

New solar plant to meet 15% of oil sector's needs by 2021



Malaysia police arrest woman over N Korean assassination



At NY fashion week, hijabs top looks fit for royalty



Real fight back to beat Napoli; Bayern rout Arsenal



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ROUHANI VISITS KUWAIT, OMAN TO IMPROVE TIES

IRANIAN PRESIDENT SUPPORTS AMIR'S CALL FOR DIALOGUE

Min 08°
Max 22°
High Tide 02:25 & 15:31
Low Tide 09:25 & 21:53



(Left) Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is welcomed by HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al Sabah at Kuwait International Airport yesterday. (Right) Rouhani is welcomed by Oman's Sultan Qaboos during an official arrival ceremony in Muscat earlier yesterday. — AP (See Page 2)



KUWAIT: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visited Kuwait yesterday as part of a lightning two-nation Gulf tour aimed at mending ties strained by the conflicts in Syria and Yemen. Rouhani held talks with HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who last month launched a dialogue with the Islamic republic to normalize Iran-Gulf relations. An official statement cited by the KUNA news agency said they discussed bolstering bilateral ties in all fields. They also held talks on "latest regional and international developments," said the statement, without giving further details.

Ahead of his visit to Oman and Kuwait, Rouhani had expressed support for the latter's efforts to "resolve misunderstandings and boost relations" with Gulf countries. "On this trip, there will be discussions about the region, the situation in Iraq, Syria and in particular in Yemen," Iran's official news agency IRNA quoted him as saying.

Tehran's ties with other Gulf states have been strained over its support for the Syrian regime of Bashar Al-Assad and alleged backing of Yemen's Houthi rebels. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Sabah visited Tehran last month, calling for a "normalization of ties and opening dialogue". The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit held in Manama in December asked Kuwait to initiate contacts with Tehran to start a dialogue to improve ties. Kuwait has maintained normal relations with Tehran despite taking part in the Saudi-led military campaign against the Houthi rebels. HH the Amir visited Iran in 2014.

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SAY HELLO TO UNLIMITED ENTERTAINMENT

iflix Brought to you by **zain**

KUWAIT: (From left) Scott Gegenheimer, Bader Al-Kharafi, Patrick Grove and Mark Britt are seen during the press conference.

ZAIN, IFLIX SET UP 'IFLIX ARABIA' JOINT VENTURE

KUWAIT: Zain, a leading mobile and data services operator in the Middle East and Africa and iflix, the world's leading Internet TV service for emerging markets, yesterday announced the establishment of their joint venture, 'iflix Arabia' to bring iflix's world class service to the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). iflix Arabia, will be headquartered in Dubai and trade commercially as "iflix", adding Zain's territories of operation to iflix's global footprint, including Kuwait, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Sudan, with the potential to further extend into additional regional markets.

The commercial launch of iflix's Internet TV service across the MENA region is planned for the second quarter of 2017, at which time iflix Arabia will offer consumers across the region and Zain mobile customers its extensive range of thousands of TV shows, movies and more with Arabic and English subtitles, including many first run exclusives and award winning programs. In addition to having the best of Hollywood, Bollywood, regional and local programs, as well as over 2,000 episodes of children's content, the service will additionally offer an extensive collection of highly acclaimed Arabic shows and movies with iflix Arabia planning to introduce exclusive Arabic content series.

Having first launched its service in May 2015, iflix quickly established its dominance in the Asian region, rolling out its world class service to nine markets in less than two years, acquiring over 4 million members over the period. With Zain's 47

million customers, the joint venture will benefit from and leverage the mobile operator's established market leadership in conjunction with learnings iflix acquired in consolidating its dominance throughout Asia. iflix Arabia will capitalize on the MENA's large youth population, rapidly growing internet and smartphone penetration, and huge appetite for digital content and entertainment.

Bader Al Kharafi, "The establishment of the joint venture 'iflix Arabia' instantly creates enormous value for both Zain and iflix stakeholders, given the synergies created and the new revenue streams that will be generated by the expected takeup of this appealing internet TV service from the general public and Zain customers. This is a monumental step forward for Zain in our journey to become the premier digital lifestyle provider in the MENA region."

Scott Gegenheimer, Group CEO of Zain commented: "iflix has done an exceptional job in spearheading the entertainment revolution in Asia and truly has an industry leading product. What distinguishes iflix is its constant innovation and commitment to offering its customers an exceptional and entertaining digital experience, which is at the heart of what Zain stands for. We look forward to bringing our 47m customers and regional mobile operations into the iflix footprint."

iflix co-founder and Group CEO, Mark Britt said: "Zain is a true pioneer in innovation with a deep understanding of the culture and evolution of digital businesses.

Continued on Page 13

INDIA PUTS 104 SATELLITES IN ORBIT

TRUMP DROPS US COMMITMENT TO 'TWO-STATE' DEAL

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump halted Washington's quest for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict yesterday, saying he would back a single state if it led to peace. The new president warmly welcomed Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to the White House and hailed the "unbreakable" bond between their countries. And - while he urged Netanyahu to "hold back" from building Jewish settlements for a "little bit" - Trump broke with the international consensus insisting on two states.

"So I'm looking at two state and one state, and I like the one that both parties like. I'm very happy with the one that both parties like. I can live with either one," he said. "I thought for a while the two-state looked like it may be the easier of the two but, honestly, if Israel and the Palestinians are happy, I'm happy with the one they like the best."

If this change in the US stance was calculated to please Netanyahu and his rightwing coalition, Trump's views on the shortcomings of the Palestinian position will delight them. "I think the Palestinians have to get rid of some of that hate that they're taught from a very young age," he said, echoing Netanyahu's argument that Palestinians are not ready for peace.

Continued on Page 13

SRIHARIKOTA, India: India successfully put a record 104 satellites from a single rocket into orbit yesterday in the latest triumph for its famously frugal space program. Celebrations erupted among scientists at the southern spaceport of Sriharikota as the head of India's Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced all the satellites had been ejected as planned. "My hearty congratulations to the ISRO team for this success," the agency's director Kiran Kumar told those gathered in an observatory to track the

progress of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the scientists for achieving the feat which smashes a record previously held by Russia. "They have hit a century in space technology," Modi said at an election rally in northern Uttar Pradesh state. The rocket took off at 9:28am (0358 GMT) and cruised at a speed of 27,000 km per hour, ejecting all the 104 satellites into orbit in around 30 minutes, according to ISRO.

Continued on Page 13



SRIHARIKOTA, India: Onlookers watch the launch of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C37) yesterday. — AFP

ADASANI REOPENS MP DEPOSITS CASE

By B Izzak



KUWAIT: MP Riyadh Al-Adasani speaks during a special session at the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT: Opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani yesterday claimed that 13 former and current lawmakers had received KD 51 million in "political bribes" from the government, and demanded action. Speaking in a heated debate, Adasani showed documents he said were evidence of the highly-publicized deposits that were allegedly made in 2011 and led to the resignation of former prime minister Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Adasani was prevented by Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem from showing the list of names of those involved on the Assembly screen, but nevertheless, he read out the names and the amounts involved. He even named highly influential people of paying the bribes to the politicians, and in some cases, to their wives too.

The government categorically denied any involvement in the issue, which triggered large street demonstrations in 2011 and 2012 and resulted in a major political dilemma in the country. The case was investigated by the pub-

lic prosecution, which decided not to press any charges against any of the accused over not finding sufficient evidence and for a legal loophole that prevented it from prosecuting those accused.

Opposition lawmakers said the case should not be considered dead because it involved an encroachment on public funds. Many of the lawmakers called for reopening the legal procedures in the case. The debate witnessed several heated arguments between MPs. Adasani clashed with MP Saleh Ashour over the need to debate the issue years after the public prosecution shelved it. Islamist opposition MP Jamaan Al-Harbash also clashed with MP Ahmad Al-Fadhli, trading accusations of corruption. At one stage, they started calling the names of their fathers, which angered Ghanem, who brought the proceedings to order.

A number of lawmakers who spoke during the brief debate strongly lashed out at the government for not doing enough to stop the spread of corruption in the country and for doing nothing to prosecute the lawmakers who received bribes.

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani attend the official reception ceremonies.

AMIR, ROUHANI DISCUSS TIES, REGIONAL, INT'L ISSUES



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah met yesterday with visiting Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his accompanying delegation, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and senior officials were present at the talks. The talks focused on bilateral relations and ways of promoting and developing them in all fields, and means of expanding cooperation between Kuwait and Iran, as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah said.

The talks were held in a friendly atmosphere that reflected mutual understanding and friendship, and good relations between both sides. Later, His Highness the Amir held a dinner banquet in honor of the visiting President his accompanying delegation at Bayan Palace.

Upon his arrival at the airport yesterday, Rouhani was received by His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Deputy Chairman of the National Guard Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani are pictured shortly after the president's arrival. — Amiri Diwan photos

Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah and other senior state officials.

includes Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Chief of Staff of the President of Iran Mohammad Nahavandian and Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Mohammad Reza Nematzadeh, along with other senior Iranian officials. — KUNA

In addition to Rouhani, the Iranian delegation



National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem welcomes Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomes Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomes Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.



Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah welcomes Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.



Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh welcomes Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.



Deputy Chairman of the National Guard Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, in presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and other top state officials.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

MINISTRY CLARIFIES REPORTS ON TB PATIENT'S DEATH

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health at the Ministry of Health (MOH) Dr Majida Al-Qattan said all medical tests done on people who came in contact with a female teacher found infected with tuberculosis (TB) in Ahmadi came negative. Qattan added that the teacher had been hospitalized for three weeks and is now completing her treatment at home and enjoying good health. Qattan further mentioned a case of another female teacher who was suffering from non-infectious tuberculosis meningitis and who died in 2016. MOH released a statement later to clarify Qattan's comments which had caused confusion after she was misquoted in social media as say-

ing that the teacher recently discovered to be infected with tuberculosis had died. It confirmed that the fatal case happened last year, in which the victim passed away while receiving treatment outside Kuwait last December.

10,000 patients

In other news, former head of Kuwait's office in Germany Dr Suleiman Al-Harbash said that although the office had to deal with over 10,000 Kuwaiti patients in 2015 and 2016, it is being criticized for delaying its bills. As health attache and head of the office in that period, Harbash explained that some documents were sent to the ministry late, and that he completed all documents up to the beginning of 2016 before concluding his tenure. He said the large number

of patients was beyond the office's capacity of serving 400 patients at a time, which led to the delay because of the office was understaffed of qualified accountants. Harbash described accusations pointed at him of wasting or violating public funds as laughable, untrue and driven by personal motives and a wish to defame even his family by questioning the credibility of those who exposed real corruption.

Uncollected debts

Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi said accumulation of uncollected debts happens for reasons out of the municipality's control. Speaking in response to inquiries made by Municipal Council member Fahd Al-Sane about what he described as 'corruption concern-

ing uncollected debts', Manfouhi explained that such accusations could be made if an executive body neglected doing its duties to protect public funds. Manfouhi said the government's uncollected debts usually accumulated because of companies' violation of the contracts of investing in hoardings and banners, which results in fining them, and the delay in paying the fees plus the fines. He also said that one of the reasons was the debts of some employees concerning deduction of social allowances and scholarships for non-deserving employees after they already get them. Manfouhi also stressed that long litigation periods that can go on for years before a sentence is passed are also a main reason for accumulation of debts.

Tenders role

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry urged the Finance Ministry to cooperate on putting the public tenders law into practice, especially in terms of purchases made by government bodies.

Prostitutes arrested

Vice police arrested 17 female expats of various Asian nationalities in separate cases for engaging in prostitution, said security sources. The sources explained that the suspects include two Chinese women arrested in Salmiya, where they charged clients KD 80-100. The sources added that by tracking a social media ad about offering 'sex services', a group of 15 Asian women were arrested. All suspects are awaiting deportation.



KUWAIT: A file photo for a previous activity organized by the Kuwait Motor Sports Club.

11TH JABER AL-AHMAD CHAMPIONSHIP FOR CARS AND MOTORCYCLES OPENS TODAY

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Jaber Al-Ahmad Circuit on the 6th Ring Road is hosting the 11th Jaber Al-Ahmad Championship for Cars and Motorcycles, organized by the Kuwait Motorsports Club. The event will be held on Feb 16, 17 and 18, and attendance to all activities is free of charge. "This championship is organized annually. This year is very unique, as we have a special performance by a professional freestyle MX motocross team from Europe. They will present the show on Thursday and Friday at 9:00 pm at Jaber arena, with live coverage by KTV3," Sheikh Ahmad Al-Dawood, President of Kuwait Motorsports Club, told Kuwait Times.

A drift show, meeting point expo, kart-

ing and a live music performance will be held during the event. Local and international drivers will show their talent and skills in drifting.

On Friday, a band from Yemen will perform at 6:30 pm, and on Saturday, an Indian band will perform at the same time. Visitors can also try their skills in karting and participate in the races by registering at the venue free of charge. Around 30 booths selling food, beverages, merchandise, accessories and other stuff will be available during the three-day festival.

"I invite all people to come and visit the festival with their families, as we have activities for all ages and categories. The venue can welcome up to 6,000 people, so don't miss these great activities," Sheikh Ahmad said.

NEW STATION TO GENERATE 15 PERCENT OF ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN 2021: MINISTER

OIL PRODUCTION STANDS AT 2.75 MILLION BPD: KOC

KUWAIT: Kuwait's 'Al-Dabdaba' solar plant, expected to be completed in the fiscal year 2020/2021, will produce around 15 percent of the oil sector's power consumption, Minister of Oil Essam Al-Marzouq said yesterday.

In a speech to open Kuwait's International Health Safety and Environment (KIHSE) Conference and Exhibition, Marzouq, who is also Minister of Electricity and Water, said that the solar plant will help reduce carbon emissions by 1.3 million tons yearly.

Moreover, he noted that the project fits into national strategies to rely on renewable energy and promote environment conservation, adding that the use of renewable energy requires support of sustained development in the country.

On the conference, the Minister of Oil said it will tackle solutions to environmental challenges, against the backdrop of plummeting oil prices, noting that oil production methods in Kuwait strictly adhere to environment safety procedures.

Marzouq added that Kuwait is eager to invest in highly efficient energy sources with minimal carbon content, which highlights the need to invest in projects dealing with renewable energy and petrochemicals locally and abroad. He also pointed out that Kuwait is always on the lookout for new energy sources to meet the country's increasing power needs.

Production

Meanwhile, CEO of Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) Jamal Jaafar said that Kuwait's total oil production has reached around 2.75 million barrels per day (bpd). In a statement to the press on the sidelines of conference, Jaafar underscored Kuwait's commitment to an OPEC deal to cut oil output, which has no bearing on production.

On Kuwait's production of natural gas, he



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq delivers a speech during the Kuwait International Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) conference yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

revealed that free gas output totals out to be 180 million cubic feet per day, while production of associated gas is at 40 million cubic feet per day for every 100,000 barrels.

The KOC official noted that the company is eyeing a boom in natural gas production to around 800 or 900 million cubic feet per day, adding that KOC's production capacity amounts to 3.1 million bpd.

Moreover, Jaafar said that the company has launched a plethora of monumental projects that aim to ratchet up production capacity, all of which are environment-friendly.



KUWAIT: Omani Oil and Gas Minister Dr Mohammad Al-Ramhi delivers a speech during the Kuwait International Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) conference yesterday. — KUNA

Free gas

On a related note, Marzouq said that free gas production remains one of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's (KPC) top priorities. Speaking to journalists on the sidelines of the conference, the Minister said that KOC will consider an offer next Monday dealing with measures to expedite free gas production, adding that plans are in the works to privatize oil projects. Meanwhile, Al-Marzouq's Omani counterpart Dr Mohammad Al-Ramhi, who was in attendance at the conference, said that OPEC's decision to reduce oil production is a measure to protect consumers. — KUNA

FARMERS ALLOWED TO SELL PRODUCTS AT PARKS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Faisal Al-Hasawi said the authority will continue supporting productive Kuwaiti farmers and provide them with all their needs. Speaking to reporters after receiving a delegation from Kuwait Farmers Association represented by the newly-elected board of directors headed by Barrak Fahd Al-Sabeeh, Hasawi said both sides discussed the problems of subsidies and distribution of produce. Hasawi added that the Municipality allowed outlets to be opened to sell national agricultural products in a number of PAAAFR parks in all Kuwaiti areas.

Hasawi added that he made an agreement to hold a weekly meeting with the association to discuss various problems. Sabeeh highly commended PAAAFR's cooperation and understanding of the

problems faced at both Wafra and Abdaly farms.

Technical disputes

Minister of Public Works Abdulrahman Al-Mutawwa started efforts to resume work at the Sixth Ring Road intersections project leading into new residential areas to the west of Jleeb Al-Shuyikh, after a legal dispute with the contractors was resolved. Mutawwa stressed the need to accelerate resuming the project and resolve the problems it faced while protecting the ministry's rights, especially since the project has been halted for around four years. Notably, the project had been halted because of some technical and contracting disputes with the contractor that had to be taken to court.

E-services

Assistant undersecretary for information technology affairs at the Central Statistical Commission

(CSC) Ahmed Khalifa Al-Abduljaleel announced that according to law number 20/2014 pertaining electronic transactions, CSC has experimentally started providing packages of e-services on its website and through smartphone applications pending officially launching them and using e-signatures in all forms for over 55 bodies. Abduljaleel said CSC is receiving Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) employees in February to file in their e-signature forms to be used later in highly secured e-transactions. He added that the same is in progress for CSC employees, and that e-signatures are electronic certificates to be loaded on citizens' and expats' smart civil IDs, so that they could be used at various Kuwaiti and GCC bodies. Abduljaleel also said that employees would have to memorize their PIN codes to have access to the system and stressed that these codes should be kept secret. He also noted that lost civil IDs should be reported to avoid legal accountability.



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah leaves for Belgium yesterday. — KUNA

DEFENSE MINISTER HEADS TO BELGIUM TO ATTEND INT'L COALITION MEETING

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, alongside an accompanying delegation, left for Belgium yesterday to attend a meeting of defense ministers of the international coalition to combat the so-called Islamic State (IS).

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled's delegation includes Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence and Security, Major General Abdulrahman Al-Hadhoud, Army Deputy Chief of Staff for planning

Major General Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Amiri, and Director of Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled's Office Sheikh Rakan Salem Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled and his delegation were seen off at the airport by Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Kheder, Defense Ministry's Undersecretary Jassar Al-Jassar, Deputy Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Abdullah Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah, and a number of senior army officers. — KUNA

FIREMAN KILLS AUNT, COMMITS SUICIDE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Detectives solved the mystery behind the stab-murder of a woman who was found dead at her residence in Yarmouk on Feb 12, 2017. They discovered that her nephew, who reportedly committed suicide on the same day, had killed her before ending his life. Detectives inspected footage taken by cameras in front of the victim's house which showed her nephew, a fireman, committing the crime. They were also sure that the fire officer called the victim before going to her house and had a dispute with her. Information further revealed that the officer was not married, suffered psychological problems lately, and was absent from his work for a few days. Police found narcotics when they searched his apartment as well. DNA tests for traces found on the murder weapon also matched samples taken from the victim and her nephew, the Interior Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Forgery

Residency detectives arrested a mandoub (company representative) and a typist for forging labor-related transactions issued by a state department and altering the type of profession written there to facilitate receiving driver's licenses. They carried out the forgery in exchange of amounts ranging from KD

500 to KD 800 per transaction. Tips received from undercover sources were verified after data on the transactions were checked and discovered to be not matching with those in the labor database. Official departments were asked about the stamps and signatures on the transactions, and they said that they were not aware of them. The suspects were identified, arrested and sent to concerned authorities.

Camping violations

Public Relations Department at Kuwait Municipality said a campaign carried out recently in Mubarakiya and Shuwaikh resulted in issuing 51 citations. Director of Inspection and Municipality Services Department Imam Al-Kandari said the violations varied between expired health licenses, hiring workers without obtaining a health certificate, failure to comply with hygiene standards, using spoiled food material and dealing with food stuff before receiving proper health licenses. Meanwhile, Kuwait Municipality announced that spring camps committee's report until Jan 2017 showed that 348 camps were removed for violating municipality rules. The report said, the number of warnings issued since the start of camping season was as follows: 424 in Jahra, 123 in Farwaniya, 53 in Ahmadi, 281 camps in Jahra, 35 in Farwaniya and 32 in Ahmadi.



KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan (right) attends the conference. — KUNA

COMMERCE MINISTER UNDERLINES NEED TO KEEP ABREAST OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

KUWAIT: It is imperative that accountants and auditors remain aware of legislative developments in Kuwait, given the rapid change in that sector, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan said yesterday.

In a speech to open the fifth conference on accounting and auditing, Roudhan, who is also

Minister of State for Youth Affairs, said that the global financial crisis has led to the reevaluation of plans dealing with credit ratings. Moreover, he spoke of the need to establish solid inspection apparatuses that would help increase transparency in financial transactions, adding that His Highness the Amir's vision of transforming

Kuwait into a financial and commercial hub should come to fruition. He also highlighted the significance of a wide range of services to cope with constant change in the legislative sector, noting that Kuwait should curb its reliance on oil revenues, which in turn, will help create a more vibrant economic environment. — KUNA

In Brief

OMANI SULTAN QABOOS RECEIVES AMIR'S LETTER

MUSCAT: Omani Sultan Qaboos Bin Said received yesterday a letter from His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Omani-Kuwaiti relations. The letter was handed by Kuwaiti Ambassador in Muscat Fahad Al-Mutairi to Secretary-General of the Omani Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bader Al-Busaidi. — KUNA



DIWAN MINISTER MEETS ARTS SOCIETY CHIEF

KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received yesterday Chairman of the Kuwait Society for Formative Arts Abdelrasoul Salman and the society's members who introduced to him the winners of the 11th Kuwait Youth Creativity Award. — KUNA



KUWAIT, BRAZIL DISCUSS MEDIA COOPERATION

KUWAIT: KUNA Board Chairman and Director General Sheikh Mubarak Duaij Al-Ibrahim Al-Sabah received Brazilian Ambassador to Kuwait at his office yesterday. During the meeting, the ambassador noted KUNA's role to create media and cultural exchange between the two countries, while Sheikh Mubarak lauded the strong media cooperation between Kuwait and Brazil. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: Russian artists draw portraits to be displayed at a gallery organized by the Russian Embassy recently at the embassy's premises in Daiya. The artists, who were invited to Kuwait by the embassy, also gave training lessons on basics of arts to members of the International Women Group (IWG). — Photo by Joseph Shagra

ALGHANIM INDUSTRIES HOSTS MERIT SCHOLARS' EVENT FOR KUWAITI STUDENTS IN US AT COMPANY HEADQUARTERS

TO INTRODUCE THEM TO THE COMPANY AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES

KUWAIT: Alghanim Industries, one of the largest private companies in the region, held an information session for merit scholar students studying in the United States about the history of the company and its diverse businesses. The event was hosted at the company's headquarters in Al-Hamra Tower, and included 13 students, from various universities, interested in learning more about the company and career opportunities.

Students were met by both the Talent Management and Diversity team, Corporate Communications, and employees from different departments who shared their experience at university, discussed their areas of work, and spoke about the general environment at Alghanim Industries.

Director of Corporate Communications, Abdullateef Al-Sharikh, welcomed students with an overview of the company's diverse businesses and brands, in addition to Alghanim Industries' rich history in the

region. Hadeer Shelash, Assistant Manager - Corporate Communications, also discussed the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, including the various programs addressing youth education and entrepreneurship, in addition to the range of charity work targeting the underprivileged. The following segment included Senior HR Officers - Talent Management and Diversity, Noora Amin and Hebah Al Rasheedan, who shared details about the company's student internship opportunities and the fresh graduate initiative, "Alghanim Industries Future Leaders Program", which is designed to develop the professional capacity of new Kuwaiti graduates.

Commenting on the students' visit, Abdullateef Al-Sharikh said: "We strive to be present at events that involve promising and talented Kuwaiti youth. This stems from our deep belief in the vital role they play, especially when it comes to growing and developing Kuwait's private sector. In

the same vein, we've been strong supporters of NUKS-USA's annual conference, which is the largest gathering of Kuwaiti students outside Kuwait, during which we always make sure to meet with merit students in particular. This year we were able to host these students at Alghanim Industries, giving them a better idea about our company, and a chance for direct dialogue with the employees. We are always happy to host our promising youth, and we hope to welcome these distinguished students as colleagues in the near future."

The session concluded with a tour of the Alghanim Industries headquarters located at the top four office floors in Al Hamra Tower, from the 70th to the 73rd floors. Employees in the Al Hamra office enjoy a modern design and open space between different business departments, creating an atmosphere of cooperation and teamwork. The layout also helps in creating a culture of collective participation in responsibility within the business

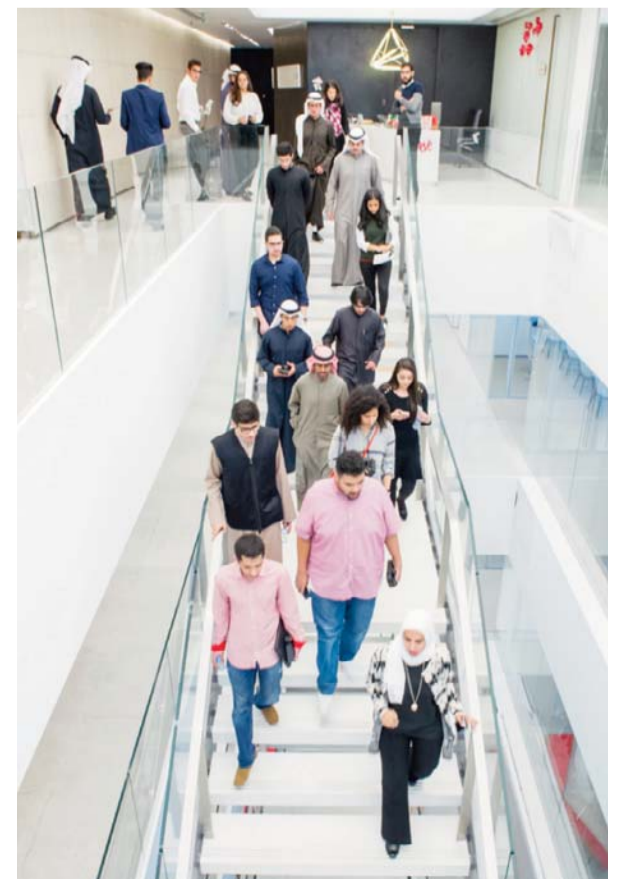
units and between them. The company also held a similar session during its sponsorship of the 32nd annual NUKS conference in the United States. These initiatives come as part of Alghanim Industries' Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, which is committed to empowering the underprivileged, supporting education and encouraging entrepreneurship. It is worth noting that the company was the Strategic Sponsor for the fifth annual Tmkeen Youth Symposium, an initiative that provides youth with valuable insights about entrepreneurship from industry leaders, academics and experts, and was held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The company is also the largest supporter for INJAZ-Kuwait, as it encourages its employees to volunteer regularly in INJAZ's different programs. In addition to being a platinum sponsor of "ArabNet Conference" and providing free event tickets to 100 university students in Kuwait.



Abdullateef Al-Sharikh speaks to the students.



KUWAIT: Group photo of the students with Alghanim Industries employees.



Students take a tour in Al-Hamra Tower's offices.



CENTER TO DEVELOP STEM CELL RESEARCH

KUWAIT: Sheikh Salwa Al-Sabah Center for Stem Cell and Umbilical Cord will pave the way forward to develop services and researches in the healthcare sector, said Kuwait Holding Projects Company (KIPCO) yesterday. The center will help advance research within the stem cell and umbilical cord domains and will aid in developing a strong partnership between the public and private sectors within health services, KIPCO Vice Chairman Faisal Hamad Al-Ayyar said in a statement.

Hopefully, this facility will make it easy for the public to access necessary healthcare in Kuwait, said Ayyar who affirmed stem cell and umbilical cord researches will be crucial to the treatment of various intractable dis-

eases. According to the company, KIPCO and its Group companies will hand over the Sheikh Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Stem Cell and Umbilical Cord Center in mid-September 2017, with 70 per cent of the construction of the building now complete. The center, financed through a KD seven million donation made to the Ministry of Health by Masharee Al-Khair Charity Organization on behalf of KIPCO Group, is the Gulf region's first-ever center to be dedicated to stem cell research and the storage of umbilical cords.

The Sheikh Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Stem Cell and Umbilical Cord Center is being built over a 12,000-square-meters plot of land in the Al Sabah

Health Zone, opposite the Maternity Hospital. It has a total built up area of 7,800-square-meters and includes a three-floor main building, a utilities building, in addition to external landscaping and parking. The facility includes testing and research laboratories, blood and cord storage banks, research and medical libraries, as well as a lecture theater.

In addition to KD 7 million donation, the Advanced Technology Company, a member of the KIPCO Group, has pledged to provide state-of-the-art equipment for the center's specialized laboratories, cooling systems and stem cell storage facilities. ATC's contribution is valued at KD 1 million. — KUNA



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and we are its sails"

-Bader Bouresli



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Crime

Report

POLICE OFFICER FORGED INVESTIGATION'S REPORT

KUWAIT: The criminal court sentenced a police officer and a citizen to five years in jail, and relieved the officer from his duties. The two were convicted of forging a drug case investigation's report. The officer, who was commissioned to carry out the investigations and write a report on it, entered the house of the suspects in the case without permission, taking advantage of his job, and arrested two people contrary to what the law stipulates. He also helped the second defendant in the case file a complaint; in which the latter gave false information to implicate the detainees.

Fake doctor arrested

Criminal detectives arrested an Asian man in Khaitan who practiced medicine for five years without license. The suspect gave diagnoses and prescriptions to patients, according to his statements made during questioning. Furthermore, the man admitted that he carried out several abortions for expatriate women who got pregnant out of wedlock. The suspect was placed under surveillance after detectives received information about his illegal activities. They noticed after monitoring his 'clinic' for a week that an average of 10 patients would visit him a day. Based on these findings, a warrant was obtained and the place was raided where three expats were found, along with banned medicine including pills used for abortion. The suspect said most of his customers are residency violators and that he uses certain medicines to facilitate abortions for KD 50 an operation, which was refundable if there were no results.

Theft

An Egyptian man accused his Sri Lankan domestic helper of stealing his wife's Spanish-made jewelry. He said the stolen material includes a diamond stone, as well as a gold ring and earrings, adding that the maid had disappeared. Detectives are working on the case.

Auto theft gangs arrested

Criminal detectives put an end to the activities of members of a vehicle theft gang, whose members confessed that they stole eight buses and many cars of various models. They smuggled the stolen vehicles to Iraq and sold them there. The gang used to hide the cars with Styrofoam, then take it to Iraq in large containers. Detectives found invoices, indicating that they bought a large quantity of Styrofoam needed to hide the cars. The security source said the gang was discovered after an Egyptian man complained that a bus belonging to his company was stolen. The source said investigations were intensified resulting in finding the stolen bus in Sulaybiya. The vehicle was loaded on a trailer's bed after it was covered with Styrofoam, and was on its way to Iraq. Detectives obtained a warrant against one of the suspects, a Syrian man identified by his initials, (S.A.A) and raided his house, where invoices for the Styrofoam purchased were found. The first suspect confessed to being involved along with another Syrian man (A.A.A) and a third person (S.H.N) who had left Kuwait few days before.— Translated from the Arabic press



التقريب

Al-Qabas

'PROTECTORS' OF VIRTUE AND DECENCY

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

They are calling for hijab and fight women who are not wearing veils. They call for gender-based segregation at schools from kindergarten through to university. They call for virtue, decency and dignity. They ask parents to prevent their daughters from flaunting, urging their women to dress in heavy, all-covering clothes. It would be better if they take after Taliban.

They hate the woman and call, both secretly and openly, for her to remain at home, obey her husband, and put up with beatings. She should accept that she will not leave the house without the approval of her husband, father, or brother. They ban education for women, watch carefully for anything they do not like on TV; their senior "brother" admits he scrambles what his household can see on TV. But as soon as democracy came with its enticements, the act of a woman exiting the home to vote became a religious duty.

They hate women, not hesitating to kick them out of the house without mercy, after uttering barely a few words to her. She will then be humiliated in court or police stations, lawyers' offices becoming her daily destination, in

order to get a bite or clothing for her or her children. And that is only if her estranged husband allows her to see them. They punish her if she deviates from their rules, but give themselves leeway because, after all, they are men with mustaches and beards.

They hate a woman's look, shape and figure, and all she represents to them. Yet you find them chasing her, mostly secretly, begging for her attention, and spend their money to try to sleep with her with or without her consent. Afterwards, they do not hesitate to insult her, put her down, deny her rights, or describe her as lacking in mind and faith. This is to support the stands of their clergy and government, which attempt to refuse her most basic rights.

They fight her, curse her, attribute to her the worse of characteristics and warn us against her corrupting evil. In secret, meanwhile, they would do anything just to gain her approval! Do you know who they are? They are the ones whose personal sexual exploits and ethical scandals are quickly pushed aside as they claim virtue and the defense of good morals.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

الأنباء

Al-Anbaa

GLORY BUILDERS

By Salah Al-Sayar

Our Arab mentality overburdens us with illusions that the West intentionally works to defame us. But even if the West does deliberately misrepresent us using stereotypes, this is not true of the Far East. The religious wars (Crusades) we participated in caused the loss of a considerable number of lives, but were never fought against the Far East. Our region never fell under their influence the way it did the West's during 'European Colonization', as it is known in Arabic politics.

As a result, I am talking about an oriental perspective, comparing Arabs' reaction to the recent US travel ban to those of the Japanese in the aftermath of World War II. A comprehensive perspective is outlined by a Japanese Contemporary Arab Literature Professor at Tokyo University, Nobuaki Notohara, who spent over 40 years in Arab countries. In his book, 'The Arabs: A Japanese Point of View', the writer says Arabs were constantly curious as to why Japan maintained relations with the US, even after the atomic

Arabs, he believed, expect the Japanese to harbor a deep hatred for the US because of the destruction it wreaked in WWII

bomb attacks at Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Arabs, he believed, expect the Japanese to harbor a deep hatred for the US because of the destruction it wreaked in WWII.

"Taking the matter this way will do us no good. We must first admit our mistakes in World War II and correct them," Notohara wrote, explaining that the issue was not whether to hate the US. "We must criticize ourselves and then correct our mistakes. Awareness of a problem is the right approach to correcting it. We have paid the price and remained in grief and bitterness but we, somehow, succeeded in correcting our mistakes."

This comes from a sincere, passionate observer. In the book's introduction, the author frankly points out that Arab societies are full of oppression, tension and aggressiveness. That probably explains Arab reactions to America's travel ban, when they should be criticizing themselves. The Japanese people managed to turn the destruction of their country into a golden opportunity for self-reflection.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

KUWAIT AIRWAYS PROUD SPONSORS OF ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF KHALEEJI MUSIC: 'FEBRAYER KUWAIT' SIX NIGHTS OF MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT CONCLUDES THIS WEEKEND



KUWAIT: As official carrier of 'Febrayer Kuwait', Kuwait Airways flew in both Majed Al-Mohandis and Angham Soliman on Tuesday for Thursday's performances

KUWAIT: Kuwait Airways, the official national carrier of the State of Kuwait, has announced its pride in supporting the successful sponsorship of the well-loved, annual musical celebration 'Febrayer Kuwait'. As one of the main sponsors and "Official Carrier" for the event, Kuwait Airways stated that it hoped it had played its part in bringing joy to regional and international visitors to this annual celebration - a coming together of Khaleeji (Arabian Gulf) musical talents and its famous singers.

With 11 artists performing over the six-night program, spread over three weeks, this year's event has offered up a special treat to fans of Khaleeji music, with the line-up of stars including the renowned and hugely respected Saudi singer, Rashed Al Majed. His solo performance tomorrow being the showpiece finale to the event. This will be Al Majed's first public performance, in Kuwait, in over eight years.

If you have not got a ticket to see Majed then, unfortunately, you are already out of luck (or will need to check on E-Bay) because, according to organizers, tickets for his show sold out within an hour of tickets going on sale in January. The venue for all of the 'Febrayer Kuwait' events have been held at the Sheikh Jabar Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, otherwise known as The Opera House.

On each night of the event, apart from Majed's finale evening, audiences have been treated to performances of two well-renowned Khaleeji singers. The program's dates for this year: 26-27 January; 2-3 February; and 16-17 February.

On 26 January, 'Febrayer Kuwait' was opened by the famous Kuwaiti singer, Abdullah Al Rwaished, followed by Aseel Abu Baker Salim. On 27 January, audiences were treated to the inimitable sounds of Nawal and Rabih Sager.

On 2nd February, the talents of another Kuwaiti singer, Nabeel Shuwail, and Shereen, were the headliners. Mohammed Abdu and Angham performed on 3 February; and on 16 February it will be the turn of Majed Al-Mohandis and Asala. Rashed Al-Majed completes the line-up with a solo performance, on 17 February.

"As the 'Official Carrier of Febrayer Kuwait', Kuwait Airways is proud to be lending its support and sponsorship to an event that celebrates both Kuwaiti and regional cultural heritage," said Rasha Al-Roumi, Chairperson and CEO, Kuwait Airways.

"Over the years, Febrayer Kuwait has proven to be a key attraction for visitors to come to the country, along with the many other events and activities that are traditionally held during this month."

"As the official national carrier of the State of Kuwait, we have welcomed on-board many GCC citizens, Arab nationals and many other visitors from around the world to this wonderful celebration of music and culture," Roumi added.



KFH LAUNCHES ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL, LIBERATION DAYS LYRICS HAIL SOLIDARITY AMONG KUWAIT'S PEOPLE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) has launched a distinct advertising campaign on the occasion of the 56th National Day and 26th Liberation Day anniversary that confers the joy of freedom and solidarity among Kuwait's people. This emanates from KFH's firm belief in the importance of its social and national role.

The add lyrics, which has been produced using human voices as per Islamic Sharia, hail the solidarity among Kuwait's people. It reveals the secret of the cohesion of the Kuwaiti national fabric, which is the kindness of its people.

The lyrics narrate "there is a secret in this land, it is in the people... Their kindness and big heart". These words incarnate the unity of Kuwaiti people, which forms impenetrable dam that saves Kuwait from any harm. The lyrics also affirms the strength of Kuwait's people and their ultimate love to their land "no matter what we have been through, and all the challenges we faced, our solidarity has been protected by God... to that we are forever grateful".

KFH is keen on embracing its social responsibility, while participating in every event of

importance to the society, primarily the national events. This affirms KFH's prestigious status and underlines its unremitting efforts in pushing other private sector institutions to follow suit in shouldering the social responsibility in all its fields.

It is worth noting that the ad will be aired and published on TV channels, newspapers, KFH social media accounts and radio. This includes KTV1 and Alrai TV, Quran Radio Kuwait, KFH accounts on social media; Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snap Chat and Facebook.





Palestinians caution against abandoning a two-state concept

WHAT'S YOUR POISON? A HISTORY OF KILLING WITH CHEMISTRY



PUTRAJAYA: A hospital van is escorted by a police vehicle as it leaves the hospital forensic department in Putrajaya, Malaysia yesterday. Kim Jong Nam, 46, was targeted Monday, Feb. 14, 2017, in a shopping concourse at Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Malaysia, and died on the way to the hospital, according to a Malaysian government official. —AP

WOMAN ARRESTED OVER N KOREAN KILLING

KIM HALF-BROTHER PLEADED FOR HIS LIFE • N KOREANS TRY TO STOP AUTOPSY

ASSASSI-NATION: NORTH KOREA'S STATE KILLINGS

SEOUL: If North Korean agents are responsible for the assassination of Kim Jong-Nam, the estranged half-brother of North Korea's leader, it would be the latest in a long line of targeted killings by the isolated state. Kim, whose younger brother Kim Jong-Un has ruled North Korea since the death of their father in December 2011, died after reportedly being poisoned by two female agents at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Monday. Here are some other fatal attacks carried out by North Korea on foreign territory.

1968 Blue House assault

At the height of the Cold War, a team of 31 commandos were sent from Pyongyang to assassinate then South Korean president Park Chung-Hee. They were stopped some 100 meters (330 feet) away from the presidential Blue House. Gunfights erupted and more than 90 South Koreans were killed including many civilians on a bus. Only two of the 31 commandos survived, one fled to the North and one was captured.

1974 presidential attempt

In 1974, Park, late father of the current South Korean president Park Geun-Hye, survived another assassination attempt. A pro-Pyongyang Korean living in Japan, Mun Se-Gwang, opened fire with a revolver while Park was delivering a speech. He missed Park but killed Park's wife Yuk Young-Soo. Mun was executed that year.

1983 Myanmar

North Korean undercover agents killed 21 people, including four South Korean cabinet ministers in a bomb attack in Yangon. A timed device planted under the roof of the city's Martyr's Mausoleum was intended to kill then South Korean president Chun Doo-Hwan. It exploded before the president arrived, but his entourage was badly hit. Three North Korean agents fled the scene, one was killed and two others were captured by Burmese authorities.

1987 Korean Air

A South Korean plane flying from Baghdad to Seoul exploded over the Andaman Sea. All 115 people on board were killed. The two bombers were traced to Bahrain where a male agent committed suicide by biting a cyanide capsule hidden in a cigarette as they were about to be taken into custody. The other agent, Kim Hyon-Hee, was captured and brought to Seoul. She later confessed her attack had been aimed to hamper the 1988 Seoul summer Olympics. She was sentenced to death but later pardoned.

1996 diplomat killing

South Korean diplomat Choi Duk-Keun was found bludgeoned to death in Vladivostok in 1996 in what South Korean media said was revenge for the death of 25 North Korean submariners who died when their vessel ran aground in the South during an infiltration attempt.

1997 family affair

Yi Han-Yong, a nephew of Jong-Nam's mother Sung Hye-Rim, was fatally shot in 1997 outside his home. The two assailants were never caught. Yi had been living in the South since his 1982 defection, where he had published his memoir revealing details of the Kims' private lives. That book was believed to have been the trigger for the assassination.—AFP

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian police probing the killing of the half-brother of North Korea's leader arrested a woman yesterday as they tried to unravel a Cold War-style assassination the South said was carried out by Pyongyang's agents. As Seoul pointed the finger at poison-wielding female spies from North of their shared border, police in Kuala Lumpur said they were holding a woman with a Vietnamese passport. Her arrest came around 24 hours after news broke of the death of Kim Jong-Nam, the elder sibling of North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un, with reports saying female assassins had sprayed toxins in his face at Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

CCTV images that emerged in Malaysian media, purportedly of one of the suspects, showed an Asian woman wearing a white top with the letters "LOL" emblazoned on the front. Malaysian police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said 28-year-old Doan Thi Huong was arrested at the airport yesterday morning - two days after the killing. The suspect was "positively identified from the CCTV footage at the

airport and was alone at the time of arrest," Khalid said in a statement.

Meanwhile, pathologists in the Malaysian capital examined the body for clues as to how he died, in a killing that has echoes of Soviet-era spy craft. If confirmed, the assassination, which analysts said could have been ordered over reports he was readying to defect, would be the highest-profile death on Kim Jong-Un's watch since the 2013 execution of his uncle, Jang Song-Thaek, in a country with a long record of meting out brutal deaths.

It emerged yesterday that Jong-Nam had pleaded with his younger brother for his life to be spared after an earlier assassination attempt. "Jong-Nam in April 2012 sent a letter to Jong-Un saying 'Please spare me and my family,'" Kim Byung-Kee, a member of South Korea's parliamentary intelligence committee, told reporters. Cheong Seong-Chang of the independent Sejong Institute in Seoul said the assassination was "unthinkable without a direct order or approval from Kim Jong-Un himself". His killing was likely motivated by a recent news report that Kim Jong-Nam had

sought to defect to the EU, the US or South Korea as far back as in 2012, he said.

South Korea's spy chief Lee Byung-Ho said the two women struck on Monday morning as Kim was readying to board a flight to Macau where he has spent many years in exile. Malaysian police said Kim, a portly 45-year-old, was walking through the departure hall when he was attacked. "He told the receptionist... someone had grabbed his face from behind and splashed some liquid on him," Selangor state's criminal investigation chief Fadzil Ahmat was reported as saying by Malaysia's The Star newspaper.

"He asked for help and was immediately sent to the airport's clinic. At this point, he was experiencing headache and was on the verge of passing out," said Fadzil. "At the clinic, the victim experienced a mild seizure. He was put into an ambulance and was being taken to the Putrajaya Hospital when he was pronounced dead." An autopsy at Kuala Lumpur Hospital's forensics department was completed by yesterday evening, Selangor Police Chief Abdul Samah Mat told AFP, but said no

results had yet been issued by the hospital. A black Jaguar sedan bearing the North Korean flag was seen outside the department, and four officials wearing flag pins were observed within the forensics compound. The officials left the department around 8 pm (1200 GMT) without commenting to reporters. No party had yet laid claim to the body, Abdul Samah said. "As for now the body will be kept at the Kuala Lumpur morgue."

Three sources told Reuters the North Korean officials spent hours trying to talk Malaysia out of conducting the autopsy. Malaysian authorities refused the request, said the sources, all Malaysian government officials. The body of Kim Jong-Nam was taken in the morning to the hospital for investigations into his mysterious death. North Korean embassy officials followed, and were there so long that they ordered a meal from KFC, reporters at the hospital said. Journalists at the hospital said North Korea's ambassador to Malaysia, Kang Chol, and colleagues arrived at the hospital in the early afternoon and remained there into the evening.—Agencies

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JERUSALEM: A general view taken yesterday shows buildings in Ramat Shlomo, an Israeli settlement in the mainly Palestinian eastern sector of Jerusalem. —AFP

PALESTINIANS CAUTION US AGAINST ABANDONING TWO-STATE CONCEPT

PALESTINIAN STATEHOOD LONG AN INTERNATIONAL GOAL

JERUSALEM: Palestinians warned the United States yesterday against abandoning a two-state solution to the conflict with Israel after a White House official said peace did not necessarily have to entail Palestinian statehood. US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meet later in the day for the first time since the US election in November that brought the Republican to office.

On the eve of the meeting, a senior White House official said it was up to the Israelis and Palestinians themselves to decide on the shape of any future peace. "Whether that comes in the form of a two-state solution if that's what the parties want, or something else," the official said, adding that Trump, while giving peace "high

priority" would not try to "dictate" an agreement. For Palestinians, who seek a state in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip, even the notion of a US retreat from the internationally backed goal of a future Palestine existing alongside Israel was alarming. "If the Trump Administration rejects this policy it would be destroying the chances for peace and undermining American interests, standing and credibility abroad," Hanan Ashrawi, a senior member of the Palestine Liberation Organization, said in response to the US official's remarks. "Accommodating the most extreme and irresponsible elements in Israel and in the White House is no way to make responsible foreign policy," she said in a statement.

Netanyahu committed, with conditions, to the two-state goal in a speech in 2009 and has broadly reiterated the aim since. But given regional instability and long-running divisions in Palestinian politics, many in his cabinet argue the time is not ripe for a Palestinian state to emerge. Far-right cabinet ministers in Israel have called for the annexation of parts of the West Bank, which was among the territory Israel captured in the 1967 Middle East war. Netanyahu has not endorsed that demand. Commenting on the White House official's remarks, Husam Zomlot, strategic affairs adviser to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, noted that Palestinian statehood has long been at the heart of international peace efforts.

"The two-state solution is not something we just came up with. It is an international consensus and decision after decades of Israel's rejection of the one-state democratic formula," Zomlot told Reuters in Jerusalem by telephone from the West Bank city of Ramallah. On his departure for Washington on Monday, Netanyahu sidestepped a question on whether he still backed a two-state solution, saying he would make his position clear in the US capital. But he has spoken of a "state minus," suggesting he could offer the Palestinians deep-seated autonomy - they already exercise limited self-rule in the West Bank under interim deals - and the trappings of statehood without full sovereignty. —Reuters

WEST MOSUL EATING ONCE A DAY AND BRACING FOR WORSE



MOSUL: Members from the 'Rebirth Generation', an Internet born group of Iraqi youths who are trying to revive the embattled city of Mosul, pose for a photo as they organize an event to mark Valentine's Day at a school in the eastern part of Mosul on February 14, 2017. Valentine's Day returned to the eastern sector of the Iraqi city of Mosul from where the Islamic State group was expelled last month, at least for a group of enthusiastic schoolchildren. —AFP

ARBIL: As the noose tightens around holdout jihadists in west Mosul, so does the belt around the waists of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi civilians trapped there with dwindling supplies. "We're trying to build up some reserves but we have very little food left at home," said Umm Sameer, a mother from the Ras I-Jadda neighborhood of west Mosul. After retaking eastern Mosul from the Islamic State group last month, Iraqi federal forces are now preparing to move on the part of the city that lies on the west bank of the Tigris River.

All the bridges connecting the two sides have been dropped and the jihadists holed up in the west have nowhere to run to, setting the stage for what could be Iraq's bloodiest battle yet in the fight against IS. "We're already only eating once a day," said Umm Sameer. "The shelves are almost bare in the shops and when you do find something it's too expensive, like a kilo of onions which now costs 15,000 dinars (around \$12)," she said. Umm Sameer said 30 eggs fetched around \$50 and sugar was impossible to find, a shortage that affects all households in a country where tea is consumed in large quantities and with abundant sugar. "People are so desperate that they are using sugar substitutes for diabetics to sweeten their tea," she said. The jihadist gunmen who have ruled the area for almost three years are growing more paranoid by the day as air strikes by the US-led coalition continue to target their hideouts, residents said.

IS raids

"(IS) members are raiding people's houses more often, looking for mobiles. If you have one, you face execution," said Abu Mohammed, who lives in the Al-Shafaa neighborhood. He said some residents who had secretly kept a mobile phone since 2014 had recently destroyed their device. None of the residents contacted by AFP by phone would give their full names out of fear. Abu Mohammed said the only ones not to suffer from the food shortages were IS leaders, many of them foreigners, who still had access to some supplies from Syria. "Local IS fighters however are more or less facing the same situation as the rest of the population," he said.

Some residents have been displaced internally by the preparations IS is making for the offensive federal forces are expected to launch against the jihadists' west bank stronghold. Fighters have set up positions along the river front in a bid to counter any attempt by Iraqi forces to cross the Tigris on pontoon bridges. The jihadists have also punched holes in people's homes, which enables them to move across a neighborhood from one house to another without exposing themselves to aerial surveillance by stepping into the street. Residents also said that the homes of those who managed to flee are being systematically seized by IS, as well as the shops whose owners happened to live on the east bank.

Burning clothes for fuel

That leaves some residents with the choice of abandoning their homes and belongings or staying in a place that is being used by IS fighters and risks being considered a military target. "We are extremely concerned about the rapid deterioration of the conditions in west Mosul," United Nations humanitarian coordinator in Iraq Lise Grande told reporters yesterday. "Families are in big trouble, half of the shops have been closed," she said while visiting a nearby displacement camp.

Abdelkarim al-Obeidi, who heads a Mosul civil society organization, urged the government to start air dropping food supplies. Water and electricity are intermittent at best and some Mosul residents have told of how they are resorting to burning their own furniture to stay warm in a city where temperatures have regularly dipped below zero in recent weeks. A man from the Tammuz 17 neighborhood who gave his name as Abu Zeid said he was even burning old clothes because gas and kerosene were also hard to come by. "We have suitcases filled with old clothes in the basement, we'll be spending a lot of time down there when the fighting starts," he said. —AFP

RUSSIAN JETS POUND SYRIAN CITY OF DERA'A

AMMAN: Russian jets pounded rebel-held areas of the Syrian city of Dera'a yesterday for a second day in the first such intensive bombing campaign since Moscow's major intervention in Syria more than a year ago, rebels and witnesses said. Rebel groups on Sunday stormed the heavily-garrisoned Manshiya district in a battle dubbed "Death rather than Humiliation" saying the campaign sought to obstruct any army attempts to capture a strategic border crossing with Jordan. The army's control of the rebel held crossing and swatches of territory in the southern strip of the city would sever the rebel link between the eastern and west parts of the city. The Syrian army said the "terrorists" had failed to make gains and its troops had inflicted many casualties.

State media said the armed insurgents showered civilian districts of the southern city with mortars, wrecking many homes. The opposition fighters are drawn from both moderate Free Syrian Army groups and members of a newly formed alliance - Tahrir Al Sham - spearheaded by a faction that was once Al-Qaeda's official affiliate. A rebel source said there were at least 30 Russian sorties on Tuesday, thwarting further rebel gains in the heavily defended enclave that had allowed them so far to secure significant parts of the Manshiya.

"When the regime began to lose control of some areas ... the Russian jets began their operations," said Ibrahim Abdullah, a senior rebel commander. The fighting also spread across other parts of the city as rebels fired mortars on government con-

trolled parts of the city. Ground-to-ground missiles were also deployed from army barracks to pound rebel held quarters of the city, residents said. The battles inside the city are the most intense since an alliance of mainstream rebels, known as "The Southern Front" who are backed by Western and Arab foes of President Bashar Al Assad launched an unsuccessful large scale military campaign to capture the whole city in 2015.

The province that borders both Israel and Jordan has escaped the devastation wreaked by Russia's aerial bombing of northern Syria after Moscow stepped up its military involvement in Syria in 2015. The Syrian army has so far failed to recapture the border crossing, a once thriving passenger and commercial gateway with Jordan, despite repeated efforts. "There is not a single day that passes without the regime trying to make advances," Salamah Aba Zaid, a resident in Dera'a said.

At least half of the southern province is in the hands of Free Syrian Army rebels but groups affiliated with the Islamic State have a foothold in an area to the west of Dera'a in the Wadi Yarmouk area near the Golan Heights. Aid workers said jets hit a Western-funded field hospital in Dera'a and raids killed at least seven members of one family in the border area, where many residents fled in the early days of the Syrian conflict. The Washington-based International Rescue Committee, which supports the hospital that was targeted, said in a statement that four health workers were injured in the attack. —Reuters



AZRAQ: Young Syrian refugees standing at the Azraq refugee camp in northern Jordan. Almost six years into a war that has devastated their country, Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon say they expect nothing of peace talks this month but still dream of going home. —AFP

REFUGEES SHRUG OFF PEACE TALKS BUT DREAM OF HOME

AZRAQ REFUGEE CAMP: Almost six years into a war that has devastated their country, Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon say they expect nothing of peace talks this month but still dream of going home. "I don't think anything will come of the talks" this week in Kazakhstan and the next in Switzerland, says Ahmad al-Khabouri, 32, at a refugee camp in Jordan. But the young man, who fled Syria with his wife and children in 2014, says he still clings on to hope of returning home some day.

"I don't know if my house has been destroyed or not, but I want to return home even if we've managed to make a new life for ourselves here," he says. The war has killed more than 310,000 people and displaced millions since it started with the brutal repression of anti-government protests in 2011. In the Azraq refugee camp, Khabouri runs a small shop that sells shisha tobacco and bicycles, the only method of transport for around 54,000 residents in the settlement.

Sitting beside him outside his shop, Khabouri's 65-year-old uncle says he still thinks about his home and surrounding fields in Dara'a, the southern cradle of Syria's uprising. But he says he is just as disillusioned about the latest rounds of talks between the regime and rebels set to take place in Astana on Thursday and in Geneva on February 23. "It's all lies, whether from the regime or the opposition. They're all laughing at the Syrian people," says the man in a long white robe and a traditional keffiyeh headscarf. At a nearby electronics stall, Ali al-Ghouthani, 42, says he'll return to Syria as soon as it is safe.

'All I want is home'

"Despite the dignified life we have here, I'll go back as soon as security returns-even if my home is destroyed... I'll rebuild it," says the father-of-eight, who is also from Dara'a. Beside him, Abdelmonem al-Muthib listens to the chirping of a caged bird brought from Syria. But he says Syria will have to be much safer for him to return. "I won't start again from scratch, even if the fighting stops... unless the situation looks at least 35 percent like it did before the war," says the father-of-six. "If not, I'll stay here."

The UN refugee agency says Jordan has taken in 655,000 Syrians since the start of the conflict, but Amman says the number is much higher at 1.4 million. In Lebanon, where the UNHCR says it has registered more than one million Syrian refugees, camp residents express similar frustration at the stagnant peace process. "We're not expecting anything. They've already met five or six times without any results," says Tarek Salloum, 24, standing outside a makeshift home in a camp in east Lebanon.

"There'll be no solution because no one wants to make any concessions," says the refugee, who fled to the Marj area from the Syrian town of Zabadani across the border. "The losers are the Syrians who left their country," Qasiya Ezz, who has 10 children, says all she wants from the talks is "security and a small house for me and my children." "Whether the regime falls or not, I don't care," says the 38-year-old, her head wrapped in a black scarf. "We used to have peace in our beautiful country. All I want is to go home." —AFP

LIBYA STILL IN THE MIRE AS ANOTHER 'VERSARY PASSES

TRIPOLI: Libya's transition has been bogged down by insecurity and chaos, leaving the country looking like a "failed state" six years after the NATO-backed uprising that ended Muammar Gaddafi's rule. "We got rid of one dictator only to see 10,000 others take his place," said Fatma Al-Zawi, a Tripoli housewife, bemoaning the multitude of warlords and militias which have run the North African country since the armed revolt which erupted in mid-February 2011.

Ordinary Libyans are showing little enthusiasm for the anniversary, which the authorities plan to mark on Thursday with cultural and sporting events in Martyrs' Square in the capital. Living conditions have deteriorated badly through a combination of insecurity, power cuts, water shortages, a cash crunch and the

plunging value of the Libyan dinar.

Libya's executive and legislative branches have been paralyzed by fierce rivalries between political movements, ideologies and tribes. "The protagonists have not understood that no single ideological branch or political or tribal clan can govern the country on its own" in the post-Gaddafi era, said Rachid Khechana, director of the Mediterranean Centre for Libyan Studies in Tunis. "This is why the country is not ready for 'classic' democratic competition" through elections, he said. In the absence of a strong regular army, the oil-rich country with long, porous borders has turned into rich terrain for smugglers of arms and people from sub-Saharan Africa desperate to reach Europe via perilous Mediterranean crossings. —AFP



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WOMAN CHAINED IN METAL CONTAINER SAYS CAPTOR 'BRAGGED ABOUT KILLING'

COLUMBIA: A South Carolina woman who spent two months chained inside a large metal container says her captor raped her daily and bragged that he was good at killing, claiming that his victims tallied nearly 100. Kala Brown says she did what she had to do to survive. "He told me as long as I served his purpose, I was safe," Brown told Phillip McGraw, the host of the television show "Dr Phil."

It was the first time she has talked publicly since her Nov 3 rescue, which authorities say helped them solve seven killings in the area dating back 13 years. Police said Todd Kohlhepp, a real estate agent with his own firm until his arrest, killed Brown's boyfriend, a couple who had been missing nearly a year and four people at a motorcycle shop in 2003. Brown said she and her boyfriend had gone to Kohlhepp's rural property Aug 31 to help him clear some underbrush. She'd cleaned houses for him previously to prepare them for sale. After the couple followed him to a two-story garage on the 95-acre property in Spartanburg County, Kohlhepp handed them hedge clippers and bottles of water. He said he needed to get something inside and came out shooting, Brown said.

He shot Charles Carver three times in the chest, she said. He gagged Brown and handcuffed her ankles and wrists. Kohlhepp took her to a "pitch black," 30-foot-long storage container nearby, chained her by the neck in a back corner and raped her, she said. He "let me know that if I tried to run, he'd kill me. If I tried to hurt him, he'd kill me. If I fought back, he would kill me. And then he raped me," Brown said in episodes that aired this week. "He would rape me twice a day, every day." The days evolved

into a pattern, she said. He took her to the garage twice a day, where she ate, used the bathroom and was allowed to bathe every other day using a washcloth and a small plastic bowl of water. But she was never unchained, she said.

"He would put more chains on before he took other chains off," she said. Kohlhepp, 45, faces murder, kidnapping and weapons charges. He is not charged with sexual assault. Spokesmen for the sheriff and prosecutor declined to address the rape allegations or whether more charges are forthcoming. His attorney did not return messages. The Associated Press normally does not identify victims of sexual assault but is naming Brown after she publicly identified herself.

The day after her rescue, investigators found Carver's body in a shallow grave on Kohlhepp's property. Brought to the site in handcuffs, Kohlhepp showed authorities the graves of the couple missing since December 2015. Kohlhepp told Brown he held that woman captive, too, before killing her.

Police said Kohlhepp acknowledged the grisly 2003 cold case after authorities granted him several requests, including letting him speak to his mother. Brown said Kohlhepp told her he killed Carver because "it was easier to control someone if you took someone they loved." She thought Kohlhepp was infatuated with her and didn't want to kill her, even saying he would let her go and give her money "if he ever got old and sick," she said. He explained Stockholm syndrome, in which a hostage starts feeling sympathetic toward their captor, and said "it would kick in and we'd be happy together." —AP



WOODRUFF: The shipping container that an abducted woman was held in for two months is removed from Todd Kohlhepp's property in Woodruff, SC. — AP



BRUSSELS: US Defense Minister James Mattis (2nd left), NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (left), Netherlands' Defense Minister Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert (center) and Italian Defense Minister Roberta Pinotti attend a NATO defense ministers meetings at NATO headquarters in Brussels yesterday. — AFP

NERVOUS NATO ALLIES PUT ON A BRAVE FACE FOR TRUMP ERA
EUROPE UNSETTLED BY TRUMP'S COMMENTS

BRUSSELS: Nervous European allies put a brave face on the troubled debut of President Donald Trump's administration, expressing confidence in US engagement with NATO as they prepared to hear from Trump's defense chief at talks in Brussels yesterday. The meeting at NATO headquarters is seen as an opportunity for Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to reaffirm US commitment to European security after an election campaign in which Trump appeared to question the value of the alliance.

His administration was jolted again this week by the resignation of national security adviser Michael Flynn, who was seen in Moscow as a leading advocate of warmer ties with Russia. But NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg dismissed concerns about the turmoil or US backing for NATO. "I'm absolutely certain that the message of this meeting will be a message of transatlantic unity, of the importance of that we stand together and protect each other, and a very strong commitment of the United States to NATO," he told reporters. Britain's defense secretary echoed that mantra.

"There is no uncertainty about America's commitment to NATO," Michael Fallon told reporters

when asked about the Flynn's resignation. Denmark's Claus Hjort Frederiksen said everything he had heard was "calming and reassuring." Still, European allies are expected to privately seek details from Mattis about Trump's attitude toward the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which has guaranteed Europe's security for almost 70 years. Trump has deeply unsettled allies with his contradictory remarks on NATO - calling it "obsolete" but also voicing support - and with his praise for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea, Ukraine's Black Sea peninsula, and its direct support for rebels in eastern Ukraine have prompted NATO to begin sending alliance troops to Russia's borders to deter the Kremlin from any other moves. The White House said on Tuesday that Trump expected Russia to hand back Crimea to Ukraine. One senior European NATO diplomat said allies are under no illusion that Trump might not still undo careful diplomatic work with a single message on Twitter. But they would still look for his support as they try to manage tensions with Russia. "We need to bring the family together," the diplomat said. "Things have been made to feel fragile."

Increased spending
In his debut trip to Europe as Pentagon chief, Mattis is set to echo longstanding US calls that European allies invest more on defense, something his predecessors under Republican and Democratic administrations have done for years. But experts say that message will have to be calibrated, because while Trump has eased off his criticism of NATO since taking office, he has maintained criticism of some allies for failing to make "full and proper financial contributions."

NATO Europe argues it is increasing defense spending, upping outlays by \$10 billion last year. NATO defense ministers from Europe, Canada and Turkey will also want to hear from Mattis, who will be first to address the 27 other defense ministers, on how the alliance can meet Trump's demands to do more to counter Islamic militants. NATO says it is already active, training troops from Afghanistan to Iraq, and cannot do the work of police or social workers seeking out returning foreign fighters from Syria. "We need to be clear that the response to international terrorism cannot be led by NATO, but it can a part of that," a second senior European NATO diplomat said. — Reuters

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GERMAN AUTHORITIES RAID HOMES OF TURKISH IMAMS

MUSLIM PREACHERS SUSPECTED OF SPYING FOR ERDOGAN

BERLIN: German police yesterday searched the homes of four Turkish Muslim preachers on suspicion they spied for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government, officials said. The imams are accused of reporting on Turkish followers of US-based Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen, who Erdogan blames for last July's failed coup attempt against him. The four imams allegedly passed on information through the Turkish consulate in the western city of Cologne to the Turkish Religious Affairs Directorate, known as Diyanet, prosecutors said.

"The purpose of today's searches is to gather further evidence on the alleged activities of the accused," prosecutors said after the raids in the western states of North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-

Palatinate. News site Spiegel online reported the imams belong to Ditib, an organization controlled by Ankara that manages some 900 mosques or religious communities in Germany.

The Erdogan government has cracked down hard on followers of Gulen, who denies he was behind the attempted putsch. More than 41,000 people have been arrested over their suspected links to Gulen's movement, and 100,000 fired or suspended. Many of them are teachers, police, magistrates and journalists. The government says the purges are necessary to clean the state of the "virus" of Gulen's movement, which encourages its members to work in public services. Human rights activists have fiercely criticized the magni-

tude of the crackdown, saying it has gone well beyond alleged coup plotters.

'Deepening divisions'

In Germany, thousands of Turkish citizens have applied for asylum since, among them reportedly dozens of Turkish soldiers stationed at NATO bases. Germany is home to some three million people of Turkish origin, the biggest population of Turks in the world outside Turkey. Chancellor Angela Merkel's government has repeatedly criticized the scale of the crackdown and urged Erdogan to safeguard civil liberties. Erdogan, meanwhile, is exasperated that Germany has failed to extradite hundreds of suspects linked to the coup, as well as the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party

(PKK) and the ultra-left. Merkel also wants Turkey to keep implementing a deal that has reduced migrant flows to Europe, despite threats by Erdogan to walk away from it due to a failure to fulfil a pledge to grant Turks visa-free travel. Erdogan's government meanwhile has also irritated Berlin by campaigning for Turkish votes in Germany. Next Saturday, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim plans to speak in Oberhausen, in North Rhine-Westphalia, to promote a "yes" vote in an April 16 referendum that would expand Erdogan's powers by creating an executive presidency. Germany's integration commissioner, Aydan Ozoguz, told Bild daily that with such events, Ankara was "deepening divisions" among Turks living in Germany. —AFP

HOLLANDE FEARS CYBERATTACKS

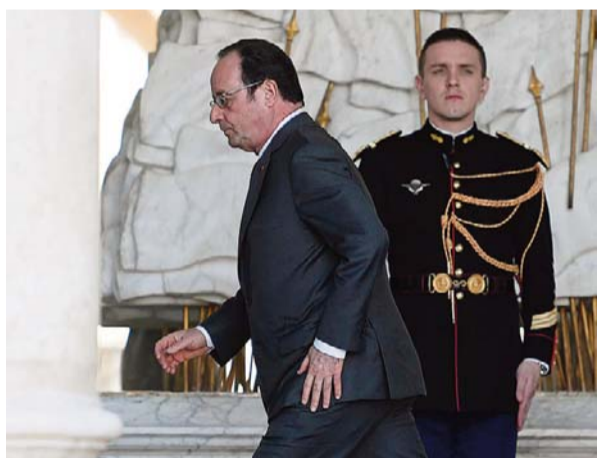
PARIS: French President Francois Hollande called yesterday for measures to prevent cyberattacks ahead of upcoming elections after US intelligence accused Russia of meddling in that country's vote to boost Donald Trump. Hollande asked his security cabinet to brief him on the "specific vigilance and protection measures being taken during the electoral campaign, including in the cyber domain", the presidency said in a statement.

Hollande, who is not himself seeking re-election, did not say what kind of threat the two-stage April 23-May 7 presidential election faces, nor did he point the finger at any group or country. But the call comes in the midst of a furor over Russia's alleged interference in the US campaign that has already forced out one of Trump's top aides. Trump's national security advisor Michael Flynn resigned on Monday after it was revealed that he misled top officials over his contacts with Russia during the campaign.

The revelations have added to suspicions over Russia's role in the election. US intelligence agencies had already accused Russian intelligence of hacking Democratic Party emails that embarrassed Trump's rival Hillary Clinton. With France going into a high-stakes election that could see the country tack sharply to the right, the country's anti-cyberattacks agency, ANSSI, is on high alert.

This week, aides to one of the leading candidates, the staunchly europhile Emmanuel Macron, accused Russia of trying to derail his bid. Macron's spokesman Benjamin Griveaux on Tuesday accused Moscow of being behind a flurry of cyberattacks over the past month on Macron's campaign website and email servers. "Half of the attacks, and there are hundreds a day, come from Ukraine, which is known for its links to hackers and people responsible for cyberattacks in Russia," Griveaux said, accusing the Kremlin of trying to boost conservative nominee Francois Fillon and far-right candidate Marine Le Pen.

Macron's aides have also accused the state-owned Russia Today (RT) channel and the Sputnik news agency—both of which have French-language sites—of waging a "smear campaign" against the 39-year-old former economy minister for reporting allegations about his private life. Macron, who is married, last week denied rumours of having had a gay affair. —AFP



PARIS: French President Francois Hollande walks at the Elysee Presidential Palace after a cabinet meeting yesterday. —AFP



In this file photo, migrants and refugees wait to be helped by members of the Spanish NGO Proactiva Open Arms, as they crowd aboard a rubber boat sailing out of control in the Mediterranean Sea about 21 miles north of Sabratha, Libya. —AP

MIGRANT DEATHS ON THE RISE DESPITE AID

BRUSSELS: Migrant deaths have risen to a record level on the Libya-to-Italy Mediterranean Sea smuggling route, and the increasing number of rescue boats trying to prevent mass drownings there might actually be helping the smugglers, the European Union's border and coast guard chief says.

Frontex Executive Director Fabrice Leggeri said yesterday that authorities face a "sad paradox," for as the international community increases its efforts to send more rescue ships close to Libya, more people die as smuggling rings pack ever more people onto tiny dinghies and push them out toward the open sea. He said the recorded number of migrant drowning deaths on the route in 2016, which might be much less than the true loss of life, stood at 4,579. Leggeri called it "tragic and the reasons are

well known: the number of migrants now (arriving) on very small dinghies."

The Frontex report "Risk analysis for 2017" said smugglers have grown more bold and reckless, knowing that rescue boats will be right on the edge of Libya's territorial waters. "Dangerous crossings on unseaworthy and overloaded vessels were organized with the main purpose of being detected" by military, EU or civilian vessels ready to pluck desperate migrants out of the water if necessary. "Apparently, all parties involved in (search and rescue) operations in the Central Mediterranean unintentionally help criminals achieve their objectives at minimum cost, strengthen their business model by increasing the chances of success," the report said. It said migrants and refugees setting off on the dangerous voyage

were "aware of and rely on humanitarian assistance to reach the EU."

Leggeri said smugglers along the lawless Libyan coast put an average of about 100 people on a small boat in 2015 then increased that to 160 per boat last year. He said that, together with a decrease in food and survival equipment like life vests, it was a prime reason for the number of casualties. Compared to the record number of deaths last year, the central Mediterranean route saw 2,869 deaths in 2015 and 3,161 in 2014. There is little sign the surge is abating, even during this winter. There were 228 recorded deaths in January, by far the biggest total for the month in recent years. Overall, central Mediterranean migrant crossings increased 17 percent last year to 181,459 people. "This is and should be the focus we have to deal with," Leggeri said. —AP

DEPORTED FROM THE WEST, AFGHANS SEEK ASYLUM IN FREEZING CROATIA

OSIJEK: At 16, Afghan migrant Ashkan Barak is already tired of life. For the past year, the orphan has been on the run - fleeing Taleban militants, paying smugglers to cross the Mediterranean, and avoiding detection in countries he never knew existed. After spending nine months in a former police station turned migrant centre in Osijek, eastern Croatia, Barak says he has given up on joining his older brother in Germany.

"I only want peace and to live away from the Taleban - it's not important where I go. I want to stay here in Croatia. I'm tired of travelling," he said in Farsi through a translator. "I can go out and walk without fear that something will happen. There's no war, no guns," said Barak, dressed in a T-shirt, black tracksuit pants and flip-flops, grateful to be shielded from the winter snow outside. There are around 950 asylum seekers living in the Western Balkans nation, according to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), many of whom have fled conflicts and poverty in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Syria.

Although Croatia houses significantly fewer migrants than most European Union (EU) countries, its interior ministry said it was expecting more asylum seekers to arrive from western Europe due to increased deportations when the weather improves. At the height of the refugee crisis in 2015, some 650,000 people passed through Croatia on the so-called Balkan route used by migrants heading west, especially towards Germany. The route was largely shut down last March after a series of border closures.

In a limbo

Barak said he realized his intended journey to Germany was futile when he was deported from Slovenia to Croatia and watched as border police beat migrants with batons. Since then, his claim for asylum in Croatia

has been rejected and the teenager faces deportation once again. The pressure is often too much to bear, he says. "I do activities and play sports to feel better. But my life is very hard and I feel depressed," he said. "I'm not sure if they're going to accept me here or send me back to Afghanistan. I'm not sure what's going to happen."

While there is no limit to how often Barak can apply for asylum, under Croatian law he must leave the country if his third application fails. Afghans made up a fifth of all migrants entering Europe in 2015, the second biggest share after Syrians. But the mass influx has raised concerns in many EU countries over security and integration. Germany, which has the most refugees in the bloc, has taken a firm stance on deportations, reaching an agreement with Afghanistan last October. Only people who can prove they are fleeing persecution, war or violence are eligible for asylum.

The Afghan Ministry of Refugees has said it will help returnees get back to their homes and that about 10,000 Afghans returned from Europe in 2015. Yet Afghanistan's Western-backed government is still battling militants who have stepped up attacks since the withdrawal of most foreign troops in 2014. Western military officials estimate the Taleban control or contest nearly a third of the country. Civilian casualties are near record levels, with thousands killed and wounded every year. The government is also struggling to develop the economy.

Choose Croatia?

In 2016, there were 2,235 asylum seekers registered in Croatia compared to 211 in 2015, but UNHCR said most were continuing their journey to the west. UNHCR said no refugees have been officially resettled in Croatia so far. But it's a trend that CARE International's Vanja

Grundmann is trying to change, having convinced a few of the 90 residents in the migrant centre to apply for asylum to stay in Croatia.

"Croatia is not a destination country but I try to talk to migrants and asylum seekers here - it's not the best, but it's not so bad. You have no more options. Give it a try," said Grundmann, who manages volunteers at the camp. For Afghan migrant Zarife Heidari and her family of six, staying in Croatia is not an option they want to take. Having spent almost a year rebuilding their lives in Austria, going to school and learning German, Heidari said they were deported to Croatia without warning four months ago.

Heidari, speaking in Farsi through a translator, said she and her husband, as well as her mentally disabled daughter, no longer have the vital medical support they received in the Austrian capital Vienna. "It's not bad here. But I don't want to stay because we don't have the right medical treatment," said Heidari who has applied to be legally reunited with her brother, daughter and son-in-law in Vienna. The Interior Ministry's Anita Dakic, who oversees migrant centres in Croatia, said it was difficult to manage the expectations of deported migrants, as many are disappointed and frustrated, especially after months of a new life elsewhere.

"It is hard because you're trying to provide for them, and they refuse because they're nervous ... and don't know what to expect for their future," Dakic said. While it pains Barak to think about his future, the teenager is hopeful that months of Croatian and English lessons will not be in vain. "It's peaceful so that's why I want to live here. It's a nice country," he said. "I'm 16 years old and I've never been to school - I would like to go to school. I want to play football, make some friends and have a normal life like all children." —Reuters

News

in brief

UAE's ambassador dies of bomb attack wounds

DUBAI: The ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to Afghanistan died yesterday of wounds sustained in a bomb attack in Kandahar last month that also killed five Emirati aid workers, the UAE's ministry of presidential affairs announced. "With great sadness and sorrow, we mourn the martyr of the nation and his duty, the righteous son Juma Mohammed Abdullah Al-Kaabi, who gave his pure soul for the sake of humanity," the ministry said in a statement quoted by official news agency WAM.

N Zealand wildfires prompt evacuation

WELLINGTON: Hundreds of people in New Zealand's second-largest city were evacuated from their homes yesterday as wildfires burned down several houses and threatened to encroach further into some suburbs. A helicopter pilot who was a decorated soldier died in a crash while fighting the blaze on Tuesday. The mayors of Christchurch City and the adjacent Selwyn District declared a state of emergency. Selwyn Mayor Sam Broughton said changing winds had made the fires unpredictable. He said the region had been unusually dry for three years and the grass in the hills had turned brown over the Southern Hemisphere summer. Smoke and ash were being blown across Christchurch. Broughton said displaced residents were staying at evacuation centers or with relatives. "They need to look after one another, and make sure they have a place to go to tonight," he said. Phil Claude told Radio New Zealand he and his family ran down a grass track to escape the fire, which destroyed their home. "I could see that the smoke and the flames were being blown right up toward our house," he said.

Cyclone threat bears down on Mozambique

MAPUTO: Mozambique braced for flooding, sea surges and evacuations yesterday as forecasters predicted a "formidable" storm system could become a tropical cyclone before it hits land later in the day. Severe Tropical Storm Dineo is now predicted to make landfall in the southern district of Massingao in the early evening, packing winds of about 130 kilometers an hour. The storm is "quite likely to undergo a final surge of intensification, just before arriving over land and there is a good chance that it will reach Tropical Cyclone status", the South African Weather Service said. It forecast torrential rain, widespread flooding and a marine storm surge, warning Dineo was "a formidable storm system which has the potential to cause much damage to coastal and inland infrastructure". The Mozambique government's emergency response centre has issued an alert over the cyclone threat, and advised people to prepare food and water supplies and be ready to seek shelter.

Montenegrins protest; oppn MPs face arrest

PODGORICA: Some 400 people protested yesterday outside Montenegro's parliament ahead of a vote to lift the immunity of two pro-Russian opposition MPs allegedly involved in a foiled coup last October. Prosecutor Miliivoje Katnic has requested that parliament allow the prosecution and detention of Andrija Mandic and Milan Knezevic, who are both leading members of the opposition Democratic Front (DF). The authorities have accused the alleged coup plotters, including DF leaders, of seeking to seize parliament and assassinate former premier Milo Djukanovic on the day of the October 16 elections. Mandic, 52, and Knezevic, 36, were suspected of "creating a criminal organization ... and preparing an attempt on the constitutional order and security of Montenegro," according to a statement on the parliament website. The DF, which has 18 MPs in the 81-seat parliament, is a fierce opponent of Montenegro's bid to join NATO and has been behind violent protests against the nation's proposed membership of the alliance.

Israel bars its basketball team from Turkey game

JERUSALEM: Israel's domestic security service said yesterday it had barred the country's Ironi Nahariya basketball team from playing a Europe Cup match in Turkey, due to "exceptional" safety concerns. Nahariya had been scheduled to play Gaziantep away in a round of 16 second leg game on February 22, after beating the Turkish side 96-75 in Israel. Gaziantep, in southeastern Turkey, lies near the Syrian border. Police in the city last week detained four suspected members of the Islamic State group and seized explosives and weapons intended for a "sensational" attack, Turkish news agency Dogan reported. A statement by Israel's Shin Bet security service said it had worked extensively with the Nahariya club's management, sporting officials and Turkish security but had failed to find a solution which would allow the game to go ahead. "In view of the exceptional threat level posed in the region where the game was to take place, it was decided to forbid the delegation from departing," the Hebrew-language statement said.

Japan hotel operator under fire for anti-Semitic remarks

TOKYO: The operator of a Japanese hotel chain already in hot water for denying a Japanese World War II atrocity has come under fire for reported anti-Semitic remarks. Toshio Motoya is CEO of APA Group, which calls itself Japan's largest hotel chain, and has drawn China criticism for writing a book denying the 1937 Nanjing massacre happened and placing copies in hundreds of APA hotel rooms. The group also runs 40 hotels in North America and its February edition of an in-house magazine for guests staying at its Canada properties contained the anti-Semitic remarks. "Jewish people control American information, finance, and laws, and they benefit greatly from globalization because they move their massive profits to tax havens so they don't have to pay any taxes," Motoya said in the magazine, according to Canadian online news website National Observer and the Japan Times newspaper. In response to a complaint by the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver, Motoya denied being anti-Jewish.

'THERE WAS A LOT OF BLOOD': MYANMAR SISTERS SCARRED BY ABUSE

MAWLAMYINE: Khin Khin Tun's back is a patchwork of burns, searing memories she says from when her former employer poured two flasks of boiling water over her flesh-one for each orange she was accused of stealing. The 14-year-old and her sister spent years working as domestic helpers in the city of Mawlamyine, southern Myanmar, part of a vast invisible workforce of child servants hidden in the country's wealthy houses.

"Aye Aye Soe took a flask and poured it on the left side of my body. She told me to tell the truth. When I replied I didn't have (the orange) she beat me," she said this week. "When I shouted I was burning, she beat me around the head. There was a lot of blood." Khin Khin Tun was rescued after three years working for Aye Aye Soe, a 40-year-old widow, and her mother Tin Pyone in their home and as a waitress for their catering service.

The girl was sent by her father to be a domestic helper to fund his medical bills. Her younger sister Thazin Aung, now 12, was later also taken in by the women. At first Khin Khin Tun was paid 30,000 kyat (\$22) a month for working more than 17 hours a day, but that stopped after her father passed away in 2015. Soon the beatings started. Hla Shwe, who also worked at the catering company, said she witnessed the boiling water attack in December. The teenager was forced to strip

before Aye Aye Soe "poured hot water" over her body, she said. I could only watch this scene. What could I do? I cannot say anything," she added tearfully.

The sisters are among tens of thousands of youngsters who support their families through domestic work for the growing urban elite in Myanmar's booming cities. Alone, invisible and without any legal protection, experts say they are highly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. The issue came to light last year when two teenage domestic helpers were freed from a tailor shop in Yangon, where they said they spent five years being beaten, stabbed and deprived of sleep and food. The case shocked the country and the president ordered an investigation into how it was handled, but no concrete steps have been taken despite de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi's pledge to protect human rights.

'Monitoring is impossible'

"Monitoring is almost impossible," according to Piyamal Pichaiwongse, deputy liaison officer for the International Labor Organization based in Yangon. "The best form of protection is still education and reducing household poverty." Khin Khin Tun and her sister were rescued in late December when the founder of a local NGO, Thi Thi Nwe, discovered her in hospital. Sitting in the NGO's

office, the teenager described how her employers would accuse the girls of stealing food, then tie them up and brand them with burning wood if they denied it.

Sometimes they would be forced to hit each other until they bled, then rub chilli powder, MSG and vinegar into the wounds. "If we did not want to beat each other, they would beat us. So we had to do it," she said softly, tears in her eyes. "They wanted us to hate each other." Aye Aye Soe appeared in court on Monday accused of causing grievous bodily harm and voluntary hurt-but not child abuse charges that would ensure she was denied bail. The widow and her mother refused to speak to AFP journalists outside the Mawlamyine court. Instead they tried to get reporters barred from observing the trial.

The girls' aunt Hla Kyi decided to bring the case, braving Myanmar's slow and often corrupt legal system, after being contacted by Thi Thi Nwe. At first the employers accused Khin Khin Tun of spilling the water on herself, saying she had "mental problems," Hla Kyi said. "When I saw the child, I felt sorry. I'm angry too. That's why I opened the case," she said. Today Khin Khin Tun says she still feels dizzy sometimes, but is hopeful she can now forge a new life with her sister. "I want my sister to go back to school," she said. "Can I go back to school at this age?" —AFP



MAWLAMYINE: Photo shows 14-year old Khin Khin Tun with deep scars on her back at Mawlamyine, some 300 kms southeast of Yangon. —AFP



CHITTAGONG: Workers look on as Malaysian ship Nautical Aliya, with relief aid for Rohingya Muslims, is unloaded as she sits moored at the port of Chittagong. —AFP

HOW ROHINGYA GIRLS BECOME CHILD BRIDES IN MALAYSIA SOLD INTO MARRIAGE

KUALA LUMPUR: The slight girl in a turquoise headscarf held back tears as she recalled what happened when she fled to Malaysia from Myanmar's violence-hit Rakhine state. Just 12-years-old at the time, she was forced to wed a man she did not know, and who was more than a decade older than her. The teenager, who is not being named by Reuters because she is still only 13, is like hundreds of Rohingya girls escaping persecution, violence and apartheid-like conditions in Rakhine, only to be sold into marriage to Rohingya men in neighboring Malaysia, migrant groups and community members said.

Separated from her family while escaping to Malaysia, she said she was caught by traffickers and held for weeks in a filthy and brutal jungle camp near the Thai-Malaysian border with dozens of others. Her captors told her a Rohingya man was willing to give her freedom if she agreed to marry him. "The (trafficking) agent said I had been sold to a man and I asked, how could you do that?... My heart was heavy and I was scared," the girl said in an interview in Kuala Lumpur. Reuters could not independently verify certain aspects of her story but her mother confirmed she was held in the camp for weeks before being released.

The girl's plight is just one illustration of the hardships faced by many Rohingya Muslims, a minority group in Myanmar who are regarded by the nation's government as illegal migrants from Bangladesh, entitled only to limited rights. Since 2012, violence and communal clashes have seen hundreds of Rohingya killed while tens of thousands have fled, seeking refuge in neighboring countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and Bangladesh. In the most recent crackdown, security forces and police committed mass killings and gang rapes and burned villages in northern Rakhine, a UN investigation published earlier this month found.

Malaysia criticized

It has been common for Rohingya women escaping Myanmar to wed Rohingya men in the country they fled to, usually through marriages arranged between families, rights groups said. Some of these arranged marriages would be for underage girls. But a growing number are becoming victims of human traffickers who sell women and girls to Rohingya men as brides. Matthew Smith, executive director of the Southeast Asia-based migrant and refugee protection group Fortify Rights, said the group had seen a "significant" rise in the number of child brides following increased violence in Rakhine.

There are no official statistics on how many girls have been sold into marriage. In 2015, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said in a report it had identified 120 Rohingya child brides in Malaysia but it was unclear how many were trafficking victims. Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak has spoken out strongly in the past few months against Buddhist Myanmar over its handling of the violence in Rakhine and the Rohingyas' plight.

But rights groups say Malaysia, which has not signed the U.N. refugee convention, has

been complicit in the abuse of Rohingya asylum-seekers because they are treated as illegal migrants with no official access to jobs, health-care or education. They live in poverty working illegally in restaurants or construction sites. The Malaysian government launched a project this month that enables 300 Rohingya people to be employed, a move welcomed by rights groups. The Malaysian government did not return requests seeking comment for this story.

Child marriages allowed

Child marriages are also tolerated in Muslim-majority Malaysia. Under Islamic law, Muslim girls under 16 can marry with permission from the Shariah court, though in the case of the Rohingya marriages in Malaysia there is no court involvement - Rohingya imams conduct them and while a marriage certificate is printed there is no indication it is a legal document under Malaysian law. The girl who was married was taken to Kuantan, on Malaysia's east coast, where she said she quickly learned that her new husband was controlling and abusive. He confiscated her mobile phone and did not allow his family to see her. She was left alone for days in the house.

Eight months into the marriage, she reconnected with her parents and four younger siblings, and was rescued by her father, who had travelled to Kuantan to find her. The girl's husband did not respond to calls seeking comment for this story. She now lives with her family in a one-room shack in a small village on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur. While she feels safer now, she said she was afraid that she may have to return to her husband, who has refused to grant her a divorce.

Sharifah Shakirah, a refugee herself and founder of the Rohingya Women Development Network, said Rohingyas have no legal status in Malaysia, and their marriages are not recognized. This can make it harder for law enforcement to intervene in domestic abuse cases, even when they involve children. "To ask help from lawyers and police is not easy because they (Rohingyas) don't have legal status. Even when cases of child brides are reported, the police don't take action," said Sharifah, who provides help and counseling to Rohingya women.

'Life of dignity'

According to UN statistics, some 56,000 Rohingyas are living in Malaysia, although migrant groups say the number is much higher as many are undocumented. The community is mainly spread across impoverished suburbs around the capital Kuala Lumpur.

For young men in this small, marginalized community, finding a partner and having a family is a way of elevating their social status and having a normal life, according to Rohingya men interviewed by Reuters. The lack of eligible women in Rohingya communities in Malaysia has created a demand for brides, while some families see marriage as a way to reduce their financial burdens, said Belal Hossain Shamia, 32, a Rohingya father of three in Kuala Lumpur whose sister was a child bride. —Reuters

TOLERANCE TEST AS MUSLIM INDONESIA'S CAPITAL VOTES

RELIGION DIVIDES JAKARTA VOTERS

JAKARTA: The race to become governor of Indonesia's capital was heading for a second round between the incumbent Christian and a Muslim former education minister after neither appeared to win a majority in yesterday election. The Jakarta poll has been overshadowed by religious tensions, with Islamist-led protests against Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, an ethnic Chinese Christian, and calls for voters to choose a Muslim leader for the city.

Analysts say divisions could linger and even deepen as the vote, which is also being widely seen as a proxy battle for the next presidential election, in 2019, appeared to be heading for a second round, according to unofficial sample vote counts. Purnama is backed by President Joko Widodo's ruling party. His main rival, former education minister Anies Baswedan, is backed by a retired general, Prabowo Subianto, who is promising a comeback to the national stage after losing to Widodo in the 2014 presidential vote. "There would be tension that will be stored until 2019, because of course all this is not really against Purnama, it's against Widodo. Prabowo is coming in now," said Wimar Witoelar, a Jakarta-based political analyst.

Purnama had secured 43.08 percent of the votes, just ahead of Baswedan on 40.14 percent, based on a quick sample count of about 95 percent of the vote by private polling firm SMRC.

The other candidate, Agus Yudhoyono, the son of former President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, was in third place with 16.78 percent. Other pollsters showed similar results. A candidate needs to get more than 50 percent of the votes in the first round to win outright. The earliest a second round will be held in April. The General Elections Commission is

expected to announce official results in around two weeks.

'Struggle not over'

Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population but is officially secular and home to minority Christian, Hindu, Buddhist and other communities. Overshadowing the campaign has been Purnama's trial for allegedly insulting the Koran in connection with remarks he made about how people vote. He denies the charge. The trial, which began in December, seemed to dent his support initially but more recently he has rebounded in opinion polls, helped by middle class approval of his efforts to improve the bureaucracy and tackle traffic jams and flooding. Baswedan, who was dropped

from Widodo's cabinet after a reshuffle in mid-2016, has largely stayed out of the headlines as the other two candidates - Purnama and Yudhoyono - fought a bitter campaign.

But Baswedan's strategy of targeting the Islamic vote, at a time when conservative Muslim groups were urging voters to shun a non-Muslim leader, gave him a late boost, analysts say. "The votes may have shifted from Yudhoyono to Baswedan," said Irine Gayatri, a political analyst at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. Ethnicity and religion would likely again be major issues in a second round, Gayatri said. The president said he hoped for an easing of tension. "We hope that everybody can return as a fami-

ly after these elections," Widodo said after casting his vote.

Purnama, dressed in his signature checkered shirt, met cheering supporters at his campaign headquarters. "The struggle is not over," he told them. "Everyone wants just one round but we're grateful to have come at least this far." Baswedan said his campaign for a second round would focus on policies. "We will focus on programs, about jobs, about quality education, needs that are important and urgent for families and people in Jakarta," he told reporters. The votes in Jakarta and scores of other regions in the world's third-largest democracy were peaceful and mostly running without hitches, police said. —Reuters



JAKARTA: Incumbent governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (center) gestures as he meets his supporters and the media after voting in local elections in Jakarta yesterday. —AFP

NEPALI WOMEN ROW AGAINST TIDE OF DISCRIMINATION ON TOURIST LAKE

POKHARA: Batuli Bhujel weaves deftly through the colourful wooden boats and paddles into the shore of Phewa Lake in west Nepal, stepping lightly out of her boat and steadying it as she helps her young passengers off. For years, Bhujel has paddled tourists out at dawn to be rewarded with majestic views of the snow-capped Himalayas reflected in the glassy waters. But the 60-year-old wonders whether she will be able to do this work much longer. "Quite often my whole body hurts, so I just rest for a day or two. If I had other sources of income, I would not have done this job," she said, tugging the boat onto firm ground. Bhujel is one of only about 30 women among 250 men who row boats commercially on Phewa Lake, the leading attraction in Pokhara, a resort town 150 km northwest of the Nepali capital Kathmandu.

Working on the lake gives women like Bhujel some independence in a country where women are often destined to a life of servitude to their in-laws as well as denied the same access as men to education, health and jobs. Parents, particularly in rural areas, often see no benefit in educating their daughters since they leave home to live with their husbands and in-laws after marriage. Although school attendance numbers in Nepal are improving, only 66 percent of girls attend secondary school compared with 74 percent of boys, the UN children's agency UNICEF says.

'Badmouthed'

Like many others on the lake, Laxmi Nepali has never stepped inside a classroom. Married at the age of 15, she is among almost 40 percent of girls in Nepal who are wed before their 18th

birthday even though the legal age for marriage in the country is 20. After giving birth to her son at the age of 18, Nepali's husband abandoned her. Shortly after, her parents took in their grandson but disowned their daughter. "Deep inside I'm heartbroken, but I don't feel anything," said Nepali, whose second marriage also ended, leaving her to bring up a 10-year-old daughter alone.

The Phewa Boat Association, in charge of boat hire on Phewa Lake and nearby Begnas Lake, allows anyone over 16 to row their boats with no training, and offers equal pay to women and men. Even though the association treats male and female workers as equals, women sometimes face discrimination from their colleagues and passengers. Passengers - Nepali men, in particular - sometimes refuse to get in a woman's boat. "The first thing they do is look at my face, and some get annoyed and go to another boat, saying they don't want to go with an old woman like me," said Bhujel. "It feels bad when people say nasty things but what can you do?"

Nepali, who said she used to be "bad-mouthed" and verbally abused over her job, recalled a group of boys who at first refused to allow a woman to row them across the lake. They eventually hired her, persuaded by others who advised, "by appearance she looks like a woman, but she is like a man". In 2015, she competed against male rowers in a boat race on Begnas Lake and came second, winning 3,000 rupees (\$28) in prize money, about six times her daily earnings. "I was given a lot of respect, even here," said Nepali, who eschews the traditional saris or tunics and trousers that other women wear for Western clothes.

Earnings

Unlike the other women on Phewa Lake who only row small boats seating up to six people, Nepali operates the larger twin-hulled boats, earning fractionally more than the others. The average fee paid by tourists for an hour on a boat is 500 rupees (\$5) with the skipper getting just 100 rupees. Boatwomen hope to earn around 500 rupees a day, plus tips, but sometimes they leave empty-handed.

When business is quiet, Bhujel, Nepali and the others may only get a turn every two or three days. Foreign tourists tend to be the meanest tipsters, Bhujel said. "If they speak Nepali, we tell them we can't even get a cup of tea with 10 or 20 rupees but foreigners don't understand us. We don't understand them, so whatever little they give, we just accept it," she said. To boost their earnings, especially after the devastating earthquake in 2015 led to a drop in tourist numbers, many of the boatwomen seek casual work elsewhere including on construction sites, breaking and carrying stones.

"I feel I have become like a man and even my heart has become like that of a man," said Nepali, stabbing the lake with her oar. She sees education as the way out of poverty for her daughter, but it is a constant battle to make ends meet. State schools are free for all children but parents still need to find money for uniforms and stationery. Sometimes they are forced to pay annual admission and exam fees. "I don't have any dreams for myself but I have dreams for my daughter, to provide her with an education so that she does well," Nepali said. "My wish is that people look at her and say, no matter how I am, I have raised my daughter well." —Reuters

WHAT'S YOUR POISON? A HISTORY OF KILLING WITH CHEMISTRY

BANGKOK: From the courtiers of Ancient Greece to Soviet spies and maybe now North Korean agents, poison has a long history as a weapon of murder, favored by assassins for its stealthy delivery of the fatal blow. The killing of Kim Jong-Nam, the half-brother of the North Korean leader, at a

Malaysian airport has revived fascination in the poisoner's methods.

In a story that could be cribbed straight from a spy novel, intelligence chiefs in South Korea say female agents dispatched by their secretive northern neighbor administered the lethal dose, with

reports suggesting a toxin was sprayed in his face. An autopsy was being carried out Wednesday. A would-be poisoner can choose from a catalogue of deadly chemicals, some of which are relatively easy to obtain. Ricin—naturally occurring in castor oil plant seeds—and thallium (rat poison) are notorious for their murderous properties.

Arsenic delivers a slow and miserable death, while strychnine induces extreme body spasms as the victim's respiratory system collapses. But "cyanide is the fastest killer and the easiest to detect, its pathology appears all over the body," said Pornpit Rojanasunan a forensic expert and adviser to Thailand's Justice Ministry. She said the victim's "bright red blood" in post-mortem is the telltale sign of a potential cyanide poisoning.

Other chemicals such as potassium can cause "an extreme heart arrhythmia... and can lead to a heart attack very quickly." Slow-acting poisons may allow assailants to slink away from the crime scene undetected. But chemical compounds are not easy to store or handle and many carry a giveaway residue, smell or color that makes them hard to conceal, Pornpit added.

Apples, umbrellas and wine

Tales of poisonings—real or imagined — have formed their own mythology. Poisoning has become a byword for backroom scheming by treacherous political rivals, revenge and cold-

blooded murder. Shakespeare took to the theme, with a penchant for poison-tipped endings for his characters, while Snow White's demise after eating the poison apple became a cautionary tale on jealousy.

In real-life, academics still debate whether it is arsenic or the asp that did for the Cleopatra, toxic wine that killed Alexander the Great or poisonous secretions in his wallpaper that accounted for Napoleon. Anguished housewives of Victorian Britain earned notoriety for dosing the food or drink of brutish husbands with arsenic. More recently poison featured prominently in Soviet-era tradecraft. In 1978 Bulgarian dissident Georgy Markov died after receiving a fatal dose of ricin delivered through the tip of an umbrella on a London street. His killer has never been caught.

Moscow was accused of carrying out an assassination on British soil in 2006 when tea laced with highly-radioactive Polonium-210 was served to ex-Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko, condemning him to a slow death. In Asia, members of a shadowy Japanese cult dropped plastic bags of liquid sarin, a nerve agent, on packed Tokyo subway trains in 1995, killing more than a dozen people. Nine years later Indonesian rights campaigner Munir Said Thalib was killed after being poisoned on a flight from Jakarta to Amsterdam. If Seoul's spy chief is right, North Korea now appears to have added a new chapter to the chilling history of poison. —AFP



This combination of file photos shows North Korean leader Kim Jong Un (left) and Kim Jong Nam, exiled half brother of Kim Jong Un. — AP

'HITS AND MISSES'

NOTABLE N KOREA ASSASSINATIONS OR ATTEMPTS

SEOUL: The killing of the North Korean leader's outcast half brother could be the latest addition to a long list of high-profile assassinations or attempts in which the country is suspected of targeting estranged relatives of the Kim clan, turncoats and South Korean public figures. Kim Jong Nam told medical workers he had been attacked with chemical spray at the Kuala Lumpur airport before he died, Malaysian officials have said.

Leader Kim Jong Un has executed or purged a slew of high-level government officials since taking power in late 2011, and experts believe he might have been trying to eliminate a potential challenger to his leadership. Others think he was enraged over recent news reports that his brother tried to defect to the South in 2012. North Korea has denied carrying out some of the killings and not commented on others. Some of the most

notable assassinations or attempts it is suspected of carrying out:

Traitor cousin

Lee Han-young, a nephew of one of the former wives of North Korea's second leader, Kim Jong Il, was found dead of gunshot wounds in front of a Seoul apartment in 1997. Lee had defected to South Korea through Switzerland in 1982, but Seoul kept his arrival secret until 1996, when his mother also fled the North. Lee had harshly criticized the country and his dictator uncle. The investigation into his death concluded that Lee was killed by North Korean agents sent to deliver Pyongyang's paycheck and the assailants returned to North Korea before they could be captured.

Blast in Yangon

North Korean agents set off a bomb meant for South Korea's leader while he was visiting Burma in 1983. President Chun Doo-hwan narrowly escaped the attack, but more than 20 people were killed, including four of his Cabinet ministers, his ambassador to Yangon and several top aides. One North Korean agent was shot to death by police, a second was executed and a third reportedly died in prison in 2008. Burma, now known as Myanmar, cut diplomatic ties with North Korea following the blast, but they restored relations in 2007.

South Korean President

A team of 31 North Korean commandos slipped undetected into South Korea in 1968 and came within striking distance of the Seoul presidential palace. South Korean security forces managed to repel the assault at the last minute. The only commando that was captured said he had come to "slit the throat of (then-President) Park Chung-hee." A furious Park established a secret commando team tasked with demolishing the Pyongyang palace of North Korea's founder. Tensions later eased, but the South Korean commando team, incensed that the planned infiltration was aborted, mutinied in 1971, killing the team's trainers and marching on Seoul before being stopped.

High-profile defector

In 2010, two agents posing as defectors were arrested in a plot to assassinate Hwang Jang-yop, a former Workers' Party secretary who remains the highest-level North Korean to seek asylum in the South. South Korean officials said both agents were majors in North Korea's main army intelligence agency and were under orders to slit Hwang's throat. Hwang, who once tutored Kim Jong Il, bitterly criticized the North Korean government after his 1997 defection. North Korea called him a traitor and "human scum." He died six months after the arrests at the age of 87. — AP



PYONGYANG: Swimmers perform in a synchronized swimming gala event in Pyongyang yesterday. The gala was part of a series of events being held to celebrate the birth of late North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il, who oversaw the country's first nuclear tests. — AFP

FESTIVAL ON ICE WITH KIM'S BROTHER BODY BARELY COLD

PYONGYANG: Less than two days after the assassination of the half-brother of North Korea's leader, small girls in frilly pastel leotards opened an ice skating gala in Pyongyang to honor the late father of both men. The Paektusan Prize International Figure Skating Festival is held every year to celebrate Kim Jong-Il, the leader who oversaw the North's first nuclear tests. His children—by different women—included both Kim Jong-Un, who inherited power from him five years ago, and Kim Jong-Nam, older by several years, who fell from grace after a bizarre attempt in 2001 to enter Japan on a false passport to try to visit Disneyland. In exile Jong-Nam voiced occasional criticism of the regime. He was murdered at Kuala Lumpur's international airport on Monday, apparently by two poison-wielding female agents. With no announcement of the death by the North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), the vast majority of Wednesday's audience at the ice rink in Pyongyang would have been oblivious of the killing.

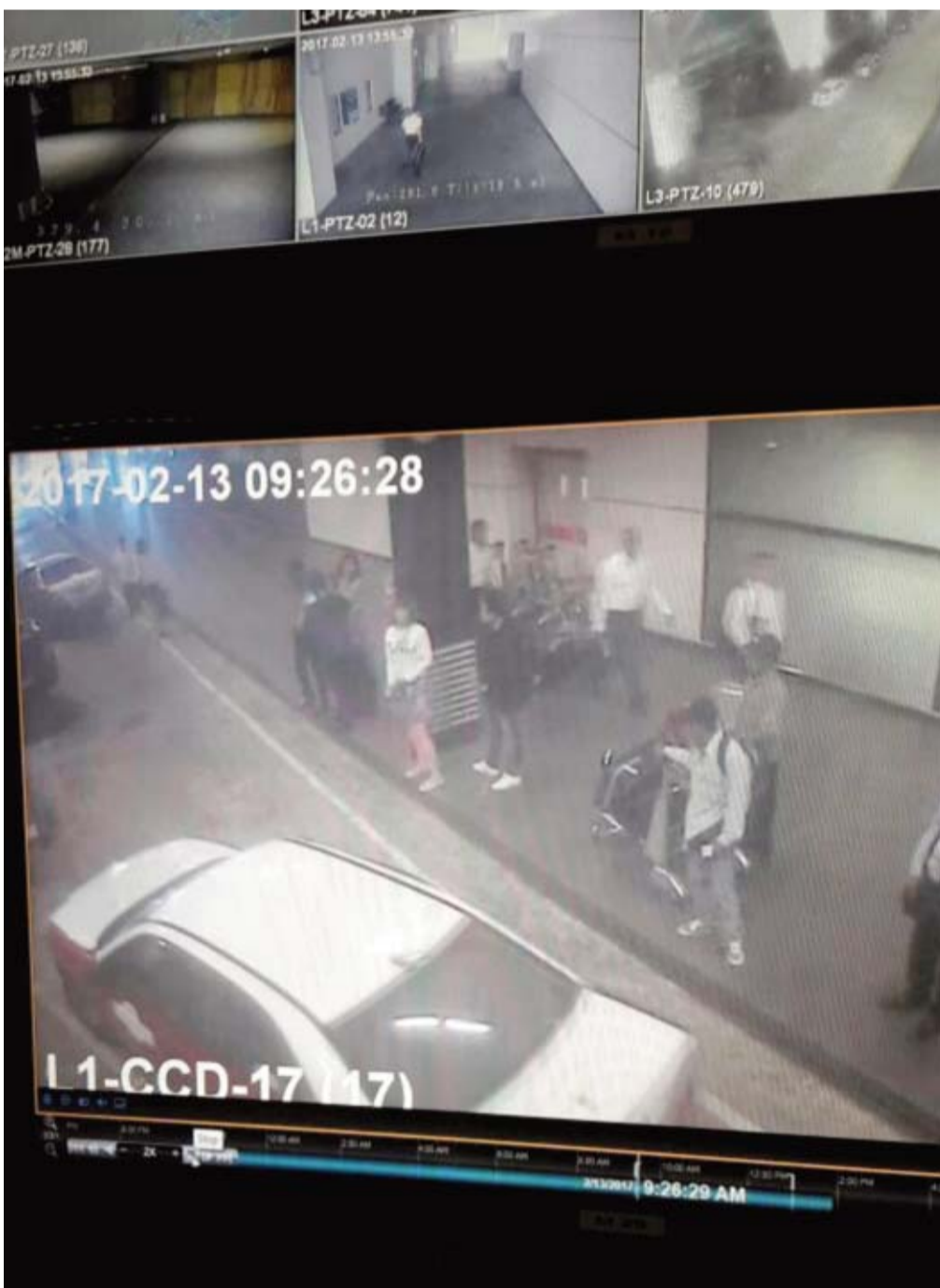
But for anyone who was aware, some elements of the program could have appeared darkly ironic: one early number was set to Pink Floyd's Hey You, lyrics: "Hey you, out there in the cold, getting lonely, getting old." In another, a skater performed a pistol-shot gesture to James Bond-like theme music. "Let us safeguard with our lives the Central Committee of the Party headed by the respected Supreme Leader Comrade Kim Jong-Un," read a white-on-

red banner dangling over the ice. "Let us uphold great leader Kim Jong-Il as the eternal sun," proclaimed another. Others read: "Peace," "Independence" and "Friendship."

'Shining star'

North Korea marks Kim Jong-Il's February 16 birthday as the "Day of the Shining Star," although accounts differ as to where and when he was born. Officially, he came into the world on the slopes of Mount Paektu, the spiritual birthplace of the Korean nation, in 1942 — which would make Thursday the 75th anniversary of the event. But according to independent historians he was actually born a year earlier and in the Soviet Union, where his father Kim Il-Sung enjoyed the backing of Moscow.

Kim Il-Sung would go on to found the Democratic People's Republic of Korea the North's official name—and the Kim dynasty in 1948. Events scheduled for the occasion include a synchronized swimming show and a fireworks display. Above the ice rink hung portraits of Kim Jong-Il and his father, smiling benevolently. Serried ranks of around 3,000 government officials in dark uniforms packed the arena, with other sections filled by women wearing colorful hanbok, traditional Korean dresses. The performers included double Olympic gold medalist and triple world champion Evgeni Plushenko of Russia, and Brian Joubert of France, who won the world championship men's singles gold in Tokyo in 2007. —AFP



This image provided by Star TV yesterday shows a woman (center in white) at Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang, Malaysia, who police say was arrested yesterday in connection with the death of Kim Jong Nam, the half brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. — AP

MYANMAR ACTIVISTS FIGHT FOR CHILD SERVANT RIGHTS

MAWLAMYINE: Thi Thi Nwe waited three days until the girl was left unguarded in her hospital bed to approach her, the first step in a months-long process highlighting the challenges of protecting child servants. The NGO worker first saw the teenager, whose back and torso were covered with livid burns, in December but there was always someone by her bedside ensuring no one could get close. "When I saw her, she covered her chest with a cloth. Her back was covered with a bandage," Thi Thi Nwe told AFP during a recent visit to the southern city of Mawlamyine. "Some people... asked me not to talk to her because her guardian didn't like it. Then I suspected something. It's not right if they don't even want any questions asked."

When she and her colleague finally managed to approach Khin Khin Tun the 14-year-old was too scared to talk, saying she had spilt boiling water on herself by accident. It was only when they turned leave that the girl blurt-

ed out her employer had attacked her, the latest incident in what she says were years of abuse inflicted on her and her sister. Today her former boss, Aye Aye Soe, is on trial for grievous bodily harm after Thi Thi Nwe persuaded the girls' aunt to press charges. The case is a rare prosecution under Myanmar's crumbling legal system, which provides little protection for tens of thousands of children thought to work as domestic servants.

Tackling the issue is one of the key challenges facing the new democratically elected government as it seeks to heal the country after 50 years of oppressive military rule. Experts say many victims are too scared to complain, fearing they will not be believed or their abusers will lie to get them thrown in jail. Authorities regularly turn a blind eye to allegations against wealthy and powerful families in return for bribes, while police are often under-resourced and ignorant of the law. When AFP visited a

recent training session, officers were given comic book-style leaflets with pictures of children being beaten and abused to help them understand.

Lawyers also face an uphill struggle as there are no specific laws covering domestic helpers, meaning cases must be brought under human-trafficking legislation or treated as common assault. Mawlamyine Justice Centre director Thurayn Thee said the system was full of "weakness" and blamed the government for not doing enough to protect child workers. Anyone who does stand up for victims can face harassment and threats. Thi Thi Nwe said the accused's mother has tried to intimidate the girls, following them and berating them for being "ungrateful" to their former employers. "We are not afraid," said her colleague Win Win Maw, who is also working on the case. "We try to keep in mind that we are all equal in the eyes of the law." — AFP

8 KILLED IN KNIFE ATTACK IN CHINA

BEIJING: Eight people were killed in a knife attack on a crowd in China's restive Xinjiang region, including three assailants who were gunned down by police, local officials said yesterday. Ten other people were injured in the attack Tuesday evening in Pishan county, according to an announcement issued by the government of the nearby city of Hotan. Police sped to the scene within a minute of the attack, which remains under investigation, the announcement said, calling the attackers "rioters". The far-western region is the homeland of the Uighurs—a traditionally Muslim group, many of whom complain of cultural and religious repression and discrimination—and is often hit by deadly unrest.

Beijing regularly accuses what it calls exiled Uighur separatist groups such as the East Turkestan Islamic Movement of orchestrating attacks in the vast, resource-rich region. But overseas experts have expressed doubts about the strength of the groups and their links to global terrorism, with some saying China exaggerates the threat to justify tough security measures. Dilxat Raxit, spokesman for the exiled World Uyghur Congress, told AFP that police arrested six people after the attack, including two

young Uighurs who shared information about the incident over mobile phones.

"Armed forces in the county are targeting Uighurs for investigation and demanding that Chinese people avoid leaving their homes," he said, citing his sources in Xinjiang. "I am worried the case will provide China with a new political excuse for repression and will cause more people to face discriminatory inspections or detentions." Last month police killed three "rioters" following a manhunt for suspected members of a "violent terror group" linked to a 2015 attack in Pishan county, according to the regional government's official website.

Weeks earlier state media reported that three attackers were shot dead after detonating an explosive device at a local party office in Moyu County, killing two and injuring three. In November 2015, police killed 28 members of a "terrorist group" over the course of a 56-day manhunt following an attack on a colliery in Aksu two months earlier that left 16 people dead. In March 2014, 31 people were knifed to death at a train station in Kunming, in southwestern China, with four attackers killed, with Xinjiang separatists blamed and state media dubbing it "China's 9/11." —AFP

ZAIN, IFLIX SET UP 'IFLIX ARABIA' JOINT VENTURE

Continued from Page 1

This collaboration represents an exciting step in iflix's growth story as we launch in the MENA region with a partner who shares our vision and commitment to deliver an outstanding service and create awesome experiences for our customers.

John-Paul McKerlie, CEO of iflix Arabia added: "The teaming of Zain and iflix has empowered both businesses with the capacity to offer customers the most incredible content services. A great mix of local and international catalogues will reach audiences using Zain's leading networks, guaranteeing the best speeds for streaming and user experience, bringing even more content to customers and enhancing their viewing experience. We are very excited about the launch and what it means for our customers and shareholders in the future."

iflix's proprietary compression and adaptive bit rate technology further ensures that users have a great viewing experience, by enabling the service to stream smoothly on low internet speeds. Each subscription allows users to access the service on up to five devices, including phones, laptops, tablets, and television sets, for viewing wherever, whenever. A special feature for iflix subscribers is that they can also download TV shows and movies from iflix's extensive catalogue for offline viewing.

With over 170 studio and distributor relationships worldwide, iflix offers users the broadest and most comprehensive selection of content available. Now available in Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Brunei, the Maldives and Pakistan, and soon across the MENA region, iflix will continue to roll out its world-class service to key additional emerging markets in the coming months.

The creation of 'iflix Arabia' builds on the establishment of the Zain Digital Frontier and Innovation (ZDFI) business unit in 2014, which is charged with launching Zain into the digital space and the view to growing the company through new innovative business streams that contribute to Zain's financial viability and market capitalization. ZDFI focuses on the areas of innovation; digital services; corporate venturing; and smart cities, with the ultimate aim of Zain becoming a regional innovation trendsetter.

iflix Arabia aims to redefine how consumers in the MENA region enjoy entertainment content, with groundbreaking features and continuous platform innovation. The collaboration forms a key pillar for Zain's transformation into a truly digital telecommunications company offering customers an exceptional mobile experience.

ADASANI REOPENS MP DEPOSITS CASE

Continued from Page 1

But Ashour said raising the issue now is part of political score settling and is not intended to serve justice, adding that those who have the evidence must submit it to the public prosecution, otherwise they are partners in the crime.

MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said the anti-corruption law includes the necessary articles to hold the lawmakers to account in court. MPs then voted to call on the Anti-Corruption Authority to accept cases related to the bribes received by MPs, starting from the 2006 Assembly. They also passed a recommendation to make the necessary

amendments to the anti-corruption laws to be able to prosecute those who took the bribes.

The Assembly also entered into heated arguments when it discussed a report by the legislative committee over the controversy around the election of the deputy Assembly speaker. Several MPs criticized the report and said it was biased in favor of opposition contender Harbath, but members of the committee strongly denied the accusation. Ghanem took part in the debate and said that the issue will be settled by the constitutional court. The Assembly also agreed to move the next session from Feb 28 to March 7 because of the national holidays.

TRUMP DROPS US COMMITMENT TO 'TWO-STATE'...

Continued from Page 1

"They're taught tremendous hate. I have seen what they're taught... it starts in the school room, and they have to acknowledge Israel."

Netanyahu had warm words for the US alliance, and hammered home his own prerequisites for peace. "First, the Palestinians must recognize the Jewish state. They have to stop calling for Israel's destruction," he said. "Second, in any peace agreement, Israel must retain the overriding security control over the entire area west of the Jordan River," he added.

This area contains the entire West Bank area that would represent the heart of any Palestinian state as conceived in all previous international agreements. The change in the US stance, which was trailed overnight by a US official, triggered Palestinian despair and consternation in international capitals. The second ranking official in the Palestine Liberation Organization, Saeb Erekat, denounced it as an attempt to "bury the two state solution and eliminate the state of Palestine." And he warned that any single state that emerged would lose Israel's Jewish character. "There's only one alternative," he told a news conference. "A single democratic state that guarantees the rights of all: Jews, Muslims and Christians."

The new US message deliberately echoed the long-standing Israeli position: No peace deal can be imposed from outside and the agenda for talks must reflect the

reality on the ground. Naftali Bennett, the right-wing leader of the hardline Jewish Home party and an opponent of any Palestinian state cried victory. "A new era. New ideas. No need for third Palestinian state beyond Jordan and Gaza. Big day for Israelis and reasonable Arabs. Congrats," he tweeted.

Speaking in Cairo after talks with Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, UN chief Antonio Guterres warned that "everything must be done" to preserve the two-state solution. France, which organized the January peace conference, was also unimpressed. Its ambassador to the UN, Francois Delattre told reporters "our commitment to the two-state solution is stronger than ever." Trump has tapped son-in-law Jared Kushner and lawyer Jason Greenblatt to lead peace efforts. Kushner had dinner with Netanyahu - a longtime family friend - and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on Tuesday night.

Israel sees Iran and its Lebanese ally the Hezbollah militia as the greatest threats in an unruly region, a view shared by the leaders of the main Sunni Arab states of the region. So yesterday, Netanyahu held out the prospect of a broader realignment, with the US and Israel partnering with Sunni Arab states in an anti-Iranian alliance. "I think that if we work together... on the great magnitude and danger of the Iranian threat, then I think we can roll back Iran's aggression and danger," Netanyahu said. "That's something that is important for Israel, the Arab states, but I think it's vitally important for America." —AFP

ROUHANI VISITS KUWAIT, OMAN TO IMPROVE...

Continued from Page 1

Kuwait's deputy foreign minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said in remarks published yesterday that he hopes Rouhani's visit will open the dialogue between the Gulf states and Iran. The elements needed for the dialogue, which were included in HH the Amir's letter, call for non-interference in the internal affairs of the Gulf states, respecting their sovereignty and establishing good neighborly relations, Jarallah said in the comments published in Al-Qabas newspaper.

In Muscat, Rouhani was welcomed by Sultan Qaboos, where the two discussed bilateral relations and the situation in the region, Oman's official ONA

news agency reported. "Tehran has always been in favor of resolving problems and disputes through dialogue," Rouhani said, according to Iranian media. "Iran's military power is only defensive."

He appealed for a ceasefire, increased humanitarian aid and political dialogue to resolve the conflict in Yemen. "Today, the Yemenis are in a particularly disastrous situation and we all have to act as Muslim countries to help these people," he said. Iran traditionally maintains good relations with Oman, with which it shares control of the key Strait of Hormuz shipping lane. "There are now good conditions for developing and consolidating relations between Iran and Oman," Rouhani said, calling for stronger economic ties. —

INDIA PUTS 104 SATELLITES IN ORBIT

Continued from Page 1

The rocket's main cargo was a 714-kg satellite for Earth observation but it was also loaded with 103 smaller "nano satellites", weighing a combined 664 kg. The smallest weighed only 1.1 kg. Nearly all of the nano satellites are from other countries, including Israel, Kazakhstan, Switzerland and 96 from the United States. Eighty-eight of them are from Planet Inc - a San Francisco-based Earth imagery company - and weigh 4.5 kg each. Only three satellites belonged to India.

Scientists sat transfixed as they watched the progress of the rocket on monitors until the last payload was ejected, and then began punching the air in triumph and hugging each other. This was PSLV's 39th successful mission, known as India's space workhorse. The launch means India now holds the record for launching the most satellites in one go, surpassing Russia which launched 39 satellites in a single mission in June 2014.

And it is another feather in the cap for ISRO which sent an unmanned rocket to orbit Mars in 2013 at a cost of just \$73 million, compared with NASA's Maven Mars mission which had a \$671 million price tag. ISRO is also mulling the idea of missions to Jupiter and Venus. The business of putting commercial satellites into space for a fee is growing as phone, internet and other companies, as well as countries, seek greater and more high-tech communications.

India has carved out a reputation as a reliable low-cost

option, relying in part on its famed skill of "jugaad" - creating a cheap alternative solution. Experts say much of its credibility stems from India's successful launch of the Mars orbiter, which gave it an edge over its rivals in the space race.

"India is proving to be a very viable option because of the cost and the reliability factor," said Ajay Lele, a senior fellow at the Delhi-based

Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. "India has been doing these launches successfully and has established itself as a very reliable player." Mathieu J Weiss, a liaison officer for France's CNES national space agency who is currently in India, said ISRO had pulled off a major feat. "It's a great technical challenge to launch so many satellites at once into orbit on the right trajectory so that they don't make contact with each other," he told AFP. Weiss said India had become a major player in the space race by making itself very competitive with its low costs and by working with private companies which are space specialists. "India has become a space power in its own right in recent years," he added.

Last June, India set a national record after it successfully launched a rocket carrying 20 satellites, including 13 from the US. The 50-year-old space agency plans to send four more rockets into space later this year ahead of its second lunar mission Chandrayaan-2 slated for 2018. Modi has often hailed India's budget space technology, quipping in 2014 that a rocket that launched four foreign satellites into orbit had cost less to make than Hollywood film "Gravity". — AFP

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Focus

TIGER TRUMPS
MAN IN INDIAN
TRIBAL VILLAGES

The tigers that roam the dense forests of eastern India have more clout than the people they live alongside, tribal activists say, as a drive to boost lucrative wildlife tourism trumps the rights of poor indigenous villagers. Tiger and man both exist in dwindling numbers in Simlipal forests, with a race now on to see which mammal will win priority in the place both call home. "Why are indigenous people being asked outright to leave without even attempting to explore reasonable options of co-existence with wildlife?" asked Sanghamitra Dubey who works with an informal Indian advocacy group for forestry rights.

Dubey said families had been stripped of their ancestral lands to protect the shrinking tiger stock and traditional ways of life - such as ancient rope plaiting - had been decimated. India has about half the world's estimated 3,200 tigers in dozens of reserves established since the 1970s, with some of the designated land shared with ancient tribal villagers. Wildlife tourism is a growing money maker for India though conservationists are divided as to whether travellers help protect threatened species or encroach on their habitat.

Notice to quit

Last November, hundreds of families from 44 tribal villages were asked to leave their homes to ensure the security of a local tiger habitat. The villages, spread over hills and valleys around Odisha's Simlipal Tiger reserve, had secured rights to the area - nearly 25,000 hectares of woodlands - just months before. Under India's Forest Rights Act of 2006, tribal households can harvest and use forest resources to maintain their ancestral livelihoods. Anup Kumar Nayak, a senior forest officer in Bhubaneswar, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that wildlife protection laws forbid humans from living within critical wildlife habitat or what is deemed the 'core zone' of a national park. He said relocations are voluntary but a number of villages around Simlipal were in the 'core' habitat zone or so close they were "as good as inside it" and would need to move. "(Only) the buffer zone is for human-animal co-existence" Nayak said. Yet activists say Indian wildlife protection laws stipulate there must be scientific evidence that human activity is irretrievably destroying tiger habitat before any relocations.

One-off payment

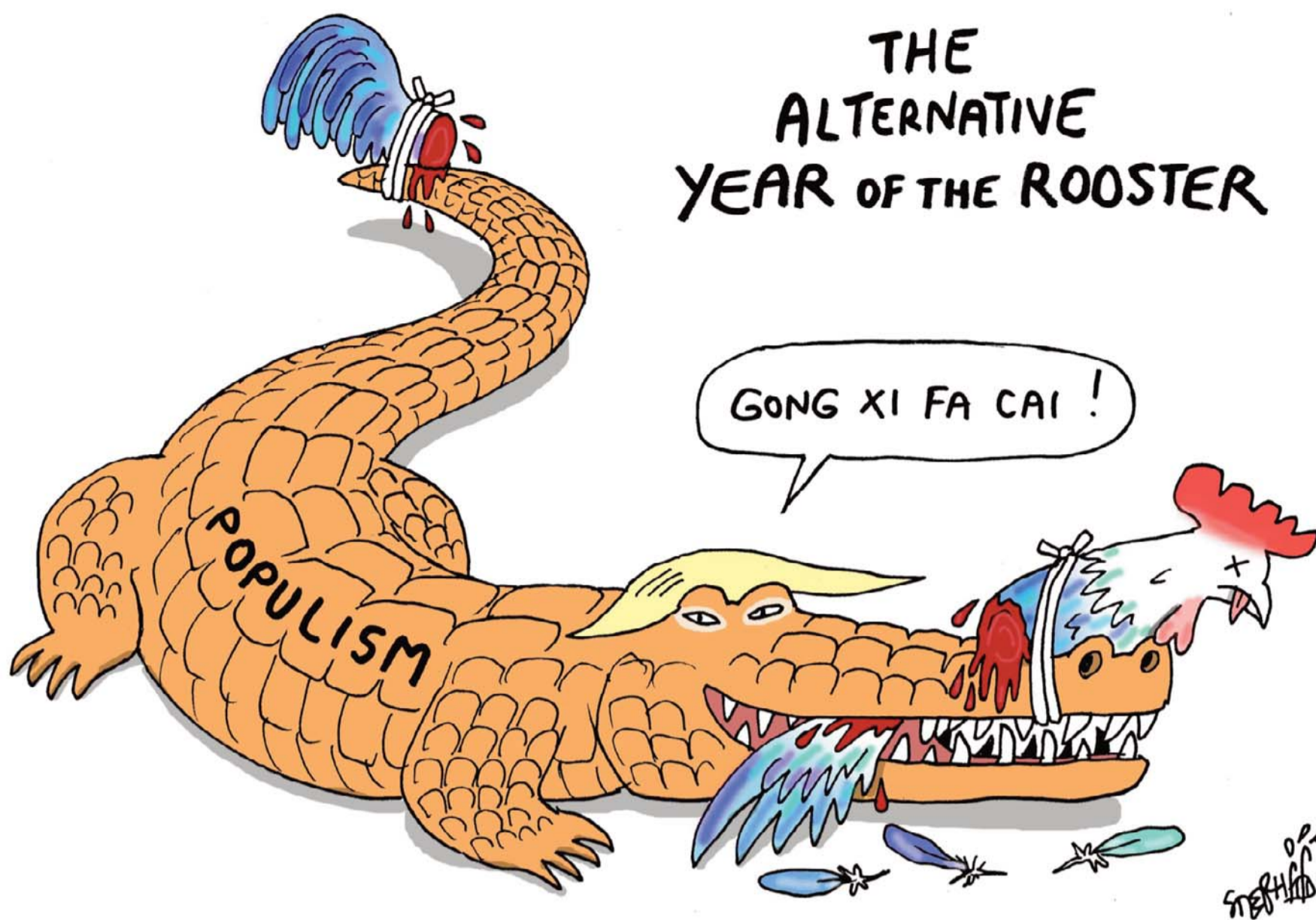
Villagers reported a visit in November by parks officials who offered them a one-off payment to leave their homes and lands under a plan to clear forest lands of human activity. Tribandha Barja, a member of a 144-tribal household in Khejuri village on the outskirts of the reserve, said most people refused the payment. "(They told us) take one million rupees (\$14,960) keep it in the bank and live better with the bank interest," Barja told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Dubey, of advocacy group CFR, said 50 families in the neighboring village of Kijahri were also targeted for relocation. "It is not even close to the core zone," Dubey said. Official figures show the tiger reserve covers about 2,750 sq km of dense forest and rich, bio-diverse land and adjoining forest that is used by other wildlife as a corridor. Authorities estimate that 10,000 people live within the park and in buffer-zone areas, while half a million people in 1,200 villages live in a 10-km radius around the park. Odisha's 10-year tiger conservation plan suggests that a population of 80 to 100 tigers need an inviolate space of between 800 and 1,000 sq km. Nayak said the relocation program follows this plan. However after 43 years as a protected area, the official Odisha government tiger count last year found just 26 Royal Bengal tigers in the Simlipal reserve.

End of the rope

In the village of Jamunagarh, in the park's 'core', just three families of more than 35 families have decided to stay on and continue to use the land they won in 2015. The others chose to take the compensation and move away. Telenga Hasa, one of the holdouts, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that neighboring families had been paid one million rupees (\$14,960) via bank deposit in Sept 2015 - of which 30,000 rupees (\$449) was paid in cash. All are still waiting to be allocated the two acres of farmland they were promised. "Now they have no forests, no farm land and no livelihood - how can they live with dignity?" Hasa said, adding that another 25 families who live in the hillside village of Bakua have decided to stay on, too. Deepak Pani, a spokesman for the activist group Gram Swaraj, says the Mankidia and Khadia - two nomadic forager groups - are the worst affected. He said the Forest Rights Act is supposed to protect their ancient cultural and livelihood traditions, but had not been enforced. Arun Mankidia, whose family live in Dendam village on the outskirts of the tiger reserve, said his people have been forced to abandon their ancient rope-making traditions. The rope, plaited from a sacred grove creeper known as 'siali', which grows in abundance in the park, is very strong and in high demand among farmers in rural areas. Now, local families have been forced to buy plastic potato sacks at three rupees (\$0.04) each so they can painstakingly unravel the strands and re-plait them into ropes, which are sold for little more than their cost. —Reuters

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FEW GOOD ALTERNATIVES TO PALESTINIAN STATE

The Trump administration appears to be easing away from longstanding US support for Palestinian statehood as the preferred outcome of Middle East peace efforts, which may please some allies of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel. But the alternatives are few, and each comes with daunting and combustible complications, including for Israel itself. The idea of two states in the Holy Land - a Jewish Israel and an Arab Palestine - rests on a particular logic: There are two quite different peoples of roughly equal size living between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River; each wants their own nation-state to control and dominate numerically; each has shown tenacity toward this goal.

This would require Israel to let go of most and maybe all of the territory it captured in the 1967 war, when it completed its takeover of all the land that British colonizers abandoned in 1948. That includes the West Bank, where there are now islands of Palestinian autonomy, scattered Jewish settlements and overriding Israeli military control; the eastern part of Jerusalem, which Israel has fully annexed and populated with Jews; and the coastal Gaza Strip, which was actually evacuated in 2005 and is now controlled by the Islamic militants of Hamas and blockaded by Israel and Egypt.

Over the years many and probably most Israelis have come around to the idea of a partition largely because they want to be considered a democracy and do not want all the Palestinian future citizens that would come along with the territory. For almost two decades, US policy has been to advocate a two-state solution. But over two decades of peace talks have failed to produce agreement on the details, and many on both sides consider it impossible without a major change in circumstances - massive global pressure on Israel, more

upheaval in neighboring Arab countries, perhaps tectonic shifts in the prevailing world order.

Ahead of yesterday's White House meeting between President Donald Trump and Netanyahu, a senior US official suggested a two-state solution was optional, bringing condemnation from Palestinian officials. But many of them have for years been quietly preparing for an alternative strategy of a single bi-national state in the Holy Land. Here's a look at that option, and other scenarios that might arise:

One State

For years this was the goal of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and for many Palestinians it is indeed the preferred option: A single democratic state, not defined as specifically Jewish or Arab, in the area of British colonial Palestine. Many prefer it anyway to the two-state notion whereby even if Israel gives up all the land it captured in 1967 it retains almost 80 percent of Palestine. The problem is that almost no one in Israel is arguing for the true extension of full rights to Palestinians in the currently occupied territories because even with Gaza excluded, it would leave Arabs constituting close to half the country's population - and that is clearly the end of the Zionist dream of a Jewish state.

This is why Israel has never annexed the West Bank and why the more sophisticated nationalists profess to support a partition, albeit on terms the Palestinians have not accepted and are not likely to. If the Palestinians formally drop the two-state strategy and demand incorporation into Israel it will put Israel in the awkward position of refusing to annex territories where it has been settling Jews for decades. Down this path lie coercion efforts in the form of international sanctions on Israel, or Palestinian violence.

Interim Agreement

Many Israelis have concluded that a final peace agreement with the Palestinians is simply not possible because the Palestinians are asking for the moon as a result of a feeling that they hold the demographic cards. It is not just about territory: The Palestinians still in theory demand a 'right of return' to Israel proper for millions of descendants of Palestinian refugees living around the region and the world, which the vast majority of Jewish Israelis reject.

But perhaps a partial deal is possible whereby the Palestinians would not have to forego future claims but for now get their state on, say, 80 percent of the West Bank, with some sort of preferred access or new regime in the Old City of Jerusalem? Even the current nationalist Netanyahu government would probably accept such a thing, but the Palestinians have ruled it out, fearing the temporary would become permanent. To get them to agree would require massive global and Arab world pressure, and risks huge internal conflict among the Palestinians.

Jordanian Option

Jordan took over the West Bank and east Jerusalem during the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli war that followed the British pull-out, lost the areas to Israel in 1967 and then gave up all claims to them in favor of the Palestinians in the 1980s. But Jordan is a country with a majority Palestinian-descended population, and some Israelis still think that it can play a role in satisfying Palestinian national aspirations while resuming control over only a part of the West Bank. But this would probably require a collapse of Hashemite rule, founded on Jordan's Bedouin population, and as such is anathema to the Jordanian monarchy, which is beloved by many Israelis for making peace with them in

1994. Adding to the difficulties, the Palestinians reject it altogether as well.

Partial Unilateral Pullout

Under these vexing circumstances many Israelis conclude no peace is possible, but they still want to be rid of the Palestinian population of the West Bank. In the mid-2000s the government of Ehud Olmert planned a unilateral pullout from most of the territory, to follow the 2005 withdrawal from Gaza. But those plans were upended when Gaza was taken over by Hamas militants and became a launching pad for rocket attacks on Israel, leading to several mini-wars.

Few want to see that scenario repeated with the West Bank, which is much larger and closer to Israel's main cities. Now talk grows of a pullout of settlers from some areas, to create a more convincing reality of partition, while the military stays for now, pending some future arrangement. NATO? A global or Arab peacekeeping force? Perpetual Israeli control? No one can say.

Status Quo

When the best that can be hoped for is the least bad option, the status quo looks attractive to some. But Israel is constantly changing the landscape by adding settlers - already there are some 350,000 Israelis in the West Bank and a quarter million in East Jerusalem. This arrangement, brittle and loved by few, undermines Israel's democratic credentials by leaving millions of people without a vote for the government that has ultimate control over their fate. The Palestinians do not have a history of acquiescing for long: There were multi-year uprisings in the late 1980s and early 2000s and a spate of violence in late 2015 and early 2016. Down this path lies the very strong likelihood of more. —AP

FIVE-STAR PRICES, WITHOUT THE SERVICE

Could anything be better than a winter getaway to Cuba, complete with a stay in one of the Caribbean island's five-star luxury hotels? Actually, yes, say many of the tourists flocking to the Caribbean's new "it" destination, who complain the state-owned hotel industry is underwhelming and overpriced. Tourists have been flooding Cuba ever since its historic rapprochement with the United States was announced in Dec 2014.

A record four million visited the communist-ruled island - population 11 million - last year, an increase of 13 percent from 2015. That has sent prices soaring. But, in a country where limited supply and years of underinvestment are hallmarks of the hotel industry, price doesn't necessarily mean quality. Jean Orsini, a French tourist, found his room had a rust-stained shower, and spent so long waiting for his dinner that he nearly gave up. "At the travel agency in Marseille, they told us they were sending us to the best hotel. But you pay 175 euros a night, and you just know it's not worth the price," said the 82-year-old retiree.

Spanish tourist Pilar Esteras was appalled by the staff's nonchalance at her hotel. Maria Teresa Gutierrez of Colombia had no running water at times and found her \$250 a night room was less than clean. Yet all three tourists stayed in four- and five-star hotels. Their experiences are an indication of the industry's problems in Cuba, even though the state now co-manages many hotels with foreign companies such as Accor of France, Iberostar of Spain and Blue Diamond of Canada.

In fact, 17 private companies operate two-thirds of the hotels in Cuba. But they have little control over things like infrastructure maintenance and the availability of good staff

in a country where hospitality training is scarce and wages are meager - less than \$30 a month. Orsini said his Cuba trip reminded him of traveling in the former Soviet Union in the 1960s. "You spent three hours waiting to eat," he said. "Since they were state restaurants, the staff could have cared less."

'More expensive than Paris'

In one well-known four-star hotel in Havana, the rate has risen from \$110 a night to \$285 in less than two years. In another, the price jumped from \$90 to \$202 in a year. But if anything, surging demand has only stretched the hotels' staff and resources further. "Cuba still hasn't managed to match the international quality standards those prices imply," said Jose Luis Perello, an industry expert at the University of Havana. "The value-for-money issue... causes a lot of complaints," said a European hotel manager in Havana, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Some are even more blunt. "Four-star rooms (in Cuba) are equivalent to a barely three-star hotel in Paris," said Stephane Ferrux, a Frenchman who runs a travel agency in Havana. The tourism ministry and the army - the sole owners of Cuba's hotels - are aware of the threat this perception poses. Tourism, Cuba's top industry, generated \$2.8 billion in revenue last year. But the sector faces tough competition from other Caribbean destinations such as the Bahamas and the Dominican Republic, which have more experience catering to foreign clients' expectations.

Earlier this year, Deputy Tourism Minister Mayra Alvarez pledged to "work to improve hotel infrastructure, raise facilities' standards and provide a well-trained workforce." But she announced no specific plans. —AFP

CHINA PILES INTO CUBA

From buses and trucks to a \$500 million golf resort, China is deepening its business footprint in Cuba, helping the fellow Communist-run state survive a crisis in oil-benefactor Venezuela and insulate against a possible rollback of US detente. Cuban imports from China reached a record \$1.9 billion in 2015, nearly 60 percent above the annual average of the previous decade, and were at \$1.8 billion in 2016 as the flow of oil and cash slowed from Venezuela due to economic and political turmoil in the South American country.

China's growing presence gives its companies a head start over US competitors in Cuba's opening market. It could leave the island less exposed to the chance US President Donald Trump will clamp down on travel to Cuba and tighten trade restrictions loosened by his predecessor Barack Obama. A deterioration in US-China relations under Trump could also lead Beijing to dig in deeper in Cuba, some analysts say.

"If and when the Trump administration increases pressure on China... China may decide to double down on its expanding footprint in the United States' neighborhood," said Ted Piccone, a Latin America analyst at the Brookings Institution think tank. China, the world's second largest economy, sells goods to Cuba on soft credit terms. It is Cuba's largest creditor and debt is regularly restructured, though amounts and terms are considered state secrets.

While Cuba does not publish investment data, the state press has been abuzz with news of Chinese projects lately, covering infrastructure, telecoms, tourism and electronics. Yutong buses, Sinotruk trucks, YTO tractors, Geely cars, Haier domestic appliances and other products are prominent in Cuba, where the main US products on display are cars dating back to the 1950s, thanks to the ongoing economic embargo.

Cubans flock every day to hundreds of Huawei supplied Wi-Fi hot spots and the firm is now helping to wire the first homes. "Business is really booming, more than we could have ever imagined," said the manager of a shipping company which brings in Chinese machinery and transport equipment and who asked not to be identified. The foreign ministry in Beijing described China and Cuba as "good comrades, brothers, and partners," and said the relations "were not influenced by any third party," when asked whether US policy was encouraging China to deepen its presence.

"We are happy to see that recently countries around the world are all expanding cooperation with Cuba. I think this shows that all countries have consistent expectations about Cuba's vast potential for development," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told reporters. The US State Department and White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment. —Reuters

SPANISH POLICE CALLED TO MARADONA'S MADRID HOTEL

MADRID: Spanish police were called to a Madrid hotel by concerned staff yesterday over an argument between former Argentine footballer Diego Maradona and his girlfriend. "My lawyer Matias Morla contacted the Spanish authorities. There are no complaints and nobody was able to explain to me the reason for this media show," said Maradona via his official Facebook page. "I'm having a great time, let them tell their stories." Spanish police confirmed they had attended the hotel, but that they had only spoken to the couple. "When the agents and emergency services arrived, those people (Maradona and his girlfriend) showed no sign of injuries and did not press charges, there was just a discussion," police sources told AFP. According to the same source, the events took place around 8:30 am (0730GMT) after hotel staff overheard an argument. Maradona is in Madrid to watch his old side Napoli take on European champions Real Madrid in the first leg of their Champions League last 16 tie. "I am enjoying time with my family in Madrid and looking forward to the Napoli game in the Champions League," added Maradona. - AFP



ROONEY, CARRICK, JONES OUT FOR MAN UNITED

MANCHESTER: Captain Wayne Rooney, Michael Carrick and Phil Jones will all miss Manchester United's Europa League clash with Saint-Etienne today, manager Jose Mourinho revealed yesterday. Jones has not played since sustaining a foot injury in United's recent 0-0 draw with Hull City and Mourinho said Rooney and Carrick had "little muscular problems". The three England internationals missed yesterday's pre-match training session at United's Aon Training Complex west of Manchester. "Phil is still recovering from the injury," Mourinho told reporters ahead of the last 32 first-leg match. "Wayne and Carrick I don't want to say 'injuries' because I don't think we are speaking about injuries. We are speaking about little muscular problems and protection of these problems. "So all three are out tomorrow and apart from that everything is right." — AFP

MANCHESTER CITY SIGN US WOMEN'S STAR LLOYD

LONDON: FIFA Women's Player of the Year Carli Lloyd has joined Manchester City on a short-term contract, the English club announced yesterday. The 34-year-old United States captain arrives from the Houston Dash and will play in the 2017 Spring Series, the FA Women's Cup and the Women's Champions League. Lloyd has won 232 international caps and scored a hat-trick, including a goal from 55 yards, in the United States' 5-2 win over Japan in the 2015 World Cup final. "I'm incredibly excited to be joining Manchester City, a club which is leading the development of women's football both on and off the pitch," Lloyd told the City website. "Having played in the US throughout my career, the chance to fulfil a long-held ambition to test myself in a new footballing environment, as well as playing in the Champions League, is something I am relishing." The move will see Lloyd link up with England internationals including captain Steph Houghton, defender Lucy Bronze and striker Toni Duggan. Lloyd, who has also scored the winning goal in two Olympic finals, will begin training with her new teammates next month. — AFP



KUWAIT TENNIS FEDERATION U-18 TOURNAMENT CONCLUDES

By Abdellatif Shara'a

KUWAIT: Kuwait Tennis Federation U-18 tournament concluded earlier in the week at Qadisiya Sports Club Courts.

The final match saw Tamim Al-Hallaq from Kuwait Sports Club defeat Kazima's player 6/1 - 6-1, winning first place, while Kazma's Abdallah Maayouf took second while third place went to Essa Qabazard from Yarmouk Club.

In the doubles Tamim Al-Hallaq and Ali Al-Harz from Kuwait S.C. won first place, while in second were Essa Qabazard and Daniel Ghassan from Yarmouk S.C. while Abdelaziz Maayouf and Ali Buhamad from Kazima won third place.

The final standings of clubs was Kuwait club in first with 230 points, Yarmouk in second with 190 points, Salmiya in third with 156, Kazima in fourth with 108 points, and Kheitan in fifth with 58 points.



TENNIS

MARIN CILIC HOLDS OFF TEMPERAMENTAL PAIRE

ROTTERDAM: Top seed Marin Cilic battled past temperamental French opponent Benoit Paire 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 for only his second win of the year at the Rotterdam World Tennis on Tuesday. Cilic, a 2014 finalist, struggled with an out-of-sorts and injured Paire, whose racquet-smashing antics left him flirting with the wrath of the chair umpire in a match lasting more than two hours.

Cilic lost the opening set as Paire, who later suffered a hamstring problem, saved two of set points. But Cilic slowly began turning the tables in a first-round match in which the Croat committed 39 unforced errors while Paire had 43 and was able to convert only one of 10 break points.

"It was a tough match but that is what I expected," Cilic said. "He is always tricky and difficult, a talented shotmaker - you never know what is coming."

"After I lost the first set I had to keep my level up. I did that, got a break in the second set and things started to roll to my side. "It was good to get into the match after being a set down and winning in the end. It's good for the confidence, obviously." Sixth-seeded Frenchman Jo-Wilfried Tsonga was kept guessing by unheralded Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas before grinding out a 6-4, 7-6 (7/2) first-round win. The 19-year-old wildcard entry came onto the court as a complete unknown to Tsonga, who played the Dutch final in 2011, losing to Swede Robin Soderling. Tsonga, returning to the Ahoy stadium for the first time since 2014, led by a set and 5-3 in the second set against the 205th-ranked challenger but was unable to kill off the match. Instead, the 31-year-old had to take it into a tiebreaker, eventually making it into the second round in 89 minutes with four breaks of serve. "It was difficult as I did not know him at all," said the number 14. "That is unusual on the tour, never seeing someone before at all. "I didn't

know where to play at the start or what to expect. The entire match went like this. He went for it sometimes, other times he stayed back and was waiting."

"He surprised me during the entire match." In round two Tsonga faces Sydney

champion Gilles Muller after the Luxembourg veteran beat Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor 6-3, 6-2 with 14 aces as the number 317 youngster made his ATP main draw debut. Holder Martin Klizan of Slovakia began his title defence with a

defeat of Fernando Verdasco 6-4, 0-6, 6-1 while last year's semi-finalist Philipp Kohlschreiber took out eighth seed Lucas Pouille of France 7-5, 6-2. Frenchman Gilles Simon overcame compatriot Nicolas Mahut 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.



Marin Cilic

BARBADOS KING UPSETS 5TH SEEDED AUSSIE TOMIC

MEMPHIS: Darian King of Barbados won his opening match at the Memphis Open, surprising fifth seeded Bernard Tomic 6-4, 6-4 to become the first player from his country to win an ATP Tour match. This was uncharted territory for King who is also the first player from Barbados in the 41-year history of the tournament. King, who had to go through the qualify-

ing rounds to get into the tournament, is making just his second appearance in the main draw of an ATP Tour event.

He hammered four aces, won 75 percent of his second-serve points and had no double faults in Tuesday's 66 minute match between the two 24-year olds. King, who is ranked 140th in the world, said it was a "dream come

true." "Playing against Bernard, the No. 5 seed is a dream come true," King said. "The discipline in Barbados is not as big so to come from there and compete against these guys, it's a lot of progress. I'm glad to get my first ATP win. "I played at least three years in Futures against college guys and Americans then basically had my first breakthrough in Cali, Colombia, in a

Challenger against former top 50 player Victor Estrella [Burgos]. Then I realized I can play."

King booked a second round match against Steve Darcis of Belgium who beat Radu Albot 7-5, 3-6, 6-4. During his only other main draw appearance, at the 2015 Washington ATP event, King lost in the first round. Australia's Tomic had one double fault and won just half of his sec-

ond serve points. Earlier this year, Tomic reached the third round of the Australian Open and the quarter-finals of this event two years ago. In other first round matches Tuesday, Tomic's fellow Aussie Matthew Ebden rallied to beat Canadian qualifier Peter Polansky 6-7 (4/7), 6-3, 6-1 and American Ryan Harrison eased past Russian Konstantin Kravchuk 6-3, 7-5. — AFP

OLYMPICS

CONFUSION OVER 2020 GOLF VENUE DATES BACK TO BID: REPORT

TOKYO: Problems surrounding the venue for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics golf events, which does not allow full membership for women, stem from documents prepared for the original bid, a Japanese media report said yesterday. Calls have arisen to move the tournament away from the private Kasumigaseki Country Club in Saitama prefecture because of a policy that forbids women from playing on Sundays and excludes them from becoming a full members.

A board meeting last week postponed a decision on the issue, which its head called "a nuisance".

After the venue was selected to host the tournament in 2012, it received approval from the International Golf Federation (IGF) but the club's policy was not included in explanatory material at that time, NHK public television said. Despite earning selection, a member of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government's bid committee warned the club that its policy could create problems for violating the Olympic charter's rules on equality.

Quoting information given to the government in 2012, NHK added that the bid committee member was told by the club that it would "fix things" and thinking

the issue was resolved, opted not to mention the policy in documents prepared in English.

A Kasumigaseki Country Club official confirmed to NHK that the club had been warned but said it had replied: "If this becomes a problem, we will have a mutual discussion at that time. We did not say we would fix things." The International Golf Federation was quoted by NHK as saying they did not know until recently that the club did not admit women as full members. Nobody was available at the club for comment yesterday and Tokyo 2020 spokesperson Hikoariko

Ono said the Organising Committee was not aware of any communications between the Bid Committee and other parties during the bidding process.

"If the media reports are correct, we believe the Tokyo Metropolitan Government should explain clearly to Kasumigaseki Country Club what actually transpired at the time," Ono added in an email response to written questions. "Kasumigaseki Country Club is aware of the IOC's request to change its membership policy and is holding internal discussions. The Organising Committee will continue to monitor developments carefully." — Reuters

GOLF

QUIET REVOLUTION BREWS AT SUPER 6 EVENT IN PERTH

MELBOURNE: Golf has clung slavishly to its centuries-old traditions and long ignored growing calls for reform but the ancient sport will be nudged gently towards modernity at the inaugural World Super 6 tournament in Australia this week. The European Tour co-sanctioned event at Perth's Lake Karrinyup Country Club will ditch convention by deciding Sunday's winner in a final day matchplay shootout after three rounds of regular strokeplay.

The innovation will promise a more "punchy" finish for spectators and television audiences, organisers hope, as a full field whittled down to 24 players compete in pairs in six-hole playoffs until only one remains.

While more evolution than revolution, it's a tweak unprecedented on any of the world's major professional tours. It also counted as a necessary experiment for a game that was struggling to lure a new generation of participants and fans in golf's mature markets, according to the Australian PGA Tour. "The challenge for a lot of sport, and particularly for golf, is the demographic of the average golfer and golf fan is a bit older," PGA Australia's chief commercial officer Steve Ayles told Reuters yesterday.

"We're basically the number one sport for over-45s. This form of event certainly appeals to a younger demographic and certainly appeals to people who are time-poor. And we believe that this will be a great spectacle." The Scottish city of Perth is renowned for its rich golf heritage, with King James IV having made the first recorded purchase of golf clubs from a local bowmaker there in 1502, but its Australian namesake is an unlikely launch-pad for reform. With most of the world's top golfers competing at the \$7 million Genesis Open on the PGA Tour, a modest field headlined by Swedish world number 11 Alex Noren and former British Open winner Louis Oosthuizen will battle in the \$1.75 million (\$1.34 million) event at Lake Karrinyup.

DECLINING PARTICIPATION

"I think it's great that we try new things and I think it's going to be exciting for the crowds and nice for the TV viewers too," Noren said.

"I think anything where the crowd experiences a new way for us to play the game is good. I think we should work out more ways to do this kind of thing."

The top 10 rankings are laden with 20-somethings, including Australian world number one Jason Day and Northern Ireland's second-ranked Rory McIlroy, but in the sport's traditional markets, fans and participants are ageing and thin-



KUALA LUMPUR: In this Oct. 28, 2016 file photo, Lydia Ko of New Zealand checks her line on the eleventh green during the second round of the LPGA golf tournament at Tournament Players Club (TPC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A day ahead of the start of the Women's Australian Open at Royal Adelaide, the 21-year-old Thai golfer Ariya Jutanugarn also says she's not putting pressure on herself to overtake Ko for the No. 1 ranking. — AP

ning. Australia, where huge crowds once flocked to local courses when favourite son Greg Norman was in his pomp, has battled to attract sponsors and fans to its marquee events in recent years, while struggling to arrest declining rates of participation. Golf tourism fuelled by international visitors has taken up some of the slack for the embattled industry but scores of lower-profile private clubs have slashed fees to lure new members.

Australia has never wanted for a pioneering spirit, however, and local sports have gladly ditched tradition in a bid to innovate and open new markets.

The nation's domestic Twenty20 cricket competition, the 'Big Bash', has proved an outrageous success since its inaugural tournament in 2011-12, its glitzy mix of sport and entertainment drawing huge attendances and television audiences. The national athletics federation has also

attempted to foment revolution with the recent staging of the inaugural Nitro Series in Melbourne, where Usain Bolt and his 'All-Star' internationals competed against five nations in a team-based event held over three meetings.

Organisers promise a similarly relaxed and informal atmosphere at Lake Karrinyup, where there will be live music, DJs and a specially built 90-metre 'shootout hole' to act as a tie-breaker for pairs who halve their six-hole matchplay duels. But with the tournament still dominated by conventional strokeplay over the opening three days, it will not be so revolutionary as to upset the silver-haired set. "This tournament is not to say that strokeplay events aren't still popular," Ayles added. "They are immensely popular around the world. This really just provides an alternative. If all goes well, we would certainly consider expanding this across Australia and then potentially, Europe and Asia." — Reuters

RUGBY

GIANTS AIM TO BUILD ON WIDNES WIN AGAINST SALFORD

LONDON: Huddersfield were one of the favourites for Super League glory a year ago before an underwhelming campaign ensued-so coach Rick Stone knows the importance of a good start this time around.

The Giants play their first home game of the season against Salford today after an impressive 28-16 opening-round win at Widnes hinted at a brighter season ahead after they finished bottom of the 2016 table and narrowly survived relegation via the Qualifiers.

Stone arrived mid-way through last season from NRL's Newcastle Knights in Australia so was forced to focus on survival.

But he has bigger goals this year, and says Huddersfield's season could be shaped by their first six fixtures, which includes winnable games against Wakefield Trinity and newly-promoted Leigh. "A good start is important in every season but probably a bit more so for the Giants this season considering the way we finished last year," Stone said.

"For us the first six games are really important and we can get some confidence and some continuity to help give us a springboard forward for the rest of the year. I think the Giants have been under the radar quite a bit and I am happy to see that. "If you win more than you lose, you will be in the top eight and if you win a high percentage then you can keep going forward from there."

"If we can get the right kind of balance and a bit of luck with injuries I know we will be competitive." Salford mounted a strong second-half comeback against champions Wigan in their opening fixture, but it was not enough to prevent a 26-16 defeat.

CARNEY WAIT

The Red Devils will be without injured second-row pair Weller Hauraki and Ben Murdoch-Masila against Huddersfield, while new signing Todd Carney is yet to receive a work visa.

"We know it's in the final stages and hopefully we'll have some positive news this week," said Salford coach Ian Watson.

"He (Carney) is ready to come, his bags are all packed. "We've got to perform like we did in the second half (against Wigan) for 80 minutes."



Huddersfield Giants in action

"It will be a good opportunity against Huddersfield today to see if we have learnt our lessons." In the only other Super League fixture this week due to the World Club Series, Leigh will host their first top-flight match in 12 years against Leeds on Friday.

The Centurions' first game back in the Super League ended in a heavy 44-16 defeat by Castleford, while Leeds lost 6-4 to St Helens.

Despite that narrow defeat, Rhinos prop Mitch Garbutt was encouraged by his side's performance and has dismissed suggestions Leeds

are already under pressure in the race for the top four. "Pressure is what you put on yourself," the 27-year-old said. "We don't take anything on board from the outside. We worry about what we can control and we put in every week and prepare the best we can."

"We have had a really good pre-season. I've been to a few clubs and I can honestly say it's one of the best pre-seasons I've been involved in. "A lot of young kids got what they needed to out of pre-season. They improved a lot and we are only going to get better," he added. — AFP



Grant Hackett

SWIMMING

OLYMPIC GREAT HACKETT ARRESTED AFTER 'BREAKDOWN'

MELBOURNE: Australian long distance swimming great Grant Hackett was arrested and detained by police in the Gold Coast yesterday after a "breakdown" at his parents' home, local media reported.

The troubled triple Olympic champion's father told local newspaper, the Gold Coast Bulletin, that he had called the police so his 36-year-old son could be given help.

"Grant's got a medical problem and it manifested itself here this morning... he was raving and ranting a bit," Neville Hackett told the paper.

"He's been receiving treatment from a doctor. He's big and powerful when he's not happy. We decided he needed some treatment but there was no way he was going to go and get treatment this morning, so we called the police."

"The only way the police can do anything under the law of the land is to arrest him for domestic violence." Neville Hackett said the swimmer had not made any threats but was not "what you say is a normal person". Local broadcaster Channel Seven posted video footage of Hackett

being driven to a local police station in handcuffs. A Queensland Police spokesman said a man had been arrested "following a disturbance at a Surfer's Avenue address at Mermaid Waters around midday".

Grant Hackett's agent was unavailable for comment. Hackett won 1,500 metres gold at the 2000 Sydney Olympics and at Athens in 2004 before retiring after the 2008 Games in Beijing, where he won silver in the event. The 10-times world champion returned to the pool last year to make an unsuccessful bid to qualify for the Rio Olympics. He was questioned by airport police in Melbourne last April after an altercation with a passenger on a flight. He said he had been binge drinking in the wake of his Olympic disappointment and publicly apologised. Hackett has previously struggled with prescription drug problems and admitted he became dependent on a sleep medication. The swimmer flew to the United States in 2014 to spend time in a rehab centre after he was spotted topless and disoriented in the lobby of a Melbourne casino. — Reuters

SAILING

TOP CYCLIST JOINS TEAM COLON NZ AS GRINDERS TURN TO PEDAL POWER

WELLINGTON: London Olympics bronze medallist Simon Van Velthoven has been training with Team New Zealand's for this year's America's Cup regatta as the syndicate turned to pedal power for their challenge, local media reported yesterday. The team, who officially launch their new AC50 boat today ahead of the regatta that starts in May, were photographed on Tuesday with their grinders seated and powering the hydraulics needed to control the wingsail with their legs.

Local television then showed the super-fast foiling yacht on Waitemata Harbour in Auckland on Wednesday with four members of the six-man team pedalling, rather than using their arms to power the winches that provide the hydraulic pressure.

TVNZ reported that Van Velthoven, who won bronze in the Kierin at the London Games but missed selection for last year's Rio Olympics, had been involved in helping with the design of the system. A Cycling New Zealand spokesman also told local media that Van Velthoven had been granted a leave of

absence from their sport's high performance programme but was unsure as to what he was doing.

Former Team New Zealand skipper Dean Barker, who is leading Japan's challenge for the America's Cup, however, was not overly impressed with the innovation, having also considered switching to pedal power but ruled it out.

"We evaluated it and didn't think it would pay for itself," Barker told Radio Sport. "There's a real balance... the theory is 100 percent correct. Cycling will produce a hell of a lot more power. "But the dynamics of these boats, changing sides frequently, different manoeuvres, there is a cost to go down that path. "Good on them for giving a different concept a go. All the teams have evaluated—we have, Oracle also—and the decision we took is that it isn't going to pay for itself." The regatta for the challenging syndicates—from Britain, Sweden, Japan, France and New Zealand—starts in Bermuda on May 26 with the America's Cup beginning on June 17 between the winner of the qualifying regatta and holders Oracle Team USA. — Reuters

CYCLING

HERMANS WINS OMAN 2ND STAGE TO TAKE LEAD

AL-BUSTAN: Belgian Ben Hermans is the new leader of the Tour of Oman after winning yesterday's 145km second stage.

The 30-year-old surprised a group of stage favourites with a late attack on a steep climb to the finish in Al Bustan, with Portugal's Rui Costa second and Jakob Fuglsang of Denmark third.

Hermans was supposed to be helping his BMC team leader and compatriot Greg Van Avermaet, the Olympic champion, but jumped on his opportunity to claim victory.

"Greg was supposed to contest the sprint finish whereas me, I had a free role,

in particular marking Romain Bardet. I tried my luck at the best moment 150 metres from the line," said Hermans, who succeeded Norway's Alexander Kristoff, winner of Tuesday's opening stage, as race leader.

Van Avermaet finished ninth with Bardet, second behind Chris Froome at last year's Tour de France, 10th.

All the favourites for overall victory, including Italy's seventh-placed Fabio Aru, winner of the 2015 Vuelta a Espana, finished in the top 10. Thursday's 162km third stage is a hilly run from Sultan Qaboos University to Quriyat. — AFP

BLACK CAP GUPTILL OUT FOR THREE SOUTH AFRICA MATCHES

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's in-form opening batsman Martin Guptill will miss the first three matches of South Africa's tour after suffering a hamstring injury, officials said yesterday. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said Guptill strained his hamstring during training and was out of this Friday's one-off Twenty20 international against the Proteas in Auckland. He will also miss two of the five one-day internationals in South Africa's busy touring schedule, which includes three Tests. Rather than call up the vastly experienced

Ross Taylor for the T20, the Black Caps instead turned to uncapped 20-year-old Glenn Phillips. Chief selector Gavin Larsen said the South African-born Auckland had shown outstanding domestic form and was an exciting prospect. "He bats with power, has shown he can clear the rope, and gets a deserved opportunity to showcase his skills on the international stage," Larsen said.

Dean Brownlie will replace Guptill in the first two ODIs. Brownlie was considered unlucky to miss out on the ODI squad in the

first place after a strong performance against Australia and Larsen said he was the logical replacement for Guptill.

New Zealand and South Africa have only played 14 T20 internationals, with the Proteas victorious in 10 of them. They arrive in New Zealand as the world's top-ranked one-day team after winning their last 11 one-dayers, including 5-0 clean sweeps against Australia and Sri Lanka.

They also have added motivation against the New Zealanders after the Black Caps

ousted them from the 2015 World Cup in a dramatic semi-final in Auckland. South Africa's one-day captain AB de Villiers has described that agonising result as "unfinished business", saying the Proteas are keen to exact revenge. But New Zealand are also performing well in ODIs and are ranked third in the 50-over format. They helped South Africa topple Australia from the number one spot by defeating their trans-Tasman rivals in the recent Chappell-Hadlee Trophy series and whitewashed Bangladesh 3-0.

"New Zealand are a street-smart team and they find ways to compete but we have a decent record there," de Villiers said, referring to series wins for the tourists in 2012 and 2014. The Black Caps' battling qualities are expected to be less of a factor in the Test series beginning in Dunedin on March 8, with South Africa enjoying a superior record in the format. New Zealand have never won a Test series against the Proteas and the last time they defeated the South Africans in a five-day match was in Wellington in 2004. — AFP

ROOT VOWS TO CAPTAIN ENGLAND 'HIS WAY'

LEEDS: Joe Root insisted he would captain England "his way" as he gave his first insight into how he would lead the Test side. Two days on from being named as the successor to former England Test skipper Alastair Cook, Yorkshire batsman Root outlined his approach when speaking to reporters at his Headingley home ground yesterday.

"I don't think you should be scared of asking for help on occasions but for the most part I like to think I'll be able to put my stamp on things and do things my way," Root told BBC Radio Five. The 26-year-old Root, previously vice-captain to Cook, has little senior captaincy experience, with just a handful of matches as stand-in Yorkshire skipper behind him. But he has plenty of time to ease himself into his new role as England's next Test is not until their July series opener against South Africa at Lord's. For the time being, their focus is on limited overs cricket, particularly June's 50-over Champions Trophy tournament on home soil.

'INSTINCTIVE'

Root is a senior batsman in all formats for England but Eoin Morgan will remain the side's captain in white-ball cricket ("I think the beauty of the position right now is I have plenty of time to think about that," said Root).

"I'd like to think I'd be quite instinctive, I want us to always look to win and I want us to be a tough side to play against. "I think it would be silly of me not to speak to people who have been in the position before... like Cooky, Strauss (England director of cricket Andrew Strauss, Cook's predecessor as captain)." Root, who in common with 2005 Ashes-winning skipper Michael Vaughan played for the Sheffield Collegiate club,

added: "I've obviously known Michael Vaughan for a long time and maybe a few people away from cricket to get a different perspective on things."

As for his lack of leadership experience, Root—who has an impressive batting average of over 52 in his 53-Test career—said: "I didn't have much county experience before I got onto the Test team and I managed to find a way to be successful in that environment. "I've got a lot of experience now with 50-odd games under my belt and I'd like to think for the past few years I have started to think as a captain in my own mind, so if Cooky ever needed help or advice or the bowlers came up to me and asked what I thought then I was switched on enough to think 'this is what I'd do.'"

Cook resigned following a 4-0 series reverse in India that crowned a difficult 2016 for England that saw them lose eight Tests in all.

But Root believed England, who after home series against South Africa and the West Indies begin the defence of the Ashes in Australia in November, were on the cusp of great things. "There's a core group of players that have played 20-30 games, I think it's the right time for them to take a bit more responsibility and become slightly more consistent."

Root said he had been offered the England captaincy while looking after his five-week-old son. "On Sunday afternoon I had just taken Alfie for nappy changing and I got a nice call from Andrew (Strauss) saying 'this is the one call you get in your life... we'd like you to take the role'," he told Sky Sports. "I immediately accepted it. It was dad's birthday weekend and I went down for Sunday dinner with the family. It was a special time in our family life." — AFP



MINNEAPOLIS: Cleveland Cavaliers' LeBron James gets off a pass as Minnesota Timberwolves' Karl-Anthony Towns, left, and Gorgui Dieng of Senegal defend during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, in Minneapolis. — AP

BASKETBALL

LEBRON HELPS CAVALIERS TO WIN OVER MINNESOTA

MINNEAPOLIS: LeBron James had 25 points, 14 assists and eight rebounds to turn back a charge from Andrew Wiggins and help the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 116-108 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday night. Channing Frye had 21 points and 10 rebounds while starting for All-Star Kevin Love, who will miss at least the next six weeks after having surgery on his left knee. Kyrie Irving scored 25 points for the Cavs and James sealed the victory with a stepback 3-pointer with two minutes to play. Wiggins scored 41 points against the team that drafted him and Karl-Anthony Towns scored 26 for the Wolves, who finished a six-game homestand at 2-4. The Wolves allowed Cleveland to shoot 51 percent and hit 13 3s.

BULLS 105, RAPTORS 94

Doug McDermott scored 20 points, All-Star Jimmy Butler had 19 points and 12 assists in his return to the lineup, and Chicago beat Toronto for the 11th straight time. Taj Gibson had 14 points and Rajon Rondo added 12 for the Bulls, who led by as many as 23 points and never trailed in the final three quarters to snap a three-game skid. Toronto's last win in the series was Dec. 31, 2013. Kyle Lowry scored 22 points to lead the Raptors, who lost their third straight and fell one-half game behind idle Atlanta for the No. 4 seed in the Eastern Conference. DeMar DeRozan was limited to 18 points - 10 below his season average. He was whistled for his second technical foul in the final minute and ejected from the game.

KINGS 97, LAKERS 96

DeMarcus Cousins had 40 points and 12

NBA results/standings									
Sacramento 97, LA Lakers 96; Cleveland 116, Minnesota 108; Chicago 105, Toronto 94.									
Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	36	19	.655	-	Utah	34	22	.607	-
Toronto	32	24	.571	4.5	Oklahoma City	31	25	.554	3
NY Knicks	23	33	.411	13.5	Denver	25	30	.455	8.5
Philadelphia	21	34	.382	15	Portland	23	32	.418	10.5
Brooklyn	9	46	.164	27	Minnesota	21	35	.375	13
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	38	16	.704	-	Golden State	46	9	.836	-
Indiana	29	26	.527	9.5	LA Clippers	34	21	.618	12
Chicago	27	29	.482	12	Sacramento	24	32	.429	22.5
Detroit	26	30	.464	13	LA Lakers	19	38	.333	28
Milwaukee	24	30	.444	14	Phoenix	17	39	.304	29.5
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Washington	33	21	.611	-	San Antonio	42	13	.764	-
Atlanta	32	23	.582	1.5	Houston	40	17	.702	3
Charlotte	24	31	.436	9.5	Memphis	34	23	.596	9
Miami	24	32	.429	10	Dallas	22	33	.400	20
Orlando	21	36	.368	13.5	New Orleans	22	34	.393	20.5

rebounds, and Sacramento held on for its fourth straight win.

Lou Williams scored 29 points off the bench to lead the Lakers, who rallied from 13 down early in the fourth quarter and tied the game 91-all on his 3-pointer with 1:31 to play. Los Angeles pulled even twice more, including on another 3 by Williams, but couldn't overcome Cousins, who scored the final 10 points for

Sacramento. Williams' potential game-winning 3 went wide right of the basket at the buzzer. He was 4 of 11 from long range.

The Lakers got within two in the third only to have the Kings run off nine points in a row and extend their lead to 68-57. Williams made a 3 and another basket, and Larry Nance Jr. scored to cut Sacramento's lead to 70-64 heading into the fourth. — AP

CRICKET

ASHWIN 'BRADMAN OF BOWLING': STEVE WAUGH

NEW DELHI: Former skipper Steve Waugh has warned that Australia's only hope of beating India in their upcoming series is by taming Ravichandran Ashwin, branding the record-breaking spinner "the Bradman of bowling".

After the off spinner became the fastest bowler to claim 250 Test wickets last weekend, Waugh paid Ashwin the ultimate Australian compliment by comparing him to the game's greatest batsman, the late Donald Bradman. "He is the Bradman of bowling. Ashwin is doing what Don Bradman did with batting. Pretty incredible stuff and he is a handy batsman too," Waugh was quoted as saying in the Times of India yesterday. "Ashwin is the player that Australia have to overcome and probably then we have a chance. His record in India is just phenomenal," said Waugh, who was attending an awards ceremony in Monaco.

Australia have not won a Test in India since their 2-1 series victory in 2004 and few observers give them much hope of success this time round against what is currently the world's number one ranked team. India are

on a record-breaking 19-Test unbeaten run and have also won six series on the trot under the captaincy of their star batsman Virat Kohli. Ashwin is the team's undoubted star bowler, ranked number one in Test bowling rankings and top of the all-rounders' list after picking up 61 wickets in the last three series-all of them at home.

His latest match-winning performance came during the one-off Test against Bangladesh in Hyderabad, which ended on Monday when Ashwin recorded figures of 4-73 in the second innings.

India have been in red-hot form in recent months, with the victory over Bangladesh following a 3-0 whitewash of New Zealand in September and a 4-0 drubbing of England at the end of last year.

"India are very hard to beat in India and that has been proved in the last couple of years. They are a very settled side and everyone is very confident in their role," said Waugh. The four-match series between India and Australia begins in Pune on February 23. The other Tests are in Bangalore, Ranchi and Dharamsala. — AFP



Ravichandran Ashwin



LEEDS: England's newly-announced cricket Test captain Joe Root poses for photographers ahead of a news conference at Headingley stadium in Leeds, north-east England, yesterday. Root said he felt "privileged, humbled and very excited" after being given the "huge honour" of being named England's new Test captain. — AFP

SHAHARYAR SAYS PCB WON'T SPARE MATCH-FIXERS

ISLAMABAD: A top official of the Pakistan Cricket Board says two players accused of involvement in spot-fixing in the Pakistan Super League tournament will face maximum punishments if they confess. Sharjeel Khan and Khalid Latif arrived in Lahore yesterday and were scheduled to appear before the PCB's head of anti-corruption unit Col. Mohammad Azam. "If they confessed there's no need to form a tribunal, but we will hand them maximum punishment so that nobody could do this thing in future," PCB chairman Shaharyar Khan told reporters.

Shaharyar said the players will be handed the charges and the PCB will give them around 14 days to respond. "We will give evidence to them which we have against them... it's necessary to give them a chance," Shaharyar said.

Shaharyar said the PCB was aware of the fact that bookmakers were targeting players in the PSL and that was the reason players were briefed before the inaugural match between Islamabad United and Peshawar Zalmi on Feb. 9 in Dubai.

Both accused players were part of the defending champions Islamabad United. Sharjeel played in the first match, which was under the scrutiny of the PCB's anti-corruption unit while Latif was rested.

PCB provisionally suspended both Sharjeel and Latif while another former test opener Nasir Jamshed was also provisionally suspended on Monday - the day he was arrested and then released on bail in England. "Jamshed and another man, Yusuf, were arrested by the National Crime Agency," a PCB official told The Associated Press yesterday.

The PCB official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to comment on the issue. Britain's National Crime Authority released an earlier statement saying two men in their

30s had been arrested on Feb. 13 and released on bail until April in connection with bribery offences as part of an ongoing investigation into international cricket match spot-fixing.

A third Islamabad United player is also under investigation and a player from each of the Karachi Kings and Quetta Gladiators franchises was questioned by the PCB's anti-corruption unit in the United Arab Emirates, where the Super League is being staged. All three players were allowed to continue playing in the tournament.

"We know what we are doing," PSL chairman Najam Sethi said late Tuesday. "We have all the evidence and we knew this for a while. We had information, but we cannot talk about stuff right now, a charge sheet will be given to players soon." Sethi said the PCB's anti-corruption unit had information about spot-fixing before the PSL began on Feb. 9. "We had identified a few players and then at final stages we knew the ICC had some information as well," he said.

"When we compared it, the information was the same and then we decided to act on this." "We have these players' phones in which there is more information - who they were in touch with, what they talked about," Sethi said the cricket board's anti-corruption unit had infiltrated gambling operations in Pakistan ahead of the tournament. It's not the first time Pakistan cricketers have been embroiled in corruption controversies. In 1999 Salim Malik and Ataur Rehman were banned for life following a match-fixing investigation.

In 2010 three players - Mohammad Amir, Salman Butt and Mohammad Asif - were suspended for five years for their involvement in the bowling of deliberate no-balls at pre-determined times during a test match in England. — AP

SHORT-SIDE GOALS RISE AS SHOOTERS ADJUST TO GOALIES

NEW YORK: It's the kind of goal that makes fans groan because the goalie probably should've stopped it. A shooter skating down the wing or even behind the net fires the puck between a goaltender and the near post for a short-side goal. It looks like it shouldn't go in, but it has been happening a lot more this season as players figure out what goalies are doing ... or at least trying to do.

"Those goals, they don't look good, but I think if people knew how hard it was to do that maneuver, they might be a little less quick to jump to judgment on the goalies," Chicago Blackhawks goalie Scott Darling said. That maneuver is called the "Reverse VH" and it's the most widespread way for goalies to cover the post and not allow soft goals to be scored. An opposite of the previously-used "VH" stance, it means a goalie's pad against the post is horizontal along the ice while the back leg is vertical.

The Reverse VH is more effective than its predecessor, but as NHL Network analyst and former goaltender Kevin Weekes has said: Short side has become the new five hole. And everyone in hockey knows it.

Brian Boucher, another retired goalie turned analyst, said you can't go two or three nights without seeing a short-side goal somewhere around the league. As recently as Thursday night, Colorado

Avalanche captain Gabriel Landeskog went short side on Stanley Cup-winning Pittsburgh Penguins goaltender Matt Murray on a textbook sharp-angle shot that looks like a bad goal but is more the product of shooters understanding techniques.

"Guys are realizing that the sharp-angle shots are extremely difficult to stop," Vezina Trophy winning goalie Braden Holtby of the Washington Capitals said. "You do see more and more guys trying it because it's a high-quality scoring chance. Guys figure out trends now. They kind of figure them out a little quicker than they used to, which isn't great for us." Jonathan Quick led the Los Angeles Kings to two Cups by using the Reverse VH and taking advantage of his Gumby-like athleticism. The stance, which originated in Sweden a few years before, took off in the NHL after Quick won the Cup in 2012 and now it's a go-to for most goalies.

Goaltending analyst Justin Goldman points out that when a skater is coming down the ice, there's actually more room for the puck on the short side than the far side because there's less distance for it to travel. More short-side goals isn't a result of the Reverse VH being a bad stance, but instead he believes it's goalies overusing it and losing the cat-and-mouse game between them and shooters. Too often goalies drop

to their knees into the Reverse VH and become sitting ducks for Alex Ovechkin, Sidney Crosby, Joe Pavelski and some of the best snipers around.

"The shooter knows the goalie's going to drop into this stance, which means he can release a puck a half a second or a half a step sooner than usual and he knows what his target is before he even looks up and sees where the goalie is," Goldman said. "They're almost over-anticipating what a shooter is going to do before he actually does it and the shooter has the capacity now, he has the wherewithal and he has the accuracy to pick that spot."

Darling thinks some goalies are still mastering the relatively new Reverse VH, and 2006 Cup winner Cam Ward of the Carolina Hurricanes acknowledged he still uses the old VH style because he's more comfortable in it. Ward looks at Tuukka Rask of the Boston Bruins as someone who can push side-to-side with power out of the Reverse VH, and Goldman called 2013 Vezina winner Sergei Bobrovsky of the Columbus Blue Jackets the "posterchild" for doing it right.

"It's a tough position to get fully square, but when the puck's behind the net it gives you good coverage for pass outs and things like that," Philadelphia goaltender Steve Mason said. "It's complicated, but I think

sometimes it can be overused."

Flyers teammate Jakob Voracek said he just shoots "wherever it's open," but that's often the short side nowadays. When the best shooters can anticipate a goalie going down early and putting the puck where he isn't, Goldman said it's so difficult to get back up that the key is being patient and staying upright longer.

"The problem is because goalies rely on this stance so often, they're dropping down into it before the puck is actually off the shooter's stick," Goldman said. "You want the shooter to make the first move. You want to hold your feet. You want to keep yourself as patient as possible so you read what the shooter does first and then you react." Easier said than done, perhaps, even for the best in the game. A lot has changed since Boucher set the consecutive shutout record in 2003, and he doesn't even know if he'd be able to perfect the Reverse VH and deal with the expectations of goaltenders today. "You've got to be in position to make the second and third saves because at the end of the day it's about keeping the puck out of the net," Boucher said. "Whether it's your fault or it's not your fault, if you don't keep it out of the net you're going to have a tough time winning games and you're going to have a tough time having a job."

MUSICAL COACHES

Michel Therrien became the fifth coach fired this season when the Montreal Canadiens canned him Tuesday and replaced him with Claude Julien, who was fired by Boston last week. Julien took five more days to get a new job than Bruce Boudreau did when fired by Washington on a Monday in November 2011 and joining the Anaheim Ducks yesterday.

MILESTONE WATCH

After registering a point Tuesday in the Penguins' win over Vancouver, Crosby is one away from 1,000 for his career. He's at 756 games now and will soon become the second-fastest active player to hit 1,000 after the ageless Jaromir Jagr.

GAME OF THE WEEK

The Blue Jackets host the Penguins on Friday in what very well could be a first-round playoff preview.

LEADERS

Points: Crosby (Pittsburgh), Connor McDavid (Edmonton), 61; Goals: Crosby, 30; Defenseman points: Brent Burns (San Jose), 59; Goals-against average: Devan Dubnyk (Minnesota), 1.97; Save percentage: Dubnyk, .933. — AP

SOCCER

FOOTBALLERS PRONE TO BRAIN DAMAGE: STUDY

LONDON: Professional footballers are at heightened risk of developing a brain disease that can cause dementia and is usually found in boxers and American football players, a study published yesterday suggests. The study, published in the journal Acta Neuropathologica, looked at 14 retired footballers with dementia who had started playing football and heading the ball in childhood or their early teens.

Post-mortem examinations carried out on six of the players found that four of them showed signs of chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), far in excess of the average rate of 12 percent found in the general population. "The findings of our study show a potential link between playing foot-

mid-70s for the general population-and 12 of the 14 died with advanced dementia.

Permission from next of kin for post-mortem examinations to be carried out was granted for only six of the players. The players whose brain autopsies showed signs of CTE also had Alzheimer's disease, though Ling said the relationship between the two diseases remained unclear.

"They're two potential brain disorders that can cause dementia," she said after the study was presented to the media in London. "It's most likely that a combination of these pathologies have contributed to dementia in these retired footballers." The most pressing research question is therefore to find out if dementia is more common in footballers than in the normal population."

HEAVY, LEATHER FOOTBALLS

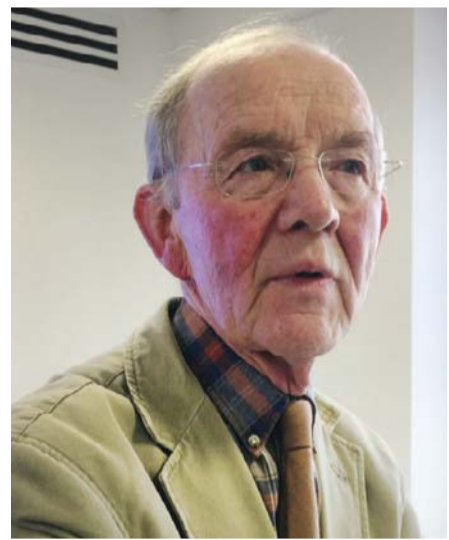
The post-mortems were carried out by researchers from University College London and Britain's National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery.

The study did not show whether the damage inflicted on the footballers' brains had been caused by heading the ball, aerial collisions with other players or something else. Unlike boxers and American football players, who regularly receive major blows to the head, footballers are unlikely to experience significant neurological symptoms or losses of consciousness. Instead, they are subjected to what the researchers termed "repetitive, sub-concussive head impacts". CTE can only be diagnosed posthumously and a very small number of former footballers are known to have had the disease.

They include former Brazil captain Hilderaldo Bellini and ex-West Bromwich Albion striker Jeff Astle, who died in 2002 aged 59. Astle was originally diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's, but a re-examination of his brain revealed he had died from CTE that a doctor said was brought on by repeatedly heading the ball.

An American semi-professional footballer called Patrick Grange died of CTE in 2012, which researchers say is a sign the condition cannot only be linked to the repeated heading of old, heavy, leather footballs. Several high-profile former players have contracted Alzheimer's, including three of England's 1966 World Cup-winning team: Martin Peters, Nobby Stiles and Ray Wilson. England's FA says it supports research into degenerative brain diseases in former players and has called on world governing body FIFA to investigate.

Jiri Dvorak, FIFA's former chief medical officer, has said there is "very little evidence" linking footballers' brain trauma and dementia. In the United States, children under 11 have been banned from heading the ball in response to a lawsuit brought by parents and players concerned about concussion. The British researchers say the risk of recreational footballers developing brain problems through playing the sport is "extremely low". — AFP



LONDON: Consultant psychiatrist Dr Don Williams speaks to the Associated Press in his office in London, Tuesday. The degenerative damage potentially caused by repeated blows to the head in soccer has been highlighted by a rare study of brains of a small number of retired players who developed dementia. Williams played a key role in the research after starting to monitor former footballers who were diagnosed with dementia from 1980. — AP

ball and CTE," the study's lead author, Helen Ling from University College London's Institute of Neurology, told AFP.

"There's now a pressing need to identify the risk involved. "Large-scale study is needed and cooperation from professional bodies such as the FA (Football Association) and FIFA will be required."

It is the first time CTE has been confirmed in a study involving a group of ex-football players. The unnamed players were 13 former professionals and one "committed amateur" who had played football regularly for an average of 26 years.

They had all been referred to a psychiatry service in Swansea, south Wales between 1980 and 2010. The earliest signs of dementia started when they were in their mid-60s-compared to an average of their

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE PROGRESS NEAR IMPOSSIBLE: NEYMAR

BARCELONA: Barcelona's Brazil star Neymar says it will be a virtual 'mission impossible' for the Spanish giants to progress in the Champions League after their 4-0 first leg demolition by Paris Saint-Germain.

No team has ever come back from a 4-0 first leg deficit to remain in the Champions League and Barcelona are under no illusions about the mountain they will have to climb for the second leg of the last 16 clash at Camp Nou on March 8. "Now we have to think about the return match and see what we can try to do to reverse this situation," the Brazilian star told journalists. "But it will be very difficult, practically impossible. However, we can't give up." Barca were totally dominated during the game in which Angel di Maria scored twice alongside further goals from Julian Draxler and Edison Cavani in a match Barca coach Luis Enrique dubbed a disaster for the Spaniards.

Neymar poured praise on PSG and said that being hammered was unfamiliar to Barcelona's galaxy of international stars.

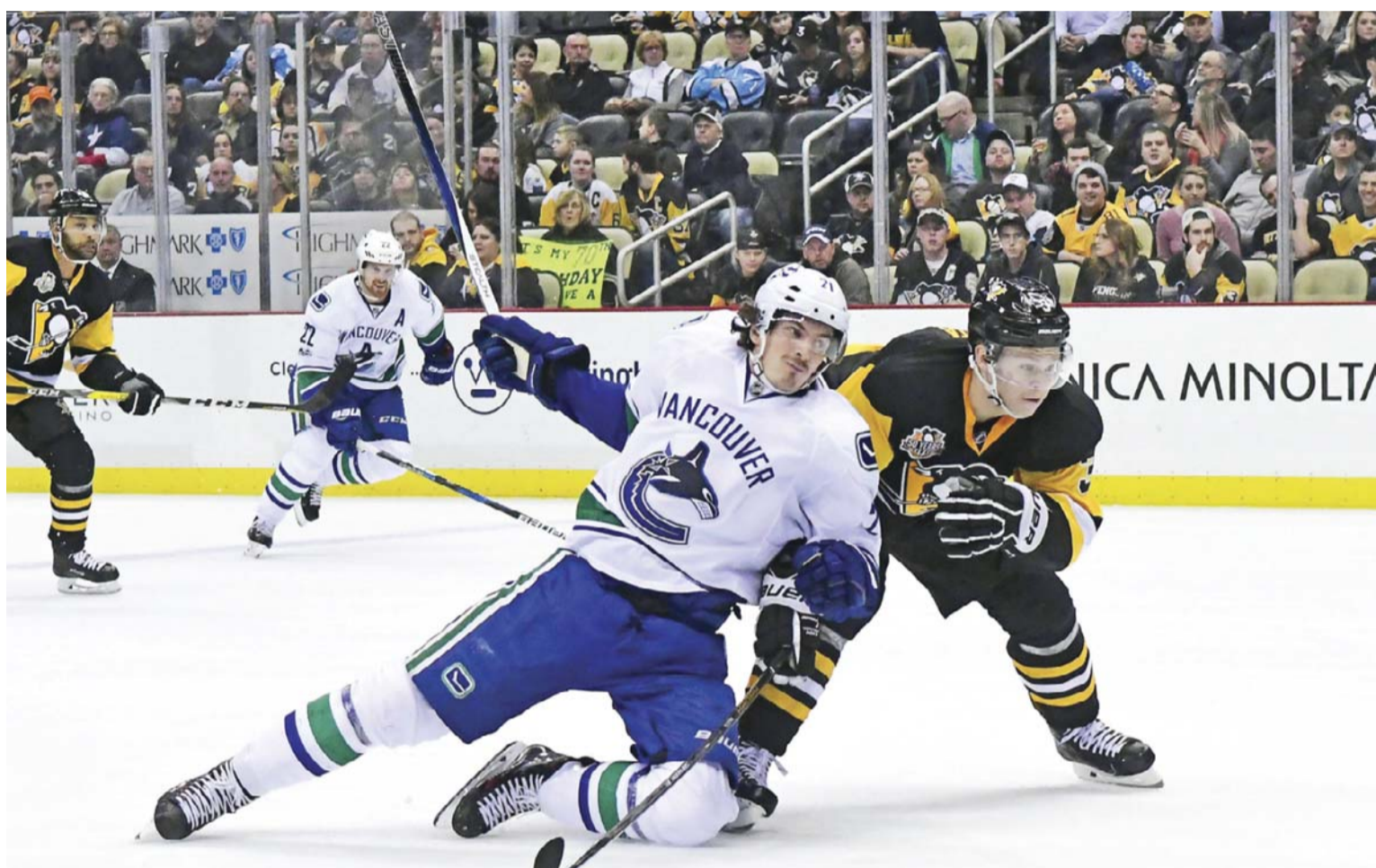
"All credit to PSG," he said. "This match was

atypical, we are not in the habit of finding ourselves in this sort of situation.

"It will be very difficult to prepare for the return match, with a four-goal deficit. I don't think this has ever happened to me."

He said that Barcelona had not prepared well for the game but were still surprised by the punishment they had received.

"We were not good, we did not do our work as we should have done and we were surprised by this result," he said. The joint heaviest defeat in coach Enrique's three seasons in charge means Barcelona face missing out on the quarter-finals for the first time since losing on away goals to Liverpool in the last 16 in 2006/07. "It was a disastrous night for us in which we were clearly inferior," Enrique acknowledged. Neymar, Lionel Messi and teammates took part in a closed-door training session at Camp Nou earlier yesterday to wind down after the PSG defeat. A glum looking trio of Messi, Luis Suarez and Gerard Pique were pictured on the club website taking part in the session. — AFP



PITTSBURGH: Loui Eriksson #21 of the Vancouver Canucks is taken to the ice by Olli Maatta #3 of the Pittsburgh Penguins at PPG Paints Arena on Tuesday in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. — AFP

NHL

CROSBY GETS 999TH CAREER PT, PENGUINS BEAT CANUCKS

PITTSBURGH: Evgeni Malkin had a goal and an assist in his return from a lower-body injury and Sidney Crosby got his 999th career point with an assist as the Pittsburgh Penguins rolled by the Vancouver Canucks 4-0 on Tuesday night. Phil Kessel, Jake Guentzel and Matt Cullen also scored for the defending Stanley Cup champions. Matt Murray stopped 29 shots for his third shutout this season and the fourth of his career. Pittsburgh broke it open with three third-period goals past Ryan Miller. Crosby fed a streaking Guentzel down the slot 2:27 into the third to make it 2-0 and pull Crosby within a point of becoming the 86th player in NHL history to reach 1,000. Miller made 38 saves while under siege for most of the night as the Penguins remained unbeaten in regulation since the All-Star break (5-0-2).

DUCKS 1, WILD 0

John Gibson made 37 saves for his fourth shutout of the season, rookie Joseph Cramarossa scored his fourth goal and Anaheim blanked Minnesota. Gibson stalled the league's fourth-highest scoring team, beating Minnesota and former coach Bruce Boudreau for the first time in three meetings.

The Wild were 0 for 5 on the power play and lost in regulation for the first time in six games and the fifth since the start of December, a span of 34 games. Devan Dubnyk made 22 saves. Cramarossa scored for the first time in 16 games 4:38 into the first period.

MAPLE LEAFS 7, ISLANDERS 1

Auston Matthews scored twice, Frederik Andersen earned his 100th NHL win and Toronto routed New York in a game with playoff implications. The Maple Leafs set a season high for goals and won for the third time in nine games. They moved three points ahead of the Islanders for the second wild card in the Eastern Conference. New York fell to 10-4-2 in its past 16 games. Matthews increased his rookie total to 27 goals and Andersen stopped 33 shots. Josh Leivo had a career-high three points with one goal and two assists for Toronto.

Nazem Kadri and William Nylander each had a goal and an assist. Tyler Bozak and Matt Hunwick also scored for the Maple Leafs. Jason Chimera scored on a penalty shot for New York. Thomas Greiss and Jean-Francois Berube combined to give up seven goals on 41 shots.

DEVILS 3, AVALANCHE 2

Devils defenseman Andy Greene scored the

NHL results/standings													
Edmonton 5, Arizona 2; Winnipeg 5, Dallas 2; Anaheim 1, Minnesota 0; Toronto 7, NY Islanders 1; Buffalo 3, Ottawa 2; New Jersey 3, Colorado 2; Pittsburgh 4, Vancouver 0.													
Western Conference					Eastern Conference								
Central Division					Atlantic Division			Metropolitan Division					
W	L	OTLGF	GA	PTS	Montreal	31	19	8	165	150	70		
Minnesota	37	13	6	187	130	80	Ottawa	29	19	6	145	146	64
Chicago	35	17	5	166	147	75	Boston	29	23	6	157	155	64
St. Louis	29	22	5	161	165	63	Toronto	26	18	11	172	162	63
Nashville	27	21	8	158	151	62	Florida	24	20	10	134	153	58
Winnipeg	26	29	4	171	187	56	Buffalo	24	23	10	141	161	58
Dallas	22	26	10	160	187	54	Tampa Bay	25	24	7	154	160	57
Colorado	15	37	2	109	184	32	Detroit	22	24	10	141	169	54
San Jose	34	18	5	156	135	73	Washington	39	11	6	192	121	84
Anaheim	30	18	10	152	147	70	Pittsburgh	35	13	7	197	155	77
Edmonton	30	19	8	162	148	68	Columbus	35	15	5	177	136	75
Los Angeles	28	23	4	138	136	60	NY Rangers	37	18	1	192	147	75
Calgary	28	26	3	149	164	59	Philadelphia	27	22	7	147	168	61
Vancouver	25	26	6	135	164	56	NY Islanders	25	20	10	162	165	60
Arizona	19	29	7	131	174	45	New Jersey	24	22	10	131	159	58
							Carolina	24	22	7	140	156	55

Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)

JETS 5, STARS 2

Patrik Laine got his third hat trick of the season, including the go ahead goal with 5:07 left to lift Winnipeg over Dallas. The Finnish rookie has 26 goals, including two in the third period as the Jets broke open a tight game. Joel Armia and Blake Wheeler also scored to help Winnipeg snap a four-game skid.

Jamie Benn and Tyler Seguin scored in the second period for the Stars to erase a two-goal deficit. Connor Hellebuyck made 34 saves in his third straight start for the Jets since Ondrej Pavelec sustained a lower-body injury. Antti Niemi stopped 19 of 22 shots for Dallas. The victory ended a five-game home losing streak for the Jets, and Dallas took its sixth loss in seven games.

OILERS 5, COYOTES 2

Leon Draisaitl and Oscar Klefbom each had a goal and two assists as Edmonton overcame a slow start to beat Arizona. Matt Hendricks, Mark Letestu and Patrick Maroon also scored for the Oilers, who won for the second time in six games. Cam Talbot finished with 23 saves. Josh Jooris and Martin Hanzal had the goals for the Coyotes, who won their previous two. — AP

FORM NOT REPUTATION THE KEY FOR ENGLAND'S SOUTHGATE

LONDON: England manager Gareth Southgate has vowed to select players based on form not reputation while admitting that the team's current world ranking of 13th is just not good enough.

Southgate, who replaced Sam Allardyce on an interim basis in September and was named full-time manager in November after four matches in charge, has been tasked with reviving England's fortunes

after a disastrous Euro 2016 campaign. "I'm very conscious I've got to get the balance right because ultimately my responsibility is to produce a winning England team," the 46-year-old told the Daily Telegraph in an interview.

"I never pick on reputation-form has to come into it. You have to look at the opposition and the type of game you're expecting and select the players best suited to that.

"We have players of great potential but at the moment we're 13th in the world. We've got to be better, everything we do has got to be better. Even being second in the world isn't good enough, we have to be the best we can be, and that's the best."

Southgate also said his side needed to develop the same ruthless winning mentality that Eddie Jones has instilled in the country's rugby team, which has led to their

unprecedented run of success.

"It's clear they don't believe they can be beaten. That plays a huge role," Southgate said after Jones' side scored a late converted try to beat Wales 21-16 in Cardiff last Saturday to extend their winning streak to 16 games. "You get a sense of the culture that's there. One of the things I was interested in was that culture."

"How are they working? How do they

deliver? Because that's what we are trying to take into the England team: how do we create an environment that will bring the best out of the players?"

"Confidence plays a part. As a coach, you're working out how to challenge at every moment. That said, the challenge should also come from the players themselves. Ownership of what they are doing is really important." — Reuters

THE POGBAS, BROTHERS TURNED SIBLING RIVALS

LONDON: A family football story born on the pitches of Paris's eastern suburbs arrives at Old Trafford today as brothers Paul and Florentin Pogba face off in the Europa League.

"The day has come," says elder brother Florentin, a defender with Saint-Etienne. "We're going to face each other on the pitch, rather than on our neighbourhood mini-pitch." The two Pogbas' lives have veered in different directions since their childhood scraps on a synthetic pitch in Roissy-en-Brie, 24 kilometres (15 miles) from the centre of the French capital.

Paul, 23 and capped 44 times by France, is the world's most expensive footballer following his return to Manchester United from Juventus for a fee of £89.3 million (\$111 million, 105.2 million euros).

Florentin, 26, opted to represent Guinea at international level and has an estimated transfer value of three million euros according to the respected Transfermarkt website.

United are the richest club in the world. Saint-Etienne are not even the richest club in the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region, where Lyon are the local powerhouse.

"Even if United are a great club, anything is possible in football," Florentin told the UEFA website this week.

"The fact they're better than us on paper doesn't matter." Florentin has become accustomed to watching his little brother win from afar and the chances are he will have an opportunity to do so up close in Thursday's last 32 first leg. Saint-Etienne may be fifth in Ligue 1 and United sixth in the Premier League, but Jose Mourinho's star-studded team have gone 16 league games without defeat.

It will be up to Florentin and his teammates to try to prevent United settling into a rhythm that is often set by Paul's driving runs and passes to Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

Florentin has not been a regular starter this season, but in recent weeks Saint-Etienne coach Christophe Galtier has found a place for him at left-back. With Paul play-

ing in central midfield, their paths may not cross too often, but with both players comfortably over six feet tall (183 centimetres), any clashes could be seismic.

'HE GOES MAD'

"If he arrives at full pelt and I have to tackle him, I will," Florentin told French television show Telefoot.

"I'm not going to knock him out—he's my brother—but if I have to commit a foul, I'll do it." For Pogba Jr., the game represents another opportunity to prove himself as a big-game player.

A guaranteed starter, he has played a leading role in United's current resurgence, but remains without a league goal or assist in 2017. "In terms of being the world's most expensive player, I think he has put that to one side because it's more an issue for the media," says Florentin, whose twin brother, Mathias, plays for Sparta Rotterdam.

"He's just playing his football, even though everything he does gets three or four times more attention, good or bad. He can handle all of that because of the mental strength he has had since his youth."

"He is quite irritable though. He doesn't like to lose. His head starts buzzing when he loses. I learnt to lose and I would say that you're not losing, but learning. But for him, when he loses, he goes mad."

United's other France international, Anthony Martial, knows defeat will be hard to take for whichever brother ends up on the losing side. "They are well known for being big jokers and mickey-takers, but once they are on the field, it will be like two warriors who are going all-out to win the game," Martial told the United website.

"If one beats the other, he'll immediately start giving out loads of stick so they'll be desperate to do all they can to win!" Florentin adds: "My parents will have mixed feelings because whatever happens there will be one winner and one loser. However, there are two winners because this game will be an unforgettable occasion." — AFP



ISTANBUL: Turkey announced yesterday an ambitious bid to host the Euro 2024 football tournament yesterday.

SOCCER

TURKEY SEEKS TO HOST EURO 2024

ISTANBUL: Turkey announced yesterday an ambitious bid backed by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to host the Euro 2024 football tournament, brushing off concerns over security and infrastructure. The football authorities hope it will be second time lucky for the bid after losing out to France to host the 2016 event by one vote, but Turkey is likely to face strong competition from Germany. Turkey in 2014 withdrew its bid to host final stage matches of Euro 2020 — which uniquely will be held across Europe in favour of focusing on a one country bid for 2024.

Turkish Football Federation (TFF) chief Yildirim Demirezen said the bid would be formally presented to UEFA on March 2, just before the March 3 deadline for candidates.

"This time it is our right to host the championships," he told reporters at TFF headquarters. He thanked Erdogan for the support, adding: "I believe we are moving together on this path."

Sports Minister Akif Cagatay Kilic said that Turkey now had the best stadium infrastructure in Europe and its only rival in terms of recently

built venues was the United States.

"In the last years, Turkey has made a great step forward in terms of stadiums," he added. "Turkey is able to organise anything on a world sporting level." Turkey has in the last years embarked on a massive spree of stadium building, opening a new 42,000 seat venue in Konya in 2014, a similar size venue for Istanbul side Besiktas last year and most recently a new stadium for Trabzonspor by the Black Sea.

'OLYMPICS BID TAUGHT US'

The Turkish authorities were bitterly disappointed that Istanbul lost out to Tokyo in the race to host the 2020 Olympics and believe the country now has the infrastructure in place to host a global sports event. Turkey had also in 2010 lost out narrowly by one vote and in controversial circumstances to France in the bidding to host the 2016 Euro competition.

It had also been keen to host Euro 2020 and the Turkish authorities were angered by UEFA's decision to hold the competition across

European cities. Kilic did not rule out another bid in the future to host the Olympics, saying the failed 2020 candidacy "taught us a lot" and helped "increase our capabilities".

In the 2024 race, Turkey will face competition from 2006 World Cup hosts Germany which has already confirmed its interest-as well as possibly a joint bid from Scandinavian nations.

But the bid may be shadowed by concerns over security after the July 15 failed coup and a slew of terror attacks in 2016 that left hundreds dead, as well as whether Turkey's transport infrastructure is up to hosting a nationwide tournament. "I don't think there will be any problems with transport," said Kilic.

He compared the rapid construction of Istanbul's third airport due to open next year with the repeated delays in opening Berlin Brandenburg airport in Germany.

The country has seen in the last years a massive overhaul of its infrastructure in projects spearheaded by Erdogan as he seeks to make Turkey a top 10 global economy. — AFP



Paul Pogba

BUSQUETS BLAMES FITNESS AND TACTICS FOR PARIS NIGHTMARE

MADRID: Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets has criticised their tactical and physical frailties after a 4-0 thrashing at Paris St Germain in the last 16 left them on the brink of their earliest Champions League exit in a decade.

The five-times European champions were crushed in every aspect of the first-leg clash by Unai Emery's side, suffering their heaviest defeat in Europe since 2013 and under coach Luis Enrique, who appeared ruffled in front of the media.

"They (PSG) played much better than us and they overwhelmed us physically," Busquets told Catalan television network TV3. "They pressed us harder, they were much better tactically than us, they had a plan and executed it how they wanted to and they were the better team."

The midfielder also appeared to criticise the team's preparation for the game, adding: "We expected something else but that's what can happen. We hope to be able to turn things around at the Nou Camp but I can't lie, it's very difficult."

Luis Enrique cut an uneasy figure in an interview with TV3 which he cut short, saying: "Stop looking for more reasons. This is my responsibility and I hope you use the same tone now we have lost as when we win." In his news conference,

Luis Enrique said his side were utterly outplayed although he rejected suggestions he had not prepared his players properly for the high pressing game PSG carried out to perfection.

"We weren't surprised at all, we had spoken about their pressing before the game but that doesn't mean you can overcome it. We lost so many individual duels. PSG played as we expected and played at their best and we did not," he said. "It's pretty simple. Our opponents were better than us with and without the ball. They won battles, they were more effective and the result clearly reflects what happened. I don't think I have to give a huge explanation to Barca fans."

Luis Enrique gave midfielder Andres Iniesta his first start for a month after his recovery from an ankle injury alongside Busquets who had also only recently returned from a layoff while Gerard Pique had just come back after a muscle injury.

"We had players that had just recovered but I don't want to individualise, now is not the time. I have every confidence in my players, it's time to talk about coaches and I assume full responsibility for this as always," added Luis Enrique. "The players are the same ones that have won on other days." — Reuters

ANGEL REBORN IN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE THRASHING OF BARCA

PARIS: One month ago, Angel di Maria was an outcast on the Paris Saint-Germain substitutes' bench, but the striker was reborn in the Champions League demolition of Barcelona.

Two goals in the 4-0 thrashing of Argentina teammate Lionel Messi's Barca saw birthday boy di Maria hit near perfection in a way that he rarely managed at Manchester United or Real Madrid. Superstar Messi has rarely looked so poor. Long-suffering PSG players and fans, so often at the receiving end against the Spanish giants, still could not believe the scoreline when they woke up yesterday.

"You saw 14 warriors out there, people who wanted to help each other. And when you play like that you have nights like that. It was fabulous," said midfielder Blaise Matuidi.

Di Maria hit a goal in each half on his 29th birthday and each time gave his traditional celebration, forming a heart with his hands.

But di Maria's heart has not really been in the PSG game this season. Last month, coach Unai Emery banished the second most expensive import into the French league — 63 million euros paid to United in 2015 — to the substitutes' bench. Julian Draxler had arrived from Germany and Lucas was playing well. Being out in the January cold jolted di Maria into action.

DI MARIA'S METAMORPHOSIS

Already against Bordeaux last Friday, he scored one in the 3-0 win that kept PSG in the French title race against Monaco.

PSG back Thomas Meunier said di Maria hated being on the bench and hailed di Maria's game against Bordeaux as "an Angel who has gone through a metamorphosis."

Di Maria said he had problems with the tactics brought in by Emery last year. "Those who know me know that I like to run everywhere, a bit haphazard. He wants every player to take care of his own space and press from that position. It was a problem at the start, but I understood and now I like it," di Maria told the Spanish sports daily Marca after the Bordeaux game.

Di Maria forced Lucas out of the starting line up for the Barcelona game and received a standing ovation from the Parc des Princes crowd when he left in the 61st minute.

He scored with a curling free kick and a second half shot, both attempts from outside the penalty area. Di Maria now has nine goals for the season and hopes it will set him up for a spec-



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's Argentinian forward Angel Di Maria celebrates after scoring a goal during the UEFA Champions League round of 16 first leg football match between Paris Saint-Germain and FC Barcelona on Tuesday at the Parc des Princes stadium in Paris. — AFP

ular finale. "It was a very special day. It's impossible to have a better performance and birthday. It was a wonderful display and fully deserved," he said on Beln TV after the match.

"We controlled the game for 90 minutes. It was hard to control Neymar, Luis Suarez and Lionel Messi but we managed it in the end."

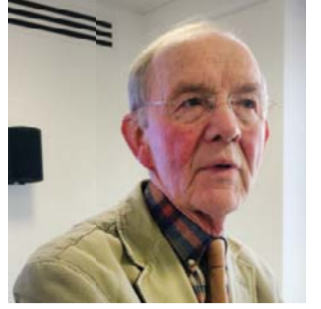
PSG had twice been eliminated from the Champions League at the hands of Barcelona in the previous four seasons. Barca also had a fearsome record in games against sides coached by Emery, losing just one of 23 games before being put to the sword yesterday.

PSG's Qatari owners have set Emery the task

of at least reaching the Champions League semi-finals. The Spaniard has now had a lot of pressure taken off his shoulders. But he warned that the players must make sure they finish the job in the second leg in Barcelona and reach the quarter-finals. "The only feeling I have is that the team produced a massive effort against the great Barca," Emery said after the triumph.

"I respect Barca and the message was clear in the dressing room: there is still 90 minutes to go and we are going to suffer there in Barcelona."

"So, prudence, satisfaction, concentration on the second match and respect for the great opposing team and its players." — AFP

Olympic great
Hackett arrested
after 'breakdown'Footballers
prone to brain
damage: Study

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ROOT VOWS TO CAPTAIN ENGLAND 'HIS WAY'

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MADRID: Real Madrid's Karim Benzema jumps over Napoli goalkeeper Pepe Reina during the Champions League round of 16, first leg, soccer match between Real Madrid and Napoli at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid, yesterday. — AP

REAL MADRID BOUNCE BACK TO BEAT NAPOLI

MADRID: Real Madrid shrugged off conceding an early away goal to take a huge step towards a seventh straight Champions League quarter-final as goals from Karim Benzema, Toni Kroos and Casemiro sealed a 3-1 win over Napoli yesterday. Lorenzo Insigne's stunning 40-yard strike had the travelling hordes in dream land after just eight minutes of the last 16 first leg.

However, Benzema soon headed home an equaliser before Kroos and Casemiro fired home from outside the box early in the second half to give the holders a commanding lead ahead of the second leg on March 7.

With former Napoli great Diego Maradona watching on, the atmosphere reached fever pitch before kick-off as up to 10,000 travelling fans were estimated to have

made the trip from Naples for only their side's second ever appearance in the last 16. Maradona even gave the Napoli players a pep talk in the dressing room before kick-off. By contrast, Real are in the knockout stages for the 20th straight season and it was the home fans who nearly had something to cheer inside 30 seconds as Benzema's shot from close range was parried by Pepe Reina. However, it was Napoli who got off to the perfect start just eight minutes in when Insigne took aim from 40 yards and caught Madrid 'keeper Keylor Navas out of position with a superb effort that curled around the Costa Rica international.

Madrid, though, showed the response of champions to level just 10 minutes later when Dani Carvajal's cross

with the outside of his right boot picked out Benzema to power home a header from close range.

Cristiano Ronaldo should have had one of the two goals he needs to reach 100 in European competition on 27 minutes when great work from Benzema and Luka Modric freed the World Player of the Year inside the area, but he blasted well over the bar.

Madrid's control of the first 45 minutes grew as the half went on and only a combination of Reina and the post denied the hosts a lead at the break.

This time Ronaldo was inch-perfect with his low cross for Benzema, but his effort was tipped onto the woodwork and behind by Reina.

The tie did swing decisively in Madrid's favour within

10 minutes of the restart however. Firstly, Ronaldo played provider once more with a fine run down the right and measured cut-back for Kroos to slot home from the edge of the box. Then Napoli were struck by a thunderbolt from the most unlikely source as defensive midfielder Casemiro pounced on a looping clearance to volley first-time past a helpless Reina. Napoli had the chances to set up a thrilling return leg as Dries Mertens, who had scored 14 goals in his previous 11 appearances, fired over with the goal at his mercy from former Madrid winger Jose Maria Callejon's fine lay-off. Mertens also saw another effort smothered by Navas from close range and Callejon a goal ruled out for offside as Napoli slumped to their first defeat in 19 games. — AFP

THIAGO-INSPIRED BAYERN HAND ARSENAL 5-1 ROUT

MUNICH: Arsene Wenger's future was plunged into further doubt yesterday as Thiago Alcantara inspired Bayern Munich to a 5-1 rout of his hapless Arsenal team which left the Gunners facing a seventh straight Champions League last-16 exit.

Bayern extended their Champions League record to 16 home wins by flooring the Gunners with three goals in ten second-half minutes.

Bayern knocked Arsenal out at the same stage in 2005, 2013 and 2014 and were looking comfortably placed to make it four times after romping through yesterday's first leg.

The Allianz Arena defeat raises the pressure on Wenger for the return leg on March 7 with only Alexis Sanchez's away goal for comfort. The result matched the 5-1 group-stage thrashing Arsenal received in Munich in November 2015 — the club's joint record away defeat in Europe. Arjen Robben's superb curling shot gave Bayern the lead on 11 minutes, but Sanchez levelled by drilling home Manuel Neuer's save from a penalty on 30 minutes.

Bayern moved up a gear after the break with a flurry of goals in quick succession.

Robert Lewandowski headed Bayern back into the lead on 53 minutes before Thiago added two in quick succession while Thomas Mueller came off the bench to complete the rout.

Bayern spent the opening minutes camped in the Arsenal half and took the lead on 10 minutes through Robben's wonderful strike.

The Dutch winger cut in from the right, and curled home a superbly-weighted shot off his left foot from

outside the area. Arsenal then raised the tempo and started pressing the hosts. Bayern defender Mats Hummels was given a yellow card for fouling Sanchez just outside the box.

Mesut Ozil drilled the resulting free-kick at Neuer, but moments later Arsenal were awarded a penalty.

Lewandowski mistimed his clearance kick in the area and struck Laurent Koscielny's raised leg.

Despite Bayern's furious protests, Serbian referee Milorad Mazic pointed to the spot.

Neuer saved Sanchez's penalty, but the Chile international drilled home the rebound from a tight angle at the second attempt.

It was the valuable away goal Bayern had talked about not conceding in the match's build-up.

There were equally furious Bayern protests at the other end when David Alaba's cross struck Hector Bellerin on the hand, but the referee waved play on.

It was 1-1 at the break, but Bayern stepped up the pressure in the second half.

Robben released Philipp Lahm who put in a perfect cross and Lewandowski twisted to tuck his header past David Ospina's reach.

The Poland hot-shot then flicked Xabi Alonso's pass into Thiago's path to tuck his shot past Ospina.

Lewandowski hit the crossbar on 61 minutes, but Thiago added his second when his shot from the edge of the box deflected past the Arsenal goalkeeper on 63 minutes.

Mueller came on for Lewandowski on 86 minutes and added Bayern's fifth two minutes later after Thiago squared the final pass. — AFP



MUNICH: (L-R) Bayern Munich's Chilean midfielder Arturo Vidal, Arsenal's Swiss midfielder Granit Xhaka, Bayern Munich's Dutch midfielder Arjen Robben and Bayern Munich's defender Mats Hummels jump for the ball during the UEFA Champions League round of sixteen football match between FC Bayern Munich and Arsenal in Munich, southern Germany, yesterday. — AFP

Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary BUSINESS

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NEW YORK: Pedestrians walk by the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in Manhattan on an unseasonably warm afternoon in New York. Unusually high temperatures last month prompted a sharp decline in the need for heating, which dragged down overall US industrial output in January, the Federal Reserve reported yesterday.—AFP

US INFLATION HITS FASTEST PACE IN 4 YEARS

RETAIL PRICES PICKED UP, FACTORY OUTPUT ROSE IN JANUARY

WASHINGTON: US consumer prices in January rose at their fastest pace in nearly four years, a fresh sign that a pickup in inflation may be approaching. Labor Department figures showed yesterday. The consumer price index showed a 0.6 percent gain for the month, the third consecutive monthly acceleration and the largest increase since February 2013.

January also saw its largest 12-month CPI increase in nearly five years, rising 2.5 percent over January 2016. Even excluding the more volatile categories of food and energy, prices were still up by almost as much at 2.3 percent. The new figures may help persuade US central bankers to tighten monetary policy more quickly this year after a decade of near-zero interest rates.

Meanwhile, US retail sales rose more than expected in January as households bought electronics and a range of other goods, pointing to sustained domestic demand that should bolster economic growth in the first quarter. The economy's improving prospects were also underscored by other data yesterday showing consumer prices last month recording their biggest increase in nearly four years. The upbeat reports came a day after Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen appeared to put an interest rate hike next month on the table. "The US economy has quite a bit of momentum as the year began," said Jennifer

Lee, a senior economist at BMO Capital Markets in Toronto. "This morning's reports add a little more impetus for the Fed to move this quarter. Still not our call but it is becoming very interesting."

The Commerce Department said retail sales increased 0.4 percent last month. December's retail sales were revised up to show a 1.0 percent rise instead of the previously reported 0.6 percent advance.

Last month's fairly solid sales came despite motor vehicle purchases posting their biggest drop in 10 months. Compared to January last year retail sales were up 5.6 percent. Excluding automobiles, gasoline, building materials and food services, retail sales increased 0.4 percent after a similar gain in December. These so-called core retail sales correspond most closely with the consumer spending component of gross domestic product. Economists had forecast retail sales ticking up 0.1 percent and core sales gaining 0.3 percent last month.

Factories rebound

Consumers in the United States shelled out a total \$472.1 billion in January, a 0.4 percent increase over the prior month. Auto sales, however, saw their sharpest decline in eight months, falling 1.4 percent. Excluding the more volatile auto category, the overall increase in retail sales for the month would have been twice as large

at 0.8 percent. Still, monthly sales were stronger than expected. Analysts had forecast growth of only 0.1 percent.

US manufacturers cranked out more steel, machinery and electronics last month as factories appear to be rebounding after two years of stagnation. Factory output rose 0.2 percent in January, its second straight increase, the Federal Reserve said yesterday. While modest, the gain is equal to the industry's growth in all of 2016. Manufacturers are benefiting from increased spending by businesses on industrial machinery and other equipment. Oil and gas drillers are building new rigs now that energy prices have stabilized after falling sharply two years ago. Cutbacks by drillers had caused orders for steel pipe and other drilling equipment to plummet. And weak overseas economies in Europe and China also cut into exports. Yet those trends have largely reversed. Mining production rose 2.8 percent last month, pushed higher by a solid gain in oil and gas drilling. Utility production fell 5.7 percent last month, as unseasonably warm weather reduced demand for heating. A broader measure of industrial production, which includes manufacturing, mining and utilities, dropped 0.3 percent. Other measures of manufacturing output show steady improvement. Factories expanded at the fastest pace in more than two years last month, according to

a private survey of purchasing managers. That survey also found that factories are hiring more. And a separate gauge of new orders for US factory goods rose in December at a solid pace, lifted by greater business spending on big-ticket items such as machinery and computers. A strong dollar has weighed on exports because it makes US goods more expensive overseas, though manufacturers appear to be adjusting to the currency's strength.

Home builders pessimistic

US homebuilders are feeling a bit less confident this month, reflecting a dimmer outlook on sales in the months ahead and fewer would-be buyers dropping by builders' sales offices. The National Association of Home Builders/Wells Fargo builder sentiment index released yesterday fell to 65 this month. That's down two points from a revised reading of 67 in January. Readings above 50 indicate more builders view sales conditions as good rather than poor. The index has been above 60 since September and reached the highest level in 11 years in December.

The February number falls shy of analyst predictions. They expected the index to hit 68, according to FactSet. Builders' view of sales now and over the next six months also fell, as did a gauge of traffic by prospective buyers.—Agencies

EU WORKERS IN BRITAIN DROP AFTER BREXIT VOTE

LONDON: A steady rise in the number of European Union migrants working in Britain stalled at the end of 2016, suggesting the Brexit vote, and the subsequent fall in the value of the pound, might have made the country less attractive as a place to work. The number of non-UK EU nationals employed in Britain fell by 19,000 in the final three months of 2016 from the previous quarter, to stand at 2.24 million. That was the biggest drop in any other October-December period since records began 20 years ago, official data showed. It compared with a rise of 12,000 in the same period of 2015 and a jump of 121,000 in the fourth quarter of 2014.

After a surge in immigration over the past 20 years, Britain has one of the highest proportions of non-native workers among European countries. Worries about migration were a big factor in last year's referendum vote to leave the European Union. The rights of Europeans based in Britain, and of the estimated 1.2 million Britons living in continental Europe as of 2015, will need to be thrashed out during a complex two-year negotiating period that will start next month.

The last time there was a fall in non-British EU workers during the last three months of any year occurred in 2009, around the time of the global financial crisis. The previous time it fell in any period was in the third quarter of 2014. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) said the data was not seasonally adjusted and should be treated with caution.

Wage pressures

The Bank of England is watching for signs of a slowdown in the supply of people coming into the labour force because it could push up wages and inflation. Many employers have said they are struggling increasingly to find suitable candidates to fill their vacancies and are worried that a reduction in foreign workers could aggravate the problem.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, a human resources body, said on Monday that over a quarter of British employers believed that non-UK EU staff members might leave their firms or the country in 2017. The value of sterling has fallen about 10 percent against the euro since the referendum. "The figures offer further evidence that Brexit has had a discernible impact on the allure of the UK as a place to live and work," said Gerwyn Davies, the CIPD's labor market adviser.

"Employers in sectors that employ relatively large numbers of EU nationals, which also account for a sizeable proportion of vacancies, are likely to come under further recruitment pressures if, as we expect, this trend continues," he said. The ONS's first overall official migration figures to cover the post-referendum period are due to be published on Feb. 23.—Reuters

EU PARLIAMENT BACKS CANADA TRADE DEAL

STRASBOURG, France: The European Parliament backed a contested EU-Canada free trade deal yesterday, facing down protests by activists and Donald Trump-inspired calls for protectionism. MEPs hailed the deal as a rare victory for an imperilled global trade system that is under threat from US President Trump who opposes far-reaching trade deals.

The accord, known as CETA, is tipped as Europe's most modern ever and a possible model for relations with Britain after it leaves the EU. MEPs meeting in Strasbourg, France, solidly approved the pact with 408 votes in favour, 254 against and 33 abstentions. "This is a watershed moment - EU trade policy will never be the same again," said senior Scottish MEP David Martin, whose Socialists and Democrats group split on the issue. Approval by the parliament allows the provisional implementation of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement as early as next month.

Protesters attempted to disrupt the vote, with about 700 people marching outside parliament to voice their opposition to the deal. Anti-globalization activists dressed in surgical masks dramatically blocked the entrance to the parliament

building, before being dragged off by riot police. "Saying yes to CETA is a trampling of the people," said a banner.

Following the approval by parliament, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will address MEPs in person today. EU states and Canada formally signed the deal in October after seven years of tough talks, overcoming last-minute resistance from a small Belgian region that blocked its national government from approving the accord. "By adopting CETA, we chose openness and growth and high standards over protectionism and stagnation," said Latvian MEP Artis Pabriks, a conservative from the EPP group who sponsored the law.

Opponents to CETA slam the deal as a "trojan horse" to big business and a danger to health, democracy and the rule of law. "The disconnect between MEPs and public concerns over living standards, public health and the environment is another blow to the EU," said Greenpeace's EU trade policy adviser Shira Stanton.

Some of the more controversial aspects, including a much-derided investor court system, still require ratification by EU member states, which could take years.

CETA will remove 99 percent of non-

farm customs duties between the two sides, a big win for exporters on both sides of the Atlantic. And unlike classic trade deals, CETA harmonizes regulations on matters such as health and the environment, a major concern for activists. Some

industries are left untouched. The CETA deal will not remove tariff barriers for public services, audiovisual and transport services and a few agricultural products, such as dairy, which is heavily subsidized in Canada.—AFP



STRASBOURG: Demonstrators march against the so-called CETA trade deal near the European Parliament in Strasbourg, eastern France, yesterday.—AP

GLOBAL MARKET LAUNCHES INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM UMBRELLA

KUWAIT: Global Market, a leading market research company set in Kuwait, has launched Umbrella, a user-friendly business intelligence platform with comprehensive data about businesses in the region.

The subscription-based service boasts a user-friendly platform, designed to focus on quantifying business locations and connecting their operational and performance characteristics. Umbrella is developed around 4 main elements; people, companies, brands, and locations. Each element includes geographical locations of outlets, contact information (social media, email, and phone numbers),

subsidiaries, business affiliates, estimated sales. The service can be accessed on <https://umbrella.global/>. Subscribers can find information to connect with business owners through the "People" page. The page includes contact information about business owners along with any news update about their direct involvement in the business world.

Subscribers can also find the legal structure, business subsidiaries and affiliates in the region, contact information, business owners, and company news are listed in the companies page. Additionally, the service offers information about brand operating, from brand introduction in the

region with its store openings and closings, operating companies, and map view of its locations. Subscribers can compare estimated sales, features, and facilities of two locations from the brands page.

Additionally, subscribers can find information about the location opening date, staff count and their nationalities, working hours, store facilities and features such as front of house areas and furniture, sales estimates, and news.

Global Markets has set striding steps in transforming the business data and information grounds in the GCC for four years and has recently launched a business intelligence game changer. Businesses

have long been lacking the credible information and data sources in the industries they compete in the region. The research methodology undertaken by Global Markets has proven reliable and trustworthy by many conglomerates. Conducting intensive primary research with 100 percent sample coverage is key in reducing the margin of error and developing more micro level understanding of market dynamics.

Global Markets invested heavily in developing the platform to connect data together and enable subscribers to generate coherent information sets to help them in their daily business decisions. The

ultimate goal of the platform is to enhance the business decision practices in the GCC.

Global Markets is a market research and a business intelligence company that was established in 2010 in Kuwait. The company estimates market sizes and shares by conducting on-site primary and secondary research. The detailed and micro study of businesses and brands is the key differentiator factor for Global Markets' businesses model. The company's strength in linking information from business owners to their operating branches is valuable to better understand market conditions.

LUFTHANSA AGREES TO HIKE PAY FOR PILOTS BY 8.7%

AIRLINE ACCEPTS MEDIATOR'S PROPOSAL IN LONG-RUNNING DISPUTE

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German airline Lufthansa said yesterday it had agreed to boost pilots' salaries by 8.7 percent over four years, hoping to end years of disputes and costly walkouts by air crew.

Pilots' first pay increase will be backdated to January 1, 2016 and the last is slated for January 1, 2019, while the agreement will remain valid until the end of that year, Lufthansa said in a statement.

The airline said it had accepted the recommendations made by a mediator in a long-running row over pay with pilots' union

Vereinigung Cockpit, which will add around 85 million euros (\$90 million) to its annual costs. The German flagship carrier said the recommendations included pay increases for 5,400 pilots by an overall 8.7 percent in several steps as well as one-time payments worth a total 30 million euros.

Pilots will also receive a one-off bonus payment of between 5,000 and 6,000 euros under the deal, or "around half a month of salary" per person, pilots' union Cockpit noted in its own statement.

To make up for the added expenses,

Lufthansa said 40 new aircraft due for delivery would be staffed not by crew on collective labour agreements at its core brand, but by crew from elsewhere within the group. Lufthansa is trying to cut costs but pilots have walked out 15 times since early 2014 over disputes with management on topics including pay and early retirement, costing the carrier hundreds of millions of euros in lost profits.

Before the mediation process, the pilots had asked for an average annual pay increase of 3.7 percent over a five-year period backdated to 2012, which is when their last collective bargaining contract with Lufthansa expired. The pilots had said altogether these increases would amount to a rise of nearly 20 percent on current pay.

Pilots at Lufthansa, Lufthansa Cargo and low-cost subsidiary Germanwings are all included in the agreement. The deal is "acceptable", Cockpit spokesman Markus Wahl said in the union's statement, but must still be approved by members in a vote.

Lufthansa and Cockpit turned to a mediator in December to unravel their intractable pay dispute.

Disruption from the pilots' latest strike in November cost the firm around 100 million euros—the latest in a series of walkouts that Lufthansa says have inflicted some 351 million euros of costs in total since 2014. While the airline said it was happy with the result, it warned that the additional expense meant the pilots of 40 new aircraft it is adding to its fleet would not be covered by the compromise.

Meanwhile, tough talks are still to come for the two sides as they tackle remaining thorny issues including pilots' pensions. Lufthansa shares rose on news of the deal, adding 0.93 percent to trade at 12.97 euros in Frankfurt at 1350 GMT, outpacing 0.08 percent gains for the DAX index of leading German shares. —Agencies



FRANKFURT AM MAIN: This file photo shows a display next to a Lufthansa logo showing cancelled flights due to a strike of pilots of German airline Lufthansa at the airport in Frankfurt am Main. German airline group Lufthansa has agreed to pay pilots some 85 million euros (\$90 million) extra per year, putting an end to years of disputes and costly walkouts by air crew. —AFP



NEW DELHI: Chairman of the Executive Board and Chief Executive Officer of Deutsche Lufthansa AG, Carsten Spohr (right), Vice President Asia-Pacific Lufthansa Group Airlines Dieter Vranckx (left) and Senior Director South Asia, Lufthansa Group Airlines Wolfgang Will (center) pose for a photograph during a press conference in New Delhi yesterday. —AFP

LITTLE HOPE FOR TEXTILE INDUSTRY REVIVAL IN STRUGGLING NIGERIA

KADUNA, Nigeria: Talba Goni has been trying without luck to get government funds or loans to restart a textile plant in Kaduna, the former industrial heartland in northern Nigeria, that he was running until it closed almost 15 years ago. "We were not able to meet up with those conditions to access the funding ... the bureaucracy, you have to give this, you have to give that," he said. "There should be concessions, like the company income tax, a waiver for about 3-4 years."

Most importantly, Goni is unable to get enough petrol to power the plant's generators as the major oil producing country grapples with fuel shortages due to its derelict refineries.

"We can't operate without black oil (petrol), it's very expensive and also very scarce," he said.

President Muhammadu Buhari hopes to revive the once flourishing textile and leather industries in northern Nigeria to end the country's dependence on oil exports and diversify Africa's biggest economy.

But a collapse in vital oil revenues has pushed the West African nation into its first recession in 25 years, making it difficult to provide state loans or improve the erratic power supply that has led to closure of most plants.

Adding further woes, a central bank decision to keep the naira currency at a high rate versus the dollar has deterred foreign investors fearing to get caught eventually in yet another devaluation. There have been some limited Chinese investments in recent years into what is left of Nigeria's leather and textile industry, but most plants have remained closed since throwing in the towel in the 1980s and 1990s.

Goni said he had to fire 2,500 workers, joining an army of unemployed from which Boko Haram jihadists waging an insurgency in the northeast have been recruiting. "We are getting the people out of the woods," he said. "Once we are able to start the factory, we will solve a lot of this problem of unemployment." —Reuters

IN GHANA, POST-ELECTION FISCAL CRUNCH IS POLITICS AS NORMAL

ACCRA: Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo has taken power with ambitious plans to revive once spectacular economic growth, only to discover a \$1.6 billion hole in the budget and a deficit twice as high as expected. He may have a strong sense of deja vu. The country has a vigorous democracy, with voters ready to eject any leader who falls short of expectations. But for a third successive time, the national finances have gone off track before elections, forcing the winner to confront a fiscal crunch.

With Ghana more than half way through a three-year International Monetary Fund program, the new government must reveal in its first budget next month how it intends to restore financial discipline while staying true to Akufo-Addo's election promises to boost growth and fight poverty.

Akufo-Addo entered office last

month on pledges to spend the equivalent of \$1 million a year on development in each of Ghana's 275 parliamentary constituencies, build a dam in every village to ensure reliable water supplies and bring a factory to every district. In winning a big victory in December over incumbent John Mahama, he also promised to cut taxes. His plan is to stimulate private sector investment to raise economic growth - which peaked at 14 percent in 2011 - back into double digits from around 4 percent last year.

The government said last week it would follow through on its promise to make secondary school education free. It has adopted a triple track approach: preparing the budget, reassuring investors who are major holders of Ghana's local currency and dollar debt that it will not overspend, and holding fresh talks with the IMF.

Finance Minister Ken Ofori-Atta acknowledges the balancing act. "One thing that I can commit to is there will be discipline. One thing that I can also assure you is that we are pro-private sector," he told reporters. "(But) you cannot win a sweeping mandate of this nature where the cry out there is for jobs and come and have a budget that does not seem to address that," added Ofori-Atta, a former investment banker.

"UNCHECKED OVERSPENDING"

While the budget crises have coincided with the four-yearly election cycle, Ghana does not entirely fit the model of struggling governments spending freely just before voting in the hope of holding on to power. The fiscal blowout in the 2012 election year was largely due to pay rises for civil servants. But this was part of a long-term wage reform agreed

by government and opposition parties.

The current overshoot has several causes. Shortly before his defeat after only one full term in office, Mahama toured the country opening new schools, roads and bridges. But many of these projects, and spending on them, had been underway for several years. Revealing that the new government had inherited debt from state-owned enterprises and government ministries of at least 7 billion cedis (\$1.6 billion), Ofori-Atta said "unchecked overspending" was part of the problem but he also blamed decreased revenue.

Ghana's boom years were fuelled by exports of oil, gold and cocoa. The 2014-15 dive in commodity prices hit it hard, along with a technical fault that halted production last year at its Jubilee oil field, operated by British company Tullow. —Reuters

INSURER ANTHEM FIRES BACK AT CIGNA

INDIANAPOLIS: Health insurers Anthem and Cigna are now trading lawsuits instead of working together to salvage their shaky \$48-billion buyout agreement. The Blue Cross-Blue Shield carrier Anthem said yesterday that it is seeking a restraining order to block its smaller rival from terminating their deal, which has already been blocked by a federal judge.

Cigna announced Tuesday that it was suing Anthem and seeking more than \$13 billion in damages for what it says were Anthem's breaches of the merger agreement. Anthem had filed documents seeking an expedited appeal to the judge's ruling a day before Cigna's com-

plaint landed in federal court. The two companies announced Anthem's plan to buy Cigna in 2015 a few weeks after two other insurers, Aetna Inc. and Humana Inc., announced a similar combination. But the Department of Justice sued to stop both acquisitions, and separate federal judges recently rejected them after a trial partially over concerns about their impact on consumers.

Aetna and Humana announced Tuesday they were ending their deal. But Anthem said yesterday that there still was enough time and "a viable path forward" for completing its deal. —AP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.681
Indian Rupees	4.580
Pakistani Rupees	2.912
Srilankan Rupees	2.035
Nepali Rupees	2.866
Singapore Dollar	216.650
Hongkong Dollar	3.481
Bangladesh Taka	3.856
Philippine Peso	6.132
Thai Baht	8.759

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.784
Qatari Riyal	83.867
ani Riyal	793.000
Bahraini Dinar	814.000
UAE Dirham	83.463

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.200
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	18.584
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.230
Tunisian Dinar	134.660
Jordanian Dinar	431.570
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.042
Syrian Lira	2.184
Morocco Dirham	30.944

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	306.350
Euro	325.800
Sterling Pound	3437.000

Canadian dollar	234.460
Turkish Lira	84.280
Swiss Franc	306.230
Australian Dollar	236.660
US Dollar Buying	306.650

GOLD

20 Gram	251.040
10 Gram	128.440
5 Gram	65.060

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	306.000
Canadian Dolla	234.715
Sterling Pound	382.870
Euro	325.295
Swiss Franc	305.690
Bahrain Dinar	811.180
UAE Dirhams	83.705
Qatari Riyals	84.925
Saudi Riyals	82.525
Jordanian Dinar	432.760
Egyptian Pound	18.668
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.036
Indian Rupees	4.576
Pakistani Rupees	3.02250
Bangladesh Taka	3.865
Philippines Peso	6.132
Cyprus pound	168.040
Japanese Yen	3.675
Syrian Pound	2.425

Nepalese Rupees	3.855
Malaysian Ringgit	69.675
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.985
Thai Bhat	9.730
Turkish Lira	84.230

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.375054	0.385054
Czech Korune	0.003968	0.015968
Danish Krone	0.039494	0.044494
Euro	0.318469	0.327469
Norwegian Krone	0.032411	0.037611
Romanian Leu	0.007189	0.071789
Slovakia	0.019190	0.019190
Slovenia	0.030219	0.035219
Swiss Franc	0.297797	0.308797
Turkish Lira	0.077483	0.087783
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.226617	0.238617
New Zealand Dollar	0.213334	0.222834
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.228820	0.2379820
Georgina Lari	0.138366	0.138366
US Dollars	0.302250	0.306650
US Dollars Mint	0.302750	0.306650
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003626	0.004210
Chinese Yuan	0.043210	0.046620

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037390	0.040140
Indian Rupee	0.002685	0.004908
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002592	0.002772
Kenyan Shilling	0.002949	0.002949
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.064918	0.070918
Nepalese Rupee	0.003088	0.003258
Pakistan Rupee	0.002643	0.002933
Philippine Peso	0.006028	0.006328
Sierra Leone	0.000039	0.000045
Singapore Dollar	0.210201	0.220201
South African Rand	0.017364	0.025864
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001683	0.002263
Taiwan	0.009851	0.010031
Thai Baht	0.008387	0.008937

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.806028	0.814528
Egyptian Pound	0.011999	0.021252
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000187	0.000247
Jordanian Dinar	0.426425	0.435425
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020174	0.044174
Nigerian Naira	0.000404	0.001039
Omani Riyal	0.789293	0.794973
Qatar Riyal	0.083335	0.084785
Saudi Riyal	0.080607	0.081907
Syrian Pound	0.001299	0.001519
Tunisian Dinar	0.130243	0.138243
Turkish Lira	0.077483	0.087783
UAE Dirhams	0.081983	0.083683
Yemeni Riyal	0.000996	0.001076

EU'S MOSCOVICI URGES QUICK GREECE DEBT COMPROMISE

ATHENS: Top EU economics official Pierre Moscovici urged Greece and its creditors yesterday to try and reach a compromise over the cash-strapped country's bailout terms in the next few "key days".

The former French finance minister spoke during a visit to Athens aimed at breaking the deadlock between Greece and its eurozone and International Monetary Fund (IMF) lenders, which has raised fears of a fresh debt crisis.

His trip came five days before a meeting of eurozone ministers that is seen as an unofficial deadline to end the stalemate ahead of important elections in Europe. "We have a few key days, let's concentrate now to finish all these talks. The parameters are on the table, everybody knows them," Moscovici told reporters after meeting Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras and Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos.

The EU commissioner said he was confident of progress towards a deal "if efforts are made by all sides". The IMF and Europe are split over a demand by the eurozone that Greece deliver a pri-

mary balance, or budget surplus before debt repayments, of 3.5 percent of GDP. The IMF has said only 1.5 percent is feasible. The Tsipras government refuses more pension cuts and tax hikes, which the IMF—quietly backed by Germany—insists are necessary for Greece to deliver on its targets.

'Tunnel of austerity'

The feuding has blocked a tranche of loans from Greece's 86 billion euro (\$91 billion) bailout that it needs for debt repayments of 7.0 billion euros this summer. Considered an ally of Greece, Moscovici said that although more reforms would be necessary, it was important to tell Greek people "that there is a light at the end of the tunnel of austerity".

"We must strike the right balance between fiscal sustainability on the one hand, but also prosperity and the necessity to address... the concerns of those who suffer from poverty or unemployment," he said.

Talks in Brussels between Greece and its creditors on Friday ended with no

breakthrough. On Tuesday the Greek government hailed figures showing the country had returned to annual growth in 2016, using it for a fresh assault on further austerity measures.

Early estimates from the national statistics office and projections from Brussels showed growth of 0.3 percent last year. Moscovici welcomed the growth and called for a "reformed Greece in the heart of the eurozone," defying concerns over the country's future in the monetary union.

More time needed

Despite the commissioner's push for an agreement next week, Eurogroup chief Jeroen Dijsselbloem warned on Tuesday warned that the standoff was likely to drag on.

"The IMF has to come on board," he told Dutch broadcaster RTL Z. "It will take more time. People think that as there is a Eurogroup meeting next week we must have something worked out. But that has not been my planning." An IMF report obtained by AFP last week said Greece's debt "is highly unsustain-



ATHENS: Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (L) smiles as he speaks with top EU economic affairs official Pierre Moscovici during their meeting in Athens yesterday.—AFP

able" and "will become explosive in the long run". But European Commission vice-president Valdis Dombrovskis said the outlook from the Washington-based fund was "very pessimistic". "That's why

there is now a gap between our figures and those of the IMF" he told German newspaper Handelsblatt yesterday, expressing hope that the gap could be filled.—AFP

KEEP TAKING THE MEDS, OECD TELLS AILING ITALY

ROME: Italy needs to step up reforms if it is to make a full recovery from an economic crisis that caused poverty and inequality to surge while investment collapsed, the OECD said yesterday.

The call for an acceleration of change came in a survey that highlighted a devastating investment crunch, serious disparities in income and education, a five-fold increase in child poverty and productivity levels that are still declining. Although the economy emerged in 2015 from eight years of stagnation and recession, output per head remains ten percent lower than in 2007, and roughly the same as in 1997, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said. Investment, after allowing for inflation, is running at 70 percent of 2007 levels.

The think tank of the world's most advanced economies did offer encouragement to the country's centre-left government, hailing its flagship Jobs Act as an ambitious labour market reform that was already generating jobs something which is disputed by trade unions and others in Italy. "Reforms are producing results, that's the basic message I would like to give," Angel Gurría, the OECD's Secretary General, told a press conference. And the Paris-based number crunchers also provided the government with some comforting words of support in its running battle with European Union officials over budget discipline.

Child poverty surges

The survey notes that a "broadly appropriate" and "mildly expansionary" fiscal policy was underpinning growth predicted to continue at a sickly rate of around one percent through this year and next. It also states that investment in infrastructure, one of the government's sources of contention with Brussels, would be crucial to addressing the productivity problem.

But Gurría's list of the challenges faced by the Italian economy was a daunting one. They included: reversing the inter-linked slide in investment and productivity, cleaning up a banking sector saddled

with more than 300 billion euros (dollars) worth of non-performing loans, addressing skill shortages much worse than in comparable countries and reducing poverty levels that have hit children hardest. "In 2015, 11 percent of Italian residents under the age of 17 were living in what we consider absolute poverty. In 2006 it was only three percent," Gurría said. "Those figures are a signal of a need for urgent action."

Finance Minister Pier Carlo Padoa-Schioppa agreed with the OECD's assessment of where Italy was, insisting the government was committed to reducing poverty. "That's not only ethically the right thing to do, it is also economically efficient to promote inclusive growth," the veteran economist said.

The OECD highlighted Italy's notorious bureaucracy, its snail-paced legal system and chronic tax evasion as serious obstacles to economic progress.

'Dolce Vita' factor

"Public-administration inefficiencies, slow judicial processes, poorly designed regulation and weak competition still make it difficult to do business in Italy," the survey notes. "Innovative start-ups and small/medium-sized companies continue to suffer from difficult access to bank and equity finance, curbing incomes for many." Tax arrears stood at 750 billion euros in September 2015 - equivalent to nearly 1,250 euros for every person in the country.

And it is not only the fault of dodgers: the World Bank puts Italy 126 out of 190 countries in a ranking for ease of calculating and paying taxes.

The OECD also highlighted highly unequal access to education and appropriate training as being acute issues, noting that literacy levels were among the lowest of its 20 member states.

It was not all bad news however. The "dolce vita" (sweet life) factor still puts Italy above comparable countries for work-life balance, social connections and levels of health and longevity, albeit with considerable disparities across social classes and regions.—AFP

DANONE TO SLASH COSTS AS SALES GROWTH SLOWS

PARIS: French dairy giant Danone unveiled a one-billion-euro (\$1.1-billion) cost-cutting program yesterday as it said that sales growth slowed last year. Danone said in a statement that although it turned in a "robust" performance last year, it needed to improve costs in order to face up to the current challenges. "While we delivered a robust performance... the challenges we faced, including a volume turnaround of dairy in Europe and major market volatility, are a clear case to step up in our ability to seize consumer opportunities and improve our efficiency," said chief executive Emmanuel Faber.

Danone said its net profit jumped by 34 percent to 1.7 billion euros (\$1.8 billion) in 2016, but sales declined by 2.1 percent to

21.9 billion euros, largely due to exchange rate effects.

On a like-for-like basis, sales grew by 2.9 percent, slower than the rate of 4.4 percent recorded the previous year. Looking ahead, Danone said it expected economic conditions to "remain particularly volatile and uncertain overall, with persistently fragile or even deflationary consumer trends in Europe, and specific contextual difficulties in a few major markets," including Russia, China and Brazil.

In the face of this, it would embark on a program to cut selling and administrative costs by one billion euros by 2020, and lift operating margins, Danone said. Danone is in the process of acquiring the US organic foods producer WhiteWave Foods.—AFP



PARIS: French Food group Danone CEO Emmanuel Faber poses prior to attend the presentation of the group's 2016 results in Paris yesterday.—AFP

PROTECTIONISM, POLITICAL RISK THREATEN EUROZONE REVIVAL

IMPENDING EU-BRITAIN DIVORCE TO COMPOUND CRISIS

BERLIN: Potential anti-establishment upsets in national elections in France, the Netherlands and Germany, alongside a global rise in protectionism pose the biggest threats to the eurozone economy, according to a majority of economists polled by Reuters.

These risks come ahead of the threat of impending divorce negotiations between the European Union and Britain becoming fractious, which was the number one concern for Britain in a similar Reuters poll published this week. The findings, released yesterday, contrast with financial markets around the globe, particularly stock markets, being priced for a lot of positive news.

"With populist parties still gaining support and opinion polls consistently proving unreliable, there are plenty of events that could unsettle markets," Simon Wells, chief European economist at HSBC, said.

The eurozone economy is forecast to grow 0.4 percent in coming quarters, a respectable pace by recent historical standards, the latest survey taken Feb 9-15 showed. Few economists strayed far from the median view, and those decent-yet-uninspiring growth predictions have barely budged over the last two years in Reuters polls. Still, most economists who answered an additional question said the recent revival in the eurozone economy is sustainable. But with the European Central Bank already purchasing tens of billions of euros a month in bonds and its key interest rates at zero or negative, there is little more it can feasibly do to revive the economy should it stumble.

That leaves the pace of economic growth, much like that of the United States and Britain, vulnerable to political forces at a time when global trade is at risk. Inflation expectations remain well below the ECB's target of just under 2 percent until at least 2019. Inflation is predicted to average 1.5 percent this year and 1.4 percent next, similar to a poll in January.

"With growth set to maintain a slow but steady pace, underlying price pressures are likely to stay muted. Although headline inflation is set to rise due to the drag from lower energy prices ending, core inflation remains stubbornly low," noted HSBC's Wells. The recent optimism on the region's economic outlook has coincided with a weak euro, making the currency bloc's exports relatively cheap on world markets. The euro is predicted to weaken 3 percent against the dollar over the coming year, a separate Reuters poll of FX analysts showed.

Political risk rising

In recent weeks, the euro has come under pressure in the run up to the French presidential election. The latest opinion polls show far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen winning the first round of the election, but the losing heavily to independent candidate Emmanuel Macron or slightly less heavily to conservative Francois Fillon in the second round.

Despite this, few are discounting an upset give the failure of polls in recent British and US votes. "A victory for Ms Le Pen is well within the bounds of possibility," said Florian Baier, senior economist at Fathom. "Latest polls show that Ms. Le Pen will make it to the second round, which she will then lose... (but) polls have got it wrong before. Mr Trump won, and Brexit happened." Over 90 percent of the 42 economists who answered an extra question in the latest survey said a win for the National Front party was unlikely. Economists also gave a very low probability of any country leaving the currency union over the next few years.

That suggests the outlook for the eurozone economy, which is widely believed to lack the momentum to withstand a major political change, is based on the assumption that the political status quo across the region is maintained. "It is not our central scenario that she (Le Pen) wins, but the risk scenario is that she wins as the chances of that happening is higher than what is priced into the markets," Fathom's Baier said. "If Le Pen wins the French election then it is the end of the euro area as we know it." If the National Front wins the election, it pledges to hold a European Union referendum within six months, abandon the euro and reintroduce the franc as the country's primary currency. Far-right and anti-establishment parties in the Netherlands and Italy also want to leave the eurozone.—Reuters



PARIS: French Economy and Finance Minister Michel Sapin speaks during a session of questions to the government at the French National Assembly in Paris yesterday.—AFP

MILLIONS TO FIGHT FOOD INDUSTRY SWAY, FROM A SNACK BAR CEO

NEW YORK: A \$25 million pledge to fight the food industry's influence on public health is coming from a surprising source - the CEO of a snack bar maker. Kind founder Daniel Lubetzky says he's pledging his own money to create a group called "Feed the Truth" dedicated to revealing corporate influence in the nutrition field, with activities like education campaigns and investigative journalism.

The move underscores the division between older "Big Food" companies and newer businesses that market themselves as wholesome alternatives aligned with health advocates. Kind, known for its fruit and nut bars, touts its use of "real" ingredients and has proven deft at mixing marketing with nutrition issues. A public health and ethics expert not involved with the group says much depends on how it is set up, and that one tactic to neutralize potential critics is to engage them.

Three high-profile health and nutrition experts have been enlisted to name Feed the Truth's board, which will hire an executive director. Lubetzky said he and Kind will have no involvement, and the group will be free to scrutinize the company. "We don't have any skeletons in our closet," he said.

Since Kind was launched in 2004, the company's annual revenue has grown to \$673.4 million, according to market researcher Euromonitor. The company was in the spotlight after the Food and Drug Administration warned that it was inappropriately using the term "healthy" on packaging. Kind launched a petition asking the FDA to update its guidelines, saying the fat in almonds and avocados shouldn't count against it, and declared victory when the agency said last year it was re-evaluating.

Lubetzky cited that experience and recent reporting by The Associated Press and The New York Times revealing the food industry's influence on nutrition science for his decision to create Feed the Truth. Kind said he will sign a letter of intent to donate \$2.5 million a year for the next 10 years.

Lubetzky said he did not donate the money to the Center for Science in the Public Interest because the advocacy

group does not accept industry funding. That raises the question of whether Feed the Truth will accept money from other food companies, and if so, under what terms. Lubetzky said that will be up to the board and director. The irony of such a group being established by a snack bar CEO is not lost on Marion Nestle, a professor of food studies at New York University who is helping nominate the board. She said she usually keeps industry at arm's length, but found Lubetzky "very persuasive" and felt Feed the Truth could raise awareness about corporate influence in nutrition research.

Deb Eschmeyer, a senior policy adviser on nutrition under the Obama administration, said the project reflects the new ways companies and executives are engaging with the public. Michael Jacobson, executive director of CSPI, said the money being pledged in advance should help give the group independence. Kind said the three advisers are not being paid, though it covered Nestle's travel costs for a meeting. The company said it would not be involved once the board is established.

Leigh Turner, a professor at the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health, said that whether the group remains free from Lubetzky and Kind's influence remains to be seen. He noted that engaging critics is one way for companies to neutralize them, and that the group could be a boon to Kind's image.

"This is a business that wants to present itself as a healthy alternative to candy bars," Turner said. As an example of how Kind presents itself, the company launched a "Nutrition Collective" for dietitians last year, which it said was for discussion of major public health issues. A signup page said members would not be paid, but being involved included letting people how "Kind can be a part of their

new lifestyle." Although Feed the Truth may boost Kind's image, Lubetzky said that wasn't the goal. "I would hope that people say, OK, these guys are doing the right thing for society, I'm going to be more loyal to the brand," Lubetzky said.—AP

WORLD STOCKS RISE TOWARDS RECORD HIGH

LONDON: World stocks rose to a whisker off all-time highs yesterday and the dollar rose for the 11th straight day following Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen's flagging of a possible interest rate rise next month. The dollar notched up its longest winning streak in almost five years after Yellen said on Tuesday the Fed would probably need to raise rates at an upcoming meeting and that delaying could leave the central bank's policymaking committee behind the curve.

Propelled by record highs on Wall Street, MSCI's benchmark global equity index rose 0.25 percent to 442.4 points, its highest

since May 2015 and two points off its record high. It has not fallen for six sessions, its longest such run since last July.

"The simple act of leaving a March (US) hike on the table, given that it had been all but written off by investors, is what triggered such a reaction," said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at Oanda.

Europe's index of leading 300 stocks rose nearly 1 percent earlier to its highest since December 2015, but by mid-session had settled back to trade up 0.4 percent on the day at 1,465 points. Germany's DAX was up 0.2 percent and Britain's FTSE was up 0.5 percent, boosted by sterling's slide after

soft UK wage growth data. Yellen's remarks helped push Wall Street by boosting US bank stocks. Goldman Sachs shares hit a record high, and are up 37 percent since the US presidential election on Nov. 8. Financials also led the way in Europe, with Credit Agricole up more than 3 percent after France's biggest retail bank beat forecasts with a smaller than expected earnings drop in the fourth quarter.

Six of the top 10 gainers in Europe were banks. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan rose 0.7 percent, rising to its highest since July 2015. Japan's Nikkei added more than 1 percent, buoyed

by a weaker yen. US futures pointed to a flat open on Wall Street.

PUNCHY DOLLAR

The dollar index against a basket of major currencies chalked up its longest winning streak since May 2015. It was up 0.2 percent at 101.220, near a four-week high of 101.380 scaled overnight.

Yellen's remarks rekindled expectations in some quarters for the Fed to raise rates three times in 2017 rather than twice. The futures market did not share this view amid doubts about the US economy's ability to sustain three hikes. Yellen testifies to Congress again yesterday, this time to the House of Representatives.

According to CME Group's FedWatch data, US interest rate futures implied an around 30 percent chance of at least three increases this year, little changed from the previous day - though the chance rose above 40 percent immediately after Yellen's comments. "That kind of rate re-think is dollar-friendly, but too timid to derail the risk rally that starts in US equities and spreads into emerging market currencies," said Kit

Juckes, head of FX strategy at Societe Generale in London.

The dollar was a shade higher at 114.40 yen after rising to a two-week high of 114.50 the previous day, while the euro slipped to a one-month low of \$1.0525. It was last at \$1.0560.

Sterling was the big mover in FX, sliding 0.5 percent to \$1.2410 after figures showed that UK wage growth slowed unexpectedly at the end of last year, thereby cooling inflationary pressures and the need for tighter monetary policy. The dollar was supported as US Treasury yields rose on the Fed Chair's comments, with the benchmark 10-year yield climbing four basis points to an 11-day high of 2.50 percent the previous day. They were last at 2.48 percent.

The stronger dollar, which puts non-US buyers of dollar-denominated commodities at a disadvantage, weighed on crude oil prices. US crude was down 0.6 percent at \$52.86 a barrel and Brent also shed 0.6 percent to \$55.65 a barrel. Crude already came under pressure the previous day on evidence of surging US stockpiles. —Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report										
Wednesday 15 February 2017										
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low					
Price Index	▲ 63.44	6,814.81	6,751.37	6,815.32	6,747.16					
Weighted Index	▲ 4.86	428.95	424.09	428.95	423.60					
KXSX 15	▲ 10.99	974.67	963.68	975.41	962.01					
Trades										
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change			
MARIN	63	60	43500	2,670	3	63	▲ 3.0			
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	405	— 0.0			
NAFESCO	820	820	512	420	1	820	— 0.0			
ENERGYH	44.5	42.5	1,712,492	74,417	110	43.5	— 0.0			
GPI	57	54	16,152,199	900,757	273	56	▲ 1.0			
ABAR	97	95	92,555	8,844	9	95	▼ -2.0			
Oil & Gas			18,001,258	987,107	396	859.57	▲ 1.29			
KFCOU	335	335	3,551	1,190	4	335	— 0.0			
BPCC	590	580	875,919	510,533	26	580	▼ -10.0			
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700	— 0.0			
ALQURAIN	325	315	2,397,606	766,291	71	315	▼ -10.0			
Basic Materials			3,277,078	1,278,014	101	1312.71	▼ -18.32			
KCEM	490	485	156,865	76,614	3	490	▲ 5.0			
CABLE	570	540	274,675	152,379	28	570	▲ 20.0			
SHIP	230	214	30,159	6,776	6	230	▲ 6.0			
PCEM	1,080	1,040	65,266	68,855	12	1,080	▲ 40.0			
PAPER	385	385	48,723	18,758	7	385	▲ 25.0			
MRC	90	85	281,097	25,032	16	90	▲ 5.0			
ACICO	305	295	1,051,275	311,698	21	300	▼ -5.0			
GMCM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	350	— 0.0			
HCC	170	170	1,500	255	1	170	— 0.0			
KBMMK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0			
NICBM	218	218	120,000	26,160	4	218	— 0.0			
EQUIPMENT	67	65	2,611,651	171,065	72	66	▲ 1.0			
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	— 0.0			
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0			
SALBOOKH	77	76	906,936	69,079	46	77	▲ 1.0			
AGLTY	660	650	2,963,314	1,948,107	113	660	— 0.0			
EDU	208	208	20,250	4,182	4	208	▼ -4.0			
CLEANING	58	56	3,189,697	182,670	72	56	▼ -1.0			
KGL	67	64	1,170,291	77,176	37	67	▲ 3.0			
KPCF	198	198	1,000	198	1	198	— 0.0			
HUMANSOFT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	3,000	— 0.0			
NAFAIS	200	190	6,099,162	1,219,782	7	200	— 0.0			
GFC	40.5	40.5	3,000	122	2	40.5	▲ 2.5			
MAYADEEN	35.0	33.5	12,100,565	412,016	166	35.0	▲ 1.5			
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	500	— 0.0			
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0			
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	820	— 0.0			
ALAFCO	255	250	162,675	40,646	9	255	— 0.0			
MUBARRAD	78	75	2,866,016	220,079	58	77	— 0.0			
LOGISTICS	76	74	2,574,191	193,090	61	74	▼ -1.0			
SCEM	87	85	244,210	20,952	11	86	▼ -1.0			
GCEM	88	86	688,593	59,841	31	88	— 0.0			
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	81	— 0.0			
FCEM	88	87	1,141,680	99,902	22	88	▼ -1.0			
RKWC	100	100	10,307	1,031	1	100	— 0.0			
SPEC	99	94	1,631,252	158,854	84	99	▲ 5.0			
Industrials			40,414,250	5,565,320	895	1604.86	▲ 9.16			
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0			
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	49.5	— 0.0			
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0			
CATTL	224	224	204,398	45,785	27	224	▼ -10.0			
DANAH	90	88	2,000,206	177,608	63	88	▼ -1.0			
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,520	— 0.0			
Consumer Goods			2,204,604	223,393	90	1124.42	▼ -7.16			
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0.0			
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0			
YIACO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	290	— 0.0			
Health Care			0	0	0	1225.37	— 0.00			
KCIN	1,380	1,320	2,560	3,410	6	1,380	▲ 60			
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	236	— 0.0			
SULTAN	85	82	352,518	29,605	23	85	▲ 1			
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	47.5	— 0.0			
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0			
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	— 0.0			
OULAFUEL	130	122	64,571	8,073	28	128	▲ 4			
MUNTAAZAHAT	88	86	872,201	76,119	31	87	▼ -1			
JAZEERA	630	620	2,681	1,677	5	620	▼ -20			
SOOR	128	122	69,748	8,586	21	128	▲ 4			
FUTUREKID	122	122	11,000	1,342	2	122	▼ -2			
ALRAI	178	176	548,188	96,739	27	178	— 0.0			
ZMAH	70	67	1,281,242	87,703	41	68	— 0.0			
Mezzan	960	950	186,510	177,645	13	960	▲ 20			
Consumer Services			3,391,219	490,899	197	991.61	▲ 1.52			
ZAIN	495	485	9,251,431	4,539,528	242	495	▲ 10			
OOREDOO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,280	— 0.0			
HITSTELEC	60	57	14,246,149	829,569	219	59	— 0.0			
VIVA	870	860	24,665	21,279	36	870	— 0.0			
Telecommunications			23,522,245	5,390,375	499	689.82	▲ 2.92			
NBK	740	730	1,764,326	1,289,450	29	740	▲ 10			
GBK	260	246	2,983,788	761,061	69	260	▲ 12			
CBK	510	500	77,001	38,506	12	500	— 0.0			
ABK	305	300	150,419	45,128	14	305	▲ 5			
ALMUTAHED	445	435	476,441	210,472	35	440	— 0.0			
KIB	230	222	5,125,908	1,159,317	129	230	▲ 8			
BURG	325	315	871,974	278,812	42	320	— 0.0			
KFIN	630	610	16,377,526	10,222,742	263	620	▲ 10			
BOUBRYAN	415	405	695,181	285,308	48	410	— 0.0			
AUB	236	228	4,620,497	1,070,892	90	236	▲ 8			
ITHMR	67	62	81,711,918	5,231,508	1,037	66	▲ 4			
WARABANK	265	250	19,044,800	4,931,673	500	265	▲ 15			
Banks			133,899,839	25,524,869	2,268	985.17	▲ 26.09			
KINS	295	295	500	148	1	295	▲ 25			
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	600	— 0.0			
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	470	— 0.0			
WINS	100	96	17,506	1,701	6	100	▲ 4.0			
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	186	— 0.0			
FTI	89	79	257,720	20,846	57	79	▼ -5.0			
WETHAQ	60	58	317,367	18,508	22	59	▲ 2.0			
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0			
Insurance			593,093	41,203	86	1155.45	▲ 16.35			
Trades										
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change			
SOKOUK	56	53	11344170	612,501	197	54	▲ 1.0			
KRE	78	76	4,953,074	380,221	59	78	▲ 2.0			
URC	100	98	288,973	28,527	15	98	▼ -1.0			
NRE	116	114	7,430,372	858,059	112	116	▲ 2.0			
SRE	400	390	88,176	34,389	4	400	▲ 10.0			
TAM	455	455	500	228	1	455	▼ -15.0			
AREEC	186	184	40,750	7,499	2	186	— 0.0			
MASSALEH	55	55	100	6	1	55	— 0.0			
ARABREC	48.5	46.0	13,275,245	631,311	214	48.5	▲ 2.0			



KUWAIT: Attendees at the event



A group photograph of the members.

AL-SAYER RENEWS SOCIAL COMMITMENT WITH ATAHUB PARTNERSHIP

KUWAIT: As part of the ongoing Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility (CSR) efforts, Al-Sayer Group Holding has announced partnership agreement of ATAHUB 'Believer Package' membership. The official signing ceremony held recently at the Group Headquarters in the presence of Faisal Bader Al-Sayer Chairman, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer Executive Board Member and Chairman of CSR Committee, Bengt Schultz COO, Ibrahim Al-Fouzan Toyota Group Service Business Director and Vice Chairman of the CSR Committee, Farid AlFozan ATAHUB representative, Dr Fatemah Al-Mosawi Founder of Spread the Passion.

The event was also attended by Hamad MUSAED Al Sayer CEO Al-Sayer Franchising

Co, Nehad AlHaj Ali DGM Corporate Excellence, Shibu Mohamed CSR Manager, Deputy Manager for Marketing Bader Faisal Al-Sayer and Bedour Faisal Al-Sayer, Abdullah Al-Sayer Manager Strategic Planning and Business Development along with community partners of ATAHUB including PAWS, KSGD, KESWA, GHIRAS, FSRI, Manpower & Government Restructuring Program.

Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer Executive Board Member and Chairman of the CSR Committee said "Our relationship with ATAHUB will bring new dimension to Al-Sayer Group Holding Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility initiatives in Kuwait. Such online and open platform shall bring one to one engagement of the

volunteers, corporates and communities with our programs to make it more visible and reachable to the desired societies. We positively look to work closely with voluntary group and individuals to give back our best to the Kuwait society, who supported Al-Sayer to grow step by step."

Farid AlFozan of ATAHUB commented "Al-Sayer Group's 'Believer Package' partnership member will give great encouragement to the online ATAHUB platform, which brings volunteers for a common goal: to server society. The community service through a collaborative network of volunteers makes the greatest possible social impact, and using the latest technologies and methods in this era is apt to gather people with common understanding and

passion for social initiatives. And this gives close encounter with the community and corporates to define best suitable CSR programs, to connect deeply with beneficiaries to create value proposition."

ATAHUB a non-profit initiative, and a network of cooperation which will meet volunteers and civil society organizations, public and private sectors, to work diligently to serve the community and to influence it, and confirmed it aims to raise community awareness and cooperation and participation in the initiatives that have a positive return on the community and its needs.

Al-Sayer Group efforts towards sustainability
For Al-Sayer Group Holding, "sustainable

business" is a whole system concept, spanning every dimension of our operations - financial performance, social responsibility, employees and customer well-being, and care for the environment, all working hand in hand. And one of the key principle to guide our CSR implementation is to support regional initiatives to promote sustainability and social responsibilities where we do business. The Group envisions the relationship with ATAHUB to form part of the company's CSR strategies, which are based on a belief that such initiatives help strengthen its role within society as well as advancing innovation to our planned programs including road safety, disability awareness, promote education and Kuwaitization.



KUWAIT: Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer, Executive Board Member (left) Al-Sayer Group Holding and Farid AlFozan of ATAHUB.



KUWAIT: Faisal Bader Al-Sayer, Chairman Al-Sayer Group Holding at the signing ceremony



KUWAIT: Faisal Bader Al-Sayer at signing ceremony



WASHINGTON: Boeing 737 MAX winglets, which sweep up and down from the wingtip and differ from the current 737 model with its single upward wingtip sweep, stand already painted in the Lion Air livery as the wing is assembled at Boeing's airplane production facility in Renton, Washington.—AP

BOEING VOTE TELLS NEXT CHAPTER IN SOUTHERN UNIONIZATION

NORTH CHARLESTON, SC: Nearly 3,000 production workers at Boeing's South Carolina plant are deciding whether they want to unionize, writing the next chapter in efforts to organize labor in large manufacturing plants across the South. The first round of voting began early yesterday. A second round of voting was set for the afternoon to accommodate all the employees.

If successful, the balloting on whether employees should join the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers would send a significant message to politicians both in the region and Washington that workers here are demanding the same protections and benefits as their colleagues in other areas. And, to the leaders trying to recruit businesses by promoting their states' lack of union presence, it'd make their jobs more difficult.

But this most recent test of Southern acceptance of collective bargaining movements is an uphill battle for the union and its backers. The global aviation giant, which came to South Carolina in part because of the state's minuscule union presence, did so with the aid of millions of dollars in state assistance made possible by officials who spoke out frequently and glowingly with anti-union messages.

"It is an economic development tool," Gov. Nikki Haley, now President Donald Trump's ambassador to the United Nations, said in a 2012 address of how

she sold companies on why they should come to the state. "We'll make the unions understand full well that they are not needed, not wanted and not welcome in the state of South Carolina."

Tactic works

At least that part of the tactic has worked. While some South Carolina workers have representation - just more than 1,900, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2016 figures - most don't. Other major manufacturers in the state, including BMW and Michelin, aren't unionized or haven't experienced major campaigns to do so. The Machinists initially petitioned for a vote at Boeing in 2015 but withdrew the request because of what the union called a toxic atmosphere and political interference. Southern states for decades have recruited manufacturers by promising freedom from the influences of labor unions, which except for some textile mills have been historically rejected by workers as collective action culturally foreign to a South built around family farms, said Jeffrey Hirsch, a law professor who specializes in labor relations at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

A successful union vote at Boeing would have a greater impact on the general view of labor in the South than efforts by autoworkers to unionize Volkswagen in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as a foothold for organizing other Southern car plants.—AP

GM, PSA BOSSES TRY TO SELL EUROPE DEAL AMID CRITICISM

GERMAN GOVT TALKS TO CARMAKERS ON FUTURE OF PLANTS

FRANKFURT/PARIS: The bosses of General Motors and Peugeot maker PSA were racing yesterday to contain anger in Germany over their plans for PSA to buy GM's European business Opel. GM Chief Executive Mary Barra visited Opel's headquarters in Rueselsheim near Frankfurt, while PSA said its CEO Carlos Tavares planned to meet senior German officials, possibly including Chancellor Angela Merkel, in the near future. US carmaker GM and France's PSA Group caused outrage in Germany on Tuesday by confirming they were in talks that could result in PSA buying GM's European operations without having consulted Berlin or informed workers.

Opel employs the majority of its workers, about 28,000 people, in Germany. It also has plants in Austria, Hungary, Poland, Spain and Britain, where it uses the Vauxhall brand.

Germany's labour minister said yesterday there were talks "at all levels" with Opel, GM and PSA to ensure that Opel's three plants in Germany remained open in the event of a sale. "The German government intensively discussed at a cabinet meeting today the issue of Opel," Andrea Nahles said after the cabinet meeting. Separately, Britain's Department for Business said it was in close contact with GM over the potential deal. GM's Vauxhall plants employ 4,500 staff near Liverpool, northwest England, and Luton, north of London.

UK raises alarm

Meanwhile, Britain and its leading union expressed concerns yesterday at a plan by General Motors to sell its European operations to France's PSA Group in a deal that could put GM's Vauxhall operations in England at risk after Brexit.

Britain's largely foreign-owned car industry has thrived in recent years, but the vote to leave the European Union has cast doubt on future growth by raising the prospect of tariffs which would make UK plants less competitive. Prime Minister Theresa May's government has already been forced to pull a deal together to persuade Nissan to keep investing in Britain, saying it would counter any loss of competitiveness caused by Brexit.

On Tuesday the news that GM had entered into talks with France's PSA over a deal to merge its loss-making Opel and Vauxhall

brands with the French group's Peugeot, Citroen and DS names raised fears that the British Vauxhall brand could look vulnerable if an enlarged group needs to cut costs.

"The government remains in close contact with GM as we closely monitor the situation," a spokesman for the British Department of Business said, adding that the minister Greg Clark had already raised his concerns with GM President Dan Ammann.

Britain's car industry, which ships more than half of its exports to the other 27 countries in the EU, had lobbied hard against Brexit. Since the vote last June, Prime Minister May has said that Britain will leave the EU single market, which guarantees unfettered trade on the continent, but suggested that certain industries may be able to retain elements of free trade. Vauxhall employs around 4,500 staff in two plants near Liverpool and

Luton, north of London, and supports other jobs through supply chain and retail links.

The Unite workers' union said the president of GM had given a private assurance last year that there would be no surprises in terms of GM's plants in Britain, and that these commitments had not been upheld. "To Peugeot I say, talk to us," Unite General Secretary Len McCluskey said in a statement. "Our members have helped to make the UK auto industry the most competitive and productive in Europe and will do so again with the right backing." McCluskey met Business Minister Clark yesterday to discuss the potential impact on Vauxhall and said he had urged the government to give the same assurances it had given to Nissan to other carmakers. "It cannot be that the future of UK car workers' jobs now lie in the hands of the French government and their backing for Peugeot," he said.—Agencies



LILLE: A man stands in front of the logo of German car maker Opel in Lille, northern France, yesterday.—AFP

OOREDOO CONTINUES TO GIVE XPRESS CUSTOMERS 100% EXTRA CREDIT NATIONAL HOLIDAYS CELEBRATION SURPRISE TO BE ANNOUNCED SOON

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, is continuing its February offer, which gives prepaid customers double their credit upon each recharge transaction for free. The offer comes in alignment with Ooredoo's strategy which is based on caring, connecting and challenging, and which aims to enrich the lives of customers through telecommunication services.

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

Commenting on this, Ooredoo stated its commitment to delivering the best in-class products to our customers, with the highest standards. The

company feels committed to enriching the experience of its customers, including the prepaid segment. Ooredoo has recently simplified our prepaid plans to give our customers more flexibility and freedom. The new plans give customers more freedom to add the features that suit their needs from different add-ons at different values, whether they are international minutes, local minutes, or internet.

Additionally, the company announced that it will launch a special surprise on the occasion of the national holiday, and will announce the details about it soon. Ooredoo has recently relaunched its Xpress prepaid plans, with streamlined simplified plans at KD 5 for a SIM card. Customers can subscribe to a main bundle that includes internet and local calls, starting at KD 3 per month, and have the

freedom to subscribe to add-on plans at competitive prices that include internet, international calls or local calls.

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

Ooredoo is a leading international communications company delivering mobile, fixed, broadband internet and corporate managed services tailored



to the needs of consumers and businesses across markets in the Middle East, North Africa and South-East Asia. As a community-focused company, Ooredoo is guided by its vision of enriching people's lives and its belief that it can stimulate human growth by leveraging communications to help people achieve their full potential. Ooredoo has a presence in markets such as Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, Algeria, Tunisia, Iraq, Palestine, the Maldives and Indonesia. The company was named "Best Mobile Operator of the Year" at the World Communication Awards 2013.



Batumi-Georgia

FLYDUBAI UNVEILS THREE NEW DESTINATIONS FOR THE SUMMER DUBAI-BASED CARRIER TO FLY TO BATUMI, QABALA AND TIVAT

KUWAIT: Dubai-based flydubai yesterday announced the addition of three new destinations for the upcoming summer season. Batumi in Georgia, Qabala in Azerbaijan and Tivat in Montenegro are the latest destinations to join flydubai's growing network and will operate from June to September 2017.

Following the launch of its latest popular destination, Bangkok, at the end of 2016, flydubai continues to diversify its network with the addition of more popular summer destinations for passengers from Dubai and across the region. The decision to launch these seasonal routes is in direct response to customer feedback and demand for more leisure destinations on the flydubai network.

flydubai will be the first carrier to offer direct flights from the UAE to Qabala and Tivat, and the first from Dubai to Batumi. GCC nationals will not need a visa to any of these three new destinations, while UAE residence will receive visa on arrival.

"We would like to thank the authorities in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Montenegro for making it easier for the residents of the UAE and GCC to visit these countries by facilitating their visa

requirements," said Ghaith Al Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer at flydubai, commenting on the announcement.

"We continue to look for opportunities to further expand our network and offer our passengers more options to travel especially for the summer holiday season. These popular new routes in will complement our existing comprehensive network and will be a gateway to explore this part of the region," added Al-Ghaith.

Supported by new aircraft deliveries in 2017, flydubai continues to widen its network which comprises 93 destinations in 44 countries spanning from Yekaterinburg in the north, Bangkok in the east, Zanzibar in the south and Prague in the west.

Batumi, which will be served by three flights a week, will be flydubai's second destination in Georgia following Tbilisi. Qabala, which will be served by two flights a week, is flydubai's second point in Azerbaijan after Baku. While the start of two weekly flights to Tivat will mark flydubai's first entry to Montenegro following the successful promotional trip that was held in October 2016 in partnership with Porto Montenegro.

"We are confident that the demand for these

new summer flights will be strong in both Business and Economy Class. The interest in affordable, popular and off-the-beaten-track holiday destinations continues to grow especially from the GCC markets and these routes offer alternative options for those seeking a beach holiday or city breaks," said Jeyhun Efendi, Senior Vice President Commercial (UAE, EU, ME, CIS) at flydubai.

Batumi, Georgia

flydubai will operate three weekly flights between Dubai and Batumi from 22 June to 30 September 2017 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

Batumi is the second largest city in Georgia, located on the coast of the Black Sea in the country's southwest region. Batumi is a popular tourist destination known for its bustling seaside resorts during the warm months of the summer. The city is also an important sea port with thriving shipbuilding, food processing and light manufacturing industries.

Qabala, Azerbaijan

flydubai will operate two weekly flights between Dubai and Qabala from 22 June to 17 September 2017 on Thursdays and Sundays.

Qabala, also known as Gabala, is the capital of the Gabala District one of the richest archeological and historic regions of Azerbaijan. Qabala is considered a popular tourist destination due to the combination of a mild climate, woods along the mountains, excellent wildlife and recreational resorts.

Tivat, Montenegro

flydubai will operate two weekly flights between Dubai and Tivat from 23 June to 25 September 2017 on Mondays and Fridays.

Already a popular tourist resort, Tivat is set to become a nautical tourism centre for the southern Adriatic. This coastal town in southwest Montenegro is renowned for its pleasant climate and natural beauty and is conveniently located a short drive away from Dubrovnik in Croatia and Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina.



BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNER OF AL-THURAYA ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday Robert Drolet as the lucky winner of the Al-Thuraya Salary Account monthly draw. The winner expressed his excitement for being presented with a Nissan Patrol SUV.

The draw rewards new and existing customers who transfer their salary to Burgan Bank a chance to win a Nissan Patrol SUV every month and with every KD 10 available in the account, the customer receives one chance to enter the draw.

The Al-Thuraya Account's features range from the option to hold money in Kuwaiti dinar and any other major currencies, access to account-related services such as standing orders, loans and credit cards and much more. Customers wishing to open an Al-Thuraya account can do so by simply visiting the nearest Burgan Bank branch and obtain all the necessary details, or simply call the bank's call center on 1804080.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer

base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. 'People come first' is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.



IBS BECOMES AN ACCREDITED ACI EXAMINATION CENTRE

KUWAIT: Prof Yaqoub Alrefaei, Director General of the Institute of Banking Studies announced that the IBS became an accredited examination centre in Kuwait for the "ACI Financial Markets Association Examinations" which are coordinated by Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, Germany.

Frankfurt School hosts the ACI Global Education Centre of ACI - The Financial Markets Association (ACI) which is considered as a prestigious world standard setting body. ACI provides a suite of specialized examinations targeting Foreign Exchange, Fixed Income, Money Markets, Derivatives, Repos, Asset Liability and Risk Management for front, middle and back-office staff.

All of the ACI exams are in English and computer based. ACI offers an online-exam portfolio comprising the ACI Dealing Certificate, the ACI Operations Certificate and the ACI Model Code Certificate as well as the ACI Suite of Diplomas. Examinations at The Institute of Banking Studies examination centre



will be held on first Tuesday of each month at 16:00 pm (Kuwait local time). There are limited examination slots available, therefore, enrollment is on first-come first-served basis. Please learn more about Frankfurt School at the following link: www.fs.de/exed

ABK ANNOUNCES SECOND WINNER OF FEBRUARY DRAW

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) held the second weekly 'Update your Civil ID' February promotion draw on Monday, 13th February, 2017 at the Bank's Head Office in the presence of a representative from the Ministry of Commerce. The promotion includes a draw for each week of February, with one person per draw winning an Apple iPhone7.

The lucky winner for the first 'Update Your Civil ID' draw was Joisy Thumbarappel Joseph, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh Branch.

To enter, customers just need to insert their Civil IDs into an ATM at any ABK branch during February 2017 and update their information. In addition to allowing customers to update their Civil ID details, ABK's ATMs also offer a range of other services including withdrawing and depositing money, requesting account balances and mini-statements, changing a PIN number and transferring funds to other ABK accounts.

The next draw will be held on Monday 20th February, where one new lucky winner will be

announced. The campaign will end on 28th February, 2017. All winners will be contacted personally and a winners announcement will be made through the media.



AUB ALLOWS CUSTOMERS TO UPDATE CIVIL IDS VIA ATMS

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank (AUB), one of the leading local Islamic financial institutions that provides a wide range of Sharia compliant banking services, announced yesterday the launch of a new service that allows customers to update their civil IDs through ATMs. The new service aims at facilitating the overall banking process while also reinforcing customer satisfaction. AUB's latest service allows its customers to update their data through their civil IDs in an easy and timely manner, through the use of the Bank's enhanced ATM network across Kuwait, without the need to visit any of the Bank's branches.

Huda Al-Madani, AUB's Assistant General Manager-Alternative Distribution Channels said, "The new update allows customers to update the required information available in their civil IDs at any given time and place through an easy-to-follow process. Customers need only to use any of AUB's ATMs and select the 'update personal information' option and insert their smart civil IDs in the ATM, which will automatically update the data required." "Updating customers' personal information through the use of ATMs is a step forward in the varied services provided by AUB. Customers can now save a lot of time and don't need to visit any of the branches to update their personal information, Al-Madani added.

"At AUB, we continuously aim at providing highly enhanced services while also providing the latest technical updates across

our banking operations in order to ensure customer satisfaction. This is part of the Bank's strategic vision which focuses on facilitating systems and processes to provide an enhanced customer service, and one which is in line with our wide range of banking products, finance offers that we routinely launch," Huda Al-Madani concluded.



ZENITH AND OOREDOO LAUNCH TV SYNC FOR THE FIRST TIME IN KUWAIT



During the Kuwaiti parliamentary elections that took place last Nov, when TV viewings is at its highest, Ooredoo Kuwait, one of the leading communications networks in the Middle East, ran a campaign with Zenith media tapping into moment marketing and utilizing advanced data analytics to extend customer experience from TV to mobile. Breaking through the media clutter, Zenith's TV Sync tool helped bridge TVCs strong reach to mobile engagement. TV Sync enables a marketer to synchronize its above the line TV advertising with different digital channels. When a TV ad ran for Ooredoo Kuwait, it triggered a display ad and videos on tablets, mobiles and desktops -

scooping up second-screener, driving incremental reach and delivering relevant messages about the brand to consumers when they were most receptive. The first of its kind in the market, the campaign achieved more than 200,000 complete views during the span of 28 hours, and received an average view rate of 60 percent.

TV Sync achieved 28.5 percent more complete view rate and 213 percent higher click through rate (CTR) than video campaigns on social platforms. "As technology changes the speed and way people engage with content across devices, it's imperative that successful marketers are able to connect with consumers in real time. Zenith is

committed to being at the forefront of innovation and we believe our insights and in-house capabilities help us map the right course for our clients," says Mohamed Reda, Media Director at Zenith Kuwait. "Due to the media clutter in Kuwait, we are always trying to find an opportunity where our messages stand out and reach our target audience efficiently. During elections, when most brands also invest in TV, we needed to be one-step ahead. TV Sync helped us maximize our exposure and achieve higher ROI, while reaching our target audience wherever on multiple platforms," says Talal Al-Fassam, Advertising Manager at Ooredoo Kuwait.

SMARTPHONE MAKER HUAWEI CATCHING UP ON SAMSUNG, APPLE

PARIS: Chinese smartphone maker Huawei managed to gain ground on Samsung and Apple in terms of market share last year, following the problems encountered by the two sector giants, the Gartner consultancy group said yesterday. Over the year as a whole, the Chinese maker saw its sales leap by 26.7 percent, while the South Korean and US rivals both saw their sales decline by 4.3 percent, Gartner said in a study.

As result, Huawei was able to increase its share of the smartphone sector to 8.9 percent in 2016 from 7.3 percent a year earlier, while Samsung saw its market share shrink by two full percentage points to 20.5 percent and Apple's contracted to 14.4 percent from 15.9 percent. "Chinese makers succeeded in winning market share over last year and Huawei now seems to be the main rival to the two giants, even if the gap remains large," Gartner analyst Annette Zimmermann said.

Among the other Chinese smartphone makers are OPPO, BBK Communication Equipment (with its One Plus and Vivo brands), ZTE, Xiaomi and Lenovo. "We're seeing a very real progression compared

with earlier years, when the number three maker and the others had struggled to hold on to a market share of more than four percent," Zimmermann said. "Huawei looks likely to strengthen its position again this year," she added. In the fourth quarter of 2016 alone, the launch of the iPhone 7 and Samsung's difficulties with its Note 7 model enabled Apple to take top slot in the market with a share of 17.9 percent or 77 million units sold.

Samsung sold 76.8 million smartphones in the October-December period, giving it a market share of 17.8 percent, while Huawei sold 40.8 million phones or a market share of 9.5 percent. "Preliminary data for the current quarter suggest that Samsung will overtake Apple again. But it's remarkable that Apple can hold on to that sort of share of the market with a closed eco-system," the analyst said. With regard to the different operating systems, Android, which is used by the large majority of smartphone makers, commands a market share of 81.7 percent, while Apple's iOS operating system of its iPhones and iPads accounts for 17.9 percent of the market. —AFP



VERTOU: This file photo shows logos of US online social media and social networking service Facebook in Vertou, western France. — AFP

FACEBOOK PUSHES VIDEO ONTO TV SCREENS WITH NEW APPS

SAN FRANCISCO: Facebook on Tuesday announced it was rolling out apps to allow people to view videos posted on the social network on connected televisions. The new apps-for Apple TV, Amazon's Fire TV and Samsung Smart TV-will provide a more convenient way for users of the social network to view videos on a large screen.

The move could be a small step toward what some reports say is a more ambitious

video plan by Facebook to compete with Google-owned YouTube or even with streaming services such as Netflix. For now, the apps will simply make it easier to view and share user-generated video. "Last year we rolled out the ability for you to stream videos from Facebook to your TV, and today's announcement expands this capability," said a blog post from product manager Dana Sittler and engineering manager Alex Li.

"With the app, you can watch videos shared by friends or pages you follow, top live videos from around the world, and recommended videos based on your interests." Facebook said it expects the applications to roll out "soon" for users of Apple, Amazon and Samsung, with additional platforms likely to be added. Facebook also said it was modifying video playback for users, with sound to play automatically unless users silence their devices. —AFP

DISNEY ENDS DEAL WITH YOUTUBE STAR OVER ANTI-SEMITIC STUNT

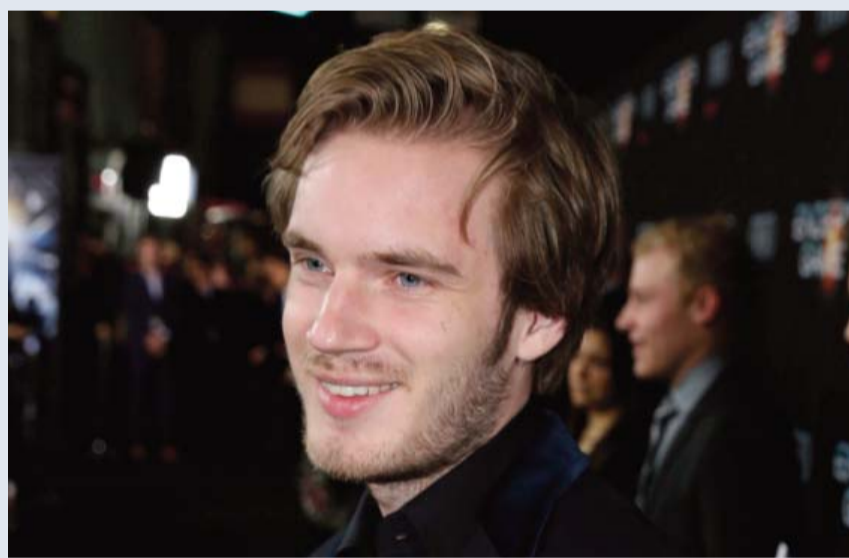
NEW YORK: Disney's Maker Studios and Google's YouTube are distancing themselves from a top YouTube star after he made jokes construed as anti-Semitic and posted Nazi imagery in his videos. Felix Kjellberg, known online as PewDiePie, has the most popular YouTube channel, with more than 53 million subscribers. The Swedish YouTube star rose to fame by posting videos of him playing and commenting about video games. More recently, he branched out into non-gaming videos that show him performing skits, stunts or making jokes.

Disney, whose Maker Studios runs Kjellberg's channels and network, said he crossed the line with some of his videos. One video from January shows two Indian men paid by Kjellberg to hold up a sign that says "Death to all Jews." Kjellberg said the video was meant to demonstrate how far people will go if they get paid to do something, but he didn't think they would actually do it. Other videos show Nazi imagery in a satirical way. In blog post Kjellberg said he was making jokes,

but realizes now that they were offensive.

Kjellberg's channel was already part of Maker Studios when the Walt Disney Co. bought Maker in 2014 for \$675 million. Maker contracts with individuals such as Kjellberg to produce videos for various YouTube channels. Kjellberg (pronounced SHEHL-burg) pulled the video showing the two men displaying the anti-Semitic sign, but it is excerpted in a Wall Street Journal video. Other videos still on the site show Nazi imagery being used satirically.

Maker Studios said in a statement that while Kjellberg's channel is popular because he is irreverent and provocative, the studio is ending its affiliation with him because he went too far. YouTube spokeswoman Michelle Slavich said YouTube has canceled the release of the second season of Kjellberg's reality show "Scare PewDiePie" and removed the PewDiePie channel from its Google Preferred advertising program, which aggregates top YouTube content for advertisers to buy time on. —AFP



LOS ANGELES: In this file photo, YouTube star Felix Kjellberg arrives at the premiere of Ender's Game in Los Angeles. —AP

MOST DRIVERS, NOT JUST YOUNG, ARE TAKING RISKS

DETROIT: Young drivers aren't alone in behaving badly on US roads, a trend that could be contributing to a spike in highway deaths. Well over half of drivers in every age group have texted behind the wheel, run a red light or driven faster than the speed limit in the last 30 days, according to a new study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Younger drivers are the worst offenders.

Eighty-eight percent of drivers ages 19 to 24 admitted to at least one of those behaviors. But even mature drivers skirted the rules more often researchers expected. For instance, 10 percent of drivers between 60 and 74 have texted or sent email from behind the wheel, while 37 percent of drivers over 75 said they'd driven through a light that had just turned red. "It was a surprise that there were relatively high rates of these behaviors among the drivers we think of as safer," said Lindsay Arnold, a research associate with the AAA Foundation.

Arnold said the responses were similar to those in past years, indicating a troubling trend. In 2015, US traffic deaths rose 7 percent to 35,092, the largest single-year increase in five decades. They're expected to rise again in 2016 when that data is final-

ized. "It points to the need to improve driver behavior if we're going to reverse this alarming trend," Arnold said. Teen driver education campaigns have had some success, foundation spokeswoman Tamra Johnson said. Now the organization is considering the best ways to reach drivers of other ages.

The study found broad agreement on some issues. Eighty-seven percent of drivers said they have never driven when they thought they were close to the legal alcohol limit. Ninety-five percent said they had never driven within an hour of using marijuana. Eighty-eight percent of drivers say it's unacceptable to drive without a seat belt and 82 percent support laws requiring motorcycle riders to wear helmets.

But drivers' behavior sometimes contradicted their own instincts. More than three-quarters of drivers say it's unacceptable to text or email while driving, but 31 percent had done so in the last month and 8 percent do so often. Ninety-six percent of drivers say drowsy driving is a serious safety threat, but 29 percent had recently driven when they were so tired they had trouble keeping their eyes open. The study questioned 2,511 licensed drivers aged 16 and over. —AP

ELECTRIC CAR BOOM SPURS INVESTOR SCRAMBLE FOR COBALT

LONDON: Investors are buying up physical cobalt anticipating that shortages of the metal, a key component of lithium-ion batteries used in electric cars, will spur prices to their highest levels since the 2008 financial crisis. Prices for cobalt metal <COB-CATH-LON> have climbed nearly 50 percent since September to five-year peaks around \$19 a lb as stricter emissions controls boost demand for electric vehicles, especially in China, struggling with ruinous pollution levels in some cities. Consultants CRU Group say electric car and plug-in hybrid vehicle sales could hit 4.4 million in 2021 and more than six million by 2025, from 1.1 million last year.

By 2020, 75 percent of lithium-ion batteries will contain cobalt, whose properties allow electric cars to extend their range between charges, according to eCobalt Solutions, which produces battery grade cobalt salts. Some 98 percent of cobalt is produced as a by-product of copper and nickel output, so for investors pure equity exposure to cobalt is tricky. "Cobalt isn't going to massively impact share prices. The funds looked at LME (London Metal Exchange) cobalt contracts, but they aren't liquid enough for the millions they want to invest," a Europe-based cobalt trader said. "So they are buying cobalt with the intention of sitting on it until prices rise, looking for \$25 (a lb) or more."

Swiss-based Pala Investments, a fund focused on the mining sector, and Shanghai Chaos Investment, one of China's largest commodities funds, bought cobalt last year, industry sources familiar with the matter said, declining to specify amounts. Pala Investments declined to comment, while calls to Shanghai Chaos went unanswered. "Future demand for cobalt from the EV (electric vehicle) sector is looking tangible and is more positive than originally expected," one commodity-focused fund manager said. "China has some aggressive plans in terms of electric vehicles...It will be a major driver behind cobalt consumption growth."

China's State Reserves Bureau, in charge of building the country's stocks of commodities from oil to rare earth minerals, bought 5,000 tons of cobalt metal last year and in 2015, traders said. It is expected to buy more this year. Highlighting the metal's importance, the US's Defense Logistics Agency deemed lithium cobalt oxide and lithium nickel cobalt aluminum oxide compounds as strategic and has been stockpiling since 2014. Cobalt is also widely used for super alloys in turbines, space vehicles, rocket engines and power plants.

Hoarding

After seven years of surplus and overcapacity the market will move into a deficit this year, exacerbated by an insecure supply chain. Almost 60 percent of the world's cobalt lies in politically risky Democratic Republic of Congo. At the same time, many traders are hoarding cobalt, most of it

bought when the price was around \$10 a lb in Dec 2015 due to a market surplus of more than 2,000 tons. They are waiting for higher prices. On Monday, trader and miner Glencore tightened its grip on Congo's copper and cobalt resources by buying the remaining stake in one mine and upping its share in another for \$960 million. It said the complex had the potential to become the world's largest cobalt producer.

Other copper and cobalt producers include privately owned Eurasian Resources Group, Canada's Sherritt International and China Molybdenum. Canadian small-cap LiCo Energy Metals, which is exploring for materials used in lithium-ion batteries, could appeal to investors looking for exposure to reliable sources of cobalt from a politically stable country. Global total demand for cobalt last year was around 100,000 tons, of which around half was used in batteries

to power electric cars, as well as mobile phones, laptops, digital cameras and cordless drills.

"In terms of overall demand, EVs (electric vehicles) only consumed around 6.5 percent of refined cobalt in 2016. This will increase to 16.9 percent in 2021 helping lift demand to nearly 130,000 tons," CRU senior consultant Edward Spencer said. "We expect a deficit in the region of 900 tons this year. However, a far larger deficit could open quickly if mine and refinery capacity growth fails to keep pace." Analysts at Macquarie Research expect deficits of 885 tons next year, 3,205 in 2019 and 5,340 in 2020.

"Cobalt has limited new supply projects coming through. Meanwhile refined output in key supply countries such as Australia, Russia and Zambia are well down on levels seen a decade ago," Macquarie analyst Colin Hamilton said. —Reuters

HONG KONG POLICE STRUGGLE TO STOP BROKERAGE HACKING SPREE

HONG KONG: Hong Kong police are struggling to deal with digital pump-and-dump schemes targeting brokerages - a little-known type of computer-generated fraud that surged in the Chinese territory last year. Although the money involved was small - only about \$20 million worth of shares - there were 81 such incidents reported in 2016, more than triple the number in 2015, according to police. In the scheme, criminals invest in thinly traded penny stocks and then manipulate their share prices by ordering trades from hacked brokerage accounts. They earn profits by selling before the fraudulent trades are reported.

After last year's cyber-heist of \$81 million at Bangladesh's central bank and a series of hacks of ATM's around the world, authorities fear such pump-and-dump schemes could be increasingly used for electronic theft. Hong Kong is a favored place for such attacks because of the number of thinly-traded penny stocks in the territory and because its securities industry has fallen behind other financial centers in defending against cyber fraud. At least seven brokers and eight banks have been targeted in Hong Kong, including HSBC Holdings Plc and Bank of China International (BOCI) Securities, according to regulators and people familiar with confidential investigations.

A spokesman for HSBC declined to comment. A spokeswoman for BOCI Securities said he could not comment on its case but the brokerage would continue to invest in IT security. "If you ask regulators in the industry what is the number one threat, not surpris-

ingly it's all about cyber attacks," Ashley Alder, CEO of the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) and chairman of the International Organization of Securities Commissions, said in a speech to the local legislature last week. "We've seen that happen not only in banking but also at brokers in Hong Kong, in particular recent attacks to do with basically hijacking share trading accounts."

Such schemes surfaced more than a decade ago in the United States. Charles Schwab Corp, E*Trade Financial Corp and JP Morgan Chase & Co. were identified as victims of these schemes in a 2006 complaint filed by the Securities and Exchange Commission. The pace of attacks reported in the United States has slowed in recent years after big brokerages implemented a variety of strategies to thwart the hacks, said John Reed Stark, a former chief of the Securities and Exchange Commission's (SEC) Office of Internet Enforcement.

Some use algorithms to identify and halt unusual trading activity, others scrutinize Internet traffic for orders coming from suspicious servers and one stopped permitting customers to use its online trading platform from buying penny stocks, said Stark, who now runs cyber-security consulting firm John Reed Stark Consulting LLC. But such protections are rare in Hong Kong, where the government has only recently started suggesting security improvements to banks and brokerages which have traditionally considered stock trading to be low-risk. —Reuters

HIV INFECTIONS FALL BY 18% IN SIX YEARS IN US

NEW YORK: New calculations to better track HIV infections confirm that the US is seeing a strong and steady decline. The number of new cases has been falling for years. But health officials wanted a clearer picture of how the epidemic was behaving. They count people when they were diagnosed with the AIDS virus - not when they actually contracted it, which can be

months or years earlier. Counting infections instead of diagnoses is a more ideal gauge - a kind of speedometer that tells how fast the epidemic is actually moving, said David Holtgrave, an HIV researcher at Johns Hopkins University.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention used blood test results to help date the infections. Their calculations

showed new infections dropped by nearly 18 percent over six years, the CDC reported Tuesday. Though health experts expected a decline, they welcomed the confirmation. "It's very exciting to see this kind of drop," said Ron Brookmeyer, a statistician at the University of California, Los Angeles. It suggests that stepped-up efforts to diagnose and treat infections are

paying off, he added. The agency found that between 2008 and 2014, new infections fell: 18 percent in the overall population, from 45,700 to 37,600. 36 percent in heterosexuals. 56 percent in people who inject drugs. Two-thirds of the people who are diagnosed with HIV each year are gay and bisexual men. The CDC saw substantial declines in new infections in very

young and in middle-aged men in that group. But there was a 35 percent increase in men ages 25 to 34, offsetting the other decreases. Officials also said they were able to estimate annual HIV infections in 35 states. No state saw an increase. Seven saw significant decreases - Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New York, North Carolina and Texas.—AP

COULD GENE EDITING HELP AVOID DISEASE? MAYBE

ALTERING HUMAN HEREDITY TO FIGHT GENETIC DISEASES

WASHINGTON: Don't expect designer babies any time soon - but a major new ethics report leaves open the possibility of one day altering human heredity to fight genetic diseases, with stringent oversight, using new tools that precisely edit genes inside living cells. What's called genome editing already is transforming biological research, and being used to develop treatments for patients struggling with a range of diseases.

The science is nowhere near ready for a huge next step that raises ethical questions - altering sperm, eggs or embryos so that babies don't inherit a disease that runs in the family, says a

"Caution is absolutely needed, but being cautious does not mean prohibition," said bioethicist R. Alta Charo of the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "This committee is not saying we will or should do germline - heritable - editing. What we are saying is that we can identify a set of strict conditions under which it would be permissible to do it," Charo added. "But we are far, far away from being ready to try." Genome editing should not go beyond healing the sick and enhance traits such as physical strength, what's commonly called "designer babies," the panel stressed.

But the public should get involved in these

tional meetings with the hope of doing just that. "Genome editing is a new tool for gene therapy and it has tremendous promise," Charo said.

Germline editing

But, she added, it has to be pursued in a way that promotes well-being and is responsible, respectful and fair. Genome editing is essentially a biological version of cut-and-paste software, allowing scientists to turn genes on or off, repair or modify them inside living cells. There are a few older methods but one with the wacky name CRISPR-Cas9 is so much faster, cheaper and simpler to use that it has spurred an explosion of research. Under development are ways to treat a range of diseases from sickle cell and hemophilia to cancer.

In lab experiments using human cells or animals engineered with human like disorders, scientists are unraveling how gene defects fuel disease - and are even trying to grow transplantable human organs inside pigs. That kind of research is very promising, is adequately regulated today and should continue at full speed, the National Academies panel concluded. When it comes to the more sci-fi-sounding uses, it's quite possible scientists will learn how to perform germline editing in five to 10 years, said panel co-chair Richard Hynes of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Safety is one reason for caution, he said, as scientists will have to learn whether editing one gene has unwanted downstream effects. Some critics argue that families plagued by inherited diseases already have other alternatives - adopt, use donated eggs, or undergo in vitro fertilization and discard resulting embryos that inherit the bad gene. But Charo noted that sometimes parents carry two copies of a lethal gene, guaranteeing any children inherit it. Others oppose the discarding of embryos for religious reasons. For some families, "you can see there would be strong arguments for doing it" if the other criteria are met, said Robin Lovell-Badge of Britain's Francis Crick Institute.

Some countries prohibit any germline editing research. Others, such as Britain, allow laboratory research with genome editing in embryos, not for pregnancy but to understand human development. In the US, scientists can perform laboratory embryo research only with private, not government, funding. Any attempt at pregnancy would require permission from the Food and Drug Administration, which is currently prohibited from using federal funds to review any such request. "The bottom line is there is no planetary government with enforcement power," Charo noted Tuesday.—AP

Gene editing within a living cell

A technique called CRISPR-Cas9 is one method of what is called genome editing, allowing scientists to precisely repair or modify genes in the quest for new ways to treat or prevent inherited diseases.

Guide RNA

Scientists customize RNA molecules to guide an enzyme named Cas9 to the correct spot.

Cas9

The enzyme precisely cuts DNA like scissors. The cell repairs itself or a new piece of DNA can be inserted.



SOURCE: University of California, Berkeley

AP

report Tuesday from the National Academy of Sciences and National Academy of Medicine. But if scientists learn how to safely pass alterations of the genetic code to future generations, the panel said "germline" editing could be attempted under strict criteria, including that it targets a serious disease with no reasonable alternative and is conducted under rigorous oversight.

debates now, to say what might one day be acceptable. The long-awaited report offers advice - the prestigious academies cannot set policy. But it is considered a step toward creating international norms for responsible development of this powerful technology. The US National Academies and its counterparts in Britain and China have been holding interna-

MINERS PROTEST PHILIPPINE PLAN TO CANCEL 75 CONTRACTS

MANILA: Mining firms in the Philippines voiced outrage yesterday over government plans to cancel nearly one quarter of the nation's contracts, plus a permit to exploit one of the world's largest known copper deposits. Environment Secretary Gina Lopez announced Tuesday she would cancel 75 of the nation's 311 mining contracts, as well as the environmental compliance certificate of the planned \$5.9-billion Tampakan copper and gold project. The Chamber of Mines of the Philippines said it would fight Lopez's decision, warning it threatened \$22-billion worth of projects.

The contracts are for projects in the pipeline but are not yet operating. "She's out to kill the industry. We do not see a future for us under her," Ronald Recidoro, the chamber's vice president for legal and policy affairs, said. "Her announcement was bloody in all aspects." Lopez, appointed by President Rodrigo Duterte last year, has railed against what she insists are the environmentally destructive and exploitative practices of local and foreign miners in the Philippines. "Water is life. If you put at risk the water supply of the community there, you are putting at risk the quality of life of the people," Lopez said on Tuesday.

This month Lopez also ordered the closure of 23 existing mines and the suspension of five others, saying they illegally encroached on watersheds, leaked waste into rivers and destroyed trees. The Philippines is the world's top supplier of nickel ore and main exporter to China, and the government actions have impacted global metal prices. Lopez said Tuesday mining companies would be given seven days to explain before the cancellation of the 75 contracts were carried out. However the mining industry has warned it will take all legal measures to fight Lopez's moves, which are widely expected to be brought before the Supreme Court.

Mining firms accused Lopez of breaching contracts and asked congress on Tuesday to reject her confirmation as environment secretary. The Tampakan copper-gold project in the southern Philippines had already been stalled by regulation hurdles, including a local government ban on open-pit mining. Recidoro warned Tuesday's announcement would be a huge blow for the local economy. "This will lead to the loss of what will probably be the biggest employer in the area," Recidoro said.—AFP



MANILA: This file photo shows miners pushing a trolley as they enter a cooperative mining site in the village of Mt. Diwata, Monkayo town, Compotela valley on the southern island of Mindanao.—AFP

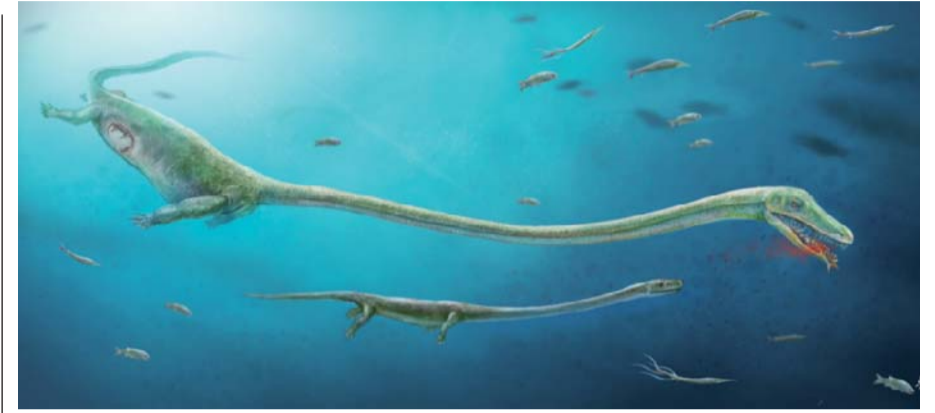
OHIO ZOO'S POLAR BEAR MOVES TO CHICAGO TO FIND ROMANCE

TOLEDO, Ohio: An Ohio zoo's polar bear is off to Chicago to find love. The Toledo Zoo says its 21-year-old female bear named Nan has been moved to the Brookfield Zoo near Chicago to see if she will breed with the zoo's male bear. Nan moved into her new home this week where she's separated by a fence from her potential mate named Hudson. The Brookfield Zoo says

the bears will spend a little time getting to know each other before moving in together. The move was arranged by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums and its polar bear species survival program. Keepers at the Toledo Zoo say Nan is genetically important because she was born in the wild and discovered as an orphan cub near Barrow, Alaska.—AP



BROOKFIELD: In this photo, a female polar bear shakes off water after a swim in her public debut at the Brookfield Zoo's Great Bear Wilderness habitat in Brookfield, Illinois.—AP



ANHUI, China: A handout image released by the Nature magazine and obtained shows a pregnant Dinosaur catching a fish.—AFP

LONG-DEAD REPTILE GAVE LIVE BIRTH

PARIS: An unusually long-necked marine reptile gave birth to live young 245 million years ago—the only known member of the dinosaur, bird and croc family to not lay eggs, researchers said Tuesday. Archaeologists examining the fossil of a female Dinosaur from Yunnan Province, southwest China, were amazed to discover the remains of a baby among the bones where her abdomen would have been. "I was so excited when I first saw this embryonic specimen," said Jun Liu of China's Hefei University of Technology who co-authored a study published in Nature Communications.

"This discovery rewrites our understanding of the evolution of reproductive systems." Dinosaur was a member of the archosaur family, which includes extinct dinosaurs as well as today's birds and crocodiles—all egg-layers. The archosaurs' sister clade of turtles also lays eggs, but a third group of reptiles called lepidosaurs, including lizards and snakes, contains some species that give birth to live young—including some sea snakes, boas, skinks and slow worms.

Live birth is usually associated with mammals, and egg-laying is considered the original, "primitive" state of animals. Dinosaur was a strange-looking ocean-dweller with a neck almost twice the

length of its trunk—some 3-4 meters in total. It was a fish eater, snaking its long neck from side to side to catch prey. The baby Dinosaur, or what remained of it, was about a tenth of the mother's size.

Offspring, or lunch?

At first, "I was not sure if the embryonic specimen (was) the last lunch of the mother, or its unborn baby," Liu said by email. "Upon closer inspection and searching the literature, I realized that something unusual has been discovered—an embryo providing 'clear evidence for live birth'. Unlike prey, which would ordinarily have been swallowed head-first, the young Dinosaur was facing forward in the abdominal cavity, said Liu.

The scientists also discounted the possibility that the tiny reptile had been inside an egg shell which simply eroded over time. The specimen "demonstrates the curled posture typical for vertebrate embryos," and there were no calcified shell bits found, said Liu. Archosaurs are known to lay their eggs at a much earlier developmental stage, he added—long before the tot had grown to this size. The new study pushes fossil evidence for the reproductive biology of archosaurs back by 50 million years, to the Middle Triassic, said the study.—AFP

EUROPE READY TO EMBRACE FIRST COPIES OF BIOTECH CANCER DRUGS

LONDON: Treatment with two important cancer drugs is about to get much cheaper in Europe with a cut-price copy of Roche's blood cancer drug Rituxan likely to hit the market imminently followed by a rival to its breast cancer medicine Herceptin. As cancer drug prices spiral, the arrival of the first biosimilars or copies of biotech drugs, ones made inside living cells, puts European oncologists in the forefront of a treatment shift that could slash costs and expand patient access. Copycat versions of Rituxan, also known as MabThera, and Herceptin have faced several delays in development in the past.

This time the world's biggest cancer drug-maker cannot escape the competition. Approval from the pan-European regulator, the European Medicines Agency (EMA), is pending and preparations are under way for the launch of a Rituxan biosimilar from South Korea's Celtrion. "We're expecting it to be available shortly," Andrew Roberts of Napp Pharmaceuticals, which will sell the intravenous drug in Britain, told Reuters. The EMA does not comment on upcoming approvals but its website shows it is assessing two biosimilar versions of Rituxan and three of Herceptin. Industry analysts believe Mylan and its partner Biocan may win a green light for the first Herceptin biosimilar in Europe later this year. Big numbers are at stake. Rituxan sold \$7.3 billion worldwide last year, while Herceptin brought in \$6.75 billion. Although copies of both are sold in parts of Asia, Europe is the first large market, with US launches still some way off. Investors have been concerned about how quickly doctors would trust the new drugs but cancer experts and healthcare providers, worried about the finances of Europe's healthcare system, say they plan to embrace the cut-price medicines.

Oncologists see savings creating financial headroom for a new wave of even more expensive immunotherapy drugs that are revolutionizing cancer care but can cost more than \$100,000 per patient. "Whether it's in the public or the private sector, we need to provide sustainable healthcare and biosimilars are clearly a good way to improve affordability," said Josep Taberner, head of medical oncology at the Vall d'Hebron University Hospital in Barcelona.

Taberner believes uptake will be just as good as for biosimilar rheumatoid arthritis drugs, known as anti-TNFs, which were launched in Europe a couple of years back. While it took a few months for physicians to get comfortable with those first antibody copycats, demand has since taken off and competition has driven down anti-TNF prices substantially.

50 percent discount

Because biotech drugs are made inside living cells it is impossible to make exact generic

copies, as happens with simple pills, so regulators have come up with the notion of approving products that are "similar" enough to do the job. That makes developing them relatively costly, leading to initial expectations of only modest price discounts. Yet biosimilar anti-TNFs now sell at around a 50 percent discount and Novartis, whose Sandoz unit has one of the biggest biosimilars portfolios, reckons discounts could widen to as high as 75 percent in some instances.

Taberner, who is president-elect of the European Society of Medical Oncology and co-wrote a technical paper last month putting the case for biosimilars, told Reuters he would "love to see discounts of 40 to 60 percent". Based on the rheumatology experience, discounts are likely to start out at around 30 percent.

"If European oncologists are offered highly effective biosimilar agents at a better price, I'm sure they will receive them extremely positively," said Paul Workman, chief executive of Britain's Institute of Cancer Research.

Officials running Europe's national healthcare systems are also paying close attention. Nordic countries and Germany have led the way in using biosimilars but others are now taking action to drive up biosimilar use. Britain, for example, which spends more than 300 million pounds (\$375 million) on Rituxan and Herceptin, has set a target for 90 percent of new patients treated in National Health Service hospitals to get biosimilars in future. And the British Oncology Pharmacy Association declared last week it was committed to optimizing the use of biosimilar antibodies in cancer treatment.

New cancer patients, rather than those already started on an existing medicine, are the group most likely to receive biosimilars, at least initially. Still, the nature of treatment, often involving multiple therapy regimens, means this may not hinder biosimilar uptake in the medium-term. "We won't see instant uptake in every area but we would still expect much faster uptake than has been seen in the past with biosimilars," said Napp's Roberts. The EMA has to date approved 23 biosimilars against just four in the United States.

"The EMA has done a good job. It realized many years ago that this is very strategic for managing drug costs in Europe and they set clear, understandable guidelines very early on," said Oliver Kubli of Bellevue Asset Management in Zurich. With a run of patent expiries on blockbuster biotech drugs lasting until around 2022, he is betting on a surge in sales for biosimilar manufacturers in the coming years, even with price discounts of 50 to 70 percent. Roche acknowledged this month it would see some erosion from biosimilars this year, although it is hoping to offset this with better or more convenient follow-on products.—Reuters

BEE'AH SUPPORTS THE FIRST EVER GULF SUSTAINABILITY AND CSR AWARDS

Bee'ah, the Middle East's leading and award-winning environmental management company, will headline the first ever Gulf Sustainability and CSR Awards (GSCSR) to recognise efforts made in 2016. As a sponsor and strategic partner in GSCSR, Bee'ah will raise the bar of sustainability and increase awareness of CSR in the Gulf region and beyond. The Finals and Awards Ceremony of GSCSR took place yesterday at Jumeirah Creekside Hotel, Dubai.

Over 250 senior sustainability and CSR professionals will be in attendance and 75 finalists representing blue chip companies across a range of industry sectors. The ceremony is organised by Awards International, the leading and most credible, independently-judged awards com-

pany in the Middle East.

Bee'ah's Group CEO, Khaled Al Huraimel, comments on the occasion: "Bee'ah will always extend its unwavering support for initiatives that empower individuals and companies to take the lead in sustainability and CSR. We are committed to the community, in line with the UAE Vision 2021, by providing the best standard of sustainability."

He added: "At Bee'ah, we have set an example in the UAE and the region as a leading environmental management company that operates responsibly. We aim to recognise the pinnacle achievers at GSCSR 2016 to share our knowledge and expertise with others in the various industries as well."

Mark Hamill, Managing Director of

Awards International UAE, exclaimed, "Bee'ah have been Winners in many categories related to Sustainability in one of our other Awards programmes therefore they are the optimal choice to be Headline Sponsors for these Awards. They have been at the forefront of leading environmental change by applying the best international practices to conserve the UAE's valuable resources."

The Gulf Sustainability and CSR Awards, the first-of-its-kind in the region, provide recognition for companies and individuals implementing outstanding sustainability and CSR initiatives in their fields. The Awards also aim to promote organisations and businesses as a vehicle for sharing best practices and to encourage continuous improvement through

personal development.

The key sponsors and partners are offering support to make this awards programme a success. The Finals and Awards Ceremony will represent the culmination of an arduous and worthwhile journey as the finalists will deliver presentations to open judging panels, followed by the announcement of the winners of each category during the Gala lunch.

Four experts from Bee'ah will be a part of the esteemed judging committee and through its invaluable participation, Bee'ah will emphasise the importance of CSR efforts in the region. Bee'ah's role in the ceremony is statement of intent: to continue to make great strides in the field of sustainability as part of their mis-

sion for a better tomorrow.

The award categories include: Best Community Development, Best Sustainability Education Programme, Learning and Education Programmes, Clean Technology, Environmental Sustainability Programmes, Green Building, Innovation in Sustainable Technologies, Waste Management, Water Treatment and Management, Best Workplace and HR Practices, Cause-related Marketing Campaign, Employee Programme, Sustainable Business Models and Awareness Programmes, Government CSR Initiative, Government Sustainability Initiative, Social Enterprise, CSR Professional of the Year, CSR Team of the Year, Sustainability Professional, and Sustainability Team of the Year.

PHARMA INDUSTRY SHUNS TRUMP PUSH FOR RADICAL SHIFT AT FDA

NEW YORK: US President Donald Trump's vow to roll back government regulations at least 75 percent is causing anxiety for some pharmaceutical executives that a less robust Food and Drug Administration would make it harder to secure insurance coverage for pricey new medicines. The prospect of big change at the regulatory agency comes as drugmakers are under fire for high prices, including Marathon Pharmaceuticals LLC, which said Monday it was "pausing" the launch of its Duchenne muscular dystrophy drug after US lawmakers questioned its \$89,000 a year price.

Industry trade group Biotechnology Innovation Organization told Reuters that during high-level discussions with Trump advisors, lobbyists urged the administration not to name a new commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration who would act rashly to speed up the agency's approval of new medicines. That sentiment was echoed by executives at more than a dozen pharmaceutical and biotechnology firms, who told Reuters that the FDA is already adopting new drug development models and warned that a looser review process would put patients at risk.

"People often argue that the FDA is too restrictive," said Roger Perlmutter, head of research and development at Merck & Co Inc. "We have the sense that the balance is pretty right ... you have to have a well-characterized risk/benefit profile." That stance underscores the unique position the drug industry finds itself in when it comes to regulating its products. While most sectors welcome less oversight, drugmakers say a robust review process is critical in convincing physicians and insurers that a pricey new medicine has value.

Damaging approach

Otherwise, the time and money it takes to get a new drug to market - estimates run as high as \$2.6 billion - would be lost if insurers are not willing to pay for the product. "It is great that the administration is seeking deregulation ... to make sure the private sector can be more competitive," said John Maraganore, chief executive officer at Alnylam Pharmaceuticals Inc and co-chair of BIO's regulatory committee. "But payers are looking for evidence of value."

He said the FDA should speed the approval of lower cost generic versions of drugs that have lost patent protection, but warned that allowing novel products to be launched without extensive testing could be dangerous. "Any change at the FDA that allows drugs to be tried out on patients without clinical evidence is a damaging approach," said Jeremy Levin, chief executive officer at Ovid Therapeutics Inc., which

is developing drugs for rare diseases.

Health insurers are pushing back against high-priced drugs. Sales of expensive new cholesterol drugs from Amgen Inc and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc have stalled as insurers limit coverage until they see results of trials designed to prove that the drugs significantly lower the risk of heart attack and other cardiovascular crises. "It is one thing to get a drug approved, but you have got to get reimbursed," said Paul Perreault, CEO at biotech company CSL Ltd, adding that won't happen unless payers see proof that a new drug is better than what is already available.

More competition

To be sure, some pharmaceutical executives have been vocal about the need for deregulation. Reducing regulation "will help with drug prices, because it will induce more competition," Pfizer Inc CEO Ian Read said on a recent conference call. After top executives at Merck, Johnson & Johnson and others met at the White House last month with Trump, who pledged to "streamline" the FDA, industry trade group Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America said the meeting found common ground such as tax reform, and removal of outdated regulations. The trade group declined to comment on changes at the FDA.

The prospect of a shake-up at the FDA is being welcomed by a new class of investor with ambitions to disrupt the current drug development model, in which larger pharmaceutical players often buy or license early-stage medicines, and reap the bigger rewards if they succeed. "The system we have now has its roots 50, 60 even 70 years ago ... it has become incredibly expensive," said Tim Shannon, of venture capital firm Canaan Partners. He supports the notion that some prescription medications could reach the market, possibly at discounted prices, once testing shows they are safe. If such controlled usage indicates that they are also effective, prices could then be raised.

"We want to make healthcare itself more efficient," he said. "Let the marketplace decide how valuable a drug is." The fate of deregulating the FDA will be driven by its next commissioner. President Trump said last month he has a "fantastic person" lined up for the role. Candidates, according to sources close to the administration, include former FDA staffer Scott Gottlieb, and Jim O'Neill, a colleague of Trump supporter Peter Thiel who has advocated for allowing some medicines to reach the market once they are shown to be safe, even if there is scant evidence that they work.—Reuters



PARIS: This file photo shows people walking past a traffic light in Paris.—AP

FRENCH PEDESTRIANS SEE GREEN LIGHT, EVEN WHEN IT'S RED

PARIS: French pedestrians have the reputation of being a law unto themselves-but an unusual study has provided some scientific backing for the stereotype. Four times out of 10, French pedestrians cross the road when the lights are against them, according to a paper published yesterday. In disciplined Japan, though, the rate is 20 times lower. Cedric Sueur of Strasbourg University in eastern France led a team that analyzed behavior at three pedestrian crossings in Strasbourg and four in the Japanese city of Nagoya.

The researchers recorded 3,814 crossings in Strasbourg and 1,631 in Nagoya. The rule breaking was vastly different between the two countries-in France, 41.9 percent of crossings took place against a red light, but this was just 2.1 percent in Japan. Men and young people aged 20-30 were more inclined than women and older people to cross illegally. Different degrees of social conformity explain the gap in behavior between the two countries, researchers reported in the journal Royal Society Open Science.

"The French have less respect for the rules... We are less concerned with social approval," Sueur said. "It's not that the fear of a ticket is bigger in Japan than in France. It's that people (in Japan) are more concerned about the opinion of others." The role of group behavior on pedestrian traffic is a major factor in safety, the study found. Such research "could help target specific preven-

tion, culture-specific solutions for pedestrian safety," it said. According to the World Health

Organization (WHO), nearly 300,000 pedestrians lose their lives on the road every year.—AFP

QUAKE-PRONE PACIFIC NATIONS HOLD JOINT TSUNAMI DRILLS

MANILA: Quake-prone countries around the Pacific Ocean yesterday began a joint exercise testing their ability to deliver timely warnings of approaching tsunamis to tens of millions of people living along the coast. The annual "Pacific Wave" exercise is taking place in a region where nearly eight in 10 of the world's tsunamis-giant waves usually caused by underwater earthquakes-occur, the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization said.

Though no actual evacuations will be conducted during the three days of drills, civil defense offices will rehearse the relaying of tsunami warnings for large quakes off the coasts of Chile and Peru, Colombia and Ecuador, the Philippines, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. The warnings will be sent to the participants by tsunami monitoring centers in Hawaii, Japan, and, for the first time, China. "This is very important for us because it allows us to receive advance warnings of tsunamis long before they

arrive," seismologist Rommel Grutas of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said in Manila.

Grutas said one scenario involved a movement of the Manila Trench, a large and unstable undersea rift that runs the length of the Philippine archipelago and which triggers at least one minor earthquake each month. A large movement of the trench launched a quake and a tsunami on Manila Bay and nearby areas in the 1800s, he added. Grutas said only his agency was involved this year because the government's civil defense office was busy addressing the fallout from a 6.5-magnitude quake that killed at least six people on the large southern island of Mindanao last week. UNESCO said its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission set up a Pacific tsunami warning system to address the recurring threat in 1965, after a tsunami hit the coasts of Chile, Hawaii, Japan, and the Philippines, killing 224 people.—AFP

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د. فهد علي المخيزيم

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MOC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND NCCAL KUWAIT ORGANIZE CHINESE INNER MONGOLIAN CULTURAL EVENT



In celebration of Kuwait National Day and Chinese New Year, Ministry of Culture of the People's Republic of China, in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters of Kuwait, is organizing the Chinese Inner Mongolian Cultural Event at 7.00 pm on 19 Feb 2017 at Abdulhussain Abdulredha Theater in Salmiya. In this event, the performances will feature Morin khuur playing (traditional Mongolian bowed stringed instrument), Khoomei (Mongolian throat singing), long drawn song and other Chinese traditional dancing and singings. Please come and enjoy the various Chinese traditional cultural performances.



SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY HOSTS NELSON MANDELA SOCCER CUP 2017

The South African Embassy under the sponsorship of the Sports for All Department of the Public Authority of Sports will host the 1st Nelson Mandela Soccer Tournament for youth development on 18 Feb 2017 from 11.00 am to 4.00 pm. The event will feature young soccer players from various schools representing all the Governorates in Kuwait and will take place at the Mishref Sports Yard. The Nelson Mandela Soccer Tournament aims to celebrate and honor the legacy of former President Nelson Mandela in line with the objectives of the United Nations Nelson Mandela International Day under the Theme: "Take Action - Inspire Change - Make Every Day #MANDELADAY".

The event is aimed at celebrating President Mandela's life and legacy, honor his life's work and inspire individuals and communities to take action to change the world for the better. The event will also be a tribute to His Highness, the Amir of the State of Kuwait for being honored by the United Nations as the Global Humanitarian Leader and the State of Kuwait as the Global Humanitarian Centre. The tournament also coincides with the festive celebrations of the 56th Anniversary of the Independence of Kuwait, the 26th Anniversary of the Liberation of Kuwait and the 11th anniversary of assumption of power by His

Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Nelson Mandela is considered one of the world's most significant moral and principled champions for freedom and democracy. He was very instrumental in the leadership collective of the liberation movement that fought for freedom and democracy in South Africa. More importantly, Nelson Mandela is internationally revered as an icon in the fight for justice, human rights, non-racialism, national reconciliation and nation building. In order to preserve his visionary legacy, South Africans and the international community celebrate Nelson Mandela Day every year in promoting his enduring values of justice and progressive internationalism.

Sport has played an important role in the history of South Africa. The international sports sanctions to isolate the apartheid regime and the utilization of sports by Nelson Mandela to bring about national reconciliation and social cohesion in South Africa's democratic transition remain important milestones in the country's history. We hope that the Nelson Mandela Tournament will create awareness on the significance of the values that Nelson Mandela represents and the power of sports in bringing people from different nationalities and background together.

NSH GLOBAL VILLAGE HARMONY ORGANIZES LOGO DESIGN CONTEST

The champion in the logo design contest conducted by the award winning voluntary organization NSH Global Village Harmony (NSH GVH) has been honored recently. Latha Iyyiar, whose thematic design that highlights team work has been selected from the several hundred entries, was honored by the President of NSH Global Village Harmony, Sabu. Talking at the awarding ceremony, Sabu appreciated Latha Ayyiar for her enthusiasm and good efforts.

NSH GVH, registered with the Indian Embassy in Kuwait, is rendering yeomen services for the Indian community in Kuwait such as conducting awareness programs on UNESCO's International Literacy Day, UN International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, Protection of Environment, World Heart Day, World Diabetes Day, No Alcohol and No Tobacco Program, Parents of Pride, National Essay Contest, Master Brain Quiz, etc. Harikumar, P V Santhosh, Santhosh Babu, Manoj, Pani J Anthony were among those present.



INNER WHEEL ON MOTION AT IISM

Inner Wheel, the mothers' club of India International School Mangaf held its annual meet for the mothers of class I and II students on 11 Feb 2017. The idea of forming a mothers' club was proposed by the school's Director, Malayil Moosa Koya as it will strengthen the bond between the school and the parents creating a much more homely atmosphere for the students. As a start an enriching and

thought provoking talk on 'Healthy Eating Habits in Children' was given by Vanaja Reddy.

The speaker expressed her concern that the healthy food habits inculcated by our mothers and grandmothers, is now largely replaced by fast food. She also threw light on the harmful effects of junk food and the importance of breakfast. It was followed by tips on easy and attractive luncheon

for kids monitored by Tufellunissa. Preparation of easy and healthy mouth watering sandwiches was demonstrated by her, and the aroma of the palatable sandwich filled the air providing sensory pleasure and enhanced their appetite.

The next segment was handled by Dhanya who discussed 'Effective Parenting' giving practical ideas on how to handle children in difficult situations. It was followed by a

demonstration of constructive reusing of household materials for kids' projects by Afifa. The program came to an end with the vote of thanks proposed by Nadhira. The event was graced by the school Director, Malayil Moosa Koya, Principal F M Basheer Ahmed, Vice Principal Narinder Kaur and Vice Principals Sophy John and Indulekha.





CA SRI LANKA, KUWAIT CHAPTER HOLDS TECHNICAL SESSIONS

CA Sri Lanka and Kuwait Chapter hosted their Technical Sessions for its members and the professionals from Sri Lanka. The members of the Chapter and other professionals from Sri Lanka have attended the Technical Sessions. The Technical Sessions mainly featured on the key developments around the globe and within the MENA region in connection with taxation and possible implementation of new regulations.

The Chapter's first Technical Session covered 5 percent Tax Retentions Regulations in Kuwait & its practical applicability, and the Value Added Tax (VAT) in Kuwait/GCC, which was held at Hotel Crowne Plaza, Farwaniya. The Second Technical session of the Chapter covered Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) and high-level briefing on The Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) and Common Reporting Standard (CRS). Kuwait has already entered into an Inter-Governmental Agreement with the USA to report information on the Foreign Financial Institution's US accounts.

Kula Kulaseelan, the President of the Chapter and the Presenter/Facilitator of

Chapter's Technical Sessions, said "most of the members of the Chapters are working in the Financial, Auditing and Commercial Sectors. Therefore, the Chapter's Executive Committee has decided to have Technical Sessions on taxation as to develop and to refresh members' knowledge on taxation. Further, with the expansion of the Kuwaiti companies' operations outside Kuwait, it is important for the members of the Chapter to know BEPS and its impact."

The CA Sri Lanka - Kuwait Chapter office bearers for the year 2016 are: President Kula Kulaseelan, Vice President Rizqi Rasooldeen, Secretary Reyaz Kair, Treasurer Zuhrie Safwan, and the Executive Committee members Mohamed Aslam, Asoka Rupasinghe, Nandana Kalubowila, Upul Rajapakse, Susantha Dissanayake, Deeptha Wimalasena and Dasun Jayawardena.

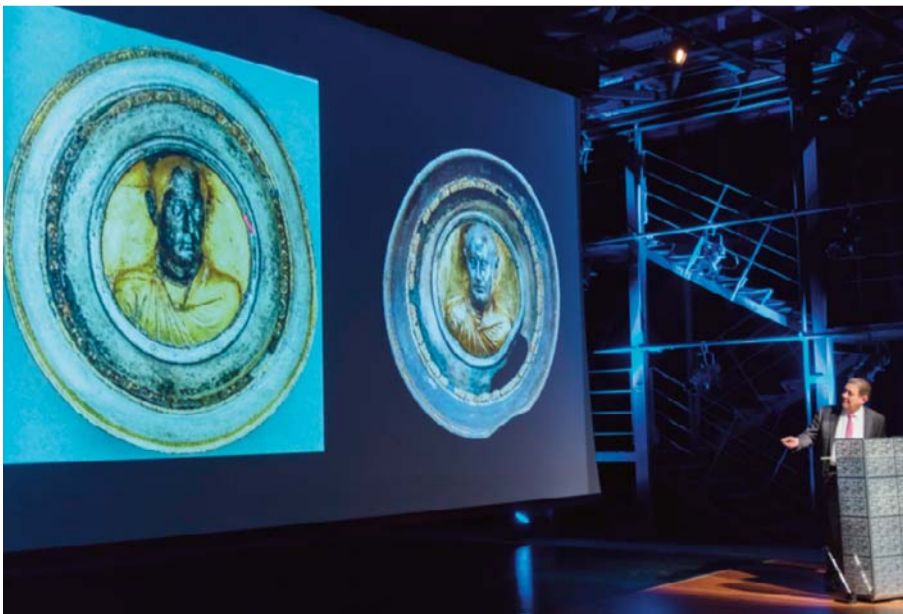
The Chapter will have its 2nd Annual General Meeting shortly to elect its new office bearers under the Patronage of HE, the Ambassador of Sri Lanka in Kuwait, Kaandeepan Balasubramaniam.



DR CARLOS A PICON DELIVERS LECTURE AT YARMOUK CULTURAL CENTRE

Dr. Carlos A Picon, curator in charge of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Department of Greek and Roman Art, delivered a lecture on 'Pergamon and the Hellenistic kingdoms of the ancient world' at Yarmouk Cultural Centre on Feb 13, 2017. Prior to the lecture, Dr. Picon paid a visit to the al-Sabah Collection at Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah and

viewed the three exhibitions currently displayed at Amricani Cultural Centre. He was fascinated to see how much Greek history was displayed at the exhibition, including the artifacts from Failaka Island.



OSN MOVIES
ACTION

- 01:00 As Above, So Below
- 03:00 Alien Outpost
- 04:45 Real Steel
- 07:00 San Andreas
- 09:00 Reign Of Fire
- 10:45 Real Steel
- 13:00 Robot Overlords
- 15:00 San Andreas
- 17:00 Harlock: Space Pirate
- 19:00 Sword Of Vengeance
- 20:45 Jupiter Ascending
- 23:00 Starship Troopers

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:00 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
- 00:55 Gator Boys
- 01:50 River Monsters
- 02:45 Bondi Vet
- 03:40 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You
- 04:35 Tanked
- 05:25 Call Of The Wildman
- 06:15 Gator Boys
- 07:02 River Monsters
- 07:49 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
- 08:36 Going Ape
- 09:25 Groomer Has It
- 10:15 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You
- 11:10 Call Of The Wildman
- 12:05 Tanked
- 13:00 Groomer Has It
- 13:55 Bondi Vet
- 14:50 Australia Doesn't Just Want To Kill You
- 15:45 Gator Boys
- 16:40 Call Of The Wildman
- 17:05 Call Of The Wildman
- 17:35 Tanked
- 18:30 River Monsters
- 19:25 The Lion Queen
- 20:20 The Vet Life
- 21:15 Tanked
- 22:10 Call Of The Wildman
- 22:35 Call Of The Wildman
- 23:05 The Lion Queen

BBC FIRST

- 00:35 Doctors
- 01:05 Eastenders
- 01:35 Poldark
- 02:30 Poldark

- 02:40 Broad City
- 03:05 South Park
- 03:30 South Park
- 04:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 04:25 Catch A Contractor
- 05:15 Lip Sync Battle
- 05:40 Ridiculousness
- 06:05 Ridiculousness
- 06:30 Lip Sync Battle
- 06:55 Lip Sync Battle
- 07:20 Framework
- 08:10 Catch A Contractor
- 09:00 Disaster Date
- 09:25 Ridiculousness
- 09:50 Ridiculousness
- 10:15 Key And Peele
- 10:40 Disaster Date
- 11:05 Ridiculousness
- 11:30 The It Crowd
- 11:55 Sweat Inc.
- 12:45 The Next Step
- 13:10 Lip Sync Battle
- 13:35 The It Crowd
- 14:00 Catch A Contractor
- 14:50 Ridiculousness
- 15:15 Catch A Contractor
- 16:05 IdiotSitter
- 16:30 Ridiculousness
- 16:55 Ridiculousness
- 17:20 Disaster Date
- 17:45 Lip Sync Battle
- 18:10 Key And Peele
- 18:35 Coaching Bad
- 19:25 The It Crowd
- 19:50 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salwagef
- 20:20 Comedy Central Presents Comedy Salwagef
- 20:50 Disaster Date
- 21:13 Ridiculousness
- 21:37 I Live With Models
- 22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 22:30 Inside Amy Schumer
- 22:54 The Half Hour
- 23:18 Tosh.0
- 23:42 Tosh.0

Discovery Family

- 00:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 00:40 Ultimate Survival
- 01:30 Science Of The Movies
- 02:20 Wildest Africa
- 03:10 Lost & Found With Mike & Jesse
- 04:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:50 Ultimate Survival
- 05:40 How It's Made
- 06:05 How It's Made
- 06:30 Dirty Jobs
- 07:20 Mythbusters

- 14:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 14:15 Gravity Falls
- 14:40 Hank Zipper
- 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 Bunk'd
- 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 Crackle
- 22:40 The Next Step
- 23:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 23:30 Jessie
- 23:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 00:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 00:55 PJ Masks
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 The Hive
- 01:45 Loopdidoo
- 02:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:15 Calimero
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:55 Zou
- 03:05 Loopdidoo
- 03:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:35 Calimero
- 03:50 Zou
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 The Hive
- 04:40 Loopdidoo
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:10 Art Attack
- 05:35 Loopdidoo
- 05:50 Calimero
- 06:05 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Zou
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:30 Henry Hugglemonster

- 14:05 How Do They Do It?
- 14:30 Auction Hunters
- 14:55 Auction Hunters
- 15:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 16:10 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
- 17:00 Deadliest Catch
- 17:50 Fast N' Loud
- 18:40 Misfit Garage
- 19:30 How Do They Do It?
- 19:55 How Do They Do It?
- 20:20 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
- 21:10 Storage Wars Canada
- 21:35 Storage Wars Canada
- 22:00 So You Think You'd Survive?
- 22:50 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 23:40 Manhunt With Joel Lambert

Disney 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 Elite Force
- 10:25 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 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 Elite Force
- 19:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:10 Supa Strikas
- 19:35 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 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

itv HD 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 Tina & Bobby
- 05:15 Shetland
- 06:15 The Trials Of Jimmy Rose
- 07:10 The Chase
- 08:05 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 09:00 Tina & Bobby
- 10:00 Shetland
- 11:00 The Trials Of Jimmy Rose
- 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 Don't Tell The Bride
- 18:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 18:50 The Trials Of Jimmy Rose
- 19:45 Emmerdale
- 20:15 Coronation Street
- 20:45 Coronation Street
- 21:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 22:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 23:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 23:50 Emmerdale

- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 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 Private Chef
- 20:30 Private Chef
- 21:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 21:30 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 22:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 22:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 23:00 Iron Chef America

itv HD 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 Tina & Bobby
- 05:15 Shetland
- 06:15 The Trials Of Jimmy Rose
- 07:10 The Chase
- 08:05 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 09:00 Tina & Bobby
- 10:00 Shetland
- 11:00 The Trials Of Jimmy Rose
- 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 Don't Tell The Bride
- 18:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 18:50 The Trials Of Jimmy Rose
- 19:45 Emmerdale
- 20:15 Coronation Street
- 20:45 Coronation Street
- 21:10 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 22:00 Don't Tell The Bride
- 23:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 23:50 Emmerdale



HANGING UP ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

- 09:30 Pawn Stars
- 10:20 Storage Wars
- 11:10 American Pickers
- 12:00 Alone
- 12:50 Time Team
- 13:40 Swamp People
- 14:30 Ax Men
- 15:20 Mountain Men
- 16:10 Shipping Wars
- 17:00 Counting Cars
- 17:50 Pawn Stars
- 18:40 Leepu And Pitbull
- 19:30 Counting Cars
- 19:55 Car Hunters
- 20:20 Ax Men
- 21:10 American Pickers
- 22:00 America's 9/11 Flag: Rise From The Ashes
- 22:50 Inside Alcatraz: Legends Of The Rock
- 23:40 Hunting Hitler
- 00:30 Grizzly Empire
- 04:45 Ultimate Animals
- 05:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 06:35 Cobra Mafia
- 07:30 Grizzly Empire
- 08:25 Ultimate Animals
- 09:20 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 10:15 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 11:10 Rescue Ink
- 12:05 World's Weirdest Extreme Body Parts
- 13:00 Shell Shocked
- 13:55 Super Predators
- 14:50 Giant Panda: The Last Refuge
- 15:45 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog
- 16:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 17:35 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 18:30 Rescue Ink
- 19:25 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog
- 20:20 Journey Into Amazonia
- 21:10 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 22:00 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 22:50 Rescue Ink
- 23:40 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:20 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 00:45 Delinquent Gourmet
- 01:10 Chocolate Covered
- 01:35 Carnival Eats
- 02:00 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 02:25 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 02:50 Miguel's Feasts
- 03:15 Chocolate Covered
- 03:40 Glamour Puds
- 04:05 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 04:30 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 04:55 Maximum Foodie
- 05:20 This Is Brazil
- 06:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 07:00 Chocolate Covered
- 07:25 Glamour Puds
- 07:50 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 08:15 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 08:40 Miguel's Feasts
- 09:05 Chocolate Covered
- 09:30 Glamour Puds
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- 20:05 Tripping Out With Allie & Georgia
- 20:30 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 21:00 Maximum Foodie
- 21:25 This Is Brazil
- 22:15 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 23:05 Chocolate Covered
- 23:30 Glamour Puds
- 23:55 Ariana's Persian Kitchen

OSN MOVIES DRAMA

- 00:00 Solace
- 02:00 The Two Faces Of January
- 04:00 Dark Places
- 06:00 Dangerous Lessons
- 08:00 Project Almanac
- 10:00 Blackhat
- 12:15 A Kind Of Murder
- 14:00 Panic Room
- 16:00 Nick Of Time
- 18:00 Stoneheart Asylum
- 20:00 Along Came A Spider
- 22:00 Kidnapping Mr. Heineken

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 00:00 It Takes Two
- 02:00 Step Dogs
- 03:45 Ducktales: The Movie
- 05:00 Black Beauty
- 06:45 Oliver & Company
- 08:30 Ducktales: The Movie
- 10:00 It Takes Two
- 12:00 Oliver & Company
- 14:00 Gnomeo & Juliet
- 16:00 Inside Out
- 18:00 Ice Princess
- 20:00 The Game Plan
- 22:00 The Incredible Adventures Of Professor Branestawm
- 23:15 Inside Out

OSN MOVIES HD

- 01:30 Mistress America
- 03:30 Daddy's Home
- 05:30 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
- 08:00 Zootropolis
- 10:00 Daddy's Home
- 11:45 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
- 14:00 Racing Hearts
- 15:45 Ricki And The Flash
- 17:45 The Angry Birds Movie
- 19:30 Captain America: Civil War
- 22:00 The Huntsman: Winter's War
- 01:00 Running Scared

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 03:00 Norbit
- 05:00 Crazy On The Outside
- 07:00 Hanging Up
- 09:00 Norbit
- 11:00 Crazy On The Outside
- 13:00 Hanging Up
- 15:00 The Golden Child
- 17:00 Lovesick
- 19:00 Hot Rod
- 21:00 Growing Up And Other Lies
- 23:00 A Million Ways To Die In The West

OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Fear And Loathing In Las Vegas
- 03:00 Whiplash
- 05:00 Searching For Bobby Fischer
- 07:00 Pele: Birth Of A Legend
- 08:45 Foreverland
- 10:30 The Blind Side
- 12:45 The Wave
- 14:30 The Theory Of Everything
- 16:45 Creed
- 19:00 Spotlight
- 21:15 Still Alice
- 23:00 Mad Max: Fury Road

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 00:00 Bolts And Blip
- 01:45 Rugrats In Paris: The Movie
- 03:30 Egon And Donci
- 05:15 Daddy I'm A Zombie
- 07:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 08:30 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure



ROBOT OVERLORDS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 03:25 Ripper Street
- 04:20 Orphan Black
- 05:05 Doctors
- 05:35 Eastenders
- 06:05 New Tricks
- 07:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Eastenders
- 08:00 Holly City
- 08:55 Death In Paradise
- 09:50 Stella
- 10:35 New Tricks
- 11:30 Doctors
- 12:00 Eastenders
- 12:30 Death In Paradise
- 13:25 Stella
- 14:20 New Tricks
- 15:15 Doctors
- 15:45 Eastenders
- 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 Holly City
- 22:00 Benidorm
- 22:50 Friday Night Dinner
- 23:15 Friday Night Dinner
- 23:40 The Mimic

- 08:00 Kids vs Film
- 08:25 Bear Grylls Survival School
- 08:50 Giant Pandas Go Wild
- 09:40 How It's Made
- 10:05 How It's Made
- 10:30 Science Of The Movies
- 11:20 Mythbusters
- 12:10 Giant Pandas Go Wild
- 13:00 Ultimate Survival
- 13:50 How It's Made
- 14:15 How It's Made
- 14:40 Dirty Jobs
- 15:30 Mythbusters
- 16:20 Science Of The Movies
- 17:10 Kids vs Film
- 17:35 Bear Grylls Survival School
- 18:00 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 18:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 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 NASA's Greatest Missions
- 23:00 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 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 Zipper
- 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 Zipper
- 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 Zipper
- 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
- 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

- 07:45 Loopdidoo
- 08:00 Zou
- 08:15 Calimero
- 08:30 Loopdidoo
- 08:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 09:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 09:05 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 09:15 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 09:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 09:45 Goldie & Bear
- 09:55 The Lion Guard
- 10:20 PJ Masks
- 10:35 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 10:50 Doc McStuffins
- 11:00 Goldie & Bear
- 11:15 PJ Masks
- 11:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 11:35 The Lion Guard
- 12:00 Sofia The First
- 12:30 Doc McStuffins
- 12:55 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 13:20 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 13:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 14:15 Gummi Bears
- 14:40 Sofia The First
- 15:10 Little Mermaid
- 15:35 PJ Masks
- 16:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 16:30 The Lion Guard
- 16:55 Unbungleable
- 17:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 17:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 17:55 The Lion Guard
- 18:20 Goldie & Bear
- 18:50 PJ Masks
- 19:15 Sofia The First
- 19:40 Doc McStuffins
- 20:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:30 Little Mermaid
- 21:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 21:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 22:00 Unbungleable
- 22:05 Goldie & Bear
- 22:35 Miles From Tomorrow
- 23:00 My Friends Tigger & Pooh
- 23:25 Gummi Bears
- 23:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons

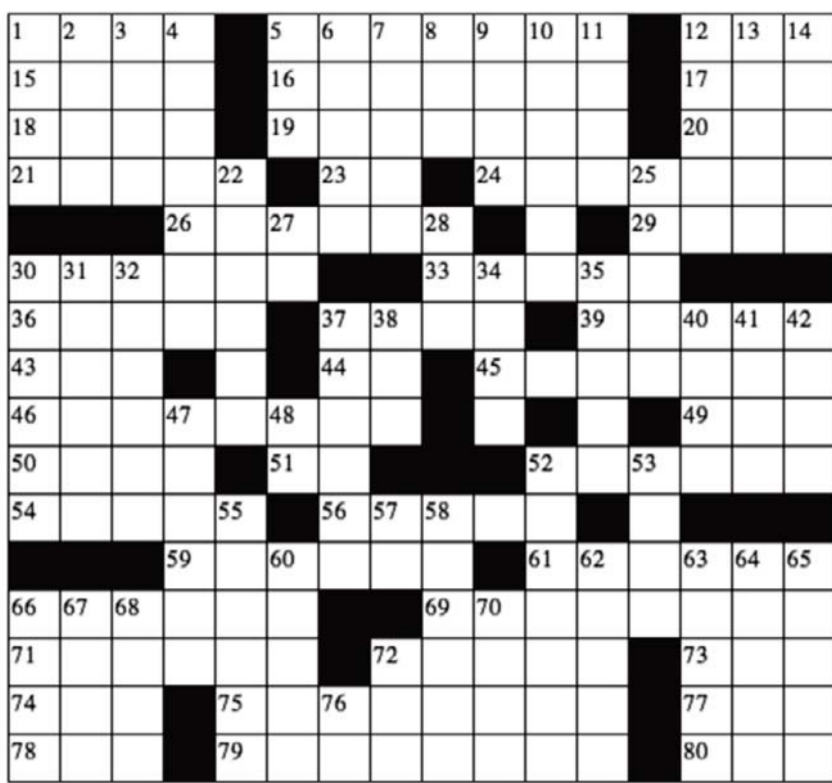
Discovery Channel HD

- 00:30 Fast N' Loud
- 01:20 Misfit Garage
- 02:10 Blowing Up History
- 03:00 How Do They Do It?
- 03:25 How Do They Do It?
- 03:50 Impossible Engineering
- 04:40 Fast N' Loud
- 05:30 Auction Hunters
- 06:00 How Do They Do It?
- 06:30 How Do They Do It?
- 07:00 Deadliest Catch
- 07:50 Misfit Garage
- 08:40 Fast N' Loud
- 09:30 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
- 10:20 Auction Hunters
- 10:45 How Do They Do It?
- 11:10 How Do They Do It?
- 11:35 Blowing Up History
- 12:25 How Do They Do It?
- 12:50 How Do They Do It?
- 13:15 Impossible Engineering

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 Dash Dolls
- 04:45 Dash Dolls
- 05:40 Dash Dolls
- 06:30 Botched
- 07:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 07:55 E! News
- 08:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 09:10 E! News
- 10:10 Mariah's World
- 11:10 Mariah's World
- 12:05 Mariah's World
- 13:00 E! News
- 13:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 14:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 15:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 16:00 E! News
- 16:15 Rob & Chyna
- 17:15 Rob & Chyna
- 18:10 Rob & Chyna
- 19:05 Celebrity Style Story
- 19:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 20:00 E! News
-

CROSSWORD 1523



ACROSS

- An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
- Having the color of caramel.
- Standard temperature and pressure.
- A member of an Indian people of northern California living along the Russian River valley and adjacent Pacific coast.
- Any of various large edible marine gastropods of the genus *Haliotis* having an ear-shaped shell with pearly interior.
- A branch of the Tai languages.
- A town in north central Oklahoma.
- Small silvery schooling fishes with protrusible mouths found in warm coastal waters.
- A small piece of cloth.
- Expressing deep personal emotion.
- (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
- (biology) Having branches or flower heads that bend downward.
- Annual or perennial herbs with large leaves that resemble the leaves of cabbages.
- The lean flesh of a fish similar to cod.
- French explorer (with Jacques Marquette) of the upper Mississippi River valley (1645-1700).
- English monk and scholar (672-735).
- A mountain range in western Russia extending from the arctic to the Caspian Sea.
- (sometimes followed by 'of') Having or showing realization or perception.
- Used in combination to denote the middle.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- An antibacterial drug (trade names Rifadin and Rimactane) used to treat tuberculosis.
- A long lace for fastening boots.
- Gone by.
- Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
- A heavy odorless colorless gas formed during respiration and by the decomposition of organic substances.
- Acquire or gain knowledge or skills.
- Genus of East Indian trees or shrubs.
- Italian poet (1569-1625).
- The Mongol people living the the central and eastern parts of Outer Mongolia.
- Behave in a certain manner.
- Perennial of the genus *Phytolacca*.
- A medicinal drug used to evoke vomiting (especially in cases of drug overdose or poisoning).
- A master's degree in business.
- The federal agency that insures residential mortgages.
- (Japan) Ritual suicide by self-disembowelment on a sword.
- An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
- An interest followed with exaggerated zeal.
- An odorless gum resin formerly used in medicines.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
- A supplement to a will.
- A rotating disk shaped to convert circular into linear motion.
- A unit of resistance equal to a billionth of an ohm.
- The seventh month of the Moslem calendar.
- A flat wing-shaped process or winglike part of an organism.
- The time period between dawn and noon.
- Provide with a coating, as of chocolates.
- A soft heavy toxic malleable metallic element.
- Any of a number of tiny parallel grooves such as.
- Express gratitude or show appreciation to.
- North Atlantic sea poacher.
- Any of three poisonous colorless isomeric phenols.
- An Indian tree of the family *Combretaceae* that is a source of timber and gum.
- A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- The herpes virus that causes infectious mononucleosis.
- Mostly tropical songbird.
- A lake in northwestern Russia north of St. Petersburg.
- An association of people to promote the welfare of senior citizens.
- Little known Kamarupan languages.
- German mathematician (1804-1851).
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- Port city that is the capital and largest city of Latvia.
- An organic compound that contains a hydroxyl group bonded to a carbon atom which in turn is doubly bonded to another carbon atom.
- Covered with paving material.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A town in northern Egypt.
- A wad of something chewable as tobacco.
- A member of an Athapaskan people that migrated to Arizona and New Mexico and Utah.
- An organization of independent states to promote international peace and security.
- The capital of the state of Kansas.
- A summary that repeats the substance of a longer discussion.
- A curve that lies on the surface of a cylinder or cone and cuts the element at a constant angle.
- A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
- (of persons) Highest in rank or authority or office.
- A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
- (informal) Informed about the latest trends.
- An artificial language for international use that rejects rejects all existing words and is based instead on an abstract analysis of ideas.

DOWN

- German industrialist who was the first in Germany to use an assembly line in manufacturing automobiles (1871-1948).
- A range horse of the western United States.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Early morning meetings and conferences are good places to show off your skills. Your ability to act and accomplish what is set out before you is most admirable-you are acknowledged. Continue this afternoon to push forward with your work and do not allow any outside force to slow your progress. You will find this a profitable and successful day. This is a busy time. New beginnings can be seen on the horizon and this is probably due to your preliminary work in setting the possibilities into motion. This may mean a promotion, a new relationship, new business or any other number of things that get you where you want to go in order to accomplish some big goals. Good for you; give yourself a big pat on the back and enjoy being entertained.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Difficulties, blocks and all manner of hot spots may be discovered and worked through. Follow through with your responsibilities-people will continue to make demands on your time. What you need to do will outweigh what you want to do but there will be rewards for your hard work in due time. Patience, do not try to push an issue with co-workers or friends during this time. Although the stress will not be removed for a while, you will be more able to deal with the pressures after the noon break. Creating a structure to empower and maintain your ideals and principles becomes a high priority, an article of faith. By taking on greater responsibilities of this kind, you become an inspiration to others.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may have a hard time concentrating today as there could be continuous interruptions. You might make better progress if you camped out in a library. Consider placing an at-work sign on your desk as this could help to discourage interruptions. Perhaps some time away from your work will help to break up the groups of people that may be hanging around your desk. Client relationships are very important to you and you may find yourself spending some time in the afternoon making phone calls to clients. Away from work this afternoon, you get an opportunity to communicate with friends that have a talent in common with you. This could mean choir practice or a writer's group or some other weekly group where you find enjoyment.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Identify and simplify any financial dealings this month. This will help you avoid pitfalls that could lead to some real problems. Be aware of power struggles and avoid becoming involved in them. Setting limitations and making yourself clearly understood are beneficial to your success in anything you set out to do just now. Relationships, whether they are partnerships, personal or the social scene in general, are very important to you and can have a very decided influence on your career and workplace. Someone pays back a debt today. Some kind of healing process is at work in your life: you isolate what does not work, eliminate it and go on from there. Your sexual and personal appeal is at a high now. It seems as though magic is working in your favor.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You are full of all sorts of information to inspire and encourage your team to move forward. This may be a sports team but more than likely you will be involved with a sales team. You might prefer to ignore work for today and spend more time socializing, but you will be surprised at your progress if you concentrate on productivity. Other people may wonder about your secret to success. There are wonderful things that inspire you and it may be time you consider inspiring others; perhaps you could become a personal coach. Inspiring people to use their minds in achieving success is a wonderful talent of yours. You are in a good position to communicate with groups and society in general. This could include teaching.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

There is progress in your career and you may see indications of a raise or promotion soon. The real action is behind the scenes around work, which may mean you will require guidance and practice to become skilled with new equipment or new instructions. You may want to copy a few instructions to read at home later but never fear; you learn quickly. Take your work one step at a time and you will be pleased with the end result. This is a very good time to communicate your goals and put them into words. Complete any tasks, jobs, projects, etc., that have been left to the side now. You have a deep interest in what makes things tick and who, or what, pulls the strings; and this is the hallmark of the mental cycle that now begins in your life.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is a touch-and-go time when it comes to your emotions. Others may cut you off or make it difficult for you to express yourself. You may feel that you lack depth and the ability to move or communicate with others. Your ideas may not find the support you need. You would benefit from a class, book, lecture or a little research on business communication skills. This will help increase your confidence and give you more power in knowing office politics. Before the year ends, you will have higher-ups looking at you to be the next to climb the ladder of success. You can get quite a lot accomplished if you just pace yourself for today. Helping those who cannot help themselves-and getting such help when you need it-is an essential lesson now.



Scorpio (October 23-November 19)

Communication today may be less important than listening; good questions are the secret to a successful outcome. Concentrating on your own work this afternoon, you will find you have a lot of energy for completing most any task. Co-workers follow your example. There will be future opportunities to express yourself; timing is everything. Use this afternoon to think through some new personal plans. Listen to your intuition and you will be headed in the right direction. Beyond the town in which you live you will find a new love or a new close friend. You could meet this person in some group gathering, such as a class or at a convention. You may spend time later this evening organizing your closet, car or drawers, etc.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

Don't be afraid to move forward now. All sorts of things can be accomplished with your positive attitude. Someone may try to hold you back by offering you interesting distractions. Stand firm by what you intuitively know you need to do and then move forward for your own advancement and self-esteem. If you are looking to widen your work abilities, look in the areas of mechanics, accounting, teaching, writing or telecommunication. You can talk about your feelings with great insight. All that is psychic, mysterious and spiritual comes to the forefront at this time. This can be inspiring or can be confusing, depending on how you are able to integrate it into your overall experience; just tackle one subject at a time. Your artistic talents are heightened at this time.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

It is a great time to schedule in an old friend for lunch. If you have been doing more than your share of work for another co-worker lately, it is time to break away from that activity. You could put your own job at stake by performing that person's job plus your own. You can demonstrate great understanding to the needs of others just now. Hold your head up and be confident in your own abilities. You will have heads turning toward you today with your positive attitude. Whether or not you are single, a co-worker may show more than appreciation for you at this time. Social entertainment surrounding your professional peers can be rewarding this evening. This is one of your best days for love. A loved one may be unpredictable tonight.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

If you take charge of a project in the workplace today, you will find positive and enthusiastic reviews. The problem is how to get yourself in the position where you can be in control of a particular project. This may mean you have ideas for catering, decorating or a sales package to an old customer or any other improvement that will add to your status with customers as well as with your peers. There are new and fresh ideas. A few sketches and an estimate of cost and equipment, and a plan will have you getting all the attention from the powers that be, so to speak. You are improving in the workplace and are becoming an asset to your company. This afternoon is spent in creative work. This evening is spent in celebration.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Higher-ups are willing to observe or view your ideas. Your work will be well regarded. You are where you are because that is where you need to be. You gain attention and receive rewards for your accomplishment-be patient of others. You respect honesty and think that people should be as open with you as you are with them. There is a chance to clear a matter of confusion and gain an understanding. Hesitation in any area of your life may come from a fear of failure. Your adaptability prevents you from being the object of this misconceived criticism. Remember to get the appropriate rest necessary for physical and mental strength. Good advice from a guide or older person may be expected. A family member needs your praise.

WORD SEARCH

More 80's Songs

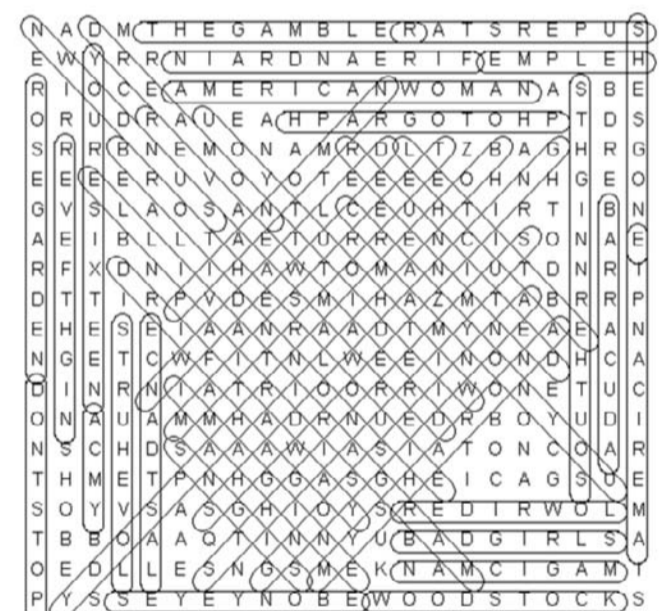
Find and circle all of the 1980's song titles that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an Elton John song.



- | | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| AFRICA
ALWAYS
AMERICA
BEAT IT
BROKEN WINGS
CALL ME
CONTROL
CRUISIN'
DOWN UNDER
ENDLESS LOVE
FAITHFULLY
FAME
FAST CAR
FREEDOM | GLORIA
GUILTY
HEARTBREAKER
HEAVEN
HOLD ME
HUMAN
HUNGRY HEART
INFATUATION
KOKOMO
LA BAMB
LET'S DANCE
MAGIC
MANIC MONDAY
MONEY MONY | NEVER
NOTORIOUS
OUR HOUSE
PASSION
PATIENCE
PINK HOUSES
PURPLE RAIN
ROCK ON
SAILING
SARA
SATISFIED
SHOUT
SONGBIRD
SUKIYAKI | SUSSUDIO
THE FLAME
THE LOOK
THE ROSE
TIME
TOO SHY
TRUE
TRULY
TWO HEARTS
VACATION
VOICES CARRY
WE BELONG
WHIP IT
YOUR LOVE |
|---|--|--|--|

Yesterday's Solution

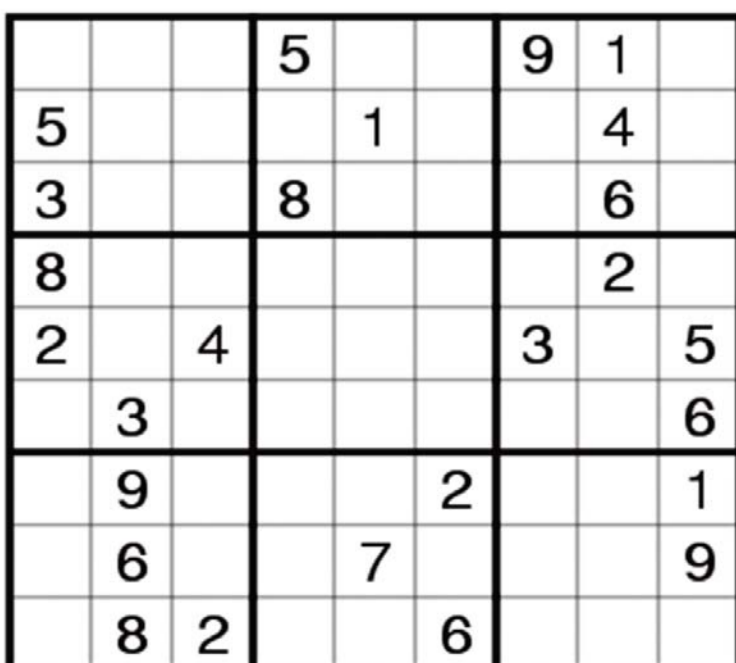
More 70's Songs



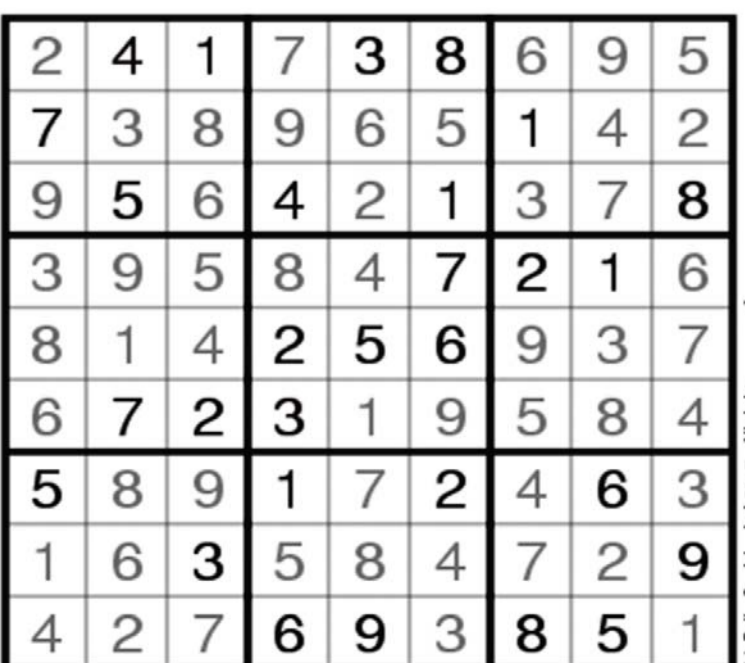
- | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| AFTERNOON DELIGHT
AMERICAN PIE
AMERICAN WOMAN
ANNIE'S SONG
BAD GIRLS
BARRACUDA
BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY
BROTHER LOUIE
CRAZY ON YOU
DELTA DAWN
DON'T STOP | DREAM ON
DREAM WEAVER
DRIFT AWAY
EBONY EYES
FIRE AND RAIN
HELP ME
IMAGINE
LAST DANCE
LET IT BE
LOVE HURTS
LOW RIDER | MAGIC MAN
MAIN STREET
MARGARITAVILLE
MY LOVE
MY SHARONA
NIGHT FEVER
PHOTOGRAPH
PIANO MAN
REUNITED
ROSE GARDEN
SHADOW DANCING | SHE'S GONE
SIGNS
SOUTHERN NIGHTS
SUMMER NIGHTS
SUNDOWN
SUPERSTAR
THE GAMBLER
WITHOUT YOU
WOODSTOCK
Y.M.C.A.
YOU'RE SIXTEEN |
|---|---|--|--|

Hidden words: AMERICA BREAD NAZARETH HEART BLONDIE BOSTON CHICAGO ABBA QUEEN KISS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

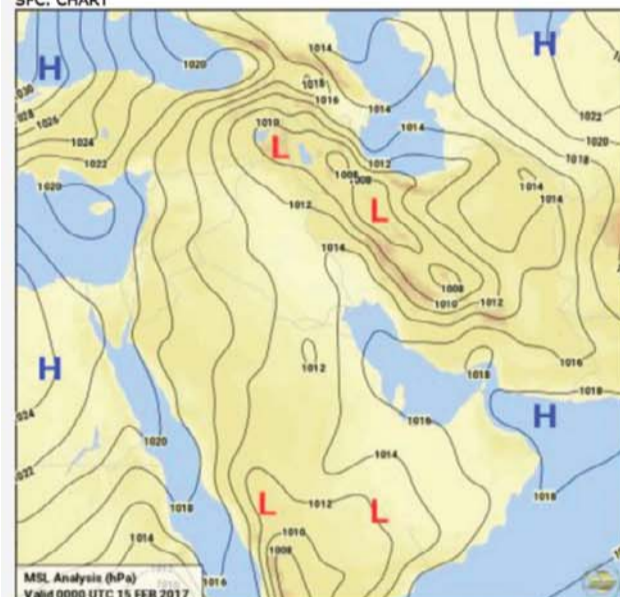
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 15/02/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 23 °C

By Day : Partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually at times south easterly to southerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times
By Night : Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly changing to north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather				
Min Temp °C	12	07	05	04
Max Temp °C	23	20	16	17
Wind Direction	north westerly to northerly	north easterly becoming north westerly	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	12 - 35	25 - 50	15 - 38	12 - 35

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings

Thunder Rain

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	14	22
KUWAIT AIRPORT	08	23
ABDALY	06	24
BUBYAN	11	18
JAHRA	10	23
FAILAKA ISLAND	10	20
SALMIYAH	14	19
AHMADI	14	18
JAL ALIYAH	09	22
QAROH ISLAND	15	20
UMM AL-MARADEM	15	19
NUWAISIB	10	21
WAFRA	08	23
MANAGISH	08	22
SALMY	07	22
MUTRIBA	09	25

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	22
Min Temp (°C)	08
Max Rel Hum (%)	76
Min Rel Hum (%)	27
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	28 E
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:07
Sunrise	06:28
Zuhr	12:02
Asr	15:13
Sunset	17:37
Isha	18:54



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	Plastic Surgeons
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	2455050 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	2455050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem	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

Paediatricians	Endocrinologist
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarouf	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gupare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
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. Abdalateef 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. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Physiotherapists & VD	Rheumatologists:
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammed Akkad	2455050 Ext 210
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC	
Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center	
Te: 2575077	
Fax: 25723123	

Family Doctor	Psychiatrists	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	Internists, Chest & Heart
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581	Dr Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0	Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Psychiatrists		Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047	Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0	Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians		Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581	Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321	Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539	Dr. Salem soso	22618787
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406	General Surgeons	
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272	Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Salem soso	22618787	Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
General Surgeons		Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044	Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148	Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Internists, Chest & Heart		Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939	Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300	Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004	Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515		
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446		
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3		

Psychologists /Psychotherapists	Soor Center Tel: 2290-1677 Fax: 2290 1688	info@soorcenter.com www.soorcenter.com	Kaizen center 25716707	Noor Clinic 23845955	William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677 Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677
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MUSIC & MOVIES

Gore Verbinski born to be a horror director

A conversation starter for bored dinner party guests, "nominative determinism" is the theory that someone's name destined them for whatever they ended up doing with their lives. Think Bulgarian hurdler Vania Stambolova, BBC weather forecaster Sara Blizard, singer Bill Medley or lavatory impresario Thomas Crapper. So there was a certain inevitability in Oscar-winning filmmaker Gore Verbinski becoming a horror director-although the big mystery is why he seemed to give it up when he'd only just got started.

The 52-year-old made his name in 2002 with "The Ring," a remake of Japanese classic "Ringu," scaring the wits out of a generation of fans with his spooky tale of a cursed videotape that kills anyone who sees it after a week. It became one of the highest-grossing supernatural horror movies of all time, recouping more than five times its \$48 million budget and spawning a sub-genre of American remakes of "J-Horror" classics such as "The Grudge" and "Dark Water."

Yet Verbinski stepped quietly away, letting other directors take over two poorly-received sequels and turning with varying degrees of success to straight drama, a western, an animated film and three "Pirates of the Caribbean" installments. "A Cure for Wellness" sees the director reaffirm his horror chops with an elusive genre-bender that might best be described as a cross between Martin Scorsese's "Shutter Island" and Milos Forman's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

"I'm always developing four or five things. They all go on the back burner and I go 'I have to tell this story now'. There's

no kind of career path," he told AFP, attempting to explain the 15-year hiatus between horror films.

'Nightmare'

Shot over seven months mostly in Germany, "Wellness" stars Dane DeHaan ("The Amazing Spider-Man 2") as an ambitious stockbroker sent by his firm to a remote Alpine medical spa where the patients are supposedly receiving a "miracle" cure but seem to be getting sicker. Verbinski transformed the derelict Beelitz-Heilstaetten military hospital outside Berlin into a sterile yet Gothic spa in which you might find oligarchs and captains of industry receiving quack cures side by side. He wanted it to be the kind of place where "you would, maybe deep in the steam room, bump into Dick Cheney with a towel wrapped around him," the director said.

"Wellness," which opens on Friday, can be read as a metaphor for humanity's unrelenting and ultimately unfulfilling quest for perfection-a bulging bank account, a perfect family and job, wellbeing, health and happiness. "I think we live in an increasingly irrational world. We know history. We're driving a car into the wall and we can't turn the wheel and that's the horror, the nightmare," Verbinski said. It's not clear what the wall represents, or why we can't just slow the car down, but it is an image Verbinski has invoked on previous occasions to explain his sense that society is both in denial about being sick and susceptible to snake oil cures.

"Why are we vulnerable to the pharmaceutical industry? Why are we vulnerable to the seaweed wrap and the kale



Gore Verbinski

milkshake or whatever it is? There must be something inside us where we know we're not well," he said. With his films achieving a collective global box office of \$3.7 billion, Verbinski just about squeezes into the top 10 highest-grossing directors of all time. "A Cure For Wellness" is his tenth feature-only his fifth without longtime collaborator Johnny Depp-in a resume so eclectic that it defies analysis. A punk guitarist as a teenager growing up in LA, Verbinski appeared in several rock

bands and made music videos before making an inauspicious start in filmmaking with unloved comedies "Mouse Hunt" and "The Mexican."

Optimist

"The Ring" and the first, critically-acclaimed "Pirates of the Caribbean" movie represented a purple patch but were followed by box office flop "The Weatherman," and two poorly-reviewed if financially successful "Pirates" sequels. Computer-animated "Rango," a critical and commercial hit, won Verbinski an Oscar, his best ever reviews and an opportunity to blot his copy book again with high-concept Western "The Lone Ranger."

Starring Depp in a role that made his "Pirates of the Caribbean" performances look positively restrained, the lavish, over-long \$225 million production was an infamous flop that frustrated fans who could see Verbinski's obvious talent. It is a body of work that raises more questions than answers about the enigmatic filmmaker's worldview, although he reveals an optimistic spirit apparently at odds with the dread that suffocates "Wellness." "I think there's something about the youth today that is maybe questioning the treadmill a little bit," he said, suddenly appearing quite chipper. "I have faith that maybe they realize there's no more headroom in this algorithm we have created." — AFP



British director Trudie Styler (left) and British actor Alex Lawther pose during a photocall for the film "Freak Show" screened in the Generation 14plus section of the 67th Berlinale Film Festival in Berlin, on February 13, 2017. — AFP

Trudie Styler tackles gay teen bullying with first feature

British actress and producer Trudie Styler is making her directorial debut at the Berlin Film Festival this week with "Freak Show," about a gay American teen who stands up to bullying. Styler, who has co-produced such films as "Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels" and "Snatch," premiered the movie to sold-out audiences in the festival's 'Generation' section, which showcases young adult cinema. The film ended up being a family affair, with her daughter Eliot Sumner, who lives in Berlin and has her own music career, helping with the soundtrack and Eliot's older sister, Mickey, playing a doctor in one scene.

Styler is married to musician Sting. "Freak Show" tells the story of Billy Bloom (British actor Alex J Lawther), the flamboyant son of a billionaire father and a glamorous, fun-loving mother who is played by Styler's friend Bette Midler. When their marriage breaks up, Billy has to leave New England for his father's home in a Republican state in the Bible Belt, where the cheerleaders cry "Make America Great Again". Dressed up as gay pop icon Boy George on his first day at school, Billy runs a gauntlet of hostile jocks and popular kids but refuses to let the conformists cramp his style.

Even after he is ambushed and beaten up by a gang of football player thugs, Billy returns to school and delivers a book report performance in drag as Jazz Age heroine Zelda Fitzgerald that brings the house down. Eventually Billy decides to challenge the school's top "mean girl" (Abigail Breslin of "Little Miss Sunshine") for the homecoming queen crown. Styler, 63, lined up a series of celebrity cameos for the movie including Laverne Cox, the transgender star of "Orange is the New Black", to play a local television reporter, and tennis great John McEnroe as the well-meaning school gym teacher.

She said she chose the script, based on a bestseller by James St James, for her first outing as a director in part because of her own experience with bullying. "I had a rough time at school myself," she told AFP. "I had ADHD

(attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder) and dyslexia and had had a pretty bad road accident when I was a child so I was very scarred on my face." "I was a listener to music but a lonely one," she continued. "I didn't belong to the popular girls or even the mean girls. But we all have sharp memories of our own high school years."

'Bullies as leaders'

"Freak Show" is Styler's debut as a director of a feature film, although she has co-directed documentaries. She also recently co-starred in the television series "Empire" and is a prominent environmental campaigner. She said she feared that the example being set by today's political leaders was warping the attitudes of young people. "We're living in a more xenophobic and homophobic culture than I would suggest that we have at any time in our recent history," Styler said. "We want our kids to grow up to be more tolerant, more inclusive, more compassionate and so it's a worry when we have bullies as leaders. I'm talking about Marine Le Pen, I'm talking about (Donald) Trump, I'm talking about (Vladimir) Putin, there are any number." She said kids needed role models to help them fit in, even if they are taken from pop culture.

"I'm married to a musician-music is a transcendent form. We all remember what we were doing to a certain song at a certain time. It evokes memory, it evokes feeling above all," she said. "In this movie, Eliot helped me to select some great LGBT bands to play at certain very poignant moments of the movie. In fact she's got two of her own songs." The soundtrack also includes songs by Perfume Genius, Boy George and 1970s glam rockers T. Rex, a band Styler said she loved as a young woman. The Berlin film festival runs until Sunday. — AFP

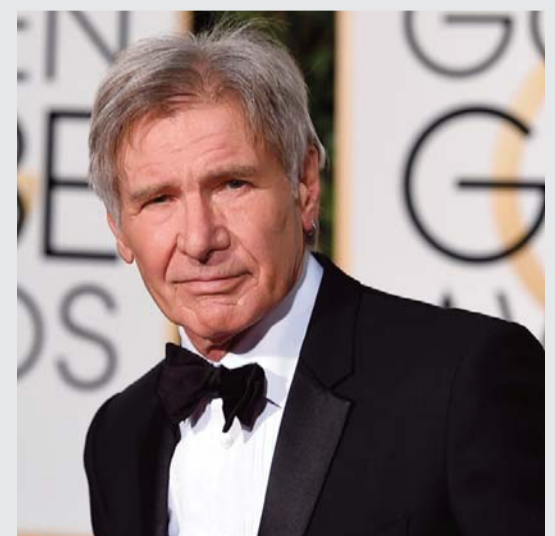
Harrison Ford in near-miss landing private plane

Hollywood star Harrison Ford was involved in a near-miss at a California airport as he was piloting his private plane, officials and US media said on Tuesday. Ford, a seasoned pilot and vintage plane collector, was approaching John Wayne Airport in Orange County, NBC reported, when he headed towards a taxiway rather than the runway, passing over a Boeing 737 with 110 passengers and six crew. The 74-year-old "Indiana Jones" star was captured on air traffic control recordings, according to NBC, asking: "Was that airliner meant to be underneath me?"

The Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) said it did not identify people involved in air incidents but confirmed it was investigating what had caused the misunderstanding. "Air traffic controllers cleared the pilot of a single-engine Aviat Husky to land on Runway 20L at John Wayne Airport Monday afternoon," spokesman Ian Gregor said in a statement. "The pilot correctly read back the clearance. The pilot then landed on a taxiway that runs parallel to the runway, overflying a Boeing 737 that was holding short of the runway."

The American Airlines plane managed to depart safely for Dallas just minutes after the incident, according to NBC. The FAA prohibits aircraft landing on taxiways and sanctions for pilots found at fault range from a warning letter to a suspension of their license. Ford suffered a broken arm and minor head injuries when he crash-landed a World War II plane on a Santa Monica golf course two years ago, after the carburetor failed. He also crash-landed a helicopter during a flying lesson in Ventura County, California in 1999 and, a year later, his Beechcraft Bonanza scraped the runway during an emergency landing in Nebraska.

The actor has been in accidents out of the cockpit too, suffering a broken leg three years ago on the set of the Millennium Falcon spaceship after he was pinned down by the heavy, metal-framed door while reprising his role as Han Solo in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens." A long-time aviation enthusiast, Ford owns several aircraft and claims more than 5,200 hours in his log book. He is certified to fly and land planes, seaplanes and helicopters, according to the National Transportation Safety Board. His representatives refused to comment. — AFP



In this file photo, Harrison Ford arrives at the 73rd annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills, Calif. — AP

Indie icon Jens Lekman finds adulthood has a disco beat

Suffering from writer's block so severe he felt physically ill, singer Jens Lekman found a way to jumpstart his creative energy-forcing himself to write and release a song, a "postcard," every week. "It was almost like getting a gym card or something to force myself out of bed every day to do something productive," he said. "I had to write. I had a contract with the world." A decade ago, Lekman was hailed as a pre-eminent voice of indie pop, with wry, witty lyricism that spoke to sensitive 20-somethings and created a romanticism around his hometown of Gothenburg, Sweden, which figures prominently in his songs.

But Lekman was stung by the more subdued reaction to his last album, 2012's "I Know What Love Isn't," a stripped-down, often sorrowful work haunted by a breakup. "I struggled with a lot of doubts around my songwriting and around what I was and what my purpose and mission were," Lekman, who speaks in a calm reserve much like his deadpan songs, told AFP at a coffeehouse in New York. Lekman's new album, "Life Will See You Now," comes out Friday with, after his years of darkness, a surprise-the joy is back.

"Life Will See You Now"-a title that plays on how doctors call in patients from the waiting room-revives the ironic voice that defined Lekman's early songs. Lekman goes further than before with electronics, with songs such as the sensory, readily danceable "What's That Perfume That You Wear?" bursting into disco with touches of samba. Two of Lekman's postcards-"How We Met, the Long Version" and "Postcard #17"-made the album.

But Lekman said the postcards more broadly helped him focus on what he wanted to be writing about-existential thoughts on getting older. Lekman recently turned 36 - an age, he said, where "you start to see the consequences of your choices and how life keeps repeating itself." In an essay to introduce the album, Lekman described one's 30s as "like your teenage years, but without all the cool role models." "When you were a teenager you had The Ramones. When you're in your 30s you have the characters from 'Seinfeld,'" he wrote.

What Would Jens Do?

The album starts off with the bouncing "To Know Your Mission," in which Lekman recalls an encounter with a Mormon missionary in Gothenburg. "I remember being very intrigued that this missionary had this very clear idea of what his purpose in life was-he was going to spread the Gospel," Lekman said. "He was 19 or something. For me, it's not until now that I'm starting to grasp a little bit

what I'm supposed to do and what makes me happy and what I'm put here to do."

Lekman, in an experience that became a separate song, stopped at a gas station in deep America and bought a "WWJD" bracelet. The acronym, popular in the Bible Belt, stands for "What Would Jesus Do?" But Lekman found his own message-"What Would Jens Do?" "I started thinking, what if I just tried doing the opposite of whatever my initial instincts would be?" Lekman said. "I wore that bracelet for a while just to remind myself," he said. "I think that's something more people should try if they feel that they keep repeating their patterns and making bad choices in life."



Jens Lekman

Listening to fans

Lekman in late 2015 started the Ghostwriting project with the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center and the Gothenburg Biennial in which strangers submit stories which he turns into songs. Lekman wants Ghostwriting to expand into a small festival with a range of artists composing for their fans. "I would love to hear Marilyn Manson's fans or something, what their stories would be like," Lekman said of the occult-dabbling rocker.

Even if his music is looking brighter, he is not optimistic about the future of the business. Traditional album sales have plummeted, which he called a "nightmare scenario" for an indie pop artist. But Lekman carefully laid the financial groundwork to take a full band on a tour of North America and Europe that opens February 23. He is adamant about playing smaller cities, remembering his youthful excitement when bands visited Gothenburg. "For me, it's sort of like a cultural democracy or musical socialism to take a stand and get out of the major cities if you can." — AFP

Sarah Jessica Parker to chair library association book club

Sarah Jessica Parker is adding another credit to her life as a bookworm. The "Sex and the City" actress is serving as honorary chair of the American Library Association's newly created Book Club Central. The library association told The Associated Press yesterday that the club will recommend books throughout the year and will formally launch in Chicago on June 24, during the ALA's annual conference. "From an early age, books were my constant companions and my local library a place I could find a new friend on every shelf," Parker said in a statement. "I'm thrilled to help champion original voices for dedicated readers as well as for a new generation, supporting libraries in what they do best."

Parker recently started her own imprint with Penguin Random House and last year introduced JK Rowling at a PEN gala, where the "Harry Potter" author was being honored by the literary and human rights organization. Parker also served on a presidential arts and humanities committee during the Obama administration. — AP

Katy Perry, Ed Sheeran to play iHeartRadio Music Awards

Katy Perry, Ed Sheeran and The Chainsmokers will perform at the iHeartRadio Music Awards in Los Angeles. Additional performers announced yesterday include Shawn Mendes, Thomas Rhett, Noah Cyrus and Big Sean. Bruno Mars has also been previously announced as a performer. Drake leads all nominees with 12 nominations, including male artist of the year, at the fourth annual awards show. The show will air live on TBS, TNT and truTV on Sunday, March 5. — AP



Katy Perry arrives at the 59th Annual Grammy Awards - Universal Music Group After Party at The Theatre at Ace Hotel on Sunday in Los Angeles. — AP

WELCOME TO THE HUMBLE: GUNS 'N ROSES SORRY OVER AUS MIX-UP

Rock legends Guns N' Roses apologized yesterday after confusing the southern city of Melbourne with Sydney on their Australian tour. Concert-goers booed the US rockers when guitar technician McBob said hello to "Sydney" at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Tuesday night as he introduced the group on stage. "Sydney, you wanted the best but they're stuck in traffic, so here's what you get," he said.

The group later tweeted from their official account that they were "truly sorry." "Melbourne! Accidentally after 30 years McBob made an error, we're truly sorry. Thank you for coming out tonight!" Lead guitarist Slash apologized on Twitter for the "Spinal Tap intro" while bassist Duff McKagan added: "Don't b2 hard on McBob 4saying 'Sydney' in the intro...his wife and fam from here. Hell catch it plenty!"

There has been a long-time rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne, Australia's two largest cities. While Sydney is the nation's financial center and boasts of its iconic harbourfront that features the Opera House and bridge, Melbourne prides itself as Australia's cultural and sporting capital. The veteran band last performed in Melbourne in 2013. — AFP





Villagers parading a dragon next to a highway in the fields near Gutian village, Liancheng county of China's eastern Fujian province.



Villagers parading a dragon through a tunnel next to a highway in the fields near Gutian village, Liancheng county of China's eastern Fujian province.



Villagers parading a dragon through fields near Gutian village, Liancheng county of China's eastern Fujian province.

Enter the dragon: Rural Chinese honor mythical beast

Dragons several hundred meters long snake their way down pastoral roads and through country hamlets, part of centuries-old Chinese folk celebrations for a mythical creature revered as a blessing. The visually striking festival is among a range of colorful traditional observances unique to eastern Fujian province and its Hakka people and held each year in conjunction with the Lantern Festival, which fell this year on February 11.

The dragon is believed to scare off bad luck and bring the rains needed by farming communities in Liancheng county, a rural area of Fujian. In the village of Gutian on Saturday, residents began their two-day dragon parade by slitting the throat of a squealing pig on the grounds of a temple, the animal's blood spouting into a pan and later poured onto the head of the paper-and-wood dragon. The giant beast was then carried by dozens of local men through farms and villages.

Bringing up the rear was the dragon's tail, separated from the rest of the body because locals believe attaching it may bring too much rain. Later that night the dragon was paraded in circles outside a local government compound as fireworks crackled. The dragon was dismantled at night, but the parade resumed the next day. The dragon's head started out first, joined in succession by other sections until it was complete again.

It was eventually lit up in flames on the grounds of the temple where it all started, an offering for a bountiful year ahead. A few days earlier, the well-preserved ancient Hakka village of Peitian had its own parade of eleven illuminated dragons, observances dating back to the Ming dynasty, which ruled China from 1368 to 1644. — AFP



Villagers parading a dragon through an ancient compound in Peitian village, Liancheng county of China's eastern Fujian province. — AFP photos



Villagers parading a dragon before burning it as an offering in Gutian village.



Children eating ice cream as they await a dragon parade in Peitian village.

Ambitious Western US music center plans premiere

Tippet Rise, an ambitious music center in the rolling hills of Montana, on Tuesday announced a second season that will include a premiere by leading composer Aaron Jay Kernis. The Tippet Rise Art Center opened last year on a sweeping ranch in the western US state, aiming to bring world-class classical musicians to a venue in nature with concerts attended by no more than 150 people at a time. The estate—which features original sculptures, communal dinners and, this year, a new 5.5 kilometers (three and a half miles) of hiking and bicycle trails—is funded by free-spirited philanthropists Peter and Cathy Halstead who sell tickets for just \$10.

The second season, which takes place over the summer, will feature a world premiere of a work by Kernis for piano and cello. The premiere will mark the first of three years of commissioned works at Tippet Rise by the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, known for his neo-Romantic style that incorporates contemporary influences.

Kernis is perhaps most famous for a 1983 incident at the New York Philharmonic when music director Zubin Mehta stopped one of his pieces, saying the score was vague, and the then 23-year-old composer insisted he go on. Performers set for Tippet Rise's new season include the cellist Zuill Bailey, who shared two Grammy Awards on Sunday, and the Russian pianist Yevgeny Sudbin, who will open the season in July with works that include Liszt and Tchaikovsky.

The season will close with a festival of films about architecture and design including a documentary on artist Stephen Talasnik. Two of his sculptures were recently acquired by Tippet Rise. The Halsteads, in designing Tippet Rise, have said that they are looking for a new model on how to present classical music and art rather than building another big urban hall. The latest season will include a weekend of music for wind instruments and piano meant to complement the natural setting. — AFP



This file photo shows tourists, as they observe 'Beartooth Portal,' a work by Spanish sculptors Anton Garcia-Abril and Debora Mesa, known together as Ensemble Studio, at the Tippet Rise Art Center near Fishtail, Montana. — AFP



This file photo shows 'Two Discs' (right), a sculpture by Alexander Calder on loan from the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC, and the Olivier Music Barn (left) seen at the Tippet rise Art Center near Fishtail, Montana.

Get your home red-carpet-ready with Badgley Mischka

Design duo Mark Badgley and James Mischka, known for show-stopping red-carpet gowns, are bringing the glamour of their fashion shows to a living room near you. The designers describe their first-ever Badgley Mischka Home Collection, launching today, as "couture furniture" infused with old Hollywood glamour. "We love when a piece of furniture has a little bit of atmosphere to it, where it sort of harks back to the golden era of Hollywood. At the same time, it's our quest to keep every piece modern. So it's been a real luxury and a real treat to work on something besides a red-carpet ball gown," said Badgley during an exclusive sneak peek of the collection in Los Angeles.

Badgley and Mischka also pulled inspiration straight from their runway collection, which they will present today during New York Fashion Week. Some of the furniture will be used in the show. "We used a lot of fabrics that were reminiscent of fabrics that we are using on the couture collection," said Mischka. "Our (fashion) collection is done with a lot of hand-beading and a lot of very intricate work on the couture gowns. And this collection also has handwork on it. All the finishes are distressed by hand. It's extremely labor intensive, which is very much like our couture gowns."

Their approach to designing for the dining room and the red carpet is the same: The devil is in the details. "We were very involved, from sketching. We scoured Europe for fabrications. We flew in tiny little planes to the middle of nowhere where we could find the craftsmanship to execute certain processes. It was a real labor of love," Badgley said.

The collection ranges in price from \$100 to \$10,000, and includes accent pieces, beds, chairs, sofas, tables, cabinets, candles and artwork. It will be available on the designers' website and at Neiman Marcus. Colorful sketches of Badgley Mischka gowns were blown up and framed. Lush fabrics line

a gold, zebra-print bench and a velvet octagonal coffee table. Like a dress with a wow moment on the back, there's a sleek, gray couch with striking geometric wood pattern only seen from behind.

Their favorite piece? A masculine, dark wood desk with gold detailing and curved architectural flair. "It's very sensual," Badgley said. "It's very simple. Nothing pretentious about it, but the finishings make it, and elevate it to such a couture piece. ... These pieces are timeless. James and I have never liked trendy pieces. We don't like trendy clothes. We certainly don't like trendy furniture. When James and I buy a piece, we want to know that it's going to be in the home for the next 20, 30, 40 years. And that, to us, is what this furniture stands for." — AP

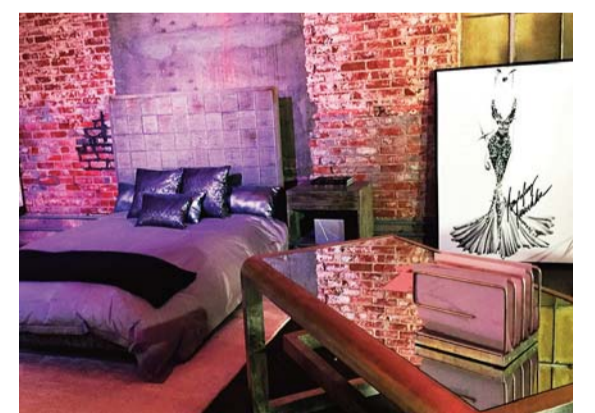


Photo shows pieces from the Badgley Mischka Home Collection on display in Los Angeles.

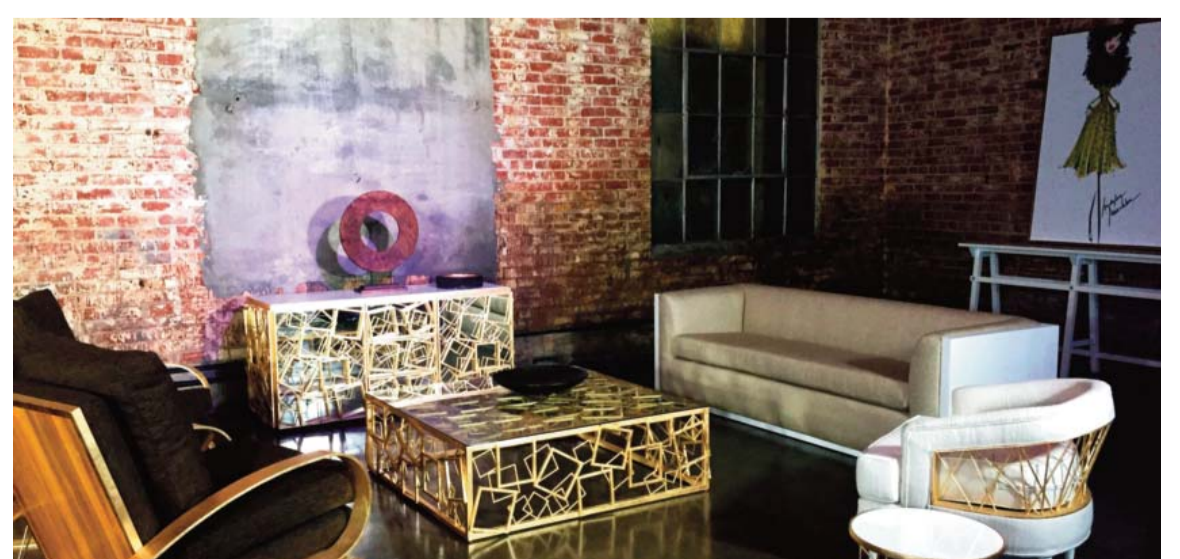


Photo shows pieces from the Badgley Mischka Home Collection on display in Los Angeles. — AP photos

FASHION



AT NY FASHION WEEK, HIJABS TOP LOOKS FIT FOR ROYALTY

In just two seasons, Indonesian Muslim designer Anniesa Hasibuan has made the hijab her trademark and dazzled New York fashion week's catwalk this week by styling it with flowing, iridescent gowns fit for a princess. Like in her New York show last fall - which cemented her status as a rising star - all of the models who showcased Hasibuan's autumn/winter 2017 collection sported lustrous gray hijabs that sculpted the facial features while carefully covering the hair.

show that "fashion is for everybody." "There is beauty in diversity and differences - something we should not be afraid of" she told AFP, speaking through an interpreter. "I believe being a fashion designer can bring a lot of changes - and beautiful changes, of course."

Growing fame

She unveiled her second New York collection amid controversy over US President Donald Trump's recent executive order on immigration, currently blocked by a US court, that bars refugees and migrants from seven Muslim-majority nations. The decree ignited mass protests and global condemnation. Hasibuan, however, aims to keep her work, which is primarily geared toward Muslim women, "separate" from politics.

"I'm here bringing the beautiful voice of the Muslim women, the peace and the universal values that fashion can offer," she said. Her dream, she said, would be to dress Kate Middleton, whom the designer said is "like a queen," adding that she admires the Duchess of Cambridge for "her elegance."

Hasibuan won worldwide praise for her fall collection in New York last September, the first to feature a hijab in every look. Since then she has opened new stores in her home country Indonesia as well as in Malaysia, Turkey and Abu Dhabi - proffering modern Islamic clothing dripping in glamor. Chiara Sari, Indonesia's vice consul in New York, donned a white hijab atop a black, velvet top and black pants to attend the show, pulling her contemporary look together with a statement necklace.

The hijab, Sari said, is Hasibuan's "trademark, and I don't think she will lose that." Since Trump's contentious decree Sari said she has spent significant time reassuring her fellow Indonesians in the United States, while also urging them to "avoid traveling abroad" to reduce the risk of not being able to re-enter. For Sari, Hasibuan's growing fame is a gift. "Hopefully that will increase familiarity with Islam in general, especially now when it is getting a lot of bad press," she said. — AFP



Designer Anniesa Hasibuan walks the runway for the Anniesa Hasibuan collection during New York Fashion Week in New York City.



Other than the hijab, the traditional head and neck covering many Muslim women wear, the 30-year-old designer's clothes evoked nothing of the "modest Muslim" style that sometimes stirs controversy and exacerbates anti-Muslim sentiment in western countries. On the contrary, Hasibuan's collection features shimmering, on-trend pleats, silver and golden ruffles, and long trains adorned with pearls, glitter or embroidery that recalled royalty of the Middle Ages.

The models were not chosen at random - the young designer held casting calls specifically seeking first and second-generation immigrants, seeking to



Models walk the runway for the Anniesa Hasibuan show during New York Fashion Week in New York City. — AP/AFP photos

Naeem Khan uses Maya Angelou, Brandon Maxwell faces fears

This Fashion Week, designers have come up with widely varying ways to comment, either overtly or not, on the nation's political situation. Naeem Khan decided to use poetry. As the final design made its way down the runway on Tuesday - a grand, glistening, golden bridal gown, with a gold floral crown and a cascading veil with a black-and-gold train - the soundtrack played Maya Angelou reading her poem, "Human Family." "The variety of our skin tones can confuse, bemuse, delight, brown and pink and beige and purple, tan and blue and white," the poem reads in part.

It closes by saying, three times: "We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike." Backstage, Khan spoke about President Donald Trump's travel ban and its potential impact on the fashion industry. "You look at the fashion business, it drives the economy of our country," said Khan, who was born in India and is a US citizen. "It's the third or fourth largest business in America. You cannot have a business so big and have a travel ban." He added: "You look across all the designers ... we bring diversity. And we make business by being all together to create newness mixed with volume mixed with so many amazing, beautiful things that come from different parts of the world. So we cannot have a travel ban. Especially if it's confined to one community. I mean that is absolutely not

acceptable because that's not our Constitution."

Khan was a favorite designer of former first lady Michelle Obama, and famously designed the shimmering gown she wore to the India state dinner - her first. There were plenty of equally shimmering gowns at Tuesday's runway show, including a few striking Deco-inspired looks - in gold metallic thread, or sequins. Khan also showed flouncy party dresses in tea length; a silvery sequined dress with ruffle straps and a peplum detail looked like almost like a very chic suit of armor. Embellishment was still key; Khan said he had experimented with new types of embroidery and placing sequins at different angles, to create texture and catch the light.

The collection began with somewhat more casual looks, part of an effort by Khan to expand more into daywear - animal print coats, print dresses, or a beaded jacket over drawstring pants. In an especially bright ensemble, high embroidered boots matched the embroidery on the dress, for shoulder-to-toe color. "The inspiration was this larger-than-life woman who is my client, who is all the women I dress," Khan said. "There are women across the world who wear my clothes, so how do I take different art from different parts of the world in today's climate to show ... diversity and beauty? This is the collection." Among the guests was actress Mandy Moore, star of TV's "This Is Us": She opted against a dress, given the weather, and wore one of Khan's beaded, full-length vests. "I just have been introduced to Naeem's stuff," she said. "I wore one of his dresses to the Golden Globes this year and was floored by how empowered I felt."

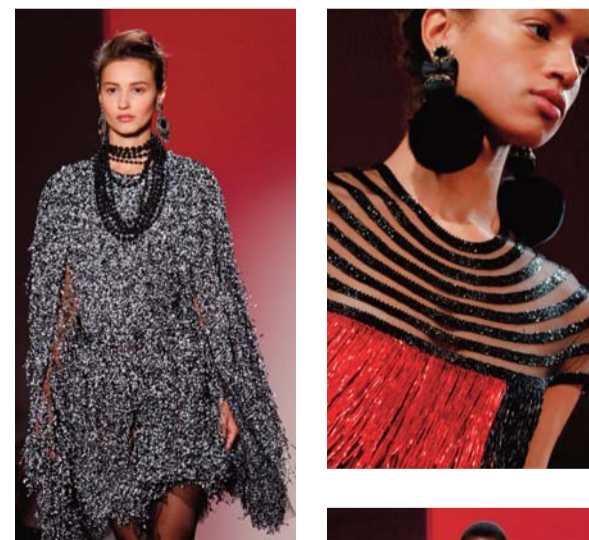
Brandon Maxwell faces fears

Looking back on the two years he's been in business, Maxwell has come to a place of release. "I had reached what felt like the lowest point in my life. In that dark moment, I turned on my music, and I worked through my pain in the only way I know how, by creating," he said in notes for Tuesday's show, held high above the Statue of Liberty on the 71st floor of one of the World Trade skyscrapers. It was the creative process, Maxwell said in a backstage interview, that led him to bid goodbye to the lifelong "people pleaser" in him and hello to freedom from fears, including the ones that had him trying to please all the people all the time - customers, buyers and critics among them.

The result, set to a soundtrack that included "Black or White" by his beloved Michael Jackson, was a collection worn by models who stayed loose and relaxed, as did many of his silhouettes. He included looks in deep teal and pops of party-girl red, like a turtleneck sweater with two rows bell pleats that began above the wrist. While true to his pencil skirts and elegant pleating detail in gowns, jackets and other looks, one wide-waisted ball skirt in shimmering black clearly made the model happy. A wide-trouser was paired with a fur-trimmed

high collar and partial skirt. A fox fur coat was worn with a strapless gown with a layered bodice.

As a boy in Longview, Texas, the 32-year-old Maxwell - Lady Gaga's fashion director and friend - had a mirrored closet door. That's where he'd sing along to Jackson. As a man, recently, he said he had to look himself in the mirror again. "I decided I'm going to do what I want because at the end of the day I have to sleep with it. You're not going to please everybody," Maxwell said. "I have to be OK with that." — AP



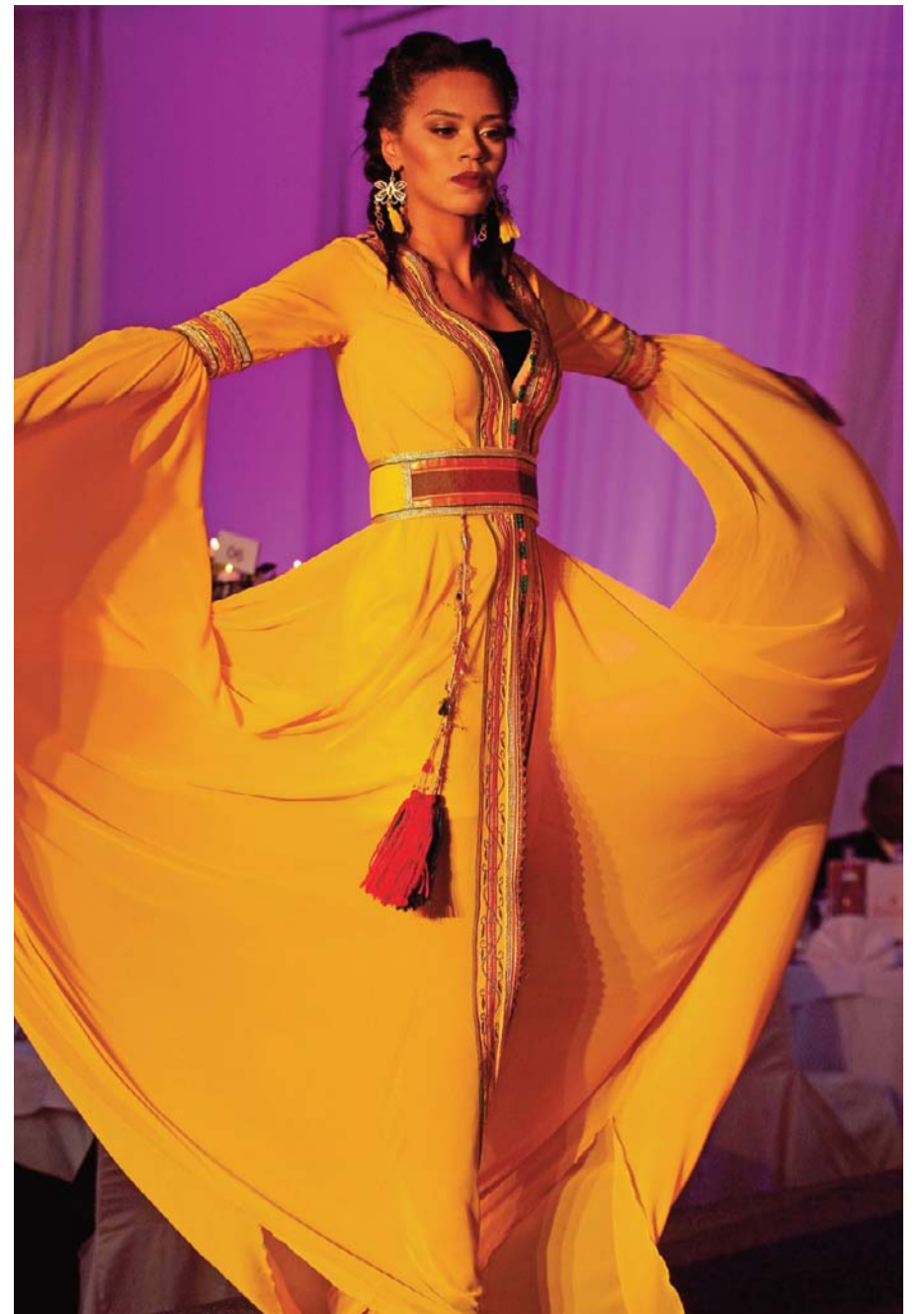
Fashion designer Naeem Khan walks the runway after showing his collection during Fashion Week.



FASHION



Tunisian fashion designer Olfa Mhaoued, who is inspired by adding modern touches to the North African country's traditional garbs, is applauded at the end of a fashion show in Tunis. — AFP photos



Models present creations by Tunisian fashion designer Olfa Mhaoued.

Tunisian fashion designers look to past for inspiration

Traditional embroidery on modern dresses, men's robes turned into women's jackets—Tunisian designers are making their mark with outfits inspired by their country's heritage. Drawing on a diverse range of regional styles, designers like Zeineb Chiboub are adding modern touches to the North African country's traditional garb. Wearing a hooded coat inspired by the kachabiya, a winter robe usually worn by men, Chiboub says the idea of reworking generations-old designs is catching on.

"Tunisians, especially young people, are increasingly fond of Tunisian heritage. They want to show their identity," she says. Every week, Chiboub, a pharmacist by training, heads to a different region in search of old clothes. She cuts them up and transforms them into "stylized" models in order to sell them at her shop in an upmarket suburb of Tunis.

Tunisia boasts a wide variety of clothes inspired by past rulers, with Carthaginian, Roman, Amazigh, Arab, Andalusian and Ottoman styles all leaving an imprint. Each region has its own style of dress for weddings and religious ceremonies, using luxurious silk, lace and tulle fabrics richly ornamented with silver, gold and filigree threads. But Chiboub says her clients are also looking for everyday clothes. Her most in-demand item is the Maryoul Fadhila, a traditional silk or cotton top worn over jeans or a short skirt. Haifa Ifaa, a student in her 20s, says the clothes give her a feeling of pride. "I love wearing the updated clothes of our grandmothers," she says, standing at the entrance of the shop of Faouzia Frad, another designer of reworked traditional clothing. "(They) show the beauty of our heritage."

'Warm and daring colors'

Veteran designer Frad says her designs combine traditional embroidery with "more sophisticated, more tailored dresses, adapted to the tastes of the modern woman." She says the concept is increasingly popular. Stylist Ilyes Ben Amor agrees. "The ethnic trend is in vogue at haute couture houses and on international podiums," he says. It is a celebration of the "warm and daring colors of traditional clothes, which spread joy and freshness, contrary to all that is dark, full of sadness, like the niqab," the face-covering Islamic veil, he adds. Some designers see taking inspiration from the country's past as a statement against religious extremism. Tunisia has experienced an ongoing jihadist insurgency since a 2011 revolution toppled long-time dictator Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali.

"Our only weapon against fundamentalism is our identity, our culture, our craftsmanship," says Fatma Ben Abdallah, head of the jury of the annual Khomsa d'Or fashion show. The show, set for May 18, will host both amateur and professional artisans and designers. Organized by the National Crafts Board, it aims to revive the traditional dress in Tunisia, with the dream of crossing borders. Ben Abdallah has ambitions beyond that, hoping to organize international fashion events to showcase Tunisian designs. It will be a challenge-to-date, there is no official data on revenue from the clothing sector or its export potential.

"We have a very rich heritage, talent and taste," she says. "But we lack resources, and without the support of the government, this dream cannot be realized." Three-time Khomsa d'Or prize winner Ilyes El Andari agrees. "The traditional dress is the showcase of the country. It deserves to be more supported," he says. — AFP



Hepburn is muse in defense of women on NY runway

Millionaire Tory Burch kicked off Valentine's Day at New York fashion week on Tuesday by unveiling a Katharine Hepburn inspired collection designed for the modern, elegant and powerful woman. Held at the Whitney Museum of American Art, where the winter sun poured through the windows and a red hardback of love poems was carefully laid out for each guest, the show oozed class.

The opening look—a model dressed in a white coat and white pants—was difficult to dissociate with one of Hillary Clinton's most iconic ones during her defeated presidential bid last year that Burch supported. "To me, she is a hero," 50-year-

old Burch told AFP backstage of Hepburn, the late screen legend, after the show on the sixth day of fashion week. "I think she personifies powerful women in a way, she was very irreverent and outspoken and did it with such grace."

From a classic navy blue pant suit, to a waist accentuated by silver-colored sparkling buttons, to a Fair Isle winter sweater paired with velvet pants or jacquard skirt, they could have been staples from a chic 1950s closet. Burch, whom Forbes ranks 73 on the list of the world's most powerful women, has made a fortune out of her lifestyle brand of prep-chic. Since Oprah Winfrey helped propel her to fame in 2005, Burch's clothes have been worn by well-heeled women

all over the world such as Catherine Zeta-Jones, Jennifer Lopez or the duchess of Cambridge. Actress Diane Kruger was at her show Tuesday.

Burch said she had been "greatly affected" by the protests that erupted after Donald Trump's inauguration, especially the massive women's march on Washington on January 21. "It was something that takes your breath away," she said. "I think that it's bigger than what it became about, because women are half the population, it should be equal rights, equal pay... it should be a given not a favor." The designer said she was gearing up for a Women's Day campaign on March 8 that would bring together women and girls to talk about embracing

ambition and "how important that is right now, especially for women in America."

But Burch downplayed a dinner she attended that was hosted by first daughter Ivanka Trump—before her father's inauguration—another elegant New York businesswoman who has also called for better pay for women and child care. "It was just a meeting that someone set up, 15 CEOs maybe in a room, I think she is just trying to figure out what she is doing," said Burch. "I don't work with Ivanka, so I don't know." — AFP



The Tory Burch collection is modeled during Fashion Week in New York, Tuesday.

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2017

At NY fashion week, hijabs top looks fit for royalty

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Karyn (left) and husband Tucker Brown (right) ski while celebrating their 10th wedding anniversary during the Loveland Ski Area 26th Annual Valentine's Day Mountaintop Matrimony held near Georgetown, Colorado on February 14, 2017. Over 70 couples gathered to either wed or renew their vows during the ceremony which was officiated by Minister Harry Heilmann, of the Universal Life Church. — AFP

Rumor has it: German Shepherd crowned at Westminster 'quality and nobility'

After endless primping, cheers and more than a little drool, the Westminster Dog Show culminated late Tuesday with a triumph for a German Shepherd named Rumor. The champion was crowned after an extensive judging finale during which Rumor, a crowd favorite, was paraded with six other contenders including a majestic Irish Setter named Adrian, and a ground-hugging Pekinese furball named Chuckie.

The win marks just the second Westminster crown for a German Shepherd, a breed known for its "quality and nobility," said Thomas Bradley 3rd, the final arbiter of the proceedings. "She is just magnificent," Bradley said of the bright-eyed winner. Tuesday capped the 141st installment of Westminster, an annual February ritual that, along with Fashion Week, helps New Yorkers survive a mid-winter slog of frigid temperatures, transit delays and cranky half-sick colleagues. Madison Square Garden was nearly at capacity on Valentine's Day, with bursts of fervent applause for popular breeds like the Golden Retriever and StBernard, and knowing laughs as handlers used treats to try to coax silence from yappy contestants. Nearly 2,800 dogs from 200 breeds competed this year. Judges separate the elite from the field by assessing how the dog compares with official breed standards.

Does the beagle's snout do justice to the hound breed's zealous sniff instincts? Do "ratter" terriers look like they would actually catch vermin? Beyond that, to garner the top prize, an ambitious canine is one who knows to "bring it" when it counts most. Rumor, who is five years old, is a natural performer, said her owner and handler, Kent Boyles. She had been favored to win Westminster last year, but finished runner-up in the Best in Show finale. After last year's disappointment, the dog didn't compete for almost a year, while Boyles contemplated whether she was ready for motherhood. Sitting out of the ring didn't sit well with Rumor, who watched her housemates travel to shows. "She hated it at first, she'd go nuts" he said. "She was barking and carrying on." Eventually Rumor adjusted to life on the sidelines-but Boyles, who loves German Shepherds for their exceptional intelligence and capacity for



Rumor the German Shepherd and handler Kent Boyles pose for photos after winning Best In Show at the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show at Madison Square Garden in New York City. — AFP photos



Rumor, a German shepherd, stands next to Kent Boyleshis, the handler after it won 'Best in Show'.

empathy, began to consider one last try at Westminster. After winning, Boyles told a television interviewer that "there are puppies in the future" for the champ.

Again a bridesmaid

The selection of Rumor once again relegated Patricia Trotter to bridesmaid status after a lifetime of championing the Norwegian Elkhound breed, a midsized, grayish breed originally bred to hunt moose. On Tuesday, Trotter beamed as

she prepared to present her dog, Duffy, which triumphed late Monday in the Hound category over beagles, fox hounds and a whippet, among others. "It feels like old times," said the 81-year-old Trotter. Duffy was bred from the sperm of the son of a prior Westminster finalist that was frozen in a sperm bank for 17 years until a suitable partner could be located. "Yes for science!" she exclaimed.

For Laurel Cain Denk, a California veterinarian, just bringing her two-year old Tibetan Mastiff to New York was a goal

that helped her get through cancer treatments. "He's going to be a pain," she said, speaking beside the 135-pound giant named Kalhant shortly before presenting the dog in the Working category. Alas, Kalhant did not advance. "But he's going to have fun and I'm going to have fun," Cain Denk said. "This is really one of the best moments of my life." — AFP



A bulldog rests before competing.



Seven-year-old Raina McCloskey is seen with her Borzois in the judging area.



A Yorkshire Terrier rests in the Benching area.



A Bichon Frises is seen in the benching area

