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GHANEM: IRAQ RESPECTS SOVEREIGNTY OF KUWAIT

KUWAIT SEEKS TO FREEZE KNESSET IPU MEMBERSHIP



Min 08°
Max 25°
High Tide 00:01 & 13:40
Low Tide 07:23 & 19:16

By Meshaal Al-Enezi and Agencies



CAIRO: National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem, accompanied by MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, Odah Al-Ruwaei, Ali Al-Deqbasi and Khaled Al-Otaibi, leads Kuwait's delegation at the second Arab parliament conference yesterday. — KUNA

CAIRO / KUWAIT: Iraqi Speaker Salim Al-Jabouri's reaffirmation of respecting Kuwait's sovereignty is "vital" to block any attempts to ignite disputes between the two neighboring countries, Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Al-Ghanem said yesterday after meeting Jabouri and a number of Iraqi MPs to discuss the ramifications of recent reconnaissance missions carried out by Iraqi forces over the Khor Abdullah waterway on the Kuwaiti border.

Ghanem thanked his Iraqi counterpart for an "honest and transparent" discussion over this matter and an affirmation of respecting Kuwait's sovereignty in accordance with signed international treaties. Having a clear official affirmation by the Iraqi leadership on this matter is "very crucial" in obstructing the schemes of those who wanted to create tension between the two nations for their personal gains, Ghanem told reporters. Jabouri affirmed to the press that his country is serious in respecting the sovereignty of its neighboring country and that Iraq is keen on continuing good relations with Kuwait.

A number of lawmakers who attended the talks stressed that both countries' bilateral relations were strong enough to overcome the recent problems over Khor Abdullah. MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei said what some Iraqi parties are doing is nothing more than a 'storm in a teacup'. He also expressed satisfaction with Jabouri's statements. MP Odah Al-Rowaei stressed the role of diplomacy in resolving problems, adding the talks were frank and straightforward. He also commended Jabouri's sense of responsibility towards both countries' interests.

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US OBJECTS TO PALESTINIAN AS UN LIBYA ENVOY

UNITED NATIONS: The United States on Friday blocked the appointment of former Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad to be the new UN envoy to Libya. US Ambassador Nikki Haley said in a statement that she did not "support the signal this appointment would send within the United Nations", where the state of Palestine does not have full membership.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had informed the Security Council this week of his intention to name Fayyad to lead the UN support mission in Libya and help broker talks on a faltering political deal. Haley said the United States was "disappointed" to see the letter from Guterres, his first appointment of an envoy to a major conflict area. "For too long, the UN has been unfairly biased in favor of the Palestinian Authority to the detriment of our allies in Israel," said the US ambassador. "Going forward, the United States will act, not just talk, in support of our allies."

The UN chief had given the council until late Friday to consider the choice, and the United States came forward to raise objections. Fayyad, 64, was prime minister of the Palestinian Authority from 2007 to 2013, and also served as finance minister twice.

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7 KILLED IN BAGHDAD CLASHES

HOW ALGORITHMS RUN THE WORLD

WASHINGTON: When you browse online for a new pair of shoes, pick a movie to stream on Netflix or apply for a car loan, an algorithm likely has its word to say on the outcome. The complex mathematical formulas are playing a growing role in all walks of life: From detecting skin cancers to suggesting new Facebook friends, deciding who gets a job, how police resources are deployed, who gets insurance at what cost, or who is on a "no fly" list.

Algorithms are being used - experimentally - to write news articles from raw data, while Donald Trump's presidential campaign was helped by behavioral marketers who used an algorithm to locate the highest concentrations of "persuadable voters". But while such automated tools can inject a measure of objectivity into erstwhile subjective decisions, fears are rising over the lack of transparency algorithms can entail, with pressure growing to apply standards of ethics or "accountability".

Data scientist Cathy O'Neil cautions about "blindly trusting" formulas to determine a fair outcome. "Algorithms are not inherently fair, because the person who builds the model defines success," she said. O'Neil argues that while some algorithms may be helpful, others can be nefarious. In her 2016 book, "Weapons of Math Destruction," she cites some troubling examples in the United States: Public schools in Washington DC in 2010 fired more than 200 teachers - including several well-respected instructors - based on scores in an algorithmic formula which evaluated performance; a man diagnosed with bipolar disorder was rejected for employment at seven major retailers after a third-party "personality" test deemed him a high risk based on its algorithmic classification.

Many jurisdictions are using "predictive policing" to shift resources to likely "hot spots". O'Neil says that depending on how data is fed into the system, this could lead to discovery of more minor crimes and a "feedback loop" which stigmatizes

Continued on Page 13

BAGHDAD: Seven people were killed in clashes that erupted in central Baghdad yesterday between the security forces and protesters demanding reforms to Iraq's electoral system, police said. The violence was the deadliest to break out at a protest since a wave of demonstrations demanding better services and accusing Iraq's political class of corruption and nepotism began in 2015. Police fired tear gas and rubber-coated bullets at the crowd when some protesters, most of them supporters of cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr, tried to force a cordon and reach Baghdad's fortified Green Zone.

"There were seven dead as a result of the violence. Two of them are from the security forces and the other five are protesters," a police colonel told AFP on condition of anonymity. He said more than

200 were hurt in the chaos. Most were protesters suffering from tear gas inhalation, but at least 11 had more serious injuries caused by bullets and tear gas canisters. Protesters initially gathered peacefully on Tahrir square to demand a change in the electoral law and the replacement of the electoral commission ahead of provincial polls due in September.

"The demonstrators tried to cross Jumhuriya bridge, the security forces fired tear gas to stop them but they insisted," a senior police official said. Sadr supporters accusing Iraq's political class of corruption and nepotism broke into the so-called Green Zone twice in 2016, storming the prime minister's office and the parliament building.

Continued on Page 13



FAREWELL SPIT, New Zealand: Dead pilot whales sit on the high tide line during a mass stranding yesterday. — AFP

FRESH WHALE STRANDING ON NEW ZEALAND BEACH

FAREWELL SPIT, New Zealand: Another 200 whales were stranded on a New Zealand coastline late yesterday, frustrating rescuers who had battled through the day and even defied a shark threat to try and keep them at sea. At twilight, Department of Conservation (DOC) officials made the decision to leave the whales overnight as it became too risky to continue efforts to refloat them as darkness approached.

The crisis began Friday when a pod of 416 whales became stranded on Farewell Spit in Golden Bay on the northwest of the South Island. Most of them died but volunteers converged yesterday on the spit, which is a notorious whale trap, to help in the rescue of 100 survivors. The whales were refloated at high tide in the late morning but linked up with a so-called "super pod" of another 200 whales gathered off shore.

Rescuers waded into neck-deep water,

defying a shark threat to form a human wall and guide the survivors out to sea while also prevent the other 200 from coming to shore. "But in spite of best efforts by everyone to prevent further losses, the large pod of approximately 200 pilot whales that were free-swimming, have stranded," DOC spokesman Herb Christophers said. "We may salvage some of the stranded whales. Not all stranded whales can successfully be refloated. Even when some whales are saved, they may still restrand as has happened in this instance and prolongs the effort and reduces the chances of success."

About 20 whales who re stranded earlier in the day were euthanized "out of concern for their welfare," Christophers added. The whales beached at low tide, three kilometers from where the first group had died Friday.

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BAGHDAD: An injured protester is assisted after reacting to tear gas fired by security forces as protesters run during protests by followers of Iraq's influential Shiite cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr in Tahrir Square yesterday. — AP

CAPITAL GOVERNOR HONORS OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: The Capital Governorate honored, in a ceremony held on Friday evening, a number of renowned Kuwaiti figures to mark the start of festivities of the National Days. Retired Lieutenant General Thabet Al-Muhanna, the Capital Governor, said in a speech during the ceremony that "we should remember the sacrifices of our fathers and forefathers for the sake of development of our nation."

He commended the solid bonds among the Kuwaiti people, living under wise leader-

ship of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Muhanna said the Capital Governorate was used to honor a number of Kuwaiti personalities every year for their contributions to Kuwait in different domains. The governor honored Sheikh Dr Suad Al-Sabah, Ruqayya Al-Qatami, Fatma Hussein, Mohammad Al-Sanousi, Abdulwahhab Al-Wazzan, Abdulmutallem Al-Kadhmi, Mahmoud Al-Nouri, Dr Abdulwahab Al-Fouzan and Retired General Yusuf Al-Ansari. — KUNA



Governor of the Capital Governorate retired Lieutenant General Thabet Al-Muhanna speaks during the ceremony.

GOVERNOR HAILS PARTICIPATION OF KFH IN FLAG HOISTING CEREMONY

KUWAIT: Governor of the Capital Governorate retired Lieutenant General Thabet Al-Muhanna praised Kuwait Finance House KFH's participation in raising the Kuwaiti flag at Naif Palace marking the beginning of national celebrations. The event was held in presence of a number of officials and senior government figures in addition to a huge num-

ber of people including folkloric groups. KFH's participation stems from its endeavors to optimally assume the national and social responsibility. KFH spares no efforts in taking part in the national and social events that incarnate its commitments towards representing the key role of the private sector in shouldering the social responsibility.



KUWAIT: Governor of the Capital Governorate retired Lieutenant General Thabet Al-Muhanna poses with KFH members.



79 TEAMS QUALIFY FOR THE FINALS OF MIT ENTERPRISE FORUM ARAB STARTUP COMPETITION

BEIRUT/JEDDAH/KUWAIT: The MIT Enterprise Forum (MIT EF) of the Pan Arab Region announced the much anticipated semifinalists of the 10th edition of the MIT Arab Startup Competition, in partnership with Community Jameel, a social enterprise organization that operates a wide range of initiatives to promote a positive society and economic sustainability and Zain Group, a leading telecommunications innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa. This year's strategic partner is Tamkeen, a semi-government organization in Bahrain with the task of making the private sector as the key driver of sustainable economic development.

This year's edition has witnessed an unprecedented turnout with more than 8,272 applications, constituting a 39 percent increase in comparison to last year's edition. The highest number of applications came from Egypt, Morocco, Libya and Saudi Arabia (through the MIT EF Saudi competition). The submitted projects tackled a variety of sectors, among the most prominent of which were software related followed by education, healthcare and creative industries.

The semifinalists of the 10th MIT Arab Startup Competition hailed from 11 Arab countries as follows: Egypt (22), Lebanon (11), UAE (10), Jordan (8), Tunisia (6), Morocco (5), Bahrain (3), Sudan (2), Libya (2), and Algeria (1). Nine Saudi Arabian teams will be added to the list from the MIT EF Saudi Competition that will be announced in March. These teams will be invited to participate in the pre boot camp training which will be held during the month of March 2017 in Egypt, Jordan, and the United Arab Emirates. The semi-finalists list can be viewed on www.mitfarab.org. The participating teams submitted their applications through the competition's website: mitfarab.org between 17 October 2016 till 4 January 2017.

This year's edition is of special importance as it celebrates 10 years of success and excellence while serving generations of young Arabs and

their creative entrepreneurial ideas. Very much like last year's competition, this edition included three exciting tracks - Ideas, Startups, and Social Entrepreneurship. Cash prizes exceeding \$160,000 will be distributed among the nine lucky winners, three per track. Beyond the cash prizes, all semifinalists will benefit from advanced training sessions, personal mentorship and guidance not to mention a great deal of media coverage and excellent networking opportunities. Hala Fadel, Chair of the board of MIT EF Pan Arab, commented on the importance of this 10th edition. She said, "This year, we are celebrating 10 years of entrepreneurial success in the region by bringing together our biggest edition to date. We are also celebrating everything we have accomplished so far especially in terms of our ability to develop young entrepreneurs and support their ideas that a substantial portion of which have become success stories that we take deep pride in. We have great expectations for this year's competition whether it's in terms of ideas, startups or social entrepreneurship. We are expecting more and more technology innovations from the MENA region this year and we aim to take the most innovative of these entrepreneurs to new heights."

Fady Jameel, President of Community Jameel International, commented on the semifinals saying: "We are happy with the diversity of the semifinalists, which reinforces the fact that the Arab world is full of talent and creativity. We have offered our full support to this successful event for 10 consecutive years now, and remain true to our commitment to see it through. As it has been the case in previous years, our strong belief in this competition continues, as we strive to help generations of young entrepreneurs realize their hopes and bring their aspirations to life."

Jameel also referred to the successes achieved by the MIT Enterprise forum Arab Startup Competition in the past 9 years, which made the 10th edition a mathematical certainty. He said, "the MIT Arab Startup Competition has

demonstrated its ability to help young entrepreneurs achieve their deepest aspirations, accepting a mind blowing 8,272 applications this year."

Commenting on Zain Group's support of the latest MIT Arab Startup Competition, CEO Scott Gegenheimer said, "We are excited to support the competition again this year, and congratulate the MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab for another milestone for the 10th year of running. We congratulate everyone responsible for bringing to life yet another edition of this outstanding competition which supports young aspiring entrepreneurs to achieve their dreams and appeals to a number of our core constituents, aligning with our outlook and values at Zain Group perfectly."

Gegenheimer continued, "We look forward to seeing the face of innovation being revealed throughout the course of the competition and shall take the opportunity to capitalize on the most promising ideas, supporting our evolution in becoming a digital lifestyle operator."

On this occasion Dr Ebrahim Mohammed Janahi, Chief Executive of Tamkeen expressed his pleasure in Tamkeen's support to this competition and said: "In Tamkeen we support all initiatives through which we empower entrepreneurs to start and sustain their innovative projects in various vital sectors. We are proud to host this regional competition for the first time in the Kingdom of Bahrain as we believe such competitions has the ability to encourage entrepreneurs to offer the best of their creativity in a healthy competitive environment."

Dr Janahi added "We are truly pleased with the number of applicants that exceeded 8,000 applications as it reflects the region's wealth of youthful energies that seek the opportunities to showcase their innovations and excellence."

The MIT Arab Startup Competition will culminate in a four-day event from April 24 to April 27, 2017 in Bahrain, with the announcement of the competition winners set to take place during the final award ceremony.



KUWAIT: Ahmadi Governorate organized a festival on Friday afternoon at the Kuwait Oil Company's stadium as part of its ongoing national celebrations.



PANEL MULLS HEALTH FEES FOR VISITORS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: In its meeting due to be held at noon today, the parliament's health committee will discuss a proposal to collect fees for health services provided to visitors and increase health insurance charges in order to limit treating them in public hospitals. And with the attendance of Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh and Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq, the parliament's financial affairs committee is scheduled to discuss a proposed bill on banning interest on social security loans and fuel, water and electricity prices increases and parliamentary demands to scrap them, which is expected to be strongly rejected by the government, according to informed sources. The sources added that the government wants law-

makers to cooperate in achieving financial reforms instead of going back to square one and making proposals that would not serve the state budget. At the same time, the educational affairs committee is scheduled to meet the education minister to discuss discredited degrees and suggested penal measures against those involved.

Energy charges

Chairman of the parliament's agricultural and fish resources affairs committee MP Hamdan Al-Azmi announced full support to the agricultural sector and Kuwait Farmers Association (KFA) headed by newly elected Barrak Al-Sabeeh. Speaking to reporters at KFA treasurer Marzouq Al-Azmi's farm, Azmi stressed rejecting any pro-

posals to increase farmers' electricity and water charges in order to encourage Kuwaiti farmers.

Value added tax

The Kuwaiti Banks Association (KBA) is currently preparing a memo including some proposals to exempt Islamic banks from applying the value added tax (VAT) due to be passed next year and submit the memo to Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh pending including it in the VAT bill. The reason for KBA's proposal is to limit the negative impact of annual expenses on Islamic banks and the possible extra financial burdens on those banks' clients. KBA added that this exemption is already applied in other Islamic countries like Malaysia and Turkey.

Local Spotlight

CROSSCHECK



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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Google and Facebook announced that they are teaming up to fight fake news on social media. CrossCheck is the name of the initiative, which was announced by Google. The company said it is working in tandem with a total of 17 newsrooms to provide a platform for rapid fact checking, and expects more partners to be onboard soon. This is a great project. It is time to stop this disease on social media today because its impact goes very deep into the ideas, opinions, attitudes, decisions and ways of thinking and living of ordinary people.

The fake news epidemic on social media has serious repercussions on public ideas and decisions regarding all matters. I am conservative about the effects of social media, which turned some stupid and trivial people rich and famous, and they became role models. Worst, they used this power and money to shape and spread false ideas about life, family, marriage and values.

For example, false news had a bad role in influencing people, as we saw in the US election. Another example is of Facebook, which provoked the revolution in Egypt. This should be an indicator of the power of social media on people today, especially the youth. In Kuwait, I personally do not trust all news on social media because it is often exaggerated or untrue and fabricated, which leads to social damage, especially related to security and the country's status.

My problem with news on social media is that there is no way to investigate its accuracy or authenticity immediately. For example, when you receive the news of a possible devaluation of a country's currency, you can't easily deny or confirm such a report at once, because it may seem to appear as official. Until the emergence of contrary information, it could be too late, and people will already have been affected.

CrossCheck will act as a ranking tool to track and curate the most popular posts across social networks. I think this is a difficult mission, but it is not impossible. This operation is a collaborative tool to stop the spread of disinformation online and to improve the general public's access to verified information. Preventing fake news from gaining attention and being shared by others is crucial to Facebook's goal of providing accurate information to its users.

Google said in a blog post that CrossCheck aims to ensure hoaxes, rumors and false claims are swiftly debunked, and misleading or confusing stories are accurately reported, and with the French presidential election approaching, journalists from across France and beyond will work together to find and verify content circulating publicly online, whether it is photographs, videos, memes, comment threads and news sites. This project aims to protect the society from falling victim to false information. It is a wonderful effort and I hope more news agencies will join this team.



KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr. Jamal Al-Harbi undergoes a test during the Sixth Arab Hematology Conference. — KUNA

HEALTH MINISTER AFFIRMS IMMUNIZATION AS NECESSITY

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Dr. Jamal Al-Harbi said yesterday that the national vaccination campaign against measles, German measles, parotid and polio aims at bolstering citizens' health immunity. In remarks on the sidelines of launching the Sixth Arab Hematology Conference, the minister said the campaign has been launched in response to a recommendation by the World Health Organization to the GCC states.

Kuwait has been free of polio since 1986, minister Harbi announced, affirming necessity of regular vaccinations to keep the people of Kuwait immune from such diseases.

The conference, agenda of which partially addresses broken blood cases among children, groups elite consultants from Arab, European countries and the United States of America. Meanwhile, assistant undersecretary for public health Dr. Majeda Al-Qattan indicated that the conferees will discuss pregnancy, newly-born cases and blood cancers. Dr. Najat Rouheddine, the convention chairperson, said the agenda tackles various types of blood diseases, diagnosis and treatment. She added that participants from 25 countries will lecture about the diseases, immunization and stem cell innovations. — KUNA

WOMAN KILLED, 2 HURT IN SALMI ROAD CRASH

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A female citizen was instantly killed and two others were severely injured when their vehicle flipped and rolled over several times yesterday morning along Al-Salmi highway. Security sources said the vehicle had to be cut open to free the two injured women.

Separately, two people were severely injured when their vehicles collided at a road junction in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, said security sources, noting that both vehicles had to be cut open with hydraulic tools to release the injured and rush them to hospital for treatment.

Injuries

A fire broke out on the fifth floor of a 10-storey building in Hawally, said security sources, noting that firemen rushed to the scene where they evacuated the entire building and managed to control the fire. No casualties were reported, but an investigation is in progress to determine the cause of the fire.

Another fire broke out on the first floor of a Salmiya building. Security sources said firemen rushed to the scene where they controlled the fire and treated two people onsite, while two others were taken to Mubarak Hospital with severe burns.

A fire broke out in a nine-storey Jleeb Al-Shuyukh residential building where firemen had to evacuate around 90 residents through the roof and by fire ladders, while two other teams ventilated the building and fought the flames to prevent them from spreading to adjacent buildings. No casualties were reported.

Meanwhile, a fire broke out in the second floor kitchen of a house in Jaber Al-Ali, said security sources, noting that firemen rushed to the scene and managed to contain the fire without reporting any casualties.

Ahmadi inspection

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said that Ahmadi municipality inspectors recently inspected Ahmadi stores and filed 109 violation citations. The inspection campaign was led by Ahmadi follow-up director Saad Al-Sheiba.



KUWAIT: A picture taken from the scene of a traffic accident that killed a person and wounded two others at Al-Salmi highway.



KUWAIT: A picture taken from the scene of a traffic accident that killed a person and wounded two others at Al-Salmi highway.



BURGAN BANK CELEBRATES ITS EMPLOYEES IN THE ANNUAL IBS GRADUATION CEREMONY

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank celebrated its employees' achievements at the Annual Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) graduation ceremony. The employees successfully concluded their training programs at the institute. Under the patronage of Mohammad Yousef Al-Hashel, Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait and Chairman of the IBS, the ceremony held in commemoration of its graduates took place recently at the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The 8 employees being celebrated completed different levels and training programs offered by IBS as part of their career development program; a long term and highly individualistic program nurtured by the Human Resources Department at the Bank.

As he honored the graduates,

Burgan Bank Group Chairman, Majed Al-Ajeel and a board member of the Institute of Banking Studies, expressed his pride towards the success of the career development program at the bank which placed emphasis on high potential professionals and talents and hence provided training programs which support their career evolution. The training programs which the employees had undertaken during 2015-2016 were specialized programs in Certified Credit Management (CCM), Advanced Certificate in Credit Management (ACCM) and Certified Bank Branch Manager (CBBM).

Halah El-Sherbini, Burgan Bank's Group Chief Human Resources and Development Officer said: "We take pride as we congratulate our employees for their dedication and drive towards their training pro-

grams and their careers. As we continue to strive to recruit the best talents in the market, we only expect this type of dedication and success from our employees. We aim to always recognize and celebrate talent, and do our best to nurture their strengths and set of skills through individually-set training and career enhancement programs."

Sherbini continued: "Our employees are our strongest asset and our investment in their career development is merely a reflection of our belief in the fact that our highly experienced, dedicated, and professional staff constitutes the backbone to our success and achievements as a Group. We will continue to invest in our human capital and show them the same dedication to their futures as they have shown towards Burgan Bank Group."

DIYAR UNITED CO, OPENWARE SPONSOR STUDENT PROJECTS

KUWAIT UNIVERSITY'S 31ST ENGINEERING DESIGN EXHIBITION

KUWAIT: Diyar United Company, a Kuwait-headquartered Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specialist, along with Openware participated in the sponsorship of Kuwait University's 31st Engineering Design Exhibition. Alongside the company also sponsored three individual student projects.

Engineering students from the College of Engineering and Petroleum displayed their graduate projects at an exhibition which was organized under the auspices of the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. The exhibition was held in the presence of Kuwait University officials, professors and specialists in the engi-

neering field along with a number of other dignitaries.

Diyar United Company's sponsorship comes as the company's efforts to provide financial and moral support to various social programs and community initiatives, particularly those that target youth and students. Diyar United Company actively seeks to empower young local talents, fostering their creativity and encouraging their innovations to enable them to contribute to national development across all sectors.

Commenting on the sponsorship, Khaleel Al-Failakawi, Vice President for Major Projects, Diyar United Company said, "Diyar United Company is very proud to support and encourage students ambitions

and innovations, they worked very hard on their presentations and their passion and dedication is inspiration for the future of engineering in Kuwait. At Diyar United Company we firmly believe that the youth of our society are the main pillars that provide new and innovative visions that serves the development process and contribute to boost the economy."

Diyar United Company has always been dedicated to providing comprehensive support to the youth population in Kuwait. By sponsoring the student projects, Diyar United Company reinforced its CSR commitment towards Kuwait's youth and the education sector, demonstrating its enthusiasm in playing an active role in the community.



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah

UK RENEWED COMMITMENT TO SECURITY, STABILITY OF KUWAIT: DEPUTY FM

LONDON: The United Kingdom renewed its utter commitment to the security and stability of the State of Kuwait as well as the Arabian Gulf in general, said a senior Kuwaiti diplomat yesterday. This remark was made by Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah after his meeting in the Kuwaiti Embassy with British Minister of State for Middle East and Africa Tobias Ellwood.

Jarallah said that the British minister clearly explained the kingdom's stance and support to the State of Kuwait, which echoed similar statements recently made by UK Prime Minister Theresa May during the GCC summit in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The meeting was attended by Kuwait's Ambassador to UK Khaled Al-Duwaisan. The meeting also delved into topics regarding holding the 5th Syria donors conference, development in the region especially in Yemen and Syria, Jarallah added. The deputy minister noted that the UK was clearly monitoring developments in the region.

In response to the issue of Port Abdullah, Jarallah said that the British government asserted importance of respecting commitments to the signed international agreements, which all parties should abide by. Jarallah expressed appreciation and comfort to the response he received from Ellwood during the meeting. The two sides also tackled issues related to bilateral relations and the vital role played by the joint Kuwaiti-British guidance committee. —KUNA

Special Report

Efforts to remove obstacles facing Sawaber renovation plans

Complex part of Kuwait's 2030 urban plan

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

The Al-Sawaber residential complex has become a part of the urban plan of Kuwait's 2030 vision after the expropriation of its housing units. The move comes after Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh's decision to support the expropriation in October last year.

The 38-hectre complex in central Kuwait City features 470 residential units divided into 33 blocks. Surrounded by popular streets such as Ahmad Al-Jaber and Mubarak

Land's estimated value stands at hundreds of millions of dinars

Al-Kabeer, the land's estimated value stands at hundreds of millions of dinars. Chairman of the urban plan committee at the Municipal Council Ali Al-Mousa expressed the commission's desire to remove obstacles delaying the implementation of the project.

Not leaving

Seventeen residents, spread over half the housing

Seventeen residents refusing to leave, rejecting KD 233,000 offer

Efforts to seek compromise to avoid legal solution for forced eviction

blocks, are refusing to leave, rejecting the estimated amount offered - a maximum of KD 233,000. "We cannot evict them. After all, that is not in our ethos. There was a short time when their water and electricity supply was cut, but it was reinstated," Mousa said. "These families are looking for an increased valuation, so we brought up the issue with the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) to reach a compromise or find a legal solution requiring forced eviction. We do not want things to reach that stage, though."

Mousa said that although the Cabinet commissioned the finance ministry to assess the value of Sawaber and manage the process, the number of residential units was "too large," and the finance ministry could not resolve the impasse caused by the 17 tenants' refusal to leave.

Fourth plan

"The subject was referred to the committee of the Municipal Council and we are awaiting a response from PAHW," he said. "The development of this area will not

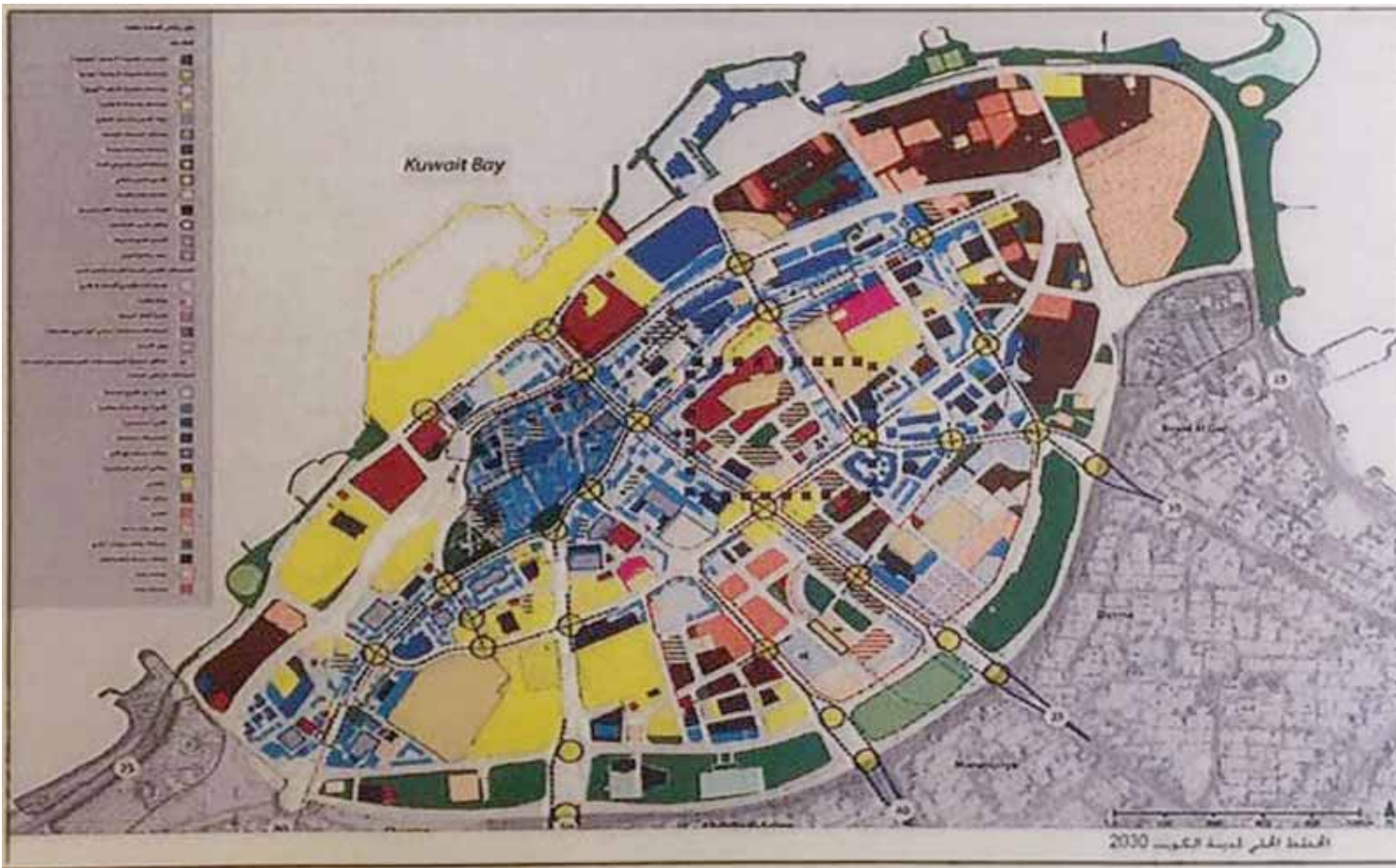
New project to include high-rise residential and commercial buildings



Ali Al-Mousa, Chairman of the urban plan committee at Municipal Council. —Photo by Joseph Shagra

commence until we find a way to resolve this problem. The Sawaber project will be a constituent of the fourth urban plan of Kuwait due for completion in 2030."

The new Sawaber project will consist of high-rise residential and commercial buildings, as well as a new road to revitalize the area and attract investors. Mousa hopes the private sector under the BOT (Build-Operate-Transfer) scheme will collaborate with government, given it is known for innovation and speedy execution.



A 'blueprint' provided by Ali Al-Mousa shows the future plan for Kuwait City as part of Kuwait's 2030 urban plan.



Al-Sawaber complex's location in Kuwait City.

- The Cabinet had issued a decree last year for the removal of all residents of Al-Sawaber complex by March 2016.
- Most tenants have evacuated since then, except for 17 who still refuse to accept financial compensations or alternative homes located in Northwest Sulaibikhat to leave their properties.
- Built in 1981 with designs by famed architect and urban planner Arthur Erickson, Al-Sawaber represents a distinct architectural, economic and cultural period in Kuwaiti history. It is one of the first high density complexes in the country.
- Located on approximately 245,000 square meters of prime real estate property in the heart of Kuwait's financial district, the complex includes 33 buildings and more than 520 residential apartments.



This file photo shows Al-Sawaber complex (right) in Kuwait City.

In Brief

AIPU MULLS AMENDMENTS

BIERUT: A panel affiliated with the Executive Committee of the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union discussed Friday a package of Kuwaiti amendments to the union's 2018-22 strategy. The amendments related to chapters of the Palestinian cause, women, youth, counter terrorism, and parliamentary diplomacy, Undersecretary of the Kuwaiti Parliamentary Caucus MP Rakan Al-Nisf said. —KUNA



KUWAIT, ARGENTINA'S FMS DISCUSS TIES

KUWAIT: Kuwait's First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received Friday a phone call from Argentina's Foreign Minister Susana Malcorra on boosting bilateral ties, and regional and international developments. —KUNA



KUWAIT OIL PRICE UP TO \$52.12 PB

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up 31 cents Friday to \$52.12 per barrel, compared to Thursday's price of \$51.81 pb, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. At the global market, oil prices went up due to reports on OPEC members achieving 90 percent of their commitment to lower production, which began last month. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: The eyes of a Eurasian eagle-owl pictured during the Hala February opening festival in Salmiya on Friday. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KFH PLATINUM SPONSOR OF CHARTER AWARD CEREMONY, CFA SOCIETY KUWAIT 'ECONOMIC EDUCATION VITAL FOR PROSPEROUS FUTURE'

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) is committed to develop responsible and thoughtful leaders who will create value for their organizations and ultimately their communities. KFH firmly believes that economic education is vital for prosperous future" said KFH-Group CEO Mazin Saad Al-Nahedh.



He added during his speech at CFA Society Kuwait, the 9th annual award ceremony held at Marina Hotel to celebrate the graduation of 23 people, that CFA professional standards and values mirror KFH's culture amongst the professional working throughout all levels across the bank with one common goal; always striving for excellence.

Nahedh illustrated that economic education gives the building blocks for a successful financial future. It empowers us with knowledge and tools to empower the economic well-being, indicating it is the best investment we can make to strengthen the nation's economy. He added: "In today's ever-changing and increasingly competitive financial marketplace, Knowledge is power."

Mazin Al-Nahedh speaks during the event.

He continued "effective economic education helps people develop the skills to meet their financial and personal objectives, including savings, financial stability and higher education. The focus on education is at the core of our operations at KFH. The bank has offered a wide range of contributions that include recognizing graduates, endorsing students' graduation projects and researchers' supporting student wide initiatives. Our goal is to promote a culture of knowledge because knowledge is power." Meanwhile, CFA Society Kuwait Vice Chairman Dr Mohammad Al-Sarraf praised KFH's participation in the honoring ceremony.



Mazin Al-Nahedh honors one of the CFA graduates.

APPARATUS TO MAKE NATIONAL PRODUCTS COMPETITIVE

KUWAIT: The competition protection apparatus plans to examine laws that regulate all commercial services and prospects of making national commodities more competitive, said the head of the department. Naif Al-Lavi said in a statement yesterday that the apparatus would launch "a new initiative aimed at studying all laws that regulate trade and transactions involving products and commercial services in the country and specify potentials for rendering them competitive." The planned initiative, the third by the apparatus, follows recent meetings with a visiting delegation of the World Bank to provide the department with technical back-up.

Rules deemed obstructive to competition by the national products will be pin pointed and tackled, he indicated, also noting that the concerned personnel would look into possible monopolization cases in the country's various economic sectors. Some of the fields to be subject to the study are those of transports, mail services, water, retail centers, professional services such as medicine, engineering and law. The initiative will be in line with the government reform scheme, the five-year development plan encompassed in the state vision ending by 2035, designed to transform Kuwait into a financial magnet and business hub. —KUNA



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Crime

Report

THIEF INJURED IN BOTCHED ESCAPE

KUWAIT: In an attempt to escape after he was almost caught by a citizen while robbing his house, a bedoon burglar with a criminal record jumped from a window and suffered severe fractures that rendered him immobile, until paramedics took him to Jahra Hospital.

Fatal accident

A housemaid was killed and a citizen, his wife and two children were injured after the man lost control of his vehicle and it flipped over along Wafra highway.

Smuggling foiled

An Ethiopian woman was arrested on arrival at Kuwait International Airport with six kilograms of qat she concealed in bags of coffee.

Reckless drivers arrested

A number of reckless drivers were arrested in Jahra near a roundabout known as the 'Diesel Roundabout', where drivers usually take advantage of the rain to drive on slippery roads and sometimes pour diesel on the ground when there is no rain, which endangers their lives and that of others.

Attempted robbery

An Egyptian gardener who worked for a 63-year-old Kuwaiti woman in her villa 50 km west of Cairo was arrested for attempted robbery, said security sources, noting that the man hid in the woman's bedroom and threatened her with a knife, demanding money. The sources said the woman shouted for help, and the villa's janitor rescued her and caught the thief.

Search for police impersonators

Six 'bachelor' Indian roommates reported that two unidentified people in dishdashas barged into their apartment claiming to be police detectives and stole KD 670 in cash, their car keys and mobile phones after interrogating and beating them. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Car theft

A bedoon reported that an unidentified robber smashed his vehicle's window and stole KD 500 in cash, five sunglasses and the vehicle's audio system. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress. Meanwhile, a citizen reported that his vehicle was also broken into while parked outside his house in Qairawan, and that the robbers stole a tablet. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress. —Translated from the Arabic press



النهار

Al-Anbaa

YOU'LL REGRET IT!

By Mubarak Al-Wesaiss

Following days of debate and weighing-up of options, things were wrapped up with the resignation of Minister of Information and Minister of Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. You will regret sacrificing Al-Humoud to maintain your own positions, because you will soon lose them after appearing so weak!

You will regret this because you allowed constitutional violations and let down a minister who had been working according to your vision. It is as if you approve of all what came during the false interpellation!

You will regret this, curse these days and think you shot yourself in the foot; you will realize that you believed empty promises from people with party agendas! You will regret yielding to a political group that never keeps its promises and is loyal only to itself. You will regret it because you keep on feeding foxes and worry not about wolves, thinking that you would be safe from them, though they had devastated things in

the country!

You will regret it, because those who fail to learn the lessons of the past do not deserve to survive the future! The bottom line is, a good believer can never be bitten twice from the same hole!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

النهار

Al-Anbaa

ICE-COLD GOVERNMENT

By Saleh Al-Shayaji

Some people said that we are about to enter a new ice age with which the 'Ice geography' of our country will change and our land will be covered with ice. It is also said that the new ice age will start this year and the cold and frost wave that has hit our region is a solid proof and declaration of the commencement of the ice age. For some people, such a thing seems impossible to happen while others take it for a laugh. I personally accept both opinions, includ-

We will never see polar bears wandering around among us, and will continue to walk on sand till we perish

ing the more serious scientific one suggesting that our area will enter an ice age, and the sarcastic funny one excluding such likelihood.

Scientifically speaking, climate changes need several ages to take effect and happen gradually, which means that we, the people living in the twenty first century, will never live to witness our region turning into glaciers. We will never see polar bears wandering around among us, and will continue to walk on sand till we perish. Our government will continue to be a part of us. It will remain as sandy as we are and will never turn into an ice-cold one.

However, if nature violates its norms and does not respect long time cycle and span needed for the change and if we turned into an icy country, we will be in much trouble, especially our government which. In such case, the government will have to seek help from friends or a friendly government experienced enough in dealing with such situations, to replace our 'sandy' one that lacks the skills and experience of running icy countries.

Naturally enough, the same goes for the parliament that lacks 'icy' legislative experiences and, thus, an icy one will be needed to match the new era by passing icy laws and legislations to match the new 'cold' state form. The new icy parliament's mission will be easy because it will not have to pass legislations mandating women to dress decently, for instance, because the weather will do that job and force women to dress warmly. Our current government will have to monitor the surrogate icy government's performance so that it can eventually learn how to be 'cold' itself.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



KFAS ANNOUNCES NAMES OF THE PARTICIPATING COMPANIES IN 'INNOVATION CHALLENGE 2017'

KUWAIT: Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) announced the ten out of twenty private Kuwaiti companies selected to participate in 'KFAS Innovation Challenge Program 2017'; a four-month learning program specifically designed to drive companies in Kuwait to become more innovative. KFAS is providing this unique learning opportunities to develop private sector human capacity in business innovation for the purpose of promoting economic growth.

This unique executive educational program which is customized for Kuwait by KFAS through a partnership with the Royal College of Art (RCA) in London; one of the finest academic institutions in the world in designing and fostering innovation in the private sector. KFAS is offering this program to Kuwait's private sector at no cost to the participating companies as part of its efforts in supporting the private sector and to be a catalyst in transforming Kuwait's economy into knowledge based economy.

Dr Adnan Shihab-Eldin, Director General of KFAS emphasized during a speech at a dinner held to inaugurate the program on the importance of the initiative. He noted that this year's program is of significance due to the collaboration with the Executive Education for Business - Royal College of Arts, London, a leader in service design for business. Service design helps optimizing the customer experience which is a competitive advantage especially in today's business environment.

Shihab-Eldin also accentuated that the program, which is held for the third year, "indicates the foundation's commitment to spread and solidify the culture of investing in science, technology and innovation from development and growth. On a similar note, Dr Paul Thompson, the Rector of the Royal College of Art focused on the RCA's history of delivering customized executive education on topics that include design thinking, people-centered design, disruptive innovation and service

design, adding that through this partnership KFAS would be able to unlock the talent and ingenuity of its workforce: "Drawing on our experience and expertise in using service design, design management and inclusive design for business innovation, we will train your executives to 'think like a designer', to engage and understand your clients and supply chains, mapping and analyzing processes and user journeys, in order to create efficient systems and services, satisfied customers, and businesses with increased capacity to innovate."

Rama Gheerawo, Director of the Hamlyn Centre for Design, RCA mentioned as part of his program overview speech that successful businesses are not put off by minor difficulties and set-backs. As he noted <<Innovation is messy. We should not be afraid of small failures or early failures, we should try new things and we should experiment. We often say at

the RCA "fail often, in order to succeed sooner."

The ten teams selected for the Innovation Challenge 2017 program represent the following companies: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), EQUATE Petrochemical, Gulf Bank, Commercial Bank of Kuwait (Al-Tijari), Agility Global Integrated Logistics, Kuwait Projects Company (KIPCO), Mabaneer Real Estate, Boubyan Bank, ALARGAN Real Estate, and Future Communications.

KFAS Innovation Challenge program, in the past two years, has contributed to the introduction and adaptation of innovative projects in several companies in a structured and systematic approach. The program assisted effectively in implementing the launch of new services such as; the interactive ATM machine in one of the Kuwaiti banks, and car leasing services within the parameters of Islamic Sharia. Additionally, the program helped a Kuwaiti company to aptly tackle manifesting cashflow

issues related to insolvency. KFAS Innovation Challenge has built a foundation of leaders, champions, and supporters of innovation in the private sector in Kuwait with more than 70 executives who have participated and are

keen to push forward the wheel of change within their companies. This continuous productive momentum, in return will result in a growth and enhancement in businesses and corporates over the long term.



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LEXUS SUV MODELS

MODEL	YEAR	EXT. COLOR	INT. COLOR	KM	PRICE KD
NX200t	2015	Fire Agate M.M.	Tan	63,161	10,750
LX570	2015	Sleek Ecru ME.	Beige	22,825	19,750
LX570	2014	Starlight Black GF.	Beige	47,597	18,500
LX570	2014	Sleek Ecru ME.	Beige	61,763	19,000
LX570	2015	Sleek Ecru ME.	Beige	35,655	18,500
RX350	2015	Starlight Black GF.	Beige	53,476	12,750
RX350	2015	Sleek Ecru ME.	Tan	31,818	12,750

LEXUS SEDAN MODELS

ES250	2016	Sonic Titanium	Tan	25,212	11,500
ES250	2016	Graphite Black GF.	Beige	22,888	11,500
ES350	2016	Sonic Titanium	Tan	25,546	13,595
ES350	2015	Sleek Ecru ME.	Beige	63,032	11,750
GS250	2015	White Pearl CS.	Tan	29,900	12,750
IS350	2014	Starlight Black GF.	Tan	57,230	10,500
IS350	2014	White Pearl CS.	Tan	35,616	10,500

SPECIAL OFFER & MANAGEMENT - SELECTED MODELS

MODEL	YEAR	EXT. COLOR	INT. COLOR	KM	PRICE KD
IS200t	2016	Madder Red	Beige	3,154	11,395
ES250	2015	Fire Agate M.M.	Beige	33,073	11,000
ES250	2015	Starlight Black GF.	Beige	38,219	11,000
LS460	2016	Sonic Quartz	Tan	3,568	19,750
LS460	2016	Sonic Quartz	Beige	9,739	19,750
LS460	2016	Starlight Black GF.	Beige	16,553	23,000
LS460	2016	Sonic Quartz	Beige	3,722	23,500
ES250	2015	Platinum Silver ME.	Beige	38,980	11,000
ES250	2015	Platinum Silver ME.	Beige	33,449	11,000
ES250	2015	Starlight Black GF.	Beige	25,400	11,000
ES250	2015	Fire Agate M.M.	Beige	33,871	11,000
ES250	2015	Platinum Silver ME.	Beige	34,675	11,000
ES250	2015	Sleek Ecru ME.	Beige	27,350	11,000
ES250	2015	Platinum Silver ME.	Beige	41,531	11,000



Modi faces election test as voting begins in Uttar Pradesh

THRONGS VOW TO VOTE FOR MUSLIM LEADERS IN JAKARTA



WASHINGTON: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and US President Donald Trump shake hands before a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House. — AFP

TRUMP WELCOMES ABE WITH WARM EMBRACE

PRaised his guest's 'strong hands' and pair's 'very, very good chemistry'

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump welcomed Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe with a brotherly hug and warm words of admiration Friday, as he ditched previously hard-charging rhetoric toward Tokyo during a White House summit. Trump praised his guest's "strong hands," the pair's "very, very good chemistry" and rolled out a White House military honor guard in a remarkable public display of diplomatic affection. "When I greeted him today at the car," Trump said after an Oval Office meeting, "I shook hands, but I grabbed him and hugged him, because that's the way we feel."

The odd political couple had lunch at the White House before heading to Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida for further talks and a round of golf yesterday. At Palm Beach airport, the pair was welcomed by a swarm of black SUVs, and a group of onlookers wearing red "Make America Great Again" hats. Dozens of Palm Beach residents lined the sidewalks along the route to Trump's estate, photographing the motorcade and waving American flags. The

sporting gambit recalled the diplomatic exploits of Abe's grandfather, Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi, who once donned a polo shirt to play with avid golfer president Dwight Eisenhower. Abe is in the United States on a similar charm offensive. Then, the topic was post-war reconciliation. This time, the Japanese leader is trying to build a personal rapport with the mercurial new US president and head off simmering disputes.

Ties have been strained by Trump's willingness to question US defense commitments and his rejection of a trans-Pacific trade deal. Plans under consideration in the White House propose a substantial hike of import tariffs that could have a serious impact on Japanese manufacturers. Abe dodged questions about the trade deal, instead dispatching a slew of compliments. "Donald, Mr President, you are an excellent businessman," he said, praising Trump on everything from his meteoric political rise to his golf game. "My scores in golf are not up to the level of Donald at all," Abe said self-effacingly.

'Very, very deep' bonds
Abe's efforts appeared to have paid off. After some tough anti-Japanese rhetoric on the campaign trail, Trump embraced long-standing defense agreements and "free, fair and reciprocal" trade. "We're committed to the security of Japan," Trump said. "The bond between our two nations and the friendship between our two peoples runs very, very deep. This administration is committed to bringing those ties even closer."

Japan's biggest business lobby, known as Keidanren, hailed the strengthening of "personal relations of trust between Prime Minister Abe and President Trump." In a statement, Trump offered reassurances the US would come to Japan's defense if China were to seize the disputed Senkaku islands, known as the Diaoyu in China. In a joint statement, the pair said they "oppose any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration of these islands"-comments that are sure to rile Beijing.

Although Abe has pushed ahead with

efforts to boost Japan's military capabilities, Tokyo still relies on US security guarantees. In a test of Trump's transactional approach to diplomacy, Abe floated the idea of building a Japanese-designed high-speed rail link that could take Trump between the White House and Trump Tower in New York in an hour. Early Friday, Abe told business leaders that US-Japanese commerce had been "win-win" and highlighted the hundreds of thousands of American jobs created by Japanese investments. Most budget cars sold by Toyota and Honda are "produced in US factories by American workers," he said, noting that US investments by Japanese firms total \$411 billion, generating 840,000 jobs.

'Asia in turmoil'

Trump has cast himself as a change agent willing to rip up existing agreements and relationships to put "America first." While his defense secretary had traveled to Japan to send reassuring messages about the durability

of the relationship, until now Trump has showed little inclination to play nice. Inside the White House, foreign policy is sometimes treated as little more than a tool to frame Trump's image at home.

"The Trump administration has sent mixed signals about the relationship thus far," said Michael Green of the Center for International and Strategic Studies. "For Abe, a strong relationship with the United States is critical given the threat from North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs and China's rise." On the issue of China, however, Abe and Trump may find common cause.

Tokyo was often concerned about President Barack Obama's willingness to work with Beijing. Trump is expected to take a tougher line. "We will work together to promote our shared interests, of which we have many, in the region, including freedom from navigation and defending against the North Korean missile and nuclear threat, both of which I consider a very, very high priority," Trump said. —AFP

IS EXECUTES FIVE EGYPTIANS IT ACCUSED OF SPYING FOR ARMY

CAIRO: The Islamic State group in Egypt claims to have executed five men it accuses of spying for the army, which is battling the jihadists in the Sinai Peninsula. In a series of photos published Friday on the secure messaging app Telegram, five men presented as "spies" are seen lying face down on the ground before a militant shoots them in the back of their heads with an assault rifle.

Jihadists have killed hundreds of soldiers and policemen since the military overthrow of Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013 unleashed a bloody crackdown on his supporters. The crackdown decimated the Islamist movement and killed hundreds of his followers, and set off a jihadist insurgency that has killed hundreds of security personnel.

Most of the attacks have taken place in the Sinai Peninsula, which borders Israel and the Gaza Strip, but attacks have also been carried out in other areas including Cairo. The Egyptian army announced on Friday that it had killed "500 terrorists" since it launched a wide-ranging security operation in the Sinai in September 2015. In October 2015, IS claimed the downing of a plane carrying Russian tourists home from the Sinai resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, which killed all 224 people on board. — AFP

TURKISH NATIONAL REFERENDUM COMES AMID MEDIA CRACKDOWN

ANKARA: Turkey's electoral board yesterday confirmed April 16 as the date of a national referendum on expanding the president's powers, but the main opposition leader predicts he will face an "unfair" campaign process. The head of the High Electoral Board, Sadi Guven, announced the referendum date a day after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed off on the constitutional changes aimed at creating a presidency with executive powers, which were passed by parliament last month. Guven said 55 million people in Turkey and close to 3 million Turks living abroad are eligible to cast votes.

But with Turkey's opposition media largely silenced, opponents of the constitutional changes complain that they cannot get their views across. "The referendum process will not take place under fair conditions. We know that the (pro-

government media) will continue to act as though the opposition does not exist," said Kemal Kilicdaroglu, leader of the Republican People's Party. Speaking to a small group of journalists, Kilicdaroglu said he still remains hopeful that a "no" vote will prevail.

"We know that it won't be a just referendum, but despite everything, I have trust in the people's conscience, foresight and common sense," Kilicdaroglu said. The changes, long sought by Erdogan, would grant the president the power to appoint government ministers and senior officials, dissolve parliament, declare states of emergency, issue decrees and appoint half of the members in the country's highest judicial body.

The proposal would also increase the number of parliamentarians from 550 to 600 and lower the age of eligibility for parliamentary office from 25 to 18. Critics

say it would concentrate even more power in the hands of a leader they accuse of authoritarian behavior. The government

says a strong presidency will make the country stronger and improve its abilities to fight terror threats.

RUSSIA USING IRAN AIRSPACE TO CONDUCT SYRIA STRIKES

TEHRAN: Russian warplanes are using Iran's airspace to carry out airstrikes in Syria, an Iranian official said yesterday. "The fact that they (Russian bombers) use Iranian airspace continues because we have total strategic cooperation with Russia," Admiral Ali Shamkhani told the Fars news agency. Shamkhani is secretary of the Supreme National Security Council and Tehran's coordinator of political, security and military actions with Russia. "The use of Iranian airspace by Russian aircraft is made subject to a joint decision, taking into account the need... to fight terrorism," he told the IRNA news agency. He said Russian planes had not recently needed to land in Iran for re-supply. Russian fighter bombers first used an Iranian military base in August 2016 to attack jihadist positions in Syria. Iran and Russia are closely cooperating in Syria and provide political, financial and military backing to the regime of President Bashar Al-Assad. Tehran has sent military advisors and "volunteer" fighters to support the Syrian military in its fight against rebel and jihadist groups. — AFP

HOMELAND SECURITY PRESSED TO DEFINE 'SANCTUARY CITY'

SAN DIEGO: US Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly told law enforcement officials on a tour of nation's border with Mexico Friday that he couldn't define a sanctuary city, which US President Donald Trump has targeted for withdrawal of federal funding for refusing to cooperate with immigration authorities.

Trump's executive order on immigration last month says a "sanctuary jurisdiction" defies federal law by shielding people in the country illegally and that they have caused "immeasurable harm to the American people and to the very fabric of our Republic." While sanctuary cities are broadly understood to mean a refusal to cooperate with the federal government on immigration enforcement, a precise definition has eluded many, including in law enforcement.

"I don't have a clue," Kelly told San Diego Police Chief Shelley Zimmerman when she asked for a definition. The blunt-spoken, retired four-star general went on to say it was inconceivable why any jurisdiction wouldn't want criminals removed from their communities. "I'm stunned when people say, 'Well, we're not going to cooperate with you even in the event of convicted criminals,'" he said.

Refuse to cooperate

Kelly said it would be difficult to justify immigration enforcement grants to cities that refuse to cooperate. "I promise you we'll work with you and will make no Draconian moves until I fully understand what a given locale might be doing or not doing," he told Zimmerman and other local police chiefs and sheriffs.

Kelly spoke near the end of a two-day tour of the border in Arizona and California. In San Diego, he joined agents on two house visits to deport people in the country illegally and toured a cross-border drug tunnel. Last week he toured the border in south Texas. The secretary said he got "an earful" of suggestions from his employees on where to extend a border wall with Mexico, which currently covers about 700 miles of the 2,000-mile international divide.

"I'll take that on board, we'll bring it back to Washington, put in the blender and come up with a solution," he told federal, state and local law enforcement officials at San Diego's San Ysidro port of entry, the nation's busiest border crossing. On Tuesday, Kelly told lawmakers that he would like to see wall construction "well underway" within two years, but he held open the possibility that it

wouldn't extend to areas where there are natural physical barriers.

San Diego, which has one of the most fortified stretches of border, is often cited as an example of how walls can slow illegal crossings, but critics say fencing only forced people to more remote areas, particularly in Arizona, where many have died in extreme heat. Kelly later told reporters that he worried about a federal appeals court's refusal to reinstate Trump's ban on travelers from seven predominantly Muslim countries. He said vetting practices in those countries "are loose at best" and that the countries include failing or faltering states.

"I am concerned in that we are unable to vet these folks who are coming here in a more meaningful way," he said. Asked about reports from advocacy groups that US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents did a large roundup of people in the country illegally in Southern California and made arrests elsewhere, Kelly said authorities are executing the law. He didn't specifically address the reports but rejected the term "roundup" and said officials cannot ignore federal laws. He said Congress



SAN DIEGO: Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly listens to a question from a reporter at a news conference as vehicles enter the United States from Mexico at the San Ysidro Port of Entry. —AP

should change the law if it sees fit. At the meeting with law enforcement officials, San Diego County Sheriff Bill Gore sought help for legal authority to hold criminals in the country illegally

after they finish their sentences, giving ICE authorities more time to pick them up at county jails. Kelly said he didn't know if that was possible but would do so if he could. —AP



WASHINGTON: Protesters gather outside Jefferson Middle School in Washington, Friday, Feb 10, 2017, where Education Secretary Betsy DeVos paid her first visit as education secretary in a bid to mend fences with educators after a bruising confirmation battle. —AP

PROTESTERS MEET NEW EDUCATION SECRETARY AS SHE VISITS SCHOOL

WASHINGTON: Education Secretary Betsy DeVos' attempt to mend fences with teachers and parents across the country got off to a rocky start, when she was confronted by angry protesters during her first visit to a public school. Several dozen activists gathered outside Jefferson Middle School in Washington, DC, a predominantly African-American school, chanted "stand up, fight back." Two protesters tried to block her way and one man was arrested.

DeVos, a wealthy Republican operative and promoter of charter and private schools, said she enjoyed touring the school, but warned her critics that they will not prevent her from doing her job. "I respect peaceful protest, and I will not be deterred in executing the vital mission of the Department of Education," DeVos said in a statement. "No school door in America will be blocked from those seeking to help our nation's school children." DeVos, 59, spent more than two decades promoting charter schools and school voucher programs in her home state of Michigan and other states. She faced fierce opposition during the confirmation process from teachers unions who fear that she intends to defund traditional public schools. Two Republican senators from rural states that rely heavily on public schools opposed the nomination and Vice President Mike Pence had to cast a tie-breaking vote on Tuesday.

Blocking cars

As DeVos tried to enter the school building Friday morning, two protesters physically blocked her way and one of them shouted, "Shame." Visibly irritated, she retreated to her car, accompanied by an aide, but eventually she entered the school. Many teachers at the

school wore black in a sign of resistance, according to a staff member. Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, one of the groups that vigorously opposed DeVos' nomination, condemned the incident.

"Just heard a protester blocked & almost knocked Secy @BetsyDeVos down at Jefferson," she wrote on Twitter. "We don't condone such acts." DC Mayor Muriel Bowser also stressed on Twitter that protests should be peaceful. "We welcome Betsy DeVos & anyone who wants to learn more about our schools," she wrote. DeVos' visit to the school was not announced by the Education Department and was closed to the media. Jennifer Ibrahim, 34, a humanitarian worker, brought her toddler son in a stroller to the protest. "I want to support our local public schools, make sure that everybody gets fair treatment under the system and I don't feel like that's where we are headed with our new education person," Ibrahim said. "Charter schools aren't necessarily better than public schools."

Ari Schwartz, 26, a nonprofit worker, held a poster in which a picture of a teddy bear was juxtaposed with a photo of DeVos. "This is a bear. This is a threat to students," the caption read. During her confirmation hearings, DeVos suggested that schools should have guns on campus to protect students against grizzly bears.

Public schools are "the foundation of our society, that's how everybody learns what's right and wrong," Schwartz said. "We need to keep it that way." Elizabeth Davis, president of the Washington Teachers Union said teachers will continue to fight for good public education and hope DeVos will listen to them. —AP

ASYLUM SEEKERS FLEEING US FOR CANADA BRAVE EXTREME COLD

IMMIGRANTS JOURNEY ACROSS BORDER ON FOOT IN FREEZING COLD

EMERSON: Farhan Ahmed hoped to find refuge in the United States after fleeing death threats in Somalia, but fear over a US crackdown on immigration sent him on another perilous journey to Canada. The 36-year-old was among nearly two dozen asylum seekers who braved bone-chilling cold on a February weekend to walk across the border, trudging through snow-covered prairies in the dead of night to make a claim in this country.

It was a record number of arrivals for a single weekend in the small border town of Emerson, and Canadian officials said Thursday they are bracing for more. US President Donald Trump's controversial ban on refugees and nationals from seven Muslim-majority nations has prompted many who had hoped for a new life in the US to flee north. While the ban is currently on hold due to two successive defeats in federal court, Trump has warned he is weighing a new immigration order.

Among the first wave of immigrants to Canada in the wake of Trump's measure was a two-year-old boy who reportedly begged his mother to let him die in the snow because he could walk no further. Two others lost their fingers to frostbite in -20 degrees Celsius (-4 Fahrenheit) temperatures when they made the same trip in December. Wayne Pfiel works at the Emerson hotel steps from the boundary. Asylum seekers, he said, often stop here for a moment of respite after walking up to 12 kilometers from the United States, coming in to ask if they have reached Canada. Others have called police for help, and are taken to the closest border outpost, where they can file an asylum claim. "They usually call us if they're cold or lost, and we find them on the side of the highway," said RCMP Corporal Paul Manajaga.

Risky desperation

An agreement with the US prevents asylum seekers from lodging claims in Canada if they first landed stateside, but it only applies to arrivals at border checkpoints, airports and train stations. Rita Chahal, executive director of the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, described a "big surge coming across the border."

According to Canada's Border Services Agency, numbers have roughly doubled in each of the last

four years to 321 cases in fiscal 2015-2016. Since April, there have been 403 cases. People often come from Djibouti, Ghana, Nigeria and Somalia, said Chahal, whose agency works out of a building designed by a top Canadian architect who was once himself a refugee. The numbers are high, but the risky routes asylum seekers take are also alarming.

"They're crossing through farmers' fields. Many of them are getting lost," Chahal said. The recent arrivals, she said, tell a common story: "We're afraid of what's happening in the United States, we're not sure what's

risky journey to make it to another safe place Canada."

'Walk north'

Last weekend, Brenda Pielt, an Emerson volunteer emergency coordinator who also publishes the local newspaper, received a call from border agents asking for help with the overflow of asylum seekers. Pielt said she arranged to feed and house the cold, exhausted group members many wearing wet socks overnight at the Emerson curling rink. The next day, they took a taxi an hour north to Winnipeg, where aid agencies helped them

given a date for his hearing. Ahmed told the Americans he had witnessed his father being slaughtered by a rival tribe in his hometown, and as the oldest son, he feared he would be next. He left behind his wife and three children—the youngest born only months earlier—and traveled through nine countries before reaching the US. A US panel rejected his claim, but he was released under supervision and allowed to work as a truck driver until his deportation could be arranged.

After Trump announced his ban, which includes Somali nationals,



A refugee claimant from Djibouti looks out the window of the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council shelter yesterday, after arriving with a group of other migrants that walked illegally through the US-Canada border to seek asylum in Canada in the weeks following Donald Trump's inauguration. —AFP

going to happen if I get sent back to my country." Samatar Adam, 30, from Djibouti, arrived last month. Asked why he did not file a refugee claim in the US, he replied: "Donald Trump." He left soon after the inauguration. "It saddens me to see refugees flee not only their country but also a safe, democratic country like the United States," said the Immigration Partnership Winnipeg's Hani Al-Ubeady, himself an Iraqi refugee who now helps resettle others. "They have to take another

find shelter and legal counsel. Ahmed of Somalia said it was a much warmer welcome than the one he received in Texas in 2014. In the lobby of a gloomy downtown hotel where he now shares a small room with three others, he described being handcuffed and detained until his US asylum bid was heard. New arrivals received blankets, food and housing while their cases are ongoing, according to Ahmed. The next day, he expected to be

deported. "I decided to try my luck in Canada to ask for protection, because if I were deported to Somalia I would surely be killed," he said. Ahmed took a bus to Minneapolis, where he met a man who dropped him off at the border with instructions to "walk north." Ahmed said he had seen snow in the United States, "but not like this." "That night it was very, very cold," he recalled. "My hands were frozen. I couldn't feel my feet." —AFP



PALM BEACH, Florida: A flag-draped coffin, which protesters said symbolizes the death of democracy, is carried as they walk to where US President Donald Trump was staying at Mar-a-Lago Resort on Feb 4, 2017. —AFP

FLORIDA'S FOREIGNERS LIVING IN FEAR

MIAMI: When Venezuelan journalist Eulimar Nunez saw the airport chaos triggered by US President Donald Trump's now-suspended executive order on immigration, she decided to try to upgrade her status from permanent resident to US citizen. Like her, many foreigners in Florida living in the country legally or illegally are in a state of fear and confusion. "It is not that I think he is going to go after Venezuelans. But everything is so unstable and all the rules are changing so fast that I am terrified," said Nunez, 34, who has lived in Miami as a legal resident since 2010.

She remembers the pandemonium that broke out in many US airports when Trump on January 27 abruptly signed an order barring nationals from seven mainly Muslim countries for 90 days, all refugees for 120 and Syrian refugees indefinitely.

Some of those arriving from the seven Muslim countries, including Iraq, Iran and Syria, were detained and sent back on the next flight. People with valid US visas who happened to be abroad, such as students or researchers, were unable to return to America. A judge in Seattle suspended the order, and on Thursday night a three-judge panel in San Francisco declined to reinstate it. The case will now likely go to the Supreme Court. "I am shocked by the lack of communication with which these decisions were made, and the sloppy way in which they

were carried out," said Nunez. "So I am very afraid of depending on the discretion of US agents."

Upgrades

That fear is cited by many foreigners who, like Nunez, are rushing to upgrade their legal status in the United States: from work visa to permanent resident—the so-called green card holders—or from the latter to US citizen. "Since Trump won it has been sheer madness," said Lorraine Perez, an immigration lawyer in Miami. "But the fears are not unfounded."

Attorneys like her say they have obtained a draft executive order that would make it harder to get work visas—for example for business executives or people looking to come to America to invest—by requiring a higher level of education. Perez said it is not known when Trump will sign this order. She said that under the draft, in order to get a work visa people will now need an advanced university degree. It will also become harder for foreigners living in America legally to bring family members over with them.

So people seeking one of these kinds of visas are rushing to get the paperwork done before Trump signs the order. "I have been a lawyer for 20 years and I have never seen anything like this," said immigration attorney Ada Pozo, whose firm has offices in Miami, Atlanta and New York. Pozo said that in all three cities,

her work volume has increased five-fold. "People are really scared, and justifiably so," said Pozo.

The Migration Policy Institute says Florida is home to 650,000 immigrants who do not have legal residency papers. A study by the Pew Research Institute says Miami has the fifth largest undocumented alien population in America, at 450,000 people.

Fear and rumors

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and the American Immigration Lawyers Association told AFP they did not have recent figures that would give an idea of the increase in visa applications since Trump won the presidential election in November. But even if the evidence is anecdotal, the fear in the air is palpable.

"My advice to residents who qualify for citizenship is that they file, because rights are being taken away," said Pozo, who is also a spokeswoman for AILA in Florida. People living in Florida illegally have the most jitters. They got even worse when Miami Mayor Carlos Gimenez decided January 26 to bow to a defunding threat from Trump and removed Miami from the list of so-called sanctuary cities, in which local authorities do not cooperate with federal immigration officials seeking to arrest or deport people without papers. —AFP

70,000 EVACUATED IN GREECE TO DEFUSE BOMB FROM WWII

THESSALONIKI: Greek authorities yesterday began evacuating some 70,000 people in the city of Thessaloniki ahead of an operation to defuse a bomb from World War II. The bomb, containing nearly 250 kilograms (550 pounds) of explosives, was unearthed in the northern city during road works last week and is due to be defused on Sunday.

More than 300 disabled people and bedbound patients were set to be the first evacuated yesterday using 20 ambulances, authorities from Greece's second

city said. The full evacuation of all residents within a 1.9-kilometre radius of the bomb site, affecting three working-class neighborhoods around west of the city-centre, is due to be completed before 0800 GMT on Sunday.

Evacuation is "obligatory", regional security chief Apostolos Tzitzikostas told reporters Friday. The operation is unprecedented in Greece, "where a bomb of this size has never been found in an area this densely populated," Tzitzikostas added. Regional authorities said the

entire operation would take up to eight hours, but local military spokesman Colonel Nikos Phanios was more cautious.

"We don't know what we're going to find," he told AFP. Defusing the bomb and then moving it to a military shooting range "could take us up to two days", he added. It is not yet known which side in the war dropped the bomb or when it fell, Phanios said. A thousand police officers have been mobilized for the operation, with residents given several days' warning via the media, leaflets and posts

on social networks. Thessaloniki residents were facing disruption on the bus and train networks, with facilities set up to host evacuees in need of shelter. People living in a nearby refugee camp will also have to be evacuated, the migration ministry said, without specifying the number affected.

At their request, the refugees will use the evacuation as an opportunity to visit the local archaeology museum, the ministry added. Seven decades after the end of World War II, unexploded bombs from

the conflict are still being found around the globe. On January 23 dozens of people were evacuated after a bomb was found near a Hong Kong university, while three days before that Britain's navy disposed of a suspected World War II bomb found close to the parliament in London. In the German city of Augsburg, 54,000 people had an unwellcome Christmas surprise on December 25 when they had to leave their homes while authorities dealt with a bomb dropped by Britain during the war. — AFP

TWO YEARS SINCE PEACE DEAL, WAR STILL LINGERS IN UKRAINE

'IT IS EVERYONE'S FAULT AND THERE IS NO POLITICAL WILL'

KIEV: Two years have passed since the signing of a deal aimed at ending the war in Ukraine but the bloody conflict has rumbled on-at the cost of another 5,000 lives. The Minsk II accord saw Kremlin-backed rebels agree with Kiev and Moscow on a halt to the fighting and outlined a complex roadmap for securing peace.

It was hammered out by the presidents of Ukraine and Russia with the help of their French and German counterparts and signed on February 11 two years ago. The deal was inked during a period of intense combat and rising

against Moscow remain in place. So where did Minsk II go wrong?

"It is everyone's fault and there is no political will," one Western diplomat in Kiev told AFP on condition of anonymity. The West is convinced that Russia sparked the conflict and is continuing to stoke it. But it also believes Kiev must now share the burden over its refusal to hand some autonomy to the rebel fiefdoms in line with the terms of the deal.

13-point plan
Minsk II followed on from the collapse of a

condition that Ukraine change its constitution to grant the separatist regions near Russia "special status" and "interim local self-government" by the end of 2015. But none of these conditions was met and the agreements have been repeatedly extended as international powers cling on to them as the only hope of ending the 33-month war.

One key factor is the refusal of the dominant nationalist and populist forces in Ukraine's parliament to grant extra powers to the rebels for fear they would hand the regions over to Russia. The insurgents themselves have never held OSCE-monitored elections under Ukrainian laws stipulated in the deal and instead pushed ahead with their own local council votes that infuriated Kiev. And the Russian-Ukrainian border remains open wide enough for the Kremlin to send in tanks and other weapons to assist the separatists.

Frozen conflict

The deal has succeeded in limiting the scope of clashes to specific hotspots. Flareups like this month's battle in Avdiivka that killed dozens are increasingly rare. What Ukraine fears most is that the war will turn into a "frozen conflict" like the situation in two Georgian regions seized by Russia and declared independent in 2008. Georgia still considers them its own territory and had previously vowed to win them back through a new military offensive. Kiev is also concerned that Western sanctions may be eased with the arrival of Donald Trump. The new White House chief has taken a more conciliatory tone toward Moscow and Ukraine fears that this may result in US concessions over its future.

It is also frustrated that Western powers-fearful of inciting Putin-have refused to provide Ukrainian troops with the modern weaponry that could make Moscow's intervention more costly. The past two years have seen every truce collapse and have left Poroshenko at a loss about what to do. For now all eyes are on Washington. "I think that inside the US administration, they are still looking for their Russian strategy," German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said on February 4. "We all hope that (possible deals) between Russia and the US will not be made at the expense of Ukraine or Europe, and will lead to a detente between both global powers," he said. — AFP



DONETSK: A woman walks past destroyed car in Donetsk on February 9, 2017. — AFP

fears of an open war between the two neighbors. Kiev was accusing the Kremlin of covertly sending in thousands of troops-putting huge pressure on Moscow's ties with the West. What Minsk II did was rein in worries of a broader war. But it never eliminated the violence and deep mistrust blocking progress toward a political solution. The death toll stands at more than 10,000 and swathes of Ukraine's coal-and-steel-producing east are still controlled by the self-proclaimed "people's republics" of Lugansk and Donetsk. And damaging Western sanctions

September 2014 agreement that triggered some of the heaviest fighting of the entire war. The deal emerged from 18 hours of talks between Russia's Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's Petro Poroshenko.

Their French and German counterparts acted as mediators between the two sworn foes. But the real meat of Minsk II was a separate 13-point plan that called for an "immediate and comprehensive ceasefire" and the quick withdrawal of heavy weapons from the front. It granted Kiev control over its entire border with Russia on con-



RIO DE JANEIRO: Military police officers wait as their relatives block the entrance to the military police station during a protest for better salaries and working condition. — AFP

BRAZIL POLICE PROTEST SPREADS TO RIO, CRIMINALS RUN AMOK

RIO DE JANEIRO: A partial police shutdown over unpaid wages put Rio de Janeiro on edge Friday, sparking fears of chaos similar to that seen in a neighboring Brazilian state where police are in revolt and criminals have run amok. Morale among street police is low as a result of nearly bankrupt Rio state's inability to pay full wages, as well as brutal crime fighting that has seen more than 3,000 officers killed in Rio since 1994 — a casualty rate exceeding that of US troops in World War II, according to a recent study.

Police, who are classified as military, are barred by the constitution from going on strike or demonstrating. To get around that law, female relatives of officers blocked the entrances to several Rio police bases, including the elite Shock Battalion and personnel made no effort to come out. "We're demonstrating to demand police get their rights back, especially security, payment of salaries on time and better equipment, not weapons that are out of order and cars that are

not maintained," said a woman outside the 6th Battalion station.

The woman, who like other protesters requested she not be identified, said her husband had been killed on duty last year. "We've had enough!" said another police widow helping to blockade the station. At the imposing Shock Battalion headquarters, women prevented cars and anyone in uniform from exiting. "If you come in, we won't let you leave," one woman warned two thick-set policemen returning to base with rifles and other combat gear carried by Shock Battalion troopers. They politely agreed.

Police authorities said in a statement that protests were taking place outside 27 of Rio's 100 police stations, with five reported by Globo television as blockaded. Spokesman Major Ivan Blaz told journalists that "95 percent" of officers were working as normal and that the state and city were secure. Roberto Sa, security chief for Rio state, said on Friday night that the defense

ministry had made troops available to step in if needed, adding that he hoped their intervention would not be necessary.

Dire straits

The limited blockades were modeled on a broader shutdown in the neighboring state of Espirito Santo, where relatives of police closed all stations one week ago, plunging the state into chaos. Despite the dispatch of federal army troops, more than 120 people have been reported killed amid looting and robbery.

President Michel Temer, who said nothing in public about the crisis all week, called the situation "unacceptable" on Friday and said that demonstrators "cannot hold the Brazilian people hostage." On Friday night, local authorities and police representatives had reached an agreement in Espirito Santo for the police to return to work soon. In exchange, they would not face disciplinary action. — AFP



MADRID: Leader of left-wing party Podemos, Pablo Iglesias takes part in a decisive two-day Party congress at Vistalegre palace that could unseat the charismatic leader and co-founder of one of Europe's leading far-left parties. — AFP

SPAIN'S DIVIDED PODEMOS STARTS CRUCIAL CONGRESS

MADRID: Shouting "yes we can" and "unity", thousands of Podemos supporters gathered yesterday at a decisive two-day meeting in Madrid that could unseat the charismatic leader of one of Europe's leading far-left parties. Born in 1974 out of the Indignados anti-austerity protest movement that swept Spain during a severe economic crisis, the party, an ally of Greece's Syriza, has found itself risen by in-fighting after a meteoric rise to national-level politics.

But yesterday, party leaders attempted to put these bitter divisions behind them as they took to the stage in a congress centre bathed in purple flags and banners, the color of Podemos, in an electric atmosphere. "We have committed many mistakes," Pablo Iglesias, the party's charismatic leader and co-founder, said on stage behind huge white letters spelling out Podemos. To wild applause, the 38-year-old added the weekend's congress should be "an example of fraternity, unity and intelligence".

For months, Iglesias and his deputy and former close friend Inigo Errejón, 33, have been locked in a high-profile duel over how to steer the party towards taking power now that it has become Spain's third most powerful political force. Supporters are hoping the deep and damaging rift will be put to rest by Sunday, when they elect a new leadership council and secretary general, with Iglesias presenting his candidacy again. Crucially, they will also vote on a strategy for moving the party forward.

'Scarred' by rift

After a meteoric rise that saw it shatter Spain's traditional two-party system, coming third in 2015 general elections and in a repeat 2016 vote, Podemos now finds itself at a crossroads. Should the party, which harnessed the anger of millions stung by Spain's economic crisis, take to the streets again as an anti-establishment group, as wanted by Iglesias and his followers?

Or should it shed an "enfant terrible" image that may be scaring away voters now that it has become a credible political force, and work from within parliament as

Errejón and his supporters propose? The congress caps three intense years for a party that went from nothing to securing millions of votes in general elections, on a promise of radical change and a more egalitarian society.

But for some supporters, the months of in-fighting have left their "scar", as 49-year-old Rafa Burguillo put it. He travelled to Madrid for the congress from Barcelona with his wife Eva Campos, a Podemos councillor, and their eight-year-old son. "When people get a taste of power, they really like it. And they forget that what they actually have to do is debate to change the system," he said. Burguillo is a supporter of Iglesias, and will be voting for him and his list of candidates for the leadership council. "He remains true to his ideas, to a hard, strong discourse." Two self-imposed challenges loom for Podemos: replacing the Socialists as Spain's main opposition party, and eventually taking power.

'Stronger' from Monday

Iglesias' and Errejón's differences over how to do this have created friction as party members have picked sides, prompting accusations of a purge against dissenters by those close to the Podemos chief. Yesterday, though, the pair put on a united front, appearing on stage together along with other leaders from either side.

Both teams have drafted competing lists of candidates for the leadership council. Errejón is not standing for secretary general, which means Iglesias will almost certainly be re-elected as Podemos chief, since the only other candidate is a low-profile lawmaker. But Iglesias has said that if his list of candidates for the leadership council and his strategy are not approved, he will step aside. That would set the scene for a second crisis within Podemos as the party tries to replace him.

But supporters at the congress hope it won't come to this, Errejón included. "From Monday, more Podemos, more together, stronger," he told the crowd, to huge applause. — AFP

US DEMAND FOR MORE NATO BURDEN-SHARING FAIR: GERMANY

WASHINGTON: The US call for NATO partners to step up funding for the transatlantic alliance is "a fair demand," German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen said on Friday after what she called a positive first meeting with Defense Secretary James Mattis. Germany and other European powers were unnerved when President Donald Trump during the election campaign accused NATO allies of failing to pay their way, and described the alliance shortly before he took office last month as "obsolete."

Trump offered some reassurance this week when he told US forces: "We strongly support NATO." Von der Leyen said Germany, which spends less than the NATO target of 2 percent of economic output on defense, understood it needed to increase that amount. "I think it's a fair demand," von der Leyen said. "If we want to jointly master the crises in the world, namely the fight against terrorism, and also put the alliance on solid footing, then everyone has to pay their share."

She told reporters she welcomed an offer from Mattis to deepen the strategic dialogue between the two countries. He had also reiterated his clear and deep commitment to NATO. Admiring comments from Trump about Russian President Vladimir Putin have raised concerns among some European

countries that the United States might relax sanctions imposed against Moscow over its 2014 annexation of Crimea and its support for violent separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Von der Leyen said it was critical that NATO members remained unified. "It is ... very important that we speak with one voice." She said she and Mattis agreed that many global problems, including the war in Syria, could not be solved without Russia, but Moscow needed to respect international law and the borders of other sovereign countries.

They had agreed it was important to "continue to act from a position of strength to extend an outstretched hand to Russia and work out our mutual problems at the negotiating table and then solve them." The Pentagon said in a statement that Mattis thanked von der Leyen for Germany's leadership in NATO and acknowledged the role it plays in fighting terrorism, specifically in the coalition fighting Islamic State.

Both look forward to working together at the NATO Defense Ministerial and Munich Security Conference next week, the statement said. Von der Leyen's meeting with Mattis lasted for about an hour, twice as long as planned. She was the first European defense minister to visit him at the Pentagon. — Reuters

News

in brief

Polish PM 'stable'
after car accident

WARSAW: Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydlo was in "stable condition" in hospital after a car accident, a government spokesman said. The prime minister was riding in a motorcade on Friday evening when a Fiat 600 driven by a 21-year-old man struck her vehicle in the southern town of Oswiecim. Her car was forced off the road and crashed into a tree, with the front of the car badly damaged. Two security agents including Szydlo's driver were also injured, one of them suffering serious leg injuries. Szydlo underwent medical tests in a local hospital before being transported in the evening by helicopter to a military hospital in Warsaw.

Government spokesman Rafal Bochenek told reporters the prime minister was still in hospital "under observation" and the duration of her stay would "depend on the specialists". "She is being well looked after. She can carry out her role, she can fulfil her obligations as head of the government," Bochenek said. He refused to specify the nature of medical tests undergone by the 53-year-old or confirm if she would preside over the weekly cabinet meeting on Tuesday. "She feels well although she is not completely back to normal after being involved in an accident," he said. Szydlo was wearing a safety belt at the time of the crash. The Fiat's driver has admitted responsibility for the accident and has been charged with causing "bodily damage in a road accident".

Myanmar jade mine
landslide kills nine

YANGON: A landslide in northern Myanmar's jade mining region has killed 9 people, a local official said yesterday, the latest fatal incident to strike the shadowy billion-dollar industry. The men were believed to be searching for jade in Kachin state when a wall of unstable earth collapsed late Thursday night.

Five bodies were found buried beneath the rubble on Thursday and three more were found on Friday, said Kyaw Swar Aung, the administrator of Hpakant-the heart of Myanmar's jade-producing region. Rescuers also found two injured men, but one was pronounced dead at the hospital, he added. "The total number of dead bodies found was nine. Their funerals are today," he told AFP.

Myanmar is the chief source of the world's finest jadeite, a near-translucent green stone that is highly prized in China. But the secretive trade is poorly regulated and enormously dangerous. The area around Hpakant has suffered a string of deadly landslides in recent years, with a major incident in November 2015 leaving more than 100 dead.

Numerous other smaller accidents have left scores more dead or injured. The victims are usually impoverished locals or itinerant workers scouring the area for pieces of jade left behind by the industrial diggers that have turned the region into a moonscape of environmental destruction. While the mining firms-many linked to the junta-era military elite-are thought to be raking in huge sums, local people say they are shut off from the bounty.

Suicide bomber kills 7 in
Afghan provincial capital

LASHKAR GAH: A suicide bomber killed seven people and wounded 20 others outside a bank in the capital city of Afghanistan's Helmand province yesterday, the governor's office said yesterday. The bomber detonated an explosives-packed car next to an Afghan army vehicle as soldiers arrived at a bank in Lashkar Gah to collect their pay, the Helmand governor's spokesman, Omar Zwak, said. Among the dead were four civilians and three soldiers. Sixteen civilians and four soldiers were wounded, he said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the Taliban have seized large areas of Helmand and have often threatened Lashkar Gah. Hundreds of international troops are stationed in Helmand as part of the NATO-led effort to train and support Afghan security forces, which have struggled to contain a growing insurgency.

At least one American Special Forces soldier was wounded in fighting there this week. To the north of Lashkar Gah, a local official said that an American military air strike killed a number of civilians in a recent bombing in Sangin district. The allegation has not been independently verified. US military spokesman Captain Bill Salvin said that US jets had conducted strikes in Sangin in the past few weeks. While US forces had "no evidence that civilians were killed in these strikes", Salvin said the command would investigate the claims. "We take every precaution to prevent and mitigate civilian casualties and we take every allegation seriously."

S SUDAN GENERAL QUILTS, CITES
ARMY ABUSES AND ETHNIC BIAS

NAIROBI: A South Sudanese general has resigned, citing abuses by the security forces against civilians and what he called increasing ethnic favoritism in the military, according to a letter seen by Reuters yesterday. Lieutenant General Thomas Cirillo Swaka, the deputy head of logistics, is the highest-ranking officer to resign since former Vice President Riek Machar fled after his supporters clashed in Juba in July with soldiers loyal to President Salva Kiir.

Swaka, widely known as Cirillo, is respected by the international community and Western governments would see his resignation and the charges he has levelled as an indictment of the government, one security expert in Nairobi said.

South Sudan has been riven by conflict since 2013, two years after seceding from North Sudan. Fighting broke out a few months after Kiir, from the Dinka tribe, sacked Machar, a Nuer. His reinstatement in 2016 lasted just weeks before violence erupted again.

The conflict has increasingly followed ethnic lines, forcing three million people to flee their homes, bringing the nation of 11 million close to famine and leading the United Nations to say South Sudan was on the brink of genocide. Swaka's letter reinforced those warnings. "President Kiir and his Dinka leadership clique have tactically and systematically

transformed the SPLA into a partisan and tribal army," it read, using the acronym for the government Sudan People's Liberation Army.

"Terrorizing their opponents, real or perceived, has become a preoccupation of the government," Swaka said the military, police and other security branches systematically recruited Dinka from the president and chief of army staff's home region. Non-Dinkas and Dinkas who disagreed with the president's agenda were given remote postings or sidelined, he said. He also said "soldiers from the Dinka ethnic group have been strategically deployed and posted in non-Dinka areas to support the policy of land occupation." Swaka said the military raped and killed civilians and allowed tribal militias to commit the same abuses as well as running a network of secret prisons where torture was endemic. The government routinely dismisses charges of ethnic bias and blames rebels for stoking trouble.

Officials say any soldier committing abuses will be held to account and the president said on Monday any soldier committing rape should be shot. Military spokesman Brigadier General Lu Ruai Koang did not return calls seeking comment about Swaka's letter. The presidential spokesman also could not immediately be reached. UNofficials and Western governments have accused both sides in the conflict of abuses. — Reuters

MODI FACES BIG ELECTION TEST AS
VOTING BEGINS IN UTTAR PRADESH

INDIA'S MOST POPULOUS STATE A CRUCIAL BATTLEGROUND

MUZAFFARNAGAR: Millions of voters in India's most populous state cast their ballots yesterday in a contest seen as a key test for Narendra Modi halfway through his first term as prime minister. Uttar Pradesh is home to over 200 million people-more than the entire population of Brazil-and polls in the battleground state are a bellwether of national politics.

This election is seen as a referendum on Modi's controversial ban on high-value banknotes, a move aimed at combating tax evasion by the rich that has hit poor rural communities hard. The northern state voted overwhelmingly for Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the 2014 general election, powering him to victory over the Congress Party that has dominated Indian politics since independence.

Major challenge

But now the BJP faces a major challenge from the youthful and charismatic current Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav, who has tapped into the pain from Modi's cash ban to try and swing the state his way. "Modi must answer the people. His credibility will come into question, and that is why he is panicking," Yadav told reporters Saturday in the state capital Lucknow. "This result is going to give him a big jolt."

Voting will be staggered over several weeks, with results out on March 11, and pollsters put the BJP neck and neck with Yadav's Samajwadi Party and alliance partner Congress. Congress, whose 46-year-old likely next leader Rahul Gandhi has campaigned alongside Yadav, desperately needs a win after a dismal performance in 2014. Both Modi and Gandhi-scion of the family that has dominated the Congress party for generations-have their seats in Uttar Pradesh, underscoring the importance of the electorally pivotal state. Observers say Modi would be judged in part on his shock decision in November to take 86 percent of India's currency out of circulation, leaving many without the means to buy essentials in the cash-depen-



UTTAR PRADESH: Indian women stand in a queue to cast their votes at Muradnagar yesterday. —AP

dent economy. "There will also be other factors at play in these state polls, but Modi's BJP will be judged in comparison to its performance in the state in 2014," said Ashok Malik, a fellow with think-tank Observer Research Foundation.

Much at stake

With so much at stake halfway through his term, Modi has personally led the campaigning for his party instead of relying on a local face. He urged voters to partake in the "huge festival of democracy", while painting his opponents as enablers of Uttar Pradesh's notoriously corrupt elites. "Criminals rule the roost in UP. There is so

much lawlessness all around," he said in a speech Saturday, referring to the state by its popular acronym.

The first phase saw queues snaking from polling booths and Indians emerging with their fingers inked as proof they voted. High turnouts were reported, with roughly half the 26 million voters eligible in this round casting a ballot by mid afternoon, the Election Commission of India said. Extra women-only polling stations were set up to encourage female voters to the ballot box, and security measures beefed up at voting booths. There were no major disturbances reported, and extra security deployed to hotspots like Muzaffarnagar where soldiers

guarded the western district's nearly 900 polling booths. The memory of Hindu-Muslim violence in 2013 that left at least 50 people dead and thousands displaced was fresh in the minds of some voters as they headed to the ballot box. "We don't want a repeat of the riots. All we want is peace," Mohammed Shahid, 60, told AFP in Muzaffarnagar. In Agra, home to the legendary Taj Mahal, young voters lamented the shoddy roads, power cuts and poor sanitation rife throughout the overcrowded state. "One of the seven wonders of the world is here but there's been hardly any economic development," Aastha Chaturvedi, a 22-year-old first-time-voter in Agra said. — AFP



ISLAMABAD: Released Pakistani fisherman Mohammad Siddique, fifth from left, introduces his colleagues to reporters during a news conference at the office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Islamabad yesterday. Seven Pakistani fishermen who were jailed in Yemen for over a decade have returned home after efforts from the International Committee of the Red Cross and Pakistan's foreign affairs ministry. —AP

CHINA, US AIRCRAFT IN 'UNSAFE'
ENCOUNTER OVER S CHINA SEA

WASHINGTON: A Chinese military aircraft had an "unsafe" encounter with a US Navy surveillance aircraft near a contested reef in the South China Sea, the US Pacific Command said Friday. The two planes came within 1,000 feet of each other during Wednesday's incident near the Scarborough Shoal, which is claimed by both the Philippines and China, according to Pentagon spokesman Jeff Davis.

The close encounter comes amid heightened tensions between the United States and China over Beijing's moves to establish a presence in disputed areas of the South China Sea by building reefs and atolls into artificial islands. "An interaction characterized by US Pacific Command as 'unsafe' occurred in international airspace above the South China Sea between a Chinese KJ-200 aircraft and a US Navy P-3C aircraft," said US Pacific Command spokesman Rob Shuford. "The US Navy P-3C was on a routine mission operating in accordance with international law."

Davis said the Chinese aircraft essentially "crossed the nose" of the American plane, causing it to "make an immediate turn." "We don't see any evidence that it was intentional," the spokesman said, adding that the incident appeared to be a "one-off" encounter. "Clearly we have our disagreements with China over militarization of South China Sea," he said, adding that interactions between ships and planes are "largely professional and safe."

The KJ-200 is an airborne early warning and command plane, while the P-3 is a

maritime surveillance aircraft. The Pacific Command said it would address the issue "in appropriate diplomatic and military channels." China responded "legally and professionally" a Chinese defense ministry official told The Global Times that the Chinese pilot had responded "legally and professionally" to the US plane when it approached the aircraft. "We hope that the US could take the bilateral military relations into consideration and adopt practical measures to eliminate the root cause of air and sea mishaps between the two countries," the official said on condition of anonymity.

China asserts sovereignty over almost all of the resource-rich region despite rival claims from Southeast Asian neighbors and has rapidly built reefs into artificial islands capable of hosting military planes. US President Donald Trump's administration so far has taken a tough stance on China's claims in the South China Sea, insisting it will defend international interests there. During his confirmation hearings, new US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson raised the threat of blocking China's access to the contested islands.

Under President Barack Obama's administration, Washington insisted it was neutral on the question of sovereignty over the South China Sea islets, reefs and shoals, calling for the disputes to be resolved under international law. But the US has dispatched aircraft and naval patrols to assert its rights of passage through international spaces. —AFP

TURKMENISTAN'S
LEADER SET TO
WIN RE-ELECTION

ASHGABAT: The authoritarian president of Turkmenistan is set to sail to victory in today's election where eight other candidates are on the ballot, but all praise his policies. President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow has been the overwhelmingly dominant figure in the former Soviet republic since late 2006, when he assumed power after death of his eccentric predecessor, Saparmurat Niyazov.

Berdimuhamedow has made small reforms of the single-party system imposed by Niyazov and some aspects of the latter's cult of personality, which included naming the months of the year after his family members and mandating all schoolchildren read his book of philosophical musings. Some of Niyazov's more notoriously odd initiatives, such as banning opera and gold teeth, also were rolled back. Notably, Berdimuhamedow expanded public access to the internet and increased compulsory education from nine years to 12.

Under Berdimuhamedow, a law was adopted to allow non-government parties, although these parties are strictly vetted. The candidates nominally competing with Berdimuhamedow have been allowed to meet with voters in theaters and cultural centers, but the encounters were not televised and no debates were held. The country last year amended the constitution to extend the presidential term to seven years from five, and eliminated the age limit of 70, effectively allowing Berdimuhamedow to be president for life.

Personality cult

Meanwhile, Berdimuhamedow has established a considerable personality cult of his own. He is regularly shown on state media successfully acquitting himself in a wide array of physical and competitive disciplines, such as horse-riding, racing cars, cycling, sailing and lifting weights. More recently, the president has taken up music with gusto, on occasion regaling wildly applauding crowds with performances on the guitar and piano.

State television reported on how during a pre-election visit to a gas refinery last month, Berdimuhamedow watched as workers serenaded him on a severely out-of-tune guitar. Later, the president was shown strumming the same guitar - now properly tuned - and performing a song of his own composition as workers clapped along.

Authorities in Turkmenistan have secured quiescence among the country's 5 million people through a combination of authoritarianism and generous welfare subsidies, like free household gas and salt. But the state's ability to dispense that largesse has come under intense strain as the price for natural gas - Turkmenistan's only significant export commodity - has plummeted.

Until a few years ago, Turkmenistan could count on selling gas to China, Russia and Iran. Russia and Iran have recently stopped buying the fuel, however, following pricing disputes. Turkmenistan is placing strong hopes on an ambitious plan to build a gas pipeline serving Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, but construction so far is underway only in Turkmenistan. The economic crisis triggered by the collapse in gas revenue has led to devaluation of the national currency, the manat, and shortages for many staples including cooking oil and sugar. — AP



ASHGABAT: In this Saturday, Dec 12, 2015 file photo, Turkmenistan President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow smiles as he attends an international conference. —AP

MISSING CHINA BILLIONAIRE TAKEN FROM HK HOTEL IN A WHEELCHAIR

HONG KONG: Missing China-born billionaire Xiao Jianhua was whisked in a wheelchair from a luxury Hong Kong hotel in the early hours of Jan 27 with his head covered, a source close to the businessman told Reuters.

Xiao was carried into his own car at the entrance to the Four Seasons serviced apartments in the heart of the Asian financial hub in what appeared to be a "smooth operation", another source with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

The comments from the sources confirmed a report in the New York Times on the disappearance of Xiao, who has close ties to senior Chinese officials and their families. Despite a statement issued in Xiao's name over 10 days ago that he was seeking medical treatment overseas and had not been abducted, his disappearance has rekindled fears over Hong Kong's status as an independent judicial entity of China.

"It is uncertain if Xiao was conscious when he left," the second source said, adding that it took at least a few people to carry the billionaire into the car. "There was no struggle in the whole process.

You could even say it was efficient. It was a smooth operation." Reuters could not independently verify the circumstances at the time Xiao was taken out of the hotel or the condition of his health.

Assistants of Xiao were waiting in the lobby of the hotel's serviced apartments when at least five people, dressed in casual attire, came in, said the second source, who declined to be identified due to the sensitivity of the issue. The group, which some media have reported were mainland Chinese agents, were escorted to Xiao's room by his assistants and they left shortly after with the businessman and some luggage, the second source said.

The source close to Xiao who said the billionaire left the hotel in a wheelchair said his head was covered with some cloth, but it was not clear what the material was. The source added that as far as he knew Xiao did not use a wheelchair and there was nothing wrong with his legs. A Hong Kong police source who was briefed on the probe into Xiao's disappearance had previously told Reuters the case was initially treated as a "kid-

napping" following a complaint from someone connected to Xiao.

But after a review of CCTV footage at the Four Seasons and at the border checkpoint, police concluded that Xiao had voluntarily left Hong Kong. They said Xiao had entered mainland China through a border checkpoint on Jan 27 and that they were seeking more information on the case from Chinese authorities. Police and the Four Seasons did not immediately respond to requests for comment yesterday. China's Ministry of State Security, Foreign Ministry and Public Security Bureau have so far not responded to Reuters requests for comment on whether Chinese agents were involved in Xiao's disappearance.

Corruption crackdown

Xiao's disappearance has sparked widespread media speculation that he has been drawn into Chinese President Xi Jinping's crackdown on corruption, which has ensnared a string of Chinese executives. Any indication that Xiao may have been forcibly removed from the former British colony would be a breach of the "one

country, two systems" framework under which it has been governed since its return to mainland Chinese rule in 1997.

Xiao's case has already spooked many mainland Chinese working in the city, with some already making contingency plans and seeking advice on moving assets overseas. Another source close to Xiao said his immediate family and the company's senior executives witnessed nothing unusual ahead of his disappearance. Xiao's wife and brother were not in Hong Kong when he left the Four Seasons, the third source said, declining to say where they were at the time.

They immediately rushed back to Hong Kong, the source said. "Everybody freaked out," the source said. "Nobody knew where he went, nobody knew what was happening." Xiao's wife and brother have already "fled" Hong Kong to Canada, according to the third source. Xiao's family, company executives and lawyers wrote a statement in Xiao's name "in a rush" to quell speculation that the billionaire had been kidnapped, the source said.

The statement, published on the front

page of Hong Kong's Ming Pao newspaper five days after he went missing, said he was seeking medical treatment "outside the country" and "had not been abducted to the mainland." It is uncertain if the family had been in touch with Xiao when the statement was drafted. Outside law enforcement agencies, including those from mainland China, are not authorized to operate in Hong Kong, which enjoys wide-ranging freedoms not allowed on the mainland, including a separate legal system.

Police commissioner Lo Wai-chung said in a radio talk show last Saturday that there was no sign of mainland authorities enforcing the law in Hong Kong. Xiao, who runs Tomorrow Holdings, a financial group headquartered in Beijing, was ranked 32nd on the 2016 Hurun China rich list, China's equivalent of the Forbes list, with an estimated net worth of \$5.97 billion. At least two of Tomorrow Group's statements posted after Xiao's disappearance on their social media account were deleted, pointing to what appears to be heightened sensitivity in Beijing over the case. — Reuters



JAKARTA: Muslim men raise their fists during a rally at Istiqlal Mosque. — AFP

THRONGS VOW TO VOTE FOR MUSLIM LEADERS IN NEW JAKARTA ELECTIONS

CALLS PEOPLE TO VOTE FOR MUSLIM CANDIDATES AGAINST CHRISTIAN GOVERNOR

JAKARTA: More than 100,000 Indonesians descended on Jakarta's grand mosque yesterday to call on people to vote for Muslim candidates running against the city's incumbent Christian governor in an upcoming election. It coincides with the final day of campaigning for Wednesday's vote in the capital of the world's most populous Muslim-majority country, where ethnic Chinese Christian governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is facing two prominent Muslim challengers.

The mass prayer, centered at the Istiqlal Mosque, encouraged people to cast their ballots for Muslim leaders. Supporters and followers of several Islamic groups, including from the Islamic Defenders Front and the Muslims Forum, joined the mass movement, flashing posters such as "I'd prefer if my leader is a Muslim" and "It

is forbidden to pick an infidel leader."

In his speech, event organizer Muhammad Al Khaththath asked the crowd of men wearing white skullcaps and women in headscarves to vow: "In the name of God the Almighty I swear that I am ready to sacrifice my life and soul to defend Allah, the Prophet, ulemas, the Quran and Islam," which the crowd repeated after him, one hand in the air. "I am ready to fight to win a governor that fits the criteria issued by the Ulema Council, which is a faithful Muslim."

Purnama, known by his nickname Ahok, won popularity for his no-nonsense style and determination to clean up Jakarta. But he has seen a once unassailable poll lead whittled away after being hauled into court for a blasphemy trial that critics view as unfair and politically motivat-

ed. The allegations against him centre on comments he made about a Quranic verse. He accused his opponents of using the verse, which some interpret as meaning Muslims should only support Muslim leaders, to trick people into voting against him.

The protest movement against him, which has been spearheaded by Islamic hardliners, and the court case have sparked concerns about growing religious intolerance in a country long considered a bastion of pluralism. Undeterred by heavy rain, more than 100,000 people showed up, national police spokesman Rikwanto, who goes by one name, said. "I am here driven by my faith, because I also felt insulted when Ahok insulted my religion and I am here to defend that," 25-year-old Mochamad Ramzie said. — AFP

SIX DEAD AFTER STRONG QUAKE SHAKES SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

SURIGAO CITY: Rescuers dug through rubble yesterday to find survivors after a powerful earthquake struck the southern Philippines, killing at least six people and sending thousands fleeing for safety. Residents of the southern town of Surigao in Mindanao island spent the night huddled in fear as aftershocks rocked the city following the 6.5-magnitude quake which struck late Friday when many people were already in bed.

Provincial disaster management officer Ramon Gotinga said that most of those killed had died due to falling objects. But he added that one elderly man was buried in his home when the upper floor collapsed, and despite rescue teams digging throughout the night, they were unable to recover him alive. Another 80-year-old woman died of a heart attack, Gotinga said, adding that at least 126 people were injured, 15 of them in a serious condition.

The quake damaged many buildings, including in the two-storey Gaisano mall one of the city's largest structures—and shattered windows, sending sharp shards and heavy rubble into the street. One bridge collapsed and two others were damaged in the quake, which also cracked the city airport's runway, forcing flights to be diverted,

the civil defense office added. "I thought it was the end of the world. The cement on the roads was cracking open," resident Carlos Canseco told ABS-CBN television.

Thousands of terrified residents fled their homes with many running to higher ground, fearing that a tsunami would hit the coastal city of over 152,000 people.

Regional civil defence chief Rosaura Arnel Gonzales said several houses had collapsed and search and rescue teams had been dispatched to make sure no

one was inside. "There are reports of houses that were damaged and they (the rescue teams) have to go around these impacted areas to really ascertain whether there is a need to conduct a rescue," he told AFP. The disaster also knocked out both power and water services in Surigao City and surrounding areas.

Authorities said they expected power to be restored by Sunday but that it may take as much as three days to bring back water services.



SURIGAO DEL NORTE: Patients spend the night outside a hospital after abandoning their rooms following a powerful earthquake that rocked Surigao city. — AP

TOURIST CRITICALLY INJURED IN HONG KONG SUBWAY ATTACK

HONG KONG: A Taiwan tourist was among three people in critical condition yesterday after a rush hour arson attack on a Hong Kong subway train the previous night, officials said, with one man with a history of mental illness arrested for the crime. A total of 18 people were injured in the incident which occurred at 7:15 pm Friday, while police said they had seized suspected liquid accelerators from the scene.

Police have ruled out the possibility of a terrorist attack and said the man acted alone, with investigators looking into his mental state. "We visited a female tourist from Taiwan, her condition is still considered critical and is in intensive care," the city's number two official Matthew Cheung told reporters. "To our knowledge, she has a friend in Hong Kong, and that friend has notified her family, and that they are on their way to the city," Cheung, the chief secretary, said.

Health Secretary Ko Wing-man said the three in critical condition were on breathing apparatus. Ko added that the suspect had a history of mental illness. "In the long term, his condition was stable, but recently he was supposed to receive treatment but he missed it," Ko told reporters. Video footage showed chaos on the platform of the packed Tsim Sha Tsui station, with a train carriage on fire and one man lying on the floor with his clothes ablaze as bystanders tried to help him. Images broadcast on Cable Television news also showed multiple people with burn injuries, as emergency personnel carried out rescue operations.

Cable also reported that a 15-year-old

high school girl received burn injuries to her legs.

'It burned'

"I heard loud cries, and the smell of the fumes didn't smell like a normal fire—it had a chemical smell," an eyewitness identified as Mr. Chow told reporters at the scene. "Once I inhaled it, it burned the throat," Chow said. Police said they had arrested a 60-year-old man surnamed Cheung for arson. "The mental condition of the arrested person is one of (the) directions of (the) police's investigation," a government statement said yesterday.

Reports said the suspect was not on good terms with his family and had previously been arrested for minor crimes such as gambling. The South China Morning Post had earlier reported that the man tried to light a Molotov cocktail and said "burn you to death" before he took out the bottle.

Cable Television reported the man had said loudly some people had harmed his son and he needed to take revenge, and that he had doused his trousers with thinner liquid. Local media said the suspect was among those in critical condition, but police would not confirm the reports. The Tsim Sha Tsui station, which services a popular shopping and nightlife district, was evacuated following the incident with trains skipping the station on Friday night. It was re-opened yesterday morning. It was a rare incident in the Asian finance hub, where the transport network is known for its safety and efficiency. In 2004, 14 people were injured on the subway when a man started a fire in another busy station during the morning rush hour. — AFP



HONG KONG: Police officers stand guard in front of a subway station. — AP

RIVAL RALLIES CROWD SEOUL OVER PARK IMPEACHMENT

SEOUL: Hundreds of thousands of people took part in rival rallies in Seoul yesterday, protesting for and against the impeachment of President Park Geun-Hye, after months of political turmoil in South Korea. Park was impeached by parliament in December over a corruption scandal that tapped into mounting economic and social frustrations and brought millions of people onto the streets in weekly protests.

The Constitutional Court in Seoul is now deliberating whether to approve the impeachment, which would trigger new elections, or to allow her to see out her five-year term.

Yesterday's pro-Park protest, which drew an estimated 50,000 people, attracted large numbers of the elderly who grew up under her late dictator father, Park Chung-Hee, the leader credited with the country's rapid industrialization.

They claimed Park's impeachment was a work of "pro-North Korea" leftists, urging the court to turn it down and bring Park back to power. The rally took place outside the City Hall as anti-Park protesters, estimated by organisers to number 500,000, gathered nearby, call-

ing for the court to approve Park's impeachment at an early date. Anti-Park protesters, holding lit candles, chanted "Arrest Park Geun-Hye" and "Stop delaying verdict on impeachment".

They marched toward the presidential Blue House. Police set up barricades to keep the two groups apart. Park is accused of colluding with a longtime friend, Choi Soon-Sil, to strong-arm donations worth tens of millions of dollars from top firms to dubious foundations controlled by Choi.

The president is also accused of using her influence to ensure the merger of two Samsung units in 2015 to help facilitate a father-to-son power succession of Samsung's founding family, allegedly in return for bribes given to Choi.

The court's chief justice Lee Jung-Mi earlier this week gave Park's lawyers until next Thursday to wrap up their arguments and present them in writing. Her order sparked speculations that the court might reach a verdict in March. Should the impeachment be approved, new presidential election would have to take place within 60 days. If rejected, Park would be restored to power immediately. — AFP

HOW ALGORITHMS RUN THE WORLD

Continued from Page 1

poor communities: Some courts rely on computer-ranked formulas to determine jail sentences and parole, which may discriminate against minorities by taking into account "risk" factors such as their neighborhoods and friend or family links to crime; in the world of finance, brokers "scrape" data from online and other sources in new ways to make decisions on credit or insurance. This too often amplifies prejudice against the disadvantaged, O'Neil argues.

Her findings were echoed in a White House report last year warning that algorithmic systems "are not infallible - they rely on the imperfect inputs, logic, probability, and people who design them". The report noted that data systems can ideally help weed out human bias but warned against algorithms "systematically disadvantaging certain groups".

Zeynep Tufekci, a University of North Carolina professor who studies technology and society, said automated decisions are often based on data collected about people, sometimes without their knowledge. "These computational systems can infer all sorts of things about you from your digital crumbs," Tufekci said in a recent TED lecture. "They can infer your sexual orientation, your personality traits, your political leanings. They have predictive power with high levels of accuracy."

Such insights may be useful in certain contexts - such as helping medical professionals diagnose postpartum depression - but unfair in others, she said. Part of the problem, she said, stems from asking computers to answer questions that have no single right answer. "They

are subjective, open-ended and value-laden questions, asking who should the company hire, which update from which friend should you be shown, which convict is more likely to reoffend."

Frank Pasquale, a University of Maryland law professor and author of "The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information," shares the same concerns. He suggests one way to remedy unfair effects may be to enforce existing laws on consumer protection or deceptive practices. Pasquale points at the European Union's data protection law, set from next year to create a "right of explanation" when consumers are impacted by an algorithmic decision, as a model that could be expanded. This would "either force transparency or it will stop algorithms from being used in certain contexts," he said.

Alethea Lange, a policy analyst at the Center for Democracy and Technology, said the EU plan "sounds good" but "is really burdensome" and risked proving unworkable in practice. She believes education and discussion may be more important than enforcement in developing fairer algorithms. Lange said her organization worked with Facebook, for example, to modify a much-criticized formula that allowed advertisers to use "ethnic affinity" in their targeting.

Others meanwhile caution that algorithms should not be made a scapegoat for societal ills. "People get angry and they are looking for something to blame," said Daniel Castro, vice president at the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation. "We are concerned about bias, accountability and ethical decisions but those exist whether you are using algorithms or not." — AFP

FRESH WHALE STRANDING ON NEW ZEALAND...

Continued from Page 1

"We don't know why the super pod came in," said Daren Grover, the general manager of environmental group Project Jonah which is assisting with the rescue. "They may have been picking up some calls from the whales here and come in to respond. It's very unusual, not something we have seen before."

DOC ranger Mike Ogle told Radio New Zealand the whales could have been frightened into the shallows by a shark. One whale had been found with bite wounds and great white sharks were known to be in the area off Farewell Spit, he said. "There's one carcass out there

with some shark bites in it - but not a big one, just a small one, but quite fresh bites so yeah, there's something out there."

Hundreds of volunteers mobilized to help the rescue operation with many working to comfort the stranded animals and keep them cool in the morning heat while they waited to refloat them on the high tide. Tim Cuff, a marine mammal medic with Project Jonah, told the New Zealand Herald of emotional scenes over the mass deaths. "It's a pretty sad scene up on the beach where there's a long line of dead whales," he said. "One German girl didn't really want to leave her whale. She was crying and had her hand on it." — AFP

7 KILLED IN BAGHDAD CLASHES

Continued from Page 1

Last year's protest movement was halted when tens of thousands of forces launched Iraq's largest military operation in years four months ago to retake the city of Mosul from the Islamic State group. However, last month's announcement that elections would take place in September has brought the political agenda back to the fore, and Sadr's movement has vowed to increase the pressure again.

Yesterday's demonstrators received a de facto green light to escalate their protest in the shape of a statement from the Najaf-based Sadr. "If you want to approach the gates of the Green Zone to affirm your demands and make them heard to those on the other side of the fence... you can," he said. Sadr encouraged the protesters to remain there until sunset but warned them against attempting to break into the fortified area.

The protesters met fierce resistance from the security forces and never made it across the Tigris River running between Tahrir Square and the Green Zone. But Sadr, a mercurial Shiite who once led a rebellion against US occupation but has more recently spearheaded an anti-corruption protest movement, urged Prime Minister Haider Al-Abadi not to turn a deaf ear. "I urge him to deliver those reforms immediately, listen to the voice of the people and remove the corrupt," the statement said. He later appealed for restraint and the demonstrators dispersed.

Abadi said the violence would be investigated and those responsible for it prosecuted. "Our action will get tougher, even if that involves physically taking over the commission," Abu Haidar, a protester wearing traditional Arab dress, told AFP before the rally turned violent. The electoral commission issued a statement asking for protection from the premier's office and the international community.

A smaller group of protesters had already demonstrated near the Green Zone on Wednesday, while hundreds also gathered in several southern cities on Friday. Their two main demands are for the members of the electoral commission to be replaced on the grounds that they are all affiliated to political parties and that the body supervising nationwide ballots was therefore anything but independent. They also want the electoral law to be amended to give wider representation to smaller parties in the country's elected bodies.

Sinan Al-Azzawi, a popular Iraqi actor, was among those who addressed the protest before the violence broke out. Politicians "are profiteers and their only loyalty is to the countries they used to live in but not to Iraq," he said, referring to the Saddam-era exile of many of the country's current leaders. "Those politicians, they created an electoral commission based on sectarian quotas. It has nine commissioners who belong to political entities... It's not independent," he said. — AFP

GHANEM: IRAQ RESPECTS SOVEREIGNTY..

Continued from Page 1

MP Khaled Al-Otaibi said Iraq's stability contributes to that of Kuwait and that both sides are ready to cooperate on resolving any problems. MP Askar Al-Enezi said Jabouri assured Kuwait that Iraq was fully committed to bilateral agreements during the talks, attended by lawmakers from both countries. He also quoted the Iraqi delegation's emphasis on the fact that the offensive statements made about Khor Abdullah do not represent the Iraqi people.

Meanwhile, Ghanem stressed yesterday the importance of resuming Kuwaiti efforts, in cooperation with Arab parliaments, to freeze the Israeli Knesset's membership at the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

A document released at end of the second conference of the Arab Parliament and chairmen of Arab parliaments and legislative councils highlighted the significance of taking such a step, Ghanem said in a press statement.

The document's timing coincides with the UN Security Council's recent resolution that condemned and demanded the Israeli government to stop the

ongoing construction of settlements in Palestinian territories, he noted, adding that several major countries supported the UNSC resolution, except the United States that refrained from backing the action.

"As Arabs, we must have our own measures and decisions that are, at least, different than the ones of non-Arab countries," the Kuwaiti speaker said, indicating that freezing Israeli government's IPU membership is possible due to the absence of veto power, in addition to the presence of 57 Muslim countries. The Kuwaiti parliament has completed the legal aspect regarding the resumption of efforts and will submit it in the next conference of speakers of Arab parliaments, Ghanem affirmed, calling on Arab states to support the Kuwaiti efforts.

Freezing the Knesset's IPU membership is the least that can be done to make the Israeli occupation government commit to UN resolutions, he said, adding that the Israeli authorities, backed by the Knesset, have continued to violate all UN charters and resolutions and have never showed any regard or respect to honor their commitments.

US OBJECTS TO PALESTINIAN AS UN LIBYA ENVOY

Continued from Page 1

The Texas-educated former International Monetary Fund official had earned praise in the international community for his efforts to crack down on corruption and to build effective Palestinian public institutions. He had been tapped to replace Martin Kobler of Germany, who has been the Libya envoy since Nov 2015. US President Donald Trump and Haley have criticized the United Nations for adopting a resolution in December that

demanded an end to Israeli settlement building.

Guterres' spokesman Stephane Dujarric said yesterday that the proposal to nominate Fayyad "was solely based on Mr Fayyad's recognized personal qualities and his competence for that position". Dujarric added "United Nations staff serve strictly in their personal capacity. They do not represent any government or country." Israeli Ambassador Danny Danon applauded the US decision, describing it as "the beginning of new era where the US stands firmly behind Israel against any and all attempts to harm the Jewish state." — Agencies



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Washington Watch

US-ARAB TIES IN
AGE OF TRUMP

By Dr James J Zogby

As US President Donald Trump and Iran's Ayatollah Khamenei trade barbs, a nervous Arab World is caught in the middle. Earlier this week Iran's Supreme Leader made headlines thanking President Trump for "revealing the true face of America". While much of Ayatollah Khamenei's criticism was directed at the administration's hardline policy and threat to "put Iran on notice", he zeroed in on the disastrous White House executive order and its impact on refugees and immigrants and visitors from seven majority Muslim countries.

At one point, in his remarks Khamenei, speaking of Trump, said "Now with everything he is doing - handcuffing a child as young as five at an airport - he is showing the reality of American human rights" (correction: A child of five was detained in the wake of President Trump's executive order, but he was not handcuffed). This news item and the nasty and childish Twitter exchange and war of words between Iran's religious leader and the President of the United States brought home the intimate connection between US domestic and foreign policies and encapsulated the dilemma that will be faced by America's Arab allies in the "Age of Trump". It reminded me of two stories from the first George W Bush Administration - both involving Saudi Arabia's then Crown Prince Abdullah. Bush's callous disregard for the rights of the Palestinians, his administration's policies which trampled on the rights of Arabs and Muslims in the US, and his disastrous invasion of Iraq - all severely strained US-Saudi relations. The kingdom, ever cognizant of the important role the US played in providing a security umbrella protecting the Gulf Arab states from the threat of the revolutionary Islamic Republic of Iran, was at its wit's end. At one point Abdullah told Bush that if the US persisted in ignoring Arab concerns, Saudi Arabia might feel compelled to go its own way. It was not a step he was eager to take, but it was one born of frustration with US policies and the increasingly high cost they incurred at home.

To make his point, Crown Prince Abdullah liked to tell a story about a sheep herder who was losing a sheep a night to aggressive wolves. To protect his flock, the herder hired guards. They kept the wolves at bay, but the herder had to kill two sheep daily to feed his newly acquire protectors. The price he was forced to pay, he noted, was becoming greater than the benefit received.

Then on election night 2004, I received a call from a friend of mine who served as an advisor to the crown prince. He asked me excitedly whether the news stories he was hearing were correct - that Democratic challenger John Kerry was in a position to beat incumbent George Bush. I was surprised and asked why he would be supportive of Kerry. I said, "Kerry has been very critical of Saudi Arabia, while Bush claims to be your friend". He responded (and he made clear that he was speaking for himself, not his boss) "I think it is better for us to have a US president who hates us, than to have a US president hated by our people".

Dizzying ride

During the last 16 years, US-Gulf relations have been on a dizzying rollercoaster ride. First there was the adventurism of the Bush Administration - which went from neglect, to destabilizing war, to misguided democracy promotion based more on ideology than reality. The Obama Administration only compounded Arab frustration. It began with great promise but the failure to deliver coupled with multiple miscues led to it being judged as an enormous disappointment.

By 2016, the Arab region was in disarray and the US-Arab relationship was in tatters. Thanks to the foolish Iraq war, and its seriously bungled aftermath: That country is in the midst of a long civil war; Iran has been unleashed and emboldened as a threatening regional power; the US military and public are war weary and wary of new conflict; Russia has extended itself into the Middle East; violent extremist movements have found safe-havens and metastasized spreading across the region; and because US allies have felt abandoned they have felt compelled to act on their own, sometimes rashly, to defend their interests vis-a-vis Iran's designs. To some extent, Arabs felt like they were caught up in the tale of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". With Bush they had "too much", with Obama "too little". With the 2016 election, they were hoping for "just right". They wanted a relationship with a partner that would work with them to insure regional security and stability. And a partner that was both respected by and respectful of their people. From its performance, to date, the Trump Administration does not appear to be such a partner. Trump has spoken forcefully about wiping out extremism and reining in Iran, but he and too many of his advisers have coupled this with ham-fisted anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies that have caused IS and Al-Qaeda, and now the Iranian leader to thank him.

It would be a grave error for this administration to fail to understand the connection between how they treat and are perceived to treat Arab and Muslim peoples and their ability to achieve their broader policy objectives in the Middle East. The scenes at US airports and the heart-breaking stories that filled Arab media in the wake of the Executive Order and the shocking anti-Muslim rhetoric associated with some White House officials has outraged Arab and Muslim public opinion. It has also, as we now see, heartened our adversaries and put relations with our allies at risk.

NOTE: Dr James J Zogby is the President of the Arab American Institute

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TRUMP HERALDS NEW ERA OF CLOSER EGYPT TIES

Friendly phone calls, an invite to the White House, a focus on Islamist militancy and what Donald Trump called "chemistry" have set the tone for a new era of warmer US-Egyptian ties that could herald more military and political support for Cairo. The mutual admiration dates back to a UN meeting in September, when then-presidential candidate Trump found common ground with President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi's hardline on extremism. Trump described the ex-general, who rights groups criticize as authoritarian and repressive, as a "fantastic guy".

Sisi, the first foreign leader to congratulate Trump on his election victory, returned the favor last month after the newly inaugurated president barred citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the United States. Egypt, not on the list, refrained from speaking out against the ban on behalf of Muslim countries that often look to it for leadership. That silence spoke volumes about the changing tone of its relationship with the United States. For Trump, Sisi appeals as an uncompromising leader who came to power by overthrowing the Muslim Brotherhood and is fighting Islamic State in northern Sinai and on his border with Libya. For Sisi, Trump appeals as a US leader who unlike Barack Obama is not interested in berating an old ally on human rights. "The rhetoric alone of this Trump administration is much more forward leaning in its support toward Sisi than Obama," said one US official, who declined to be named. "I expect it to be a much closer relationship."

Egypt is one of Washington's closest Middle East allies, and US military aid has long cemented its historic 1979 peace deal with Israel. Home to the Suez Canal, one of the world's busiest waterways, the stability of the Arab world's most populous state is a US priority, but the strategic relationship hit a low under Obama who briefly froze aid after Sisi overthrew an elected president.

In contrast, weeks into Trump's presidency, the White House has already discussed declaring the Brotherhood a terrorist group - sure to be welcomed by Sisi, who was condemned by Obama for his crackdown on Egypt's oldest Islamist group. Egyptian and US officials say the Trump administration will likely seek to lift or ease conditions imposed under Obama on the payment of \$1.3 billion in US military aid a year. Officials and analysts do not expect a major jump in the size of US military aid overnight, but describe a relationship that is more aligned and mutually supportive. "During the Obama's administration there were difficulties," said an Egyptian government official, who declined to be named. "When the administrations have common goals it makes cooperation easier. The military is the backbone of the relationship. We have a common enemy, which is terrorism."

Military support

Obama froze aid for nearly two years after Sisi overthrew President Mohamed Morsi, an elected Brotherhood official, in mid-2013 after mass protests. Though Sisi went on to win an election and the aid was restored in March 2015, new rules were introduced to ensure it was used for counter-

terrorism and border security and Sinai. Congress also made aid dependent on the US Secretary of State certifying that Egypt was moving to govern democratically. That experience has left a bitter taste among some in Egypt's military who saw their overthrow of the Brotherhood as part of the broader war on terrorism. "What interests Egypt now is economic and military aid and this is what Egypt will try to benefit from in light of the closeness between Sisi and Trump," an Egyptian intelligence official said. "In return, America is seeking to benefit from Egypt as an ally in the Middle East and the fight against terrorism."

New era

The Egyptian government official said the overall size of the aid package had barely changed in decades, but it would weigh any request for increases carefully. What Egypt gets depends partly on Congress, where some oppose loosening restrictions due to concerns over Sisi's crackdown on dissent. "(The administration) could ask Congress to no longer impose conditions on the funds and they could request increases in certain types of assistance," said Tim Rieser, a foreign policy aid to Senator Patrick Leahy, the Democratic vice chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "But President Trump's positive statements offer President Sisi a kind of affirmation and encouragement to continue what he is doing, which in some ways is worth more than dollars."

Egypt has witnessed years of upheaval since the 2011 uprising helped to end Hosni Mubarak's 30-year rule, a change ultimately supported by the Obama administration. When the ensuing elections saw Islamists win parliament and presidency, Obama engaged them in an effort to encourage democratization in the aftermath of the Arab Spring uprisings. But Egypt banned the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization shortly after Sisi seized power. His security forces killed hundreds of Mursi supporters and thousands of activists have been jailed, prompting criticism from the United States and the aid suspension. By contrast, Trump has backed Egypt's approach.

"The (Trump) administration has signalled repeatedly that it sees the Muslim Brotherhood as virtually indistinguishable from groups like al Qaeda or even Islamic State," said Eric Trager, a fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "This is something Cairo is very excited about and Arab partners favor as well." On the street, Trump's victory was met with delight by Sisi supporters, who saw in Hillary Clinton an extension of Obama. The early invitation to the White House is seen by Egyptian officials as a sign they will again be heard.

But while Egyptian officials like Trump's more aggressive approach to Islamic State they say they have yet to see detailed policies. "The warmth of the rhetoric is definitely something that's different, that makes the Egyptians feel very comfortable," said H A Hellyer senior non-resident fellow at the Atlantic Council in Washington. "But nobody likes an unpredictable, erratic, variable in the mix and Trump is a very erratic variable." —Reuters

TRUMP HOSTILITY TO REELECT
ROUHANI, MAKE LIFE HARDER

Donald Trump's bellicose rhetoric towards Iran now appears likely to help keep President Hassan Rouhani in office for another term, but will make it harder for the Iranian leader's team of moderates to govern. With an election due in three months and a hostile new administration in the White House, Iran's hardliners seem to have backed off from trying to reclaim the presidency for their faction, at least for now.

No single candidate has emerged as a potential hardline champion to challenge the relative moderate Rouhani in the vote. Instead, officials speak of ideological rivals uniting behind him as best suited to deal with a Trump presidency. "To protect the Islamic Republic against foreign threats we need to put aside our disputes and unite against our enemy," said a senior official speaking on condition of anonymity like other figures within Iran contacted for this story. "Under the current circumstances, Rouhani seems the best option for the establishment."

Still, Rouhani's supporters worry that even though hardliners no longer seem intent on removing him, they will take advantage of confrontation with the Trump administration to weaken the president at every turn. "To cement their grip in power, hardliners will do whatever they can to provoke Trump. From missile tests to fiery speeches," said a former senior official, close to Rouhani. "By making Rouhani a lame-duck president, they will try to prevent any change in the balance of power in Iran."

Rouhani, elected in a landslide in 2013 on a pledge to reduce Iran's isolation, is the face of Tehran's deal with the Obama administration to curb Iran's nuclear program in return for the lifting of US and European sanctions. Trump and other US Republicans have frequently disparaged that deal, as have hardliners in Iran. For now, the Iranian hardliners appear to have concluded that they still need Rouhani in office, if only so Washington rather than Tehran will be blamed if the deal collapses, said Iran analyst Ali Vaez of the International Crisis Group.

"With the deal in jeopardy, the system will be in vital need of Rouhani's team of smiling diplomats and economic technocrats to shift the blame to the US and keep Iran's economy afloat," said Vaez. But ultimately, said analyst Meir Javedanfar, any atmosphere of heightened tension with Washington benefits the hardliners and weakens the moderates in Iran.

"Now with Trump in charge, Iran's hardliners can sleep easy as they thrive on threats and intimidation from the US, it feeds their narrative," said Javedanfar, an Iranian-born Israeli lecturer on Iran at Israel's Interdisciplinary Centre Herzliya.

Preservation

Under Iran's theocratic governing system, the elected president is subordinate to the unelected supreme leader, 77-year-old Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a hardliner in power since succeeding revolutionary founder Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989. A hardline watchdog body can control the elected government by vetting candidates before they stand and by vetoing policies. Khamenei uses anti-American sentiment as the glue to hold together the faction-ridden leadership, but he will not risk a total collapse in relations with Washington that might destabilise Iran, say Iranian officials.

"The leader's top priority has always been preserving the Islamic Republic ... A hardline president might intensify tension between Tehran and America," said an official close to Khamenei's camp. Rouhani's efforts to open up Iran to less hostile relations with the West still have to be couched in the rhetoric of anti-Americanism that has been a pillar of Iranian rule since the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

On Friday, hundreds of thousands marked the anniversary of the revolution, taking to the streets chanting slogans that include "Death to America". At such events, Rouhani can strike a note that sounds as headline as anyone. "We all are followers of our leader Khamenei," Rouhani said in a speech that cast his own re-election bid as an opportunity for Iranians to demonstrate their defiance of Washington. "Our nation will give a proper answer to all those threats and pressures in the upcoming election."

For his part, Khamenei said in a speech earlier this week that Trump had shown "the real face of America", echoing the headline Iranian criticism of the Obama administration's comparatively accommodating stance as insincere or devious. Khamenei dismissed a Trump administration threat to put Iran "on notice" for carrying out missile tests. But he also avoided signalling a break with the nuclear accord, and the speech was interpreted as a sign that he will stick by Rouhani for now. "The leader's speech showed that the leadership has agreed on a less confrontational line. They prefer to wait and see Trump's actions and not to act based on his rhetoric," said Tehran-based political analyst Saeed Leylaz.

Ordinary Iranian voters also seem inclined to keep Rouhani in power. Many complain that they have still seen few economic benefits from the lifting of sanctions, and those who hoped Rouhani would reform restrictive social policies say they are disappointed by the lack of meaningful change so far. Nevertheless, there seems to be little appetite to reverse course at the election and restore power to a confrontational hardliner like Rouhani's predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. —Reuters

DON'T MESS WITH POLITICAL DADS AND DAUGHTERS

After Nordstrom dropped Ivanka Trump's fashion line, US President Donald Trump quickly tweeted his disapproval. A day later, the president was the target of venom from Meghan McCain, angry over Trump's criticism of her father, Arizona Sen John McCain. Different circumstances, the same lesson: Don't mess with political dads and their daughters. For Trump, getting involved in the Nordstrom situation wasn't without risk. His tweet that Ivanka had been treated "so unfairly" - later retweeted from the official presidential account - drew the ire of ethics experts who questioned the use of his platform to comment on a family business.

But when it comes to his kids, Trump is known to be protective. Ivanka Trump has not publicly commented on the situation. A person close to her said she did not ask him to do this and she is staying out of it because she takes seriously her pledge to separate from her business.

The Trumps weren't the only father-daughter duo showing support this past week. Meghan McCain sprang to her father's defense after Trump slammed the Republican lawmaker on Twitter. The president accused McCain, a decorated veteran and former prisoner of war, of emboldening the enemy for disputing the administration's

insistence that a deadly US military mission in Yemen was a success. The senator did not weigh in, but his daughter tweeted: "Trump has never served. My father can't bend one of his knees or lift one of his arms above his head. I am done with this today."

These are just the latest examples of political families fighting for each other. Before Twitter was available, President Harry Truman backed his daughter the old-fashioned way. Truman sent an angry letter to a Washington Post music critic who wrote a less than favorable review of one of Margaret Truman's concerts. After the concert, Paul Hume wrote that she "cannot sing very well".

Truman responded by sending a note to him on White House stationery, dated Dec 6, 1950, calling it a "lousy review". He added: "Some day I hope to meet you. When that happens you'll need a new nose, a lot of beefsteak for black eyes, and perhaps a supporter below!" Katherine Jellison, head of the history department at Ohio University, asked: "If Twitter had existed in those days, would Harry Truman have tweeted the critic instead of writing a letter?"

More recently, President Bill Clinton defended his family's decision to send his Chelsea Clinton to a private school while he was in the White House. At a town hall meeting in 1993, Clinton said his

daughter was "not a public figure". He continued that "she does not like getting a lot of publicity. And frankly, she has more privacy and more control over her destiny where she is than she would if she were at the public school that she was also interested in attending".

Several years later, Chelsea Clinton gave a silent show of support for her father when, at the height of her parents' public marital problems in 1998, she was photographed walking between them holding both of their hands. To many, it looked as though she was holding the family together. At other times, presidents have supported their daughters more silently. When Jenna and Barbara Bush drew some unwanted headlines for underage drinking during his time in the White House, President George W Bush did not weigh in publicly.

These family political bonds sometimes even extend to furry friends. In 1944, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt made a campaign speech that touched off a Republican attack that he had sent a Navy destroyer to pick up his dog Fala in the Aleutian Islands. "I am accustomed to hearing malicious falsehoods about myself," Roosevelt said. "But I think I have a right to resent, to object to libelous statements about my dog." —AP

ALLEGRI WANTS ANOTHER 400 GAMES WITH JUVE

ROME: Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri has brushed aside rumours of a move to England's Premier League by saying he hopes to be at the helm of the Serie A champions for "another 300 or 400" games. Allegri, who led Juventus to the Champions League final in his first season in charge in 2015 and a defeat to Barcelona, has been linked with a move to Arsenal amid reports suggesting Arsene Wenger could step down as coach of the Gunners. The rumour mill was set spinning further when reports claimed officials from Juventus had met with Napoli coach Maurizio Sarri. Asked specifically about reports claiming he had been contacted by interested clubs in the Premier League, Allegri said in midweek: "I'm not confirming and I'm not denying." On Saturday Allegri said he intends to honour his current deal, which expires in 18 months, and he left room for an extension when he said: "How can I deny something that I never said, or confirm something which doesn't exist? I'm fine here, I've still got a year and a half left on my contract and when the time comes I will sit down with the club to speak about the future and put together a schedule. — AFP



STOKE, WEST BROM CLASH OVER 'LOSER' VOICEMAIL

LONDON: West Bromwich Albion manager Tony Pulis called Ryan Shawcross, captain of his former club Stoke City, a "loser" in a voicemail message, according to Stoke manager Mark Hughes. Shawcross had accused West Brom of leaking the news that Saido Berahino had served an eight-week ban for failing a drugs test prior to joining Stoke from West Brom last month. West Brom won 1-0 when the teams met at The Hawthorns in the Premier League last weekend and Hughes claims Pulis insulted Shawcross in a voicemail message left on Monday. "We were annoyed with a number of things," Hughes said, in comments published in British newspapers yesterday. "I was annoyed with their manager ringing up Ryan on the Monday morning after the game and calling him a loser. I wasn't too happy with that. Any number of things surrounding the game were, in our view, unnecessary. There was a voicemail left, and I haven't heard it. But Ryan wasn't too pleased. He tried to ring back and didn't get any answer." Hughes did not receive a handshake from fellow Welshman Pulis after last weekend's game, which saw Berahino make his second Stoke appearance as a second-half substitute. — AFP

FOG POSTPONES MEN'S DOWNHILL

ST MORITZ: Fog forced the marquee men's downhill to be postponed at the ski world championships yesterday. Organizers did not immediately announce a new race plan. The women's downhill is scheduled today, and the men's combined event is slated for tomorrow. An updated schedule should be announced at a meeting of race organizers and team leaders later. Despite bright sunshine and clear blue skies in the finish area, Saturday's race was repeatedly delayed from its planned midday (1100 GMT) slot. Fog failed to lift from parts of the course ahead of the latest possible start time of 2:30 p.m. (1330 GMT). Patches of cloud hung over middle sections of the 2.77-kilometer (1 3/4-mile) Corviglia course, cutting visibility to around 20 meters (yards) in places. That is unsafe on a hill where racers can reach 120 kph (75 mph). An expected crowd of around 30,000 people went home without seeing any action. — AP



ZAIN CONCLUDES MAIN SPONSORSHIP OF GULFRUN 12

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, concluded its main sponsorship of the 12th edition of GulfRun, the region's most popular motorsport activity. The conclusion of this year's event was marked by a final race that was held at Bahrain International Circuit.

Zain's continuous support to this unique motorsport event is in line with the company's belief in the importance of supporting the youth and sports sectors and encouraging the various sporting initiatives that cater to young people in Kuwait. The event witnessed an impressive participation of motorsport enthusiasts from across the region, both during the Kuwait and Bahrain phases.

The latest GulfRun event in the Kingdom of Bahrain was a true test of the participants' motorsport skills, where they had the chance to take part in several training procedures in preparation for the final race that was extremely popular with professional and amateur racers alike.

GulfRun is considered an ideal and safe alternative to street racing, which threatens the lives of many people, many of them young drivers. Motorsport enthusiasts were able to showcase their talents within professional and certified grounds during the final race at Bahrain International Circuit, in addition to having taken advantage of the opportunity to gain valuable insights with the help of qualified trainers and experienced professional instructors.

GulfRun featured a number of exciting activities, including a sports cars show that took place at Murooj, where participants showcased their exquisite high-speed cars and thrilled visitors. Additionally, a Karting Endurance race was held at Kuwait's SIRBB Circuit over a period of 24-hour as part of the program, attracting a large, thrill-seeking crowd.

By sponsoring this event Zain also looks to highlight its dedication to applying safety measures while driving on the roads of Kuwait, especially for the country's youth.



LOTUS LEAVES ITS MARK IN GULFRUN AT BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT

MANAMA: One of the stars of the regionally recognized GulfRun event that was held at the Bahrain International Circuit on February 2 and 3, 2017 is Lotus, one of the main sponsors of the annually anticipated event. During the two-day event, both participating drivers and the event's attendees had the opportunity to test drive the Lotus Evija Coupe S in the inner, outer and GP circuit as well as see the Evora 400 in Lotus' designated F1 garage.

Lotus made itself seen and heard with the Lotus Evija Coupe S. Registered drivers were welcome to test-drive the latest generation Evija S that has a supercharged V6 engine. With its supercharged 3.5-liter engine aside, the biggest piece of technological trickery is the new Dynamic Performance Management system. DPM is Lotus' version of ESP with Touring, Sport, Race and Off being the settings. It is capable of both curbing under steer and also optimizing traction out of corners and it can even learn which tires a driver is using - Pirelli P Zero Corsas are standard. Performance gains have been made on the other side of the power-to-weight ratio with a comprehensive stripping-out, reducing the Cup's mass to just 1110 kilograms, 66 kilograms less than the Evija S. The Evija S feels stunningly quick to the point where the 0-62 miles per hour time of 3.8 seconds seems almost conservative. It has an addictively rich seam of punchy torque thanks to that supercharger with ride quality and steering that leave no doubt about the road surface the driver is traveling on. The supercharged V6 makes a world of difference to the character of the car. It is a stunningly strong engine and throttle response is scintillating, no matter where one is in the rev range.

The quicker steering is exactly what one would expect from Lotus - full of feel as it dances in one's hands as the car follows the cambers of the road. With a heavier mid-mounted engine one might expect the Evija to feel tricky on the limit, but on wet roads it would swing progressively either with a lift or by keeping one's foot in. Last but not least, the new V6

sounds great - there is something of the historic race-car about its rich growl and there is no overpowering supercharger whine either.

Lotus' sponsorship and participation of GulfRun is ideal as the annual event encompasses a friendly motorsport competition that is open to all track-capable cars and drivers who compete in multiple events in the course of two days. The overall objective of GulfRun is to promote car racing and training in a safe and professional environment while at the same time educating drivers on proper racing techniques, a process that is monitored by track-certified marshals who ensure the event's safety and security. Anyone above the age of 18 who has a valid driver's license and a track-capable car was welcome to participate in the event. Attendees were welcome free-of-charge to experience the adrenaline-filled event at the renowned Bahrain International Circuit. In addition to enjoying the races, attendees had the chance to personally meet the participating drivers and their vehicles including viewing the many test-drives that were enjoyed by the participating drivers of the Lotus Evija Coupe S, a factor that furthers Lotus' weighty presence during the event.

The new Lotus Evora 400 is the latest pure and focused supercar from Lotus, combining high performance with the legendary Lotus benchmark handling. With a maximum speed of 300 kilometers per hour and an acceleration of 0-100 kilometers in 4.2 seconds, the new Evora is a more agile and involving drive that enables it to lap the challenging test track at the Lotus Headquarters in Hethel, Norfolk at a scintillating six seconds faster than previous models. Over two thirds of the Lotus Evora 400 is new, including its supercharged and charge-cooled mid-mounted 3.5-liter V6 engine that produces a horsepower of 400 and 410 Nm of torque. A new aluminum chassis incorporates a new interior and the lightweight composite body has changed significantly both in the front and rear of the miracle car. The new Evora is 22 kilograms lighter, an accomplishment that has been achieved

through careful and clever design and attention to detail. This weight reduction is even more impressive considering that the supercar has more power and a higher standard specification than before.

Lotus' sponsorship and presence at GulfRun reaffirms Alghanim Motors' commitment to only providing customers with the best driving experience. Apart from its community outreach especially toward car aficionados, Alghanim Motors is also dedicated to providing customers with superior products, outstanding service and other features that have positioned the company as a leader in the automotive market. Add the thrill of finesse and powerful drives by visiting Alghanim Motors' Lotus showroom at Shuwaikh Industrial 1, block 1, street 11 opposite of the Historical Vintage and Classic Cars Museum on Saturday to Thursday starting from 9 AM until 12:30 PM and 4:30 PM until 8:30 PM. You can also be the first to know what is new by following Alghanim Motors on Instagram at @AlghanimLotusKW.



SCOTLAND ARE A TEAM FOR ALL TERRAIN, SAYS COACH

PARIS: Scotland may be getting a reputation for being an expansive running outfit but assistant coach Jason O'Halloran believes they can still mix it in the mud.

In days gone by, Scotland were known for their door-kicking-based brand of rugby that could prove effective on cold, wet and windy nights at Murrayfield in November.

They had toppled Australia in 2009 and South Africa a year later in such conditions. But the Scotland of New Zealander Vern Cotter is one that

excites and throws the ball around with confidence and expectation.

Yet O'Halloran, a former All Black international, believes they proved last week they can still toil when necessary. "I like to think we can play in both conditions. The way we muscled up, up front against Ireland last week, suggests we could play quite alright in these type of conditions where it's wet and slippery. It puts a premium on ball security and making those hard yards around the fringe and being really physical in defence," said O'Halloran.

"I'd like to think we've got an all-court game and can play in any conditions." There are high hopes that Sunday's Six Nations clash at the Stade de France will be a high-octane and enthralling affair, with two teams backing themselves to beat each other on merit.

But O'Halloran says France will not be quite as cavalier as they were last year, when they went to Murrayfield and lost 29-18, during coach Guy Noves's first Six Nations in charge.

"What he (Noves) has done since

coming into the fold is pretty impressive. I think they were a little bit reckless with their offloading last year but I assume he's tightened up on that and they're much more accurate in that department.

"I thought their performance against the All Blacks in the autumn was outstanding and they were very unfortunate not to win that game—Beauden Barrett goes 95 metres off an intercept and I think that was a massive turning point (France lost 24-19).

"I think they dominated that game

through much of it, so they're a very dangerous team."

As for the spectacle, O'Halloran is confident both teams will put on a show, aided by South African referee Jaco Peyper. "I heard the forecast (for Sunday) is very good so we're looking forward to it. "Both teams showed some good attacking intent last week so I'm expecting an open game with a lot of advantage played by the referee—he likes to play that way, so I'm expecting long passages of play and opportunities for both teams." — AFP

RUGBY

NO ROOM FOR SENTIMENT AS SIX NATIONS TAKES SHAPE

CARDIFF: Italy coach Conor O'Shea has insisted there will be no question of divided loyalties when the Azzurri face his native Ireland in the second round of the Six Nations Championship yesterday.

Italy and Ireland will both be coming off defeats in Rome whereas the second match features two sides who enjoyed first-round wins. Wales, fresh from a 33-7 victory away to Italy in Rome face Grand Slam champions England, who launched their title defence with an unconvincing 19-16 home victory over France, in Cardiff.

Today will see Scotland aim to back up their 27-22 win over Ireland by ending their 18-year wait for a Championship victory against France in Paris. "Ireland is where my family is, where my home is and where I spend my holidays," said O'Shea. "But right now my only priority is rugby with Italy."

Ireland's preparations suffered a setback when captain Rory Best went down with a stomach bug on Friday, the hooker confined to the team hotel. "Hopefully he is going to be better with some extra hours of sleep," said Ireland assistant coach Simon Easterby. Italy captain Sergio Parisse warned his side to beware of an Ireland that will "want to go out and do some damage". Meanwhile Wales were sweating on the fitness of wing George North (leg) and fly-half Dan Biggar (ribs), with Alex Cuthbert and Sam Davies on standby.

'CUNNING' WELSH

Friday saw BBC Wales axe a promotional film where several Wales fans were apparently unable to answer the question: "What's good about England?"

England coach Eddie Jones, an

Australian, had already done his bit for Anglo-Welsh relations before insisting, against Wales's wishes, the Principality Stadium's retractable roof remain open.

"They're a cunning lot the Welsh aren't they?" said Jones, whose England side are looking to extend their national record winning-streak to 16 Tests.

"They've got goats, they've got dofodils," added Jones, fired as Australia coach following a 2005 defeat in Cardiff.

Wales forwards coach Robin McBryde summed up the game's enduring importance by saying: "It is that English-Welsh rivalry, and wanting to get the better of your neighbour."

England centre Jonathan Joseph, who scored a key try in his side's win in Cardiff two years ago, said of the Principality Stadium: "I like the atmosphere, it spurs me on and gets me going and I think that it does that to a lot of the other boys too."

Scotland stunned Ireland with three tries inside the first half-hour at Murrayfield before the Irish edged ahead. However, two late penalties from Scotland captain Greig Laidlaw sealed victory.

"We understand how we can win games from being behind," said scrum-half Laidlaw. France centre Remi Lamerat added: "Scotland play an attractive game that is also effective given that they beat Ireland." Last week at Twickenham saw France again go close against a major side only to lose narrowly, just as they did in November defeats by Australia (25-23) and world champions New Zealand (24-19). "Only a victory can unlock the next improvement," said France coach Guy Noves. — AFP



MELBOURNE: Bolt All Stars celebrate after winning the Nitro Athletics meet in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

ATHLETICS

BOLT FIRES 'ALL STARS' TO NITRO SERIES WIN

MELBOURNE: Usain Bolt fired his team of international 'All Stars' to victory in the inaugural Nitro Athletics Series in Melbourne yesterday, capping the glitzy event with a dominant win in the 4x100m relay to pip hosts Australia in the final standings.

Running the second leg of the relay, the eight-times Olympic gold medal-winner took the baton from fellow Jamaican sprinter Asafa Powell before Jeneba Tarmoh and Natasha Morrison powered to the finish in front of a sell-out crowd at Lakeside Stadium.

Having run in only the relays in the opening two instalments of the three-night series, Bolt also took his first individual run of the year, burning away from a modest field for an easy win in the 150m sprint ahead of New Zealander Joseph Millar. The 'All-Stars' finished the team-based meeting with 3,040 points, edging Australia by 77 points, with Bolt playing a key role as both his team's linchpin and the event's 'chief entertainment officer'.

But the final score was less important than the crowds and television figures for an event that promised to "revolutionise" athletics by borrowing heavily from the formula of sport and entertainment that has underpinned Twenty20 cricket's considerable success.

"It was brilliant, it was exciting. Tonight came down to the last event and I think everyone in the track and field world really enjoyed this," Bolt, who was paid a seven-figure sum to run in Melbourne and was given a stake in the Series, told reporters on the track.

IMPROVEMENTS

"I knew that this is what track and field needed. "I'm just happy the event came together the way that it did.

We know we have improvements to do ... We're going to keep trying to improve it along the way." With a sprinkling of big international names and a number of athletes well off peak fitness, the entertainment outweighed the quality of the sport but the parochial crowd warmly embraced the team rivalries and the novel program of events.

IAAF president Sebastian Coe, battling to lift the sport's profile outside of the Olympics and repair its reputation after a series of major doping and corruption scandals in recent years, was impressed. "I thought it was a terrific start," said Coe, who attended the latter two nights of the Series. "It's an obvious thing to say but unless we innovate we are going to become less and less relevant and we can't afford to do that."

The three nights of the Series drew over 23,000 spectators, nearly double the total attendance for the entire program of athletics events across Australia last year. It was not without its teething problems.

Organisers were red-faced during Thursday's second instalment when the meeting referee botched the score in the final relay and awarded the night to Australia rather than the 'All-Stars', leaving an incredulous Bolt crying foul.

The error was corrected, putting the 'All-Stars' rightly on top, but not before the live broadcast was finished and much of the crowd had filed out of the stadium.

With 'power play' events awarding double points to winners and an unorthodox program

of mile eliminations, mixed distance medleys and 300m relays, there was inevitably confusion at times among some athletes and fans.

Bolt, who is contracted to bring his 'All-Stars' to Australia for the next two years, said he hoped to make the event international and attract overseas investors.

But with his retirement after the world championships in London, his absence from the track

will be a big test for the Series' ambitions.

"In my lifetime, I've not seen anyone grab the sporting landscape, probably not since Muhammad Ali," said British distance running great Coe.

"The big challenge is to make sure that when we don't have Usain out there, that the world recognises that the sport is full of extraordinary talent." — Reuters

GOLF

WILLETT REGAINS LEAD AT MAYBANK

KUALA LUMPUR: Reigning US Masters champion Danny Willett took a three-shot advantage after three rounds of the Maybank Championship Malaysia, scoring a five-under 67 to finish the day ahead of American David Lipsky. The top-ranked player at the tournament was 16-under par after 54 holes, a score that could have been bettered had he not agonizingly missed out on an eagle in the final hole.

But the 29-year-old Englishman seems to be thriving despite unpredictable weather conditions at the Saujana Golf & Country Club in Kuala Lumpur, opening with three rounds of 67 or better for just the third time in his career.

"It was an up and down. I'd have taken 67 at the start of the day, it spreads to the top five and top six guys a bit more and further away," said Willett, who birdied the last two holes. "I'm not sure what will win it to be honest, depends on if we pitch up and it's flat calm. I think there's a few guys that can go low if it's windy like this. One or two under par is a good knock out there so I think it all depends on the weather tomorrow."

The world number 15 has yet to win since he triumphed at the Masters in April 2016, and has only managed three top-10 finishes since. Lipsky, searching for a first title since 2014, put on a sturdy showing to card a 68 and move within sight of Willett heading into the last day of the \$3 million tournament co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour and European Tour. "Just keep doing what I'm doing. I'm playing pretty well and giving myself opportunities," said Lipsky. "My last birdie before 18 was on 10 so I'm happy to have made that. Danny and I are friends and it'll be neat out there competing."

Frenchman Alexander Levy is also a contender in third place, thanks to a clean scorecard that included five birdies for 67.

Austria's Bernd Wiesberger, who put on a sizzling show with 11 birdies on Friday, lost ground after only managing a 73 to sit five shots away from the leader. He is tied fourth with a host of golfers that includes Gregory Havret, Thailand's Panuphol Pittayarat and

South Korea's K.T.Kim.

Indian star Anirban Lahiri, the 2015 Asian Tour number one, missed several putts in his round of 69 to end the third round in a share of ninth place. — AP



KUALA LUMPUR: Danny Willett of England tee off on the 18th hole during the day 3 of Maybank Championship golf tournament in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia yesterday. — AP



ROME: Ireland's CJ Stander, right, chased by Italy's Angelo Esposito scores a try during a Six Nations rugby union international match between Italy and Ireland at the Rome Olympic stadium, yesterday. — AP

SPIETH HOLDS CLUBHOUSE LEAD AT WEATHER-HIT PEBBLE BEACH

CALIFORNIA: Jordan Spieth delivered a putting masterclass on the way to setting the clubhouse lead in the weather-hit Pebble Beach National Pro-Am on Friday before second-round play was suspended due to thick fog on the Monterey Peninsula in California. The world number six fired a seven-under-par 65 at Spyglass Hill, one of three venues being used for this week's PGA Tour event, to post a 10-under total of 133 before play was halted with only 33 players back in the clubhouse.

Derek Fathauer was also at 10 under but had one hole to play at Pebble Beach while Australian world number one Jason Day was at nine-under with six holes remaining at Spyglass Hill. "I have been striking it well," Spieth told reporters after ending his round at the par-four ninth with his eighth birdie of the day. "I've been trying to do a lot of work with the putter and we've got some pure greens out here at Spy.

"I started to roll some putts in, starting on our third hole of the day, number 12. So I got into a nice rhythm, the hole started to look big towards the end and I'm very glad to finish with a nice three."

Organisers were trying to get the tournament back on track after the opening

round, which was suspended on Thursday because of heavy rain, was finally completed mid-morning on Friday.

However, fog then delayed the scheduled start of round two before later forcing play to be suspended for the day at 4:21 pm PST (21:21 GMT).

The second round is scheduled to resume at 7:30 am yesterday, with sunny weather forecast for the rest of the weekend. Spieth was among 81 players who had to return to the course on Friday to complete round one, and he parred his last two holes at Monterey Peninsula Country Club for a 68 to sit one stroke off the lead. He then headed out to Spyglass Hill where he moved to the top of the leaderboard by shooting a sparkling 65 that included a 12-foot birdie putt at the par-four second and a 25-footer at the par-four fourth. "Conditions were all so totally different ... maybe because we got so much rain during the round yesterday," double major champion Spieth said of the switch from Monterey Peninsula Country Club to Spyglass Hill. "So much could happen with three courses. The first two rounds, it's been easy. Tomorrow might feel a little different." — Reuters



CALIFORNIA: Jordan Spieth follows his drive from the 11th tee of the Spyglass Hill Golf Course during the second round of the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am golf tournament Friday, in Pebble Beach, Calif. — AP

PROTEAS HAVE 'UNFINISHED BUSINESS' IN NEW ZEALAND

CENTURION: South Africa's cricketers have "unfinished business" in New Zealand, according to one-day captain AB de Villiers.

Speaking ahead of the team's departure for New Zealand yesterday, De Villiers said South Africa were keen to avenge their defeat by the Black Caps in a dramatic 2015 World Cup semi-final which was marked by controversy over South Africa's team selection.

The Proteas brought in Vernon

Philander for fellow fast bowler Kyle Abbott in that game, a decision made, it was claimed, to ensure four players of colour in the starting XI.

South Africa will travel as the world's leading one-day team after completing a 5-0 clean sweep against Sri Lanka at SuperSport Park on Friday. In less than a week they will play a one-off Twenty20 international in Auckland next Friday, with the first of five one-day internationals in Hamilton two days later.

De Villiers said the number one ranking gave the team confidence but also put pressure on the players. "Being the number one team in the world people expect you to play a certain level of cricket all the time," he said.

"But with the team ethic we have at the moment I think we'll thrive under that kind of pressure. It definitely gives you confidence as well. There's a reason why we're number one and that's because we're playing good cricket.

"We've got a bit of unfinished business there from the 2015 World Cup and we're very keen to play good cricket against a team that has also been playing well. "I think we deserve to be number one and we want to carry on playing the way we have been."

De Villiers said he expected a tough challenge. "New Zealand are a street-smart team and they find ways to compete but we have a decent record there. The last few tours we have been there

we have played really good cricket."

Faf du Plessis, who will captain the team in the T20 international as well as a three-match Test series which follows the one-day games, said overcoming jet lag would be the immediate challenge for the squad. "Normally we go there and we've got about a week to ten days to get over jet lag. We rested a lot of players from our (losing) T20 series against Sri Lanka but we still should have won.— AFP

DETROIT TIGERS, RED WINGS OWNER MIKE ILITCH DIES AT 87

DETROIT: Billionaire businessman Mike Ilitch, who founded the Little Caesars pizza empire before buying the Detroit Red Wings and Detroit Tigers, won praise for keeping the professional sports teams in the city as others relocated to new suburban stadiums.

Ilitch's family said in a statement that he died Friday at a local hospital. He was 87. No other details were provided by family spokesman Doug Kuiper. Known simply as "Mr. I" to most in Michigan, his family called him a visionary who set the tone for them and his company.

"He was a strong businessman, an innovative leader and a loving family man," Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder said Friday. "He was passionate about the city of Detroit and served a critical role in the city's comeback, investing time, effort and resources to help craft a better vision for Detroit."

Former President George W. Bush said in a statement that Ilitch was "a self-made man with talent, drive, and a huge heart."

"He generously gave back to his city and made it a better place," Bush said. Ilitch founded Little Caesars in 1959 in suburban Detroit with his wife, Marian. The business - later known for its "Pizza! Pizza!" ads featuring an animated "Little Caesar" - eventually grew into one of the world's largest carry-out pizza chains with several spin-off companies that now employ 23,000 people worldwide and posted revenues last year of \$3.4 billion.

"Whether he was making pizza, building successful sports and entertainment franchises or supporting youth organizations in our city, Mr. I helped to bring thousands of jobs and opportunities to our city and attract millions of dollars of investment," Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan said.

TRANSFORMATION

Ilitch's investments in Detroit spearheaded the current flurry of development from downtown to Midtown. "Mike Ilitch saw the bright possibilities of Detroit's Woodward Corridor at a time that other investors had fully turned their backs on the city," said Rip Rapson, president and chief executive of the Troy, Michigan-based Kresge Foundation.

"Revitalizing the historic Fox Theatre and relocating his business headquarters to the city were bold moves, but ones that ultimately set downtown on a course for incredible investment and remarkable transformation," Rapson said.

Ilitch was as much a fan of the often-struggling Detroit as he was of sports. When approached in 2009 by organizers of the Motor City Bowl in Detroit, Ilitch agreed to sponsor the annual college football bowl game despite a poor local economy. The game was renamed the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl. "It's a sporting event, and we need sporting events," Ilitch said at the time. "It picks our community up to no end, with all the great colleges we have in this state and the professional teams that we have. Thank God for 'em, especially at times that are rough right now."

The son of Macedonian immigrants, Ilitch was born on July 20, 1929. He played baseball at Detroit's Cooley High School and was signed by his hometown Tigers after his four-year stint in the US Marines, spending three years in the team's farm system before a knee injury ended his playing career. But he found his niche in business. It started with that first Little Caesars restaurant in Garden City, a working-class suburb west of Detroit. A food service distribution company soon followed to supply ingredients and other products for the growing number of restaurants. Blue Line Foodservice grew into one of the largest program account

food service distribution companies in the US.

Ilitch Holdings Inc. was established in 1999 to manage the family's interests in food, sports and entertainment, and the company remained family focused. His son, Christopher, is president and CEO, while his wife, Marian, was vice chairwoman as well as sole owner of MotorCity Casino Hotel, one of Detroit's three casinos.

Ilitch broke into sports ownership in 1982, when he paid a reported \$8 million for the struggling Red Wings. Once a National Hockey League powerhouse, the team had bottomed out to mediocrity, but it began winning again under Ilitch. The Red Wings took home the Stanley Cup in 1997, 1998, 2002 and 2008.

Ilitch was inducted into the NHL Hockey Hall of Fame in 2003, and into the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame a year later. "Mr. and Mrs. Ilitch are incredibly passionate about Detroit and their teams," Red Wings general manager Ken Holland told The Associated Press in a 2010 interview. "They create a family atmosphere with stability, loyalty and a personal touch. But we all understand we have to produce to be around for a long time." As part of his long-term plan to build a Detroit-based business empire, Ilitch also bought Olympia Entertainment, which manages sports and entertainment venues, in 1982. Husband and wife bought the downtown Fox Theatre five years later and started a massive, \$12 million restoration. It reopened a year later and became a lucrative venue for musicals, plays and other productions. The Little Caesars world headquarters also was moved downtown.

Then, in 1992, the man who once dreamed of playing for the Detroit Tigers bought the team for \$85 million. He moved it in 2000 from the storied but fading Tiger Stadium to Comerica Park, across from the Fox Theatre.

SUCCESS

Unlike previous owners of both sports franchises, Ilitch opened his checkbook to sign top players - finding solid success in hockey, and a roller coaster in baseball.

The Tigers lost an American League record 119 games in 2003, but advanced to the World Series three years later, losing in five games to the St. Louis Cardinals. Near the end of a disappointing 2008 season, Ilitch said he and the team would review everything done to put the roster together but focusing on the \$138 million payroll wasn't the priority.

"I'm not afraid to go out and spend money," Ilitch said. "It's been very costly, but I'm not going to change my ways."

But Ilitch never got the chance to see his team win a World Series as its owner, despite spending millions of dollars on contracts for stars like Miguel Cabrera, Justin Verlander, Victor Martinez, Ivan Rodriguez and Prince Fielder.

"I've never seen a man more dedicated to this community and to baseball than Mr. I," Tigers Executive Vice President and General Manager Al Avila said Friday. "What he has done for this franchise, and for Detroit, is immeasurable. He was always there to give us whatever we needed because he wanted greatness and happiness for all of us - especially the fans."

The Tigers made the American League playoffs in 2011, a return to winning that brought more fans to Comerica Park. The team last made the playoffs in 2014, losing to the Baltimore Orioles.

"We won a lot. I wish we would have won the ultimate world championship for him," former Tigers General Manager Dave Dombrowski told the AP on Friday.—AP



HYDERABAD: Bangladesh's Mehedi Hasan bats during the third day of the cricket Test match against India in Hyderabad, India, yesterday.—AP

CRICKET

RAHIM, SHAKIB KEEP BANGLADESH AFLOAT

HYDERABAD: Skipper Mushfiqur Rahim and Mehedi Hasan made gritty half-centuries as Bangladesh try to prevent a follow-on against a dominant India on the third day of their one-off Test yesterday.

Rahim (81 not out) shared a 107-run fifth-wicket stand with Shakib Al Hasan (82) before putting on an unbeaten partnership with young Hasan to frustrate the hosts. Hasan was batting on 51. The visitors were 322 for six at stumps, needing another 166 runs to avoid the follow-on against the world's number one Test side. "We will want them (Rahim and Hasan) to play the first session and maybe we can score 100-120 runs that can take us close to the follow-on saving, which is our first target as of now," Shakib told reporters. "Obviously India is in front foot...at this moment we are still a long way from the match." The wicketkeeper-batsman Rahim, who took 35 balls to move from 46 to 50, tackled the Indian bowlers with patience on a pitch that still looked good for batting.

Rahim took a nasty blow on his finger from pacer Ishant Sharma in the final over of the day, only to hit the bowler for a boundary off the very next delivery.

"When the situation is tough he likes to stand up and do the hard work for the team and that character obviously helped him playing for so long and doing well for Bangladesh," Shakib said of his captain. Rahim found a perfect partner in Hasan to stage a fightback after the visitors were left reeling at 235 for six in the afternoon session. Hasan, who claimed two wickets in the Indian innings with his off-spin, showed great batting temperament to register his maiden Test fifty in just his fifth outing.

The 19-year-old all-rounder, who made his Test debut against England in Chittagong last year, has struck 10 boundaries during his 103-ball knock so far. Rahim's crucial stand with Shakib, who registered his 21st Test half-century, helped Bangladesh recover against a formidable bowling attack.

TESTING SPELL

The left-handed Shakib played some attacking cricket during a brisk knock laced with 14 boundaries, but admitted to having faced a testing spell from Indian seamer Umesh Yadav, who claimed two wickets. "Well obviously he was bowling really well probably the best spell I faced in my career the way he was moving the ball both ways it was tremendous, all credit goes to him," Shakib said of his Indian Premier League (IPL) teammate Yadav.

Shakib eventually ran out of steam, losing his wicket to India's premier spinner Ravichandran Ashwin after mistiming a drive to mid-on. Starting the day on 41 for one, the visitors made their way to 125-4 at lunch with Indian pacers compounding Bangladesh's woes in their first-ever Test on Indian soil. India's batting coach Sanjay Bangar praised skipper Virat Kohli's five-bowler theory that according to him helped India succeed in recent times. "I think our bowling has been doing really well...It also leads to number of victories you got because of the five bowler combination. Virat backs (harps) quite a lot on that," Bangar said.

"It's very important that the bowling unit is developed in such a fashion that even when India tours overseas, spinners will have to play a particular role, and role reverses for seamers when they play in India," said the former India batsman. The hosts had put themselves in a commanding position after Kohli smashed 204, steering the team to a record total of 687-6 declared against Bangladesh. India have won six and drawn two matches against Bangladesh, who gained Test status only in 2000.— AFP

SCOREBOARD

HYDERABAD, India: Scoreboard at stumps on the third day of the one-off Test between India and Bangladesh in Hyderabad yesterday.

India 1st innings 687-6 dec (V. Kohli 204, W. Saha 106 not out; T. Islam 3-156, M. Hasan 2-165)	S. Rahman lbw b Jadeja 16
	M. Hasan not out 51
	Extras (lb 13) 13
	Total (6 wickets; 104 overs) 322
Bangladesh 1st innings (overnight 41-1)	Fall of wickets: 1-38 (Sarkar), 2-44 (Iqbal), 3-64 (Haque), 4-109 (Mahmudullah), 5-216 (Shakib), 6-235 (Rahman)
T. Iqbal run out (Yadav/Kumar) 24	Bowling: Kumar 17-6-46-0, Sharma 16-5-54-1, Ashwin 24-6-77-1, Yadav 18-3-72-2, Jadeja 29-8-60-1.
S. Sarkar c Saha b Yadav 15	Still to bat: T. Islam, T. Ahmed, K.I. Rabbi
M. Haque lbw b Yadav 12	
Mahmudullah lbw b Sharma 28	
Shakib Al Hasan c Yadav b Ashwin 82	
M. Rahim not out 81	

KOIVU GIVES WILD WIN OVER LIGHTNING

ST PAUL: The Minnesota Wild are all but a lock for the playoffs, while the Tampa Bay Lightning are a long shot currently. So the point the Lightning earned in a shootout loss Friday may have been more important in the long run than the two points Minnesota got for winning. Wild captain Mikko Koivu scored the only goal in the shootout, as Minnesota overcame a stiff challenge by the Lightning, winning 2-1.

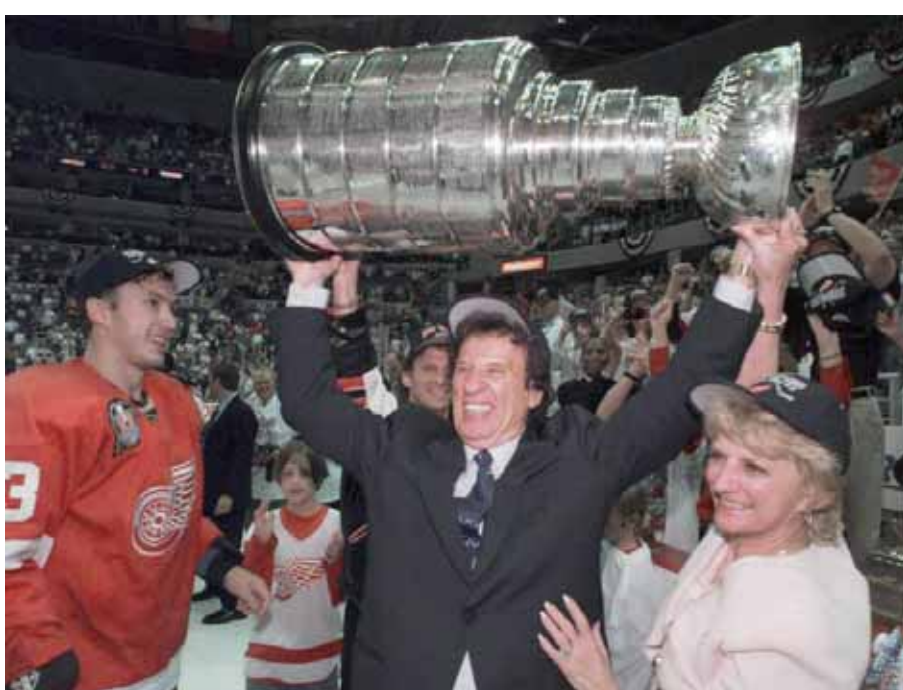
BLACKHAWKS 5, JETS 2

Brent Seabrook has been an elite

defenseman in the NHL for more than a decade but it was his goaltending skills that were front and center as the Chicago Blackhawks defeated the Winnipeg Jets 5-2 on Friday at the MTS Centre. With the visitors (34-17-5) clinging to a 2-1 lead late in the second period, the Jets (25-28-4) looked to be about to tie it as a deflected shot off the stick of captain Blake Wheeler squeaked through Corey Crawford's legs and dribbled agonizingly toward the goal line.— Reuters



WINNIPEG: Winnipeg Jets center Mathieu Perreault (85) misses the open net against Chicago Blackhawks goalie Corey Crawford (50) during the first period of an NHL hockey game Friday, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.— AP



DETROIT: In this June 17 1998, file photo, Detroit Red Wings owner Mike Ilitch, center, hoists the Stanley Cup in Washington after the Red Wings won their second consecutive NHL championship. Igor Larionov is at left. Ilitch, founder of the Little Caesars Pizza empire and owner of the Red Wings and the Detroit Tigers, has died.—AP

HOLM TRIES TO AVOID ONE-HIT WONDER STATUS AT UFC 208

NEW YORK: Holly Holm is already the answer to a trivia question as the first fighter to dominate and defeat Ronda Rousey. Her leap from obscurity to instant celebrity landed her on daytime talk shows and chatting with late-night hosts and made her - oh so briefly - the most talked about fighter in UFC.

She's trying these days to avoid another rather dubious fight conversation. Holm's championship reign lasted only four months, and another loss soon followed that left Holm not as the heir apparent to Rousey in the women's division, but rather on the cusp of being labeled an MMA version of a one-hit wonder like Buster Douglas. Douglas rode a stunning knockout of Mike Tyson in 1990 in Japan all the way to fight immortality - sports fans can't forget his name, yet he never had another major victory in his career.

Holm's not quite there yet, though she was composed enough this week at Barclays Center to answer questions that

lumped her in with Douglas. "After the fight with Ronda, I knew that if I didn't win after that, those would be things that would be tossed around," Holm said. "But I'm not in this sport to please everybody else and what they think and what they feel. I'm in it because I love it."

Douglas was a 42-1 longshot when he KO'd the undefeated and seemingly indestructible Tyson and won the heavyweight championship. Douglas gained about 35 pounds and had grown lazy on his 15 minutes of fame when he lost the belt in quick fashion eight months later to Evander Holyfield.

Holm lost the bantamweight belt when Miesha Tate choked her out in March 2016 and she lost a decision to Valentina Shevchenko in the main event of a Fox card in July. Both fights went five rounds and are the only losses in her career. "It's not like I've been fighting nobody's. They're very tough opponents," Holm said. "I do feel in my heart that I have the capability to win those

fighters. I just know that I didn't perform my best."

COMPARISONS

Holm (10-2) can erase the Douglas comparisons and become the first two-division champion in UFC women's history when she fights Germaine de Randamie (6-3) in the main event of UFC 208. Holm, fighting in the new 145-pound featherweight division created as a showcase for Cristiane "Cyborg" Justino, can join Conor McGregor, Randy Couture and B.J. Penn as the only two-division champs in UFC history.

"I can guarantee you, they can build this division in no time," Holm said. "They just have to make some phone calls. Because there's a lot of girls out there that are very tough."

Justino's UFC fate is in limbo because of a doping violation that knocked her off the New York card. After winning titles in the Invicta and Strikeforce promotions, Justino won her first two fights

in the UFC. But she said she tested positive for a diuretic she is taking as part of a therapeutic treatment due to medical issues related to her difficult weight cuts before bouts.

Rousey may not fight again following her 48-second loss to Amanda Nunes in her comeback fight at UFC 207.

Holm is forever linked to Rousey in the history book. The 35-year-old Holm, who went 33-2-3 as a professional boxer and won several championship belts, wants to prove she's more than the fighter who handed Rousey her first L.

"I don't want my whole career to be defined around getting the belt from Ronda," Holm said. "I want my career to be defined by me being the best fighter I can be and accomplishing the biggest things I can, and whatever competition comes in front of me. So, I want this for me for my career. I don't want it to just be around the one fight. I want them to remember everything after." Like Holm, the 32-year-old de Randamie moved up

in weight for the shot at the title in the first UFC pay-per-view in 2017. She's a Dutch kickboxer who also fought in Strikeforce and also lost to Nunes in 2013. She gained a slice of notoriety when she knocked out Belgian actor Tom Waes in a short bout filmed for a reality show. "I fought a man who had 40 pounds over me and I knocked him out," she said. Though in the main event, she might be the least known fighter on a Brooklyn card that boasts UFC legend Anderson Silva vs. Derek Brunson. Jacare Souza fights Tim Boetsch, Glover Teixeira fights Jared Cannonier and Jim Miller takes on Dustin Poirier in the other PPV bouts. While Holm tries to avoid Douglas' career arc, de Randamie would like to pull off a surprising win for the belt just like Holm.

"I know, Saturday, it's do or die for me," de Randamie said. "This is my one and only shot to fight for the belt. I know. I'm always realistic to myself so I'm going to make the most of it." — AP

SOCCER

CAVANI, DI MARIA FIRE PSG PAST BORDEAUX AS BARCA LOOM

BORDEAUX: Edinson Cavani and Angel Di Maria stole the show in Paris Saint Germain's 3-0 win at Bordeaux on Friday in an ideal warm-up for next week's Champions League clash with Barcelona.

PSG joined Monaco, who face Metz on Saturday, on 55 points at the top of Ligue 1 but remain second on goal difference.

Marco Verratti was back for PSG after sitting out their last four games with a calf injury. He joined his fellow Italian Thiago Motta - suspended for the Barcelona game - and Adrien Rabiot in midfield.

PSG coach Unai Emery also welcomed back first choice keeper Kevin Trapp with the German enjoying a generally hassle free return to work.

Thiago Silva was given the night off to freshen up for the Valentine's Day Champions League last 16 first leg date with Barcelona at the Parc des Princes on Tuesday. The captain's shoes in central defence against the side PSG had knocked out of the French Cup quarter-finals were filled by Presnel Kimpembe. "It was important to win because there's another goal to achieve," said Trapp.

"We have put a little more pressure on the other teams. It was a clean match and good preparation for Tuesday." As in that 4-1 defeat last month that propelled PSG into a fourth straight Cup final it was Cavani and

Di Maria who starred.

Cavani's neatly executed one-touch volley put PSG into a sixth minute lead after Vokasin Jovanovic's failed attempt to head Marquinhos' cross from the right out of danger. Unfortunately for the Bordeaux defender Cavani was on hand to work his magic and take his Ligue 1 haul to a personal best ever 24 goals from only 25 games. With PSG bossing the encounter Di Maria deservedly doubled their advantage as half-time approached.

His cheeky chip over Bordeaux keeper Cedric Carrasso came after a neat link-up from Lucas and Verratti with the Italian midfielder delivering the assist to Di Maria.

The sound of the referee's whistle for the restart had barely disappeared when Cavani picked up a cross from the left from Di Maria to strike the ball with his first touch past Carrasso.

That took the red-hot Uruguayan's scoring percentage to one goal a game.

With his encouraging return ahead of the Champions League clash Verratti came off after an hour with Di Maria quickly following. Emery introduced Hatem Ben Arfa for Cavani for the closing 20 minutes.

PSG headed back to the French capital after a good evening's work but aware that a far stiffer test awaits them in 96 hours' time. — AFP



NEW YORK: Brooklyn Nets forward Trevor Booker, right, keeps the ball in play during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Miami Heat, Friday, in New York. The Heat won 108-99. —AP

JOHNSON SCORES 26, HEAT BEAT LOWLY NETS FOR 13TH STRAIGHT

NEW YORK: Reserve James Johnson scored a season-high 26 points and the Miami Heat extended their winning streak to 13 games with a 108-99 comeback victory over the Brooklyn Nets on Friday night. Johnson came within one of a career high set Feb. 21, 2015, at Houston. Goran Dragic had 21 points for Miami (24-30), which outscored Brooklyn 50-30 in the final 19:24.

WARRIORS 122, GRIZZLIES 107

Klay Thompson scored 36 points and Golden State rolled past Memphis at FedExForum. Thompson tied his season high for made 3-pointers as he went 8 of 15. Kevin Durant had 24 points, five rebounds and four assists and Stephen Curry had 18 points and five assists. Draymond Green only scored four points but had a rare 12-rebound, 10-assist, 10-steal triple-double in addition to five blocks.

NUGGETS 131, KNICKS 123

Nikola Jokic poured in a career-high 40 points to lead Denver over New York at Madison Square Garden. The second-year center was 17 of 23 from the field, grabbed nine rebounds and had five assists for the Nuggets (24-29). Wilson Chandler scored 19 points and Gary Harris and Jameer Nelson registered 16 points each. Nelson also had 11 assists.

SPURS 103, PISTONS 92

Kawhi Leonard had 32 points, six rebounds and five assists and San Antonio never trailed Detroit at The Palace. LaMarcus Aldridge had 19 points and 11 rebounds and Dewayne Dedmon contributed a season-high 17 points and a career-high 17 rebounds for San Antonio (41-12), which improved to 2-1 in its eight-game Rodeo road trip.

PELICANS 122, TIMBERWOLVES 106

Anthony Davis had his sixth 40-point game of the season and New Orleans pulled away from Minnesota at Target Center. Davis was instrumental in helping New Orleans (21-33) turn a 15-point first-half deficit into a double-digit victory. The Pelicans' standout was an efficient 16 of 22 from the floor, including 2 of 3 from 3-point range, en route to 42 points. Jrue Holiday chipped in 25 points and rookie Buddy Hield scored 17 off the bench for New Orleans.

WIZARDS 112, PACERS 107

John Wall had 26 points and 14 assists as Washington resumed its winning ways at home. Markieff Morris finished with 26 points and 10 rebounds for the Wizards (32-21), who have won two straight and eight of nine. Washington had won 17 straight home games and seven in a row overall before losing a thrilling 140-135 overtime matchup with the Cleveland Cavaliers on Monday.

LAKERS 122, BUCKS 114

Nick Young scored 26 points and Lou Williams added 21 as Los Angeles withstood a furious comeback bid by Milwaukee at the Bradley Center. Young went 8 of 11 from the floor with

NBA results/standings									
Golden State 122, Memphis 107; New Orleans 122, Minnesota 106; Washington 112, Indiana 107; LA Lakers 122, Milwaukee 114; Denver 131, NY Knicks 123; Miami 108, Brooklyn 99; San Antonio 103, Detroit 92.									
Eastern Conference				Western Conference					
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division			Pacific Division		
W	L	PCT	GB	Utah	34	20	.630	-	-
Boston	34	19	.642	Oklahoma City	31	23	.574	3	-
Toronto	32	22	.593	Denver	24	29	.453	9.5	-
NY Knicks	22	33	.400	Portland	23	31	.426	11	-
Philadelphia	19	34	.358	Minnesota	20	34	.370	14	-
Brooklyn	9	45	.167	25.5	Golden State	45	8	.849	-
Central Division				LA Clippers	32	21	.604	13	-
Cleveland	36	16	.692	-	Sacramento	22	32	.407	23.5
Indiana	29	24	.547	7.5	LA Lakers	19	37	.339	27.5
Chicago	26	28	.481	11	Phoenix	17	37	.315	28.5
Detroit	25	29	.463	12	Southwest Division				
Milwaukee	22	30	.423	14	San Antonio	41	12	.774	-
Southeast Division				Washington	32	21	.604	-	-
Atlanta	31	23	.574	1.5	Houston	39	17	.696	3.5
Charlotte	24	29	.453	8	Memphis	33	23	.589	9.5
Miami	24	30	.444	8.5	Dallas	21	32	.396	20
Orlando	20	35	.364	13	New Orleans	21	33	.389	20.5

five 3-pointers as the Lakers (19-37) shot 52 percent from the field and got double-digit scoring efforts from six players.

SUNS 115, BULLS 97

Devin Booker and Eric Bledsoe combined for 50 points and Phoenix used a small-ball lineup to beat Chicago. Booker scored 27 points and Bledsoe had 23 for the Suns (17-37), who played without center Alex Len (suspended) and lost center Tyson Chandler to a sprained right ankle before halftime. But Phoenix led by 13 at the half and Chicago never got closer than six points

in the second half.

KINGS 108, HAWKS 107

Darren Collison scored 22 points, the last two on a driving layup that he kissed off the top of the glass with 3.5 seconds left, to lift Sacramento over Atlanta at the Golden 1 Center. Collison's layup capped Sacramento's comeback from a 22-point deficit and gave the Kings (22-32) consecutive wins at home for the first time since December. It also allowed the Kings to prevail in a game that saw four lead changes in the final minute. — Reuters

ANGOLA PROBES DEADLY FOOTBALL STAMPEDE

LUANDA: Angola announced an investigation yesterday into a stadium stampede that killed at least 17 and injured scores in an incident that the host team blamed on police error. The government has set up a commission to probe Friday's crush-described as the country's worst football tragedy-the national Angop news agency reported.

Children were among the victims. A second commission will help families of those who died and assist in organising funerals. The deaths occurred during a domestic league match between host side Santa Rita de Cassia and Recreativo de Libolo in the northern town of Uige on the opening day of the season.

"Several children have been killed," police spokesman Orlando Bernardo told AFP.

"There was a blockage at the entrance to the January 4 stadium," he said. "This obstruction caused multiple fatalities — 17 deaths,

and there are 56 injured in the hospital."

A doctor at the military hospital in Uige said yesterday that the toll had risen to 22. "Seventeen people died on the spot and five others at the hospital," said the doctor, who wished to remain anonymous. Officials maintained that the toll was 17.

Police said hundreds of fans had tried to enter the already packed stadium to see the match, causing a crush that pushed some people to the ground. Many of the dead were trampled to death or suffocated. "While the players were on the field, fans outside were trying to get into the stadium and a gate probably gave way to the pressure of the crowd causing several people to fall who were literally trampled on by the crowd," the Recreativo de Libolo club said in a statement on its website. The club called it "a tragedy without precedent in the history of Angolan football". — AFP



BORDEAUX: Bordeaux's French defender Youssef Sabaly (L) vies with Paris Saint-Germain's Brazilian midfielder Lucas Moura during the French Ligue 1 football match between Bordeaux (FCGB) and Paris (PSG) on Friday at the Matmut Atlantique stadium in Bordeaux, southwestern France. — AFP

INDIA CAPTAIN SAYS ASIAN CUP KEY TO DEVELOPMENT

MUMBAI: India's hopes of developing as a soccer-playing nation are reliant on regular participation in tournaments like the Asian Cup, captain Sunil Chhetri told Reuters.

Chhetri will be hoping to lead India to the 2019 Asian Cup finals in the United Arab Emirates after the world's second-most populous nation missed out on the last edition of the tournament in Australia two years ago.

India, who have only reached the finals on three previous occasions, have been drawn alongside Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Macau in Group A of the last round of qualifiers, with the top two teams advancing to the expanded tournament. The Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) decision to increase the number of finalists from 16 to 24 has given the country a better chance of qualifying and Chhetri believes it is an opportunity India should not pass up. "To be honest, we should be playing at the Asian Cup every time. That's the parameter we need to use to judge if we are doing

well or not," Chhetri said in an interview. "We have to keep playing in the Asian Cup which will mean rubbing shoulders with the best in the region. You know the quality you are playing against and then you know how much you have improved."

Cricket-loving India may have a population of 1.3 billion but it is a massive under-achiever as far as soccer is concerned, with the national side 130th in the FIFA rankings and yet to make a single appearance at the World Cup finals. A quick glance at India's group opponents shows that Kyrgyzstan are ranked six places above them, Myanmar are 159th and Macau are a further 25 places adrift, yet Chhetri is refusing to read too much into those numbers. "As far as our hopes are concerned, I have played enough to understand that you cannot think about the chances yet," India's most-capped player with 92 appearances said. "The way the rankings work is if you do well in the last six-to-eight months, your ranking can rise to an extent that you can't even imagine," he added.

"That's why when I face teams in Asia, I don't look too much into rankings. (Qualification) is not going to be easy."

India, who did qualify for the 1950 World Cup in Brazil but withdrew ahead of the tournament, open the final round of Asian Cup qualifiers away to Myanmar in Yangon on March 28. In the past, India coach Stephen Constantine has spoken of giving opportunities to youngsters to create a bigger pool of talent for the national side and Chhetri, also the country's most prolific scorer with 52 goals, prefers continuity. — Reuters



Sunil Chhetri

SUAREZ NETS 2 IN BARCA WIN MARRED BY VIDAL INJURY

BARCELONA: Barcelona's big three of Luis Suarez, Lionel Messi, and Neymar led a 6-0 rout at Alaves that was marred by an injury to defender Aleix Vidal in the Spanish league yesterday.

Vidal was carried off in the final minutes after he hurt his right lower leg following a collision with opponent Theo Hernandez. After barely playing in the first half of the season, Vidal earned a spot in Luis Enrique's rotation in recent weeks. "It was a good result, but one we can't celebrate very much," said

Barcelona's Ivan Rakitic, who also scored. "At first glance (Vidal's injury) looked very ugly. We hope it turns out not to be that bad."

Suarez struck twice to continue his excellent scoring form with 10 goals in his last nine appearances across all competitions. He is on pace to repeat as the La Liga's leading scorer with 17, followed closely by Messi with 17.

Barcelona took over the league lead from Real Madrid. Madrid can restore its place at the top by beating Osasuna on

the road later. Madrid also has two games in hand, against Valencia and Celta Vigo.

Besides his brace, Suarez played a part in two more goals, while defender Alexis Ruano added an own goal on a dismal day for the hosts.

Alaves will have more than three months to prepare for its next meeting with the European powerhouse in the Copa del Rey final on May 27. At least Alaves can count on Suarez not playing in the cup final due to a one-game sus-

pension. Because the Basque club had no answer for Suarez yesterday, Suarez opened the scoring in the 37th minute when he completed a beautiful team buildup that quickly moved the ball from left to right of the attack before Suarez was left to fire in Aleix Vidal's low cross. Suarez's hustle helped double the advantage in the 40th when goalkeeper Fernando Pacheco swatted a ball off Suarez's head. The ball bounced right to Neymar to tap in.

Messi drilled a left-footed shot

between Pacheco's legs after he stole the ball from Carlos Vigaray near Alaves' goal in the second half.

Alaves wilted when Ruano knocked in an own goal trying to stop Messi after Suarez set him up. Suarez started a counterattack that produced Rakitic's strike, and Suarez took his second goal two minutes later when he blasted in a rebound. Real Betis striker Ruben Castro hit the post early on in scoreless stalemate that increased the winless streaks of both teams.—AP

GOALKEEPERS ON TOP AS BORO, EVERTON DRAW



LONDON: Middlesbrough goalkeeper Victor Valdes and his Everton counterpart Joel Robles shared the limelight as their sides played out a 0-0 draw in the Premier League yesterday.

Valdes saved sharply from the in-form Romelu Lukaku and Ademola Lookman, while Robles produced a stunning late stop to prevent substitute Rudy Gestede giving Boro victory at the Riverside Stadium.

Everton have now gone eight games unbeaten in the league, but after four wins in their previous five games, this was a missed opportunity for Ronald Koeman's side to make up ground on the teams above them.

The Merseyside club remain seventh, while Aitor Karanka's Middlesbrough stay 15th, two points above the relegation zone, after an eighth successive league outing without a win.

Koeman made two changes from last weekend's 6-3 win over Bournemouth, with Tom Davies and Idrissa Gueye replacing James McCarthy and Gareth Barry, and Davies quickly caught the eye.

The 18-year-old midfielder with the straggly blond hair had the first sight of goal, but could not fashion an effort on target following good work by Ross Barkley.

On the half hour he won the ball back in midfield and set Lukaku clear on goal, only for Valdes to thwart the Belgium striker who scored four times against Bournemouth—with a save low to his left.

With Everton monopolising possession, Boro were obliged to play on the counter-attack. They looked poised to exploit a promising breakthrough in the 13th minute, but Adam Forshaw failed to pick out either Adama Traore or the recalled Cristhian Stuani with his pass.

Lookman, 19, kept his place in Everton's starting XI and he began to show late in the first half, seeing an effort blocked and then lashing a strike into the side-netting.

Boro posed more of an attacking threat in the second half, Traore bursting past a posse of defenders and flashing a shot wide before Stuani headed straight at

Robles. Everton left-back Leighton Baines was then obliged to clear a header from Ben Gibson off the line.

Valdes came to Boro's rescue again shortly after, saving with his legs after Barkley's cross had sent Lookman scampering towards goal.

But Robles produced the save of the day with three minutes remaining, leaping to palm the ball over the bar from Gestede's emphatic header.—AFP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE	
Burnley v Chelsea	16:30
beIN SPORTS	
Swansea v Leicester	19:00
beIN SPORTS	

SPANISH LEAGUE PRIMERA	
Villarreal v Malaga	14:00
beIN SPORTS	
Leganes v Sporting Gijon	18:15
beIN SPORTS	
Las Palmas v Sevilla	20:30
beIN SPORTS	
Atletico de Madrid v Vigo	22:45
beIN SPORTS	

ITALIAN CALCIO LEAGUE	
Crotone v Roma	14:30
beIN SPORTS	
Inter Milano v Empoli	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Torino v Pescara	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Palermo v Atalanta	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Sassuolo v Chievo Verona	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Sampdoria v Bologna	20:00
beIN SPORTS	
Cagliari v Juventus	22:45
beIN SPORTS	

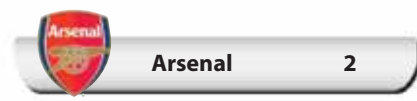
GERMAN BUNDESLIGA	
Wolfsburg v Hoffenheim	17:30
beIN SPORTS	
Freiburg v Köln	19:30
beIN SPORTS	

FRENCH LEAGUE	
Stade Rennes v Nice	17:00
beIN SPORTS	
Saint Etienne v Lorient	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Nantes v Marseille	23:00
beIN SPORTS	



LONDON: Arsenal's Francis Coquelin, center, competes for the ball with Hull City's Andrea Ranocchia, left, during the English Premier League soccer match between Arsenal and Hull City at the Emirates Stadium in London, yesterday.—AP

PROLIFIC SANCHEZ HANDS VICTORY TO ARSENAL



LONDON: Two goals from Alexis Sanchez, one of which was scored with his hand, earned Arsenal a workmanlike 2-0 win over Hull City yesterday and halted their run of two successive Premier League defeats.

But the result, which lifted them to third in the table, was far from convincing and did little

to settle the debate over Arsene Wenger's future after days of uncertainty about whether he will remain in charge next season.

The manager completed his four-match touchline ban by watching from the stands and was delighted to see Sanchez pop up on the line for the opener on 34 minutes. But the goal was controversial, with the ball going in inadvertently off the Chilean's hand after popping up from a goalline save by Hull keeper Eldin Jakupovic.

Afterwards Hull defender Andrew Robertson said referee Mark Clattenburg apologised for not disallowing the goal when he saw the halftime replay. "The referee apologised to us after half-time and said it was a handball," said Robertson. "He obviously realises he was in the wrong. It

must be tough for him, but often decisions don't go your way when you come to these big stadiums." Oumar Niasse twice went close for an enterprising Hull side, who had Sam Clucas sent off for conceding the injury-time penalty from which Sanchez scored his 17th league goal and fourth against Hull this season.

Asked if Arsenal had been fortunate, Wenger said: "Maybe. Sorry for that but I cannot influence that. I felt we were resilient, focused.

"It was not easy against a good side. There was an edgy atmosphere but as a player you have to cope with that." Wenger was non-committal about his future. "I have big respect for this country and this club and I am grateful because I have worked here for 20 years," he said.—Reuters

ALLEN STRIKE FREEZES OUT PALACE AT STOKE



STOKE-ON-TRENT: Sam Allardyce's poor run since taking over Crystal Palace was compounded at Stoke City yesterday as Joe Allen's slick finish gave the hosts a 1-0 Premier League win.

The defeat leaves Palace second bottom on goal difference and the south Londoners have won just once in eight games since the former England boss, who has never suffered relegation from the top flight, took over. In driving rain on a wintry afternoon of lashing winds Stoke City came out wearing short sleeves and a look of grim determination ahead of what the players clearly suspected would be a gritty affair. The goal when it came was one of

rare beauty, however, as Marko Arnautovic lofted an angled pass into the box on 67 minutes that Ramadan Sobhi held up, awaiting Allen's run and setting him up with perfect timing. Allen's instinctive snap shot whipped into the opposite bottom corner beyond the clutching grasp of Wayne Hennessey, his Welsh international teammate. Sobhi was playing his first game since losing the Africa Cup of Nations final 2-1 with Egypt to Cameroon last Sunday in the sweltering heat of Gabon. Hennessey in fairness had seen little menacing action until Allen's winning strike and Stoke boss Mark Hughes was pulling faces on the freezing sidelines.

Allardyce went for broke and brought on French pair Loic Remy and Yohan Cabaye in a desperate bid to draw level in a game they had started to believe would yield a point.

Six frantic minutes of added time failed to produce a solution for Allardyce's charges and it would be scant recompense for Palace that bottom side Sunderland were thumped 4-0 by Southampton.—AFP



STOKE: Stoke City's Peter Crouch controls the ball past Crystal Palace's Damien Delaney, during the English Premier League soccer match between Stoke City and Crystal Palace, at the bet365 Stadium, in Stoke, England, yesterday.—AP

LAST-GASP ROBBEN, VIDAL PUT BAYERN SEVEN CLEAR

BERLIN: Bayern Munich left it late to beat Ingolstadt 2-0 and open a seven-point lead with its main rivals dropping points in the Bundesliga yesterday. Second-placed Leipzig was beaten 3-0 at home by Hamburger SV, third-placed Eintracht Frankfurt was defeated by the same score to Bayer Leverkusen, and fourth-placed Borussia Dortmund lost 2-1 at bottom club Darmstadt. Bayern, which hosts Arsenal in the Champions League on Wednesday, looked to be laboring toward its second straight league draw after an uninspiring performance before Arturo Vidal struck in the final minute and Arjen Robben added another in injury time.

With just one Bundesliga goal so far after scoring 32 in all competitions last season, Thomas Mueller's disappointing season epitomizes the club's unexpected dip in form. But the Germany forward crossed for Vidal to score from close range, and Robben played a one-two with fellow substitute Douglas Costa to seal it.

Robert Lewandowski and Mueller had come closest for the side in the first half and Lewandowski struck the post in the second. Ingolstadt remains second last. Schalke was hosting Hertha Berlin later Saturday.

LEIPZIG 0, HAMBURGER SV 3

Leipzig slumped to its first defeat at home in the Bundesliga after an impressive performance from relegation-threatened Hamburg. The on-loan Kyriakos Papadopoulos, who claimed the winner against parent club Bayer Leverkusen last weekend, opened the scoring with a thumping header to a corner at Leipzig. Papadopoulos first joined Leipzig on loan from Leverkusen before switching to Hamburg in the winter transfer period. Wallace claimed the second from another corner from Nicolai Mueller in the 24th for the Brazilian's first Bundesliga goal. Again, Papadopoulos was in the thick of the action. Mueller set up Aaron Hunt to seal the victory in injury time as Hamburg left the relegation zone.

BAYER LEVERKUSEN 3, EINTRACHT FRANKFURT 0

Sky TV reported before the game that Leverkusen's board of directors had decided to fire Roger Schmidt regardless of today's result, but the coach's position will be strengthened after a comprehensive defeat of high-flying

Frankfurt. Javier 'Chicharito' Hernandez opened the scoring early with a volley after Kai Havertz eluded four Frankfurt defenders and the rebound from an attempted clearance fell kindly for the Mexico striker. Another volley made it 2-0 after the hour-mark. Karim Bellarabi didn't let Kevin Kampl's cross touch the ground and neither did Chicharito for his second goal.

Substitute Kevin Volland sealed the win with a quarter-hour remaining. "That looked very much like our game," Schmidt said.

DARMSTADT 2, BORUSSIA DORTMUND 1

Dortmund has goalkeeper Roman Buerki to thank for preventing a heavier defeat.

Buerki saved from Terrence Boyd before Jan Rosenthal hit the post and he then stopped another effort from Marcel Heller, before Boyd fired the home side into a deserved 21st-minute

lead when Heller pulled the ball past four stranded Dortmund defenders.

Marco Reus struck the crossbar with a free kick in response before Raphael Guerreiro equalized with a fine strike before the break.

Substitute Antonio-Mirko Colak restored Darmstadt's lead with more than 20 minutes remaining and the home side might have scored more - Buerki pushed Colak's strike onto the crossbar and saved from Rosenthal on the rebound. "Darmstadt deserved to win," Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel said.

WERDER BREMEN 0, BORUSSIA MOENCHENGLADBACH 1

Thorgan Hazard's early strike through a counterattack set up by Christoph Kramer was enough for the visitors to climb ninth and leave Bremen in the relegation zone.—AP



INGOLSTADT: Bayern's Rafinha, left, and Ingolstadt's Anthony Jung challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Ingolstadt and FC Bayern Munich in Ingolstadt, Germany, yesterday.—AP

Sports

Usain Bolt fires
'All Stars' to
Nitro Series win



Detroit Tigers,
Red Wings owner
Mike Ilitch dies



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2017

ANGOLA PROBES DEADLY FOOTBALL STAMPEDE

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ANFIELD: Liverpool's German-born Cameroonian defender Joel Matip (L) vies with Tottenham Hotspur's Danish midfielder Christian Eriksen during the English Premier League football match between Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England yesterday. — AFP

MANE DOUBLE HELPS LIVERPOOL BEAT SPURS

Liverpool 2

Tottenham 0

LIVERPOOL: Sadio Mane scored two goals inside two first-half minutes as Liverpool ended its winless start to 2017 by beating title-chasing Tottenham 2-0 in a ruthless display in the English Premier League yesterday. Spurs were looking to trim the gap to first-place Chelsea to six points, but were

outplayed at Anfield in the face of Liverpool's relentless pressing game.

Mane raced through the middle to lift home a well-taken finish in the 16th minute and was celebrating again in the 18th after driving a rising shot into the net from close range. They were his first goals since returning from the African Cup of Nations at the end of January.

Liverpool hadn't won any of its first five league games this year, virtually ending its hopes of capturing a first title since 1990, but this was an encouraging return to form against a rival for a top-four finish.

The Reds climbed to fourth ahead of

Manchester City, which plays Bournemouth tomorrow. Tottenham started the weekend as Chelsea's nearest challenger. Yet this was a demoralizing loss - only its third all season in the league - and it could have been much worse, with Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet barely troubled.

Liverpool's slump in form coincided with Mane's departure to the African Cup with Senegal, with the team missing his energy and exuberance out wide. His return could be the catalyst for a renewed tilt at the Champions League qualification places for Liverpool. Spurs simply couldn't live with him here.

Mane's first goal came courtesy of a pinpoint through-ball by Georginio Wijnaldum, after Liverpool forced a turnover and then created space in central midfield with a neat one-two between Wijnaldum and Roberto Firmino. Mane outpaced Ben Davies to latch onto the pass and showed composure to lift his finish beyond Hugo Lloris from inside the area. Home celebrations had barely died down when Tottenham's midfield was again picked off, Mane led a counterattack, Firmino had a shot saved, and Mane slammed the rebound high into the net from eight meters.

Mane was in relentless mood, shooting

just wide and then forcing a superb low save out of Lloris. Spurs were being suffocated and the halftime whistle came as a relief, as Liverpool should have been further ahead especially when Philippe Coutinho had a clear sight on goal and shot at Lloris.

Liverpool maintained its standard - and breathtaking levels of pressing - in the second half as tempers frayed, with even striker Harry Kane getting booked for an ugly lunge on Nathaniel Clyne. Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp lived and breathed every action in his inimitable style in the technical area and he warmly embraced each of his players after the final whistle. — AP

MARTIAL MAKES POINT AS MAN UTD CLOSE ON CITY

Man United 2

Watford 0

MANCHESTER: Juan Mata and Anthony Martial helped Manchester United extend their brilliant Premier League form as they outclassed Watford in a comfortable 2-0 victory at Old Trafford yesterday. Jose Mourinho may have a reputation as a defensive manager, but that accusation could not be made during this contest as United were wonderfully entertaining from start to finish.

With an attack containing Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Henrikh Mkhitaryan and both goalscorers, United had class to spare and Walter Mazzarri's Watford had no real answers.

Mourinho will be particularly pleased with the return to form of Martial, a player who has blown hot and cold recently following speculation about his future. United's impressive league form has seen them go unbeaten since their humiliating 4-0 reverse at leaders Chelsea on October 23. They now trail fourth-place Manchester City by just a

point ahead of their derby rivals' trip to Bournemouth tomorrow. Watford arrived in Manchester confident, however, after consecutive wins over Arsenal and Burnley. United had the best of the opening moments, but clear-cut chances were a rarity early on. That was to change.

Antonio Valencia's deflected cross fell to Ibrahimovic 12 yards out after 60 seconds, but he mis-hit his volley, while a jinking run from Martial had Watford worried until his shot deflected wide.

Watford were clearly up for the fight as Jose Holebas and M'Baye Niang targeted Valencia on United's right flank and repeatedly ran through on David de Gea's goal, but could not make it count. After 17 minutes, Paul Pogba nearly opened the scoring with a fine effort from 25 yards that Heurelho Gomes managed to brilliantly claw away at full stretch.

TWISTED THE KNIFE

United slowly turned up the tempo and had three brilliant opportunities as Watford began to sit back, a tactic that can prove fatal at Old Trafford. Firstly Ibrahimovic volleyed over following a fine ball from Pogba before the Frenchman almost scored himself, volleying Valencia's low cross goalwards, only for Gomes to produce another smart save. The best opportunity, though, fell to

Mkhitaryan, who blasted over from Mata's intelligent pass, much to Mourinho's dismay. It felt like Watford's resistance had to break and so it proved. With Mourinho imploring the home crowd to chant more loudly in support of his side, Gomes produced a stunning close-range block from Ibrahimovic before Mata broke the deadlock in the 32nd minute.

Martial ran Watford ragged down the left and his pinpoint pass gave Mata an easy tap-in from four yards out for his ninth goal of the season. Watford somehow reached half-time just a goal down, but Mourinho's men continued where they had left off after the interval as a Martial effort just went wide of the far post 60 seconds into the second half. Martial did a little better on the hour, grabbing his side's second goal as United twisted the knife. In the blink of an eye, Ibrahimovic fed Martial near the halfway line and he ran through on goal, took his time and then beat Gomes at his near post through a thicket of defenders.

After the goal Watford actually improved as they chased the match and Daryl Janmaat should have halved the deficit with 20 minutes to go, only to blast wastefully over from 12 yards out. It summed up Watford's afternoon as United closed up at the back and ran down the clock with ease. — AFP



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Zlatan Ibrahimovic, right, in action during the English Premier League soccer match between Manchester United and Watford, at Old Trafford, in Manchester, England, yesterday. — AP



WARBA BANK RECORDS STRONG GROWTH, PERFORMANCE



TOKYO: A woman plays the popular dating simulation game Ikemen series produced by Japanese mobile content business company Cybird in Tokyo. — AFP

THE BIGGEST PLAYERS ON WALL STREET? ALGORITHMS
 MYSTERIOUS PROGRAMS AT THE CENTER OF 'FLASH CRASH'

NEW YORK: They are agnostic on market direction, but ubiquitous in markets. Firms like Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley may get the headlines, but algorithms are the real force today on Wall Street. The mysterious programs were at the center of the so-called "Flash Crash" in May 2010, when the US stock market plunged more than nine percent in a matter of minutes for no discernible reason.

The swoon, which was reversed within a matter of minutes, was sparked by a computerized order to sell a large quantity of S&P 500 futures in a short period. That, in turn, triggered a chain reaction of other computerized orders by high-frequency traders. The quickfire crash and recovery underscored the pivotal role of algorithms, which execute automated trades after taking instantaneous readings of inputs that

can include news events, economic data and stock price movements.

The era of automated trading began with the 1971 founding of the Nasdaq market, which introduced computers to Wall Street in a significant way. Today, algorithms are the 900-pound gorilla in markets, playing a role in the vast majority of securities transactions. "I would say it is 90 percent algorithmic, but there is not a great way to quantify that," said Valerie Bogard, an equity analyst at Tabb Group, a research and consulting firm. "Even though (people) may send an order through a sales desk, it is possible it is going through an algo."

Wide variety

Algorithmic trades vary in complexity and can be carried out with minimal human

involvement once they are set up. For example, the branding and technology company T3 has created a robotic, or "bot," system that reads US President Donald Trump's Twitter feed and implements stock trades if it determines based on a quickfire reading that there will likely be a negative impact on a company's shares. Other firms, such as QuantCube Technology, use algorithms to make trades following analysis of so-called "Big Data." But the most controversial type of algorithms are those that do high-frequency trading, which execute buy and sell orders that individually result in minuscule gains but can add up to great amounts at large volumes.

High-frequency trades make up a rising share of overall market transactions and are often criticized due to their opacity. Traders in this area have at times engaged in "spoof-

ing"—placing thousands of computer-generated rapid-fire fake trades that are quickly cancelled. The objective is to coax other traders into making bets at artificially high or low prices. "That is just a violation of some of the rules of trading," said Eric Noll, chief executive of Convergenx Group, a New York brokerage firm.

Link to crises?

The Securities and Exchange Commission in 2014 levied its first fine for such bogus trades. Since then, US regulators have pumped more resources into enforcing the rules on electronic trading. The SEC now requires firms to identify those who design and operate algorithms and can subpoena documents from firms employing the technology. There has also been a preference

among some investors to rein in the machines. The New York Stock Exchange has announced plans to slow down transactions in one of its platforms, following the introduction of a similar mechanism by IEX Group, which delays transactions by microseconds.

These moves were taken in response to criticism that high-frequency traders were stiffing investors by driving up transaction costs. But market insiders say there is no evidence of a clear trend as far as whether high-frequency trading makes the market more prone to crises than with conventional trading. After all, markets were also prone to violent gyrations prior to when the machines took over. "When the crash in 1987 happened, it was before algos," said Noll. "It is a somewhat harsh reality but true." — AFP

STOP 'PLAYING WITH FIRE,' GREEK PM WARNS IMF AND GERMANY

BRUSSELS TALKS FAIL TO END GREECE BAILOUT IMPASSE

ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras yesterday warned the International Monetary Fund and German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaueble to "stop playing with fire" in the handling of his country's debt. Opening a meeting of his Syriza party, Tsipras said he was confident a solution would be found, a day after talks between Greece and its creditors ended in Brussels with no breakthrough.

He urged a change of course from the IMF. "We expect as soon as possible that the IMF revise its forecast... so that discussions can continue at the technical level."

Referring to Schaueble, Tsipras also called for German Chancellor Angela Merkel to "encourage her finance minister to end his permanent aggressiveness" toward Greece. Months of feuding with the IMF has raised

fears of a new debt crisis. Greece is embroiled in a row with its euro-zone paymasters and the IMF over debt relief and budget targets that has rattled markets and revived talk of its place in the euro. Eurogroup chief Jeroen Dijsselbloem said progress had been made in the Brussels talks with Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos and other EU and IMF officials. But he provided few details.

The Athens government faces debt repayments of 7.0 billion euros (\$7.44 billion) this summer that it cannot afford without defusing the feud that is holding up new loans from Greece's 86 billion euro bailout. Breaking the stalemate in the coming weeks is seen as paramount with elections in the Netherlands on March 15 and France in April through June threatening to make a resolution even more difficult.

Bailout impasse

Meanwhile, talks between Greece and its creditors ended with no breakthrough Friday as months of feuding with the International Monetary Fund raised fears of a new debt crisis. Greece is caught up in a complicated row with its euro-zone paymasters and the IMF over debt relief and budget targets that has rattled markets and revived talk of the country's place in the euro. Eurogroup chief Jeroen Dijsselbloem said progress was made after

five hours of talks in Brussels with Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos and other EU and IMF officials, but provided few details.

"There is a clear understanding that a timely finalization of the second review is in everyone's interest," Dijsselbloem said in a short statement, referring to the long delayed signing off on the next payment of bailout loans. The Greek government faces debt repayments of 7.0 billion euros (\$7.44 billion) this summer that it cannot afford without defusing the months-long feud that is holding up new loans from Greece's 86 billion euro bailout.

Breaking the stalemate in the coming weeks was seen as paramount with elections in the Netherlands on March 15 and France in April through June threatening to make a resolution even more difficult. But Dijsselbloem also warned that the next meeting of euro-zone ministers on February 20 —seen as an unofficial deadline ahead of the votes-would still be too early for a breakthrough. "We will take stock of the further progress (during that meeting)," said Dijsselbloem, who is also Dutch finance minister. The central focus of the talks was whether Greece can deliver a primary balance, or a budget surplus before debt repayments, equal to 3.5 percent of GDP for several years after the completion of the current bailout in 2018. —Agencies

EGYPT'S INFLATION HITS 29.6 PERCENT

CAIRO: Egypt's annual inflation rate hit 29.6 percent in January, official figures showed yesterday, three months after the government floated the pound in line with an International Monetary Fund bailout. Prices were rising even more quickly than in December, when inflation stood at 24.3 percent, the highest level since January 2011 when the Arab Spring uprising was at its height. Consumers have been hit by surging prices since November when the government floated the currency and slashed fuel subsidies as part of an economic reform package linked to the \$12 billion IMF loan deal.

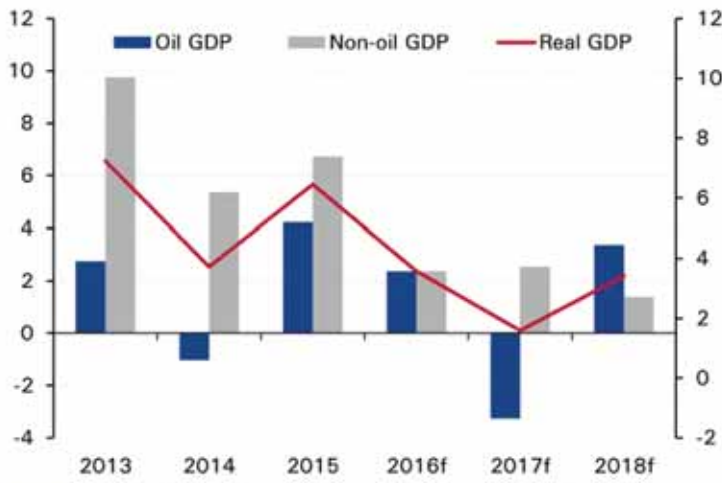
The Egyptian pound, which had been pegged at 8.83 to the dollar, has been trading at nearly 19. Food prices have gone up even more than those of other goods, rising by 38.6 percent year on year. IMF mission chief Chris Jarvis said last month that he expected inflation to ease significantly in the second half of the year.

He said Egypt had made a "good start" on the reform package it had signed up to. In addition to the pound's devaluation, the government also raised tariffs on hundreds of imported items to up to 60 percent in December and introduced a value-added tax in September. The IMF approved a first \$2.75 billion tranche of emergency loans in November after Egypt's foreign currency reserves plunged. The tourism sector, which is one the main sources of foreign currency, has been badly hit by a persistent jihadist insurgency. Egypt is set to receive a second tranche of \$1.25 billion. —AFP



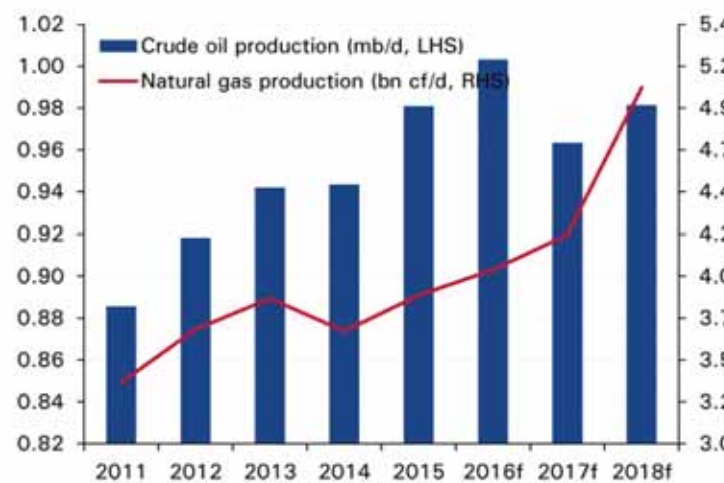
ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras speaks during a meeting of his Syriza party in Athens yesterday. —AFP

Chart 1: Real GDP (% y/y)



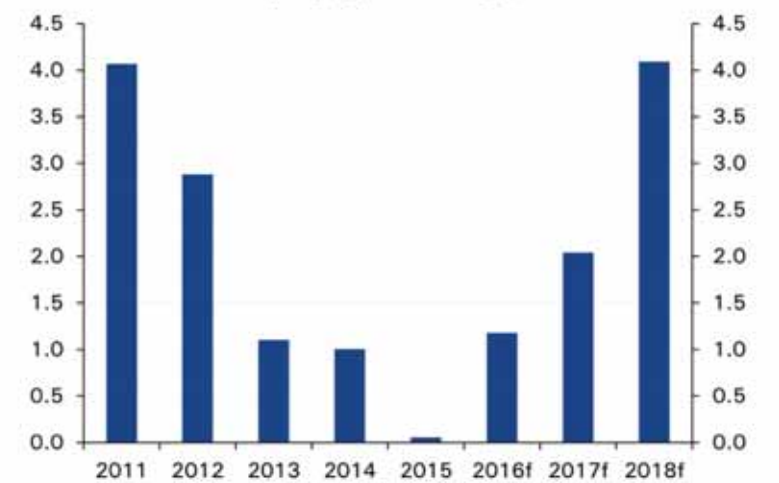
Source: National Center for Statistics and Information, NBK estimates

Chart 2: Hydrocarbon production



Source: National Center for Statistics and Information, NBK estimates

Chart 3: Consumer price inflation (% y/y, year average)



Source: National Center for Statistics and Information, NBK estimates

OMAN'S GROWTH SLOWS; FISCAL STANCE TIGHTENS

NBK Economic Update

Table 1: Key economic indicators

		2015	2016f	2017f	2018f
Nominal GDP	US\$ bn	70	68	70	73
Real GDP	% y/y	5.7	2.4	0.1	2.2
- Oil	% y/y	4.2	2.4	-3.3	3.4
- Non-oil	% y/y	6.7	2.4	2.5	1.4
CPI	% y/y	0.1	1.2	2.0	4.1
Budget balance	% GDP	-17.3	-19.1	-13.9	-8.8

Source: National Center for Statistics and Information, NBK estimates

KUWAIT: The economy is showing signs of slowing on the back of fiscal tightening. Consumer confidence is weakening, government projects are being pushed forward and market conditions have turned bearish. The persistence of low oil prices is projected to produce substantial deficits through 2018, increasing the urgency for fiscal consolidation. Following fiscal reforms that failed to rein in the deficit in 2015, the government proposed new measures targeting excessive spending and better revenue collection.

To that end, the government is poised to implement a valued added tax in 2018. This is expected to act as a damper on domestic demand and economic growth. Nonetheless, the launch of the BP Khazzan tight gas project in 2018 is likely to provide a much-needed boost to growth. Meanwhile, liquidity in the banking sector is set to improve, on the back of recovering oil prices and future international issuances. At the same time, the government has been pushing meaningful structural reform and improving trade relations, which should support growth in the medium to long-term. Recent government efforts show resolve in divesting away from the public sector. Reforms supporting small and medium-sized enterprises and foreign investors hope to spark growth in the non-oil sector. Deepening ties with Iran may also be a boon for both the non-oil and financial sectors.

Growth held back

National Center for Statistics and Information, NBK estimates weaker household and government consumption, coupled with delayed private and public investments is likely to lead to a slowdown in real GDP growth in 2016 and 2017. Growth is set to recover in 2018 on the back of a boost in the oil & gas sector. Real GDP growth is expected to come in at a modest 2.4% in 2016, as a pick-up in oil production offsets the weakness in both consumer and market activity.

However, this will fail to carry through into 2017 due to planned oil production cuts in accordance with the non-OPEC agreement. Growth in 2017 will also suffer from a thriffter government, which may see some investment spending delayed, dampening a potential uplift in household consumption ahead of the implementation of the value-added tax (VAT).

For these reasons, real GDP growth in 2017 is forecast to come in flat, at an estimated 0.1%. Increased revenue from the new VAT and recovering oil prices, however, may see government investment spending pick up in 2018, with growth further lifted by the launch of the BP Khazzan tight gas project that same year. Indeed, this may lead to stronger government consumption, gas production, and LNG exports. Nonetheless, household

consumption is expected to remain subdued in 2018, with total GDP growth estimated at 2.2%.

Oman continues to pursue diversification initiatives in a bid to divest its economy from oil. Efforts, however, are being held back by the oil price crunch, posing a drag on the non-oil economy. Private and public investment spending has dried up in 2016. The value of awarded projects halved to \$7 billion in 2016. Meanwhile, other than a few investment friendly laws introduced at the beginning of the year, other initiatives have since been few or lacking. As a result, the non-oil economy is expected to see real growth average 2% from 2017 through 2018.

High breakeven price

With current and expected oil prices well below the sultanate's estimated breakeven price, Oman's coffers are expected to remain under duress, with substantial deficits to be potentially registered for 2016 and 2017, before recovering in 2018. As of October 2016, Oman has recorded a deficit of OMR 4.8 billion, overshooting the government's expectation of OMR 3.3 billion deficit for 2016, on the back of disappointing spending cuts. With little expected change in spending behavior and an estimated breakeven price of \$95 per barrel versus a 2016 market average that has hovered around \$45 per barrel, the government is slated to register a deficit close to 19% of GDP, or OMR 5.0 billion, in 2016. The 2017 budget may fare better, with the government expecting a OMR 3 billion deficit for that year. Their budgetary strategy will focus on cutting expenditures and keeping revenues unchanged, with the average barrel of oil priced at \$45. Given the government's current fiscal expenditure performance, such an outlook would imply further aggressive cuts in subsidies and a large cut in current expenditures. The likelihood of that happening, however, is slim, since such cuts may face public resistance.

On the bright side, revenues, both oil and non-oil, are expected to come in higher on the back of higher expected oil prices (\$55 per barrel

and better fee collection, but will do little to limit expenditure growth. As such, we project a slightly larger deficit than the government's, at around OMR 3.7 billion, or 14% of GDP, for 2017. Implementation of the VAT in 2018, in addition to a pick-up in oil prices, will see revenues increase that year, helping improve the budget deficit. Current and investment expenditures are expected to pick-up, however, encouraged by the stronger revenue streams. Indeed, the government may offset the impact of the tax through wage increases and a more aggressive pursuit of its development plan. The deficit is expected to come in at 9% of GDP in 2018.

In view of the low oil price environment, the government has adopted several measures to rein in their finances in 2016, such as fuel hikes, increases in government fees, corporate tax hikes, and spending cuts at government institutions. In recent months, the government also moved ahead with cuts in electricity subsidies, visa fee increases, and a privatization program.

Oman was successful in raising \$5.5 billion worth of international debt to finance its 2016 deficit by way of international bonds and syndicated loans. The government's foray was facilitated by its investment grade rating, which it is still expected to benefit from in 2017. Oman's debt level remains low relative to its peers, though it is expected to have risen to around 21% of GDP at the end of 2016; it is seen rising further to 29% and 33% by the end of 2017 and 2018, respectively.

Oil & gas sector

After an exceptional year that saw average daily production breach 1 million barrels per day, Oman is expected to see its oil sector contract in 2017, as it complies with proposed oil cuts by non-OPEC members supporting a broader OPEC agreement. The recovery of oil prices over the forecast period, however, will offset the drop in crude oil production. The higher revenue potential may also imply a more modest uptick in 2018 oil output. The launch of the BP

Khazzan tight gas project in 2018, however, will see Oman's gas sector witness a strong boost as daily production capacity is increased by 1 billion cubic feet. As such, Oman's real oil GDP growth is seen at 2.4% in 2016, -3.3% in 2017, and 3.4% in 2018. With domestic gas demand still outstripping supply, and the bulk of gas output going towards Oman's LNG exports, the need for gas imports continues to grow. As such, an Iranian gas pipeline is proposed that will import 1 billion cubic feet per day from 2018. This could help Oman avoid disruptions to its LNG exports and even consider expanding them. Progress on the pipeline, however, has been slow.

Liquidity conditions

In light of the rise in oil prices, Oman's banking sector is projected to see liquidity pressures ease as government deposits recover. Further expected international borrowing by the government may also add some support. Indeed, liquidity pressures have come off recently, with the overnight interbank lending rate at 0.46% in December 2016, lower than the 0.57% recorded in March 2016 before Oman issued its international bond. It was still up, however, from December 2015's reading of 0.19%. The improvement has been supported by a more contained decline in government deposits thanks to recent international government issuances. Government deposits were down 4% y/y in November 2016. The recent pick up in oil prices may add a further lift. Credit growth, while still resilient in 2016, is expected to slow in 2017, on the back of weaker household spending, only to pick up in 2018, as individuals cope with the higher cost of living brought forth by the implementation of the VAT. As of November 2016, private credit growth has eased, but remained resilient at 8.6% year-on-year (y/y), and is set to finish the year on a similar note.

Despite Oman's currency peg to the dollar, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) refrained from increasing its main policy rate after the widely expected US Fed rate hike. CBO chief, Al-Zadjali, explained that current

domestic liquidity and economic conditions did not warrant increased rates. However, the CBO did raise its overnight repurchase rate to 1.195% as of mid-December. Oman's financial sector is still well capitalized. According to the CBO's latest quarterly financial soundness statistics (June 2016), credit risk remains low in Oman with nonperforming loans (NPL) slightly higher at 2.2% of gross loans. Capitalization was also high, with a capital adequacy ratio of 16% in 2Q16 and a tier-1 capital ratio of 13% at the end of 2015.

More subsidy cuts

Inflation picked up following recent subsidy cuts. The increase is expected to be sustained in 2017 and 2018 as the government liberalizes prices on energy and other goods and services, offsetting downward pressures from global food and energy prices. Inflation in Oman's consumer price index (CPI) came in at 1.1% in 2016 and is expected at 2% in 2017. The introduction of the VAT in 2018 may see consumer prices rise to 4.1% for

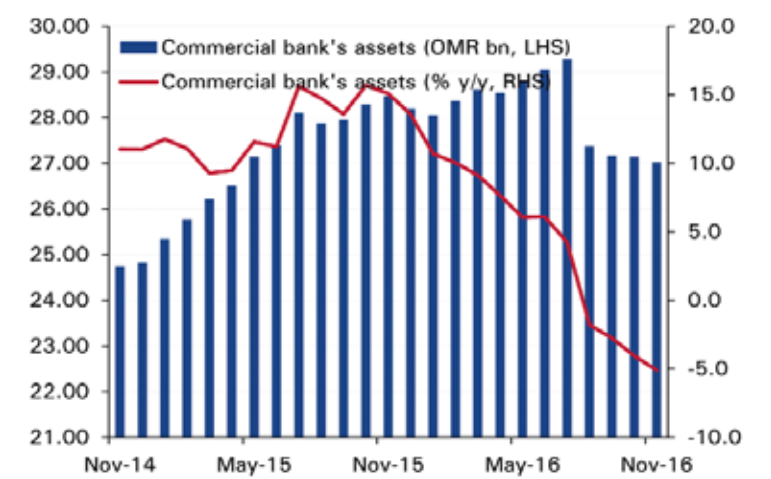
that year. December's inflation reading came in at 1.1% y/y, on the back of increased housing, furnishing, and transportation costs, offsetting the sustained decreases in food prices.

Current account

The deficit on the current account balance is projected to worsen in 2016 before improving in 2017 and 2018. Weaker oil prices will more than offset the decline in imports and import prices, keeping the trade surplus modest well into 2018.

The removal of international trade sanctions on Iran and the prospect of higher LNG exports are expected to provide strong support to the trade balance. The services deficit will continue to expand, albeit at a slower pace, as projects aimed at boosting tourism and transport come to fruition. Meanwhile, further growth in the expatriate population will see remittances grow. As of October 2016, Oman's foreign reserves stood at OMR 7.4 billion, or an estimated 9 months of imports.

Chart 6: Commercial bank assets



Source: Central Bank of Oman

Chart 7: Credit to private sector (% y/y)



Source: Central Bank of Oman

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.701
Indian Rupees	4.578
Pakistani Rupees	2.917
Srilankan Rupees	2.032
Nepali Rupees	2.863
Singapore Dollar	216.110
Hongkong Dollar	39.410
Bangladesh Taka	3.826
Philippine Peso	6.131
Thai Baht	8.744

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.601
Qatari Riyal	84.046
ani Riyal	794.690
Bahraini Dinar	812.540
UAE Dirham	83.313

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.100
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.172
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.228
Tunisian Dinar	134.890
Jordanian Dinar	430.800
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.039
Syrian Lira	2.180
Morocco Dirham	30.889

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	305.800
Euro	327.660
Sterling Pound	384.080
Canadian dollar	325.050
Turkish lira	83.460

Swiss Franc	307.030
Australian Dollar	235.010
US Dollar Buying	304.600

GOLD

20 Gram	252.370
10 Gram	129.110
5 Gram	65.400

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer Selling Rate

US Dollar	305.450
Canadian Dolla	234.165
Sterling Pound	382.950
Euro	326.665
Swiss Franc	306.290
Bahrain Dinar	809.725
UAE Dirhams	83.555
Qatari Riyals	84.775
Saudi Riyals	82.380
Jordanian Dinar	431.985
Egyptian Pound	17.197
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.031
Indian Rupees	4.567
Pakistani Rupees	2.913
Bangladesh Taka	3.859
Philippines Pess	6.128
Cyprus pound	167.740
Japanese Yen	3.685
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupee	3.850
Malaysian Ringgit	69.555

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.840
Thai Bhat	9.705
Turkish Lira	83.170

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

British Pound	0.376107	0.386107
Czech Korune	0.004057	0.016057
Danish Krone	0.039786	0.044786
Euro	0.320664	0.329664
Norwegian Krone	0.032679	0.037879
Romanian Leu	0.084750	0.084750
Slovakia	0.009164	0.019164
Swedish Krona	0.030306	0.035306
Swiss Franc	0.299100	0.310100
Turkish Lira	0.076883	0.087183
Australian Dollar	0.227019	0.239019
New Zealand Dollar	0.214435	0.138117
Canadian Dollar	0.228850	0.237650
Georgina Lari	0.138117	0.138117
US Dollars	0.301700	0.306100
US Dollars Mint	0.302200	0.306100
Bangladesh Taka	0.003619	0.004203
Chinese Yuan	0.042975	0.046475
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037342	0.040092
Indian Rupee	0.002677	0.004900
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002624	0.002804
Kenyan Shilling	0.003011	0.003011
Korean Won	0.000256	0.000271
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065027	0.071027
Nepalese Rupee	0.003083	0.003253
Pakistan Rupee	0.002638	0.002928
Philippine Peso	0.006055	0.006355
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.210253	0.220253
South African Rand	0.016941	0.025441
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001679	0.002259
Taiwan	0.009663	0.009843
Thai Baht	0.008387	0.008937
Bahraini Dinar	0.804569	0.813069
Egyptian Pound	0.010133	0.019386
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000186	0.000246
Jordanian Dinar	0.425649	0.434649
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000148	0.000248
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020116	0.044116
Nigerian Naira	0.001267	0.001902
Omani Riyal	0.787865	0.793545
Qatar Riyal	0.083184	0.084634
Saudi Riyal	0.080460	0.081760
Syrian Pound	0.001297	0.001517
Tunisian Dinar	0.130150	0.138450
Turkish Lira	0.076883	0.087183
UAE Dirhams	0.081834	0.083534
Yemeni Riyal	0.000994	0.001074

WARBA BANK RECORDS STRONG GROWTH, PERFORMANCE

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Warba Bank achieved successful results in 2016, and is eyeing more success in 2017. CEO Shaheen Al-Ghanim held a press conference on Thursday at the bank's premises to speak about the bank's achievements in 2016, its new strategy in cooperation with McKinsey & Company, marketing of Islamic bonds (sukuk) that were launched in 2016, as well as other issues. 2016 was a special year for Warba Bank. "We closed many successful deals in 2016, which resulted in strong growth and performance in Dec 2016.

The most important phase was preparing our new strategy for the next five years. We were keen to invest in this strategy, and although it will not show up in the assets of our balance sheet, it has a great value. We decided to get into a partnership with McKinsey & Company, one of the most popular advisors and consultants to many of the world's most influential businesses and institutions. Our strategy with McKinsey was approved last month," said Ghanim during the conference.

"In 2016, we prepared our next strategy, and it was approved by the board in January. Today, Warba is entering a new phase, which is more focused on excelling in its sectors," he added. Warba will strengthen its leading position in corporate and investment banking. "As an Islamic bank, I think we are successful in both. Financing companies includes structured transactions, while investment banking includes Islamic bonds (sukuk), syndication and others.

Also, we will be offering all modern banking services including digital and electronic services to our clients, which we consider the most important means to reach out to them. We don't think that having branches according to the old system is not the best option, but we would rather expand through our client's mobile phones and online serv-

ices," stressed Ghanim. In a message to the bank's clients, Ghanim said: "We offer innovative services and products. We invent solutions and we are a bank that doesn't sell products that others sell as standard. We are a bank that shares our opinion with our clients and understands their needs to build together suitable solutions that meet their desires and needs."

In a message to the bank's employees, Ghanim said: "We won't judge and will give you the chance to grow and learn. We will invest in our staff and will increase their training. We believe that our competition in the market is through our employees and through training and preparing them for this competition. As we are a bank that invents solutions, we should have employees that can invent and develop."

In a message to the bank's shareholders, Ghanim said: "We promise them balanced growth between profits and continuous growing, and achieving good returns for our shareholders. Warba Bank became very interesting for investors as its share value reached 250 fils. Our goal and strategy is to grow with achieving profits. This is our strategy for the next five years."

Performance

"The market growth was 2.9 percent in financing portfolios, while Warba Bank's growth was 51 percent in both finance and investment portfolios, as we reached KD 928 million in total income, generating assets that make good returns," he said.

Sectors

"The sector of individuals faced a great drop in general, but our bank succeeded to achieve growth. The same thing applied in the contracting sector, where the market growth increased and we as well achieved growth. Also, the trading sector improved and we achieved growth in this sector.

Due to the variety of our portfolio and entering new sectors, even our real estate portfolio registered growth," Ghanim said.

Warba Bank achieved a greater growth percentage than other banks. "We attracted clients from other banks, which is reflected in our numbers. Warba proved that we are able to compete. Financing a project in New York was one of the most important contracts in 2016, along with KNPC project and others," noted Ghanim.

In 2017 Warba is preparing more projects, especially those planned by the government. "These include Kuwait Airways Corporation, KPC and RFP for consulting services. Also, we are financing the main contractor for Formula 1 tracks. Also, there is an oil refinery and many other government contracting projects that we are expecting," he stated.

"We continue to grow in the individuals sector. We also entered in the financing contract of Bank Ajman - out of the \$230 million, we financed \$40 million. Furthermore, we entered in the ICD bonds with KD 25 million, and we bought some of the bonds of Faisal Holding and became shareholders in \$250 million. For the first time, we entered in the structured issuance notes of Emirates airlines with \$14 million," he also said.

Warba Bank is targeting to reach 10 percent of the market share in Islamic banking. "We have reached 2 percent and expect to reach 10 percent within the next five years. We expect to grow by 40 to 50 percent annually to reach 10 percent, depending on the local market, but we also target to distribute transactions in cooperation with other banks, which will allow our bank to compete in mega deals," Ghanim explained.

Warba bank will go on a non-deal road show this month. "We will be focusing on East Asia including Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and London. The contracts will be based in London.



KUWAIT: Warba Bank's CEO Shaheen Al-Ghanim chats with reporters during a press conference at the bank's premises. — Photo by Yasser Al Zayyat

Regional and international market is awaiting bonds from Kuwait due to its high quality and small numbers, especially from Warba, which is supported by the government. The bonds will focus on corporate, investment and retail. We reached 18 percent capital adequacy, and after issuing the bonds we will reach 33 percent," stressed Ghanim.

The operating model will not focus on launching big branches that have high cost. We will rather use technology to reach our clients. "This will allow the bank to enter into mega deals and projects, while other banks with high spending on operating huge branches won't be able to do so. All the services that clients need the bank will provide through online services. The e-signature is one of the modern services. But we will still open about three or four branches annually," he concluded.

AHLI UNITED BANK CORE FINANCE INCOME RISES

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank, KSCP (the Bank) announced that its operations for the financial year ending 31 December 2016 realized income from its core financing activities amounting to KD 133 million, exceeding the 2015 income recorded of KD 121 million, an increase of 10%. This increase was the outcome of the Bank focusing on higher return sectors albeit with a lower risk profile managed under an active and robust risk management framework. Overall, the Bank maintained a stable level of operating profits for the year being KD 111 million.

Notwithstanding the oil prices maintained at low level during 2015 and 2016, which had an adverse impact on the performance of the various economic sectors the Bank succeeded in maintaining good results, thereby realizing a net operating income before provisions of KD 77.2 million in 2016, as compared with KD 77.7 million achieved in 2015. The net operating income after provision and before tax reported KD 39.7 million up from KD 37.1 million reported at the end of 2015, an increase of 7%.

Ahli United Bank Chairman, Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf, said that the Bank - as per the directives of its Board of Directors - continued to adopt a prudent risk policies and efficient Asset Management, during this period of low oil prices and geopolitical instability in the region, coupled with tighter levels of liquidity, which resulted in maintaining a high quality portfolio of financing assets with a total value of KD 2.7 billion, where the ratio of non-performing financing in this portfolio did not exceed 2.5%.

Moreover, the Bank maintains a coverage ratio of provisions against non-performing financing of 264% noting that the impairment provision relates to the additional precautionary credit provisions taken on the Bank's financing receivables on a

conservative basis. Consequently, the Banks net profit in 2016 recorded KD 40.3 million, i.e. a decrease by 5.8% below the 2015 net profits of KD 42.8 million. Accordingly, the earnings per share (EPS) reached 25.9 fils per share in 2016 (27.4 fils per share in 2015).

In October 2016, AUB Kuwait successfully completed a US\$ 200 million (equivalent to KD 60.6 million) issue of Additional Tier 1 Perpetual Basel III Compliant Sukuk. The strong demand generated for the Sukuk following the successful fixed income investor meetings in Asia, the Middle East and Europe translated to an oversubscription of the issue by more than three times.

The Sukuk adds a new source of funding for the Bank's capital which will further diversify its capital and funding base. The successful issuance is a clear indication of the confidence of both local and global investors in AUB's diversified business model, its robust financial performance, the overall strength of its financial position and credit worthiness which has led to an enhancement of the Bank's capital base to reach KD 446 million, thus bringing the capital adequacy ratio up to 18.2% (2015, 15.5%) before distribution.

The Bank maintained a distinct return on equity (ROE) of 11% in 2016, which is deemed with the prime rates of return in the domestic and regional markets. On the other hand, the return on assets (ROA) in 2016 recorded 1%. The Bank's assets reached KD 3.7 billion in 2016, 5% below 2015 level, given the Bank's prudent credit underwriting stance in a difficult operating environment and optimizing returns.

The Bank continued to obtain high credit ratings given by the international credit rating agencies, such as Fitch, Moody's and Capital Intelligence. The Bank maintained a credit rating of "A+" on the long term and "F1" on the short term with



Dr Anwar Al-Mudhaf

stable outlook by Fitch Ratings Agency, and "A2" on local currency with stable outlook by Moody's. Capital Intelligence affirmed the Bank's long term credit rating of foreign currency to "A+" and enhanced the short term foreign currency rating to "A2". All these ratings confirm the credit standing, capital quality, and stability of the Bank for future growth.

The Board of Directors continued their focus on following up on the Bank's objectives towards rationalization of costs and maintaining an operating efficiency ratio of 30.5% in 2016. Equally, the Bank continued its commitment towards developing its Youth National Manpower through structured training and leadership programs. Dr Al-Mudhaf added that in conformity with the Bank's objective to develop products and services for its customers, the Bank launched its new mobile banking application and further developed its front-end systems in branches to provide an improved service to customers.

Furthermore, a new branch was opened in the Boulevard Mall in Salmiya

adding to the already extensive branch network across Kuwait. The Bank's management supported an active corporate social responsibility program by contributing to a large number of social and charitable activities during the year. Staff involvement was key to this success. This also included the furnishing and adaption of seven branches and a number of automated teller machines (ATMs) to serve Special Needs customers.

The Bank obtained several awards in 2016. These awards included the "Best Islamic Bank Award - Kuwait" for the fourth consecutive year from The Banker magazine, that is considered one of the Global Magazines that award pronounced annual awards reflecting the distinction in providing Islamic Banking as per international Standards and the "Second Safest Islamic Bank in Kuwait and Fourth in the GCC" awarded by Global Finance magazine for the second year in row. The Bank is recommending a cash distribution of 12% and bonus shares of 8% of the issued and paid up capital to the shareholders subject to the approval of the ordinary general assembly of the Bank, due to be convened in month.

Praise be to Allah the Almighty, Dr Al-Mudhaf extended his thanks and appreciation to Central Bank of Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority for their valuable directions and the Bank's customers and shareholders for their confidence and continued support for the Bank on all levels. In conclusion, Dr. Al-Mudhaf extended his thanks to the members of the Board of Directors and members of the Fatwa & Shari'ah Board, the Executive Management, and all the Bank staff for their efforts and diligence which contributed to advancement of the Bank and supporting its 75th year of operation which is being celebrated in 2017.

News

in brief

Canada's unemployment rate falls to 6.8 percent

OTTAWA: Canada's unemployment rate fell 0.1 percent in January to 6.8 percent, the government said yesterday. Some 48,000 new jobs were added, in contrast with forecasts that had predicted a modest loss of 10,000 jobs and a stable unemployment rate. Year-over-year employment grew by 276,000 jobs (+1.5 percent), with the bulk of hires occurring since August. Job growth was strongest in the service sector, but declined in the information, culture and recreation sectors. Employment grew among men and women age 25-54 and varied little in other population segments, according to Statistics Canada. At the regional level, the provinces of Ontario, British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland saw the greatest job growth. The private sector saw the bulk of job growth (+32,400) with modest increases in the public and self-employed sectors. Since August, the Canadian economy has created an average of 40,000 jobs per month, which is "well above the pace of employment growth that we would expect with GDP appearing to be tracking between 1.5-2 percent at present," said Andrew Grantham, an economist with CIBC Bank.

British economic outlook brightens as Brexit looms

LONDON: Britain's industrial output grew and the trade deficit improved in December, official data showed yesterday, signaling a brighter economic outlook ahead of Brexit. The news comes as The Times newspaper reported that the government has divided British industries into high, medium and low priorities in terms of its upcoming EU exit negotiations. Industrial output climbed 1.1 percent compared with activity in November, with particularly strong activity in the pharmaceutical and metal sectors, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) revealed in a statement. That easily outshone market expectations for a modest gain of 0.2 percent. Britain's trade-in-goods deficit narrowed in December to £10.9 billion from £11.6 billion in November, the ONS added. Scott Bowman, UK economist at British-based research consultancy Capital Economics, argued the data signaled a "more balanced" economy. "Today's economic activity data added to other evidence suggesting that the economy maintained a significant amount of momentum at the end of 2016 and implies that GDP (gross domestic product) growth is becoming more balanced," Bowman noted.

Reserve Bank lowers Australia short-term growth forecast

SYDNEY: Australia's central bank lowered near-term growth forecasts Friday after a rare contraction in the September quarter, but stayed positive about the economic outlook as the International Monetary Fund warned of risks ahead. The Reserve Bank of Australia slashed the growth figures for the year ending June 2017 by one percentage point to 1.5-2.5 percent following a 0.5 percent contraction in the third-quarter of last year. "Some of the factors weighing on reported GDP growth in the September quarter were temporary and have not materially affected the outlook for growth," the RBA said in its quarterly Statement of Monetary Policy. "Overall, year-ended GDP growth is forecast to pick up as the drag from mining investment and effects from the earlier fall in the terms of trade dissipate. "GDP growth is forecast to increase to 2.5-3.5 percent in late 2017, and to be above potential for most of the forecast period." Australia has avoided a recession for more than a quarter of a century. But the economy has charted a bumpy course in recent years since the end of the mining investment boom.

Iraqi Airways plane evacuated after fire

JEDDAH: Hundreds of passengers were evacuated safely from an Iraqi Airways plane yesterday after a wheel caught fire on landing in Saudi Arabia, Saudi state media said. Emergency crews evacuated 356 passengers "in record time without any casualties," the official Saudi Press Agency said. The aircraft was landing at King Abdulaziz International Airport in the Red Sea city of Jeddah when fire broke out on one of the wheels, the agency said. SPA said the captain radioed the control tower to report the problem and fire crews rushed to the aircraft to extinguish the flames. It said the fire was "limited" in scope. The airport, one of the Saudi kingdom's busiest, is a key gateway for millions of Muslims who visit for the yearly hajj and for minor umrah pilgrimages to Islam's holiest cities in Makkah and Madinah.

IN US, TRUMP USHERS IN ERA OF DRAMATIC DEREGULATION

WASHINGTON: Methane emissions, guns, river pollution, Wall Street: Hand in hand with President Donald Trump, the Republican majority in Congress has begun to repeal Obama-era regulations opposed by big business. At the very beginning of his term, the billionaire Republican president signed an order freezing any new regulations close to being finalized, and requiring that for each new rule imposed two others must be eliminated. "We think we can cut regulations by 75 percent, maybe more," Trump said in a White House meeting with business leaders on January 23.

If details remain vague (75 percent of the number of pages in regulations? 75 percent of cost?), they reflect the clear intent of the Republican majority to satisfy the demands of the interest groups that have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in lobbying and campaign donations. "Every day is Christmas for big business in the Trump administration," Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen said. His nonprofit advocacy group is filing a court challenge to the order on regulations. In practice, Trump can delay such regulations-which have passed through a years-long review process-but he cannot eliminate them with the simple stroke of a pen.

Republican leaders in Congress, however, have unearthed a rarely used 1996 law that allows them, through a vote, to revoke certain regulations finalized in the last six months of the previous administration. They have already targeted for repeal: a rule that would have made it harder for mining companies to dump coal-min-

ing waste into streams and waterways; an anti-corruption rule requiring oil, gas and mining companies to disclose any payments made to foreign governments, including taxes and royalties; a rule to require oil and gas companies drilling on public lands to reduce leaks or burnoff of methane, a heat-trapping gas linked to global warming; and a rule aimed at keeping firearms out of the hands of certain mentally disabled people. Trump, for his part, has signed an executive order targeting the sweeping Dodd-Frank financial reform adopted after the recession of 2008, as well as the so-called fiduciary rule that requires financial advisers to act in the interest of their clients. The objective in each case is the same: less regulation means fewer costs for companies, and, they say, for consumers.

Permanent resistance

These rules were targeted by powerful business organizations like the US Chamber of Commerce and Freedom Partners, which accused the Obama administration of imposing excessive costs on companies, particularly through tough new environmental rules. Landmark regulations like those in the Clean Power Plan, which would compel coal-fueled power plants to slash their carbon emissions, are also being tested in court.

"The last eight years have been a challenge," said Paul Schlegel, director of environment and energy policy for the American Farm Bureau Federation. Farmers now have a feeling of "hope," he said. Dozens of busi-

ness groups from every sector of the economy are now piling pressure on Congress to weaken the power of federal agencies. "The signals that are being sent by the Trump administration about regulatory reform are things that we would support," said Lowell Randel, vice president of the Global Cold Chain Alliance, which represents 1,300 companies involved with refrigerated storage and transport.

The Trump administration may also choose to act more favorably on the enforcement side, possibly reducing on-site safety and quality inspections, or instructing federal agencies to issue warnings but fewer fines. The enforcement division of the Environmental Protection Agency might even be shuttered, according to the Inside EPA website. "We don't expect leniency, but if there is a greater degree of constructive engagement, we think that would be a positive step," said Schlegel of the farm group.

With Democrats now the minority party in Congress, resistance to deregulation will likely be led by nonprofit groups advocating for the environment and consumer protection. The next four years could see the emergence of a more or less permanent resistance movement, with the courts as a favored battlefield. "There will be legal challenges to every repeal," predicted Rebecca Buckwalter-Poza, of the Center for American Progress, a left-leaning think tank. "There are going to be a lot of hurdles, but in the meantime things will not be enforced, and it will not be possible to make new rules." —AFP

SECTORS' WEEKLY TRADING ACTIVITY				
Sector	Volume	To Market %	Value	To Market %
OIL & GAS	76,776,609	2.89%	4,067,726	1.66%
BASIC MATERIALS	16,164,187	0.61%	5,835,542	2.38%
INDUSTRIALS	162,089,520	6.11%	27,290,760	11.14%
CONSUMER GOODS	23,207,159	0.87%	3,851,227	1.57%
HEALTH CARE	93,820	0.00%	24,136	0.01%
CONSUMER SERVICES	43,744,464	1.65%	4,174,069	1.70%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	110,764,849	4.17%	26,963,603	11.01%
BANKS	277,002,117	10.44%	42,208,538	17.23%
INSURANCE	3,465,320	0.13%	239,919	0.10%
REAL ESTATE	1,036,384,561	39.05%	61,871,894	25.26%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	902,769,049	34.01%	68,169,841	27.83%
TECHNOLOGY	1,622,701	0.06%	220,098	0.09%

SECTORS INDICES PERFORMANCE				
Sector	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
OIL & GAS	840.74	918.78	-8.49%	7.70%
BASIC MATERIALS	1,301.44	1,300.39	0.08%	29.52%
INDUSTRIALS	1,478.70	1,477.92	0.05%	10.02%
CONSUMER GOODS	1,139.45	1,152.92	-1.17%	1.28%
HEALTH CARE	1,235.49	1,189.97	3.83%	-0.72%
CONSUMER SERVICES	973.47	1,006.54	-3.29%	5.29%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	674.68	689.11	-2.09%	6.06%
BANKS	938.91	956.00	-1.79%	12.15%
INSURANCE	1,134.97	1,121.72	1.18%	14.15%
REAL ESTATE	1,028.24	1,110.97	-7.45%	18.16%
FINANCIAL SERVICES	745.56	801.08	-6.93%	24.87%
TECHNOLOGY	848.81	849.08	-0.03%	39.80%

KUWAIT STOCK EXCHANGE ENDS IN THE RED ZONE

Bayan Investment Weekly Report

KUWAIT: Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE) ended last week in the red zone. The Price Index closed at 6,582.75 points, down by 3.81% from the week before closing, the Weighted Index decreased by 1.19% after closing at 420.28 points, whereas the KSE-15 Index closed at 962.07 points down by 0.86%. Furthermore, last week's average daily turnover decreased by 18.21%, compared to the preceding week, reaching KD 48.98 million, whereas trading volume average was 530.82 million shares, recording a decrease of 14.53%.

The selling operations over controlled the trading activity in the Bourse, which caused its three indices to record different losses for the second consecutive week, which came in light of the continued profit collection operations that included many listed stocks, especially the small-cap ones that being traded below its book value, and recorded noticeable increases since the beginning of the current year. The Price Index ended the week's trading at 6,582.75 point level, with 3.81% loss, while the Weighted Index ended the week's trading at 420.28 point level, down by 1.19%, and the KSE-15 Index lost by the end of the week about 0.86%, to close at 962.07 point level.

The Bourse recorded its losses in light of the decline in the trading indicators during the week on both the value and volume levels, compared to its levels in a week earlier, where the total volume of the traded stocks reached 2.65 billion stock, down by 14.53%, while the total trading value reached KD 244.92 million, down by 18.21%, compared to the trading levels in a week earlier.

Also, the market capitalization reached by the end of the last week KD 27.88 billion, declining by 1.06% when compared to its level in a week earlier, after it reached then KD 28.18 billion (Note: delisting of Safwan Trading & Contracting Company and Ikarus Petroleum Industries Company during the last week contributed to the decrease of the Bourse market cap by KD 44 million, the total market cap of the mentioned companies). Moreover, the Bourse Kuwait initiated its first sessions of the week with noticeable decline affected by the active profit collection operations executed on the small-cap stocks, especially the ones that realized big gains during the previous period, which negatively affected the Price Index's performance in particular, to decline by the end of the session steeply and lose about 157 point, the largest decrease in one session in more than one year.

The market was able in the second session to realize grouped gains for the three indices affected by the return of the purchasing activity that concentrated on the leading stocks, which positively affected the three Bourse indices, especially the Weighted and KSE-15 indices, to compensate all its losses recorded in the previous session, while the Price Index compensated a part of such losses. On the mid-week session, the Bourse indices returned to the losses zone once again affected by the quick profit collection operations that included many listed stocks headed by the small-cap ones, which added to the Price Index's losses on a

weekly level, and pushed the Weighted and KSE-15 indices to the red zone once again.

However, Wednesday's session witnessed a return of the three market indices to the green zone, supported by the speculative operations that concentrated on the small-cap stocks especially the ones being traded below its book value, which came in light of the increased trading levels for both the value and volume, where the cash liquidity increased by 12%, and the volume went up by 23%, compared to the previous session's trading.

In addition, the Bourse witnessed at the end of the week session a return to the losses zone for the three indices, in light of the quick profit collection operations that continued since the beginning of the week, where the decline included most of the market sectors, especially the Real Estate and the Financial Services. For the annual performance, the price index ended last week recording 14.52% annual gain compared to its closing in 2016, while the weighted index increased by 10.57%, and the KSE-15 recorded 8.71% growth.

Sectors' indices

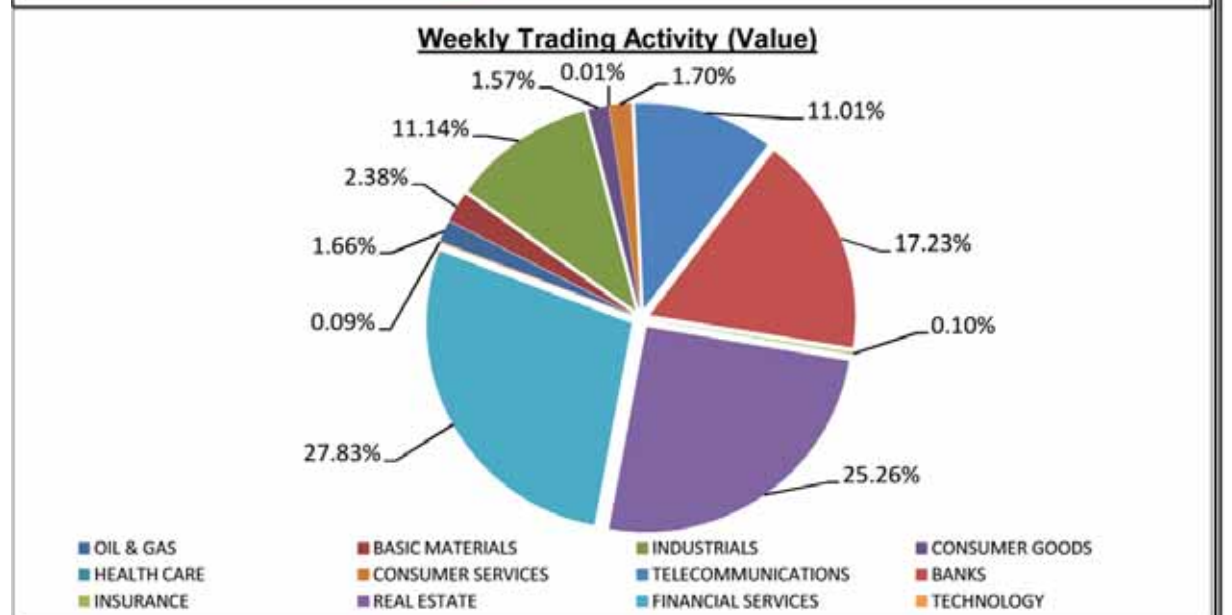
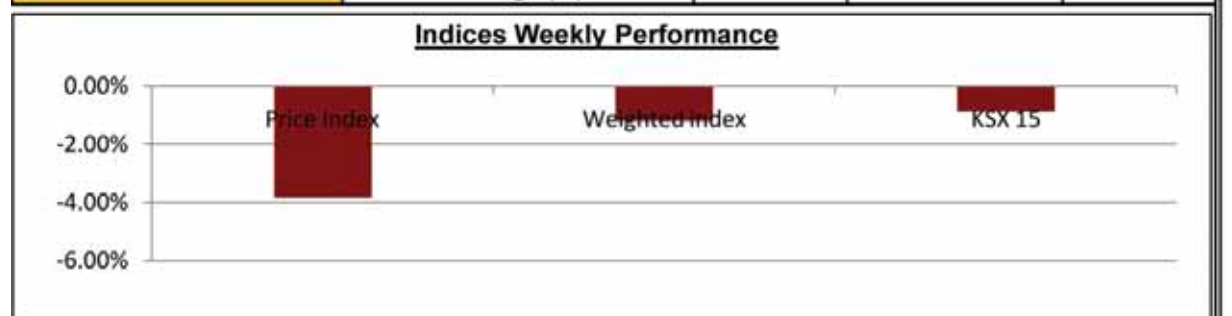
Eight of KSE's sectors ended last week in the red zone, while the other four recorded increases. The Oil & Gas sector headed the losers list as its index declined by 8.49% to end the week's activity at 840.74 points. The Real Estate sector was second on the losers' list, which index declined by 7.45%, closing at 1,028.24 points, followed by the Financial Services sector, as its index closed at 745.56 points at a loss of 6.93%. The Technology sector was the least declining as its index closed at 848.81 points with a 0.03% decrease.

On the other hand, last week's highest gainer was the Health Care sector, achieving 3.83% growth rate as its index closed at 1,235.49 points. Whereas, in the second place, the Insurance sector's index closed at 1,134.97 points recording 1.18% increase. The Basic Materials sector came in third as its index achieved 0.08% growth, ending the week at 1,301.44 points. The Industrial sector was the least growing as its index closed at 1,478.70 points with a 0.05% increase.

Sectors' activity

The Real Estate sector dominated a total trade volume of around 1.04 billion shares changing hands during last week, representing 39.05% of the total market trading volume. The Financial Services sector was second in terms of trading volume as the sector's traded shares were 34.01% of last week's total trading volume, with a total of around 902.77 million shares. On the other hand, the Financial Services sector's stocks were the highest traded in terms of value; with a turnover of around KD 68.17 million or 27.83% of last week's total market trading value. The Real Estate sector took the second place as the sector's last week turnover was approx. KD 61.87 million representing 25.26% of the total market trading value.

BOURSA KUWAIT INDICES				
		Price Index	Weighted index	KSE 15
Weekly	Last week	6,582.75	420.28	962.07
	Previous week	6,843.53	425.36	970.40
	Change (Point)	-260.78	-5.08	-8.33
	Change (%)	-3.81%	-1.19%	-0.86%
Annual	Last year	5,748.09	380.09	885.02
	Change (Point)	834.66	40.19	77.05
	Change (%)	14.52%	10.57%	8.71%



TOP GAINERS OF THE WEEK				
Company	Last Week Closing	Previous Week Closing	Ch. (fils)	Ch. %
FTI	79.00	55.00	24.0	43.64%
NSH	47.00	39.50	7.5	18.99%
NCCI	50.00	42.50	7.5	17.65%
YIACO	300.00	255.00	45.0	17.65%
CBK	500.00	430.00	70.0	16.28%

MARKET ACTIVITY			
	Last Week	Previous Week	Ch. %
Volume	2,654,084,356	3,105,373,843	-14.53%
Value (K.D)	244,917,352	299,434,270	-18.21%
Deals	50,179	55,155	-9.02%

MARKET CAPITALISATION (K.D.)				
	Last Week	Previous Week	Weekly Ch. %	Annual Ch. %
	27,881,450,826	28,180,206,539	-1.06%	9.74%

AIR ARABIA DELIVERS STRONG PROFIT OF AED 509 MILLION

SHARJAH: Air Arabia (PJSC) yesterday announced full-year financial results for 2016 as the Middle East and North Africa's first and largest low-cost carrier continued to deliver healthy growth and strong levels of profitability despite challenging market conditions. Air Arabia's net profit for the full year ending December 31, 2016 was AED 509 million, a 4 percent lower than 2015 figure of AED 531 million. Turnover for the full year 2016 was in line with the preceding 12 months reaching AED 3.8 billion.

More than 8.4 million passengers flew with Air Arabia in 2016, a 12 percent year-on-year increase. The average seat load factor - or passengers carried as a percentage of available seats - in 2016 stood at an impressive 79 percent. Following its solid full year 2016 performance, Air Arabia's Board of Directors proposed a dividend distribution of 7 per cent of share capital, which is equivalent to 7 fils per share. This proposal was made following a meeting of the board of directors of Air Arabia and is subject to ratification by Air Arabia's shareholders at the company's upcoming Annual General Meeting.

Air Arabia added 9 new routes to its global network in 2016 from its five operating hubs in the UAE, Morocco, Egypt and Jordan. The carrier took delivery of 7 new aircraft and ended the year with a fleet of 46 Airbus A320 aircraft operating to 124 routes across the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Europe. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Mohammad Al Thani, Chairman of Air Arabia said: "2016 was a challenging year

for the global aviation market as the economic and political uncertainty continued to impact the industry. We have seen vigilant fiscal markets, weakening currencies and political instability impacting airlines performance.

Despite all challenges, Air Arabia recorded solid full year results driven by growth, efficient operations and tight cost controls". In the fourth quarter of 2016, Air Arabia reported

a net loss of AED 33 million despite maintaining a strong average seat load factor of 80%. Turnover for the three months ending December 31, 2016 was AED 814 million, a drop of 15 percent compared to AED 956 million in the same period in 2015. Air Arabia flew 2.1 million passengers in the final quarter of 2016, an increase of 6% on the corresponding 2015 figure.

"The fourth quarter of 2016 was impacted by deteriorating yield margins that the industry in general and the Middle East region in particular is witnessing" Sheikh Abdullah Bin Mohammad Al Thani continued: "The solid operating metrics and high seat load factor that Air Arabia achieved in the fourth quarter were impacted by continuous drop in yield margins as a result of the overcapacity deployed in the market and the slow growth environment in major economic hubs".

He added: "As the market conditions continue to be challenging, Air Arabia will continue to drive its business by a clear strategy for organic growth and supported by strong measures to continue driving operating expenses lower. Above all, we will remain focused on delivering innovative value driven services to our customers allowing them to travel more often to more places".

Air Arabia was ranked 3rd among top 50 airlines in the world in 2016 by Airfinance Journal. The carrier was also named "Best Low-cost Airline serving the Middle East" at the Business Traveller Middle East 2016 Awards as well as "Best Value Leisure Product Award" at Travel Trade Fair Pune in India. The carrier Chief Executive Officer was also named "Airline CEO of the Year" at the prestigious CEO Middle East Awards 2016. The carriers corporate social responsibility program "Charity Cloud" was also recognized once again in 2016 by winning the "Initiative of the Year" award.





MUTAWA ALKAZI LAUNCHES THE GS4

KUWAIT: Enhancing its strong relationship with its customers and overall commitment to providing top of the line cars, Mutawa Alkazi recently launched GAC Motor's flagship SUV, the GS4, a masterpiece of international standards that boasts superior quality ahead of similar models in its class with unmatched specifications at attractive prices.

The launch took place at the Marina Crescent amongst a large audience of car enthusiasts, and coincided with fun filled festivities that marked Kuwait's National celebrations at the Marina Mall and the anniversary of the Proclamation of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as the Amir of the State of Kuwait. During the event, well known International Musician Caitlin De Ville, performed an artistic aerial show that entertained the audience. Renowned presenter Osama Fouda, kept the audience engaged through the exciting competitions which resulted in a wide range of fabulous prizes being given to the participating winners.

National celebrations

To kick off the event, Omar Sulaiman Alkazi, CEO of Mutawa Alkazi Company, congratulated H.H. Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the Crown Prince, Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, political leaders, and the wider Kuwaiti community on the celebration of the country's National and Liberation Days, praying to Allah, Be Exalted, to keep Kuwait, its leader, the government and its people, safe. Alkazi announced the launch of the GS4 from GAC Motor, China's automotive manufacturing giant. The GS4 aims to go beyond the average SUV buyer's expectations with its innovative performance and design, international safety standards, with the strictest quality specifications.

According to China's Initial Quality Study by JD Power, GAC Motor had remained the Number 1 Chinese brand for 3 consecutive years. During the event, Alkazi expressed his pride in the success and achievements of

Mutawa Alkazi's partnership with GAC Motor, and the successful launch of this promising brand in the Kuwaiti market a few years ago. The GAC management is always seeking to innovate and as a result Kuwait can look forward to additional new and exciting model launches scheduled for later in the year.

Alkazi continued by highlighting that GAC Motor is the world's fastest growing multi-award winning automotive manufacturer. Alkazi reaffirmed Mutawa Alkazi's commitment to always providing its customers with the ultimate auto shopping experience along with a complete after sales service ensuring that every Mutawa Alkazi customer enjoys a pleasurable driving experience. Alkazi invited the many GS4 admirers to visit one of Mutawa Alkazi's showrooms located in Alrai, Shuwaikh, and Ahmadi to test drive the new GS4 and experience first-hand the exciting dynamics of this amazing new SUV. The GS4, in addition to the current GA6 sedan, has already won numerous awards worldwide including the 'best in class interior design', 'best in class fuel consumption', etc.

Distinctive partnership

Vice Minister of International Business Development in GAC, Mr. Guan Feng Hu, praised the strong partnership with Mutawa Alkazi Company which was built on mutual confidence stemming from the Mutawa Alkazi's vast experience and solid reputation in Kuwait's automotive market. About GAC Motor, Guan Feng affirmed that the group, within a short period of time, has achieved unprecedented results and growth in China and is looking forward to spreading its wings throughout the international markets. Starting with Kuwait, the GCC markets have kicked off to a very strong market presence in a minimal timespan.

GAC is confident that its swift growth will continue to expand exponentially with the addition of near term future planned models

such as the GA8 and GS8, both of which will surely attract a significant market share amongst the large size sedans and SUVs. With GAC's continuous innovative strategy moving forward many more models will appear on the roads of Kuwait in the coming years. Guan Feng expressed his happiness with the exciting launch event arranged by the Mutawa Alkazi management team.

High efficiency

On his part, the General Manager of Car Sales in Mutawa Alkazi Company, Ahmad Abulhuda, stated that the GS4 represented a new era for SUVs following its first global appearance at the North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) in 2015. The front wheel drive GS4 is equipped with a 1.5 liter, 16 valves, turbocharged-4 cylinder engine thereby limiting fuel consumption to just 6.3L /100kms i.e. among the lowest in its class. The GS4 also features an innovative 7-speed G-DCT transmission to guarantee extremely quick shifting by 0.2 seconds. It is also switchable to Eco, Sport, and Manual modes for maximum driving pleasure.

Being successfully linked up in partnership with the biggest car components manufacturers in the world, GAC Motor's priority was, and continues to be, ensuring quality is delivered to every one of its drivers. Each vehicle's electronic stability and motor management system is sourced from Bosch in Germany, along with the braking system which is also from Germany (Continental). The frontal and rear bumpers are sourced from Visteon in America, and the air-conditioning system from Denso in Japan. In addition, many of the safety features, including the air bags, rear brakes, hydraulic energy systems, are produced by TRW in the United States of America.

Five star safety rating

Safety is not taken lightly by GAC, Abulhuda stressed. The GS4 adopts a GAC Five-Star Safety

Body Design containing ultra-strength front and rear anti-collision steel beams. Additional safety features include front, side, and curtain airbags protection, ISOFIX seats for children safety, advanced ABS +EBD system from Bosch, Electronic Stability Program (ESP), high-performance chassis, ventilated disc brakes, parking sensors, rear view camera and anti-theft system among many others.

Sporty exterior

Abulhuda referred to the enjoyment of driving the GS4, which will not find any obstacles that it cannot overcome. He added that the GS4 is a solid, tough-looking compact SUV that enjoys modern, integrated sportive and aggressive lines which suggest dynamic performance. The fierce front grille, adaptive high intensity discharge lamps (Xenon) with LED daytime running lights, LED optical combination taillights, front and rear fog lights, 17" or 18" sporty alloy wheels all together offer elegance in motion.

Interior wise

The GS4 offers a modern driving cabin with a spacious area, comfortable to the family, which provides a feeling of complete calmness thanks to its 360-degree Mute Design System (ASD) which reduces the overall road noise levels by 26%. The center console is equipped with a large 8 inch 3D sound screen to offer a journey full of excitement. Other features include the four-spoke multifunction steering wheel with cruise control, volume adjustment, phone dial/hang-up functions among other functions, welcoming leatherette seats, striking dashboard, dual-zone air conditioning, and large trunk space which offer 1,410 liters of storage space when the rear seats are folded down to 180 degrees. Additional features also include power sunroof, rain sensor wipers, power seats, etc. Mutawa Alkazi Company, GAC Motor's distributor in Kuwait, affirmed its adherence to always providing the best in sales and after-sales to its customers.



ACTRESS BHATIA INAUGURATES MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS' NEW SHOWROOM

KUWAIT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds' the leading jewelry retailer across the globe launched its 16th showroom in Karnataka at Marthahalli, Bangalore on Saturday, 04th February, 2017. The latest showroom of Malabar Gold & Diamonds was inaugurated by Bollywood actress Tamannaah Bhatia in the presence of Asher O, Managing Director - India Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Shri Ramesh N, Marthahalli Corporation; IfluRahman, Regional Head, Karnataka; management team members of Malabar Gold & Diamonds, other dignitaries, well-wishers & guests.

The 5000 sqft state of art showroom displaying jewelry specific to the culture

and celebrations of Karnataka, the new showroom displayed the exclusive range of sub brands from Malabar Gold & Diamonds: Mine - Diamond jewelry, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewelry, Precia - Gem Jewelry, Divine - Indian Heritage Jewelry, Ethnix - Handcrafted designer Jewelry Starlet - Kids' Jewelry and Hi-casual jewelry. The showroom also showcased platinum and silver jewelry. Being a successful business entity, Malabar group has always been in the forefront of social responsibility initiatives. Malabar Gold & Diamonds earmarks distinct 5% of its annual profit for activities in the field of health, education and housing charity.

US CONSUMER SENTIMENT FALLS AS ELECTION EUPHORIA FIZZLES

IMPORT PRICES EXCLUDING FUELS FALL 0.2 PERCENT

WASHINGTON: US consumer sentiment eased off a 13-year high in early February likely as some of the jubilation over Donald Trump's election victory ebbed, but it remained strong enough to suggest that consumers will continue to drive the economy. Confidence surged in the wake of Trump's victory last November. The jump in sentiment tracked a stock market rally as both consumers and investors focused on the business mogul-turned politician's promises to cut taxes and reduce regulations.

These proposals, whose details remain vague, were viewed as pro-business and favorable for economic growth. At a meeting with airline executives on Thursday President Trump said he would announce a "phenomenal" tax plan in the next few weeks, but offered no specifics. The University of Michigan on Friday said its consumer sentiment index fell to 95.7 early this month from a reading of 98.5 in January, which was the highest since January 2004. The survey's current conditions sub-index of consumer expectations dropped to 85.7 from January's reading of 90.3.

"This might be due to a lack of follow-through from Washington on the details of the plans for tax cuts, reforming healthcare, and infrastructure spending," said John Ryding, chief economist at

RDQ Economics in New York. The University of Michigan said consumers who participated in this month's survey were split in their views on the Trump administration's economic policies. Thirty percent of respondents had a favorable view, while 29 percent had a negative perception. As such, nearly six-in-10 consumers made a positive or negative mention of government policies, which the university said was an unusually high reading for the survey.

Consumers' views were split along party lines, with self-identified Democrats anticipating an economic recession, while self-identified Republicans expected continued growth. "America is clearly in a politically charged environment, and that was evident in the survey results," said Jim Baird, chief investment officer at Plante Moran Financial Advisors in Kalamazoo, Michigan. "The bottom line is that consumers remain understandably upbeat, supported by continued strength in the labor markets ... and appear to be of the positive mindset for spending growth to continue in the coming months." Consumer spending accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity. The dollar was trading higher against a basket of currencies, while prices for US government debt fell.

Stocks on Wall Street hit record highs on the back of Trump's promised tax announcement.

Low inflation expectations

The University of Michigan survey also showed consumers' inflation expectations remaining generally low early this month. The low inflation theme was also evident in a separate report from the Labor Department on Friday. Import prices increased 0.4 percent last month amid further gains in the cost of energy products after advancing 0.5 percent in December. In the 12 months through January, import prices jumped 3.7 percent, the largest gain since February 2012, after advancing 2.0 percent in December.

But import prices excluding fuels fell 0.2 percent following a 0.1 percent dip the prior month. They were unchanged in the 12 months through January. Import prices are rising as firming global demand lifts prices for oil and other commodities, but the spillover to a broader increase in inflation is being limited by dollar strength. The dollar gained 4.4 percent against the currencies of the United States' main trading partners in 2016, with most of the appreciation occurring in the last months of the year. —Reuters

US FED'S TARULLO RESIGNS, LEAVING THE 3RD VACANCY

WASHINGTON: The Federal Reserve governor in charge of banking oversight submitted his resignation on Friday, creating a third vacancy for US President Donald Trump to fill. Daniel Tarullo, who helped enforce banking rules in the wake of the global financial crisis, will leave the central bank April 5, nearly five years before his term expires. In a brief letter to Trump, Tarullo, 64, gave no reason for his departure.

The resignation means Trump may have the opportunity to significantly influence the composition of the board, which sets the benchmark lending rate. Janet Yellen's four-year term as Federal Reserve chair is due to expire in February 2018, and given Trump's criticism of the Fed and of Yellen, he is widely expected to appoint a new chief.

During his campaign, Trump attacked the Fed's independence, accusing it of deliberately keeping interest rates low to

support former President Barack Obama. Yellen has said repeatedly the Fed does not allow politics to influence monetary policy decisions. However, while Trump can replace Yellen as chair, her term on the board extends until January 2024, and while Fed chairmen have usually resigned if they are replaced in the leadership role, it is not required. If she resigns, that would offer Trump a fourth Fed vacancy as well as the chance to designate a new chair of the board, which could dramatically alter the central bank's policy decisions.

In addition, Vice Chair Stanley Fischer's term expires in June 2018. "Tarullo's resignation only further cements our view that significant change is coming to the Federal Reserve Board of Governors over the next 18 months," Barclays Research said in a client note. Tarullo's departure comes at a time when the Fed's regulatory role may take on increased relevance. —AFP

UKEF SUPPORTS BEE'AH'S LANDMARK HEADQUARTERS WITH HISTORIC DEAL

SHARJAH: Bee'ah, the Middle East's leading and award-winning environmental management company, has announced a contract that will be supported by UK Export Finance (UKEF), the UK's export credit agency. It is the first time that UKEF has supported an export to Sharjah, this demonstrates a dedication to sustainable engineering worldwide as well as placing Sharjah as an attractive investment destination for international entities.

UKEF's support helped Al Futtaim Carillion secure a contract to construct Bee'ah's headquarters, designed by Zaha Hadid Architects. The headquarters will be a landmark achievement for UAE and the region as it will be powered by 100% renewable energy sources and utilise recycled materials in construction. Bee'ah awarded

Carillion the construction contract earlier last year. The late Dame Zaha Hadid, a world-renowned architect, designed the unique and iconic headquarters to minimize energy and resource consumption.

The headquarters will be powered by low- and zero-carbon sources, including solar power and waste-to-energy. It will be one of the most architecturally impressive buildings in the GCC region; it has been developed to minimize the need to consume resources, using natural light and temperature management systems where possible and construction will use recycled materials. The headquarters is expected to be operational by the end of 2018, moving towards the major milestone of being powered by 100% renewable energy.

Rt Hon. Greg Hands MP, Minister for Trade and Investment, said:

"Carillion's contract to build Bee'ah's green headquarters clearly demonstrates the UK's leadership in sus-

tainable engineering, and its ability to support smart cities capability in the Middle East and worldwide.



ENERGY STOCKS LOOKING FOR CATALYST OUT OF DOLDRUMS

Wall St Week Ahead

NEW YORK: Buoyant oil prices since Donald Trump's election have provided no lasting halo effect for energy stocks as the sector's profit rebound has lacked vigor, but that could change in the week ahead with a fresh crop of quarterly scorecards. Helped by OPEC output cuts, oil prices are up roughly 20 percent since Trump's victory, and US crude has held above \$50 a barrel since mid-December. US Commodity Futures Trading Commission positioning data shows hedge funds and other speculators hold near-record-high net long positions in US crude futures and options. But the S&P energy index, one of the key drivers to the stock market rally in the early days following the Nov 8 election, has not kept pace. It has slumped nearly 4 percent for the year.

"We are seeing a little bit of a difference of opinion between equity investors and commodity investors," said David Lefkowitz, senior equity strategist at UBS Wealth Management Americas in New York. "Equity investors seem a little bit more worried about the outlook for the commodity and the actual commodity investors themselves don't seem to be reflecting that." Should those opinions converge and energy

stocks rebound, stocks could see more pronounced moves than have been seen in recent weeks, with the S&P 500 unable to register a move of more than 1 percent in either direction since Dec 7.

The relationship between the energy sector and US crude has also tightened recently, with the 10-correlation at 0.61, its highest in three weeks. Part of the underperformance in the sector looks to be attributable to a disappointment in quarterly results. Energy companies were expected to benefit from easy comparisons with last year, when the price of oil sank below \$30 a barrel, but so far they've under-delivered against those expectations. Thomson Reuters data through Friday morning shows energy sector earnings for the fourth quarter are on pace for a fractional decline. A month ago they were seen rising by nearly 5 percent.

Moreover, the group has so far posted a beat rate of only 58 percent, as measured by the number of companies in the sector posting better-than-expected results, well below the 68 percent rate for the S&P as a whole. "Understand when you think about the energy patch in general, you have to separate out what the fully

integrated guys were doing," said Art Hogan, chief market strategist at Wunderlich Securities in New York.

"What drags the group down is when you lump in the majors, and they were spotty." That should put the focus on the next leg of earnings from energy companies next week, when names such as Marathon Oil, Devon Energy and a host of smallcap companies in the group report results. Devon is forecast to post a modest profit after a massive loss a year earlier, while Marathon is expected to cut its loss by nearly 90 percent, according to estimates compiled by Thomson Reuters StarMine.

Both posted substantial upside earnings surprises in their previous reports for the third quarter, and shares of both have outperformed their peers since the election, with Devon up 8.3 percent and Marathon up 13.6 percent. "Definitely we are going to need to see some proof in earnings to play catch-up here," said Jeff Zipper, managing director at the US Bank Private Client Reserve in Palm Beach, Florida. "Now we are going to see some clarity from when these companies report, at least in the sector, to see some follow through here." —Reuters



GULF BANK SPEARHEADING PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE IN COLLABORATION WITH CISI

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is spearheading the banking professional excellence by collaborating closely with the Chartered Institute for Securities and Investment (CISI), following its agreement with the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) back in January 2015. A signed Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations envisions a promotion of a qualifications framework to the Kuwaiti market where CISI qualifications is mandated to specific job functions within CMA licensed entities.

Gulf Bank is following suit by integrating excellence into its banking services through a series of trainings provided by the CISI. So far, forty-eight employees from both the wealth division and priority division already undertook the International Certificate in Wealth and Investment Management training (ICWIM) and the International Introduction to Securities and Investments training (IISI).

The ICWIM covered the essentials of financial planning, private client asset management, fund management, advisory functions and investment analysis from a global perspective. As for the IISI, it offered a broad introduction to the financial services industry, with a specific

focus on investments from a global perspective. It is the foundation exam for many higher-level CISI qualifications. Tareq Al Saleh-Assistant General Manager-Investments at Gulf Bank, Meshari Shehab-Assistant General Manager-Priority Banking at Gulf Bank, and Esra Alhabib-Manager-External Relations at Gulf Bank, met last week with Simon Culhane - CISI CEO, and Matt Cowan - CISI Regional Director, to further discuss the collaboration and to set future plans.

Tareq Al-Saleh, Assistant General Manager-Investments at Gulf Bank commented on this step and said: "In line with the CMA efforts, Gulf Bank emphasizes on promoting and enabling its staff with the right competencies for efficient banking services results. By collaborating with the CISI, we are not only keeping up with the international best practices, but also integrating them into our daily performance." CISI is a not for profit organization whose mission is to set standards of professional excellence and integrity for the securities and investment industry, providing qualifications and promoting the highest level of competence to its members, individuals and firms.



CFA Kuwait 2017 Charterholders & Society Board

CFA SOCIETY AWARDS NEW CHARTERHOLDERS

KUWAIT: Last night CFA Society Kuwait, CFA Institute's local association of investment professionals consisting of portfolio managers, financial analysts and investment advisors, hosted its 9th Annual Charter Award Ceremony at Salwa Al-Sabah Hall, Marina Hotel in Kuwait. Mohammad Alsarraf, Vice President of CFA Society Kuwait welcomed Mazin Al-Nahedh, Group CEO of Kuwait Finance House as the Chief Guest and recognized 23 new charterholders. In addition to awarding CFA charters to recipients, Chester Santos, memory expert and motivational speaker

presented to the audience in the area of memory improvement and mental fitness.

Congratulating the new charter holders Mohammad Alsarraf, Vice President of CFA Society Kuwait said: "As we welcome 23 new charterholders into CFA Society Kuwait, we are proud of our continued growth as a centre for financial and investment excellence in the country. CFA Society Kuwait continues to enjoy growth in the number of members and Charterholders. Together with our existing members and new charterholders, we will continue to support the growth

of Kuwait's financial industry by upholding ethical investment management practices."

Commenting on the ceremony, Mijbel AlQattan, CFA, President of CFA Society Kuwait said: "The Middle East has experienced considerable challenges over the past year, despite this the demand for better qualified professionals in the financial sector continues to grow. CFA Society Kuwait will continue to work towards raising standards of professional practice and contribute toward the development of the country's investment sector. We are looking forward to 2017; as we

continue to serve our members in promoting thought leadership and discussion on a broad range of topical issues."

To earn the CFA designation, candidates must pass all three levels of the exam (successful candidates often report dedicating in excess of 300 hours of study per level); meet the work experience requirement of four years in the investment industry; sign a commitment to abide by the CFA Institute Code of Ethics and Standards of Professional Conduct; and become a member of CFA Institute.

NISSAN REPORTS NINE-MONTH RESULTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2016

DUBAI: Nissan Motor Co Ltd yesterday announced financial results for the nine-month period to December 31, 2016. "In the first nine months of the fiscal year, Nissan generated an operating profit of 503.2 billion yen, which represents a 6.1% margin on net revenues of 8.26 trillion yen," said Carlos Ghosn, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer. "Although these results reflect continued currency headwinds, we remain confident of achieving our fiscal year guidance." "On a constant currency basis, operating profit rose 30.1% to 764.6 billion yen, equivalent to an 8.1% profit margin. Our underlying performance was enhanced by solid product demand in the US, China and Western Europe, along with the continued benefits of our strict cost controls and synergies from our Alliance strategy."

Fiscal Year 2016

The following table summarizes Nissan's financial results for the nine-month period to December 31, 2016, calculated under the equity accounting method for the Group's China joint venture. Fiscal Year 2016 Nine-Month Financial Highlights to December 31, 2016. Yen in billions

FY 9M 15	FY 9M 16	% change year on year
FY 9M 15	FY 9M 16	% change at constant currency. On a man-

Sales performance

In the first nine months of the fiscal year, Nissan's total unit sales rose by 2.6% to 3.99 million units. In the US, Nissan's sales rose by 4.2% to 1.16 million units, equivalent to a market share of 8.7%, amid strong demand for the Rogue and Altima. Nissan unit sales in China, which reports figures on a calendar year basis, rose 8.2% to 929,000 units, equivalent to market share of 5.0%. In Europe, excluding Russia, Nissan's sales rose by 5.5% to 474,000 units, which resulted in a market share of 3.6%.

The Qashqai SUV and X-Trail helped drive demand in the region. Nissan's performance in these key markets helped offset challenging conditions in the Japanese market. Total unit sales in the nine-month period for Japan were 344,000 units, representing a market share of 9.8%. In other markets including Asia and Oceania, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, Nissan's sales decreased 3.9% to 596,000 units.

ETIHAD AIRWAYS DELIVERS ANOTHER YEAR OF SUSTAINED GROWTH IN 2016

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways delivered another year of sustained growth in 2016, helped by new aircraft, additional frequencies and the introduction of further world-class products. The airline carried 18.5 million guests during the year, up six percent on 2015. The airline was also part of the evolution of Etihad Aviation Group, a wider aviation and tourism business which now also includes Etihad Airways Engineering; Airline Equity Partners; Etihad Airport Services and Hala Group. The formation of Etihad Aviation Group was announced in May 2016.

During the year, Etihad Airways operated more than 109,000 scheduled passenger and cargo flights spanning around 446 million kilometers and 112 destinations. Capacity, measured in available seat kilometers (ASK), grew by nine percent and passenger traffic, measured by revenue passenger kilometers (RPK), rose by eight percent. The average load factor held steady at 79 percent.

Etihad Airways' fleet of 119 aircraft is one of the youngest and most environmentally-friendly in the industry, with an average age of 6 years. During the year, the airline took delivery of 10 aircraft: three Airbus A380s, five Boeing 787s and two Boeing 777-200 cargo freighters. An additional 12 aircraft are set for delivery in 2017, including nine Boeing 787s, two Airbus A380s and one A330-200 freighter. Etihad holds the strongest credit rating in the aviation industry (A by Fitch), demonstrating the strength of its successful business model which is widely acknowledged by the international financial community.

Business environment

James Hogan, President and Chief Executive Officer of Etihad Aviation Group (EAG), said: "2016 saw sustained growth in a very tough business environment. This is where Etihad Airways' superior products and services show their true value and where the strength of the EAG business model comes into effect through its diversity of businesses, cost effective synergies and global spread of risk. Most importantly, in 2016 we were able to introduce our new Group structure, which positions this business for long-term growth and development."

Etihad Airways launched Venice in Italy,

Rabat in Morocco and Sabiha Gokcen in Turkey as new destinations in 2016. The much-admired Airbus A380 began serving Mumbai and Melbourne, and the Boeing 787 Dreamliner was deployed on new routes, including Perth, Shanghai, Johannesburg and Dusseldorf. The airline added a fifth daily flight on the Doha route, an extra daily flight to Cairo and Kozhikode, and increased frequencies to Dammam, Manila and Tehran.

Etihad Airways carried more than 76 percent of the total passengers who travelled to and from Abu Dhabi International Airport in 2016. With the addition of the airline's equity

partners that operate flights into the UAE capital, the combined total rises to 86 percent of passenger traffic at the airport.

The airline's codeshare and equity partnerships delivered 5.5 million passengers onto Etihad Airways' flights, an increase of nine percent over the five million passengers in 2015.

Codeshare agreements

The airline launched new codeshare agreements with Avianca Colombia, Avianca Brasil, Kulula, Precision Air and Montenegro Airlines. Etihad Airways' existing codeshares with airberlin, Alitalia, Brussels Airlines,

Flynas, Jet Airways, Malaysia Airlines, Hong Kong Airlines, and Virgin Australia were significantly expanded. Etihad Airways also launched new interline agreements with Lufthansa, Pegasus, Malindo and LATAM. As a result, the airline now offers a combined passenger and cargo network of nearly 600 destinations through its 188 interline and 53 codeshare partnerships.

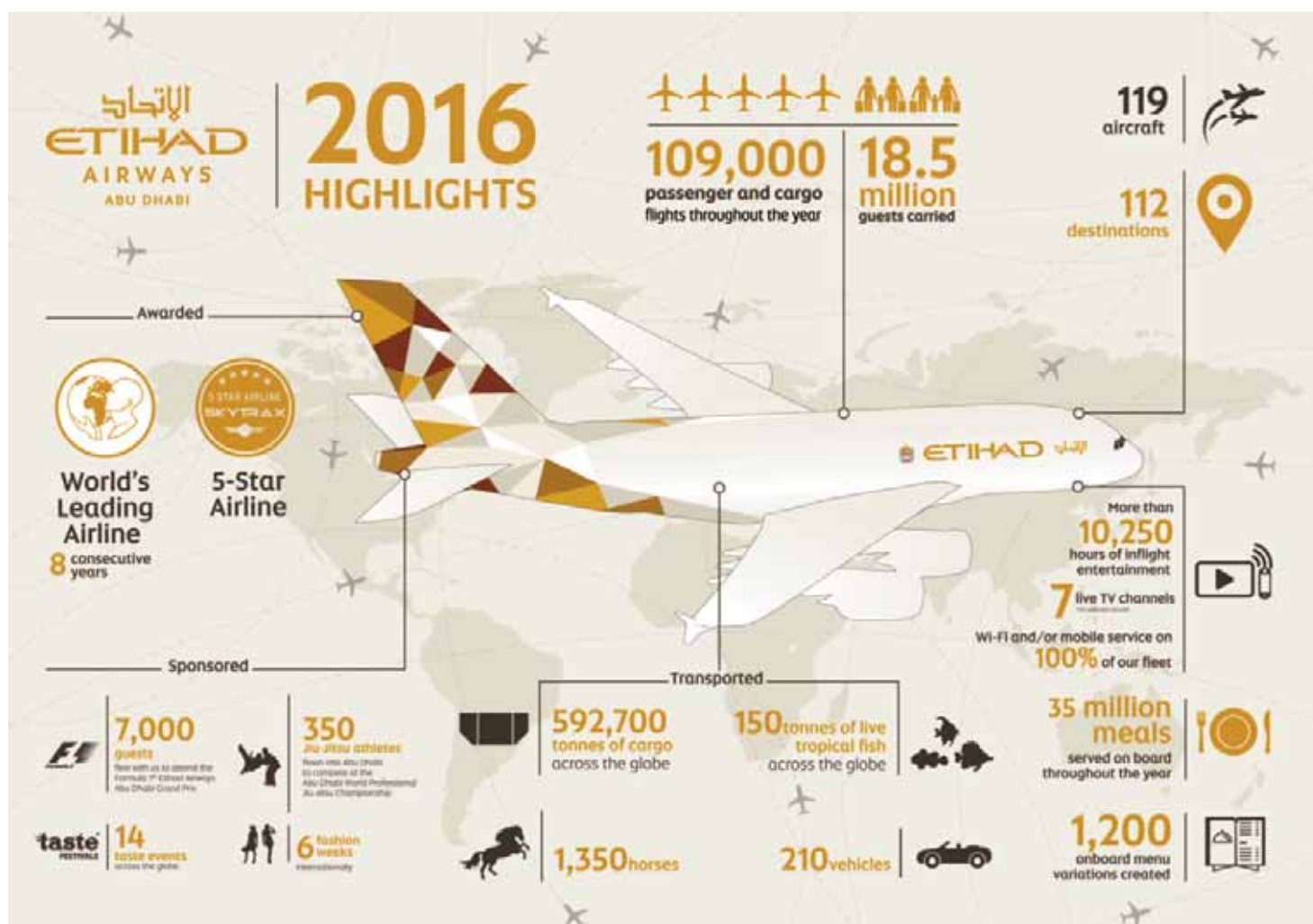
Etihad Airways' equity partner network, including airberlin, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Alitalia, Jet Airways, Virgin Australia and Etihad Regional, represents the seventh largest global grouping of air-

lines. In 2016, the combined fleet of 705 aircraft carried 126.6 million guests. In November, Etihad Airways Engineering dealt with a record breaking week of heavy maintenance at its state-of-the-art facility in Abu Dhabi. Aircraft from six of the seven partner airlines were worked on by the company's 3,000-strong team.

During 2016, Etihad Cargo carried 592,700 tons, which was flat year-on-year. Etihad Cargo expanded its freighter services to several new markets, including Columbus Rickenbacker, Ohio in the US; East Midlands and London Stansted in the UK; Copenhagen; Brussels; Addis Ababa and Casablanca in Africa; Colombo; Muscat; and Zhengzhou in China. This brings the number of freighter-only destinations to 15.

Strong growth was achieved within the group's loyalty businesses with over three million new members joining the Etihad Guest, MilleMiglia (Alitalia), top bonus (airberlin) and JetPrivilege programs, which now provide benefits to nearly 20 million members. The Etihad Aviation Group workforce, as of 31 December, stood at 26,635 employees, representing 150 nationalities. The airline continued to prioritize its Emiratisation program, and in November, celebrated the graduation of 310 future leaders from the Future Leaders Programs, a strong indication of the company's commitment to investing in its people. There are currently more than 3,000 Emirati employees - 52 percent of whom are women, including engineers and pilots.

Mr Hogan added: "2017 will be another challenging year. We will continue to expand prudently and efficiently, reflecting the nature of the economic environment. We remain optimistic and have every belief that our robust business model will succeed and, most importantly, stand the test of time." 2016 was a year of impressive accolades for Etihad Airways - the pinnacle being the Skytrax Certified 5-Star Airline Rating - the most sought after quality status in the airline industry. Etihad was also named the 'World's Leading Airline' at the World Travel Awards for the eighth consecutive year and collected the coveted Crystal Cabin Award for the Boeing 787 First Class cabin design. During the year, Etihad Guest marked its 10th anniversary and reached 4.7 million members.



ALGORITHMS: THE MANAGERS OF OUR DIGITAL LIVES

PARIS: Algorithms are a crucial cog in the mechanics of our digital world, but also a nosy minder of our personal lives and a subtle, even insidious influence on our behavior. They have also come to symbolize the risks of a computerized world conditioned by commercial factors.

A gift from a Persian scientist

Long before they were associated with Google searches, Facebook pages and Amazon suggestions, algorithms were the brainchild of a Persian scientist. The term is a combination of mediaeval Latin and the name of a ninth century mathematician and astronomer, Al-Khwarizmi, considered the father of algebra. A bit like a kitchen recipe, an algorithm is a series of instructions that allows you to obtain a desired result, according to sociologist Dominique Cardon, who wrote "What Algorithms Dream Of". Initially known mainly to mathematicians, the term spread as computers developed. The brains of computer programs are algorithms, and are thus a central cog in the internet machine.

Where are algorithms found?

"We are literally surrounded by algorithms," says Olivier Ertzscheid, a French professor of information technology and communication. "Every time you consult Facebook, Google or Twitter you are

exposed to choices" that algorithms calculate for us, and we are also sometimes influenced by them, he said. They reign in the finance sector, one example being high frequency trading programs, which can execute trades in milliseconds driven by algorithms that analyze a range of market and economic factors. Their speed and rule-based nature means they can make markets volatile and have triggered so-called flash crashes in the foreign exchange and stock markets. Police forces increasingly use algorithms to predict where and when crimes are most likely to be committed. Predpol, a software program, claims to have contributed to double-digit drops in burglaries, robberies and vehicle theft in several US states and is also used in Kent, southern England. Satellite tracking and surveillance would not have reached the point they are at today without sophisticated algorithms.

How Google began

In the 1990s, PageRank (PR) was created in Stanford, California by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, Google's co-founders. PR made it possible to class web pages by order of popularity. It became the heart of the Google search engine, which responds to key words within a fraction of a second. In addition to PR, Google uses "a dozen algorithms... to deal with spam, detect copyright infrac-

tions" and handle other crucial tasks, Ertzscheid explains.

Facebook and the 'filter bubble'

Facebook uses sophisticated algorithms to offer its more than 1.8 billion users worldwide personalized content, in particular on its News Feed service which compiles messages from "friends", and shares articles selected according to each user's social media contacts. One risk posed by such a system is that of "The Filter Bubble" according to Eli Pariser, who developed the concept in a book of the same name. Being surrounded by information filtered by algorithms based on one's friends, tastes and previous digital searches and choices, someone surfing the internet can be plunged unwittingly into a "cognitive bubble" that just reinforces their convictions and perspective on the world.

Algorithms and the truth

Another risk was exposed during the last US presidential election—the prevalence of so-called fake news or hoaxes on Facebook and other social media. Facebook's algorithms were not designed to distinguish true from false—a feat that is difficult even for artificial intelligence—but the popularity of information. Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg has sought to deflect criticism that it had been used to fuel the spread of misinfor-

mation that may have impacted the presidential race, but the company responded to growing criticism by saying new tools would be provided so users could call attention to controversial content.

Thinking for us?

Cardon says four main "families" of web algorithms exist. One calculates the popularity of web pages, another assesses their authority within the digital com-

munity, and a third evaluates the notoriety of social network users. The fourth attempts to predict the future. This last one is "problematic" for the sociologist, because it tries to anticipate our future behavior based on clues we have left on the internet in the past. It shows up on Amazon for example as book recommendations based on past purchases. "We build the calculators, but in return they build us" too, Cardon concluded.—AFP



TOKYO: A huge game machine displays the popular dating simulation game Ikemen produced by Japanese mobile content company Cybird at the company's office in Tokyo. The Ikemen app has been downloaded some 15 million times since its launch about nearly five years ago, while the firm has also released an English version.—AFP



TOKYO: Natsuko Asaki, a game producer at Cybird, the company which created the popular app series Ikemen, speaking during an interview in Tokyo. The Ikemen app has been downloaded some 15 million times since its launch about nearly five years ago, while the firm has also released an English version. Mirroring the smartphone boom, female-targeted virtual romance games have ballooned into a market worth about 15 billion yen (\$135 million) annually in Japan, according to the Tokyo-based Yano Research Institute.—AFP

'NO SAD ENDINGS' FOR JAPAN'S VIRTUAL ROMANCE ENTHUSIASTS

TOKYO: Japanese book editor Miho Takeshita is having an affair. But the recently married 30-year-old is not worried about getting caught—her boyfriend only exists on a smartphone. Takeshita is a fan of romance simulation games, a booming market in Japan that is winning the hearts of women looking for some unconventional loving. "It's very addictive," Takeshita said. "Even though the game characters aren't real, you start to develop feelings towards them."

That is the whole point, said Natsuko Asaki, a game producer at Cybird, which created the popular series Ikemen—a Japanese term for handsome guys. "The story is most important, as well as the characters, and the twists and turns," Asaki said. The Ikemen app has been downloaded some 15 million times since its launch about five years ago, and the firm has also released an English version. Mirroring the smartphone boom, female-targeted virtual romance games have ballooned into a market worth about 15 billion yen (\$135 million) annually in Japan, according to the Tokyo-based Yano Research Institute.

Some 80 percent of fans, including a growing number of married women, play just before bed, a Cybird survey found. The games do not rely on complicated algorithms, but instead offer multiple choice scenarios that let players escape into a world where they create their own love story with digital hunks. Takeshita does not see anything strange about flirting with her smartphone sweeties. In fact, she can engage with them whenever she likes—something real-life spouses do not always provide. "The games also have sexual overtones but they're expressed less crudely than in simulations made for boys," Cybird's Asaki said. "It's an ideal love story—there are no female rivals and no sad endings."

'Feed the illusion'

The success of these games may be partly linked to dating etiquette in Japan, where men are expected to take the lead when it comes to romance. "A Japanese woman making the first move is not viewed favourably," said Ai Aizawa, a marital relations specialist at the All About website, which offers daily living advice. And even those women who have found a soulmate are often not satisfied romantically, she added. "They use these simulations as an outlet, a place where they are not betrayed, and where ideal love and the perfect lover feed the illusion," Aizawa said. Some smartphone applications such as Tokimeki kareishi (emotion buddy) or Sumakare (smartphone buddy) let users exchange texts with digital boyfriends, making the experience all the more real.

But is there any risk with a bit of smartphone hanky panky? "Becoming an addict," said one single female fan, who asked to remain anonymous. "You can even start to feel a little guilty if you do not play regularly—it's a bit dangerous for teenage girls who are still immature." Romance games are one of the culprits behind a trend that has seen some young Japanese lose interest in finding a real partner, according to a study last year by the Meiji Yasuda Life Foundation of Health and Welfare.

"The relationship that does not happen in real life happens perfectly in the game that can lead some people to give up looking for love, at least for a time," said marriage specialist Aizawa. While humans can easily love a virtual partner, it is still uncertain whether that feeling could ever be reciprocated, said Hiroshi Ishiguro, a robotics designer at Osaka University. "A male or female body is no longer the thing that defines a human being," he said. "It's quite conceivable to really love robots or virtual characters—there's no doubt about that. The question is more whether they will someday be able to love a human."—AFP

RIDE-HAILING APP HALTS OPERATIONS IN TAIWAN

TAIWAN UBER DRIVERS PROTEST FINE HIKE

TAIPEI: Protesting Uber drivers circled Taiwan's Transport Ministry yesterday as the ride-hailing app halted operations on the island following an impasse with the government which deems the service illegal. The US firm announced last week that it would suspend business in Taiwan from Friday after the government raised the maximum penalty for Uber drivers to Tw\$25 million (\$804,000) - the highest in the world. The Transport Ministry last week said it was preparing to charge the firm Tw\$230 million in penalties.

Uber has racked up fines for running a business without the proper registration to operate as a taxi service since it entered the Taiwan market in 2013. About 200 cars, adorned with ribbons and Uber stickers, drove around the transport ministry in downtown Taipei on Friday, according to an alliance of drivers which organized the protest. Single mother Fiona Yang, 38, said Uber had been her main source of income for the past two years as she juggles earning a living and raising two children. "I can understand why they had to suspend operations. The penalties are outrageous," she said. "It has a big impact on me. How am I going to raise my kids?"

Uber said last week it hoped the suspension would prompt action from President Tsai Ing-wen, who is pushing for the island to foster its own "Asian Silicon Valley". "The current regulatory environment makes it impossible to serve the island the way we know works best," the firm said in a statement. Taiwan's suspension came after Uber halted services in Hungary last July due to new legislation that stops drivers from making money with their own vehicles. The smartphone app has faced stiff resistance from traditional taxi drivers around the world, as well as bans in some places over safety concerns and questions over legal issues, including taxes. Uber insists it is a platform connecting drivers and passengers, not a transport business like taxi firms.—AFP



TAIPEI: Uber drivers surround the Ministry of Transportation during a demonstration in Taipei. Protesting Uber drivers circled Taiwan's Transport Ministry as the ride-hailing app halts operations on the island, citing an impasse with authorities.—AFP



TAIPEI: Uber drivers display placards that read 'Thank you for letting technology improve the economy' and 'Thank you for letting me return home safely' during a demonstration in front of the entrance of the Ministry of Transportation in Taipei.—AFP

SAAB OFFERS HIGH-TECH JET PRODUCTION HUB TO INDIA

NEW DELHI: Swedish defense giant Saab has offered to build a state-of-the-art fighter jet factory in India should it seal a lucrative deal to supply hundreds of military jets to New Delhi. Saab and its US competitor Lockheed Martin have emerged as the frontrunners to supply around 250 single-engine combat planes to India's air force which wants to revamp its Soviet-era military hardware. The Saab proposal would see "the world's most modern" military aircraft factory roll out the Gripen E fighter not just for India but the global market.

"It is an unrivalled offer that will set new

standards in aeronautical engineering excellence for decades to come, should India procure Gripen," Saab India chairman Jan Widerstrom said in a statement Friday. The offer comes just days after Lockheed Martin indicated its plan to set up a production line in India for its iconic F-16 combat aircraft was subject to approval from the new administration under US President Donald Trump. Saab's proposal also comes amid a push by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reduce India's reliance on expensive defense imports while it seeks to bolster its military in the face of China's growing clout in the region.

Modi's government has raised the limit on foreign investment in the defense sector and encouraged tie-ups between foreign and local companies under a 'Make in India' campaign. Saab said its proposal met the objectives of the world's largest defense importer. "Saab is offering an industrial facility that will be the centre-of-gravity for the Made-in-India Gripen," said Widerstrom. Last year India signed a contract to buy 36 Rafale twin-engine fighter jets for 7.9 billion euros (\$8.8 billion) after major delays and obstacles over the cost and assembly of the planes in India.—AFP

TECHNOLOGY FIRMS TACKLE 'FAKE NEWS'

LONDON: Technology firms must up their game in tackling "fake news", Apple chief executive Tim Cook said yesterday, calling for a major public information campaign. "All of us technology companies need to create some tools that help diminish the volume of fake news," the US tech giant boss told the Daily Telegraph in an interview. "We must try to squeeze this without stepping on freedom of speech and of the press, but we must also help the reader. Too many of us are just in the complain category right now and haven't figured out what to do." But Cook, who met British Prime Minister Theresa May at Downing Street

on Thursday, said governments should also introduce a public information campaign. "We need the modern version of a public-service announcement campaign. It can be done quickly if there is a will," he said.

He added: "We are going through this period of time right here where unfortunately some of the people that are winning are the people that spend their time trying to get the most clicks, not tell the most truth. It's killing people's minds in a way." Fake news-fabricated reports designed to promote a particular agenda came to prominence during last year's US presidential election campaign.—AFP

STUDY FINDS A BACTERIAL STRAIN CAN CONTAMINATE SHELLFISH

CONCORD: Scientists studying oysters along the Atlantic Coast have discovered a critical clue to understanding why more seafood lovers are getting sick from eating shellfish. Researchers at the University of New Hampshire have found a new strain of the bacteria *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, the world's leading culprit of contamination in shellfish that, when eaten, causes diarrhea, vomiting and abdominal pain. In rare cases, people have died from contracting lethal septicemia.

Cheryl Whistler and her colleagues discovered the new strain ST631 and detailed their findings in the *Journal of Clinical Microbiology*. Previously only one strain of the bacteria was blamed for this type of food poisoning, which Whistler said is on the rise in New England and already is responsible for an estimated 45,000 cases in the US each year.

Whistler said the new strain is endemic to the region but it is unclear how it evolved to become so dangerous. It has similar virulent genes to ST36, the strain long blamed for infections and which is

believed to have come from the Pacific Northwest. "It wasn't understood that there was a strain that lived in the Atlantic already that was causing increasing infections," said Whistler, the director of the university's Northeast Center for *Vibrio* Disease and Ecology. "We knew people were starting to get sick more frequently by unknown strains. It wasn't clear if every person was getting sick by a different strain. Are there a hundred different strains making people sick or just a couple making people sick?"

She partnered with the federal Food and Drug Administration and public health and with shellfish management agencies in five states on the study to discover the new strain. "We were surprised to learn that it was so widespread," she said, adding that ST631 can thrive in a range of water temperatures from Florida to Prince Edward Island and the Gulf of Maine, suggesting a link to climate change.

Climate change

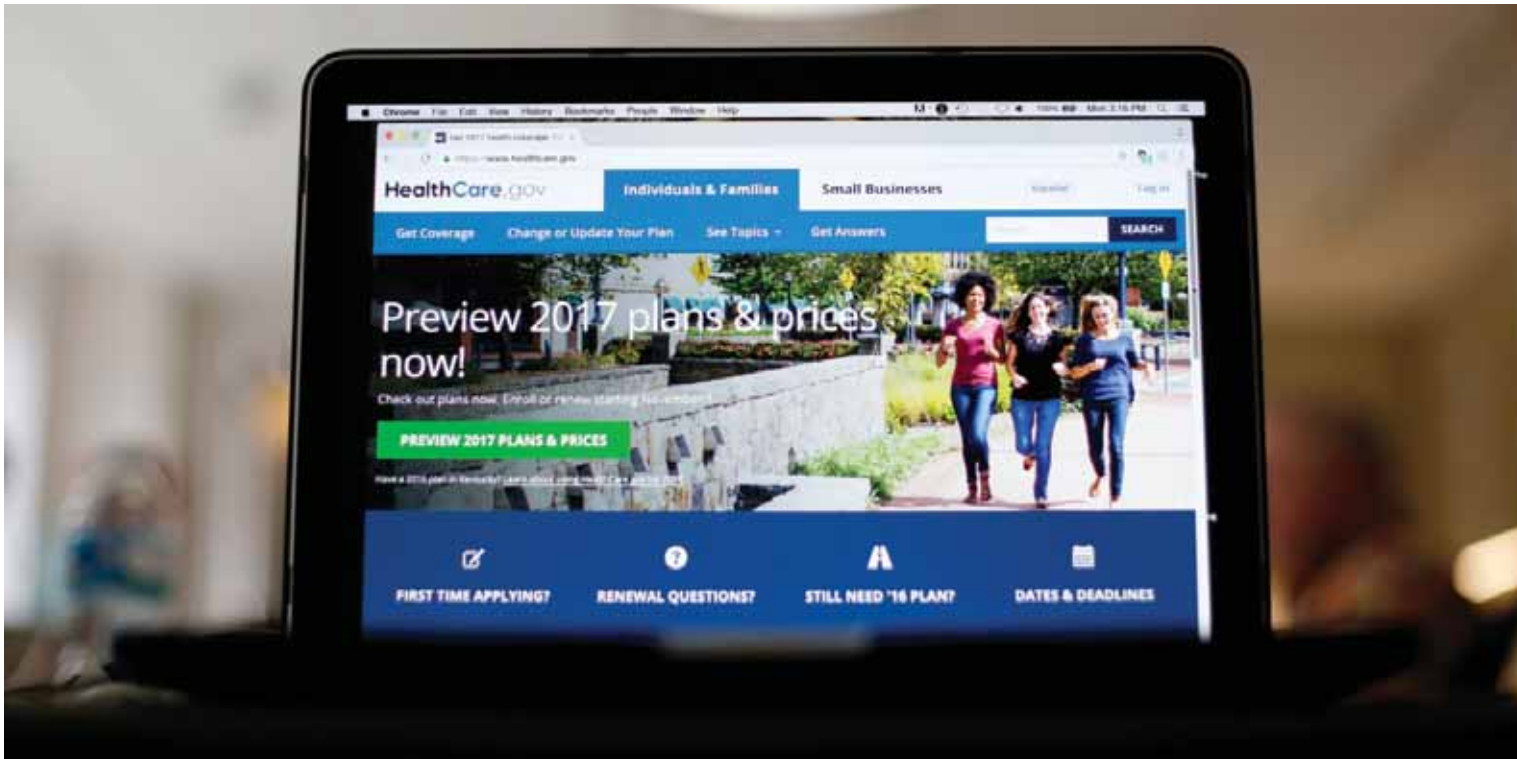
The findings build on earlier studies showing

the role climate change is playing in the spread of pathogens like *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*. An August report in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* found that warming waters are linked to waterborne food poisoning, especially from eating raw oysters. "There is a lot of evidence that there is changing climate and an expanding pathogen population because of that," Whistler said. Rita Colwell at the University of Maryland did not participate in the UNH research but led the study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, and praised Whistler's work. She said the UNH study contributes to a growing body of evidence that global warming has "a measurable human effect."

"They have done a very nice job doing sequencing of the DNA and getting the DNA fingerprints so to speak," Colwell said. "The important aspect of it is they have good evidence that the strain that is circulating in the US is in fact different from strains that are circulating globally ...

They have also been able to track infections with it." Public health officials are hoping the discovery of ST631 will give agencies along the Atlantic Coast and in Canada the data they need to develop tools to reduce the risk of food poisoning from the pathogen.

Already, Whistler and UNH colleague Stephen Jones have developed a model that can estimate the likelihood the bacteria is present in coastal New Hampshire oysters. "Knowing that 80 percent of all reported illnesses are either ST36 or ST631 has helped us to target our environmental surveillance efforts on strains that cause illness," said Christopher Schillaci, an aquaculture and *vibrio* specialist for Massachusetts' marine fisheries division. "We can go beyond looking at total *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* in the environment." He said the research also helps put the focus on how common aquaculture practices affect the levels of this pathogen in shellfish and on adjusting control measures accordingly. — AP



In this Oct 24, 2016 file photo, the HealthCare.gov 2017 web site home page as seen in Washington. — AP

12.2 MILLION PLUS STILL SIGN FOR 'OBAMACARE' DESPITE PROBLEMS

WASHINGTON: More than 12.2 million people have signed up for coverage nationwide this year under the Obama-era health care law even with the uncertainty created by US President Donald Trump's vow to repeal and replace it. A count by The Associated Press shows that many consumers returned to the program despite its problems. Aside from the political turmoil, those difficulties include a spike in premiums, rising deductibles and dwindling choice of insurers.

Although initial enrollment is about 4 percent lower than last year, the sizable number of sign-ups illustrates the risk Republicans face as they begin moving to dismantle the Affordable Care Act and put in its place a yet-to-be-defined conservative approach. AP's analysis showed that a clear majority of those enrolled - nearly 64 percent - live in states that Trump carried in November.

"If they are going to replace it, it had better be as good or better than what is there, and if it's not I think it's going to cost them," said John Chipman, a drummer from Austin, Texas, who's also covering his wife and their two children. This year the family scaled back from a "silver" plan to "bronze" to avoid a big premium increase. But without the health law, Chipman says he and his wife would probably be turned down for health insurance because of pre-existing medical conditions.

The federal Health and Human Services Department reported last week that 9.2 million

people signed up in the 39 states served by the HealthCare.gov website, which offers subsidized private health insurance to people who don't have job-based coverage. AP checked with the remaining 11 states, and Washington, DC, and found an additional 3 million enrolled, for a national total of 12.2 million. A full national report from the government won't be available for at least another month.

Historic low

Under the health care law, the nation's uninsured rate has fallen to a historic low of about 9 percent, with some 20 million people gaining coverage since its passage in 2010. In addition to the subsidized private plans available through HealthCare.gov and state marketplaces, the law offers states the option of extending Medicaid to cover more low-income adults.

Republicans say this year's enrollment numbers do not equate to a success story for former US President Barack Obama's signature domestic legislation. To begin with, the numbers are well short of the 13.8 million people that the Obama administration had hoped to sign up. Also, the public health insurance markets usually see high attrition as the year goes on, with about 1 in 5 customers eventually dropping out. Some customers don't even bother to pay their first month's premium.

"It's clear overall enrollment numbers are

trending downward for 'Obamacare' over last year, no doubt due to the law's unpopular mandates and high costs," Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said in a statement. Republicans "are committed to establishing a responsible transition phase to ensure as much stability as possible for consumers who purchased insurance."

Asked about the numbers, HHS spokesman Matt Lloyd said the Trump administration sees "Obamacare" as a failure and is pursuing alternatives that will "work for the American people." One state - Minnesota - took extraordinary measures to keep residents insured. The state has seen premium increases averaging from 50 percent to 67 percent, and lawmakers used \$312 million in rainy day funds to buy down monthly rates for consumers who don't get federal subsidies. Since most health law customers already get federal assistance, the bulk of the state money is going to residents who purchase plans outside the government-sponsored marketplace.

Supporters of the health care law say the political uncertainty about its future probably kept many people from signing up. "We heard from consumers saying they thought 'Obamacare' had ended with President Obama's administration," said Elizabeth Colvin, who heads the health care sign-up program at Foundation Communities, an Austin nonprofit serving low-income working people. "Some consumers said, 'Why bother if it's going to go away?'" — AP

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION DELAYS FIRST LISTING BUMBLEBEE AS ENDANGERED

TRAVERSE CITY: The Trump administration on Thursday delayed what would be the first endangered designation for a bee species in the continental US, one day before it was to take effect. The US Fish and Wildlife Service adopted a rule Jan 11 extending federal protection to the rusty patched bumblebee, one of many types of bees that play a vital role in pollinating crops and wild plants. It once was common across the East Coast and much of the Midwest, but its numbers have plummeted since the late 1990s.

Federal law requires a 30-day waiting period

before most new regulations become effective. The addition of the bumblebee to the endangered species list was scheduled for Friday. The listing would require the service to develop a plan for helping the bee recover and provide more habitat.

But in a Federal Register notice, the service announced a postponement until March 21 in keeping with a Trump administration order issued Jan 20. It imposed a 60-day freeze on regulations that had been published in the register but hadn't taken effect. The delay, according to

the White House, was for the purpose of "reviewing questions of fact, law and policy they raise." Fish and Wildlife Assistant Director Gary Frazer said the move was not expected to impact conservation efforts. The federal agency "is developing a recovery plan to guide efforts to bring this species back to a healthy and secure condition," Frazer said in a statement.

Yet with President Donald Trump pledging to cut back on federal regulations, environmentalists said they feared the bumblebee protection might be doomed. "The Trump administration has put the rusty patched bumblebee back on the path to extinction," said Rebecca Riley, senior attorney for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "This bee is one of the most critically endangered species in the country and we can save it - but not if the White House stands in the way."

No other pending endangered-species listings are affected by Trump's freeze, said Heather Swift, spokeswoman for the Department of Interior, which includes the Fish and Wildlife Service. The rusty patched bumblebee has disappeared from about 90 percent of its range in the past 20 years. Scientists say disease, pesticide exposure, habitat loss and climate change are among possible causes. It's among a number of bee species that have suffered steep population declines - along with monarch butterflies, another key pollinator.

The American Farm Bureau Federation opposed listing the bumblebee as endangered, saying it could lead to costly limits on land or chemical use and that private partnerships could more effectively preserve bee habitat. "We're excited that the administration is taking a second look," said Ryan Yates, the group's director of congressional relations. — AP



MINNESOTA: This 2016 file photo provided by The Xerces Society shows a rusty patched bumblebee. — AP

AUSTRALIA BATTLES 50 FIRES IN HEAT WAVE, BLACKOUT FEARS

SYDNEY: Australian emergency services were bracing against "potentially catastrophic" fire conditions yesterday, as firefighters battled nearly 50 blazes in the state of New South Wales, sweltering in a heat wave sweeping the country's east coast. Weather officials fear temperatures could hit 48 degrees C (118.4 F) in some areas, setting a record for the state's hottest February day ever. People have been banned from setting fires, and some major sports events have been cancelled.

"It's not just another summer's day. This is as bad as it gets," Shane Fitzimmons, rural fire chief in the state, which was already battling 49 bush or grass fires by mid-afternoon, told reporters. "The catastrophic ratings are what we could describe as beyond the conventional scale." Thousands of people flocked to Sydney's beaches to cool off, prompting warnings from lifeguards to stay close to shore and take precautions against the sun. "We want people to be aware of signs of heat stress," a spokesman for the state's lifeguard service told Reuters. "The num-

ber one message for people is to stay hydrated, it's crucial on a day like today."

The extreme heat roiling out of Australia's desert interior will also push temperatures in the northeastern state of Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), home to the capital, Canberra, to uncomfortable levels on the weekend. Temperatures hit 47 C (117 F) in parts of New South Wales and ACT on Friday, putting pressure on the electricity grid and prompting plans by authorities to suspend supply in some areas.

Late on Friday, the Australian Energy Market Operator said the prospect of blackouts had been averted as the state cut back consumption. But with similar grueling weather expected over the weekend, residents cannot relax vigilance on power use, a spokeswoman for the body said yesterday. Businesses that halted operations to conserve energy included a paper mill, water treatment operations and Australia's largest aluminum smelter, Tomago. Many industrial users have contracts requiring them to take such action. — Reuters

CHINA CITY SAYS MANY POULTRY MARKETS INFECTED WITH BIRD FLU

BEIJING: Authorities in China's third-largest city warned that about 30 percent of its live poultry markets were contaminated with the H7N9 avian flu virus, the China Daily reported yesterday. The newspaper said the disease control authority in Guangzhou, capital of the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, urged residents to avoid contact with live poultry after tests in the past week.

Guangzhou, a major port and transportation hub, last month said it would suspend the trade of live and slaughtered poultry for three-day periods through March to prevent the spread of avian flu to humans. The latest warning will reinforce concerns about the spread of the virus as the death toll in China this winter hit 30 last week and neighbouring South Korea and Japan battle major outbreaks.

Chinese disease control experts have warned the public to stay alert for H7N9 avian flu, with more than 100 cases of

human infections reported over the last 2-1/2 months. In December alone, China had 106 cases of human infections, according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission. The virus is likely to strike in winter and spring, and farmers have in recent years ramped up measures such as cleaning regimes to prevent the disease.

China has confirmed five bird flu outbreaks among poultry this winter, which has led to the culling of more than 175,000 birds. Many major cities in the world's third-largest producer of broiler chickens and the second-biggest consumer of poultry have also closed some live poultry markets after people and chickens were infected by avian flu strains. Widespread infection can lead to severe health risks and big financial losses. The last major outbreak in China was in 2013, killing 36 people and causing more than \$6 billion in losses for the agricultural sector. — Reuters



HOUSTON: Dr Alireza Shamshirsaz, an Iranian-born professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Baylor College of Medicine, is part of the Texas Children's Fetal Center, one of only a handful of centers in the world capable of performing complicated open fetal surgeries. — AP

TRAVEL BAN KILLS SURGEON'S LIFESAVING JOURNEY TO IRAN

HOUSTON: A Houston surgeon has canceled a trip to Iran to perform lifesaving surgeries because of uncertainty over the future of US President Donald Trump's refugee and immigration travel ban. Dr Alireza Shamshirsaz is an Iranian-born professor of obstetrics and gynecology at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. He specializes in fetal surgery, and he has already had devastating video chats with two sets of parents who expected him to operate on their unborn children.

"It was a disaster. They were sobbing, completely and totally devastated. Now, there is no hope for them," he told the Houston Chronicle. A federal court has blocked the Trump ban affecting travel to and from Iran and six other Muslim-majority countries. The Trump administration is appealing that ruling, and Trump has promised more action.

Technically, nothing stood in the way of Shamshirsaz's planned 10-day trip. He has a permanent resident's visa, the "green card" the US issues to permanent noncitizen residents. However, foreign nationals with green cards and other visas were stopped and detained at US airports in the days following the implementation of Trump's ban.

Even though that ban has been held up by federal courts, the Trump administration is appealing that order, meaning it could be reimposed. Trump said Friday he is considering signing a new order to replace his previous ban. Shamshirsaz said he is worried that he would be stranded in Iran and unable to return to his wife and US patients. "There's just too much uncertainty right now to know what is the right thing to do," said Shamshirsaz, who is only one of a handful of surgeons capable of operating on fetuses. — AP

SACRIFICING CALIFORNIA SPILLWAY MAY AVOID EMERGENCY RELEASES

OROVILLE: California may avoid emergency releases from a rain-choked reservoir by further sacrificing a rapidly deteriorating concrete spillway while still protecting Oroville Dam, state officials said Friday. The California Department of Water Resources significantly increased releases from Lake Oroville even though unexpected erosion chewed through the spillway earlier this week, sending chunks of concrete flying and creating a 200-foot-long, 30-foot-deep hole that continues growing.

State engineers expect that water flowing out of the dam will catch up with the torrent flowing in from recent storms by sometime Saturday if they can continue the higher flows. "Basically it's going to be a triage situation. We know we're going to have erosion going on but it's in the best interest of the lake right now to be able to keep using the spillway to evacuate water," said department spokesman Eric See.

That could save them from having to use an emergency spillway for the first time in the reservoir's 48-year history. They were still preparing for the possibility by clearing trees and brush from the emergency spillway down a steep ravine to minimize the debris that would flow into the Feather River. They were reinforcing part of the overflow area with rocks stabilized with concrete and using helicopters to relocate power lines out of harm's way.

Rescue efforts also continued for millions of hatchery-raised fish imperiled by muddy water flowing downstream alongside the damaged spillway after sections of its concrete walls collapsed earlier this week. The cost could

approach \$100 million, though department spokesman Doug Carlson said the estimate by a department engineer is an early, ballpark figure. It is too soon to know with any certainty what it will cost, Carlson said.

Improving weather

Officials cheered improving weather that made it less likely they would have to use the emergency spillway. "Glad to look out the window and see some sunshine," See said at an afternoon briefing. Torrential rainwater flowed into the lake overnight Thursday nearly three times as quickly as it

could be released, bringing the lake to within six feet of overflowing into the emergency spillway.

Water was still entering the lake twice as fast as it could be released Friday afternoon. But the deluge was expected to continue easing into Saturday, low enough that officials can begin reducing the lake level to prepare for future winter storms. Even if the lake overflows into the emergency spillway, officials do not expect the discharge to exceed the capacity of any channel downstream as the water flows through the Feather River, into the Sacramento River and to San Francisco Bay.

They said Oroville Dam itself is sound and there is no imminent threat to the public. The spillway was last repaired in 2013 and officials said they do not know why it eroded this week. Located about 150 miles northeast of San Francisco, Oroville Lake is one of the largest man-made lakes in California and the 770-foot-tall Oroville Dam is the nation's tallest. —AP



PHOENIX: In his Tuesday, Feb 7, 2017 photo shows some of the dozens of individual gardens at a 15-acre public gardens. — AP

URBAN GARDEN MYSTERIOUSLY CLOSES AMID LAND DISPUTE

GARDENERS ANGRY, STUPEFIED OVER SUDDEN EVICTION

PHOENIX: A sprawling urban garden on a vacant lot where Phoenix residents have grown everything from melons to okra closed Friday after the gardeners were mysteriously ordered out as a federal agency reassumes ownership of the land, stupefying and angering gardeners who called their eviction a classic case of government dysfunction.

Families, senior citizens and refugees spent the last week harvesting their final crops and expressing frustration that the US Department of the Interior won't say why they have to leave - or what it plans for the 15 acres of land in the shadow of high-rise apartment buildings. The department is getting the land back from a Florida-based developer that bought it decades ago but stopped making payments promised to two Native American education trusts. The developer now owes about \$60 million and is immersed in several related lawsuits, including one being settled now that gives the lot back to the government.

Caught in the middle are the gardeners, who turned the ugly lot into a tidy, verdant grow-your-own food area in Phoenix' center. "That lot was a fenced-in, locked-up vacant eye sore on the busiest intersection in the city of Phoenix for 20 years. We beautified it and now it's gonna go back to being dust and Bermuda grass," said Tom Waldeck, the chief executive of the nonprofit Keep Phoenix Beautiful group.

Reclaiming vacant lots

The garden was born from a city effort to get rid of eyesore vacant lots that emerged throughout Phoenix following the 2008 financial crisis that hit the city's then-hot real estate boom extremely hard. The lot's owner, Florida-based Barron Collier Companies, had obtained the land from the federal government and agreed to allow the gardeners in. But Barron Collier notified Phoenix officials and Keep

Phoenix Beautiful late last year that the land would go back to the government and all gardeners had to vacate the premises because the government wanted the land back vacant.

Interior Department spokeswoman Nedra Darling declined comment because the agency is involved in an ongoing lawsuit with Barron Collier. Longtime US Sen John McCain, an Arizona Republican, did not get a response after he wrote a letter late last month asking about the garden's future prospects to Acting Interior Department Secretary Kevin Haugrud. Haugrud is running the department pending a Senate confirmation vote on President Donald Trump's interior secretary pick, Sen Ryan Zinke, a Montana Republican.

"Complying with the request to vacate the property presents a challenge to the city of Phoenix, Keep Phoenix Beautiful and their community partners, many of whom are non-profits who are actively engaged in community projects on site," McCain wrote. Phoenix's balmy climate lets the 150 or so gardeners grow their fruit and vegetables in small plots all year. The city's mild winter is best for broccoli, cauliflower, herbs and tomatoes while the scorching summer is good for cucumbers and melons.

Physical and mental therapy

Refugees resettled in Phoenix by the International Rescue Committee often grew food from their countries that they can't find in local supermarkets. Among them was Tareke Tekie, an Eritrean refugee, who said through an interpreter that he cultivated okra and a leaf he can't buy anywhere in the US.

Joanne Beard started growing broccoli and kale as a form of physical and mental therapy after she suffered a heart attack in 2013, and is angry that the empty space she helped make useful is going away. "It's helped me heal my

body and my mind. I call it my therapy," Beard said. "You know, this used to be just a trashed corner. It used to be so ugly, and we just made it so beautiful."

The lot was home many years ago to the Phoenix Indian School for Native American children operated by the US Bureau of Indian Affairs. The federal government in 1988 agreed to trade it to Barron Collier for about 100,000 acres of Florida Everglades swampland that officials wanted to preserve in a deal considered the largest land trade in US history.

The Florida land was valued lower than the Phoenix land, so Barron Collier agreed to pay \$34.9 million plus interest to two Native American education trust accounts. Payments started in 1997 but Barron Collier stopped making them in 2012, blaming a drop in the land's value, according to a letter from the company to the Department of Interior dated Jan 7, 2013. The company declined to comment. The land is probably worth at least \$32 million now and would be a good site for apartment complexes in strong demand by young professionals seeking an urban lifestyle, said Don Arones, a managing director in the Phoenix office of the Cushman & Wakefield real estate agency.

Keep Phoenix Beautiful is exploring the possibility of a nearby half-acre lot to relocate some gardeners, but there wouldn't be enough room for all of them. Four and a half acres alone in the larger lot were being used by the refugees, Waldeck said. The sense of community the gardeners developed as they tended their crops alongside neighbors they had never met previously is gone for the foreseeable future, Waldeck said. "These are people who lived next door to each other and never, ever knew they existed," he said. "We've had weddings, cookouts, Christmas parties here. The community aspect is really the hardest thing to take." — AP



PORTLAND: This undated photo provided by OHSU Doernbecher and the Reshad Family shows Fatemeh Reshad, an infant from Iran with a life-threatening heart condition, who will be treated at OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital. —AP

BABY WITH HEART DEFECT TO UNDERGO SURGERY SOON

PORTLAND: An Iranian infant soon will have life-saving heart surgery in Portland after she was temporarily banned from coming into the US by President Donald Trump's immigration order. Since she was admitted to OHSU Doernbecher Children's Hospital on Tuesday, 4-month-old Fatemeh Reshad has been undergoing a series of diagnostic studies in preparation for her surgery, hospital officials said in a news release.

A procedure called a cardiac catheterization was done Friday to determine the extent of injury to her lungs, which went well, according to Dr Laurie Armsby, interim head of the Division of Pediatric

Cardiology at OHSU. "The results were very encouraging. Despite the excess of blood passing through her lungs we believe we can proceed with surgical correction as planned," she said in the news release.

The girl's heart defects can be repaired by closing the holes in her heart and reconnecting the transposed arteries to the proper pumping chambers of the heart, according to Dr Irving Shen, head of the Division of Pediatric Cardiac Surgery at OHSU, who will perform the surgery. If all goes as planned, Fatemeh's health care team expects her to stay in the hospital for up to three weeks. —AP

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IWG ORGANIZES TOUR OF GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF BAGHDAD, KUWAIT IN SALWA

By Ben Garcia

The International Women's Group (IWG) organized a tour at the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Baghdad, Kuwait and Dependencies recently. The church compound is located at the residential area of Salwa. In my 20 years in Kuwait, it was my first time as well to visit such an oasis in Salwa. In fact, you probably

would not know that such structure exists inside a simple residential place; unless you are not in the circle of the orthodox Christian community. The church is quite spacious from the inside and relics and icons are displayed almost similar to the Holy Family Church in Kuwait City.

The IWG members were received by the Archbishop Ghattas Hazim, Metropolitan of Baghdad, Kuwait and Dependencies. The event

was organized as part of IWG's continuing program to become acquainted with other religious organizations and institutions, and be able to learn from them. This year, IWG focused on Christianity and its branches.

Ghattas Hazim welcomed the IWG, which consists mostly of prominent members of the local society, including wives of various ambassadors, lady diplomats and others He

explained that the orthodox church in various places around the world still practice and teach the old Christianity based on the teaching of Christ. "Jesus said 'I came to give you better life.' Christianity is not a law and not a foundation, but rather a way of life based on love and respect for God's creation," he said.

He said that the Orthodox Church in Kuwait has been revived via migration of people from

various countries, even though it has been there from many years back, according to archbishop Hazim. "There are traces of relics in Failakah Island, proof that Christianity has once lived here a long time ago. But the current orthodox in Kuwait came from migration of people from the neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Syria and Jordan and many from European countries," he said.

"That is the very reason why we exist in Kuwait since the 1960s so as to help shepherd the flock of God here. I am serving here in the family of God, that is first, and second, to the society we live in. We are honored in your presence in our place of worship and thankful for His Highness the Amir of Kuwait for the religious freedom we enjoy here. The credit goes for His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and all their assistants," he said.

He also congratulated the Amir of Kuwait for the upcoming National and Liberation Days slated on the 25th and 26th of February, respectively. The archbishop also mentioned the promise of a land to be used to build an orthodox church in Kuwait, and he hoped it will come soon.



MARRIOTT HOTELS UNVEIL EXCLUSIVE OFFERS FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

Marriott Hotels in Kuwait invite guests to celebrate the most romantic day of the year with special room packages and series of elegant dining experiences. JW Marriott Hotel Kuwait has created a diverse range of romantic packages, including a scrumptious valentine buffet, handpicked red roses for the ladies and music at the newly opened Crossroads Restaurant. The celebrations continue at Kuwait's best steak house, Terrace Grill, with a lavish Valentine set menu dinner accompanied by a live jazz band set in an intimate candle-lit ambience.

Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait is also offering a selection of fine-dining experiences, perfect for both couples and families. Guests can indulge in a mouth-watering valentine-themed buffet for dinner. With three restaurants in one, Atrium, Sushi and Soul & Spice restaurants combine to offer guests an unforgettable Valentine's Day

experience. The dinner will feature an international upgraded Valentine buffet with specialties that have been carefully crafted by Marriott's talented chefs, in addition to music and special decoration. Moreover, Blendz Restaurant at Residence Inn Kuwait will offer its guests a special set menu on Valentine's Day to celebrate the occasion in style.

Furthermore, JW Marriott Kuwait, Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait and Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait have launched a special room package, valid on February 14. The package includes one night stay at one of the three hotels, the valentine's dinner for two and complimentary breakfast the next day. George Aoun, Cluster General Manager of Marriott Hotels in Kuwait, said "we are raising the bar this Valentine's Day with our tailor-made and exclusive packages. Our goal is to constantly offer our guests unique and memorable experiences that exceed their expectations."



CELEBRATION OF LOVE THIS VALENTINE'S DAY AT MARINA HOTEL

KUWAIT: Celebrate Valentine's Day this year with the specially tailored packages at Marina Hotel Kuwait. Treat your loved ones to an untraditional Valentine's Day special and find real romance with Marina Hotel offerings of a wide array of experiences that will surprise and delight lovers with a package specially developed for you.

Enjoy the premium ambience at the hotel and relish with your loved ones a scrumptious Valentine dining experience. A Romantic buffet and fine dining combined with great hospitality at the Atlantis Restaurant are offered at the special

rate of only KD 60 for two persons.

For a luxurious couples' experience, the hotel has designed a special Valentine's Day room package inclusive of buffet breakfast at Six Palms restaurant and dinner for two at the Atlantis Restaurant starting for only KD 159 to celebrate the most romantic occasion of the year.

"Our team has carefully created a romantic yet unique accommodation and dining experience for this Valentine's Day that will ensure maximum guest satisfaction," said Nabil Hammoud, General Manager, Marina Hotel.



HOLIDAY INN KUWAIT SALMIYA ANNOUNCES APPOINTMENT OF NEW EXECUTIVE CHEF

The Holiday Inn Kuwait, Salmiya, is pleased to announce the appointment of Mohammad Soujod as the Hotel Executive Chef. He brings nearly 22 years of rich and diverse culinary experience, stemming from his experiences of cooking around some of the most Luxurious Hotels which will bring a dynamic, innovative energy to the dining experience at the Holiday Inn Hotel.

He has held previous positions in many prestige and luxury Hotels such as Inter Continental Le Vendome, InterContinental Doha, InterContinental Al-Khobar as well as Handling the opening of Phoenicia InterContinental Hotel, the prestigious five star business hotel in Lebanon where he developed a strong foundation in Food and Beverage Operations, Catering And Events. With his new appointment, Chef Mohamed will lead a team of experienced chefs and oversee the entire food and beverage operation in all six dining Restaurants as well as Banquet in two state-of-the-art venues and catering events ranging in size from large weddings and corporate events to small meetings.

"We are super excited to bring Chef Mohamed aboard," explains Monjed Salha, the General Manager of the Hotel. "He holds an incredible mixture of experience, foresight and education. Chef Mohammad as well is very excited to provide guests with the best that his experience and creativity has to offer."



Chef Mohammad Soujod



Ali Al-Nasser, the vice president of K9 Association of Kuwait (left) is pictured with members of the judging committee. —Photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi German Ambassador Karl Bergner

INT'L K9 ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP FOR GERMAN SHEPHERD DOGS - SHOW LINE AND WORKING LINE

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

Under the patronage of the Public Authority of Sport (PAS) and the German Embassy, the Kuwait K9 Association concluded the Kuwait Sieger Show, the international championship for German shepherd dogs -

show line and working line. The show took place on Friday and yesterday in Mishref. This championship is endorsed by the International German Shepherd Union, and the first of its kind in the Middle East.

German Ambassador Karl Bergner expressed the importance of this event and told Kuwait

Times that this show is a great chance to help the people of Kuwait to see the beauty and usefulness of German shepherds and raise awareness. "They are family dogs and well trained, and do not pose a threat," he said.

Ali Al-Nasser, Vice President of the K9 Association of Kuwait, thanked the Public

Authority of Sport on the recognition of their association, in addition to other supportive entities in Kuwait and the Gulf region. "Kuwait is a trailblazer in the field of breeding dogs. This tournament was the first in the Middle East," he said.

More than 55 dogs participated in the

championship. The first day of the championship was devoted to male puppies and adults, while the second day was for females. They were all assessed over obedience, defense, protection and beauty. The competition received serious interest from dog lovers as they filled the bleachers with their families.



OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 01:00 Montana
- 03:00 Zombie Night
- 04:45 Divergent
- 07:15 Double Team
- 09:00 Rivers Nine
- 10:45 Forbidden Empire
- 12:45 Divergent
- 15:15 The Mark: Redemption
- 17:00 Swelter
- 19:00 Beverly Hills Cop 3
- 21:00 Outcast
- 23:00 The Covenant

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:00 Up Close And Dangerous
- 00:55 Gator Boys
- 01:50 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 02:45 Bondi Vet
- 03:40 Up Close And Dangerous
- 04:35 Tanked
- 05:25 Great Animal Escapes
- 06:15 Gator Boys
- 07:02 Swimming With Monsters: Steve Backshall
- 07:49 Up Close And Dangerous
- 08:36 Gorilla School
- 09:25 Groomer Has It
- 10:15 Up Close And Dangerous
- 11:10 Great Animal Escapes
- 12:05 Tanked
- 13:00 Groomer Has It
- 13:55 Bondi Vet
- 14:50 Up Close And Dangerous
- 15:45 Gator Boys
- 16:40 Great Animal Escapes
- 17:35 Tanked
- 18:30 River Monsters
- 19:25 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You
- 20:20 The Pool Master
- 21:15 Tanked
- 22:10 Great Animal Escapes
- 23:05 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You

BBC FIRST

- 00:10 Orphan Black
- 00:55 Doctors
- 01:25 Call The Midwife
- 02:20 Silent Witness

- 03:30 South Park
- 04:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 04:25 Catch A Contractor
- 04:50 Catch A Contractor
- 05:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 05:40 Ridiculousness
- 06:05 Ridiculousness
- 06:30 Urban Tarzan
- 06:55 Urban Tarzan
- 07:20 Life Or Debt
- 08:15 Catch A Contractor
- 08:40 Catch A Contractor
- 09:05 Disaster Date
- 09:30 Ridiculousness
- 09:55 Ridiculousness
- 10:20 Workaholics
- 10:45 Disaster Date
- 11:10 Ridiculousness
- 11:35 The It Crowd
- 12:00 Hungry Investors
- 12:50 Workaholics
- 13:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 13:40 The It Crowd
- 14:05 Catch A Contractor
- 14:30 Catch A Contractor
- 14:55 Ridiculousness
- 15:20 Sweat Inc.
- 16:10 Workaholics
- 16:35 Ridiculousness
- 17:00 Ridiculousness
- 17:30 Disaster Date
- 17:55 Lip Sync Battle
- 18:25 Workaholics
- 18:50 Urban Tarzan
- 19:15 Urban Tarzan
- 19:39 The It Crowd
- 20:03 Life Or Debt
- 20:50 Disaster Date
- 21:13 Ridiculousness
- 21:37 Workaholics
- 22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 22:30 The Meltedown With Jonah And Kumail
- 22:54 Key And Peele
- 23:18 Another Period
- 23:42 Another Period

Discovery Family

- 00:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 00:40 Ultimate Survival
- 01:30 Nextworld
- 02:20 Australia Smashes Guinness World Records
- 02:45 Australia Smashes Guinness World Records
- 03:10 Guinness World Records Smashed UK
- 04:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:50 Ultimate Survival

- 12:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:40 Good Luck Charlie
- 13:05 Shake It Up
- 13:30 Shake It Up
- 13:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 14:15 Gravity Falls
- 14:40 Hank Zipzer
- 15:05 Star Darlings
- 15:10 Austin & Ally
- 15:35 Jessie
- 16:00 Bunk'd
- 16:25 Kirby Buckets
- 16:50 Rolling To The Ronks
- 17:15 Sunny Bunnies
- 17:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 17:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 18:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 18:35 Descendants Wicked World
- 18:40 Girl Meets World
- 19:05 Bizaardvark
- 19:30 Liv And Maddie
- 19:55 Best Friends Whenever
- 20:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 20:25 The Next Step
- 20:50 Austin & Ally
- 21:15 Star Darlings
- 21:20 Shake It Up
- 21:45 Backstage
- 22:10 Liv And Maddie
- 22:35 Cracked
- 22:40 The Next Step
- 23:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 23:30 Jessie
- 23:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Doc McStuffins
- 00:30 Doc McStuffins
- 00:55 PJ Masks
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 The Hive
- 01:45 Loopedo
- 02:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:15 Calimero
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Zou
- 03:05 Loopedo
- 03:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:35 Calimero
- 03:50 Zou
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 The Hive
- 04:40 Loopedo
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:10 Art Attack
- 05:35 Loopedo
- 05:50 Calimero
- 06:05 Art Attack

- 13:15 Ed Stafford: Into The Unknown
- 14:05 How Do They Do It?
- 14:30 Auction Hunters
- 15:00 Auction Hunters
- 15:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 16:10 Boy To Man
- 17:00 Deadliest Catch
- 18:40 Misfit Garage
- 19:30 How Do They Do It?
- 19:55 How Do They Do It?
- 20:20 Boy To Man
- 21:10 Auction Hunters
- 21:35 Auction Hunters
- 22:00 Blowing Up History
- 22:50 Mega Shippers
- 23:40 Impossible Engineering

XD

- 00:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA
- 07:00 Danger Mouse
- 07:25 Gravity Falls
- 07:50 Atomic Puppet
- 08:15 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 08:25 Counterfeit Cat
- 08:40 Supa Strikas
- 09:10 K.C. Undercover
- 09:35 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 10:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 10:25 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 10:50 Danger Mouse
- 11:20 Supa Strikas
- 11:45 Supa Strikas
- 12:10 Counterfeit Cat
- 12:35 Pair Of Kings
- 13:00 Pair Of Kings
- 13:30 Future-Worm!
- 13:55 Lab Rats
- 14:20 Lab Rats
- 14:45 Atomic Puppet
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
- 15:40 Supa Strikas
- 16:05 Lab Rats
- 16:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 16:55 Danger Mouse
- 17:25 K.C. Undercover
- 17:50 Future-Worm!
- 18:15 Gravity Falls
- 18:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 19:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:10 Supa Strikas
- 19:35 Supa Strikas
- 20:00 Atomic Puppet
- 20:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 20:55 K.C. Undercover
- 21:20 Counterfeit Cat
- 21:45 Mighty Med
- 22:10 Pickle And Peanut
- 22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 22:45 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
- 23:10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
- 23:35 Boyster

EHD

- 00:00 E! News
- 00:15 Mariah's World
- 01:05 Mariah's World
- 01:55 Mariah's World
- 02:50 E! News
- 03:50 WAGS
- 04:45 WAGS
- 05:40 WAGS
- 06:30 New Money
- 07:00 LA Clippers Dance Squad
- 07:55 E! News
- 08:10 LA Clippers Dance Squad
- 09:10 E! News
- 10:10 WAGS Miami
- 11:10 WAGS Miami
- 12:05 WAGS Miami
- 13:00 E! News
- 13:15 WAGS Miami
- 14:10 WAGS Miami
- 15:05 WAGS Miami
- 16:00 E! News
- 16:15 Celebrity Style Story
- 16:45 Celebrity Style Story
- 17:15 Mariah's World
- 18:10 Mariah's World
- 19:05 Mariah's World
- 20:00 E! News
- 21:00 Hollywood & Football
- 22:00 Hollywood & Football
- 23:00 Hollywood & Football

food network

- 00:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 00:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 01:00 Man Fire Food
- 01:30 Man Fire Food
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:40 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics

- 06:30 Barefoot Contessa: Back To Basics
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table
- 09:30 Siba's Table
- 10:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 10:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table
- 13:30 Siba's Table
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 17:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 20:00 Chopped
- 21:00 Food Network Star
- 22:00 Kitchen Casino
- 23:00 Iron Chef America

itv CHOICE

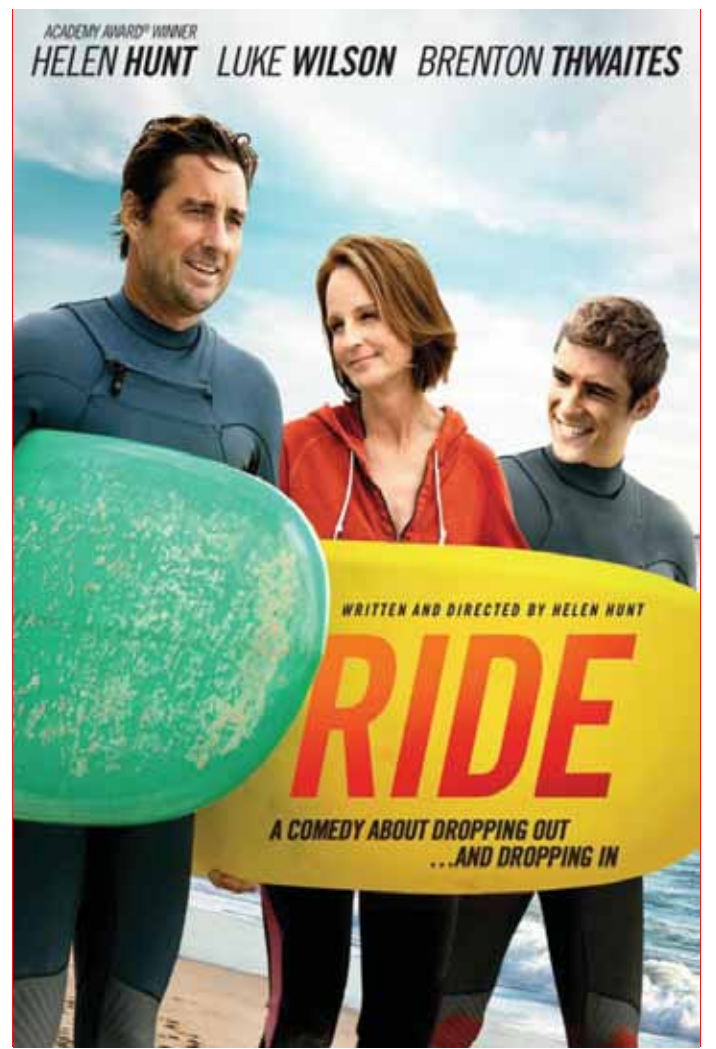
- 00:15 Coronation Street
- 00:40 Coronation Street
- 01:10 The Chase
- 02:00 Emmerdale
- 02:30 Coronation Street
- 03:00 Coronation Street
- 03:30 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 04:25 Murdoch Mysteries
- 05:15 Together
- 05:45 Together
- 06:15 Grantchester
- 07:10 The Chase
- 08:05 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 09:00 Murdoch Mysteries
- 10:00 Together
- 10:30 Together
- 11:00 Grantchester
- 11:55 The Chase
- 12:50 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 13:45 Emmerdale
- 14:15 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Coronation Street
- 15:15 The Chase
- 16:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 17:00 Doctor Thorne
- 17:50 Shetland
- 18:50 Love And Marriage: A 20th Century Romance
- 19:45 Emmerdale
- 20:15 Coronation Street
- 20:45 Coronation Street
- 21:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 22:00 Doctor Thorne
- 22:50 Shetland
- 23:50 Emmerdale

H2 HD

- 00:00 Ancient Aliens
- 01:00 The Universe
- 02:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 03:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 04:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
- 04:50 Ancient Aliens
- 05:40 Ancient Aliens
- 06:30 The Universe
- 07:20 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 08:10 The Universe
- 09:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 10:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
- 11:00 Ancient Aliens
- 12:00 Ancient Aliens
- 13:00 The Universe
- 14:00 World War II: Lost Films
- 15:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 16:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
- 17:00 Ancient Aliens
- 18:00 Ancient Aliens
- 19:00 The Universe
- 20:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 21:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 22:00 Brad Meltzer's Decoded
- 23:00 Ancient Aliens

HISTORY

- 00:30 American Pickers
- 01:20 Forged In Fire
- 02:10 Mountain Men
- 03:00 Swamp People
- 03:50 Storage Wars
- 04:15 American Pickers
- 05:05 Pawn Stars
- 06:00 Mountain Men
- 07:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 07:50 Shipping Wars
- 08:15 Shipping Wars
- 08:40 Counting Cars
- 09:05 Counting Cars
- 09:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:55 Pawn Stars
- 10:20 Storage Wars
- 10:45 Storage Wars
- 11:10 American Pickers
- 12:00 Hunting Hitler



RIDE ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

- 12:50 Time Team
- 13:40 Swamp People
- 14:30 Ax Men
- 15:20 Mountain Men
- 16:10 Shipping Wars
- 16:35 Shipping Wars
- 17:00 Counting Cars
- 17:25 Counting Cars
- 17:50 Pawn Stars
- 18:15 Pawn Stars
- 18:40 Mountain Men
- 19:30 Aussie Pickers
- 20:20 Ax Men
- 21:10 American Pickers
- 22:00 Counting Cars
- 22:25 Car Hunters
- 22:50 Forged In Fire
- 23:40 Forged In Fire

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:20 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 00:45 The Shelbourne
- 01:10 Chocolate Covered
- 01:35 The Food Files
- 02:00 Poh & Co
- 02:25 Places We Go
- 02:50 Places We Go
- 03:15 Delinquent Gourmet
- 03:40 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 04:05 Tom's Istanbul Delight
- 04:30 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 04:55 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 05:20 Carnival Eats
- 05:45 Eat Street
- 06:10 A Is For Apple
- 06:35 Eat: The Story Of Food
- 07:25 Miguel's Feasts
- 07:50 Poh & Co
- 08:15 Places We Go
- 08:40 Places We Go
- 09:05 Delinquent Gourmet
- 09:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 09:55 Tom's Istanbul Delight
- 10:20 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 10:45 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 11:10 Carnival Eats
- 11:35 Eat Street
- 12:00 A Is For Apple
- 12:25 Eat: The Story Of Food
- 13:15 Miguel's Feasts
- 13:40 Poh & Co
- 14:05 Places We Go
- 14:35 Delinquent Gourmet
- 15:00 Chocolate Covered
- 15:30 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 15:55 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 16:25 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 17:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 17:25 Carnival Eats
- 17:50 Eat Street
- 18:15 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 19:10 Chocolate Covered
- 19:35 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 20:05 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 20:30 Valentine Warner's Wild Table
- 21:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 21:25 Carnival Eats
- 21:50 Eat Street
- 22:15 Confucius Was A Foodie
- 23:05 Chocolate Covered
- 23:30 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 23:55 Poh & Co

OSN MOVIES DRAMA

- 00:00 Kelly & Cal
- 02:00 Love Under The Stars
- 03:30 The Reluctant Fundamentalist
- 06:00 Posthumous
- 08:00 Stranded
- 10:00 Changing Hearts
- 12:00 Love Under The Stars
- 14:00 Memories
- 16:00 Trust Me
- 18:00 Changing Hearts
- 20:00 The Selfish Giant
- 22:00 Fading Gigolo

OSN MOVIES FAMILY

- 01:00 Monsterville: The Cabinet Of Souls
- 03:00 Marvel Super Hero Adventures: Frost Fight
- 04:30 Sky High
- 06:30 The Boxtrolls
- 08:30 Marvel Super Hero Adventures: Frost Fight
- 10:00 The Tigger Movie
- 12:00 Sky High
- 14:00 The Land Before Time: Journey Of The Brave
- 16:00 Man Of The House
- 18:00 The Parent Trap
- 20:15 James And The Giant Peach
- 22:00 Return To Oz

OSN MOVIES COMEDY

- 00:00 Insidious: Chapter 3
- 02:00 The Benefactor
- 04:00 The Intern
- 06:00 Before We Go
- 08:00 The Benefactor
- 10:00 The Intern
- 12:00 A Royal Night Out
- 14:00 90 Minutes In Heaven
- 16:00 The Duff
- 18:00 Pan
- 20:00 Concussion
- 22:00 The Last Witch Hunter

OSN MOVIES COMEDY

- 00:20 Access 360 World Heritage
- 01:10 Monster Fish
- 02:00 Wicked Tuna
- 03:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 03:55 Live Free Or Die
- 04:50 Monster Fish
- 05:45 The Great Food Revolution
- 06:40 Paranatural
- 07:35 Dog Whisperer
- 08:30 T. Rex Ultimate Survivor
- 09:25 Seconds From Disaster
- 10:20 The Great Food Revolution
- 11:15 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 11:40 Desperate Hours
- 12:10 Mission Critical
- 13:05 Rise Up: The Legacy Of Nat Turner
- 14:00 Seconds From Disaster
- 15:00 Jurassic C.S.I.
- 16:00 Dog Whisperer
- 17:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 17:30 Desperate Hours
- 18:00 On The Brink: Uncharted Waters
- 19:00 Human Inferno
- 20:00 Startalk
- 21:00 Cesar's Recruit: Asia
- 21:25 Desperate Hours
- 21:50 On The Brink: Uncharted Waters
- 22:40 Human Inferno
- 23:30 Startalk

OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

- 02:00 Land Of Mine
- 04:00 The Village
- 06:00 Eight Men Out
- 08:00 Two Men In Town
- 10:00 War Horse
- 12:30 Escobar: Paradise Lost
- 14:30 The Imitation Game
- 16:30 Bridge Of Spies
- 19:00 The Hurricane
- 21:30 Mad Max: Fury Road
- 23:30 Nightcrawler

OSN MOVIES KIDS

- 00:00 Ghatokach - Master Of Magic
- 02:00 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
- 03:30 Baby Geniuses And The Space Baby
- 05:00 Harriet The Spy
- 07:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
- 08:30 Cher Ami
- 10:15 Jetsons: The Movie



MONTANA ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 03:20 Silent Witness
- 04:20 Orphan Black
- 05:05 Doctors
- 05:35 Doctors
- 06:05 New Tricks
- 07:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Doctors
- 08:00 Holly City
- 08:50 Death In Paradise
- 09:45 Stella
- 10:35 New Tricks
- 11:30 Doctors
- 12:00 Doctors
- 12:30 Death In Paradise
- 13:25 Stella
- 14:20 New Tricks
- 15:15 Doctors
- 15:45 Doctors
- 16:15 Death In Paradise
- 17:10 Stella
- 18:05 New Tricks
- 19:00 Doctors
- 19:30 Eastenders
- 20:05 Death In Paradise
- 21:00 Poldark
- 22:00 Last Tango In Halifax
- 22:55 Ripper Street
- 23:50 Orphan Black

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 The First 48
- 01:00 It Takes A Killer
- 01:30 It Takes A Killer
- 02:00 Deadly Wives
- 03:00 Killer Kids
- 04:00 The First 48
- 05:00 It Takes A Killer
- 05:30 It Takes A Killer
- 06:00 Deadly Wives
- 07:00 Killer Kids
- 08:00 Evil Up Close
- 09:00 Evil Up Close
- 10:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 11:00 It Takes A Killer
- 11:30 It Takes A Killer
- 12:00 I Killed My BFF
- 13:00 I Killed My BFF
- 14:00 I Killed My BFF
- 15:00 I Killed My BFF
- 16:00 Evil Up Close
- 17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 18:00 It Takes A Killer
- 18:30 It Takes A Killer
- 19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 20:00 The First 48
- 21:00 The First 48
- 22:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 23:00 Evil Up Close

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:05 Tosh.0
- 00:30 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 01:00 Key And Peele
- 01:25 South Park
- 01:50 South Park
- 02:15 Tosh.0
- 02:40 Inside Amy Schumer
- 03:05 South Park

- 05:40 How It's Made
- 06:05 How It's Made
- 06:30 Dirty Jobs
- 07:20 Mythbusters
- 08:00 Kids vs Film
- 08:25 Dick N' Dom Go Wild
- 08:50 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 09:40 How It's Made
- 10:05 How It's Made
- 10:30 Nextworld
- 11:20 Mythbusters
- 12:10 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 13:00 Ultimate Survival
- 13:50 How It's Made
- 14:15 How It's Made
- 14:40 Dirty Jobs
- 15:30 Kids vs Film
- 15:55 Dick N' Dom Go Wild
- 16:20 Mythbusters
- 17:10 Nextworld
- 18:00 Wildest Africa
- 18:50 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
- 19:40 Destroyed In Seconds
- 20:05 Destroyed In Seconds
- 20:30 How It's Made
- 20:55 How It's Made
- 21:20 Mythbusters
- 22:10 Wildest Africa
- 23:00 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
- 23:50 Destroyed In Seconds

Disney Channel HD

- 00:00 Kirby Buckets
- 00:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:10 Hank Zipzer
- 01:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:00 Violetta
- 02:45 The Hive
- 02:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:40 Hank Zipzer
- 04:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 04:30 Violetta
- 05:15 The Hive
- 05:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 06:10 Hank Zipzer
- 06:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 07:00 Violetta
- 07:45 The Hive
- 07:50 The 7D
- 08:00 Jessie
- 08:25 Jessie
- 08:50 Rolling To The Ronks
- 09:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 09:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 09:45 Bunk'd
- 10:10 Stuck In The Middle
- 10:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 11:00 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 11:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:50 A.N.T. Farm

- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Zou
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:00 Kids vs Film
- 08:25 Dick N' Dom Go Wild
- 08:50 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 09:40 How It's Made
- 10:05 How It's Made
- 10:30 Nextworld
- 11:20 Mythbusters
- 12:10 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 13:00 Ultimate Survival
- 13:50 How It's Made
- 14:15 How It's Made
- 14:40 Dirty Jobs
- 15:30 Kids vs Film
- 15:55 Dick N' Dom Go Wild
- 16:20 Mythbusters
- 17:10 Nextworld
- 18:00 Wildest Africa
- 18:50 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
- 19:40 Destroyed In Seconds
- 20:05 Destroyed In Seconds
- 20:30 How It's Made
- 20:55 How It's Made
- 21:20 Mythbusters
- 22:10 Wildest Africa
- 23:00 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
- 23:50 Destroyed In Seconds

CLASSIFIEDS



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www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (09/02/2017 TO 15/02/2017)

Time	Programme	Time	Programme
12:45 PM	SHARQIA-1 RINGS	11:30 AM	RINGS
3:15 PM	RAEES- HINDI	1:30 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE
6:00 PM	KAABIL- HINDI	3:45 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE
8:45 PM	AL MOKHAYAM (Kuwaiti Film)	6:00 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE
10:45 PM	AL MOKHAYAM (Kuwaiti Film)	8:15 PM	RINGS
12:45 AM	SPLIT	10:30 PM	RINGS
		12:45 AM	RINGS
12:15 PM	SHARQIA-2 SPLIT	12:30 PM	FANAR-3 KAABIL- HINDI
2:45 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE	1:30 PM	AL MOKHAYAM (Kuwaiti Film)
5:00 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE	3:30 PM	DANGAL- Hindi
7:15 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE	6:45 PM	KAABIL- HINDI
9:30 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	9:30 PM	JOLLY LLB 2 -Hindi
11:45 PM	SPLIT	12:15 AM	AL MOKHAYAM (Kuwaiti Film)
12:15 PM	SHARQIA-3 JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	11:30 AM	FANAR-4 JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
2:45 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	2:00 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
5:15 PM	RINGS	4:30 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
7:30 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	7:00 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
10:00 PM	RINGS	9:30 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
12:05 AM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	12:05 AM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
11:45 AM	MUHALAB-1 RINGS	11:45 AM	FANAR-5 THE SPACE BETWEEN US
2:00 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE	2:00 PM	THE SPACE BETWEEN US
4:15 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE	4:15 PM	HEARTBEATS
6:30 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE	6:30 PM	THE SPACE BETWEEN US
8:45 PM	RINGS	8:45 PM	RAEES- HINDI
10:45 PM	RINGS	11:30 PM	HEARTBEATS
12:45 AM	RINGS		
1:30 PM	MUHALAB-2 SPLIT	11:30 AM	MARINA-1 RINGS
3:45 PM	RAEES- HINDI	1:30 PM	SPLIT
6:45 PM	KAABIL- HINDI	3:45 PM	RINGS
9:45 PM	SPLIT	6:00 PM	RINGS
12:15 AM	SPLIT	8:15 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA
		10:30 PM	SPLIT
		12:45 AM	SPLIT
12:00 PM	MUHALAB-3 JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	1:00 PM	MARINA-2 RINGS
2:30 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	1:00 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE
5:00 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	3:15 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE
7:30 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	5:30 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE
10:00 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	7:45 PM	THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE
12:30 AM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2	10:00 PM	RINGS
		12:15 AM	RINGS
12:00 PM	FANAR-1 SPLIT	12:00 PM	MARINA-3 JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
2:30 PM	SPLIT	2:30 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
5:00 PM	AL MOKHAYAM (Kuwaiti Film)	5:00 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
7:00 PM	KUNG-FU YOGA	7:30 PM	JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2
9:15 PM	SPLIT		
11:45 PM	SPLIT		
	FANAR-2		

Visual Basic 6 Developers

- Development experience in VB6/MS SQL Server
- Minimum 5 years experience
- Analyzes customer requirement, Develop & Implement
- Sales, Purchase & Accounting knowledge
- Transferable residence

Send your CV to
info@microstyc.com

CHANGE OF NAME

I Shikha Rana Sham D/o Shamal Rana holder of Indian Passport No. M6712765 & Civil ID No. 290062302045 has changed my name to Sabah Shahzad Khan hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. I will be known by name of Sabah Shahzad Khan. (C 5269) 9-2-2017

Sharing accommodation for Filipino Bachelor ONLY near Big Jamiya Farwaniya. Available already, Contact 66826412 or 97512782

FOR SALE

For sale 2008 model GMC ENVOY, good condition, full option, no accident, 186000 km. Contact: 97470947. (C 5270) 12-2-2017

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation available for a decent couple or working ladies in a CAC flat at Jabriya block 10, near Jabriya Indian School. Please call 99300513. (C 5267) 8-2-2017

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

EMERGENCY 112

PRAYER TIMINGS

- Fajr: 05:12
- Shorook: 06:33
- Duhr: 12:02
- Asr: 15:09
- Maghrib: 17:32
- Isha: 18:50



Leading Shipping Freight Forwarding & Logistic Company in Kuwait Invites Competent Male Professionals for the Following Post:

Sales Coordinator

Specialized in liner service, freight forwarding. The ideal candidate must be pro-active, self motivated team player and target driven.

Qualifications:

- Not less than 5 years experience in shipping logistics & freight forwarding.
- Good communications skills.
- Fluent in English (talking & writing).
- Computer skills.
- Transferable residence.

Successful candidates are subject to fixed salary and incentives with career development both in Kuwait and other GCC country.

Interested candidates are requested to send their CV at shippingkw27@gmail.com Starting the post at the subject line or fax it at 22458892 with covering letter providing the post applied.

FLATS & VILLAS FOR RENT

- Al-Surra – Damascus St. - Floor from New VIP Villa – Large Space.
- In Mansuria-Large 2 Storey villa with Deluxe Finishing. Very good location. CALL: SABBIR 99248551
- In Salwa– Block 1, Street # 1, Building # 71 and 72. 3 bed room, 3 bath room. CALL: KAREEM 66248421
- In Hawally– Fotouh Tower, Behind Al-Bahar Center. 2 bed room, 2 bath room. CALL: MILAD 67727387
- In Maidan Hawally – Harun Al-Rasheed Street. 2 bed room, 2 bath room. CALL: ABASS 99658206
- In Jabriya – Block 1A, Street # 105, Building # 194. 3 big bed rooms, 2 bath room. CALL: KAREEM 97916548

Contact: **99666522**



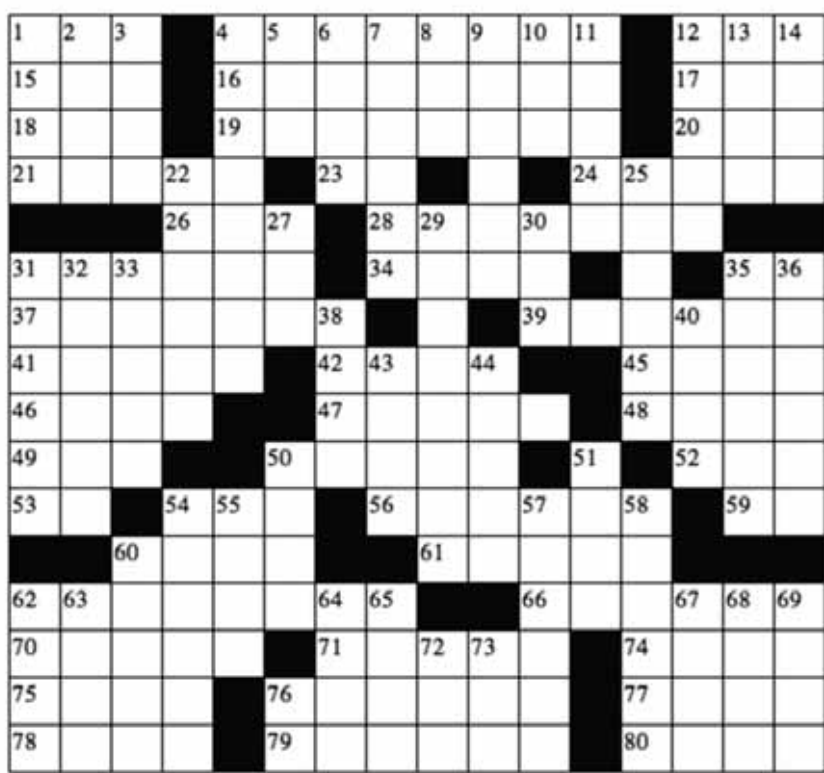
Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL 161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Sunday 12/2/2017				Departure Flights on Sunday 12/2/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20	KAC	286	Dhaka	15:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:25
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	THY	773	Istanbul	02:25
KAC	102	London	00:55	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:55
KAC	742	Dammam	01:00	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	MSC	406	Sohag	03:30
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:35
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	KKK	6505	Istanbul	03:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
JZR	555	Alexandria	02:05	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
MSC	405	Sohag	02:30	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	QTR	1077	Doha	04:40
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	KAC	103	London	04:45
QTR	8511	Doha	05:45	PGT	861	Istanbul	04:55
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	LMU	511	Cairo	05:00
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	CEB	0019	Manila	05:20
KAC	206	Islamabad	06:20	QTR	1087	Doha	05:50
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	JZR	560	Sohag	06:05
BAW	157	London	06:40	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	KAC	153	Istanbul	06:50
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	RJA	643	Amman	07:05
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:05
KAC	362	Colombo	09:05	KAC	541	Cairo	07:15
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	QTR	8512	Doha	07:15
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	KAC	773	Riyadh	07:30
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:55
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	KAC	563	Amman	08:00
IRA	665	Shiraz	09:40	KAC	617	Doha	08:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	KAC	679	Dubai	08:10
IRC	528	Ahwaz	10:05	BAW	156	London	08:55
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	FDB	054	Dubai	08:55
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	117	SNN/New York	09:00
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
KAC	774	Riyadh	11:05	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KAC	101	London	09:45
KAC	618	Doha	11:50	UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	787	Jeddah	09:55
SAW	701	Damascus	12:30	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	KAC	613	Bahrain	10:10
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR	482	Istanbul	10:35
KAC	680	Dubai	12:55	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	10:35
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30	IRA	664	Shiraz	10:40
KAC	564	Amman	13:40	KAC	501	Beirut	10:55
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	IRC	529	Ahwaz	11:05
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
KAC	672	Dubai	14:50	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55	KAC	791	Madinah	12:05
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	15:05	KAC	521	Al Najaf	12:50
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
				JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
				SAW	702	Damascus	13:30
				JZR	176	Dubai	13:45

CROSSWORD 1519



ACROSS

1. A hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland.
4. Of or relating to or characteristic of the Bahama Islands or their inhabitants.
12. Inquire about.
15. 10 hao equal 1 dong.
16. Youthful appearance in an old person.
17. Aircraft landing in bad weather in which the pilot is talked down by ground control using precision approach radar.
18. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
19. (Italian cookery) Squid prepared as food.
20. Thigh of a hog (usually smoked).
21. English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
23. A radioactive transuranic element synthesized from californium.
24. Jordan's port.
26. A small drink.
28. The trait of lacking restraint or control.
31. (Spanish) Saffron-flavored dish made of rice with shellfish and chicken.
34. Austrian chemist who did research on carotenoids and vitamins (1900-1967).
37. Discharge bad feelings or tension through verbalization, in psychoanalysis.
39. Relating to or being a member of an ethnic group.
41. (trademark) A German semiautomatic pistol.
42. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.
45. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
46. A program under which employees regularly accumulate shares and may ultimately assume control of the company.
47. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
48. Channel into a new direction.
49. A serve that strikes the net before falling into the receiver's court.
52. Meeting adequate standards for a purpose.
53. A period of time containing 365 (or 366) days.
56. A peninsula in southwestern Europe.
59. A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
61. A name for the Old Testament God as transliterated from the Hebrew YHWH.
62. Former name for the order Crocodylia.
66. A city in western Germany near the Dutch and Belgian borders.
70. A virtually extinct Caucasian language spoken exclusively in Turkey.
71. A natural and periodic state of rest during which consciousness of the world is suspended.
74. A member of the Siouan people formerly living in Iowa and Minnesota and Missouri.
75. Slanting diagonally across the grain of a fabric.
77. A city in northwestern Syria.
78. An inactive volcano in Sicily.
79. English novelist.
80. A small constellation in the northern hemisphere near Cygnus and Draco.

DOWN

1. Bony flesh of herring-like fish usually caught during their migration to fresh water for spawning.
2. A sock with a separation for the big toe.
3. Showing characteristics of age, especially having gray or white hair.
4. Formed like a bacillus.
5. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
6. (Christianity) The abode of Satan and the forces of evil.
7. A member of a widespread group of Amerindians living in northeastern South America.
8. A member of a Mayan people of southwestern Guatemala.
9. (Old Testament) The first of the major Hebrew prophets (8th century BC).
10. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring in the air.
11. Submerged aquatic plant having narrow leaves and small flowers.
12. The ninth month of the Hindu calendar.
13. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
14. God of love and erotic desire.
22. In a state of sleep.
25. Summer cypress.
27. Committee formed by a special-interest group to raise money for their favorite political candidates.
29. Agile long-tailed nocturnal African lemur with dense woolly fur and large eyes and ears.
30. The compass point that is midway between north and northeast.
32. Someone who abuses.
33. A plant disease caused by the ergot fungus.
35. Any of numerous pale-colored butterflies having three pairs of well-developed legs.
36. Lacking sense or discretion.
38. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
40. Marked by or showing unaffected simplicity and lack of guile or worldly experience.
43. A shop selling delicatessen (as salads or cooked meats).
44. Indigo bush.
50. A island in the Netherlands Antilles that is the top of an extinct volcano.
51. A distinguished female operatic singer.
54. A derogatory term used by Jews to refer to non-Jewish women.
55. (used of count nouns) Every one considered individually.
57. A ridge that forms a seam between two parts.
58. Of or belonging to an aecium.
60. Of or relating to the former Indo-European people.
63. A notice of someone's death.
64. A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
65. In addition.
67. Belonging to or derived from or associated with a divine power.
68. An open vessel with a handle and a spout for pouring.
69. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
72. The compass point that is one point north of due east.
73. Take in solid food.
76. A unit of information equal to 1024 bytes.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

The secret of this successful day is to think before speaking. Real pleasure and rewards come soon-you will see life on the home front, as well as work, running a bit more smoothly. So, pace yourself and know that changes for the good are coming your way. Perfect opportunities present themselves for making phone calls, writing letters, doing research or working on personal paperwork. Refinement and relationships are the keys to emotional satisfaction for you. Harmony and beauty are deeply satisfying. This evening will present opportunities to socialize with friends and since this is not a dress-up-and-act-your-best affair, you will be more relaxed and find your sense of humor has returned. Love talk is exciting.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This morning could be challenging. Others may challenge your authority or the direction you are taking. Events could conspire to make it difficult for you to act. You may occasionally have a tendency to act suddenly, without thought or consideration. Steer clear of mental tension or worries by learning a few meditation techniques. It is good that you are trying to break out of old mental patterns that could be destructive. Pace yourself and enjoy being with people. If possible, ask questions that will help you achieve a focus. You may even be trying to get a focus on your contribution for an important afternoon get-together. This afternoon is much better for decision making. A good noon meal will renew your energies as well as your mental outlook.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Right away you must know that this is a challenging day. Without the challenging days in our life, however, we would not have the successes that come with overcoming difficulties. Careful, if you are stressed, you may have a tendency to be sharp with your opinions. This could hurt your good intentions. The main idea here is to be gentle but truthful. This is a time when you can put your practical insights into words and convey them to others. Communication with authority figures is enhanced. Someone may criticize your good works, but if you let the comments go right over your head, you will be very pleased with the outcome. Bargaining with someone about what seems to be a set price may find everyone surprised at your results.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Some unexpected bills may come to your attention. If you are going to be late in paying, call and let them know. Look for ways to make some extra money-a temporary work agency would be happy to have you on their team. Exchanging information takes on significance that is more emotional. Concentrate on the job at hand and you will be pleased at the results. If you can close doors to keep from being interrupted this afternoon, do so. Being more involved with neighbors or siblings this evening satisfies a deep emotional need. You can demonstrate great understanding to the needs of others just now. There is a guardian angel or mentor available if you need one; you may have the opportunity to play such a role for someone else.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Through the end of the month, matters surrounding gossip could cause you to assume the truth without proof. As long as you steer clear of participating in the gossip, you will learn what you need to know. Diet and exercise somehow mean more now and a friend or neighbor will approach you about joining him or her in a routine to gain better health and lose a few pounds. You want to feel good about yourself and may give this more than a little thought. One person's diet can be another person's poison, so do not push your ideas on others. If you have a lot of weight to lose, you might consider a doctor to guide you. Success can be yours one day at a time! Action and adventure are in the forecast and you want to participate as a healthy individual.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Your day starts out on a positive note and will stay that way, even when one or two outside frustrations come your way. These are temporary obstacles and they can be handled if you can distance your emotions and realize you are not being attacked, just questioned. Emotional security, a sense of belonging and nurturing are issues felt instinctively now. You will see positive results from your choices. There are energies surrounding new and better things. This could mean purchasing a computer, a new car or even some real estate. A greater appreciation for things of value and the idea of value itself is in order. This could be a period of great material gain; it is certainly a time when material things have a great deal of importance for you.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Work continues-even at home. Circumstances that surround you tend to pull you into a group project. Work will eventually come to a successful end and afterwards a few of you may want to enjoy each other's company through different surroundings. This could mean an early dinner and a movie for a group of you. If the result of your work together is a party or wedding, of course, all will enjoy this evening. You are in top thinking form and guests or anyone visiting from out-of-town will get the royal treatment in your care. You are able to make changes, additions, suggestions or lend support to others. You appear more charming and refined than usual this evening. Tonight may be the night you enjoy the company of someone new.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Someone you meet today is too secretive and underhanded for your taste. Your thoughts and ideas go against this secretive, power-oriented manner and you are not afraid to say so. You could be seen by others as just the person to be put in charge of some project. This does not necessarily mean that you will be working in a place of business; instead, you could be coordinating group events for charity or volunteer involvement. Your nervous system will be happier now if you could make sure that your diet is rich in b vitamins. Try to maintain a balance between sound reasoning and impulsiveness in order to bring about a focus for your life. Involve yourself in a routine of exercise, perhaps with a friend.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

Law, politics, education, travel or religion is one of the areas in which an emotionally charged drama will be played. This means dealing with deep emotional changes that could include a spiritual awakening. There are opportunities opening now for you to complete old projects or pool your resources with others to end some research tasks. Clearing away, revamping or utilizing old and perhaps forgotten possessions will bring the potential to strengthen your finances. By the way, while shopping, make sure you receive the right amount of change. This evening you may enjoy a good movie or book or feel like escaping from day-to-day realities for a while and visit friends. Conversations surrounding what-if ideas bring much contemplation.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A new way of looking at life or a widened point of view is achieved today. You can really become focused on your own ideas or viewpoint. Often, some people's points of view seem all wrong. You try to succeed at understanding someone else's point of view this day. Involvements with optimistic groups take on a greater importance now; the old is suspect and the new seems to hold all the answers. A challenge can be fun when you seek to achieve new things. This new challenge could come to you today in the form of organizing a group, person or event. If you have just finished school, you will find a wonderful job full of possibilities coming available for you now. Extra attention to a physical symptom brings relief to a chronic problem.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

A new color scheme with some artwork on one wall may be the activity with which you may want to become involved. Whether you actually follow through with this idea or just plan new surroundings, this topic surfaces through your mind from time to time. You love beautiful surroundings that include soft tones of many colors as this lends itself to your special creative ideas, perhaps through writing or art. Your frame of mind is positive and upbeat and you will be pleased at the way the day progresses. A book, a child, a neighbor or friend captivates your mind with a true story that may be quite difficult to believe. The fun thing about the story is that you will have a great subject for conversation tonight. Enjoy the fun. Happy birthday!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Young people play a big part in your day. Remember to keep your budget steady as there are many fun activities to do-some costly-some not. While interacting with young people, it is easy to remember the activities of your own youth. You will have a natural sense for communicating with young people. Emotional security, a sense of belonging and nurturing are the issues felt intuitively. Enjoy a calmer way of life by harnessing your emotions in a constructive way. Read self-help books from the library or investigate the new ones from the bookstores. Searching for the tools you need in order to help all sorts of hard-to-help people will soon be within your reach. You will also learn some great techniques for yourself. Enjoy life.

WORD SEARCH

Moods & Emotions 2

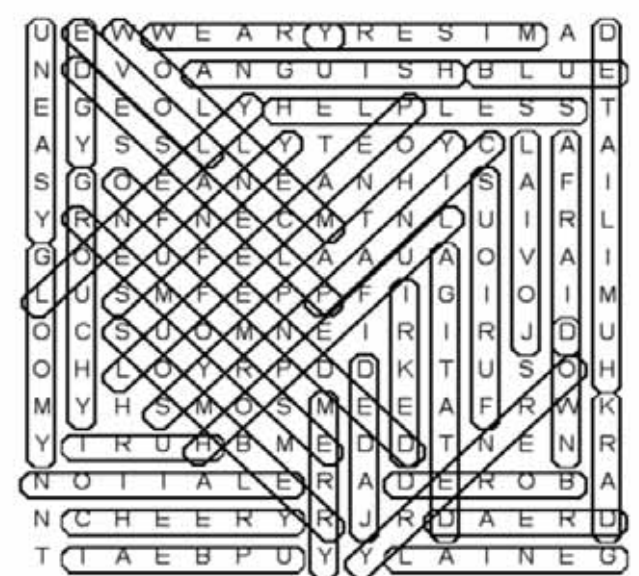
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 11 letters spell an additional word.



- | | | | |
|----------|----------|------------|-----------|
| AMUSED | DISLIKE | HORROR | SHOCK |
| ANNOYED | DOUBT | INFATUATED | SULKY |
| ANTSY | EMPATHY | JOYOUS | SULLEN |
| ANXIOUS | ENVY | LEERY | TERRIFIED |
| CARING | EUPHORIA | PRIDE | TRANQUIL |
| CONTEMPT | GLUM | RAGE | UNCERTAIN |
| CONTENT | GREED | SAD | UNHAPPY |
| CONTRITE | GROUCHY | SATISFIED | WARY |
| DELIGHT | GUILT | SERENITY | |
| DESPAIR | HATRED | SHAME | |

Yesterday's Solution

Moods & Emotions 1



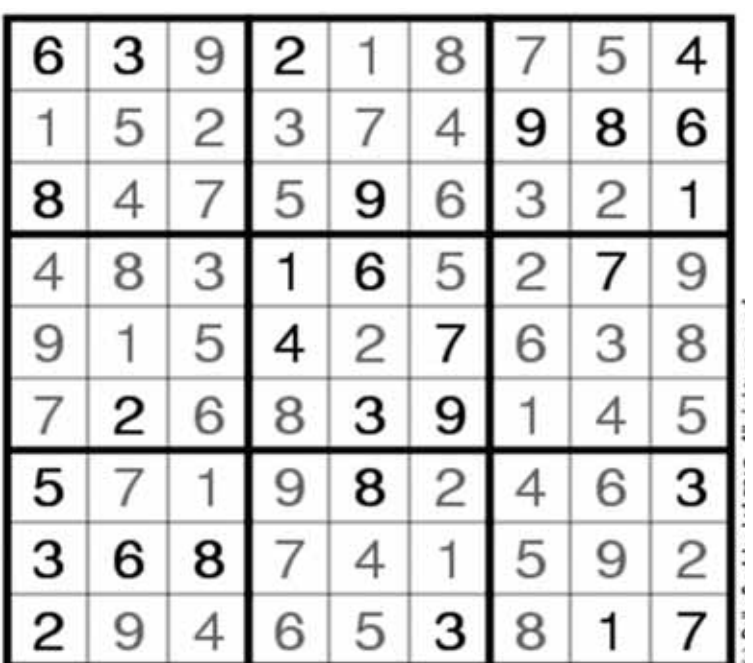
- | | | | |
|----------|------------|----------|----------|
| AFRAID | ELATION | JADED | PEACEFUL |
| AGITATED | FURIOUS | JOVIAL | PLEASED |
| ANGUISH | GENIAL | LONELY | REMORSE |
| BLUE | GLOOMY | LOVE | SOMBER |
| BORED | GROUCHY | MELLOW | SUNNY |
| CHEERY | HELPLESS | MERRY | SYMPATHY |
| DARK | HOPEFUL | MISERY | UNEASY |
| DOWN | HUMILIATED | OFFENDED | UPBEAT |
| DREAD | HURT | ORNERY | WEARY |
| EDGY | IRKED | PANIC | |

The hidden word is: ASTONISHMENT

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



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

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



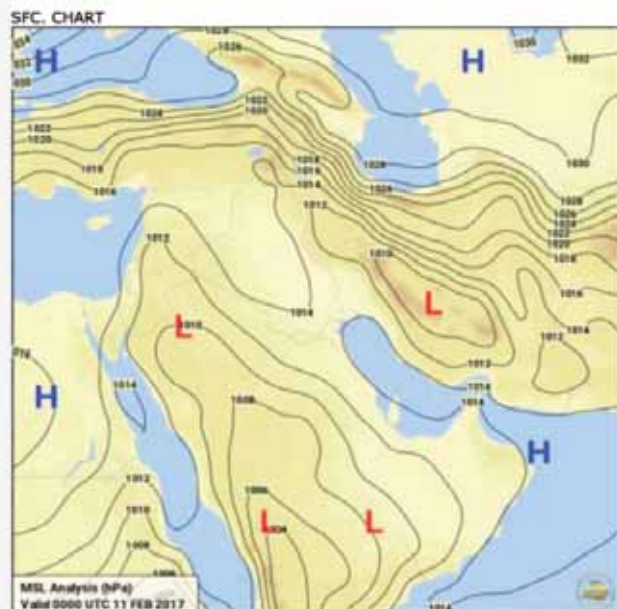
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 11/02/2017-13:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 23 °C

By Day : Clouds will increase gradually with light to moderate north westerly to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain
By Night : Partly cloudy with light variable wind, with speed of 06 - 22 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain



Four-Day Forecast

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
Expected Weather	partly cloudy + scattered rain might be thundery at times	partly cloudy + scattered rain might be thundery at times	M. sunny	clouds to increase + scattered rain later on
Min Temp °C	11	13	08	08
Max Temp °C	22	24	20	20
Wind Direction	south easterly	southerly changing to north westerly	north westerly to light variable	variable wind changing to south easterly
Wind Speed km/h	20 - 45	20 - 40	08 - 26	08 - 30

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C	REC	Max °C	EXP
KUWAIT CITY	13		22	
KUWAIT AIRPORT	10		23	
ABDALLY	08		22	
BUBYAN	09		17	
JAHRRA	11		22	
FAILAKA ISLAND	11		18	
SALMIYAH	13		17	
AHMADI	13		17	
JAL ALIYAH	09		21	
QAROH ISLAND	15		18	
UMM AL-MARADEM	14		18	
NUWAISIB	10		19	
WAFRA	10		23	
MANAGISH	08		21	
SALMY	07		19	
MUTRIBA	08		22	

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	24
Min Temp (°C)	10
Max Rel Hum (%)	83
Min Rel Hum (%)	26
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	32 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:30
Sunset	17:34

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:10
Sunrise	06:30
Zuhr	12:02
Aer	15:11
Sunset	17:34
Isha	18:52

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
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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
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Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
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Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
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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
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Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



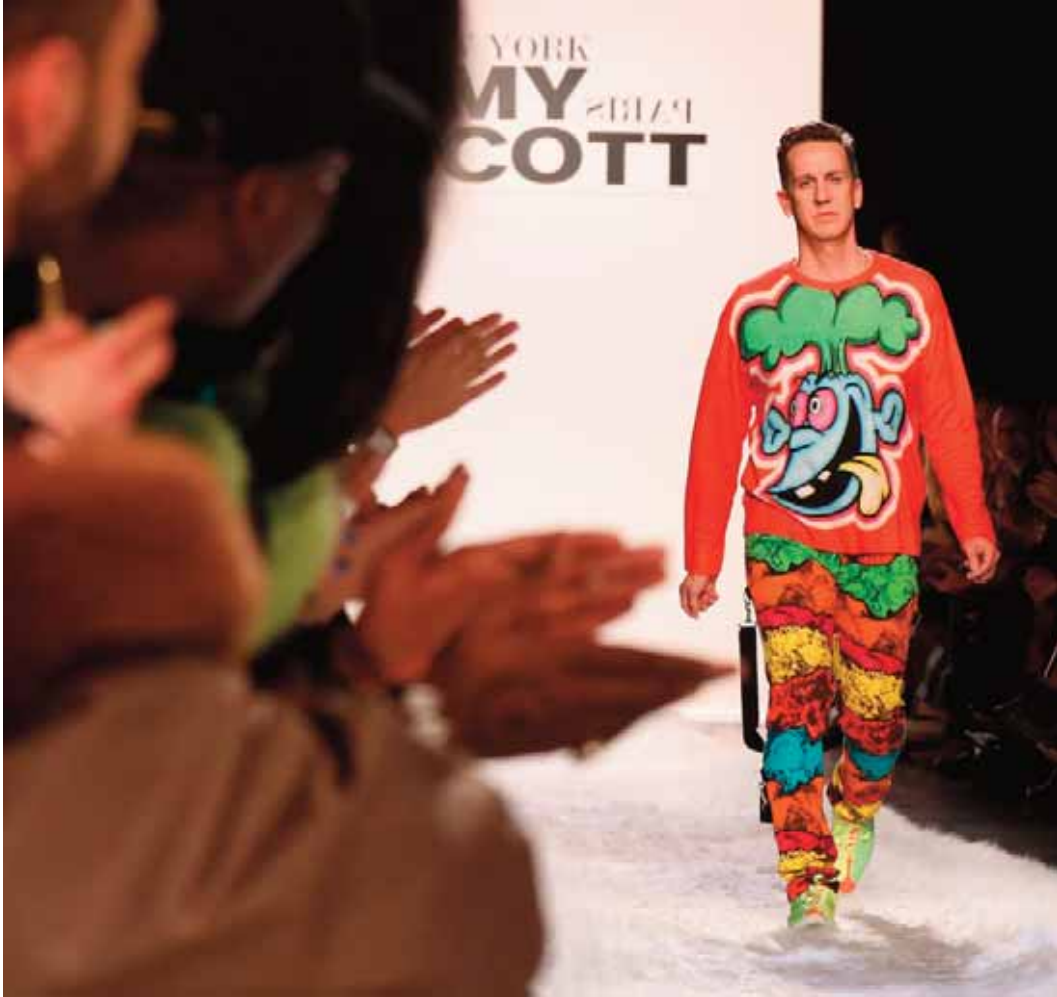
PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
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
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
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
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaezem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	
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

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
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
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
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

Paediatricians	
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 Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
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
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foaid Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR. Mohammed Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123



The fashion collection from Jeremy Scott is modeled during Fashion Week in New York. — AP photos

Calvin Klein show delivers political message at Fashion Week

Crunchy snow and ice greeted designers, models and fans at New York Fashion Week on Friday, a day after a snowstorm pummeled the city. What visitors got was a high-profile debut and a political message at Calvin Klein, some psychedelic designs (and more politics) from Jeremy Scott, a focus on femininity from Jason Wu, and not one but two collections by Kate Spade.

Calvin Klein: A message from the runway

The message could not have been clearer or more pointed: Raf Simons' debut collection for Calvin Klein opened and closed with the David Bowie song "This is Not America." "When you have a voice, you should use it," Simons said backstage just last week at his own label's menswear show. And now, for his much-awaited bow Friday morning with new employer Calvin Klein - for which he has moved to New York - the Belgian designer was using his. The soundtrack wasn't the only means Simons used to put across his message.

A day earlier, Calvin Klein had sent guests patterned bandanas, with a note saying: "Unity, inclusion, hope and acceptance: Join us at Calvin Klein in wearing the white bandanna. #tiedtogether." The clothes, too - designed along with the label's Pieter Mulier - were meant to display an inclusive message, sort of a melting pot of styles. "It reflects the environment," Simons wrote in the show notes. "It is the coming together of different characters and different individuals - just like America itself."

There were nods to the American West for both

women and men, with denim jackets over loose jeans, or colorful cowboy-style shirts. There was sporty America, in striped tube-sock sleeves - similar to the arm-warmers shown by his men's label. There were crisp business-like suits in black and white, and coats in colorful quilt patterns. For some flash, there were a number of garments - dresses, coats, skirts - encased in a layer of plastic, looking like cellophane wrapping on a gift. In one dress, the plastic shielded a burst of feathers in white, yellow and black.

A golden yellow furry coat also had this laminated effect. Another common embellishment was a silver metallic flower, appearing on black leather jackets or sheer mesh tops that left little to the imagination. Among the celebrity attendees were Gwyneth Paltrow, Julianne Moore, Sarah Jessica Parker, Naomie Harris, Kate Bosworth, Greta Gerwig, Brooke Shields, director Sofia Coppola, and supermodel Lauren Hutton. Hutton praised both the show's contents and its messaging. "He's a new miracle," she said backstage of Simons' arrival at the label, a post the former Dior designer has taken over from Francisco Costa.

Asked whether politics should have an expression in fashion, she said: "I think that's what all art is for. Fashion, if it's good, always has something to say about society." Designer Diane von Furstenberg also was among the front-row guests. She wore a large button that said: "Fashion starts with Planned Parenthood." "It's not about politics," she explained. "It's about women's rights, about the body, and about human rights."



The Jason Wu fashion collection is modeled during Fashion Week in New York.

FASHION



Models display clothing from the Spring 2017 collection by Kate Spade in New York.

Jeremy Scott riffs on iconography

There were Jesus portraits on velvet. Sequined Cleopatra-style headdresses. A white feathered tiara several feet high. A babydoll nightie saying "Love Stinks." A tearful Marilyn Monroe face. Sparkling gold go-go boots. A guy in a kilt AND ripped jeans. Another guy draped in a stole that looked like a toy fox. Yes, it was Jeremy Scott, awakening the tired, cold Fashion Week masses Friday evening with his psychedelic designs. Backstage before the show in a packed West Village venue, Scott said he had been thinking about iconography - and politics.

"I was thinking about how Elvis and Marilyn and Michael Jackson and Jesus are all kind of worshipped on the same altar," Scott said. "And that's kind of how we've gotten ourselves into a situation of having an entertainer for president. ... And then of course, at the same time (I was) trying to make fun clothes that I love and that I think my friends and fans will love." He said was going for an effect of "60s boudoirs mixed with streetwear elements like hoodies and T-shirts and sweatshirts ... collaged in a way like they've been sawed in half and smashed into one."

Scott also felt inspired, he said, to take a political stand with his designs. "How can there not be a political statement today? ... You know I think everyone needs to kind of speak out. Everyone needs to do their due diligence as a citizen to make their voice heard because that's the only thing that will protect us." To underscore that point, he wore a shirt saying, "Our voices are the only thing that will protect us" - with what he said were phone numbers of members of Congress on the back.

He urged others to make their political views known to their representatives, and not to feel "too cool for school" to do that. "Yes, I can still make fun clothes and have a good time, and there's no wrong in that," he said. "But you still need to have a moment to really do your due diligence as a citizen now more than ever." Celebrity attendees included Debbie Harry and Kylie Jenner.

A milestone for Jason Wu

It was back in 2009 that Jason Wu vaulted to prominence as the chosen designer of Michelle Obama's first inaugural gown. For good measure,

he repeated the feat four years later. This year, he's celebrating the 10th anniversary of his label, and he marked the occasion Friday with a display of wearable, elegant designs at the St. Regis Hotel that showed his talent for turning out pretty yet unfussy clothes.

The collection was focused on "the luxurious femininity at the core of the house," Wu said in the show notes. It featured soft suits and flowing dresses in fabrics like velvet, tulle, and chiffon. A shoulder-baring dress and a billowing top were both fashioned of a black gauzy material dotted with

pale green velvet. Colors ranged from "lipstick reds" to "amber golds" to "juniper greens." Accents included grommets and pearls. Printed chiffons were embellished with what the label said were "thousands of crystals, blurring the line between fantasy and reality."

Among the celebrities present were film actress Diane Kruger and model-actress Amber Valletta. But the star of the front row - at least judging from the oohs and aahs coming from photographers - was Adriana Lima, the Brazilian Victoria's Secret model, in a hot pink satin dress and black leather jacket. She was photographed with the jacket on, but her later removal of said jacket was enough to get the shutters clicking again furiously.

Kate Spade turns in two lines

Kate Spade just wants to have fun. The playful women's wear brand presented two collections Friday, complete with pom-pom accents, colorful fringe and a cake-shaped purse. "I love the vibe. I love that it's so flirty and feminine and very chic, but also has like a sense of humor to it," said actress Victoria Justice during the event at New York's famed Rainbow Room. Leighton Meester, Jamie Chung and Camilla Belle also braved the cold for the morning presentation held on two floors with a dual purpose: A spring line of see-now, buy-now clothes and the fall 2017 collection inspired by 1920s Paris.

The small, buy-now spring line included fun accessories like wicker purses in the shape of camels and monkeys, and a large straw hat with colorful, dangling tassels. There were jean dresses with floral appliques and denim overalls paired with a cozy, fringed turtleneck sweater. Another floor featuring Spade's fall looks showcased feminine dresses and skirts with a moody edge, in black lace, leather and faux fur. Models posed, lounged and rotated around the center of the room. One snacked on candies hidden in her black and pink gold-studded bag. "It's just very fun and young and fresh," said Belle. "So exciting, colorful and happy and just kind of puts a smile on your face." — AP



The Calvin Klein fashion collection is modeled during Fashion Week in New York.

China villagers beat the Buddha for a good harvest



This aerial picture shows a woman cleaning the village square after firecrackers were set off as part of the beat the Buddha celebration in Yuxi village.



This picture shows villagers carrying a dragon dance formation during the beat the Buddha celebration in Yuxi village.



This picture shows villagers taking part in the beat the Buddha celebration in Yuxi village.



This picture shows villagers taking part in the beat the Buddha celebration in Yuxi village. — AFP photos

Beating a rock statue of Buddha to wish for a good new year and an abundant harvest, villagers in China's eastern Fujian province have a unique way of worshipping the deity. The religious ceremony held Friday in Yuxi village is one of many in the run-up to the traditional Lantern Festival, which fell yesterday. It is a time for colorful ceremonies in the coastal province, where the Hakka people have maintained folk traditions.

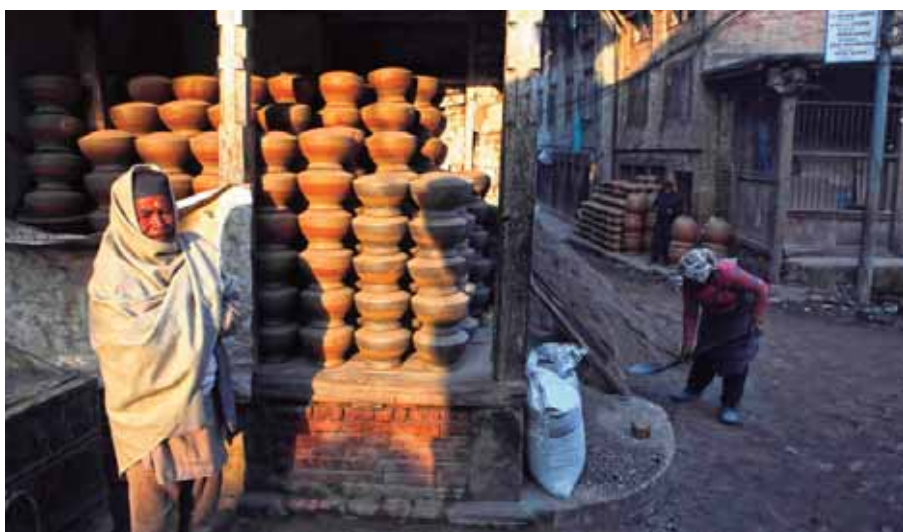
Legends about the statue vary, but all agree that the stone represents a local god capable of defending the village against both drought and flood. In preparation for the event, villagers wrapped the centuries-old Buddha—technically nothing more than a rock—in red cloth and rinsed it

with water, before tightly tying it to a wooden palanquin. Four men who had been on a strictly vegetarian diet for three days attempted to carry it across a nearby river, while another team of more than a dozen tried to stop them by blocking them with freshly hewn bamboo sticks.

Liao Qin Hai, who was on the defense side, said he travelled from his home in the eastern city of Xiamen to Yuxi, where he grew up, with his 11-year-old daughter specifically for the event. "We want to wish for a good harvest for our village and I want to show my kid the culture that I grew up with. "Lots of us do business in other places and it's a good chance to bond with my people." The mock struggle lasted for hours until the defenders finally relent-

ed and welcomed the rock Buddha into the village.

According to one of the most popular legends, the village suffered flooding for many years during the Ming Dynasty, which ruled China from 1368 to 1644, and harvests were frequently ruined. At the time, one of the villagers had a dream that a rock hidden in the fields could stop the flooding. They just needed to find it and build a temple to house it near the river. But the rock-turned-Buddha likes to run away, the legend says, and people believe beating it can make it stay. — AFP



In this photo, a Nepalese Prajapati potter stands beside clay pots neatly stacked up in the ancient Nepalese town of Thimi. — AP photos



In this photo, a man carries clay as pots are kept out to dry in the sun in the ancient Nepalese town of Thimi.

As young move away, traditional craft dies out in Nepal

For generations, the residents of the ancient Nepalese town of Thimi supplied the rest of the Himalayan country with everything from tiny clay lamps used in temples to massive grain storage jars. Locals still mix clay and throw it on potters' wheels, then leave pots to dry and harden in the sun. But not for long. As more young people leave town for better paying jobs in other parts of Nepal or abroad, fewer families have to eke out an income from the relatively low-returns business of clay pottery.

For almost 50 years, Ratna Bahadur Prajapati made clay pots and sold them in the nearby market. That was the trade of his ancestors. The potters of Thimi are all Prajapatis, a Hindu caste group. "It's difficult to earn a living through pottery nowadays. It requires hard work, but you no longer earn enough for survival," the 63-year-old said. Until a decade ago, Prajapati supported a family of seven through his traditional trade. He has two sons working in Australia and Japan and no longer needs to put in long hours for little money.

"The money my two sons send home from abroad is enough for survival," he said. Remittances from abroad are a major source of income for Nepal. According to government statistics, remittance inflows amount to 30 percent of the country's economy. Of the nearly 2,000 Prajapati families in town, less than 300 families now depend on clay pottery for a living. In the past, Prajapati potters would travel across the country to sell their wares. That practice has already died out as more durable material replaced clay pots.

"Handmade clay pots could not compete with similar industrial products of plastic and metals in the market," said Pursottam Lochan Shrestha, a historian teaching at a local college. Locals say a potter can earn 20,000 Nepalese rupees (\$200) a month, but that doesn't match up with what young people from the town can make in other jobs abroad and in bigger cities. What has kept the tradition



alive, for now, is the flow of tourists who buy artistic clay pots as souvenirs, and also because clay pots are still used in certain Hindu and Buddhist rituals.

"Times have changed, new products have flooded the market, and people from potter caste love other lucrative professions. I fear that the tradition will fade away," said Dil Krishna Prajapati. His sons never took to the trade. "Nobody in the family from the next generation will be interested in this business. I am still in this profession because I don't have other options now," he said. — AP

In this photo, a Nepalese Prajapati potter moulds a clay pot in a potters wheel in the ancient Nepalese town of Thimi.



Indonesian people watch tatungs parade during the Cap Go Meh parade to mark the closing ceremony of Chinese New Year festival in Singkawang on Borneo island yesterday. — AFP photos

Monkey skull ornaments, skewers in cheeks at Borneo parade

Hundreds of men and women with metal skewers pierced through their cheeks and wearing costumes adorned with monkey skulls yesterday took part in a colorful parade on Borneo island. As they marched, the people in bright costumes - known as "tatungs" - struck themselves with machetes and swords and walked over nails, without apparently suffering any injuries. Some appeared to fall into a trance as they marched to the sound of loud music.

The "tatung", who live around Singkawang on the Indonesian part of Borneo, are believed to possess supernatural powers that means they do not feel pain when hit with sharp weapons and are considered healers. They are a culturally mixed group, and their members include ethnic Chinese and Dayak tribespeople. The "tatung" tradition has been passed down for generations in the area. "I am happy to preserve the culture of my ancestors, while also helping tourism," said 65 year old Khin Djung, who was taking part in the parade.

The event, which involved some 600 "tatung", was part of extended celebrations to mark Chinese New Year in predominantly ethnic Chinese Singkawang. The festivities, called Cap Go Meh, mark the 15th day of Chinese New Year. Participant Elvi Mutan, 15, showed no signs of pain as a meter long skewer was stabbed through her cheeks-or hours later when it was removed. Tiny slit marks were visible on her cheeks but she said they would fade in a matter of days.

"It doesn't hurt," she insisted. The parade attracts thousands of tourists and highlights the kaleidoscope of different cultures found across the sprawling Indonesian archipelago. While 90 percent of Indonesians are Muslim, the country is home to hundreds of different ethnic groups and religious minorities, including Christians, Hindus and Buddhists. — AFP



A skull is decorated while tatung men parade during the Cap Go Meh parade to mark the closing ceremony of Chinese New Year festival in Singkawang on Borneo island yesterday.



(Above & below) Indonesian Tatungs participate during the Cap Go Meh parade to mark the closing ceremony of Chinese New Year festival in Singkawang on Borneo island yesterday.



Indonesian Meri participates during the Cap Go Meh parade to mark the closing ceremony of Chinese New Year festival in Singkawang on Borneo island yesterday.



An Indonesian Tatung from a Dayak tribe Jefri Oktavianus participates during the Cap Go Meh parade to mark the closing ceremony of Chinese New Year festival in Singkawang on Borneo island yesterday.



Bones and monkey skulls decorate the dress of a Tatung Mansyah from the Dayak 'Iban' tribe as he participates during the Cap Go Meh parade to mark the closing ceremony of Chinese New Year festival in Singkawang on Borneo island yesterday.



Skulls of monkeys decorate the dress of an Indonesian Tatung Nauli from the Dayak tribe 'Badameo' as he participates during the Cap Go Meh parade to mark the closing ceremony of Chinese New Year festival in Singkawang on Borneo island yesterday.

Babyshop launches its fun and fresh spring collection '17

Babyshop, a one stop kids' retailer part of Landmark Group, announces the launch of its fresh collection for spring this year. Combining casual designs and sporty styles, the exciting collection offers stylish seasonal essentials in spring colour palettes with a variety of styles for little girls and boys. The extensive collection lends a lively, cool and casual feel, showcasing a fresh and energetic look of spring fashion for the young kids.

The collection for girls showcases a variety of options

from sporty, boho and 'graceful girlie' looks across patch worked denims, textures and jerseys. With delightful color blends ranging from creamy whites, shades of pinks and blues, the collection gives an invigorating feel to the new season. Preppy jackets, pretty floral dresses, delicate ruffles on blouses, and sporty dresses are all set to revamp the wardrobes of little fashionistas for the season.

For boys this season, where the inspiration is drawn from the vintage rock, Cuban hills, coastal hues and a lively

weekend getaway, the range is all about playful colors in trendy styles and patterns. As functionality and fashion for boys blur lines, the sporty and active look is the go to choice this spring. This season, the collection emphasizes on retro polo t-shirts, collarless shirts, colorful t-shirts, rugged cargo shorts and denim track pants.

The color palette for boys consists of blues and greens with a variation of light yellows, warm browns, and dashes of purple. Bringing forth the element of fun, little boys

have plenty to play with in mixing and matching colors and patterns for the ultimate style. The key brands featured in the spring collection will include Juniors, Eligo, Giggles, Lee Cooper, Posh, Smurfs, Maui & Sons, Maui Princess, Hello Kitty, Disney Princess and Barbie. The above collections are available in Babyshop across all Centrepoint stores in Kuwait.



Lifestyle

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**Calvin Klein show
delivers political message**

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VENICE: People wearing carnival costumes and masks gather in St. Mark's Square during carnival celebrations in Venice, Italy, yesterday. — AP

Guggenheim celebrates immigrant roots in age of Trump

The Guggenheim Museum is highlighting the work of some of the visionaries who shaped its collection, using the occasion to note immigrants' contributions to American art weeks after President Donald Trump signed a travel ban. A show opening Friday in New York features works collected by founder Solomon R. Guggenheim's niece Peggy Guggenheim, who along with art dealer Justin K. Tannhauser came to the United State to flee Nazi Germany.

Paintings and sculpture acquisitions by immigrant art dealer Karl Nierendorf, as well as those of two other Guggenheim contemporaries—German-born artist Hilla Rebay and Katherine Dreier—are on display for this tribute to the Guggenheim Foundation's eight decades of support for radical experimentation in art. These collectors held many works by European artists, including Marcel

Duchamp, Paul Klee, Piet Mondrian, Pablo Picasso and Vasily Kandinsky, the Russian painter whose art is at the heart of the Guggenheim collection, which holds 150 pieces.

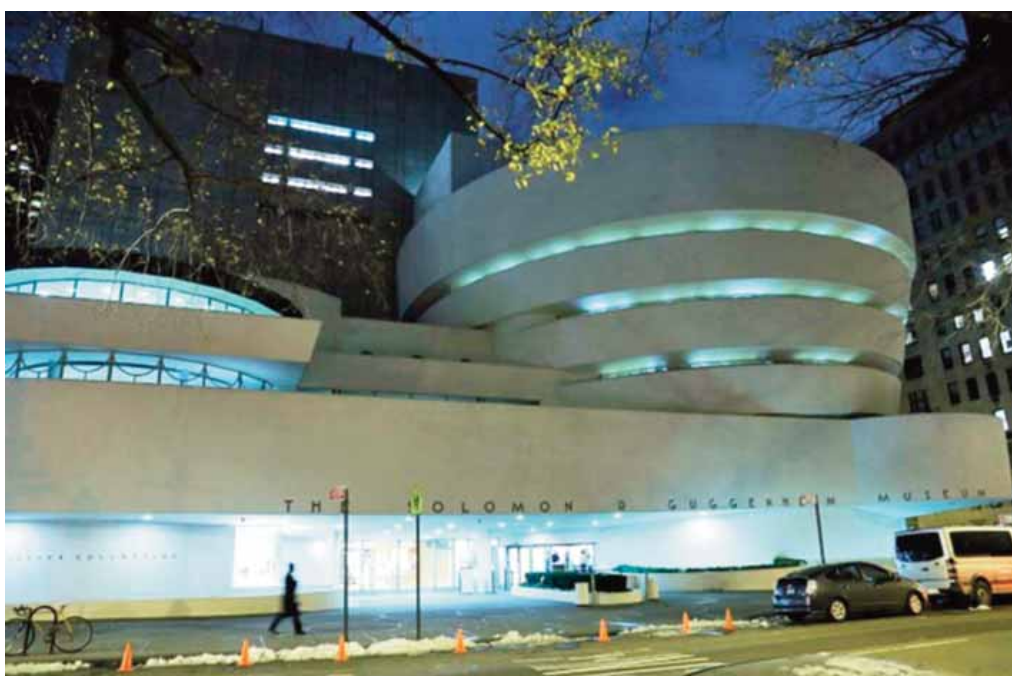
There are also works by Americans like Alexander Calder, who created a series of beloved moving sculptures known as "mobiles," Jackson Pollock, Irene Rice Pereira and Claire Falkenstein. "It's no secret that we're going through times with fundamental principles like tolerance and critical thinking being challenged," said Richard Armstrong, director of the Guggenheim Museum and Foundation, in previewing the exhibit. "Many similar challenges faced some of the visionaries of creative expression... We find inspiration in individuals whose beliefs was that art can change human behavior." His comments were a clear reference to Trump's conservative immigration policy.

The show is also a reminder of a time when "artists and also dealers fled an earlier war... and found refuge, home and freedom in the United States," Armstrong added. Ever since Trump's election, the art world has expressed its unease in various forms, be it fashion, song, video or photography. A streaming video performance installation that aimed to provide a forum for anti-Trump expression was shut down after it became "a flash-point for violence," New York's Museum of the Moving Image said. And another New York venue, the Museum of Modern Art, is exhibiting works by artists from the seven predominantly Muslim countries targeted by Trump's executive order, currently on hold after a series of court defeats.

Fertile period

With the advent of war and Nazism in the 1930s, several of the European artists presented by Guggenheim through his public collection immigrated to the United States. In the 1940s, New York catered to an "exciting cultural milieu where you had European and American artists encountering one another. It was just a really exciting moment. It was a really fertile period," said curator Megan Fontanella. In all, 160 works by 70 artists are featured in "Visionaries: Creating a Modern Guggenheim," which runs through Sept 6.

It includes a broad range of artists from the late 19th century through the first half of the 20th century. The oldest piece is a painting by Camille Pissarro from 1867. The most recent is Pollock's "Alchemy," from 1947. For the curator, the Guggenheim, whose museum was established in 1939 but only occupied its spiral building near Central Park in 1959, benefitted directly from the creativity of artists from abroad. "So many artists and culture figures found refuge here and ultimately helped shaped our institution," said Fontanella. — AFP



IMAGINE DRAGONS, MACKLEMORE, SKRILLEX LEAD ACLU CONCERT

Outrage over President Donald Trump's travel ban has prompted a spring fundraising concert for the American Civil Liberties Union that will feature a diverse lineup, including Macklemore, Imagine Dragons, Incubus, Miguel and Skrillex. DJ and producer Zedd, a Russian-born immigrant, organized the April 3 concert called "Welcome!" at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Other performers include Bebe Rexha, Camila Cabello, Machine Gun Kelly, Mija, Daya, Halsey and Tinashe.

"All of us artists have a huge responsibility, whether we want it or not," said Zedd, whose real name is Anton Zaslavski. "I was really surprised how above and beyond people were willing to go to be part of this show." Ticket prices range from \$49.50 to \$249.50 and more for VIP experiences. The ACLU was chosen as the beneficiary because the organization has been fighting Trump's executive order on immigration, which included a temporary travel ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries.

Zedd won a Grammy Award for "Clarity," which appeared on his 2012 debut album of the same name. His sophomore album, "True Colors," was released in 2015, and features "I Want You to Know" with Selena Gomez. He was born in Russia and raised in Germany before coming to America and said he has never a politically outspoken person, until now. The travel ban struck a raw nerve and he reached out to all the music acts he could.

"This is something very personal and important to me," he said. "It felt natural and it felt like I had to use my voice to say what is on my mind. Whether people agree with it or not is up to them. Everybody should have their own opinion. But this is my opinion." The con-

cert's lineup includes musicians from a multitude of genres: rap, EDM, rock, pop and R&B. "For me, it was really important to try to get somebody from each market," said Zedd. "I mean, it's called 'Welcome!' Everything and everybody is welcome!"



This file photo shows DJ and producer Zedd at 106.1 KISS FM's iHeartRadio Jingle Ball in Los Angeles. — AP

He said he hopes the artists collaborate, in the spirit of inclusion: "Hopefully there's some sort of natural swing where people will be interested in performing with somebody else that has nothing to do with their type of music," he said. "It may be metaphorical but this still speaks for the same cause: Everybody comes together, no matter who you are, no matter what you do, we are all here together doing this for a good reason."