

13
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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2017

JAMADA ALAWWAL 26, 1438 AH

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Colours of Australia
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STUDENT ART COMPETITION



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FRENCH ARTIST ENTOMBED IN ROCK FOR A WEEK

PARIS: A French artist was entombed yesterday inside a 12-tonne boulder for a week, saying: "I think I can take it." With the world's press looking on, the two halves of the limestone rock were closed on Abraham Poincheval by workmen in a Paris modern art museum. The 44-year-old had hollowed out a hole in the rock just big enough for him to sit, with a niche to hold supplies of water, soup and dried meat. If he survives the ordeal, the artist will then attempt to hatch a dozen eggs by sitting on them for weeks on end.

Just before he stepped inside the rock at the Palais de Tokyo museum, Poincheval told AFP that claustrophobia was the least of his worries. "We are already locked into our own bodies," he said. Instead he was more anxious about stopping his mind running riot during his confinement. "We did a little test yesterday and it was absolutely incredible. It felt like I was being carried off on a raft," the artist said. "One of the big challenges will be to hold onto reality."

Poincheval had earlier been caged on the rock's toilet facilities. But as the clock ticked down he came clean to AFP, admitting he would have to sit on a small container and pee into his water bottles once he had drunk them. He was stoic about living with his excrement. "The stone will absorb some of the smell," he said. "I think I can take it." The artist has spent months mentally and physically preparing himself for the practicalities of

Continued on Page 13



PARIS: French artist Abraham Poincheval is seen before the two halves of a 12-tonne limestone boulder were closed on him by workmen for a week at the Palais de Tokyo modern art museum yesterday. — AFP

MUSCAT: India and Bahrain are considering scrapping a financial guarantee scheme used to protect migrant maids who are not paid by their employers, in a move activists fear could expose thousands of Indian women in the Arab nation. There are more than 300,000 Indian migrant workers in the tiny Gulf state of one million people, according to the Indian embassy in Manama. Most are men employed as construction workers, gardeners and drivers. There are also about 15,000 women working as maids.

Continued on Page 13

BOTH PARENTS SHOULD BE LIVING IN KUWAIT TO RENEW CHILD VISA

KUWAIT: The interior ministry's residency affairs directorate plans to make it mandatory for both parents to be living in Kuwait with valid residency visas to renew their children's residency visas, said informed sources. The sources added that very few exemptions will be made, including for female doctors and teachers, allowing them to sponsor their children without the presence of their husbands in Kuwait.

"Exceptions will be made for some categories working for the government, but not the private sector," the sources added. They explained that in case an expat divorces his wife, she will not have her residency renewed if she is in Kuwait and will not be allowed into Kuwait if she is abroad.

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah following his return back home yesterday. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is welcomed by top state officials.



Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem welcomes His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

AMIR ARRIVES IN KUWAIT AFTER OFFICIAL VISIT TO OMAN

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah arrived yesterday from Oman after he concluded an official visit to the fellow Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah met with Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed during his visit.

His Highness the Amir was received at Kuwait International Airport by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Sheikh Jaber Al-Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Sheikh Faisal

Al-Saud Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, senior officials of the army, police, Kuwait National Guard (KNG), and Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD).

His Highness the Amir was accompanied during the visit by Deputy Chief of KNG Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, First

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of the Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, head of His Highness the Amir's office Ahmad Fahad Al-Fahad, head of the Amiri protocols Sheikh Khaled Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Suleiman Al-Jarallah, and other senior officials from the Amiri Diwan and foreign ministry. — KUNA

AMIR SENDS LETTER TO IOM'S DIRECTOR

GENEVA: His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a letter to Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) William Lacy Swing, said a Kuwaiti diplomat yesterday. The letter focused on Kuwait's efforts in the humanitarian domain, said Ambassador Jamal Al-Ghunaim, Kuwait's Permanent delegate to the UN and international organizations headquarters in Geneva.

After handing the letter,

Ghunaim said that he had a meeting with Swing, discussing results of the IOM Director's recent visit to Kuwait. "I have conveyed greetings from Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Swing," said Ghunaim, who affirmed that the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry was keen on developing ties with the IOM.

Meanwhile, Swing thanked the Kuwaiti leadership and people for their hospitality during the visit, affirming that he was honored to

have met with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad and other senior Kuwaiti officials.

He also lauded Kuwait's involvement in the Syria donors' conference, which is scheduled soon in Brussels. Documenting Kuwaiti humanitarian work, whether in film or any other medium, is important to showcase Kuwait's global efforts, said the IOM Director who hoped that the organization and the Gulf country would continue to coordinate their efforts in the future. —KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Ambassador of France to Kuwait Christian Nakhle awarded professor Joseph Iannaca, head of the French department at the American University of Kuwait (AUK), with the French National Order of Academic Palms, and that during the ceremony held recently at his residence. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

KUWAIT NATIONAL DAY & LIBERATION DAY GREETINGS

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KUWAIT: Ukrainian Ambassador Dr Volodymr Tolkach (right) speaks during a press conference held yesterday with Dr Ali Jowhar. —Photo by Ben Garcia

UKRAINE'S AMBASSADOR WOOS KUWAITIS FOR MEDICAL TOURISM

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: "Ukraine is stable and ready to welcome people from other countries for medical tourism, especially Kuwaitis," the Ukrainian envoy to Kuwait said at a press conference held at the embassy in Surra yesterday. Dr Volodymr Tolkach was speaking to reporters with Dr Ali Jowhar, President of Al-Thamen Co for Treatment and Medical Tourism in Ukraine. Jowhar is a Kuwaiti doctor who graduated from one of the best medical universities in Ukraine.

"In the last 30-40 years, Ukraine has developed its medical schools to international standards and is now known as the best destination for foreign students. I myself am a graduate from Ukraine. Many Kuwaitis have graduated from medical facilities there. Ukraine has come far and it is number one for medical schools and medical tourism nowadays," Jowhar said.

He encouraged Kuwaitis to visit Ukraine for medical consultations and other medical services offered at low prices. "Based on my experience and our relations as countries, I personally support Ukraine in its pursuit to encourage more Kuwaitis to come and visit the country, not only for tourism, but also for medical purposes. Our company in Kiev supports Kuwait-Ukraine programs for early detection of medical concerns, especially cancer. If you detect cancer at an early stage, it can be treated. Ukraine has the best laboratories, and our main goal is to support medical tourism and prevent all diseases, not just cancer," he said.

Tolkach mentioned several other related disciplines that can be treated in Ukraine, including the rehabilitation of children with cerebral palsy, autism and other special needs. "It is cheaper in Ukraine than in Kuwait. You can hear the experiences of

other patients that have visited and tried our medical facilities," the envoy said.

Three documents

Tolkach also emphasized that in order to visit Ukraine, Kuwaitis have to secure only three documents so they can be accepted for medical tourism - a hotel booking, international travel insurance and return tickets. He said the number of patients from Kuwait is growing yearly, and in 2016, the embassy issued more than 1,600 tourist visas from Kuwait, and 40 percent of them were seeking medical treatment in Ukraine.

For the purpose of medical tourism, Ukraine has established the International Medical Relations Organization (IMRO), comprising of health professionals who offer unique research works and methodologies. IMRO offers a full range of stomatological services, such as high aesthetic prosthetics; endodontic treatment under the microscope; masterly dental surgery; combination of stomatology and gnathology, comprehensive approach to diagnosis and treatment; prevention of children's dental diseases; joint work of the speech therapist and orthodontist and correcting speech defects.

It offers a full range of surgery services: Reconstructive surgery; plastic surgery; trauma surgery; cardiovascular and neurological surgery for children and adults; orthopedic surgery. It also offers a full range of assisted reproductive technologies: Male and female infertility treatment through ECF (extracorporeal fertilization) using ancillary technologies, surrogate maternity program, ovocyte and sperm donation; intrauterine insemination with husband's or donor's sperm; pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD); cryo-cup services for storage of frozen biomaterial (embryos, ovocytes and sperm cells).

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Youssef Al-Fadhlah said yesterday that Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah must hold to account corrupt senior officials at the health ministry and answer his questions in order to avoid questioning next month. Fadhlah warned on Tuesday that he will file to grill the prime minister on March 5 if he fails to support Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi who wanted to dismiss a number of alleged senior officials from the ministry but was not backed by the premier and the cabinet.

KD 750 million

The lawmaker said that KD 750 million were spent by the health ministry for sending patients abroad for treatment and no one was held to account for this. He added that based on reports by the Audit Bureau, at least 6,540 patients were sent abroad for treatment benefiting members of parliament and others, adding that the report is a proof for the corruption in the health ministry.

Fadhlah said that some MPs have associat-

ed grillings and other practices to personal bargaining because they have become used to dishonest parliamentary practices. The lawmaker said that he is not making the threats to make any personal gains, insisting that he entered the assembly clean and will leave as he entered. Fadhlah said that based on information he received, the minister of health wanted to hold to account a number of officials but his request was rejected and they tried to stop him. He claimed that this is an indication that the "deep state" has started moving to safeguard corrupt elements. A large number of lawmakers have already expressed their backing for Fadhlah pledge to grill the prime minister over the health ministry alleged corruption and several other issues.

Special debate

Meanwhile, MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said he plans to request a special debate on the housing issue to allow the housing minister to brief the assembly on the achievements of the ministry. The lawmaker said that he could carry out his threat to grill the housing minister if new developments take place. Adasani said that a



MP Youssef Al-Fadhlah

law to tackle conflict of interests, resolving high prices, preventing any charges on citizens, the issue of revoking citizenship and housing are his main focus in the coming period. He said he has sent a question to Commerce and Industry Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan over the ministry's measures to stop price hikes and the minister asked for some time to answer.

KEY ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECT GIVES KUWAIT GLOBAL DISTINCTION: EPA

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Environment Public Authority (EPA) said yesterday that an agreement signed with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), dealing with a study over alternatives to ozone-depleting substances used in air conditioners, "proves Kuwait's superiority in this field."

In a statement to the press, EPA's Chairman and Director General Sheikh Abdullah Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said that the \$380,000 two-year deal will provide the authority with a thorough study on substitutes for ozone-depleting gases emitted by air conditioners in Kuwait. Moreover, he added that the UN-funded project will enable Gulf nations to explore alternatives to gases used in air-conditioning systems, describing ozone-related projects as "significant."

The EPA Chairman pointed out that Kuwait is the first nation to undertake the project, which is a feather in the country's cap, as he underscored that all endeavors pursued by EPA will prove beneficial to the government sector. Meanwhile, UNDP representative Zineb Touimi said that the deal is a testament to Kuwait's commitment to regional and global environmental issues. She also noted that the project is conducive to efforts to fight climate change, highlighting Kuwait's contributions to environmental conservation. — KUNA



KUWAIT: EPA's Chairman and Director General Sheikh Abdullah Al-Humoud Al-Sabah (right) and UNDP representative Zineb Touimi sign the agreement. — KUNA

OPPOSITION MPs DISCUSS POTENTIAL PM GRILLING

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Well-informed parliamentary sources said 26 opposition MPs will hold a meeting next week to discuss MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei's intention to grill His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. The sources added that 10 lawmakers already support Tabtabaei's proposed grilling over the fuel and electricity prices issue, not returning withdrawn citizenships, violations at the premier's Diwan concerning overseas treatment and not executing the development plan.

The sources said MPs Tabtabaei, Mohammed Al-Mutair, Mohammed Hayef and Shuaib Al-Mowaizri would promote the motion and that one of them would probably join Tabtabaei in filing the motion after mid-March. The sources also noted that the group is keen on filing its motion before May, when the constitutional court is expected to pass its sentence pertaining the recent parliamentary election results, as many of them fear the current parliament might be annulled as predicted by some law experts because the government did not appoint any MP as Cabinet member. "The motion will whip up support for the lawmakers before their voters prior to the election verdict," said the sources.

Meanwhile, ministerial sources said the government would refer any grilling motion filed against the Prime Minister to the constitutional court on grounds that he can only be held accountable for the government's general policies, while respective ministers are the one to be held accountable for details like withdrawal of citizenships and fuel and electricity prices.

Violations

Chairman of the parliamentary budgets and final statements committee Adnan Abdulsamad said the committee discussed the ministry of commerce and industry's final statement for the fiscal year 2015-2016 as well as the State Audit Bureau's remarks on it. Abdulsamad stressed that the committee stressed the need to activate the ministry's own auditing. The committee also detected some ministry officials' violation of their authorities and contracting regulations.

First Ring Road

The Ministry of Public Works (MPW) requested the State Audit Bureau's approval of increasing the value of the First Ring Road development contract by KD 2.5 million and to extend its tenure by 465 days because of the adjustments made over fresh and brackish water grid lines. Notably, the project's total cost is KD 32,555,000 and aims at facilitating traffic flows on the First Ring Road.

Private developers

Well-informed sources at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare said the board of directors is currently studying a mechanism to have local and international real estate developers develop land plots in the South Saad Al-Abdullah project. The sources added that the authority plans to link building the houses and distributing the land plots to the project's blueprints. The sources added that the final contract would be signed with the winning company next month, and work will begin during the second quarter of 2018.

MEDICAL TESTS FORGERY GANG BUSTED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Firemen rescued 30 persons following a fire in a Mahboula building. Wrongful storage in the building led to the spread of thick smoke, as among the stored material were tires, being the major cause of the heavy smoke. The building was evacuated, while six persons who suffered smoke inhalation were treated onsite.

Gas leak

The fire department received a call about an ammonia gas leak at a Subhan company. Mubarak Al-Kabeer hazardous materials team combed the area and took readings from various places to find the percentage of gas in the atmosphere. Results were normal and void of any abnormal levels.

Forgery gang

Residency detectives arrested a gang of Bangladeshis that manipulated results of expats' medical tests. Tips were received about a Bangladeshi man who got a certificate as "medically fit", and obtained residency as a chef in a house. The suspect was arrested and sent for re-examination, and was found to be infected with hepatitis B. The department said the suspect confessed to having knowledge of his condition and forged the medical certificate in his country to be able to enter Kuwait. He said he also paid KD 350 in Kuwait to a man to get a "medically fit" certificate. Investigations showed four other intermediaries between the employee and the suspect. The suspects were arrested and sent to concerned authorities.

Residency forgery

Residency affairs detectives uncovered forgery in official documents, after a citizen complained to police about having a worker registered in his file, but he does not know anything about him. When the transaction was checked, it was found that the half-brother of a Bangladeshi man presented the transaction, which had his phone number. He was summoned and confessed to obtaining the residency by forging his brother's signature.

Roads closed

The Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry said in a statement the area from the Engineers Society intersection to the British Embassy intersection will be closed from 3 pm until the end of the vehicles parade that will be held at the seafont near the Kuwait Towers on Arabian Gulf Road today. The Aquapark parking lot will be designated for the disabled, the elderly and participants. The rest of open areas and yards will be designated for parking for citizens and expats.



KUWAIT: A fireman rescues a child from a burning building in Mahboula.

Farwaniya Hospital

Acting Deputy Director General for Prevention Affairs at Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) Brig Khalid Al-Abdullah and a team from the prevention sector visited the Farwaniya Hospital expansion project, which is one of the major and developmental projects of the health ministry.

Fire drill

The fire department carried out an exercise to deal with fires at Obada bin Al-Samet School in Doha. The simulation was about a fire in a lab and classrooms. Rapid intervention teams of the

school dealt with it before the arrival of firemen. Students were evacuated and fire hydrants of the school were used to fight the mock blaze. When firemen arrived, they rescued trapped students whom the rapid intervention team could not evacuate because of thick smoke.

Old recording

The Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry said an audio clip circulated on social media asking police to be cautious, is not recent and was made more than a year ago.

KUWAIT, US DISCUSS MILITARY COOPERATION

KUWAIT: Army Chief of Staff

Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher held talks with Brigadier-General David San Clemente, Chief of US Office of Military Cooperation, Defense Ministry announced yesterday. The two sides discussed a number of important subjects of joint interest, including ways to enhance and strengthen Kuwaiti-US military cooperation, Moral Guidance and Public Relations Department of Defense Ministry said in a statement. Major-General Ahmad Abdulwahab Al-Amiri, Army Deputy Chief of Staff for planning in the Kuwaiti Army, attended the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khodher meets with Brigadier-General David San Clemente, Chief of US Office of Military Cooperation. — KUNA

FEASIBILITY STUDY ON HIGH SALINITY WATER PROJECT

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) yesterday announced finishing a feasibility study on processing and using high salinity water accompanying oil drilling in various oil fields. KISR added that a survey has been made for all the technologies usable in processing and desali-

nating to avoid its environmental effects and turn it into an economically valuable water resource. KISR explained that the major technical challenge is that this water is highly polluted and in its high salinity of 150-250 gm per kilo. In addition, KISR said that the study was made in collaboration with KOC and included several earlier studies over the past few years.

In Brief

AMIR CONGRATULATES SOMALI PRESIDENT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent yesterday a written letter to the newly appointed President of Somalia Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed. In the letter, handed in by Amiri Diwan advisors Dr Yousef Hamad Al-Ibrahim, His Highness the Amir congratulated the President of earning the trust of the Somali people, affirming that Kuwait was looking forward to boost ties with his country on all possible spheres. — KUNA



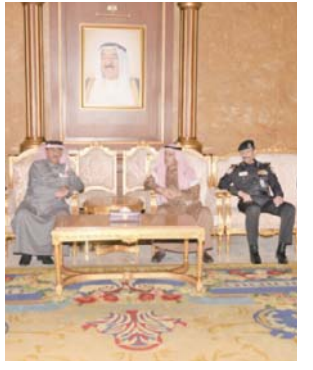
INTERIOR MINISTER CONGRATULATES AMIR

KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah congratulated the political leadership Tuesday on national celebrations. Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah sent a congratulatory cable to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, expressing, on behalf of the Interior Ministry's staff, sincere good wishes and congratulations on the country's National and Liberation Days. — KUNA



BAHRAINI OFFICIAL ARRIVES TO KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Bahrain's Deputy Interior Minister Adel Khalifa Al-Fadhel has arrived to Kuwait on an official visit to the country. During his stay in Kuwait, the Bahraini official is expected to meet with Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, the Ministry of Interior said in a release. He was received at the Kuwait International Airport by senior officials of the Ministry of Interior, it added. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A military band cheers up the atmosphere during Kuwait's national celebrations. — KUNA

International Monetary Fund

Middle East Center for Economics and Finance
Kuwait

**Vacancy Announcement
"Economic Analyst"**

Applications are being solicited for an Economic Analyst at the IMF-Middle East Center for Economics and Finance (CEF) located in Kuwait City, Kuwait. The CEF is an office of the IMF with a mission to strengthen the skills of officials from Arab League countries in economic analysis, diagnosis, policy formulation done mainly through the delivery of training courses and seminars.

This is a full-time position with an initial appointment term of two-years (renewable), and carries a competitive salary and benefits package commensurate with the successful candidate's experience and qualifications.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

- Research, collect, and compile information on economic and financial issues to support CEF training and research activities.
- Create, maintain and update quantitative and qualitative economic, financial, or statistical databases.
- Compile country background material from a variety of sources, exercise judgment based on the nature of the task to be achieved.
- Prepare tables and charts for training materials and research papers, applying IMF templates and formats.
- Assist CEF economists in econometric and other quantitative research work.
- Conducting basic computer training sessions in CEF courses.
- Other duties, as assigned.

Qualifications and Skills:

- Completion of a Bachelor's or higher degree in economics, business administration, statistics, or computer science.
- Good knowledge of statistics, econometrics, and computer software (Excel, Eviews, STATA) with the ability to learn computer packages relatively quickly.
- Experience with data management.
- Ability to manage varying assignments under tight deadlines, to display initiative and to work both independently and in close collaboration with others.
- Professional command of English and Arabic is required.

Closing date of the application is March 7, 2017.
Interested applicants should visit www.imf.org/jobs for the full vacancy information and to apply to job # 1700217

AMIR'S SUPPORT OF ENDURING TRADITION CHERISHED: OFFICIAL



Sea aficionados are seen during the start of the maritime contest.



Head of the maritime contest's organizing committee Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's support of Kuwaiti maritime heritage is highly appreciated, an official in charge of a contest on this long-standing national tradition said yesterday.

In a statement to the press, head of the maritime contest's organizing committee Sheikh Salem Al-Nawaf Al-Sabah said that the exhilarating contest has contributed to the resurgence of what is an inextricable part of Kuwaiti culture. Moreover, he said that the contest brought



Head of a local fishermen's club Raad Al-Majaim

together sea aficionados from across the Gulf region, noting that a ceremony to honor the winners will be held shortly.

Meanwhile, head of a local fishermen's club Raad Al-Majaim said that the contest featured 82 participants, adding that proceedings unfolded in an orderly fashion.

He also pointed out that keeping Kuwait's maritime tradition alive gives the younger generation an inkling of how primitive albeit arduous life was in the olden days. — KUNA



Participants are seen during the start of the maritime contest.



KUWAIT: Fish caught during the start of the maritime contest.— KUNA

NEARLY 7 IN 10 EMPLOYERS IN KUWAIT PLAN TO HIRE THIS YEAR

ACCORDING TO BAYT.COM AND YOUNG GOV SURVEY

KUWAIT: The latest Middle East Job Index Survey, compiled by the Middle East's leading job site, Bayt.com, and research and consulting group, YouGov, has revealed that many employers are planning to hire soon within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In Kuwait, in particular, nearly seven in 10 employers (68 percent) are planning to hire in the year ahead.

Hiring intentions

Within the next three months, more than half of Kuwaiti employers (52 percent) said that they are 'definitely' or 'probably' going to hire. Among Kuwaiti companies that plan to hire within the next three months, nearly half (47 percent) are going to hire for 'Junior Executive' roles, followed by 32 percent who intend to hire a 'Coordinator,' and 25 percent who intend to hire a 'Manager.' Most respondents in Kuwait also said they are looking to hire 'Administrative Assistants' (15 percent), while 14 percent said they want to hire 'Sales Executives,' 'Accountants' and 'Sales Managers.'

When looking at which industries are hiring across the MENA region over the next three months, more than two thirds (67 percent) of organizations in the hospitality/ recreation/ entertainment industry and human resources industry are planning to hire, making them the industries with the highest hiring potential. This is followed closely by organizations in business consultancy/ business management industries (57 percent).

Private sector companies have the highest intention to hire in the next three months, with 54 percent of large local companies, 52 percent of multinational companies and 51 percent of other private sector companies, 'definitely' or 'probably' hiring.

Looking at future hiring expectations, 68 percent of employers in Kuwait claim that they intend to hire in a year's time. Private-sector companies continue to have the highest hiring intentions in a year's time, with 69 percent of large local companies, 69 percent of other private sector companies, and 68 percent of multinational companies saying that they will be 'definitely hiring' or 'probably hiring.' From those surveyed, nearly eight in 10 (79 percent)



More than two thirds of organizations in the hospitality/ recreation/ entertainment industry and human resources industry plan to hire.

respondents from Kuwait claim that their company has hired new employees in the past 12 months.

"The hiring forecast in Kuwait is looking promising, with 68 percent of employers planning to hire in a year's time," said Suhail Masri, VP of Employer Solutions, Bayt.com. "It is also worth mentioning that 43 percent of those planning to hire predict having at

least five vacancies to fill in the next 3 months. These responses come as no surprise to us: there are currently more than 10,000 jobs posted on Bayt.com. We will continue to work closely with the region's employers to help them find their talent. We will also continue empowering and supporting job seekers who are going to make use of these new and exciting job vacancies."



A large number of Kuwaiti employers are looking for 'Business Management' Graduates and Post Graduates, according to the survey.

Qualifications, skills and experience

In terms of academic qualification, a large number of Kuwaiti employers are looking for 'Business Management' Graduates and Post Graduates (32 percent), followed by 'Commerce' (26 percent), 'Information Technology' (19 percent) and 'Engineering' (19 percent). When it comes to skills in high demand, almost three quarters (74 percent) of employers in Kuwait are looking for employees with 'good communication skills in both English and Arabic,' and almost half (49 percent) are looking for 'team players / cooperative / helpful / flexible' candidates.

In terms of experience, 38 percent of Kuwaiti employers are looking for candidates with 'managerial experience,' 30 percent of employers are looking for candidates with 'sales and marketing experience,' and another 23 percent are looking for candidates with 'mid-level (3 to 7 years) experience.' Masri adds: "We encourage organizations looking to hire to use features on Bayt.com such as CV Search and Job Postings, which can help meet their pressing hiring needs and ensure that they fill their vacancies as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible."

"We look at hiring expectancy throughout the MENA region as it can serve as a positive reflection on the economy. When looking at the MENA job market, the private sector has highlighted that they are planning to offer a large number of employment options in the next few months and the year ahead.

It is also important to have the insights on which skills, academic qualifications, and experience levels are in highest demand. Job seekers can plan accordingly," said Arleen Gonsalves, Associate Research Manager, YouGov.

Data for the Bayt.com Middle East Job Index survey was collected online between December 4th, 2016 and January 22nd, 2017. Results are based on a sample of 3,107 respondents from the following countries: UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Pakistan.

SMES FUND RECEIVES 2,700 APPLICATIONS WITHIN 3 MONTHS



Maha Al-Makhzoumi

KUWAIT: Around 2,700 entrepreneurs of small and medium-sized enterprises have applied to the National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise Development's new customer service center within only three months of its opening, an official said yesterday.

The opening of the Fund-affiliated customer service center in Al-Monsouriya has made a significant jump in the quality level of services provided to the entrepreneurs and applicants, Maha Al-Makhzoumi, director of the center, said in a press statement.

The center has so far received applications of around 2,700 entrepreneurs, while applicants who submitted their complete data and met the Fund's required conditions to obtain a financial support were over 152 in accordance with the Fund's statistics that were conducted during the period between November, 2016 and until mid-February, 2017, she noted.

Makhzoumi also mentioned that the customer service center was launched by the Fund's administration with the aim of adopting the best accredited modern methods with SMEs initiators and owners, adding that the center adopts the best organizational practices on the business management level.

Meanwhile, the center is to expand its services to include technical consultancy for entrepreneur, in addition to general auditing on economic feasibility studies in order to provide further technical support to SMEs owners before referring their applications to the projects evaluation committee at the Fund, she affirmed. — KUNA



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OVER 170 BRANCHES SPREAD ACROSS KUWAIT, UAE, OMAN, BAHRAIN, SAUDI ARABIA, QATAR, SINGAPORE, MALAYSIA & INDIA

Crime

Report

FOUL PLAY SUSPECTED IN EGYPTIAN MAN'S DEATH

KUWAIT: The body of an Egyptian man was sent to the coroner amid suspicions of foul play. A security source received a call about the death of a man in Maidan Hawally, so police and paramedics went to the scene. Forensics men who examined the body confirmed foul play was involved. Hawally detectives are investigating.

Drug users arrested

Police arrested four drugs users including a girl in Salmiya. They found 37 illicit tablets and six envelopes suspected of containing drugs, along with drug paraphernalia. A police patrol in Salmiya stopped the car the four suspects were in, and found they were not in a normal condition. The drugs were found during a search. The suspects and drugs were sent to concerned authorities.

Drunkards caught

Two drunk citizens were arrested, and one of them was found wanted on a kidnapping case. Southern roads security men noticed a car being driven erratically, so it was stopped, and the driver and his passenger were found to be inebriated. The passenger was also found wanted in a kidnapping case. Both men were arrested and charged with drunkenness.

Citizen stabbed

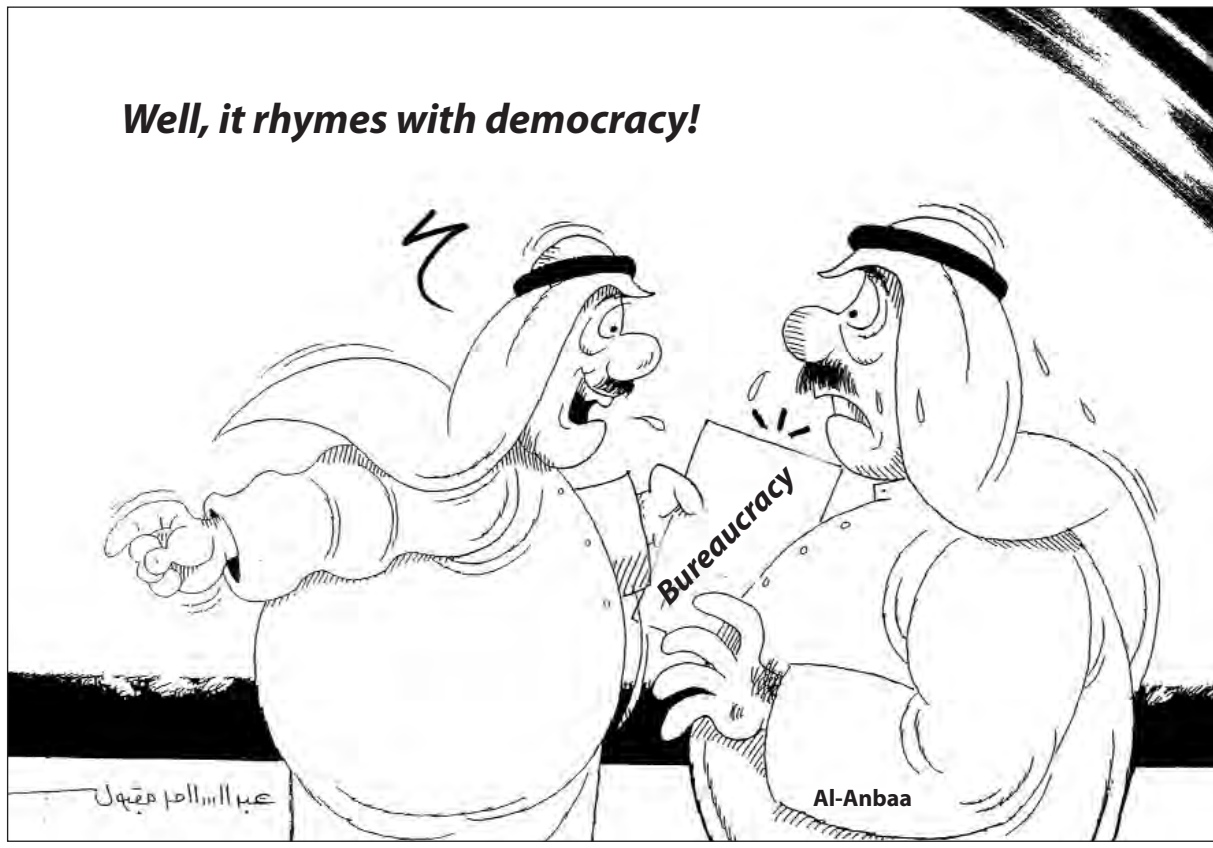
A citizen was stabbed by a friend in Ali Sabah Al-Salem. Police responded to a call about the fight, and they found that the citizen was stabbed twice. He was rushed to Adan Hospital, while the suspect fled the scene.

Indecent gesture

A citizen accused the driver of a luxury car of making an indecent gesture towards him during a traffic dispute. The citizen told Rumaithiya police that he had a traffic dispute with another motorist, who made the indecent gesture and endangered his life. Police are looking for the suspect.

Forgery

A Filipino man was sent to the public prosecution after investigations revealed that he forged documents to steal smartphones and then sell them for cheap. The man took advantage of the fact that he knew the password to the computer of his friend at a telecom services' shop. He entered the system and made purchases for smartphones and phone plans, using the identities of people whose profiles are uploaded in the system. He then obtained a total of 16 iPhone 7 Plus devices and sold them for 20 percent less than their market value. Investigations went underway after several people complained that they were notified by telecom companies to pay overdue payments for plans they said they never purchased. The suspect was identified, arrested and admitted during questioning of the forgery charges. —Translated from the Arabic press



الجريدة

Al-Jarida

MINDS VS CONSTITUTION ISLAMIZATION

By Dr Hassan Jouhar

According to our religion, which is a more worthy outcome: rewording a nominal phrase in the constitution or the true embodiment of Islamic values, such as tolerant behavior, polite debate and co-existence? Which is more important now: amending article 79 of the constitution or activating other articles to protect liberties?

Lawmakers proposing an amendment of article 79 know better than most that the proposal is doomed to failure. Why, then, do they insist on it? Some people view the move as nothing more than a show of commitment, even if it is likely to fail. Others believe that inserting Islam during the early stages of the parliament's tenure is designed to demonstrate political effectiveness, shape debate, or even arrange deals with the government.

For two reasons, I do not want to engage useless debate on the topic, citing religious issues or declaring certain parties the guardians of Islam. Firstly, we live in a country with social, political and ideological multiplicity under a single civilian constitution that allows diversity. The second reason is the religious and doctrinal multiplicity we have in Kuwait, including Muslims, Christians and many expats with different religious backgrounds. There is also doctrinal diversity amongst Kuwaiti Muslims. Most importantly, we are suffering from accelerating sectarian fanaticism, which raises the specter of

political Islamization. We are proud and thankful to Allah Almighty for being Muslims because, according to our beliefs, it is our savior.

We are religiously and morally responsible for respecting Islam's holy principles and promoting its concepts, regulations and applications, though we might differ in religious practices. The mere institution of slogans to appear more religious is politically and intellectually superficial, especially if such slogans are emptied of their content and meaning. We are currently experiencing dangerous crises that have defamed our religion, destroyed our countries, killed our children and brought us shame because of extremism, terrorism and slaughter. It brought us infighting amongst war lords and groups, each claiming to be speaking in the name of Islam.

So, according to our religion, which is a more worthy outcome: rewording a nominal phrase in the constitution or the true embodiment of Islamic values, such as tolerant behavior, polite debate and co-existence? Which is more important now: amending article 79 of the constitution or activating other articles to protect liberties? Knowing this, are those who signed the proposal ready to Islamize the rest of the constitution in words, conduct and political practices? Let us hope so! —Translated by Kuwait Times

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

FALLING INTO OLD TRACKS

By Ali Al-Bedah

It seems that lawmakers who are again discussing amending the constitution, adding or adjusting an article to it while emphasizing commitment to religious principles, only want to avoid being blamed by their leaders and supporters. But other Islamist MPs found no reason to emphasize that Kuwait, already a Muslim state, is indeed Muslim. It is clear nobody can undermine people's religious commitment. However, they continue to deal with the Kuwaiti people like a father attempting to guide his adolescent children down the right path. Gentlemen, this constitution has lasted for over 50 years and nobody can change his religion or doctrine. Religion requires both worldly and theological knowledge. It also requires simplifying coexistence amongst us all. We need to realize our

A constitutional article cannot be more powerful than the Quran

duties towards Allah and, at the same time, catch up with science and modern civilization.

The constitution is not the Quran or a holy book, and it must not replace them. The constitution was established to organize our lives and has nothing to do with worshipping Allah. Adding more articles will never make us more religious because this would mean taking the Holy Quran lightly. A constitutional article cannot be more powerful than the Quran, which we have had for over 14 centuries!

Stop profiteering and making gains at our expense or that of the country. We have so many worldly matters to tend to, such as legislation to counter corruption, and if you manage to achieve even a simple portion of it, this would greatly please our Creator. Be realistic. Stop deviating the parliament off course and wasting time discussing unnecessary issues. Such calls make you more like those who deliberately discuss side issues to get people to exchange insults and widen gaps at the expense of the future of the nation.

Religion must not be used for personal gain, social status, or to get reelected. It must be manifested in the bravery of the truth and the fight for justice. It must stop corruption by passing decisive laws that will see Kuwait join the free, democratic nations that are respected both locally and internationally.

We must transport Kuwait from this state of deterioration and once more make it a haven for love, happiness and progress. We need honest lawmakers keeping their promises; ones who cannot be bought and fear nobody, and ones who prioritize Kuwait, its future and the security of its people. Only then will you become faithful to religion in deed, not in words or by changing a certain article. —Translated by Kuwait Times



VIVA SPONSORS 'LIBERATION VILLAGE' EXHIBITION AT AUK

ORGANIZED BY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS CLUB



KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, sponsored the "Liberation Village" Exhibition at American University of Kuwait "AUK", organized by the International Relations Club 'IRC', from 19 to 21 February, 2017.

This annual exhibition showcased major milestones of Kuwait history from the 60s all the way to 2000s: the 60s block revolved about the oil and constitution era, the 70s about Kuwait Fund for Social and Economic Development, the 80s about the economy and the shining era of Kuwait Soccer Team, and the 90s about the Liberation period.

Abdulrazzaq Bader Al-Essa, Corporate Communications Director at VIVA, said: "We were eager to sponsor such exhibition that highlights significant historical facts and gives the opportunity for the students at AUK and visitors to know more about the main events that marked the golden history of Kuwait."

VIVA offered through its booth in the exhibition special bundles and packages for the students, in addition to many competitions and entertainments as part of the last road show campaign "More with VIVA", that allowed the participants to win valuable prizes.

GULF BANK HOLDS SECOND RED ACCOUNT DRAW 2017

THREE NEW WINNERS ARE ANNOUNCED

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its second monthly red account draw for year 2017 on Monday February 20, 2017. The red account draw resulted in the announcement of three customers who won Apple prizes and they are:

- 1. Muneerah Fareed Saleh Al-Awadhi - iPhone 7 plus
- 1. Nouf Meqbas Askar Al-Shammari - iPad Pro
- 1. Rawan Nouri Yousef Al-Khatrash - Apple Watch

Each month, an iPhone 7, an iPad Pro, and an Apple Watch will be gifted to three lucky winners. The draws will run until January 2018 and the next draw dates are as follows: March 30, 2017, April 24, 2017, May 22, 2017, June 29, 2017, July 24, 2017, August 30, 2017, September 28, 2017, October 23, 2017, November 20, 2017, January 11, 2018.

Gulf Bank's red is an account for high

school students, college and university students aged between 15 and 25. Eligible customers will get the chance to enter the draw automatically and on a monthly basis, upon transferring their student allowances.

In addition to the Apple prizes, students will have the opportunity to win a Fiat 500-Model 2017 at the annual car draw, upon transferring their allowance! Also, movie tickets at all Cinescape theatres will be available for only KD2 seven days a week by simply being a red account holder; not to mention the exclusive offers from Edfa3ly, which is an international internet shopping services company.

To take part in the red account draws, prospective customers can open an account at any one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, transfer online using the Bank's App or through the bank's bilingual website at www.e-gulfbank.com, or call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805.



NBK GRANTS CHILDREN'S WISHES: JOORI BECAME A BALLERINA



KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) continues its 'I Dream to Be' initiative, a first-of-a-kind initiative that aims at granting wishes for children with severe illnesses around Kuwait, giving them the chance to live their dreams. Joori Jamal Al-Rajhi who is undergoing treatment at NBK Hospital, has always dreamt to become a ballerina. NBK and Royal Britannia Academy helped in making her dream come true.

NBK's family organized a visit for Joori and her mother to The Royal Britannia Academy, where she was given special lessons and practices on ballet dancing with the assistance of a specialized ballet trainer. Joori was learning all the ballet techniques and moves through practicing.

The Academy team greeted Joori with a customized ballerina dress, giving her precious memorabilia that will positively

impact her future as a ballet dancer. NBK has arranged special training sessions in ballet dancing for Joori for free in order for her to achieve her dream and become a professional dancer.

"Joori's dream to become a ballerina is yet another wish granted through NBK's initiative 'I Dream to Be'. We are proud to be a part of the children's wishes and expand our support to them as much as possible to fulfill their dreams," said Joanne Al-Abdul Jaleel, NBK Public Relations Officer. "The 'I Dream to Be' initiative is a lifetime experience for children," she added. "This initiative is a great way to spread joy and show that there's always a positive side to a difficult situation. NBK gives top priority to children through its commitment to its corporate social responsibility. NBK

works closely with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospitals (KACCH), Bayt Abdullah for the Care of Children in Hospice (BACCH) and several other special needs organizations to maximize its reach to all the children in numerous hospitals and schools.

NBK has been at the forefront of supporting Kuwait's community through a range of initiatives towards education, health, sports and social responsibilities. The establishment of NBK's Children Hospital for Oncology and Hematology at Al Sabah Medical Area stands as one of many ongoing corporate social initiatives towards health and children. 'I Dream to Be' aims at focusing and supporting NBK's efforts towards children and addressing their needs as much as possible.



North Korean diplomat wanted over Kim death



LOS ANGELES: People wave US flags during a naturalization ceremony at the Los Angeles Convention Center, in Los Angeles. Since Trump's immigration enforcement order and travel ban, immigrants have been rushing to prepare applications to become Americans. — AP

US TARGETS MILLIONS IN SWEEPING DEPORTATION PLAN

MEXICAN MIGRANT KILLS SELF AFTER THIRD DEPORTATION FROM US

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration has issued tough new orders for a sweeping crackdown on illegal immigrants, putting nearly all of the country's 11 million undocumented foreigners in its crosshairs. The orders sent shivers through US immigrant communities, where millions of people who have spent years building families and livelihoods in the country, most of them from Mexico and Central America, were seriously threatened with deportation for the first time in decades.

Rights groups labeled the move a "witch hunt," warning that mass deportations would damage families with deep roots in the United States and hurt the economy. But John Kelly, the secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) who issued the new orders in two memos, said they were necessary to address a problem that has "overwhelmed" government resources. "The surge of illegal immigration at the southern border has overwhelmed federal agencies and resources and has created a significant national security vulnerability to the United States," he said in one of the memos.

Senator Ben Cardin, the top Democrat of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, warned the new guidelines will "harm national security and public safety." New York Mayor Bill De Blasio said he refused to turn the city's police officers into immigration agents or its jails into "holding pens for deportation policy that will only undermine the inclusiveness that has helped make New York city the safest big city in the nation."

Expedited deportations

The new rules make it easier for border patrol and immigration officers to quickly deport any illegal immigrants they find, with only a few exceptions, principally children. The priority will remain undocumented immigrants convicted of crimes, as well as anyone who has been charged or potentially faces criminal charges. However, people deemed as low priority for deportation by the previous administration of Barack Obama—generally anyone not tied to a crime—are no longer protected. "With extremely limited exceptions, DHS will not exempt classes or categories of removal aliens from potential enforcement," the memos said. All of those in violation of the immigration laws may be subject to enforcement proceedings, up to and including removal from the United States. The memos followed up on President Donald Trump's order, issued just after his January 20 inauguration, for authorities to crack

down on illegal immigration by tightening enforcement and building a wall along the nearly 2,000-mile US-Mexico frontier.

In the memos, Kelly ordered immediate action to begin planning the wall. He also ordered the hiring of 15,000 more officers for the Customs and Border Protection and Immigration and Customs Enforcement agencies. The move comes ahead of meetings this week between Kelly and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson with Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto in Mexico, in which illegal immigration and border security will be key topics.

Sharp policy shift

The turn in policy follows years in which the Obama and George W Bush administrations, sought to find a way with Congress to allow most of the long-term illegal immigrants to stay in the country. But Trump campaigned for the White House on a promise to crack down on what he characterized as a source of widespread crime and a drag on the economy. White House spokesman Sean Spicer said Trump "wanted to take the shackles off" officials enforcing the laws. DHS said there are more than 534,000 pending immigration cases in the courts nationwide, and that agents have apprehended more than 93,000 people trying to sneak into the country in October and November alone. That work "has significantly strained DHS resources," it said. While Spicer said the policy could evolve beyond the DHS memos, there was no indication of what form those changes could take.

'Mass deportation policy'

Pro-immigrant groups, already nervous after hundreds were arrested in a series of ICE raids on immigrant "sanctuary cities" two weeks ago, expressed shock and outrage. At the Statue of Liberty in New York a banner reading "refugees welcome" was unfurled. "Secretary Kelly has unleashed an unprecedented witch hunt on millions of immigrant families," said Angelica Salas, executive director for the Los Angeles-based Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights. "These guidelines represent an unlawful, expedited process, a dragnet, to remove undocumented immigrants living and working in the US. This is a dastardly approach to a very human issue." Omar Jadwat, director of the Immigrants' Rights Project at the American Civil Liberties Union, predicted strong legal chal-

lenges to the new policy. "These memos confirm that the Trump administration is willing to trample on due process, human decency, the wellbeing of our communities and even protections for vulnerable children, in pursuit of a hyper-aggressive mass deportation policy," he said.

Mexican migrant kills self

With just a plastic bag of belongings in his hand, a Mexican man who was deported from the United States Tuesday

promptly killed himself, jumping off a bridge in view of the US border. Sinaloa state native Guadalupe Olivas Valencia, 44, threw himself to his death, authorities said. He had jumped 30 meters (100 feet). Witnesses said the man was in great distress after being sent back to Mexico for a third time. The tragedy comes as US President Donald Trump has pledged to deport millions of undocumented migrants living in the United States. Trump has called Mexican migrants criminals and pledged to build a massive border wall. —Agencies

100 IS FIGHTERS STILL HOLED UP IN AL-BAB

ISTANBUL: Turkey said yesterday fewer than 100 Islamic State jihadists were still holed up in a flashpoint Syrian town which has seen the bloodiest clashes of Ankara's half-year campaign inside the conflict-torn country. Speaking to NTV television, Defense Minister Fikri Isik said half of the town of Al-Bab was in the hands of Turkish troops and allied pro-Ankara Syrian rebels, after the government repeatedly said it was "largely under control". Since launching its unprecedented incursion into Syria in August, Turkey has been focusing on Al-Bab as the last bastion of IS extremists in Aleppo province.

But the battle for the town has been fierce, with most of the 69 Turkish soldiers killed in the Syria campaign dying there. "We estimate there are less than 100" IS fighters left in Al-Bab, Isik told NTV. "But they are very dangerous people. Some are snipers, some are potential suicide bombers." "More than half of the town is now in our hands," he said, indicating that the operation to surround Al-Bab was "over" with troops now moving from district-to-district to "clean up" the town. "Until this clean-up inside is completed, it's impossible to say that our work is over," he added. Rebel commanders on the ground told AFP troops were facing fierce resistance, with IS using snipers and laying roadside bombs. But Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, told AFP in Beirut that Turkish troops and allied rebels controlled only 25 percent of Al-Bab, with some 700 jihadists still fighting there.

The Britain-based Observatory has also accused Turkish forces of killing more than 124 civilians in two weeks of air strikes and shelling. But Ankara has vigorously denied claims that innocent lives have been lost, insisting it does its best to avoid civilian casualties. The resident and regional UN humanitarian coordinators for Syria said in a joint statement that the United Nations was "deeply concerned" over the fate of some 5,000 civilians trapped in and around Al-Bab as the fighting continues. —AFP

BAVARIA PUSHES AHEAD WITH BURQA BAN; ELECTIONS LOOM

MUNICH: Bavaria will ban the full-face veil in schools, universities, government workplaces and polling stations, the southern German state said on Tuesday. The move comes seven months before a federal election where immigration will be a prominent issue and the Bavarian conservatives that govern the region, the sister party to Chancellor Angela Merkel's, are worried about losing votes to the anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany (AfD).

"Communication happens not only via language but also via looks, facial expressions and gestures," Bavarian Interior Minister Joachim Herrmann said after the regional government agreed a draft law to ban the full-face veil for civil servants and in public places where there are concerns for public safety. "It's the foundation of our interactions with each other and it's the basis of our free and democratic order," he said. "Concealing your face is at odds with this culture of communication." In December, Chancellor Angela Merkel called for a ban on full-face Muslim veils "wherever legally possible". The moves come after more than a million, mainly Muslim, migrants arrived in Germany over the last two years and amid widespread security fears after several Islamist attacks last year. France and Belgium have banned the burqa and the region of Lombardy in northern Italy has banned it in hospitals and public offices belonging to the regional government. Herrmann said he expected Bavaria's regional parliament, in which the CSU has an absolute majority, to approve the law by the summer break. — Reuters

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BAHRAIN POLICE CLASH WITH PROTESTERS

DUBAI: Bahrain police clashed with demonstrators following the death of a young man who attempted to escape arrest, witnesses said yesterday, days after 20 people were detained across Shiite villages. It was the latest flare-up of unrest pitting members of the kingdom's Shiite majority against the Sunni-dominated government.

Residents of the village of Nuwaidrat, south of the capital Manama, took to the streets to protest the death of Abdullah Al-Ajouz, 22, who died in a Monday raid aimed at his arrest, the witnesses said. There were no immediate reports of any casualties in the clashes with police. Ajouz had been sentenced to life imprisonment on terrorism charges including murder and the making of explosives. Over the past two weeks, police have arrested 20 residents of Shiite villages in what they have described as a crackdown on "terror cells."

Bahraini authorities have made sweeping use of counter-terrorism legislation to crack down on dissent since they crushed demonstrations for a constitutional monarchy and an elected prime minister in 2011.

Sporadic demonstrations have intensified since last week's anniversary of the launch of the protests. The police media centre published the names of the 20 people arrested, who include four women. They aged between 20 and 65. They published photographs of nine of them, including all four women. Those arrested face charges including "plotting acts of terrorism" and aiding and abetting fugitives.

Eight are accused of having "received military training on arms and the use of explosives in Iran and Iraq". The Bahraini authorities have detained scores of people since the 2011 crackdown. They have banned the Shiite opposition and handed many of its leaders long jail terms, several on "terrorism" charges. Authorities have put prominent human rights activist Nabil Rajab on trial for tweets deemed hostile to Bahrain and its ally Saudi Arabia. The latest hearing was set for later on Tuesday. Rajab, who has been denied bail, is also charged with making "false or malicious" accusations against Bahrain in a series of television interviews in which he criticized the government. — AFP



MANAMA: In this file photo, Bahraini lawmakers participate in a special session of parliament to discuss how to handle the uprising in the Gulf island kingdom. — AP

ISRAEL BLASTS UN 'HYPOCRISY'

SYDNEY: Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull offered a staunch defense of Israel yesterday, criticizing the United Nations and vowing never to support "one-sided resolutions" calling for an end to Israeli settlement building on occupied land. Turnbull welcomed Benjamin Netanyahu yesterday as the first Israeli prime minister to visit Australia and reiterated Australia's support for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. However, he also made it clear Australia would not support any resolutions such as the one approved by the United Nations Security Council in December calling for an end to Israeli settlement building on land occupied by Palestinians.

"My government will not support one-sided resolutions criticizing Israel of the kind recently adopted by the UN Security Council and we deplore the boycott campaigns designed to delegitimize the Jewish state," Turnbull wrote in an editorial in The Australian newspaper. The UN resolution was approved in the final weeks of Barack Obama's administration, which broke with a long tradition of shielding Israel diplomatically and chose not to wield its veto power. "Australia has been courageously willing to puncture UN hypocrisy more than once," Netanyahu said. "The UN is capable of many absurdities and I think it's important that you have straightforward and clear-eyed countries like Australia that turn bring it back to earth," he said after meeting Turnbull.

Israel has long pursued a policy of constructing Jewish settlements on territory captured in a 1967 war with its Arab neighbors including the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem. Most countries view such activity in the West Bank and East Jerusalem as illegal and an obstacle to peace but Israel disagrees, citing a biblical connection to the land. Washington's ambassador to the United Nations has said the United States still supports a two-state solution to the conflict, although new US President Donald Trump has also said he is open to new ways to achieve peace.

The two-state solution has long been the bedrock of the international community's policy for a settlement between Israel and the Palestinians but Trump's apparent loosening of that main tenet, at a joint news conference with Netanyahu last week, stunned the international community. "We support an outcome which has two states where Israelis, the Israeli people, the Palestinian people live side-by-side as a result of direct negotiations between them," Turnbull told reporters in Sydney. Netanyahu said any solution would need Palestine to recognize Israel, which would also have security control of the territories. While in Australia, Netanyahu is scheduled to sign agreements fostering closer economic and defense cooperation. — Reuters

GROUNDHOG DAY IN GENEVA AS OLD QUESTIONS HAUNT SYRIA PEACE TALKS

RIVALS STILL DEADLOCKED OVER ASSAD'S FUTURE

GENEVA: When Syria peace talks restart in Geneva today after 10 months in the deep-freeze, familiar disagreements are likely to resurface, despite massive changes in the military and political context. President Bashar Al-Assad's military advances, with Russian and Iranian help, have transformed the battlefield since the last UN talks broke up without progress in April 2016.

The political context is similarly unrecognizable, with new leadership in Washington and the United Nations and tentative coordination between Turkey, Russia and Iran. But while a ceasefire exists, at least nominally, across most of Syria, there has been little movement on the issues that dogged previous rounds of talks. The conflict that began with street protests six years ago has evolved into a complex multi-sided war that has killed hundreds of thousands of people and created the world's worst refugee crisis.

The opposition will press for prisoner releases, the lifting of government sieges, and above all for a political transition leading to the end of Assad's rule. The government side is expected to stick with its view that the entire armed opposition are terrorists. And with Assad militarily stronger than he has been for years, it has the option of pressing home its advantage on the ground if it doesn't get its way at the negotiating table. "The opposition should understand that there are new realities on the ground in Syria and international changes - it's not like it was in 2011," said pro-Assad Syrian parliamentarian Sharif Shehadeh.

"The circumstances, the (battlefield) has changed, the political situation has changed, so they need to go with a mindset of participation, not exclusion." Anas Al-Abdallah, head of the opposition Syrian National Coalition, said: "We are fully committed to the Geneva talks and prepared to discuss a political solution and transition. We cannot address the profound security threats... while Assad remains in power." UN mediator Staffan de Mistura summed up his mood as "determined" as he prepared for Syrian delegates to arrive on Wednesday. He wants to focus on reforming the governance of Syria, introducing a new constitution, and holding elections under UN supervision.



DARAA, Syria: Smoke billows in the distance following reported air strikes on the southern Syrian city of Daraa. —AFP

'Magnet for terrorism'

Some opposition figures, western and Arab diplomats fear that if Assad stays in power, the violence will simmer for ever. A leak of a Russian-drafted constitution suggests he could continue for several seven-year terms. "He will be a magnet for terrorism," one Western diplomat said. "It's obvious and logical but it's so difficult to sell as an idea, because people are so desperate for peace. People are saying: 'Why do you support terrorism? The priority is to stop terrorism, so go with Bashar.'"

The opposition says Assad is responsible for hundreds of thousands of deaths. His government blames the rebels for the bloodshed. Western diplomats said De Mistura was hopeful of bringing the opposing Syrian factions face to face - unlike last year, when he was forced to shuttle between them in "proximity talks" that proved to be fruitless. But it was unclear whether this would be possible. The government delegation will be led by Syria's UN ambassador Bashar Ja'afari, while the main opposition delegation will be headed by Nasr Al-Hariri, a 40-year old cardiologist from the southern province of Deraa, where the first major demonstrations against Assad began in 2011.

Outside powers Russia and Iran, which back Assad, and Turkey and the

United States, which support his opponents, will have no direct role in the talks. A question mark hangs over the position of US President Donald Trump, whose public comments have signaled he is more concerned with fighting Islamic State than with removing Assad. He appears to have withdrawn from the US-Russian co-leadership that drove Syria diplomacy in the past. "Where are the United States? I can't tell you, because I don't know," de Mistura said last week. "One thing I'm missing at the moment in order to have a clear equation... is a clear US strategy."

Stronger contacts between Russia, Turkey and Iran brought Syrian negotiators to talks in Kazakhstan in January and this month, and briefly stirred hope of fresh impetus. But those talks, which some diplomats said might lead to a united front against designated terrorist groups, ended in disarray. New UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has played down expectations of a breakthrough. "Peace is only possible when none of the parties to the conflict think they can win. I'm not sure we are yet there in Syria," he said on Saturday. "I'm afraid that some might still think, and I think it's a total illusion, that they might win that war, so I'm not optimistic about the short-term solution for the Syria crisis." — Reuters

News

in Brief

Top Yemen commander killed as rebels hit back

ADEN: Yemeni rebels hit back at government forces advancing up the Red Sea coast, killing a deputy army commander in a missile strike, a military source said yesterday. Army deputy chief of staff Major General Ahmad Saif Al Yafii was killed by a heat-seeking missile on the outskirts of the coastal town of Mokha, the source said. Another 18 soldiers as well as 21 rebels were killed in the clashes between Iran-backed Houthi insurgents and a Saudi-led coalition supporting the Yemeni government. More than 50 others from the two sides were wounded in the fighting, which saw the coalition carry out air strikes as the rebels reached the eastern outskirts of Mokha. The army had overrun Mokha on February 10. Tuesday's clashes were a major setback for an offensive launched by government forces in January to try to recapture Yemen's 450 kilometer Red Sea coastline, which had previously been almost entirely in rebel hands.

S African court slaps down bid to leave ICC

JOHANNESBURG: A South African court yesterday ordered the government to withdraw its "unconstitutional" bid to pull out of the International Criminal Court, in a boost to the embattled Hague-based institution. The decision was a blow to President Jacob Zuma but a welcome piece of good news for the ICC, which has been rocked by threats of withdrawal amid complaints of an alleged bias against Africa. South Africa announced it had lodged its decision to pull out with the United Nations in October, following a dispute over Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir visiting the country in 2015. South African authorities refused to detain Bashir despite him being the subject of an ICC arrest warrant over alleged war crimes, saying he had immunity as a head of state.

Iraq forces poised for Mosul airport assault

AL-BUSEIF: Iraqi forces readied yesterday for an assault on Mosul airport after blitzing jihadist positions in a renewed offensive to retake the Islamic State group's emblematic stronghold. Elite forces reinforced positions that were taken since a fresh push south of Mosul was launched on Sunday while hundreds of civilians fled newly recaptured villages. "Around 480 people displaced from Al-Yarmuk area are being transferred to liberated areas further south," the federal police said in a statement. Iraqi forces have retaken a key checkpoint on the main Baghdad highway south of Mosul and the village of Al-Buseif, a natural citadel overlooking the airport and the south of the city. There were no major operations near Mosul yesterday, with Iraq's new interior and defense ministers expected to visit the front lines. However Hashed Al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization) paramilitaries continued to battle jihadists further west, near the town of Tal Afar, which lies between Mosul and the Syrian border and is still held by IS.

S Africa sees another rise in tension over migrants

JOHANNESBURG: The South African government says it is concerned about inflammatory remarks on social media following recent attacks on foreign immigrants. Security officials said yesterday that threatening posts, made by South Africans and immigrants against each other, have escalated. South African officials are appealing to people to refrain from remarks that could incite violence. South African media say homes belonging to Nigerians were recently set on fire in neighborhoods of Johannesburg and Pretoria, the capital. Shops run by Somalis and Pakistanis were also looted. Nigeria has urged the South African government to protect Nigerians and other African nationals currently in South Africa. In 2015, anti-immigrant riots in and around the South Africa city of Durban killed at least six people. In 2008, similar violence killed about 60 people.



YANGON: A worker looks on amid a pile of logs at a holding area along the Yangon river in Yangon. —AFP

Myanmar makes record seizures of illegal timber

YANGON: Myanmar seized a record amount of illegal timber this financial year as part of a government clampdown to protect the country's rapidly disappearing forests, a senior official said yesterday. Forest ministry director Tin Tun said authorities had confiscated 40,000 tons of timber since April 2016, months before the newly elected government issued a nationwide ban on logging. "There has been illegal trade in timber in Myanmar from the junta era to the present day, so we can't say that the illegal trade has peaked this year," he said. "But we can say that by tonnage, we seized the highest amount of timber ever this financial year." Seizures were highest in northern Kachin state which borders China, the world's top importer of illegal timber whose insatiable appetite for rare trees such as teak and rosewood has ravaged Myanmar's vast forests. The London-based Environmental Investigation Agency estimates some \$2.7 billion worth of timber crossed the border between 2000-14.

Supreme Court splits over border shooting

WASHINGTON: The US Supreme Court gave a sympathetic hearing Tuesday to relatives of a Mexican boy shot on the border with the United States, but appeared split on whether they could sue the American border patrol agent who killed him. The thorny cross-border case lands before the Supreme Court with bilateral tensions running high over President Donald Trump's call for a border wall to keep out Mexican migrants. At issue before the eight black-robed justices is whether the family of 15-year-old Sergio Hernandez Guereca has the constitutional right to sue the agent who killed him in American courts. And on that question, the court—which is evenly split between conservatives and liberals pending confirmation of President Donald Trump's nominee Neil Gorsuch—appeared firmly divided.

TURKEY LIFTS BAN ON OFFICERS WEARING ISLAMIC HEADSCARF



GAZIANTEP: Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks with his supporters in Gaziantep, southeastern Turkey, ahead of the April 16 national referendum on expanding the president's powers. Critics say it would concentrate even more power in the hands of a leader they accuse of authoritarian behavior. — AP

ISTANBUL: Turkey's army is lifting a historic ban on female officers wearing the Islamic headscarf in the officially secular country, the state-run Anadolu news agency said yesterday. The move, ordered by the Defense Ministry, applies to female officers working in the general staff and command headquarters and branches, it said. Women may wear the headscarf underneath their cap or beret so long as it is the same color as their uniform and does not cover their faces.

The reform will come into force once it is published in the official gazette. It was not immediately clear if it applied to women on combat missions. It will also apply to female cadets. The ruling Islamic-rooted Justice and Development Party (AKP) co-founded by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has long pressed for the removal of restrictions on women wearing the headscarf. Turkey lifted a ban on the wearing of the Muslim headscarf, known as the hijab, on university campuses in 2010.

It allowed female students to wear the headscarf in state institutions from 2013 and in high school in 2014. And in the latest key reform before the army's move, Turkey in August for the first time allowed policewomen to wear the Islamic headscarf as part of their uniform. Erdogan's critics have long accused the president of eating away at the secular pillars of modern Turkey as set up by its founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk when he established the Turkish republic in 1923.

The government rejects the suggestions, saying it is allowing freedom of worship for all Turkish citizens whatever their beliefs. At the time of the controversy over the lifting of the ban on the headscarf in the police forces, pro-government media pointed out that several Western states have already granted female police officers permission to wear the headscarf. The army has traditionally been seen as the strongest bastion of the secular state and had been traditionally hostile to any perceived Islamisation of state institutions. But its political power has ebbed after the government increased control over the armed forces in the wake of the failed July 15 coup bid blamed on followers of US-based Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen. —AFP

AMNESTY BLAMES TRUMP, OTHERS IN GLOBAL ROLLBACK OF HUMAN RIGHTS

408-PAGE ANNUAL REPORT DETAILS RIGHTS ABUSES

PARIS: Amnesty International says "toxic" fear-mongering by anti-establishment politicians, among them President Donald Trump and the leaders of Turkey, Hungary and the Philippines, is contributing to a global pushback against human rights. Releasing its 408-page annual report on rights abuses around the world yesterday, the watchdog group described 2016 as "the year when the cynical use of 'us vs them' narratives of blame, hate and fear took on a global prominence to a level not seen since the 1930s," when Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany.

Amnesty named Trump, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte among leaders it said are "wielding a toxic agenda that hounds, scapegoats and dehumanizes entire groups of people." "Poisonous" rhetoric employed by Trump in his election campaign exemplified "the global trend of angrier and more divisive politics," Amnesty said. "The limits of what is acceptable have shifted. Politicians are shamelessly and actively legitimizing all sorts of hateful rhetoric and policies based on people's identity: misogyny, racism and homophobia. The first target has been refugees and, if this continues in 2017, others will be in the crosshairs."

The White House did not respond to a request for comment on the report. In the Philippines, Duterte's spokesman, Ernesto Abella, said the president has recently toned down his rhetoric. Duterte has previously said he would be "happy to slaughter" 3 million drug addicts and talked of fattening fish in Manila Bay with corpses. Duterte's crackdown on illegal drugs is feared to have killed more than 7,000 mostly poor drug users and petty drug pushers since he took office last June. Abella told the ABS-CBN TV network that Duterte "does listen and he's not just frothing in the mouth."

"There is anger coming there, but to refer to it as toxic as if it was a planned thing ... that he wanted to destroy people, I think obviously misses the mark," Abella said. Amnesty's annual report, "The State of the World's Human Rights," documented what it called "grave violations of human rights" in 159 countries in 2016. It said governments "turned a blind eye to war crimes, pushed through deals that undermine the right to claim asylum, passed laws that violate free expression, incited murder of people simply because they are accused of using drugs, justified torture and mass surveillance, and extended draconian police powers." The report added that "the big question in 2017 will be how far the world lets atrocities go before doing something about them." Exceptionally, London-based Amnesty chose to launch its report in Paris. Salil Shetty, the group's secretary-general, said France has used emergency powers introduced in 2015 in the wake of terror attacks in an abusive and "deeply discriminatory" manner, confining more than 600 people, mostly Muslims, under house arrest and banning more than 140 protests.

"Even states that once claimed to champion rights abroad are now too busy rolling back human rights at home to hold others to account," Amnesty said. "The more countries backtrack on fundamental human rights commitments, the more we risk a domino effect of leaders emboldened to knock back established human rights protections." France's government has repeatedly defended the emergency powers as a necessary safeguard against the severe terror threat it says is facing the country, and parliament has repeatedly voted to extend those powers. — AP



CALIFORNIA: Cars are submerged in a flooded neighborhood in San Jose, Calif. Rescuers chest-deep in water steered boats carrying dozens of people, some with babies and pets, from a San Jose neighborhood inundated by water from an overflowing creek Tuesday. — AP

FLOODING FORCES HUNDREDS FROM HOMES IN CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA: Murky, waist-high floodwaters swamped neighborhoods along a rain-swollen creek in the northern California city of San Jose on Tuesday, prompting authorities to issue evacuation orders or advisories for more than 1,000 homes, city officials said. The state's third-largest city, a hub of the high-tech Silicon Valley corridor south of San Francisco, has about 1 million residents and declared an emergency as Coyote Creek overflowed its banks from days of heavy showers.

The trash-strewn floodwaters inundated whole city blocks, submerging parked cars and lapping at the walls of apartments and townhouses, as firefighters in inflatable boats ferried stranded residents to dry ground. About 300 homes were ordered evacuated in low-lying Rock Springs, and city officials urged residents of roughly 200 dwellings in the Williams Street neighborhood downstream to leave their homes, city spokesman David Vossbrink said.

After dark, fire department crews began going door to door advising residents of three creek-side mobile home parks, consisting of about 600 trailers, to move to higher ground, Vossbrink said, adding that the stream was continuing to rise. At a news conference earlier in the day, Mayor Sam Liccardo acknowledged that municipal officials should have moved more quickly in evacuating the Rock Springs area. "As I sit here today and I look out at a neighborhood that's completely inundated with water ... there's no question in my mind there was a failure of some kind," he said.

City officials had no reports of injuries, deaths or people missing, said Vossbrink, who estimated at least 300 homes were damaged by flooding. The San Jose Fire Department advised a decontamination cleansing for those immersed in floodwaters to get rid of hazardous pollutants. The latest series of downpours that swept

northern California on Sunday and Monday weakened on Tuesday, the National Weather Service said. Meteorologists said the storms were spawned by an "atmospheric river" bringing moisture from the Pacific Ocean.

Last week a string of storms triggered a crisis near the Lake Oroville Dam about 100 miles (160 km) northeast of San Francisco, where damage to two spillways prompted an evacuation of more than 100,000 people downstream. California is slowly recovering from five years of drought thanks to several months of unusually wet weather. At least 3 inches (8 cm) of rain fell in many areas, though some received far more, such as the sparsely populated Big Sur region and outside the city of Santa Rosa, which got more than 8 inches (20 cm), the weather officials said. The next heavy storm is expected to hit Northern California this weekend, they added. — Reuters

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Youth, Kuwait's prospect.

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N KOREAN DIPLOMAT WANTED OVER KIM DEATH

POLICE WANT TO QUESTION EMBASSY'S SECOND SECRETARY

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian police yesterday named a North Korean diplomat along with a state airline official who are wanted for questioning over the murder of Kim Jong Nam, the estranged half-brother of North Korea's leader. Kim Jong Nam, 46, was killed at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on Feb. 13, while preparing to board a flight to Macau, where he lived in exile with his family under the protection of Beijing. South Korean and US officials believe the killing of the elder half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un was an assassination carried out by agents of the North.

Kim Jong Nam had spoken out publicly against his family's dynastic control of the isolated, nuclear-armed state. Giving an update on an investigation that has already angered North Korea, Malaysia's police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said the diplomat wanted for questioning was 44-year-old Hyon Kwang Song, a second secretary at the embassy. Police also want to interview Kim Uk Il, 37, an employee of the North Korean state-owned airline Air Koryo. Khalid said both were in Malaysia but could not confirm they were in the embassy.

"They've been called in for assistance. We hope the embassy will cooperate with us and allow us to interview them quickly or else we will compel them to come to us," Khalid said. "We can't confirm that they are hiding in the embassy," he said. So far, police have identified a total of eight North Koreans suspected of being linked to the killing. One, Ri Jong Chol, has been in custody since last week, and another, Ri Ji U, remains at large. Khalid said police "strongly believed" four others were back in the North Korean capital of Pyongyang, having fled Malaysia on the day of the attack. Police have not stated Ri Jong Chol's role in the killing. He lived in Malaysia for three years without working at the company registered on his employment permit or receiving a salary. Police are also holding two women - one Vietnamese, one



NAM DINH: Villagers walk past the native home of Doan Thi Huong, a suspect involved in the assassination of Kim Jong-Un's half-brother, in Nghia Hung district yesterday. Detectives probing the assassination of Kim Jong-Un's half-brother want to question a North Korean diplomat, Malaysia's top policeman said. —AFP

Indonesian - who are suspected of carrying out the fatal assault on Kim Jong Nam using a fast-acting poison.

Rehearsed attack

Police chief Khalid said both women wiped a liquid, containing an as yet unidentified toxic substance, on Kim Jong Nam's face. "Yes, the two female suspects knew that the substance they had was toxic. We don't know what kind of chemical was used," he said, dismissing speculation that the women had thought they were part of a prank. "They used their bare hands," he said, adding that they were instructed to wash their hands afterwards. The women had rehearsed the attack at

two shopping malls in central Kuala Lumpur before assaulting Kim Jong Nam, he said. An Indonesian foreign ministry official Lalu Muhammad Iqbal said it was premature to draw conclusions about its citizen's involvement. "The fact that investigators have asked for an extension to the remand shows that the evidence so far is not enough to bring charges or prosecute," he said in a statement.

Diplomatic spat

North Korea's embassy issued a statement yesterday calling for the immediate release of its citizen, Ri Jong Chol, and the two women, saying they were innocent. The embassy statement did not

address the police request to interview one of its diplomats. Security was stepped up at the morgue where Kim Jong Nam's body is being held after an attempted break-in earlier this week, Khalid said. Malaysia has denied North Korea's request for the body to be handed over to its embassy directly, saying it would be released to the next of kin, though none has come forward. The investigation has strained Malaysia's hitherto friendly relations with North Korea. Earlier this week Malaysia recalled its ambassador from Pyongyang, and Prime Minister Najib Razak rebuked the North Korea ambassador in Kuala Lumpur for making "diplomatically rude" comments. —Reuters



Russian President Vladimir Putin

PLANES, TANKS AND SHIPS: RUSSIA MILITARY GETS MASSIVE UPGRADE

MOSCOW: The Russian military received a sweeping array of new weapons last year, including 41 intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the wide-ranging military modernization will continue this year, the defense minister said yesterday. Minister Sergei Shoigu told lawmakers the air force will receive 170 new aircraft, the army will receive 905 tanks and other armored vehicles while the navy will receive 17 new ships this year.

Amid tensions with the West, the Kremlin has continued to spend big on new weapons despite Russia's economic downturn. Also this year, three regiments of Russia's strategic nuclear forces will receive new intercontinental ballistic missiles, Shoigu said. Each regiment has up to 10 launchers. The rising number of new weapons has raised demands for new personnel. Shoigu said the military currently needs 1,300 more pilots and will recruit them by 2018.

A severe money crunch after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union left the military in tatters, with most of its planes grounded and ships left rusting at harbor for lack of funds. As part of President Vladimir Putin's military reforms, the armed forces have received new weapons and now engage in regular large-scale drills. Russia has used its revived military capability in Syria, where it has launched an air campaign in support of Syrian President Bashar Assad and used the conflict to test its new weapons for the first time in combat.

The weapons modernization effort has seen the 1-million Russian military narrow the technological gap in some areas where Russia had fallen behind the West, such as long-range conventional weapons, communications and drone technologies. Shoigu said the military now has 2,000 drones compared to just 180 in 2011. He also noted that Russia has now deployed new long-range early warning radars to survey the airspace along the entire length of its borders. The minister said the military will complete the formation of three new divisions in the nation's west and southwest, and also deploy a new division on the Pacific Islands, which have been claimed by Japan.

The dispute over the Kuril Islands just north of Japan, which the former Soviet Union seized in the closing days of World War II, has prevented the two countries from signing a peace treaty. Russia previously has deployed new long-range anti-ship missiles on the Kurils to protect the coast. The deployment of a full-fledged Russian army division there appears intended to stake Moscow's claim to the islands, which have strategic importance and are surrounded by fertile fishing grounds. — AP

NEW HOPE FOR YAZIDI WOMEN RAPED, TORTURED BY ISLAMIC STATE FIGHTERS

DOHUK: It's been less than two weeks since Perwin Ali Baku escaped the Islamic State group, after more than two years in captivity, bought and sold from fighter to fighter and carted from Iraq to Syria and then back again. When a door slams, the 23-year-old Yazidi woman flashes back to her captors locking away her 3-year-old daughter, captured with her, to torment her. When she hears a loud voice, she cringes at the thought of them barking orders. "I don't feel right," she said, sitting on a mattress on the floor of her father-in-law's small canvas-topped Quonset hut in a northern Iraq refugee camp. "I still can't sleep and my body is tense all the time."

Perwin wants treatment, and is hoping to find it in a new psychological trauma institute being established at the university of Dohuk, the first in the entire region. It's the next phase of an ambitious project funded by the wealthy German state of Baden Wuerttemberg that brought 1,100 women who had escaped Islamic State captivity, primarily Yazidis, to Germany for psychological treatment. The medical head of that project, German psychologist Jan Kizilhan, is also the driving force behind the new institute, which opens at the end of the month.

The program will train local mental health professionals to treat people like Perwin and thousands of Yazidi women, children and other Islamic State victims. About 1,900 Yazidis have escaped the clutches of IS, but more than 3,000 other women and children are believed to still be held captive, pressed into sexual slavery and subjected to horrific abuse. As the fighting rages between Iraqi forces



Yazidis fill a crowded waiting room at a clinic inside the Sharya camp for civilians displaced by war in Iraq. A new psychological trauma institute is being established at the university of Dohuk in Iraq, the first in the entire region. The program will train local mental health professionals to treat Islamic State victims, including thousands of Yazidi women and children. —AP

and IS in Mosul, only about 75 kilometers from Dohuk, the number reaching freedom increases daily.

Right now there are only 26 psychiatrists practicing in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, with a population of 5.5 million people and more than 1.5 million refugees and internally displaced people. None specializes in treating trauma. Perwin received brief, basic counseling after being freed Dec 30 from IS near Mosul - "they asked do you sleep well and I said no, I can't sleep well" - but nothing else. She looks to her toddler, dressed in a red sweatshirt with her hair in pigtails held together with cherry bobbles, who popped into the tent only to beat a hasty retreat when she saw strangers. The child has received no treatment at all.

"She's always scared," Perwin said. "And she's had nothing more than cough medicine." Fighters from the Islamic State, also known as Daesh, swept into the Sinjar region of northern Iraq in August 2014, an area near the Syrian border that is the Yazidis' ancestral home. Tens of thousands of Yazidis escaped to Mount Sinjar, where they were surrounded and besieged by Islamic State militants. The US, Iraq, Britain, France and Australia flew in water and other supplies, until Kurdish fighters eventually opened a corridor to allow them to safety. Casualty estimates vary widely, but the United Nations has called the Islamic State assault genocide, saying the Yazidis' "400,000-strong community had all been displaced, captured or killed." —AP

CYPRUS PEACE TALKS CALLED OFF AMID MOUNTING WAR OF WORDS

NICOSIA: A planned meeting between rival Cypriot leaders scheduled for today has been called off as a war of words over a nationalist commemoration in Greek Cypriot schools threatens reunification talks. There was no immediate statement from the United Nations, which has been hosting the talks, but the Cyprus government said that Greek Cypriot leader Nicos Anastasiades had been informed yesterday that the meeting would not go ahead.

The row threatens nearly two years of UN-backed negotiations on ending the island's decades-old division that many had seen as the best chance for a settlement since Greek Cypriots rejected a UN reunification plan in 2004. A meeting last Thursday broke up in acrimony with Anastasiades and his Turkish Cypriot counterpart Mustafa Akinci accusing each other of walking out. UN envoy Espen Barth Eide had voiced confidence that this week's meeting in Nicosia would go ahead regardless, but the climate of trust between the two leaders has deteriorated.

The head of the UN peacekeeping

force on the island, Elizabeth Spehar, had shuttled between the two sides to try to broker a compromise, meeting Akinci on Tuesday and Anastasiades on Wednesday but to no avail. Anastasiades said the meeting's cancellation was regrettable and that he remained ready to return to the table. "I regret the decision of Mr Akinci not to attend the meeting tomorrow. I am ready to continue the dialogue at anytime," he said on Twitter. Akinci's spokesman also confirmed the cancellation. Tensions have soared over the February 10 approval by the Cyprus parliament for Greek Cypriot schools to commemorate a 1950 referendum on "Enosis", or union with Greece.

The unofficial referendum-staged before Cyprus won independence from colonial ruler Britain-overwhelmingly approved Enosis but had no legal value. Almost 96 percent of the majority Greek Cypriots signed up in favor of union with "motherland" Greece in the poll held in churches and coffee shops, according to its organizers, the Cyprus Greek Orthodox Church. The amendment

to schools legislation, sponsored by the far-right Greek nationalist ELAM party, essentially calls for secondary students to mark the anniversary by learning about the referendum and the Enosis cause.

'Mistaken decision'

Akinci's spokesman said he was ready to return to the negotiating table but that steps first needed to be taken to overturn the amendment. "I hope that in the shortest time the necessary steps are taken and a new date is set," the spokesman said. "We expect concrete steps at a political and administrative level to invalidate this mistaken decision... I hope that Anastasiades will make the necessary contributions to overcome this problem." Akinci had warned on Monday that he could not continue the talks without action on an issue he said had caused "public indignation" among Turkish Cypriots. "The Greek Cypriot leader should give a clear message to the Turkish Cypriot people and to the world that he does not support this decision," he said. —AFP

News

In brief

Russia's court scraps conviction of activist

MOSCOW: Russia yesterday overturned the conviction of anti-Kremlin activist Ildar Dadin, who was the first person sent to jail under new rules that made staging some forms of non-violent protest a criminal offence. Dadin was sentenced in December 2015 to three years in jail later reduced on appeal to two and a half years - for conducting a series of peaceful, one-man protests against Kremlin rule. Conducting protests without official permission was previously punishable by a fine. But new rules adopted after mass protests in Moscow that followed President Vladimir Putin's 2012 election made it a criminal offence, punishable with jail term, to stage the protests more than twice in 180 days. Dadin alleged that he was subjected to physical torture by prison staff while in a penal colony in northwest Russia - an allegation that officials denied. He became a cause celebre among Kremlin opponents who say their right to dissent is being steadily crushed.

Lanka creates panel to stem abuse of women

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka will set up a special panel to tackle widespread sexual abuse and exploitation of women including thousands of war widows, the government said yesterday. The establishment of a new National Commission on Women comes amid warnings that women from the Tamil minority face widespread sexual exploitation by officials in their own community as well as from the military. The commission will have powers of prosecution, said the government in a statement. Sri Lanka's former president Chandrika Kumaratunga said last week that women faced sexual abuse from local officials, with those widowed during the 37-year conflict particularly at risk. Many have struggled in the war's aftermath to obtain identity papers and birth certificates which are essential to obtain government handouts and other aid.

Taiwan 'train bomber' sentenced to 30 years

TAIPEI: A Taiwanese man was sentenced to 30 years in prison yesterday for detonating a pipe bomb on a busy Taipei train that injured more than two dozen people last year. Lin Ying-chang, 56, was convicted on charges of attempted murder and making an explosive without a permit over the July 2016 blast, which the Taipei district court said was a botched suicide attempt. The explosion injured 24 people when it tore through the train as it pulled into a station. "The defendant detonated the explosive device with the goal of committing suicide, as well as taking his revenge on society by means of killing innocent people. His motive was malicious," a court statement said. Lin, who has the right to appeal the ruling, was also injured in the blast. He told the court he had struggled to find a job after being diagnosed with cancer and had ended up living in his car. He said he had also become estranged from his family.

China offers big anti-terror rewards in Xinjiang region

BEIJING: Authorities in a violence prone area of China's western Xinjiang region are offering 100 million yuan (\$14.5 million) in rewards for anti-terror tips, state media said, a policy that coincides with a dramatic rise in regional security spending. Hundreds of people have been killed in Xinjiang in the past few years, most in unrest between members of the Muslim Uighur minority, who call the region home, and ethnic majority Han Chinese. Beijing blames the unrest on Islamist militants. After a period of relative calm, there has been a rise in violence in recent months in the region's south, which includes the Uighur heartland of Hotan, where officials are offering hefty rewards for people with information on violations ranging from violent attacks to illegal beards. The rewards range up to 5 million yuan (\$730,000) for verifiable "operational inside information" on plans for attacks in crowded areas or at government and Communist Party departments, the state-run Hotan Daily said on Tuesday.

President pooh-poohs pineapple-topped pizza

REYKJAVIK: Despite his distaste for pineapple-topped pizza, Iceland's President Gudni Johannesson has no plans to ban it, admitting he doesn't have the powers to pull the Hawaiian. The pineapple polemic erupted last week when a high school student in the northern town of Akureyri asked Johannesson what he thought of putting the tropical treat on top of a pizza with the president admitting he hated it and would ban it if he could. His remarks were picked up by the local press and soon caused a stir on social media across Iceland and beyond over the merits of the Hawaiian, a ham-and-pineapple pizza, prompting a presidential post on Facebook to clarify his position. "I like pineapples, just not on pizza," he wrote.



Somalia's President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed

Somalia's new president vows to restore dignity

MOGADISHU: Somalia's new leader was inaugurated yesterday while promising to restore dignity to the troubled Horn of Africa nation but warning it will take another two decades to "fix" the country. President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, who also holds US citizenship, was elected earlier this month in a step toward Somalia's first fully functioning central government in a quarter-century. "Multiple challenges are ahead of our government. Therefore, I am telling people that because of the limited resources we have, our achievements will be limited," said Mohamed, also known as Farmajo. "For the past 26 years, there have been conflicts and droughts, so it will take other 20 years to fix this country." He said Somalia's main obstacles are insecurity and humanitarian crises, including a drought that the UN has said affects millions of people. The immediate priority is to "avert famine," the UN's special representative for Somalia, Michael Keating, told the audience that included several regional heads of state.

BACHA BAZI: PRACTICE OF CHILD SEX SLAVERY

KABUL: Afghanistan is set to criminalize the practice of "bacha bazi", sexual exploitation of boys, with a slew of stringent punishments laid out for the first time in a revised penal code. The move comes after an AFP report last year found the Taliban are exploiting the centuries-old practice, one of the most egregious violations of human rights in the country, to mount deadly insider attacks in the volatile south. Here are some key answers about bacha bazi.

What is it?

Powerful warlords, commanders, politicians and other members of the elite often keep "bachas" as a symbol of authority and affluence. Bachas, sometimes dressed as women, are often sexually exploited. They can also be used as dancers at private parties. Bacha bazi is not widely seen as homosexual behavior—popularly demonized as a deviant sexual act, prohibited in Islam—and is largely accepted as a cultural practice.

How common is it?

"Women are for child-rearing, boys are for pleasure" is a common saying across many parts of Afghanistan. The ancient custom, banned under the Taliban's 1996-2001 rule, has seen a resurgence in recent years. It is said to be widespread across southern and eastern Afghanistan's rural Pashtun heartland, and with ethnic Tajiks across the northern countryside.

How has it flourished?

Tight gender segregation in Afghan society and lack of contact with women have contributed to the

spread of bacha bazi, rights groups say. Several other factors such as an absence of the rule of law, corruption, limited access to justice, illiteracy, poverty, insecurity, and the existence of armed groups have also helped the practice spread, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) said in a report in 2014. AIHRC points out that Afghanistan's criminal law prohibits rape and pederasty, but so far there are no clear provisions on bacha bazi. "There is a gap and ambiguity in the laws of Afghanistan regarding bacha bazi and the existing laws do not address the problem sufficiently," the report said.

It is this gap which the government hopes the revised penal code will address. But the government has a poor track record of implementing such measures, as many of the perpetrators have connections with the security organs and by using power and giving bribes they get exempted from punishment. Where do the boys come from? And what happens to them afterwards? Bachas are typically aged between 10 and 18. Many of them are kidnapped and sometimes desperate poverty drives their families to sell them to abusers. "The victims of bacha bazi suffer from serious psychological trauma as they often get raped," AIHRC's report said.

"Such victims suffer from stress and a sort of distrust, hopelessness and pessimistic feeling. Bacha bazi results in fear among the children and a feeling of revenge and hostility develop in their mind." In turn, many adolescent victims are said to grow up to have boy lovers of their own,

repeating the cycle of abuse. "In the absence of any services to recover or rehabilitate boys who are caught in this horrendous abuse, it's hard to know what happens to these children," said Charu Lata Hogg, a London-based fellow at Chatham House, a think tank. "We have heard anecdotal reports that many grow up to keep their own bachas, perpetuating the revolving door of abuse."

Impacts on security

Bacha bazi is having a detrimental bearing on the perpetual state of conflict in Afghanistan, helping the Taliban to infiltrate security ranks in provinces such as Uruzgan, officials say. The abusive practice in security ranks also undermines support for NATO-trained Afghan forces. "To date, the US has provided over \$60 billion in assistance to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF), including nearly \$500 million to the Afghan Local Police," the US Congress said in 2015.

"Predatory sexual behavior by Afghan soldiers and police could undermine US and Afghan public support for the ANDSF, and put our enormous investment at risk." The practice also continues to embolden the Taliban's desire to reassert sharia law in Afghanistan and is fuelling their insurgency. "Such wild abuses of the predatory mujahideen forces in the early 1990s drove the popularity of the austere Taliban, helping them sweep to power across most of the country. Similar behavior of the government forces after 2001 is also helping to inspire the insurgency," a Western official in Kabul said.— AFP



SEOUL: Housewives make kimchi (traditional pungent vegetable) to donate to needy neighbors for winter preparation at a government building. While most people born in rich countries will live longer by 2030, with women in South Korea projected to reach nearly 91, Americans will continue to have one of the lowest life expectancies of any developed country, a new study published online predicts.— AFP

LIFE EXPECTANCY ON THE RISE

SOUTH KOREAN WOMEN COULD HIT 91

PARIS: By 2030 life expectancy for South Korean women could top nine decades, an average lifespan long thought to be out of reach, researchers said yesterday. South Korea is not only the first country in the world where women may live past 90 on average, it is also the one on track to log the biggest jump in longevity, they reported in *The Lancet* medical journal. Other developed countries are not far behind: the longevity of French and Japanese women are more likely than not to stretch past 88 years.

"As recently as the turn of the century, many researchers believed that life expectancy would never surpass 90 years," said lead author Majid Ezzati, a professor at Imperial College London. Nations boasting the greatest longevity among men by 2030 - 84 years in each case—will likely be South Korea, Australia and Switzerland, according to the study. Among 35 well-off countries examined, life expectancy was predicted to increase across the board over the next 15 years. While a marker of progress, ageing populations also pose huge challenges to health care systems and social services, and may require pushing back the age at which people stop working, the study warned.

"It is important that policies to support the growing older population are in place," Ezzati said. "The social implications of this change will also likely require changes to pensions and retirement." The South Korean success story is built on broad gains in economic status, along with improved child nutrition and broad access to health care and modern medical technology, the study noted. The East Asian nation of 50 million, along with its neighbor Japan, has also maintained significantly lower rates of obesity, and of smoking among women.

US falling behind

In the United States, by contrast, life expectancy at birth is currently below most other high-income countries, and is poised to fall even further behind. "The poor recent and projected US performance is at least partly due to high and inequitable mortality from chronic diseases and violence, and insufficient healthcare," the study concluded. Among the countries canvassed, the United States has the highest child and maternal mortality, homicide rate, and body-mass index, a standard measure of obesity.

Of the 35 wealthy OECD nations, it is the only one not to have universal health care, which the researchers iden-

tified as the "cornerstone" of other countries' strategies for reducing adult mortality. To improve on earlier estimates of future lifespan, the study leveraged statistical techniques used in weather forecasting and developed 21 independent models, rather than just one. In 2015, women in Japan, Singapore and Spain topped the longevity list at 87, 86 and 85.5 years respectively. South Korea placed fourth. The men who could look forward to the longest lives in 2015 were in Switzerland, Iceland and Australia—all within a few decimal points of an 81 year lifespan.

From 2010 to 2030, South Korean women are set to add 6.6 years to an average lifespan, followed by Slovenia (4.7) and Portugal (4.4). Among men, the big gains will be Hungary (7.5 years), South Korea (7.0) and Slovenia (6.4). The United States will see only a moderate gain over the same two decades, from 81.2 to 83.3 years for women, and 76.5 to 79.5 years for men. In 2015, the five countries with the lowest life expectancy—ranging from 50 to less than 55 years for men and women—were all in sub-Saharan Africa. Outside periods of war or famine, life expectancy in wealthy nations has risen almost continuously since the 19th century, from roughly 50 to 80 years.— AFP

KABUL TO SET PENALTIES FOR SUBCULTURE OF BOY SEX SLAVES

KABUL: Afghanistan is set to lay out stringent penalties for "bacha bazi"—sexual slavery and abuse of boys—for the first time, officials say, in a landmark move against the deeply entrenched practice. AFP revealed last year how the Taliban were exploiting rampant bacha bazi in police ranks to mount deadly insider attacks, exposing a hidden epidemic of kidnapping of young boys for institutionalized sexual slavery.

The revelations intensified long-standing demands by campaigners for Kabul to enact an incisive legal provision to curb bacha bazi—literally "boy play" which has seen a striking resurgence in post-Taliban Afghanistan. A raft of punishments will now be listed in Afghanistan's revised penal code—from up to seven years in jail for sexual assault to capital punishment for "aggravated cases"

such as violating more than one boy. "There is an entire chapter on criminalizing the practice (bacha bazi) in the new penal code," Nader Nadery, a senior advisor to President Ashraf Ghani said. "The code is expected to be adopted any time this month. This is going to be a significant step towards stopping this ugly practice."

A draft of the chapter seen by AFP, titled "Driving children towards moral corruption", also states that bacha bazi victims cannot be prosecuted, a significant caveat in a nation where sex assault victims often face punishment. Afghanistan's criminal law previously only prohibited pederasty and sex outside of marriage, which rights campaigners said did not sufficiently address the problem of bacha bazi. "This chapter clearly defines bacha bazi as a crime, leaving no room for ambiguity," Ghani's legal advisor

Nasrullah Stanekzai said, waving printed copies of the revised penal code in his hand.

Aside from police commanders, warlords, politicians and other members of the Afghan elite often keep "bachas" as a symbol of authority and affluence. The young boys, sometimes dressed effeminately with makeup and bells on their feet, can be used as dancers at private parties and are often sexually exploited. AFP's investigation found that the Taliban were using the boys—keen on revenge and easy prey for recruitment—to infiltrate security ranks and mount crippling insider attacks on police in southern Afghanistan. The insurgents deny the claim.

'21st century slaves'

Before the penal code, activists pushed for years for special legislation on bacha bazi, with scant hope of getting it through parliament as they suspect the practice is prevalent among lawmakers themselves. "I have received calls from MPs that say they will never let a bacha bazi law pass in parliament," said Soraya Sobhrang from the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. "This is a battle to save 21st century slaves." The penal code is likely to be passed by presidential decree during the ongoing parliamentary recess. But Sobhrang worries that some lawmakers may try to water it down when it is later subjected to a parliamentary review.

Afghanistan has a poor record of enforcing similar provisions, including a law to eliminate violence against women and another to ban the recruitment of child soldiers, especially when the perpetrators are powerful. "Explicit criminalization in law of the heinous practice of bacha bazi is commendable, but implementation of laws in Afghanistan has been questionable," the All Survivors Project, a global fact-finding effort into sexual violence against males in conflict zones said.

"How is the government planning to monitor, investigate and hold accountable those responsible for abusing boys under this new legal provision?" As Afghanistan's conflict escalates, critics have said there appears to be no will to act against abusive security officials who are seen as the lesser of two evils in the fight against insurgent groups. Western officials have privately conceded to AFP that some Afghan commanders accused of bacha bazi are "too strategic to be removed" from their posts.

But growing public scrutiny of the practice, once shrouded in shame and silence, is forcing authorities to act in some areas. Earlier this month, the government sacked Shah Mirza Panjsheri, police chief of the volatile Dasht-e-Archi district in northern Kunduz province, after a video of his "bacha bazi party" surfaced on social media. "He was kidnapping young, beautiful boys and forcing them to dance in bacha bazi gatherings," a Kunduz government spokesman said. "When we heard about this we dismissed him immediately," he said, adding that he was the first high-ranking police official in Kunduz to be sacked for this practice.— AFP



An Afghan boy, who was held as a child sex slave, sits at a restaurant in an unidentified location in Afghanistan.—AFP

FILM DEPICTS A CRACKDOWN ON CHINA LABOR ADVOCATES

HONG KONG: Film-maker Wen Hai had intended to portray the gritty lives of Chinese migrants toiling in factories in his documentary "We the Workers", but wound up chronicling a gathering crackdown on courageous labor groups. The 174-minute film serves as a record of the waning months for unofficial labor organizations, run mostly by current and former workers, whose lobbying for better pay and treatment in southern China unnerved authorities. "They are not just the faceless drones making your phones. When workers feel confident and unafraid of the pressure, they are powerful," Wen said.

"We the Workers", which premiered at the International Film Festival Rotterdam on January 31, is a change of pace for Wen, 46. He spent much of his career spotlighting the hip Beijing artists and intellectuals that he associates with, but became intrigued by the migrant workers who make nearly half of the world's manufactured goods. Working conditions have generally improved over the country's more than three-decade economic boom. But many laborers, who often travel far from home for menial jobs, are still victimized by employers. Wen first travelled to remote southwestern

China to see the poverty that left many workers "so desperate to find a job that they take it first, then worry about the work conditions later."

In 2014 Wen moved on to Guangdong province, China's manufacturing hub, living with a labor activist in a cramped apartment for a year. Wen rose with workers and activists in the morning and ate with them, and they let off steam together at karaoke bars. He snuck into factories to film assembly lines. "The workers accepted me as one of their crew. I had a great time, and it was only months later that I saw how dangerous their situation was becoming," Wen said.

Shot with long takes and a fly-on-the-wall feel, most of the film deals with workers' attempts to stand up to employers, backed by the pro-bono advocates. Independent "workers centers" cropped up over the past decade, offering an alternative to official state-controlled unions. Most encouraged negotiation and saw strikes and protests as last resorts. Much of the film takes place in 2015 in Panyu, a district of the provincial capital Guangzhou, as laborers stepped up demands, triggering pushback from factories and authorities.—AFP

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SEVEN EARTH-LIKE PLANETS DISCOVERED AROUND 1 STAR

PARIS: Researchers announced yesterday the stunning discovery of seven Earth-like planets orbiting a small star in our galaxy, opening up the most promising hunting ground so far for life beyond the Solar System. All seven roughly match the size and mass of our own planet and are almost certainly rocky, and three are perfectly perched to harbor life-nurturing oceans of water, they reported in the journal Nature.

Most critically, their proximity to Earth and the dimness of their red dwarf star, called Trappist-1, will allow astronomers to parse each one's atmosphere in search of chemical signatures of biological activity. "We have made a crucial step towards finding life out there," said co-author Amaury Triaud, a scientist at the University of Cambridge. "Up to now, I don't think we have had the right planets to find out," he said in a press briefing. "Now we have the right target."

The Trappist-1 system, a mere 39 light years distant, has the largest number of Earth-sized planets known to orbit a single star. It also has the most within the so-called "temperate zone" - not so hot that water evaporates, nor so cold that it freezes rock-solid. The discovery adds to growing evidence that our home galaxy, the Milky Way, may be populated with tens of billions of worlds not unlike our own - far more than previously suspected.

'Ultracool' dwarf star

Remarkably, professional stargazers may simply have been looking in the wrong place. "The great idea of this approach was to study planets around the smallest stars

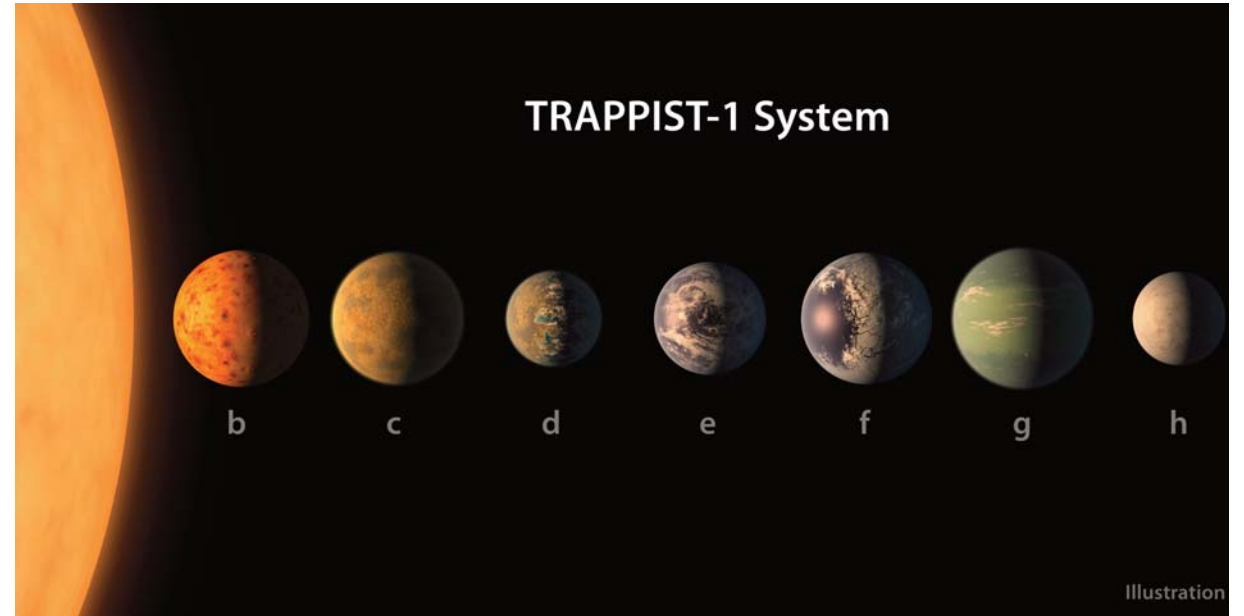
of the galaxy, and close to us," said lead author Michael Gillon, a professor at the University of Liege in Belgium.

"That is something nobody did before us - most astronomers were focused on stars like our Sun," he told journalists ahead of publication. Gillon and his team began to track Trappist-1 - a so-called "ultracool" dwarf star with less than 10 percent the mass of the Sun - with a dedicated telescope in 2010, and reported last year on three planets in its orbit. They detected the invisible exoplanets using the so-called "transit" method: when an orbiting world passes between a star and an astronomer peering through a telescope, it dims the starlight by a tiny but measurable amount.

But when subsequent calculations didn't quite tally, Gillon realized that there might be other stars that had escaped Earth-bound observation. "So we requested time with NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope," said co-author Emmanuel Jehin, also at the University of Liege. "This allowed us to get 20 consecutive 24-hour periods of observation, which was crucial to discovering that we had seven transiting planets."

Like a sunset

Looking from Earth, the astronomers could only track activity around the star at night. "From space, we observed continually and matched all the transits," 34 in all. Compared to the distance between our Sun and its planets, the Trappist-1 family is very tightly bunched. Indeed, the dwarf star and its seven satellites - with orbits ranging from 1.5 to 12 days - would all fit comfortably in the distance between the Sun and its closest planet, Mercury.



This illustration provided by NASA/JPL-Caltech shows an artist's conception of what the TRAPPIST-1 planetary system may look like, based on available data about their diameters, masses and distances from the host star. — AFP

If Earth were that close to the Sun, it would be a hellish ball of fire. But because Trappist-1 emits far less radiation, temperatures on its planets - depending on the atmosphere - could be between zero and 100 degrees Celsius, the scientists said. Gillon and his team have started to analyze the chemical make-up of the atmospheres. "There is at least one combination of molecules, if present with relative abundance, that would tell us there is life, with 99 percent confidence," said Gillon.

A certain mix of methane, oxygen or ozone, and carbon dioxide, for example, could almost certainly come

only from biological sources. "But except for detecting a message from beyond our solar system from intelligence out there, we will never be 100 percent sure," he added. Someone standing on, say, Trappist-1 D, E or F - the three middle planets - would have a breathtaking panorama of the star and its system, Triaud said.

The red dwarf - which would loom 10 times larger than the Sun in our sky - would be a "deep crimson" shading into a salmon-like color, he said. "The view would be beautiful - you would have about 200 times less light than from the Sun on Earth at midday," he added. "It would be like the end of a sunset." — AFP

BAHRAIN, INDIA MAY SCRAP MAID GUARANTEE...

Continued from Page 1

Bahrain's Labor Market Regulatory Authority said in a blog published earlier this month that the two countries are studying a proposal to cancel the scheme, which gives financial aid to migrant maids, but did not give further details. "If the study to scrap the financial guarantee in domestic workers' recruitment is agreed by the Indian government, it will leave domestic workers less protected," said Rafeek Ravuther, director at the Centre for Indian Migration Studies in India.

Bahraini and Indian officials were not immediately available to comment on why they were considering ending the protection. Due to widespread reports of abuse committed against Indian workers in Gulf nations, India and Bahrain have an agreement whereby employers of domestic workers must provide a bank guarantee certificate of \$2,500 to the Indian embassy in Manama. This aims to protect the domestic worker if an

employer fails to pay wages, or the maid is subjected to abuse, such as physical or sexual violence, and requires compensation and financial aid to return home.

The bank guarantee provision is also implemented by Indian embassies in the five other Gulf countries - Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Qatar. Notably, when the scheme was introduced in Kuwait a few years ago, the government had threatened to ban Indian expatriates moving to the country in response. Many MPs had also spoken out against the \$2,500 guarantee, describing it as a violation of Kuwait's sovereignty. The scheme remains in place in Kuwait.

Josephine Valarmathi of National Domestic Workers Movement in India said New Delhi should carefully consider the vulnerability of workers before changing the scheme. "If it is removed, it will put the workers in a much more difficult situation," she said. "By removing the bank guarantees, the government is easing the rules and putting workers in a difficult situation without financial guarantees." — Agencies

FRENCH ARTIST ENTOMBED IN ROCK FOR A WEEK

Continued from Page 1

life inside the rock, where he will sit up with his arms outstretched.

Holes have been bored for air and cables for a heart monitor and an emergency video link. "We found a way of slipping the toilet container underneath me that works almost to the millimetre," Poincheval said. His only other comforts are a cushion and a couple of books "for helping to pass the time, although I don't think I will be able to read all the time". His reading material is certainly not light. He has packed the Polish philosopher Zygmunt Bauman's classic text "Liquid Modernity" and a new novel by French author Celine Minard, "Le Grand Jeu" (The Great Game), about a woman who cuts herself off from modern life in a hi-tech mountain refuge.

Poincheval is no stranger to bizarre and hair-raising performances. He once spent a fortnight inside a stuffed bear eating worms and beetles, was buried under a rock for eight days and navigated France's Rhone river inside a giant plastic corked bottle. He has crossed the Alps in a

barrel and last year spent a week on top of a 20-m pole outside a Paris train station like the stylite saints of the early Christian church.

He has also played at being a human mole, and crossed France on foot in a straight line with a friend. Poincheval said his new performance, which he calls "Stone", was "a voyage through geological time" where he would become the "beating heart" of the rock. "Rocks are a living repository of time," he added. His father, Christian, sporting a bowler hat, was on hand to wish him good luck as the rock closed around him.

His next performance "Egg" will begin on March 29, with Poincheval sitting on a dozen eggs for between three and four weeks until they hatch. He will eat a special diet rich in ginger so he can keep the eggs at a minimum of 37 degrees Celsius (98 degrees Fahrenheit), with only a half an hour break every 24 hours to keep him from cracking. The chicks that hatch "will go and live with my parents", Poincheval added. But his ambitions do not end there. His big dream is to "walk on the clouds. I have been working on it for five years, but it is not quite there yet," he add. — AFP

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SYRIAN REFUGEES FEAR DEPORTATION

Focus

It was in the dead of night when Nagham and her three young sons crept out of the Jordanian refugee camp and set off on a long walk that brought them to the capital Amman just as the sun came up. Having already fled the embattled city of Homs in neighboring Syria, her children were frightened by the roar of jets flying over the camp. Nagham, travelling without her husband who was barred from crossing the border with them, was worried by the lack of security and privacy during the month they spent there. "I finally felt safe," said the 33-year-old mother of her family's night-time trek to the city in April 2015.

Nagham and her children are just some of the hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees in Jordan who have lost their rights to humanitarian aid and risk deportation because they either left official refugee camps or failed to register with the UN refugee agency or the Jordanian authorities. In the almost two years since she left the camp, Nagham, who do not want to give her real name because she fears being arrested, has barely left her apartment in Amman.

Instead, her three sons - aged 10, 12, and 14 - go out to work as delivery boys in local vegetable shops every day, earning a meager salary of 3 Jordanian dinars (\$4.25) each, barely covering the monthly rent of more than \$200. "I usually don't go out of the house, if I do I never leave the neighborhood. I tell my children not to speak to many people," said Nagham inside her bare, first-floor flat in a poor area of east Amman traditionally inhabited by Palestinian refugees. "I always feel like we're targeted because I know we're doing something wrong."

Numbers of new arrivals from Syria dropped off dramatically after Jordan tried to seal the 370-km border in 2013, citing strain on its limited water resources and economy. The Jordanian government says there are 1.4 million Syrians in the country at the moment, of whom around 633,000 are registered with the UN refugee agency UNHCR. Many are welcomed by host communities whose family ties straddle the Syrian-Jordanian border. A UNHCR spokesman told the Thomson Reuters Foundation it had no estimate on the numbers of refugees who are unregistered. If caught without documentation, unregistered Syrian refugees face being returned to camps or being deported back to Syria, say human rights groups. Jordan is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention, though has said it operates in accordance to principles of international law, which include non-refoulement - meaning a refugee may not be forced back to a country if they face persecution. Officials in three government ministries did not respond to requests from the Thomson Reuters Foundation for comment.

Mistrust

Adam Coogle, Jordan researcher for Human Rights Watch, said he had been tracking deportations since 2014. They took place for a variety of reasons including security concerns, refugees working illegally or suspicion of having committed a crime, he said. "We hear reports that deportations are ongoing and they probably increased following the attack in Rukban camp in June, 2016," said Coogle, referring to a suicide attack at a Syrian-Jordanian border crossing close to a camp for 50,000 refugees.

Noura, a 31-year-old refugee from Homs said her younger brother was deported after he tried to leave a camp. "They just put them back over the border," she said. "He's now back in Daraa (Syria), it's very bad," she said. "He was still in high school." Refugees living in Jordan's cities say they even worry their children could inadvertently betray them to the authorities. When Syrian children get into arguments with locals the Jordanian parents sometimes threaten to get them deported, or blackmail them for money, said Areej, a 38-year-old woman living in Mafraq, a city 10 miles from the Syrian border.

Several civil society organizations in Jordan are trying to help the undocumented refugees, but mistrust on both sides is hampering the process, said Samar Muhareb, director of Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development, which gives legal assistance to refugees. "I think perception or the fear of deportation are much higher than the realities but unfortunately this is the language used by the host communities," she said.

Donor states have prodded the Jordanian government to relax labor laws to allow thousands of refugees to work legally in industrial parks and businesses near big camps like Za'atari. Jordan had issued 20,000 work permits by July 2016, and tens of thousands more Syrian refugees are expected to get them in the coming years. If refugees are unable to live and work legally, they will be forced to take risks, said Matteo Paoltroni, technical advisor to European Commission's humanitarian aid department (ECHO), during an interview with the Thomson Reuters Foundation in his office in Amman. — Reuters

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SYRIANS GET TO GRIPS WITH GERMAN FREEDOMS

More than a year ago, Mayar and Nawar Ballish escaped car bomb attacks in Damascus. Now the Syrian sisters, both students in their twenties, go to school by train past neat gardens and farms in the quiet hills of Bavaria, southern Germany. They have lived there since Oct 2015. Their story shows what a cultural leap such migrants face, and how hard it can be to match the aspirations of those seeking shelter with Germany's own goals.

Around half a million Syrians have arrived in Germany over the past two years, part of a record influx of more than a million people. Most new asylum applicants have been men, a few of them violent or, according to the security services, covert jihadists. Some Germans feel it is a duty to welcome asylum-seekers. But violence by a few has fuelled hostility. There are attacks on asylum-seekers' homes more than twice a day on average, according to the Interior Ministry.

The sisters, who have leave to stay for three years, are more westernized than some of their compatriots. They wear jeans and choose not to wear the veil. Last Eid, they spent days making and delivering homemade cards to everyone in their town as a gesture of friendship. Even so, says Mayar, "most people ... don't really get the fear and the situation that we left behind in Syria."

The government stresses that Germany needs to import labor. A study published in 2016 by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research said that without migration, the German working-age population would probably fall by around 500,000 a year between now and 2035. The country needs skilled workers in technical jobs such as automotive and metal engineering, plumbing and software development as well as health and nursing.

The problem is: That's a mould the sisters don't fit. Like around one in five recent Syrian arrivals in Germany, they are educated to a high level. They hope to go to university, but people in the school system have pressured them to follow a vocational course. "The worst part is that ... people ... think we're dumb, useless refugees who aren't going to do anything," Mayar, 21, said.

'Idyll of nature'

Back in Syria, the sisters were at Damascus University. Mayar was studying English literature. Nawar ranked in the top five in her interior design course. Their mother went to university with them and studied French literature. Their father, who is 53 and is called Moneer, worked for the government as a technical design teacher. In 2012, Moneer was passing a courthouse in Damascus as a car bomb

exploded. He removed 27 pieces of shrapnel - mostly bits of windscreen - from his face and chest. The next year, another car bomb ruined the family's fourth-floor apartment. The sisters left Damascus with their mother and brothers in Aug 2015. Their father followed; they were reunited last Christmas. The government housed the family in Schillingsfuerst, a quiet place with around 40 refugees and an average age of 41. The Ballishes are the only Syrians in the town, which has a population of 2,275. It sits on Germany's Romantic Road, a holiday route which one promotional website says "unites culture with wellness, recreational activities and the idyll of nature."

Mayor Michael Trzybinski says he would like some refugees to stay permanently: "There are people among them who do great work and people who really want to completely integrate." Last March Horst Doellinger, who owns the family's apartment, arranged for Moneer to do an internship at his architects' office. He enlisted one of his staff to help with bureaucracy. He hopes he might be able to employ Moneer in future. But first, he said, "these people need to find their feet."

The Ballishes' apartment overlooks a grassy field and modern yellow, pink and blue houses. The family gets 1,024 euros (\$1,080) from the state each month and a German woman gave them things including furniture, a laptop and guitars. Local volunteer Gerald Baer first met the family at a Christmas party in 2015 where he was dressed as Santa Claus. They are learning German fast, he said. "They're also very open and cheerful and reach out to other people, and I think that's a big advantage."

Soon after arriving, Moneer and his wife went to exercise classes with older people. But she had a bad back and stopped going. When he realised he would be the only man, he stopped too. He set up a Facebook page to try to boost understanding between Syrians and Germans.

'Das', 'der' or 'die'

The sisters started German lessons at a technical school in Nov 2015 and play volleyball at a local club. In some ways they have found Germany shockingly free. On the way to school, they noticed a girl who seemed to be forever changing her hair color - green, purple, pink, and blue. They were surprised to see women wearing short shorts, or with their midriffs exposed. "People here don't have limits, don't have rules for clothes and you can wear whatever you want and dye your hair," said 22-year-old Nawar. "That makes us think about whether it is good or not."

In one class, a teacher showed them a photo of Conchita Wurst, a drag queen who won a Eurovision Song Contest. "He was wearing a dress but he had a beard too," said Mayar. Her dark eyes widened. Nawar had mastered masculine, feminine and neuter in German. "He's not a woman and he's not a guy," she said. "He's 'das', not 'der' or 'die!'"

Other Syrians have responded dramatically to such permissiveness, but Mayar thinks she will get used to living with freedoms like homosexuality. "At first when I heard of it I thought: 'Huh? This is crazy, this is really stupid, no one in the world would do it,'" she said. "But then I think 'OK, they are a little bit weird' ... Maybe a year later I will say, 'yeah that's OK, nice!'" Hans Emmert, a retired teacher in Schillingsfuerst, said he understands the sisters' response. He admires their moral steadfastness and believes many other Germans do too. "I think that might even provide positive impetus," he said. The family's moral code contains values "that we have unfortunately lost." Not everyone has been understanding. When the sisters were giving out Eid cards, Mayar greeted a woman watering plants. The woman frowned and turned her back, telling Mayar to go away and saying she did not want to talk to her.

A few people worry that refugees are getting attention that native Germans need. Rita Tanevski, the girls' volleyball teacher, said she knows one unemployed man who said, "The refugees get all the help, they have time to help them find a job but I get nothing."

Struggle for learning

The Ballishes' top priority is education. They know people in Sweden, their father says, but came to Germany in the hope it would be better for the children's studies. Mayar wants to teach English or American studies at university level. However, Germany generally puts heavy emphasis on vocational training. In 2015, only around 30 percent of 30 to 34 year-olds in the country had any kind of university degree, according to Eurostat. That is one of the smallest shares in Europe. In Sweden, it is 50 percent.

There is no data on how many refugees study at German universities, but the German Academic Exchange Service estimates that between 30,000 and 50,000 of the refugees who arrived in 2015 came with qualifications to enter university. Germany's Education Ministry has pledged 100 million euros to 2019 to help refugees prepare. Medicine, business, mathematics, computer science, natural sciences and technology are in high demand, a spokeswoman said. — Reuters

KIM MURDER SUSPECT LIVED MYSTERY LIFE

Ri Jong Chol, a North Korean arrested in the probe into last week's murder of the half-brother of the isolated state's leader, lived in Malaysia for more than three years without working at the company registered on his employment permit or receiving a salary. Ri, 47, had a Malaysian work visa that showed he was an employee of Tombo Enterprise. But the owner of the company said he never worked a day there or drew a salary from the small herbal medicine firm.

Chong Ah Kow said he facilitated Ri's working visa by stating in supporting documents that he was a product development manager in the company's IT department earning 5,500 ringgit (\$1,230) per month. The visa was renewed once, he said, in June 2016. "It was just a formality, just documents, I never paid him," Chong, a Malaysian, said in an interview. "I don't know how he survives here. I don't know how he gets money."

Chong, a frequent traveller to North Korea, said he was just trying to "help out" Ri. He has been interviewed by police and told Reuters he was ready to face any consequences from submitting false information to the government. Chong, who has remained friends with Ri, said the North Korean lived with his wife and two children in Kuala Lumpur. Reuters could not ascertain if Ri had any other employment or source of income. Police could not be reached for comment to explain how Ri supported his family in Malaysia.

HELP University

Ri has been arrested as a key suspect in the murder of Kim Jong Nam, the half-brother of North Korea's leader Kim Jong

Un. Police have not specified what role he may have played in last week's brazen killing at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport. Reuters was unable to find out whether Ri has a lawyer or to contact his wife or his daughter. Efforts to contact the North Korean embassy in Kuala Lumpur were also unsuccessful.

Chong said Ri rented an apartment in Kuchai Lama, a middle-class Kuala Lumpur suburb. Three-bedroom apartments in the neighborhood typically rent for about 1,500-2,000 ringgit (\$337-449) per month, according to property websites. Ri's daughter studies at HELP University, a fee-paying private college in a western Kuala Lumpur suburb that bestowed an honorary doctorate in economics on Kim Jong Un in 2013 for his "untiring efforts for the education of the country and the well-being of the people". The university has confirmed she is a student there.

Chong said he and Ri met in 2013 when the North Korean came to him in Kuala Lumpur, and said he was related to the inventor of a mushroom extract with anti-cancer effects. Chong said he has visited North Korea about 10 times and admires the country for its culture. "They have great shows," Chong said. "(Ri was a) soft-spoken, courteous, humble man - just like other North Koreans."

Easy entry

Ri met Chong infrequently, driving with his daughter to Chong's office in Kuala Lumpur. The men discussed business opportunities, such as palm oil importation, with Ri's daughter translating from Korean into English and vice versa. Nothing, however, came from the talks, Chong said. The

duo last met in January. Malaysia is about the only foreign country that a North Korean can easily enter, thanks to a visa-free policy for visitors that is largely reciprocated by Pyongyang. Since the 1980s, North Korea has used the Southeast Asian nation as a hub to promote its strategic and business interests, legitimate and otherwise, some

analysts say. However ties are under strain following the killing of Kim Jong Nam. Kim died last week after being assaulted at the airport with what police believe was a fast-acting poison. The two women who assaulted him, one who is Indonesian and another who carried a Vietnamese passport, are both in custody. — Reuters

N KOREA MORE ISOLATED THAN EVER AFTER KILLING

North Korea had few friends even before the assassination of the leader's half-brother at a Kuala Lumpur airport last week, but the fallout from the killing looks set to further isolate the nuclear-armed state. Pyongyang and Kuala Lumpur have enjoyed relatively warm economic ties, with some bilateral trade and citizens from both countries entitled to travel to the other under a unique reciprocal visa-free deal.

Malaysia has also provided a channel between Pyongyang officials and the wider world, with Kuala Lumpur in recent years serving as a discreet meeting place for talks between the regime and the United States. But all that could come to an end following a war of words over Malaysia's probe into the assassination of Kim Jong-Nam, which has seen Pyongyang's envoy to Kuala Lumpur savage local police, and Malaysia recall its ambassador to the North.

Singapore cancelled its visa-free arrangement with Pyongyang last year in protest over the regime's fourth nuclear test. Andray Abrahamian of Choson

Exchange, a non-profit that provides economic policy training to North Koreans, believes Malaysia could now make a similar move. "It wouldn't surprise me. The arrangement is already absolutely unique. North Koreans don't need a visa to work in Mongolia, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos. But the Malaysian side is the unusual thing," he told AFP. Malaysia and North Korea are both non-aligned nations and the one-off visa deal was likely hashed out as they sought to develop business ties, he said.

Muhammad Fuad Othman, a lecturer in international politics at Universiti Utara Malaysia, said diplomats would need to be seen to respond to the killing - which Seoul has said was orchestrated by Pyongyang. "In order to pacify the West maybe there is a need to re-evaluate the free visa policy that we accord to North Koreans," he said.

Up to 1,000 North Koreans currently work in Malaysia and, like expats from the Stalinist state worldwide, their remittances are a valuable source of foreign currency for the isolated regime. — AFP

BLACKBURN LOOK TO MOWBRAY FOR REVIVAL

LONDON: Indian-owned Blackburn Rovers have appointed Tony Mowbray as the club's new manager, the English second-tier strugglers announced yesterday. Mowbray, 53, has signed an 18-month contract after former manager Owen Coyle left the Championship club by mutual consent on Tuesday. Most recently in charge at Coventry, Mowbray started his managerial career at Ipswich and has also managed Hibernian, West Bromwich Albion, Celtic and Middlesbrough. At Hibs, he twice led the Scottish club into Europe while at West Brom he lost the Championship play-off final in 2007 before getting the Baggies promoted to the Premier League as champions the following season. He left Coventry without a league win at the end of September, having guided them to an eighth-place finish in third-tier League One last season. Blackburn, Premier League champions in 1995, are currently second-from-bottom of the Championship, three points from safety, after two wins in their last 13 league games. — AFP

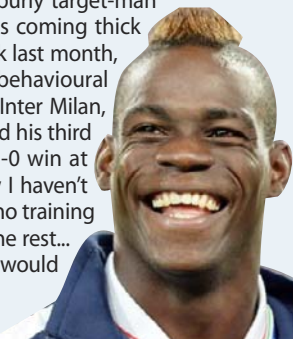


SINUS SURGERY RULES OPENER HAMEED OUT OF MCC MATCH

LONDON: England opener Haseeb Hameed has withdrawn from Marylebone Cricket Club's XI for the Champion County match against Middlesex next month to have sinus surgery, it was announced yesterday. Hameed, 20, has been replaced by Yorkshire's Alex Lees in the MCC squad for the day/night match in Abu Dhabi from March 26-29. Lancashire rising star Hameed's brief career has been marked by injury problems. After impressing as a 19-year-old on England's tour of India late last year, Hameed missed the final two Tests of a 4-0 series defeat after suffering a broken finger while batting. He had recently been working his way back to fitness with the second-string England Lions in Sri Lanka. England Under-19s captain Matt Fisher, also in MCC's original team, has pulled out because of a groin problem. Fisher will be replaced by Yorkshire and England fast bowler Liam Plunkett in the traditional curtain-raiser to the English season, which has been staged in Abu Dhabi since 2009. "Of course it is a shame that Haseeb and Matt have had to withdraw from the squad, but we have two excellent replacements in Liam and Alex who will add experience and firepower," said MCC head of cricket John Stephenson. — AFP

TALENTED BALOTELLI NEEDS ATTITUDE CHANGE

MILAN: Controversial striker Mario Balotelli has shown few signs of wanting to fight his way back into the national side, Italy coach Gian Piero Ventura warned yesterday. Balotelli last played for Italy at their ill-fated 2014 World Cup campaign, but his international and club career have been in a tailspin since then. After a lightning start with French first division side Nice this season however, the burly target-man appeared to have stopped the rot with goals and assists coming thick and fast. It prompted Ventura to offer Balotelli a way back last month, the coach pledging a face-to-face meeting to "discuss" behavioural problems. But that prospect now looks slim. The former Inter Milan, AC Milan, Manchester City and Liverpool striker was issued his third red card of the season last weekend, for dissent, in a 1-0 win at Lorient. "We have to meet face-to-face, but up until now I haven't seen positive signs," Ventura told media at Italy's Coverciano training base near Florence. "There's no disputing his talent, but the rest... the facts suggest that Balotelli needs to make changes. It would be a pity not to have him available." — AFP



TOKYO GOVERNOR WARNS OF SPIRALLING 2020 COSTS

TOKYO: Tokyo's governor has warned that the bill for the city's 2020 Olympics could yet spiral out of control despite exhaustive efforts to rein in runaway costs.

Governor Yuriko Koike said there was still a danger of costs reaching an eye-watering 3 trillion yen (\$26 billion) — four times more than initially planned — unless Games organisers keep a tight rein on the purse strings.

"We still haven't got a final figure for how much it will cost," she told AFP in an interview Tuesday. "But if there is no governance within the organising committee, it could be that expensive." "That's a question for them," added the governor, who took office last August after a landslide election victory. "In short, it's a question of leadership and good management." Concerns over soaring costs have cast a shadow over Tokyo's Olympic preparations and fears were heightened after a panel of experts predicted the overall budget could exceed 3 trillion yen without drastic cuts.

Koike proposed a review of three costly venues — for rowing, swimming and volleyball — but subsequently agreed to keep all three at their planned Tokyo sites.

"I don't think we are on different wavelengths," she said, rejecting any suggestion of discord between 2020 organisers and city and central government officials.

"Everyone is cooperating," added the former TV newscaster. "At one point the Sea Forest (rowing) venue was going to cost \$1.1 billion but we have more than halved that. Tokyo is building six venues and we have made significant reductions to the costs."

Tongue planted firmly in cheek, Tokyo's first female governor joked: "I just show the differences (in opinion) as much as possible to make it news!"

GOLF CONTROVERSY

In its bid, Tokyo estimated costs of \$7 billion and projected an economic windfall of 3 trillion yen, but Tokyo organisers are under pressure to balance the books after ballooning costs at recent Olympics, notably the \$50 billion price tag for the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) is under pressure to reduce costs to keep cities interested in bidding for future Games.

"It's just not sustainable to spend vast sums of money on the Olympics," said Koike, 64, who previously served as Japan's defence minister. "Tokyo will be a test case for the IOC."

Koike recently criticised the Tokyo Olympic golf venue for not accepting women as full members, leaving the private club's hosting rights in the balance. "Kasumigaseki Country Club not admitting full women members conflicts with Olympic Charter," she said, referring to the club in Saitama prefecture, north of Tokyo.

"We will continue to monitor the situation and see how they react." A long-time parliamentarian, the Cairo University graduate and fluent Arabic speaker is seen as one of Japan's most popular politicians.

Tipped as a possible future prime minister, Koike says she leads a "normal life" at home, doing laundry and going for walks with her pet Yorkshire terrier.

But as she continues her fight against Olympic over-spending, the political reformer insisted she was committed to the task in hand.

"I'm a new governor and it's my duty to deliberate on every venue, one by one," Koike said. "Tokyo has a heavy responsibility to make the 2020 Games a success." — AFP



BUDAPEST: Head of the bid of Budapest for hosting the 2024 Summer Olympic Games Balazs Furjes addresses the General Assembly of the City of Budapest with Budapest Mayor Istvan Tarlos, right, and Vice Mayor Alexandra Szalay-Bobrovniczky in the background in the town hall in Budapest, Hungary, yesterday. — AP

OLYMPICS

BUDAPEST OLYMPIC BID ON LAST LEGS AS MAYOR TO BRING IN GOVT

BUDAPEST: Budapest's mayor is expected to tell the government that political unity over the city's bid to host the 2024 Summer Olympics has broken down, taking what is widely seen as a pivotal step to it pulling its candidacy.

Istvan Tarlos will ask the government to "clarify whether, as national unity ended, there is any point in sustaining Budapest's candidacy," according to a resolution approved by the City Council. Bidding alongside powerhouses Los Angeles and Paris, Budapest has been considered a long-shot candidate, pinning its hopes on the International Olympic Committee's Agenda 2020 initiative that seeks a return for the event to simpler venues and smaller price tags.

After local opponents of the candidacy last week submitted a quarter of a million signatures on a petition for a referendum on the bid, Tarlos suggested the city might quit the race.

But he also rejected responsibility for allowing the bid to fail, saying the issue was a national one. Yesterday's council resolution authorised Tarlos to discuss the bid with the national government and Olympic committee.

He is expected to meet Prime Minister Viktor Orban later on Wednesday and a decision — in all probability involving a withdrawal of the bid — could follow soon thereafter.

'LIKE STRUDEL DOUGH'

Tarlos, who only began to support the bid after Agenda 2020 promised to support the bid for the Olympics more affordable, urged a fast resolution of the issue. "I never insisted on the Olympics," he told the council. "There is no point dragging out this process like strudel dough."

According to a survey published yesterday by pollster Median, half of Hungarians would like

Budapest to withdraw the bid, with only a third supporting it nationally. In Budapest, 56 percent of voters were against the bid.

Attempting to shore up backing for the bid, its chairman Balazs Furjes told the council: "Our phones are ringing off the hook. IOC members from Asia to Africa to Australia are calling us daily to tell us, guys, stop fooling around, do not quit." (But) unless we restore unity right away we stand no chance."

Socialist councillor Csaba Horvath said his party backed the bid in principle but the government's track record suggested it might turn the event into a "corruption gold mine." Corruption allegations have marred Orban's rule for years, with Transparency International describing the situation as a "state capture" by oligarchs close to the premier. The government has consistently denied the allegations. — Reuters



TOKYO: In this picture taken on February 21, 2017, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike speaks during an interview with AFP in Tokyo. Tokyo's governor has warned that the bill for the city's 2020 Olympics could yet spiral out of control despite exhaustive efforts to rein in runaway costs. — AFP

ASIA WELCOMES THIRD STRAIGHT WINTER OLYMPICS: OCA CHIEF

TOKYO: Asia is ready, willing and able to host a third straight Winter Olympics if the Japanese city of Sapporo wins the bid for the 2026 Games, Olympic Council of Asia President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah has said. Sapporo hosted Asia's first Winter Olympics in 1972 and has also staged the Asian Winter Games three times, including the inaugural edition in 1986 and the ongoing Feb. 19-26 event.

City officials said in late 2014 they would be keen on a 2026 bid, though the Japanese Olympic Committee would also need to approve it proceeding.

With South Korea's Pyeongchang staging the Winter Olympics in 2018 and Beijing hosting the event four years later, a third successive Winter Games in Asia would underline the region's growing presence on the international sporting stage. The Summer Olympics will also be held in Asia in 2020 in Tokyo.

Sheikh Ahmad said the way the ongoing Asiad had been organised clearly demonstrated Sapporo would take the task of hosting another Olympics in its stride. "I am happy to hear that Sapporo is ready to host the Olympic Winter Games. Sapporo is capable and ready," he said at a news conference, adding that Sapporo had "all the tools, all the facilities

and all the experience" needed to stage the multi-sport event. Beijing and the nearby city of Zhangjiakou beat Kazakhstan's Almaty for the right to host the 2022 Games after the other competitors dropped out, citing costs and other worries, and Sheikh Ahmad said an Asian bid for 2026 would depend on the level of interest from other countries.

The costs of staging Olympics have become a hot-button issue in recent years and prompted the International Olympic Committee to take steps aimed at keeping spending under control. Reforms known as "Agenda 2020," carried out under IOC President Thomas Bach with the aim of making the Olympics more sustainable, allow hosts to use facilities in other cities or even countries if it makes financial and practical sense.

Hamburg, Rome and Boston have already abandoned bids to host the 2024 Summer Games while Budapest could also pull out. That would leave only Paris and Los Angeles still in the race. "If there is a lot who bid, we will have to evaluate the situation, but if not then we have a good chance," the Kuwaiti added. "We are ready to host a third Olympic Winter Games." Japan's Nagano hosted Asia's last Winter Olympics in 1998. — Reuters

WINTER ASIAN GAMES ARE VERY TOPICAL IN TROPICAL E TIMOR

SAPPORO: For Alpine skier Yohan Goult Goncalves, the chance to be East Timor's sole representative at the Asian Winter Games was too good to pass up, even if it meant missing the world championships.

Goult Goncalves could have taken part in the Alpine skiing world championships in St. Moritz, Switzerland but chose instead to travel to Japan to become East Timor's first athlete at the Asian Winter Games.

"It was more important to come here because East Timor is part of Asia," Goult Goncalves said in an interview Wednesday with The Associated Press. "Timorese people feel closer to the Asian Games than any other event - even the Winter Olympics - so that's why I chose to come here."

Born in France, the 22-year-old Goult Goncalves is the son of a French father and his mother is from East Timor, the tiny former Portuguese colony between Australia and Indonesia. He qualified for the world circuit in 2013 and had no trouble deciding which country to represent when it came to choosing between France and East Timor.

East Timor's National Olympic Committee was only established in 2007, and two athletes have competed at the Summer Games in 2004, 2008 and 2012. "My dream of representing Timor came when I was eight," Goult Goncalves said. "I wanted to go to the Olympics and I knew it was for Timor because I think it was important to show to the world that there is this country. I think that the contrast of having an athlete that skis but is from a country with no snow makes it special."

Goult Goncalves' childhood dream came true when he competed at the Sochi Olympics.

"It was so challenging to get there," Goult Goncalves said, recalling his route to become the first athlete from East Timor to compete at the Winter Olympics. "And when I arrived there you raise the flag of Timor in the opening ceremony. It's the first time in the Winter Olympics so there was a lot of attention on you because people are wondering 'where is this country?' Do



SAPPORO: East Timor's Yohan Goult Goncalves speaks during an interview, ahead of his alpine skiing men's giant slalom at the Asian Winter Games in Sapporo, northern Japan, yesterday. — AP

they have snow? Do they have mountains?"

Now he has his sights set on qualifying for an Olympic return, this time closer to home in Pyeongchang, South Korea. "I want to participate in more international events so people get to know Timor better," Goult Goncalves said. Many of Goult Goncalves' family members live in Australia, where he has based himself for southern hemisphere winter training the past several years.

Goult Goncalves first hit the ski slopes in his father Pierre's backpack when he was a year old, and skied for the first time when he was three.

The country was colonized by Portugal in the 16th century and East Timor declared its independence in 1975. Indonesia invaded East Timor within weeks and violent period followed.

In 1999, following intervention from the United Nations, Indonesia relinquished control of the territory and East Timor became a sover-

ign state on May 20, 2002. The country's political situation has become more stable in recent years. "Right now it is pretty peaceful, the last civil war was in 2006," Goult Goncalves said. "Since then nothing major has happened so I hope tourists will come to Timor."

In 1974, just before Indonesia invaded East Timor, Goult Goncalves' mother, Carolina, and her young siblings boarded a fishing boat in the capital Dili and set sail for Darwin, the remote capital of Australia's Northern Territory. Despite being overcrowded, the boat and its 500-plus passengers arrived safely, and the family was granted refugee status.

For now, Goult Goncalves said he is happy to be able to take his campaign to raise awareness of his country to the slopes. He started competition in the giant slalom yesterday, and is entered for the slalom tomorrow. — AP

ZAIN CONCLUDES MAIN SPONSOR OF KUWAIT INTERNATIONAL ARABIAN HORSE FESTIVAL

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, concluded its main sponsorship of the Kuwait International Arabian Horse Festival 2017 during the All Nations Cup - Straight Egyptians competition. The event was organized by the Arabian Horse Center - Bait Al Arab under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah.

Zain took part in awarding the winners of the All Nations Cup - Straight Egyptians competition, which witnessed the attendance of HH the Amir's representative HE the Deputy Minister Of The Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al Jarah Al Sabah, Head of the Arabian Horse Center's Board of Trustees Alaa Al Roumi, HE the Minister of Commerce and Industry and acting Minister of State for Youth Affairs Khalid Al Roudhan, and HE the Minister of

Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Faleh Al-Azeb.

Zain's support to this international competition came in line with the company's belief in the importance of taking part in projects and initiatives that strengthen the valuable Arabian identity and cherished Kuwaiti culture, reflecting the vital role of the private sector in contributing to the preservation of the heritage, culture and history of Kuwait.

Zain also took part in awarding the winners of the 6th International Championship - Arabian Horse Breeder Award, which was held early February and attracted many purebred Arabian horse owners from inside and outside of Kuwait, as well as a large number of Arabian horse admirers from the public.

Zain stressed its keenness in providing



the needed support and encouragement to all activities and initiatives that further push the national economic and touristic development wheel.

The company is committed to continuing to support all kinds of national projects that support the national economy and offer innovative ideas that contribute to the further progress of Kuwait.

The Kuwait International Arabian Horse Festival 2017 mainly aims at raising awareness about preserving the breed of the Arabian horse. The Arabian Horse Center - Bait Al Arab is considered an official organizer of horse breeding competitions both on local and international levels, and partners with the Hunting and Equestrian Club and ECAHO (European Conference of Arab Horse Organizations).

NEW ZEALAND BEAT SOUTH AFRICA IN SECOND ODI, LEVELS SERIES

CHRISTCHURCH: Ross Taylor set a national record for most centuries in one-day international cricket with an unbeaten 102 that guided New Zealand to a tense, series-leveling six-run win over South Africa yesterday.

Taylor reached his 17th one-day international century from the last ball of the New Zealand innings to overtake Nathan Astle (16) as New Zealand's leading century-maker in ODIs and on the way became the fourth Kiwi to surpass 6,000 runs in the format. The combination of those two records, along with Taylor's 32 half centuries and his average of 43.11, clearly establishes the 32-year-old right hander as New Zealand's best-ever batsman in the one-day game.

His innings, achieved in partnerships of 104 with Kane Williamson (69) and an unbeaten 123 with James Neesham (71 not out) lifted New Zealand to 289-4 after losing the toss on a slow wicket at Hagley Oval in the second ODI.

South Africa kept pace with the required run-rate for much of its reply but the dismissal of A.B. de Villiers for 45 by Trent Boult in the 39th over, which left the Proteas 199-6, dimmed their hopes of victory. The Proteas finished 283-9.

Allrounder Dwaine Pretorius slammed 50 from 27 balls near the end to keep the run chase alive but was out the last ball of the 49th over and with his departure, South Africa's hopes faded.

New Zealand's death bowlers, Trent Boult and Tim Southee, lost their line and length

briefly under an assault from Pretorius, who hit a six and a four from Boult from the first two balls of the 46th over, to leave South Africa needing 40 runs for victory.

But both recovered well and their last two overs were critical to the win. Boult allowed only five runs from the 49th over, dismissing Pretorius with the last ball, and Southee bowled four dot balls to start the 50th over from which South Africa needed 15 runs, snuffing out the Proteas' challenge.

Quinton de Kock again set up the South African run chase with a half century at the top of the order. He made 57 from 65 balls, following on from his 69 in the first match at Hamilton which provided the foundation of South Africa's four-wicket win. Andile Phehlukwayo took boundaries from the last two balls of the innings Wednesday to again finish 29 not out.

"It was good to be on the right side of this one," New Zealand captain Williamson said. "That's one tight game each. "Wins against the best team in the world aren't going to come easy and I think to get to a competitive total off the back of Ross's brilliant hundred was a brilliant effort. From that point we were able to put them under pressure for a long period of time."

Taylor's innings on a troublesome pitch was a match-winner. He hit a boundary from the last ball of the innings to post his record-breaking century, holding his nerve after being dropped on 96 one ball earlier. — AP



CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand's Ross Taylor bats during the second one-day international (ODI) cricket match between New Zealand and South Africa at the Hagley Park Oval in Christchurch yesterday. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand: Completed scoreboard in the second one-day international between New Zealand and South Africa in Christchurch yesterday:

New Zealand		South Africa	
D. Brownlie lbw Pretorius	34	H. Amla lbw b Southee	10
T. Latham c Phehlukwayo b Parnell	2	Q. de Kock c Neesham b Boult	57
K. Williamson c Phehlukwayo b Tahir	69	F. du Plessis b de Grandhomme	11
R. Taylor not out	102		
N. Broom c Duminy b Pretorius	2		
J. Neesham not out	71		
Extras (lb2, w7)	9		
Total (4 wickets, 50 overs)	289		
Fall of wickets: 1-13 (Latham), 2-53 (Brownlie), 3-157 (Williamson), 4-166 (Broom)			
Bowling: Morris 10-0-58-0 (2w), Parnell 8-0-49-1 (2w), Pretorius 10-0-40-2 (1w), Tahir 10-0-61-1 (2w), Phehlukwayo 9-0-62-0, Duminy 3-0-17-0			
JP Duminy st Latham b Santner	34		
AB de Villiers c Latham b Boult	45		
D. Miller c Latham b Miller	28		
D. Pretorius b Boult	50		
C. Morris run out Brownlie	7		
W. Parnell lbw b Santner	0		
A. Phehlukwayo not out	29		
I. Tahir not out	0		
Extras (lb5, w7)	12		
Total (9 wickets, 50 overs)	283		
Fall of wickets: 1-22 (Amla), 2-51 (du Plessis), 3-108 (Duminy), 4-124 (de Kock), 5-192 (Miller), 6-199 (de Villiers), 7-214 (Morris), 8-214 (Parnell), 9-275 (Pretorius)			
Bowling: Southee 10-0-60-1 (1w), Boult 10-0-63-3 (3w), Neesham 3-0-20-0 (1w), de Grandhomme 4-1-10-1, Williamson 3-0-16-0, Sodhi 10-0-63-1 (2w), Santner 10-0-46-2.			
Result: New Zealand won by six runs.			



ADELAIDE: Sri Lankan players celebrate their T20 series win over Australia after the third T20 Cricket International at the Adelaide Oval yesterday. — AFP

ZAMPA AND KLINGER STAR IN AUSTRALIA'S 41-RUN T20 WIN

ADELAIDE: Leg-spinner Adam Zampa claimed three wickets to bowl Australia to victory and avoid a Twenty20 series wipeout against Sri Lanka in Adelaide yesterday. Man-of-the-match Zampa, who was left out of the previous match as the Sri Lankans won to clinch the three-match series, captured three for 25 at a crucial stage as Australia went on to win by 41 runs. "It is always nice to bowl the middle overs and it is very easy when you have a start like that," Zampa said.

"Sri Lanka have very fearless players, sometimes it can be tough to bowl at them."

Openers Aaron Finch and Michael Klinger hit half-centuries as the Australians, with their leading stars in India for this week's Test series, set Sri Lanka 188 runs to win.

But the Sri Lankans could not reproduce another of their blazing late innings comebacks where they won the first two T20 games off the last ball. "I thought we played some fantastic cricket tonight. A complete performance like this makes the last match even more heart-breaking," skipper Finch said. "When you have Klinger at the other end, he lets you play your shots. We have been guilty of not converting starts. Today we had two fifties and Dunk and Head chipping in." Sri Lanka's chase was given early impetus by Dilshan Munaweera, who smacked 37 from 25 balls, but from 41 without loss in the fourth over the tourists lost traction and slid to 76 for four in the 10th over.

Zampa claimed the vital wicket of man of the series Asela Gunaratne, leg before wicket for four in the 10th over and the tourists were unable to arouse another of their sensational finishes to beat Australia's total. Gunaratne slammed a pulse-racing 84 to power Sri Lanka to a last-ball victory against Australia on Sunday after clubbing 52 off 37 balls in the opening win in Melbourne. "Beating Australia in home conditions is a tough thing to do. The guys did a good job," skipper Upul Tharanga said.

SCOREBOARD

ADELAIDE, Australia: Scoreboard in the third and final Twenty20 international between Australia and Sri Lanka in Adelaide yesterday:

Australia		Sri Lanka	
A. Finch c Siriwardana b Prasanna	53	D. Munaweera c Turner b Head	37
M. Klinger run out (Shanaka)	62		
B. Dunk c Prasanna b Shanaka	28		
T. Head c Kapugedera b Malinga	30		
M. Henriques not out	2		
A. Turner c Kapugedera b Malinga	1		
J. Faulkner c Kapugedera b Shanaka	2		
T. Paine not out	1		
Extras (lb2, w5, nb1)	8		
Total (6 wickets, 20 overs)	187		
Did not bat: P. Cummins, J. Richardson, A. Zampa			
Fall of wickets: 1-79 (Finch), 2-128 (Dunk), 3-179 (Head), 4-180 (Klinger), 5-182 (Turner), 6-184 (Faulkner)			
Bowling: Malinga 4-0-35-2 (1nb, 1w), Kulasekara 4-0-40-0 (1w), Sanjaya 3-0-34-0 (1w), Prasanna 3-0-25-1, Siriwardana 1-0-12-0, Gunaratne 1-0-12-0 (1w), Shanaka 4-0-27-2			
U. Tharanga c Richardson b Faulkner	14		
K. Mendis c Cummins b Richardson	14		
A. Gunaratne lbw b Zampa	4		
M. Siriwardana c & b Faulkner	35		
C. Kapugedera b Zampa	7		
M. Shanaka lbw b Zampa	0		
S. Prasanna c Richardson b Faulkner	12		
N. Kulasekara not out	8		
L. Malinga run out (Finch)	1		
S. Sanjaya run out (Dunk)	5		
Extras (lb2, w7)	9		
Total (all out, 18 overs)	146		
Fall of wickets: 1-41 (Tharanga), 2-68 (Mendis), 3-69 (Munaweera), 4-76 (Gunaratne), 5-91 (Kapugedera), 6-91 (Shanaka), 7-120 (Prasanna), 8-138 (Siriwardana), 9-140 (Malinga), 10-146 (Sanjaya)			
Bowling: Turner 2-0-15-0 (1w), Richardson 3-0-38-1 (2w), Cummins 3-0-20-0 (2w), Faulkner 3-0-20-3 (1w), Henriques 1-0-10-0, Zampa 4-0-25-3, Head 2-0-16-1 (1w)			
Result: Australia won by 41 runs.			

"The innings Asela Gunaratne played in the second game in Geelong was amazing." James Faulkner also took three wickets with his clever changes of pace to maintain Australia's advantage. It was Sri Lanka's first defeat in six T20 internationals in Australia. Skipper Finch was dropped by Munaweera before he had scored on the fifth ball of the Australian innings and went on to cash in with 53 off 32 balls with three sixes and five fours. Klinger proved the mainstay of the

innings with 62 from 43 deliveries with six fours and a six. The opening pair put on 79 runs for the first wicket. Ben Dunk (28 from 21 balls) and Travis Head (30 from 16) contributed useful knocks to get to 179 for two before a late flurry of wickets cost Australia a chance to top a 200 total. Sri Lanka claimed four wickets for eight off the final 11 deliveries with Lasith Malinga taking two for 35 and Chamara Kapugedera taking three catches in the deep. — AFP

SMITH REJECTS INDIA WHITEWASH FORECAST

PUNE: Steve Smith dismissed predictions yesterday that Australia face another series whitewash against India but admitted they had to show more fight to have any chance of stopping the world's number one Test team.

Former Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly and veteran spinner Harbhajan Singh have both forecast a clean sweep for the hosts when the arch rivals begin their four-Test series today in Pune.

India, who are on a record-breaking 19-match unbeaten run, toppled Australia from the top of the Test rankings back in August when Smith's side were beaten 3-0 in Sri Lanka. That was the third time in a row that the Australians had lost all of their Tests in away series against teams from the sub-continent, a sequence which began with a 4-0 reverse in India in 2013.

But speaking to reporters on the eve of the first Test, Australia skipper Smith said the tourists knew they were in for a difficult series but rejected the idea that

another whitewash was on the cards.

"I don't believe that's the case. I'm confident in the squad we've got here to compete against India," he said. "India have played some very good cricket off late, particularly at home, so we're under no illusions there, it's going to be tough. But we've got the squad here that can compete in these conditions."

Smith said Australia were determined not to dwell too much on their most recent performances on the sub-continent but admitted that a repeat would spell disaster. "Obviously some of the away performances of late haven't been up to standard from my point of view and the Australian cricket team's point of view," he said.

"We want to change the way we play away from home. We want to be more adaptable to conditions and show some fight. For me it's starting things fresh. We have come here with a positive mindset. The more we think about the last time we

came here or Sri Lanka, we start to lose."

One of the main sub-plots of the series will be the battle between Smith and his opposite number Virat Kohli who are respectively ranked number one and two in the Test batting rankings.

Both men have continued to score heavily since being made skipper and Kohli who has scored four double centuries since July-heaped praise on Smith.

"Captain's responsibility has helped him to focus a bit more in certain situations and push that much extra for his team," said Kohli.

"That has shown in his performances. He is the number one Test player in the world and there's a reason for that."

'WORLD CLASS' STARC

Kohli also had warm words for the Australian paceman Mitchell Starc who is seen as the tourists' main bowling threat despite India's reputation for having spin-friendly pitches.

"He is a world class bowler, we all know that. He has been hampered by injuries quite often, but the way he has evolved as a bowler, it's been outstanding," said Kohli.

"He has learnt the art of reverse swing and bowling with the old ball as well. It's amazing to see, the way he has developed his skills." Although Smith has encouraged his players to get in the face of the hosts, his vice captain David Warner has warned that such tactics might end up only spurring on Kohli.

The Indian skipper said his naturally competitive nature would take over when he was on the pitch and that players on both sides understood that anything that was said in the heat of battle should not be taken personally.

"See, I am really good friends with them... but I know where to draw the line of friendship as well," said Kohli. After the match in Pune, the two sides are also due to play Tests in Bangalore, Ranchi and Dharamsala. — AFP



PUNE: India's Ravindra Jadeja (L) speaks with coach Anil Kumble while batting at nets during a training session at the Maharashtra Cricket Association stadium in Pune yesterday. — AFP

GUARDIOLA VOWS MORE OF SAME AFTER MONACO GOALFEST

MANCHESTER: Pep Guardiola pledged that Manchester City will continue to fight fire with fire when they take a 5-3 lead to Monaco in their Champions League last 16 tie. City procured a two-goal advantage after a remarkable first-leg match at the Etihad Stadium on Tuesday in which they fought back from 2-1 and 3-2 down to put themselves in the driving seat.

Monaco's goals exposed serious failings in the City rearguard, but although Guardiola acknowledged his side must tighten up at the back, he said they would go to Stade Louis II intending to attack.

"They will attack more and more and we have to defend better. But we will have our chances," said the City manager. "We are going to fly to Monaco to score as many goals as possible. We are not going to defend that result. "We now know each other better. We will adjust some things, they will adjust some things, but we have to score goals. "If we don't score a goal in Monaco, we will be eliminated." Raheem Sterling gave City a 26th-

minute lead following a brilliant run from Leroy Sane, but a loose kick by home goalkeeper Willy Caballero enabled Monaco to level through Radamel Falcao's header. A dawdling Nicolas Otamendi was at fault for Monaco's second goal, scored by Kylian Mbappe, and then conceded a penalty, only for Caballero to save Falcao's effort.

Sergio Aguero and Falcao swapped goals, the former benefiting from a huge error by Monaco goalkeeper Danijel Subasic, the latter scoring with a sublime chip, before City found an extra gear. Aguero volleyed in David Silva's corner to make it 3-3 in the 71st minute and further goals from John Stones and Sane carried Guardiola's men to a breathless victory.

Aguero was booked for diving after flinging himself over a challenge by Subasic in the first half, but Guardiola refused to discuss the incident, barking: "Next question!" Aguero has only returned to the starting XI because of an injury to Gabriel Jesus, but he played down suggestions

his relationship with Guardiola is frosty.

DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

"The truth is we get on very well," said the Argentine striker. "What he wants, above everything, from all the players is that we push a little more. He's always asking me for more, more, more."

"Obviously it's a sacrifice I have to make, that we all have to make, and fortunately tonight it worked and we'll see if it keeps working in the next game."

Monaco coach Leonardo Jardim said his team had paid for "defensive errors", but said the "key moment" had been Falcao's failure to convert his penalty early in the second half. The visitors were 2-1 up when Otamendi was penalised for going through the back of Falcao, but the Colombian dallied over his spot-kick and then saw a tame shot parried by Caballero.

French striker Mbappe, 18, vindicated Jardim's decision to hand him a first tournament start by calmly net-

ting Monaco's second goal after Otamendi had been caught out by Fabinho's free-kick.

Jardim hailed the teenager's display, but said Monaco's defensive shortcomings showed the club's commitment to developing young players was a double-edged sword. "I used Kylian up front today because we know City well. We know there's lots of space in behind," Jardim told his post-match press conference. "I thought he played a great match. The little guy is 18 years old. And that's part of our project as well."

"The defensive errors are also a question of age, maturity. Kylian is 18. Lots of the players are 20, 21, 22." Monaco's performance confirmed their status as Europe's most prolific attacking team and gave Jardim hope they can turn the tie around in three weeks' time. "I think playing here in England, scoring three goals at City, putting on a great show, is also an important moment," he said. "I congratulate the team. There are 90 minutes left at home. Nothing is finished." — AFP

MAN UNITED EASES INTO EUROPA LEAGUE LAST 16

PARIS: Criticized by manager Jose Mourinho for being over-confident in the first leg at Old Trafford, Manchester United's players put on a fine display of focus and discipline yesterday to beat Saint-Etienne 1-0 and reach the last 16 of the Europa League with a 4-0 aggregate win. The Red Devils traveled to France for the last-32 return leg with a 3-0 advantage and put the game to bed with an early goal from Henrikh Mkhitaryan, who scored the winner in the 17th minute from Juan Mata's assist as United prevailed at Geoffroy Guichard stadium.

United tightened its grip on the match with a strong defensive performance after moving ahead, despite playing with 10 men in the final half-hour after Eric Bailly was shown a second yellow card.

Needing at least three goals to keep its hopes alive, Saint-Etienne got off to a strong start and created its first chance within the first minute when Henri Saivet tested 'keeper Sergio Romero with a low shot from the right.

Well organized in midfield, United easily slowed down the pace and prevented the hosts from hitting their stride. The Red Devils then converted their first chance to kill any sense of suspense when Mkhitaryan connected with a cross from Mata to put United ahead with a flick past Stephane Ruffier. Mata came close to doubling the lead six minutes later but Ruffier made a nice reflex save to parry away his cross after the ball was twice deflected by Saint-Etienne players.

Mkhitaryan was forced to leave the pitch soon after with an apparent ham-

string injury that could rule him out of Sunday's League Cup final at Wembley against Southampton.

Saint-Etienne enjoyed a good spell near the half-hour but the hosts' possession did not translate into clear-cut opportunities. Saint-Etienne dominated early in the second half but could not find an edge as Saivet saw his shot blocked and Kevin Monnet-Paquet missed the target.

United remained the most dangerous team, though, as Marcus Rashford led fast counterattacks down the left flank and Marouane Fellaini's shot in the 58th hit the side netting. The Red Devils played a man down for the final 27 minutes after Bailly was sent off following a clumsy tackle but Saint-Etienne could not take advantage of the situation.

SCHALKE 1, PAOK 1

Alessandro Schöpf scored a first-half goal to give the hosts a comfortable cushion and Schalke easily progressed to the next round with a 4-1 win on aggregate.

The Austrian was set up by Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting and slotted home with a clean finish in the 23rd minute. PAOK leveled two minutes later after Matija Nastasic beat his own 'keeper by diverting a ball into the net.

FENERBAHCE 1, KRASNODAR 1

Krasnodar made it to the Round of 16 for the first time with a 2-1 aggregate win. Fedor Smolov scored the decisive goal in the seventh minute, converting the Russian side's first shot of the match.

Fenerbahce midfielder Souza put the teams level in the 41st minute. — AP



VALENCIA: Real Madrid's Portuguese forward Cristiano Ronaldo heads the ball to score a goal during the Spanish league football match Valencia CF vs Real Madrid CF at the Mestalla stadium in Valencia yesterday. — AFP

SOCCER

LEADERS REAL STUNNED BY STRUGGLING VALENCIA

VALENCIA: Real Madrid suffered a surprise 2-1 defeat at struggling Valencia yesterday as they missed the opportunity to extend their lead at the top of La Liga after losing for only the second time in the league this season.

Simone Zaza, who endured an unhappy loan spell at West Ham United earlier this season, gave Valencia the lead in the fifth minute with a brilliant shot on the turn and Fabian Orellana added the second in the ninth.

Cristiano Ronaldo headed Real back into contention just before halftime, but the visitors were unable to build on their momentum after the break. Real remain top on 52 points, one ahead of nearest challengers Barcelona and three clear of Sevilla in third, and still have one game in hand on

both of their title rivals. Real's match at Valencia was rearranged after the original fixture was postponed from December due to Zinedine Zidane's side taking part in the FIFA Club World Cup.

Valencia have endured a nightmare season filled with dismal results and upheaval off the pitch, but they got off to a flying start when a long pass from goalkeeper Diego Alves found its way to Zaza, who swivelled and fired the ball into the far top corner.

Zaza, who joined Valencia in January on loan from Juventus after flopping at West Ham, scored his first goal for his new club in Sunday's 2-0 win over Athletic Bilbao. He was a constant thorn in Real's side, linking up superbly with wingers Nani, Orellana and Munir El Haddadi.

Real responded with a wayward shot from Toni Kroos but left themselves exposed on the break and were soon another goal down as Zaza spread the play to Nani and Orellana darted onto the Portuguese's pass to knock the ball through keeper Kelyor Navas's legs. Valencia might have got a third had it not been for a decisive block from Marcelo on Munir's shot which deflected over the bar, and the Brazilian played a crucial role in giving Real a foothold on the game, sending an arcing cross into the box which Ronaldo leapt to head past Alves. Gareth Bale was brought on to help Real's push for more goals in the second half but they barely mustered a decent attempt on goal, while Munir had a strong penalty appeal waved away at the other end. — Reuters



SAINT ETIENNE: Manchester United's Marcus Rashford, center, jumps over Saint-Etienne's goalkeeper Stephane Ruffier during their Europa League round of 32 second leg soccer match at Geoffroy Guichard stadium in Saint Etienne, France, yesterday. — AP

LIVERPOOL ANNOUNCE PLANS TO LEAVE MELWOOD FOR KIRKBY

LONDON: English Premier League side Liverpool announced plans yesterday that will see the first team leave their long-time training base in Melwood and move to a redeveloped site in Kirkby, where their youth academy is located.

Melwood, the training ground of some of the biggest names in English football since the late 1950s, including Kenny Dalglish, Ian Rush, Robbie Fowler, John Barnes and Steven Gerrard, has also been earmarked for redevelopment.

Redeveloping Melwood, elevated to Liverpool's first-team training centre under former manager Bill Shankly in 1959, could provide about 160 houses in West Derby, Liverpool said on its website. (www.liverpoolfc.com)

Shankly transformed Melwood into a top-class training facility, but incumbent Jurgen Klopp has been a keen advocate of using a larger facility to accommodate the first team and the academy.

"We recognise that Melwood has played a significant role in the club's success and forms an important part of our

history," Liverpool's chief operating officer Andy Hughes said on the website.

"However, the Melwood site is limited in space and is unable to accommodate our longer-term ambitions, which is why we are exploring options on the Academy site."

Liverpool plan spend 50 million pound (\$60 million) on the combined training centre, redeveloping the existing facilities at the academy and converting the main pitch into an indoor one.

The club said that a public consultation would be held on March 8 for residents and businesses to discuss the proposed plans in more detail. Liverpool intend to purchase land adjacent to the academy site and close part of Moss Lane between Simonswood Lane and Arbour Lane to allow the proposal to go ahead.

The club did not offer any timeline for the building work, but the Liverpool Echo newspaper reported that it would begin in early 2018 and be completed by the summer of 2019 if the project was given approval. — Reuters

EVERGRANDE SMASH SEVEN PAST HISTORIC EASTERN

GUANGZHOU: Two-time winners Guangzhou Evergrande ruthlessly dispatched nine-man Eastern 7-0 yesterday in a brutal introduction to the AFC Champions League for the Hong Kong minnows and their female coach.

Chan Yuen-ting, nicknamed "Beef Ball", became the first woman to coach a professional men's team in continental competition but otherwise it was a night to forget for the trailblazing 28-year-old.

It meant the big-spending Chinese teams have all opened with a win, after Ramires's 90th-minute strike gave Jiangsu Suning a 1-0 victory over Jeju United and Shanghai SIPG beat FC Seoul by the same scoreline on Tuesday.

Luiz Felipe Scolari's Evergrande, who have won the last six Chinese Super League titles, couldn't have made a stronger start to Group G as they overshadowed Chan's historic achievement. After Wong Tsz-ho was sent off for handling on the line, Ricardo Goulart drilled home his spot-kick in a moment that effectively killed the game as a contest after just four minutes.

Evergrande laid siege to the visitors' defence and they went 2-0 up on 22 minutes when Wang Shangyuan prodded home from a corner after Paulinho's header.

Alan missed a penalty but it mattered little as his fellow Brazilian Goulart fed Liao Lisheng to make it 3-0 on 33 minutes, just before Wong Chi-chung received his second yellow card. Goalkeeper Yapp Hung-fai prevented further damage but nine-man Eastern slipped to 4-0 down two minutes after the break when Liao nodded his second from close range. Alan made up for a string of misses when he smashed Evergrande's fifth on 65 minutes, before Paulinho got on the scoresheet and Wang grabbed his second late on. Also in Group G, Kawasaki Frontale were held 1-1 at home by South Korea's Suwon Samsung Bluewings when Shogo Taniguchi's own goal cancelled out Yu Kobayashi's 11th-minute opener.

In Group H, Japan's Gamba Osaka outclassed Adelaide United 3-0 in a rerun of the 2008 final, when they were the last Japanese club to lift the trophy.

Tall striker Shun Nagasawa put the J-League outfit ahead with a powerful header, before Yasuyuki Konno rammed home a rebound in first-half stoppage time to put Gamba in command.

Gamba rounded off the scoring when Reds defender Dylan McGowan deflected Yasuhiro Endo's free kick into his own net with nine minutes left. — AFP



ISTANBUL: Fenerbahce's Brazilian forward Fernandao (left) heads the ball next to Krasnodar's Brazilian-German defender Naldo (R) during the UEFA Europa League round of 32 second leg football match between Fenerbahce SK and FC Krasnodar yesterday at Fenerbahce Ulker stadium in Istanbul. — AFP

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SEVILLA: Sevilla's Argentinian midfielder Joaquin Correa (C) celebrates after scoring a goal during the UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match Sevilla FC vs Leicester City at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Sevilla yesterday. — AFP

VARDY GIVES LEICESTER HOPE IN SEVILLA DEFEAT

SEVILLA: Jamie Vardy's first Champions League goal gave Leicester City a lifeline in their last 16 tie despite going down 2-1 to Sevilla in yesterday's first leg.

Goals from Pablo Sarabia and Joaquin Correa had given Sevilla a deserved 2-0 lead, whilst Correa also saw a penalty saved by the inspired Kasper Schmeichel.

However, despite Sevilla's dominance, Schmeichel's heroics and Vardy's strike means the English champions are well in the tie ahead of the second leg at home on March 14.

The two sides couldn't be in more contrasting form with Sevilla just three points off the top of La Liga, whilst Leicester face a relegation battle just a year after defying all the odds to win the Premier League. Sevilla's

first big chance arrived 14 minutes in when Correa showed more fight and fleetness of foot than the Leicester defence inside the area and was chopped down by visiting captain Wes Morgan.

Correa won a battle with his teammates to take the spot-kick, but was less successful with a tame effort that Schmeichel easily collected. The Dane then showed fine reflexes to get down low to his left to parry Sergio Escudero's low driven effort from the edge of the box. Sevilla finally made their superiority count 24 minutes in when Escudero's cross from the left was met with a powerful header from his opposite wing-back Sarabia that nestled in the far corner for his ninth goal of the

season. The one way traffic continued as Stefan Jovetic's looping long-range effort was turned over by Schmeichel before the 'keeper produced another stunning stop to once again deny Correa.

Leicester didn't have a single effort on goal in the first-half, but did at least test Sergio Rico early in the second period, albeit with a routine save when he collected Wilfred Ndidi's volley from range. Vitolo then nearly undid Schmeichel's good work in the first half with an audacious effort from the narrowest of angles that clipped the inside of the Leicester 'keeper's near post.

Just as the visitors were beginning to gain a foothold, Sevilla doubled their lead as Jovetic held off two

Leicester defenders then laid the ball perfectly into Correa's path to finish high past Schmeichel from close range. However, Claudio Ranieri's men responded to get an away goal that could prove vital in three weeks' time.

Danny Drinkwater broke down the left and his low cross was turned home on the stretch by Vardy for his first goal since December. Leicester still had to see out a late onslaught as Sevilla sought to restore their two-goal advantage.

Adil Rami came closest when his thunderous header came back off the bar, but Leicester held out to maintain hope their maiden Champions League campaign can stretch into the last eight. — AFP

PJACA, ALVES STRIKES LIFT JUVE PAST DEPLETED PORTO



PORTO: Juventus' goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon (L) and Porto's Spanish goalkeeper Iker Casillas greet one another at the end of the UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match FC Porto vs Juventus at the Dragao stadium in Porto yesterday. — AFP

PORTO: Croatian starlet Marko Pjaca and Dani Alves came off the bench to strike late as Juventus overcame 10-man Porto 2-0 in their Champions League last 16 first leg yesterday. Porto hosted Juventus, the beaten 2015 finalists, looking for their first win in four meetings between the sides and confident in their chances after a recent six-game winning run. But the hosts endured a disastrous opening half at the Estadio do Dragao, former Inter Milan midfielder Alex Telles sent off for a second bookable offence in the 27th minute.

After seeing both Gonzalo Higuain and Paulo Dybala come close, Higuain notably denied on 39 minutes by an alert Iker Casillas, Massimiliano Allegri replaced Juan Cuadrado with Pjaca on 67 minutes.

The 22-year-old capitalised only six minutes later, starting a great move before firing Dybala's return pass past Casillas from 15 yards out. Allegri replaced right-back Stephan Lichtsteiner with Alves immediately afterwards and the former Barcelona star scored with practically his first touch of the game to wrap up a precious win for the Turin giants.

Deploying an attack-minded 4-2-3-1 formation designed to squeeze goals out of Higuain, Juve were forced to defend deep as Porto took control in the opening stages. But early promise failed to threaten Gianluigi Buffon in the Juve goal, Yacine Brahimi's free kick curling over after Giorgio Chiellini, who passed a late fitness test with fellow defender Andrea Barzagli, fouled striker Andre Silva.

Juve eventually settled and Higuain looked on his way to breaking the deadlock on 18 minutes until Marcano slid in to dis-

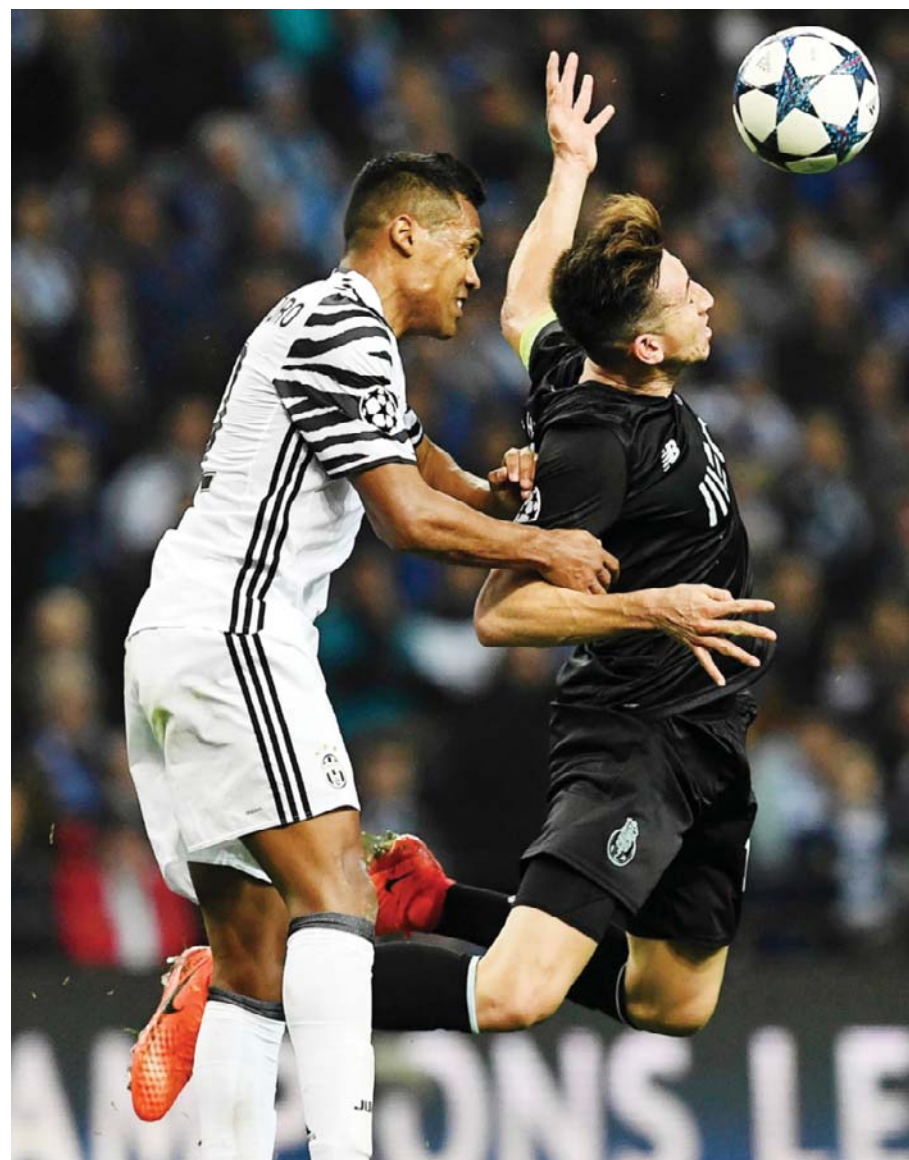
possess the Argentine yards from goal. When Miralem Pjanic fired an enticing ball into the area for Mandzukic, Casillas was forced out quickly to slide the ball away with his feet.

Juventus were gaining momentum but Dybala fired a great chance over Casillas's crossbar after Sami Khedira's smart overhead flick. Telles earned his first caution on 25 minutes for a foul on Cuadrado and gave Juventus a welcome boost when he saw red barely two minutes later for a foul on Lichtsteiner.

Santo replaced Silva with Miguel Layun three minutes later but it took a superb reflex save from Casillas to stop Higuain's deflected effort from squeezing in at the base of the post on 39 minutes.

Casillas was beaten on the stroke of half-time but Dybala's shot from the edge of the area came off the base of the 'keeper's upright. The players left the pitch at half-time to a chorus of whistles, although they were aimed mostly at German referee Felix Brych after a controversial opening period capped by Maxi Pereira being cautioned for a foul on Mandzukic.

A reminder that Porto had no intention of sitting back to defend came just three minutes after the restart, Hector Herrera heading Layun's great cross to the back post into Buffon's side-netting. Porto remained resolute, but eventually buckled under Juve's persistence. Khedira came close after pouncing on a poor headed clearance by Ruben Neves and then Higuain bamboozled his two markers before unleashing a right-footed drive that curled just wide of Casillas's far post. — AFP



PORTO: Juventus' Brazilian defender Alex Sandro (L) vies with Porto's Mexican midfielder Hector Herrera during the UEFA Champions League round of 16 second leg football match FC Porto vs Juventus at the Dragao stadium in Porto yesterday. — AFP

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SPECIAL NEEDS

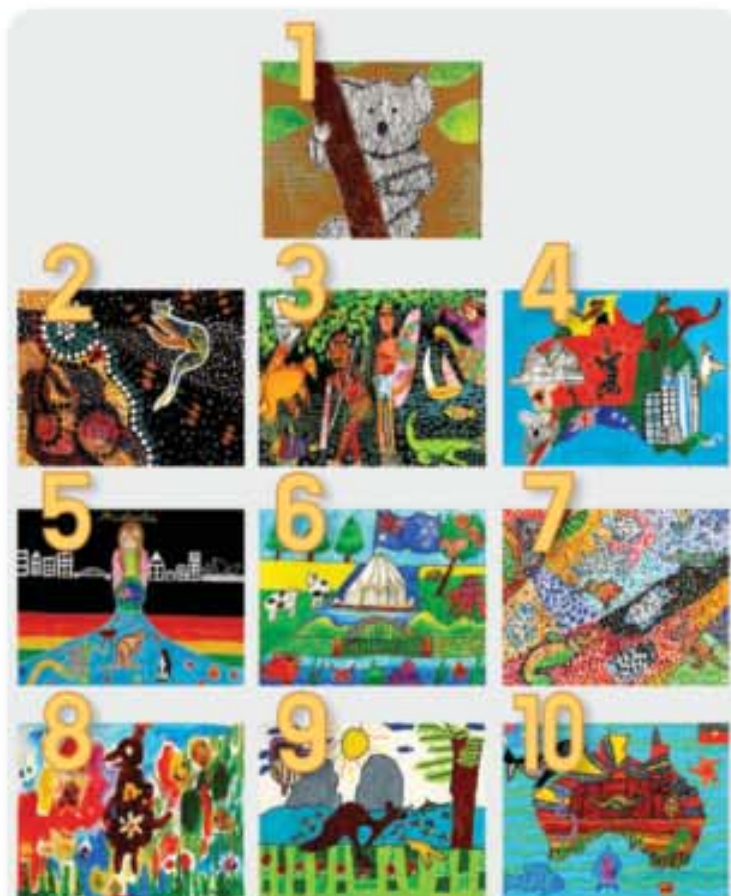
- **First winner**
Faisal Ali Almhana
Alnebras School
- **Second winner**
Mousa Abedal-Aziz Ahmed
Alnebras School
- **Third winner**
Haya Abd Al-Aziz Al-Shayea
Alnebras School
- **Runners-up**
• Rawa Fawzi Al-Shayea
Manarat School
• Johann D'souza
Kuwait English School
• Mesbah Humoud Al-Mesbah - Khalifa School
• Bader Younis Al-Dwailah
Hope School
• Haya Soliaman Al-Shayea
Manarat School
• Badrreya Mousa Sabti
Khalifa School
• Mohamed Abd Al-Rahman
Kuwait Academy



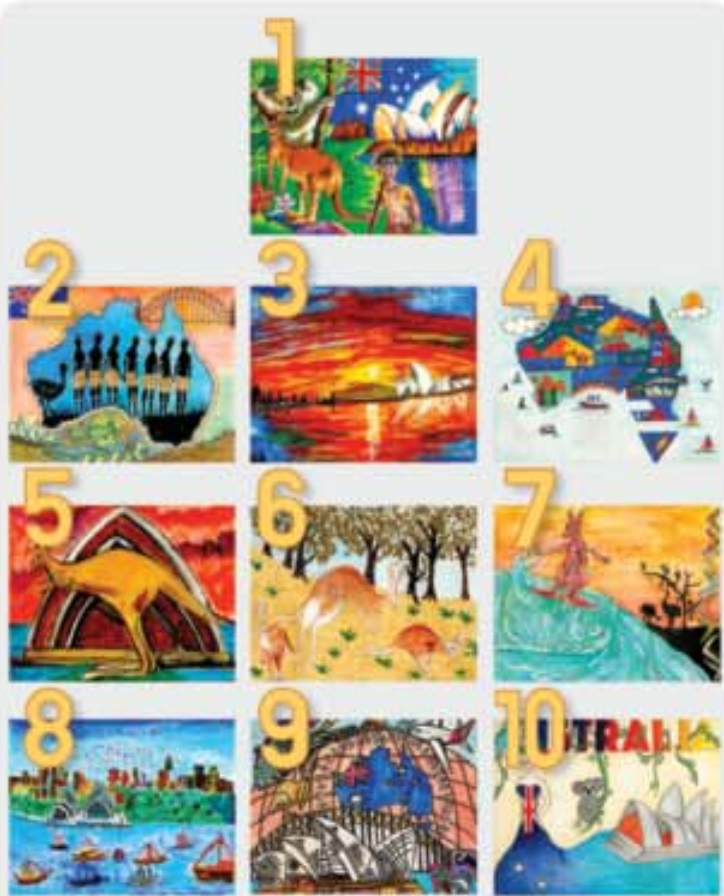
The Winners of Special Needs students

6 TO 9 YEARS

- **First winner**
Al-Hasan Al-Maged
Al-Ruaya School
- **Second winner**
Neema Hamza Abo Ain
Alqotuf School
- **Third winner**
Sonia Anna Mouradian
Armeian School
- **Runners-up**
• Daniella Becca Derec
Indian English School
• Andreca K. Sequeira
Carmel School
• Anna Belle
Lycee Francais
• Sreena Surech
Indian Educational School
• Nour Salah
Future School
• Hamed Yousef
Hisham Ebn Omayaschool
• Meher Singh Sayed
Salmiya Ind Modern School



The Winners of 6 - 9 years students



The Winners of 10-13 years students

10 & 13 YEARS

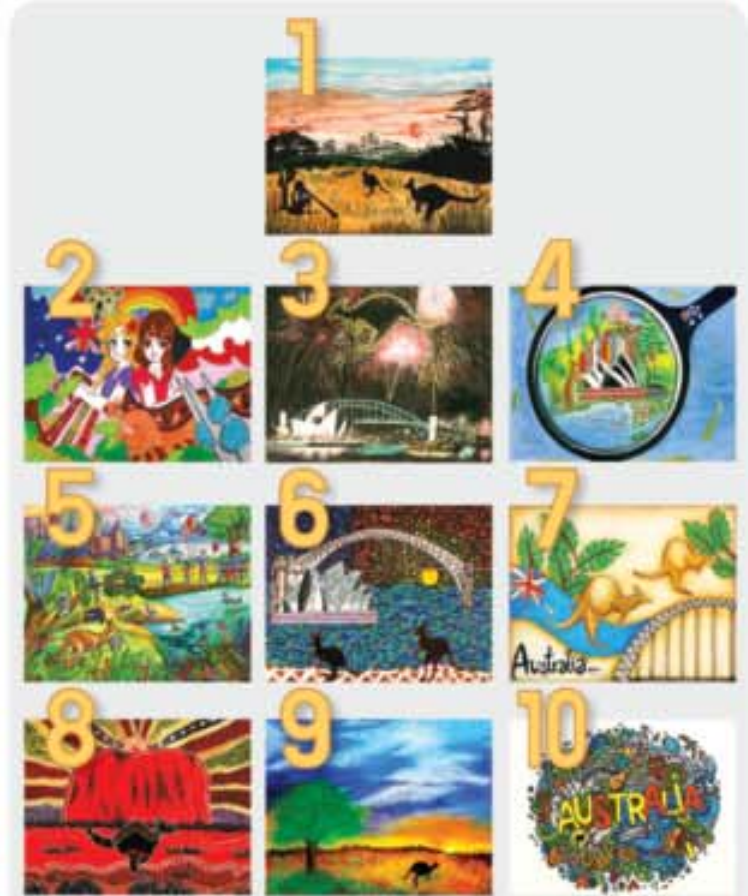
- **First winner**
Nandhakrish Nan . M
Indian Educatioal School (Bahavans)
- **Second winner**
Dikshita Voura
Carmel School
- **Third winner**
Warada Nabil
International School of Pakistan
- **Runners-up**
• Lolwa Abed Al-Aziz Mothafer
Mushref Intermediet School
• Sharan James Riyo
United Indian School
• Sukaina Raza Ali
English School Of Kuwait
• Fatema Taher Nour
Gulf English School
• Sheyanshe Dhirawat
Integrated Indian School
• Lexine Simmel Lunday
New Kuwait Philipine International School
• Sodon Ali Al-Olaimi
Om Kalthoum Intermediet School



The Winners of Special Effort students

SPECIAL EFFORT

- Anfal Bo Hamad
Anfal Group
- Aysha Mohammed Al-Khataib
Al-Ekhlash School
- Aya Karem Abdel Hamed
Al-Ekhlash School
- Meshary Abul
Kuwait English School
- Minjae Son
Kuwait English School
- Myoungiae Son
Kuwait English School



The Winners of 14-17 years students

14 & ABOVE

- **First winner**
Isra Hamdullah
New Pakistan School
- **Second winner**
Sara Mohammed Alshati
Omama Bent Beshar
- **Third winner**
Qassem Ahmed Al-hwaj
Saleh Shehab School
- **Runners-up**
• Abd Al-Rahman Ahmed Mohammed
Khalifa Talal Al-Gare
• Abo Amaan Pal
Indian Center School
• Angel Tereesa
Gulf English School
• Dana Hussain Ghulum Hussain
Omama Bent Bisher
• Laial Al-Harb
English School of Pakistan
• Esraa Ahmed Hamed Saleem
Faraa Bent Abi Al-Sult
• Ibrahim Hafe
New Pakistan Int. School

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2017

China's thriving SUV-only
automaker looks globally

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World stock markets
mostly higher

Page 24



Top brands plan to
boycott Bangladesh
garment summit

Page 23

CROATIA'S REAKTOR SIGNS JOINT VENTURE WITH KUWAITI TECH PROVIDER

Page 26



HOUSTON: Sunlight streams between skyscrapers as the sunrise paints the sky behind downtown Houston. —AP

LE PEN PLOTS RETURN OF THE FRANC

COULD THIS LEAD TO THE END OF THE EURO?

PARIS: If Marine Le Pen has her way, the French will soon pay for their baguettes with francs, not euros. The presidential candidate from the anti-EU, anti-immigration National Front party is all about national sovereignty and independence. She wants France to take control of its money, subject to a referendum that would lead France out of the European Union and its shared currency. But how would France pull off a euro exit, or "Frexit"?

No country has left the euro since its creation in 1999. A number of economists paint dire scenarios in which the departure of one of the euro's 19 countries unleashes chaos: market plunges, controls on money transfers, customs officers stopping people carrying suitcases of cash out of the country, a plague of defaults and lawsuits on bonds and contracts.

The euro was designed to be irrevocable. It's the "Hotel California" principle, as in the Eagles' song: you may wish to "check out any time you like, but you can never leave." Le Pen is leading polls for the first round of voting April 23; most polls and prognosticators see her losing the second round on May 7. But after the British vote last year to leave the 28-member European Union, and after Donald Trump's election as US President, fewer people are taking a Le Pen defeat for granted. Here are scenarios - starting with an explanation of Le Pen's position by Jean Messiha, the economist who drafted her 144-point electoral program.

Soft Frexit

Messiha downplays apocalyptic scenarios, saying that since a disorderly breakup would harm other euro countries they have a motive to sit down and negotiate France's smooth exit - a "soft Frexit" rather than a "hard Frexit," in which France simply pulls out with no agreement or cooperation.

Her election "will be a shock in Europe that will bring our partners around the table," Messiha told The Associated Press.

The National Front, known in France by its acronym FN, foresees "a six-month negotiation period with our partners regarding what will be the new monetary framework, the new type of cooperation once we decide to go outside the euro," he said. "If the French people make the choice of Frexit, our partners could not continue to behave as if nothing has happened... The withdrawal of a country as large as France is not a minor event. It will have very important collateral impact on the eurozone. They will be forced to come to the table and negotiate a soft Frexit, not for our sake but for their own sake also."

Le Pen and the National Front view the euro, which almost broke up during a debt crisis in 2010-2012, as headed for a breakup eventually in any case. "It is always better to prepare the end of the eurozone instead of waiting until the end, until the eurozone itself explodes," Messiha said. The National Front is open to different forms of post-exit cooperation. Le Pen has mentioned the European currency unit, called ECU, which predated the euro. The ECU was a weighted average of national currencies, used as a reference point so that countries could keep their national currencies in a stable but adjustable relationship to each other.

The apocalypse

A number of economists say a French euro exit would provoke a financial and economic disaster. That is because owners of stocks, bonds, real estate and other assets would fear having their holdings redenominated into a reborn franc that would likely fall in value. So they would sell everything before the currency switch could be carried out.



LYON: In this Sunday, Feb 5, 2017 file photo, Far-right leader presidential candidate Marine Le Pen gestures as she speaks during a conference. —AP

And then France would default on its government bonds for trying to substitute new francs as repayment. Corporate borrowers would be in default, or else struggle to pay debts in suddenly more valuable euros. Switching currencies on bond holders "is default, full stop," said economist Carsten Brzeski at ING-DiBa. "You're going to call your lawyer."

Economist Cinzia Alcidi, the head of the economic policy unit at the Center for European Policy Studies in Brussels, used the word "apocalyptic." Political leaders have shied away from letting Greece slide out of the euro because of that fear of disruption. A French exit would be even more disruptive because France is so much bigger. "It would mean the end of the euro and the collapse of the entire banking system in Europe, given the size and linkages of the French banks," Alcidi said. "Italy and other countries would fol-

low, or maybe even lead the exit and the sovereign default will be inevitable."

She said the impact of redenominating contracts and setting up new monetary authorities is "impossible to estimate with any realism." As for negotiating a "soft" exit, forget about it, says Nicolas Veron, visiting fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. "That assumes a consensus that the euro needs to be dismantled and that consensus is not there. It's an impossible assumption." Veron said the National Front and Le Pen "are talking about things that are almost impossible as if they were likely. They seem more concerned with sound bites and what resonates with the public."

Sovereignty first

Messiha says there could be disruption but says it would soon pass, as it did after the vote in Britain, which however is not part of the euro. He

claims the new franc would fall only by a manageable 5-10 percent against the dollar. The euro itself has fallen against the dollar by some 23 percent since 2014 and that helped eurozone exporters.

He disputed the notion that France would automatically be found in default on its government bonds if it switched currencies, saying that under international law a country's debt is assumed to be in its own currency. Assistance could be provided for corporations. And the French central bank could support the government's ability to borrow by buying its debt, something that's restricted under the euro. In any case, he said, it is important to "break the monopoly of financing through the financial markets... Politics must dominate economics."

A house divided

But wait: even a Le Pen victory would not mean she could implement all her plans. That's because the National Front currently has only two seats in the National Assembly. She would need a strong showing in the parliamentary vote June 11 and 18. Otherwise, she will face a prime minister from a different party. Under the constitution, the president can nominate and dismiss the prime minister, but that prime minister must win a majority of deputies.

Says economist Holger Schmieding at Berenberg Bank: "The likely result would be a protracted political stalemate and a serious dent to growth amid heightened uncertainty, but not a Frexit." A Le Pen victory could, however, indirectly undermine the euro by installing an opponent of the currency union at the head of the second-largest member country. That could damage confidence in the region and worsen a crisis that erupts elsewhere, such as Italy or Greece. —AP

ESTONIAN ROBOTS HEADED FOR US MUST MASTER CROSSWALKS

TALLINN: A knee-high, black-and-white buggy rolls down a snowy pavement in Estonia's capital Tallinn and, carefully avoiding pedestrians, stops obediently at the red traffic light of a large road junction. The six-wheeled robot, on its way to deliver lunch to a client, knows to cross only when the pedestrian light is green, but, armless, it cannot press the traffic light button.

Inventors Starship Technologies have taught their robots to avoid traffic lights with buttons and are now giving them speakers and microphones to help them navigate pedestrian crossings. While not quite as talkative as C-3PO, the quick-witted droid of "Star Wars" movies, Starship robots will be able to communicate with humans.

"We'll have predefined sentences that are used in certain situations. Like 'hello' or... 'could you press the button of the traffic light?'" Mikk Martmaa, the 26-year-old head of Starship's testing programme in Estonia, told AFP. Most passers-by smile as the robot resembling a hi-tech icebox roams the streets of Tallinn's Mustamäe district.

"I've seen the Second World War and now I've lived to see robots on the streets of Tallinn!," marvels 80-year-old

resident Aleksandra Vaskina. A prototype of the robot was first designed for a NASA competition seeking bots able to collect rock samples on Mars or the Moon. While it did not win, the Tallinn-based engineers behind the model thought it was perfect for food deliveries. To explore the idea, lead engineer Estonian Ahti Heinla and Denmark's Janus Friis, co-founders of the online call service Skype, created Starship Technologies in London in 2014. The startup's bots are being developed and tested in the Baltic state of Estonia, one of the world's most wired countries and a trailblazer in new technology.

'Knock-knock'

On a cold February day, 27-year-old TV producer Liisi Molder does not feel like going out but fancies a 12-euro (\$13) portion of squid and celeriac with herring roe and rocket in shellfish sauce from the busy nearby Umami restaurant. With a few clicks, Molder places her order on an application on her mobile phone and 20 minutes later the robot arrives with her lunch. It had no trouble climbing a paving stone in front of Molder's block of flats, but

unable to press the entry buzzer, it sends a message to her phone.

"Knock-knock! Your Wolt delivery is arriving, please come outside and unlock the robot," reads the message with an access code to open the robot's container. "I'm sure it's going to make some services more efficient," Molder told AFP. The robots' top speed is around six kilometres (four miles) per hour but they are far less expensive to build and operate than delivery drones now being tested by online retail giant Amazon and others.

Once on the market, the final product is expected to cost "as much as a laptop or a really expensive phone. A few thousand euros," Martmaa said. Starship partnered with Finland-based Wolt, a company handling food deliveries for over 120 Tallinn eateries. The robots are "a good addition to our fleet. We have bikes, cars and scooters but maybe the robots will be the best option for the short deliveries in the future," says Matias Nordstrom, Wolt's interim head in Estonia. For now, Wolt robot deliveries are available from four Mustamäe area restaurants. —AFP



TALLINN: A woman takes delivery of food from a six-wheeled robot by Starship Technologies from restaurant. —AFP

WTO RATIFIES FIRST MULTILATERAL DEAL

FACING UNPRECEDENTED THREATS FROM A HOSTILE US

GENEVA: The first multilateral deal agreed at the World Trade Organization came into force yesterday, a step billed as a milestone for the body facing unprecedented threats from a hostile US administration. The Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) has now been ratified by 112 of the WTO's 164 members, crossing the two-thirds threshold needed for activation, the Geneva-based organi-

sation confirmed. Under the deal, nations agreed to simplify and standardize customs procedures at borders to make it easier for goods to flow around the world.

WTO chief Roberto Azevedo said that the TFA was estimated to trim global trade costs by more than 14 percent and could boost global growth by half a percentage point per year. "The trade

facilitation agreement is the biggest reform of global trade this century," Azevedo told journalists after Chad, Jordan, Oman and Rwanda submitted the clinching ratifications.

Reap the benefits

Poorer countries are expected to reap the most benefits from the TFA through provisions that will improve access to richer markets for their products. The head of the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce, Sunil Bharti Mittal, called the TFA's ratification "a watershed moment for global trade."

He said small businesses the world over had been shut out of international commerce because they lacked the resources to navigate "complex customs requirements." "By cutting unnecessary red-tape at borders," the TFA will open markets to more players, he added in a statement. Since its founding in 1995, the WTO has suffered high-profile setbacks in trying to craft major deals, notably in the stalled Doha Round process, which is striving to re-write global trading rules.

When negotiations on the TFA were successfully concluded in 2013 it marked a major victory for the WTO. Azevedo claimed yesterday that the relatively swift ratification process proved the deal was "a win-win for everyone". But more trouble almost certainly lies ahead following Donald Trump's US election win.

'Confident' despite Trump

The leader of the world's top economy called the WTO a "disaster" during the campaign and threatened to pull the US out. The protectionist agenda he hyped during the campaign has persisted since his inauguration, including through the nomination of Robert Lighthizer as US trade representative.

Lighthizer has said Washington could ignore WTO rules in order to redress what he considers trade imbalances, notably ones he claims favor China. Azevedo, a Brazilian diplomat, has in public remarks sought to downplay the possible threat of rising US protectionism. "I am quite confident that the WTO offers tools to address many of the concerns expressed recently," he said Wednesday in response to a question about Trump. He added that he was "yet to have any kind of conversation with the new administration". — AFP



GENEVA: Brazilian Roberto Azevedo, left, Director General of the World Trade Organization, WTO, and Jordan's Ambassador Saja Majali, pose with the ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, during a photo opportunity, at the headquarters of the World Trade Organization. — AP



FRANKFURT: The German stock index DAX is displayed at 12,031.11 points at the stock exchange in Frankfurt. — AP

EU SAYS, GERMANY SHOULD DO MORE TO HELP ECONOMY

BRUSSELS: Europe's top economy Germany should help its EU partners out, the European Commission said yesterday, after the Trump administration attacked Berlin for using the bloc to boost exports unfairly. The Commission said second-ranked France, which has long struggled with deficits, had made progress but more needed to be done to remedy "excessive imbalances" in its much weaker public finances.

Germany has racked up enormous trade surpluses over many years, with its EU peers pressing Berlin repeatedly to help their weaker economies by investing more at home to boost consumption and therefore imports. Unveiling a regular review of member state public finances, EU Economic Affairs Commissioner Pierre Moscovici said this situation was not good for anyone.

"In Germany's case, we see once again that a very large current account surplus is not healthy for the economy and additionally, creates very significant economic and political distortions for the entire eurozone," Moscovici said. "We will follow developments closely in this situation which is absolutely crucial for the eurozone," he told reporters.

"We will make the necessary recommendations this spring and later, on the basis of what the next government does," he added, referring to September polls in Germany. US President Donald Trump warned just before his inauguration Berlin was taking everyone for a ride, including the European Union, by using a weak euro to boost exports. "You've been very unfair with the USA ... it's a one-way street," Trump told German tabloid Bild, promising tough action to restore the balance.

France 'more to do'

Compared with the strength of Germany, France has struggled with persistent low growth, high budget deficits and debt. Moscovici, a former French finance minister, said the latest report showed more "good news" as Paris stabilised the economy. "There has been progress but there certainly is much more to do. That will be for the next government to decide and so we will look very carefully at what they put forward," he said, referring to upcoming French presidential elections.

Among other countries running "excessive imbalances," the Commission noted that Italy continued to have very high debt levels—currently around 130 percent of GDP—while the economy struggled for growth. Recent political upheaval had also stalled needed reforms since mid-2016, it noted.

Spain meanwhile, categorized as "experiencing imbalances," was in the midst of a strong recovery which supported rebalancing of the economy. European Union member states are supposed to keep budget deficits—the shortfall between government revenue and spending—at not more than three percent of Gross Domestic Product. Accumulated public debt has a ceiling of 60 percent of GDP.

The Commission polices member states to see they meet these rules but has stopped short of imposing punishments on member states who have mostly breached the limits for years. Debt levels especially remain high after the eurozone crisis required massive publicly-funded bailouts, but on budget deficits there has been a significant improvement led by Germany, which has balanced its books. — AFP

DUTCH CORPORATE TAKEOVER DEFENSES TOUGH TO BREACH

THE HAGUE: Corporate takeovers can be tricky in the Netherlands, as US food giant Kraft Heinz found out before performing a sudden U-turn in its surprise move on Unilever, experts say. But even unwanted attention from a potential predator can be useful, if it serves as a wake-up call for companies needing to shape up to avoid becoming a target again, they say.

Kraft Heinz on Sunday announced it was dropping its \$143 billion (135 billion euro) offer to buy the Anglo-Dutch Unilever-barely two days after vowing to press ahead with the bid that would have created the world's second-largest food giant behind Nestle. Rotterdam-based Unilever had on Friday snubbed the offer, saying it "fundamentally undervalues" the company that has brands like Marmite, Magnum ice cream, Lipton tea and Knorr soups in its portfolio.

But on Tuesday, Unilever said it was "conducting a comprehensive review of options available to accelerate delivery of value" for shareholders which it expected to be complete by April. "The events of the last week have highlighted the need to capture more quickly the value we see in Unilever," it added in a statement. "We don't really know what happened behind the scenes" between Friday and Sunday, said Peter Roosenboom, professor in corporate finance at Rotterdam's Erasmus University.

"I think they (Kraft Heinz) thought they could do a friendly deal... but they made a mistake. Historically Dutch companies make use of many takeover defences," he told AFP. Although many Dutch protective measures have been disman-

tled over the past 10 to 15 years "it still remains very difficult to acquire Dutch-listed companies in a hostile way", Roosenboom said. Kraft Heinz may have decided to drop the bid once it saw things sliding towards a hostile takeover and realised "it was going to be an uphill battle to get the deal done", he said.

Unique protection

Analysts say Dutch corporations are protected by a unique set of laws and anti-takeover measures that makes it very difficult, but not impossible, for outside companies to conclude hostile takeovers. Dutch companies by law must themselves consider whether the deal is in the interest of all stakeholders including management and employees, customers, creditors, suppliers and the environment.

This model differs from the United States or Britain "where a board only has a responsibility towards its shareholders", said Martijn Kesler, a corporate lawyer for AMS Advocates in Amsterdam. Unilever's corporate culture—which focuses more on corporate responsibility and sustainability than short-term profits—also differs vastly from Kraft Heinz and its owners 3G Capital, the analysts said.

The Brazilian group is known for its brutal approach when it comes to cost and job cuts and zero budgeting principles, analysts said. "The bottom line is the most important aspect for the owners of Kraft Heinz," said Joost van Beek of Theodoor Gilissen private bank in Amsterdam. "Had this deal gone through, I

believe thousands of Dutch jobs may have been lost," at Unilever, he said.

Dutch 'poison pill'

Home-grown anti-takeover measures include the so-called "Dutch poison pill" which during a takeover transfers control of the company from public stockholders to a controlled foundation. For instance, a targeted company can issue share certificates that means a large portion, or even a majority, of the vote in a takeover bid is shifted to a so-called trust office foundation.

"This is a very powerful position because basically the administrators of the trust office are on friendly terms with the target company's management... effectively making it very difficult to launch a hostile takeover." "The anti-takeover schemes in The Netherlands, especially the one using the trust office foundation are quite unique," added Kesler.

"I would not be surprised if Unilever had (similar) measures in place to protect them from the attempt," he told AFP. The attempted takeover however showed that even large companies such as Unilever, which posted a 52.7 billion-euro turnover last year can be vulnerable to attack, analysts said.

"It might force Unilever to shape up, become more efficient and keep them on their toes," said Erasmus University's Roosenboom. "That's probably the best way to keep your shareholders happy and make sure you don't get this unwanted takeover attention," he said. — AFP

S AFRICA BUDGET THROWS LIGHT ON FRACTURED ANC

PRETORIA: South Africa's Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan delivers the annual budget in parliament yesterday as he battles to revive the economy and head off loyalists of the president who seek to oust him. Gordhan, a popular figure in South Africa and among international investors, is widely seen as being at loggerheads with President Jacob Zuma, who has shrugged off a series of recent corruption scandals.

The ruling African National Congress (ANC) has been engulfed by friction between Zuma's plans for funding "radical economic transformation" and Gordhan's stand against graft and uncontrolled expenditure. "The budget will allow Gordhan to show his independence as the head of treasury and not be influenced by politics," political analyst Mcebisi Ndletyana told AFP. "But he also has to find some money to support Zuma's projects—that could prove to be very difficult in this economic climate."

Gordhan last year faced fraud charges that were criticised as a move against him by Zuma's associates as political turmoil spooked investors and saw the rand plummet. The charges were dropped at the last minute, exposing tensions in the

ANC as several ministers came out in Gordhan's support. The ANC youth league, women's league and its military veterans association have all called for him to resign.

On borrowed time?

Gordhan's future has come under the spotlight again ahead of the budget, with speculation of an imminent cabinet reshuffle to axe him—a step likely to trigger another crisis of confidence in the markets. Uncertainty increased last week with the announcement that Zuma ally Brian Molefe, the former chief executive of the state-owned power generator Eskom, was heading for parliament as a new lawmaker.

"You don't bring someone of Molefe's calibre into parliament just to make him a backbencher," said Ndletyana. In a pre-budget interview with television news channel eNCA, Gordhan, 67, admitted that he was "not indispensable", adding "we are just humble civil servants." The finance minister, who is not viewed as a future presidential candidate, was appointed in 2015 to calm panicked investors when Zuma sacked two finance ministers within four days. — AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.689
Indian Rupees	4.571
Pakistani Rupees	2.919
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.034
Nepali Rupees	2.866
Singapore Dollar	216.060
Hongkong Dollar	3.946
Bangladesh Taka	3.831
Philippine Peso	6.132
Thai Baht	8.756

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.694
Qatari Riyal	84.142
Omani Riyal	795.608
Bahraini Dinar	813.470
UAE Dirham	83.408

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	20.450
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	17.537
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.230
Tunisian Dinar	134.810
Jordanian Dinar	431.290
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.041
Syrian Lira	2.183
Morocco Dirham	30.924

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	306.150
Euro	327.180
Sterling Pound	384.680
Canadian dollar	234.780
Turkish lira	83.310

Swiss Franc	307.460
Australian Dollar	237.110
US Dollar Buying	304.950

GOLD

20 Gram	252.060
10 Gram	128.950
5 Gram	65.320

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer Selling Rate

US Dollar	305.900
Canadian Dolla	233.8150
Sterling Pound	383.845
Euro	325.313
Swiss Frank	309.220
Bahrain Dinar	810.915
UAE Dirhams	83.680
Qatari Riyals	84.900
Saudi Riyals	82.500
Jordanian Dinar	432.620
Egyptian Pound	19.484
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.019
Indian Rupees	4.574
Pakistani Rupees	2.918
Bangladesh Taka	3.854
Philippines Peso	6.088
Cyprus pound	167.990
Japanese Yen	3.690
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupees	3.855
Malaysian Ringgit	69.500

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.840
Thai Bhat	9.715
Turkish Lira	84.660

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

British Pound	0.376029	0.386029
Czech Korune	0.003923	0.015923
Danish Krone	0.039340	0.044340
Euro	0.317172	0.326172
Norwegian Krone	0.032605	0.037805
Romanian Leu	0.071312	0.071312
Slovakia	0.009185	0.019185
Swedish Krona	0.030062	0.035062
Swiss Franc	0.296735	0.307735
Turkish Lira	0.079075	0.089375
Australian Dollar	0.226999	0.238999
New Zealand Dollar	0.212865	0.222385
Canadian Dollar	0.227782	0.236782
Georgina Lari	0.138321	0.138321
US Dollars	0.302150	0.306550
US Dollars Mint	0.302650	0.306550
Bangladesh Taka	0.003584	0.004148
Chinese Yuan	0.043138	0.046638
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037368	0.040118
Indian Rupee	0.002683	0.004906

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002613	0.002793
Kenyan Shilling	0.002951	0.002951
Korean Won	0.000258	0.000273
Malaysian Ringgit	0.064973	0.070973
Nepalese Rupee	0.002996	0.003166
Pakistan Rupee	0.002673	0.002963
Philippine Peso	0.006026	0.006326
Sierra Leone	0.000038	0.000044
Singapore Dollar	0.210343	0.220343
South African Rand	0.017298	0.025798
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001683	0.002263
Taiwan	0.009820	0.010000
Thai Baht	0.008407	0.008957

Bahraini Dinar	0.805763	0.814263
Egyptian Pound	0.014131	0.023384
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000187	0.000247
Jordanian Dinar	0.426284	0.435284
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000152	0.000252
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020163	0.044163
Nigerian Naira	0.000403	0.001038
Omani Riyal	0.789033	0.794713
Qatar Riyal	0.083308	0.084758
Saudi Riyal	0.080580	0.081880
Syrian Pound	0.001299	0.001519
Tunisian Dinar	0.130050	0.138050
Turkish Lira	0.079075	0.088375
UAE Dirhams	0.081956	0.083656
Yemeni Riyal	0.000996	0.001076

TOP BRANDS PLAN TO BOYCOTT BANGLADESH GARMENT SUMMIT

DHAKA: Leading fashion brands including H&M and Zara will boycott a key industry conference in Bangladesh in support of garment workers who have been sacked, hunted or jailed for participating in wage strikes, the companies said yesterday. H&M, C&A, Tchibo and Inditex which owns Zara-all top clients of Bangladesh's \$30-billion garment industry-pulled out of the Dhaka Apparel Summit, the signature annual event in the global textile hub, scheduled for Saturday.

The move follows strikes in December when tens of thousands of

garment workers in the industrial town of Ashulia staged mass protests demanding a three-fold hike in pay, which can run as low as \$68 a month. Dutch clothing brand C&A said, "C&A together with other apparel brands, including H&M and Inditex decided not to participate in the BGMEA Dhaka Apparel Summit."

"We strongly encourage the Government of Bangladesh to take immediate steps to ensure the protection of the workers' rights, with special attention to the legitimate representatives of the workers who have been

arrested," C&A spokesman Thorsten Rolfes told AFP. A spokesman for Swedish apparel giant H&M confirmed the boycott.

"H&M believes that attending the Dhaka Apparel Summit would create confusion and send the wrong signals regarding our commitment to freedom of association and that the ongoing situation must be peacefully resolved," spokesman IØigo S-enz Maestre said. The strike, which lasted for a little over two weeks, was squashed, with some 1,600 employees sacked and 34 arrested, while cases alleging burglary, arson, vandalism

and extortion, among other charges, were filed against more than 1,500 workers. Last week union leaders said the workers were "living in constant fear of being arrested as the police hunt those who were involved in the strikes".

The summit is hosted by the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), an industry body that represents the country's 4,500 clothing factories, and features Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina as its keynote speaker.

BGMEA president Siddiqur Rahman told AFP that they "did not get any com-

munication from any brand not attending the summit". International rights group Clean Clothes Campaign welcomed the brands' decision to withdraw participation and said it would be "a major embarrassment" for the government and the organisers.

CCC spokeswoman Mirjam van Heugten said, "Unless all detainees are released, unsubstantiated charges are dropped, and other acts of intimidation and harassment of trade unions are stopped... (the brands) cannot credibly participate in a summit on 'sustainable growth' of the industry." — AFP

ABB UNCOVERS FRAUD AT S KOREAN SUBSIDIARY

TOKYO: Japan is turning to those hooded samurai-era acrobatic spies known as ninja to woo tourism. The Japan Ninja Council, a government-backed organization of scholars, tourism groups and businesses, said yesterday that it's starting a Ninja Academy to train people in the art of ninja, and building a new museum in Tokyo devoted to ninja, set to open in 2018.

"The art of ninja is made up of various elements, such as combat, survival techniques and astronomy," Jinichi Kawakami, known as "the last ninja" and a master of the Koga ninja school, told reporters at the Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan. "We hope this will appeal to people all over the world."

The council, set up in 2015, has created an official logo for certified products and movies to nurture what it called the "ninja business," and it hopes to educate "ninja ambassadors" to promote the culture globally.

The first certified product is an origami, or folding paper, for messages shaped like a shuriken, the star-shaped daggers that ninja throw as weapons. Hiroshi Mizohata, council vice president, who heads the Osaka Convention & Tourism Bureau, shrugged off questions about commercializing tradition. Dressed in a black ninja outfit, he stressed that ninja fun is good for business and potentially a big part of the government's "Cool Japan" campaign, which includes animation, video games, food and movies, especially leading up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The council put on a ninja-inspired martial-arts demonstration, in which a

muscular actor used rope to ward off, choke and disarm an attacker, and a woman dressed in a mini-ninja outfit did flips to recorded rock music. It also showed a guidebook in English highlighting several ninja-related places in Japan, such as castles where ninja had been employed, a gorge used for training by Sarutobi Sasuke, a legendary ninja, and a ninja-village theme park.

Booming business

Tourism has been booming in Japan, with 24 million visitors from abroad last year, and those numbers are expected to grow. Historically, ninja were hired by samurai as spies on enemies - hence their appearance in movies, eavesdropping from attics and summersaulting escapes from rooftops. Iga and Koga clan ninja were reputed to be the best. They have inspired countless novels, movies and cartoons, including the "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles."

According to the council, ninja can stare at a burning candle without blinking, frequently massage their ears to stay nimble and never gain weight above 60 kilograms (130 pounds). Their diligence and perseverance, as well as their humble acceptance of anonymity, are integral parts of Japanese culture and should become a pillar export, the council argues. Kawakami acknowledged that real ninja training was hard to pass down today, and said that was why he is called the last real ninja. But ninja had much to offer spiritually, such as the meditative focus they muster when they clasp their hands in concentration in their trademark pose. "It is also about respect to our ancestors," Kawakami said. — AP

CHINA'S THRIVING SUV-ONLY AUTOMAKER LOOKS GLOBALLY

AMBITIOUS GOAL REQUIRES ADVANCES IN SAFETY AND FEATURES

BAODING: Wei Jianjun is the chief matchmaker in China's love affair with the SUV. A decade ago, the chairman of Great Wall Motors Ltd. saw opportunity as the bulky vehicles began shedding their image in China as a farm tool. Wei cut back on making sedans and poured resources into its fledgling line of Havals. That gamble paid off as SUVs caught on with drivers who saw them as the safest ride on bumpy, chaotic streets. By 2013, with demand surging, Great Wall had become China's most profitable automaker and Wei was a billionaire.

Now, Wei wants to make the Haval a global brand. It's an ambitious goal that requires advances in safety and features for a company known until now mainly for low prices. Great Wall sells Havals in Australia, Italy and Russia, but exports were less than 5 percent of last year's output of just under 1.1 million units. "By 2020, we hope Haval can become the world's biggest specialty SUV brand," Wei said at a reception at Great Wall headquarters in this city southwest of Beijing to celebrate sales passing the 1 million mark.

That "globalization strategy" includes working toward meeting American safety standards, Wei said. But he gave no indication when Haval might export to the United States or major European markets such as Germany. Great Wall is part of a cadre of small but ambitious independent Chinese automakers that grew in the shadow of state-owned giants such as Shanghai Automotive Industries Corp., which assembles vehicles for General Motors Co. and Volkswagen AG.

Creating brands

Without foreign joint-venture partners, the independents created their own brands and started exporting to Africa and Latin America. Geely Holding Ltd., which owns Sweden's Volvo Cars, plans to start US and European sales of its



HEBEI PROVINCE: In this Sunday, Feb 19, 2017 photo, workers walk past Haval SUV models parked outside the Great Wall Motors assembly plant. — AP

new Lynk & Co. brand in 2019. BYD Auto, the world's biggest-selling electric car maker, supplies battery-powered buses and taxis in the United States and Europe. Great Wall opened a European assembly plant in Bulgaria in 2012. It has similar facilities with local partners in Russia, Indonesia, Iran, Egypt and Ecuador.

SUVs have an outsized role in China, where their popularity has helped offset sagging demand for sedans and other vehicles. Sales of domestic brand SUVs soared 58 percent last year

to 5.3 million units out of total sales of 24.4 million in the world's biggest auto market. They are growing fastest in the lowest price ranges, dominated by Haval and Chinese rivals. That has helped Chinese brands to claw back market share they were losing to global competitors.

The top seller was Haval's flagship H6, starting at 89,000 yuan (\$12,900), which has become China's most popular vehicle to date. H6 sales surged 55 percent last year to 580,000 units while the overall market grew 15 percent. — AP



TOKYO: Members of ninja group Ashura show their martial-art skills during a press conference held by Japan Ninja Council at Foreign Correspondents' Club of Japan (FCCJ). — AFP

MANGA, MARIO AND NINJA: JAPAN'S HOPES FOR TOURISM

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CELEBRATING KUWAIT

ABK extends its congratulations to HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, III the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and to the Kuwaiti government and its people on the occasion of National and Liberation days.

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WORLD STOCK MARKETS MOSTLY HIGHER

LONDON: European stock markets mostly rose yesterday as traders reacted to mixed economic data and earnings results. Earlier, Hong Kong had led most Asia markets higher, but Tokyo struggled as a stronger yen weighed on exporters' share prices. Traders woke up to the now-common sight of a record close on Wall Street.

In Europe yesterday, sterling headed lower in reaction to mixed UK growth data ahead of Brexit, analysts said. Britain's economy grew by a better-than-expected 0.7 percent in the final three months of last year, according to official revised data that revealed also that for the whole of 2016 it expanded by a lower-than-forecast 1.8 percent.

"The main impact of all this was, as expected, felt by the pound," said Spreadex analyst Connor Campbell. "Having been up 0.2 percent against the dollar earlier in the session, sterling is now in the red." In the eurozone, German business confidence unexpectedly bounced back in February, a key survey showed Wednesday, even as political uncertainty continues to cloud the prospects for Europe's biggest economy.

The Ifo institute's headline index climbed to 111 points, the same level it reached in December, after slipping to 109.9 points in January. Last month's dip was largely blamed on fears that US President Donald Trump's protectionist leanings and Britain's upcoming divorce

talks with the European Union would hurt German exporters.

Meanwhile in world corporate news yesterday, shares in Toshiba soared more than 22 percent on expectations of a part sale for its microchip business, and after the Japanese giant sold its medical finance unit to Canon. Despite the surge, the company's shares are still worth only half of what they were in December owing to concerns about massive losses in its US nuclear arm.

In Europe, shares in Airbus fell 0.7 percent to 66.80 euros after the aircraft maker said its profits nosedived last year as charges related to problems with its A400M military cargo transport plane sent earnings into a tailspin. But German

heavy industry giant ThyssenKrupp jumped 4.7 percent to 24.25 euros as the company agreed to sell its Brazilian CSA steel mill to the Ternium group for 1.5 billion euros (\$1.6 billion). "Looking ahead to the US open and there is little on offer to challenge the (British) GDP data for dominance, at least not until the latest Federal Reserve meeting minutes are released this evening," added Campbell.

Most Asia markets up

Meanwhile in Asia, Hong Kong led most Asia markets higher yesterday after the previous day's HSBC-fueled plunge, but Tokyo struggled with a stronger yen. Regional traders woke up to the now-common sight of a record close on Wall Street as the US returned from the Presidents' Day holiday to higher oil prices and healthy eurozone economic data.

The Hang Seng Index in Hong Kong which is at levels not seen since summer 2015 — suffered a meltdown Tuesday after HSBC announced a slump in profits last year and warned of uncertainty from Brexit and Donald Trump.

The banking giant fell five percent. But the bourse snapped back one percent yesterday despite another dip in HSBC. Elsewhere Shanghai, Sydney and Seoul each put on 0.2 percent, while Singapore, Taipei and Manila were also up. Tokyo closed marginally lower as exporters were weighed by the strong yen, although it

recovered from a morning sell-off. However, Toshiba soared more than 22 percent on expectations for a planned sale of a stake in its microchip business, and after it sold its medical finance unit to Canon. Despite the surge, the company's shares are still worth only half of what they were in December owing to concerns about massive losses in its US nuclear arm. The greenback retreated in Asia after rallying Tuesday in response to a top Federal Reserve official saying a March interest rate hike was still a possibility. Fed chief Janet Yellen last week hinted an increase next month was not off the table.

However, the surge fizzled yesterday as investors look ahead to the release of minutes from the central bank's most recent policy meeting to gauge its views on the US economy and plans for lifting borrowing costs. "These markets are very fickle, as last week the dollar could not hold a bid after Yellen's hawkish comments as well as the stellar US economic data," said Stephen Innes, senior trader at OANDA, in a note.

"Yet it turns on a dime after the Fed's Philadelphia President Patrick Harker mentioned that a March rate hike was still on the table. It is all a bit bewildering, but nonetheless a sign that the market is desperately searching for an opinion, while lacking any serious conviction." In early European trade London added 0.1 percent, while Paris and Frankfurt each gained 0.2 percent. —AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report						
Wednesday 22 February 2017						
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low	
Price index	▲ 26.37	6,792.73	6,766.36	6,795.62	6,761.95	
Weighted Index	▲ 0.59	423.51	422.92	425.52	422.86	
KSX 15	▼ -2.28	957.57	959.85	965.83	956.82	

Volume	Value (KWD)	Number of Trades
280,380,243	29,946,324	6,196

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	63	58	50300	2,918	5	58	▼ -5.0
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	420	— 0.0
NAPESCO	870	870	814,508	708,622	75	870	▲ 50.0
ENERGYH	44.0	43.0	59,200	2,552	7	44.0	— 0.0
GPI	53	52	3,662,048	191,154	67	53	— 0.0
ABAR	95	89	268,597	24,169	10	95	▲ 2.0
Oil & Gas			4,854,653	929,416	164	876.79	▲ 11.04
KFOUC	345	325	60,154	20,385	9	340	▼ -10.0
BPCC	590	580	611,650	356,774	11	590	▲ 10.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	700	— 0.0
ALQURAIN	330	320	1,582,613	513,689	47	330	▲ 10.0
Basic Materials			2,254,417	890,847	67	1342.18	▲ 9.55
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	495	— 0.0
CABLE	570	560	72,149	40,465	13	570	— 0.0
SHIP	232	224	55,485	12,429	10	224	— 0.0
PCEM	1,080	1,080	20,025	21,627	4	1,080	▼ -20.0
PAPER	510	460	61,283	28,204	8	510	▲ 25.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89	— 0.0
ACICO	335	320	1,333,039	434,471	65	325	▲ 10.0
GGMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	325	— 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170	— 0.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170	— 0.0
NICBM	218	218	300	85	1	218	▲ 2.0
EQUIPMENT	63	61	615,760	38,460	19	63	▲ 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	75	74	29,970	2,219	5	74	▼ -1.0
AGLTY	630	600	4,475,466	2,726,998	162	610	▲ 10.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	204	— 0.0
CLEANING	57	54	2,909,581	161,407	71	55	— 0.0
KGL	69	66	1,393,086	94,419	33	67	— 0.0
KPCP	198	198	30,000	5,940	4	198	— 0.0
HUMANSOFT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	3,060	— 0.0
NAFAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	200	— 0.0
GFC	56	50	439,095	24,027	24	56	▲ 5.0
MAYADEEN	34.0	33.0	918,305	30,518	26	33.5	▲ 0.5
CGC	500	500	100	50	1	500	▲ 10.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0
UPAC	810	810	5,500	4,455	2	810	▼ -10.0
ALAFCO	260	255	511,904	130,551	8	260	▲ 1.0
MUBARRAD	75	72	240,250	17,533	9	73	▼ -5.0
LOGISTICS	74	73	1,223,899	89,981	29	74	▲ 1.0
SCEM	87	87	5,000	435	1	87	▲ 2.0
QCEM	90	89	2,458,000	218,787	29	90	— 0.0
GIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	87	— 0.0
FCM	88	87	260,500	22,724	6	88	▼ -2.0
RKWC	102	100	10,562	1,068	3	102	— 0.0
SPEC	95	92	598,951	55,828	26	94	▲ 1.0
Industrials			17,668,210	4,162,660	559	1527.73	▲ 6.98
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	— 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	54	— 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	— 0.0
CATTL	224	224	189,716	42,496	10	224	▲ 10.0
DANAH	89	88	1,452,100	128,082	30	88	▼ -1.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,520	— 0.0
Consumer Goods			1,641,816	170,578	40	1142.46	▲ 5.41
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0
YIACO	290	265	21,000	5,590	2	290	— 0.0
Health Care			21,000	5,590	2	1225.37	— 0.00
KCIN	1,500	1,400	4,540	6,640	6	1,440	▲ 40
KHOT	246	206	12,000	2,731	3	246	▲ 10
SULTAN	78	76	117,900	9,109	19	78	▲ 1
CABLETV	35.0	32.5	91,500	2,986	9	32.5	▼ -3
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	— 0
QULAFUEL	130	122	233,772	29,740	45	126	▲ 2
MUNTAZAHAT	87	85	681,236	56,766	32	86	— 0
JAZERA	640	580	146,221	88,317	32	610	▼ -20
SOOR	126	122	189,656	23,317	28	124	▲ 2
FUTUREKID	118	116	11,573	1,366	3	118	— 0
ALRAI	178	176	254,137	44,728	21	178	▲ 2
ZIMAH	66	63	545,720	34,892	36	64	▼ -1
Mezzan	950	950	92,000	87,400	2	950	▼ -10
Consumer Services			2,360,255	387,993	236	963.68	▲ 1.23
ZAIN	490	480	4,306,810	2,083,921	99	480	— 0
OOREDOO	1,240	1,240	12,120	15,029	7	1,240	▼ -20
HITSTELEC	57	53	6,705,273	363,832	140	54	▼ -3
VIVA	840	820	137,165	113,800	42	830	— 0
Telecommunications			11,161,368	2,576,582	288	656.67	▼ -8.93
NBK	730	720	1,711,783	1,249,228	41	730	— 0
GBK	248	246	1,311,000	325,088	20	248	— 0
CBK	500	495	27,000	13,490	4	495	▼ -5
ABK	300	300	28,451	8,535	4	300	— 0
ALMUTAHED	440	435	67,237	29,537	6	440	▲ 5
KIB	248	242	4,493,698	1,100,159	104	244	— 0
BURG	315	310	255,502	79,241	14	310	▼ -5
KFIN	630	610	1,984,292	1,232,999	61	610	▼ -10
BOUBAYAN	415	410	402,153	165,183	24	410	— 0
AUB	238	234	5,535,109	1,306,225	73	238	▲ 10
ITHMR	63	61	9,745,856	604,767	138	62	— 0
WARBANK	285	280	4,126,208	1,160,255	120	280	— 0
Banks			29,688,289	7,274,706	609	978.92	▲ 3.10
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	315	— 0
GINS	800	800	39,655	23,793	1	800	— 0.0
AINS	500	500	5,000	2,500	1	500	— 0.0
WINS	106	104	82,814	8,673	4	106	▲ 6.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	186	— 0.0
FTI	72	69	182,100	12,674	48	69	▼ -5.0
WETHAQ	60	58	382,986	22,505	14	58	▲ 2.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0
Insurance			692,555	70,146	68	1160.74	▲ 4.72

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	50	49.0	289,378	143,092	60	49.5	— 0.0
KRE	78	76	3,379,594	261,406	49	78	▲ 1.0
URC	106	99	9,582	966	8	99	▼ -3.0
NRE	114	110	10,098,766	1,131,295	168	112	— 0.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	390	— 0.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	460	— 0.0
AREEC	182	182	47,213	8,593	2	182	— 0.0
MASSALEH	51	50	550	28	2	50	— 0.0
ARABREC	46.5	45.0	2,804,253	127,412	82	45.5	▼ -0.5
ERESCO	48.0	46.0	688,312	31,983	17	47.0	▼ -1.0
MABANEE	850	840	895,419	752,152	24	850	▲ 10.0
INJAZZAT	84	83	774,071	64,562	21	84	▲ 1.0
INVESTORS	30.5	29.5	8,905,149	268,681	92	30.5	▲ 0.5
IRC	41.5	39.0	19,473,868	777,616	258	40.0	▲ 0.5
ALTUJARIA	87	86	1,726,440	149,287	21	86	— 0.0
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0
AAYANRE	0.0</						



SPORTY ELEGANCE: THE AUDI A5 AND S5 COUPÉ

KUWAIT: Audi revolutionized its mid-size class in 2007 with the A5. The German carmaker created a work of art that took fans around the world by storm. Nine years later Audi has marked the launch of the second generation with a new, honed look and high tech everywhere. The new generation of the A5 Coupé is athletic, sporty and elegant.

Its design goes hand in hand with sophisticated aerodynamics. Under the skin the A5 impresses with an all-new chassis, powerful engines, and innovative infotainment features and driver assistance systems. The new Audi A5 and S5 Coupé are now available at Audi Kuwait showroom represented by Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company. The new model comes in two different engine variants: 40 TFSI, 45 TFSI, with a six-cylinder engine with 354 hp for the Audi S5 Coupé.

How do you make a work of art even more beautiful? Audi designers have been pondering this question for years. The results are impressive: The new Audi A5 Coupé sports a fresh, modern and honed look. It is nevertheless true to its DNA with the sporty and elegant character being passed down to the new version. The best example is the wave-shaped shoulder line that characterized the previous model. The precisely sweeping line with pronounced bulges over the wheel arches emphasizes all four wheels - a cue to the quattro all-wheel drive.

The perfectly balanced proportions with a long engine hood, the stretched wheelbase and short overhangs underscore the sportiness of the new A5 Coupé. The sculpted Single frame grille is significantly flatter and wider than in the previous model. The LED rear lights and LED or Matrix LED headlights with dynamic turn signals make high-end technology visible even after dark.

Tarek Al Shafie, General Manager of Audi Kuwait represented by Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company, said: "The first

generation A5 was truly revolutionary for its class, we are excited to present the all-new second generation model in our showroom." He added "The early arrival of the all-new S5 coupe provides our customers the opportunity to own the sportier version of the A5 family. The launch of the A5 and the S5 cater to the needs and driving enjoyment of all our customers."

Engines

The new Audi A5 Coupé is available in Kuwait with two TFSI engines. Their power output has increased considerably and is now between 190 hp and 252 hp. Compared with the previous model, they offer up to 17 percent more performance while consuming as much as 22 percent less fuel. All the engines combine high efficiency with sporty power development and smooth running.

With its newly developed 3.0 TFSI, the Audi S5 Coupé is now in a league of its own. The turbo V6 exhibits highly efficient, sports car-like performance. From its 2,995 cc of displacement, the boosted six-cylinder engine produces 354 hp of power, which is 21 hp more than the engine in the previous model.

Drive train

The new Audi A5 Coupé comes with a drive train solution tailor-made for each engine variant. The seven-speed S tronic is used with the four-cylinder engines in the A5. The eight-speed tiptronic is reserved for the S5 V6 engine that comes standard with quattro all-wheel drive. Audi also offers the optional rear-axle sport differential for even more dynamic driving and precision.

Chassis

The all-new chassis is one of the strengths of the Audi A5 Coupé. It offers the driver optimal comfort combined with a high degree of agility. The A5 handles long trips with

aplomb. Audi offers a suspension with damper control as an option. This is integrated into the dynamic handling system known as Audi drive select, which enables the driver to modify the basic characteristic in multiple steps. The electromechanical power steering is also a new development from Audi. It adapts according to the vehicle's current speed and provides highly precise road feedback. Optionally available is the dynamic steering, which varies its gear ratio depending on the speed and steering angle.

Body

The Audi A5 Coupé is significantly more efficient than its predecessor. This is due in large part to a reduction in weight as well as sophisticated aerodynamics. The engineers were able to trim the curb weight by as much as 60 kilograms. The body is the lightest in the competitive field thanks to an intelligent mix of materials and lightweight design. With a drag coefficient of 0.25, the A5 Coupé is also the segment leader with respect to aerodynamics.

Interior

The interior benefits from the increased dimensions and longer wheelbase. Space for driver and passengers is more generous. The horizontal architecture of the instrument panel and the continuous air vent strip create a wide sense of space. As is typical for Audi, interior build quality is uncompromisingly high. High-quality materials in a wide range of colors provide for a particularly pleasant ambience and underscore the premium character of the mid-sized model. Optional ambient lighting highlights the interior with a choice of 30 adjustable shades. The new A5 Coupé also redefines the class benchmark for aero acoustics. The acoustic comfort is almost that of a luxury class model.

The luggage compartment offers a volume

of 465 liters, 10 liters more than with the previous model. The rear seat has a 40:20:40 split and can be easily folded forward using levers in the luggage compartment. Audi also offers the two-door Coupé with optional gesture control for opening the luggage compartment lid via a foot motion. The optional trailer hitch is electrically released at the press of a button.

Display and controls

The A5 Coupé is now available for the first time with the optional Audi virtual cockpit, a 12.3-inch TFT display with a resolution of 1,440 x 540 pixels. Together with the MMI navigation plus including 8.3-inch monitor on the center console, it forms the central information unit. The focal point of the MMI terminal is the round rotary pushbutton. Its surface is home to the touch-sensitive touchpad. The touchpad is used to input characters and for multi-finger gestures, such as allowing the driver to zoom in on the map. The whole MMI control logic is similar to that of a smartphone, including the intelligent free text search function. The new, more natural voice control system can recognize input made using everyday language, such as: "I would like to call Peter."

Infotainment

The optional MMI navigation plus will include the Audi smartphone interface. Apple Car Play will bring the familiar smartphone environment to the car, if desired. The optional Audi phone box with wireless charging in the center armrest uses near-field coupling to link smartphones wirelessly to the vehicle's antenna and enables inductive charging according to the Qi standard. For discerning hi-fi fans, the Bang & Olufsen sound system with its innovative 3D sound is available as an option.

Driver assistance systems

An intelligent combination of different technologies enhances the safety, comfort

and efficiency of the new Audi A5 Coupé. At the same time, Audi is also taking the next step toward piloted driving. The broad choice of innovative driver assistance systems sets standards in the segment. Compared with the previous model, nearly all of the systems are either completely new or have been extensively updated. Audi active lane assist helps keep the car on track in the driving lane. New and important safety features include the park assist, cross traffic assist rear, exit warning, collision avoidance assist and turn assist as well as the Audi pre sense systems.

Compared with the previous model, the list of standard equipment is even more generous. Among the features included are LED headlights and LED rear lights, LED interior lights, the Audi MMI radio plus with 7-inch MMI color display, Bluetooth and USB charging function, the three-spoke multifunction steering wheel (including shift paddles), height-adjustable belt feeds and the Audi drive select dynamic handling system.

New trim lines provide numerous customization opportunities, for both the interior and the exterior. Besides the base model, there are also the sport and design lines. The S line sport package and the Audi design selection are available for sophisticated customization, particularly for the interior. Audi offers the S line exterior package for a particularly dynamic appearance.

The Audi S5 Coupé

From 0 to 100 km/h in 4.7 seconds, the new Audi S5 Coupé combines dramatic elegance with the performance of a sports car. Its newly developed, turbocharged V6 engine produces 354 hp and consumes just 7.3 liters of fuel per 100 km. The sharper S exterior design and the S-specific details in the interior underscore the dynamic character of the Audi two-door sports Coupé.



ABK LIGHTS UP HEADQUARTERS FOR NATIONAL AND LIBERATION DAY

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) marked the start of its National and Liberation day celebrations earlier this month by lighting up its Head Quarters with the colors of the Kuwaiti flag. The Bank will be celebrating with its staff members on this occasion by distributing Kuwait flags and themed pins as well as traditional sweets across all branches. As part of ABK's social responsibility and in line with its focus on special needs, the Bank is the main sponsor of the Kharafi Activity Kids Center's National Day celebra-

tion for children with special needs, further strengthening the sense of nationalism and joy on this special occasion.

The Bank will be closed for business on Sunday 26th February, 2017 and will resume its operations on Monday 27th February, 2017. During this period, ABK's online services and call center will be available. ABK takes this opportunity to congratulate HH the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, HH the Crown Prince of Kuwait Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti government and its people.

SYLHET TO BE FLYDUBAI'S 3RD DESTINATION IN BANGLADESH

KUWAIT: Dubai-based flydubai announced the addition of Sylhet to its network, becoming the airline's third destination in Bangladesh after Chittagong and Dhaka. flydubai will commence direct flights between Dubai and Sylhet on 15 March 2017. The new service will see flydubai provide up to 27 flights a week to Bangladesh.

The service to Sylhet, also known as Jalalabad, will begin with four flights a week and is set to increase to six flights a week from 16 May. The operation to Sylhet Osmani International Airport is in partnership with Bangladesh carrier Regent Airways.

Commenting on the new announcement, Ghaith Al Ghaith, Chief Executive Officer at flydubai, said: "We are happy to be re-launching flights to Sylhet, an important cultural and trade centre in Bangladesh. We remain committed to strengthening air links between the UAE and underserved markets. We look forward to seeing more people choose our reliable and affordable service between Dubai and our growing network in Bangladesh."

flydubai serves a wide network of destinations in the Subcontinent. This network covers eight points in India, five points in Pakistan, three points in Bangladesh, two points in Sri Lanka as well as the capital cities of Afghanistan and Nepal with flights to Kabul and Kathmandu respectively.

"Since we began operations to Dhaka and Chittagong at the beginning of 2011, we have seen strong demand for flights to Bangladesh," said Sudhir Sreedharan, Senior Vice President Commercial for GCC, Subcontinent and Africa at flydubai. "We are confident that our passengers from Sylhet will benefit from our direct flights to Dubai and beyond, via Dubai's efficient aviation hub, especially onto our strong GCC network which is served by up to 650 weekly flights to 18 points."

With the announcement of the launch of flights to Batumi in Georgia, Qabala in Azerbaijan and Tivat in Montenegro, earlier in February, flydubai's network has expanded to 93 destinations in 44 countries. This now sees the airline operate to 62 destinations that previously had no or very few direct air links from the UAE. Flight scan be booked from flydubai's



website (flydubai.com), its Customer Centre (+971) 600 54 44 45, flydubai Travel Shops or through travel partners.

Flight details and fares

Flights between Sylhet and Dubai start on 15 March 2017 with four flights a week. flydubai's FZ 595/596 will operate between Dubai International Terminal 2 and Sylhet's Osmani International Airport. Economy Class return fares from Dubai to Sylhet will start at AED1,500 including 7kg hand baggage, while Business Class return fares will start at AED2,700 and are inclusive of all taxes and 40kg checked baggage. Economy Class return fares from Sylhet to Dubai will start at USD550 including 7kg hand baggage, while Business Class return fares will start at USD900 and are inclusive of all taxes and 40kg checked baggage.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the President of Croatia



CROATIA'S REAKTOR SIGNS JOINT VENTURE WITH KUWAITI TECH PROVIDER AEA MANUFACTURE

KUWAIT: With the recent visit of the Croatian president to the State of Kuwait to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, two companies playing in the innovation and engineering market segment signed Joint Venture. AEA Manufacture, one of the first IoT manufacturers in Kuwait and one of the top innovation and engineering companies in Croatia, Reaktor, joined forces for Middle East expansion. Both parties are extremely proud of this partnership and supported by recent political and economic relations between Kuwait and Croatia.

"In 2008 the number of connected things to the internet became equal to the number of the world population. By 2020, the Internet of Things market is estimated to be \$14 Trillion. The world is changing rapidly with new technologies and innovations. As the world adapt and apply the new technologies, Kuwait is on path to follow where the world is going. That's why we at, Applied Electronic manufacture made sure to be ahead in time and start to serve this new market in Kuwait to provide the High-Tech product and services and to do this we are proud to have our Joint venture with the Croatian Hardware Innovation company, Reaktor. Together we are introducing latest technology and innovations services to Kuwait enterprise and startup clients", said Ali Ashkanani CEO at AEA Manufacture.

We serve businesses or any entrepreneurs that are looking to automate their process, product, or services. We use the internet to connect all their hardware or existing device via

secured platforms and servers and we also support any other special request the client need, such as, design, simulate and manufacture," said Mr. Ashkanani. With the world rapid change in Technology, the customers demand fast delivery, tailor made solution, and up-to-date product and service. Therefore, the client requires professional team who will support them in step by step to fulfill the request.

Reaktor's advanced products and solutions

"We see a great business opportunity in custom made Building Management Systems (BMS), as well as remote monitoring of the consumption of water and energy, and applying big data solutions to identify opportunities for savings. To complement need for high tech, connected buildings we are in particularly interested in integrated centralized BMS with modules for visitor flow analytics, permission ID cards, indoor positioning and geofencing. In Kuwait there are many World class prime real estate assets that would benefit from implementing cutting-edge innovative solutions that we can offer," stated Ivan Jelusic, CEO at Reaktor.

The latest projects

"On European ground, we work mainly with early stage startups and on special projects for big enterprise clients. We have worked and developed unique solutions from premium phone chargers, robotic arms controlled by computer vision, biosensors, medical devices and processes, to a cloud IoT platform and infra-

structure serving whole city to monitor energy consumption and analytics for its public lights.

Recently, we're seeing a lot of interest from creative agencies for development of very interesting high-tech projects in exclusive limited series, for marketing purposes. In Kuwait, together with AEA Manufacture we are going to be offering solutions for IoT and BMS market segment which is currently underserved, along with our general engineering and manufacturing services. Our first clients in Kuwait are the premium office buildings mostly looking for centralized cloud solutions to increase security, optimize energy consumption and custom product/solution development," said Jelusic.

Plans for the future

Jelusic also added "Together with AEA Manufacture as our joint venture partner, we want to become leading innovation, product development and manufacturing companies in EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) serving both small and large scale clients. We are able to take idea from paper sketch to high volume production in-house and even put your product on the markets on European soil. Moreover, we believe that our presence in region will open up market even for other companies from Croatia interested in this doing business in EMEA." "First step into working with us would be a brief project/product requirements or problem you want to solve after which we will be able to make technical concepts and budget estimate. We are looking forward to have your business partnering with innovations," Ashkanani concluded.

TALABAT CELEBRATES NATIONAL DAY WITH 'MADE IN KUWAIT'

KUWAIT: On the occasion of National Day in Kuwait, Talabat has launched its newest campaign dubbed 'Made in Kuwait'. Running from the 24th to 26th of February, the campaign aims to showcase Kuwait's rich culture and traditions, underscoring Talabat's long history with Kuwait and its people.

Honoring its long-standing partnerships with leading local restaurants, the 'Made in Kuwait' campaign includes four participating restaurants, namely Naif Chicken, Mais Alghanim, Humble Burger and Freej Swaileh. Considered to be true local success stories, all these restaurants are of Kuwaiti origin and are firmly supported by Talabat. The campaign offers customers a 26% discount on their order with any of the aforementioned

restaurants. The discount can be obtained upon purchase by any payment method.

Abdulhamid Alomar, Chief Executive Officer of Talabat, stated: "After all these years, we still continuously work to innovate our offerings to provide the best for our customers. We also aim to provide constant support for our many restaurant partners. We are committed to offering the best service to the community; the same community that had nurtured our humble beginnings and continues to support our ongoing successes." Today, Talabat is ranked as a market leader in the e-commerce business. Yet despite its growth and wide-scale regional expansion, Talabat has always been proud of its position as a Kuwait born-and-bred company.



GBK CLOSED DURING NATIONAL AND LIBERATION DAY HOLIDAYS

KUWAIT: On the occasion of the National and Liberation day, Gulf Bank's head office and its 56 branches will be closed on Sunday, 26 February 2017. Normal working hours will resume on Monday, 27 February 2017. During the holiday, Gulf Bank will continue to provide round-the-clock access and assistance through customer contact center at 1805805. Customers can also conduct their daily transaction needs through Gulf Bank's mobile banking application as well as through "Gulf Live", the Bank's Interactive Teller Machines. "Gulf Live" will be available on Sunday during the holiday from 10AM to 6PM at the Jabriya branch and Al-Adan branch.

It will give customers the opportunity to communicate with a teller through a live video session and to conduct every-



day transactions typically available through branch tellers. On this blessed and joyous occasion, the management of Gulf Bank conveys its sincere congratulations to the Amir of the State of Kuwait His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

JAZEERA AIRWAYS RAISES THE KUWAITI FLAG HIGH

KUWAIT: JAZEERA Airways, the first private airline in Kuwait and the Middle East has embellished an aircraft from their fleet and dedicated gates at Kuwait International Airport with the national colors of patriotism to commemorate Kuwait's National and Liberation days.

During the most celebrated month of the year, the Airbus with registration CAJ is furnished with the Kuwaiti flags alongside captivating text that reads

'daam 3eezik ya Kuwait' as a gesture of airline's pride of the Kuwaiti heritage and liberation. Epitomizing Kuwaiti culture in their approach to airline hospitality and service, Jazeera Airways has played its part in the country's economic growth and is presently one of the largest operators at Kuwait airport.

Commenting on Jazeera Airways participation in the country's festivities, Dr Mohammed Barakat, VP Marketing and Product said, "As a proud Kuwaiti

airline, we are committed to supporting the country through our growing business and as we move forward, we continue looking back at our history and the wonderful journey Kuwait has travelled since the Independence and Liberation Days. This month is a reflection of the Kuwaiti peoples' will to prevail and we are honored to be part of such a great nation."

Since its inception over a decade ago, Jazeera Airways has strengthened

its presence by currently flying to over 15 destinations and continues to serve as a beacon of excellence for innovative products and services to enhance travel experience on ground and in the air. Only recently, Jazeera Airways introduced a first in Kuwait - the much awaited Park & Fly services for smart travel, followed by a dedicated business lounge adjacent to its respective gates at Kuwait International Airport and is now scheduled to reveal its

brand-new terminal that will showcase a broad portfolio of advanced technological and innovative solutions, as a testimony to its pioneering spirit.

To learn more about Jazeera Airways services, offers, promotions and destinations, customers can contact the Call Center on 177 or visit the airline's website on www.jazeeraairways.com. Customers can also download the Jazeera Airways app on the iPhone or Android or Windows.



BURGAN BANK'S AIRPORT BRANCH OPEN FOR UPCOMING HOLIDAYS

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced today that its airport branch will remain open on Sunday, 26th of February in an effort to accommodate banking requirements of regular customers and travelers during the National and Liberation day festivities. The branch will be open on the day of the holiday, corresponding to Sunday 26/2/2017 from 8 am to 10:30 pm. Providing essential banking services during the holiday period, reflects Burgan Bank's utmost care to its customers. The bank takes the opportunity to send its very best wishes to all of its customers as it celebrates Kuwait's National and Liberation Days.

GULF INSURANCE GROUP ANNOUNCES KD 12M NET PROFIT IN 2016

KUWAIT: Gulf Insurance Group (GIG) announced today that it has achieved a net profit of KD 12 million (US\$ 39.3 million), or 67.02 fils per share for the financial year ended December 31, 2016, compared to KD 14.09 million (US\$ 46.1 million) in 2015 with decrease of 14.8 percent.

The Board of Directors has recommended the distribution of 40% cash dividend (40 fils per share) for the financial year ended December 31, 2016, subject to the approval of GIG's General Assembly and other concerned regulatory authorities. GIG's book value per share reached 460 fils as on 31 December 2016.

GIG's Shareholder's equity decreased during 2016 by KD 7.3 million (US\$24 million) to reach KD 82.3 million (US\$269.4 million), representing a 8 per cent decrease rate as at December 31, 2016, compared to KD 89.6 million (US\$293.1 million) in 2015 effected by the devaluation of some foreign currencies against Kuwaiti dinar related to our subsidiaries and associates. GIG's Gross written premiums grew 14.7 percent compared to last year, with an increase of KD 27.3 million (US\$89.3 million) to reach KD 213.2 million (US\$697.7 million) at the end of 2016.



DAMAC PROPERTIES SPONSORS 5TH SESSION 'MY ORGANIZATION-DUBAI'

DUBAI: The Abdulaziz bin Humaid Leadership Program (ALP), a first-of-its-kind program that empowers talented young individuals with essential leadership qualities, concluded the fifth session titled 'My Organization-Dubai' at Habtoor Grand Resort in Dubai. Sponsored by DAMAC Properties, the session was held from February 5th to the 9th focusing on organisational behaviour, protocol and etiquette vital for the participants' careers.

The majority of the workshops and activities, which are in line with UAE Vision 2021 to make the UAE the best among countries in the world, focus on the concept and importance of etiquette to provide strong first impressions as well as how etiquette is directly related to the Arab culture. They specifically demonstrate proper table etiquette for official meetings, work-related visits, appropriate behaviour between colleagues and relationship boundaries. In addition, etiquette-focused presentations cover appropriate conduct for emailing, phone calls, dress codes, handshakes, speaking and listening. The workshops also provide specific tactics for improving oneself and building a strong self-esteem, demonstrating the importance of punctuality, goal-setting, and taking responsibility for mistakes.

Shaikha Ali Al Nuaimi, Corporate Communication Manager, Abdul Aziz Bin Humaid Foundation said: "I would like to thank DAMAC Properties for their sponsorship and support. In addition, I would like to thank Habtoor Grand

Resort, Dubai for hosting this session. The importance of organisation behaviour, protocol and etiquette cannot be understated. In an increasingly complex world with numerous factors that need to be balanced, organisational skills are crucial for success. Furthermore, young individuals that practice good manners on a daily basis will be important assets to any organisation. They will effortlessly forge networks with people from a diverse range of cultures and traditions without."

Sharing insights

Hussain Sajwani, Chairman, DAMAC Properties, visited the participants and shared insights from his business success story. During the session, Sajwani commented: "I am delighted to share my experience with talented, passionate, young individuals from across the region. The hard work, dedication and effort you have put into this programme during these early and difficult stages of your development is crucial for long-term success." The audience response to a visit from DAMAC's Chairman was incredibly positive as they view Hussain Sajwani as a tangible proof of success.

The session started on Sunday 5th of February 2017 with a keynote speech from Fatima Al Muhairi, Chairwoman of Dubai Quality Group, followed by the organisational behaviour workshop. The February 6th ses-

sion continued with the second in-depth workshop on organisational behaviour, building on the fundamental concepts that were introduced. The organisational behaviour workshops highlighted the way people interact within groups. It demonstrated how this can be applied to create more efficient business organisations. The central idea of the workshops was to demonstrate how a scientific approach can be applied to the management of employees. The day concluded with the 1st round of presentations for the participants' Innovation Challenge Projects. The young entrepreneurs pitched their project ideas along with the financial sections of their business plans.

On February 7th, DAMAC Properties organised a field visit to DAMAC Hills master development. The participants were inspired by the luxury of the Beverly Hills lifestyle that spans 42 million square feet. The field visit showcased a variety of properties, some of which are the result of collaborations with world-renowned brands such as Fendi Casa, Bugatti and Paramount Hotels & Resorts. The two-hour presentation and tour included Trump International Golf Club Dubai; a world-class, 7205-yard, par 71, golf course with a 30,000 square-foot clubhouse; the largest of its kind in Dubai. The February 8th and 9th workshops highlighted various facets of protocol and etiquette, emphasising their underlying importance in the workplace.



MICROSOFT DEMONSTRATES POWER OF INTELLIGENT CYBERSECURITY

KUWAIT: Microsoft last week held a summit at the Marina Hotel, Kuwait, for Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) and security managers, to introduce them to breakthroughs in intelligent cybersecurity for the digital era.

"We are proud to be introducing Kuwaiti cybersecurity professionals to the latest in identity and information protection solutions," said Cyril Voisin, Executive Security Advisor, Enterprise Cybersecurity Group, Microsoft MEA. "In the mobile-first, cloud-first world, it is vital that users can be productive anywhere, on any device. But we must also ensure the highest level of security for identities, applications, and data."

A study conducted of Kuwait-based Windows PCs in 2015 revealed that cyberattacks peaked in the fourth quarter, when 30% of computers surveyed reported a malware encounter of some kind, compared with a worldwide average of about 21%. While most of these infections were blocked, slightly more than one in every 22 (4.54%) monitored machines faced infections that had to be cleaned, against a global average of 1.69%. The data agrees with several other independent reports that suggest Kuwait, like many Gulf nations, has higher-than-average rates for both encounters and infections. The summit's agenda centred on the challenge of providing today's end users with a secure modern workplace. An overview of the current threat landscape was followed by "User Behaviour Analytics: How to Secure Your Identity and Thousands of Applications". Also covered was information protection, data-loss prevention (DLP) and encryption. Microsoft conducted solutions' demos for delegates, including those that protect "from mail to end points" through integrated advanced threat protection. The company additionally demonstrated an integrated approach for productivity, communication, mobility and security.

"Microsoft's comprehensive cybersecurity solutions are built to address the latest global threat-landscape trends. Our holistic portfolio encompasses features across products that include user and entity behaviour-analytics (UEBA); advanced threat protection; cloud-application security; protection from zero day attacks; data classification and loss protection; managing and securing identity; and multi-factor authentication" added Cyril.

Additional layers of authentication

Security experts at the event outlined the company's unique perspective on threat intelligence, as well as explaining to delegates the investments the company is pouring into a secure platform that meshes seamlessly with customers' on-site policies and requirements. Microsoft also launch edits



recently updated compliance and governance solution — a console-based tool that allows an organisation to implement its security policies across all Microsoft products from a single access point.

At the event, Microsoft showed how its security solutions have helped organisations around the world protect against recent attacks. It showed how customers could protect against identity compromise by augmenting passwords with additional layers of authentication. Microsoft experts also explained how solutions could detect unusual authentications and early signs of breach attempts, and proactively notify admins and security managers of suspicious activity. Microsoft platforms are able to respond automatically to threats by amending access requirements and providing risk-based conditional access.

The company showed delegates how they could protect corporate data by applying rights management; identify unsanctioned apps; thwart phishing attacks; and contain, classify and encrypt data. Microsoft solutions offer the ability to detect unauthorized access to applications, through notifications of any attempts of unauthorized data access, as well as anomalies and other threats. Microsoft customers can also use policies to block untrusted apps, revoke access permissions, and remotely wipe device data.

Device protection is covered by Microsoft solutions, which allow security professionals to manage company and personal devices, so that data is appropriately encrypted and the organisation can ensure its compliance obligations are being met. It includes automatic detection of unusual activity and identification of compromised endpoints. Network administrators can instantly respond by blocking, quarantining, or wiping suspect devices.

Servers and workloads can be protected through deep, granular visibility of systems, allowing the monitoring and enforcement of policies on cloud data resources. Microsoft solutions allow the establishment, at policy level, of baseline behaviors. Subsequent monitoring automatically detects deviations from baselines, allowing early warnings and proactive notifications to be sent to the appropriate parties.

CENTRIFY ANALYTICS STOPS BREACHES IN REAL-TIME BASED ON USER BEHAVIOR

DUBAI: Centrifly, the leader in securing hybrid enterprises through the power of identity services, announced the release of its new Analytics Service. This new service uses machine learning to assess risk based on constantly-evolving user behavior patterns. It then assigns a risk score, and enforces an appropriate decision - determining whether the user's access is granted, requires step-up authentication, or is blocked entirely.

According to a new Forrester study, commissioned by Centrifly, an astonishing two-thirds of organizations experienced an average of five security breaches in the past two years. And billions of usernames and passwords have been stolen and made available for these types of attacks, increasing risk of further breaches. The power of these attacks is in their perfect camouflage. Attackers "look" just like legitimate users, raising no suspicion, since all IT sees is regular user activity.

Breaking the cycle of breach

Centrifly gives IT the power to break the cycle of account exploitation and impersonation, to stop attacks that lead to data breaches. Not only are anomalous access requests stopped in real time, but potentially compromised accounts are flagged and elevated to IT's attention - speeding analysis and greatly minimizing the effort required to assess risk across today's hybrid IT environment. And, arming IT with machine learning frees them from manually creating policy across all their endpoints, apps, sites, services and resources.

Balancing security and optimal end-user experience

Building security policy for employees, contractors, partners and privileged IT users has typically favored security over user experience. Behavior-based scoring



Bill Mann, chief product officer at Centrifly

means users get a frictionless experience when they present low risk, easing access and improving productivity - while maintaining high security.

"By tailoring security policy to each individual's behavior and automatically flagging risky behavior, we're helping IT professionals minimize the risk of being breached - with immediate visibility into account risk, without poring over millions of log files and massive amounts of historical data," said Bill Mann, chief product officer at Centrifly. "And thanks to our broad set of enforcement points that include endpoints, applications and IT infrastructure, we can enforce risk-based policy in real time, at the point of access. This means high-risk threats can be blocked, while low-risk users get authorized access to apps, privileged credentials, or privileged sessions." Risk-based access gives IT new insights through risk scoring for end and privileged users to control policy and what action should be taken for a given risk level. Examples of risk-based access include:

- Single sign-on (SSO) to applications: As long as end-user's behavior is in keeping with typical access, it presents low risk, and IT can provide easy one-click access to their apps.

- Multi-factor Authentication (MFA) for password checkout: When an IT admin checks out a privileged credential or initiates a privileged session to a server or other resource from a location that's not typical, the risk level is elevated, and the admin is prompted for further authentication.

- MFA for outsourced IT: If an attacker attempts to leverage an outsourced IT credential from an unknown or previously unseen device, access can be blocked entirely, stopping the attack before it can gain traction.

Since this new service is part of the Centrifly Identity Services Platform, customers can implement risk-based policy across their boundary less hybrid enterprise of endpoints, cloud applications, IaaS, and IT servers and resources for more detailed heuristics - and more effective policy. Available as an add-on to Centrifly Identity Service and Centrifly Privilege Service, the service is a natural extension of Centrifly's adaptive Multi-Factor Authentication, adding machine learning that both eases configuration for IT and eliminates constant MFA challenges to simplify end user access.

CHINA SELFIE-APP SEEKS TO BEAUTIFY THE WORLD

MEITU HAS OVER 450 MILLION ACTIVE USERS IN CHINA

SHANGHAI: Strolling a tree-lined Shanghai street with friends, Hu Dongyuan pulls out her smartphone and does what millions of Chinese women do daily: take a selfie, digitally "beautify" their faces, and pop it on social media. Such virtual makeovers, typically involving lightening skin, smoothing out complexions and rounding the eyes, have propelled selfie-editing app Meitu to the top ranks of China downloads.

With more than 450 million active China users, Meitu is now also gaining traction abroad, using its more advanced features to challenge Instagram and Snapchat, which depend largely on filters and stickers. China has a world-leading 700 million mobile-Internet users, vast numbers of whom use such apps to fuss over their digital appearance.

"It's the same as with clothing and makeup. They are all ways for people to better present themselves," said Hu, a travel agency employee, who likens Meitu to a cheap, non-permanent form of cosmetic surgery. She added: "Everyone uses it as a kind of personal advertisement."

Meitu, which means "pretty picture", launched a Hong Kong IPO in December that valued the company at \$4.6 billion at the time, despite consistently posting losses. It was Hong Kong's biggest tech IPO in nearly a decade. Analysts call Meitu a potential test case of the global potential of Chinese apps, particularly those aimed at women, a powerful consumer force.

Millennial appeal

"(Meitu) has really appealed to the beauty concept of China's post-95s," said William Chou, an internet analyst for Deloitte China, referring to those born after that year. "Photo-sharing is a global phenomenon but China has climbed to the top of the world in this," he added. The selfie-editing craze highlights how Chinese lives are increasingly lived online, making a person's virtual appearance as important as their real one, said psychology professor Yu Feng of Xi'an Jiaotong University. "Modern society has turned face-to-face communication into mostly internet communication," Yu said, and Chinese millennials are seizing the chance "to control themselves and their world".

Meitu and domestic competitors like Camera 360 and POCO shrewdly cater to Chinese beauty preferences for lighter skin and rounder eyes; key features allow easy modification of such



SHANGHAI: This picture taken on January 8, 2017, shows Hu Dongyuan (L), Wang Peng (C) and Peng Lin displaying their selfie. — AFP

attributes on screen. Founded in the eastern city of Xiamen, Meitu initially provided photo-editing software for PCs, introducing its first selfie app in 2013.

Its IPO prospectus said Meitu apps process half of the pictures posted on Chinese social media and were used to alter around six billion photos last October. Its half-dozen applications, including one for altering video, are regularly among the top photo-app downloads in countries as diverse as China, Russia, Japan, India and Malaysia.

Business makeover

Chinese internet giants like Tencent and Alibaba have struggled to replicate their domestic dominance overseas. But Meitu said it had 430 million overseas users as of October last year, compared to around 500 million claimed by Instagram. Yet profits remain elusive. Meitu lost 2.2 billion yuan (\$320 million) in the first half of last year.

"Meitu's big problem has always been that it came up with this killer app and the usage is

unbelievable. It's crazy. But they never had a clear business model underneath it," said Jeffrey Towson, professor of investment at Peking University. Meitu did not respond to requests for comment. Hungry for revenues, it launched its own phones designed for selfie-taking in 2013.

It sold just 646,446 in the first 10 months of last year, however, a tiny amount in China's massive market. Phone sales nevertheless still make up more than 95 percent of Meitu revenue. It now promises to build an online "ecosystem" of apps and devices based on selfie-processing, which could include selling advertising space-as Instagram does-and launching a fashion-focused e-commerce platform. "Our mission is to make the world more beautiful. Our wish is to build a beauty ecosystem," the IPO prospectus said. Its shares have risen 16 percent since they debuted, closing Tuesday at HK\$9.86. Deloitte's Chou said investors were ignoring Meitu's current losses in hopes it can pull off the planned business makeover. He explained: "For tech companies, the future is more important than the past." — AFP



CISCO AND ADSIC CONDUCTS SECURITY TRENDS AND STRATEGY WORKSHOP FOR PUBLIC SECTOR

ABU DHABI: Cisco together with Abu Dhabi Systems and Information Centre (ADSIC) held a security workshop at the Ritz Carlton in Abu Dhabi to showcase the latest security innovations, global smart deployments and use cases to Abu Dhabi's government departments and entities. The high-level workshop brought together information security and technology leaders from the government and public sector who shared their experiences and discussed the latest developments in the field of cybersecurity.

Speaking on the importance of the cybersecurity workshop, HE Rashed Lahej Al-Mansoori, Director General of Abu Dhabi Systems and Information Centre (ADSIC) said, "Cybersecurity has become a critical issue for governments and organizations across all sectors, from transport and healthcare to critical infrastructure and utilities.

With fast-paced changes impacting how government organizations engage with citizens, businesses, and each other, public-private partnerships are able to advance the cybersecurity agenda by facilitating information sharing and elevating security operations, standards and processes. This workshop is part of our long-standing relationship with Cisco aimed at leveraging best practices and building digital capabilities and trust."

Dynamic changes in the technology landscape, led by digitization, are creating opportunities for cybercriminals. According to Cisco's 2017 Annual Cybersecurity Report, more than 50 percent of organizations faced public scrutiny after a security breach, with operations and finance systems most affected. The report finds that just 56 percent of security alerts are investigated and less than half of legitimate alerts remediated, as defenders battle complexity and manpower challenges, leaving gaps of time and space

for attackers to utilize to their advantage. Underscoring the seriousness of recent cyberattacks, a common effort is emerging to address the need for greater collaboration among business and government stakeholders to minimize the impact of cyberattacks and strengthen national security.

"We are extremely proud of our association with ADSIC and support their efforts to highlight the importance of security, and the most effective strategies to prevent, detect, and mitigate threats," said Shukri Eid, Managing Director - East Region, Cisco Middle East.

"Cloud, mobility, Internet of Things (IoT) and social media technologies, combined with growing digital business practices, have helped countless organizations transform how they operate, but they have also increased the attack surface. As ICT systems are extended and merged, there is growing fear that sensitive data that is collected and held by public entities will be vulnerable to criminal hackers or other types of unauthorized disclosure.

Public sector organizations and service providers are especially vulnerable because their operations are tied so closely to the public's trust. Security must be integrated into the very fabric of an organisation, and it takes a security-conscious approach to ensure that every level of cyber protection is met."

Ongoing collaboration

The workshop is part of ongoing collaboration between Cisco and ADSIC to address growing demand for technology and networking skills and develop digital capabilities across government entities.

Cisco and ADSIC have also been working to expand the Cisco Networking Academy

Program throughout the Abu Dhabi Educational system. Cisco's Networking Academy Program enables UAE graduates to pursue successful ICT careers in a wide range of industries and also enables others to harness the entrepreneurial spirit and knowledge they acquired in Networking Academy to start their own businesses and create new jobs.

The initiative has helped ADSIC achieve its goal of developing ICT education opportunities throughout Abu Dhabi, in line with the UAE National Career Development Plan, wherein the government is committed to investing in educational programs that will provide career development, access to world-class facilities and training for citizens throughout the Emirates.

Security is rapidly becoming an integral part of any sort of deployment, and this awareness is coming in earlier in the process, though often, not early enough. In order to enable organizations to tackle security challenges, they are facing challenges posed by the skills gap.

Previous Cisco studies reveal there is currently a deficit of 1 million security practitioners, increasing to 1.5 million by 2019. Globally, 26% of organisations are facing staffing shortages, and 35% are facing expertise shortages with security jobs growing at 12 times the rate of the overall job market.

At the workshop, Cisco presented compelling security industry insights, including the latest threats, trends and best practices. Cisco's security experts also shared their experience on how best to achieve a holistic approach to security that integrates tools, processes and policies, in addition to showcasing Cisco's latest products from its integrated security portfolio.

HEALTH LAW CREATED WINNERS AND LOSERS WHEN BUYING INSURANCE

WASHINGTON: Michael Schwarz is a self-employed business owner who buys his own health insurance. Subsidized coverage through "Obamacare" offers protection from life's unpredictable changes and freedom to pursue his vocation, he says. Brett Dorsch is also self-employed and buys his own health insurance. But he gets no financial break from the Affordable Care Act. "To me, it's just been a big lie," Dorsch says, forcing him to pay more for less coverage. Schwarz and Dorsch represent two Americas, pulling farther apart over former President Barack Obama's health care

law. Known as the ACA, the law rewrote the rules for people buying their own health insurance, creating winners and losers. Those with financial subsidies now fear being harmed by President Donald Trump and Republicans intent on repealing and replacing the ACA. But other consumers who also buy their own insurance and don't qualify for financial help feel short-changed by Obama's law. They're hoping repeal will mean relief from rising premiums.

The ACA sought to create one big new market for individual health insurance in each state. It required insurers to accept all customers, regardless of

medical problems. And it provided subsidies to help low- and moderate-income people afford premiums. These newly vested ACA customers joined consumers already in the market, to make a new insurance pool. Policies offered to all had to be upgraded to meet new federal standards for comprehensive benefits, raising premiums. And many of the new customers turned out to be sicker than insurers expected, pushing rates even higher.

Incredibly grateful

Consumers who didn't qualify for government financial help wound up bearing the full cost of premiums. They also faced the law's new requirement to carry health insurance or risk fines. "One (group) is angry and one is incredibly grateful," said Robert Blendon of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. If Trump and congressional Republicans aren't careful, their actions could stoke fresh grievances without solving longstanding problems of access and cost. Consider what happened to Schwarz and Dorsch this year, as premiums for a standard plan through HealthCare.gov jumped an average of 25 percent.

Schwarz and his wife are in their mid-20s and live in Tampa, Florida. He has his own commercial photography business and she's pursuing a graduate degree in speech-language pathology. The sticker price of their HealthCare.gov policy went up about 20 percent, but what they pay monthly is about \$115 lower than last year. Not only did their subsidy cover the rise in premium, they're also getting more help because

their income went down when Schwarz's wife returned to school full time. "Being uninsured is not an option," said Schwarz. If Republicans take away his subsidy, "I would have to change careers and find a job that offered health insurance," he said.

Skimpier plan

Dorsch and his wife live in Wilmington, Delaware, and are in their mid-50s. He has a wholesale business supplying electronics to retail stores and has been buying his own health insurance for years. He gets no financial help from the ACA. Dorsch said their insurance company wanted to raise the monthly premium to \$2,050, or nearly \$25,000 a year. They settled for a skimpier plan that still costs \$1,350 a month and has a very high deductible. "In four years my health insurance has more than doubled and I have less coverage," said Dorsch. "It's ludicrous." He voted for Trump. "He saw the reality that Obamacare has been a nightmare for most Americans, unless you are poor or in a very difficult situation," said Dorsch. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that the pool of people buying individual health insurance is basically split down the middle among subsidized customers like Schwarz and those who get no help, like Dorsch. Republican proposals to tie tax credits to age, not income, would help Dorsch. But they may not be generous enough for Schwarz.

"It's trying to find the way to help the one without hurting the other that's really tricky," said Nicholas Moriello, a health insurance broker from Newark,

Delaware. "If we had a way to help the person whose premium has become unaffordable without hurting the person we are currently subsidizing," Caroline Pearson, of the consulting firm Avalere Health, studied consumers on government marketplaces like HealthCare.gov - where nearly 90 percent get subsidies - and compared them with those who purchase directly from an insurer and pay full cost. Among Avalere's findings:

1- The majority of consumers in the government marketplaces live in lower-income neighborhoods with high unemployment. However, among those who purchase directly from an insurer, about 30 percent live in neighborhoods with a median income of \$100,000 or more.

2- Consumers in the subsidized market are generally costlier to cover. For those with a standard plan, per-person medical claims averaged \$376 per month in 2015, compared to \$312 for unsubsidized customers who bought policies directly from an insurer.

3- The subsidized market is important in states that voted for Trump. In Florida, for example, 70 percent of individual policyholders purchase through HealthCare.gov. In Georgia, it's 62 percent. "Obamacare helped a lot of lower-income people with high health needs who previously couldn't afford insurance," said Pearson. "It overlooked the fact that there are a lot of people who are relatively healthy and who didn't want the increased benefits. More sick people drove up premiums, which is resulting in some people feeling like they are worse off." —AP



FLORIDA: Photo shows Michael Schwarz, sole proprietor of Mike Schwarz Photography, poses for a photo in Tampa, Fla. —AP

'ALARMING' SUPERBUGS A RISK TO PEOPLE, ANIMALS AND FOOD: EU

OFFICIALS WARN OF 'SERIOUS THREAT' TO PUBLIC HEALTH

LONDON: Superbug bacteria found in people, animals and food across the European Union pose an "alarming" threat to public and animal health having evolved to resist widely used antibiotics, disease and safety experts warned yesterday. A report on antimicrobial resistance in bacteria by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said some 25,000 people die from such superbugs in the European Union every year.

"Antimicrobial resistance is an alarming threat putting human and animal health in danger," said Vytenis Andriukaitis, the EU's health and food safety commissioner. "We

have put substantial efforts to stop its rise, but this is not enough. We must be quicker, stronger and act on several fronts." Drug resistance is driven by the misuse and overuse of antibiotics, which encourages bacteria to evolve to survive and develop new ways of beating the medicines.

Yesterday's report highlighted that in Salmonella bacteria - which can cause the common and serious food-borne infection Salmonellosis - multi-drug resistance is high across the EU. Mike Catchpole, the ECDC's chief scientist, said he was particularly concerned that some common types of Salmonella in humans, such as monophasic Salmonella Typhimurium, are show-

ing extremely high multi-drug resistance.

"Prudent use of antibiotics in human and veterinary medicine is extremely important," he said. "We all have a responsibility to ensure that antibiotics keep working." Resistance to carbapenem antibiotics - usually the last remaining treatment option for patients infected with multi-drug resistant superbugs - was detected for the first time in animals and food, albeit at low levels, as part of EU-wide annual monitoring for the report. It said very low levels of resistance were observed in E. coli bacteria found in pigs and in meat from pigs.

Resistance to colistin, another last-resort human antibiotic - was

also found at very low levels in Salmonella and E. coli in pigs and cattle, the report said. Marta Hugas, head of EFSA's biological hazards and contaminants unit, noted geographic variations across the European Union, with countries in northern and western Europe generally having lower resistance levels than those in southern and eastern Europe and said this was most likely due to differences in the level of use and overuse of the medicines. "In countries where actions have been taken to reduce, replace and re-think the use of antimicrobials in animals show lower levels of antimicrobial resistance and decreasing trends," she said. —Reuters



FRANCE: Ducks are pictured at a poultry farm in Saint Aubin, southwestern France yesterday. —AFP photos

FDA REJECTS AMPHASTAR'S NASAL OPIOID OVERDOSE TREATMENT



In this file photo, Ashley Grant sits on a swing near her home in Bridgeton, NJ. —AP

NEW YORK: Amphastar Pharmaceuticals Inc said on Tuesday that the US Food and Drug Administration had rejected its application to market an intranasal version of the emergency opioid-overdose treatment, naloxone. The abuse of opioids - a class of drugs that includes heroin and prescription painkillers - has assumed epidemic proportions in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 91 Americans die every day from opioid overdoses. Last April, officials attributed the death of musician Prince to the accidental overdose of the synthetic opioid fentanyl.

The FDA's complete response letter identifies issues with user human factors study - which is designed to evaluate the user interface of a product - among others, Amphastar said. Amphastar already sells naloxone in pre-filled syringes, as does privately held Kaleo Pharmaceuticals, which came under fire earlier this month for raising the price of its naloxone device Evzio by 550 percent to \$4,500. —AP



FRANCE: Duck breeders load ducks into a truck to bring them to a slaughterhouse at a poultry farm in Saint Aubin, southwestern France.

FRANCE SLAUGHTERING ALL DUCKS IN KEY REGION DUE TO BIRD FLU

PARIS: France's agriculture ministry has ordered all remaining 600,000 ducks in a key poultry-producing region slaughtered to try to stem a growing outbreak of bird flu. A previous cull in southwestern France failed to stop the spread of the H5N8 virus, which has hit ducks and other birds in more than 300 French farms in the last few months. Most are in the Landes, a foie gras-producing

region where the new slaughter is focused. Agriculture Minister Stephane Le Foll said on France Bleu radio Tuesday that the flu spread faster than expected. He said all 600,000 farmed ducks in the Landes would be killed and measures would be taken to better secure transport of poultry and limit their mobility. The virus does not transmit via food and is harmless to humans. —AP

INDIAN SUNGAZERS KEEP UP FAMILY TRADITION FOR FOUR GENERATIONS

KODAIKANAL: In the early morning darkness, Devendran P walks up a hill to a solar observatory in India's southern hill town of Kodaikanal, trudging the same path his father and grandfather walked in a century-old family tradition of studying the sun. Once inside, he pulls a rope to open shutters in the dome and positions a six-inch telescope used since 1899 to photograph the sun and preserve a daily record of its activity.

"The sun, like stars, has a lifetime of 10 billion years," Devendran told Reuters during a recent visit to the observatory in India's southern state of Tamil Nadu. "If you want to know about any small changes, you need to have a large amount of data." The observatory run by the Indian Institute of Astrophysics has a key role in providing a continuous stream of data on the sun and its influence on Earth and surrounding space, said R Ramesh, a professor at the institute.

"Some of the discoveries made, based on data obtained in the Kodaikanal observatory, are so fundamental to solar physics that they vastly improved techniques used at observatories even today," Ramesh said. The Evershed effect of gas motion in sunspots, discovered in 1909 by the then director of the observatory, John Evershed, is one such example, he added.

In the observatory library, shelves stretch to the ceiling, packed with volumes of handwritten records and thousands of film plates of the sun. Authorities have launched a project to digitize and preserve the data collected over the past century. Devendran's grandfather, Parthasarty, joined the observatory in 1900, a year after it relocated from Madras, the state capital, to Kodaikanal, situated more than 2,000 meters above sea level, offering ideal weather to study the sun.

Like his father and grandfather, Devendran

has no formal education in astronomy. His interest was piqued during a visit to the observatory when he was a child. He became a fulltime sun-watcher in 1986 and says the six-inch (15-cm) telescope has never failed his family. "It has never required any major overhaul, or change of parts, because we all take care of it," he said.

More than three decades of observation has made him feel close to the sun, despite its distance of more than 149 million kms from Earth. It's a feeling enhanced by the devout family's worship of the Hindu sun god Surya, he said. "I feel more religious than other people, as I can see that there is a universal power which is controlling everything," he said. His 23-year-old son, Rajesh, expects to carry on the family tradition, but with one difference. He has a master's degree in physics. "I get amazed by what my father does here," said Rajesh. "I think observing the Sun is in my blood." —Reuters

VIRGINIA GOVERNOR VETOES BILL DEFUNDING PLANNED PARENTHOOD

WASHINGTON: Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe on Tuesday vetoed a bill that would have blocked funding for Planned Parenthood, which provides abortions and other health services. The bill passed by the Republican-controlled legislature would have barred the state from providing funds to clinics that perform abortions not covered by Medicaid, the federal healthcare program for the poor. McAuliffe, a Democrat, said the measure would harm thousands of Virginians who relied on Planned Parenthood health-

care services and programs. He vetoed a similar measure last year.

"Attempts to restrict women's access to health care will impede the goal of making Virginia the best place to live, work, and run a business," he said in a statement. Advocates for the law had said it would underpin organizations that provide the widest range of services. Planned Parenthood draws the ire of many Republicans because it provides abortions. Republican President Donald Trump has pledged to defund the organization. —Reuters

SLAMMED BY THE FLU, BUSINESSES SCRAMBLE TO GET WORK DONE

NEW YORK: The flu season has slammed many small businesses, weakening already thin staffing levels and forcing some owners to scramble to cover shifts or get the work done. All but five of the 26 staffers at BusBank, a transportation booking service, have been sick at some point this season. On the worst day so far, six people were out sick or caring for children with the flu, and four others were on already planned days off.

"It has been hard for us to keep up, with lots of folks running backup for each other," says Brandon Dudley, vice president of the Chicago-based company that arranges bus charters for events ranging from nights on the town to long-distance trips. Human resources consultants have been hearing from company owners overwhelmed by flu-related absences. In its latest report, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 35 states had moderate to high levels of flu cases. More than 5 percent of people seeking medical help complained of flu-like symptoms during the week ended Feb 11, up from a baseline of 2.2 percent, the CDC said.

During this flu season

"Small businesses' operations are so lean that having two people sick at one time is a very big impact," says Amy Marcum, a human resources consultant with Houston-based Insperty. Telecommuting has helped lessen the flu's impact on companies like BusBank, where staffers mainly work on laptops. So customers are getting their buses, Dudley says. But some projects like updating the company's website have had to be delayed.

When Denise Stern's staffers are sick, they can't work, period. Stern owns Let Mommy Sleep, a franchise company that provides overnight baby care for children ranging from newborn to 6 months old - and someone who's sick cannot care for an infant. At times during this flu season, Stern has had a quarter of her more than 20 caregivers calling out sick. "It hit us like a ton of bricks," says Stern, who founded Let Mommy Sleep and runs the Washington, DC-area branch of her company. Let Mommy Sleep also has franchises in northern New Jersey and Philadelphia.

When a caregiver is ill, Stern will try to call in a backup. But so many employees have been sick that at times she either has no one available, or found the family is reluctant to have a caregiver they're not

familiar with. "I can't tell you how awful it is to be speaking with a mom on the verge of tears because we don't have staff to help," says Stern, who estimates her profits are down 15 percent for February.

At BOCA Communications, as many as four employees at a time have been sick with either the flu or a stomach virus. "It's the gnarliest flu season we've seen in 10 years," says Ashley Breinlinger, a senior vice president at the San Francisco-based public relations firm. "People have been sicker than I've ever seen."

The bugs have been so bad that Breinlinger and CEO Kathleen Shanahan have asked staffers when they first start feeling unwell to stay home and not spread their germs. Employees' ability to work from home as much as possible has limited the impact on BOCA's productivity, and the company is set up so everyone has a backup to finish projects. Another saving grace is that clients are empathizing, not complaining. "Clients are sick too, so they're understanding," Breinlinger says.

Create backup plans

With the flu season expected to last into the spring, Insperty's Marcum advises business owners to be proactive to protect staffers' health as well as company operations. Employees should be encouraged to work at home if they're not feeling well, and to get flu shots if they haven't already done so. Some companies will bring in medical personnel to administer shots onsite.

Now is also the time to create backup plans, designating which staffers will cover for others. Some owners might also want to think in advance about arranging to get temporary help if needed. Kristen Burris estimates she lost a third of her working days in January when she was sick three times and her son was also ill.

"It's definitely the worst flu season we have experienced in years," says Burris, co-owner of Eagle Acupuncture in Eagle, Idaho. Her husband, Tony, covered the practice as best he could. But many clients whose sessions were canceled just waited till their next appointment. Practice hours lost to the flu came on top of cancellations forced by record snowfall in Idaho last month. Burris is adding 12 extra hours to her weekly schedule in hopes of recouping some income. But the rest? "It's 100 percent lost," she says. —AP



WASHINGTON, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, United States: Giant panda Bao Bao sits in her outdoor habitat at the Smithsonian's National Zoo February 21, 2017 in Washington, DC. —AFP

BYE BYE, BAO BAO: PANDA LEAVES WASHINGTON FOR CHINA

WASHINGTON: One of Washington's most popular residents left town on Tuesday: Bao Bao, the National Zoo's uber-popular young female panda, headed to her new home in China. Bao Bao left Dulles International Airport outside the US capital on a specially outfitted cargo plane for a 16-hour nonstop flight to the Chinese city of Chengdu, home to a special research base for giant panda breeding. Two

zoo personnel will travel with the panda along with about 30 kilos (65 pounds) of food—mainly bamboo, but also apples, cooked sweet potatoes and special biscuits.

Once in China, the 3.5-year-old Bao Bao—born in August 2013 at the National Zoo—will stay in quarantine for about a month, before entering the breeding program. About 60,000 panda lovers visited the zoo over the weekend to say

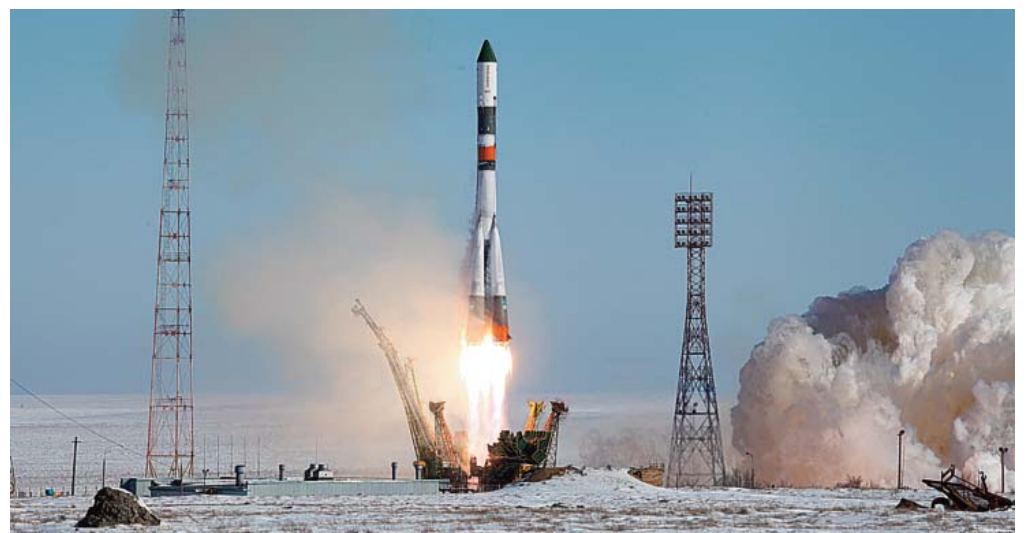
farewell to Bao Bao, some of them traveling long distances. Her departure was shown on Facebook Live on Monday. Most giant pandas around the world are on loan from China. Any panda cubs born abroad, like Bao Bao, are sent back to China before they turn four. The National Zoo has played host to pandas since the early 1970s. An estimated 1,800 pandas live in the wild, mainly in China's Sichuan province. —AFP

SPACE X ABORTS APPROACH TO SPACE STATION, DELIVERY DELAYED

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida: A navigation error forced SpaceX to delay its shipment to the International Space Station yesterday, following an otherwise smooth flight from NASA's historic moon pad. SpaceX's supply ship, the Dragon, was less than a mile from the orbiting outpost when a problem cropped up in the GPS system. The approach was aborted, and the Dragon backed away. NASA said neither the station nor its six-person crew was in any danger, and another attempt would be made Thursday. "As a pilot it is sometimes better to accelerate and circle around than attempt a difficult landing," French astronaut Thomas Pesquet said in a tweet from the space station. "Same in space - we'll be ready tomorrow!"

Just a few hours earlier, Russia successfully launched a cargo ship from Kazakhstan, its first since a failed launch in December. SpaceX launched the Dragon capsule Sunday from Kennedy Space Center's Launch Complex 39A, out of action since NASA's space shuttle program ended in 2011. It's the same spot where astronauts flew to the moon in the late 1960s and early 1970s. SpaceX has a 20-year lease with NASA for 39A; besides launching station cargo from there, the company hopes to send up astronauts as early as next year.

Everything was going well with this latest SpaceX flight until the GPS issue. The Dragon's computers halted the rendezvous from just seven-tenths of a mile away. SpaceX said the problem is well understood and can be fixed before Thursday morning's delivery attempt. The Russian supplies



KAZAKHSTAN: In this photo provided by the Russian Space Agency (Roscosmos) press service, a Soyuz-U booster rocket carrying the Progress MS-05 spacecraft blasts off from the Russian-leased Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan yesterday. —AP

should arrive Friday. This was the first time that SpaceX had to abort a shipment at the last minute like this. The private company, led by tech billionaire Elon Musk, has been making station deliveries since 2012.

In December, Russia lost a load of station supplies shortly after liftoff. The upper stage of the Soyuz rocket and the cargo ship ended up in

pieces over Siberia. It's the same kind of rocket used for launching crews, and the accident ended up delaying the return of three space station astronauts and the launch of two others. Russian investigators concluded there was a manufacturing flaw in the third-stage engine. The 250-mile-high station is home to two Americans, three Russians and France's Pesquet. —AP



SAN FRANCISCO: In this photo, Ashley Breinlinger, a senior vice president at BOCA Communications, poses with her dog Bella at her office in San Francisco. —AP

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EDUCATION AND CAREER PROGRESSION AT KUWAIT NATIONAL ENGLISH SCHOOL

For several years now, the Kuwait National English School (KNES) has been at the forefront, amongst other English Schools in Kuwait, in the provision of outstanding, qualitative education to our students. Recently, and in furtherance of our enviable position, we hosted several representatives of Universities from the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America who came to advise our Key Stage 4 and 5 students about their University education course choices and future career prospects.

The events have been very successful in enlightening our Students and helping them choose a post-secondary career path. Furthermore, it demonstrates our commitment in not only providing a high standard, quality education for our students but also, ensuring that our students consistently receive the right counseling, that will guarantee their academic and career progression.

At Kuwait National English School, we aim to enhance the opportunities available to all our students, by careful and experienced nurturing of their academic life, positioning them for future successes in education and career. As expected, the feedback from the University representatives and our students has been very positive and we hope to continue fervently, in this unequivocally progressive direction in future.



KES PHYSICS CLUB VISITS KNPC

On Monday February 12th, a group of 21 KES students (years 7-12) from the Physics Club visited the Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) in Ahmadi. The trip was organized by physics teacher Nomuoja with the aim to consolidate the concepts of Physics studied in school by observing their applications in the industry. Physics teachers Millighan and Hendricks also attended the trip. The students were given a warm welcome by Eng Ali Kashawi and a team of senior HSE delegates, followed by an informative presentation about KNPC and its role in the society and global impact. It was a very successful morning, where the students were inspired and motivated by the visit and where they had an opportunity to explore career options and explore how science works in our society.

SHERATON KUWAIT AND FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON KUWAIT CELEBRATE THE NATIONAL, LIBERATION DAYS

On the occasion of the 56th National Day, the 26th Liberation Day and 11 years of His Highness the Amir's reign and in conjunction with the celebrations of the Sheraton Kuwait of being inaugurated for over 50 years as the first Five-Star hotel in Kuwait and the first hotel to open outside of the United States, Sheraton Kuwait raised the banner of His Highness the Amir and Humanitarian Leader Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah in honor of this momentous occasion and the Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait is adorned with the Kuwait flag representing our high respect for this country and how thankful we are to have the opportunity to show our appreciation by engaging in the festivals on this meaningful occasion.

On the occasion of more than five decades of the opening of the Sheraton Kuwait Hotel, which has become a real milestone of its landmarks, bringing up his track record of achievements and a prime location of successes, Fahed Abushaar expressed the pride in the role that the Sheraton Kuwait played, which extended for over 50 years as a pioneer and leader in the world of hospitality for Kuwait and its people. Abushaar the General Manager of Sheraton Kuwait and Mounir Amer, the General Manager of Four Points by Sheraton Kuwait offer their most heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and all the people of Kuwait and its residents.



WARBA BANK ORGANIZES ANNUAL STAFF GATHERING



Warba Bank hosted its annual staff gathering at the Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Hall on Wednesday, February 15, 2017. CEO Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanem, management and staff attended the event which was held under the title 'together we can'. Shaheen praised the team for their performance and constant efforts that he said played a key role in helping the bank achieve record profits, he said: "We managed, by God's well, to achieve great results in 2016, which is the fruit of the bank's productive medium-term strategy, as well as the efforts of its employees who exerted all efforts and dedicated all of their skills to help achieve a

steady growth for all of the bank's indicators." "As a result, Warba Bank moves forward today towards improving the infrastructure of the Islamic banking industry in Kuwait." He added addressing staff members: "Today we need you to double your efforts as we move forward with our new strategy in partnership with international consultancy leader McKinsey & Company. I am confident that we will be able to work together and as one team and unify our efforts as management and staff to implement this strategy, and therefore support Warba's steady march as it continues to move forward thanks to your constant dedication and efforts, and

seeks to leave its mark in the market through innovative and unique services that enable it to play a vital role in supporting the Kuwaiti economy and providing the best investment and financing tools that earn clients' trust." Ghanem further reiterated that Warba Bank is distinguished by offering leading solutions and seeks to obtain a market share of 10 percent by 2021, in addition to assuming the third position in the Islamic banking sector and sixth in the banking sector as a whole. Furthermore, he stressed that the bank is likely to achieve record growth and is capable to lure clients from competitors. In addition, he highlighted that the bank's

achievements in 2016, noting that it earned several prestigious awards from trustworthy international bodies. During the event, veteran bank staff members were honored for their loyalty and continued efforts which became the backbone for the bank's success in reaching a higher status in the Kuwaiti market today. The employees also competed in several competitions organized during the ceremony, and won awards dedicated in appreciation to their efforts. Ghanem concluded by saying: "We consider our employees as partners in success. We grow with them, and are confident that through their support, Warba Bank



can continue moving steadily towards further achievements that allows it to become the first choice and destination for clients. We

promise to continue to invest in them and organize training courses that help them attain high competitiveness capabilities."



AUTHOR HONORS MARTYRS' FAMILIES

Author and columnist Abdullah Abbas Bowair hosts a ceremony tomorrow on the occasion of the 56th Anniversary of Independence and 26th Anniversary of Liberation of Kuwait. Families of Kuwaiti martyrs will be honored during the event which takes place at Crowne Plaza Hotel (Andalus Ballroom) starting from 7:00 pm.

SOUTH AFRICAN EMBASSY CLOSURE

On the occasion of the National Day and Liberation Day, the Embassy of the Republic of South Africa will be closed from Sunday, February 26, 2017 and will reopen on Monday, February 27, 2017 with its official office hours from 8:00 to 16:00 and the Consular Section operation hours will be from 8:30 to 12:30. For Emergency calls please contact: 94924895.



NSH CELEBRATES KUWAIT'S NATIONAL, LIBERATION DAYS

The continuous celebrations including cultural events bring great enthusiasm and excitement among the community members in the NSH, the single largest employer in the Middle East. It gives a different style of glory to the expatriate community during the celebrations of national importance. NSH conducted events wherein the dance performed by Meghana and team won thunderous applause, and the cricket matches between the managers and the workers added more beauty. It is also felt by the members that with such events it is a manner of paying respect and saluting the nation for all its paternalistic care. The events such as cancer awareness events are being continued, Sabu said.



OSN MOVIES
ACTION

- 01:00 Get Lucky
- 03:00 Shark Lake
- 04:45 Blown Away
- 07:00 Metro
- 09:00 Rivers Nine
- 11:15 Batman: Bad Blood
- 12:45 Blown Away
- 15:00 Swelter
- 16:45 Big Game
- 18:30 Beverly Hills Cop 3
- 20:30 Divergent
- 23:00 Mercury Rising

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 Yankee Jungle
- 04:35 Tanked
- 05:25 Call Of The Wildman
- 05:50 Call Of The Wildman
- 06:15 Gator Boys
- 07:02 River Monsters
- 07:49 Insane Pools: Off The Deep End
- 08:36 Going Ape
- 09:00 Going Ape
- 09:25 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 10:15 Yankee Jungle
- 11:10 Call Of The Wildman
- 11:35 Call Of The Wildman
- 12:05 Tanked
- 13:00 Dogs/Cats/Pets 101
- 13:55 Bondi Vet
- 14:50 Yankee Jungle
- 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 Gangland Killers
- 20:20 The Vet Life
- 21:15 Tanked
- 22:10 Call Of The Wildman
- 22:35 Call Of The Wildman
- 23:05 Gangland Killers

BBC FIRST

- 00:35 Doctors
- 01:05 Eastenders
- 01:35 Poldark
- 02:30 Last Tango In Halifax

- 02:40 Broad City
- 03:05 South Park
- 03:30 South Park
- 04:00 The Daily Show - Global Edition
- 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 IdiotSitter
- 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 - Global Edition
- 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
- 22:55 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

- 12:50 How Do They Do It?
- 13:15 Impossible Engineering
- 14:05 How Do They Do It?
- 14:30 Storage Wars Canada
- 14:55 Storage Wars Canada
- 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 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 15:40 Supa Strikas
- 16:05 Lab Rats
- 16:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 16:55 Right Now Kapow
- 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 Right Now Kapow
- 20:00 Atomic Puppet
- 20:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 20:55 K.C. Undercover
- 21:20 Kickin' It
- 21:45 Mighty Med
- 22:10 Danger Mouse
- 22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 22:45 Marvel's Avengers Assemble
- 23:10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
- 23:35 Boyster

EHD

- 00:00 El News
- 00:15 Mariah's World
- 01:05 Mariah's World
- 01:55 Mariah's World
- 02:50 El News
- 03:50 Dash Dolls
- 04:45 Dash Dolls
- 05:40 Dash Dolls
- 06:30 Fashion Bloggers
- 07:00 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 07:55 El News
- 08:10 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
- 09:10 El News
- 10:10 Mariah's World
- 11:05 Mariah's World
- 12:00 Mariah's World
- 13:00 El News
- 13:15 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 14:10 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 15:05 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
- 16:00 El 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 El News
- 21:00 Mariah's World
- 22:00 Mariah's World
- 23:00 Mariah's World

food network

- 00:00 Chopped
- 01:00 Food Network Star
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 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: Fast Feasts
- 09:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 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: Fast Feasts
- 13:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 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
- 05:20 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
- 06:15 The Syndicate
- 07:15 The Chase
- 08:05 Couples Come Dine With Me
- 09:00 Tina & Bobby
- 09:00 Autopsy: The Last Hours Of...
- 11:00 The Syndicate
- 12:00 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 Syndicate
- 19:50 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

H2 HD

- 00:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 01:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
- 02:00 Warriors
- 03:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 04:00 Missing In Alaska
- 04:50 Ancient Aliens
- 05:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 06:30 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
- 07:20 America: The Story Of The U.S.
- 08:10 The Universe
- 09:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 10:00 Missing In Alaska
- 11:00 Ancient Aliens
- 12:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 13:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
- 14:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
- 15:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 16:00 Missing In Alaska
- 17:00 Ancient Aliens
- 18:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 19:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
- 20:00 America: The Story Of The U.S.
- 21:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 22:00 Missing In Alaska
- 23:00 Ancient Aliens

H HD HISTORY

- 00:30 American Pickers
- 01:20 Time Team
- 02:10 Counting Cars
- 02:35 Car Hunters
- 03:00 Forged In Fire
- 03:50 Storage Wars
- 04:15 American Pickers
- 05:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:30 Pawn Stars
- 06:00 Mountain Men
- 07:00 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
- 07:50 Shipping Wars
- 08:15 Shipping Wars



Parenthood
"Parenthood excels with emotional grace."



PARENTHOOD ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

- 08:40 Counting Cars
- 09:05 Car Hunters
- 09:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:55 Pawn Stars
- 10:20 Storage Wars
- 10:45 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
- 16:35 Shipping Wars
- 17:00 Counting Cars
- 17:25 Counting Cars
- 17:50 Pawn Stars
- 18:15 Pawn Stars
- 18:40 Leepu And Pitbull
- 19:30 Counting Cars
- 19:55 Car Hunters
- 20:20 Mountain Men
- 21:10 American Pickers
- 22:00 Outlaw Chronicles: Hells Angels
- 22:50 Search For The Lost Giants
- 23:40 Hunting Hitler
- 02:10 Dangerous Encounters
- 03:00 Super Predators
- 03:50 Giant Panda: The Last Refuge
- 04:45 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog
- 05:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 06:35 Super Predators
- 07:30 Giant Panda: The Last Refuge
- 08:25 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog
- 09:20 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 10:15 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 11:10 Rescue Ink
- 12:05 Ultimate Rivals: Cat V. Dog
- 13:00 Sharks Of Lost Island
- 13:55 Puma: Lion Of The Andes
- 14:50 Bearhood
- 15:45 Ultimate Animals
- 16:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 17:35 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 18:30 Rescue Ink
- 19:25 World's Weirdest
- 20:20 Ultimate Animals
- 21:10 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 22:00 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 22:50 Rescue Ink
- 23:40 World's Weirdest

OSN MOVIES DRAMA

- 00:00 Bus 667
- 02:00 The Boy
- 04:00 Backtrack
- 06:00 A Mother Betrayed
- 08:00 Assassin's Bullet
- 10:00 Two Wrongs
- 12:00 First Response
- 14:00 The Last Survivors
- 16:00 Turbulence
- 18:00 Pay The Ghost
- 20:00 Landmine Goes Click
- 22:00 The Purge

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 01:00 High School Musical 3: Senior Year
- 03:00 Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie
- 05:00 Batman Unlimited: Animal Instincts
- 06:30 Kim Possible: So The Drama
- 08:00 Turbo: A Power Rangers Movie
- 10:00 Lilo & Stitch
- 12:00 Kim Possible: So The Drama
- 13:45 Hercules (1997)
- 15:45 Stitch! The Movie
- 17:15 Underdog
- 19:15 Hannah Montana Movie
- 21:15 The Santa Clause 3
- 23:15 Stitch! The Movie

OSN MOVIES HD

- 00:00 Entourage
- 02:00 The Atticus Institute
- 04:00 The Benefactor
- 06:00 Suffragette
- 08:00 Ride Along 2
- 10:00 Kindergarten Cop 2
- 12:00 Zoolander 2
- 14:00 Madoff Part 1
- 15:30 Madoff Part 2
- 17:00 Spooks: The Greater Good
- 18:45 Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials
- 21:00 The Man From U.N.C.L.E.
- 23:00 Deadpool

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 01:00 Don Peyote
- 03:00 After The Ball
- 05:00 With This Ring
- 07:00 Parenthood
- 09:00 After The Ball
- 11:00 With This Ring
- 13:00 Parenthood
- 15:00 Pixels
- 17:00 Other Plans
- 19:00 Baby Mama
- 21:00 She's Funny That Way
- 23:00 How To Make Love Like An Englishman

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:30 Twelve Monkeys
- 04:00 The Sting
- 06:30 The Rainmaker
- 08:45 WarGames
- 10:45 A Perfect Day
- 12:30 The Blind Side
- 14:45 Get On Up
- 17:00 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
- 19:00 Star Wars: The Force Awakens
- 21:15 Interstellar

OSN MOVIES HD KIDS

- 00:15 Ghatokchik - Master Of Magic
- 02:00 The Adventures Of Don Quixote
- 03:45 Memory Loss
- 05:15 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure
- 07:00 Scooby-Doo! And The Beach Beastie
- 00:30 Invasion Of The Killer Whales
- 01:20 Predator Battleground



BIG GAME 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 Holby City
- 08:55 Death In Paradise
- 09:50 The Coroner
- 10:35 New Tricks
- 11:30 Doctors
- 12:00 Eastenders
- 12:30 Death In Paradise
- 13:25 The Coroner
- 14:20 New Tricks
- 15:15 Doctors
- 15:45 Eastenders
- 16:15 Death In Paradise
- 17:10 The Coroner
- 18:05 New Tricks
- 19:00 Doctors
- 19:30 Eastenders
- 20:05 Death In Paradise
- 21:00 Holby City
- 22:00 Mum
- 22:30 Uncle
- 23:00 The Detectivists
- 23:30 The Detectivists
- 08:00 Kids vs Film
- 08:25 Bear Grylls Survival School
- 08:50 Bondi Vet
- 09:40 How It's Made
- 10:05 How It's Made
- 10:30 Science Of The Movies
- 11:20 Mythbusters
- 12:10 Bondi Vet
- 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
- 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 Unbungalivable
- 17:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 17:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 17:55 The Lion Guard
- 18:20 Goldie & Bear
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- 20:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:30 Little Mermaid
- 21:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 21:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 22:00 Unbungalivable
- 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

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

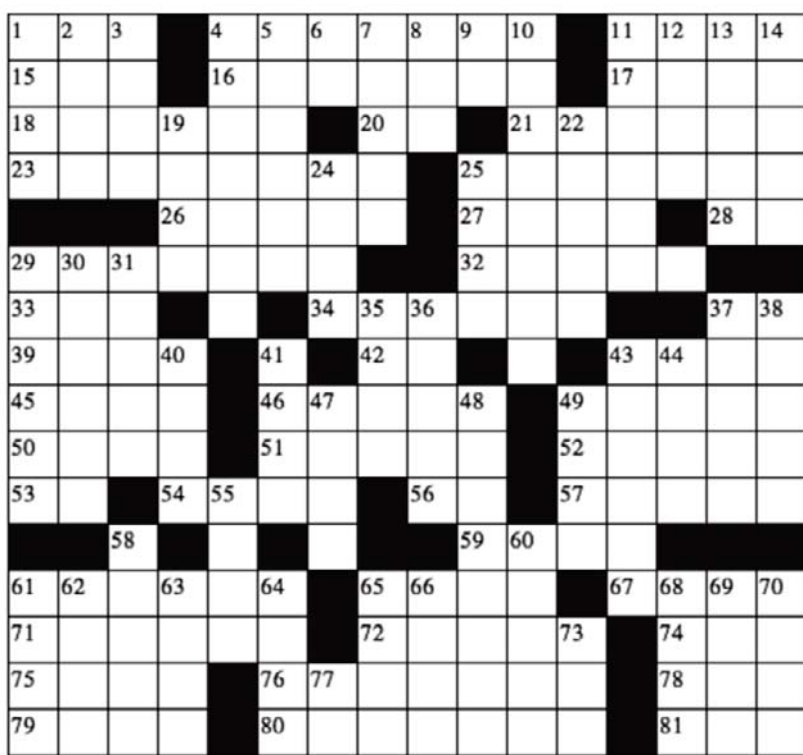
Discovery Channel HD

- 00:30 Fast N' Loud
- 01:20 Misfit Garage
- 02:10 Made By Destruction
- 02:35 Made By Destruction
- 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 Storage Wars Canada
- 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 Storage Wars Canada
- 10:45 How Do They Do It?
- 11:10 How Do They Do It?
- 11:35 Made By Destruction
- 12:00 Made By Destruction
- 12:25 How Do They Do It?



ENTOURAGE ON OSN MOVIES HD

CROSSWORD 1530



ACROSS

- Nut of any of several trees of the genus *Corylus*.
- (of non-living objects) The state of being free of pathogenic organisms.
- Biennial Eurasian plant usually having a swollen edible root.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- A small flat triangular bone in front of the knee that protects the knee joint.
- Imprudently incurring risk.
- A member of the agricultural people living in the central Volga provinces of European Russia.
- A doctor's degree in religion.
- Traveling on horseback.
- An Italian poet famous for love lyrics (1304-1374).
- Of or relating to the uvea of the eye.
- (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
- A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- Any of various birds of the Australian region whose males build ornamented structures resembling bowers in order to attract females.
- (used of persons or the military) Characterized by having or bearing arms.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- Tropical African herbs.
- Being of delicate or slender build.
- The blood group whose red cells carry both the A and B antigens.
- A village in eastern Ireland (northwest of Dublin).
- Squash bugs.
- The dynasty that ruled much of Manchuria and northeastern China from 947 to 1125.
- Worn or shabby from overuse or (of pages) from having corners turned down.
- The principles of right and wrong that are accepted by an individual or a social group.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- A metrical unit with unstressed-stressed syllables.
- A silvery soft waxy metallic element of the alkali metal group.
- A cylindrical spike-like inflorescence.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- Any organic compound formed by adding alcohol molecules to aldehyde molecules.
- A quantity of no importance.
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- Transient cessation of respiration.
- Any of several small ungulate mammals of Africa and Asia with rodent-like incisors and feet with hooflike toes.
- United States composer noted for his innovative use of polytonality (1874-1954).
- Large long-winged warm-water seabird having a large bill with a distensible pouch for fish.
- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- A piece of furniture with a writing surface and usually drawers or other compartments.
- Be earlier in time.
- The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.

DOWN

- Providing sophisticated amusement by virtue of having artificially (and vulgarly) mannered or banal or sentimental qualities.
- A slender double-reed instrument.
- A member of the British order of honor.
- Scandinavian liquor usually flavored with caraway seeds.
- Someone who sets snares for birds or small animals.
- The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
- Of or relating to the feet.
- An honorary degree in science.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- English illustrator of several of Dickens' novels (1815-1882).
- A British peer ranking below a Marquess and above a Viscount.
- A city in western Germany.
- A location other than here.
- Beat thoroughly in a competition or fight.
- Leafless East Indian vine.
- (of a young animal) Abandoned by its mother and raised by hand.
- Any of numerous local fertility and nature deities worshipped by ancient Semitic peoples.
- (Greek mythology) One of the three Graces.
- Long-tailed arboreal mustelid of Central and South America.
- A flat-bottomed volcanic crater that was formed by an explosion.
- Realistic Norwegian author who wrote plays on social and political themes (1828-1906).
- A toxic protein extracted from castor beans.
- Order by virtue of superior authority.
- Any of a group of antidepressant drugs that inhibit the action of monoamine oxidase in the brain and so allow monoamines to accumulate.
- A complex red organic pigment containing iron and other atoms to which oxygen binds.
- Combatant who tries to throw opponent to the ground.
- A dull persistent (usually moderately intense) pain.
- (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- Resoluteness by virtue of being unyielding and inflexible.
- Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
- An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
- In some classifications.
- Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
- An underground enclosure with access from the surface of the ground or from the sea v 1.
- Any piece of work that is undertaken or attempted.
- An inhabitant of Lapland.
- A university in Connecticut.
- Surpassing the ordinary especially in size or scale.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
- Used of a single unit or thing.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.

Yesterday's Solution

B	O	S	C	U	R	S	I	D	A	E	M	E	G		
O	P	A	H	T	O	C	C	A	T	A	A	L	A		
N	A	G	A	R	I	A	K	H	A	A	Y	I	N		
E	L	A	N	C	A	G	Y	R	A	G	B	A	G		
				A	D	A	D	N	A	C	R	E			
A	C	O	L	D	S	F	A	X	E	C	C				
L	A	V	S	H	O	A	L	M	E	D	A	L			
S	L	I	M	A	P	I	A	P	D	A	B	A			
A	P	E	R	E	D	G	A	R	D	A	D				
C	A	D	N	S	C	T	I	M	B	A	L	E			
E	C	O	S	O	C	R	E	P	E	A	L				
				T	A	R	S	A	L	S	H	E	I	K	A
B	L	U	E	H	E	A	D	T	U	A	R	E	G		
R	I	L	L	E	M	I	L	E	A	R	U	B	A		
Y	E	L	L	C	O	A	L	B	I	N	L	A	M		
A	U	R	A	H	A	N	D	B	A	G	A	B	A		

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may be very expressive in speaking or communicating. People will understand just what you mean. You may feel that you are in touch and in harmony with others; the lines of communication are open. Successful results can occur as you work with others. You may be asked to carry through on a particular job. If you are looking for support you will not have to look far-the support you need is there. You may find yourself looking for a little emotional release this afternoon and a little exercise should be considered. You can appreciate the results of good exercise and you may talk a friend into a bicycle ride later this afternoon. Tonight there is time to read a romantic book or take in a movie. Romance is promising this evening.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may find yourself at odds with those around you or with your life situation regarding issues of great sensitivity-very personal. Difficulties, blocks and all manner of hot spots may be discovered and worked through today. You will be able to breeze through and find a solution to these problems quickly. Your natural charm and your artistic abilities may provide you with just what you need to enjoy financial success. This is an excellent time to start new projects or work on new ideas with your co-workers. Incentives and rewards become a part of creating the best results for an earnest group of people to hit the mark of success. When goals are reached, the progress continues and is eventually handed down. This time indicates strength.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You have not had a party in a very long time and at this time you might find that you spend a great deal of time thinking about what to do for the next party and who would appreciate such a party. At work your preoccupation may leave you out of some important conversation, so write down a few notes regarding your thoughts on the party and then you will be able to pay attention to the work in your workplace. The noon break may provide the opportunity to shop and gain some more ideas about a party. You may decide to have a theme party-perhaps a masquerade party. If you can keep your patience intact, you will find things working out in your favor. You can be inspired to express your unique and unusual ideas-others appreciate your input.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You may feel more expressive with others now and your abilities to share in open discussions can be a great deal of fun. Networking is the number one way to get your work noticed-as well as learning ways to update, improve, expand or advertise. Take advantage of the opportunities today to network on the computer or in the lunchroom. Do not try to change the workflow as you seem to be caught up in some rush of work. Your ingenuity and expertise can help to create positive results for almost any project. You will handle problems in a swift and smooth manner. Your intuition and compassion will come into play this afternoon as you help a young person with some temporary problem. Careful; you can occasionally get preachy.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your competitive nature will kick in today-you will find you can really accomplish quite a lot. Perhaps you are a freelance writer and can easily jump from one story to another. You are coming into a period of greater than usual emphasis on emotional security. Making your job in general count as a most important factor in your life. You feel a love of order and law-an appreciation for responsibilities and duty. You value problems for the lessons they represent, not for how your solutions are perceived. Although you gain a great deal of satisfaction from your accomplishments in the work world, you tend to be puzzled over just where all the money you have earned has gone. Personal partnerships in business are beneficial and informative.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

If you are short of money just now, know that it is a temporary situation. If you have any legal matters to attend to, these should go in your favor. You may discover a new philosophy and begin to see life from a different perspective. You are in a good mood and will gain quite a lot from the work you do. If you go with your intuition this afternoon, you will be pleased with the results of your choice. There are many opportunities to learn about how business works and this includes politics. With your positive attitude and your sense of humor, you are able to help a young person with some serious problems this evening. Don't sweat the small stuff-it's all small stuff! A card game or a trip to the library is time well spent with a loved one tonight.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Take a little time each day to find the ways in which you can improve your power and you will find some exciting experiences. You are also thinking about future opportunities for growth and travel as well as financial gains. Take one thing at a time and create ways in which to secure or improve your job identity. Secure your mobility by taking care of your vehicle today. Do not wait too long to perform maintenance on your vehicle as an oil change would be beneficial. Check the belts, brakes and tires as well. This precaution is to save time and money to head off future delays and costs. A social affair this evening gives you an opportunity to network. You instinctively know who to impress and can charm anyone.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Professionally speaking, you may want to retrain yourself today. Others need to catch up and could use your help in understanding some new method of working or using equipment. Today seems to be all about paying attention to the trends of change around you and your expectations. Be smart with finances while shopping this afternoon. Whatever you may be wanting to purchase may have to wait a day or so. Universal conditions will change and so will your vision of what is unique or appropriate for your personal enjoyment. You might enjoy a drive in the country this evening or a good recorded book. Books on tape and music played on your preference of player are enjoyable ways to pass time while exercising or driving a car or tending to chores.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

This is one of those days that find you wishing you could just stay home. An attitude of gratitude will see you through the day with few repercussions. Everyone seems to be either in a state of change or focused on the business at hand. Make a concentrated effort to bring balance into your day. This means work, fun, nutritious meals; you know-all the things your mother taught you. After work, you could involve yourself with a bit of exercise, perhaps with a friend. This activity will help relieve an edgy feeling that may have occurred because of stress. If you become aware of some underlying negative from a member of your family, turn your attention to this person and lend an encouraging smile. Remember, frowns and smiles don't work at the same time.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may have to sort through several stories today to get to the truth of a matter. We all have our own way of viewing situations and co-workers have opinions that need attention. If you are management-listen. If you are a co-worker, perhaps this would be fodder for a writing practice. You may even decide to present your writing to a group of script writers of a popular comedy or story episode. The peacemaker in you is in demand today. The law, religion or getting some work published is an interest that currently occupies your mind. Perhaps it is time to assess your goals and what you would like to accomplish. Consider updating or revising your financial accounts. Perhaps reviewing your present ability to add more to a plan would be wise.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You have a natural sense for communicating with others, especially those younger than you. Political correctness and appropriate consideration of others are subjects you are aware can move people in directions of study and thought. You make suggestions as you teach to help others stop and think through a new awareness. Each student chooses the right individual path through much personal study. Through your leadership, you may show positive ways society has progressed. Positive changes that continue our growth may be the deep subjects of social development that you love to teach. You seem to enjoy the work set out in front of you now. Mechanical projects fare well this evening and you like it when sounds, smells or service is fine-tuned.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

The way you give advice and lead young people is how you like to be guided or taught. The culmination of your education and your understanding of how people like to be treated creates a desire in you to establish a good kinship or understanding so that your teaching is engrained in all of your students, in positive ways and throughout their life. Today you encourage others to move forward with their goals, whether you are teaching or not. Co-workers trust your words to be true and in their best interests. With this type of fan club, you might consider putting in a request that would take you further up the corporate ladder. At home this evening you may be looking for a bit of encouragement and you will not be disappointed.

WORD SEARCH

Movies: Science Fiction

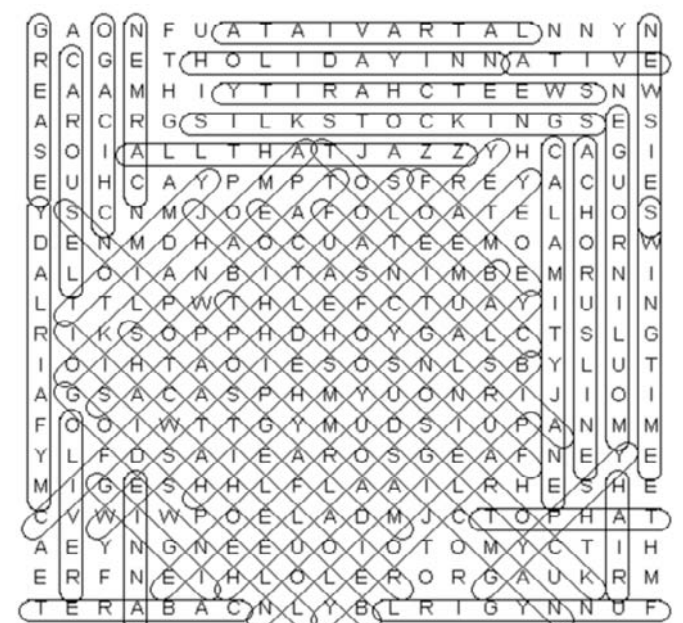
Find and circle all of the Science Fiction movies that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the title of an additional Science Fiction movie.



- ALIEN
- BLADE RUNNER
- BODY SNATCHERS
- BRAZIL
- COCOON
- CONTACT
- CUBE
- DARK CITY
- DEEP IMPACT
- DUNE
- EQUILIBRIUM
- FANTASTIC VOYAGE
- FLASH GORDON
- FLATLINERS
- FORBIDDEN PLANET
- FRANKENSTEIN
- GATTACA
- INDEPENDENCE DAY
- JURASSIC PARK
- LOGAN'S RUN
- MAD MAX
- METROPOLIS
- ROBOCOP
- SCANNERS
- SHIVERS
- SILENT RUNNING
- SOLARIS
- SOYLENT GREEN
- SPIDER-MAN
- STAR WARS
- STARGATE
- STARMAN
- STARSHIP TROOPERS
- TERMINATOR
- THE ABYSS
- THE FLY
- THE MATRIX
- THEY LIVE
- TOTAL RECALL
- TRANCERS
- TRON
- VIDEOODROME
- WESTWORLD

Yesterday's Solution

Movies: Musicals



- A CHORUS LINE
- ALL THAT JAZZ
- ANNIE
- BLUE HAWAII
- BRIGADOON
- BUGSY MALONE
- CABARET
- CALAMITY JANE
- CAMELOT
- CARMEN
- CAROUSEL
- CHICAGO
- EVITA
- FAME
- FANTASIA
- FUNNY FACE
- FUNNY GIRL
- GIGI
- GODSPELL
- GREASE
- GYPSY
- HAIR
- HELLO, DOLLY!
- HIGH SOCIETY
- HOLIDAY INN
- JAILHOUSE ROCK
- LA TRAVIATA
- MARY POPPINS
- MOULIN ROUGE
- MY FAIR LADY
- NEWSIES
- OKLAHOMA!
- OLIVER!
- PAL JOEY
- SHOW BOAT
- SILK STOCKINGS
- SOUTH PACIFIC
- STATE FAIR
- SWEET CHARITY
- SWING TIME
- THE MUSIC MAN
- TOMMY
- TOP HAT
- WEST SIDE STORY

The hidden movie is: A FUNNY THING HAPPENED ON THE WAY TO THE FORUM

Daily SuDoku

	9	4		6				
		1		8			9	
		8			4		7	6
	8	5	6					
3								5
					3	4	6	
1	2		9			8		
		9		4		6		
				1		5	2	

Yesterday's Solution

2	5	1	4	8	7	6	3	9
7	4	6	3	1	9	2	8	5
3	8	9	5	6	2	4	7	1
4	3	7	1	2	6	9	5	8
9	6	8	7	5	3	1	4	2
1	2	5	8	9	4	7	6	3
8	9	2	6	7	5	3	1	4
6	1	4	9	3	8	5	2	7
5	7	3	2	4	1	8	9	6

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaee 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



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Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



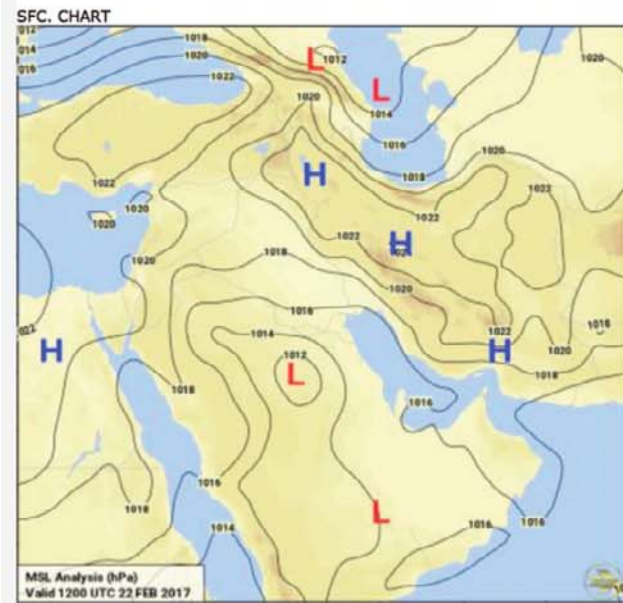
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 22/02/2017-19:00 LT UTC +3hr

MIN Temperature 8 °C

By Night :Partly cloudy to cloudy with light variable wind changing to light to moderate south easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 28 km/h with a chance for scattered light rain later on

By Day : Cloudy to partly cloudy with light to moderate freshening gradually at times easterly to south easterly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h with a chance for rain that might be thundery at times



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	partly cloudy + scat rain thundery at times	sunny + chance for fog	sunny	fair
Min Temp °C	08	07	05	07
Max Temp °C	19	23	23	25
Wind Direction	easterly to south easterly	north westerly to northerly	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	15 - 40	12 - 35	15 - 38	15 - 38

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C EXP	Max °C REC
KUWAIT CITY	10	21
KUWAIT AIRPORT	08	21
ABDALY	10	25
BUBYAN	11	18
JAHRA	10	22
FAILAKA ISLAND	10	19
SALMIYAH	13	18
AHMADI	13	16
JAL ALIYAH	10	22
QAROH ISLAND	14	18
UMM AL-MARADEM	14	18
NUWAISIB	09	20
WAFRA	08	21
MANAGISH	10	21
SALMY	09	21
MUTRIBA	09	23

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	20
Min Temp (°C)	01
Max Rel Hum (%)	43
Min Rel Hum (%)	14
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	28 NW
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:20
Sunset	17:43

Tomorrow Prayer Times

Fajr	05:01
Sunrise	06:20
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:17
Sunset	17:43
Isha	19:00



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)	Psychiatrists
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daary	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	Gynaecologists & Obstetricians
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaezem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea	25333501
Urologists	Internists, Chest & Heart
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	Physiotherapists & VD
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
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-Katrah	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	Rheumatologists:
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	Internist, Chest & Heart
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foaid Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC	
Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
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Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Dr. Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliyami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr. Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

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Review

FEATURES

In 'Get Out,' the two-faced horrors of racism

Fifty years after Sidney Poitier upended the latent racial prejudices of his white date's liberal family in "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner," writer-director Jordan Peele has crafted a similar confrontation with altogether more combustible results in "Get Out." "Do they know I'm black?" Chris (Daniel Kaluuya) asks his white girlfriend Rose (Allison Williams) as they get ready to leave their city apartment for a weekend at her parents' rural estate. "No," she replies. "Should they?" "It seems like something you might want to mention," he sighs. "I don't want to get chased off the lawn with a shotgun."

It's a joke but it's also foreshadowing - and just a hint of the frights to come. In Peele's directorial debut, the former "Key and Peele" star has - as he often did on that satirical sketch series - turned inside out even supposedly progressive assumptions about race. But Peele has largely left comedy behind in a more chilling portrait of the racism that lurks beneath smiling white

faces and defensive, paper-thin protestations like, "But I voted for Obama!" and "Isn't Tiger Woods amazing?" Those are the kinds of things that Rose's father, Dean (an excellent Bradley Whitford), says as he and his wife, Missy (Catherine Keener), heartily welcomes his daughter's boyfriend. "How long has this thing been going on?" Dean asks with forced emphasis on "thang."

But the warm welcome is only skin deep. A deeply bizarre atmosphere takes hold at the house, where all the hired help is black. They are a spooky, robotic bunch, with dead eyes and zombie-like demeanors that would have stood out even in "The Stepford Wives." Something clearly is off, though Peele takes his time letting the mystery thicken. "Get Out," produced by Jason Blum's low-budget horror studio Blumhouse Productions, is serious, even sober in its horror. But its archness has moments of creepy levity. When Chris is given a tour of the house, Dean points out the sealed door to the basement. "Black mold," he says.



This image released by Universal Pictures shows, from left, Catherine Keener, Bradley Whitford, Allison Williams, Betty Gabriel and Daniel Kaluuya in a scene from 'Get Out.' — AP

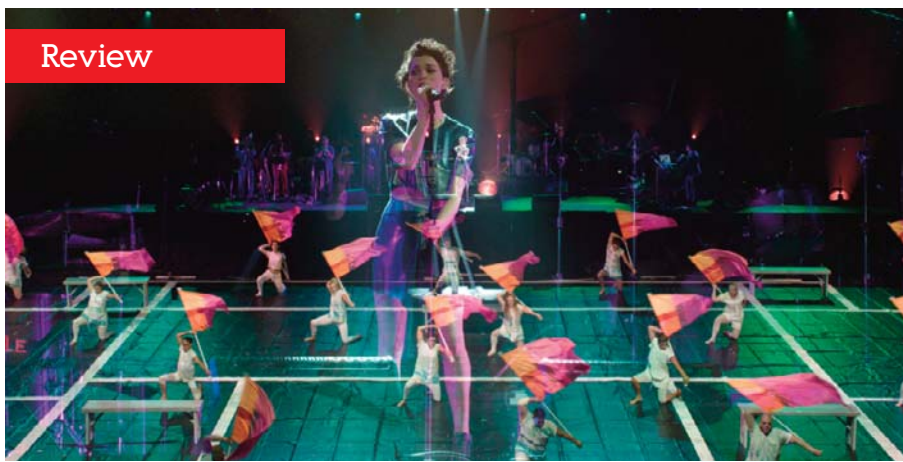
Inclusive of genres
Things get even stranger when Chris meets some of the family friends, who all appear oddly frozen in time somehow. Some ogle him

with lust, feeling his biceps. The most paranoid (and funny) character in the movie is Chris' friend, Rod (a terrific Lil Rel Howery), a TSA agent who - dubious from the start - grows

increasingly concerned with every update from Chris. Eventually, the truth comes out, things turn bloody and, as you'd expect, we get a look at that basement.

It's long been a lamentable joke that in horror films - never the most inclusive of genres - the black dude is always the first to go. In this way, "Get Out" is radical and refreshing in its perspective. The movie is entirely from Chris' point of view; his fears are ours. Peele originally conceived his long-planned film as an Obama-era horror, one that revealed the hidden racism that the country had supposedly overcome. "Get Out" instead comes out at a time where few still hold any belief in a post-racial America. The dark forces unleashed in "Get Out" came out of hiding long ago. "Get Out," a Universal Pictures release, is rated R by the Motion Picture Association of America for "violence, bloody images, and language including sexual references." Running time: 103 minutes. Three stars out of four. — AP

Review



This image released by Oscilloscope shows a scene from 'Contemporary Color,' a documentary about the art of Color Guard, by Bill and Turner Ross. — AP

'Contemporary Color' is a hypnotic concert film

In 2015, former Talking Heads front man David Byrne staged an unconventional show in which he paired up 10 contemporary musicians and performers with color guard teams - those baton and saber twirling staples of small town parades and high school football games. The musicians, including the likes of St Vincent, Lucius, Ad-Rock, Zola Jesus and Nelly Furtado, composed original songs that the color guard teams then used to choreograph a corresponding routine. The unique spectacle, which took place at Brooklyn's Barclays Center, is chronicled with experimental verve in the documentary "Contemporary Color," from filmmaking brothers Bill and Turner Ross.

Narrative is of little consequence in "Contemporary Color." The Ross brothers show some interest in the excitable high school students from various parts of the country who have devoted most of the free time of their young lives to their color guard teams. This strange, high profile gig will also be the last time many are performing together. But the audience doesn't get to know any individual well enough for that to have any sort of emotional impact.

Maybe it'll remind some of their long lost high school passions, but the most remarkable thing about these youngsters is what happens when they're on the stage moving in tandem in an eye-popping swirl of sequins and flags. You forget that just a minute ago they were giggly

and emotional and inarticulate in that way that most normal people are when a camera is pointed at them. The Ross bros employ various techniques to keep the sights stimulating, dreamily overlaying images and sounds in hypnotically retro fashion. They were right to keep "Contemporary Color" on the experimental side, but the film isn't immune from dragging some. After a handful of performances, they do start to blend together a bit. Perhaps that's because they have the unenviable task of documenting the entire show for an audience who will be watching it separated by a screen, making it that much more difficult to convey the actual energy of a live performance.

Lovely voices

Off stage, too, the film can't help but stumble onto the high/low divide between the color guard art that they're purportedly celebrating and the fact that many of the students and coaches participating simply haven't heard of some of the indie musicians they've been paired up with. The film isn't out to mock anyone, nor is Byrne, who seems genuinely delighted by the color guard troupes. And yet I couldn't help but feel a slight queasiness watching three grown men standing in the hall of a high school having to tell the camera that they had not heard of the act How to Dress Well. —AP

Hungary's Berlin film fest winner Enyedi to adapt novel

The Hungarian director whose "On Body and Soul" won the top award at the Berlin Film Festival says her next project is an adaptation of "The Story of My Wife," a 1942 novel by Hungarian writer and poet Milan Fust. Director Ildiko Enyedi also said Tuesday that she welcomed the national film fund's support for her work and that of a wide range of Hungarian directors and writers, some of whose films have recently won prizes at international festivals. "Son of Saul" by Laszlo Nemes won the Oscar last year for best foreign-language film.

"I see an intelligent and wise strategy on part of the Film Fund in that they are motivated primarily by professional aspects to help the films," Enyedi said. "The creators are able to bring mature works to the table and that is very significant." "On Body And Soul," a love story about two slaughterhouse workers who connect in shared dreams, is Enyedi's first feature film since 1999. It won the Berlin Film Festival's Golden

Bear award on Saturday. Enyedi has been critical of the cultural policies and perceived democratic shortfalls of Prime Minister Viktor Orban's government. She said that while her opinions had not changed, she regretted if they distracted from the success of the film.

"We've made a beautiful film for everyone ... and I wish we could enjoy what we have put so much work into," Enyedi said. "I don't think it's up to any culture policy to declare what is good or not." Enyedi's film won several other prizes in Berlin, including one from the Ecumenical Jury she said was particularly meaningful. "It means that we achieved our goal of reaching many different kinds of people," Enyedi said. "My mother is Lutheran, my father was Jewish, my husband is Catholic ... and our children are ecumenical in their very existence." Enyedi, 61, won the Golden Camera award in Cannes with her 1989 debut film, "My 20th Century." — AP



Hungarian author and director Ildiko Enyedi, 'On Body and Soul' poses for photographers after winning the Golden Bear for Best Film at the awards ceremony of the 67th Berlinale Film Festival in Berlin, Germany, Saturday Feb 18 2017. — AP

WOMEN, MINORITIES FARE (A LITTLE) BETTER IN HOLLYWOOD

Women and minorities are faring better in Hollywood and feature prominently at this year's upcoming Oscars, but they are still woefully underrepresented overall in the entertainment industry, according to a report issued on Tuesday. The "2017 Hollywood Diversity Report" - the fourth in a series by the Ralph J Bunche Center for African American Studies at the University of California Los Angeles - examined 200 top-grossing films released in 2015 as well as 1,206 television shows that aired or streamed during the 2014-15 season. It also tracked hiring of women and minorities, both on screen and behind the camera, in 11 job types. "Since the last report, the good news is that minorities and women have made some progress, particularly in television, which is currently engaged in what might be characterized as a 'Golden Age,'" the report said. "The bad news is that despite these gains, minorities and women remained underrepresented on every measure in television during the 2014-15 season." The study comes just days before the Academy

Awards which in past years faced scathing criticism and boycott calls for nominating only white actors in the main categories.

This year, however, a record number of black actors were nominated for the glitzy awards ceremony being held on Sunday, averting a repeat of the #OscarsSoWhite controversy. Still, the UCLA study said that despite the inclusion of more black actors in this year's nominations, "the exclusion of people of color and women from Hollywood remains a concern." "While there have been some improvements, especially in television, the numbers remain disheartening across the board," said Darnell Hunt, the report's lead author and director of the Bunche Center. "At the heart of it is the fact that Hollywood is simply not structured to make the most of today's market realities."

The study noted that minorities make up 40 percent of the population in the United States but only 13.6 percent of lead actors in films and 10.1 percent of Hollywood directors. As for women, despite the fact that they make up 50 percent of

the US population, they got just 29 percent of lead roles in films and fewer than 10 percent of the directors of the top 200 films in 2015 were women.

'Diversity and financial sense'

"In terms of sophistication of content, television might be considered to be in something of a golden age," said Hunt, who also is chair of the UCLA sociology department. "But in terms of representation and opportunity, we still have a long way to go. "White men are still dominant, and women and people of color struggle to get the opportunities to succeed." The report said television hit shows such as "Empire," whose cast is primarily people of color, and "Transparent," a comedy-drama about the transgender patriarch of a California family, have helped push Hollywood's diversity agenda, but more was needed on all fronts. It underlined that the industry needs to consider the buying power of minorities, who in 2015 purchased 45 percent of all movie tickets sold in the US. —AFP

Midas trends launches Herman Miller new living office in Kuwait as their authorized dealer

Midas Trends, the authorized dealer of Herman Miller in Kuwait along with Herman Miller, Dubai, held a special event to launch Herman Miller latest Living Office (showroom) in Kuwait and introduce the new concept of Living Office along with some of the latest products of Herman Miller, including the newly introduced version of the iconic Aeron Chair remastered on February 15, 2017, at Al-Sayer Complex in Farwaniya.

The event was attended by special invitees, media personnel and Midas Trends customers and business partners. Rob Keddie, Regional Director of Herman Miller, Middle East and Africa, was the guest of honour. Midas Trends as the authorized dealer for Herman Miller in Kuwait, look at this new partnership as the start to a greater customer experience introducing more innovative products to the Kuwait market. Herman Miller is a recognized innovator in contract furniture solutions, healthcare environments, and related technologies and services. A publicly held company headquartered in Zeeland, Michigan, the company has manufacturing facilities in the United States, Italy, the United Kingdom and China, with sales offices, dealers, licensees, and customers in over 100 countries.

Speaking at the event, Midas Vice President, Kamal Jamil,

expressed his excitement at the new partnership, and underlined his company's vision of bringing a whole new furniture shopping experience to the customers. "As the new authorized dealer of Herman Miller, we will be able to further raise the bar and deliver more quality, style and comfort in the market."

Midas' business strategy

Jamil further noted that the customers are increasingly looking for new and innovative solutions in office furnishing, and exposing Kuwaiti customers to have a good insight into the new trends in the world. He said the new partnership is well on track with Midas' business strategy of catering to the demands of the regional market for high quality products that bridge the gap between functionality and style. Giving a brief history of Midas, Jamil said that within a few years of establishment, Midas was able to create a unique identity of its own, and soon went on to become the market leader in furniture contracting business in Kuwait. "And to this day, we have maintained our enviable position through continuous improvement and commitment to quality."

He added, "Wherever we went, we made sure our standard was never compromised and provided world-class facilities

and services." On his part, Rob Keddie, said Herman Miller is committed to expanding its presence in the region and achieving its goal of being a global trendsetter in our industry." He hailed their partnership saying, "We've worked with Midas Trends for the last year, and are delighted that Midas Trends has introduced the Living Office concept within the showroom."

We are confident that our association with Midas will help us cement our position as market leaders here in the Middle East." The showroom illustrates Herman Millers' commitment to the region and is in line with the company's on-going global expansion plans into emerging markets, he added.

Extensive research

A key highlight at the event was the new version of Aeron Chair, which has been remastered to suit the needs of the 21st century work based on extensive research in the science of sitting postures. Don Chadwick, the original designer of the Aeron chair, himself oversaw the design of this new version, which is expected to be the new normal in the workplaces of the future.

Rob also expressed great pleasure for being able to take part in the event and said that it was an honour to enter a

partnership with a world-class furniture contractor like Midas Office. "Midas' market knowledge and expertise in the field will be a great asset for Herman Miller to further its business aspirations in the region," he noted. The guests were then taken on a tour of the Herman Miller product display. The exhibits generated a lot of interest and the guests engaged the staff to find out more about the products and solutions.

A special draw for a surprise prize added to the event's excitement and ensured the guests were entertained throughout. Midas Furniture was founded in 1993 and quickly became a regional leader in home furniture and accessories. This success pushed the company to expand its horizons and include office and corporate project solutions to its list of products and services. Over the past 20 years, Midas has grown to include 16 locations and showrooms across Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Jordan and Iraq. The company has also evolved to include a projects division aimed at providing complete and integrated design and furnishing solutions for large scale businesses and industries in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.



MUSIC & MOVIES

Cult Japanese film director **Seijun Suzuki** dead at 93

Japanese B-movie director, Seijun Suzuki, whose prolific output from gangster films to fantasies influenced international filmmakers including Quentin Tarantino, has died, his former studio announced yesterday. He was 93. Suzuki died of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease on February 13, the Nikkatsu studio said in a statement expressing "deep gratitude and respect to his great achievements". In a career spanning five decades, Suzuki's works "had a great influence on movie fans and film makers around the world," the company said.

Though Suzuki was not widely known among audiences outside Japan, he had an impact on other directors. The Hollywood Reporter said he inspired filmmakers including Tarantino, Jim Jarmusch, Wong Kar-wai and fellow countryman Takeshi Kitano. Suzuki's cinematic style was recently described by "La La Land" director Damien Chazelle as "like musicals... but with guns". Debuting in 1956, Suzuki directed B-movies at

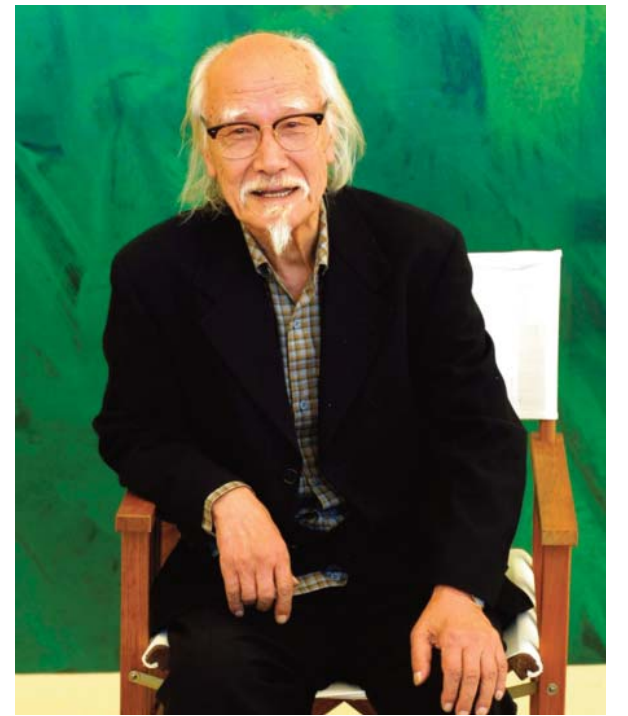
Nikkatsu for 12 years, with his films drawing attention for a unique and vivid sense of colour that his fans came to call "Seijun bigaku (Seijun aesthetic)".

But his work, sometimes derided as strange and hard to understand, wasn't for everyone. Kinema-Junposha, which publishes movie-related magazines and books, said Suzuki was fired in 1968 after releasing his gangster opus "Branded to Kill". Nikkatsu's president deemed his films to be "incomprehensible". Suzuki did not return to filmmaking for a decade, despite an outcry from his colleagues and fans as well as court proceedings. But he roared back in the early 1980s with the surreal mystery "Zigeunerweisen", which won the Honorable Mention at the 31st Berlin International Film Festival.

His last film was "Operetta Tanukigoten" ("Princess Raccoon") in 2005, a fantasy in which a prince falls in love with a raccoon princess, starring Chinese actress Zhang Ziyi. Suzuki,

known for his long white hair, white beard and sheepish demeanour, also appeared in movies and TV dramas as an actor, public broadcaster NHK reported. Chazelle name-checked Suzuki during a visit to Japan last month when asked if he had included any references to other films in the movie. "I feel like I took a little" from Suzuki's "Tokyo Drifter" as well as "his whole kind of oeuvre of movies," Chazelle said. "His super wide frames and very pop-art colours-they feel like musicals to me, but with guns," Chazelle said. — AFP

File picture shows Japanese director Seijun Suzuki posing during a photo call for the presentation of 'Pistol opera' out of competition at the 58th International Film Festival, organized by Venice's Biennale. — AFP



Oscar statues are waiting to be cleaned and painted for the 89th Annual Academy Awards in Hollywood, California. — AFP

Israel invited 26 Oscar stars to visit. So far none has

A year ago Israel offered Leonardo DiCaprio, Matt Damon and other Hollywood stars all-expenses paid luxury trips, but it seems they have chosen to miss their cues. Campaigners are claiming victory as it appears none of the 26 Oscars stars offered a free personalized tour valued at up to \$55,000 has visited. The offer, part of gift bags given out by a marketing firm around the time of the 2016 Oscars each worth an estimated \$200,000 and including other items such as ultra-expensive toilet paper, sparked a backlash.

Campaign groups accused Israel of trying to use the celebrities to gain positive coverage and downplay alleged abuses in the occupied Palestinian territories. A few days ahead of the 2017 ceremony on February 26, it appears none of the nominees has visited themselves. Hunger Games star Jennifer Lawrence did take up the offer but gave it to her parents, said the agency that came up with the idea.

"This is a success," said Yousef Munayyer of the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, which ran the campaign against the visits along with American organisation Jewish Voice for Peace. "I am very glad there's no evidence that people went. I think it is clear the objective of using the actors to whitewash Israel has failed." Given several days notice, Israel's tourism ministry declined to comment or confirm which celebrities had taken up the offer.

Kick back

Ahead of the 2016 Oscars, in which DiCaprio scooped best actor for The Revenant, Israel's tourism ministry announced the nominees for the top five prizes as well as host Chris Rock would be offered individually tailored trips, including first class flights and luxury hotels. Israeli officials said they were seeking to show the real Israel at a time of conflict. "Every celebrity that is coming to visit us can put online a selfie somewhere and the value is huge," tourism ministry director general Amir Halevi told AFP at the time.

But US-based campaigners placed adverts in the Los Angeles Times and urged the actors to #skipthetrip on social media. Campaigners then monitored traditional and social media to see if any of the celebrities made public trips. "So far we have not seen any," Munayyer said. Sam Gee from exploreisrael.com agency that devised the idea said Lawrence gave the trip to her parents as a birthday gift and they have already visited. Mark Rylance, winner of the Best Supporting Actor and a

long-time critic of Israeli policies, confirmed to AFP he would not visit. Jewish Voice for Peace spokeswoman Granate Sosnoff said it was part of a wider cultural boycott. "Our campaign brought tension, interrupted the normalcy of brand Israel and reminded Hollywood elites that there's a social cost of being associated with military occupation," she said.

Left-wing shift

Dan Rothem, a researcher on US-Israel relations, said Israel wanted to use celebrities "as a way to break the impression there is some sort of isolation or boycott". Musicians performing in Israel are often put under pressure to boycott from activists, with Pink Floyd's Roger Waters a major campaigner against such trips. But in recent weeks a number of global bands, including Radiohead, who are known for social activism, have announced gigs in the country, leading left-wing newspaper Haaretz to ponder if boycott moves are failing.

Last week controversy erupted over American footballers visiting Israel, with only five of the 11 players from the NFL joining a trip after the Superbowl. Seattle Seahawks defensive end Michael Bennett said he would "not be used" by Israel, quoting reports the itinerary was being sculpted by the government for publicity. "When I do go to Israel and I do plan to go it will be to see not only Israel but also the West Bank and Gaza so I can see how the Palestinians, who have called this land home for thousands of years, live their lives," he said in a statement.

Academic Margaret Campbell, who has written about celebrity endorsements, said the biggest risks of backfire is "that people end up with a worse idea of the brand (the country 'brand' in this case) than before". Chuck Norris visited Israel this month and met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Rothem said right-winger Norris' visit would not break the "right-left divide", but more traditionally left-wing Hollywood could help reverse a negative trend for Israel. The percentage of Democrats who sympathise more with the Palestinians than with Israel has nearly doubled since 2014, research by the Pew Research Center found, and in 2016 was higher than the percentage favoring Israelis (40 percent and 33 percent respectively). "The left and the right in America no longer view Israel through the same prism," Rothem said. — AFP

Chris Brown restrained from model after abuse account

Troubled singer Chris Brown has been ordered to stay away from an ex-girlfriend, model Karrueche Tran, after she said he punched her and threatened to kill her. In documents made public Tuesday, a Los Angeles court granted a restraining order requested by Tran, with Brown facing arrest if he comes near her. Tran, who has had an on-off relationship with Brown, said that the 27-year-old singer punched her in the stomach and pushed her down the stairs several years ago but that she did not call the police.

The model, who has also appeared in television series, said she requested the restraining order as Brown had recently sent her threats by text message. "He told a few people that he was going to kill me. He said if no one else can have me, he's gonna 'take me out,'" she wrote. Brown, who rose to fame at a young age with his R&B voice and later rap, has become notorious for allegations of abuse. He was convicted of beating Rihanna, then his girlfriend, before the 2009 Grammy Awards, forcing the pop superstar to miss the music industry's annual gala. Last year, he was arrested on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon after an hours-long standoff with police.

A woman had called for assistance in that incident, but Brown's lawyers insisted she had set him up amid a feud. Brown on Tuesday posted an expletive-filled video on Instagram in which he said to fans: "Make sure you all don't be listening to this." It was unclear if he was commenting specifically on the restraining order or solely on his ongo-



In this file photo, Karrueche Tran arrives at the 74th annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif.



In this file photo, rapper Chris Brown performs at the 2015 Hot 97 Summer Jam at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, NJ. — AP photos

ing feud with another artist in legal trouble, the rapper Soulja Boy.

The two stars have been trading punches over social media and had dared each other to settle scores with a real-life fight-a boxing match, which may prove lucrative for the two of them. Brown confirmed that he has walked away from the boxing proposal, amid online taunts by Soulja Boy, who is facing unrelated felony weapons charges. Brown called the match "immature" and said that

too many middlemen "got in the way because they want to get a piece of the pie." The latest woes have apparently not deterred Brown's star appeal as he announced a major tour on Tuesday. His promoters said that Brown would headline a 33-date tour of North American arenas joined by the rapper 50 Cent and other stars, starting on March 31 in Baltimore. — AFP



Andris Nelsons, music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducts at Tanglewood, the orchestra's summer retreat in the Berkshires near Lenox, Massachusetts. —AFP

Boston Symphony plans major additions to summer home

The Boston Symphony Orchestra's summer home of Tanglewood, one of the premier outdoor venues in classical music, will undergo a major expansion that will include a year-round building. Nestled in the Berkshire hills of western Massachusetts, the rustic 212-hectare (524-acre) estate has been the orchestra's base each summer since 1937, offering tranquility for student musicians and a weekend destination for cultured travelers. In a \$30 million expansion announced late Tuesday, the orchestra plans to build four interconnected buildings that include a performance space, a lecture hall and a dining area meant to encourage interaction between musicians and visitors.

The complex, which will open in the summer of 2019, will be climate-controlled and available for rental in the off season. The performance area will accommodate an audience of up to 200 people. The orchestra said the expansion would support Tanglewood's long-term financial health. "Our investment in its future is essential as we continue to expand Tanglewood's many wonderful offerings," music director Andris Nelsons said in a statement.

Managing director Mark Volpe said the orchestra is also designing a new Tanglewood Learning Institute which will aim to bring newcomers to the retreat through educational programming. The Boston Symphony, historically considered one of the big five US orchestras, said that some 350,000 visitors come to Tanglewood each summer. The venue also draws a selection of major acts outside of classical music, with rock legend Bob Dylan performing last year.—AFP

RUSSIAN FILM REVIVES MEMORY OF SLAIN PUTIN FOE NEMTSOV

Two years after he was gunned down in Moscow, Russian opposition politician Boris Nemtsov's murder remains shrouded in controversy, as supporters insist the masterminds are yet to be unmasked. Now a new documentary film is set to shine a fresh spotlight on a tumultuous career that saw him go from deputy prime minister to fierce Kremlin critic-at a time when his memory is still a sensitive subject for the authorities. Nemtsov was shot dead on a bridge just meters from the Kremlin as he walked home through central Moscow late on February 27, 2015.

The shock killing was the highest-profile assassination of a Kremlin critic since President Vladimir Putin came to power. While five men have gone on trial accused of carrying out an alleged contract hit, Nemtsov's family and supporters say the murder trail points to more senior officials in the North Caucasus Chechnya region but complain that those who ordered the killing have got off scot-free. The new film, entitled "The Man Who Was Too Free", does not delve into Nemtsov's murder but focuses instead on his political convictions as he went from Kremlin insider under former president Boris Yeltsin to one of Putin's most prominent critics.

It is due to roll out across 20 cities, including Moscow, from yesterday after getting officially certified for release in cinemas to the surprise and delight of those behind it, in a country where works on sensitive subjects can face hurdles. "I didn't expect that we would get such a release," the film's director Vera Krichevskaya. "I hope that all will be well." The film's credited backers include ex-telecoms magnate Dmitry Zimin, who has come under pressure from authorities over his funding of civil society. But producer Yevgeny Gindilis said that documentary films had a freer hand to deal with subjects frowned on by the authorities than Russian-made feature films, which often rely on at least some government funding. "Documentaries let you talk about the topics that concern Russian society," he said. "In feature films, this has become much more difficult."

'The time we've lost'

With a budget of just over 100,000 euros (\$105,400), the two-hour film features interviews with major figures from Nemtsov's political career and archival footage. Most interviews were done by Mikhail Fishman, editor-in-chief of The Moscow Times newspaper. The film is a

portrait not just of a person but of a period when genuine political debate existed in Russia, said Krichevskaya, a former journalist for the NTV channel which was forced under state control in 2001. "It's about the time we've lost," she said. In 1997, Nemtsov was plucked from being governor of the industrial Nizhny Novgorod region to serve as deputy prime minister by an ailing Yeltsin, who encouraged him to aim for the Kremlin.

Handsome, young and eloquent, Nemtsov swiftly became a household name but then found himself inextricably associated with a period of political instability in which many people lost savings in the 1998 ruble default when it plummeted in value. "A time has a face. He personified all that," current opposition leader Alexei Navalny said in the film, admitting he asked Nemtsov not to publicly campaign for him. Nemtsov and his allies ultimately failed to convince voters to back his liberal values of freedom and protection of property rights. After initially backing fellow Yeltsin protege Putin, Nemtsov became disillusioned at what some saw as the strongman's cold-blooded response to the 2000 sinking of the Kursk nuclear submarine and the 2002 Moscow theatre siege.

A 'good death'

In the film, billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov calls Nemtsov a rights activist not a politician because he always said what he thought. "He wasn't a political animal," agreed Krichevskaya. "He followed his principles absolutely consistently." When the opposition found itself pushed out of mainstream politics, Nemtsov "went onto the streets," she added. He regularly got detained at street protests and became a lawmaker in the provincial city of Yaroslavl. The filmmakers said they consciously steered clear of the elephant in the room-the trial of his alleged killers and accusations linking the murder to those close to the Kremlin-loyal leader of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov.

But despite focusing on Nemtsov's life, rather than his death, the film still could not avoid touching on his shocking end. Former oil magnate and Kremlin critic Mikhail Khodorkovsky says in the film that Nemtsov would have wanted to die this way, in the public eye and from a bullet. This was a "good death," he says. — AFP



George Michael

Brit Awards to honor **George Michael**

The Brit Awards were to pay tribute to the late George Michael yesterday, in a ceremony also giving greater recognition to ethnic minority artists, following a backlash last year. Late rock legend David Bowie could also be in line for two posthumous accolades at the British music industry's annual awards, as he is up for best male artist and best album. The Brits shook up the judging panel after the 2016 event, following criticism about a lack of diversity, and there are many more black nominees this year.

"People feel there might actually be a breakthrough. The question is whether this is going to be long-term or short-term," said Keith Harris, who chairs UK Music's diversity taskforce. "As long as it's not just a reaction to the publicity given last year-as long as it's genuine." This year's Brits have given greater recognition to the grime movement, with Skepta-who won the Mercury Prize for best British album with "Konichiwa"-Kano and Stormzy among the nominees.

Bowie nominated twice

But the awards will be tinged with sadness. Michael, who died on December 25 last year aged 53, is to be remembered at the 37th edition of the Brits, being held at the O2 Arena in London. And Bowie, who died on January 10 last year, is nominated for best British male solo artist alongside Craig David, Kano, Skepta and Michael Kiwanuka. He is also shortlisted in the British album of the year category for "Blackstar", released on his 69th birthday-two days before he died. The other nominees are Skepta for "Konichiwa"; The 1975's "I Like It When You Sleep For You Are So Beautiful Yet So Unaware Of It"; Kano's "Made In The Manor" and Kiwanuka for "Love and Hate".—AFP

FEATURES



A man cycles past the Cathedral in Piazza del Duomo in central Milan. — AFP photos



Tourists take pictures in the "Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II" shopping mall in Milan.

Milan laughs while Rome cries

While rays of sun warm the elegant marble monuments on Rome's skyline, Milan lies under grey crowds heavy with pollution. But beyond the blue skies the eternal city is battling crises on several fronts, while its northern rival has become the nerve center of Italy, attracting not only record numbers of tourists but entrepreneurs and foreign capital. "Milan is experiencing a moment of extraordinary transformation, becoming one of the most interesting hubs internationally," says Giuliano Noci, a strategy professor at the Polytechnic School in Milan. Visitors descend for fashion week four times a year; a design fair that takes over large parts of the city; a week-long food fair founded this year; and a book fair Milan is boldly stealing from its sister northern metropolis, Turin.

With such an array of cultural offerings, the smog lingers but the city has shrugged off the stereotype of being a sad industrial hub. "Milan was able to capitalize on the World Expo" of 2015, which attracted 21.5 million people, including 6.5 million foreigners, Noci said. And despite welcoming a record number of visitors in 2015, the home of the famous Gothic cathedral and La Scala opera house topped it last year, with tourists up by over 2 percent. "One of the highlights of Milan is that it is a cosmopolitan city, it attracts many quality foreigners, it's a centre of exchange. The universities are very inter-

national," says Carlo Alberto Carnevale Maffe, a professor at the Bocconi University.

Noci describes it as "a gateway to business in Italy, linked to one of the most important economic development zones in Europe". While the national jobless rate is close to 12 percent, it is only 8.0 percent in Milan, while in Rome it nears 11 percent. The country's finance capital alone generates 10 percent of the country's GDP (Gross Domestic Product). A quarter of Italian banks have set up their headquarters here, and many companies have quit Rome for Milan, like television group Skytg24, which decided in January to close its headquarters in the Italian capital.

'Make Milan the capital?'

"Important multinationals, including Chinese ones, have decided to open research centers here, such as Huawei," said Noci, referring to the Chinese telecoms giant. You cannot move for famous 'Made in Italy' food, fashion and tech companies, and the Lombardy capital has the largest congress center in Europe as well as three airports to Rome's two. And while the city of the Colosseum struggles with a waste problem, that of the stock exchange is one of the top three European cities for recycling. Rome's dirty buses have taken to spontaneously igniting. Milan's gleam.

The gulf between the two cities has become

so pronounced that even the Roman philosopher Raffaele Simone was driven to suggest in L'Espresso magazine in January that it might be time to move the capital to Milan. "It is an ancient question... but for some time it has become increasingly impossible to avoid it," he wrote, citing corruption scandals, Rome's huge mountain of debt and its beleaguered mayor Virginia Raggi as reasons to up sticks. His complaints will have rung true with many: "cleanliness (years of neglect), urban policing (inefficient, boorish), maintenance of green spaces (zero), public transport (catastrophic), traffic (undisciplined to the point of malignancy)".

Rome has "significant potential, but it must first solve basic problems such as transport. Only once it has done that can it think of a medium to long term project of strategic development," Noci said. Simone's suggestion tickles Carnevale Maffe. "Us Milanese have never been interested in being the capital of Italy," he said. "What Milan wants is to be the capital of the growth, innovation and economic development." He describes the city as "strongly European," in the sense of a Europe "looking outwards to the world." — AFP



A trolley car goes past in Milan's Garibaldi neighborhood.



People walk past MiCo, the largest convention centre in Europe, in Milan.

Israeli parliament takes closer look at staffers' skirts

Israel's parliament will retain a contentious dress code banning short skirts, but will make its enforcement and sanctions against offenders gradual, a committee of MPs and parliamentary staff ruled. The decision on Tuesday came after staffers had demonstrated in December when colleagues who wore skirts deemed too short were barred from entering the building. The staffers said that security guards

at Israel's parliament, the Knesset, had started to strictly enforce rules on the length of skirts without giving a reason. The committee was subsequently formed to examine the issue. "It was agreed that the dress code would remain in place. At the same time it was decided to create an enforcement mechanism including issuing warnings before denial of entry to the building," a Knesset statement said.

Haaretz newspaper said yesterday that staff would initially get two warnings about inappropriate dress and would only be denied entry if there was a third occasion. "Arrival at the Knesset should be in proper and dignified attire," the statement added. "One should not arrive in clothing which does not show respect for the Knesset, such as T-shirts, crop-tops, shorts, sandals, short dresses or skirts, tracksuits."

It said that shirts bearing political slogans were also banned. Haaretz said that the code did not specify what is an appropriate skirt length, but the committee ruled that miniskirts were forbidden. — AFP

The 'Kimono - onheur des dames' exhibition



Kimonos created by Japanese fashion designer Junko Koshino are on display during the inauguration of the exhibition "Kimono - Au bonheur des dames" at the Guimet museum in Paris. — AFP photos



A woman looks at kimonos during the inauguration of the exhibition "Kimono - Au bonheur des dames".



French fashion designer Franck Sorbier poses in front of one of his creation.



A kimono created by French fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier is on display.



A kimono created by British fashion designer John Galiano is on display.



Kimonos created by Japanese fashion designer Kenzo Takada are on display.



A woman looks at kimonos during the inauguration of the exhibition "Kimono - Au bonheur des dames".



A kimono created by Japanese fashion designer Junko Koshino is on display.



A kimono created by Yves Saint Laurent is on display.

FASHION



A dress by designer Catherine Walker, and worn by Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales at an engagement in Leicester Square, London in 1990, is pictured during a press preview of the forthcoming exhibition entitled 'Diana: Her Fashion Story', at Kensington Palace in London yesterday. — AFP photos



A dress by designer Catherine Walker, and worn by Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales during an official visit to Austria in 1986, is pictured during a press preview of the forthcoming exhibition.



A dress (center) by the designer Atelier Versace, and worn by Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales at her Harper's Bazaar photo-shoot, is pictured during a press preview of the forthcoming exhibition.



A dress by designer Victor Edelstein, and worn by Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales at the State Dinner at the White House in Washington in 1985, is pictured during a press preview of the forthcoming exhibition.



A dress by designer Catherine Walker, and worn by Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales during an official portrait with her husband Charles, Prince of Wales in 1987, is pictured during a press preview.

PRINCESS DIANA'S ICONIC DRESSES ON SHOW FOR ANNIVERSARY

Glistening gowns, elegant suits and bold mini-dresses worn by the late Princess Diana will go on show from Friday on the 20th anniversary of her death in new exhibition charting her style reign. "Diana: Her Fashion Story", hosted in her London residence Kensington Palace, follows her evolution from the demure outfits of her first public appearances to the glamorous gowns of her later life. The show charts how she not only rewrote the rules of royal dressing with a more informal style but also expressed herself through her fashion choices, before her 1997 death in a car crash in Paris. "Each of the dresses is like a mini biography... They're not just what she wore but they tell stories," Libby Thompson, a curator, told AFP. Curator Eleri Lynn said: "We see her growing in confidence throughout her life, increasingly taking control of how she was represented". Some of the highlights include the discreet pale pink Emanuel blouse she wore for her engagement portrait in 1981 and the dazzling ink blue Victor Edelstein velvet dress she wore when she danced with John Travolta at the White House in 1985. So iconic is the "Travolta" dress that it sold for £250,000 (\$310,000) at auction three years ago. Another gown, a silk velvet dress she wore for private events at Buckingham Palace during the 1980s, is sure to charm many visitors. Tiny fingerprints believed to belong to one of her sons-Prince William and Prince Harry-have been found on the material, preserved through the last 30 years.

Informal wardrobe

The show will also highlight how throughout her years as one of the world's most photographed women, Diana revealed herself to be a diplomatic dresser. The "Gold Falcon Gown" is a perfect example. She wore the Catherine Walker cream silk dress embroidered with gold falcons-the national bird of Saudi Arabia-during a visit to the country in 1986. But it was by breaking the codes of royal dressing and embracing a more practical style that Diana



A dress, known as the 'Elvis Dress', by designer Catherine Walker, and worn by Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales in Hong Kong in 1989, is pictured during a press preview of the forthcoming exhibition.

transitioned from the Princess of Wales into the "People's Princess"- the term used by then prime minister Tony Blair after her death. She developed a more informal "working wardrobe" of chic Catherine Walker suits and tailored shift dresses to champion the causes she cared about. These outfits, designed to convey approachability, she wore on charitable outings including meeting people with HIV and visiting children in hospital.

Following her separation from Prince Charles in 1992, Diana threw the rulebook away again by adopting a bolder look featuring many figure-hugging mini dresses. The cream silk mini she wore while attending a charity auction of her more memorable dresses in 1997 is testament to that. Held in Kensington Palace, her residence for 15 years, the exhibition will extend to the gardens where her sons have said they will add a statue of her to mark the anniversary of her passing. — AFP



A chiffon blouse by the designer Emanuel, and worn by Princess Diana, at her first official portrait by Lord Snowdon, consequently published in Vogue in February 1981, is pictured during a press preview of the forthcoming exhibition.



A dress by the designer Regimes, and worn by Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales at the Ball at Althrop House in 1979, is pictured during a press preview of the forthcoming exhibition.



A collection of dresses made by designers Regimes in 1979 (left), Bruce Oldfield in 1990 (center), and Catherine Walker in 1987, all worn by Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales in Hong Kong in 1989, are pictured during a press preview of the forthcoming exhibition.



A television reporter gestures as she stands next a dress, known as the 'Elvis Dress', by designer Catherine Walker, and worn by Britain's Diana, Princess of Wales in Hong Kong in 1989, during a press preview of the forthcoming exhibition.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds presents Studs & Drops Festival, showcasing a variety of earrings from over 20 countries

Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the big five jewelry retailers globally announced the details of its latest offering "Studs & Drops Festival" at their outlets in UAE, Oman, Kuwait, Qatar, KSA and Singapore showcasing an extensive collection of earrings, giving their customers a unique chance to witness and own earrings from over 20 countries in Gold and Diamonds. This festival runs from 23rd February to 8th April 2017.

The jewelry chain presents a marvelous range of earrings for today's woman, keeping in mind

the different roles she plays at work and at home and the way she adorn herself differently on special occasions and in everyday life. This exclusive festival gives their customers a unique chance to choose from a stunning collection of earrings designed and handcrafted by skilled artisans around the world, ranging from lightweight, daily wear to party wear in traditional as well as international designs to suit every occasion.

Apart from these, Malabar Gold & Diamonds also showcase an incredible collection of unique designs in gold and diamond jewelry from Italy,

Turkey, Bahrain and India to suit the tastes and budget of its different customers. Customers can also choose gifts to their loved ones from their branded jewelry segment that includes Era - Uncut Diamond Jewelry, Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewelry, Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Precia- Gem Jewelry Divine - Indian Heritage Jewelry & Starlet - Kids Jewelry.

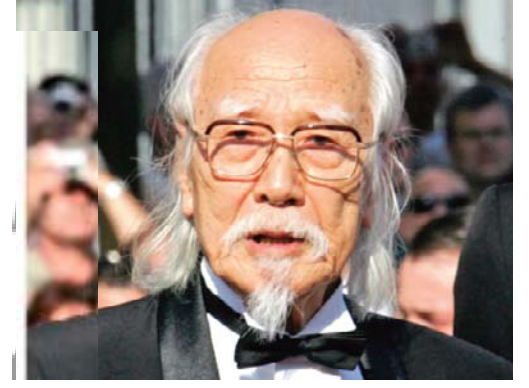


Lifestyle

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2017

Cult Japanese film director
Seijun Suzuki dead at 93

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A Bangladeshi woman decorates the Bangladesh Central Language Martyrs' Memorial monument with flowers in homage to the martyrs of the 1952 Bengali Language Movement in Dhaka on February 21, 2017, on International Mother Language Day. International Mother Language Day is celebrated each year on this day, which in Bangladesh marks 65 years since police officials fired at thousands of protesters at universities in then East Pakistan, who were demanding that Bengali be declared the state language. The deaths marked the start of a nearly two-decades-long struggle for the establishment of the state Bangladesh which was achieved when Indian troops were victorious in the 1971 independence war with Pakistan. — AFP



This undated photo provided by The Monacelli Press shows the Inner Garden at Kykuit, the country retreat established by John D Rockefeller in Sleepy Hollow, NY.



This undated photo provided by The Monacelli Press shows the Japanese Garden at Kykuit, the country retreat established by John D Rockefeller in Sleepy Hollow, NY.



This undated photo provided by The Monacelli Press shows a view from the West Terrace at Kykuit, the country retreat established by John D Rockefeller in Sleepy Hollow, NY, looking to the Hudson River with Marino Marini's 'Horse,' left, and Aristide Maillol's 'Night' installed on the lawn.



This undated photo provided by The Monacelli Press shows Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in Cornish, NH. — AP photos

Gilded Age gardens sparkle with renewed attention, respect

The period Mark Twain dubbed "the Gilded Age" was one of extreme wealth and ostentation, of robber barons amassing great fortunes, of glaring chasms between rich and poor. It was also a time when some of the nation's grandest gardens were constructed. "These were incredibly competitive, extravagantly wealthy people with tremendous pride in America. They wanted the country to be viewed as cultured and grand, and their hope was to create gardens that equaled, and ideally surpassed, the great gardens of Europe," says Todd A. Forrest, vice president of horticulture and living collections at the New York Botanical Garden, founded in 1891.

The Gilded Age lasted from the 1860s and '70s to just after the turn of the century. Some of the gardens were meant to be exquisite private gems, while others, such as the New York Botanical Garden, were intended to edify, inspire and uplift the public.

A handful of new and recent books pay tribute to their enduring importance. Because of the high cost of maintaining ambitious Gilded Age gardens, many have long since vanished. Others, however, such as the New York Botanical Garden in the Bronx, have been diligently preserved, evolving over time, as recounted in "The New York Botanical Garden," edited by Forrest and Gregory Long (Abrams, 2016).

Dozens more Gilded Age gardens languished but have been restored and opened to the public in recent decades. "Rescuing Eden," by Caroline Seebom and Curtice Taylor (The Monacelli Press, 2015), and "The Shelburne Farms," by Glenn Suokko (Rizzoli, March 2017), tell of heroic efforts by communities and conservancies to resurrect great gardens that had fallen into ruin in the mid-20th century, usually for lack of funding and attention.

"For ages, Americans didn't think much about the glorious gardens of this era, and people are suddenly seeing that there are these stunningly beautiful places across the country, and that many had gone neglected," Seebom said. Her book features Gilded Age gardens across the country, including in Georgia, New Hampshire, California,

Kentucky, Maine, New Jersey, Texas and South Carolina. "The brilliant thing is that every single one of these gardens has been resurrected and is now open to the public," she says. "The Rockefeller Family Gardens," (The Monacelli Press, April 2017) by the New York Botanical Garden's Forrest and Larry Lederman, is a multi-generational story that to some extent traces the changing ideals of American gardens.

And Sam Watters' "Gardens for a Beautiful America" (Acanthus Press, 2012) features meticulously identified photos of some of the most opulent gardens of the time. One inspiring story of a garden's rise, fall and rebirth is that of the little-

known Untermyer Gardens in Yonkers, New York, featured in "Rescuing Eden."

Reflecting pools

"It had really fallen into total ruin and was pretty bleak for decades, but the garden, which was one of the truly great gardens of the Gilded Age, is now in the full flowering of its second life, largely thanks to a fellow named Stephen Byrnes," Seebom explains. Byrnes, who stumbled upon ruins in what remained of the garden in the 1980s, became founder and president of the Untermyer Gardens Conservancy. In its heyday, the garden, where Isadora Duncan once danced and parties and poetry readings were held, sprawled over 150 acres with a view of the Hudson River Valley. It was part of a lavish estate belonging to Samuel Untermyer, a New York lawyer who opened it to the public weekly for 25 years and intended it to remain open for posterity.

"The piece de resistance of the garden was a walled garden with crisscrossing canals," Seebom says. "But sometimes people don't think their endowments through very carefully, and when Untermyer died, he left it to the town of Yonkers, which didn't have the means to maintain it," says adds. Thanks largely to Byrnes and the conservancy, the garden is now a Yonkers city park. It once again features its stunning Walled Garden, inspired by those of Indo-Persian antiquity, with reflecting pools teeming with exotic water lilies. The mosaic floors of the loggia are once again intact. And a long outdoor staircase punctuated by Roman-style columns offers dramatic, unobstructed views of the Hudson, just as it did in the Gilded Age. — AP



This undated photo provided by The Monacelli Press shows Untermyer Park and Gardens in Yonkers, NY.



This undated photo provided by The Monacelli Press shows Pearl Fryar Topiary Garden in Bishopville, SC.



This undated photo provided by The Monacelli Press shows the dry landscape garden inside of the Japanese Garden at Kykuit, the country retreat established by John D Rockefeller in Sleepy Hollow, NY.