italian Andrea Dovizioso, on a Ducati, clinched the third fastest spot at 1min 59.553 seconds while Honda's Dani Pedrosa was fourth fastest at 1min 59.578 seconds.

Light rain briefly hampered the action in the early afternoon but riders were under-entertained once dry conditions resurfaced. Motorcycling superstar Rossi-debuting Yamaha's new fairing with "internal" winglets

in Sepang following the ban on external ones this year-registered 1min 59.589 seconds on the clock to take the fifth spot. 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.

"I'm quite happy, it was a good test, because my lap times were OK and 1min 59.589 is not so bad and we are all very close at the top," said Rossi. Three-time world champion Jorge Lorenzo, adjusting to his new Ducati, was the ninth fastest at 1min 59.767 seconds. It was a vast improvement from day one when he was 17th fastest but he leapt up the timesheets on day two to number eight. Suzuki's Andrea Iannone, the fastest rider on day two on Tuesday, was 11th fastest on Wednesday at 2mins 00.045 seconds.

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: Movistar Yamaha MotoGP's Spanish rider Maverick Vinales takes a corner during the last day of 2017 MotoGP pre-season test at the Sepang International Circuit yesterday. — AFP



## AUSTRALIA CAPTAIN WADE TO RETURN FROM NZ TOUR

**NAPIER:** Australia captain Matthew Wade has been ruled out of the remainder of the one-day series against New Zealand and will return home for treatment on a back injury to ensure he is fit for the tour of India, the team said yesterday.

The wicketkeeper had told reporters in Napier earlier on Wednesday that he had already been ruled out of the second one-day at McLean Park, but hoped to be able to play in Sunday's third game in Hamilton.

"With Matthew not being fit for Thursday's game... it has been decided to send him home for an assessment and treatment in Melbourne, with a view to him being fit for the tour of India and the training camp in Dubai that precedes it," Cricket Australia's (CA) chief medical officer John Orchard said. "We are hopeful this injury will settle down relatively quickly and that

he will be able to participate in that tour without any issues."

Aaron Finch will continue to lead the side, having stepped in about 30 minutes before the first game started in Auckland on Monday. Wade had been appointed to lead Australia in the absence of regular skipper Steve Smith (injury) and rested vice-captain David Warner.

CA said they would not seek a replacement player. Peter Handscomb took the gloves for the Eden Park match and is to continue behind the stumps for the rest of the series led 1-0 by New Zealand.

Wade, who looked uncomfortable doing wicketkeeping drills with assistant coach Brad Haddin yesterday, said the injury had occurred at training when he dived for a catch and felt his back "tighten up".

"It's just about trying to rest and recover," he told reporters at McLean Park. "It has been really frustrating. But there should be no problem for India."

He later said facing a bus ride on Friday to Hamilton for the third match had been a factor in the decision to return home.

"It's not a major injury but with the short turnaround between matches and the four-and-a-half hour journey by bus to Hamilton for the next match, it's been decided its best for me to go home and get some treatment in Melbourne," Wade said. "I'll get that bit of treatment in Melbourne and we're hopeful it'll be fine by Sunday or Monday and I can be on a flight to Dubai and start training pretty much as soon as I hit the ground there." The four-Test tour of India starts in Pune on Feb. 23. — Reuters



Matthew Wade

## W INDIES' RUSSELL GETS YEAR BAN FOR DOPING

**SYDNEY:** Globetrotting West Indian all-rounder Andre Russell has been banned from all cricket for a year over a doping code violation, his Australian Twenty20 club said yesterday. The 28-year-old did not file his whereabouts on three occasions in 2015 as required, which constitutes a failed drugs test under World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) guidelines.

His punishment was handed down by the Jamaican Anti-Doping Commission on Tuesday. "We are devastated for Andre," said Sydney Thunder general manager Nick Cummins, in confirming the outcome.

"We haven't seen the written judgement, but given the circumstances surrounding the filing failures we thought he had a good chance of being exonerated.

"We will monitor the appeals process and assess our options." Under WADA's whereabouts rules, elite athletes must supply details of where they will be for one hour each day to facilitate drug tests. Russell played the first five games of the Big Bash League this year for Thunder before withdrawing due to injury and being replaced by international teammate Carlos Brathwaite.

Sydney Thunder director of cricket Mike Hussey said he felt for Russell. "I feel for him. He's been going through a really tough time of late with all the 'whereabouts' saga going on and he's been waiting to hear the finding of that hearing," Hussey told the Cricket Australia website. "I want him to go away and get better physically but also mentally." — AFP



**MARSEILLE:** Marseille's forward Dimitri Payet, left, challenges for the ball with Lyon's French forward Nabil Fekir, during the French Cup soccer match between Marseille and Lyon, at the Velodrome Stadium, in Marseille, southern France, Tuesday. — AP

## PAYET DEBUTS AS MARSEILLE ADVANCE TO CUP Q-FINALS

**PARIS:** Marseille's star recruit Dimitri Payet made his debut on Tuesday but it was Brazilian Doria who booked the team's French Cup quarter-final berth with a 2-1 extra time win over Lyon. Payet rejoined the Ligue 1 side on a four-and-a-half year deal on Sunday after Marseille paid 30 million euros (\$31.3 million, £25 million) to bring him back to the Stade Velodrome.

And the 29-year-old former West Ham player came on to a standing ovation after 94 minutes as the Cup clash was deadlocked 1-1 and heading into extra-time.

"It was exceptional, a moment that I will remember forever," said an emotional Payet, who had effectively gone on strike at his London club in his bid to return to France.

"I had the shivers when I walked onto the pitch. The public were totally behind us, we wanted to reward them with victory. The important thing was to win whether I was on the pitch or not. In the locker room I'm not in the same place and I haven't the same jersey, but I have the same passion.

"I haven't played for a month and I felt it, but I'm motivated to find my level again." Despite the arrival of the star of the winter transfer window it was old recruits who kept 10-time Cup winners Marseille on track in the 100th edition of the tournament in which they hold the joint record number of trophies along with defending champions Paris Saint-Germain who travel to Rennes on Wednesday. Rod Fanni, recalled last summer by former coach Frank Passi, headed in the opener on 24 minutes before Corentin Tolisso equalised for the visitors on 64 minutes.

And 22-year-old Doria, who had been sidelined by former Marseille boss Marcelo Bielsa and loaned out twice, stole the show. He came on in place of another new recruit Patrice Evra who picked up a thigh injury three minutes after the break and fired in the winner after 109 minutes at the Velodrome.

"Evra, we'll know more tomorrow, I don't think it's serious," said Marseille coach Rudi Garcia. "We knew that he and Dimitri Payet aren't 100 percent. I'm happy for Doria, he's

young, he's learning in a position that he isn't used to, but in our system players must sacrifice themselves to help the team. "He has remained serene every time he has had difficulties and he has been criticised, he has gotten down to work."

Lyon, who had beaten Marseille 3-1 just ten days ago, exit the tournament they have won five times, most recently in 2012. "It's a huge disappointment. It hurts to be eliminated from the French Cup," said Lyon coach Bruno Genesio. "We have to pick ourselves up, and learn from this for our next match." Ligue 1 sides Bordeaux, Lille and Lorient also advanced, as Nantes and Dijon exited.

Lille ground out a 1-0 win at home against Nantes with Sebastian Corchia slotting in a penalty after 81 minutes.

A last-gasp Galtan Laborde goal two minutes into time added on helped Bordeaux past Dijon 2-1 as top flight tailenders Lorient were made to work hard for a 3-2 extra time win at Chateauroux. — AFP



All finalists of KBC



Winners Boubyan Bank

## BOUBYAN BANK CLINCHES KBC TROPHY

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Cricket hosted the prestigious Kuwait Banks League at the Sulaibiya cricket ground on Saturday with an explosive finals day.

Boubyan Bank had to pull out all of their experience to overcome the spirited challenge of National Bank of Kuwait to lift the prestigious Kuwait Banks League Cup Trophy. Winning the toss, National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) elected to bat first but were dented with a heavy blow as they lost their first 3 wickets. The total sat at just 29 on the scoreboard, with Aamer Javed from Boubyan Bank seen to be bowling with utmost accuracy as the ball swung both ways. Reeling at 29 for 3 in the 6th over, the NBK innings started to look stable with some sensible batting by Ronald Fernandes and Yasir Idrees who slowly and steadily consolidated the earlier loss with an exceptional batting display. Once both the batsmen got themselves settled in, Yasir played some excellent strokes to score a solid 90 in just 48 balls with 8 towering sixes, well supported by Ronald who scored a brilliant 53, helping NBK to post a challenging total of 178 in their allotted 20 overs.

Boubyan were confident of chasing the total, despite an uneven track, but they were given a major setback when they lost their prolific opening batsman Aamer after gaining just 21 runs. With the fall of another two quick wickets of Rifkaz and Alwyn, it looked extremely shaky for Boubyan. Bringing in to the crease the dependable Abid Mushtaq, who along with the support from Hisham and skipper Faraz played a phenomenal innings of 81 to ensure Boubyan Bank achieved the target with 8 balls to spare. This impressive performance rightly secured Mushtaq the title of the Man Of the Match.

On the Plate Final, KFH upset Commercial Bank of Kuwait by winning the match by 33 runs. Winning the toss, KFH decided to bat first

and put up a huge total of 195, with Saad Khalid playing an excellent knock of 69 runs from just 35 balls and boasting 5 huge sixes. In reply, Commercial Bank started their run chase well, despite losing their opener Kunal Cheaply for 1. After the initial precarious start, Nitin played a wonderful knock of 69 runs scoring all-round the ground, but with feeling the pressure of losing partners on the other end, he tried to play one too many. With Nitin's downfall Commercial Bank could finally only manage 162 runs in their allotted 20 overs, thereby giving KFH their first Plate Trophy of the season.

Newly appointed Kuwait Cricket Chairman Mahmood Bastaki thanked everyone present at the venue and along with KBC board member Qutayba Al-Bassam, presented the KBC Cup Winner Trophy to the Boubyan skipper Faraz and presented the Runners Up Trophy to NBK skipper Khurram Rana. Kuwait Banks Club official Khalid Balushi, along with NBK Management presented the Late Finalist Trophy to the KFH skipper Faraz and the Runner Up Trophy to CBK's skipper.

It was an all-round exciting day with some amazing individual executions, as well as a solid team effort from all that attended the sunny but windy day at Sulaibiya and we look forward to some more outstanding performances from the upcoming Finals of the AUB Trophy in March.

The presentation ceremony was conducted by the Director Domestic & Marketing Sajid Ashraf who appreciated the participating teams and sponsors especially the hard work and efforts of the KC Council headed by chairman Mahmood Bastaki along with other council members who were present on the occasion; Director Junior & Corporate Harshith Vora responsible for the successful running and execution of the league with the support of Director IT & Website Rishi D Jayan and Head of Logistics Robert D'souza.



Director Juniors & Corporate with Chairman Mahmood Bastaki.



KFH Plate finals winner.

## DROGBA REPELS BULLET-PROOF CORINTHIANS OFFER

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Former Chelsea striker Didier Drogba has refused an offer to join Corinthians of Brazil that would have included generous wages and a bullet-proof car.

The Ivory Coast star, 38, is out of contract after a spell at Montreal Impact and was offered \$120,000

(110,000 euros) a week, a 24-hours-per-day translator, six return tickets to Europe and a bullet-proof car.

Drogba said on Twitter yesterday that he had spoken with the Corinthians president Roberto de Andrade to decline the offer. "I'm very honoured... but it doesn't feel like the

right move for me at this time," wrote Drogba.

The club thanked the player for showing an interest. "Life is made up of choices and this renowned player will head for other horizons this season," Andrade said in a press release headlined "Thanks anyway, Drogba".

In mid-January Corinthians' sporting director Flavio Adauto had indicated that Drogba had been approached by the club and that his relatively modest demands would be met.

Drogba moved to Chelsea from Marseille in 2004, remaining at Stamford Bridge until 2012 then return-

ing there for the 2014-2015 season.

A Champions League and four-time Premier League winner with the Blues, Drogba has hinted at a return to Marseille. The former Ivory Coast captain has also played for Chinese side Shanghai Shenhua and Galatasaray in Turkey. — AFP

## MOURINHO WARNS MARTIAL TO PROVE HIS WORTH

**MANCHESTER:** Anthony Martial still has work to do to convince Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho he is worthy of a regular starting place in his Premier League line-up. French forward Martial, signed from Monaco in 2015, has endured a difficult season since Mourinho's arrival.

Martial has scored just two league goals this term and has drawn criticism recently from his manager, leading to speculation that he might be leaving Old Trafford during the January transfer window.

No move has materialised and Mourinho was adamant that the 21-year-old would be staying with the club.

Martial was handed a starting opportunity in the weekend FA Cup win over Championship club Wigan.

He improved after a poor first-half showing, assisting on two goals in the 4-0 victory. But as Mourinho prepared for his side's next fixture, a home Premier League meeting with Hull on Wednesday, the United manager revealed Martial still has some way to go if he is to regain his trust.

"He has done enough to be on the bench," said Mourinho. "He has to perform better than the others who are competing for the same positions. His position is one where we have lots of options. Do you want me to leave Mkhitarian out after being man of the match and playing so well as he did? I can't."

"The players pick themselves. I am just there to analyse what they do and try to be fair with them. Such a good performance, Mkhitarian has to play tomorrow. Simple."

The Wigan victory maintained United's interest in all four competitions in which they started the season.

And despite a gruelling February ahead, in which they will play seven fixtures in all four tournaments, Mourinho insists he will not follow the example set by a number of

Premier League rivals who fielded severely weakened line-ups in the FA Cup at the weekend.

### 'MISTAKE'

"I don't do it," said Mourinho. "Even if I am the manager of a club without the same ambitions as us, especially in the FA Cup. I did it once, in my first year in England, I understood the mistake. I understood the dimensions of my decision."

"It was a period where we had to play Barcelona in the Champions League. We went direct to the League Cup final against Liverpool. In that period we played Newcastle in the FA Cup and I threw it away. I understood the dimension. The FA Cup deserves respect. I don't do that. If I am changing players I do it because I have to give chances to some other players. I have to give rest to some others. I will change players against Blackburn because I have to give players a chance. I will change but I am not going with a team with seven kids. I can't do that. I will risk but I can't do that." Similarly, Mourinho claimed that he will treat the Europa League with equal seriousness as it offers the chance of Champions League football next season should United advance past Saint-Etienne in the last 32 and go on to win the trophy.

"Personally, I miss the Champions League," he said. "Every match I don't play in the Champions League means an incredible number of matches is not going up."

"I am the youngest one to be in the club of 100. Every time I don't play I am not happy. But obviously Manchester United is much more important than me and my individual targets."

"What matters is Manchester United and as everyone knows, Manchester United is a club that belongs to the Champions League." — AFP



**LONDON:** Arsenal's Alex Iwobi, right, and Watford's Craig Cathcart challenge for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Watford at the Emirates stadium in London, Tuesday. — AP

## WENGER STUMPED AFTER WATFORD SINK ARSENAL

	Arsenal	1
	Watford	2

**LONDON:** Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was at a loss to explain his side's appalling first-half display during their surprise 2-1 defeat by Watford at the Emirates Stadium.

His side mustered just three wayward efforts on goal in the opening 45 minutes as they allowed Watford to canter into a two-goal lead and damage further their tilt at the Premier League title.

"It was not good in the first half, especially in the first 20 minutes. We were beaten in the duels and Watford were sharper than us," Wenger admitted after Tuesday's match.

"Did we think subconsciously that we just had to turn up? I don't know. Honestly we prepared well for the game. Looking at the preparation, I have no basic regret."

"We knew that Watford would make it very physical and we prepared for that. You do not make 47 points after 23 games in the Premier League if you don't have physical power, but you have to switch it on 100 percent all of the time in the Premier League. We didn't start the way we wanted, but in the second half it was all us and let's be fair, we didn't deserve to lose this game."

"We hit the bar and (Watford goalkeeper Heurelho) Gomes made fantastic saves as well, so I still think that if you look at the chances, we were unlucky to lose. On top of that we were a bit unlucky with the free-kick for the first goal and then a deflected shot on top of that."

Younes Kaboul's deflected free-kick gave Watford a 10th-minute lead and Watford added a second three minutes later when Troy Deeney tucked in the rebound from Etienne Capoue's shot. Arsenal, who replied through Alex Iwobi, travel to leaders Chelsea on Saturday and Wenger insisted his team will not suffer from a hangover from this result.

Nor was he comforted by draws for Chelsea, Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur, which limited the ground Arsenal lost.

### TAYLOR TRIBUTE

"We want to respond against Chelsea and win the game, of course. But we first have to analyse why we didn't start well in this game," said the Frenchman, whose team now trail Chelsea by nine points.

"I'm responsible for the results of the team so I am very frustrated that we did not win the game. We are playing at home, we had a great opportunity and we had a start like we did."

"We have to learn from that and respond very quickly and in a very convincing way. What the other teams do doesn't matter."

Wenger confirmed that Welsh midfielder Aaron Ramsey had limped off with a calf strain.

For Watford manager Walter Mazzari, the result justified his decision to rest almost his entire first team for Sunday's FA Cup defeat by third-tier Millwall. The Italian made a point of dedicating the victory to former Watford manager Graham Taylor, who passed away on January 12. "My objective is for Watford to stay in the Premier League and to make my team grow game by game, week by week," said Mazzari, whose side sit 13th.

"Of course the players need this victory to work better with me and also to believe that

they can achieve great things.

"I was very happy at the end because recently we deserved to win some games, but didn't because luck was not on our side. We needed a big win, especially for the morale of the team."

"Of course I would have liked us to play the whole 90 minutes like we did in the first half."

"But we had at least four or five players coming back from injury and who hadn't played 90 minutes for a long time, so they weren't in condition to play the full 90 minutes at the same level. Today was a great game and I want to dedicate this victory to a great person in Graham Taylor." — AFP

## PREMIER LEAGUE HITS RECORD TRANSFER SPEND

**LONDON:** Premier League clubs have shelled out a record £1.4 billion in transfers this season, according to a report yesterday that warned of over-reliance on big Chinese spending.

The Deloitte consultancy study said top-tier English sides made 40 million pounds (\$50 million/46 million euros) in profit from the January transfer window, the first time they have come out of the football horse-trading in the black.

The market closed on Tuesday night with Southampton swooping for Napoli's Italy forward Manolo Gabbiadini for at least £14 million while Burnley completing the reported club-record £13 million signing of Norwich winger Robbie Brady.

Deloitte said total gross spending by Premier League clubs for the 2016/17 season is now almost £1.4 billion (\$1.76 billion/1.6 billion euros) smashing the previous record of £1 billion set last season.

The latest eye-watering outlay was "far in excess of any other league in world football", said Dan Jones of Deloitte's sports business department. In all, the 20 Premier League clubs spent £215 million on new players during the market from January 1 until Tuesday, Deloitte said, the second-highest amount for this window since 2011. The bottom six teams fighting for their Premier League lives—Hull City, Sunderland, Crystal Palace, Swansea, reigning champions Leicester City and Middlesbrough—accounted for more than 50 percent of the January sales spending.

But the Premier League still came out in the black as a whole. "The sales of Oscar,

Dimitri Payet, Odion Ighalo and Memphis Depay, as well as around £20m worth of sales to Championship clubs, have helped Premier League clubs record net receipts for the first time in a transfer window," said Jones. "As was the case last year, it is clubs in the bottom half of the table who have driven expenditure this January, investing in their squads in an attempt to secure survival." This month has seen the increasingly wealthy Chinese Super League flex its financial muscles with Brazil international Oscar leasing Chelsea for Shanghai SIPG in a move worth £51 million.

With Tuesday's deadline day made more complicated by the fact several Premier League clubs had important fixtures, one of the few big deals in the closing hours of the window saw more Chinese spending as Watford striker Ighalo joined Changchun Yatai for a fee reported to be around £20 million. But Deloitte warned the days of Chinese teams splashing out on players could be coming to an end.

"The spending activity by clubs in the Chinese Super League (CSL) has grabbed many headlines in recent weeks," said Jones. "CSL clubs have spent over £150 million so far during their current off-season, which began in November 2016. However, with the CFA having recently announced that tighter regulations around player transfer and salary expenditure are to be introduced, as well as imposing limits on the number of foreign players allowed, it will be interesting to see whether CSL clubs match this level of expenditure in future off-seasons." — AFP



**MANCHESTER:** This file photo taken on January 21, 2017 shows Manchester City's Brazilian striker Gabriel Jesus (L) running with the ball during the English Premier League football match between Manchester City and Tottenham Hotspur at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, north west England. Jesus, 19, agreed to join City last year, but did not formally complete his transfer until earlier this month. — AFP

## NEGREDO ON TARGET BUT MIDDLESBROUGH HELD

	Middlesbrough	1
	West Brom	1

**MIDDLESBROUGH:** Alvaro Negredo rescued Middlesbrough as the Spanish striker's penalty secured a 1-1 draw against West Bromwich Albion on Tuesday. Aitor Karanka's side fell behind when their former midfielder James Morrison lashed home from 20 yards early on at the Riverside Stadium.

They drew level before the break after Gareth McAuley needlessly brought down Marten de Roon in the area and Negredo slotted home the resulting spot-kick.

The point will hardly soothe Karanka, who on Monday admitted his frustrations at failing to sufficiently add to his squad in the January transfer window.

Middlesbrough are now just two points clear of the relegation zone after failing to win for the sixth consecutive league game.

Karanka, who made seven changes to the line-up from the 1-0 FA Cup win over Accrington at the weekend, saw his side fall

behind after six minutes.

After the home side failed to clear their lines from a ball into the box, West Brom skipper Darren Fletcher expertly chested down to Morrison and the former Middlesbrough academy product rifled low past Victor Valdes from the edge of the area.

Boro were nearly two down inside the first quarter of an hour as Chris Brunt's dipping volley went narrowly over, but they were given a lifeline in the 17th minute when McAuley senselessly hacked down De Roon in the area, allowing Negredo to stroke home the spot-kick as he sent Ben Foster the wrong way. Middlesbrough almost pulled ahead when Allan Nyom diverted Adama Traore's cross towards goal, only for Foster to keep it out as well as Christian Stuani's rebound from an acute angle.

After the interval, Valdes was almost beaten twice as West Brom hit both posts in the space of seconds, first through Matt Phillips' diving header then Salomon Rondon's follow up. Immediately afterwards, Middlesbrough broke down the right, which led to De Roon's first time strike being clawed away by Foster.

Karanka's men also had three shots in quick succession blocked by the Baggies, while Brunt's strike from distance was tipped over by Valdes. — AFP



**MIDDLESBROUGH:** Middlesbrough's Ben Gibson, left, and West Bromwich Albion's Jose Salomon Rondon battle for the ball during the English Premier League soccer match between Middlesbrough and West Bromwich Albion, at the Riverside Stadium, in Middlesbrough, England, Tuesday. — AP

# RESURGENT CAMEROON STAND IN GHANA'S PATH

**FRANCEVILLE:** The nearly men of African football in recent years, Ghana go into a sixth consecutive semi-final at the Cup of Nations when they face Cameroon in Franceville today.

The Black Stars have not won the trophy since 1982, instead gaining a reputation for coming up just short all too often over the last decade.

Avram Grant's side lost on penalties to the Ivory Coast in the final two years ago, while their current run of near misses began with a 1-0 last-four defeat to Cameroon at home in Accra in 2008.

But in Gabon they have seemed like a side on a mission to end their long title drought and a 2-1 quarter-final win over DR Congo in Oyem on Sunday, secured thanks to a goal each from the Ayew brothers, took them through to the last

four. "It's not just by chance but by the hard work the team has put in," Ghana's assistant coach Maxwell Konadu told reporters on Wednesday when asked about the Black Stars' consistency at the tournament. "The players are always willing to do something for their nation. One thing we all dream to achieve is to win the cup this time around."

Konadu confirmed that Ghana are hopeful of having skipper Asamoah Gyan—a survivor of the 2008 squad-back fit from the adductor injury suffered in their last group game against Egypt and that kept him out of the DR Congo win.

Meanwhile, Razak Brimah will hope to keep his place in goal despite being fined \$2,500 by the Ghanaian FA after upsetting supporters with an outburst on Facebook. Razak said he was

responding to insults directed at his mother but nevertheless issued an official apology. "I accept that as an ambassador for my country Ghana and a role model for many across the globe, I should not have reacted this way," said the 29-year-old.

### EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

The sedate town of Franceville, set amidst lush green rolling hills around the Mpassa river, was the venue for Cameroon's penalty shoot-out win over Senegal in the last round.

So while Ghana had to travel to the south-east of Gabon from Oyem, Cameroon were able to stay at their base in the nearby town of Moanda, one of the biggest manganese producers in the world. There Hugo Broos's side have

been preparing in the knowledge they have already exceeded expectations in making it this far. Their build-up has been slightly tarnished over a disagreement relating to bonuses, with Broos saying the country's federation has shown the team "a lack of respect". But the coach insisted that the issue will not be held up as an excuse if their run ends here. "We have not been happy since the start of the tournament but you have never seen that on the field," he said.

"If we lose it will not be because the money is not good, it will be because Ghana are better than us."

Cameroon progressed from their group at the expense of hosts Gabon and then edged out a much-fancied Senegal thanks to a Sadio Mane miss in a penalty shoot-out that followed a

goalless draw. They have put behind them the withdrawals of key players before the competition, including Joel Matip and Eric Choupo-Moting, and are flourishing under their Belgian coach.

"The players who didn't come have their own personal reasons why they didn't come and we are not looking back," said the defender Fai Collins.

Collins remembers well the win against Ghana at the same stage nine years ago when the Indomitable Lions side featured stars like Samuel Eto'o and Rigobert Song. "I remember I was at home, watching the game with my parents," he said. "It was an extraordinary feeling for us beating Ghana knowing they had a very good squad. Now I am here and I hope I can have the same feeling as I did back then." — AFP

## RANIERI BLAMES HANDBALL AS LEICESTER LOSE TO BURNLEY

	<b>Burnley</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Leicester City</b>	<b>0</b>

**BURNLEY:** Sam Vokes grabbed a late winner as Burnley piled more pressure on struggling Premier League champions Leicester City on Tuesday.

With the match seemingly heading for a goalless draw, Vokes hooked home from close range off a headed knockdown from Michael Keane to secure Burnley's fifth successive home win.

The ball hit the Wales striker's hand before he scored but referee Mike Dean dismissed Leicester's appeals. "It was a handball. It was for everybody, for the television, but not for the referee," Leicester manager Claudio Ranieri told the BBC.

"The referee is the boss. He didn't see it and we lost - in this moment everything is wrong against us, including the decision of the referee."

Burnley have taken all but one of their 29 points at Turf Moor this season while Leicester, with 21 points from 23 games, have yet to win away from home in the current campaign and are now perilously close to the drop zone.

The Foxes are 16th, level on points with Swansea below them and just two clear of the relegation places.

They now have the worst record after 23 games of any reigning top-flight champions and Tuesday's defeat was the first time they had suffered three successive Premier League losses under Ranieri.

Leicester have not won away since they beat Sunderland 2-0 at the Stadium of Light in April 2016, when they were well on their way to a fairytale title.

Meanwhile, struggling champions

Leicester City have signed Mali centre back Molla Wague on loan from Udinese until the end of the Premier League season.

Leicester said that Wague, who played in this month's African Nations Cup against Leicester's Ghanaian midfielder Daniel Amartey, was their second signing of the transfer window that closes on Tuesday.

The club have an option to buy the player, whose move is subject to international clearance, from his parent club Granada at the end of the season.

"I'm delighted to be at Leicester City and I can't wait to get started. It's a wonderful club and I'm excited to have the chance to show what I can do in the Premier League with the champions," the French-born player told the club website.

Wague, a former French youth international, has been on loan at Udinese since 2014, making 37 appearances for the Serie A club. He also played alongside former Leicester player N'Golo Kante at Caen earlier in his career. — Agencies

**Live Matches on TV**  
(Local Timings)

**AFRICAN NATIONS CUP**  
Cameroon v Ghana **22:00**  
beIN SPORTS MAX 2 HD  
beIN SPORTS MAX 1 HD

**SPAIN COPA DEL REY**  
Celta de Vigo v Deportivo Alaves **23:00**  
beIN SPORTS

**ENGLISH CHAMPIONSHIP LEAGUE**  
Huddersfield v Brighton & Hove Albion **22:45**  
beIN SPORTS



**LIVERPOOL:** Chelsea's Brazilian defender David Luiz (L) vies with Liverpool's German midfielder Emre Can during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Chelsea at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England on Tuesday. — AFP

# MIGNOLET ATONES TO KEEP CHELSEA TETHERED

	<b>Liverpool</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Chelsea</b>	<b>1</b>

**LIVERPOOL:** Simon Mignolet went from zero to hero as Liverpool prevented Chelsea from significantly extending their lead at the Premier League summit in a 1-1 draw at Anfield on Tuesday.

The Belgian goalkeeper was caught daydreaming as David Luiz put Chelsea ahead with a first-half free-kick, but after Georginio Wijnaldum equalised, his penalty save denied Diego Costa a late winner.

With Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspur dropping points, victory would have sent Chelsea 11 points clear, but instead Antonio Conte's side had to content themselves with eking their advantage up to nine points.

"It's a pity Diego Costa missed the penalty because he played very well," said Chelsea manager Conte. "We had different chances to score goals, but we must be happy with the result and the performance because it is not easy to play away at Liverpool."

Liverpool remain 10 points off the pace in fourth place, but although they have won just one of their nine matches in 2017, they avoided

losing four successive home games for the first time since 1923.

While the point did little to enhance their title hopes, it was a much improved display by Jurgen Klopp's men after successive exits from the League Cup and FA Cup against Southampton and Wolverhampton Wanderers.

"I'm not sure happy is the right word to say how I'm feeling, but I'm proud of the boys because they did outstanding things against a really good side," Klopp told BT Sport.

"I'm happy we could give this sign and create this atmosphere. It was a good performance."

Costa's squandered 77th-minute penalty, awarded for a foul on him by Joel Matip, meant Chelsea failed to win for only the second time in 17 league games, but the title remains theirs to lose. Klopp had trumpeted his team's ability to beat "anyone else in this league" in the match programme and with England pair Nathaniel Clyne and Adam Lallana back from injury, his men began sharply.

### MANE COMEBACK

Their aggressive pressing prevented Chelsea from settling into a rhythm and Wijnaldum saw a rasping shot parried by visiting goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

Conte, clad in a tracksuit and puffer jacket that recalled former manager Jose Mourinho's attire during Chelsea's pivotal 2-0 win here in 2014, kicked the ball away in frustration at one point. But in the 24th minute a combination of exquisite technique and inexcusably lax defen-

sive attentiveness gave Chelsea the breakthrough. As Luiz advanced to strike his free-kick, 25 yards from goal and to the left of centre, Mignolet was gesticulating to his team-mates on the edge of the area.

The Brazilian struck the ball with ferocious but controlled power and it zipped over the wall before crashing in via the left-hand post, with Mignolet rooted to the spot.

Liverpool should have levelled four minutes into the second half when Roberto Firmino hoisted the ball clear of the bar from 15 yards out after Eden Hazard had slid in to rob Clyne.

But following a sight of goal at the other end for Victor Moses, who clipped the post after charging down James Milner's clearance, the home side levelled in the 57th minute.

Jordan Henderson's deep cross from the right was headed back across goal by Milner, with a touch from Moses enabling Wijnaldum to direct a low header beneath Courtois's despairing dive.

Sadio Mane made his Liverpool comeback in place of Philippe Coutinho, his Africa Cup of Nations quest with Senegal having been ended by his squandered penalty against Cameroon in the quarter-finals.

But here it was Costa who fluffed his lines from 12 yards as Mignolet dived to his right to shovel away the Chelsea striker's poorly struck spot-kick. Pedro Rodriguez, on for Willian, came close to sparing Costa's blushes with a snapshot that flashed wide, while Firmino could only direct a header straight at Courtois at the opposite end. — AFP



**BURNLEY:** Burnley, England, United Kingdom: Leicester City's English-born Jamaican defender Wes Morgan vies with Burnley's Welsh striker Sam Vokes (R) during the English Premier League football match between Burnley and Leicester City at Turf Moor in Burnley, north west England on Tuesday. — AFP

# TOTTENHAM'S POCHETTINO RUES MISSED OPPORTUNITY

	<b>Sunderland</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>Tottenham</b>	<b>0</b>

**SUNDERLAND:** Tottenham manager Mauricio Pochettino admitted he was disappointed after his side dropped two points in their bid to eat into Premier League leaders Chelsea's lead with a 0-0 draw with struggling Sunderland on Tuesday. Spurs leapfrogged London rivals Arsenal on goal-difference, nine points behind Chelsea who were held 1-1 by Liverpool on Tuesday after a bruising stalemate at struggling Sunderland.

Pochettino's side are unbeaten in the league since mid-December, an eight-match run that has seen them take 20 of a possible 24 points to maintain their hopes of securing at the very least a top four finish in May. The Argentinian con-

fessed to leaving Sunderland reflecting on what might have been at an opportunity lost.

"I'm disappointed, not frustrated," he said. "We're on a good run at the moment, and it was a chance to cut the gap on Chelsea so when you drop two points like tonight then it's difficult not to feel bad about it."

Danny Rose faces a scan on a knee injury that forced the England defender off before half-time in an uncompromising contest. Sunderland midfielder Jack Rodwell was fortunate to escape with only a yellow card after a sickening challenge on Tottenham's Belgian midfielder Mousa Dembele.

Spurs return to action at the weekend when they host Middlesbrough on February 4. "Danny will be assessed," said Pochettino. "He's twisted his knee and we'll know more tomorrow. I don't know if it was a red card for Rodwell, it's difficult for referees to take a quick decision, and we need to support his decision."

"I thought we were poor in the first half and although we were better in the second, it wasn't enough to win the game."

"We weren't aggressive enough that was the problem and we can't afford that. "We all need to learn and try to fix it."

Relegation-threatened Sunderland failed with late transfer bids for Leicester City forward Leo Ulloa and Southampton striker Jay Rodriguez as David Moyes attempted unsuccessfully to fill the void left by the two-month injury absence of Nigerian international Victor Anichebe. "I don't know if I'd use the word frustrating," said Moyes, who bought in Darron Gibson and Bryan Oviedo on Monday from one of his former clubs Everton. "We were trying to add to the squad but we knew it was going to be a difficult few days. "The injury to Victor made the situation a lot harder for us. Some players we couldn't get, and some clubs chose not to sell their players, so that's where we're at."

The Black Cats are without a win in eight games in all competitions, but were boosted by a welcome point to lift them off the bottom of the Premier League on goal difference ahead of Hull, who play Manchester United yesterday. — AFP

# Sports

Kuwaiti shooters continue their supremacy in Amir's Grand Prix



Mignolet atones to keep Chelsea tethered



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ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE HITS RECORD TRANSFER SPEND Page 18



BANGALORE: Indian team players pose for a photograph with the trophy after winning against England during the third T20 cricket match between India and England at the Chinnaswamy Cricket Stadium in Bangalore yesterday. — AFP

## CHAHAL SINKS ENGLAND AS INDIA CLINCH SERIES

**BANGALORE:** Leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal claimed six wickets to demolish England and hand India a 75-run series-clinching win in the third and final Twenty20 international in Bangalore yesterday. Chahal recorded his T20 best of 6-25 to help skittle out England for 127 in 16.3 overs, chasing 203, lost eight wickets for eight runs in the space of 18 deliveries.

The 23-year-old Chahal became only the second bowler in T20 cricket to get six wickets in an innings after Sri Lanka's Ajantha Mendis achieved the feat twice with figures of 6-8 and 6-16.

The attacking spinner started England's batting rot in the 14th over of the innings, getting dangermen Joe Root (42) and skipper Eoin Morgan (40) on consecutive deliveries to derail the tourists' chase. Root and Morgan had kept the chase alive with their 64-run third-wicket stand but the innings fell apart after their departure.

Chahal got three wickets in his fourth over to rip through the England middle and lower order-five batsmen were out on zero-as India won the series 2-1. Chahal, who received the man of the match and series award for his eight scalps in three games, got great support from seamer Jasprit Bumrah's three wickets. Earlier scintillating half-centuries from Suresh Raina and Mahendra Singh Dhoni helped India post a mammoth 202 for six after being put into bat. India rode on the 55-run third-wicket partnership between Raina (63) and Dhoni (56) to thwart the England bowling attack after an early wicket fall.

The hosts lost skipper Virat Kohli for two after a terrible mix up with Lokesh Rahul (22) saw the star batsman being run out. Kohli was furious with Rahul for not responding to his call for a single. Raina counter-attacked with two boundaries and five sixes during his 45-

ball knock as he put on crucial partnerships with Rahul and Dhoni.

Rahul was bowled by Ben Stokes but the left-handed Raina carried on the power hitting as he recorded his fourth T20 fifty with a six off leg-spinner Adil Rashid. Dhoni, who smacked five fours and two sixes in his 36-ball blitz, joined forces with Raina as the duo carted the England bowlers to all parts of the ground.

Raina fell in the 14th over while Dhoni, who put on 57 runs with veteran batsman Yuvraj Singh, stayed on until the second delivery of the final over. A vintage Yuvraj turned on the heat with his 10-ball 27 as he hit seamer Chris Jordan for two fours and two sixes to give India 24 runs in the 18th over.

India, who won the Test (4-0) and ODI (2-1) series against England, now head into the one-off Test against Bangladesh starting next week in Hyderabad. — AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**BANGALORE, India:** Scoreboard of the 3rd one-day international between India and England at M. Chinnaswamy Stadium yesterday:

India	England	
Virat Kohli run out Jordan	Jason Roy c Dhoni b Mishra	32
Lokesh Rahul b Stokes	Sam Billings c Raina b Chahal	0
Suresh Raina c Morgan b Plunkett	Joe Root lbw b Chahal	42
Mahendra Singh Dhoni c Rashid b Jordan	Eoin Morgan c Pant b Chahal	40
Yuvraj Singh c Buttler b Mills	Jos Buttler c Kohli b Bumrah	0
Rishabh Pant not out	Ben Stokes c Raina b Chahal	6
Hardik Pandya run out Stokes/Buttler	Moeen Ali c Kohli b Chahal	2
Extras: (4b, 3lb, 8w)	Liam Plunkett b Bumrah	0
TOTAL: (for six wickets)	Chris Jordan st Dhoni b Chahal	0
Overs: 20.	Adil Rashid not out	0
Did not bat: Amit Mishra, Jasprit Bumrah, Ashish Nehra, Yuzvendra Chahal.	Tymal Mills c Kohli b Bumrah	0
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-65, 3-120, 4-177, 5-191, 6-202.	Extras: (2lb, 3w)	5
Bowling: Tymal Mills 4-0-32-1 (4w), Chris Jordan 4-0-56-1 (2w), Liam Plunkett 2-0-22-1, Ben Stokes 4-0-32-1 (2w), Moeen Ali 4-0-30-0, Adil Rashid 2-0-23-0.	Total: (all out)	127
	Overs: 16.3.	
	Fall of wickets: 1-8, 2-55, 3-119, 4-119, 5-119, 6-123, 7-127, 8-127, 9-127, 10-127.	

## HOT WIZARDS STRETCH HOME WIN STREAK TO 15 GAMES

**WASHINGTON:** Bradley Beal scored 28 points and the surging Washington Wizards defeated the New York Knicks 117-101 on Tuesday for their NBA-best 15th straight home victory. Markieff Morris

had 24 points and 10 rebounds while John Wall had 15 points and 13 assists for the Wizards, who won their last five games and 12 of 14 — two against the Knicks. Washington shot 55.7 percent from the

field and led by as many as 21 points.

### RAPTORS 108, PELICANS 106 (OT)

Kyle Lowry made a step-back jumper with 4.3 seconds left in overtime to lift Toronto. Lowry finished with 33 points and 10 assists as the Raptors won for only the second time in their past eight games.

### SPURS 108, THUNDER 94

Kawhi Leonard scored 36 points and grabbed eight rebounds as San Antonio shrugged off a ragged stretch of the third quarter to defeat Oklahoma City. Leonard, who scored 30 or more points for the 15th time this season, outplayed the Thunder's Russell Westbrook, but the Spurs' bench was the difference, racking up 32 points to 22 for Oklahoma City's reserves. LaMarcus Aldridge added 23 points and was the only other San Antonio player in double-figure scoring.

### ROCKETS 105, KINGS 83

Ryan Anderson recorded his second double-double of the season and Houston opened a four-game homestand with a victory over road-weary Sacramento. Anderson finished with a team-high 25 points plus 11 rebounds as

the Rockets appeared refreshed in their return from a five-game road trip. James Harden added 10 points, seven rebounds and eight assists.

### TRAIL BLAZERS 115, HORNETS 98

Damian Lillard scored 27 points as Portland blew away Charlotte. Allen Crabbe added 21 points off the bench and C.J. McCollum contributed 18 as the Trail Blazers won for the fourth time in five outings. Portland won the battle in rebounds 51-42 and points in the paint 44-22, and held the Hornets to 39.8 percent shooting. The Trail Blazers had only eight turnovers, one more than its season low.

### LAKERS 120, NUGGETS 116

D'Angelo Russell returned to score 22 points and hand out a career-high 10 assists, and Los Angeles captured a win over Denver. Nick Young had 23 points and Lou Williams added 21 points and seven assists for the Lakers, who snapped a seven-game skid to the Nuggets at Staples. Russell missed the previous three games with a mild MCL sprain in his right knee and a strained right calf. Los Angeles rookie Ivica Zubac scored a career-high 17 points. — Reuters



**WASHINGTON:** John Wall #2 of the Washington Wizards shoots in front of Kyle O'Quinn #9 of the New York Knicks during the second half at Verizon Center on Tuesday in Washington. — AFP

### NBA results/standings

LA Lakers 120, Denver 116; Portland 115, Charlotte 98; San Antonio 108, Oklahoma City 94; Houston 105, Sacramento 83; Washington 117, NY Knicks 101; Toronto 108, New Orleans 106 (OT).

Eastern Conference				Western Conference			
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division			
W	L	PCT	GB	W	L	PCT	GB
Boston	30	18	.625	Utah	30	19	.612
Toronto	30	19	.612	Oklahoma City	28	21	.571
NY Knicks	21	29	.420	Denver	21	26	.447
Philadelphia	18	29	.383	Portland	22	28	.440
Brooklyn	9	39	.188	Minnesota	19	29	.396
Central Division				Pacific Division			
Cleveland	32	15	.681	Golden State	41	7	.854
Indiana	25	22	.532	LA Clippers	30	18	.625
Chicago	24	25	.490	Sacramento	19	30	.388
Milwaukee	21	26	.447	LA Lakers	17	34	.333
Detroit	21	27	.438	Phoenix	15	33	.313
Southeast Division				Southwest Division			
Washington	28	20	.583	San Antonio	37	11	.771
Atlanta	28	20	.583	Houston	36	16	.692
Charlotte	23	26	.469	Memphis	29	21	.580
Miami	19	30	.388	New Orleans	19	30	.388
Orlando	19	31	.380	Dallas	18	30	.375



A WALL OF UNCERTAINTY TO REMAIN HIGH



**BRAWLEY:** Mexican Farm workers harvest celery in a field of Brawley, California, in the Imperial Valley, on Tuesday. Many of the farm workers expressed fears that they would not be able to continue working in the United States under the President Trump's administration. — AFP

**TIJARI DECLARES NET PROFIT OF KD 50.4M FOR 2016**

**COMMERCIAL BANK BOARD RECOMMENDS 15% CASH DIVIDEND, 10% BONUS SHARES**

**KUWAIT:** Commercial Bank of Kuwait announced a net profit of KD 50.4 million a growth of 9.1 percent compared to last year with earnings per share of 33.8 fils compared to 30.9 fils for the year 2015. The Board of Directors recommended to the General Assembly cash dividend distribution of 15 fils per share and a bonus issue of 10 shares for each hundred shares, compared to 13 percent cash dividend and 6 percent bonus issue last year.



**Elham Mahfouz**

healthy financial indicators where the Banks' capital adequacy ratio at the end of December 2016 stood at 17.94 percent, the leverage ratio stood at 11.24 percent, liquidity coverage ratio stood at 142 percent and Net Stable Funding Ratio stood

at 108.7 percent comfortably exceeding the minimum requirement set by the Central Bank of Kuwait. The Bank continues to demonstrate its cost leadership with operational efficiency, a competitive advantage for the Bank which continues to maintain one of the lowest cost/income ratios among Kuwait banks at 27.9 percent for the year ended 31 December 2016.

Mahfouz hailed the tremendous efforts exerted by the Bank's different departments and staff members for enhancing the credit & investment portfolio quality which was reflected in the gains generated from these portfolios with the Bank building strong bond portfolio and extending credit lines for projects of national importance. Apart from this, the Bank's strong financial indicators are due to its prudent policy to use a portion of the operating profits to build the provisions and aggressive policy on write offs adopted during 2011-2016 to clean the loan portfolio. Mahfouz went on saying that the NPL ratio dropped from 0.90 percent to 0.50 percent, it is much lower than the industry average emphasizing the Bank's continuous efforts to recover the previously written off loans where the Bank managed to recover KD 106 million during last four years. She, further, added that the Bank intends

to continue its prudent and conservative policy of building the required provisions during 2017 and beyond, in order to meet the challenges of volatile economic and geopolitical situation in the region.

**Strategic objectives**

Mahfouz further commented that the bank's strategic objectives to diversify its income sources and mitigation of risks, particularly those related to geographical and sector concentration are being pursued in letters and spirit, indicating that the Bank's strategy and focus on available growth opportunities will be instrumental to analyze with a fine tooth comb the market conditions and emphasize on core business activities with efficient management of risks and associated returns. She also pointed out that this strategy bore its fruit during 2016 and it is forecast to continue yielding benefits for the Bank in the future.

On the other hand, Mahfouz pointed to the ratings the bank has obtained from the international rating agencies such as Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings noting that the bank's good performance was recognized by these rating agencies. She further said that the bank has

a rich record of social responsibility activities and this was proven in its continued contributions to identify the needs of the community with its diverse segments and to satisfy such needs effectively by sponsoring several social activities and initiatives.

These efforts were recognized with the bank receiving a certificate of recognition for the pioneering CSR projects at the level of GCC countries, where the Bank was honored at the sideline of the 33rd session of the Council of Ministers of Labor & Council of Social Affairs of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) for Arab States which was recently held in Riyadh.

Mahfouz concluded her statement by extending her appreciation and thanks to the Bank's shareholders for their support to the Bank, valued customers for choosing Commercial Bank of Kuwait as a source of their banking services, staff members for their loyalty and dedication at work and the regulatory authorities represented in the Central Bank of Kuwait and Kuwait Capital Markets for their sincere efforts in safeguarding the banking sector and financial units, emphasizing that the bank's management spares no efforts for maintaining and safeguarding the interests of the Bank and its stakeholders.

**INDIA BOOSTS SPENDING AND CUTS TAXES AS CASH BAN BITES**

**NEW DELHI:** India's finance minister pledged to raise spending on the rural poor and halved the basic rate of income tax in his annual budget yesterday, seeking to ease the pain of a shock move to ban high-value banknotes. Arun Jaitley defended so-called demonetization, saying it would increase revenues by forcing people to declare untaxed wealth, but conceded it had hit the economy and promised relief for the poor and middle classes ahead of key polls.

Jaitley pledged to double the income of farmers, who have been hard hit by the currency ban, in the next five years and bring 10 million households out of poverty by 2019. He also promised more affordable housing for the poor and halved the basic rate of income tax to five percent.

"My overall approach while preparing this budget has been to spend more in rural areas, poverty alleviation through fiscal prudence," Jaitley said in a speech to parliament. The finance minister said tax evasion had become India's "new normal" as he laid out further measures to increase the number of people paying their taxes after last November's cur-

rency ban. He said the rate cut was intended to reward those already paying income tax, and encourage more to do so. The basic tax rate applies to those with annual incomes of between 250,000 rupees (\$3,700) and 500,000 rupees. "We are largely a tax non-compliant society. When too many evade tax, the burden falls on those who are honest," Jaitley said.

**'Historic reform'**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unanticipated decision removed around 86 percent of India's cash at a stroke, triggering massive queues outside banks and a cash shortage that has hit businesses across the country. Analysts said the budget was in line with expectations that the government would target communities worst hit by the move, with elections beginning in the key battleground state of Uttar Pradesh later this month.

"That's applying a balm to this segment, which is broadly the lower middle class and which has been more vulnerable to the cash ban," said Sunil Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings & Research, referring to the tax cut. "This is what's been the flavor of the budg-

et- to reduce the pain of demonetization." Jaitley relaxed India's fiscal deficit target to 3.2 percent for the financial year 2017/18, citing the increase in government spending, but said it would be back on track for a three-percent deficit the following financial year. He announced plans to spend a record 3.96 trillion rupees on infrastructure including modernization of India's roads, airports and crumbling railways. That includes a trillion-rupee plan to improve safety on the railways after a slew of deadly accidents.

Targeting corruption, Jaitley announced a ban on cash transactions worth more than 300,000 rupees and said the government was considering new legislation to seize the assets of "big time offenders" who flee abroad. Indian banks are currently trying to recover more than \$1 billion owed by the Formula One tycoon Vijay Mallya who left the country for Britain last year.

On Tuesday 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. Jaitley said India had undergone "historic reform" over the past



**NEW DELHI:** Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley arrives in Parliament House to present the Union Budget in New Delhi yesterday. — AFP

year, but remained an "engine of global growth". Modi's government swept to power in 2014 on a promise to tackle corruption and bring about the economic reforms needed to increase growth and provide jobs for a rapidly expanding young population. Some of its proposed reforms were blocked by the upper

house, where the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) lacks a majority. The upcoming elections in five states including India's most populous, Uttar Pradesh, offer a chance for the party to win more seats because most members of the upper house are indirectly elected by state legislatures. — AFP

DELOITTE LICENSED TO PROVIDE FATCA COMPLIANCE SERVICES IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Ministry of Finance (MOF) issued Ministerial Resolution No (68) of 2016 announcing that Deloitte & Touche, Al-Wazzan & Co in Kuwait has been certified with the Ministry of Finance for the provision of Foreign Account Tax Compliance services (FATCA).

FATCA is a US legislation which aims to combat tax evasion by US persons and certain entities owned by US persons. The intent behind the law is for Foreign Financial Institutions ('FFIs') (ie non-US FIs) to identify and report any US persons that hold assets abroad to the Internal Revenue Service ('IRS').

"FATCA is the new reality and going forward non-compliance could result in penalties and the risk of severe reputational damage. A large majority of FFIs in Kuwait are already adhering to the FATCA requirements by complying with the local Intergovernmental Agreement due to the potential commercial, reputational and financial risks (e.g. withholding and regulatory penalties) of non-compliance. It is therefore advised for all financial institutions to become FATCA compliant as soon as possible," said Nauman Ahmed, Deloitte Middle East tax leader.

"We understand that the implementation of new and complex regulations can be a daunting challenge for many businesses, the first place to start is to understand the level of impact that FATCA will have on your business. The key to any successful regulation implementation program includes developing a strong governance framework that can identify the areas of the business that need changes and remediation and developing appropriate policies and procedures that allow for the transition of new compliance requirements into the business as usual," Alex Law, Managing Director of Deloitte's International tax Services.

The main FATCA services that institutions should be emphasizing on at the moment include Entity classification, implementation support, customized training, policy and procedures drafting and reviews, reporting, and complete FATCA reviews and assurance on the Financial Institution's compliance with the FATCA requirements. To guide businesses in Kuwait through this local and global tax reform, Deloitte has launched a new report "Doing business guide - understanding Kuwait's tax position" available on the following link: http://bit.ly/2iZj9Et. "The guide addresses the key tax considerations for doing business in Kuwait, alongside key legal, economic and market drivers which impact clients who are looking to invest in the country, or those who have been present there for some time, but are looking to undertake a review of their tax exposures," said Ihab Abbas, Partner, Tax, Deloitte & Touche, Al-Wazzan & Co. Kuwait.

SAUDI CANNOT ESCAPE DESTINY AS SWING PRODUCER: ANALYST

LONDON: Saudi Arabia has been forced to return to the role of swing producer in the oil market, despite the country's insistence for three decades it would never play the role again. Saudi Arabia and its allies in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) account for the majority of production cuts made so far under the OPEC and non-OPEC accords reached in November and December.

By cutting their own output deeply, Saudi Arabia and its allies have masked the low level of compliance from the rest of the organization. Outside OPEC, Russia has so far delivered only around a third of its promised cut of 300,000 barrels per day (bpd), according to sources.

Russia and other producers have always pledged to phase in cuts, which are meant to be averaged over the first six months of 2017. Strictly speaking, OPEC and non-OPEC members have not yet failed to honor their promises since they could reduce output more steeply in the remainder of the compliance period. But Saudi Arabia and its GCC allies have once again supplied most of the upfront cutbacks, reducing their production by enough to create a deficit in the market and draw down excess crude inventories.

Adjusting production to bring about a desired balance between supply and demand, or achieve a particular target price, is the classic role of a swing producer. Saudi Arabia has been forced back into the role, despite insisting since the mid-1980s it would never assume the burden again.

Saudi Arabia only officially played the role of swing producer for a short period in the early 1980s, when it failed to stem the oversupply of global oil markets and slide in prices. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries began setting an overall production target and allocating it among members at its ministerial conference in March 1982.

The initial target for the group as a whole was set at 17.5 million bpd and Saudi Arabia's share was set at 7.150 million bpd. One year later, in March 1983, OPEC revised the allocation system and Saudi Arabia formally assumed the role of swing producer, varying its output to balance supply and demand.

Ministers agreed "to establish a ceiling for total OPEC production of 17.5 million barrels per day, within which individual member countries were allocated," according to the communiqué issued afterwards. "No quota is allocated to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which will act as a swing producer to supply the balancing quantities to meet market requirements" ("Communique by OPEC", New York Times, March 1983).

Saudi Arabia had often acted as an informal swing producer, but this was the first time the role had been formalized. Saudi Arabia's role as a swing producer formally terminated in 1984 when it opted instead for a quota of 4.35 million bpd, though in practice it went on performing the swing producer role until September 1985.

"I have a strong feeling that this will work out and that OPEC will be in the driver's seat," Saudi oil minister Zaki Yamani told a news conference after the March 1983 meeting.

But the following three years proved difficult for Saudi Arabia as other OPEC members cheated on their quotas, rival suppliers outside OPEC continued to raise their output, and oil prices fell. Saudi Arabia cut its output to balance the market and shore up prices to no avail, and then switched to a netback pricing system to recapture lost market share, sending prices tumbling to \$10 per barrel.

NEVER AGAIN

Yamani was sacked in October 1986 and replaced as Saudi oil minister by Hisham Nazer, who ruled out any return to acting as a swing producer ("Nazer rules out swing producer role for Saudi Arabia", Middle East Economic Survey, Sep 1987). "We will conscientiously support OPEC... but we will not appoint ourselves custodians of the policies of OPEC, nor will we be willing to play the role of swing producer at all", Nazer said in an interview in September 1987.

Nazer's successor as oil minister, Ali Naimi, was even blunter: "Saudi Arabia tried in the past to play the role of the swing producer by reducing production to maintain a specific price, but the result was unfavorable to the kingdom," he said in an interview in March 1998.

"Despite the fact that its production fell from more than 10 million bpd in 1980 to less than 3 million bpd in 1985, prices collapsed. As a result, the kingdom not only lost in terms of prices but also lost its market share at that time." "We have abandoned once and for all the role of swing producer," Naimi said ("Saudi oil minister spells out kingdom's views on current oil market", Middle East Economic Survey, March 1998).

NO ESCAPE

In practice, giving up the role of swing producer has proved impossible, however much the country's policymakers loathe it. In March 1999, Saudi Arabia was again taking the lead in cutting production to shore up prices after the Asian financial crisis.

Saudi Arabia and its GCC allies ended up providing most of the production cuts that helped drain excess stocks and push prices higher in 1999 and 2000. —Reuters

LUFTHANSA CHIEF REJECTS 'SUBSIDIES' FOR AIRLINES

SPOHR SIGNS COOPERATION DEAL WITH ETIHAD

ABU DHABI: The Lufthansa chief yesterday reiterated the German carrier's opposition to state subsidies for airlines, as he signed a cooperation deal with Abu Dhabi's Etihad, one of the main Gulf carriers accused of receiving government support. "It is not a secret that Lufthansa has always been and remains an opponent of state subsidies," Carsten Spohr said at a joint press conference in Abu Dhabi with Etihad chief James Hogan.

He said a partnership should be based on "openness and fairness", while adding that two successful groups could have their differences and still become "successful partners".

The two carriers said yesterday that a codeshare agreement had taken effect, and they also sealed a \$100-million global catering accord and signed an engineering memorandum of understanding. Western legacy carriers have long accused the three fast-growing Gulf carriers, Etihad and Dubai's Emirates and Qatar Airways, of receiving state subsidies that give them an edge over competitors.

Spohr told reporters he would like to see the rules of the World Trade Organisation applied in aviation, "as we see that for other global industries". However,



ABU DHABI: Carsten Spohr (l), Chief Executive Officer of Lufthansa, and James Hogan, President and CEO of Etihad Aviation Group, speak during a press conference on boosting cooperation yesterday in Abu Dhabi. —AFP

relationships between governments and airlines appeared likely to grow as "we see a

wave of protectionism around the world", he said. Spohr, who has in the past dis-

missed speculation that Etihad would buy a share in Lufthansa, said the airline industry needed "rationalisation" with a "healthy relationship between offer and demand".

The German carrier agreed in December to lease 38 aircraft from struggling Air Berlin, in which Etihad has a 29-percent stake. Under the outgoing Hogan, Etihad pursued an ambitious expansion policy through equity partnerships in other airlines. It saw Etihad spend hundreds of millions on stakes in foreign airlines, including acquisitions of 49 percent of Alitalia, 19.9 percent of Virgin Australia and three percent of Irish carrier Aer Lingus that it offloaded in 2015. Some of the investments have been costly, however, with Etihad having had to keep Air Berlin alive with regular cash injections.

Etihad, which announced last month that Hogan would step down in the second half of 2017 after more than a decade at the helm, has said the Abu Dhabi-based carrier will review its strategy.

Yesterday, Hogan defended his policies, saying Etihad and its shareholders continued to support an expansion strategy that the carrier would "fine-tune". "Partnerships are at the heart of our strategy," he said. —AFP

CHINA JAN FACTORY ACTIVITY EXPANDS FOR 6TH MONTH

BEIJING: China's manufacturing sector grew slightly faster than expected in January as the world's second-largest economy continued to benefit from record bank lending and a construction boom. The improvement in the industrial sector could give the government more room to tackle high debt levels in many parts of the economy this year, though analysts are not sure if current growth levels can be sustained.

The official Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 51.3 in January, slowing marginally from 51.4 in December, but above the 50-point mark that separates growth from contraction on a monthly basis.

January's reading was slightly above the prediction of a Reuters poll for 51.2, and marked the sixth straight month of expansion as China's industrial sector continues to improve. Production remained robust, although its reading dipped to 53.1 from 53.3 in December.

Overall new order growth also eased, while export orders grew at only a marginally better pace.

China's manufacturing sector has been buoyed by a government infrastructure building spree and a housing boom, which have fueled demand for building materials from cement to steel.

Rising commodity prices and stronger

demand have boosted profits for industrial firms, and helped revive inflation expectations worldwide. However, some analysts question whether the growth will be sustainable once the impact of earlier stimulus measures begins to wear off and as the property market starts to cool, which is widely expected.

China's economy expanded at a steady 6.7 percent clip in 2016, fueled by stronger government spending, record bank lending and a red-hot property market.

But hitting the government's growth target came at a high price, adding to explosive growth in debt. If the economy remains on better footing, China's leaders are expected to turn their attention to containing financial risks this year, accepting a slightly lower growth target of around 6.5 percent.

A separate reading on the services sector showed the pace of growth picked up in January from the previous month. The official non-manufacturing PMI stood at 54.6 in January, up from 54.5 in December, and well above the 50-point mark.

The services sector accounted for over half of China's economy last year and for the majority of growth, as rising wages give Chinese consumers the opportunity to travel and eat out more. —Reuters



MUMBAI: Indian commuters travel on a crowded local train in Mumbai yesterday. India is to halve the basic rate of income tax to five percent, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced yesterday in his annual budget. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Table with 2 columns: Currency, Rate. Includes Japanese Yen, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, Sri Lankan Rupees, Nepali Rupees, Singapore Dollar, Hongkong Dollar, Bangladesh Taka, Philippine Peso, Thai Baht.

GCC COUNTRIES

Table with 2 columns: Currency, Rate. Includes Saudi Riyal, Qatari Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, UAE Dirham.

ARAB COUNTRIES

Table with 2 columns: Currency, Rate. Includes Egyptian Pound - Cash, Egyptian Pound - Transfer, Yemen Riyal/for 1000, Tunisian Dinar, Jordanian Dinar, Lebanese Lira/for 1000, Syrian Lira, Morocco Dirham.

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

Table with 2 columns: Currency, Rate. Includes US Dollar Transfer, Euro, Sterling Pound.

Table with 2 columns: Currency, Rate. Includes Canadian dollar, Turkish Lira, Swiss Franc, Australian Dollar, US Dollar Buying.

GOLD

Table with 2 columns: Weight, Rate. Includes 20 Gram, 10 Gram, 5 Gram.

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Table with 2 columns: Rate for Transfer, Selling Rate. Includes US Dollar, Canadian Dollar, Sterling Pound, Euro, Swiss Franc, Bahraini Dinar, UAE Dirhams, Qatari Riyals, Saudi Riyals, Jordanian Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Sri Lankan Rupees, Indian Rupees, Pakistani Rupees, Bangladesh Taka, Philippines Peso, Cyprus pound, Japanese Yen, Syrian Pound.

Table with 2 columns: Currency, Rate. Includes Nepalese Rupees, Malaysian Ringgit, Chinese Yuan Renminbi, Thai Bhat, Turkish Lira.

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

Table with 3 columns: CURRENCY, BUY, SELL. Includes British Pound, Czech Korune, Danish Krone, Euro, Norwegian Krone, Romanian Leu, Slovakia, Swedish Krona, Swiss Franc, Turkish Lira.

Table with 3 columns: CURRENCY, BUY, SELL. Includes Australasia, Australian Dollar, New Zealand Dollar.

Table with 3 columns: CURRENCY, BUY, SELL. Includes America, Canadian Dollar, Georgina Lari, US Dollars, US Dollars Mint.

Table with 3 columns: CURRENCY, BUY, SELL. Includes Asia, Bangladesh Taka, Chinese Yuan.

Table with 3 columns: Currency, Buy, Sell. Includes Hong Kong Dollar, Indian Rupee, Indonesian Rupiah, Japanese Yen, Kenyan Shilling, Korean Won, Malaysian Ringgit, Nepalese Rupee, Pakistan Rupee, Philippine Peso, Sierra Leone, Singapore Dollar, South African Rand, Sri Lankan Rupee, Taiwan, Thai Baht.

Table with 3 columns: Currency, Buy, Sell. Includes Bahraini Dinar, Egyptian Pound, Iranian Riyal, Iraqi Dinar, Jordanian Dinar, Kuwaiti Dinar, Lebanese Pound, Moroccan Dirhams, Nigerian Naira, Omani Riyal, Qatar Riyal, Saudi Riyal, Syrian Pound, Tunisian Dinar, Turkish Lira, UAE Dirhams, Yemeni Riyal.

# KUWAIT OUTPERFORMS GLOBAL MARKETS TO KICK OFF 2017

## KAMCO GCC Markets Monthly Report

**KUWAIT:** GCC markets continued the uptrend seen over the previous two months with almost all markets closing January-17 with positive returns. This was also reflected in the overall MSCI GCC index that closed the month with a gain of 1.94 percent. The exceptions included 2016's best performer, Saudi Arabia, that declined by 1.5 percent on the back of softer full year earnings along with a marginal decline of 0.1 percent for Oman. The decline in Saudi Arabia can also be attributed to oil prices that remained range bound during the month after a positive start to the year.

Kuwait recorded the best monthly performance amongst major global equity markets during January-17 with a gain of 18.9 percent as a result of multiple positive factors that included a change in the MSCI Frontier Market index constituents that benefited Kuwait further supported by reportedly higher buying by institutional investors. In addition, full year earnings have so far remained positive which provided a boost to investor confidence with banks recording healthy year-on-year growth in their bottom-line. Kuwait also announced its new economic development plan called "New Kuwait" that runs until 2035 and is aimed at transforming Kuwait into a regional business and cultural hub.

On the economic front, the surge in oil price over the past few months has provided additional confidence for GCC governments as spending is expected to increase after being curtailed and optimized over the past two years. According to the recent budget announcements, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar have signaled higher spending during 2017 in order to achieve near term diversification targets. Moreover, these budgets are based on an oil price of less than \$ 50/b, which we believe lends additional buffers as oil continued to trade above this level during January-17.

### GCC equity markets monthly

Kuwaiti equity markets recorded the world's best monthly performance during January-17 on the back of a number of positive factors. The Price index surged 18.9 percent during the month, recording the highest monthly gain in 14 years. The index reached a monthly peak of 6,943.24 points towards the end of the month, the highest close in 26-months. Similarly, the monthly return of 12.44 percent for the Weighted index was the highest since February-10. The index reached the highest level in 21 months and closed January-17 above the 400 points mark for the first time since August-15. The large-cap Kuwait 15 Index recorded a monthly gain of 11.34 percent, the highest monthly return since the inception of the index, and closed the month at 985.4 points. The index surged past the psychologically important 1,000 points on 29-Jan-17 to reach 1,006.17 points, the highest level in 17 months.

Sector performance also reflected the positive investor sentiments in the market with all the indices closing the month with positive monthly returns, with the only exception of the Health Care index that declined by 5.9 percent. The Technology

index recorded the highest monthly return of 31.1 percent, followed by Financial Services and Basic Materials indices with monthly returns of 23.7 percent and 21.3 percent, respectively. Among the large-cap sectors, the Banking index surged 11.5 percent during the month while the Telecom index went up by 13.3 percent. Trading activity during the month was the highest since May-13 with both volume and value traded at almost four times the level achieved during December-16. Zain (+20.7 percent) was the most actively traded stock during the month with a total value of KD 82.8 million followed by KFH (+14.8 percent) and NBK (+12.3 percent) with KD 67 million and KD 51.3 million worth of shares traded in these stocks, respectively.

A change in the MSCI Frontier Market index during the month was one of the key factors that led to the strong buying activity on Boursa Kuwait. The index compiler announced that Pakistan with a weight of 10.2 percent would be upgraded to emerging market status later this year.

This would benefit Kuwait by mostly increasing its weight in the MSCI Frontier Market Index, which currently stands at 18.03 percent, highest in the group. Moreover, a number of initiatives are being undertaken by Boursa Kuwait to reduce transaction costs and bringing efficiencies and standardization, much similar to efforts seen in Saudi Arabia and UAE.

On the economic front, the country launched a new economic development plan, called "New Kuwait", which runs till 2035 and envisions to transform the economy into a business and cultural hub. The key pillars of the ambitious plan includes diversification of the economy towards non-oil sectors by investing in mega projects with the help of private investments and development of education and transportation sectors to boost tourism. The initial strategy includes a five year development plan with a earmarked spending of \$100 billion out of which \$ 15 billion is planned be spent between 2017-2018.

### Tadawul

Saudi's equity market took a breather during January-17 after a rally that lasted for almost two months. The benchmark TASI receded 1.5 percent during the month to close at 7,101.9 points after plunging below the 7,000 mark during the third week on the back of poor earnings for some of the key stocks in the market. However, the index made a strong recovery during the last week after higher clarity emerged on the state of the economy that is now expected to post a smaller budget deficit led by higher oil prices coupled with reduction in austerity measures as well as implementation of VAT starting from 2018. The month also saw the adoption of GICS standards for sector classification on the exchange to more closely reflect the business activities of listed companies. We also see this move as a step closer towards the bid to win the emerging markets status this year that would lead to flow of additional passive funds in the market. Another move seen in this direction was the publishing of draft rules for the introduction of a T+2 settlement cycle. The CMA aims to

implement the new settlement cycle by June-17, the month when MSCI decides on whether to review Saudi Arabia for inclusion in its emerging markets index that would be followed by a review by FTSE in September-17.

Monthly market performance reflected the earnings results for FY-16 with the Insurance sector leading the monthly sectoral gains after reporting a 165.6 percent jump in FY-16 earnings. A majority of the large-cap sectors witnessed declines during the month with the Banking index down by 1.2 percent, Telecom by 6.6 percent and Energy index down by 8.4 percent. The monthly gainers chart was dominated

closed the month down, marginally by under 1 percent m-o-m.

In prominent earnings releases that commenced for full year 2016 and Q4-16 numbers, National Bank of Abu Dhabi (NBAD), which is set to merge with FGB, reported a 28 percent y-o-y increase in Q4-16 net profits driven, by lower expenses and impairment charges, beating consensus expectations. NBAD made a profit of AED 1.33 billion in the Q4-16 compared to AED 1.03 billion in Q4-15. For full year 2016, NBAD reported net profits of AED 5.296 billion, up 1.2 percent y-o-y, while operating profit grew by 5 percent y-o-y as non-interest income grew while expenses

gained during Jan-17 included Qatar International Islamic Bank and Masraf Al Rayan which moved up by 7.8 percent and 6.5 percent respectively. United development and Barwa led the real estate pack gaining by 9.2 percent and 4.8 percent m-o-m respectively. Ooredoo pushed the Telecoms index higher and gained by 3.1 percent m-o-m, even as S&P affirmed Ooredoo's long term corporate credit ratings at 'A-' and changed its outlook from Stable to Positive. S&P's change in outlook is largely driven by expectations that Ooredoo will require lower capital expenditure, resulting in higher free operating cash flow in 2017 and 2018.

### Bahrain Bourse

After ending 2016 on a flattish note, The Bahrain All Share Index kicked off 2017 as the second best performing market in the GCC. The Bahrain All Share Index closed 6.8 percent higher on a m-o-m basis for the month of Jan-17. The index closed at 1303.70 points at the end of the month. Sectoral performance was mixed for the month, and included both gainers and decliners. Market breadth for the index was broadly even, as 12 stocks gained ground, while 14 stocks witnessed declines in their share prices. Commercial Banks was the main sector which drove the index up as the sector was up 11.6 percent for the month. The Investment sector went up as well by 8.7 percent, mostly due to a significant jump in the stock price of Ithmar Bank. Industrials were the main laggards for the index as it went down by 13.7 percent for the month of Jan-17. In earnings related releases, National Bank of Bahrain (NBB) reported a net profit of BHD 58.24 million in 2016, an increase of 5.4 percent y-o-y as compared to BHD 55.26 million in 2015. For Q4-16, NBB recorded a net profit of BHD 12.03 million, compared to BHD 11.90 million in Q4-15. EPS for full year 2016 improved from 48.5 fils in 2015 to 50.9 fils in 2016. In Telecoms, Zain Bahrain reported revenues of BHD 64.6 million in 2016, a 9 percent increase from BHD 71.1 million from the previous year.

### Muscat Securities Market

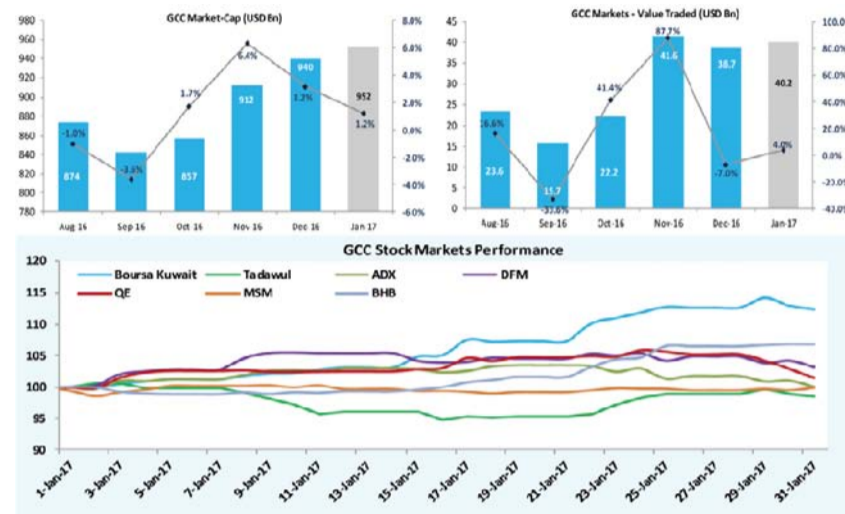
After two consecutive months of marginal uptrend, the MSM 30 index ended flat during January-17 after gains in Financial and Industrial indices were completely offset by declines in the Services index. The Financial Index surged 3.6 percent, the highest gain in terms of relative sector performance, on the back of double digit returns recorded in insurance stocks. Shares of Al Madina Takaful went up by 30 percent during the month, while Oman United Insurance shares recorded gains of 14.9 percent. Among the large cap stocks, National Bank of Oman was the only stock in the sector to record a gain of 1.3 percent. On the other hand, shares of Muscat Muscat, the biggest stock in the market and in the sector, declined by 2.1 percent despite report higher earnings for Q4-16 and for the full year. The earnings season was significantly positive as compared to the previous year with total profits for listed stocks up by 19.2 percent to OMR 785.8 million as compared to OMR 659.1 million during the previous year.

### Dubai Financial Market

The DFM index which was the best performing index in 2016, continued on its upward trajectory in 2017. DFM closed the month marginally up by 3.2 percent at 3642.85 points. Sectoral trends were broadly positive, as more indices gained ground as compared to declining for the month. For the current month, Services names rose significantly by 8.6 percent, driven by a surge in the price of Amanat Holdings, which went up by over 17.3 percent. Insurance index followed and gained by over 8.5 percent for the month, while Transportation index gained by 6.8 percent for the month of Jan-17. The financials indices comprising of Banks, Financial and Investment Service and Insurance also closed the first month of the year with strong gains and outperformed the DFM index. Indices, which lost ground during the month, were led by Consumer Staples, which went down by 7.4 percent m-o-m, followed by Telecoms, which recede by 3.2 percent m-o-m.

### Qatar Exchange

The QE 20 index started the year in positive territory, as the index moved up by 1.5 percent m-o-m, and closed at 10597.22 points. The Qatar All Share index also improved by 1.4 percent for the first month of 2017, while sectoral trends were mixed. Heavyweight indices such as Banks & Financial Services, Real Estate, and Telecoms index closed in the green. Banks which



noted by insurance stocks with 3 out of the top 5 gainers belonging to this sector. Arabian Shield Co-op Insurance topped the chart with a gain of 64.7 percent backed by the insurer's 147 percent jump in FY-16 net income. On the decliners side, Tihama Advertising topped the chart with a decline of 22.3 percent followed by Nama Chemicals with a drop of 18.5 percent led by higher reported losses. Alinma Bank continued to be the one of the most actively traded stocks in terms of value traded that stood at SAR 8.3 billion followed by SABIC at SAR 7.8 billion.

### Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange

After ending 2016 up by 5.5 percent, the ADX index closed almost flat m-o-m in Jan-17. The index closed at 4548.82 points, as sectoral indices included both gainers and decliners for the month. The Financials pack did well in the first month of the year and was led by the Investment & Financial Services index, which rose by 18 percent, followed by the Insurance index which surged by 15 percent, while Banks improved by 1.1 percent. Waha Capital was solely responsible in pushing up the Investment & Financial Services index, while a strong performance in Al Watbha Insurance drove the insurance index. NBAD and ADCB were the big banking stocks which rose in the first month of 2017 as against Dec-16, as their share prices rose by 4.1 percent and 3.5 percent respectively, while FGB improved by 0.8 percent m-o-m. In terms of laggards, Telecoms receded the most and lost ground by 4.8 percent for the month of Jan-17, followed by the Energy index and the Services index, as each

were tightly managed. Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank (ADCB) reported a full year 2016 net profit of AED 4.157 billion, down 16 percent from AED 4.927.



**COLOMBO:** Sri Lankan police stand guard during a protest against the proposed sale of a stake in a loss-making port to a Chinese company in Colombo yesterday. Protesters led by the leftist People's Liberation Front, are opposing plans to sell an 80 percent stake in the \$1.4 billion deep sea port of Hambantota to China Merchants Port Holdings Company. — AFP

# WORLD ECONOMY ENTERS 2017 WITH WINDS FORE AND AFT

## MOMENTUM AND RISKS AHEAD FROM US PROTECTIONISM, BREXIT

**LONDON/SINGAPORE:** Factories across the world fired up - or at least kept up activity - in January with some registering multi-year output highs, just as a barrage of political risks threatens the global economy with potential harm.

Rising protectionism from the United States, concerns over how Britain's negotiations on leaving the European Union will pan out, and national elections in Europe's largest economies all lie ahead. But entering 2017, economic growth gathered momentum, according to surveys released on Wednesday, following on from last year thanks to a bounce in consumption.

Euro zone factories registered the fastest activity rate for nearly six years, China's activity expanded for the sixth month and Japanese manufacturing growth was the fastest in almost three years. Even in Britain, where a slump in sterling since the June referendum stoked the sharpest rise in factory costs on record last month, growth remained robust.

There were also signs of growth in Brazil, where industrial output rose in December at its fastest monthly pace in 2-1/2 years after one of the worst years on record. "So far momentum is pretty strong heading into 2017," said Jacqui Douglas at TD Securities. "But political risks are definitely one of the biggest this year and given the surprises we had through 2016 it's really hard to tell what's in store."

Among unexpected events last year was Britain's vote to leave the EU and the election as US president of Donald Trump, both seen as the result of anti-establishment anger among voters who feel left out of the wealth of nations. Signs of concern this may spread could be found on bond markets. The premium investors demand to hold France's government debt rather than that of similar economies shot up on so-called Brexit fears - the possibility that the far-right National Front might win the presidential election and try to take the country out of the euro zone.

IHS Markit's final manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index for the currency bloc rose to 55.2 in January from December's 54.9, its highest since April 2011. A Markit/CIPS UK factory PMI edged down to 55.9 from December's 2-1/2 year peak of 56.1, matching the consensus forecast in a Reuters poll. Anything above 50 indicates growth. A similar

survey for the United States due later is expected to show factories in the world's largest economy also increased activity.

### Tokyo Tempering Trump

A stronger dollar helped major economies such as Japan, where export orders surged, Markit/Nikkei PMI numbers showed, a welcome sign for the economy along with recent data suggesting a more durable recovery may be underway. However, those encouraging signals sit uncomfortably with the growing threat from Trump's trade policies. Japan is moving to temper the risks with plans to show Trump its firms are ready to create US jobs, according to a document whose contents were revealed to Reuters. In export-reliant Asia, and other regions where global supply chains are closely interlinked, Trump's election is a particular risk to both world trade and broad economic growth if the new president follows through on his "America First" policies. "The uncertainty surrounding future market access to the US is bound to weigh on investment activity as companies await regulatory certainty," said Frederic Neumann, co-head of Asian economic research at HSBC in Hong Kong. "I suspect there's going to be a

lot of capital expenditure expansion projects that will be put on hold as long as the uncertainty surrounding the trade environment persists."

In China, the world's second-biggest economy, growth was led by an investment and construction boom that has helped spur global growth. Its official PMI stood at 51.3 in January, slowing marginally from 51.4 in December.

Analysts question whether Chinese growth will be sustainable once the impact of earlier stimulus begins to wear off and if the property market cools. They warn a slowdown in the Asian economic powerhouse could ripple across the region and beyond.

"Within China, we expect that real estate will slow down, because the government is quite keen to contain housing prices," said Louis Kuijs, head of Asia economics at Oxford Economics in Hong Kong. Other regional economies like Indonesia showed positive momentum in manufacturing activity, while Indian factory activity returned to modest growth in January, bouncing from a contraction in December triggered by the government's scrapping of high value banknotes. Even in laggard South Korea where manufacturing contracted for the sixth straight month, exports rose at the fastest pace in nearly five years. — Reuters

# WOMEN ARE GETTING MORE SEATS IN THE BOARDROOM

**NEW YORK:** The number of women sitting at the table in corporate boardrooms across the country is rising very slowly, but it's rising. Just over 15 percent of all director seats at publicly traded US companies were held by women as of Dec. 31, according to a study by Equilar, a corporate research firm. That's up from 14 percent a year earlier and from 12 percent in 2013. So, the trend is toward more equal representation on boards, but parity won't happen until the end of 2055 unless the pace picks up, according to Equilar. That's nearly 40 years away, which may be about when girls born today begin sitting on corporate boards.

Demonstrating how far remains to go toward gender parity, 738 companies still have no women on their boards. Last year, nearly 60 companies that had no female directors since at least 2011 added one or more women. Even so, it's still much easier to find a woman in the boardroom than in the corner office, accord-

ing to a separate, global survey of 3,400 companies by Credit Suisse. While women occupied nearly 15 percent of board seats at the end of 2015, only about 4 percent of CEOs are women. Companies in other countries have gotten closer to gender parity than the United States, and government pressure has played a big role. Several European countries have set quotas and targets for how many corporate board members should be held by women. That's why women held 24 percent of European board seats at the end of 2015, the highest rate in the world. Investors are taking note.

Companies with at least one female director tend to have higher stock returns and better corporate performance than those with all-male boards, Credit Suisse says. Of course, this may be a case of correlation rather than causation, and better-performing companies may be more welcoming to women rather than vice versa. — AP



**American Water Company President and CEO Susan N. Stoy**

# BURGAN BANK WILL SOON ANNOUNCE WINNER OF AL-THURAYA ACCOUNT DRAW

**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank will soon be announcing the lucky winner of its newly re-launched Al-Thuraya Salary Account. The winner will be granted a Nissan Patrol SUV. The new draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan bank a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month.

The new draw is part of Burgan Bank's approach of rewarding loyal customers with higher chances of winning while encouraging new customers to benefit from the bank's unique offerings. With the introduction of this new monthly draw, every KD 10 available in the account provides the customer a chance to

win. The Al-Thuraya Account's features range from the option to hold money in Kuwaiti dinar and any other major currencies, access to account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards and much more. The account has been further developed in response to offering more benefits and increasing chances to win. Customers wishing to open an Al-Thuraya account can do so by simply visiting the nearest Burgan Bank branch and obtain all the necessary details, or simply call the bank's call center on 1804080. For further information, customers can also visit the bank's website on www.burgan.com.

# DOLLAR STEADIES AHEAD OF FED, STOCKS RISE

**LONDON:** World stocks made their first gain in five days yesterday as the dollar steadied from turbulence after the Trump administration accused Germany, Japan and China of devaluing their currencies to gain a trade advantage. The US currency suffered its worst January in three decades after President Donald Trump complained that every "other country lives on devaluation".

Bargain hunters nudged the dollar up 0.15 percent in Asian and European trading, reassuring themselves that the Federal Reserve should signal later that it still plans to raise US interest rates a number of times this year. Healthy results from a slew of Europe's bluechips also bolstered the mood, lifting its main bourses 0.8 percent and snapping a four-day losing streak for MSCI's

46-country All World index. Markets remained jittery however. Trump's top trade adviser had also said on Tuesday that Germany was using a "grossly undervalued" euro to exploit its trading partners. The accusations drew rebuttals from German and Japanese officials, but looked likely to run for some time.

"The issue is at what point do investors get concerned that the potential negative shock effects from trade, immigration and geopolitics overwhelm the positives (of potential U.S. stimulus)," said Bluebay asset management head of Credit Strategy David Riley. There was little reaction to a raft of European data. Sterling barely budged after data showed its fall since June's UK Brexit vote had stoked the sharpest rise in factory costs on record

but had offered little boost to exports. Eurozone factories meanwhile started 2017 by ramping up activity at the fastest rate for nearly six years.

"Optimism about the year ahead has risen to the highest since the region's debt crisis," Chris Williamson, chief business economist at the data's provider IHS Markit, noting that inflation was also picking up. Overnight in Asia, Japanese investors seemed relieved the yen's 0.5 percent rise against the dollar had not been larger. They nudged the Nikkei up 0.5 percent and MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan up 0.1 percent in a largely quiet session. Spread betters were also tipping a modest early bounce for Wall Street's S&P 500 and Dow Jones and a slightly better one for the tech-heavy

Nasdaq after Apple reported a strong revival in iPhone sales.

### Fed on hold

Chinese markets were still on holiday but surveys from the Asian giant showed manufacturing and services activity continued to expand in January. Exports from tech bellwether South Korea also grew at the fastest pace in almost five years, another sign the global economy had been on the mend before all the talk of US protectionism darkened the air. Investors' hopes for a fiscal boost to the world's largest economy under Trump have been tempered by controversial and

protectionist policies that have seen him suspend travel to the United States from seven Muslim-majority countries. The policy uncertainty only added to expectations the US Federal Reserve will keep interest rates steady when it concludes a two-day meeting later.

Tokyo shares closed higher yesterday on bargain-hunting after two days of losses and as a rise in the value of the yen fizzled. The Nikkei tumbled on Monday and Tuesday with investors around the world spooked by US President Donald Trump's flurry of executive orders that have fuelled worries about the outlook for the global economy. —Agencies

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report					
Wednesday 01 February 2017					
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low
Price Index	▲ 15.74	6,847.96	6,832.22	6,877.24	6,825.04
Weighted Index	▲ 0.79	428.17	427.38	429.37	424.92
KSX 15	▲ 1.90	987.30	985.40	990.06	976.59

Volume	Value (KWD)	Number of Trades
586,994,494	55,118,430	9,605

Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Change
MARIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	69	▲ 0.0
IKARUS	46.5	45.5	173,800	7,930	15	▲ -2.5
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	370	▲ 0.0
NAPESCO	900	900	525	473	1	▲ 900
ENERGYH	62	59	1,596,245	96,964	60	▲ 0.0
GPI	61	57	6,348,762	375,463	157	▲ -1.0
ABAR	94	94	20,000	1,880	1	▲ 94
Oil & Gas			8,139,332	482,710	234	▲ -17.66
KFOUC	340	315	1,595,630	529,475	57	▲ 25.0
BPCC	570	570	209,000	119,130	6	▲ -10.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	700	▲ 0.0
ALQURAIN	295	290	773,073	226,841	38	▲ 10.0
Basic Materials			2,577,703	875,447	101	▲ 30.66
KCEM	465	460	235,000	108,775	11	▲ 5.0
REFRI	320	320	1,049	336	1	▲ -10.0
CABLE	580	560	750,034	427,056	54	▲ 0.0
SHIP	242	236	20,050	4,732	2	▲ 6.0
PCEM	1,100	1,100	101,028	111,131	5	▲ 20.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	305	▲ 0.0
MRC	83	77	83,860	6,686	24	▲ 3.0
ACICO	0.0	0.0	0	0	295	▲ 0.0
GMCM	0.0	0.0	0	0	300	▲ 0.0
HCC	140	140	12,759	1,786	4	▲ 10.0
KBMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	180	▲ 0.0
NICBM	214	210	168,000	35,876	7	▲ 2.0
EQUIPMENT	75	73	2,273,900	166,956	80	▲ -2.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	42.5	▲ -10.0
GYPSON	0.0	0.0	0	0	95	▲ 0.0
SALBOOKH	83	80	3,463,096	281,776	94	▲ -1.0
AGLTY	750	730	2,919,092	2,159,444	83	▲ 0.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	206	▲ 0.0
CLEANING	57	55	2,172,247	121,024	45	▲ -1.0
KGL	68	66	173,400	11,644	7	▲ -1.0
KPCP	0.0	0.0	0	0	198	▲ 0.0
HUMANSOFT	3,020	3,000	105,001	315,003	15	▲ 20.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	194	▲ 0.0
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	385	▲ 0.0
GFC	43.5	43.0	30,000	1,300	5	▲ -2.5
MAYADEEN	37.0	35.0	4,707,766	169,482	96	▲ -1.0
CGC	490	490	2,000	980	2	▲ 490
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	56	▲ 0.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	770	▲ 0.0
ALAFCO	255	250	37,493	9,511	4	▲ 5.0
MUBARRAD	79	74	436,448	33,388	25	▲ 0.0
LOGISTICS	79	77	3,449,800	267,435	68	▲ 0.0
SCEM	89	89	169,000	15,041	4	▲ 89
GCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	85	▲ 0.0
QIC	83	83	10,000	830	1	▲ 83
FCEM	92	91	1,468,250	133,620	37	▲ 0.0
RKWC	100	99	74,340	7,427	5	▲ 100
SPEC	108	104	1,703,468	180,240	63	▲ 2.0
Industrials			24,566,881	4,571,479	742	▲ 2.92
KSH	162	160	59,250	9,500	3	▲ -10.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	39.5	▲ 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	100	▲ 0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	234	▲ 0.0
DANAH	102	98	4,659,617	466,829	123	▲ 1.0
FOOD	2,620	2,600	817,380	2,125,243	7	▲ -20.0
Consumer Goods			5,536,247	2,601,572	133	▲ -9.95
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	290	▲ 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	920	▲ 0.0
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	280	▲ 0.0
Health Care			0	0	1186.94	▲ 0.00
KCIN	1,180	1,180	50	59	1	▲ 1,180
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	265	▲ 0.0
SULTAN	97	94	472,108	44,738	27	▲ 1
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	47.5	▲ 0.0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	385	▲ 0.0
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	192	▲ 0.0
OLULAFUEL	130	128	77,034	9,988	17	▲ 130
MUNTAZAHAT	94	91	756,116	69,571	36	▲ -1
JAZEERA	680	660	78,702	53,088	15	▲ -10
SOOR	130	124	70,723	9,005	17	▲ 128
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	126	▲ 0.0
ALRAI	170	164	2,219,457	370,984	108	▲ -2
ZMAH	67	61	6,864,497	443,026	168	▲ 5
Mozzan	990	990	1,000	990	1	▲ 990
Consumer Services			10,539,687	1,001,450	390	▲ 4.45
ZAIN	520	495	11,475,171	5,806,743	223	▲ 15
OOREDOO	1,180	1,180	124	146	1	▲ -60
HITSTELEC	63	60	10,489,666	640,099	166	▲ 1
VVA	880	870	61,009	53,677	54	▲ -10
Telecommunications			22,025,970	6,500,666	444	▲ 693.11
NBK	730	720	2,036,442	1,469,677	87	▲ 0
GBK	260	250	2,215,850	556,386	63	▲ -255
CBK	410	405	21,095	8,559	2	▲ 405
ABK	325	325	10	3	1	▲ 325
ALMUTAHED	445	430	111,330	48,553	14	▲ 445
KIB	224	220	998,492	221,894	34	▲ -5
BURG	335	330	111,697	36,943	11	▲ 335
KFIN	630	610	5,272,961	3,266,877	189	▲ 620
BOUBAYAN	415	410	901,927	370,336	34	▲ 415
AUB	224	220	1,346,694	297,916	32	▲ -5
ITHMR	77	71	48,757,732	3,586,466	572	▲ -0
WARBANK	238	234	647,739	153,315	99	▲ -4
Banks			62,421,969	10,016,925	1,138	▲ -2.36
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	300	▲ 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	670	▲ 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	475	▲ 0.0
WINS	100	99	92,547	9,230	8	▲ -1.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	180	▲ 0.0
FTI	52	49.5	1,058,032	52,836	30	▲ 0.5
WETHAQ	62	58	30,100	1,812	6	▲ 0.0
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	355	▲ 0.0
Insurance			1,180,679	63,878	44	▲ -0.15

Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Change
SOKOUK	60	56	10064541	583,383	184	▲ 0.0
KRE	82	80	1,329,371	107,684	28	▲ 0.0
URC	108	104	12,477	1,323	7	▲ 108
NRE	128	122	7,550,678	942,173	123	▲ 0.0
SRE	395	380	5,500	2,098	2	▲ 395
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	450	▲ 0.0
AREEC	184	182	80,000	14,580	4	▲ 182
MASSALEH	0.0	0.0	0	0	57	▲ 0.0
ARABREC	56	53	6,385,368	346,046	108	▲ -1.0
ERESCO	51	51	2,321,681	118,406	44	▲ -1.0
MABANEE	890	880	504,127	443,939	20	▲ -10.0
INJAZZAT	85	83	588,763	49,327	15	▲ 83
INVESTORS	35.0	33.0	38,816,736	1,323,684	293	▲ -0.5
IRC	43.0	41.5	864,022	36,750	37	▲ 41.5
ALTJARIA	88	87	2,214,797	193,990	45	▲ -1.0
SANAM	59	57	105,000	5,995	2	▲ 59
AAYANRE	81	78	545,641	43,326	27	▲ -3.0
AQAR	69	69	20,000	1,380	1	▲ 69
ALAQARIA	49.0	47.5	124,455	5,970	9	▲ 0.5
MAZAYA	132	128	9,895,156	1,286,457	145	▲ 2.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	11.0	▲ 0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	106	▲ 0.0
TUARA	69	67	1,198,422	81,260	31	▲ 69
TAAMEER	43.0	41.5	6,138,500	258,714	112	▲ 42.5
ARKAN	89	83	17,030,315	1,439,550	220	▲ 3.0
ARGAN	198	196	2,897,202	573,646	9	▲ 198
ABYAAR	42.0	39.5	98,653,405	4,011,813	569	▲ 41.0
MUNSHAAT	81	78	5,275,776	416,367	81	▲ 78
FIRSTDUBAI	85	82	1,193,449	99,463	44	▲ -1.0
KBT	64	62	9,532,000	601,701	135	▲ 64
REAM	220	220	500	110	1	▲ 220
MENA	38.0	36.0	3,904,980	144,385	71	▲ -0.5
ALMUDON	60	56	11,128,189	646,837	233	▲ 2.0
MARAKEZ	43.0	40.5	14,000	573	5	▲ 41.5
REMAL	65	62	4,758,243	302,361	11	



# A WALL OF UNCERTAINTY TO REMAIN HIGH

## LARGE SOVEREIGN ISSUANCE EXPECTED FROM GCC

Chart 11: Cumulative sovereign & corporate net issuance in USD & EUR, netting principal payments

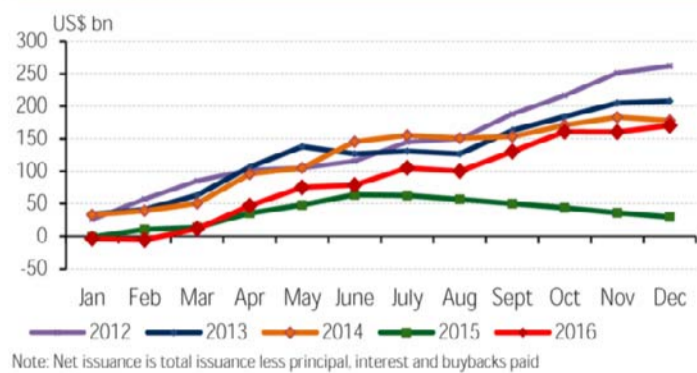


Chart 12: Gross and net issuance in billions and EPFR % flows into EXD; Net issuance = gross issuance minus debt service, including coupons

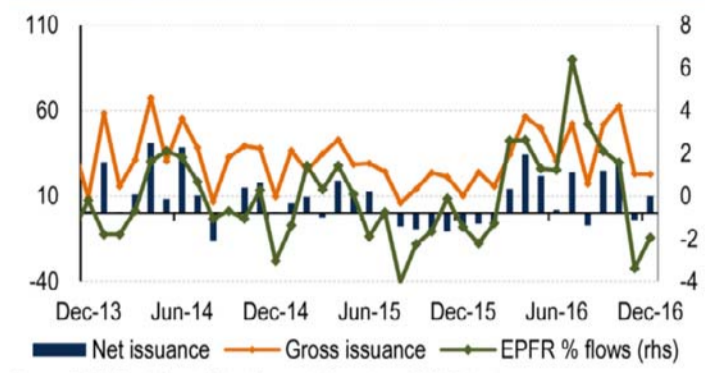


Chart 13: Euro gross issuance as % of total EM issuance



**KUWAIT:** We expect global uncertainty to remain high. However, the primary drivers are changing. The usual global drivers of EM asset prices, namely developed markets rates, risk aversion and commodity prices, are being overshadowed by political developments. Their influence on the design of public policies will have long-lasting global economic consequences. As long as globalization instead of technological changes is seen as the main culprit of the rise in income inequality, the de-globalization trend driven by an increase in protectionist policies will continue. This trend will necessarily imply lower global trade and lower capital flows, with significant implications for emerging markets.

Despite our medium-term concerns, price action in EM has improved in recent weeks on the back of renewed inflows. The USD has weakened across the board since the beginning of the year as US real rates peaked in mid-December though inflation expectations continued rising in the US. A combination of stretched short positioning in US rates and rising uncertainty associated with potential developments in US trade policy are likely behind the stabilization in real rates. The short squeeze in CNH and the PBoC decision to tighten liquidity to discourage speculative positions certainly helped stabilize asset prices in the Asia complex. Light positioning in EM and still-high levels of cash holdings helped to trigger the positive price action.

### GCC sovereign issuance

EM as an asset class still benefits from diversity, as a large concentration of LatAm and Asia provides an offset to the volatility in the Central and Eastern European countries. The bulk of 2017 sovereign issuance is expected to come from GCC, followed by LatAm. We expect Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Qatar and

Kuwait to be the largest gross and net issuers in 2017. Just these four issuers could account for 37 percent of the total sovereign gross issuance. GCC issuance has been increasing rapidly mainly due to low oil prices, with some new issuers in 2016, and we expect 2017 issuance to continue to be high. Among those, we expect Kuwait, with no external sovereign debt, to come to market with about \$10bn to finance a budget deficit resulting from low oil prices.

The bold liberalization of the FX regime by the Central bank of Egypt (CBE), accompanied by large hikes to administered energy prices, provides a credible and front-loaded start to the economic reform program. One key risk to monitor in the near term is social stability, as inflation is likely to peak around 25-30 percent and private consumption will be curtailed. Increased competitiveness should help economic activity rebound and gradually narrow external imbalances.

### Fiscal consolidation

The fiscal reforms introduced so far likely aim to generate annual savings of up to 2.5ppt of GDP in the first year of the IMF program, versus a total target of 5.5ppt of GDP in primary balance adjustment over the life of the program. This includes the introduction of VAT from September (with likely proceeds of EGP22bn or 0.7 percent of GDP and an inflationary impact of c.1.5ppt), wage bill control through the passage of the Civil Service Act, and energy subsidy reform (EGP22bn or 0.7 percent of GDP in proceeds). The impact of currency depreciation on fiscal accounts is likely to be broadly neutral. Unless the EGP weakens much further, the CBE is unlikely to raise

rates, and real interest rates are likely to remain supportive of debt dynamics.

### USD/EGP waiting for portfolio inflows

USD/EGP is cheap versus its history and could gradually stabilise on the back of efforts to attract FX inflows from multilateral and bilateral sources, as well as from the parallel market. Success is likely to be measured through the return of portfolio inflows, which should provide the first signal of market confidence. The Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) is at historical lows, although high inflation is likely to dent competitiveness.

The IMF program should unlock additional bilateral funding and gradually help boost domestic confidence and volume in the FX interbank market. While the latter likely remains below pre-Revolution levels, a portion of the FX backlog has probably been serviced already. While the parallel market has returned to some extent, the narrower USD/EGP differential versus the parallel market could bring some USD supply back to official channels. A functioning FX interbank market rate that ensures smooth entry and exit, and generates enough FX liquidity to service imports and meet the backlog of FX demand (US\$3-10bn, according to local press) is needed to bring back a portion of the historically large foreign portfolio investment, in our view.

### Saudi Arabia

#### Budget calls for higher oil prices

We think that the Saudi USD peg will hold given sizeable foreign assets and the experience with implementing multi-year fiscal adjustments. Energy policy should shift toward supporting oil prices. Main view: Higher oil prices smooth the adjust-

ment process. We expect twin deficits to narrow but remain relatively elevated. Liquidity is likely to improve and non-oil sector growth should rebound given a more gradual pace of fiscal tightening.

Main risks: A prolonged period of low oil prices, fiscal reform slippage, devaluation, political succession and regional geopolitical threats remain the primary risks. Growth rebound, higher oil prices, gradual reforms are key Saudi priorities. The budget statement and medium-term program imply three Saudi policy priorities: easing near-term austerity, supporting higher oil prices and introducing non-oil revenue reforms. The 2017 budget suggests flattish real spending, along with further repayment of government arrears in 1Q17. The authorities appear to be targeting a higher medium-term path for both oil prices and nominal spending. Given that the non-oil revenue fiscal reforms appear insufficient to bring the fiscal deficit towards balance, energy policy is likely to remain focused on supporting oil market rebalancing and hence oil prices. We see the budget being consistent with oil prices of \$55/bbl (\$65/bbl target, \$40/bbl floor) and a fiscal breakeven of \$98/bbl.

### Budget deficit set to narrow in 2017

We expect the 2017 fiscal deficit to narrow on the back of higher oil prices, discipline in spending and non-oil revenue measures. We see the 2017 budget deficit at SAR316bn (\$85bn; 12 percent of GDP) on the back of higher oil prices (\$57/bbl), compared with a deficit of SAR402bn in 2016 (\$107.5bn; 16.9 percent of GDP) and SAR385bn in 2015 (\$102bn; 15.9 percent of GDP). Underlying spending discipline kept the 2016 fiscal deficit in line with budget tar-

gets. However, the repayment of contractor arrears (SAR80bn; \$21bn) and spending related to surplus projects (SAR25bn; \$6.7bn) drove the 2016 fiscal deficit wider.

### Medium-term reform drive

The publication of the "Fiscal Balance Program 2020" highlights that the reform program is not derailed, although higher oil prices allow for a better pacing of measures. The authorities are planning the introduction of means-tested cash allowances in 1Q17, with disbursements from June for a total budget cost this year of SAR25bn or c.1 percent of GDP. This is likely to allow further selective energy subsidy reform in 2H17 (including electricity, gasoline and diesel).

Excise taxes on tobacco and sugary drinks are likely to be introduced in 2Q17, and an expat levy will come into force in July 2017.

The budgetary statement and program suggest that the policy aim is for the main tools of the ongoing medium-term fiscal adjustment to be a combination of higher oil prices and higher non-oil revenues, in line with the planned National Transformation Plan (NTP) fiscal reforms. Oil price recovery is paramount to narrow fiscal imbalances as we estimate 20-25 percent of the medium-term fiscal adjustment will take place through higher oil prices, assuming full NTP implementation.

However, a continuation of the EM rally is far from assured. We expect US real rates to continue moving higher in the coming months on the back of more stimulative fiscal policy, which should translate into a stronger USD and higher risk premium in EM assets. The extent of the move will naturally depend on whether the fiscal easing will be accompanied by a wave of deregulation and protectionist policies.



## BOSCH TO PAY OUT OVER 'DIESELGATE' BUT ADMITS NO WRONGDOING

**FRANKFURT AM MAIN:** German car parts maker Bosch will pay out compensation to US buyers and dealers of Volkswagen-made diesel cars affected by the 'dieselgate' scandal, it said yesterday, but admits no wrongdoing. Under a settlement agreement hammered out with civil claimants, Bosch will "settle the most substantial part of the criminal law proceedings pending in connection with Volkswagen, Audi and Porsche diesel vehicles that were sold in the US" for \$327.5 million (303 million euros), the firm said in a statement.

Bosch, the world's largest car parts supplier and a household appliance giant with 2016 revenues of 73.1 billion euros, is accused of helping Volkswagen hide the existence of sophisticated software included in diesel engines to minimise emissions during regulatory testing.

The so-called "defeat devices" were installed in 11 million diesel engines from VW and its subsidiaries around the globe before coming to light in September 2015.

The Stuttgart-based firm said that its compensation agreement "would settle the claims of consumers and dealers of used vehicles against Robert Bosch GmbH, its affiliates, employees, and directors" in the United States. It covers customers who bought vehicles from Volkswagen and Audi with 2.0-litre diesel engines between 2009 and 2015, as well as 3.0-litre VW, Audi and Porsche cars produced between 2009 and 2016.

If it goes ahead, Bosch's \$327.5-million deal would be dwarfed by the more than \$23 billion so far agreed by Volkswagen in compensation and fines to customers, dealers and authorities in the United States. The firm set aside 650 million euros in provisions in 2015 to cover any legal costs arising from the 'dieselgate' scandal, which became public in September that year. To avoid a trial, VW admitted to conspiring to deceive its

customers and US authorities and to obstructing justice by destroying documents. On Wednesday, it announced a final tranche of compensation payments, buybacks and rebates for US buyers of Volkswagen, Audi and Porsche vehicles fitted with 3.0-litre diesel motors.

### Moving on?

By contrast, Bosch said it "neither acknowledges the facts as alleged by the plaintiffs nor does Bosch accept any liability." It agreed to the payout because "we wish to devote our attention and our resources to the transition in mobility and in other areas of activity," chief executive Volkmar Denner said in the statement. Presenting provisional results for 2016 last week, the family-owned firm said it was investing billions in transitioning to electric cars and connected objects from its traditional car components and domestic appliances business. The Stuttgart-based firm admitted soon after the dieselgate scandal emerged to having supplied parts of the software used in the defeat devices, but has "neither admitted anything nor covered anything up," a spokesman told AFP.

With the proposed agreement affecting only civil law claims, Bosch added that it "will continue to defend its interests in all other civil and criminal law proceedings and to cooperate comprehensively with the investigating authorities in Germany and other countries." Meanwhile, it remains under investigation in both Germany and the United States. Bosch is running its own internal investigation "prioritizing thoroughness over speed," the spokesman said. The firm's proposed deal with VW buyers and dealers must still be approved by a US federal judge in California, with a hearing slated for February 14. Bosch hopes to receive a green light by early May after plaintiffs have had time to examine its offer. — AFP

## ENJOY GREAT QATAR AIRWAYS HOLIDAYS PACKAGES TO EXPERIENCE DJWE 2017

GCC RESIDENTS CAN BOOK FLIGHT, HOTEL AND TOUR PACKAGES ONLINE

**DOHA:** Qatar Airways Holidays, the leisure division of Qatar Airways is offering fantastic packages for visitors travelling to the fourteenth edition of the Doha Jewellery and Watch Exhibition 2017 (DJWE) taking place between 20-25 February.

Qatar Airways Holidays has designed special flight, hotel and tour packages for visitors to this international luxury event, providing seamless travel arrangements and allowing them to discover what Doha has to offer during their trip. A range of Economy and Premium packages are available, including for premium travel a first class return ticket and two nights stay at a five star hotel starting from KD 135 per person. Qatar Airways Holidays exclusive hotel packages also offer complimentary services such as buffet breakfast, room upgrades, airport shuttle, parking, early check-in late check-out and discount vouchers for spa, activities and meals depending on the availability. Travellers can book flight and hotel packages or hotels from now until 25 February by visiting [www.qatarairwaysholidays.com/DJWE](http://www.qatarairwaysholidays.com/DJWE).

Qatar Airways Senior Vice President of Commercial Middle East, Africa and Pakistan, Ehab Amin, said: "Qatar Airways Holidays is offering visitors to Doha complete travel packages at special prices, to ensure travellers enjoy visiting this international event and their opportunity to explore Doha. Visitors booking through Qatar Airways Holidays website will benefit from holiday extras such as early check-in and late check-out, airport shuttles and much more, all designed to make their travel as glamorous as



20 - 25 FEBRUARY 2017  
DOHA EXHIBITION AND CONVENTION CENTER



the jewellery and watches they will discover at the fair."

Travellers looking for transportation for the entirety of their trip can also hire cars as well as city and cultural tours from Qatar Airways Holidays website. This annual luxury exhibition welcomes more than 400 brands showcasing their striking gemstone and accessories collections at Doha Exhibition and Conference Centre (DECC) in the heart of Doha's business district.

DJWE 2017 is organized by Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) who together with this year's partners, Auditoire, gives discerning visitors an exclusive experience; one that brings together old world hospitality with cosmopolitan sophis-

tication to deliver a wealth of new experiences - a series of new fairytale stories in luxury.

Qatar Airways Holidays is the leisure travel division of Qatar Airways. It offers a diverse range of full-service holiday packages, hotels, car rentals, tours and airport transfers for all types of traveller that demand a seamless and hassle-free travel experience. Travellers planning holidays can choose flights and accommodation, book transfers, insurance and destination activities all with Qatar Airways Holidays from Qatar, the UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Oman to more than 150 Qatar Airways destinations worldwide and beyond to over 1,500 tourism global destinations.

## FILLON SCANDAL, FREXIT CONCERNS, FORCE UP FRENCH BORROWING COSTS

**LONDON:** The premium investors demand to hold France's government debt rather than Germany's or Belgium's hit multi-year highs yesterday with French bonds under pressure from rising political risks before presidential elections in April and May.

The election is shaping up as a major risk event for markets. Investors are concerned over the possibility of a win for Marine Le Pen, leader of the far-right National Front. The FN said on Tuesday it would put leaving the euro at the heart of its economic platform. Le Pen is not favored to win in polls, but the candidate who was, conservative Francois Fillon, has been embroiled in a scandal.

Police searched Fillon's office in parliament as an inquiry into alleged fake work by his wife threatened his campaign. "The France (bond yield) spread to Belgium is the gauge we use for political risk, and that has widened further after

an adviser to Le Pen fleshed out their Frexit plans," said ING strategist Martin van Vliet, using a term similar to the Brexit of Britain leaving the European Union. "And with Fillon under the microscope as well, France is definitely underperforming." Fillon, favourite to win the election until a week ago, insists his wife did real work for her pay as a parliamentary assistant. A poll yesterday showed an increase in support for both Le Pen and centrist Emmanuel Macron, with Fillon, the candidate of The Republicans, not making the second round.

The gap between France's 10-year bond yield and its Belgian equivalent hit 26 basis points on Wednesday, the highest since at least April 2008. The spread over Germany hit an almost three-year high of 63.5 bps. The debt of France and Belgium are often compared because of their similar credit ratings and geographic proximity. France is rated Aa2/AA/AA and Belgium

Aa3/AA/AA- by the three main ratings agencies, Moody's, S&P Global and Fitch.

France's 10-year government bond yields rose was up 5 basis points yesterday to 1.10 percent, close to a 16-month high hit earlier in the week and following a 34 bps rise in January, the biggest monthly rise since June 2015. German 10-year yields, the euro zone benchmark, were 2.2 bps higher at 0.46 percent.

Data on Tuesday showed inflation in the eurozone hit 1.8 percent last month, just below the European Central Bank's target, putting pressure on the bank to wind down stimulus sooner rather than later. Most other eurozone yields were up 2-4 bps yesterday ahead of the first US Federal Reserve meeting of the year, due to conclude later in the day. The market will be looking for clues as to how aggressive a stance the world's most important central bank will take on interest rate increases. — Reuters

# FLYDUBAI REPORTS \$8.6 MILLION PROFIT FOR 2016

## AIRLINE ANNOUNCES 14.4% PASSENGER GROWTH TO 10.4 MILLION

**KUWAIT:** flydubai has yesterday announced its full-year results for 2016 reporting a profit of AED 31.6 million (\$8.6 million). It has reported total revenue of AED 5 billion (\$1.37 billion) an increase of 2.4 percent compared to the same period last year. The stronger second half, driven by increased passenger numbers, was impacted by downward pressure on yield leading to lower overall revenue growth reflecting a continuation of the same adverse factors reported in the first half.

Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Maktoum, Chairman of flydubai, said: "these results see flydubai report its fifth consecutive full-year of profitability. In 2012, our third year of operation, we carried 5.1 million passengers. This year, we have carried 10.4 million passengers demonstrating that flydubai continues to help change the way both business and leisure passengers travel around the region. An established tourism destination and global centre for business together with the UAE's geographic location has supported the need for increased connectivity."

Ghaith Al-Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of flydubai, reviewing the Annual Results for 2016, commented: "Over the last two years we have seen passenger traffic grow cumulatively by 52 percent in terms of RPKM1. We continue to demonstrate that we gain loyal customers across our network who recognize the benefits of direct air links and enjoy our onboard offering. The continuation of mainly lower fuel prices and ongoing cost management efforts are reflected in the 16 percent improvement in terms of ASKM2 over the last two years. We have however seen a difficult pricing and operating environment."

**Cost and revenue performance**  
EBITDAR3 was healthy at 21.1 percent of revenue; an improvement from the

previous year's figure of 20.5 percent. The closing cash and cash equivalents position, including pre-delivery payments for future aircraft deliveries, remained strong at AED 2.3 billion.

Fuel costs were 25 percent of operating costs compared to 30.6 percent in the previous year, against a backdrop of



Ghaith Al-Ghaith

lower fuel prices for the year, with legacy fuel hedges impacting only 21 percent of the volume for full year 2016. Ancillary revenue comprising of baggage, cargo and inflight sales contributed 13.8 percent of revenue; dropping from 15.1 percent from the previous year.

### Operational performance

**Aircraft deliveries:** 8 Next-Generation Boeing 737-800 aircraft joined the fleet in 2016 in support of network expansion. The average age of the fleet was 3 years 8.5 months.

**Business Class:** the growth in the number of flydubai's Business Class passengers continued and saw the airline carry 2.4 times the number of passengers as in 2014. The Subcontinent saw the strongest demand for Business Class carrying more than double the number of

passengers. This was followed by the Caucasus which grew by 88 percent, as a result of a liberalization of the visa rules, creating an increased demand from both inbound and outbound traffic flows. In addition, Business Class passengers grew by 38 percent in Europe and 24 percent in the GCC and Middle East.

**Network expansion:** During the course of the year, increased flight frequency on existing routes and a maturing in the performance of the 41 new routes launched in 2014 and 2015 saw ASKM grow by 9 percent.

The launch, on 29 November, of flights to the popular destination of Bangkok was the first route outside of the GCC to start operations with a double daily service. Across the network, flydubai reported the following passenger flows:

\* GCC & Middle East: flydubai carried 28 percent of all traffic between Dubai and the GCC and Middle East.

\* Europe: passenger numbers in Europe grew by 19 percent.

\* Russia: with 21 flights per week across 7 destinations passenger numbers increased by 3 percent.

\* Ukraine: overall flydubai passenger numbers on flights between Ukraine and Dubai increased by 26 percent.

\* Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan): its 5 points across the region saw flydubai contribute 23 percent of the total growth at Dubai airports.

\* Subcontinent: passenger numbers on the flydubai network grew by 22 percent.

\* Africa: passenger numbers from its 11 points grew by 3 percent and contributed 12 percent of the total growth at Dubai airports.

Al Maktoum International (DWC): Flydubai has been operating from DWC since October 2015. With its two gateways, flydubai will continue to gradually increase its operations at DWC based on



the further expansion of the airport.

Staff numbers: flydubai continued to grow its experienced team with a total of 3,773 staff including 746 pilots, 1,618 cabin crew and 282 engineers.

**OPEN:** flydubai launched its simple and straightforward rewards program on 25 October 2016 and has been well received in the market.

**FZ981:** Following the tragic loss of FZ981 on 19 March 2016, flydubai remains focused on supporting the families who lost their loved ones. In addition to providing initial financial assistance payments and interim financial assistance payments, our Long Term Care Team continues to be available to the bereaved families who are our primary concern. Plans are being put in place for a memorial to mark the first year anniversary. Ghaith Al-Ghaith, CEO of flydubai, said: "flydubai continues, through its accredited representative, to support the investigation into the tragic accident. Our Long Term Family Assistance team continues to be available for all the families."

### Outlook

During 2017, flydubai will be the first airline in the Middle East to receive the

new model Boeing 737 MAX 8 and the first of these aircraft will enter into service in the second half of the year. The overall capacity will not grow during 2017, as short term capacity needs are adjusted, due to the ongoing challenging operating environment. Since launch, one of the principles of flydubai's fleet planning strategy was to maintain a young fleet. Under these plans, the airline will see the eight-year lease term expire for 4 Next-Generation Boeing 737-800 and during the year these aircraft will be retired from the fleet.

Ghaith Al-Ghaith, CEO of flydubai, looking to the year ahead, said: "we will remain prudent throughout 2017 as we will continue to operate in a challenging socioeconomic environment. Yields will remain under pressure and we expect to report flat growth in the year ahead. We are looking forward to receiving the first Boeing 737 MAX 8 in the region which will bring further fuel and operating efficiency to our young modern fleet. We are focused on our strategy to lead in innovation, to provide an unrivalled experience on board and on the ground, as we continue to meet the travel demands of our passengers."



## ZAIN ANNOUNCES KHALID AL-SALEH WINNER OF GRAND PRIZE IN 'PAY ONLINE AND WIN'

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the winner of the Grand Prize in its "Pay Online and Win" draw that saw a weekly postpaid winner of four valuable prizes when paying their bill using Zain's website or app.

Zain concluded the campaign by announcing Khalid Saleh Essa Al-Saleh winner of the Grand Prize in the final draw, which includes iPhone 7, iPhone 7 Plus, Touch Hotspot LTE-A with free 1.5 TB Prepaid Internet line valid for 3 months, and a PlayStation 4 (1 TB).

The campaign was concluded with 8

winners of valuable prizes across the past 8 weeks. Postpaid customers got one chance to enter the draws for every KD1 paid through Zain's digital channels, including the company's website (pay.kw.zain.com) and Zain's app available for iOS and Android.

Zain launched this exciting promotional campaign to reinforce its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best products and services to meet its customers' personal and professional telecommunications needs, who are considered Kuwait's biggest family of subscribers.

## KFH CAPITAL UPHOLDS A STRONG BUY RECOMMENDATION FOR AL-MAZAYA

### SHARE FAIR VALUE RANGE AT 170-175 KUWAITI FILS UPHELD

**KUWAIT:** KFH Capital has affirmed Al-Mazaya Holding's share fair value range at 170 -175 Kuwaiti Fils. The rating, mentioned in an official report issued by KFH Capital recently, is based on the robust growth potential of Al-Mazaya's current investments, now centered in Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain and Turkey. The rating is supported by the company's strengths in recurring cash flows generated by its major operations, mainly those in areas of real estate.

As per the report, KFH Capital's rating reflects Al Mazaya Holding's 2016 performance and the future outlook over the next three years in a conservative way that takes into consideration only the profits the company reaps through projects that are now under construction. This excludes the new enterprises that the company is planning to develop, including, for example, the Al-Sharq Project in Kuwait, although the plot has already been purchased by the company and the design and process layout work already started. This is in addition to the Q-Line Project in the United Arab Emirates; their design and layout works have already been completed in preparation for the execution stage.

The strength of the company's share is attributable to its ability to increase its total profits over the coming three years, according to the report.



The company's overall net profits are predicted to rise in 2018, 70 percent of which shall be generated by rental returns especially when the delivery of real estate projects is approaching the final stages. This advantage places Al-Mazaya Holding among top regional companies that boast high cash flows and considerable operating revenue streams. The report underlined the strengths currently boasted by the company and over the

coming three years, including the diversification the company has achieved within the asset base and revenue streams. While revenue streams are real estate-related, they are diversified by geography, varying between developed-for-sale and rental properties. This mitigates operating risks and ensures good growth prospects for real estate assets. The company's high net profits and cash generation have been hailed as well.

## RENAULT AL-BABTAIN ANNOUNCES NEW OFFERS FOR FEBRUARY 2017

**KUWAIT:** Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Company (AABC), the authorized dealer of Renault vehicles in the State of Kuwait, launched an exciting offer as a part of its Hala February campaign.

The offer gives the opportunity to the first 100 customers to win amazing prizes including cash back, tinting and body protection, airline tickets, fuel vouchers, mobiles or Al Babtain Vouchers. The offer also includes a ten years warranty or 500,000 km in addition to free registration

and third party insurance on all Renault vehicles. The offer also includes the All-New Koleos and Talisman, the new line from Renault. The All-New Koleos is the latest, redesigned, restyled, and much-awaited addition to Renault's product line-up and bears all the hallmarks of a charismatic SUV echoing an unseen alliance of power and refinement that fulfill all expectations. All-New Renault Koleos' engine and transmission line-up has been tailored to meet the needs and expectations of the market. The 2.5-

litre petrol engine is also an atmospheric, four-cylinder, power is 170hp (126kW) at 6,000rpm, with peak torque of 233Nm at 4,000rpm.

The Renault Talisman provides a distinctive blend of comfort and delight to the driver, with electronic damper control for outstanding on-road dynamics that combine maneuverability, performance and ease. It is for those looking for a luxurious and practical car, with a class-leading energy TCe 190 turbocharged direct-injection petrol engine, which ensures driving enjoyment and efficiency, with 190 hp on tap, fuel consumption and CO2 emissions of as low as 17 km/litre and 139 g/km respectively.

A normally aspirated engine is available as well. This month-long offer and Renault Al Babtain's Hala February 2017 festival sponsorship are yet another opportunity to deeply immerse Kuwait's customers in Renault brand culture and cement their loyalty. Renault Al-Babtain regularly strives to design offers that people simply just cannot resist while creating a more memorable and enjoyable car shopping experience. Renault Al Babtain encourages all customers to gear up for the prizes awaiting them during the month of February as they buy their favorite Renault car.



## GULF BANK LAUNCHES 'GULF LIVE' NEW INTERACTIVE TELLER MACHINES

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank is pleased to be one of the first banks in Kuwait to launch its Interactive Teller Machine (ITM) entitled "Gulf Live" across many of its branches.

With cutting-edge technology and live customer service representatives, customers can easily conduct their daily transaction needs.

"Gulf Live" is a live video conversation with Gulf Bank's representatives allowing customers to avoid queues in branches and has extended hours of services. Through "Gulf Live" customers can withdraw amounts up to KD 5,000 and deposit amounts up to KD 3,000. Customers can also cash and deposit checks, in addition to a variety of transaction which are usually offered by the branch tellers. Choosing a denomination which ranges from KD 1 to KD 20, conducting all transactions by simply using a civil ID rather than a debit card, are also part of "Gulf Live".

The new ITMs enable Gulf Bank to offer its customers the benefits of both self-service video banking and the branch experience in one simple solution. In fact, it combines video banking and remote transaction processing banking technology embedded within the ITM to give the customer the choice of self-service or connecting with a remote teller in a highly personalized, two-way audio/video interaction.

The new "Gulf Live" machines are available at the Gulf Bank head office on Mubarak Al-Kabeer Street in Kuwait City, as well as the Jabriya branch and Al-Adan branch. Gulf Bank will be deploying this new service at different branches throughout the year.

## GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-DANAH DAILY DRAWS

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draws on 29 January 2017 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 22 January - 26 January 2017. The Al Danah daily draws include draws each and every working day for two prizes of KD 1,000 per winner.

### The winners are:

Sunday 22/1: Mohammed Sultan Ismel Al-Qalaf, Adel Abdullah Mohammed Al-Naser

Monday 23/1: Ebrahim Khaled Saad Abdullah, Nader Naser Theyab Al-Turki



Tuesday 24/1: Naser Amran Abdullah Kanaan, Rajaa Sulaiman Dawoud Mohammad

Wednesday 25/1: Rozat Shafiq Abbasi, Sawzan Abdulrazaq Jassim Al-Abdulsalam

Thursday 26/1: Hanaa Nader Al-Khudari, Mahmoud Hasan Haq Aadrnabada

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2017 draw line-up includes daily draws (2 winners per working day and each receive KD1000). Al-Danah's 1st quarterly draw for the prize of KD200,000 will be held on 30 March, the 2nd quarterly draw for the prize of KD250,000 will be held on 29 June and the 3rd quarterly draw for the prize of KD500,000 will be held on 28 September. The final Al-Danah draw for

KD1 million dinar will be held on 11 January, 2018 whereby the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced.

### Five reasons why the Al Danah account is the best:

- 1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million
- 2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD500,000
- 3) Two winners of KD1,000 every working day.
- 4) The most chances to win
- 5) Only Bank that transfers your chances to win from year to year

### Only Al-Danah makes millionaires

Al-Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al-Danah deposit only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al-Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al-Danah winner.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the draw within two days.

To take part in the Al-Danah 2017 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must have an Al-Danah account containing at least KD 200; customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, transfer on line, or call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance.

Customers can also log on to www.gulfbank.com/aldanahwinners, to find out more about Al-Danah and its winners.

# CISCO REDUCES TIME TO DETECTION TO SIX HOURS

According to the Cisco (NASDAQ: CSCO) 2017 Annual Cybersecurity Report (ACR), over one-third of organizations that experienced a breach in 2016 reported substantial customer, opportunity and revenue loss of more than 20 percent. Ninety percent of these organizations are improving threat defense technologies and processes after attacks by separating IT and security functions (38 percent), increasing security awareness training for employees (38 percent), and implementing risk mitigation techniques (37 percent). The report surveyed nearly 3,000 chief security officers (CSOs) and security operations leaders from 13 countries in the Security Capabilities Benchmark Study, part of the Cisco ACR.

the potential for security effectiveness gaps. "In 2017, cyber is business, and business is cyber -that requires a different conversation, and very different outcomes. Relentless improvement is required and that should be measured via efficacy, cost, and well managed risk. The 2017 Annual Cybersecurity Report demonstrates, and I hope justifies, answers to our struggles on budget, personnel, innovation and architecture," said Ziad Salameh, Managing Director - West Region, Cisco Middle East. To exploit these gaps, ACR data shows criminals leading a resurgence of "classic" attack vectors, such as adware and email spam, the latter at levels not seen since 2010. Spam accounts for nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of email with eight to 10

of 14 hours in early 2016 to as low as six hours in the last half of the year. This figure is based on opt-in telemetry gathered from Cisco security products deployed worldwide. "One of our key metrics highlighted in the 2017 Annual Cybersecurity Report is the 'time to detection' - the time it takes to find and mitigate malicious activity. We have brought that number down to as low as six hours. A new metric - the 'time to evolve' - looked at how quickly threat actors changed their attacks to mask their identity. With these and other measures gleaned from report findings, and working with organizations to automate and integrate their threat defense, we can better help them minimize financial and operational risk and grow their business," said Scott Manson, Cyber Security Leader for Middle East and Turkey, Cisco.



Ziad Salameh, Managing Director, West Region, Cisco Middle East

battle complexity and manpower challenges, leaving gaps of time and space for attackers to utilize to their advantage. Cisco advises these steps to prevent, detect, and mitigate threats and minimize risk:

**Make security a business priority:** Executive leadership must own and evangelize security and fund it as a priority.

**Measure operational discipline:** Review security practices, patch, and control access points to network systems, applications, functions, and data.

**Test security effectiveness:** Establish clear metrics. Use them to validate and improve security practices.

**Adopt an integrated defense approach:** Make integration and automation high on the list of assessment criteria to increase visibility, streamline interoperability, and reduce the time to detect and stop attacks. Security teams then can focus on investigating and resolving true threats.

## Cisco Annual Cybersecurity Report

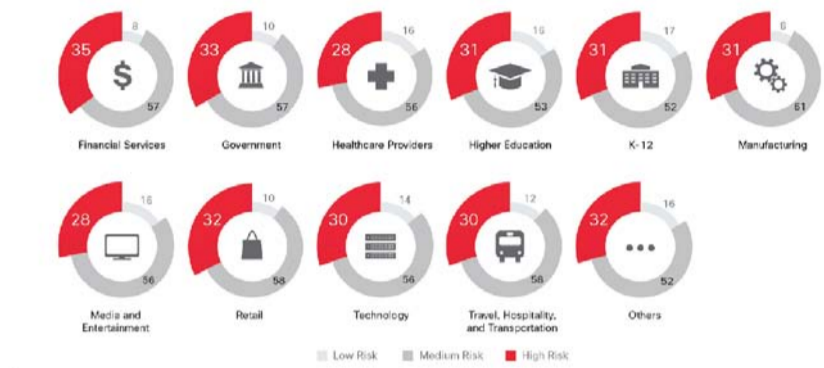
Cybersecurity has changed drastically since the inaugural Cisco Annual Security Report in 2007. While technology has helped attacks become more damaging and defenses become more sophisticated, the foundation of security remains as important as ever. In 2007, the ACR reported web and business applications were targeted, often via social engineering, or user-introduced infractions. In 2017, hackers attack cloud-based applications, and spam has escalated. Ten years ago, malware attacks were on the rise, with organized crime profiting from them. In today's shadow economy, thieves now run cybercrime as a business, offering low barrier-to-entry options to potential customers.

Today perpetrators can be anyone, anywhere; they don't require a security background and can easily purchase "off-the-shelf" exploit kits.

The 2007 report tracked 4,773 Cisco IntelliShield Security Alerts, mapping closely to the level seen by the National Vulnerability Database. By the 2017 report, for the same time period, the vendor-disclosed vulnerability alert volume had increased by 33 percent to 6,380. We believe the increase is driven by greater security awareness, an increased attack surface and an active adversary.

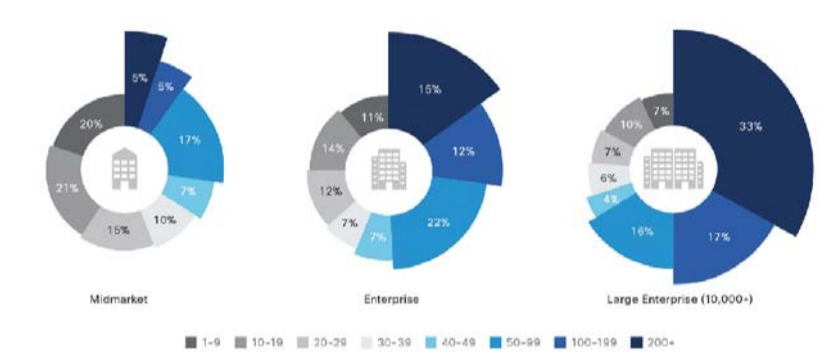
In 2007 Cisco advised defenders to own a holistic approach to security, integrating tools, processes and policies, and educating stakeholders to protect their environments. Businesses looked to vendors for a comprehensive answer, often in vain, who instead prescribed piecemeal point solutions. In 2017 CSOs are grappling with the complexity of their environments. Cisco is combatting this through an architectural approach to security, helping customers get more from existing security investments, increasing capability while decreasing complexity.

Figure 8 Distribution of Low-, Medium-, and High-Risk Applications, by Industry



For more (in Arabic): [www.cisco.com/go/cisco2017](http://www.cisco.com/go/cisco2017)

Figure 49 Number of Security Professionals by Size of Organization



For more (in Arabic): [www.cisco.com/go/cisco2017](http://www.cisco.com/go/cisco2017)

Now in its 10th year, the global report highlights challenges and opportunities for security teams to defend against the relentless evolution of cybercrime and shifting attack modes. CSOs cite budget constraints, poor compatibility of systems, and a lack of trained talent as the biggest barriers to advancing their security postures. Leaders also reveal that their security departments are increasingly complex environments with 65 percent of organizations using from six to more than 50 security products, increasing

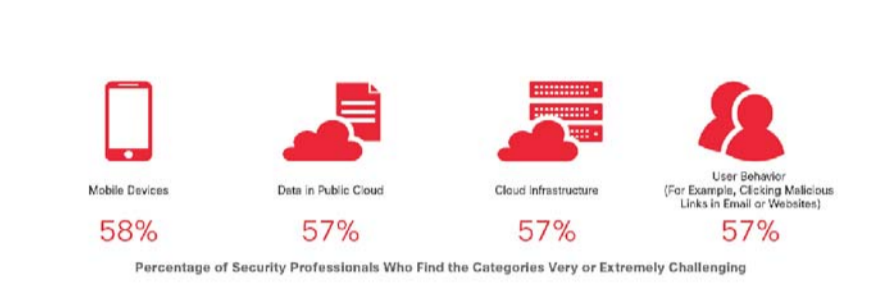
percent cited as malicious. Global spam volume is rising, often spread by large and thriving botnets.

Measuring effectiveness of security practices in the face of these attacks is critical. Cisco tracks progress in reducing "time to detection" (TTD), the window of time between a compromise and the detection of a threat. Faster time to detection is critical to constrain attackers' operational space and minimize damage from intrusions. Cisco has successfully lowered the TTD from a median

## Lost customers, lost revenue

The 2017 ACR revealed the potential financial impact of attacks on businesses, from enterprises to SMBs. More than 50 percent of organizations faced public scrutiny after a security breach. Operations and finance systems were the most affected, fol-

Figure 1 Security Professionals' Biggest Sources of Concern Related to Cyber Attacks



lowed by brand reputation and customer retention. For organizations that experienced an attack, the effect was substantial: Twenty-two percent of breached organizations lost customers - 40 percent of them lost more than 20 percent of their customer base. Twenty-nine percent lost revenue, with 38 percent of that group losing more than 20 percent of revenue. Twenty-three percent of breached organizations lost business opportunities, with 42 percent of them losing more than 20 percent.

## Hacker operations and new business models

In 2016, hacking became more "corporate." Dynamic changes in the technology landscape, led by digitization, are creating opportunities for cybercriminals. While attackers continue to leverage time-tested

Cloud opportunity and risk: Twenty-seven percent of employee-introduced, third-party cloud applications, intended to open up new business opportunities and increase efficiencies, were categorized as high risk and created significant security concerns. Old-fashioned adware - software that downloads advertising without user permission - continued to prove successful, infecting 75 percent of organizations investigated. A bright spot emerged with a drop in the use of large exploit kits such as Angler, Nuclear and Neutrino, whose owners were brought down in 2016, but smaller players rushed in to fill the gap.

## Secure business, maintain vigilance

The 2017 ACR reports that just 56 percent of security alerts are investigated and less than half of legitimate alerts remediated. Defenders, while confident in their tools,



DETROIT: This photo provided by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety shows a Tesla Model S during crash safety testing. — AP

## TESLA, BMW ELECTRICS FALL SHORT OF HIGHEST CRASH-TEST RATING

DETROIT: Two luxury electric vehicles - the Tesla Model S and the BMW i3 - fell short of getting the highest safety ratings in new crash tests by the insurance industry. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety tested 2017 models of both vehicles. Neither earned the institute's "Top Safety Pick-Plus" award, which is given to vehicles that get the highest rating in five different crash tests and offer a crash-prevention system with automatic braking. To get a highest "Top Safety Pick-Plus" designation, vehicles must meet all of those criteria and have good headlights.

In the 2017 model year, 38 vehicles have won the "Top Safety Pick-Plus" designation, including two plug-in hybrids: the Toyota Prius Prime and the Chevrolet Volt. But no all-electric vehicles are on the list. The institute hasn't yet tested the all-electric Chevrolet Bolt, which went on sale at the end of 2016. Tesla's Model S, an all-electric luxury sedan that starts at \$72,500, earned good ratings in four of the institute's five tests, including a side impact test and a head restraint test. But it earned a lower rating in a small overlap frontal crash test, which replicates what happens

when the front corner of the car collides with a tree or telephone pole at 40 miles per hour.

The Tesla's safety belt allowed the crash dummy to move too far forward and it hit its head on the steering wheel. The institute said Tesla made a production change this month to address the problem, so the car will be tested again. The Model S has earned the highest ratings on US government crash tests, but IIHS performs different tests. Tesla also earned a "poor" rating for its headlights. And a high-performance version of the Model S, the P100D, got a lower ranking on the roof strength test because its larger battery makes it much heavier, so the roof might not hold up as well in a rollover crash.

The government hasn't performed a roof-strength test on the P100D. The BMW i3, a small electric car that starts at \$42,400, also earned good ratings in four out of five tests. It fell short in the head restraint test, which measures how well the car protects against neck injuries in a rear crash. The i3 earned the second-highest rating of "acceptable" for its headlights. The government hasn't yet reported crash-test results for the i3.—AP

## DAIMLER TO SUPPLY SELF-DRIVING CARS FOR UBER

FRANKFURT: German auto giant Daimler on Tuesday said it had struck a partnership with Uber to supply self-driving cars for the US ride-hailing company. The tie-up comes as both carmakers and ridesharing firms are jockeying to establish themselves as leading players in the burgeoning world of autonomous driving, seen as the future of the auto industry. "Under the terms of the cooperation, Daimler plans to introduce self-driving vehicles... on Uber's global ridesharing network in the coming years," the companies said in a joint statement.

The agreement will see Daimler build and operate self-driving Mercedes-Benz cars for use by Uber, but the statement revealed no financial details. "As the inventor of the automobile, Daimler aims to be a leader in autonomous driving-one of the most fascinating aspects of reinventing mobility," Daimler CEO Dieter Zetsche said in the statement. San Francisco-based Uber has invested heavily in self-driving car technology in recent years, and is currently piloting the use of autonomous vehicles on roads in the United States. — AFP

# APPLE REVERSED ITS IPHONE SLUMP, BUT WHAT'S NEXT?

## SELLING IPHONES GETS TOUGHER

SAN FRANCISCO: Apple has snapped out of the first sales slump in the iPhone's decade-long history, although the modest upturn doesn't mean that it has broken out of its innovation funk. If anything, the numbers Apple released Tuesday highlight the company's growing dependence on the iPhone, whose sales tower above Apple's other current offerings. The company hasn't managed to come up with another breakthrough product since its chief visionary, Steve Jobs, died in 2011.

Meanwhile, Apple's rivals have been rolling out new products in other promising fields such as augmented reality, virtual reality and artificial intelligence. Apple currently trails in those areas, although many analysts believe the company may try to catch up with products featuring those trendy technologies later this year. No matter what's coming down the pike, the iPhone remains a huge moneymaker. Its success is the main reason Apple boasts a market value of \$640 billion - more than any other company.

The iPhone is also driving the rapid growth of Apple's services division, which makes money from fixing devices, selling music streaming subscriptions and commissions on sales of mobile apps. Apple's services revenue surged 18 percent to \$7.2 billion in the past quarter, putting it on pace generate enough annual revenue by itself to rank among the world's largest companies.

## Barely on the rise

But selling more iPhones has been getting tougher as more people hold on to older models for longer periods and competitors such as Samsung and Google entice customers with sleek devices running on Android software. The trend led to three consecutive quarters in which iPhone sales fell compared to the prior year, causing Apple's total revenue to sag as well. Apple bounced back in the quarter ending in December, buoyed by a positive response to the late September release of the iPhone 7 and 7 Plus. That device featured a better camera, which drew rave reviews, and no jack for headphones, which irked some consumers and befuddled others.

Apple shipped 78.3 million iPhones in the latest quarter, a 5 percent increase compared to the previous year. It benefited from a year-end quarter consisting of 14 weeks, one more than the previous year period. If not for the calendar quirk, the iPhone sales slump might not have ended.

Apple sold an average of 5.6 million iPhones per week in the latest quarter compared to 5.7 million iPhones per week in the previous year. The Cupertino, California, company also was



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo, Phil Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of worldwide marketing, talks about the pricing on the new iPhone 7 during an event to announce new products, in San Francisco. — AP

helped by a recall of Samsung's Note 7 phones, which were plagued by battery fires. That problem drove some people switch to other models such as the iPhone.

About 17 percent of all iPhones are now 7 models, according to Localytics, which tracks activity on mobile devices. Most of the rest are older iPhone 6 or iPhone 5 models. Apple could have sold more of the iPhone 7 Plus, which boasts a bigger screen and an extra camera, but the company misgauged demand and didn't make enough to meet customer demand, CEO Tim Cook said during a conference call. iPhone sales could slip yet again. Anticipation is building for the expected release of a 10th anniversary iPhone of some sort this summer or fall.

Many smart phone owners could hold off until they get a good look at this year's iPhone, says Daniel Ives, a senior vice president for the mobile research firm Synchronoss Technologies. "It's like a drum roll while everyone waits for the curtains to roll back to unveil the next iPhone," Ives says. "There is a lot of pent-up demand out there, so this has the potential to be a game changer." Cook promises there are still many iPhone advances yet to come that will win even more fans. "The smart phone is still in the early innings of the game," he said. "I think there's a lot more to do."

The iPad, a tablet that became a smash hit after its 2010 debut, remains mired in a three-year sales slump, further magnifying the iPhone's importance to Apple. The company

shipped 13.1 million iPads in the past quarter, a 19 percent drop from the previous year. "Remember when Apple called itself Apple Computer Inc.?" says BGC Financial analyst Colin Gillis, harking back to the company's identity until 2007. "They may as well call themselves Apple Phone Inc. now." Propelled by the iPhone, Apple Inc.'s revenue edged up 3 percent to \$78.4 billion in the quarter. But its profit dipped 3 percent to \$17.9 billion.

## Still waiting

It was Apple's biggest quarterly revenue in its 40-year history, but it doesn't erase the question that has nagged Tim Cook since he succeeded Jobs as CEO nearly 5 1/2 years ago: What's next? Cook touts a smartwatch that Apple introduced as a huge success, but most analysts still view it as more of a novelty. In interviews, Cook has hinted Apple is exploring opportunities in augmented reality, which casts holograms and other digital images onto the real world around you.

Apple also has been buying companies and hiring engineer specializing in artificial intelligence, a niche focused on teaching computers to think and talk more like humans. Gillis believes Apple already has wasted too much time trying to figure out its next big move. "When your iPhone juice runs down, you should already be ready to ramp up your next product," he says. "What have we gotten after all the billions that Apple has spent on" research and development? —AP

## S AFRICA AND EU SPAR OVER CHICKEN MEAT DUMPING

**JOHANNESBURG:** South Africa's poultry industry says it is on the brink of collapse due to hotly-denied accusations that the European Union is dumping cheap chicken in the country in a dispute over free trade. Workers, former workers and company managers from the South African poultry sector will march on the EU headquarters in Pretoria yesterday, furious over cheap imports and mounting job losses. But the EU has accused the industry of using it as a "handy scapegoat" for domestic production problems, and said volumes of EU chicken imported to South Africa were too small to be responsible for the crisis.

Organizers of the march said that 4,000-5,000 jobs had already been lost, and that 110,000 more were at risk in the industry, plus 20,000 in the feed supply sector. RCL Foods, South Africa's largest poultry producer, last month laid off 1,350 employees — 20 percent of its workforce—and is selling 15 of its 25 farms. "This issue has been

growing since the EU started to send more and more leg quarters to South Africa at what we consider dumped prices," RCL Foods managing director Scott Pitman, who will join the march, said.

"Not only have we taken a financial burden over the last five years, but the loss has got so big that we are going to go bankrupt if we don't cut the size of our business." The South African poultry industry alleges that the EU dumps off-cuts of "dark meat"—chicken thighs and drumsticks—in South Africa at below-cost prices because the European market prefers breast meat.

### Waste disposal

"This is a form of waste disposal," Kevin Lovell, the boss of the South African Poultry Association (SAPA), said. South Africa is struggling with slow growth at just 0.4 percent last year and unemployment is stuck stubbornly high at 27 percent—posing a major challenge to the ANC government. On

Monday, ANC secretary-general Gwede Mantashe suggested the government should intervene by buying poultry farms that are closing down and finding new markets for their produce. In the face of damaging accusations of dumping, the European Union has fought back, saying the South African poultry industry was blaming others for its own failures.

"When people are losing livelihoods, trade deals can be a handy scapegoat," EU Ambassador Marco Cornaro told reporters on Tuesday. "It is a distortion... to think that it is the EU trade policy which is the origin, let alone the main source, of the current woes of the SA chicken industry." According to EU figures, EU exports account for less than seven percent of total South African chicken consumption, and EU imports of "dark meat" account for only 14 percent of local market consumption. Cornaro said a lack of competition, a severe drought pushing up feed prices; rising

electricity costs and injecting brine (salt water) were causing South African industry's problems rather than EU imports.

The EU said it would welcome marchers into their delegation offices yesterday to discuss their concerns. Brazil was the biggest poultry importer to South Africa in the first half of 2016, followed by Netherlands, Britain and Spain. Trade Minister Rob Davies told Bloomberg News last week the poultry sector was in "distress", adding "we will not have an industry to raise the competitiveness" if imports continue to flood the market. On top of tough avian flu restrictions, South Africa has imposed anti-dumping duties on EU importers and, in December, also introduced an extra "safeguard" tariff to try to protect the industry. The EU is South Africa's biggest trading partner, and the dispute marks a tricky start to the economic partnership agreement (EPA) between the two sides that came into force last year. —AFP



**FLORENCE:** Antonio Medica, the colonel in charge of the Italian military's cannabis laboratory shows Marijuana produced at the military's 164-year-old chemical and pharmaceutical institute (ICFM), in Florence. — AFP photos

## ITALY'S MILITARY NARCOS COOK UP CANNABIS CURES

PRODUCING IT IN A SEALED ENVIRONMENT IS VERY IMPORTANT

**FLORENCE:** It's every stoner's nightmare: marijuana plants as far as the eye can see and not a spiff in sight. "No, I have never tried it, and I don't have any intention of trying it either," says Antonio Medica, the colonel in charge of the Italian military's cannabis laboratory in Florence. As he inspects pristine plant buds destined to be cut and dried into a version of the drug for medical use, the veteran officer is nonetheless sure he is producing some really good stuff. "Absolutely yes, I can assure you of that," says Medica, who is wearing surgeon's scrubs over his uniform. "We have done the tests."

In the doorway of a growing room that resembles a cross between a science lab and a steamy greenhouse, Medica explains how he ended up

producing top-grade weed for Italy's health service. "One of my colleagues was joking with me the other day: 'We spent 40 years trying to stop the troops smoking it in the barracks and now we are producing it ourselves,'" he said. In reality, it is a serious business. The quality has to be reliable because the output from the military's Cannabis Project Team is destined for patients, not potheads.

### Not so high

"Producing in this sterile, sealed environment is very important," Medica explains. "That is the only way you can ensure a consistent product and one free from the toxic materials, particularly heavy metals like mercury, that the plants can easily

absorb when grown in fields." The first batches of made-in-Italy pot have just arrived in pharmacies. Its production is just one of the activities of the military's 164-year-old chemical and pharmaceutical institute (ICFM). The body prides itself on the fact that its cannabis was registered as a pharmaceutical product by Italy's medicines agency in September 2015.

As such, it is very different from most of the cannabis consumed around the world. This is because the component that gets recreational users high, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), is less useful to doctors than another active ingredient, the anti-inflammatory cannabidiol (CBD). In simple terms, Italian military dope has less THC but more CBD, compared to its street-bought equivalent, or even when compared with the legal, Dutch-made supplies on which Italian physicians previously relied. An estimated 2,000-3,000 Italians currently use medical cannabis for purposes such as relief from multiple sclerosis pain or combating nausea after chemotherapy.

### Medical munchies

Italy's guidelines also highlight its possible use for glaucoma and in helping to restore the appetite of anorexia and HIV patients. The latter application depends on the same reaction that recreational marijuana users experience when they get the "munchies." Italy authorized the consumption of cannabis for medical reasons in 2007. But take-up has been slow with doctors reluctant to consider it an option because of uncertainty over the circumstances in which it can be used, dosages and how to administer it. "They were afraid of side effects, afraid to take the responsibility, afraid about everything," said Pierluigi Davolio, a Florence pharmacist.

Davolio estimates he is now dispensing around 300 cannabis preparations per year as awareness and confidence grows amongst medics and patients, some of whom would have previously risked self-medicating with dealer-supplied or home-grown stocks. He has no doubt that cannabis has its place on his shelves. "One thing it works well for is fibromyalgia, a condition for which there is no really effective medicine," he said, referring to a disorder that causes joint pain. "We had a patient here who had sold her car because she was in too much pain to be able to drive. As soon as she started (taking cannabis), she was back at the garage saying she needed it back."

### An experimental phase

With 100 plants yielding eight kilograms of final product, the ICFM plans to have four growth chambers on stream soon and to produce around 100kg (220 pounds) in total this year. Medica anticipates being able to expand output and to produce different types of medical cannabis as demand grows and feedback identifies which compound-mix works best for specific conditions. "We are still in a very experimental phase," Davolio said.

Growing each plant to the harvesting point takes three months, compared to a year outdoors in Italian conditions. Controlled cycles of powerful artificial light accelerate the process. The growing rooms are irrigated, kept between 20-28 degrees Celsius and frequently resonate to the strains of Mozart, thought to be helpful to plant growth. After being processed into a texture resembling dried parsley, the cannabis is treated with gamma rays to kill off pathogens before being sold to pharmacists at 6.8 euros (\$7.30) per gram. —AFP



**FLORENCE:** A member of the Italian Military's Cannabis Project Team works in the growing room of Marijuana and inspects pristine plant buds destined to be cut and dried into a version of the drug for medical use, at the Chemical and Pharmaceutical institute (ICFM) in Florence.

## KENYAN SLUM SEEKS TO TURN SEWAGE INTO GOLD WITH RECYCLING PLANT

**KIBERA, Kenya:** Abdullahi Ibrahim's dream to set up a fruit-juice business has so far been thwarted by water scarcity in Kenya's biggest slum, Kibera. But the 19-year-old is confident a reliable water supply — which he sees as a basic need — will be available one day, enabling him to open up shop. His ambition could get a boost as soon as March, when a sewage treatment plant under construction in the east of the slum, home to around a quarter of a million people in southwest Nairobi, is due to start operating. The plant is being built by ASTICOM K Ltd, a Kenyan company that specializes in waste recycling, with \$12.7 million in funding from the multi-donor Climate Technology Initiative.

ASTICOM CEO Leah Tsuma said the plant will be the first in Africa to both purify sewage into clean water and convert solid waste into power. "Accessing water and electricity is a big problem for us slum dwellers," said Ibrahim. "I am looking to this recycling plant for things to change." In the absence of a water treatment system, groups of traders have taken over Kibera's water supply. Even for those still connected to the city council water network like Robert Akim, a clerk at the Kibera Constituency Office, unexpected rationing leaves them at

the mercy of the private suppliers.

"The whole slum is messy because the cartels do not do their job as expected," said Akim. "They control the supply of water, energy and waste management." The new plant, whose construction began in November on a 5-acre plot of land donated by a local housing co-operative, could help bust their monopoly. Two drainage canals running through the slum will channel waste water to the plant, while young people will be awarded contracts to supply solid waste, said project leader Tsuma. The plant's planned power capacity is 8 megawatts of electricity, which will be generated using biogas from solid waste.

It also aims to produce 6,000 tons of methane per year that will be sold for cooking. Treated water will be provided free to Kibera residents, Tsuma added. The plant's purification technology uses anaerobic digestion where raw sewage is collected in a big tank, and then filtered and taken through a chemical process to remove harmful bacteria. The solid waste in the sewage water will be used to make biogas, while the liquid part is purified, Tsuma said. "Even the bad smell is removed, and so clean drinking water is generated," she explained. —Reuters

## LOBSTERMEN QUESTION NEED FOR RESTRICTIONS TO HELP SPECIES

**PORTLAND:** Some lobster fishermen expressed skepticism Tuesday about a plan to try to revive the dwindling southern New England lobster stock through new fishing restrictions. Lobster fishing in the US is experiencing a boom that has lasted several years, and prices have also been high. But the population of the species has diminished in the waters off southern Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and Long Island, New York, where it was once plentiful.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission is considering a host of options to try to rejuvenate the region's lobster stock, which scientists have said is falling victim to rising ocean temperatures. An arm of the commission voted Tuesday to send the options out for public comment. Fishermen and fishing groups at the meeting said it might not make sense to restrict fishing when the environment itself is what's hurting the lobster population.

George Dahl, a spokesman for the Long Island Sound Lobstermen's Association, asked: "What good is it to penalize the fish-

ermen with more restrictions if the environmental conditions are not good enough for the lobster population to survive?" The regulators could pick new restrictions for the fishery by May. The selection of those measures will follow public comments that will be solicited in the coming months, the commission has said. Possibilities for managing the fishery include changing the legal harvesting size limit for lobsters, reducing the number of traps in the water and enforcing seasonal closures.

Megan Ware, a fishery management plan coordinator for the commission, said it's important to find a way to increase egg production among southern New England lobsters so the population can rebuild. The new management options are geared at accomplishing that, commission members have said. Fishermen seek lobsters off of New England and Canada, with the US fishery based mostly in Maine. The southern New England lobster fishery is a small piece of a larger American lobster fishery that was worth a record of more than \$620 million at the docks in 2015. —AP

## INDIA PLEDGES TO ERADICATE TB, LEPROSY WITHIN DECADE

**NEW DELHI:** India yesterday set deadlines to eradicate a range of deadly diseases that afflict tens of millions of its poorest people, unveiling a major boost to health spending in the annual budget. The government announced a 23 percent increase in spending on its woefully underfunded public health system, including a pledge to eliminate killers like tuberculosis, leprosy and black fever. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said cash will flow particularly to poorer rural areas, where healthcare services are few and preventable illnesses are rife.

"Poverty is usually associated with poor health. It is the poor who suffer the maximum from chronic diseases," Jaitley told parliament as he presented the budget. He said black fever and filariasis, both potentially fatal mosquito-borne illnesses, would be stamped out by 2017, with leprosy following a year later. The target for measles eradication is 2020 and 2025 for tuberculosis—a major killer with millions of new cases every year. Jaitley also outlined ambitious goals for reducing maternal and

infant mortality, which is nearly double in rural areas compared to urban centers.

Additional funding in the budget will also be used to transform 150,000 tiny rural clinics into properly-staffed treatment centers. India, home to one-seventh of the world's population, spends just over one percent of its gross domestic product on its healthcare system, far below the global average. It is not the first time the government has pledged to eradicate diseases, rolling out mass vaccination programs and awareness campaigns. India did stamp out the polio virus in 2014 but millions still suffer from infectious diseases and preventable illness, with poor sanitation and lack of treatment options exacerbating the problem.

There were 2.5 million cases of TB reported in 2015, according to the World Health Organization. An estimated 200,000 patients die every year from the infection. India reported another 200,000 cases of leprosy in 2015 despite an eradication program being in place since 1955. —AFP

## NON-STICK CHEMICALS COMMON IN FAST FOOD PACKAGING

**MIAMI:** Burgers, fries, tacos and pastries come wrapped in grease-proof paper and boxes that often contain non-stick chemicals that may be able to leach into food, US researchers said yesterday. The study in the journal Environmental Science and Technology Letters tested more than 400 samples from 27 fast food chains in the United States. Almost half of paper wrappers and 20 percent of paperboard samples—such as boxes for fries and pizza—contained fluorine, a marker for highly fluorinated chemicals used in stain-resistant carpets, non-stick cookware and waterproof outdoor apparel.

"Wrappers for Tex-Mex food, desserts and breads were the most likely to contain fluorine," said the report. The study did not show any specific harm to human health from exposure to these chemicals—known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFASs)—in food wrappers. But researchers warned that exposure to some PFASs has

been associated with cancer, thyroid disease, immune suppression, low birth weight, and decreased fertility according to prior studies. "These chemicals have been linked with numerous health problems, so it's concerning that people are potentially exposed to them in food," said lead author Laurel Schaidler, an environmental chemist at the Silent Spring Institute.

"Children are especially at risk for health effects because their developing bodies are more vulnerable to toxic chemicals." Six of the samples contained a long-chain PFAS called perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), also known as C8, even though several major US manufacturers agreed to stopping using C8 compounds in food packaging due to health hazards, after a 2011 US Food and Drug Administration review. Researchers also detected some shorter-chain PFAS compounds, which have been increasingly used as replacements for the longer chain PFASs. —AFP



**WASHINGTON:** This file photo shows a fast food hamburger in Washington, DC. —AFP

## LOW SOCIAL RANK BIGGER HEALTH RISK THAN OBESITY

**PARIS:** People on the bottom rung of the socioeconomic ladder may live two years less on average than those at the top, according to a large-scale study published yesterday. This makes social rank a bigger risk factor for illness and premature death than either high alcohol consumption or obesity, and it nearly equals the risk posed by physical inactivity, researchers said. On average, a low social rank shaved over 25 months off the average lifespan, compared with six months for heavy alcohol intake

and eight months for obesity, according to Lifepath, a European Commission-funded consortium that conducted the study.

For diabetes, the risk was almost four years in lost life, and for smoking nearly five. The study was the first attempt to weigh the health risk of socioeconomic status against other "modifiable" factors, the authors said, at least in high-income countries. "Low socioeconomic status is one of the strongest predictors of premature mortality worldwide, but

health policymakers often do not consider it a risk factor to target," Lifepath said in a statement. "Because these circumstances are modifiable, they should be included in the list of risk factors targeted by global health strategies," said Silvia Stringhini of the Lausanne University Hospital, the lead author of the study.

Smoking, drinking and physical inactivity are already the focus of national and global public health policies. Social rank could be improved by

government policies on tax or education, for example, said the study published in *The Lancet*. The researchers reviewed data from 48 previous studies covering more than 1.7 million people from seven countries—Australia, Britain, France, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland and the United States. They conceded that their research was limited by the fact that they had used the participants' occupation—whether a street sweeper or a CEO—as the sole measure of socioeconomic status. —AFP

## DUTCH EXPERIMENT WITH TINDER FOR ORANGUTANS

**THE HAGUE:** An animal reserve in the Netherlands is having apes respond to images of their fellow creatures on a tablet, a program dubbed "Tinder for orangutans" by the Dutch press. To better understand their emotions, orangutans and bonobos at the Apenheul Primate Park near the central town of Apeldoorn are shown pictures of other apes, and researchers evaluate their responses from neutral to aggressive, the park said. "After seeing the photos, the monkeys have to push a button on the screen," the park said. "In this way we can measure their capacity for reaction."

The research, conducted with Leiden University, could improve breeding programs for the apes, the park said. The local

De Stentor newspaper wrote: "Apenheul wants to know if female orangutans like Samboja, looking at pictures on a tablet, can show a preference for potential mates, before they are flown to the Netherlands." Initial results indicate that bonobos, an endangered ape species, react most strongly to photos showing positive behaviors, such as sexual activity or searching for lice, the park said. "The study shows that primates pay attention to the emotions of their peers," the park said. "We now know, for example, that bonobos use body language to recognize emotions." But the study had to be suspended for the orangutans, after Samboja, a young female, destroyed a tablet showing potential suitors. —AFP

## LOCK-IN PARALYSIS PATIENTS REPORT BEING HAPPY

**MIAMI:** International scientists for the first time have found a way to communicate with people who are completely paralyzed from degenerative motor neuron disease — and found that they report being happy. The report in Tuesday's journal *PLOS Biology* is based on four people with complete "lock-in" syndrome, meaning they are unable to move at all due to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease), which destroys the part of the nervous system responsible for movement. Patients are unable to blink or move their eyes, and they breathe with the help of a ventilator.

But using a non-invasive brain-computer interface that measured levels of oxygen on the brain, researchers were able to detect whether the patients were thinking "yes" or "no" in response to a series of questions, with an accuracy rate of about 70 percent. Some of the questions were common, such as asking a woman if her husband's name was Joachim, or if Berlin was the capital of France. A man was asked if his daughter should marry her boyfriend, and answered "no" nine out of 10 times. All four patients in the study were asked, "Are you happy?" They each consistently responded "yes," over weeks of questioning.

"We were initially surprised at the positive responses when we questioned the four completely locked-in patients about their quality of life," said lead author Niels

Birbaumer, professor at the Wyss Center for Bio and Neuroengineering in Geneva, Switzerland. "All four had accepted artificial ventilation in order to sustain their life, when breathing became impossible; thus, in a sense, they had already chosen to live." Until now, researchers had believed that people with this condition were unable to communicate because they lack the goal-directed thinking necessary to use a brain-computer interface.

"The striking results overturn my own theory that people with completely locked-in syndrome are not capable of communication," said Birbaumer. "We found that all four patients we tested were able to answer the personal questions we asked them, using their thoughts alone," he added. "If we can replicate this study in more patients, I believe we could restore useful communication in completely locked-in states for people with motor neuron diseases." The technique in the study used near-infrared spectroscopy combined with electroencephalography (EEG) to measure blood oxygenation and electrical activity in the brain.

Other brain-computer interfaces have helped some paralyzed patients communicate, but these tend to require eye movements in order to work. More studies are planned to see if the technique could help more people with paralysis resulting from ALS, or those who have suffered a stroke or spinal cord injury. —AFP



**KOSOVO:** This file photo shows a Kosovo Albanian beekeeper showing his honeybees near the village of Studencan. — AFP photos

## BELEAGUERED BEES HIT BY DEFORMED WING VIRUS

COLONY COLLAPSE DISORDER DECIMATE BEES

**PARIS:** A wing-deforming virus shortens the lifespan of wild honeybees already contending with a startlingly long list of existential threats, researchers said yesterday. Spread by microscopic mites, the microbe disrupts bees' foraging and curtails their lives, experiments confirmed for the first time. "Deformed wing virus strongly reduced the chances for workers to survive to foraging age," scientists reported in the *Royal Society journal Proceedings B*. It also "reduced the life expectancy and total activity span" of infected bees, they found.

Bees around the world—especially in Europe and North America—have been decimated in recent years by a mysterious blight called "colony collapse disorder," in which entire populations disappear or die out. Research has pointed an accusing finger at agricultural pesticides, viruses, fungi, parasites, malnutrition because of fewer flowers—or some combination of the above. More than just the survival of the bees is at stake.

Scientists recently calculated that 1.4 billion jobs, and three-quarters of crops, depend on pollinators, mainly bees. All told, there are some 20,000 bee species that fertilize more than 90 percent of the world's 107 major crops. At the same time, the United Nations estimates that 40 percent of invertebrate pollinators—mostly bees and butterflies—are at risk of extinction.

### Mini tracking devices

Deformed wing virus has previously been recognized as a threat to bees' well-being, com-

promising their ability to remember where they have been. The pathogen is found in most parts of the world; in certain areas up to three-quarters of hives are affected. It was previously also suspected of affecting flight patterns and lifespan, but evidence was lacking. The new study removes any doubt on this score. Scientists led by Kristof Benaets from the Laboratory of Socioecology and Social Evolution in Leuven, Belgium, set up an experiment using radiofrequency identification (RFID).

Tiny emitters placed on the bodies of both

healthy and virus-infected bees allowed the researchers to follow, and compare, their movements. "Tracking out-of-hive activity is key in studying the impact of pathogens on honeybee health," the team said. The virus did not reduce the number or duration of pollen-gathering sorties by worker bees. But it did cause the insects to begin foraging too young, the experiment revealed. They were less adept at the task, and died earlier than non-infected bees. Deformed wing virus "had a strongly negative overall effect," the study concluded. —AFP



**NEPAL:** This file photo shows a honeybee hovering over a flower in Kathmandu.

## DECLAWED, HUNGRY TIGER CUB FOUND IN N MEXICO TOWN

**MEXICO CITY:** Mexico's environmental protection agency says an abandoned Bengal tiger cub was discovered wandering in a town in the northern state of Sinaloa. A statement from the federal agency says the cat was captured on a lot in Navolato, about 15 miles west of Culiacan, the capital of Sinaloa. Tranquilizer darts were used to subdue the animal without harming it. It

was determined to be a female around 4 months old. It had no claws and was dehydrated and malnourished. The agency urged people not to keep wild animals as pets without permission or in unsafe, inhumane conditions. Tigers are not native to Mexico. The agency said Tuesday the species is internationally protected as endangered. — AP

# CLINIC PAGE



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## CHINESE ASSOCIATION IN KUWAIT MARKS LUNAR NEW YEAR

Chinese Association in Kuwait celebrated Lunar New Year, the first day of the year of the rooster, in style on Jan 27, 2017. Large crowds gathered in Kuwait National Museum and Planetarium to mark the New Year. The crowd was amused with stunning performances. Officials from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Chinese expatriates and many foreign friends also attended the ceremony.

## US EMBASSY NOTICE

On Jan 27, US President Trump signed an Executive Order temporarily suspending entry into the United States of foreign nationals from seven countries under section 212(f) of the Immigration and Nationality Act. This suspension provided for in the Executive Order will allow us to review current screening procedures, while protecting national security - our top priority when issuing visas.

The US government's national security visitor screening and vetting procedures are constantly reviewed and refined to improve security and more effectively identify individuals who could pose a threat to the United States. We welcome every opportunity to continue to review and improve our systems and procedures. We are reviewing the Executive Order and working closely with the Department of Homeland Security to implement it immediately.

**Q: How will the Executive Order be implemented?**

Under the Executive Order, the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State and the Director of National Intelligence, will immediately conduct a review to ensure that the information available from a foreign country to be used in the processing of an application for a visa or other immigration benefit is adequate to uphold the integrity of the process. To allow for proper review and establishment of standards to prevent ter-

rorist or criminal infiltration by foreign nationals, the Executive Order imposes on nationals of certain designated countries a 90-day bar on entry into the United States. This bar also includes a 90-day prohibition on visa issuance. These countries, as designated by Congress or the Secretary of Homeland Security, are: Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Iran, Somalia, Libya and Yemen. We will announce any other changes affecting travelers to the United States as soon as that information is available.

**Q: When will these changes take effect?**

Beginning Jan 27, 2017, travelers who have nationality or dual nationality of one of these countries will not be permitted for 90 days to enter the United States or be issued an immigrant or nonimmigrant visa. Those nationals or dual nationals holding valid immigrant or nonimmigrant visas will not be permitted to enter the United States during this period. Visa interviews will generally not be scheduled for nationals of these countries during this period.

**Q: Are there any exceptions to the temporary bar on entry?**

The Department of Homeland Security and Department of State may, on a case-by-case basis, and when in the national interest, issue visas or allow entry to nationals of countries for which visas and entry are otherwise blocked under this Executive Order.

**Q: Is the Executive Order permanently hindering foreign nationals from traveling to the United States?**

The US Government is committed to facilitating legitimate travel for international visitors while ensuring the security of US borders. As explained in the Executive Order, the suspension is one component of the initiative to ensure that adequate standards are established to prevent infiltration of foreign terrorists and criminals. In order to best protect US borders and the American people, the US government must ensure that those admitted to the United States do not pose a security risk or intend to exploit US immigration laws for malevolent purposes.

**Q: Is the Department of State cancelling or revoking visas previously issued to these nationals?**

Beginning Jan 27, 2017, travelers, who have nationality or dual nationality of one of these countries, will not be permitted for 90 days to enter the United States or be issued an immigrant or nonimmigrant visa. Those nationals or dual nationals holding valid immigrant or nonimmigrant visas will not be permitted to enter the United States during this period. Visa interviews will generally not be scheduled for nationals of these countries during this period. Additionally, as such travelers will not be admitted to the United States under the Executive Order, and at the request of the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of State is provisionally revoking valid visas previously issued to any affected nationals.



## SHERATON KUWAIT CULINARY TEAM RANK 1ST AT HORECA KUWAIT 2017

The Sheraton Kuwait and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait culinary team dominate the Salon Culinaire competition for the second consecutive year and clearly showcasing the market leading position during the HORECA Kuwait exhibition which is Kuwait's largest and most prestigious chef competition program for three days of battle among Kuwait's leading hotels and restaurant chefs in several live cooking and display categories. Judged by a well known international panel of culinary experts and celebrity chefs.

All the attendees unanimously agreed that the culinary team performance at the Sheraton Kuwait and Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait has excelled and made all that is innovative with luxury touches; also they praised the quality of materials used by the chefs to prepare their dishes. Sheraton Kuwait and Four Points by

Sheraton Kuwait has been awarded a trophy for winning the overall battle with seven gold, 11 silver, 16 bronze and numerous merit and appreciation certificates was handed over by the organizers to the Sheraton Kuwait and Four Points by Sheraton team.

Fahed Abushaar - General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait and Mounir Amer- General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait and the departments Heads met the culinary team participated in the HORECA exhibition and they praised their efforts to provide and maintain the highest standards of quality. Abushaar thanked as well Chef Frank Noack - Cluster Director of Culinary for his successful team management and guidance which have strengthened the presence of Sheraton Kuwait and maintained the high level of quality service for over 50 years of continuous success.

## ENJOY EXCLUSIVE GETAWAYS WITH ABK'S VISA CARD

Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK), VISA and Jumeirah Properties have joined forces to offer ABK Visa card holders fantastic Jumeirah Hotel deals and exclusive travel discounts for 2017.

Customers making bookings using their ABK Visa card before March 31, 2017 can enjoy a range of unbeatable benefits, such as up to 25 percent off the best available room rate at selected Jumeirah Hotels and Resorts across the UAE, Kuwait and Maldives, and up to 10% off best room rates at selected Jumeirah Hotels in Europe.

For visits booked to UAE, Kuwait or Maldives, customers can get up to 25 percent off the best available room rate at Burj Al Arab Jumeirah, Madinat Jumeirah, Jumeirah Beach Hotel, Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, Jumeirah Emirates Towers and Jumeirah Creekside Hotel, Jumeirah at Etihad Towers in Abu Dhabi, Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, Jumeirah Dhevanafushi and Jumeirah Vittaveli. Bookings must be for a minimum of three nights and will include complimentary buffet breakfast, access to the hotel's Kids Club and, for Dubai

only, exclusive beach access and unlimited access to Wild Wadi Water Park.

In Europe, customers can get a 10 percent discount of the best available room rate if they book for a minimum of two nights in any of the following participating Jumeirah hotels: Jumeirah Frankfurt, Pera Palace Hotel Jumeirah, Jumeirah Carlton Tower, Jumeirah Lowndes Hotel and Grosvenor House Suites. Guests will also receive complimentary breakfast for two guests, a complementary 50 EUR spa or food and beverage credit, two tickets to a local cultural attraction, seasonal VIP amenities and late check-out until 14.00.

More information on UAE, Kuwait and Maldives offers can be found at [www.jumeirah.com/visaoffers](http://www.jumeirah.com/visaoffers) and information about stays in Europe can be found at [www.jumeirah.com/TasteEuropewithvisa](http://www.jumeirah.com/TasteEuropewithvisa). For more information about Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit [eahli.com](http://eahli.com) or contact a customer service agent via 'Ahlani' at 1899899.

## EMBASSY OF INDIA KUWAIT WARNS AGAINST FAKE AGENTS

Some unscrupulous agents are duping members of Indian community in Kuwait by extorting money from Indian nationals/students/professionals who have submitted their educational/professional certificates/degrees for attestation/verification through local authorities/Embassy of Kuwait in New Delhi.

Further, these agents faking as representatives of Embassy of Kuwait, New Delhi are asking those who contact them to deposit big amount of Indian Rupees to the under-mentioned bank account toward mandatory attestation fee charged by concerned Indian universities and Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) for verification by using a fake email ID: [kuwaitembassy\\_in@hotmail.com](mailto:kuwaitembassy_in@hotmail.com). The details of the fraudulent bank account are as below:

Account No: 7860201005987  
Account Name: Mr. Laltanpuia  
Name of the Bank: Syndicate Bank  
IFSC Code: SYN80007960

The Embassy of Kuwait, New Delhi has confirmed that they have not asked anyone to deposit money in any bank account for the above purpose and that the email ID [kuwaitembassy\\_in@hotmail.com](mailto:kuwaitembassy_in@hotmail.com) does not belong to them. In view of above, the Embassy advises Indian community members not to fall prey to the perpetrators of such frauds mentioned to above. It is important to note that process of verification of educational/professional certificates does take time due to procedure/due diligence involved including response from the concerned educational institutions situated in various parts of India.



Abey Varicad, Managing Director of Orma Group presents gold gifts to Sushama Shetty, the lucky draw winner of Orma jewelry gold gift scheme at Orma jewelry showroom in Salmiya.

# Alghanim Industries

## Inaugurates First Flagship



## Wendy's Store in Kuwait



CEO Omar Alghanim



H E Ambassador Lawrence Silverman



H E Ambassador Warren Hauk

**A**lghanim Industries, one of the largest private companies in the region, opened its first Wendy's store in Kuwait. Employees, food enthusiasts and fans from across the country attended the grand opening, held at the newly inaugurated stand-alone location on Blajat Street, Salmiya. The grand opening kicked-off with Alghanim Industries' Chief Executive Officer, Omar Alghanim who welcomed guests to the first Wendy's store, promising more stores in the months to come. He was joined by the Ambassador of the United States, H E Lawrence Silverman, the Ambassador of Australia, H E Warren Hauk, and executives from The Wendy's Company with messages of congratulations on this auspicious occasion.

Founded in Columbus, Ohio in 1969, The Wendy's Company built their brand on quality and a commitment to delighting every customer. The hugely successful restaurant franchise focuses on creating joy and opportunity through food, family and community. Today, Wendy's is the third largest burger chain in the world with around 6,500 outlets in 29 countries. In 2015, Alghanim Industries acquired the rights to develop Wendy's restaurants across the MENA region. Today, the company operates 17 locations in the United Arab

Emirates with plans for further expansion in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and across the Middle East.

Speaking during event, Alghanim Industries Chief Executive Officer, Omar Kutayba Alghanim said: "It's an exciting day for Alghanim Industries as we celebrate the grand opening of Wendy's Kuwait with our customers. The decision to partner with one of the world's largest quick-service hamburger companies was heavily influenced by the values we share. When it comes to exceeding customer expectations, Alghanim Industries and Wendy's share the same philosophy - we don't compromise." Alghanim added: "This flagship store represents the beginning of our journey in Kuwait. Before the end of 2017, we intend on opening more Wendy's restaurants so that loyal customers can enjoy this great American brand at their convenience - Marina Mall is next."

"In a few months, we'll also be launching our first store in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. A huge market with huge potential. We're really excited - this year is going to be a great year for our F&B portfolio." "We are very excited that our franchise partner, Alghanim Industries, is celebrating the grand opening of the first Wendy's restaurant in Kuwait today, said Bob Wright, Executive Vice President, Chief Operations Officer and International, The Wendy's Company. I'm confident that the operators at Alghanim Industries will successfully expand the brand in the MENA region and deliver an exceptional customer experience for all fans of Wendy's."

Commenting on this occasion was Lawrence R. Silverman, the United States Ambassador to Kuwait: "I am pleased to see that American brands continue to be well received and are expanding in the region. Wendy's is the third largest hamburger chain in the world, known for fresh food made to order and a variety of options for the consumer. It will be a unique addition to the market. I wish this new enterprise success." In parallel, Warren Hauk, the Australian Ambassador to Kuwait commented: "At the heart of a burger you want the best ingredients and it's no secret that Australian beef is some of the highest quality beef in the world. So I am pleased to be here today for the opening of Wendy's who are using 100 percent Halal Australian Angus Beef in its burgers."

Wendy's burgers are made using the highest quality ingredients; in Kuwait, the classic square patty is made of 100% Halal Australian Angus beef and 100% whole breast chicken fillets. The ingredients used include regionally sourced tomatoes, lettuce and buns from the UAE and Oman. Moreover, fresh tomatoes and crisp lettuce are freshly prepared daily at Wendy's restaurants; burgers because Wendy's believes that fresher always tastes better. Some of the must-try items are the signature Wendy's burger, Dave's Single, the Spicy or Home-style Chicken Sandwich and to satisfy those with a sweet tooth, the famous Frosty.

Alghanim Industries is actively expanding its Food and Beverage portfolio, which began in 2013 with its franchise agreement that enabled it to penetrate the coffee shop market in Kuwait. The company recently expanded further through entering the "better chicken" segment of fast-casual restaurants, and is rapidly growing its F&B portfolio. The first Wendy's restaurant in Kuwait seats up to 68 customers inside and 60 in the outdoor area. The restaurant is strategically located on Al Blajat Street overlooking the stunning Arabian Gulf. Wendy's is open daily from 11 am until 1 am with a drive-through and take out options.



The attendees have the famous Wendy's meals for dinner.



Graffiti artist Abdullah Al-Enezi makes a beautiful painting during the event.



The band 'After Thought' preformed at the event.

**ANIMAL PLANET HD**

- 00:50 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 01:45 Bondi Vet
- 02:40 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You
- 03:35 Tanked
- 03:49 O'Shea's Big Adventure
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 06:49 The Pool Master
- 07:36 Gorilla School
- 08:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 09:15 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You
- 10:10 O'Shea's Big Adventure
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 O'Shea's Big Adventure
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 18:25 The Lion Queen
- 19:20 The Vet Life
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 O'Shea's Big Adventure
- 22:05 The Lion Queen

- 18:30 How Do They Do It?
- 19:20 Boy To Man
- 20:10 Auction Hunters
- 21:00 So You Think You'd Survive?
- 21:50 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 22:40 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud

**Disney Channel HD**

- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Violetta
- 01:45 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:15 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
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Violetta
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 The HUD
- 07:00 Jessie
- 07:50 Rolling To The Ronks
- 08:15 Frozen: Magic Of The Northern Lights
- 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 08:45 Bunk'd
- 09:10 Gravity Falls
- 09:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 10:00 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 10:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 10:50 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:05 Shake It Up
- 12:30 Shake It Up
- 12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 13:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 13:15 Gravity Falls
- 13:40 Hank Zipzer
- 14:05 Star Darlings
- 14:10 Austin & Ally
- 15:00 Jessie
- 15:00 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 Frozen: Magic Of The Northern Lights
- 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

**H2 HD**

- 00:00 The Universe
- 01:00 World War II: Lost Films
- 02:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 03:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 03:50 Ancient Aliens
- 04:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 05:30 The Universe
- 06:20 World War II: Lost Films
- 07:10 The Universe
- 08:00 Cities Of The Underworld
- 09:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 10:00 Ancient Aliens
- 11:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 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
- 17:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 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

**ci crime & investigation network**

- 00:00 My Haunted House
- 01:00 Psychic Kids
- 02:00 I Was Possessed
- 03:00 My Crazy Ex
- 04:00 My Haunted House
- 05:00 Psychic Kids
- 06:00 I Was Possessed
- 07:00 Soham: 10 Years On
- 08:00 Shannon Matthews: The Disappearance
- 09:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 10:00 It Takes A Killer
- 11:00 When Life Means Life
- 15:00 Shannon Matthews: The Disappearance
- 16:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 17:00 It Takes A Killer
- 18:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 19:00 The First 48
- 21:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 22:00 Shannon Matthews: The Disappearance

**HISTORY HD**

- 00:20 Time Team
- 01:10 Counting Cars
- 01:35 Car Hunters
- 02:00 Forged In Fire
- 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
- 08:05 Car Hunters
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Alone
- 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 Leepu And Pitbull
- 18:30 Counting Cars
- 18:55 Car Hunters
- 19:20 Ax Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 President Obama: In His Own Words

**Discovery Family**

- 00:30 Nextworld
- 01:20 Wildest Africa
- 02:10 Finding Bigfoot
- 03:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:00 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
- 13:40 How It's Made
- 14:05 How It's Made

**food network**

- 00:00 Food Network Star
- 01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:00 Chopped
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 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 Junior**

- 00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:35 The Hive
- 00:45 Loopidoo
- 01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:15 Calimero
- 01:30 Art Attack
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Loopidoo
- 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:35 Calimero
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 The Hive
- 03:40 Loopidoo
- 03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:10 Art Attack
- 04:35 Loopidoo

**Disney XD**

- 00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:35 The Hive
- 00:45 Loopidoo
- 01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:15 Calimero
- 01:30 Art Attack
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Loopidoo
- 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:35 Calimero
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 The Hive
- 03:40 Loopidoo
- 03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:10 Art Attack
- 04:35 Loopidoo



BLUNT FORCE TRAUMA ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

**NAT GEO WILD HD**

- 22:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 22:25 Gummy Bears
- 22:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 23:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates

**NAT GEO WILD HD**

- 08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 09:40 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 10:30 Love The Way You Lie
- 11:20 Nightmare Next Door
- 12:10 Lone Star Mystery: A Disappeared Special
- 13:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 13:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 15:30 Love The Way You Lie
- 16:20 Nightmare Next Door
- 17:10 Swamp Murders
- 18:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 18:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 18:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 19:40 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 20:30 Love The Way You Lie
- 21:20 Nightmare Next Door
- 22:10 Killer Confessions
- 23:00 The Perfect Murder
- 23:50 California Investigator

**NAT GEO WILD HD**

- 00:20 Dragon Island
- 01:10 Dangerous Encounters
- 02:00 Turf War- Lions And Hippos
- 02:50 Planet Carnivore
- 03:45 Ultimate Animals
- 04:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 05:35 Turf War- Lions And Hippos
- 06:30 Planet Carnivore
- 07:25 Ultimate Animals
- 08:20 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 09:15 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 10:10 Rescue Ink
- 11:05 World's Weirdest
- 12:00 Zambezi
- 12:55 Vanishing Kings: Desert Lions Of Namib
- 13:50 Planet Carnivore
- 14:45 Ultimate Animals
- 15:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 16:35 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 17:30 Rescue Ink
- 18:25 World's Weirdest: Animal Taboo
- 19:20 Ultimate Animals
- 20:10 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 21:00 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 21:50 Rescue Ink
- 22:40 World's Weirdest: Animal Taboo
- 23:30 Zambezi

**OSN MOVIES HD ACTION**

- 00:00 The Dead Lands
- 02:00 Sharknado 2: The Second One
- 04:00 Legendary: Tomb Of The Dragon
- 08:00 Blunt Force Trauma
- 10:00 Hudson Hawk
- 12:00 Close Range
- 14:00 Lucy
- 15:45 Tomorrowland
- 18:00 San Andreas
- 20:00 Cradle 2 The Grave
- 22:00 Waist Deep

**OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY**

- 00:00 House Of Cards
- 01:00 Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.
- 02:00 StartUp
- 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 The Flash
- 19:00 Suits
- 20:00 Blindspot
- 21:00 Lethal Weapon
- 22:00 Star

**OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY**

- 00:30 Wrecked
- 01:00 Wrecked
- 01:30 Bordertown
- 02:00 Bordertown
- 02:30 The Big C
- 03:00 New Girl
- 03:30 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
- 04:00 The Bill Engvall Show
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 Trophy Wife
- 06:00 \$#!\* My Dad Says
- 06:30 The Bernie Mac Show
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 The Bill Engvall Show
- 08:30 Trophy Wife
- 09:00 New Girl
- 09:30 Son Of Zorn
- 10:00 The Mindy Project
- 10:30 The Bernie Mac Show
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 \$#!\* My Dad Says
- 12:30 The Bill Engvall Show
- 13:00 Trophy Wife
- 13:30 The Bernie Mac Show
- 14:00 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
- 14:30 Son Of Zorn
- 15:00 The Mindy Project
- 15:30 Wrecked
- 16:00 Wrecked
- 16:30 \$#!\* My Dad Says
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 The Goldbergs
- 18:30 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
- 19:00 Son Of Zorn
- 19:30 The Mindy Project
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Wrecked
- 21:30 Wrecked
- 22:00 Difficult People
- 22:30 Difficult People
- 23:00 The Big C
- 23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers

**OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY**

- 00:00 Road Trip
- 02:00 Coneheads
- 04:00 It Boy
- 06:00 Ride
- 08:00 Coneheads
- 10:00 It Boy
- 12:00 Ride
- 14:00 Overboard
- 16:00 The Beautician And The Beast
- 18:00 Night At The Museum: Battle Of The Smithsonian
- 20:00 Dickie Roberts: Former Child Star
- 22:00 The Babymakers

**OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL**

- 01:00 Primal Fear
- 03:15 The Help
- 05:45 Finding Forrester
- 08:00 Ordinary People
- 10:00 The Wave
- 11:45 Testament Of Youth
- 14:00 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
- 16:00 The Theory Of Everything
- 18:00 The Assassination Of Jesse James
- 20:45 Whiplash

**OSN MOVIES HD KIDS**

- 01:00 Scooby-Doo! And Kiss: Rock And Roll Mystery
- 02:45 Worms
- 04:30 Miffy The Movie
- 06:00 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 07:30 The Heart Of The Oak
- 09:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 10:45 Scooby-Doo! And Kiss: Rock And Roll Mystery
- 12:15 Worms
- 14:00 Marco Macaco
- 16:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 18:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 19:30 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 21:00 Marco Macaco
- 22:30 The Heart Of The Oak

**OSN MOVIES HD KIDS**

- 01:00 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
- 03:00 Chilly Christmas
- 05:00 Gulliver's Travels
- 07:00 Scooby-Doo! Moon Monster Madness
- 09:00 Peter Pan
- 11:00 Gulliver's Travels
- 13:00 Open Season: Scared Silly
- 15:00 Mousehunt
- 17:00 Tinker Bell And The Lost Treasure
- 19:00 Beverly Hills Chihuahua
- 21:00 The Last Flight Of Nohaa's Ark
- 23:00 Mousehunt



TESTAMENT OF YOUTH ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

**Discovery Channel HD**

- 14:30 Storm Chasers
- 15:15 Mythbusters
- 16:00 Doki
- 16:20 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 16:45 Do You Know?
- 17:00 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 17:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 18:40 Nextworld
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 22:00 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 23:40 Ultimate Survival

**Discovery Channel HD**

- 11:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 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 Private Chef
- 20:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 21:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 22:00 Iron Chef America

**Discovery Channel HD**

- 04:50 Calimero
- 05:05 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Zou
- 06:00 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Loopidoo
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:15 Calimero
- 07:30 Loopidoo
- 07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 08:05 PJ Masks
- 08:15 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
- 10:00 PJ Masks
- 10:15 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 10:35 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Doc McStuffins
- 12:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 13:15 Gummy Bears
- 13:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 15:30 Little Mermaid
- 15:55 Unbungeable
- 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 Miles From Tomorrow
- 21:00 Unbungeable
- 21:05 Goldie & Bear
- 21:35 Miles From Tomorrow

**NAT GEO people HD**

- 00:10 Delinquent Gourmet
- 00:35 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 01:00 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 01:25 A Is For Apple
- 01:50 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 02:15 Food School
- 02:40 What's For Sale?
- 03:05 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 03:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 03:55 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 04:20 Grandma's Boy
- 04:45 This Is Brazil
- 05:35 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 06:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 06:50 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 07:15 A Is For Apple
- 07:40 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 08:05 Food School
- 08:30 What's For Sale?
- 08:55 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 09:20 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 09:45 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 10:10 Grandma's Boy
- 10:35 This Is Brazil
- 11:25 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 11:50 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 12:40 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 13:05 A Is For Apple
- 13:35 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 14:00 Jose Andres: Dinner In Haiti
- 14:55 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
- 15:25 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 16:20 Maximum Foodie
- 16:45 This Is Brazil
- 17:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 18:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 19:05 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
- 19:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure

**ID X**

- 00:40 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 01:30 Southern Fried Homicide
- 02:20 Florida's Craziest Crimes
- 03:10 Married With Secrets
- 04:00 Obsession: Dark Desires
- 04:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 05:36 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 06:24 Love The Way You Lie
- 07:12 Nightmare Next Door
- 08:00 Who On Earth Did I Marry?
- 08:25 Who On Earth Did I Marry?



IN THE HEART OF THE SEA ON OSN MOVIES HD



# CLASSIFIEDS



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## KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (02/02/2017 TO 08/02/2017)

Time	Programme	Time	Programme	Time	Programme
1:00 PM	SHARQIA-1 SPLIT	5:45 PM	SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS	3:00 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS
3:15 PM	SPLIT	7:45 PM	SPLIT	5:15 PM	RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter
5:30 PM	KAABIL- HINDI	10:00 PM	SPLIT	7:30 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS
8:30 PM	SPLIT	12:30 AM	SPLIT	12:05 AM	RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter
10:45 PM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE				RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter
12:45 AM	SPLIT				
12:15 PM	SHARQIA-2 KUNG-FU YOGA	12:45 PM	FANAR-2 LIVE BY NIGHT	12:00 PM	AVENUES-1 DANGAL -Hindi
2:30 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	1:30 PM	RAHAF FRI	3:15 PM	KAABIL- HINDI
4:45 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	3:30 PM	LIVE BY NIGHT	6:15 PM	JOMONTE SUVISHESHANGAL- Malayalam
7:00 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS	6:15 PM	LIVE BY NIGHT	6:00 PM	NO SUN+TUE+WED
9:15 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	8:45 PM	RAHAF	9:15 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
11:30 PM	SPLIT	10:30 PM	RAHAF	12:30 AM	KAABIL- HINDI
		12:15 AM	LIVE BY NIGHT		
12:30 PM	SHARQIA-3 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	11:30 AM	FANAR-3 DANGAL -Hindi	12:45 PM	AVENUES-2 MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX
2:45 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS	2:45 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS	3:00 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX
5:00 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS	5:00 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS	5:15 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX
7:15 PM	RAEES- HINDI	7:15 PM	DANGAL -Hindi	7:30 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX
10:15 PM	RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	10:30 PM	RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	10:00 PM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX
12:30 AM	RAEES- HINDI	12:45 AM	RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:15 AM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX
12:15 PM	MUHALAB-1 DANGAL -Hindi	11:45 AM	FANAR-4 KUNG-FU YOGA	11:30 AM	AVENUES-3 RAEES- HINDI
1:30 PM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	2:00 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	2:30 PM	RAEES- HINDI
3:30 PM	RAEES- HINDI	4:15 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	5:30 PM	RAEES- HINDI
6:30 PM	RAEES- HINDI	6:30 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	8:30 PM	RAEES- HINDI
9:30 PM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	8:45 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	11:30 PM	RAEES- HINDI
11:30 PM	SPLIT	11:00 PM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE		
		1:00 AM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE		
12:15 PM	MUHALAB-2 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:00 PM	FANAR-5 RAEES- HINDI	11:30 AM	360°-1 SPLIT
2:30 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS	3:00 PM	RAEES- HINDI	1:45 PM	SPLIT
4:45 PM	MONSTER TRUCKS	6:00 PM	KAABIL- HINDI	4:15 PM	SPLIT
7:00 PM	KAABIL- HINDI	9:00 PM	RAEES- HINDI	6:45 PM	SPLIT
10:00 PM	RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:05 AM	RAEES- HINDI	9:15 PM	SPLIT
12:15 AM	RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter			11:45 PM	SPLIT
11:30 AM	MUHALAB-3 xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:00 PM	MARINA-1 RAEES- HINDI	1:15 PM	360°-2 DANGAL -Hindi
1:30 PM	SPLIT	2:45 PM	SPLIT	1:45 PM	MOANA
3:45 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	5:00 PM	RAEES- HINDI	4:30 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
6:00 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	8:00 PM	SPLIT	7:45 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
8:15 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	10:15 PM	SPLIT	11:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
10:30 PM	SPLIT	12:30 AM	SPLIT		
12:45 AM	SPLIT				
11:30 AM	FANAR-1 OZZY	11:30 AM	MARINA-2 xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:45 PM	360°-3 LIVE BY NIGHT
1:45 PM	THU+SAT+MON	1:30 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	3:30 PM	SING
11:30 AM	SPLIT	3:45 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	5:45 PM	SING
1:45 PM	SUN+TUE+WED	6:00 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	8:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
3:45 PM	SWALLOWS AND AMAZONS	8:15 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	10:00 PM	LIVE BY NIGHT
	OZZY	10:30 PM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:45 AM	LIVE BY NIGHT
		12:45 AM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE		
		12:45 PM	MARINA-3 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:45 PM	AL-KOUT.1 SPLIT
				3:00 PM	SPLIT

## VACANCY

**Field service engineer (wellhead)**

**Must have**

- 2 - 3 years relevant experience in Kuwait
- Relevant degree or diploma
- Hold Kuwaiti driving license

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Sharing accommodation for Filipino Bachelor ONLY near Big Jamiya Farwaniya. Available already. Contact 66826412 or 97512782

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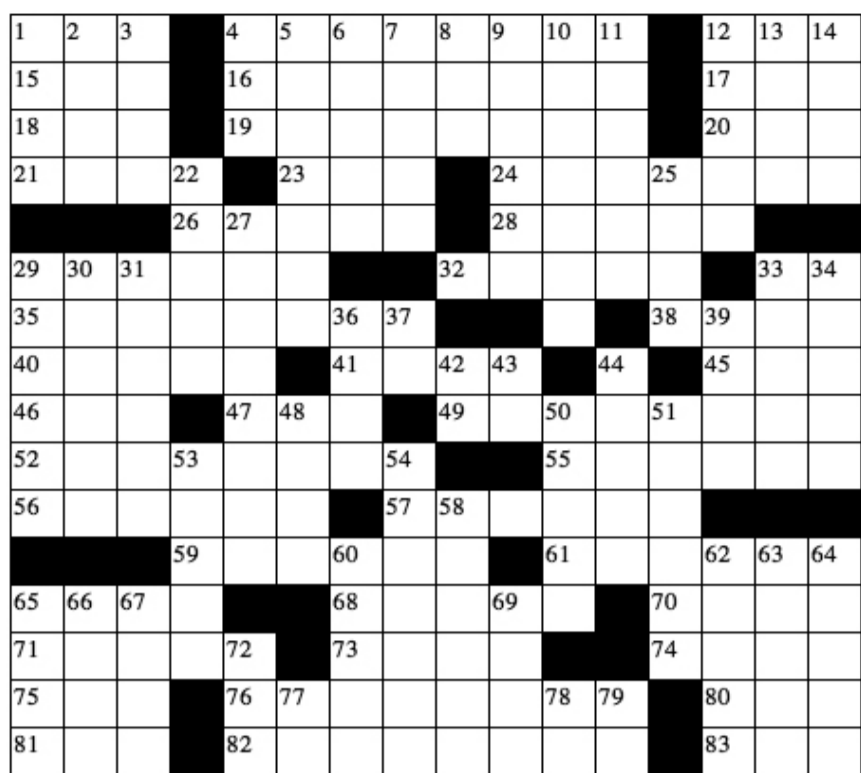


## Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

### DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 2/2/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 2/2/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	FEJ	934	Sohag	13:35
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	JZR	786	Riyadh	13:45
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KAC	155	Dubai	13:50
KAC	102	London	00:55	TXC	1622	Istanbul	14:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
MSC	411	Asyut	01:00	FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
SAI	441	Lahore	01:30	KAC	561	Amman	14:20
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	521	Al Najaf	14:45
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	KNE	382	Taif	14:50
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	BON	102	Sarajevo	14:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	FEJ	932	Alexandria	14:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:15
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	15:20
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	546	Cairo	03:55	FDB	8054	Dubai	16:05
LMU	510	Cairo	04:00	KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
MSC	501	Alexandria	04:05	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
PGT	4858	Istanbul	04:10	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
JAI	904	Delhi	04:15	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
UAE	873	Dubai	04:55	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
FEJ	933	Sohag	05:00	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
JZR	503	Luxor	05:10	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
JZR	529	Asyut	05:15	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	KAC	615	Bahrain	17:35
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	KAC	343	Chennai	17:40
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
BAW	157	London	06:40	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
QTR	8511	Doha	07:00	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:05
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	KAC	353	BLR	18:15
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	KAC	205	Islamabad	18:25
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	NIA	252	Alexandria	18:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	JZR	554	Alexandria	18:55
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	FDB	064	Dubai	19:05
IRA	667	Esfahan	09:00	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	QTR	1081	Doha	19:50
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
TXC	1621	FJR	10:00	KAC	383	Delhi	20:30
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	361	Colombo	20:35
AVV	653	Sohag	10:10	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
IRA	673	Ahwaz	10:10	KAC	775	Riyadh	20:45
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	1543	Cairo	20:55
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:55
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05	MSR	619	Alexandria	21:05
RBG	553	Alexandria	11:15	OMA	648	Muscat	21:10
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	KAC	619	Doha	21:20
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	QTR	1089	Doha	21:35
FDK	801	Damascus	11:45	DLH	634	Doha	21:50
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10	FDB	5054	Dubai	22:00
FEJ	953	Asyut	12:35	KAC	351	Kochi	22:00
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:10
JZR	239	Amman	12:45	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	KAC	381	Delhi	22:45
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:45
				UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
				KLM	417	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				NIA	152	Cairo	23:10
				QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

CROSSWORD 1509



ACROSS

1. (computer science) The rate at which data is transferred (as by a modem).
4. Trade name for a drug containing an antihistamine and a decongestant.
12. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
16. One who attacks the reputation of another by slander or libel.
17. An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from a cloth.
19. Partially clothed.
20. Former measure of the US economy.
21. A small cake leavened with yeast.
23. (of champagne) Moderately dry.
24. Genus of perennial North American herbs with aromatic usually comous roots.
26. A bachelor's degree in literature.
28. A town and port in northwestern Israel in the eastern Mediterranean.
29. An ancient country is southwestern Asia on the east coast of the Mediterranean.
32. Capital and largest city of the Czech Republic.
35. Of or relating to or characteristic of Eritrea or its people.
38. (Islam) The man who leads prayers in a mosque.
40. The brightest star in Cygnus.
41. Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
45. American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
46. Fish eggs or egg-filled ovary.
47. A slippery or viscous liquid or liquefiable substance not miscible with water.
49. Unrestrained by convention or morality.
52. A cephalosporin antibiotic (trade name Ultracel).
55. Usually elongate cluster of flowers along the main stem in which the flowers at the base open first.
56. English writer of detective fiction (1893-1957).
57. A unit of weight used in some Spanish speaking countries.
59. Be compatible or in accordance with.
61. A city in western Germany near the Dutch and Belgian borders.
65. Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing.
68. A switch made from the stems of the rattan palms.
70. The villain in William Shakespeare's tragedy who tricked Othello into murdering his wife.
71. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
73. (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
74. Formerly a large constellation in the southern hemisphere between Canis Major and the Southern Cross.
75. A rapid bustling commotion.
76. Of or relating to or characteristic of Assam or its people or culture.
80. The foot of a human being.
81. (British) Your grandmother.
82. Temporary cessation or suspension.
83. A metal-bearing mineral valuable enough to be mined.

DOWN

1. Divulge information or secrets.
2. A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.

3. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
4. Acute delirium caused by alcohol poisoning.
5. Genus of tropical American herbs or shrubs.
6. United States playwright (born in 1947).
7. A legally binding command or decision entered on the court record (as if issued by a court or judge).
8. A large cask especially one holding a volume equivalent to 2 butts or 252 gals.
9. Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trade names Acular and Toradol) that is administered only intramuscularly.
10. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
11. Deliver a sermon.
12. (informal British usage) Aggravation or aggression.
13. (the feminine of raja) A Hindu princess or the wife of a raja.
14. A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
22. Make less active or intense.
25. Of or relating to or characteristic of Thailand of its people.
27. On the left-hand side of a vessel or aircraft when facing forward.
30. Small space in a tissue or part such as the area between veins on a leaf or an insect's wing.
31. Being ten more than eighty.
33. Capital of the state of Oregon in the northwestern part of the state on the Willamette River.
34. Any of a class of organic compounds that contain the divalent radical -CONHCO-.
36. (usually followed by 'to') Having the necessary means or skill or know-how or authority to do something.
37. A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
39. Produced by a manufacturing process.
42. A public promotion of some product or service.
43. A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
44. Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus Draba having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
48. A gonadotropic hormone that is secreted by the anterior pituitary.
50. An utterance expressing pain or disapproval.
51. Any of various spiny trees or shrubs of the genus Acacia.
53. A long noosed rope used to catch animals.
54. The English physicist and chemist who discovered electromagnetic induction (1791-1867).
58. Small genus of mediterranean shrubs.
60. Remove from memory or existence.
62. United States comedian.
63. Moth having nonfunctional mouthparts as adults.
64. A trap for birds or small mammals.
66. English monk and scholar (672-735).
67. Very dark black.
69. Chief port of Yemen.
72. The cry made by sheep.
77. A metallic element having four allotropic forms.
78. A white trivalent metallic element.
79. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your energies are high through the end of this month for anything you want to accomplish. New ideas and technology are knocking at your door and you are ready. You may even take it upon yourself to teach others about the new technologies—certainly, there should be a fee for your time. There is a feeling that nothing is impossible. You are at your most practical when it comes to dealing and working with others—you know just what to do. Within the family unit, you could see changes for the positive in the way that others look to you for answers; you are pleased. A blind date or a new friend this evening may prove to be the most enjoyable time you have had in a long while. There is plenty of laughter and sharing pleasant stories of years gone by.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Now is the best time to settle down and work side by side with others. Group meetings or department meetings may become necessary in order to create a smoothly running business. This is one day where all efforts seem to work together for the better of the whole. It could be that some incentives have been added and a new competition adds that extra push needed for success to be realized. Actions can speak louder than words and your positive actions can be as attractive as honey is to flies! A young person is impressed by your ability to work through difficulties quickly—you find the truth of a matter and have practical answers. Keep your eye on the personal goals of love and happiness with your special love-give away a pat on the back.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Be mindful not to appear too independent. Every person deserves a listening ear—if not for the positive aspects, then for awareness. When people ask you for advice, you show the kindness and patience you expect in return. The middle of this week is a little frantic in that there are plenty of sales and new merchandise to show the public. Everyone wants to try on clothes and it may be difficult to get all the merchandise back into neat piles. This is a problem from time to time but today seems to be an extra push for neatness. Visiting executives want to see how quickly the merchandise is moving. After work your life may take on a kind of mystical quality. Dreams and illusions, forgiveness and understanding are the things that arouse deep feelings.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Challenges are likely this day—and they are not all bad. You have the knowledge that will help you to gain the speed needed to reach a deadline or avoid a calamity. You have special abilities that will help you accomplish your goals. During your noon break, spend some time in the library or walk around the block to diffuse any frustrations. The afternoon is much smoother with regard to accomplishments. You realize you have grown when you see how much less time you are willing to spend in a negative situation—congratulations! Situations will unfold and can be understood easily. Someone proves to be very understanding. You will want to take an attitude of gratitude this evening so that you can leave any problems from work, at work.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Social events involving both old and new friends could prove especially satisfying at this time, Leo. You will be able to catch up with those you haven't seen for a while. You might also be introduced to new people who prove valuable business contacts in the future. Expect good news, stimulating conversation, and a lot of reminiscing about the past with warm and congenial companions.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your empathy, intuition and attentiveness is in sync with the world and ready to be helpful. Your life takes on a kind of growth at the emotional level now. Dreams, forgiveness and the understanding of human weaknesses arouse deep feelings. The business that you are in at this time may depend on others to sustain you. This could mean your work is charitable or perhaps political. So much depends on how you sell what you represent. However, you believe in what or who you represent and could help make this world a much better place. Never fear... You are doing a good job. The past and the future seem to come together in order to bring about a healing this afternoon. Your loved one sees who you are and expresses deep appreciation of you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Puzzling happening in the workplace has a way to perk up your interest this morning. Putting two and two together without saying much, you may be able to decipher or uncover the puzzle. Quiet and discreet conversation may open new doors of opportunity. There is a chance to become more involved in electronics today. Neighbors will enjoy your company later this afternoon. Community activities or a special interest group offers enjoyable experiences this evening. Your love relationship can blossom when you share your hopes and your dreams with each other—plan for your futures together. This is a rewarding day. Keep looking to your higher self for answers and you will be pleased by your progress. Home is where you find your heart.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Although much can be accomplished this day, an energetic person could test your concentration this morning. You might as well stop and answer questions or help guide someone with whatever they need; then you will be able to get back to your own work. By the noon hour, a feeling of being rushed or stressed will pass. Take time to smell the flowers during your noon break. Later this evening you can put your feet up and relax. The result of what you do when a difficulty arises is not what you gain in attention by being able to solve the issue, but in how you grow and gain through the experience. Work, respect, status and achievement are central goals for you as a new phase begins in your life. Indulge yourself in a favorite hobby this evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Work routine is exasperating and you are not alone. Although you may not want to continue to be a cog on a wheel, so to speak, you take on an attitude of good sportsmanship. You may notice later today that a joint financial venture is bound for success. You have chosen your associates or friends well. Ideas and interaction with authority figures will get more attention this afternoon. Your directional abilities are in high focus and someone is watching. Working with—rather than against—the flow should be easy to do. Lovers, children and other people or things dear to your heart are emphasized this evening. A relaxed attitude with the family creates a good bonding time. There is talk of selling or buying property and you see a long financial drought ending.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You enjoy a supportive partner and your close family members. After a good breakfast, most any problem this day will find an easy solution through your perception. This is a positive time to obtain a loan, take a vacation, start a diet or begin a business of your own. New beginnings are important now and getting serious about taking care of yourself with regard to mind and body is of interest to you as well. Letting go of past grievances is a key to peace of mind. There is a greater recognition of your psychic and spiritual growth as well as the ability to listen to that small inner voice that guides you. Time is passing and you are sensing the importance in getting serious with plans you have for a secure future. A networking opportunity is successful tonight.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

A quiz may take place this morning and the game triggers memories or thoughts about your belief system. You would do well to work as a lawyer, child advocate or a private detective. Soon you will have a mystery to solve and you will be asked to keep a secret until the time comes to reveal the truth or your sources. Your belief system keeps you true to your word and you are a strong advocate for some political or legal issue. Your passion is strong. Express yourself in your art or hobby; you will find this effort a great way to expel some of the stresses that accumulate with the types of responsibilities you have. Perhaps as you refinish a piece of furniture you learn the art of patience. People want to take pictures this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Forgiveness and understanding human weakness may arouse deep feelings. The past and the future combine and the stumbling blocks between people dissolve. This is a key to understanding and it brings about a greater psychic and spiritual sensitivity now. Your own inner need for change and growth may be threatened by someone older or by circumstances. You are able to put things on hold in order to get a better grasp on the real truth. There could be some unhandled goings-on behind the scenes at work and you will be wise to avoid being in the path of this development. You have lots of energy to accomplish your own goals. Keep up the good work and maintain good health by eating high-protein, low-fat foods.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Hockey

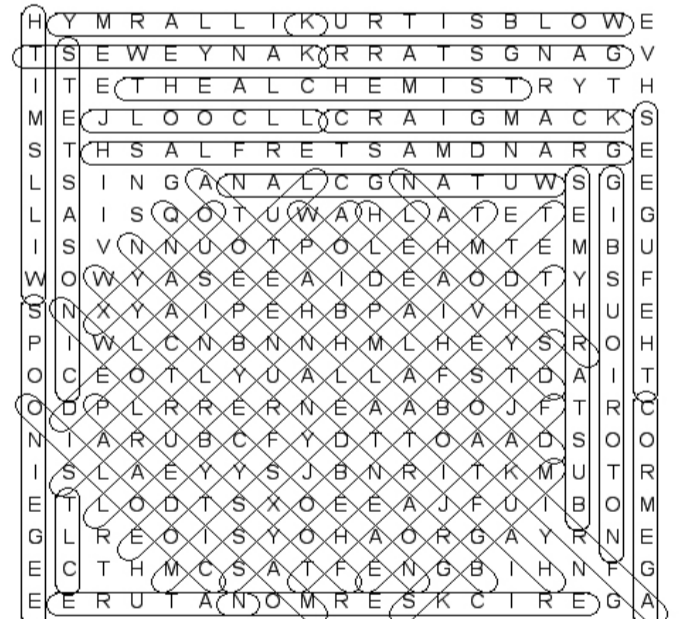
Find and circle all of the Hockey words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Rodney Dangerfield quotation.



- |                    |                    |                |                  |                   |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|
| ARENA ASSIST       | ELBOWING ENFORCER  | ICE RINK ICING | PENALTIES PERIOD | SLAPSHOT SLASHING |
| BLUE LINE BOARDING | FACE MASK FACE-OFF | JERSEY KNEEING | PERIOD PLAYER    | SLOT SPEARING     |
| BOARDS             | FOREWARD           | LEAGUE         | POINT            | STANLEY CUP       |
| BODY CHECK         | FOUL GAME          | LINE CHANGE    | POKE CHECK       | SUSPENSION        |
| BREAKAWAY          | GLOVES             | LINESMAN       | POWER PLAY       | TRIPPING          |
| CENTER             | GOALPOST           | MISCONDUCT     | PUCK             | TRIPPING          |
| CHARGING           | GOALTENDER         | NHL            | RED LINE         | WHISTLE           |
| CONTACT            | HAT TRICK          | OFFENSE        | REFEREE          | WINGS             |
| CREASE             | HELMET             | OFFICIALS      | ROUGHING         | WRIST SHOT        |
| DEFENSEMEN         | HOLDING            | OFFSIDE        | SAVE             | ZAMBONI           |
| DEFF               | HOOING             | OVERTIME       | SCORE            | ZONES             |
| EJECTION           |                    | PASS           | SKATES           |                   |

Yesterday's Solution

Hip-Hop Artists



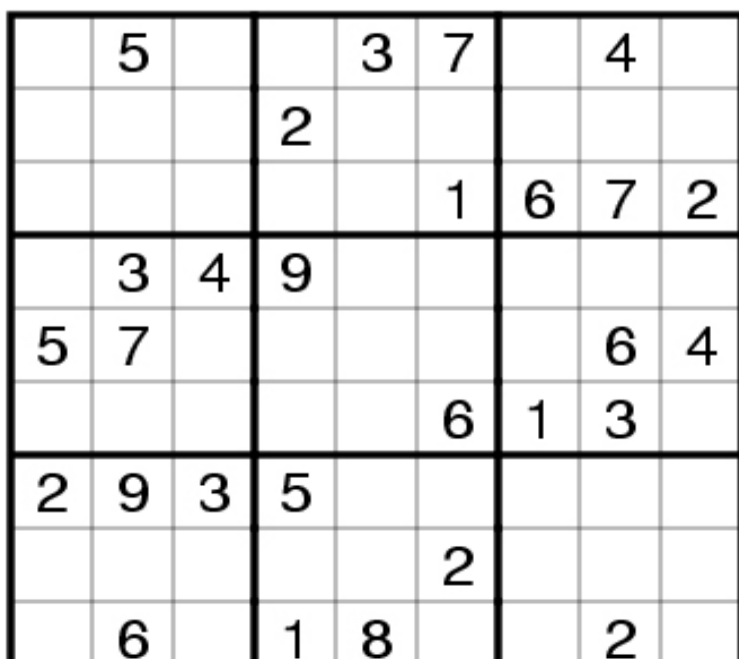
- |                |                   |                  |               |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| AFRIKA BAMBATA | FOXO BROWN        | MISSY ELLIOTT    | THE ALCHEMIST |
| BRAND NUBIAN   | GANG STARR        | MUGGS            | THE FAT BOYS  |
| BUSTA RHYMES   | GRANDMASTER FLASH | NATURE           | THE FUGEES    |
| COOLIO         | HEAVY D           | NOTORIOUS B.I.G. | THE PHARCYDE  |
| CORMEGA        | KANYE WEST        | ONXX             | THE ROOTS     |
| CRAIG MACK     | KILLARMY          | QUEEN LATIFAH    | TLC           |
| DE LA SOUL     | KURTIS BLOW       | REDMAN           | WILL SMITH    |
| DJ SHADOW      | LAURYN HILL       | SALT N PEPA      | WU-TANG CLAN  |
| ERICK SERMON   | LL COOL J         | SPOONIE GEE      | WYCLEF JEAN   |
| FAT JOE        | MASTER P          | STETSASONIC      |               |

The hidden sentence is: EVERYTHING IS EVERYTHING

Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



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## PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

## INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

## STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630  
Fax: (+965) 24348714  
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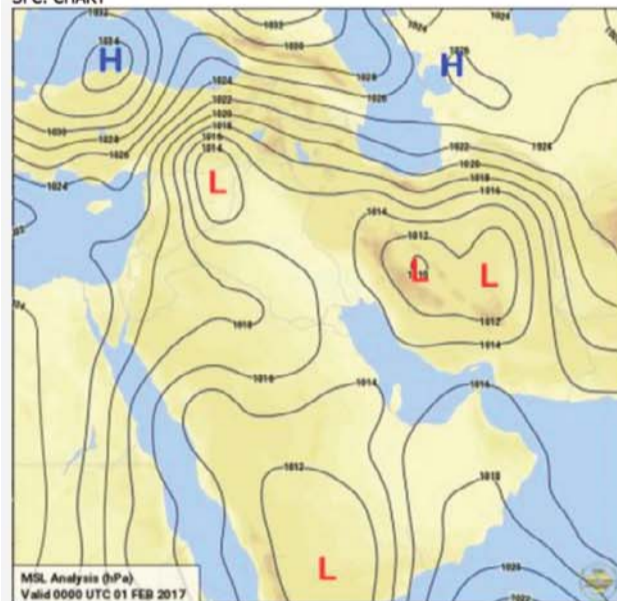
### Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 01/02/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

#### Max Temperature 18 °C

**By Day :** Partly cloudy with moderate to fresh north westerly wind, with speed of 22 - 42 km/h with a chance for raising dust over open areas  
**By Night :** Clouds will disappear gradually with moderate freshening at times north westerly wind, with speed of 20 - 40 km/h with a chance for raising dust over open areas

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	temperature will decrease + raising dust	cold + raising dust	cool	cool
Min Temp °C	05	01	02	03
Max Temp °C	11	10	14	15
Wind Direction	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly	north westerly to light variable
Wind Speed km/h	25 - 45	25 - 50	15 - 38	06 - 26

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

### Weather Watches



Fresh wind

### Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	12		18	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	11		18	
ABDALLY	08		19	
BUBYAN	11		16	
JAHRA	11		21	
FAILAKA ISLAND	11		17	
SALMIYAH	12		15	
AHMADI	13		16	
JAL ALIYAH	09		20	
QAROH ISLAND	15		17	
UMM AL-MARADEM	15		17	
NUWAISIB	12		19	
WAFRA	11		20	
MANAGISH	09		20	
SALMY	07		22	
MUTRIBA	07		20	

### Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	19
Min Temp (°C)	04
Max Rel Hum (%)	77
Min Rel Hum (%)	38
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	43 SE
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

### Prayer Times

Sunrise	06:38
Sunset	17:26
Fajr	05:16
Sunrise	06:38
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:05
Sunset	17:26
Isha	18:45



## PRIVATE CLINICS

<b>Ophthalmologists</b> Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor 25622444 Dr. Samy Al-Rabea 25752222 Dr. Masoma Habeeb 25321171 Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy 25739999 Dr. Mohsen Abel 25757700 Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl 25732223 Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly 25732223 <b>Ear, Nose &amp; Throat (ENT)</b> Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner 24555050 Ext 510 Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali 25644660 Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel 25646478 Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah 25311996 Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory 25731988 Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary 22620166 Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz 25651426 <b>General Practitioners</b> Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi 24555050 Ext 123 Dr. Yousef Al-Omar 24719312 Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaizeem 23926920 Dr. Kathem Maarafi 25730465 Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah 25655528 Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi 24577781 Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea 25333501 <b>Urologists</b> Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy 22641534 Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul 22639955 Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi 22616660 Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) 25313120 Dr. Leons Joseph 66703427	<b>Plastic Surgeons</b> Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf 22547272 Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari 22617700 Dr. Abdel Quttainah 25625030/60 <b>Family Doctor</b> Dr Divya Damodar 23729596/23729581 <b>Psychiatrists</b> Dr. Esam Al-Ansari 22635047 Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan 22613623/0 <b>Gynaecologists &amp; Obstetricians</b> Dr Adrian arbe 23729596/23729581 Dr. Verginia s.Marin 2572-6666 ext 8321 Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan 22655539 Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami 25343406 Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly 25739272 Dr. Salem soso 22618787 <b>General Surgeons</b> Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer 22610044 Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher 25327148 <b>Internists, Chest &amp; Heart</b> Dr. Adnan Ebil 22639939 Dr. Mousa Khadada 22666300 Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan 25728004 Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra 25355515 Dr. Mobarak Aldoub 24726446 Dr Nasser Behbehani 25654300/3	<b>Paediatricians</b> Dr. Khaled Hamadi 25665898 Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed 25340300 Dr. Zahra Qabazard 25710444 Dr. Sohail Qamar 22621099 Dr. Snaa Maarouf 25713514 Dr. Pradip Gupare 23713100 Dr. Zacharias Mathew 24334282 <b>Dermatology</b> Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University 23845955 <b>Dentists</b> Dr Anil Thomas 3729596/3729581 Dr. Shamah Al-Matar 22641071/2 Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed 22562226 Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer 22561444 Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan 22619557 Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash 22525888 Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan 25653755 Dr. Bader Al-Ansari 25620111 <b>Neurologists</b> Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri 25633324 Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan 25345875 <b>Gastrologists</b> Dr. Sami Aman 22636464 Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly 25322030 Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali 22633135	<b>Endocrinologist</b> Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman 25339330 Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888 Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924 <b>Physiotherapists &amp; VD</b> Dr. Deyaa Shehab 25722291 Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees 22666288 <b>Rheumatologists:</b> Dr. Adel Al-Awadi 25330060 Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah 25722290 <b>Internist, Chest &amp; Heart</b> DR.Mohammes Akkad 24555050 Ext 210 Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital 25339667 <b>Consultant Cardiologist</b> Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC 2611555-2622555 Inaya German Medical Center Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123
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Psychologists /Psychotherapists

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Fax: 2290 1688

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www.soorcenter.com

Kaizen center  
25716707

Noor Clinic  
23845955

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677  
Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677

## Pharrell Williams' wife has given birth to triplets

The 'Happy' hitmaker and spouse Helen Lasichanh - who also have son Rocket, eight, together - welcomed three babies into the world earlier this month, a spokesperson for the singer has confirmed to Vanity Fair. The representative declined to reveal the gender or names of the tots, but said the family are all "healthy and happy". In September, Helen's growing baby bump was spotted at a Chanel's No 5 L'Eau fragrance party in Los Angeles, but there was no indication at the time that the pair were expecting triplets. Meanwhile, the 43-year-old

music producer previously opened up his family life, revealing he loves spending time in the sea in his hometown of Miami.

Writing a piece to mark World Oceans Day, he shared: "Of all the elements, the one I identify most with is water. I grew up in Virginia Beach. I live in Miami. I love boats and I adore being out in the ocean - it's the best feeling in the world. Sometimes I feel like I live on water. Most of my ideas come to me in the shower and the sea always inspires my work. So you can see why water is a huge inspiration to me. It's important for us to act

because the ocean is what we all live off - it's our everything and we cannot afford to hurt it." And Pharrell also previously opened up about why him and Helen chose to name their son Rocket. He said: "In the same way the Indians named their children after a force or animal or element, we named him after a man-made machine that was meant to go up, meant to ascend." — Bang Showbiz



In this file photo, from left, Helen Lasichanh, her husband, Pharrell Williams, and French actress Isabelle Huppert attend the Chanel's Fall-winter 2016-2017 ready to wear collection presented in Paris. — AP



This file photo shows Hong Kong democracy campaigner Joshua Wong (center) speaking during a press conference upon his arrival at the international airport in Hong Kong, after being deported from junta-run Thailand. — AFP

## JOSHUA, THE HONG KONG TEEN TAKING ON THE MIGHT OF CHINA

A scrawny millennial with gaunt features and a studious frown, Joshua Wong looks like he'd struggle to take on a large steak, let alone the might of Communist China. Yet the bespectacled activist is the unlikely hero to a generation in Hong Kong, where he led a movement inspiring hundreds of thousands to join his cause for elections free from Beijing's interference. At the age of just 17, he spearheaded mass blockades that brought parts of the Asian financial center to a standstill in 2014, sparked by restrictions from Beijing on how Hong Kong's next leader will be chosen.

Hailed as one of the world's most influential figures by Time, Fortune and Foreign Policy magazines, he is now the focus of an award-winning Netflix documentary due for release later this year. "We hope people around the world recognize that social movements can make things happen. They can make things change," Wong, now 20, told AFP by telephone from Hong Kong. "People may be depressed or downhearted with the political situation in their own country, but it's still optimistic to see hope and seek change by street activism." "Joshua: Teenager vs. Superpower" tells the story of how Wong became one of China's most notorious dissidents after the mainland Communist Party backtracked on its promise of autonomy to Hong Kong.

### 'David and Goliath'

Critics say the 79-minute documentary could not have picked a better moment, with political engagement piqued in the West as protesters take to the streets to decry the policies of new US leader Donald Trump. "You have a lone teenager taking on China and it's one of the things that attracted me to the story. The odds don't get much bigger. Talk about David and Goliath," Los Angeles-based director Joe Piscatella said in an interview. At the age of just 14, Wong campaigned successfully for Hong Kong to drop a pro-China "National Education" program, rallying a crowd of 120,000 to his cause.

He was one of the 78 people arrested in September 2014 during another giant pro-democracy protest after China reneged on a pledge made during the handover to give Hong Kongers the right to choose their next leader. Umbrellas were used to shield activists from waves of police pepper spray, giving the

nascent "Umbrella Movement" its banal yet iconic symbol of resistance. Galvanized by Wong's passion, the Umbrella Movement made headlines around the world, but was ultimately unable to shake up Hong Kong politics after weeks of protest.

Wong continues to campaign under the banner of a new political party, Demosisto, for a referendum to determine who will rule Hong Kong after the "one party, two systems" principle codified in Chinese agreements with Britain expires in 30 years. "I'm still hopeful for the young generation here. In Hong Kong, more young people may be legislators in the future. I would say that this is just a starting point," Wong said.

### 'That's my life'

Born to middle class Christian parents Grace and Roger Wong in 1996, Wong began his life of activism at age 13 with a protest against plans for a high-speed rail link between Hong Kong and the mainland. It was here that Piscatella's producer, documentary filmmaker Matthew Torme, first encountered Wong and, seeing something extraordinary in the youngster, started his camera rolling. "The first time I met Joshua, I was in awe... He's kind of a conundrum in that, when he walks into a room, he's not somebody you notice right away," Piscatella said. "You give him a microphone and a bullhorn and there's a change in him where suddenly he just becomes this other person where he's passionate and has this ability to connect with a large group of people." "Joshua: Teenager vs. Superpower" was picked up by Netflix and awarded the audience prize at this year's Sundance Film Festival, where Wong attended screenings, describing the support for the film as "unbelievable."

Since the end of the Umbrella Movement, Wong has been denied entry into Malaysia and Thailand, attacked in the street and abused by pro-China protesters in Taiwan. But he takes it all in his stride. "That's my life," he shrugs, describing the drawbacks of his high profile, with a quiet insouciance, as "inconvenient" and vowing to fight on. "We didn't win in the last battle," he said, "but I'm still optimistic for winning in the final war." — AFP



This image released by Magnolia Pictures shows people gathering at the Lincoln Memorial for the March on Washington, featured in the film, "I Am Not Your Negro."



This image released by Magnolia Pictures shows James Baldwin, center, in "I Am Not Your Negro." — AP photos

## Review: 'I Am Not Your Negro' is radical and of the moment

Somewhat deep into the searing and utterly necessary documentary "I Am Not Your Negro," director Raoul Peck overlays audio from a 1960 US Government film "The Land We Love," in which the narrator extols the virtues of America and the freedoms afforded all citizens, with images from the 1965 Watts Riots. While the juxtaposition might not be a revolutionary technique to convey incongruities, in this film it captures the sum of the essential American hypocrisy: Black people suffer while the white people play. Peck's restraint to build to and save that gut punch for a moment when he's certain the audience can comprehend not just the images but the ideas behind it, is a testament to the studied excellence of the film. It is not only a must see, but one that should be studied and absorbed over many viewings. "I Am Not Your Negro" is inspired and informed by "Remember This House," an unfinished manuscript by James Baldwin in which he aspired to tell the story of America through the death of three friends - Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. Baldwin had written only 30 pages before his own death in 1987.

Peck uses Baldwin's words (read by Samuel L

Jackson) from "Remember This House" and archival footage of various speeches and interviews to create an urgent narrative of race in America that encompasses past and present. Baldwin was writing and speaking about his time, his friends and their moment, but his ideas and truths transcend the specificity of the 1960s. It makes sense when Peck fast-forwards to images of Tamir Rice, Trayvon Martin and Amir Brooks, or headlines about mass shootings.

### Undeniable indictment

"History is not the past, it's the present," Jackson says for Baldwin. "We are our history." Using Baldwin's words and ideas as a guide, Peck seamlessly connects segregation, civil rights and Black Lives Matter while also offering a radical and undeniable indictment of the way in which media can poison a populace, whether through the distractions of mindless reality television or the not-so-subtle othering of black people in films that made Baldwin feel "outside the system of reality." "I Am Not Your Negro" being a film makes Baldwin's criticisms of the medium even more powerful.

We get to see the terrified black janitor being

told by police that, justly or not, he will likely be accused of raping and murdering a local girl in "They Won't Forget," or a light-skinned girl (Dorothy Black) getting "exposed" as black to her white classmates when her mother (Louise Beavers) comes to pick her up from school in John M. Stahl's "Imitation of Life." But perhaps some of the most powerful moments come just from watching Baldwin himself - so eloquent and perceptive and so misunderstood by those around him - whether speaking to Dick Cavett on national television or standing in the front of a banquet hall. His eyes get wide and large with urgency as he explains his ideas. His forehead crinkles when someone else tries to tell him he's got his own experience wrong.

Baldwin's words, Jackson's reading and Peck's elegant and scorching composition will resonate for years to come. "I Am Not Your Negro," a Magnolia Pictures release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "disturbing violent images, thematic material, language and brief nudity." Running time: 95 minutes. Four stars out of four. — AP

## Video game cache serves as an archive, at play

The University of Michigan collects video games. Lots of them. The Ann Arbor university's Computer and Video Game Archive features over 7,000 titles - everything from time-honored favorites such as "Pac-Man" and "Frogger" to newer fare, including "Call of Duty" and "Halo" - on dozens of gaming systems. Now in its 10th year, the CVGA collects video games in the same way that other archives pursue books, journals or historical artifacts.

"It's important to have an archive like this, because games are part of our culture," said Dave Carter, who got it up and running in 2008. Carter, who serves as a reference services librarian and the CVGA's archivist, previously was a lecturer at Michigan's School of Information and is trained as an electrical engineer, specializing in optics and radio waves. He's also a lifelong video game fan, having made frequent use of an Atari 2600 as a kid.

"If you'd told 12-year-old me that this would be part of my job growing up, I'd think that was pretty cool," he said with a smile. The archive is open to anyone - students and members of the public alike. Carter said he can't speak about what other video game archives around the US are doing, but that "we were certainly one of the first that opened our doors to allow people to come in and use the game on their own." People like Jeremy Bolen.

### History of computer

The restaurant employee from Ann Arbor stops by three or four times a week, sometimes before heading to work. During a recent visit, Bolen fired up "League of Legends," an online fantasy game, on one of the archive's PCs. "It's kind of awesome that the video game archive here just has pretty much anything you can think of," Bolen said. "Any game you'd really want to play, you can play."

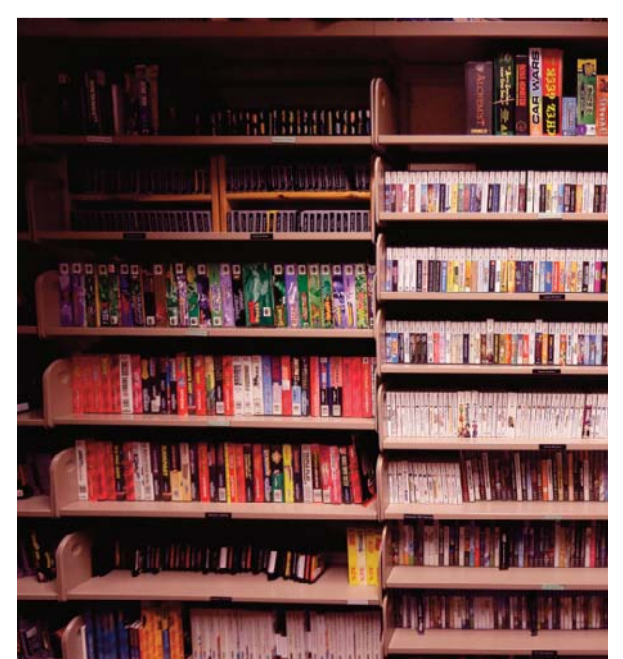
Initially situated on the second floor of the Duderstadt Center, which houses U-M's art, architecture and engineering library, the archive moved in 2011 to a bigger space in the basement. Approach the archive's desk, hand the attendant an ID - student or otherwise - and the whole history of computer gaming becomes available. Visitors can play on everything from an Atari or a Commodore 64 to a Playstation 4 or an Xbox 360. Gamers are asked to keep it down while they play in the CVGA's main area Monday through Thursday, but managers don't enforce low sound levels as strictly on Friday.

### Hereditary warrior

That's the day visitors can play one of the archive's most popular games, "Super Smash Bros." The archive is funded by the University of Michigan Library System and has a budget to buy games as they're released. It also accepts donations,

which account for about half of its holdings. While it would be nice to fill the archive's shelves with every video game ever made, budgetary considerations and the rapid-fire release of new titles make that an unrealistic collection strategy. "We can't have everything in here," Carter said. "But I want to have a good, broad representation of the different types of games that are out there." It's not all fun and games, however. Instructors hold class sessions there, and several student researchers have used the Forza racing game series to study texting while driving. An instructor in the history department teaching a class on Samurai brought students to the archive to explore ways the members of the hereditary warrior class in feudal Japan are depicted in games. "Like all things of popular culture, eventually people want to study it seriously. And you never think of collecting that stuff when it was first coming out," Carter said. — AP

Video games are shelved at the Computer and Video Game Archive at the Duderstadt Center at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, Mich.



FEATURES



Buddhist monk Kaichi Watanabe walking to a home to commemorate the one-year anniversary of a woman's death in Funabashi, Chiba prefecture, a suburb of Tokyo. — AFP photos



Buddhist monk Kaichi Watanabe (right) speaking to relatives during the one-year anniversary of a woman's death at her home.



Buddhist monk Kaichi Watanabe chanting sutras to commemorate the one-year anniversary of a woman's death.

# 'Rent-a-monk' biz thrives as Japan loses temple ties

In a quiet room thick with the smell of incense, Buddhist monk Kaichi Watanabe chants sutras to commemorate the one-year anniversary of a woman's death. The 41-year-old may look like a traditional holy man in Japan-but he wasn't dispatched by a temple. Instead, the family ordered him through a fast-growing rent-a-monk business that has angered traditionalists who warn it is commercializing the religion.

Watanabe's employer, Tokyo-based firm Minrevi, said demand for its monk delivery service has spiked since it started in May 2013, as more and more Japanese lose their ties to local temples-and lose faith in an opaque donation system. The monk later rings a small traditional bell and bows to relatives as the 30-minute ceremony winds down at the grieving family's home near Tokyo. "There are many temples in the neighborhood, but I didn't know where to call," said the deceased woman's middle-aged son, who asked not to be named.

"Also, I have no idea how much I should donate. But this has a clear pricing system." At the click of a mouse, customers can hire a monk from Minrevi from 35,000 yen (\$300) depending on the ceremony. Retailing giant Aeon sent shockwaves through Buddhist circles in 2010 when it started a service that had a price list for introducing customers to temples for funeral services. The open pricing flew in the face of longstanding system in which monks collect donations, known as *ofuse*, in return for performing ceremonies. But there has been growing unease about the murky system which leaves the amount up to families, who have to make several more donations after a funeral for more than a decade.

### 'Commodified donations'

Japan's Buddhist temples count on donations to do renovations, which can cost several million dollars, but there has been criticism that they're more interested in raising revenue than offering spiritual guidance. Chiko Iwagami, an executive member of the Japan Buddhist Federation, acknowledged that some monks have improperly demanded specific



Buddhist monk Kaichi Watanabe (center) chanting sutras to commemorate the one-year anniversary of a woman's death.

amounts of money at memorial services, hurting public trust. "That ignores the spirit of donations," Iwagami said, noting that monks are not supposed to expect financial rewards for performing their duties.

Aeon's fledgling operation outraged the federation, which demanded it take down the price list. The company complied but still runs its service. Earlier this year, the federation also blasted online retailer Amazon for listing Minrevi's monk-renting service. "They have commodified donations. This is extremely unfortunate," Iwagami said. But Minrevi's vice-president Masashi Akita brushed off the criticism, saying the company is just offering a "platform" to connect customers with monks.

The firm has a roster of about 700 monks nationwide with business on track to grow by 20 percent this year, he added. Akita, who grew up in rural community where his neighbors

regularly visited a temple, said the business is just a sign of the times. "I was shocked when I first learned that some people didn't know how to contact a monk," he said. "So I wanted to be that bridge."

### Community ties

The Japanese government does not keep track of the religious identification of citizens, but participation in rituals related to both Buddhism as well as native Shintoism-the two major religions in the country-is common across the nation. Some firms also offer Shinto priests' services. But attachment to religion has fallen into decline. As the population rapidly ages and small rural communities shrink, some 30 percent of Japan's 75,000 Buddhist temples are at risk of closing by 2040, said Kenji Ishii, a professor of religion at Kokugakuin University in Tokyo.



Buddhist monk Kaichi Watanabe ringing a traditional bell while chanting sutras to commemorate the one-year anniversary of a woman's death at her home.

"Japanese have maintained ties with temples because of funerals and other types of community-related events, not for religious reasons," he added. "Buddhist leaders now have to think how they're going to run their sects with shrinking revenues. But it seems like they don't want to look at the reality." Watanabe, who conducted the service near Tokyo, doesn't see a clash between the business and spiritual aspects of his job. "I want to spread the teachings of Buddhism," he said. "This service gives us more opportunity to visit homes. I think it's meaningless if we cannot be there to help." — AFP

# Cruise news for 2017: Alaska boom, more in-depth experiences

A demand for more in-depth experiences - from learning how to scuba dive to dining in a private home in port - are shaping what's new in the cruise industry this year. Other cruise news: a boom in Alaska trips, a few precious sailings to Cuba and potentially game-changing new technology.

### High seas, high tech

Princess Cruises will debut a coin-sized medalion in November aboard the Regal Princess that could dramatically change guest experiences. Passengers will carry or wear the medalion, which will direct them to their cabins, unlock their doors as they approach and alert crew members to their schedules and preferences, whether it's a class they've signed up for or a favorite cocktail. It will also streamline getting on and off the ship.

### Alaska

Alaska expects 1.06 million cruise passengers this year, likely breaking its 2008 record of 1.03 million visits. The Alaska Travel Industry Association says larger ships are bringing more visitors, and destinations like Sitka, Juneau and Icy Strait Point have built out piers to accommodate bigger vessels. Smaller ships are simultaneously expanding service, specializing in more remote destinations the bigger ships can't reach.

Holland America Line marks its 70th year of exploring Alaska with the redeployment of its Oosterdam ship from Europe to Alaska. Seabourn, a small-ship line, returns to Alaska in June for the first time in 15 years. Lindblad launches a new ship, National Geographic Quest, whose itineraries will include Alaska. Carnival Miracle will do a 14-day round-trip to Alaska from Long Beach, California,

that will include Carnival Cruise Line's first-ever call at Icy Strait Point. Crystal Cruises, which last summer sailed the largest luxury passenger vessel ever through the Northwest Passage, offers a repeat trip from Anchorage on Aug 15. In 2018, Norwegian Cruise Line will launch Norwegian Bliss, a ship custom-built for Alaska trips.

### Cuba

Long-term prospects for travel from the U.S. to Cuba remain uncertain under the new presidential administration. But for now, a number of cruises are scheduled through spring. Havana is on the itinerary for sailings from Florida in April and May aboard Royal Caribbean's Empress of the Seas, and in May on Norwegian Cruise Line's Norwegian Sky. The Fathom brand continues seven-night sailings to Cuba every other week through May.

### New experiences onboard and onshore

Royal Caribbean is the only cruise line offering scuba-diving certification through the Professional Association of Diving Instructors. Passengers begin the course at home online, continue lessons in a ship pool and finish with four mandatory open-water dives in ports of call. Carnival Cruise Line is offering longer sailings of nine to 15 days with options for more immersive and adventurous experiences beyond beaches and bars. Passengers might visit a school in Mexico or get a home-cooked meal at a private house in Jamaica. "People are looking for meaningful experiences," said Carnival spokeswoman Jennifer De La Cruz.

MSC Cruises launches a wellness experience in April with personalized health assessments and fitness programs, along with a Weight Watchers cruise from Miami to the Caribbean in May.

Princess is expanding Discovery at Sea offerings for kids with new programming such as MythBusters science activities and destination-themed programs on culture and nature. Princess is also featuring a new show, "Born to Dance," produced with famed composer Stephen Schwartz, paying tribute to Broadway's greatest choreographers and dancers.

Holland America Line's new programs include cooking shows and workshops in partnership with "America's Test Kitchen," plus Rijksmuseum at Sea, with interactive displays about the famed Amsterdam museum as a tie-in to the cruise line's Dutch heritage. HAL has also just rolled out a partnership with BBC Earth, with games, activities and live concerts during screenings showing wildlife and wilderness. Norwegian Cruise Line has opened a new private destination in southern Belize called Harvest Caye with a beach, villas for daily rental, a lagoon for canoeing and kayaking, and "Flighthouse" with a zip line, ropes course and more. The port also makes it easy for guests to explore Belize on shore excursions.

Cunard's Queen Mary 2 this year offers trans-Atlantic cruises themed on space exploration and fashion. Disney Cruise Line will offer Marvel Day at Sea programs featuring Marvel Comics characters in activities, shows, parties and films on seven sailings on Disney Magic from New York City this fall.

### New ships

In November, Royal Caribbean debuted the world's largest cruise ship, Harmony of the Seas, with a 5,479-passenger capacity, two 10-story enclosed dry slides and an escape game room. This year Viking Cruises adds two more ocean-going ships, Viking Sky and Viking Sun, with the Sun embarking on Viking's first-ever world cruise, 141 days long, in December. Viking is also adding two new river ships, Viking Herja and Viking Hild. Crystal Cruises not only launches two new river ships this summer, Crystal Bach and Crystal Mahler, but the cruise line is debuting AirCruises on a private Boeing jet that will take guests around the world, starting with a 27-day, \$159,000 trip. "The world is getting healthier and the wealthy want to travel," said Crystal CEO Edie Rodriguez.

Silversea Cruises launches Silver Muse in April with eight dining venues including a jazz club and Hot Rocks, where guests can cook their own meat, fish and vegetables tableside. Silversea's refurbishment of Silver Cloud as an ice-class expedition ship will be done in November, in time for 11 Antarctic and eight Arctic trips in 2018. In July, American Queen Steamboat launches American Duchess, the first contemporary boutique paddle-wheeler vessel built for Mississippi River cruises. The company already operates American Queen on the Mississippi and American Empress in the Pacific Northwest. — AP



This undated image provided by Crystal Cruises shows a Boeing 777 that the cruise line will use to take guests on a luxurious 29-day trip around the world.



A live concert aboard the cruise line's Koningsdam ship while footage from BBC Earth's wildlife and wilderness is shown on a screen behind the musicians.



This file photo, shows a cruise ship docked in Juneau, Alaska, while a paraglider soars above.



This file photo, shows the Adonia cruise ship arriving in Havana, Cuba, from Miami.

FEATURES



Fashion designer Nick Graham, left, appears with his guest models, astronaut Buzz Aldrin, center, and Bill Nye, star of TV's "Science Guy," after unveiling his Mars-themed collection during men's Fashion Week in New York. — AP photos



Former NASA astronaut Buzz Aldrin, lunar module pilot on Apollo 11 and second man to walk on the Moon, walks the runway during the Nick Graham fashion show during New York Fashion Week.



Bill Nye appears in the show for fashion designer Nick Graham's latest collection during men's Fashion Week in New York.



## At Men's Fashion Week, a collection was out of this world

Inspiration for one elegant collection at Men's Fashion Week in New York came from heaven. Actually, further than that. Designer Nick Graham sent his models down a runway Tuesday in sharkskin suits, metallic rainwear and scarfs adorned with tiny spaceships in a whimsical bid to elegantly dress any gentlemen who manages to get to Mars.

There were suits in houndstooth, tattersall and green plaid, black turtlenecks, paisley scarfs, polka-dot pocket squares, snug tuxedos and metallic neckties. There was a "Martian rubber coat," but it was unclear how it might handle Mars' 80-degree F. average temperature. One model carried a silver briefcase. Another had goggles. All had discreet blinking lights as boutonnieres. Graham, the Joe Boxer founder who launched his first eponymous brand in 2014, called his models "astronauts," blasted David Bowie's "Life On Mars" and introduced the crowd to two science stars - former astronaut Buzz Aldrin and the scientist, author and TV personality Bill Nye.

Nye opened the show with an impassioned speech embracing space exploration and technological breakthroughs. "What keeps the United States in the game economically is our ability to innovate," he said, against massive projections of Mars topography. Backstage, he made the connection between fashion and science: "They're both the expressions of human minds. What we love as humans is art and science. We don't have to pick - we combine them." Aldrin, the second man to walk on the moon, earned cheers from the several hundred who attended the show in a hulking empty warehouse when he appeared to moonwalk down the catwalk in a silver bomber jacket and sneakers. After the show, he embraced the pro-science bent of the fashion show. "I have to tell the president that exploration inspires more than fixing potholes." - AP



Fashion from the Nick Graham collection is modeled during men's Fashion Week, Tuesday in New York.



## Quilling: Paper craft lends elegance to Valentine's cards

Want to add a little panache to your Valentine's Day cards? Learn how to roll a few quilling shapes - hearts, teardrops and petals, for starters - to convey your love. Quilling - an ancient craft also

known as paper filigree - doesn't require any special tools to get started. It's essentially the rolling of narrow strips of paper to make simple shapes for use in artwork and handmade cards. Complementary techniques have devel-

oped over time, such as delicately cut and curled or fringed flowers.

A quilled card that she received several years ago fascinated Kari Cronbaugh-Auld of Olathe, Kansas, so she got to experimenting - and then perfecting - her craft. Today, she sells handmade cards and other gifts at her online Etsy shop, Quillique. Wedding invitations framed by intricate, quilled details are a top seller for her. "It looks easy, but it's time-intensive," says Cronbaugh-Auld, a social worker and grant writer who quills in her spare time.

A simple Valentine's Day card - one heart or a few scrolls - is a good project for beginners. Cronbaugh-Auld, who is self-taught, recommends picking up a quilling kit at a craft store and watching tutorials on YouTube. Quilling books include supply lists and basic techniques.

Quilling paper and equipment, such as a slotted tool - the slot at the tip helps start paper rolling - are sold at craft stores. Beginners also need fine-tipped tweezers and craft glue that dries clear and quickly. And that's about it. After all, none of these supplies were even available to the Renaissance monks and nuns who decorated holy pictures and relic vessels with the precious strips of gold-edged paper that resulted from bookmaking. Their paper filigree - created by wrapping thin paper strips around a feather quill - replicated



Ironwork patterns of the day.

During the Victorian era, well-heeled young ladies learned quilling in addition to needlework. The craft traveled to the Americas, where it was used to decorate cabinets, cribbage boards and picture frames, says Cronbaugh-Auld.

"Hundreds of years ago, quilling was done by people who wanted to make decorative things for their homes," says Hannah Milman, a Martha Stewart Living contributing editor. "Paper was precious. I'm sure every scrap was kept." Decades before she wrote about quilling for Martha Stewart Living magazine, Milman quilled paper beads as a child. She strung them on elastic thread to make necklaces.

"I never knew it was quilling," Milman recalls. "I just did this instinctively, and I'm sure a lot of people did this around the world." Milman fondly recalls using the glossy pages of her parents' New Yorker magazines.

"It was such perfect paper and smooth. It rolled up really well," she says. A reuse-and-recycle advocate, Milman recommends cutting one's own quilling strips - 1/8-inch and 1/4-inch widths are common - with scissors, paper cutter or shredder. Scrapbook and construction papers are too thick, but simple white craft paper works well, Milman says. Dye it, splatter it with paint - make it your own. "It looks amazing, really elegant," Milman says. — AP



FEATURE



Shaolin martial arts students follow their trainer, Sima Azimi, 20, in black, during a training session on a hilltop in Kabul, Afghanistan. — AP/AFP photos

# AFGHAN WOMEN PRACTICE ANCIENT SHAOLIN MARTIAL ARTS



Shaolin martial arts students practice on a hilltop in the snow.



Shaolin martial arts students and their trainer have a snowball fight after their training session in Kabul.



Afghan members of a Wushu martial arts group take a "selfie".



Shaolin martial arts students practice at their club in Kabul.



Shaolin martial arts students train at their club in Kabul.

While Afghanistan's Buddhists were carving the giant sandstone statues in Bamiyan in 500 AD, Buddhists in China were creating martial arts in the Shaolin temple in Henan Province. Fifteen hundred years later, 10 ethnic Hazara women and girls practice the martial arts of Shaolin on a hilltop in the west of Kabul. They are preparing for the day that Afghanistan can send its women's team to the Shaolin world championship in China.

Sima Azimi, 20, who is originally from Jaghuri, in central Afghanistan, trains nine students in the martial arts to prepare for Olympic competition, but also to protect themselves on the streets of Kabul, where women are routinely harassed. Azimi remembered an incident in which a thief tried to snatch her purse, but with her martial arts skills she fought back and saved it. Raihana Amiri, also 20, hopes to participate in international Shaolin competitions and bring honor and pride to Afghanistan, which is battered by decades of war.

When they aren't training on the snow-covered hills that surround Kabul, Azimi trains her students in a grungy, dark club financed by a young cinema actor. Azimi said it was difficult to find all the tools needed to train. For instance, she had to order a Shaolin sword from Iran, where she had studied the art for three years. They could not find Shaolin uniforms, but, undeterred, they designed and ordered uniforms made by a Kabul tailor.

While studying in Iran, Azimi competed in two competitions where she won gold and bronze medals. A year after returning to Afghanistan, she decided to train young girls who lived in the Hazara-dominated neighborhoods of the capital. Most of her students are teenagers, while a few of the older students study in universities. Azimi charges between \$2 and \$5 a month depending on what they can afford.

"Some of my students' families had problems accepting their girls studying Wushu (martial arts)," she said. "But I went to their home and talked to their parents." In religiously conservative Afghanistan, girls are often discouraged from



Shaolin martial arts students follow their trainer, Sima Azimi, 20, in black, during a practice session on a hilltop in Kabul.

aggressive sports. Many parents fear a sporting accident could result in a girl breaking her hymen before marriage, which is considered deeply shameful. While strides have been made for women in Afghanistan, Azimi said there's still much to change. She firmly believes that girls and women can stand toe-to-toe with boys in Shaolin martial arts. In an Olympic Committee competition in Kabul, Azimi took first position among female Shaolin participants. — AP



Afghan Wushu martial arts trainer Sima Azimi, 20, takes part in a training session.



Shaolin martial arts students practice on a hilltop in Kabul, Afghanistan.



Afghan members of a Wushu martial arts group display their skills.



An Afghan member of a Wushu martial arts group poses for a photograph at the Shahrak Haji Nabi hilltop overlooking Kabul.



A Shaolin martial arts student practices on a hilltop in Kabul.

# Lifestyle

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Afghan women practice ancient Shaolin martial arts



Participants dressed as Vikings prepare to burn their viking galley ship at the culmination of the annual Up Helly Aa festival in Lerwick, Shetland Islands. Up Helly Aa celebrates the influence of the Scandinavian Vikings in the Shetland Islands and culminates with up to 1,000 'guizers' (men in costume) throwing flaming torches into their Viking longboat and setting it alight later in the evening. — AFP

## Kazakhstan seeks to leap onto ballet world stage

'The Soviet Union did two things very well: Space exploration and ballet'



In the snowy foreground of a brand new steel and glass building in Kazakhstan's capital Astana, a dancer in national dress stands frozen in a dramatic flourish, her body arching towards the sky. The cast-iron abstract sculpture stands at the entrance of the second major ballet theatre to have opened in the new capital in the last few years. Together they point to the energy-rich country's ambition to stamp its own mark on an art form inherited from its Soviet past.

Since the breakup of the Soviet Union 25 years ago, ballet has enjoyed mixed fortunes in the Muslim-majority Central Asian region's newly independent countries. Much of Kazakhstan's multi-million-dollar ballet boom has been funded by the government, but private sponsors and international partners have also stepped in. President Nursultan Nazarbayev, 76, famously announced in 2013 that "a country that builds factories is thinking years ahead... a country that builds theatres is thinking in terms of centuries."

At the Astana Ballet Theatre's opening last year, stars of its troupe wowed spectators in a production curated by Brazilian resident choreographer Ricardo Amarante. "The artistic level here is very strong: they can do Kazakh national dance, classical ballet and contemporary," the neo-classical specialist, who has been working with the troupe for the last year, told AFP. "The support from the government is there and now it is important local ballet keeps its mind open to new styles to add, to build on, its classical foundations," he added.

Next door to the 800-seat auditorium is the first certified professional choreography academy recognized throughout



Central Asia and unveiled in September. Three years earlier, the city's largest theatre, Astana Opera, also with its own ballet troupe, opened at a cost of \$320 million (297 million euros). The building is considered one of the architectural showpieces of Astana, the capital since 1997.

### 'Space exploration and ballet'

The money being poured into ballet and other arts, even as Kazakhstan suffers an oil-linked economic downturn, testifies to the enduring appeal of cultural tastes popular in the Soviet era. Russian dancer Galina Ulanova, widely considered one of the greatest ballerinas of all time, has helped drive the development of Kazakh ballet. Ulanova taught and danced in the country's former capital, Almaty, during World War II after being evacuated from the Kirov ballet in Leningrad, the former name for Saint Petersburg.

Under the USSR, ballet became particularly popular in major cities, where Russian-speaking elites helped buttress a cultural agenda driven by Moscow. Now ballet is "equally popular among Russian-speakers and Kazakh-speakers" in a country where over a fifth of the population is ethnic Russian, says Svetlana Dzhalmagambetova, a former senator who sat on the parliament's social and cultural development committee.

"The Soviet Union did two things very well: Space exploration and ballet," said Kazakh-speaking Zhanat Zhunusbekova, after watching Amarante's ballet "Diversity" at the Astana Ballet Theatre. "We used to have to go to Russia to see a ballet like that. Now we have it here," she added.

### Pre-Soviet national culture

After the end of the Soviet era in 1991, state funding for the arts shriveled up across the region, which suffered a protracted economic slump. In the resource-poor countries of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan it has never recovered to pre-Soviet levels, driving artists abroad in search of work. "They earn no more than \$140 per month," Aigul Muratalieva, a teacher at Kyrgyzstan's main ballet school, told AFP referring to the country's ballet dancers.

"They gain experience here then go abroad. Our repertoire has greatly diminished. We have no soloists to take on the leading roles in important productions." In other countries a new emphasis on pre-Soviet national culture has emerged at the expense of the classical arts. Turkmenistan's authoritarian first president Saparmurat Niyazov banned ballet along with opera, insisting both were out of synch with the country's "national mentality."



### Keeping ballet at home

During early independence, Kazakh ballet artists would also leave for foreign countries where their classical training was appreciated and they were better paid. Now, increasingly, the best ones stay. The prima ballerina of Astana Opera, Aigerim Beketayeva, starred at the London Coliseum in 2014 in popular Russian choreographer Boris Eifman's production of Rodin. But like her international award-winning male counterpart Bakhtiyar Adamzhan, Beketayeva has remained attached to the Astana Opera troupe, which she joined after being offered a flat in the capital by the government.

"Often when you watch ballet artists you can see the effort, their straining for perfection," Gulnara Zhumaseitova, a ballet expert at the Institute of Literature and Arts in Almaty, told AFP. "But Beketayeva is so effortless and natural," she said. Zhumaseitova said however that the government must use the new academy to further develop "national dance that represents our culture and traditions" as well as find its ballet niche on the world stage. "National productions based on our dances are something people might come from abroad to see. Currently, they can still watch a better version of Swan Lake in London or Paris," she said. — AFP



Dancers performing at the opening of the Astana Ballet Theatre in the Kazakh capital of Astana. — AFP photos

