



British finance minister on Gulf tour, meets Kuwaiti FM



Turkey identifies gunman, makes new arrests amid manhunt



Tillerson and Exxon part ways; \$180m retirement package set



Zidane celebrates flawless year at Madrid



LAWMAKERS ASK GOVT TO SCRAP POWER, FUEL HIKES

MPS WARN TO GRILL PREMIER IF DEMAND REJECTED



Min 09°
Max 20°
High Tide 02:23 & 15:48
Low Tide 09:29 & 22:15



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HEALTH CHARGES FOR EXPATS SET TO BE INCREASED

KUWAIT: Health ministry assistant undersecretary for legal affairs Dr Mahmoud Al-Abdelhadi said a study has been conducted to review some health service fees to make them conform to their actual cost and which are affordable by expats, Al-Anbaa daily reported yesterday. Abdelhadi said the health ministry's undersecretaries' council discussed the health service fees and means of collecting them, closing all loopholes to safeguard public funds and upgrading means of collection.

Sources at the health ministry said the ministry is about to issue a decision to increase health service fees for expats, which will go into effect soon. The sources said the increase is inevitable, but will not be more than the charges collected in the private sector, and could be 20 percent lower.

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Rajaa and Yousri, the parents of Abdul Fatah Al-Sharif (portrait), head out into the streets in the West Bank town of Hebron yesterday after watching on television the verdict in the trial of Israeli soldier Elor Azaria, who killed their son. (Inset) Azaria waits for the verdict in his case at the military court in Tel Aviv. — AFP

ISRAELI SOLDIER CONVICTED FOR KILLING PALESTINIAN

TEL AVIV: An Israeli soldier who shot dead a wounded Palestinian as he lay on the ground posing no apparent threat was convicted of manslaughter yesterday after a trial that deeply divided the country. The soldier, Elor Azaria, had been on trial in a military court since May, with rightwing politicians defending him despite top army brass harshly condemning his actions. Sentencing is expected at a later date for the 20-year-old French-Israeli sergeant. He faces up to 20 years in prison and can appeal.

Judge Colonel Maya Heller spent more than two and a half hours reading out the decision, sharply criticizing the arguments of Azaria's lawyers. On behalf of the three-judge panel, Heller said there was no reason for Azaria to open fire since the Palestinian was posing no threat. She called Azaria's testimony "evolving and evasive." "His motive for shooting was that he felt the terrorist deserved to die," she said.

Azaria's demeanor changed drastically as the judge read the verdict. Dressed in a green army uniform, he had entered the courtroom smiling, with family members and supporters applauding him. But he and his family looked shaken as the judge spoke, and after the verdict his mother yelled: "You should be ashamed of yourselves."

In a sign of the tensions surrounding the case, dozens of protesters scuffled with police yesterday as they gathered outside Israel's military headquarters in Tel Aviv, where the verdict was announced. Shabtay Oz, a retired police officer carrying a large Israeli flag and protesting peacefully, said he never imagined himself joining a demonstration. "But when I saw a soldier in cuffs after he shot a terrorist," he said, slapping his hands together, "that was the point of no return."

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By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Five opposition lawmakers yesterday signed a draft law calling for abolishing the hike in fuel and power charges and warned that they will grill the prime minister if the government rejects their demand. The bill, signed by Islamist MPs Mohammad Al-Mutair, Mohammad Hayef, Adel Al-Damkhi, Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Abdullah Fahhad, calls for abolishing any hike in fuel, electricity and water prices and makes any future increases linked to the prior approval of the National Assembly.

Mutair later wrote on his Twitter account that the hike in fuel and electricity charges is totally rejected, and "we have submitted a draft law calling for scrapping it." "If the government opposes the abolishment of the hikes, we will directly grill the prime minister," Mutair added. The previous Assembly approved a law earlier this year allowing the government to increase the prices of electricity and water from the middle of this year for commercial shops, government offices and expatriate homes, but excluded Kuwaiti citizens from the hike. The government also hiked the price of petrol, widely used by motorists in the country, by up to

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UAE BANS WILD ANIMALS AS PETS

DUBAI: The private ownership of wild animals has been outlawed in the United Arab Emirates, where keeping exotic creatures as pets is a status symbol for some, reports said yesterday. Wildcats including endangered cheetahs are known to have been domesticated in the UAE and neighboring Gulf countries, with some even spotted being taken outside in the middle of big cities. In October, one such outing with five tigers on a beach near Dubai's iconic Burj Al-Arab hotel was captured on video and went viral on social media, while others have been filmed driving around with lions.

The new law bans dealing in and ownership of "all types of wild and domesticated but dangerous animals", Gulf News daily said. Such animals can only be kept at zoos, wildlife parks, circuses, breeding and research centers, the newspaper said. "Anyone who takes a leopard, cheetah or any other kind of exotic animal out in public will face a jail term of up to six months and a fine" of up to 500,000 dirhams (\$136,000), it added.

Al-Ittihad, an Arabic daily, said those who use wild animals to "terrorize" others would face jail or fine of up to 700,000 dirhams. The legislation also imposes new restrictions on traditional pets. Dog owners are required to get permits and keep the animals on leashes in public, the reports said, adding that those who fail to obtain the licenses face fines of up to 100,000 dirhams. — AFP

News

in brief

Gulf stock listings fall in 2016: KAMCO

KUWAIT: Stock markets in the energy-rich Gulf saw a sharp drop in the number of initial public offerings in 2016, as well as the value of listings, a report said yesterday. Only three IPOs were made in the region last year, half the number recorded in 2015 and the lowest in 15 years, Kuwaiti investment firm KAMCO Research said in the report. Their value was a meager \$745 million, the lowest since 2013 and way below the record \$10.9 billion raised by stock flotations in 2008 and 2014 separately, KAMCO said. All three of last year's IPOs were from Saudi Arabia. KAMCO said Gulf companies looking to issue IPOs decided to put them off due to events including Brexit, the US presidential election and volatility on oil markets up until OPEC agreed to cut production. Companies were also deterred by extreme turbulence in GCC stock markets in the first 10 months of last year before they rebounded in the final two months as oil prices advanced. (See Page 25)

Arab separatists attack oil pipelines in Iran

DUBAI: An Arab separatist group has claimed two pipeline bombings in Iran's oil-rich south and threatened to launch more attacks in the coming year as the country tries to boost production following the nuclear deal with world powers. Iranian Interior Ministry spokesman Salman Samani later denied the claim by the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahwaz, which said it bombed the pipelines early Tuesday morning in Khuzestan province near the town of Omidiyeh and the port of Daylam. The militants released online video they said showed one of the pipelines exploding. The group said 2017 will be "very different to previous years since the movement has prepared detailed and precise plans to carry out a number of high-quality important operations against the Iranian enemy state". The group said the first attack targeted the Maroun pipeline of the state-owned Aghajari Oil and Gas Production Company, while the second attack targeted pipelines from the Baharkan oilfield to Kharg Island.

70 spies doing time in Tehran jails: Prosecutor

TEHRAN: The chief prosecutor of Tehran has revealed that there are as many as 70 spies serving sentences in the Iranian capital's prisons, far more than what had been estimated. The 70 convicts had "offered intelligence to enemies in various fields including atomic, military, political, social and cultural," Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi said, quoted by the Mizan Online news website. Dolatabadi did not name the countries alleged to have recruited the spies. Only a handful of cases of people charged with espionage had been made public in the Islamic republic prior to his comments, which were published late Tuesday. Among them are two Iranian-American dual nationals. In October, business consultant Siamak Namazi and his 80-year-old father Baqer were given 10 years in prison for "espionage and collaboration with the American government". Nezar Zaka, a Lebanese national, was found guilty of "numerous deep links to the US military intelligence community" and handed a 10-year sentence on the same day as the Namazis, along with three Iranians.

SAUDI ONLINE STORM OVER REALITY 'PORN'

RIYADH: A Saudi television channel apologized yesterday after a reality show in the strict Islamic kingdom featured a scene that critics denounced as "pornographic". Online users posted a purported clip from the Bedaya TV program which appeared to show men dancing. One stood closely behind another, held the man's hips, and seemed to mimic a sexual act.

Social media users created an online storm over the scene from the show called "Increase Your Credit". With the hashtag "Pornographic scene on Bedaya channel", they called for punishment of the "molester" and for the closure of the channel which was founded in 2005. "A dirty scene and broadcast on a highly viewed channel," wrote Twitter user @mkhawe15. "The Ministry of Information must immediately stop the channel". A post from @FarraJIK called it "a dirty channel", while @alameh42 said Bedaya had presented itself as an Islamic station "yet insults religion".

Bedaya took to Twitter to apologize, saying mistakes can happen during live broadcasting. "The act that took place by one of our contestants, an act which is not accepted by any logic, any religion, or moral values, was apologized for by the contestant," the channel stated. "The act was unintended by him, and he has repented to God". Bedaya added that the contestant has been disqualified and his act does "not represent the channel or its goals to spread values and morals".

It said the "Increase Your Credit" show aims to promote a culture of earning and saving, while preparing youth for the labor market. Yesterday afternoon, Bedaya TV showed a live Quran reading from a mosque, and then a food show. — AFP



NEW YORK: Members of the New York City Police Department and New York City Fire Department carry an injured person away from Atlantic Terminal yesterday in the Brooklyn borough after a train derailed. — AFP

103 HURT AS NY TRAIN DERAILS

NEW YORK: A New York commuter train derailed yesterday during the morning rush at a station in Brooklyn, leaving more than 100 people with mostly minor injuries and sparking travel delays, officials said. The accident at Atlantic Terminal in the heart of the New York borough comes less than four months after a fatal crash on another commuter line in New Jersey, when a train derailed as it entered a station.

Yesterday, a Long Island Rail Road train crashed around 8:30 am (1330 GMT). Passengers rushed out as smoke filled the tunnel. The impact bent the train's doors and smashed windows. Some of the injured were brought out on

stretchers. Officials - visibly relieved the toll was not higher - said they were launching an investigation. "103 injuries reported at scene of Atlantic Terminal LIRR train derailment, all non-life-threatening," the New York Fire Department said in a tweet.

A fire department official said the train carried 500 to 600 people, and the first two train cars were seriously damaged. "We were lucky, it could have been quite a bit worse," the official said. At least 11 people were taken to hospital, and were unable to walk, he added. Passengers said the blood and chaos following the derailment was frightening.

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — KUNA

AMIR, CROWN PRINCE MEET SENIOR STATE OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness also separately received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received Ghanem, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah along with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

He also received Waleed Al-Kandari, Kuwait's Ambassador to Malaysia Saad Al-Asousi, Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium Jassim Mohammad Al-Budaiwi and Kuwait's Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Al-Bader. — KUNA

In other news, Ghanem received a number of Kuwaiti diplomats yesterday, including Kuwait's Ambassador to Germany Munther Al-Essa, Kuwait's Ambassador to Cyprus

Waleed Al-Kandari, Kuwait's Ambassador to Malaysia Saad Al-Asousi, Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium Jassim Mohammad Al-Budaiwi and Kuwait's Ambassador to Australia Najeeb Al-Bader. — KUNA

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. — KUNA



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KUWAIT: Kuwait's Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Falah Al-Azeb meets with the chief of the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court Abdelwahab Abdelrazzaq. — KUNA

JUSTICE MINISTER MEETS CHIEF OF EGYPTIAN SUPREME COURT

CAIRO: Kuwait's visiting Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Falah Al-Azeb said yesterday that the Kuwaiti-Egyptian relations are deeply rooted particularly in at the level of judicial and legal coordination. Minister Al-Azeb was speaking as he emerged from a meeting with the chief of the Egyptian Supreme Constitutional Court Abdelwahab Abdelrazzaq. The minister added that he co-signed with the Egyptian Minister of Justice judge Hussam Abdelreheem, on Tuesday, an accord for judicial and legal cooperation, incorporating agreements that had been inked since 1977.

The official indicated that his visit was related to Kuwait's need for judges and counsellors noting that his country has

heavily depended on Egypt to employ judges and legal personnel since its establishment as a modern state. Azeb turned to the issue of naming the Kuwaiti parliament as the National Assembly, noting that the house was given that name because "we considered the State of Kuwait as part of the Arab Nation, as first article of Kuwait Constitution stipulated."

Meanwhile, Abdelrazzaq indicated that he agreed with the Kuwaiti side on "next steps that would attain fruitful cooperation between the constitutional court, the Kuwaiti judiciary and the minister of justice." He affirmed keenness on preserving the historic cooperation between the two countries' judiciaries, expressing deep respect to the Kuwaiti judges. — KUNA



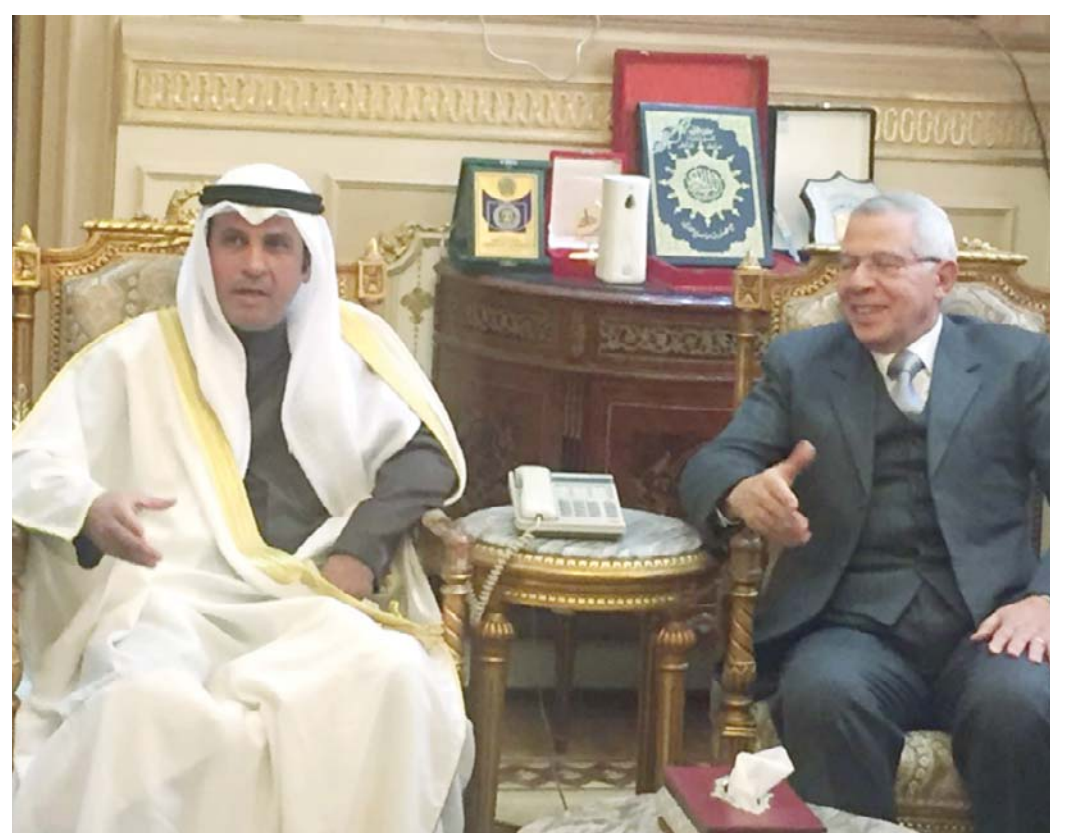
KUWAIT: Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Falah Al-Azeb poses for a group photo with Egyptian officials. — KUNA

KUWAIT, EGYPT EYE CLOSER JUDICIAL TIES

CAIRO: Kuwait's Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Falah Al-Azeb discussed with Chairman of the Egyptian Supreme Judicial Council Mustafa Jamal-el-Din Shafiq yesterday strategies for enhanced judicial ties.

Speaking in a statement to the press, Azeb cited Egyptian touches in the Kuwaiti constitution, noting that Kuwait is in need of judicial expertise in order to bring "legislation up to date." Moreover, the Kuwaiti Minister of Justice added that Egypt's proximity to Kuwait underscores his visit to the venerable headquarters of the Egyptian Supreme Judicial Council. On the visit, he said that it aims to bolster judicial cooperation between both nations, as he hailed Egypt's judicial system as amongst the most preeminent in the world.

Meanwhile, Egypt's chief Judge spoke of Egyptians' fondness of Kuwait, as he cherished an agreement for cooperation signed by both countries' Ministers of Justice. In a similar statement, Shafiq said that he was content with discussions held with the Kuwaiti minister, adding that both nations share aligning views. During his visit to Egypt, Azeb signed on Tuesday an agreement for legal and judicial cooperation with his Egyptian counterpart Hossam Abdel-Rahim, a measure intended to cement solid bilateral ties. — KUNA



CAIRO: Minister of Justice and Minister of State for National Assembly Affairs Dr Falah Al-Azeb meets with Chairman of the Egyptian Supreme Judicial Council Mustafa Jamal-el-Din Shafiq. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with British Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond. — KUNA

FM RECEIVES UK'S HAMMOND

KUWAIT: Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday the visiting British Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond. The meet-

ing was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled's Office Ambassador Sheikh Dr Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and a host of the ministry's senior officials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Education Minister Mohammed Al-Fares tours high schools to check on students taking their midterms yesterday. —KUNA photos



HIGH SCHOOL MIDTERMS UNDERWAY

By A Saleh
KUWAIT: Education Minister Mohammed Al-Fares said midterm exams kicked off yesterday for 12th grade high school students. He toured some secondary schools to make sure the process is going smoothly in a suitable environment and that the exams are suitably set. Speaking to reports covering his visit to Al-Adan Secondary School for Girls in Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Fares said he was briefed by various supervisors about the exam's levels. Fares said that part of the Ministry of Education's future

plans is to activate e-correspondence in various schools, the ministry and with parents.

Bedoon students

Kuwait University's postgraduate studies faculty dean Dr Fareeda Al-Awadhi said the decision on accepting bedoon students at Kuwait University will have to be reconsidered and discussed at the university's council meeting on Jan 12. She also stressed that the decision would have to be approved by Fares. Awadhi added that registration for bedoon students would be opened once it is

approved, so that they could start their courses from the beginning of the first semester next year.

Tender rejected

The Central Tenders Committee (CTC) recently rejected a tender presented by the Ministry of Education to lease seven vehicles to be used by the six educational area directors and the private education director, said the education ministry's assistant undersecretary for financial affairs Yousef Al-Najjar, noting that the ministry is currently considering

financing the lease contracts after getting the finance ministry's approval.

Smart meters

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Electricity and Water (MEW) asked the CTC to extend the tenure of a committee entrusted with studying a tender on smart electricity meters for a further month so that the committee could give more detailed results. Meanwhile, MEW's assistant undersecretary for consumer affairs Yousef Al-Ajeel urged the heads of consumer affairs offices to conduct a survey to separate

commercial stores from investment apartments as a preparatory measure before imposing the new electricity consumption tariffs on the commercial sector by May 22.

Municipality recruitments

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri yesterday issued a decision limiting the authorities of the municipality director. The decision also included withdrawing the municipality director's liabilities, especially those concerning recruitment to leading positions and hiring expats.



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's Training Department opened its doors yesterday to receive applications to enroll in batch number 35 for the Lance Corporal's course, batch number 88 for the policeman's course and batch number nine for the children of Kuwaiti women's course, and that for the 2016/17 academic year. Registration concludes on January 19, 2017.

OPEC'S SECRETARY GENERAL TO VISIT KUWAIT FOR CRUDE OUTPUT TALKS

KUWAIT: OPEC's Secretary General Mohammad Barkindo is scheduled to visit Kuwait on Sunday to discuss with Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq task mechanisms of the organization's committee charged with monitoring crude output.

Kuwait's Ministry of Oil said in a statement yesterday that the visit by Barkindo, who would be accompanied by a delegation during his four-day stay in the country, signaled Kuwait's significant status as chairman of the production monitoring commission and the Gulf state's leading role in conventions of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Minister Marzouq, who will meet the OPEC secretary general during the visit, doubles as Minister of Electricity and Water.

The Ministry's statement added that Barkindo's mission follows OPEC member states' agreement, on November 30th, to slash the overall crude oil output by 1.2 million barrels per day, effective January 1st. The Kuwait-chaired watchdog commission includes as members Algeria and Venezuela from OPEC, non-OPEC members Russia and Oman.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) stressed yesterday Kuwait's commitment to the Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) decision to reduce oil production to about 1.2 million barrels per day starting in January. Kuwait's share of the reduction is around 131,000 barrels a day, and will be until the end of the first quarter of 2017, said in statement. —KUNA



COMMITTEE, KAAA DISCUSS ECONOMIC REFORM PLAN

KUWAIT: The Cabinet's higher committee for following up the implementation of the nation's plan for financial and economic reform met on Tuesday with a delegation of the Kuwait Accountants and Auditors Association (KAAA). The meeting is part of the committee's pursuance of implementing the plan and strategize means of carrying it out.

The KAAA chairman Ahmad Al-Fares told reporters that the meeting is seen as a "good initiative" that would support the principle of economic transparency, stressing significance of such meetings between the executive branch and public benefit institutions and their major impact on public interest in light of difficult economic circumstances witnessed by the country in the last two years due to the decline of oil prices.

The committee for financial and economic reform addresses, among other issues, possible remedies for any would be irregularities in the state plan, which deals broadly with such reform steps as redrawing and redefining the role of the state in the national economy, increasing the contribution of the private sector to the economy, streamlining the labor market, and enacting legislation to better serve the goals set by the plan.

On the other hand, the plan deals with rationing the nation's total expenditures including monies spent on government ministries and agencies, stopping the establishment of new government ministries, agencies, and authorities or merging existing ones or even doing away with some. Also, revamping current subsidies to the public and developing new approaches to preparing the nation's annual budget. —KUNA

SICK CAMELS SLAUGHTERED, MEAT SOLD TO CONSUMERS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Municipal Council's Deputy Chairman Meshaal Al-Jowaisri urged Kuwait Municipality to investigate a case involving an expatriate worker who was seen allegedly slaughtering infected and sick camels at Dhaher slaughterhouse, and selling the meat to consumers. Video footage allegedly showing the man went viral on social media after they were first posted by a citizen who said he witnessed the process. Jowaisri stressed that the expat's actions constitute a crime, because of the direct impact on consumers' health. He also wondered whether this happened inside or outside the slaughterhouse and whether the animals had been examined by vets. "Many citizens purchase camel meat from special vendors. Are these vendors subject to municipality control and inspection?" he wondered, urging the Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi to investigate the matter.

Drainage outlets
 The Environment Public Authority

(EPA) warned of manipulating the equipment used to lock rain drainage outlets or attempting to reopen them. EPA had recently locked a number of rain drainage outlets after inspections revealed that they were used in violation of environment protection regulations, particularly in relations with discharging harmful material into the Kuwait Bay. In a press statement, EPA explained that one of its inspectors noticed that one of the devices used in blocking the outlets had been tampered with and warned that those responsible would be held legally accountable.

Suspect acquitted

The court of appeals yesterday acquitted a suspect of all charges and cancelled a first instance verdict sentencing him to seven years with labor, repaying KD 24,000 he had embezzled, fining him twice as much and dismissal from his job. Notably, the suspect had been accused of forging his IDs and claiming to be a Kuwaiti citizen and a public servant, and embezzling the sum mentioned above.

FORMER FINANCE MINISTER PASSES AWAY

KUWAIT: Former Minister of Finance and Industry Hisham Al-Otaibi passed away yesterday at age of 70. Born in 1946, Otaibi had a Bachelor of Science degree in Engineering from the University of Oklahoma in the United States, and served as Minister of Finance in 1998, after working as Director General of Kuwait Stock Exchange (KSE).

He also occupied several important posts in a number of Kuwaiti, Arab, and British companies and organizations such

as the Contracting and Marine Services Company, Kuwait Drilling Company (KDC), Kuwait Hotels Company, Kuwait Real Estate Investment Consortium (KREIC), Kuwait International Investment Company (KIIC), Union of Arab Securities Authorities (UASA), Kuwait Supreme Petroleum Council, Global Marine Construction Company, Al-Ahlia Investment Company, Portsmouth Industrial Company, UK, and Global MENA Financial Assets Limited (GMFA), UK. —KUNA

In Brief

BEHIND SCHEDULE

KUWAIT: MP Hamdan Al-Azmi sent inquiries to all ministers yesterday about projects listed in their budgets for the fiscal years between 2010/11 and 2016/17. He inquired about the projects that are behind schedule, the cost of change orders, court cases filed and procedures taken against contractors who failed to honor the terms of their contracts.



ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS

KUWAIT: MP Shuwaib Al-Muwaizri sent questions to Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq regarding Kuwait's environmental rehabilitation projects, inquiring about the amounts allocated for oil lake treatment and Kuwaiti desert rehabilitation projects. He also asked about whether any Kuwaiti employee working in these projects had his contract terminated.



HONORING MARTYRS

KUWAIT: MP Osama Al-Shaheen submitted a proposal yesterday to rename streets after martyrs who were born, have lived or died in, and to place a noticeable sign at each renamed road carrying the martyr's name and the street's number. He called for coordinating with martyrs' families on that regard with hopes of launching the project this year.



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A heron bird and seagulls are pictured at a beach in Kuwait City. —KUNA

SYRIAN CRISIS TAKES AWAY REFUGEE CHILDREN'S INNOCENCE

'PAINFUL MEMORIES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SCARS'

GAZIANTEP: Normally, childhood is the time of playing and enjoying a carefree life away from worries and concerns; however, the situation is different for Syrian refugee children. After six years of fighting, killing, bombardment, devastation, destruction, homelessness and migration, the innocence of these children seemed to fade away, leading them to maturity at a very early age.

These days, the tragedy of refugees, especially those who have recently arrived from Eastern Aleppo is aggravating. They are suffering the severe cold of winter, and trying to survive amid sharp shortage of food supplies, water, electricity and other basic needs.

Painful memories

Mohammad, 10, a displaced child from Aleppo, has lost his father and brother, in the recent horrific events in the city. Now he lives in a refugee camp, with his mother, three sisters and painful memories, and psychological scars. "I miss my home, school

and the calm happy life of the past," Mohammad said.

Now Mohammad goes to a school in the camp of Teiba, in the town of Sarmada, north of Idlib, close to the Turkish borders. It is a good school, but Mohammad has no friends here; he misses his old mates of the good old days. Loss of a father adds to the dilemma. "We seem to have grown mature, too old for our age. Children our age are supposed to be playing and enjoy carefree life," he said.

Like many other Syrian refugee children, Mohammad is now responsible for a family after the father was lost in the fighting. Some children have to work to fulfill the needs of their families. "We will go on, and hopefully one day we will be back home to Aleppo, to re-construct the devastated city," the young boy stressed.

Alleviating the sufferings

Meanwhile, director of operations of the

Qatar Red Crescent Society (QRCS) inside Syria, Bassam Khaddam, reiterated full commitment to provide all forms of support to alleviate the sufferings of the "Syrian brothers." "This is a top priority for us," he said.

The QRCS, through cadres operating inside Syria, has been offering humanitarian aid, and medical care through mobile clinics in areas where the displaced have found safe haven, after fleeing death, Khaddam said.

He referred to the challenges facing the displaced refugee children and families, aggravating the traumatic effects of the war. "Most refugee children are deprived of good education, and are in dire need for psychological and social rehabilitation," he said. The Syria crisis that erupted in 2011 has left tens of thousands killed, hundreds of thousands wounded and millions of homeless, displaced and refugees.

The Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) signed agreements worth \$2.4 million with Qatar's Red Crescent Society (QRCS) to offer relief aid and medical supplies to the Syrian refugee families from Syria's eastern Aleppo. KRCS board chairman Dr Helal Al-Sayer signed the accords with the Director of Relief and International Development at QRCS Dr Khalid Diab, at the latter's office in Gaziantep, south-western Turkey.

Strategic partnership

These agreements are part of the strategic partnership and cooperation between the two societies for the displaced "Syrian brothers from Aleppo," Sayer said. They include providing 8,000 food packages, winter clothes for 5-14 children and heating oil, and blankets, he added.

The KRCS-QRCS cooperation projects also include 10 mobile clinics for offer medical services to refugees from Aleppo, supporting a field hospital, and providing three huge tanks of drinking water daily in addition to assisting orphans, Sayer noted.

Diab said that the QRCS started offering help to Syrian refugees in 2012 in neighboring countries, Iraq, Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. This has covered health services, shelters, food security, water, non-food supplies, responding to emergencies, training and capability building, he added. — KUNA



KRCS workers distribute candies to Syrian refugees.



GAZIANTEP: Mohammad, a displaced child from Aleppo, Syria, is seen with KRCS board chairman Dr Helal Al-Sayer and director of operations of QRCS inside Syria, Bassam Khaddam. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Interior Ministry's General Traffic Department carried out a crackdown yesterday against reckless drivers in Wafra and Um Qudair deserts. A total of 25 sports vehicles which were used in reckless driving an illegal races were impounded.—By Hanan Al-Saadoun



Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Information Tarek Al-Merzem poses for a group picture with Emirati Minister of State for International Affairs Reem Al-Hashimi and other officials.

INTERIOR, MUNICIPALITY COORDINATE TO FIGHT NEGATIVE PHENOMENA

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Interior (MOI) and Kuwait Municipality held a meeting yesterday at MOI's headquarters to discuss coordination to tackle all forms of negative phenomena in society, according to a statement released by the Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Media Departments. Senior officials who attended the meeting include MOI's Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Correctional Facilities Major General Majed Al-Majed, Acting Assistant Undersecretary For Public Security Major General Ibrahim Al-Tarrah, the correctional facilities' assistant director Brigadier Salem Al-Marri, and Kuwait Municipality's Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi.



KUWAIT TO TAKE CENTER STAGE AT DUBAI EXPO 2020: OFFICIAL

DUBAI: Kuwait's participation in the Dubai World Expo 2020 will be the focal point of the exhibition, Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Information Tarek Al-Merzem said yesterday. Merzem, who is the commissioner of Kuwait's pavilion at the expo, made the remark in a meeting with Emirati Minister of State for International Affairs and Director of the Dubai World Expo 2020 Reem Al-Hashimi.

On the meeting, Merzem said that it tackled preparations to showcase Kuwait's pavilion at the expo in the most optimal way, adding that

UAE officials have welcomed Kuwait's participation in the event with open arms.

Moreover, he noted that Kuwait aims to depict a highly civil and favorable image of the nation in an exhibition set to center on recent challenges faced by the international community, including economic and environmental ones.

"We are sparing no effort to ensure that a very pleasant image of Kuwait will be brought to the limelight," the Kuwaiti official said, highlighting the magnitude of an event set to attract visitors from all across

the globe. Meanwhile, Kuwait's Consul General in Dubai Theyab Al-Rashidi said in a statement that the meeting yielded a consensus over Kuwait's participation in the event. He also added that through this expo, Kuwait's brotherly ties with the UAE will be evident as both nations work towards the "common goal" of ensuring the success of this cultural gala. Bringing together more than 180 nations and an international audience of 25 million visitors, the expo is touted to be one of the greatest shows in the world. — KUNA



DUBAI: Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Information Tarek Al-Merzem meets with Emirati Minister of State for International Affairs and Director of the Dubai World Expo 2020 Reem Al-Hashimi. — KUNA



Undersecretary of Kuwait's Ministry of Information Tarek Al-Merzem presents a memento to Emirati Minister of State for International Affairs Reem Al-Hashimi.

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الجريدة Al-Jarida

NEW YEAR AND NEW WARS

By Arwa Al-Waqjan

I would like to be as optimistic as I have always been and bid 2016 farewell to start a new year with much love and optimism. However, I am but an individual in a complete system called the world. Every time I try to seize an opportunity to rejoice, I feel guilty, being awakened by Israelis burning Palestinian homes and by famine-stricken Yemen that once used to be known as Arabia Felix (Happy Yemen) and now has turned into a hub of danger, death and starvation.

Nevertheless, I have to show some optimism to keep on living in order to lend a helping hand. I do find myself travelling to reach those underprivileged people from time to time. I listen to refugees' concerns and find them - both concerns and refugees - multiplying yearly at all borders. I then wake up to news about wiping out Aleppo and the largest displacement ever to take place, as over 20,000 people are forced out within days.

Fine - let me reassure myself by saying that I have nothing to do about it as an ordinary individual who has nothing to say in decision-making and has no political position to negotiate a peace process. The least I can do for those displaced people is to donate something, although the wars have resulted in dirty and filthy accusations against humanitarian foundations. Because Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) is the most trusted body in Kuwait and officially represents the state, it has been subjected to a malicious and dishonest campaign, claiming that the funds it raises go to Assad's regime, and because people listen attentively to rumors, this one travelled quickly.

KRCS denied the accusation, but despite what is going on in the world, how can some people driven by certain agendas disfigure and defame humane activities at such critical times during which all individual and organizational efforts must be combined to do something, no matter how simple, to help distressed people wherever they are?

Something painful takes place daily against neighbors suffering wars, killings and displacement, leading to a refugee crisis the world is still incapable of fairly solving. We are about to start a new year after the previous one brought us packages of disappointment, tragedies and massacres, as if the world was heading towards a Third World War that is crueler, more devastating and more widespread than previous ones.

Who am I today? I am nothing more than a human being who no longer clings to rosy dreams, because true life is very gloomy. I feel that the world is helplessly watching these tragedies and doing nothing but express concerns, worries and condemnation. My humanity is being hurt every day reading about religious fanaticism, extreme racism and extensive hatred surrounding us on various social media to spread hate and tumult. Facts show that people resort to violence and killing when they are not subjected to laws disciplining them and their behavior, and that mercy is an exception in the absence of such laws!

Finally, this world will not be a better place while you reject others and hate them because they are different. You have to learn to coexist with others. I do hope hate can be incriminated because humankind has already lost the battle with humanity and has nothing left but laws to deter them!

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Jarida

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

INTERVIEWING MYSELF

By Dr Najem Abdul Kareem

The schizophrenic situations prevailing in our country have resulted in many writers writing about things they do not believe in. Some writers have been writing articles praising the leaders by calling them Socrates, Hegel, Voltaire and Einstein. The geniuses of the world look very small compared to them, although they know deep inside that none of them (the leaders) have ever opened a book.

While this phenomenon prevails in our country, a single article in the free democratic world can topple any ruler, even if he belongs to the world's greatest country. Just like what journalist Bob Woodward's article did to Richard Nixon. The above introduction was inevitable, as I am about to interview myself. If this experiment receives good feedback, I plan to make it a weekly article.

Q: Through readers' feedback, how do you evaluate your writing in Al-Jarida?

As a writer, I consider my articles as seeds waiting to be reaped in the readers' minds.

Q: Do you think that your articles are sometimes hard to digest?

Yes, and such readers usually find everything in life to be very tough. They want to live in a different age, wear-

ing short dishdashas, long beards and sticking twigs in their mouths, thinking they are taking the Prophet of mercy (PBUH) as a role model, but which the Prophet (PBUH) himself would have not approved.

Q: Are you against their freedom or free will?

It is forbidden to be against a person's freedom, but when political party regulations get mixed up to be imposed on people who would be considered non-believers amongst so many other descriptions if they do not apply such regulations and things end up with explosive belts, booby-trapped vehicles and slaughter, this calls for rejecting such unlawfully 'legalized' terrorist crimes!

Q: But those people represent a wide segment in the Arab world and they are the prime concern of the entire world not only the Arabs.

I am sure they will eventually vanish. We have to learn our lessons from history. Roman popes and the medieval inquisition were more bloody and tyrannical throughout Europe. What was the result? Now, after people reacted, Europe is full of freedom and democracies and those calls have become history and we are getting closer to that end, inshallah!

— Translated by Kuwait Times

Crime

Report

DOMESTIC DISPUTE INVOLVES POLICE

KUWAIT: A citizen accused his wife of insulting him and attempting to hurt him, and asked that policemen be witnesses. The man told police he received a call from the maid about his daughter being injured, so he called his wife, but she did not answer the phone and when he went to the house, she closed the front door. Policemen who went to the house asked the maid about the girl's health, but she said she was OK. When the wife saw the police car, she became hysterical and insulted her husband verbally. Policemen attempted to calm her down, and asked her to open the door to see the girl, but she refused. When the husband headed to the police station, his wife chased him and attempted to hit him.

Accusations exchanged

After an accident in Maidan Hawally, a woman and a man exchanged accusations of who caused the accident. The woman said the man made an indecent gesture. The man said that she insulted him. Police are investigating.

Son beats father

A citizen told Waha police he was beaten in his house by his 21-year-old son, adding that this was because he is always in an abnormal condition. He said his son returns home late and causes problems with neighbors. The son was ordered arrested after he refused to go to the police station.

Man falls to death

An Asian fell to his death from a building near Jahra Hospital. His body was recovered by the coroner.

Man robbed

A security source said an Iranian man was stopped by five persons who restrained him and robbed him of KD 250, along with an old mobile phone. In an unrelated incident, three persons attacked a Pakistani expat and robbed him of KD 720 after beating him in Jleeb Al-Shuyukh. The Pakistani man was on his way to transfer money to his family, when he was stopped by the three. Detectives are working on the case.

Woman beaten by relatives

A citizen accused her ex-husband and his mother of beating her, and she had to go to the hospital for treatment. Police are working on the case.

Accused of theft

A citizen accused a Syrian man of stealing some materials from a construction site where he worked following a dispute between the two. The citizen said the Syrian refused to return the material and did not answer his calls. Police are working on the case.

— Translated from the Arabic press

KFH LAUNCHES SURVEY FOR TAMAYOZ CUSTOMERS TO GAUGE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRODUCTS, SERVICES SURVEY ENGAGES CUSTOMERS, STUDIES THEIR PROPOSALS

KUWAIT: Deputy General Manager Sales and Distributions at Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Khaled Alsubaiei said that the bank has launched a survey for Al-Tamayoz customers to gauge effectiveness of the bank's products and services and to evaluate means to improve them during the coming period. This initiative emanates from KFH's endeavors to communicate with all segments of clients in an attempt to meet their ambitions and aspirations.

He indicated that KFH targets to increase the size of its customers' base in line with the growth of its market share and the huge turnout on its products and services that have been optimally tailored to cater for all retail and corporate customers.

Alsubaiei added that the survey is disseminated randomly to Al-Tamayoz customers so it engages them and studies their proposals. This confirms the bank's keenness to improve the engaging spirit with its valued customers in efforts to enhance its services and improve its products.

He illustrated that KFH offers unique services and privileges to this segment of clients such as dedicated halls at the bank, dedicated Relationship Manager, free banking services, specially branded ATM cards, special promotions around the year, in addition to high limit credit cards and many other privileges and promotions to attain all Al-Tamayoz customers' needs and requirements.



Khaled Alsubaiei

PROSECUTION SUPPORTS RAISING JUVENILES' AGE BACK TO 18

KUWAIT: Attorney General Dherar Al-Asousi said the public prosecution agrees with the proposal of MP Marzouq Al-Khalifa to raise the age of a juvenile to 18 as it was before. Asousi said reducing the age to 16 years violates Kuwait's child law that was passed by the National Assembly in 2015, and also violates international treaties signed by Kuwait that set a minor's age as 18. He said the prosecution prepared a memo and sent it to the justice ministry to refer it to the Assembly. The previous Assembly, which reduced the juvenile's age, did not seek the public prosecution's opinion for this law. The new juvenile law became effective on January 1, 2017, and a suspect who is over 16 will be treated as an adult for precautionary detention for 21 days for felonies and 10 days for misdemeanors. He will be kept in adult wards in prison and could be sentenced to death. — Al-Jarida



Attorney General Dherar Al-Asousi

KFSD CONCLUDES TRAINING COURSE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) celebrated yesterday the conclusion of a three-month training course on basic fire-fighting principles, in which 43 Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) employees participated. The event took place

under the patronage of KFSD Director Lieutenant General Khaled Rakan Al-Mekrad, and was attended by his deputy for human resources development Major General Khaled Al-Terkait.





More than 150 inmates escape in Philippine jail raid

NEW YEAR ASSAULT IN INDIA'S TECH HUB PROMPTS POLICE PROBE



ISTANBUL: Mayors of main opposition Peoples Republic Party (CHP) hold wreaths in front of the Reina nightclub in Istanbul, three days after a gunman killed 39 people on New Year's night. — AFP

TURKEY IDENTIFIES ISTANBUL GUNMAN

36 PEOPLE DETAINED IN PROBE

ANKARA: Turkey said yesterday it had identified the gunman behind the New Year's massacre on an elite Istanbul nightclub that killed 39, as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan warned the attack aimed to polarize Turkish society. The assailant stormed the glamorous Reina nightclub on the Bosphorus early on Sunday morning, spraying 120 bullets at terrified partygoers celebrating the start of 2017. Of the 39 dead, 27 were foreigners including citizens from Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Jordan, Iraq, Tunisia and Morocco. At least 36 people have now been detained in the probe, but the gunman himself remains on the run after slipping into the night following the attack.

"The identity of the person responsible for the attack has been established," Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said during an interview with state-run Anadolu news agency, without giving any name. The attack was claimed by the Islamic

State (IS) jihadist group, with reports suggesting the authorities suspect the gunman may be from either Kyrgyzstan or Uzbekistan, both ex-Soviet states. "Efforts to capture him continue," said Cavusoglu, adding that the house the suspect lived in "has been searched" and that the attack he mounted had been "professionally" planned.

'Polarize society'

IS took responsibility for the massacre in a statement on Monday, marking the first time it has issued a clear and undisputed claim for a major attack inside Turkey.

Hitting a nightclub on New Year's night, the attack struck at the heart of secular Turkey, with analysts saying IS clearly sought to widen splits in Turkish society. In his first spoken comments on the attack, Erdogan said the attack's aim was "to create a fissure and polarize society".

He insisted Turkey would resist efforts to divide

the country, vowing that Turks would "stand tall and keep our sangroid".

"No-one's lifestyle in Turkey is under a systematic threat. We would never let this happen. In 14 years in power, we have never given this a chance," Erdogan said in a speech at the presidential palace in Ankara. IS said the attack was a response to Turkey's military intervention against the jihadists in war-ravaged Syria where Turkish troops are pressing a four-month incursion to oust jihadists from the border area.

Since the lightning advance into northern Syria in August, removing IS elements from the Turkish border, Ankara has faced a tougher fight to capture the town of Al Bab in IS.

But Erdogan insisted the operation would continue and Turkey would clear areas wherever "terrorist organizations" are. "The operation in Syria's Al Bab will be finished in a short time, God willing," he said.

New arrests

In the western city of Izmir, at least 20 people including 11 women were taken into custody as part of the investigation into the attack, Anadolu reported. The news agency said they were of Central Asian and Syrian origin while Dogan news agency said they were members of three families. It was alleged that some of those detained had been living in the house with the suspected attacker in Konya. The new arrests bring the number of those detained to at least 36, including two foreigners detained by Turkish police at Istanbul's main airport on Tuesday.

One of them was reportedly a woman suspected of being his wife with whom he had stayed in Konya along with two children. Dogan news agency quoted her as saying she was not aware of the attack until it was reported. Yesterday, the Haberturk daily said that during his getaway, the gunman took a taxi to a Uighur

restaurant in the city's Zeytinburnu district where he got out and went inside to get money from someone to pay the fare. The restaurant owner told the police that he had since detained seven of his workers—all of them Turkic Uighurs from the Xinjiang region of China—but that he did not know the attacker himself.

The shooting occurred after a bloody year in Turkey in which hundreds of people were killed in violence blamed on both IS jihadists and Kurdish militants. Turkey is also still reeling from a failed July 15 coup blamed by the government on the US-based Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen that has been followed by a relentless purge of his alleged supporters from state institutions. Parliament on Tuesday extended a controversial state of emergency in place since the coup and which has seen over 41,000 people arrested by another three months to April 19. —AFP

FRANCE'S LE PEN PROPOSES RETURN TO ECU

PARIS: French far-right party leader Marine Le Pen said yesterday that France should leave the euro but the shift to a new national currency could be accompanied by a framework similar to the pre-euro era of the ECU. After a New Year news conference, the National Front leader, who is a candidate in the presidential election in spring, said France's national debt would be denominated in the new national currency under her administration. Le Pen is alone among top presidential candidates in favoring leaving the euro, which France adopted in 1999 after ditching the franc along with other

European countries who abandoned their national currencies. But she has offered little detail about how the departure could happen until now.

With just a few months left to the first round of the election in late April, mentioning the framework of the ECU could be a move by Le Pen to reassure voters worried over a euro exit.



PARIS: Marine Le Pen, leader of the French far-right Front National (FN) party, delivers her New Year's wishes to the press in Paris yesterday. — AFP

European countries who abandoned their national currencies. But she has offered little detail about how the departure could happen until now.

With just a few months left to the first round of the election in late April, mentioning the framework of the ECU could be a move by Le Pen to reassure voters worried over a euro exit.

Elderly people are particularly concerned over the impact on their pensions of any big currency reform. "The ECU existed alongside a national currency," Le Pen

attempted to narrow fluctuations between the currencies of member states. Le Pen reiterated her party's stance that leaving the euro would be a major step to recovering sovereignty, something she said she would seek to achieve in negotiations with other EU countries. She said that economic difficulties in other euro zone countries led her to believe she could find allies in such talks. She reaffirmed she would put the result of these talks to a referendum.

Opinion polls have consistently shown Le Pen

making it to the second round of the presidential election, to be held in May, but losing that run-off to a mainstream candidate, likely to be conservative Francois Fillon. Surveys also show that despite strong misgivings about the EU and the euro, the French want to remain members of both groups. "All this (Le Pen's comments) probably reflects a reluctance to openly advocate a full retreat from the monetary union," said Bank of America Merrill Lynch chief European economist Gilles Moec.

Not in your wallet?

Nicolas Bay, a senior National Front official, said the party had stated the euro did not work and now it was engaged in a "second phase" of explaining how a new system could function. Le Pen's deputy Florian Philippot said some degree of monetary cooperation with other European countries did not represent a change in the leader's view that France should leave the euro. "A currency following the ECU model is not a currency you have in your wallet or your bank account. It's an accounting currency between countries," he said. "It could be a model, maybe even a transitory one," he added.

National Front economist Jean-Richard Sulzer said the new system the party advocated would have fixed exchange rates but allow "rare" adjustments. "Rates should be fixed but adjustable," he said. "The exchange rate would not float every morning like before the ECU because it created huge instability for our exporters." He however said the French could, under such a system, have two credit cards, one in francs and one in ECU. "It's not that complicated, is it?" he said. Bank of New York Mellon currency strategist Neil Mellor said

Le Pen's comments on swapping the euro for an ECU system raised many questions. "There are a whole host of practical problems with this, but I suspect that her statement isn't designed to be overly bothered with the nitty gritty - it's designed to make a statement," he said. "This is an issue for France but if Le Pen were to win, then it's an issue for the concept of the euro zone as a whole," said Patrick O'Donnell, investment manager, Aberdeen Asset Management. "I think the markets would vote with their feet first of all and spreads would widen significantly." — Reuters

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KIDNAPPED IRAQI WOMAN JOURNALIST RELEASED UNHARMED AFTER A WEEK

BAGHDAD: Iraqi journalist Afrah al-Qaisi, known in her country for criticizing the government in satirical articles for local media, has been released unharmed after being kidnapped by unidentified gunmen in Baghdad a week ago. The head of the Iraqi Journalistic Freedoms Observatory, Ziyad al-

Ajili, said yesterday the kidnapers had returned the car, telephone, laptop and gold jewelry they took when they broke into her home and that she drove back overnight around midnight.

A video aired by the Kurdish NRT channel showed emotional scenes after Qaisi, who

used to work for the Saudi-owned pan-Arab newspaper Asharq al-Awsat, was reunited with her family and friends after returning home. "I just want to say that I'm fine and I was well treated," she said, sobbing and shaking. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi telephoned Qaisi to check on her well-being

after her release, his media office said.

The kidnapping highlighted the dangers journalists face in Iraq, where 71 have been killed with impunity over the past decade, according to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Many were victims of Sunni insurgents active in Iraq even before Islamic

State militants overran around a third of the country more than two years ago. But other armed factions, including Shi'ite militias, some backed by the government, have grown increasingly powerful through their participation in Baghdad's fight against Islamic State. —Reuters



DAMASCUS: In this photo, Syrian president Bashar Assad, right, meets with Alaeddin Boroujaerdi, who leads the foreign policy and national security portfolios at Iran's top Shura Council, left, at the Syrian presidential palace, yesterday. —AP

TURKEY SAYS TRUCE VIOLATIONS PUT SYRIA TALKS IN JEOPARDY

ASSAD MEETS TOP IRANIAN OFFICIAL

BEIRUT: Turkey warned yesterday that repeated cease-fire violations by Syrian government forces threaten to derail peace talks scheduled for later this month. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the talks in Kazakhstan, due Jan 23, are to be preceded by preparatory meetings between Turkish and Russian experts in Turkey. The Syrian government troops and allied militias have pressed an offensive to take the Barada Valley near Damascus from the rebels - despite a cease-fire agreement signed shortly before New Year's. The govern-

ment says the region was never included in the agreement. Details of the deal have not been publicized.

Amid the government offensive, the rebels have retaliated with shelling and raids on government-held areas in other parts of the country. The rebels also accuse the government of carrying out air raids in the rebel-held province of Idlib, where hundreds of thousands of civilians have sought refuge from the civil war, now in its sixth year. Cavusoglu called on Iran, a key ally of Syrian President Bashar Assad and one of the guar-

antors of the truce agreement, to address the violations by pro-government forces. Turkey supports the Syrian opposition.

Meanwhile, Assad received a top Iranian official in Damascus and called the Shiite country his "partners in the victory that was achieved in Aleppo," referring the city pro-government forces recently wrestled back from rebels, with Iranian help.

The Iranian official, Alaeddin Boroujaerdi, in charge of foreign policy and national security portfolios in Iran's Shura Council, called the capture of Aleppo a "big step

toward restoring security and stability nationwide." The cease-fire declared last week between the government and the opposition was supposed to prepare the way for the talks in the Kazakh capital of Astana, in what would be the first substantial diplomatic movement toward ending Syria's conflict in nearly a year.

Stop violations

Russia, Turkey, and Iran had agreed to broker those talks. Russia is also a key ally of Assad. Cavusoglu warned in remarks made to Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency that the Astana process "might fail if we cannot stop the escalating violations." The cease-fire agreement has restored some calm, according to figures from the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The group, which tracks the conflict, reported that 11 civilians were killed from fighting in areas contested by the government and rebels since the truce started five days ago - a dramatic decrease compared to earlier fatality rates.

The Observatory also said that 32 civilians were killed in fighting over areas controlled by the Islamic State group, areas that are not covered by the truce. Cavusoglu said he had received assurances from Russia that the Kurdish Syrian PYD party would not be invited to Astana. Turkey considers the party an extension of its own, outlawed Kurdish insurgency and classifies it as a terror organization. The PYD controls most of the Syrian-Turkish frontier. Its armed wing enjoys the backing of the US military, and is the most effective ground force battling Islamic State militants in Syria. —AP



ANKARA: Turkey's Defense Minister Fikri Isik, wearing a helicopter pilot's jacket, speaks during a visit to a military air base, yesterday. —AP

UTAH PLAN WOULD GIVE STRICTEST DUI LIMIT IN US

SALT LAKE CITY: A state lawmaker wants to make Utah's DUI threshold the strictest in the nation by lowering the blood-alcohol content limit to 0.05 percent. Though state numbers show alcohol-related driving deaths and DUI arrests are down in Utah, Rep Norman Thurston said there's more to be done. The Provo Republican plans to introduce legislation lowering the BAC limit from 0.08 to 0.05 when Utah's lawmakers return for their annual session later this month. The BAC limit for most drivers is 0.08 in all states, but limits vary among states for commercial drivers or drivers who have had a past DUI conviction. If Thurston's bill passes this year, it would give the state the strictest BAC limit in the nation, but a tough stance on alcohol is hardly new for the majority Mormon state.

An estimated 60 percent of the state's residents and most of the state Legislature are members of The Church of Jesus Christ

(PBUH) of Latter day Saints, which instructs church members to avoid drinking alcohol. Thurston said he has received some early feedback from his colleagues and is hopeful his proposal will pass this year and other states will follow suit. A decade ago, another Utah lawmaker proposed lowering the BAC to 0.06, but the proposal never got much traction. At a BAC of 0.05 percent, a driver may have trouble steering and have a harder time coordinating, tracking moving objects and responding to emergencies, according to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

That comes from consuming two to three beers in an hour for a 160-pound man, though a number of factors, including gender, weight and how much food in someone's stomach all affect how much a drink will raise someone's BAC. For several years, the National Transportation Safety Board has encouraged states to drop their BAC

levels to 0.05 or even lower, though local officials have not adopted the standards. It took years for all states to lower their BAC to 0.08, amid criticisms from the hospitality industry that the stricter limits punish responsible drinkers.

Groups such Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) have declined to endorse proposals to lower the BAC to 0.05. MADD has said that lowering the threshold could cut deaths, but that would be years in the future and pursuing it would distract from their efforts to change other DUI laws. Thurston, who runs the health care statistics office in the Utah Health Department, notes that 0.05 BAC limits are common in Europe and in the US the limit for commercial drivers is generally 0.04 percent. Most importantly, Thurston said, the law would send the following message: "This is a state where we take this seriously and you just don't drink and drive here." —AP

TUNISIA DISMANTLES 'TERRORIST CELL' IN GROWING CRACKDOWN

TUNIS: Tunisian security forces have dismantled a 13-member "terrorist cell" that was funneling young recruits to jihadist groups, authorities said Wednesday, as part of a growing crackdown on extremists. The suspects, aged between 22 and 43, were arrested on Tuesday in Hergla, a town north of the coastal resort city of Sousse, the interior ministry said in a statement. Members of the cell held "secret meetings in a mosque" and admitted to recruiting and sending 12 youths to fight with jihadist groups abroad, it said, linking it to the Okba Ibn Nafaa Battalion, a group connected to Al-Qaeda.

It was the seventh announcement in less than a week of arrests of alleged "terrorists" in Tunisia, which has detained more than 70 people in a widening crackdown on jihadists since December 25. Authorities stepped up their efforts after Tunisian Anis Amri was identified as the primary suspect in last month's attack on a

Berlin Christmas market that killed 12 people. Amri was shot dead by police in the Italian city of Milan four days after the attack, which was claimed by the Islamic State group.

Since the 2011 uprising that toppled longtime dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia has been battling a jihadist movement that has killed dozens of soldiers and police officers as well as civilians including 59 foreign tourists. Some 3,000 Tunisians have joined the ranks of jihadist groups fighting in neighboring Libya, as well as in Syria and Iraq, according to officials. The United Nations puts the figure at 5,000. Tunisia's government said last week that it had jailed or closely monitored 800 jihadists who had returned from foreign battlefields. Concern has been growing for the threat posed by returning jihadists, with the national union for security forces last month urging the government to take "exceptional measures" against them. —AFP

CHINA TO SEND THOUSANDS OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

JERUSALEM: China has agreed for thousands of migrant construction laborers to work in Israel in a bid to alleviate a housing crisis in the Jewish state, the Israeli government said yesterday. The agreement would see 6,000 Chinese workers arrive in Israel in the six months after the formal signature of the deal expected at the end of February, a joint statement from the interior and finance ministries said. An Israeli delegation and China's commerce ministry have signed a draft agreement in China, it said.

The statement quoted Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon as saying the arrival of the Chinese workers would "energize efforts to solve the housing crisis". Housing costs in Israel have been rising steeply since 2008, according to

Bank of Israel data, significantly impacting the cost of living and triggering a wave of street protests in 2011. Kahlon, whose Kulanu party ran in the 2015 general election on a platform of lowering living costs, came under fire after an August government report showed apartment prices had risen by eight percent in a year.

Nearly 9,000 foreign construction laborers work in Israel, all of them from east European countries and half of them under bilateral agreements, according to the interior ministry. The ministry says these agreements allow for the rights of foreign workers to be protected and cut out private manpower firms that charge high commissions and exploit migrant laborers. —AFP



MANAUS: Handout picture released by the Government of Amazonas state showing Brazil's Minister of Justice, Alexandre de Moraes during a visit to the Anisio Jobim Penitentiary Complex (Compaj) the day after the prison was the scene of the rebellion that killed 56 prisoners in Manaus, Amazonas state, Brazil. —AFP

GRIM VIGIL FOR FAMILIES AFTER BRAZIL MASSACRE

MANAUS, Brazil: Brazil's justice minister on Tuesday proposed an overhaul of the penal system a day after 56 inmates were massacred in the deadliest riot in two decades. Meanwhile, hundreds of anguished relatives waited to learn if their loved ones were alive. The minister, Alexandre de Moraes, said Brazil needed to improve conditions in its jails, which are home to an estimated 600,000 inmates, after visiting the prison in the jungle city of Manaus where violence erupted between rival drug gangs on Monday.

Meanwhile, hundreds of anguished relatives, hugging each other and sobbing uncontrollably, gathered outside the morgue in Manaus, waiting to discover if their loved ones were alive. A morgue employee emerged from time to time to read from a list of those confirmed dead. "Please help me bury my son," cried Diana after learning that her son Ronei Pinheiro had been killed. "I never imagined something like this could happen." Officials were forced to rent a refrigerated truck to store bodies because there were so many dead, while medical examiners tried to identify the remains.

A war for control of the lucrative drug trade fueled the latest gang violence in Brazil's underfunded prisons, raising concerns that Monday's massacre could unleash a wave of reprisals. Some 223 inmates from other prisons in Amazonas state were relocated to an abandoned jail in Manaus to protect them from rival gangs following the riot. Moraes said the solution to Brazil's chronic prison violence was not just to keep opening new prisons. "We need to make sure those who deserve to be in jail stay there and those who committed minor crimes get out," Moraes told reporters after visiting the Anisio Jobim penitentiary. "If not, we are only providing organized crime groups with new soldiers."

The minister said that 42 percent of inmates in Brazil's prisons are awaiting trial,

versus a global average of just 20 percent. The prison system is among the worst in the world, according to human rights groups. Overcrowding and violence are common, and rights groups describe medieval conditions with food scarce and cells so packed that prisoners have no space to lie down. Brazil's federal government will provide 1.2 billion reais (\$367.82 million) to states by June to beef up security and buy more X-ray machines to prevent weapons from entering prisons, Moraes said.

The prison system in Amazonas state is run by two private companies that won a 27-year public contract. The massacre in Manaus occurred when members of a local criminal gang known as North Family, which controls the Anisio Jobim prison complex, attacked inmates from the rival First Capital Command (PCC), security officials said. Machete-wielding gangs decapitated inmates and threw their bodies over a wall of the prison, which houses more than three times the prison's capacity. A video seen by Reuters, whose authenticity could not be verified, showed prisoners tapping the decapitated heads of four men with knives and yelling: "These are all PCC."

Selfie after they escape

Amnesty International called on Brazil to launch an independent investigation to bring those responsible to justice. Police erected roadblocks and increased patrols around Manaus to hunt down more than 100 inmates who escaped from the prison during the riot, which lasted about 17 hours. According to state officials, 54 inmates had been recaptured by Tuesday afternoon. One inmate had posted a selfie of him and other prisoners on his Facebook account shortly after they escaped by tearing down a wall. The riot was the deadliest since a 1992 prison massacre at the Carandiru prison in Sao Paulo state in which 111 inmates were killed. —Reuters

TRUMP EYES CABINET VACANCIES, POLICY QUESTIONS

NEW YORK: President-elect Donald Trump pressed to fill senior posts in his administration on Tuesday even as new questions emerged about his priorities at home and abroad. His inauguration less than three weeks away, Trump tapped as US trade representative a former Reagan official who has condemned Republicans' commitment to free trade. The incoming president indicated that Robert Lighthizer, who is expected to take a hard line against China, would represent "the United States as we fight for good trade deals that put the American worker first."

The new administration's specific plans for crafting new trade deals, spokesman Sean Spicer said, "will come in time." While several hundred high-level White House posts remain unfilled, just a handful of outstanding Cabinet-level vacancies remain, specifically in the departments of Agriculture and Veterans Affairs, as well as a director of national intelligence. Trump's private meetings Tuesday included one with Leo MacKay, a senior executive at a military contractor who previously served in the Department of Veterans Affairs under President George W. Bush.

"The president-elect is up on the issues," said MacKay, a senior vice president at Lockheed Martin Corp., citing "first-class health care" for veterans as one of his priorities. While tending to his Cabinet, the president-elect and his senior advisers also worked to craft a domes-

tic and international agenda while huddled behind closed doors in his Manhattan skyscraper. Trump offered few details on his specific plans for governing in the months leading up to his stunning victory. He signaled Tuesday that he would not bless all of the GOP's priorities on Capitol Hill, however, openly questioned the timing of the House Republican push to gut an independent ethics board just as the new Congress gathered in Washington.

Initial focus

"Do they really have to make the weakening of the Independent Ethics Watchdog, as unfair as it may be, their number one act and priority?" Trump tweeted. The House GOP later dropped the push. The clash underscored Trump's ability to influence the GOP's priorities on Capitol Hill. Once Trump is inaugurated on Jan. 20, the Republican Party will control the House, Senate and White House for the first time in nearly a decade. Vice president-elect Mike Pence and Trump's pick for secretary of state, ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson, were planning separate visits with lawmakers yesterday. Ahead of those meetings Pence issued a direct challenge to Washington Republicans.

"The president-elect has a very clear message to Capitol Hill. And that is, it's time to get to work," he said Tuesday. "And it's time to keep our word to the

American people." Pence said the administration's initial focus would be "repealing and replacing Obamacare" along with legislation to cut government regulation on businesses. Trump's team has yet to say whether millions of Americans covered under the health care law would lose health care insurance altogether once it is repealed. At the same time, Trump faced questions about his foreign policy, having issued a sharp statement about North Korea and China on Twitter the night before.

The president-elect charged that China "won't help with North Korea," a country working to develop an intercontinental ballistic missile. "It won't happen!" Trump tweeted, without expanding. Senior aide Kellyanne Conway said Tuesday that Trump was putting North Korea "on notice," but he was "not making policy at the moment." She declared that as president, Trump "will stand between (North Korea) and missile capabilities." The aggressive stance prompted a warning from Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang, who said China's efforts and commitment to the dismantling of North Korea's nuclear program are "consistent and clear." "We hope all sides can refrain from speaking or doing anything that can aggravate the situation and work in concert to pull the issue back to dialogue and negotiation," Geng said. —AP



NEW YORK: Former deputy secretary of the US Department of Veterans Affairs Leo MacKay speaks with members of the media after a meeting with US President-elect Donald Trump at Trump Tower in New York. —AFP



NEW YORK: In this file photo, Hillary Clinton and her husband, former President Bill Clinton, greet supporters after voting in Chappaqua, New York. —AP

BILL AND HILLARY CLINTON TO ATTEND TRUMP INAUGURATION

WASHINGTON: Falling in line with tradition, Bill and Hillary Clinton plan to attend Donald Trump's inauguration. It's a decision that will put Hillary Clinton on the inaugural platform as her bitter rival from the 2016 campaign assumes the office she long sought. The Clintons announced their decision to attend the Jan. 20 inauguration shortly after former President George W. Bush's office said Tuesday he would attend along with former first lady Laura Bush.

The Bushes are "pleased to be able to witness the peaceful transfer of power - a hallmark of American democracy - and swearing-in of President Trump and Vice President Pence," Bush's office said in a statement. It is traditional for former presidents and their spouses to attend the inauguration. But the decision to attend was fraught for the

Clintons, given Hillary Clinton's bitter campaign against Trump. The 2016 Democratic presidential nominee has largely avoided public appearances since Trump defeated her in November.

Bush, too, has had a difficult relationship with Trump. His brother Jeb ran against Trump in the GOP primaries. George and Laura Bush let it be known they voted for "none of the above" for president rather than cast a ballot for Trump, but the ex-president did call to congratulate Trump after his victory. Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, earlier said they plan to attend Trump's inaugural. Former President George H. W. Bush, 92, and his wife, Barbara, do not plan to attend the inauguration due to the former president's age and health, his office said.—AP

TRUMP TO HOLD PRESS CONFERENCE ON JAN 11

NEW YORK: President-elect Donald Trump said Tuesday he will hold a press conference on January 11, during which he has previously indicated he would unveil plans to avoid any conflict of interest between the White House and his business dealings. Trump has not held a press conference since July, and his announcement gave just the latest date set for the much-delayed event previously due to take place December 15. He was elected in November. In a tweet, Trump said: "I will be having a general news conference on January eleventh in N Y C Thank you."

Precedent has seen American presidents-elect field numerous press conferences during the transition to power to discuss matters such as their choices to fill their cabinet and policy plans for the incoming administration. Instead, Trump has relied largely on rallies, photo ops, select interviews and in unprecedented fashion on tweets. He has largely snubbed thus far the tradition that the presidential news conference has become. His methods of communicating news about the transition have been unorthodox for an incoming head of state.

Last month, he unexpectedly announced to reporters camped in the lobby of his Manhattan Trump Tower skyscraper that Masayoshi Son-the flamboyant head of Japanese telecoms giant SoftBank and a self-made billionaire-had announced a \$50 billion investment in the US that would create 50,000 jobs. Economic announcements of this magnitude are rare and generally take place through a news release or a carefully planned press conference,

requiring the efforts of many public relations experts who carefully consider every word and gesture.

Russia hack 'intelligence'

Steven Mnuchin, tapped to become Secretary of Treasury, and Wilbur Ross, the commerce pick, announced on CNBC television that they had been appointed to their Cabinet positions by Trump. The official announcement was published several hours later. As for the nomination of his future Secretary of Defense, James Mattis, the president-elect announced the pick during a rally in Cincinnati, Ohio, the first stop of his "thank you tour" in the industrial states that gave him the presidency.

Trump later doubled down on his doubts about US intelligence findings that Russia meddled in the US election through computer hacking, a conclusion that triggered US sanctions against Moscow. He also claimed that an intelligence briefing he had been due to receive about the hack would now take place Friday. "The 'Intelligence' briefing on so-called 'Russian hacking' was delayed until Friday, perhaps more time needed to build a case. Very strange!" Trump tweeted.

Trump, who is seeking warmer ties with Washington's former Cold War foe, has long treated accusations of Russian meddling as a thinly veiled effort by a Democratic president to delegitimize a Republican victory. But that defiant stance is running up against increasing opposition in his own party. Over the weekend, Trump also made the claim that he knows "things that other people don't know" on the issue.—AFP

CALIFORNIA GIRDS TO PROTECT UNDOCUMENTED FOREIGNERS

'WE HAVE ALL HEARD THE LIES AND THREATS'

LOS ANGELES: California, home to many foreigners without residence papers, is girding to fight any attempt by President-elect Donald Trump to expel them. Trump, who takes office January 20, has vowed to deport from the country as many as three million immigrants with criminal records and build a wall along the border with Mexico. But several so-called sanctuary cities in California-ones that intentionally avoid prosecuting undocumented foreigners for violations of federal immigration policy-are beginning to dig in. The state is home to 2.8 million of undocumented immigrants.

"We have all heard the insults. We have all heard the lies. And we have all heard the threats," said Anthony Rendon, speaker of the California State Assembly. He is a Democrat of Mexican origin. "If you want to get to them, you have to go through us." During the presidential campaign, Trump vowed to cut off federal funds for sanctuary cities, of which there are an estimated 300 in the United States. But city authorities seem to have no intention of supporting any anti-immigrant initiative by the incoming government. Advocates say protecting undocumented immigrants from deportation and other punishments encourages them to report crimes, enroll in school and seek healthcare.

'Come at us'

San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee said after Trump won in November that "being a sanctuary city is in our DNA. San Francisco will never be anything other than a sanctuary city." Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti wants to open a \$10 million fund to provide free legal assistance to undocumented foreigners, most of whom are Hispanic. Xavier Becerra, liberal Governor Jerry Brown's nominee for state attorney general, is the son of Mexican immigrants and the first Latino to hold that post. "If you want to take on a forward-leaning state that is prepared to defend its rights and interests, then come at us," said Becerra, whom the press bills as Brown's attack dog.

Brown has also vowed to oppose any attempt by Trump to change California policy on climate change, labor law and immigration. The state assembly, controlled by Democrats, has approved a resolution urging Trump and the Republican-led US Congress to develop reasonable immigration policy and refrain from mass deportations. Los Angeles police chief Charlie Beck has said that his officers would not take

mented immigrants. In 2015, of 235,413 deportees (59 percent of them with a criminal record), 6,869 were caught in Los Angeles, according to data from US Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Symbolic

Ron Gochez, of the immigrant advocacy group Union del Barrio, said he appreciates the efforts of local

in the White House, the immigrants are always under attack," he said. In 2012 Obama promised comprehensive immigration reform but it got blocked in the Republican-led Congress.

Through an executive order, he approved a program to let foreigners brought into America illegally as children to study, work and get a driver's license. Trump threatened to scrap that so-called DACA program, although



CALIFORNIA: This file photo shows people marching past the Metropolitan Detention Center (behind), where immigrant prisoners are held, as they protest US President-elect Donald Trump and his administration picks in Los Angeles, California. —AFP

part in any federal operation to deport undocumented foreigners. "We are not going to engage in law enforcement activities solely based on somebody's immigration status."

We are not going to work in conjunction with Homeland Security on deportation efforts. That is not our job, nor will I make it our job," Beck said. However, city officials are powerless to stop federal raids against undocu-

authorities but sees them as symbolic. "No one can stop them. We don't want people to let their guard down because of these speeches and stop protecting themselves," Gochez said. Gochez, an American of Salvadoran and Mexican origin, notes that 2.5 million people were deported over the eight years that Barack Obama was president-more than under any other US president. "No matter who is

after winning the election he changed his tune and said, without giving details, "We're going to work something out that's going to make people happy and proud." With Becerra as attorney general, California could play the same role that heavily Republican Texas did during the eight years of the Obama administration, with lawsuits on issues such as health care, the environment and immigration. —AFP

N KOREA NUCLEAR THREAT TRUMP'S FIRST CHALLENGE

WASHINGTON: North Korea's determined quest for a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the US mainland is the first major US foreign policy challenge of the Donald Trump era. And, less than three weeks before he takes office, Trump has already plunged into these most dangerous of waters with a warning to unpredictable dictator Kim Jong-un. Kim marked the New Year by announcing that North Korea plans to test launch an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) of the kind he would need to threaten US soil. The US president-elect responded with one of his trademark Twitter taunts, vowing to halt Pyongyang in its tracks. "North Korea just stated that it is in the final stages of developing a nuclear weapon capable of reaching parts of the US," he declared. "It won't happen!"

Trump didn't provide any context for his promise but, if Kim continues to plough ahead despite the sanctions already imposed on his regime, the endgame is ominous. "Has our next commander-in-chief issued, 18 days before his inauguration, a pledge that the US will wage pre-emptive war against the DPRK?" asked Strobe Talbott. Talbott, president of the Brookings Institution and a former deputy secretary of state, spoke for many worried experts who fear Trump has limited diplomatic

options. US President Barack Obama's outgoing administration has pursued a policy of UN-backed sanctions targeting Kim's regime, and a call for six-party negotiations.

Inevitable war?

These talks would see North Korea come to the table with China, the US, South Korea, Japan and Russia to negotiate an end to the stand-off and a nuclear-free peninsula. But, aside from China, outside states have little leverage over the pariah regime and Beijing opposes any stronger measures that might threaten to destabilize its neighbor. Trump suggests an ICBM in the hands of an aggressive North Korean despite still technically at war with the United States since the 1950-53 war-would be intolerable. So, if sanctions don't work, is war inevitable? Perhaps not yet, but the US military-which has just under 30,000 troops in South Korea-has stepped up planning for any eventual operation.

"It is the threat that keeps me awake at night," a senior defense official said. "Primarily because we don't know what the dear leader in North Korea is really after." The senior official, speaking last month on condition of anonymity said US commanders have been reviewing options for 70 years but that

the ICBM threat has focused minds. Robert Einhorn, who until 2013 was State Department special adviser for non-proliferation and arms control, said that Kim's threat to test an ICBM was not new. "Whether they can deliver it is another story," he said. "Many experts believe that the North may be two or three years away from having the ability confidently to deliver a nuclear payload on the continental US."

Trump unpredictable

China does not want North Korea to join the small club of nations that can launch nuclear weapons half-way round the planet, but it doesn't want the regime to collapse either. If sanctions cause Kim's authoritarian state to fall apart, China could face millions of refugees and see its neighbor Korea reunified as a US military ally. Some once argued that Kim and his equally isolated predecessors were merely brandishing the nuclear threat to force the United States into direct negotiations. But experts now see the pursuit of nuclear missiles as a strategic choice to deter South Korean or US aggression. "I don't think these programs are any longer a bargaining chip. If they ever were," Einhorn said, adding that Trump will have to decide whether to seek direct contact. —AFP

ITALY STORM AFTER POPULIST HEAD BLAMES FAKE NEWS ON MEDIA

ROME: Italy's media and traditional political parties were up in arms yesterday after the head of the populist Five Star movement accused the country's journalists of "manufacturing false news". Comic Beppe Grillo, founder of the anti-euro movement, lashed out at print and TV journalists, accusing them of fabricating news to keep the Five Stars down. "Newspapers and television news programmes are the biggest manufacturers of false news in the country, with the aim of ensuring those who have power keep it," he said on his blog on Tuesday.

He called for "a popular jury to determine the veracity of the news published," and said in cases of fake news "the editor must, head bowed, make a public apology and publish the correct version at the start of the program or on the paper's front page". Grillo said members of the general public "picked at random" would be shown newspaper

articles and programs and asked "to determine their accuracy." The blog was accompanied by a montage of the banners and logos of Italy's main newspapers and television news programs. The media world was enraged. The news director of the private TG La7 channel, Enrico Mentana, said he would sue the comedian, while journalists' union FNSI slammed the "lynching of all journalists".

'Fascism'

The opposition Five Stars was running neck-and-neck with the ruling centre-left Democratic Party (PD) before Matteo Renzi's downfall last month and is campaigning hard for the next general election, which could be held in coming months. What Grillo is proposing "is called Fascism, and those who play it down are accomplices," PD senator Stefano Esposito said. The centre-right Forza Italia (FI) party, founded by ex-prime minister Silvio

Berlusconi, said Grillo wanted a "minculpop 2.0", a reference to the propaganda and censorship ministry under dictator Benito Mussolini.

Grillo has had a difficult relationship with the media since launching the Five Stars (M5S) in 2009, banning members from appearing on talk shows and giving international media priority over their Italian counterparts at his rallies. His claim that journalists were to blame for the country's poor standing on the World Press Freedom Index—where it ranks 77th—was dismissed Wednesday by the editor in chief of the Repubblica daily.

'Shady deals, big lies'

"It's not because of an enslavement to power, but the opposite: there are too many journalists threatened by the mafia and organized crime groups over their investigations into shady dealings and corruption," Mario Calabresi said. "And if

that wasn't enough, we hold the record for the number of lawsuits against journalists brought by politicians who cannot bear the idea that someone would look into their business or criticize them," he added. Marco Travaglio, editor of the far-left Il Fatto Quotidiano daily, agreed with Grillo but said the popular jury idea would never work.

"The biggest lies are those spread by the television and newspapers, but the solution he is proposing is naive," he said. Grillo's comments follow widespread debate in the United States and Britain over whether fake news may have played a part in persuading people to vote for Republican candidate Donald Trump and for Brexit. Last month, Pope Francis weighed in, comparing scandal-obsessed media outlets who smear politicians and spread gossip to people sexually excited by excrement—and describing their readers as faeces eaters. —AFP

BRITAIN'S BREXIT PLANS ROCKED BY RESIGNATION

'RED, WHITE AND BLUE BREXIT'

LONDON: Britain's Brexit plans were in turmoil yesterday after the UK's ambassador to the EU quit, blasting "ill-founded arguments and muddled thinking" less than three months before the process is due to start. Ivan Rogers' resignation and sharp criticism shed new light on the difficulties faced by Prime Minister Theresa May, who wants to hand in Britain's notice for withdrawing from the European Union by the end of March. The move to trigger the Article 50 mech-

anism would start a two-year clock ticking on sorting out future relations between Britain and the EU before it leaves the bloc. Rogers said Tuesday he accepted his departure would add to the "uncertainty" over the coming years of Brexit negotiations.

May has faced criticism for saying little about Britain's divorce settlement objectives: last month she went beyond her "Brexit means Brexit" mantra to specify that she wanted a "red,

white and blue Brexit". And Rogers made clear that he knew little more about how Britain intended to tackle thrashing out its future relationship with the EU. A highly-regarded diplomat who had been due to end his four-year stint in October, Rogers quit nine months early so his successor could see through the whole Article 50 process. However, he left with some pointed remarks in his resignation email to staff at UK Rep, Britain's EU embassy.

Speak truth to power

"We do not yet know what the government will set as negotiating objectives for the UK's relationship with the EU after exit," he said, revealing that UK Rep were no clearer on the issue than what May has made public. Rogers urged colleagues to provide British ministers with their "unvarnished" understanding through Brexit negotiations—"even where this is uncomfortable". "I hope you will continue to challenge ill-founded arguments and muddled thinking and that you will never be afraid to speak the truth to those in power," Rogers said.

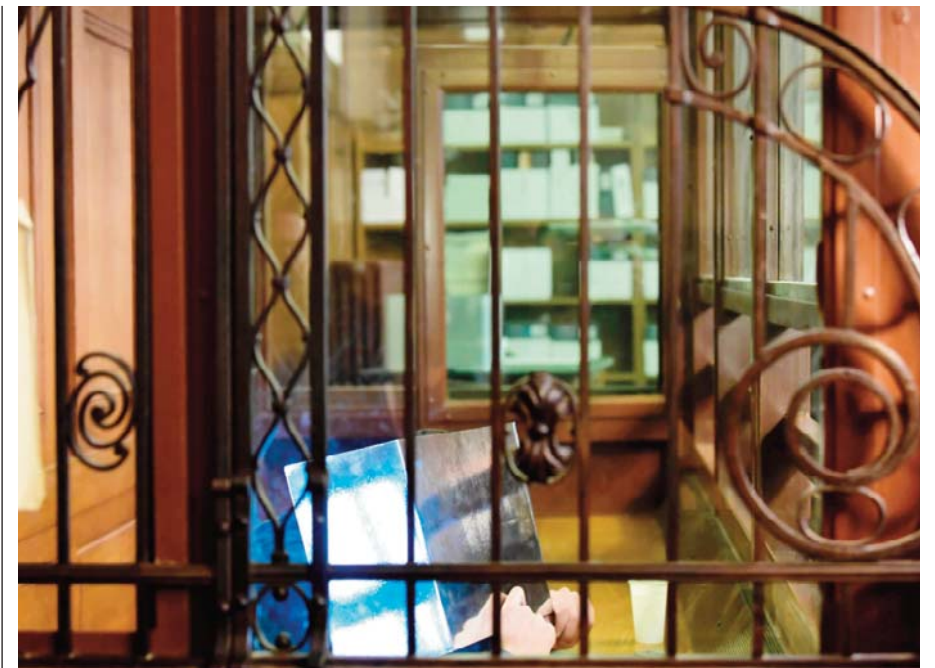
He also criticized the British government for its short supply of "serious multilateral negotiating experience" in London and said the structure of the UK's negotiating team "needs rapid resolution". Rogers came under fire last month for saying it could take 10 years for Britain to conclude a trade deal with the EU. The government insisted, though, that he was only reporting back what was being said in European capitals. The mild-mannered Rogers is widely respected in Brussels where he is known as a vastly experienced operator.

His critics say he is a Europhile, but European diplomatic sources described him as being a realist. British diplomatic sources at the time of the leaked "10 years" comments voiced suspicions that he may have been knifed in the back by pro-Brexit forces who wanted him out. The European Commission said yesterday it regretted, just as London prepared to launch fraught Brexit divorce negotiations. "We regret the loss of a very professional, very knowledgeable while not always easy interlocutor and diplomat, who always loyally defended the interests of his government," said Natasha Bertaud, a spokeswoman for the commission, the EU's executive arm.

'Massive' headache for May

The Daily Telegraph newspaper reported that May and her senior team had "lost confidence" in him over his "pessimistic" view of Brexit. The unexpected departure "delighted Brexiters but left the PM with a massive New Year headache", said The Sun newspaper. The Guardian described it as "a blow for this country", while the choice of his successor would send a "critical" message to other European capitals. London is set to appoint a new ambassador and deputy ambassador shortly.

"His resignation is not a surprise for those who work with him," one European diplomat said. "He was very competent, but not convinced by the Brexit decision and the British government line, leading the UK into an area of dangerous uncertainty." In the June 2016 referendum, 52 percent voted for Britain leave the EU. Triggering Article 50 will start a two-year countdown after which Britain will leave all the institutions and the single market unless alternative arrangements have been agreed. —AFP



BERLIN: Alleged Islamic State jihadist Shaas Al Mohammad hides his face as he waits for the opening of his trial yesterday in Berlin. — AFP

SUSPECTED IS SCOUT FOR BERLIN ATTACK SITES GOES ON TRIAL

BERLIN: An alleged Islamic State jihadist accused of scouting out potential targets for an attack in Berlin, including the Brandenburg Gate and Reichstag building, went on trial in Germany yesterday. It was the country's first trial of a suspected IS militant deployed to Germany from Syria during the chaotic 2015 refugee influx in contrast to "lone wolf" attacks or plots by extremists who were radicalized elsewhere. The defendant, identified only as 19-year-old Syrian national Shaas al-Mohammad, allegedly fought with the Islamist militia in his war-torn homeland for two years before arriving in Germany as a refugee in August 2015.

Dressed in a blue pullover and a black cap, Mohammad hid his face behind a folder as he took his seat in the courtroom. Two police trucks were parked outside the entrance, with officers armed with machine guns guarding the proceedings. Mohammad was standing trial at a special state security court in Berlin on charges of membership of a foreign terrorist organization, which carries up to 10 years in jail, and military weapons law violations. The trial comes just over two weeks after an IS extremist from Tunisia allegedly ploughed a truck through a Berlin Christmas market in an attack that killed 12 people.

'Attack targets'

Prosecutors claim the defendant joined the jihadist group as a teenager in mid-2013, taking part in combat operations, handling an AK-47 assault rifle and supplying food to fighters. He arrived in Germany near the peak of a mass influx of people fleeing Syria, Iraq and other crisis-torn countries that brought almost 900,000 asylum seekers to Europe's biggest economy in 2015. He allegedly stayed in "close contact" with IS and repeatedly visited the German capital until February 2016 to scout out landmark targets and busy tourist sites for an attack.

Among the suspected targets was the area around the glass-domed Reichstag parliament building, the nearby Brandenburg Gate monument and the busy shopping square Alexanderplatz. He

then allegedly "passed the information about the potential attack targets onto his contacts at the IS", said the court in a statement. "In addition, he arranged to send at least one person to Syria as a fighter and offered his services as a contact person for potential attackers in Germany," it added. The young Syrian was arrested on March 22 last year and has been in pre-trial detention ever since. The court has set 25 hearings until April.

Truck rampage

Germany has been shocked by a spate of IS-claimed attacks, and some foiled plots which a growing rightwing populist movement has blamed on the open-door refugee policy of Chancellor Angela Merkel. In some cases last year, the jihadists were home-grown, while others were migrants and refugees. More attacks are feared when some of the 400-odd German jihadists still in Syria and Iraq return home. In June last year, police arrested three Syrian men over an alleged plan to use guns and suicide vests in an IS attack in Duesseldorf.

In July, a 17-year-old Afghan refugee wounded five people in an axe rampage on a train before police shot him dead. Days later a 27-year-old Syrian blew himself up outside a music festival, wounding 15 people. In October, police say they prevented an attack on a Berlin airport by a Syrian refugee, 22-year-old Jaber al-Bakr. Bakr evaded a police raid but was caught by Syrian compatriots soon after and handed over to police. Two days later, he was found hanged in his cell, sparking a scandal over the security lapse in custody.

December saw the worst IS-claimed attack when Tunisian suspect Anis Amri, 24, allegedly drove a hijacked truck into a packed Berlin Christmas market. The attack claimed 12 lives, including the lorry's registered Polish driver. Amri was shot dead four days later in Italy after firing first at police there. Germany's domestic security service estimates that the number of radical Islamists in Germany rose above 9,000 last year, from some 3,800 in 2011. About 550 of them are considered dangerous and capable of a violent attack. — AFP



BRUSSELS: This file photo shows Britain's ambassador to the European Union, Ivan Rogers (top L), waiting in the background as Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May addresses journalists as she arrives for an European Union leaders summit at the European Council, in Brussels. — AFP

COLOMBIAN NARCO CAPTURED AFTER FAKING OWN DEATH

BOGOTA: Colombian authorities said Tuesday they had arrested a top lieutenant in the country's biggest drug cartel—even though he was supposedly dead, having bought a forged death certificate. Omar Dario Patino Londono, who was living under the fake name Yerci Andrei Collazos Lavao, was captured in a pre-dawn raid on New Year's day at a ranch in central Colombia's Caldas department, police said in a statement. He was allegedly a top lieutenant to the head of the powerful Gulf Clan cartel, Antonio Usuga. Usuga personally sent Patino to relaunch the cocaine route from Colombia's Pacific coast to Central America after authorities disrupted it in a series of crackdowns, police said. —AFP

GUN USED BY AMRI MATCHES BERLIN ATTACK WEAPON

ROME: Tunisian suspect Anis Amri smuggled the weapon used in the Berlin Christmas market attack across borders to Italy and used it in the shoot-out in which he was killed, police said yesterday. Italian police said ballistic tests proved the gun fired at an officer in Milan was the same as the one used to kill the Polish driver of the hijacked truck which Amri is believed to have ploughed into the crowd on December 19, killing 12.

"The weapon that killed the driver of the Berlin massacre truck is the same as the one Anis

Amri used to wound a policeman in Milan," forensic police said in a statement. An investigation was underway to see whether the weapon had been used "in other criminal episodes, in Italy or elsewhere". Amri, 24, the prime suspect in the Berlin Christmas market attack, was shot dead after travelling from the Netherlands to France before heading to Italy. The Tunisian was approached by two policemen as he loitered outside a Milan train station. He fired at one officer before being shot dead by the other. — AFP

TRIAL OF E GUINEA LEADER'S PLAYBOY SON ADJOURNED

PARIS: A French court agreed yesterday to adjourn the trial of the playboy son of Equatorial Guinea's leader, giving him six more months to prepare his defense against charges he embezzled more than 100 million Euros. Teodorin Obiang, his country's vice-president, is suspected of plundering his oil and timber-rich country to buy a mansion on one of Paris' most exclusive avenues as well as a collection of supercars. When the trial opened on Monday, lawyers for the 47-year-old son of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema argued that they had had too little time to call witnesses and prepare their defense. Judges agreed and said the trial would now resume on June 19.

The case is the first arising from an unprecedented investigation into the French assets of a trio of African leaders accused of leading a life of luxury abroad while their citizens live in poverty. Obiang had attempted to prevent the case coming to court and claims he is innocent. He says the money came from legitimate sources, not bribes or

embezzlement as prosecutors allege. The prosecution and anti-corruption group Transparency International, one of the plaintiffs in the case, called the defense's request for an adjournment a "delaying" tactic.

Assets belonging to Teodorin Obiang have been seized in several countries. His house on Paris' exclusive Avenue Foch, which boasts a cinema, spa, hair salon and taps covered in gold leaf, is estimated to be worth around 107 million Euros (\$112 million). When French judicial officials first launched raids in Paris in 2011, they hauled away Bugattis, Ferraris, Rolls Royce and other cars. The case sets a precedent for France which has long turned a blind eye to African dictators pouring their ill-gotten gains into Parisian real estate and luxury products.

Californian villa

It came about after nearly a decade of lobbying by Transparency International and another group, Sherpa. "In the beginning, there was simply no political will in

France to listen to us," William Bourdon, a lawyer for Sherpa, wrote in September. Equatorial Guinea, Africa's only Spanish-speaking nation, is the continent's third-biggest oil producer but more than half of its population live below the poverty line. It is regularly criticized by human rights groups for its repressive laws, corruption, as well as unlawful killings and torture by its security forces.

Obiang is not expected to attend the trial or serve a jail sentence even if he is convicted of the charge of laundering funds obtained from corruption. US officials said he had "shamelessly" looted his country in 2014 and forced him to forfeit property including a villa in Malibu, California, and some of his collection of Michael Jackson memorabilia. In November, Swiss prosecutors said they had also opened a money laundering probe targeting Obiang and seized 11 luxury cars in Geneva, including a Bugatti Veyron worth around two million Euros. — AFP

NEW YEAR ASSAULT IN INDIA'S TECH HUB PROMPTS POLICE PROBE



BANGALORE: This file photo shows Indian police personnel holding lathi sticks as they attempt to manage crowds during New Year's Eve celebrations in Bangalore. — AFP

NEW DELHI: Police in India's technology hub of Bengaluru said yesterday they had begun investigating reports of a New Year's assault on a woman after a video emerged showing the attack by two men, as bystanders watched. News of the video comes after a Reuters witness and media said several women revelers were groped and assaulted by a mob in the southern city in a separate incident reminiscent of last year's attacks in German cities blamed on migrants. Police opened a case of molestation against two unidentified men, based on video images of the attack as the woman walked down a secluded lane in a residential area late at night, senior police official Ajay Hilori said.

"We have registered a first information report and started investigating," he said. The closed-circuit video clip, whose authenticity Reuters could not independently verify, shows the driver of a scooter dismounting to grab the woman and drag her towards the vehicle, overcoming her efforts to get away. The other man riding the scooter also briefly joins the skirmish, but the clip ends with the attacker throwing the woman to the ground before getting back on the vehicle to flee. Some other peo-

ple can be glimpsed at one end of the lane, but no one tries to intervene and stop the attack.

The woman in the clip, broadcast by several television channels, has not come forward to make a complaint, Hilori said. Women in India are often reluctant to report such assaults for fear of being stigmatized by friends and relatives, although sex crimes are common, with more than 34,000 rapes reported in 2015, figures from the National Crime Record Bureau show. Bengaluru, in the southern state of Karnataka, is home to many well-educated professionals. It had widely been regarded as safer for women than New Delhi, which is often labeled the country's rape capital, for the many sex crimes reported there.

Authorities face criticism for not doing enough to stiffen a weak system of law enforcement and policing that leaves women vulnerable. "These kind of things do happen," the state's home minister, G. Parameashwara, told the Times Now news channel after the Dec 31 incident, in comments that appeared to blame the women for the assault, saying some of them dressed like Westerners. — Reuters

MYANMAR FACES DANGER FROM IS MILITANTS

KUALA LUMPUR: Myanmar faces a growing danger of attacks by foreign supporters of Islamic State (IS) recruited from Southeast Asian networks in support of persecuted Muslim Rohingyas, Malaysia's top counter-terrorism official has said. Malaysian authorities have detained a suspected IS follower planning to head to Myanmar to carry out attacks, the head of the Malaysian police counter-terrorism division, Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay, said in an interview.

The suspect, an Indonesian whom he did not identify, was detained in Malaysia last month. The suspect was scheduled to be charged yesterday for possession of materials linked to terrorist groups, which carries a seven-year jail term or fine, Ayob Khan said. More militants are likely to try to follow his lead in support of the Rohingya cause, Ayob Khan said. "He was planning to perform jihad in Myanmar, fighting against the Myanmar government for this Rohingya group in Rakhine State," Ayob Khan said.

A Myanmar army sweep since October in the north of Rakhine State, on its border with Bangladesh, has sent about 34,000 members of the Rohingya minority fleeing into Bangladesh, the United Nations says. Residents and rights groups accuse security forces in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar of summary executions and rape in the army operation, launched in response to attacks on police posts on Oct 9 that killed nine officers. The government of Aung San Suu Kyi denies the accusations of abuse. Myanmar government spokesman Zaw Htay told Reuters an official report into October's violence in Rakhine state found no evidence of an IS presence there or that the attacks were linked to IS.

Lightning rod

The conflict in Rakhine risks becoming a lightning rod for Islamists in a shadowy network stretching from the Philippines to Indonesia and Malaysia, with links to Islamic State in the Middle East, security analysts and officials say. Scores of Southeast Asian Muslims, most from Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, have travelled to the Middle East to join IS, counter-terrorism police in the region said. Over the past year, IS has claimed several attacks - or been linked to foiled plots - in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. "There is a high possibility that Muslims, be it from IS or other groups, will find the

ways and means to go to Myanmar to help their Rohingya Muslim brothers," Ayob Khan said.

The Indonesian suspect was among seven people arrested for suspected links to IS. The suspect was also involved in a plot to smuggle weapons to Indonesia's Poso region, on Sulawesi island, Ayob Khan said. Indonesian authorities have detained several suspected foreign militants trying to reach Poso. Ayob Khan did not say what group the suspect, a factory worker who had been in Malaysia since 2014, was trying to link up with in Myanmar. He said the suspect, was in contact with Muhammad Wandy Muhammad Jedi, a Syria-based Malaysian militant who claimed responsibility on behalf of IS for a grenade attack on a bar in June last year.

The International Crisis Group think-tank said in a report last month the coordinated attacks on Myanmar police in Rakhine State were carried out by a group called Harakah al-Yakin. While the group had links to Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, it would be wrong to "over-interpret the significance of the international links", ICG said. "Nevertheless, the longer violence continues, the greater the risks become of such links deepening and potentially becoming operational," it said.

Large pool of recruits

Muslim-majority Malaysia and Indonesia, which has the world's biggest Muslim population, have led calls in Southeast Asia for Myanmar to stop the violence against the Rohingya. Rohingyas have for years been fleeing persecution in Myanmar, which denies them citizenship because it sees them as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. They often wash up on Southeast Asian shores in rickety boats seeking asylum. More than 55,000 Rohingyas are registered with the United Nations in Malaysia.

Non-profit groups estimate as many as 200,000 Rohingyas are living in Malaysia, many working in restaurants and construction sites. Analysts warn the large number of Rohingya migrants are a potential pool of recruits for militants. "The network between Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and the Rohingyas is there," said Badrul Hisham Ismail, program executive director of the Malaysian counter-militancy group, Iman Research. Ismail said his group had discovered Malaysian militants involved in recruiting Rohingyas and sending them to Poso for training. — Reuters



WEST BENGAL: Indian activists of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) shout slogans prior to burning an effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a protest meeting in Siliguri yesterday. — AFP

FIVE INDIAN STATES GO TO POLLS IN TEST FOR MODI

'A KEY TEST AFTER MODI'S SHOCK MOVE TO BAN HIGH-VALUE NOTES'

NEW DELHI: Five Indian states representing more than 160 million voters will go to the polls in the next two months, the election commission said yesterday, in a key test for the prime minister after his shock move to ban all high-value notes. They include India's most populous state Uttar Pradesh, where Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is hoping to claw back power after performing well in national elections in 2014.

The elections will begin on Feb 4, nearly three months after Modi announced he was scrapping nearly 86 percent of all Indian currency, a move aimed at curbing widespread tax evasion. The northern states of Punjab and Uttarakhand, Goa in the west and Manipur in the northeast will also elect new governments in the elections, which

go on until March 8, with results due three days later. "All five states will go to election in one go," Chief Election Commissioner Nasim Zaidi told reporters in New Delhi. "The commission and government machinery are in full readiness to conduct the elections in a free, fair and transparent manner."

Modi's BJP needs to win state elections to gain more seats in the nation's upper house of parliament, which has blocked reforms seen as crucial to fuelling the economic growth it has promised voters. Most members of the upper house are indirectly elected by state legislatures. Modi's BJP currently rules in Goa and Punjab while the opposition Congress is in power in Manipur and Uttarakhand. The party held power until 2002 in Uttar Pradesh, where the ruling

Samajwadi Party (SP) has been roiled by a power struggle in recent weeks that could weaken its grip on power.

The vote there is being seen as the first major test of Modi after his assault on tax evasion. Initial praise for the Indian leader's bold move has given way to criticism over the slow pace of rolling out new currency, which is widely expected to hit economic growth, although popular support remains high. Voting in Uttar Pradesh will begin on February 11 and take place in seven stages. The announcement follows a Supreme Court ruling this week banning politicians from using religion and caste to win votes. India is officially secular but politicians from parties including the BJP and SP have been accused of exploiting religion and caste to garner votes. — AFP

MYANMAR COMMISSION PLAYS DOWN ABUSE AGAINST ROHINGYA

YANGON: A commission probing violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state yesterday denied security forces have carried out a genocidal campaign against the Rohingya, days after a video emerged showing police beating civilians from the Muslim minority. Tens of thousands of Rohingyas - a group loathed by many among Myanmar's Buddhist majority - have fled a military operation in the northwestern state, launched after deadly attacks on police posts in October. Dozens have died in the crackdown, while escapees now in neighboring Bangladesh have claimed they suffered rape, arson, murder and torture at the hands of police or soldiers.

Myanmar's government, led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, has said the allegations are invented and has resisted mounting international pressure to protect the minority. A state-appointed commission set up to investigate the violence released its interim report yesterday, dismissing claims troops and police have embarked on a campaign to force the Rohingya out of the country. Its interim findings come days after the government detained multiple police officers over a video showing policemen beating and kicking Rohingya villagers.

The footage, shot by one of officers, has sparked outrage and undermined the government's blanket denials that soldiers and police have carried out rights abuses. The size of the "Bengali" population, mosques and religious buildings in the unrest-hit area "are proof that there were no cases of genocide and religious persecution", it said in a statement carried in state media. Myanmar refuses to recognize the Rohingya as one of the country's ethnic minorities, instead describing them as Bengalis - or illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh - even though many have lived in Myanmar for generations.

The commission also found "insufficient evidence" of rape but added it was still looking into claims security forces committed arson, illegal arrests and torture of the

Rohingya. It blamed the unrest on foreign-backed extremists, whom it said had attacked security forces in October to harm "the sovereignty of the state... with the intention of igniting riots and conflicts." Legal action has been taken against 485 people arrested during the army's subsequent clearance operation, it added, without giving further details.

'Totally unprofessional'

Chris Lewa, from the Arakan project, said the com-

mission had failed to properly investigate the wide-spread allegations of rape and rights abuses. "The methodology is not credible, it's totally unprofessional," she said. "There is no corroboration from the villagers they are meant to have talked to. Their job was to verify the allegations and the report has not verified them." The commission has faced opposition from across the spectrum since it was announced last month - the second body created by Suu Kyi to try to heal the simmering religious divide in Rakhine state. — AFP



MYANMAR: This screen grab taken yesterday from a YouTube video originally taken by Myanmar Constable Zaw Myo Htike shows policemen standing guard around Rohingya minority villagers seated on the ground in the village of Kotankauk during a police area clearance operation. — AFP

S KOREA VOWS US MISSILE SYSTEM

SEOUL: South Korea is committed to deploying an advanced US missile defense system this year despite opposition from China, a minister said yesterday, even as opposition lawmakers headed to Beijing with a different message. Seoul and Washington agreed to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in the South after a string of North Korean nuclear and missile tests - prompting strong objections from China. "THAAD deployment is part of our efforts to bolster defense against threats from North Korea," Defense Minister Han Min-Koo said in a report to the country's acting president.

"This is not a subject for political considerations," he told Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-Ahn, who took over the executive powers of scandal-hit President Park Geun-Hye after she was impeached last month. But the opposition Democratic Party has said they will review the deployment if they win upcoming presidential elections, and a group of their lawmakers flew to Beijing to meet Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and other top officials. "They are going to convey our belief to China that the THAAD issue should be left in the hands of the next president," the party's parliamentary floor leader Woo Sang-Ho said.

Originally set for December 2017, the country's presidential election may be brought forward if Park's impeachment is upheld by the Constitutional Court, which has up to six months to decide. The Democratic Party's presidential hopeful Moon Jae-In is currently the frontrunner in the race. Beijing argues THAAD will hurt its security interests and increase the risk of military conflict in the region, and has imposed what have been seen in South Korea as a string of sanctions in retaliation for the development. These include new restrictions on Korean K-pop stars and other celebrities appearing on Chinese TV programs or performing in the mainland.

China also refused to approve chartered flights from South Korea for the Lunar New Year holiday, hitting the lucrative tourism industry. Washington maintains THAAD is no threat to Beijing. "There's no reason for China to oppose that system. This is a defensive system. And there's no reason for anyone in the region to have concern about that, other than, perhaps, North Korea," Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said Tuesday. The proposed missile system has also sparked angry protests from both residents of the areas where it is set to be deployed. — AFP

CHINA SAYS AIRCRAFT CARRIER TESTING WEAPONS IN SOUTH CHINA SEA DRILLS

BEIJING: A group of Chinese warships led by its sole aircraft carrier is testing weapons and equipment in exercises this week in the South China Sea that are going to plan, China's foreign ministry said yesterday. Exercises by the ships, in particular the aircraft carrier Liaoning, since last month have unnerved China's neighbors, especially at a time of heightened strain with self-ruled Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own, and given long-running territorial disputes in the South China Sea. China says the Soviet-built Liaoning and the other ships conduct routine exercises that comply with international law.

"The Liaoning aircraft carrier group in the

South China Sea is carrying out scientific research and training, in accordance with plans," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a regular news briefing. "The purpose is to test the performance of weapons and equipment," he said. The People's Liberation Army Navy said on its official micro blog this week that the aircraft carrier conducted drills in the South China Sea with its fighter jets and helicopters. US warships have also been conducting what they call "freedom of navigation" patrols through the South China Sea over the past year as concern grows about Chinese construction of air strips and docks on disputed reefs and islands.

The group of warships sailed through waters south of Japan and then rounded east and south of Taiwan late last month on their way to the south China province of Hainan. Taiwan's defense minister warned at the time that "the threat of our enemies is growing day by day". Taiwan media have reported that the Liaoning could sail north up the median line of the Taiwan Strait, the narrow body of water separating Taiwan and China, on its way to its home port of Qingdao. Taiwan's defense ministry said the talk about the timing and northward route of the Liaoning was speculation, and it would make preparations based on the situation and "maintain its grasp of the movements" of the ship.

Business relations between mainland China and Taiwan have grown significantly over the past decade but tension has increased since the island elected a president from an independence-leaning party last year. China distrusts President Tsai Ing-wen and has stepped up pressure on her following a protocol-breaking phone call between her and US President-elect Donald Trump last month. Beijing suspects Tsai wants to push for the island's formal independence, a red line for the mainland, which has never renounced the use of force to bring what it deems a renegade province under its control. Tsai says she wants to maintain peace with China. —Reuters



PHILIPPINES: Policemen patrol outside the walls of the North Cotabato District Jail in Kidapawan city, Cotabato Province, southern Philippines, after a massive jailbreak early yesterday. —AP Photos

MORE THAN 150 INMATES ESCAPE IN PHILIPPINE JAIL RAID

'THE ASSAILANTS WERE HEAVILY ARMED AND OVERWHELMED 24 GUARDS'

KIDAPAWAN, Philippines: Suspected Muslim rebels staged the Philippines' biggest jailbreak yesterday when they stormed a dilapidated jail in the violence-plagued south of the country, freeing 158 inmates and killing a guard, authorities said. The attack added to a long history of daring jailbreaks in the southern Philippines, home to a decades-old Muslim separatist insurgency as well as extremist gangs that have recently declared allegiance to the Islamic State group. More than 100 armed men believed to have been led by a local Muslim guerrilla commander attacked the jail in Kidapawan city about 1 am in what appeared to be a well-planned raid to free fellow rebels, jail authorities said.

"There are high-value targets in our custody who were the subject of a rescue operation," jail warden Peter John Bonggat said. The assailants were heavily armed and overwhelmed the 24 guards at the jail, according to Bonggat, who was involved in the effort to repel the gunmen and said one of his officers had been killed. At least 158 prisoners escaped, Bonggat said, although it was unclear how many of those were linked to the attackers or were just other inmates who took advantage of the chaos. Bonggat said the jail, which housed 1,511 inmates, was a run-down former school building located in a forested, secluded area.

Kidapawan, 950 kilometers south of Manila, is home to various Muslim rebel groups, criminal gangs and communist insurgents. "We have many Muslim personalities (in the jail) that are members of various organized, syndicated groups," Bonggat said. He said the attackers were believed to be militants who had broken away from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the nation's largest Muslim rebel organization which is in peace talks with the government. Six of the escapees were killed and eight captured as security forces hunted them in nearby farmlands throughout Wednesday, according to Bonggat.

Overpowered, undermanned

Acting provincial governor Shirley Macasarte said authorities had been tipped off that one of the breakaway groups, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, had been planning the jailbreak. "We had reports that a group of BIFF members wanted to rescue brothers who were involved in killings and had experience of making bombs," Macasarte said. Islamic militants have staged a series of raids on poorly funded and secured jails in the south over the past 15 years that have led to mass escapes, but authorities said Wednesday's was the largest.

"It is the biggest ever jailbreak in our history," Bureau of Jail Management and Penology spokesman Xavier Solda said. "We were really underpowered and undermanned." Militants have attacked the Kidapawan jail repeatedly. In 2007, gunmen freed 49 inmates there. Among those who escaped was Khair Mundos, one of the main leaders of the Abu Sayyaf, which is blamed for the Philippines' worst terrorist attacks. He was recaptured in 2014. The southern region of Mindanao is the ancestral homeland of the Muslim minority in the largely Catholic Philippines. The MILF, which has about 10,000 armed followers, is the largest of the rebel groups that have been fighting since the 1970s for independence or autonomy.

More than 120,000 people have been killed in the rebellion. The MILF has in recent years been observing a ceasefire as part of peace efforts with the government. MILF spokesman Von al-Haq said the group did not know who the attackers in yesterday's raid were. The BIFF is one of several breakaway groups that are determined to continue fighting and have declared

allegiance to IS. The BIFF split from the MILF in 2008 after the previous peace process collapsed, then carried out attacks on Christian communities that left more than 400 people dead and 600,000 displaced. The Maute group, regarded as one of the most dangerous extremist organizations, freed 23 inmates in a jailbreak last year near Kidapawan. —AFP



PHILIPPINES: Filipino inmates remain in their cell at the North Cotabato District Jail in Kidapawan city, Cotabato Province, southern Philippines, after a massive jailbreak yesterday.

THAI LEADERS SAY GENERAL ELECTION ON TRACK FOR 2017

BANGKOK: Thai Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan said yesterday a general election will be held this year after doubts were raised by a member of the national legislative assembly. Thailand's next polls will restore civilian rule following a 2014 coup, and will be the first under a new constitution, approved in a referendum last year, that critics say will ensure military oversight of elected governments. "We can't move it. It has its time frame. What the National Legislative Assembly has said is their problem," Prawit, who is also defense minister, told reporters in Bangkok.

A member of the military-appointed National Legislative Assembly said on Monday the election would have to be delayed until 2018 to allow time to pass laws needed to hold it. Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, a former army chief who led the 2014 overthrow of the last elected government, has sought to dispel concern his military government might delay the restoration of democracy, dismissing talk among politicians that the vote would be delayed. "In terms of the roadmap, you mustn't heed what anyone else says," Prayuth told reporters in Bangkok.

The army said the 2014 coup, the second takeover in six years, was necessary to restore stability after months of sometimes deadly

street protests against the government of Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. Some Western governments have pressed for a swift return to democracy. The junta has struggled to kick-start a lackluster economy which, after years of impressive growth, is struggling amid high household debt and low consumer confidence. The next step in the transition back to civilian rule is for new King Maha Vajiralongkorn to endorse the new constitution. The king, who came to the throne following the death of his father, King Bhumibol Adulyadej in October, has until next month to do so.

Critics say certain elements of the constitution could stifle democracy including a provision establishing an appointed upper house Senate with seats reserved for military commanders. Some politicians have suggested that the election should be postponed until 2018 because this year, the country will be focusing on preparations for the cremation of the late king and the subsequent coronation of the new one. Annuay Klangpa, a former lawmaker from Yingluck's party, urged Prayuth to stick to his word on the election timing. "I hope the prime minister keeps his word and holds elections according to the government's roadmap at the end of this year," he said. —Reuters

INDONESIA SUSPENDS MILITARY COOPERATION WITH AUSTRALIA

JAKARTA: Indonesia's military acted alone when it suspended cooperation with Australia's armed forces last week, Indonesian officials said yesterday, after what media described as insulting teaching materials were found at a base in Western Australia. A spokesman for Indonesian President Joko Widodo said there had been no discussion of the suspension with the president and the issue had been exaggerated. "This was not a decision of the president," spokesman Johan Budi said. Ties with Australia were "just fine," said Defense Minister Ryamizad Ryacudu, adding that he only learned about the matter yesterday. "We need to look at this properly first, not just from one side," he added.

Australian Defense Minister Marise Payne said only some activities had been "postponed." Military cooperation between the two countries, which ranges from counterterrorism cooperation to border protection, was suspended for "technical reasons," a spokesman for the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) said. "All forms of cooperation have been suspended," Major General Wuryanto said. "There are technical matters that need to be discussed," Wuryanto said, referring to the training material seen at an Australian military base, but he declined to elaborate.

It was "highly likely" cooperation would resume once those issues were resolved, Wuryanto said. Concerns were raised by an Indonesian military officer late last year about some teaching materials and remarks at an army language training facility in Australia, said Payne. "As a result, some interaction between the two defense organizations has been postponed until the matter is resolved. Cooperation in other areas is continuing," she said. A spokesman for Indonesia's Foreign Ministry did not answer telephone calls or respond to a written request for comment.

'Founding principles insulted'

Indonesia last suspended military ties with Australia in 2013 over revelations that Australian spies had tapped the mobile telephone of then President Susilo

Bambang Yudhoyono. Australia stopped joint training exercises with Indonesia's Kopassus special forces after accusations of abuses by the unit in East Timor in 1999, as the territory prepared for independence three years later. Jakarta and Canberra resumed military ties, saying cooperation on counterterrorism became imperative after the 2002 bombing of two nightclubs on the resort island of Bali that killed 202 people, including 88 Australians. With ties gradually warming, the first joint training exercise on Australian soil since 1995 was staged in the northern city of Darwin in September last year.

But relations again became strained after an Indonesian special forces trainer saw training material that insulted the country's founding principles of "Pancasila," which include belief in god, the unity of Indonesia, social justice and democracy, Indonesian newspaper Kompas said. The suspension of cooperation took effect in a Dec 29 telegram sent by Indonesian military chief Gatot Nurmantyo, it added. Australian media said the offensive material was found at Campbell Barracks in Perth, but officials at the army base declined to answer questions when contacted. The offices of Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Foreign Minister Julie Bishop declined to comment. The suspension of military ties was met with skepticism by many analysts, who expect the relationship to be quickly mended.

A suspension could threaten Australia's controversial policy of turning back asylum seekers, said Greg Barton, a professor of global Islamic politics at Deakin University, but he doubted intelligence sharing would stop. "Everyone acknowledges that the threat of an attack is the highest it has ever been," he added. Visiting Jakarta in October, Bishop said it was "utterly essential" for Australia and Indonesia to share information and work closely to guard citizens against terrorism. Unrest in Jakarta forced Widodo to postpone a trip to Australia planned for November that had aimed to discuss defense ties, among other subjects. —Reuters

RUSSIA OFFERS PHILIPPINES ARMS AND CLOSE FRIENDSHIP

MANILA: Russia is ready to supply the Philippines with sophisticated weapons including aircraft and submarines and aims to become a close friend of the traditional US ally as it diversifies its foreign ties, Russia's ambassador said yesterday. Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has thrown the future of Philippine-US relations into question with angry outbursts against the former colonial power and some scaling back of military ties while taking steps to boost ties with China and Russia. Illustrating the transformation of Philippine foreign relations since Duterte took office in June, two Russian warships are on four-day visit to Manila this week, the first official navy-to-navy contact between the two countries.

Russian Ambassador Igor Anatolyevich Khovaev took the opportunity to hold a news conference on board the anti-submarine vessel Admiral Tributs. He said he understood that the Philippines was intent on diversifying its foreign partners. "It's not a choice between these partners and those ones. Diversification means preserving and keeping old traditional partners and getting new ones. So Russia is ready to become a new reliable partner and close friend of the Philippines," he said. "We don't interfere with your relations with your traditional partners and your traditional partners should respect the interest of the Philippines and Russia."

The Russian navy visit comes less than a

month after Duterte sent his foreign and defense ministers to Moscow to discuss arms deals after a US senator said he would block the sale of 26,000 assault rifles to the Philippines due to concern about a rising death toll in a war on drugs launched by Duterte. Khovaev said Russia had a range of weapons to offer. "We are ready to supply small arms and light weapons, some airplanes, helicopters, submarines and many, many other weapons. Sophisticated weapons. Not the second-hand ones," Khovaev said. "Russia has a lot to offer but everything will be done in full compliance with international law."

He said it was too early to talk about the scope of military cooperation but, in a clear reference to the United States, said old allies should not worry. "Your traditional partners should not be concerned about the military ties, if they are concerned, it means they need to get rid of clichés," he said. Rear Admiral Eduard Mikhailov, head of the Flotilla of the Russian Navy Pacific Fleet, said on Tuesday Russia wanted to hold maritime exercises with the Philippines to help combat terrorism and piracy. The United States and the Philippines have been holding naval exercises annually but Duterte has decided to reduce the number of exercises and to move naval drills away from the disputed South China Sea, to reassure China, which is suspicious of US military movements in the disputed waters. —Reuters



MANILA: Russian sailors stand guard at the bow of the Russian anti-submarine ship Admiral Tributs at South Pier in Manila yesterday. —AFP



A man walks with his dog on fresh snow in Moscow yesterday. Temperatures dropped to about -9 C. — AP

ISRAELI SOLDIER CONVICTED FOR KILLING...

Continued from Page 1

The shooting set off intense political debate, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu having earlier called Azaria's father to express his sympathy. Others on the right have called for him to be pardoned in an extraordinary public rift between politicians and the country's military. Before he became Israeli defense minister in May, Avigdor Lieberman was among those showing strong support for Azaria, including attending one of his court appearances.

He has since backed away from his earlier stance and, after yesterday's verdict, said he disagreed with the decision but that it must be respected. Others from what is seen as the most rightwing government in Israeli history maintained their hardline position. "He's our son, our child," Culture Minister Miri Regev told Israeli television. The case burst into public view when a video of the March 24 shooting in Hebron in the occupied West Bank emerged and spread widely online.

The video showed Abdul Fatah Al-Sharif, 21, lying on the ground, shot along with another man after allegedly stabbing and moderately wounding a soldier minutes earlier, according to the army.

Azaria then shoots him again in the head without any apparent provocation. His lawyers argued the soldier may have thought the Palestinian was wearing explosives, but others said he had already been checked for a suicide belt and no one in the video appears to be acting with caution toward him. The Palestinian's father told reporters in

Hebron after the verdict that Azaria should be sentenced to life. "For me, a just verdict will be one that is similar to the verdicts our sons (in Israeli prisons) get," Yusri Al-Sharif said. In a statement, the Palestinian Foreign Ministry said "the occupation's chain of command" must also be prosecuted, accusing it of inciting soldiers to kill. The video was filmed by a Palestinian volunteer for Israeli rights group B'Tselem, which accused the security forces of "routine whitewashing" in a statement after the verdict. "The fact that one soldier was convicted today does not exonerate the Israeli military law enforcement system from its routine whitewashing of cases in which security forces kill or injure Palestinians with no accountability," B'Tselem said.

Military chief of staff Gadi Eisenkot has spoken out against the politicization of the case, warning it could badly harm the army. He said rules on when to open fire must be followed. The case galvanized the Israeli public, and television and radio stations interrupted their broadcasts to carry live coverage of the verdict. It had been portrayed by some as a test of whether Israel's military could prosecute one of its own, though many Palestinians dismissed it, arguing Azaria was only taken to trial because of the video. The military has said it began investigating before the release of the video. The last time an Israeli soldier was convicted of manslaughter was in 2005, Israeli media reported. Israeli security forces have been accused of excessive force in certain other cases as well, though authorities say officers act appropriately to protect themselves and civilians. — Agencies

103 HURT AS NY TRAIN DERAILS

Continued from Page 1

"There were people crying," said Aaron Neufeld, a 26-year-old paralegal who commutes on the rail line daily. "I saw some bloody faces." Neufeld, who was riding in the second car, said the train appeared to be approaching normally until it crashed, knocking passengers on top of one another and shattering glass windows. "Bags went flying," he said. "People were thrown to the ground."

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo explained that the train was supposed to stop at a bumper but failed to do so, moving a few feet past it. He said the most serious injury was a possible broken leg. "First concern is (for) the people on the train. There were a number of minor injuries," he told reporters. "What happened with the operator, we don't know. And obviously there will be an investigation to find out exactly what happened, why the operator didn't stop the train before it hit the bumper block."

Explaining why it was difficult to pinpoint exactly how

many people were injured, Cuomo added: "They were standing and they were getting ready to get off the train. The train has a sudden stop, they're not prepared for the sudden stop. They get knocked around, banged around, they hurt an arm, they hurt a leg."

The engineer was probably responsible for failing to stop the train before it hit the bumper, said Tom Prendergast, chairman of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the agency that runs the railroad. "At that speed, it's pretty much the locomotive engineer's responsibility to stop the train," Prendergast said as he stood beside Cuomo at the briefing.

New York's emergency notification system warned of traffic and transit delays and road closures in the area. In September, a train derailed during rush hour as it entered the station in Hoboken, New Jersey. One person died and 114 were injured. An investigation into that incident, in which the train entered the station at an unusually high speed, is ongoing. — Agencies

HEALTH CHARGES FOR EXPATS SET...

Continued from Page 1

Sources said the committee studying the increase in fees had completed its work and submitted its report to former health minister Dr Ali Al-Obaidi, but it was deferred.

Sources said the new health service fees will be imposed in the very near future because it is difficult to

keep government health service fees as they are, as they are not compatible with the true cost of the services provided, and especially since the current fees being collected from expats are far lower than those in the private sector. Sources said some treatment will be for free, including emergency and accident cases. Nuclear medicine will be 50 percent cheaper because it is not available in the private sector.

LAWMAKERS ASK GOVT TO SCRAP POWER...

Continued from Page 1

80 percent and applied the decision in September, triggering a standoff with the previous Assembly that eventually led to the Assembly's dissolution and holding fresh polls in November. Opposition lawmakers made a strong showing in the election, winning nearly half of the 50 Assembly seats after making abolishing the price increases the top issue in their election campaigns.

Although Kuwaiti citizens were spared from the huge increase in power and water prices, MPs argue that any increase in electricity and petrol prices will reflect negatively on the cost of living and inflation rates in the country, thus affecting citizens. Mutair said the proposed bill also amends a 1995 law that bans the government from raising charges on public services without the prior approval of the Assembly, in order to add petrol and other fuels to the law. The lawmaker said that any increase in

power prices will deal a heavy blow to small enterprises run by young Kuwaitis, charging there are influential people who do not want to see Kuwaiti youth succeed.

Another opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani is moving in the same direction with a number of other MPs, and will submit a draft law calling for fixing the price of petrol at the levels before the September increase. The bill also calls for adding petrol to the 1995 law that bans the government from raising the prices of services and products mentioned without the prior approval of the Assembly.

The two similar bills are expected to be passed with a huge majority by lawmakers since the issue has massive popular backing. The issue will likely be debated on Jan 10, when the Assembly is scheduled to hold a special discussion on government-sponsored economic reforms. According to the electricity hike law, the increase on expatriates' homes will come into effect late August. The increase will be huge, especially in the summer months.

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Focus

DRONES HELP MAP
FLOOD RISK IN SLUMS

The sight of a drone hovering above the streets of Tandale to map the crowded flood-prone neighborhood in the north of Dar es Salaam spread excitement among inhabitants tired of dealing with regular inundations. "I am happy to see something is being done to prevent flooding," said 35-year-old resident Happy Malimbo. With the help of drones, city authorities are drawing up plans to protect and assist suburbs at risk of flooding like Tandale, offering a glimmer of hope to those who live there.

Since 2013, Dar es Salaam City Council has worked with the World Bank and other partners, including the Red Cross and the Open Geospatial Consortium, to plot roads, streams and flood plains using drones. Dubbed Ramani Huria (Swahili for "Open Mapping"), the project aims to help communities in slums create accurate maps of their localities, which can be used to reduce flood risks and improve response to disasters, officials said.

Floods come every year to Tandale, one of Dar es Salaam's largest slums, but inadequate planning means the naturally occurring hazard often turns into a man-made disaster. Local people say they have repeatedly suffered losses due to flooding, which has also left hundreds without shelter. "I lost most of my belongings as the flood water stormed into the house in April this year," said Malimbo, who has three children.

With almost 70 percent of its inhabitants living in informal settlements, Dar es Salaam is highly vulnerable to flooding, especially in densely populated slum areas like Tandale. Heavy rains fall twice a year, often resulting in severe floods that force thousands of people from their homes and cause millions of dollars' worth of damage.

Community Collaboration

Juliana Letara, head of urban planning at Kinondoni Municipal Council, said the Ramani Huria initiative had trained university students and community members to identify and map areas mostly likely to be hit by floods, enabling local authorities to take action in real time. Several wards in Tandale, in Kinondoni municipality, have been mapped to create flood risk models, and a community resilience plan has established evacuation routes. "If you can trace where it floods, you can either install or upgrade infrastructure to improve the situation for the people," Letara told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The production of detailed datasets and collaboration with a separate Red Cross project to tackle flooding have led to the creation of local teams and plans for disaster preparedness and response in 10 of Dar es Salaam's most flood-prone communities. "Ramani Huria maps are user-friendly - they can be used by people with any level of education," said Letara. "The community feels a sense of ownership over them because they were a part of the whole process."

"Now we have a map - and a map is something important to start with," said Tandale Ward Officer Osiligi Lössai. "We can identify different areas to restructure and improve. It is a roadmap for us to set up new plans (and) to organise ourselves while involving the community." Officials in Tandale are also using the maps to work out where flooding could trigger disease outbreaks. "With these maps, it is easy to identify houses with known cholera patients and allow an efficient response," said Lössai.

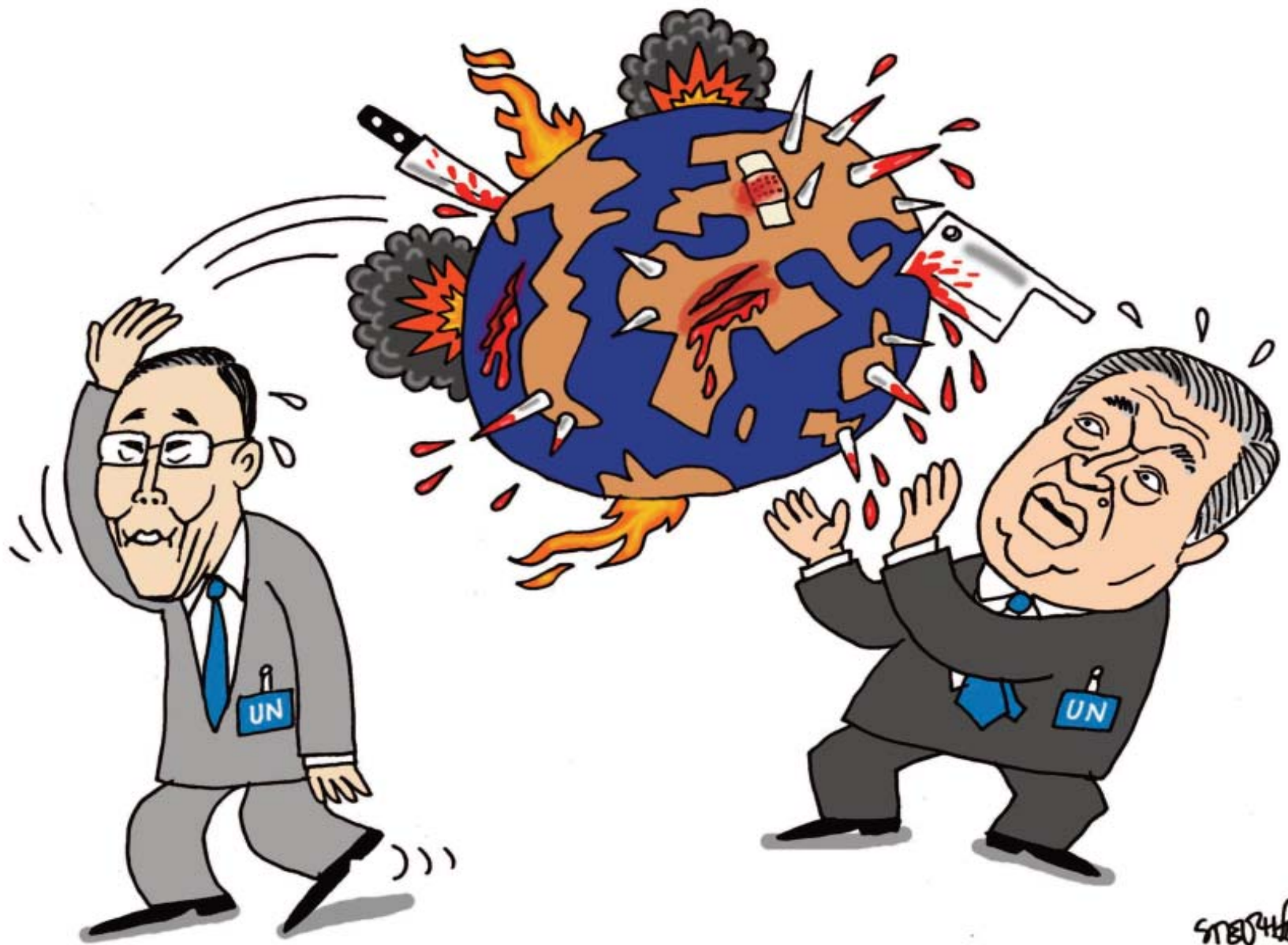
Cheap Technology

Drones provide high-resolution, real-time imagery which is needed to develop exposure maps and model flood risk. Frederick Mbuya, a World Bank consultant working with Tanzania's Commission for Science and Technology, said drones are now a proven technology to conduct aerial surveys for land mapping. "The use of drones is much cheaper than many other traditional methods," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Kinondoni official Letara noted that drones can also help map areas that cannot be reached on foot due to flooding, highlighting the critical need for such a tool.

According to World Bank information officer Loy Nabeta, the data captured so far in the most flood-prone areas of Dar es Salaam, covering 1.3 million people, has been fed into publicly accessible online tools such as OpenStreetMap and InaSAFE, which can be used by communities. Experts say most people who settle in flood-prone areas have little choice because they are poor, even if they know their lives and property are at risk.

As the rainy season does not last long, slum residents are willing to live with the threat of floods, soon forgetting the misery they cause, said Tandale resident Salum Kiponda. But the Ramani Huria project could change the view that flooding is just something to be endured. "We often don't know when the floods will come, and what to do, but this (new) information helps us know how to protect ourselves," said Malimbo. —Reuters

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BEHIND FENCE, JUAREZ WARY OF TRUMP'S WALL

Mexicans overwhelmingly say they oppose the wall US President-elect Donald Trump has promised to build along their northern border. But in Mexico's Ciudad Juarez, where extensive fencing was erected by the United States to secure the border between 2007 and 2010, residents have a more nuanced view of what a wall can mean. They say the Juarez fence has both caused and relieved problems in the city and nearby areas.

Some say the barrier has made life in Juarez better, diverting drug and human traffickers to more remote spots where crossing the border is easier. Others say the high fence bred a new kind of crime in the city, encouraging drug dealers who find it harder to get wares across the border to divert some of their product to expanding and serving a local market. Juarez's newly elected mayor, Armando Cabada, sees both sides. He says the fencing, cameras, sensors and stricter controls on border bridges have stopped flagrant crossings of undocumented Mexican migrants into downtown El Paso, Texas, which sits just across the fortified border, in sight of his wood-paneled office.

On balance, however, the negatives have outweighed the positives, he says. He notes that shortly after the wall was built, Juarez was plunged into a hellish war between cartels that made it the murder capital of the world, while El Paso remained the safest US city of its size. After the border got tighter, Cabada said, "the narco

traffickers had to battle much harder to cross their drugs into the United States, and a lot ended up staying here". The increased local supply of drugs changed social dynamics in the city and addiction and petty crime soared, he said.

It is hard to isolate causes of the chaos that engulfed Juarez in 2008 when the Sinaloa and Juarez cartels fought over trafficking routes, but the belief that tighter controls contributed to the city's deadly, downward spiral is widespread among business leaders, security officials and politicians consulted by Reuters. The city of 1.4 million saw murders rise from 336 in 2007 when work on the fence began, to 3,057 in 2010 when the work was mostly concluded. Only two people were murdered in El Paso in 2010, down from eight in 2006.

Last year murders were back below 2007 levels and normal life has begun to return, but strong demand for methamphetamines in Juarez has triggered a local turf battle and a new spike in violence, Cabada and city security officials said. Drug use in Juarez is among the highest in Mexico, government health surveys show.

'Less Chaos'

A poll conducted in May by Baselite & Associates Inc for Cronkite News and other media groups spoke to 1,500 people in 14 border cities in Mexico and the United States. It found that 72 percent of respondents on the US

side and 86 percent on the Mexican side said they were opposed to building a wall. Esteban Sabedra, a factory worker living in working class Anapra, on the western fringe of Juarez, is among the minority of Mexicans who would like to see more secure fencing.

Sabedra's home is a city block away from a rusting, low wire fence in place since the 1980s separating Juarez and El Paso, that the US Customs and Border Protection is now replacing with 2.0 km of 15-foot-high steel bollard barricade. He welcomes the new structure, saying he hopes it will deter human and drug traffickers who currently ply the neighborhood and intimidate residents. "This new fence is not a problem for us, on the contrary, it's better, less people will move through here," said Sabedra, who earns 150 pesos (\$7.28) per day making brake pads for the US market at a Juarez assembly plant. "There will be less chaos."

Indeed, experts say fencing around El Paso is one of the factors behind a sharp drop in US border guard apprehensions in the sector, to 14,495 last year from 122,256 in 2006, a drop partially attributed to illegal migrants shifting routes to less protected stretches of border. Migrant flows are a fraction of what they were in the sector largely because of the greatly increased security presence including the fencing and a near doubling of border agents, the Washington Office on Latin America rights group said in an October report.

Derelict Homes, Spas

Ciudad Juarez's public prosecutor, Jorge Arnaldo Nava Lopez, blames the El Paso fencing for contributing to a sharp uptick in crime along a fertile strip through the desert known as Valle de Juarez. The crime spike has been particularly acute where the barrier ends near Guadalupe municipality. "It has fostered a displacement towards the villages on the outskirts of Ciudad Juarez," Nava said. Valle de Juarez used to be a popular weekend escape for the city's middle class. Now, brutalized by violence and abandoned by outgunned municipal police, many of its spas, holiday homes and cotton farms lie derelict.

Officials and migrants say Mexicans and Central Americans pay gang members hundreds of dollars to wade across a sluggish stretch of the river and try their luck dodging border guards to reach the towns of Tornillo and Fabens on the other side. Fortification of the border could push the chaos elsewhere. But Nava, who previously headed Chihuahua state's anti-kidnapping agency, fears it could also spark blowback in the form of increased extortion and kidnapping if local gangs now dedicated to drug trafficking are frustrated by a new wall. "We are not exempt from the possibility that this kind of crime flares up, and that (more) drugs intended for the United States begin to stay here in Ciudad Juarez," said Nava. —Reuters

SCRATCHING A LIVING IN 'LAND OF RUBIES'

Every week Aye Min Htun prays he will find the ruby that changes his life, one of thousands of people scratching a living in Myanmar's mines set to gain little from the end of US sanctions on the military-dominated industry. For centuries emperors, kings and warlords have vied for control over the valley of Mogok, north of Mandalay, once known as the "land of rubies" for its extraordinary treasure trove of jewels. Its unique "pigeon-blood" stones are the most expensive colored gems in the world - last year the so-called Sunrise Ruby sold for a record \$30.3 million, over \$1 million a carat.

Myanmar produces more than 80 percent of the world's rubies, yet decades of isolation under the former military junta means the industry remains cloaked in mystery. But the focus on it is sharpening. In October, the US lifted sanctions barring imports of the rubies in recognition of the country's shift towards democracy under the new government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Experts fear any boom will end up lining the pockets of military men and their friends who control much of the gem trade.

Aye Min Htun earns less than \$200 a month working in a small, open-cast mine on the valley floor, but if he found a valuable ruby his commission could set him up for life. "My dream is to set up a business if I am successful in mining," the 19-year-old told AFP on a rare recent visit by journalists to Mogok's mines. "I believe in spirits... I pray they will give me a big, good-quality stone." Behind him a dozen men use high-pressure hoses to dislodge earth from the side of the crater, which is then sorted on wooden tables by barefoot workers. It is dangerous work - landslides are a frequent hazard. "I'm always reminding the mine workers to be careful... They are just kids," said manager Pauksi, who goes by one name.

Military control

Every few minutes deep rumbles rise from the belly of the earth. They come from dynamite detonated in the next mine, blasting shafts hundreds of feet into the hillside. Production in Mogok has surged since the mid-90s when the former junta first allowed in private companies, bringing with them heavy machinery and more intensive mining methods. In 2003 the US imposed its first round of sanctions barring imports of gems from Myanmar in a bid to starve the military government of funds.

Today the Mogok valley is pockmarked with mines, but locals see little of the profits. The industry is overseen by the Myanmar Gems Enterprise (MGE), a state-owned enterprise run by former military men that was taken off the US sanctions list in May. MGE both holds investments in mines and regulates them, giving it a strong hand over a lucrative sector. But experts believe much of the real power lies with the Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC), a sprawling military holding company until recently also blacklisted by Washington.

A study by the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative reported the MEC has joint-ventures in almost 100 mines in Mogok and another ruby region in Shan state. Another resources watchdog, the NRI, says "military-affiliated companies such as MEC actually dominate the gems market" and are instrumental in allowing "access by private companies". MGE

did not reply to repeated requests for comment and the MEC could not be reached.

Many private companies in Mogok are also believed to be operated by Thais and Chinese, who use shell companies to bypass laws barring any foreigners from running Myanmar's mines. The highest-quality stones are smuggled across the country's porous eastern borders to Bangkok or Hong Kong, where they are polished and made into jewelry. "Red (rubies) and blue (sapphires) mostly went to the black market in Thailand," said Tun Hla Aung, from industry body the Myanmar Gems & Jewellery Entrepreneurs Association.

Stockpiling stones

In the tourist hub of Mandalay, dealers are hopeful the end of US sanctions will bring a surge in American visitors looking to buy their wares. "The (ruby) price will go up in the next three or six months," Khine Khine Oo speculated at her stall in the city's gems market, where customers sift through small piles of unpolished stones on trestle tables. "We estimate about a 50 percent increase... [or] at least a third," she said grinning, adding that dealers were stockpiling the best rubies.

For their part, US companies are already sniffing around.



This photo taken on Nov 24, 2016 shows miners working inside a ruby mine in Mogok, north of Mandalay. (Inset) Photo taken on Nov 25, 2016 shows a buyer checking a ruby in the gems market in Mogok. —AFP

GESTEDE SIGNS FOR MIDDLESBROUGH

LONDON: Benin international striker Rudy Gestede signed for Premier League strugglers Middlesbrough yesterday from Championship outfit Aston Villa for a reported fee of £6 million (7m euros, \$7.4m). The 28-year-old who began his spell in the English leagues with Cardiff in 2011 — signed a three-year contract with Middlesbrough and his arrival should presage the departure of fellow strikers Jordan Rhodes, a former Blackburn team-mate, and veteran David Nugent. Neither have been able to command a first team spot this season despite the team struggling for goals, scoring just 17 in 20 matches and hovering four points above the relegation zone. "Boro have completed the signing of Rudy Gestede from Aston Villa for an undisclosed fee," read a statement on the Middlesbrough website. The France-born striker failed to fire in his time at Villa, scoring just five times in 24 Premier League matches last term as they were relegated. This season the former France Under-19 international had found the net four times in 19 appearances, but fell out of favour when Steve Bruce replaced Roberto di Matteo at the helm. — AFP



BOUFAL LEADS MOROCCO CUP OF NATIONS BID

RABAT: Sofiane Boufal of English Premier League side Southampton will lead Morocco's Africa Cup of Nations bid after being included in the 23-man squad named by coach Herve Renard on Tuesday. Juventus defender Mehdi Benatia, Monaco's Nabil Dirar and Nordin Amrabat of Watford are some of the other key players for the Atlas Lions. However, Morocco are without the influential midfielder Younes Belhanda, who is on loan at French club Nice from Dynamo Kiev, after a fractured toe suffered just before Christmas ruled him out for up to six weeks. Morocco, whose only triumph in the Cup of Nations came in 1976, are in Group C for the tournament that begins in Gabon on January 14. They will open their campaign against DR Congo on January 16 in Oyem before also facing Togo and the Ivory Coast. Frenchman Renard was the Ivory Coast coach when they lifted the trophy two years ago in Equatorial Guinea. —AFP

ENGLAND'S TUILAGI OUT FOR SEASON

LONDON: Injury-prone England centre Manu Tuilagi will miss the rest of the season because of a knee ligament problem, his club Leicester Tigers announced yesterday. The 25-year-old who had already been on the sidelines for two months of this season with a groin injury suffered the latest blow in his side's 16-12 Premiership loss to champions Saracens on Sunday. He had been called up for a pre-Six Nations training camp with the Grand Slam holders due to take place next week but withdrew on Tuesday. "Unfortunately Manu sustained an ACL injury in the game on Sunday that's going to put him out for the rest of the season," said Leicester coach Aaron Mauger. "It's looking like a six-month recovery which is devastating for the bloke, he's worked so hard to get back to where he is. "He's absolutely gutted, but we've got a good support team around him, we'll put a good plan in place and we'll see him back on the field early next season." The Samoan-born back has been bedevilled by injury over the past few years and managed just one appearance as a replacement for England last year. —AFP



F1 CHAMPIONS MERCEDES TO 'UNVEIL THE BEAST'

LONDON: Mercedes, Formula One's dominant team who have yet to announce a replacement for retired world champion Nico Rosberg, will present their 2017 car at Silverstone on Feb. 23.

The Mercedes website (www.mercedesamgf1.com) said yesterday that the reigning champions would "unveil the beast to the world" at the British Grand Prix circuit down the road from their Brackley factory. Fans who register for a prize draw on Facebook will have the chance to win VIP access to witness the first laps of the W08 challenger. Mercedes won 19 of 21 races last season and started all but one from pole position.

They will start the season in Australia in March as favourites for a fourth successive title, with Britain's triple world champion Lewis Hamilton leading the campaign in the absence of former rival Rosberg.

The German driver stunned Formula One by announcing his retirement five days after winning a first title in Abu Dhabi in late November, saying he had reached the peak and achieved his ambition.

His decision left Mercedes in a difficult

position, with other leading drivers all under contract with rivals at such a late point in the year.

It was also an admission of just how tough a team mate Hamilton, who won 10 grands prix to Rosberg's nine, had been to beat over the course of a season. Rosberg's replacement is expected to be announced imminently, with testing starting at the end of February in Spain.

Finland's Valtteri Bottas is seen as a safe bet, as well as a safe pair of hands, to land the seat. The motorsport.com website has reported that the Williams driver visited the Mercedes factory over the Christmas break.

The 2017 season will see wider tyres, faster cars and revised aerodynamics with Mercedes likely to face a tougher test from rivals Red Bull—who have Australian Daniel Ricciardo and Dutch teenager Max Verstappen—and Ferrari.

"I hope we can be as successful as we've been in 2016. It was not always an easy ride and I don't expect it to be any easier in 2017 but certainly one thing, it's going to be good fun again," said team boss Toto Wolff in a New Year's message. —Reuters

WOODWARD SAYS DARTS SHOULD BE OLYMPIC SPORT

LONDON: Darts should be an Olympic sport and "ticks all the boxes" for inclusion in future Games, according to England's World Cup winning former rugby coach Clive Woodward.

The former British Olympic Association director of elite performance wrote in Wednesday's Daily Mail that darts was growing in popularity worldwide and it was time it "stepped up to the Olympic oche".

It could be a very long wait, however. There are currently 37 officially recognised Olympic sports and darts, a game that has long been played by drinkers in English pubs and bars, is not one of them. Tokyo, host of the 2020 Games, will have surfing, sport climbing and karate among six new sports included in its Olympics.

Muaythai, a martial art, and cheer-leading last month also received provisional recognition as Olympic sports. "Darts should be an Olympic sport. No, seriously. The world of sport is evolving, the Olympics is evolving and I want to see darts in the Games. Easier said than done, but it ticks all the boxes," Woodward said.

"Sport is about people striving to do their best, competing to win while also accepting loss. Darts has all that and much more." Woodward, who coached

the England rugby team from 1997 to 2004 and won the 2003 World Cup, said he had "lapped up" the world darts finals over the Christmas and New Year holiday period.

World number one Michael van Gerwen of the Netherlands won his second PDC World Darts Championship title with a 7-3 victory over Scottish holder Gary Anderson at the Alexandra Palace.

"Darts is a sport of and for the people and that is what the modern-day Olympics is striving very hard to reflect," said Woodward.

"If you made darts an Olympic sport tomorrow, almost overnight millions of men and women from the age of 15 to 65 would suddenly nurture private hopes and ambitions that they could be Olympic champions. It's that accessible."

The Briton said he also loved the sporting entertainment and human drama that darts delivered. "I've lost track of the number of people who say they first tuned in to darts on TV by mistake and were still there an hour later living every moment. It draws you in," he said.

"At least half the coverage involves close-ups of faces. You can see the mental process, the calculations, the sweat, the stress, the panic and the calming of the nerves." — Reuters



Jason Day

DAY: SHORTER SWING LEADS TO LONG SPELL OF SUCCESS

LOS ANGELES: Jason Day kicks off 2017 at the US PGA Tour tournament of champions today ranked number one in the world, and the Aussie is hoping his painstaking rehab of a back injury keeps him at the top.

Speaking to reporters on Tuesday at Kapalua, Hawaii, where the elite tournament tees off on Thursday, Day said he was "cautiously optimistic" he could avoid a repeat of his injury-plagued 2016.

"I'm just trying to get stuck back into the process, trying to get better," said Day, who said he spent the three months since back pain forced him out of the Tour Championship in September working to recover.

"I feel better about my body, feel better about my game, feel better about my swing," Day said. "I feel better mentally than I did the second half of last year, so I'm hoping for very good things this year."

Day said he has worked on shortening his backswing in a bid to alleviate pressure on his back. He hopes the new approach will see him end a seven-month title drought. "Seven months, it really is a long time," he said.

Health issues weren't the only thing that Day felt threw him off track last year, and he said that in 2017 he would stop worrying about being thought a slow player and return to the methodical ways that helped him put together a sparkling run of seven wins in 17 starts.

That included three USPGA titles last year but none after the Players Championship in May. Day admitted that he let concerns about his pace of play pull him out of his normal game plan.

"I wasn't as deliberate going into a golf shot. Gathering the information, I wasn't as deliberate," he said. "Obviously, everyone wants to speed up the game. Obviously, that's a big subject in golf, to speed up the game."

"You don't want to be classed as a slower guy, but thinking about it now, when I was playing and competing really well I forgot about that stuff," he said. "I just have to make sure I am deliberate but still respect other players."

While the USPGA Tour's 2016-17 season officially got under way in October, this week's event marks a return to action for many top golfers. Jordan Spieth was coming off a stellar 2015 that lifted him to number one in the world when he won the trophy last year. The 23-year-old Texan returns this year ranked fifth in the world.

World number three Dustin Johnson, who won the US Open on his way to USPGA Player of the Year honors, is a strong contender, having lifted the trophy at Kapalua in 2013.

And sixth-ranked Japanese Hideki Matsuyama arrives in Hawaii on a hot streak that includes four victories in late 2016, including the Japan Open and World Golf Championships HSBC Champions in

China in October, the Taiheiyo Masters in November and the Tiger Woods-hosted

Hero World Challenge in the first week of December. — AFP

LAUGHTER SLAMS GB DIVING OVER COACH DEFECTION

LONDON: Britain's Olympic gold medalist Jack Laugher described British Diving's failure to hire his coach Adrian Hinchliffe as a 'massive insult'.

Hinchliffe worked as a consultant for Team GB at the Rio Games which saw Laugher take a historic gold for Britain with partner Chris Mears but has now signed up to be head coach with Australia for the 2020 Games after he failed to land a full-time job with British Diving.

"He's achieved things as a coach that no-one in this country has ever done before and it's a massive insult to me and to Ady," Laugher told the BBC.

"British Diving and the national performance director (Alexei Evangulov) have really overlooked how much of a key part he is. "To have someone like Ady say 'sack this I'm leaving', well it should never have got to this point."

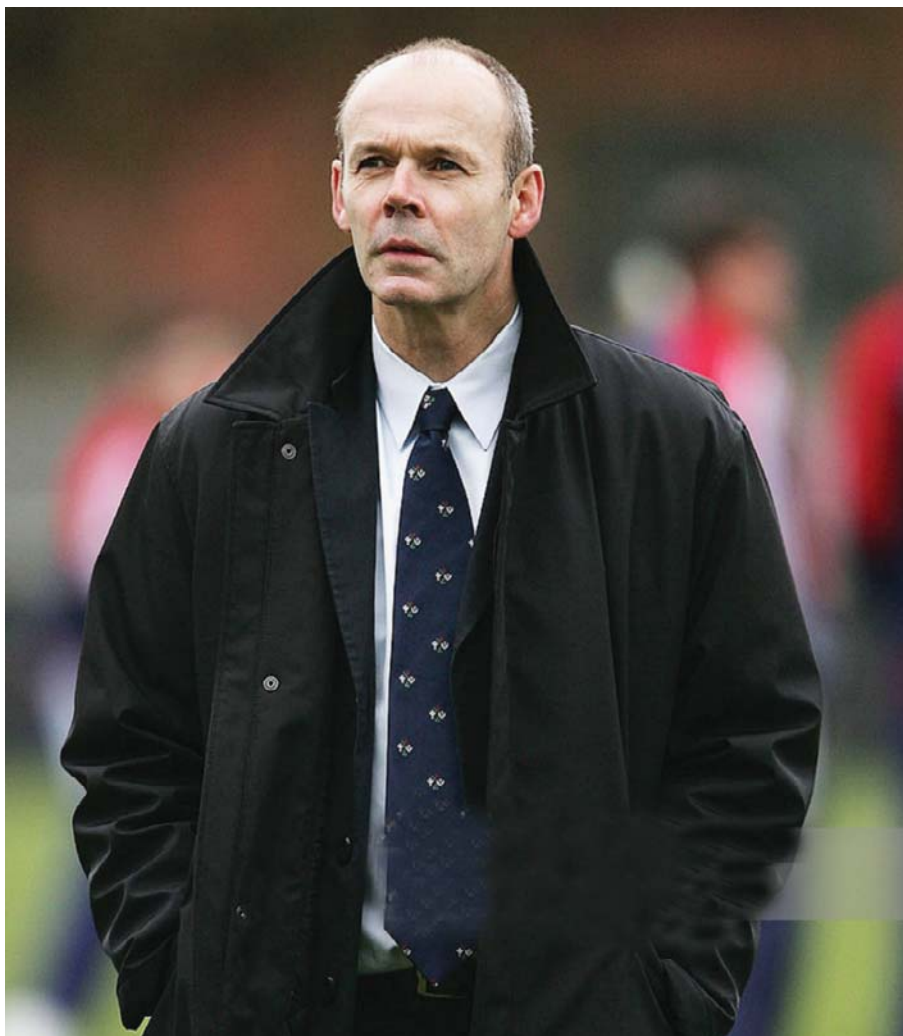
As a result of the surprise success at the Olympics last year-Hinchliffe was also responsible for Daniel Goodfellow who won bronze alongside Tom Daley in Rio-

British Diving received a boost to their funding, rising from £7.5million (\$9.2m, 8.8m euros) to £8m.

Mears expressed his disappointment that some of the extra money had not been used for coaches. "After the Games it's really tough for sports not knowing what they'll receive, but ours actually went up, but unfortunately we haven't seen that money travel to the coaching staff which is a real shame," Mears told the BBC.

Hinchliffe for his part said he felt his role in the Rio success had been under-valued or not taken into account.

"To really help those like Jack and Chris as well as the other superstars we had out in Rio keep improving, I needed to be in a full-time role," said Hinchliffe. "Coaches tend to be humble by their nature - it's the athletes who go up on the podium - but it's such an important role. "British sport is so successful at the moment and we need to examine all of the components behind that, but in my particular case I just don't think that's happened." —AFP



Clive Woodward



Jack Laugher

DHONI QUILTS AS INDIA LIMITED OVERS SKIPPER

NEW DELHI: Mahendra Singh Dhoni quit as India's limited overs captain yesterday after a decade-long spell as skipper in which he led his team to victory in the ODI and T20 World Cups. The Indian board said the inspirational wicketkeeping batsman would still be available for selection for the upcoming series against England but did not say who would replace him as captain.

"Mahendra Singh Dhoni has informed the BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) that he wishes to step down as the captain of the Indian Cricket Team from the One Day Internationals and the T20 Internationals formats of the game," said a statement.

"On behalf of every Indian cricket fan and the BCCI, I would like to thank MS Dhoni for his outstanding contribution as the captain of the Indian team across all formats," added board chief executive Rahul Johri. "Under his leadership, Indian team has touched new heights and his achievements will remain etched forever in the annals of Indian cricket." He is expected to be succeeded by Virat Kohli, who took over as Test skipper after Dhoni retired from five-day matches in December 2014. During his spell in charge of the limited overs side, Dhoni captained India to victory in the inaugural Twenty20 World Cup in South Africa. His finest hour came four years later when the team won the 50 overs World Cup against Sri Lanka on home turf.

However his position had come under scrutiny more recently after India were knocked out of last year's World T20 in the semi-final despite being favourites as tournament hosts. A former ticket inspector on India's railways, Dhoni made his international debut in December 2004 and soon established a reputation for his flamboyant stroke playing, in particular his trademark "helicopter" shot. In one of his first international appearances in April 2005, he smashed 148 off 123 balls against old foes Pakistan in Visakhapatnam.

He made his Test debut later that year in Chennai, the first of 90 Tests in which he scored 4,876 runs at an average of just over 38. His 27 victories in charge of the Test team is a record for an Indian captain. His swashbuckling style and leadership qualities soon earned him the captaincy of India's T20 team after senior players like Rahul Dravid and Sachin Tendulkar opted out of the first ever T20 World Cup in 2007. His success in South Africa landed him the job as captain of the ODI side and he built a reputation over the years for an ice-cold temperament. Despite his team's disappointing showing in last year's T20 World Cup, Dhoni voiced confidence he would still be fit enough to play in the next 50 over World Cup in England in 2019. He has so far played 283 ODIs, with a batting average of nearly 51 while he has also appeared in 73 T20 internationals. —AFP



Mahendra Singh Dhoni

PAKISTAN FIELDING MISHAPS FRUSTRATE MICKEY ARTHUR

SYDNEY: Pakistan's woes in the third Test against Australia have been many and varied but nothing has frustrated coach Mickey Arthur more than the fielding mishaps that have peppered the first two days. Arthur was pictured with his head in his hands after one of the many, sometimes almost farcical, slip-ups that studded Australia's first innings of 538-8 declared.

"It's very, very, very frustrating, we can't work any harder on our fielding," the South African told reporters yesterday. "We catch balls continuously, (fielding coach) Steve Rixon works the guys continuously hard. "We set ourselves hell of a high standards, I make no apologies for that, and we've fallen well short in the fielding department."

Pakistan's failure to create pressure for the batsmen and David Warner's explosive start to the test with a century inside the first session were other contributing factors to his team's parlous position in the match, Arthur said.

One glimmer of light was the batting of opener Azhar Ali, who backed up his double century in the second test in Melbourne with a 58 in an unbroken third wicket partnership with Younus Khan that got the tourists to Wednesday's close on

126-2. "The amount of time he has spent in the field is almost beyond belief," said Arthur. "For him to keep going and going and going shows a lot of resilience and shows a pretty tough mind."

"To see the resilience and character and intent that has been shown by Younus and Azhar has been a real example to the rest of the dressing room."

"Batting is all about intent... It gets you into right positions and allows you to score and these two guys have shown that. "We'll carry on with the same intent and see where that gets us tomorrow."

Another reason Pakistan need to keep batting for as long as possible is the state of the bowling unit with spinner Yasir Shah carrying an injury and seamer Mohammad Amir on his last legs.

"Yasir has a hamstring strain I think. I don't think it's too bad. I think he'll be able to bowl again at some stage in the game," Arthur said.

"Over the last six months (Amir's) played a massive amount of cricket and he just keeps going and keeps going. Even though he's showing a lot of niggles, he hasn't shirked his responsibility and he keeps running in for us." Australia are 2-0 up in the three-match series. —Reuters



BANGALORE: KSCA officials listen as the senior vice president, Kevin Crowe (R) explains the functioning of the newly installed subsurface aeration and vacuum-powered drainage system at the Chinnaswamy Cricket Stadium in Bangalore yesterday. The system automatically kicks into action the minute it starts raining and sucks water through vacuum pipes installed underneath the outfield at a rate of 10,000 litres per minute thus avoiding match delays or cancellations. — AFP



SYDNEY: Australia's fieldsman David Warner (L) drops a catch from Pakistan batsman Azhar Ali (C) as wicketkeeper Matthew Wade (R) looks on during the second day of the third cricket Test match at the SCG in Sydney yesterday. —AFP

AZHAR, YOUNUS STALL AUSTRALIA IN SYDNEY

SYDNEY: Pakistan's Azhar Ali and Younus Khan forged a 120-run partnership to stall a rampant Australia on day two of the third and final Test yesterday after a Peter Handscomb century had helped drive the hosts to 538-8 declared.

Opener Azhar, who hit a double century in the second test defeat in Melbourne that lost Pakistan the series, had contributed 58 to his side's 126 for two at close of play, while veteran Younus had forged ahead of his partner with 64 not out.

Handscomb had earlier completed the third century of Australia's innings, matching openers David Warner and Matt Renshaw, as Steve Smith's men poured on the runs before the declaration, which came seven overs before tea.

Paceman Josh Hazlewood drove home the advantage by removing Sharjeel Khan and Babar Azam cheaply inside five balls to leave the hapless tourists reeling at 16-2 at the second break.

Half centuries from Azhar and Younus may have raised Pakistan's flagging spirits but the Australians will still be confident of victory and a series sweep going into day three at the Sydney Cricket Ground with a lead of 412 runs.

Handscomb had resumed on 40 with Australia 365-3 and never looked like missing out on his second test hundred, becoming only the second Australian to score 50 or more in his

SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard at stumps on the second day in the third and final Test between Australia and Pakistan on Wednesday in Sydney, Australia.	
Australia 1st innings (Overnight: 365-3)	Bowling: M. Amir 24-2-83-0, I. Khan 27-4-111-2 (nb-2), W. Riaz 28-4-89-3 (nb-2 w-2), Y. Shah 40-2-167-1, Az. Ali 14-0-70-2, A. Shafiq 2-0-12-0.
M. Renshaw b I. Khan	184
D. Warner c S. Ahmed b Riaz	113
U. Khawaja c S. Ahmed b Riaz	13
S. Smith c S. Ahmed b Shah	24
P. Handscomb hit wkt b Riaz	110
H. Cartwright b I. Khan	37
M. Wade c B. Azam b Az. Ali	29
M. Starc c sub b Az. Ali	16
S. O'Keefe not out	0
Extras (b-5 lb-1 nb-4 w-2)	12
Total (for 8 wickets declared, 135 overs) 538	
Fall of wickets: 1-151 D. Warner, 2-203 U. Khawaja, 3-244 S. Smith, 4-386 M. Renshaw, 5-477 H. Cartwright, 6-516 P. Handscomb, 7-532 M. Wade, 8-538 M. Starc	
Did not bat: J. Hazlewood, N. Lyon	
Pakistan 1st innings	
Az. Ali not out	58
Sh. Khan c Renshaw b Hazlewood	4
B. Azam lbw b Hazlewood	0
Y. Khan not out	64
Extras	0
Total (for 2 wickets, 41 overs)	126
Fall of wickets: 1-6 Sh. Khan, 2-6 B. Azam	
To bat: Misbah-ul-Haq, A. Shafiq, S. Ahmed, M. Amir, W. Riaz, Y. Shah, I. Khan	
Bowling: M. Starc 10-2-34-0, J. Hazlewood 11-3-32-2, S. O'Keefe 7-1-11-0, N. Lyon 9-1-34-0, H. Cartwright 4-0-15-0.	

first two tests along the way.

Brought into the side with Renshaw in the wake of the Hobart humiliation at the hands of South Africa in November, the 25-year-old has proved a rock in what had become a fragile Australian middle order.

He brought up the milestone with a single off the 194th ball he faced and had nine fours on

the board when he was out, hit wicket off Wahab Riaz, for 110.

Renshaw had already fallen short of his double century, chopping on for 184 in the first hour of the day, and debutant Hilton Cartwright (37), Matt Wade (29) and Mitch Starc, who hit two huge sixes in his 16, also departed before the declaration. — Reuters

SOUTH AFRICA NEED SIX WICKETS FOR VICTORY

CAPE TOWN: South Africa need six more wickets with two days still to play to win the second test against Sri Lanka, who closed the third day at Newlands yesterday on 130 for four, still 377 runs behind the mammoth target set them.

Vernon Philander and Kagiso Rabada both took two wickets in the Sri Lankan second innings as the home team closed in on victory and an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series. South Africa have ample time to whittle away the rest of the Sri Lankan batting while the visitors, set 507 runs to win, must survive six more sessions if they are to force a most improbable outcome.

Angelo Mathews (29 not out) and Dinesh Chandimal (28 not out) will resume on Thursday, having shown some resistance to the close of play with an unbeaten 61-run partnership. Philander made an early inroad before tea when he clean bowled Dimuth Karunaratne for six and then added the wicket of Kusal Mendis after the break as he edged a ball on a tempting length to Dean Elgar for only four.

Kaushal Silva went for 29 runs when a rising Rabada delivery hit him on the glove and popped up for an easy catch for Stephen Cook.

Dhananjaya de Silva was then given out leg before wicket off a Rabada delivery that was heading down leg side but surprisingly did not ask for a review. Had he done so, De Silva would have been able to add to his 22 runs. Sri Lanka were put into bat midway through the second session after the South African lead went past 500 runs. They declared on 224 for seven, having resumed at 35-0 overnight. Seamer Suranga Lakmal took four wickets in a rare highlight for Sri Lanka while Elgar top scored for the home side with 55, to add to his first-innings century. Captain Faf du Plessis made 41 while Stephen Cook was out for 30. South Africa scored 392 in their first innings to which Sri Lanka replied with a paltry 110. The hosts, who won the first test in Port Elizabeth last week, did not enforce the follow-on. — Reuters



CAPE TOWN: Sri Lanka Kaushal Silva, left, congratulates team Dimuth Karunaratne after making a run during the second Test cricket match between South Africa and Sri Lanka, in Cape Town, South Africa, yesterday. — AP

SCOREBOARD	
Scoreboard at stumps on the third day in the second Test between South Africa and Sri Lanka on yesterday in Cape Town, South Africa.	
South Africa 1st innings 392 (D. Elgar 129, Q. de Kock 101; L. Kumara 6-122)	Bowling: S. Lakmal 19.5-2-69-4; N. Pradeep 11-0-46-0(nb-1); L. Kumara 12-0-62-1(w-1); D. de Silva 3-0-15-0; R. Herath 6-0-32-1.
Sri Lanka 1st innings 110 (V. Philander 4-27, K. Rabada 4-37)	
South Africa 2nd innings (Overnight: 35-0)	
S. Cook c Karunaratne b Lakmal	30
D. Elgar c Mathews b Herath	55
H. Amla c Chandimal b Lakmal	0
J. Duminy lbw b Lakmal	30
F. du Plessis c Chandimal b Lakmal	41
T. Bavuma run out (D. de Silva)	0
Q. de Kock c Chandimal b Kumara	29
K. Maharaj not out	20
V. Philander not out	15
Extras (nb-3 w-1)	4
Total (for 7 wickets declared, 51.5 overs)	224
Fall of wickets: 1-64 S. Cook, 2-64 H. Amla, 3-110 D. Elgar, 4-136 J. Duminy, 5-137 T. Bavuma, 6-170 F. du Plessis, 7-192 Q. de Kock.	
Did not bat: K. Abbott, K. Rabada	
Sri Lanka 2nd innings (Target: 507 runs)	
D. Karunaratne b Philander	6
K. Silva c Cook b Rabada	29
K. Mendis c Elgar b Philander	4
D. de Silva lbw b Rabada	22
A. Mathews not out	29
D. Chandimal not out	28
Extras (b-6 lb-5 nb-1)	12
Total (for 4 wickets, 40 overs)	130
Fall of wickets: 1-11 D. Karunaratne, 2-25 K. Mendis, 3-66 K. Silva, 4-69 D. de Silva.	
To bat: U. Tharanga, R. Herath, S. Lakmal, N. Pradeep, L. Kumara	
Bowling: K. Abbott 10-3-23-0; V. Philander 10-1-34-2(nb-1); K. Rabada 10-3-22-2; K. Maharaj 10-2-40-0.	

NISHIKORI HOLDS OFF DONALDSON, REACHES QFS IN BRISBANE

BRISBANE: Kei Nishikori is putting his preparation for the Australian Open above everything else at the start of the season, including his birthday celebrations. Despite spending his 27th birthday on Dec. 29 in transit in order to get in good preparation for the Brisbane International, Nishikori was still a little rusty in his season-opening match against Jared Donaldson before holding off the American qualifier 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 on Wednesday to reach the quarterfinals.

The third-seeded Nishikori, a three-time semifinalist in Brisbane, had a first-round bye and started the second round confidently by racing to a 4-0 lead. But Donaldson responded and

won the next six games to take the opening set in less than an hour, breaking Nishikori three times. After jumping to a 3-0 lead in the second, Nishikori dropped another service game but this time was able to limit the damage and used his experience in pressure situations to calmly hold on and win the second and third sets. He will next play either eighth-seeded David Ferrer or Jordan Thompson.

Nishikori went almost immediately back out to join Dominic Thiem in a doubles quarterfinal match against Gilles Muller and Sam Querrey.

Sixth-seeded Lucas Pouille was trailing Kyle Edmund 6-3, 3-1 when he

retired from their second-round match. Pouille had treatment for blisters on his feet after winning the first game of the second set, then lost three games before signaling to the umpire that he could not go on.

A day after becoming the first player born in the 2000s to win a main draw match at an elite WTA event, Destanee Aiava lost to two-time Grand Slam winner Svetlana Kuznetsova in the women's second round.

Fifth-seeded Kuznetsova beat the 16-year-old Australian high school student 6-4, 6-3, starting with a service break in the opening game. Aiava will return to her hometown Melbourne, where she

will play an exhibition tournament next week to continue preparations for her first Grand Slam event. She has a wildcard entry for the Australian Open, where she is set to be the first player born this millennium to play a Grand Slam main draw match.

Aiava said it was a little daunting taking on a two-time major winner. "It's pretty scary," she said. "I learned a lot out of that match." Aiava advanced through qualifying, and then beat 31-year-old Bethanie Mattek-Sands in three sets in a first-round match that spanned two rain-interrupted days to set her WTA milestone. The experience has been valuable, she said, giving her

"Some confidence, maybe, in my game and myself, knowing that I do belong here."

Kuznetsova will play French Open champion and fourth-seeded Garbine Muguruza in the quarterfinals.

Second-seeded Dominika Cibulkova came from a set and a break down to beat Zhang Shuai 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 in her first competitive match since beating No. 1 Angelique Kerber to clinch the season-ending WTA Finals title. No. 8-seeded Roberta Vinci beat Misaki Doi 6-4, 6-2 in another second-round match.

Kerber will open her 2017 later against Australian wildcard entry Ash Barty in a night match. —AP

SERENA FOLLOWS SISTER VENUS TO AUCKLAND EXIT

AUCKLAND: Serena Williams suffered a shock second-round defeat at the Auckland Classic yesterday following her sister Venus's earlier withdrawal with an arm injury. Top seeded Serena blamed the wind for a string of unforced errors in her first event after a four-month layoff as she was sent packing 6-4, 6-7 (7/3), 6-4 in a two-hour, 14-minute arm wrestle with world number 72 Madison Brengle.

"I'm trying to think of a word that's not obscene but that's pretty much how I played," Serena told reporters. "I just couldn't get used to the wind. My opponent played in the exact same conditions so obviously she was used to it and her game was more suited to it but it was just really annoying me for whatever reason."

Second-seed Venus decided to quit after suffering a sore right arm during her struggle to a 7-6 (7/2), 6-2 first-round victory over 18-year-old New Zealander Jade Lewis playing in her first WTA tournament.

Serena, playing in her first tournament since losing in the semi-finals of the US Open in September, was looking for a bold showing in Auckland, both to prepare for the Australian Open and to celebrate her New Year engagement to Reddit co-founder Alexis Ohanian.

After blaming rust for her sluggish first-round win over Pauline Parmentier on Tuesday, she succumbed in abject fashion a day later with a double fault on match point at 4-5 in the third set in the blustery conditions.

"I didn't hit any returns in the vicinity of the court," lamented Serena. "I've never returned like that in my life—a little frustrating especially since I worked so hard in the

offseason. "I can take solace from the fact conditions won't be like this in Melbourne."

BLOWN AWAY

Brengle dropped her second service game but at 4-1 down reeled off five consecutive games to take the first set.

In the second set she saved five set points before losing the tie break to Williams and in the final set she held her nerve as games went with serve until Williams double faulted on match point.

"Probably my least favourite conditions I've ever played in," said Serena. "I really abhorred the conditions. It was way too much for me. This is almost not a great opportunity to assess your game."

"At this rate at least I can get out of these conditions and get to somewhere better, some warm weather."

Brengle goes through to meet seventh seed Jelena Ostapenko in the quarter-finals while Venus's withdrawal gifted Japanese teenager Naomi Osaka a berth in the final eight where she will play eighth-seed Croatian Ana Konjuh.

In the other two quarter-finals, third-seed Caroline Wozniacki, now the top-ranked player remaining, will meet Germany's Julia Goerges, and Barbara Strycova of Croatia, the fourth seed, plays American Lauren Davis.

The 36-year-old Venus Williams had complained of "feeling old" after dropping her serve four times and serving eight double faults against Lewis who was half her age. "The first match of the year is never perfect," she said after the match but before deciding to pull out. "I'm just feeling old." —AFP



PERTH: Roger Federer of Switzerland stumbles against Alexander Zverev of Germany during their eighth session men's singles match on day four of the Hopman Cup tennis tournament in Perth yesterday. — AFP

FEDERER LOSES TO TEENAGER ZVEREV

PERTH: Roger Federer's comeback from injury struck its first hurdle yesterday when he was beaten by teenager Alexander Zverev at the mixed teams Hopman Cup in Perth, but the Swiss champion remained upbeat.

In one of the highest quality singles matches ever seen in the 29-year history of the event, Federer showed plenty of the class which has won him a record 17 Grand Slams, but couldn't quite hold off the bold 19-year-old German.

Despite the result, Switzerland kept their hopes of reaching Saturday's final alive with a 2-1 win over Germany-Belinda Bencic beating Andrea Petkovic in the women's singles and then teaming with Federer to win the deciding mixed doubles.

The men's singles was a classic battle between the old and the new, with Federer left to rue his failure to serve out the first set when leading 5-3. In the end, two booming first serves from Zverev, the first teenager to make the top 20 since Novak Djokovic in 2006, closed out the match in front of a record Perth tennis crowd of 13,785. He took the match ultimately decided by three tie-breakers, 7-6 (7/1), 6-7 (4/7), 7-6 (7/4) in two hours and 30 minutes. It was Zverev's second straight win over the Swiss champ, having beaten him in Germany last June, and the result also mirrored that of an unofficial match on the prac-

tice court on New Year's Eve. Federer was upbeat despite his defeat to a player he believes will be a star for the next decade. "Who really cares ... it was good to play for two and a half hours," he said. "Sasha (Zverev) can serve big and showed what he can do, but I was happy how I hung around and I had some really good moments. "As long as I am injury free and feeling good."

It was only the 35-year-old's second match since a six-month layoff due to knee and back injuries following his win over England's Dan Evans on Monday. But Federer—who is out of the top 10 for the first time since late 2002 said he was on the right track for the upcoming Australian Open. "I am very happy, I have played five good sets so far," he said. "I am very pleased, practice has gone great, the matches have been a lot of fun and I am playing good tennis." Federer lamented his inability to serve out the first set and a subsequent poor tie-breaker.

The veteran made a shaky start to the tie-breaker with uncharacteristic successive double faults, and the teenager pounced on the opportunity to claim the first set.

The second set saw both players holding serve easily, with Federer barely challenged on serve until Zverev threatened in the 12th game, when leading 6-5. At 30-all, Zverev lobbed over Federer at the net and had the ball dropped in

instead of just floating long it would have been match point. The pair went to another tie-breaker and this time it was Federer that took the honours to level the match and set up a thrilling final set.

SWELTERING CONDITIONS

Bencic then beat Petkovic 6-3, 6-4 to level the tie, before the Swiss won the Fast Four mixed doubles, 4-1, 4-2, to stay unbeaten after two ties.

Federer and Bencic will face the French pairing of Richard Gasquet and Kristina Mladenovic on Friday, with the winner advancing to the final.

Earlier in the day, Gasquet and Mladenovic overcame extreme heat to sweep Great Britain 3-0 to also notch their second win for the week.

In sweltering conditions with the temperature passing 40 degrees Celsius, the duo were too good for Britain's Evans and Heather Watson, winning both singles matches and the mixed doubles. Mladenovic bounced back from a disappointing loss to Petkovic in France's first tie to grind down Watson 6-4, 5-7, 6-3 in the women's singles match. World number 18 Gasquet was also too good for Evans, cruising through their encounter 6-4, 6-2. Mladenovic and Gasquet then completed the rout with a 4-3 (5/4), 4-3 (5/2) win in the Fast Four mixed doubles rubber. —AFP



DOHA: Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns the ball to Argentina's Horacio Zeballos during the second round of the ATP Qatar Open tennis competition in Doha yesterday. — AFP

SELFIE SURPRISE FOR DJOKOVIC AFTER WIN

DOHA: Novak Djokovic eased through to the quarter-finals of the Qatar Open yesterday and was then shocked by opponent Horacio Zeballos who took a selfie of the pair on court.

The world number two won his second round match 6-3, 6-4 in just 72 minutes in Doha, thanks to a break of the Argentinian's serve in each set. But after the pair shook hands, Djokovic was taken by surprise.

"Making a selfie, that's the first time I have had this experience in my career," said

the Serb. "Horacio—well done, very original." Djokovic is the defending champion in Doha and this year's number two seed.

Rival, and number one seed Andy Murray, is due on court later. If the tournament goes to form, the pair will meet in their first clash of the season on January 7.

Earlier yesterday, Belgian fourth seed David Goffin, who beat Murray in an exhibition match in Abu Dhabi last week, lost 6-1, 7-6 (8/6) to Spain's Fernando Verdasco. —AFP

FRANCE MOVES TO 2-0 AT HOPMAN CUP

PERTH: France's Kristina Mladenovic and Richard Gasquet won their singles matches yesterday to give France victory over Britain at the Hopman Cup mixed teams tournament. Mladenovic beat Heather Watson 6-4, 5-7, 6-3 before Gasquet defeated Dan Evans 6-4, 6-2 to give France its second win after beating Germany on Monday. Gasquet and Mladenovic later defeated Evans and Watson 4-3, 4-3 in mixed doubles, played in the Fast4 format, to make the final score 3-0 for France.

Temperatures during the opening match rose to as high as 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit), forcing both players to conserve their energy. "It was definitely difficult," said Mladenovic, who estimated she drank seven bottles of fluid during the match. "Sometimes you would like to try to

put more intensity, but you have to be smart sometimes and maybe not run down every single ball."

In another Group A match later, Roger Federer — playing his second match for Switzerland after a six-month left knee injury layoff — and Belinda Bencic were scheduled to play Alexander Zverev and Andrea Petkovic of Germany.

Switzerland won its opening match against Britain and a victory over Germany would leave France and Switzerland playing for a spot in Saturday's final when they conclude round-robin play on Friday.

The United States, represented by Coco Vandeweghe and Jack Sock, have already qualified for the final from Group B after beating defending champions Australia and Spain in its opening matches. — AP



BRISBANE: Angelique Kerber of Germany celebrates her victory over Ashleigh Barty of Australia in the women's second round of the Brisbane International tennis tournament in Brisbane yesterday. — AFP

KERBER AND CIBULKOVA SURVIVE BRISBANE SCARES

BRISBANE: World number one Angelique Kerber survived a big scare from Australian wildcard Ashleigh Barty to progress to the quarter-finals of the Brisbane International yesterday. The reigning Australian and US Open champion held on to beat the impressive Barty in three sets 6-3, 2-6, 6-3.

Barty, the 2011 junior Wimbledon champion, walked away from the sport at the end of 2014 and only returned for four tournaments in 2016. However, the 20-year-old from Brisbane is now back on the tour full-time and she showed local fans what they have been missing with a brave fight against Kerber.

Showing no nerves, Barty opened an early lead, only for Kerber to claw her way back and claim the opening set. Barty again skipped away to an early lead in the second set but this time an error-prone Kerber was unable to recover.

However, the German cut out the mistakes to break Barty early in the final set and held on to win in one hour, 44 minutes and set up a quarter-final against Ukraine's Elina Svitolina.

"It's always tough to play a match after such a long break, and Ashleigh was playing very well from the first point," Kerber said. "It's always different starting the year, and the first matches are always tough."

"You have to get again into the rhythm and play a lot of matches to feel your game." Second seeded Slovakian Dominika Cibulkova was also forced to dig deep

before beating China's Zhang Shuai 2-6, 6-4, 6-4. After losing the first set Cibulkova seemed in control when she took the second and went 4-0 up in the third.

But Zhang fought back to 4-4 before the Slovakian claimed the last two games to move into the quarter-finals. "I knew it was not going to be easy. I didn't expect to play my best tennis today, but, you know, I'm happy I managed to come back into the match," Cibulkova said.

"She was playing really well, but then I started to use my weapons much more. I started to be much more aggressive on the return with my forehands, and I didn't let her in the game."

Cibulkova enjoyed a breakthrough 2016, winning the WTA Finals in October when she beat Kerber in the decider.

She started the year at a career high five in the world and said it was difficult adjusting to the expectations that were now on her. "You can feel the expectation and the pressure—this is what I'm trying to deal with," she said.

She now plays Frenchwoman Alize Cornet in the quarter-finals, a player she lost to in their last two meetings. Two-time Grand Slam singles winner Svetlana Kuznetsova ended 16-year-old

Australian qualifier Destanee Aiava's run with a comfortable 6-4, 6-3 win, while Italian eighth seed Roberta Vinci looked equally at ease as she downed Japan's Misaki Doi 6-4, 6-2. — AFP

FEWER GAMES? GAMES ON CAMPUS? BOWLS COULD GET A MAKEOVER

NEW YORK: Meaningless bowls. Too many bowls. Made-for-TV bowls. Shrinking bowl attendance.

There have never been more bowl games, and three years into the College Football Playoff era there are more questions than ever about why these games are being played at all. Especially when high-profile players such as Christian McCaffrey and Leonard Fournette choose to skip the postseason to protect their bodies for the NFL draft.

There is currently an NCAA-imposed freeze on the creation of new bowls that caps the field at 40 through 2019. Over the next few years the people invested in the bowls - commissioners, athletic directors and bowl executives - will consider ways to improve the bowl system and answer the question: What should bowls be? Chances are there will be fewer bowls, data-driven limitations on how many bowls a conference can lock in and maybe even postseason games played on campus. But for those who long for the days when there were a dozen or so bowls that rewarded only the very best teams in college football, well, you might as well wish for the return of leather helmets. Neither is coming back.

Everyone seems to agree that while the bowl system is not perfect, it does

not need to be razed. Andy Bagnato is a former sports writer who also worked for four years as a public relations executive for the Fiesta Bowl. He now runs Bagnato Pflipsen Communications, a consulting firm that helped Phoenix land the this year's Final Four and last year's College Football Playoff championship game.

"The question for people in college football is: What's the utility of the bowl?" Bagnato said. "Is it a great trip for your alumni? For your student-athletes? Is it television exposure for four hours for your program? Is it a branding exercise for the school and for a conference? For the communities I think the questions become: Are they tourism magnets? Is the utility of a bowl game the fact that it attracts tourists? All those are factors."

"I don't know there is one reason to have a bowl game."

EXTRA BOWL PRACTICES

The main reason is the same as it ever was. "The first thing we want them to be is a reward for the players," said Big 12 Commissioner Bob Bowlsby, who also leads the NCAA's football oversight committee. The problem is that bowls also reward competence, not excellence. Once the minimum for postseason eligibility was drawn at 6-6 when the regular

season expanded to 12 games, pressure built on conference officials to place each eligible team in a bowl.

Coaches want the extra bowl practices to develop players and the ability to sell a bowl game to recruits. "Mr. Commissioner, if my 6-6 team stays home I'm going to be your worst enemy," Football Bowl Association Executive Director Wright Waters recalled hearing from one university president back when he was commissioner Sun Belt Conference. The bowl lineup grew to 40 games as Power Five conferences locked up spots in most existing games and other conferences such as the American Athletic Conference, Sun Belt and Mountain West worked to create new games - often with the help of ESPN.

The result is that during the last two years 5-7 teams played in bowl games. "Beginning in 2020 I seriously doubt there will be 40 bowl games," Sun Belt Commissioner Karl Benson, who has previously been the commissioner of the Western Athletic Conference and the Mid-American Conference.

But no conference is about voluntarily shut down one of its bowls. That's where the oversight committee will come in. Bowlsby said the group has been analyzing data to determine how

many bowl slots each conference can typically fill. When bowl lineups are reset for 2020 and beyond, conferences will likely be limited to a number that matches a five-year average of the eligible teams they have produced.

TOO MANY TEAMS

Benson said when Texas State went 6-6 in 2013 but was shut out of the postseason, the conference broached the idea having the Bobcats play a 13th game on campus.

"It could be a way to navigate when we have too many teams for the number of bowls," Benson said. Maybe it would help attendance, which dropped 4.94 percent this season from last, according to data compiled by the Football Bowl Association. Average attendance went from 43,018 in 2015-16 to 40,893 this season. "I think the industry is healthy," said Pete Derzis, senior vice president for ESPN Events, which owns and operates 13 bowls, mostly matching teams from outside Power Five conferences. All but four of the 40 FBS bowl games, plus the national championship game, are televised on an ESPN network.

Derzis called the TV ratings for this season's bowls respectable. Waters said those final numbers were still being

compiled. But ratings for one particular game provide part of the explanation why ESPN is so heavily invested in bowls.

The Las Vegas Bowl on Dec. 17, in which San Diego State beat Houston 34-10, drew 3.7 million TV viewers on ABC, ESPN's parent network. At the same time, Kentucky and North Carolina, two of college basketball's traditional powers, played a thrilling game won by the Wildcats 103-100. The game drew 3.6 million viewers on CBS.

The ratings for the Rose Bowl, a down-to-the-wire 52-49 victory by Southern California over Penn State, jumped percent 20 percent from last year, but at 9.4 they are still way behind the days when that game would consistently draw double-digit ratings. Now the playoff draws the most attention and everything else feels more like an exhibition. Even if the playoff ultimately expands, college football will never have a huge tournament with dozens of participants. Reaching and winning a good bowl game is still a major goal for most programs. "But I don't think there's anything wrong with ending your season with a victory," Clemson coach Dabo Swinney said. "And if we just go to a total playoff, then there's only one team happy." — AP

CHAPECOENSE WILL SIGN UP TO 20 NEW PLAYERS

CHAPECO: Chapecoense, the Brazilian football club devastated by an airline crash, will sign up to 20 players for the new season and are reserving shirt numbers for two of the survivors in the hope they can play again, their director of football said on Tuesday.

Almost all the team's senior players were killed when their plane crashed in Colombia on Nov. 28. The small club from southern Brazil were heading to Medellin to play Atletico Nacional in the final of the Copa Sudamericana when their plane crashed into a mountain, killing 71 people.

Centre back Neto and fullback Alan Ruschel survived, as did reserve goalkeeper Jackson Follmann, who had part of his leg amputated. Director of football Rui Costa said all three still had a role to play at the club. "No player this season will use the shirts that were worn by Jackson Follmann, Neto or Alan Ruschel," Costa told reporters.

"More than a tribute, we expect Alan and Neto to come back and wear them. Follmann sadly won't be able to but he will certainly be back here with us in some capacity. The only ones that can wear those jerseys are them."

Costa said the club would sign between 18 and 20 new players before they start their season on Jan. 26 with a home game against Joinville.

Chapecoense's rivals rallied to their aid after the crash, promising to loan them players in order to help them retain their top-tier status. "We are resorting to a lot of loans," Costa said. "That is a tool for bringing together quality, speed and budget. Many clubs are being partners in this."

The squad will begin pre-season training on Friday, with some junior players joining the new signings and the handful of players who did not travel on the fateful flight to Colombia.

"We looked at 90 players, we whittled that down to 50 and finally had a list of 38 players that got down to the number of players we have today," Costa said. "We have a group ready to start pre-season training. We'll probably have between 25 and 27 players." The club, who were awarded the Copa Sudamericana and a place in this year's Copa Libertadores, have rejected proposals that would give them immunity from relegation from Brazil's Serie A for three years. — Reuters



BOSTON: Boston Celtics center Kelly Olynyk (41) grabs a rebound against Utah Jazz center Rudy Gobert (27) during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game in Boston, Tuesday. — AP

FA TREATED BOBBY MOORE SHAMEFULLY

LONDON: England's 1966 World Cup-winning captain Bobby Moore was treated outrageously by the Football Association after he retired in 1978, claimed his former wife Tina.

Moore, who skippered England to the epic 4-2 World Cup final victory over the then West Germany at Wembley — the nation's only major trophy-only had three low profile managerial jobs after he hung up his boots.

Tina, whose marriage with Moore produced two children but ended in divorce in 1986, said the FA could have done more for the English football legend, who died in 1993 aged just 51.

"He was deeply depressed," she told weekly magazine The Radio Times. "He was very proud, and felt rejected, bewildered. It was outrageous how the FA treated him, a scandal. 'It's all very well

that there are statues to him now, but that should have happened during his lifetime. Back then, he started to withdraw into himself. 'He always hated confrontation and would internalise a lot of things. I found to my cost that he would cut off. He could put up a wall and freeze people out. It all contributed to our break-up.' The FA have accepted in the past that Moore, capped 108 times and captaining England on 90 occasions, was not treated with the respect he deserved."

"I am aware the Football Association has been criticised over its treatment of Bobby once he retired from football," then FA chairman David Bernstein said in 2013. "It saddens me that this is the case and while I am not privy to exactly what happened at the time, it is clear to me the organisation could have done more." — AFP

LEEDS OWNER CELLINO SELLS 50% STAKE TO FELLOW ITALIAN

LONDON: Controversial Leeds United owner Massimo Cellino yesterday sold 50 percent of his stake in the historic English club to a fellow Italian with strong business ties in China. The 60-year-old Cellino, who has fired a succession of managers during his turbulent time at Leeds, had been in talks with Andrea Radzizani since last summer over selling part of his shareholding.

Cellino, who is appealing a £250,000 fine (290,000 euros, \$305,000) and 18-month ban over the transfer of Ross McCormack to Fulham, became sole owner of the Championship side in September having bought 75 percent of the club in 2014 for a reported £30 million.

"Leeds United Football Club today confirms the completion of an investment by Aser Group Holding, through its acquisition vehicle Greenfield Investment Pte Ltd, in 50 percent of the club's share capital," said a club statement. "The agreement is between Massimo Cellino and Andrea Radzizani, who is founder and group chairman of Aser Group Holding, the successful co-founder of international sports media rights company MP & Silva and a leading figure in the sports media industry over the past two decades." MP & Silva holds the exclusive distribution rights for the Premier League in southeast Asia until 2019.

Radzizani, 42, moved to assure Leeds fans over the club's future. "I am fully aware of the great heritage and traditions of Leeds United and I will endeavour to be a fitting custodian on behalf of the many thousands of Leeds supporters, who are

the lifeblood of the club," he said. Radzizani saw his bank balance grow considerably last May when MP & Silva sold a 65 percent stake in the company to Chinese investment group Everbright Securities and Internet entertainment firm Baofeng. Radzizani was appointed president of Baofeng Sport International in June and was a key player in facilitating Chinese electronics company Suning buying Serie A giants Inter Milan.

The Italian said he had been very pleased with the manner in which the club's young manager Garry Monk had transformed Leeds into promotion candidates back to the Premier League for the first time in years.

They are fifth in the Championship, seven points off the automatic promotion places and in a rich vein of form having won four of their last five games. — AFP



Massimo Cellino

CELTICS STAR THOMAS DOES IT ALL IN WIN OVER JAZZ

BOSTON: Isaiah Thomas had 29 points and a career-high 15 assists, and the Boston Celtics made 17 3-pointers for the second straight game in beating the Utah Jazz 115-104 on Tuesday night. Al Horford and Jae Crowder added 21 points apiece and Avery Bradley scored 14 for the Celtics, who have won four of five and eight of 10. The Celtics ended Utah's four-game winning streak and beat the Jazz for the ninth straight time in Boston. Gordon Hayward led Utah with 23 points. Rudy Gobert pulled down 13 rebounds, extending his streak of 10 or more to 21 consecutive games. Thomas, coming off his career-high 52 points Friday against the Heat, has scored at least 20 in 19 straight games.

SPURS 110, RAPTORS 82

Kawhi Leonard had 25 points, LaMarcus Aldridge added 23 and San Antonio held Toronto to its lowest score of the season. San Antonio dominated a matchup of teams with the second-best record in each conference, leading by as many as 34 points. Leonard and Aldridge combined to shoot 19 for 28 from the field, but it was veteran point guard Tony Parker who set the tone for the Spurs with 15 points and eight assists in 23 minutes. DeMar DeRozan led the Raptors with 26 points, but backcourt mate Kyle Lowry had only six on 2-for-9 shooting.

PACERS 121, PISTONS 116

Paul George had 32 points and Indiana beat Detroit. Myles Turner and Jeff Teague each scored 17 for Indiana, which blew a 15-point first-half lead but pulled away in the fourth quarter to win its third straight game. The Pacers (18-18) are 2 1/2 games ahead of Detroit (16-21) in the Eastern Conference standings. Tobias Harris led the Pistons with 22 points. Andre Drummond and Reggie Jackson each had a double-double. Detroit lost for the eighth time in 10 games, with two of the defeats coming at home to Indiana.

76ERS 93, TIMBERWOLVES 91

Robert Covington made a fall-away shot off an inbounds pass with 0.2 seconds left to give Philadelphia a victory over Minnesota. The Sixers needed the late basket after they blew a 26-point lead and seemed headed to overtime. Ricky Rubio, just a 26 percent 3-point shooter, buried one with 1.6 seconds left that tied it at 91. Joel Embiid scored 25 points and Ersan Ilyasova had 19 for the

Sixers. Karl-Anthony Towns had 23 points and 15 rebounds for the Timberwolves, and Zach LaVine scored 28.

MAVERICKS 113, WIZARDS 105

Harrison Barnes scored 26 points and Deron Williams added 21 as Dallas rallied to beat Washington. Devin Harris had 17 points and Seth Curry 16 for the Mavericks. Williams, Harris and Curry each hit four 3-pointers as Dallas went 17 of 32 from long range. John Wall led Washington with 27 points and Bradley Beal added 25 for the Wizards, who fell to 1-6 on the second half of back-to-back games. They lost to Houston on Monday night. The Mavericks took control early in the fourth quarter, scoring the first eight points and building a 110-100 lead on Barnes' 3-pointer with 2:51 to play.

KINGS 120, NUGGETS 113

DeMarcus Cousins scored 31 points, and Darren Collison had 26 points and seven assists in Sacramento's victory over Denver. The Kings led most of the way to stop a two-game skid and win for the fifth time in seven games. Denver got within three in the fourth quarter and had chances to trim it to one or tie, but Sacramento kept extending the lead with Cousins on the bench. The lead was five when he returned, and he helped the Kings push it to 11 with 2:22 left with assists on a 3-pointer by Arron Afflalo and a layup by Garrett Temple.

Danilo Gallinari led the Nuggets with 24 points.

SUNS 99, HEAT 90

Devin Booker scored 27 points - 18 in the second half - and rookie Marquese Chriss added a career-best 18 as Phoenix handed short-handed Miami its sixth consecutive loss. The Suns snapped a 12-game losing streak against Miami. Phoenix hadn't beaten the Heat since Nov. 3, 2009. Goran Dragic scored 22 of his 24 points in the first half for the Heat, who had just eight available players in the opener of a six-game road trip. Willie Reed had 22 points and 18 rebounds for Miami, both career highs. Eric Bledsoe added 17 points for the Suns, who stretched a four-point halftime lead to 19 in the second half.

LAKERS 116, GRIZZLIES 102

Nick Young scored 20 points, D'Angelo Russell added 18 and they keyed an early barrage of 3-pointers that sent Los Angeles past Memphis. Julius Randle had a triple-double for Los Angeles with 19 points, 14 rebounds and 11 assists. The Lakers made a season-high 17 3-pointers, all but one coming in the first three quarters. They finished 17 of 33 from beyond the arc despite missing nine consecutive attempts in the final period. Young and Russell each connected on six 3s. Marc Gasol led the Grizzlies with 22 points, seven assists and six rebounds. Mike Conley had 21 points. — AP

NBA results/standings

LA Lakers 116, Memphis 102; Sacramento 120, Denver 113; Phoenix 99, Miami 90; Dallas 113, Washington 105; San Antonio 110, Toronto 82; Boston 115, Utah 104; Indiana 121, Detroit 116; Philadelphia 93, Minnesota 91.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB				
Toronto	23	11	.676	-	Utah	22	14	.611
Boston	21	14	.600	2.5	Oklahoma City	21	14	.600
NY Knicks	16	18	.471	7	Portland	15	21	.417
Philadelphia	9	24	.273	13.5	Denver	14	21	.400
Brooklyn	8	25	.242	14.5	Minnesota	11	24	.314
Central Division				Pacific Division				
Cleveland	26	7	.788	-	Golden State	30	5	.857
Milwaukee	17	16	.515	9	LA Clippers	23	14	.622
Indiana	18	18	.500	9.5	Sacramento	15	19	.441
Chicago	17	18	.486	10	LA Lakers	13	25	.342
Detroit	16	21	.432	12	Phoenix	11	25	.306
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
Charlotte	19	16	.543	-	San Antonio	28	7	.800
Atlanta	18	16	.529	0.5	Houston	27	9	.750
Washington	16	18	.471	2.5	Memphis	22	15	.595
Orlando	16	20	.444	3.5	New Orleans	14	22	.389
Miami	10	26	.278	9.5	Dallas	11	24	.314

SPEED OF CLEMENT'S SWANSEA SWITCH A SURPRISE: ANCELOTTI

DOHA: Bayern Munich coach Carlo Ancelotti said yesterday that the speed of former assistant Paul Clement's appointment as Swansea boss took the Bundesliga champions by surprise.

However Ancelotti, in his first public comments since Clement's departure, said the Englishman takes up the Premier League post with his blessing.

"It was a surprise because everything happened on the last day of the year," said Ancelotti during a press conference

in Doha, where the Germans are holding a winter training camp.

"He had an offer from Swansea, decided to come back to England and I wish him good luck because he was a really good assistant, he's a good friend, but we don't have a problem.

"I think he has a lot of motivation because he wanted to come back to England, to be a manager in the Premier League. "He has this opportunity, he started really well last night, winning

against Crystal Palace, and I hope he's going to do a great job at Swansea."

Clement, who worked with Ancelotti at Chelsea, Paris Saint Germain, Real Madrid and Bayern, was appointed Swansea coach on Tuesday and hours later saw the relegation-threatened Swans beat Crystal Palace away to move off the foot of the Premier League.

Clement, 44, was sacked as manager of Derby County last February despite the club being fifth in the

Championship, the second tier of English football. Former Bayern coach Hermann Gerland has reportedly taken over Clement's post at the German giants. With the winter transfer window now open Ancelotti said that he was willing to allow defender Holger Badstuber to go out on loan.

The 27-year-old has been linked with a move to Manchester City, managed by former Bayern coach Pep Guardiola.

"We are open," said Ancelotti. "If he

decides to stay we are happy that he stays here, if he decided to leave to play for six months in another club, we are also open about this."

But he was more forthright on rumours linking Arturo Vidal to Premier League leaders Chelsea. "Absolute rubbish," said the Italian.

Bayern will play Belgian side KAS Eupen in a friendly in Doha and return to Bundesliga action on January 20 against Freiburg. —AFP

STOKE END BARREN RUN TO ADD TO WATFORD WOES

 Stoke	2
 Watford	0

STOKE-ON-TRENT: Stoke got back on track with a 2-0 win over Watford on Tuesday that added to the pressure on Hornets manager Walter Mazzarri.

Ryan Shawcross scored his first goal for two years in first-half stoppage time before Peter Crouch netted his 98th Premier League goal shortly after the interval at the Britannia Stadium.

Stoke's first win in six matches lifted them up to 11th in the table, above injury-ravaged Watford, whose boss Mazzarri looks under increasing pressure following a sixth defeat in their last eight games.

Stoke boss Mark Hughes persisted with his three-man defence, having switched to it for November's win at Watford, and also had striker Marko Arnautovic back from suspension.

Arnaudovic was set free by Joe Allen's

through ball after a mistake by Sebastian Prodl and the Austrian cut the ball across the six-yard box for Jonathan Walters, who might have scored were it not for Miguel Britos's brilliant intervention.

A half between two sides who had conceded a combined eight goals at the weekend was heading for a scoreless conclusion before Shawcross struck in stoppage time.

The Stoke skipper met Charlie Adam's corner 12 yards out and his effort was only helped into the corner by Gomes, with no man on his near post to spare his stopper's blushes. Four minutes after the interval Stoke doubled their lead. The Hornets had nearly levelled when Abdoulaye Doucoure's fierce right-footed try was pushed out by Lee Grant before their defensive shortcomings once again reared their head. A semi-cleared corner found its way back out to Adam on the left and his weak low cross somehow managed to get past Prodl, with Crouch, standing behind him, knowing little about the finishing touch which saw the ball divert off his thigh and into the corner.

It was the first time since February 2015 that the 35-year-old had netted in back-to-back Premier League games. —AFP



BOURNEMOUTH: Arsenal goalkeeper Petr Cech makes a save as AFC Bournemouth's Callum Wilson makes an attempt on goal, during their English Premier League soccer match at the Vitality Stadium in Bournemouth, England, Tuesday. — AP

ATLETICO MADRID BEAT LAS PALMAS IN COPA DEL REY

LAS PALMAS: Jorge "Koke" Resurreccion and Antoine Griezmann scored a goal in each half as Atletico Madrid defeated Las Palmas 2-0 in a first-leg match in the Round of 16 of the Copa del Rey on Tuesday. Koke opened the scoring with a right-foot shot from inside the area in the 24th minute, and Griezmann secured the victory in the 51st with a close-range header after being set up by Kevin Gameiro.

The result ended Las Palmas' unbeaten run at home this season. It hadn't lost at Gran Canaria Stadium since a game against Real Madrid in March.

Atletico had edged Las Palmas 1-0 at the Vicente Calderon Stadium in the teams' last Spanish league match before the winter break, ending a four-game winless streak.

Atletico is already nine points behind league leader Real Madrid, and its most realistic chance of a domestic trophy this season is in the Copa.

Three other first-leg matches will be played on Wednesday, including Real Madrid against Sevilla at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium. Defending champion Barcelona plays at Athletic Bilbao today. The Copa del Rey is Spain's second-most important club competition behind the Spanish league, which

resumes after the winter break on Friday.

VALENCIA 1, CELTA VIGO 4

Valencia continued to struggle after the surprise resignation of former Italy coach Cesare Prandelli.

Goals by Iago Aspas in the third minute, Theo Bongonda in the 14th and Daniel Wass in 19th put Celta in control in front of a frustrated crowd at Mestalla Stadium.

Daniel Parejo scored for Valencia by converting a penalty kick early in the second half, but John Guidetti netted again for Celta to seal the victory and leave his club in good position to advance to the quarterfinals. Prandelli resigned last week, only three months after taking over the Spanish club. He won only three of 10 matches at the helm of Valencia, which is just outside the relegation zone in the Spanish league.

ELSEWHERE

Nano scored in the first half and Bebe and Adrian Gonzalez added a goal each in the second as Eibar easily defeated Osasuna, while Deportivo La Coruna scored in stoppage time to salvage a 2-2 draw against Alaves after trailing 2-0 at halftime. —AP

CLEMENT SEES SWANSEA CLIMB OFF BOTTOM OF EPL

 Crystal Palace	1
 Swansea	2

LONDON: New Swansea City manager Paul Clement saw his side score an 88th-minute winner as they triumphed 2-1 at Crystal Palace on Tuesday and climb off the foot of the Premier League.

Just hours after the Bayern Munich assistant became Swansea's third manager of a dismal season, Clement was in the stands at Selhurst Park but did not pick the team, leaving that to first-team coach Alan Curtis.

The 44-year-old Clement, whose only previous job as a manager was with second-tier Derby and where he was sacked, takes over a Swansea side that is now just a point from safety-and a point behind their hosts.

In contrast, Palace manager Sam Allardyce, taking charge for the first time at home, now knows that he faces a real fight to keep the London club in the top flight.

Swansea were the better side in the opening period, with Neil Taylor firing high over from distance.

Allardyce saw his side go close after a quarter of an hour, but Yohan Cabaye hit the side-netting after the visitors made an almighty hash clearing his free-kick. But Clement would have been buoyed by the way Swansea dominated

possession against a Palace team whose predicament at the wrong end of the Premier League table is now just as desperate.

Allardyce looked on in disgust as Palace toiled and Swansea squandered a big chance when defender Federico Fernandez headed over.

But Swansea showed just why they are facing the relegation trapdoor when a punt from Palace goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey was allowed to bounce in the heart of the Swans defence, sparking panic.

Palace striker Christian Benteke nipped in and toed it past goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski, before tumbling in the box under minimal contact, but the officials were unmoved.

Soon after, on 42 minutes, Swansea took a deserved lead when a Gylfi Sigurdsson free-kick was headed in by Alfie Mawson.

Loud boos rained down on the Palace players as they trudged in at the break and they improved in the second half, substitute Bakary Sako testing Fabianski, then Joe Ledley had a shot blocked.

Palace were appealing again when Swansea defender Angel Rangel appeared to handle in the box, but moments later the hosts were level when Wilfried Zaha met a Martin Kelly cross in midair with a superb scissor kick from 15 yards on 83 minutes.

But Clement, who had been in the dug-out since half-time, was celebrating five minutes later when Rangel smashed the winner. —AFP

GIROUD LATE SHOW SEALS STUNNING ARSENAL ESCAPE

 Bournemouth	3
 Arsenal	3

BOURNEMOUTH: Olivier Giroud scored a stoppage-time equaliser as Arsenal fought back from 3-0 down to snatch a dramatic 3-3 draw at Bournemouth on Tuesday.

First-half efforts from Charlie Daniels and Callum Wilson, followed by a third from Ryan Fraser just after the break, appeared to put Bournemouth on course for their first victory over Arsenal.

But Alexis Sanchez and Lucas Perez were both on target before Giroud headed home late on to complete a sensational blitz of three Arsenal goals in the final 20 minutes.

Despite the thrilling revival Arsenal ultimately lost ground in the title race and are now eight points behind leaders Chelsea, who play their game in hand at Tottenham on Wednesday.

Arsenal were again missing Mesut Ozil due to illness, with boss Arsene Wenger claiming the German had been in bed for the last week.

It was Bournemouth who created the early chances and Josh King's speculative effort went just wide before a powerful Junior Stanislas shot from distance was straight at Petr Cech. Bournemouth fans were upset when Wilson

went down in the area under a Cech challenge but television replays suggested the Arsenal goalkeeper had got a touch on it.

However, Eddie Howe's side were celebrating on 16 minutes as they took the lead thanks to Daniels, who struck home left footed after getting the better of Hector Bellerin following a Stanislas crossfield pass.

It was 2-0 five minutes later as Bournemouth exposed more poor play at the back from Arsenal. After a break from their own half, Granit Xhaka brought down Fraser as he was going away from goal and this time referee Michael Oliver awarded a penalty.

Wilson scored the spot-kick, his sixth of the season, despite appearing to stumble and fail to make the connection he wanted on the kick.

DOWN TO 10 MEN

Arsenal responded with a Sanchez curler that went just wide but things were not going Wenger's way with Francis Coquelin limping off injured. Arsenal went close to pulling one back with a deflected Aaron Ramsey effort on the turn going wide. The visitors had another chance late in the half as an Alex Iwobi scuffed effort did not find the target, while at the other end a Stanislas shot from the edge of the area went just wide of Cech's post.

Arsenal came out in the second half with a real purpose but Bournemouth weathered the initial storm.

They were frustrated as Harry Arter's powerful shot from range hit Wilson but was ruled out

for handball despite the Bournemouth striker appearing to try and get out of the way of the drive. But Bournemouth went on to take a 3-0 lead on 58 minutes as Bellerin was beaten by Fraser from Daniels' ball down the channel and the young Bournemouth winger cut in before slotting past Cech.

It could still have got worse for Arsenal with a Stanislas free-kick kept out by Cech.

However, Arsenal got back in the game on 70 minutes as Giroud headed on Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain's cross and Sanchez nodded home at the far post.

Wenger's side then set up an exciting finish as substitute Perez's volley from another Giroud flick beat Artur Boruc.

Bournemouth were left to hang on when skipper Simon Francis was sent off for a lunge on Ramsey. But they could not do that as Giroud headed home in the second minute of stoppage time from Xhaka's cross. —AFP

Live Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

SPAIN COPA DEL REY

Bilbao v Barcelona 23:15
beIN SPORTS 3 HD



SILIGURI: Indian women footballers celebrate their victory after defeating Bangladesh during the final of the South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) women's football championship at the Kanchanjungha Stadium in Siliguri yesterday. India beat Bangladesh 3-1. — AFP

Sports

Dhoni quits as India limited overs skipper

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FA treated Bobby Moore shamefully

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SERENA FOLLOWS SISTER VENUS TO AUCKLAND EXIT

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COLUMBUS: David Savard #58 of the Columbus Blue Jackets attempts to block a shot by Drake Caggjula #36 of the Edmonton Oilers as Sergei Bobrovsky #72 of the Columbus Blue Jackets prepare to make a save during the third period on Tuesday at Nationwide Arena in Columbus, Ohio. Columbus defeated Edmonton 3-1 to win their 16th consecutive game. — AFP

JACKETS EYE HISTORY WITH 16TH STRAIGHT WIN

COLUMBUS: Cam Atkinson and William Karlsson scored power-play goals and the Columbus Blue Jackets beat the Edmonton Oilers 3-1 on Tuesday night to extend their winning streak to 16 games - one away from the longest ever in the NHL. Nick Foligno also scored for the Blue Jackets, who can tie the 1992-93 Pittsburgh Penguins with a victory Thursday night at Washington. The near-sellout crowd chanted "We want 16!" as the clock ticked down. Sergei Bobrovsky stopped 21 shots for Columbus, which started the new year on the right note after winning all 14 games in December. The Blue Jackets haven't lost since Nov. 26 thanks in part to the league's best power-play unit. Oscar Klefbom scored for Edmonton, which was limited throughout by Columbus' hard-pressing defense. Cam Talbot had 32 saves for the Oilers.

the fans' choice as Central Division captain for the NHL All-Star Game.

CAPITALS 6, MAPLE LEAFS 5, OT
Alex Ovechkin scored 22 seconds into overtime and Washington rallied to end Toronto's winning streak at five. Ovechkin's 18th goal of the season came after the Capitals erased multiple deficits to win their third in a row. The Russian superstar moved to within five points of 1,000 for his career. Justin Williams had a goal and two assists, and T.J. Oshie, Evgeny Kuznetsov, Dmitry Orlov and John Carlson also scored for Washington. Philipp Grubauer made 15 saves in relief of Braden Holtby, who was pulled after allowing three goals on eight shots. Nazem Kadri, Connor Brown, Frederik Gauthier, Leo Komarov and Mitch Marner scored for the Maple Leafs. Frederik Andersen made 23 saves.

KINGS 2, SHARKS 1, OT
Tanner Pearson scored 58 seconds into overtime to help Los Angeles rally for a victory over San Jose and a sweep of the home-and-home series. Jeff Carter tied it early in the third with his 21st goal and then set up the winner after San Jose lost possession in the offensive zone. Carter came in on a 2-on-1 and passed to Pearson for the one-timer that gave the Kings their league-leading seventh overtime win of the season. Peter Budaj made 26 saves and Los Angeles followed up a 3-2 win at home over first-place San Jose on Saturday night with another on the road to even the season series at two games apiece. Logan Couture scored the lone goal for the

Sharks, who lost for just the second time all season when leading after two periods. Martin Jones made 33 saves.

SABRES 4, RANGERS 1
Evander Kane and Justin Bailey scored 1:42 apart around the first intermission, leading Buffalo over New York. Zemgus Girgensons and Jack Eichel also scored, and Anders Nilsson stopped 24 shots to help the Sabres win for just the second time in eight games (2-4-3). Sam Reinhart had two assists, extending his career-best points streak to seven games and giving him two goals and seven assists in that stretch. Buffalo has beaten the Rangers in three straight meetings - including twice this season - after losing the previous nine. Nick Holden scored and Henrik Lundqvist made 15 saves for the Rangers, who were trying for their first four-game winning streak since a five-game run Oct. 30 to Nov. 6. The Rangers have had four three-game winning streaks since.

DEVILS 3, HURRICANES 1
Adam Henrique, Michael Cammalleri and Kyle Palmieri each had a goal and an assist, leading New Jersey over Carolina. Carolina ended an 11-game home points streak (10-0-1), and the Devils clinched the four-game season series. New Jersey has defeated the Hurricanes twice in regulation and once in overtime in three meetings. Sebastian Aho scored for Carolina. Devils goalie Cory Schneider made 29 saves a night after shutting out the visiting Boston Bruins. Hurricanes goalie Cam Ward stopped 15 of 17 shots on goal.

HEARTS AND MINDS
Despite being very much the president's man, Zidane hasn't been bowed by Perez's often perceived desire for the starting line-up to be determined by the number of shirts sold by his "Galactico" signings. Zidane's own personal playing style was defined by his grace on the ball, but he has prioritised hard work.
More unheralded names such as Brazilian defensive midfielder Casemiro and Spanish winger Lucas Vazquez have earned their places in the side ahead of crowd favourites and media

NHL results/standings

Los Angeles 2 San Jose 1 (OT); Montreal 2 Nashville 1 (OT); Winnipeg 6 Tampa Bay 4; Buffalo 4 NY Rangers 1; Washington 6 Toronto 5 (OT); New Jersey 3 Carolina 1; Columbus 3 Edmonton 1.

Western Conference					Eastern Conference								
Central Division					Atlantic Division								
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Chicago	23	12	5	109	98	51	Montreal	23	9	6	115	87	52
Minnesota	23	9	4	113	76	50	Ottawa	20	13	4	94	98	44
St. Louis	20	13	5	108	111	45	Boston	20	16	4	95	97	44
Nashville	16	14	7	103	102	39	Toronto	17	12	8	113	109	42
Dallas	16	15	7	97	113	39	Tampa Bay	19	16	4	113	111	42
Winnipeg	18	19	3	109	121	39	Florida	16	14	8	92	104	40
Colorado	12	24	1	76	125	25	Detroit	16	16	5	93	107	37
Pacific Division					Metropolitan Division								
San Jose	23	13	2	95	82	48	Columbus	27	5	4	126	74	58
Anaheim	19	12	8	107	109	46	Pittsburgh	25	8	5	133	107	55
Edmonton	19	13	7	111	104	45	NY Rangers	26	13	1	136	101	53
Los Angeles	19	15	4	94	92	42	Washington	23	9	5	105	83	51
Calgary	20	17	2	105	111	42	Philadelphia	20	14	5	116	120	45
Vancouver	18	18	3	97	116	39	Carolina	16	14	7	95	101	39
Arizona	11	21	5	82	121	27	New Jersey	16	16	7	92	115	39
							NY Islanders	15	15	6	104	113	36

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

The Devils had a season-low 18 shots, including Palmieri's empty-netter.

JETS 6, LIGHTNING 4
Nikolaj Ehlers had two goals, including a penalty shot during Winnipeg's three-goal second period. The Jets, coming of a pair of losses

where they were outscored 11-5, also got goals from Mark Scheifele, Jacob Trouba, Dustin Byfuglien and Patrik Laine. Connor Hellebuyck made 32 saves Matthew Peca got his first NHL goal for the Lightning. Nikita Kucherov had two goals, Ondrej Palat also scored and Andrei Vasilevskiy stopped 28 shots. — AP



MADRID: Real Madrid's French coach Zinedine Zidane smiles during a press conference at Valdebebas Sport City in Madrid Tuesday. — AFP

ZIDANE CELEBRATES FLAWLESS YEAR AT REAL

MADRID: The relentless demands for success at Real Madrid have cost many high-profile and heavily experienced coaches their jobs, but Zinedine Zidane has made the move into senior management look serene as he celebrates a year in charge as a European and world champion.
Madrid was a club with a very different feel 12 months ago when Zidane was promoted from his post as coach of Real's youth team Castilla in a salvage operation from club president Florentino Perez to rescue a hitherto disastrous campaign as Rafael Benitez lasted just seven months in the Santiago Bernabeu hot seat.
Zidane won everything from the Champions League to the World Cup as one of the greatest players of his generation. Yet, even by those standards, his rapid rise as a coach has been breathtaking. The Frenchman has won more trophies (three) than he has suffered defeats (two) in his first 53 games in charge.

After adding the Club World Cup to the Champions League and European Super Cup to end 2016, Zidane celebrates his first anniversary in charge at home to Sevilla on Wednesday (2015GMT) in the Copa del Rey last 16 on a club record 37-game unbeaten run. "Zidane last year changed our lives," Perez told AFP in a recent interview.

Despite being very much the president's man, Zidane hasn't been bowed by Perez's often perceived desire for the starting line-up to be determined by the number of shirts sold by his "Galactico" signings. Zidane's own personal playing style was defined by his grace on the ball, but he has prioritised hard work.
More unheralded names such as Brazilian defensive midfielder Casemiro and Spanish winger Lucas Vazquez have earned their places in the side ahead of crowd favourites and media

darlings like James Rodriguez and Isco.
Zidane's status as a former world great, and ability to still pull off a spectacular touch in training, means he has also won the hearts and minds of Real's ego-driven dressing room which many of his predecessors, particularly Benitez failed to cope with.

NEW YEAR, NEW CHALLENGES
Yet, such are the demands at the Bernabeu, no coach is ever handed a long grace period should results turn and Real face an even tougher test to maintain their success in 2017.
Madrid's embarrassment at being thrown out of the Cup for fielding an ineligible player last season had the silver lining of allowing Zidane the luxury of just one game a week during his first month in charge to become acquainted with the job. Instead, should Real reach the Copa del Rey semi-finals, they face 21 games in the next

11 weeks. The target is for Zidane to deliver Real's most successful ever season by becoming the first side to retain the Champions League in 27 years and knock Barcelona off their perch as La Liga's dominant side in the past decade.
Real enjoy a comfortable three-point lead and a game in hand over Barcelona in the title race and are heavy favourites to see off Napoli in the last 16 of the Champions League.
However, Zidane's managerial mettle will be fully tested in trying to fend off a post Club World Cup slump caused by fatigue that Real and Barca have suffered in the past two seasons.
Injuries are already beginning to mount with Gareth Bale out until April, whilst Cristiano Ronaldo will be rested for Sevilla's visit. Zidane has passed every test he has faced with flying colours in his first 12 months in charge. 2017 will determine whether there is more to his magic touch than beginner's luck. — AFP

Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary BUSINESS

THURSDAY, JANUARY 5, 2017

MENA Markets end 2016 on positive note: Markaz

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GCC witnesses muted IPO activity in 2016

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British retailer Next cuts 2016/17 profit guidance

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HONOR 6X IS LAUNCHING IN MIDEAST

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ESSEN: Visitors looking at cars on the stand of German manufacturer "BMW" during the 'Motorshow' fair in the western German city of Essen. — AFP (See Page 23)

AUTOMAKERS IN HEADLIGHTS AS TRUMP SET TO TAKE OVER TOUGH RHETORIC TOWARDS CHINA COULD TRIGGER A FULL-SCALE TRADE WAR

NEW YORK: US automakers found themselves in the political hot seat Tuesday, with President-elect Donald Trump lambasting GM for importing Mexican-made cars into the United States and Ford scrapping plans for a new plant south of the border. Trump, who won the presidency in part with tough talk on trade, has shown his willingness to single out individual companies by name if they displease him, and Ford seems to be the latest to fall in line.

Also on Tuesday, Trump nominated Reagan-era protectionist lawyer Robert Lighthizer to serve as US trade representative, signaling he intends to make good on pledges to renegotiate trade deals he blames for killing millions of American jobs. The moves likely will loom large over next week's Detroit auto show, when the US industry's top executives gather to show off their new models. The president-elect, who has previously taken to Twitter to slam Boeing and Lockheed Martin, made GM his latest target in a breakfast-hour tweet threatening to impose a tariff on imports of a small number of Mexican-made Chevy Cruze models into the US.

About-face at Ford

A couple of hours later, Ford announced it was scuttling plans for a new \$1.6 billion factory in San Luis Potosi, and instead invest \$700 million over the next four years to expand

its Flat Rock Assembly Plant in Michigan to build electric and self-driving vehicles. The Ford decision was an about-face after the second-biggest US automaker repeatedly rebuffed Trump's criticism over its plans for the Mexico plant during and after the presidential campaign.

Ford chief executive Mark Fields said the decision reflected the hope that Trump's policies will boost the US manufacturing environment. "It's literally a vote of confidence around some of the pro-growth policies that he has been outlining and that's why we're making this decision to invest here in the US and our plant here in Michigan," Fields told CNN.

He said company chairman Bill Ford spoke Tuesday morning to Trump, and that he himself had spoken to Vice-President-elect Pence about the move, which Ford said would result in 700 new US jobs over four years.

The new plant, announced in April, was expected to employ 2,800 by 2020. Mexico's government said it "regrets" Ford's decision, and that the company gave assurances it would repay "any expenditures made by the state government to facilitate this investment."

Another win for Trump?

Trump took to Twitter again to brag about the Ford reversal: "Instead of driving jobs and wealth away, AMERICA

will become the world's great magnet for INNOVATION & JOB CREATION."

Ford's decision creates a "political headline win for Trump, Ford and the UAW," yet the diminished demand for small cars also makes it a positive decision in terms of business rationale, investment bank RBC Capital Markets said in a note. Meanwhile, GM responded to Trump's Twitter attack with a statement emphasizing that the vast majority of its Cruze cars sold in the US are made in Ohio, with just a small percentage imported from a plant across the southern border.

"All Chevrolet Cruze sedans sold in the US are built in GM's assembly plant in Lordstown, Ohio," the auto giant said. Of 190,000 Cruze cars sold in the US, only 4,500 were hatchbacks made in Mexico, said a GM spokesman.

Trade war coming?

Tough talk on trade helped Trump win election, and on the campaign trail he threatened to impose a 35 percent import duty on cars produced in Mexico. He has also pledged to tear up the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico, blaming NAFTA and other trade agreements for the loss of millions of American manufacturing jobs.

The appointment of Lighthizer as his top trade negotiator suggests Trump plans to follow through on that

rhetoric. Lighthizer served as deputy US trade representative in the Ronald Reagan administration in the 1980s, when the focus was on attacking Japan for its huge exports into the US market.

But leading business lobbies such as the Business Roundtable have cautioned that US trading partners could retaliate against any new tariffs, threatening key US markets.

"Any significant tariff increase within the North American region would impact the auto industry greatly and that just really makes the industry... much less competitive," said Christopher Wilson, deputy director of Mexico Institute at the Wilson Center, a Washington think tank. Automakers are also worried that Trump's tough rhetoric towards China could trigger a full-scale trade war if the Republican makes good on threats to impose punitive tariffs on Beijing.

Demand may be slowing, but US consumers still bought a whole lot of cars and trucks in 2016. US sales of new vehicles could hit a new high in 2016. Consulting firm LMC Automotive and car-buying site Edmunds.com both predict sales will squeak past the record set last year and reach 17.5 million in 2016.

General Motors Co said its full-year sales were down 1.3 percent to just over 3 million cars and trucks. That was partly because the company cut back on low-profit sales to rental-car firms. — Agencies

EGYPT HITS RECORD HIGH, DUBAI AND QATAR CLIMB

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Stock markets in the Middle East where foreign funds are most active outperformed for a second straight day yesterday, with Egypt's index hitting a record high while Saudi Arabia was dragged lower by profit-taking. Egypt's main index gained 1.5 percent to 12,608 points in the highest trading volume this week, surpassing the intra-day record high of 12,534 points hit on Dec. 22.

Palm Hills Development jumped 8.5 percent after saying it signed an agreement with the Ministry of Housing to buy a major plot in West Cairo to build a new project close to the company's existing developments. Foreign investors, who have been net buyers of Egyptian shares since Egypt floated its currency two months ago, remained buyers yesterday, bourse data showed.

Qatar's index gained for a second session in row, closing 0.8 percent higher with 80 percent of shares in the index advancing. Real estate developer United Development was the top performer, jumping 4.9 percent in heavy trade. A monthly Reuters survey of leading Middle East fund managers at the end of December found them bullish on regional equities in general, especially the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, where

they intend to capture high annual dividend yields.

Dubai's index recouped early losses to close 0.4 percent higher as some of the largest listed shares were bid up. Emirates NBD, which is usually thinly traded, gained 2.9 percent.

Dubai Islamic Bank rose 0.4 percent after saying it had completed the sale of its stake in Jordan Dubai Islamic Bank to Bank Al Etihad and Etihad Islamic Investment Co. DIB held 20.8 percent in the Jordanian bank; the value of the sale was not disclosed.

Saudi Arabia's stock market, which has little exposure to international funds, continued to underperform the region and the index lost 0.7 percent, its largest decline since Dec. 19. Trading volume was the lowest this week. The petrochemical sector was the main drag after oil prices fell about 2 percent overnight; the sector's index slipped 1.1 percent.

Mid-sized Advanced Petrochemical, however, rose 0.2 percent after the company, the first to publish fourth-quarter earnings in the kingdom, reported quarterly net income of 210 million riyals (\$56 million), up 44 percent from a year ago and beating NCB Capital's estimate of 198 million riyals. — Reuters

TILLERSON, EXXON PART WAYS; \$180M RETIREMENT PACKAGE

NEW YORK: Rex Tillerson, the nominee of President-elect Donald Trump for secretary of state, is severing ties with Exxon Mobil through a \$180 million retirement package one week before his Senate confirmation hearing begins. Tillerson will surrender, if confirmed, all unpaid stock that was part of his pay package, more than 2 million shares. In exchange, the company will make a cash payment equal to the value of those shares to a trust to be overseen by a third party, according to a regulatory filing Wednesday with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Because of the way the compensation is being dispensed, Tillerson will give up

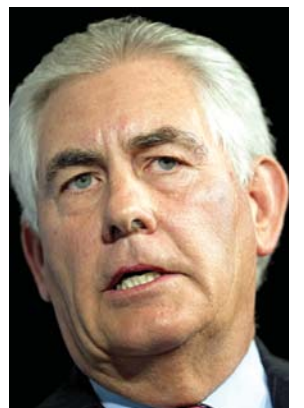
about \$7 million, compared with what he would have been paid had he retired in March as he had planned to do before the nomination. Tillerson, who worked for Exxon for more than 40 years, would have reached the company's mandatory retirement age of 65 by March, after which he would have received the payout from Exxon over a period of 10 years.

If Tillerson returns to the oil and gas industry within 10 years, the money in the trust would be paid out to charities of the controlling trustee's choosing.

With the appointment of Tillerson as secretary of state comes a host of thorny conflict-of-interest issues. The placing of the funds into a trust is intended to ally

concerns that decisions made by Tillerson as a member of the Trump cabinet could help him or his former associates.

Darren Woods, a 25-year Exxon veteran who had served as the company's president, took over as CEO of Exxon Mobil at the start of the new year. Tillerson began his career at Exxon as a production engineer straight out of the University of Texas at Austin in 1975. He replaced longtime CEO Lee Raymond in 2006 and led the company during one of the most turbulent periods in its history, which included the 2008 financial crisis and a collapse in oil prices since mid-2014 that has sharply diluted Exxon's profits. — AP



Rex Tillerson



TOKYO: Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso (center) poses before tolling a bell during a ceremony marking the start of this year's trading in Tokyo yesterday. — AP (See Page 24)

MENA MARKETS END 2016 ON POSITIVE NOTE: MARKAZ

KUWAIT WEIGHTED, PRICE INDICES CLIMB 3.5% IN DECEMBER

KUWAIT: Kuwait Financial Centre "Markaz" recently released its Monthly Market Research report. In this report, Markaz examines and analyzes the performance of equity markets in the MENA region as well as the global equity markets for the month of December 2016.

Markaz report said that MENA bourses had a positive month in December, with all markets ending the year in green. Morocco's Casablanca Index led the charge rising 9.1 per cent, followed by Egypt's HRMS index (7.2 per cent). Kuwait weighted and price indices had a positive month, with both climbing 3.5 per cent, amid a spurt in speculative trading ahead of the year-end.

The Egyptian Index also registered the highest gains in the year, closing nearly 73 per cent higher from the year before. It was followed by Morocco (30.5 per cent) and Dubai (12.1 per cent). Only the Jordan (-3.8 per cent) and Kuwait Weighted index (-0.4 per cent) witnessed a fall in 2016. Among other GCC markets, Qatar was the best performer in December, rising 6.6 per cent, followed by Abu



boom, and has depressed oil prices for more than two years. This, along with commitment from non-OPEC members, such as Russia, to cut production levels has improved investor sentiment, and has led to market recovery in the closing months of the year.

Egypt index was buoyed by the government's recent decisions, notably the liberalization of the Egyptian pound exchange rate to foreign currencies. Market capitalization of listed companies witnessed a 42 per cent leap exceeding \$33.1 billion, the highest in 8 years since the global finan-

kets, barring Saudi Arabia, witnessed fall in market liquidity in December, with Abu Dhabi and Egypt leading the charge. Overall MENA liquidity for the year was down 34 per cent compared to previous year's turnover of \$551bn. In terms of valuation, P/E of Morocco (19.8x), Kuwait (15.8x), and Qatar (14.8x) markets were the premium markets in the MENA region, while the markets of Egypt (8.0x), Dubai (9.2x), and Bahrain (9.7x) were the discount markets.

Bluechips also had a positive month, with Saudi Electric and DP World (UAE) ending the month at the top of the pile, gaining 16.7 per cent and 12.7 per cent, respectively. SABIC (KSA) lagged behind the rest of the blue chips, falling by 3.4 per cent. Saudi Electric was also the best performing stock in 2016, rising over 42 per cent, and was followed by Ooredoo (Qatar, 36 per cent) and Industries Qatar (30 per cent). The Saudi Electricity Company announced the launch of 16 innovative projects to start 2017 that aim to enhance power efficiency in the Kingdom.

Saudi 2017 budget

As part of its long-term plan to end its economy's dependence on oil, Saudi Arabia unveiled its budget for 2017. Saudi Arabia plans to increase spending in 2017 to stimulate economic growth after austerity measures helped shrink its budget deficit, as the kingdom continues to boost private sector activity. Deficit for 2016 has shrunk to \$79.2 billion, lower than what the government and most analysts had predicted, down 33 per cent from a record \$97.6bn in the previous year. It expects to run a deficit of \$53bn in 2017, about 7.7 per cent of 2017 GDP estimates, and hopes to balance its finances by 2020.

The government plans to spend \$237bn in 2017, an 8 per cent increase from 2016. The Kingdom is expected to spend \$71.4 billion on National Transformation Plan through 2020; of which \$11.2bn is allocated in 2017. Oil income contributed to 62.3 per cent of government revenues in 2016, down from 73 per cent in 2015. Non-oil revenues are expected to total \$53 billion in 2016, still far from the target the government set in June of \$141 billion by 2020. The 2017 deficit will continue to be financed by issuing debt and drawing from reserves.

Oil market review

Brent crude rose 12.6 per cent to close the year 2016 at \$56.28 per barrel, having nearly doubled since the low witnessed in January 2016. Prices shot up due to the expectation that production cut from major oil producers will curb oversupply in the market. OPEC and non-OPEC producers agreed to reduce crude oil production by 1.8 million bpd for six months from January 2017.

MENA Market Trends – December 2016

Index	M. Cap (USD Bn)	Last close	2015 %	Dec'16 %	2016 %	S&P correlation**	ADVT* (USD mn)	P/E TTM	P/B TTM	Div. Yield
S&P Pan Arab										
LargeMid Cap	113.4	145	-17.0	5.8	7.4	0.143	N.A	12.40	1.25	4.77
Saudi Arabia	448.5	7,210	-17.1	3.0	4.3	0.156	1,347.59	14.73	1.70	4.04
Qatar	133.2	10,437	-15.1	6.6	0.1	0.104	60.66	14.85	1.56	3.88
Abu Dhabi	120.6	4,546	-4.9	5.5	5.6	0.116	45.38	10.77	1.36	5.60
Kuwait Price	91.8	5,748	-14.1	3.5	2.4	0.062	52.65	15.81	1.22	4.40
Kuwait Wt.ed	81.9	380	-13.0	3.5	-0.4	0.036	52.65	15.81	1.22	4.40
Dubai	82.5	3,531	-16.5	5.1	12.1	0.112	171.56	9.25	1.29	4.70
Egypt	45.1	1,089	-24.4	7.2	72.7	0.044	67.57	7.97	0.97	6.57
Morocco	57.5	11,644	-7.2	9.1	30.5	0.003	N.A.	19.78	2.85	3.56
Jordan	22.1	4,070	-0.2	0.8	-3.8	0.028	6.59	14.24	1.28	4.74
Bahrain	18.9	1,220	-14.8	3.9	0.4	0.025	2.28	9.68	0.83	4.22
Oman	17.0	5,783	-14.8	5.4	7.0	0.099	7.02	9.98	1.14	5.16

Source: Reuters, Zawya, * - 3-year daily return correlation

Dhabi (5.5 per cent), Oman (5.4 per cent) and Dubai (5.1 per cent).

The OPEC decision to cut oil production by 1.2 million barrels a day from 33.6 million barrels, were deeper than many analysts had expected, and is expected to shrink the supply glut that has been fed in part by the US shale

oil crisis in 2008. Market turnovers posted during the year was the highest in seven years, as the traded values rose over 55 per cent higher over 2015.

MENA markets liquidity continued its downward momentum in December, with volumes decreasing by 20 per cent and value traded by 4.8 per cent. All MENA mar-

VITOL CLINCHES \$1BN OIL DEAL WITH IRAN

LONDON/DUBAI: The world's largest oil trader, Vitol, has clinched a deal with the National Iranian Oil Co (NIOC) to loan it an equivalent of \$1 billion in euros guaranteed by future exports of refined products, four sources familiar with the matter said. The pre-finance deal is the first such major contract signed between Iran and a trading house since sanctions were lifted in early 2016. Vitol and NIOC declined to comment.

It highlights the speed of the oil industry recovery in Iran just a year after lifting of sanctions, which is allowing Tehran to claw back oil market share from arch-rival Saudi Arabia.

It also re-establishes some old dealings with Western firms as Tehran is benefiting not only from easing of EU sanctions but also from reduced US restrictions on its access to dollars, which Iran needs to reignite its economy. Foreign companies still tread carefully for fear of breaking a myriad of complex laws, and oil majors such as Shell, BP and Eni have been slow to return as regular crude lifters.

Executives who are US citizens are often ring-fenced from negotiations with Iran, notably BP's CEO Bob Dudley and even those working for non-US companies. US president-elect Donald Trump has also been outspoken about reviewing the nuclear deal brokered under Barack Obama's administration, adding fresh uncertainty.

But privately held trading houses are more flexible and can negotiate deals quicker than listed firms. Traders have increasingly turned to pre-finance in recent years to secure long-term access to large volumes of oil and products - the system of pre-finance by large traders including Vitol has for example kept the Iraqi region of Kurdistan afloat during its war with Islamic State in the last two years. — Reuters



PARIS: Clothes displayed with reduced prices in a French department store, at the start of the summer sale in Paris. A week before the start of official sales, clothing stores already started good deals. The sale will start on January 11, 2017. —AFP

News

in brief

US dollar stable against KD at 0.306

KUWAIT: The US dollar's exchange rate against the Kuwaiti dinar was stable at 0.306 while the euro went down to KD 0.318, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. The CBK went on saying that the pound sterling was down to KD 0.375, the same case with the Swiss Franc which went down to KD 0.298. The Japanese Yen remain still at KD 0.002.

Kuwait oil price down by 15 cents to \$51.72 pb

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went down by 15 cents Tuesday to reach \$51.72 per barrel as oppose to \$51.87 pb last Friday, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. At the global level, the price of oil went down after the US dollar made gains, reaching levels unprecedented since 2002. The situation led investors to sell shares to gain profit. The price of the Brent Crude went down by \$1.35 to settle at \$55.47 per barrel. The price of the West Texas Intermediate also went down by \$1.39 to settle at \$52.33 per barrel.

DIB holding company sells stake in Jordanian bank

DUBAI: Dubai Islamic Bank (DIB), the largest Islamic bank in the United Arab Emirates, said yesterday that it had sold its stake in Jordan Dubai Islamic Bank. DIB held 20.8 per cent in Jordan Dubai Islamic Bank through a 40 per cent shareholding in MESIC Investments. MESIC Investments had completed the sale of its stake in Jordan Dubai Islamic Bank to Jordan-based Bank Al Etihad and Etihad Islamic Investment Company, DIB said in a statement. The value of the sale was not disclosed.

Dubai airport passenger traffic up 9.4% in Nov

DUBAI: Passenger traffic at Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel, rose 9.4 per cent in November from a year earlier to 6.58 million people, the airport's operator said yesterday. In the first 11 months of 2016, traffic grew 7.0 percent to 75.95 million people. The increase was partly due to growth in flights to and from India, after carriers including Spice Jet, Jet Airways and Air India launched new services and increased capacity this year. Dubai airport handled 234,743 tons of cargo in November, an increase of 7.5 per cent, while volume in the first 11 months rose 3.3 per cent to 2.36 million tons.

Egypt to buy local wheat at global prices

CAIRO: Egypt's government will buy the local wheat crop at global prices in the coming season and has approved raising the price it buys sugar cane from farmers, Agriculture Minister Essam Fayed said yesterday. The announcement follows the country's supply minister saying in November that the government would buy local wheat in the coming season at a set price of 450 Egyptian pounds per areb (150 kilos). Egypt usually sets a price higher than international markets to pay for its local wheat to encourage farmers to grow the strategic grain. The high price has for years encouraged local traders to mix cheaper imported wheat into the subsidized local supplies. The new policy would calculate the price of wheat according to prices at which state grain buyer GASC bought imported wheat, the minister said.

OIL PRICES RISE ON EXPECTED DROP IN US INVENTORIES

LONDON: Oil prices ticked higher yesterday on expectations that US crude inventories are falling and signs that oil producers will stick to agreed output cuts that took effect this week.

Global benchmark Brent crude futures were up 10 cents at \$55.57 a barrel by 1110 GMT. The contract reached an 18-month high in the previous session, but a strong dollar has shaved off most of those gains. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures were trading at \$52.42 per barrel, up 9 cents.

"Positive equities and gains in industrial metals this morning, as well as expectations that US crude oil stocks will show a decline ... are ingredients helping to drive a slight gain in Brent crude," said Bjarne Schieldrop, chief commodities analyst at SEB Markets in Oslo. Weekly US statistics on oil stocks are expected to show a 1.7-million-barrel draw on Thursday, analysts polled by Reuters said. —Reuters

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.615
Indian Rupees	4.510
Pakistani Rupees	2.934
Srilankan Rupees	2.053
Nepali Rupees	2.823
Singapore Dollar	212.790
Hongkong Dollar	39.563
Bangladesh Taka	3.893
Philippine Peso	6.173
Thai Baht	8.601
Malaysian Ringgit	223.230

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.881
Qatari Riyal	84.334
ani Riyal	797.427
Bahraini Dinar	815.330
UAE Dirham	83.599

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	21.250
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.073
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.232
Tunisian Dinar	133.590
Jordanian Dinar	432.400
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.046
Syrian Lira	2.188
Morocco Dirham	30.839

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	306.850
Euro	323.270
Sterling Pound	379.270
Canadian dollar	229.680
Turkish lira	87.300

Swiss Franc	302.020
Australian Dollar	222.200
US Dollar Buying	305.650

GOLD

20 Gram	328.24
10 Gram	122.04
5 Gram	57.97

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	306.550
Canadian Dolla	230.500
Sterling Pound	384.385
Euro	322.080
Swiss Franc	300.105
Bahrain Dinar	812.640
UAE Dirhams	83.855
Qatari Riyals	85.080
Saudi Riyals	82.675
Jordanian Dinar	433.540
Egyptian Pound	16.830
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.060
Indian Rupees	4.530
Pakistani Rupees	2.924
Bangladesh Taka	3.887
Philippines Peso	6.143
Cyprus pound	168.345
Japanese Yen	3.600
Syrian Pound	2.435
Nepalase Rupees	3.825
Malaysian Ringgit	69.340
Chinese Yuan	31.240
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	9.535
Thai Bhat	87.725
Turkish Lira	87.725

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY BUY SELL

Currency	Buy	Sell
British Pound	0.369279	0.379279
Czech Korune	0.003802	0.015802
Danish Krone	0.038891	0.043891
Euro	0.313975	0.322975
Norwegian Krone	0.031398	0.036598
Romanian Leu	0.070497	0.070497
Slovakia	0.009229	0.019229
Swedish Krona	0.029450	0.034450
Swiss Franc	0.292152	0.303152
Turkish Lira	0.082529	0.092829

Australasia

Australian Dollar	0.213906	0.225908
New Zealand Dollar	0.205822	0.215322

America

Canadian Dollar	0.222898	0.231898
Georgina Lari	0.138751	0.138751
US Dollars	0.303100	0.307500
US Dollars Mint	0.303600	0.307500

Asia

Bangladesh Taka	0.003578	0.004160
Chinese Yuan	0.042632	0.046132
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037520	0.040270
Indian Rupee	0.002789	0.005523
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024

Japanese Yen	0.002515	0.002695
Kenyan Shilling	0.002984	0.002984
Korean Won	0.000244	0.000259
Malaysian Ringgit	0.064568	0.070668
Nepalase Rupee	0.002944	0.003114
Pakistan Rupee	0.002620	0.002910
Philippine Peso	0.006083	0.006383
Sierra Leone	0.000053	0.000059
Singapore Dollar	0.206584	0.216584
South African Rand	0.016294	0.024794
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001651	0.002231
Taiwan	0.009393	0.009573
Thai Baht	0.008228	0.008778

Arab

Bahraini Dinar	0.808282	0.816782
Egyptian Pound	0.013279	0.022532
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000181	0.000241
Jordanian Dinar	0.428238	0.47238
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020263	0.044263
Nigerian Naira	0.000407	0.001042
Omani Riyal	0.791501	0.797181
Qatar Riyal	0.083569	0.085019
Saudi Riyal	0.080833	0.082133
Syrian Pound	0.001303	0.001523
Tunisian Dinar	0.128697	0.136697
Turkish Lira	0.082529	0.092829
UAE Dirhams	0.082215	0.083915
Yemeni Riyal	0.000999	0.001079

SHOP QATAR TO KICK OFF SATURDAY WITH FLAIR

COLORFUL ENTERTAINMENT SET TO SPREAD FESTIVE SPIRIT BEYOND RETAIL SCENE

DOHA: The first edition of Shop Qatar begins this Saturday with an elaborate opening night at Mall of Qatar's Oasis, providing guests and visitors with a taster of what is to come throughout the month-long festival.

The opening will be presented by local standup comedian Hamad Al-Amari, who will provide a humorous preview of the upcoming Doha Comedy Festival. Later on, visitors to Mall of Qatar will be treated to a live performance by renowned Qatari singer Fahad Al-Kubaisi, along with several other entertainment segments on the Oasis stage.

Public celebrations will continue the following weekend (12-14 January) along the Doha Corniche, where several food trucks and stalls will be serving delicious treats to the public from 4 -10pm, ahead of a spectacular fireworks display, which is set to light up the evening sky close to the Mourjan restaurant.

Mashal Shahbik, Director of Festivals and Tourism Events at Qatar Tourism Authority (QTA) said, "Shop Qatar showcases the best Qatar has to offer in retail and entertainment while capitalising on the country's pleasant winter weather. We are very grateful for the collaborative spirit our partners in the public and private sectors have shown as we build a

brand new tradition through the first edition of this festival." She added, "Initial bookings for accommodation and entertainment ticket sales so far show that the festival program is popular and caters to the needs of Qatar's visitors and residents."

The festival will run from January 7 - February 7, offering residents and visitors discounts on popular brands, and raffle draws with cash prizes worth QAR 4 million. Taking the festivities beyond the retail scene, Shop Qatar also features a rich schedule of entertainment that caters to a variety of ages and interests.

Retail outlets around the country will be providing discounts of up to 50% on a range of consumer goods including clothes, electronics, cosmetics and accessories for men, women and children. The first edition of Shop Qatar has ten retail partners in Doha and beyond. They include Mall of Qatar, Ezdan Mall, Hyatt Plaza, AlKhor Mall, Lagoona Mall, Gulf Mall, Landmark, Dar Al Salam Mall, The Gate and The Pearl-Qatar.

In support of local talent and budding businesses, Shop Qatar will feature 30 pop-up shops spread across Mall of Qatar, Ezdan Mall, Landmark Mall, The Gate Mall & Lagoona Mall.



Fahd Al-Kubaisi



Hamad Al-Amari



Mashal Shahbik

Regionally-acclaimed designer brands such as Maryam Aldarwish, HZ by Hissa Zainal and Fanilla Couture will showcase their latest collections, while enriching the festival's offer-

ings to provide visitors with a uniquely Qatari experience. Shoppers who spend QAR 200 at any of the participating retailers can enter a weekly raffle draw for a chance to win cash prizes worth tens of thousands of riyals and a jackpot prize of QAR 1 million.

To provide visitors with the complete package, QTA has partnered with Qatar Airways to ensure flights to Qatar from within the GCC region booked on the airline for the period between 7 January and 7 February will be available with a 25% discount. In addition, members of Qatar Airways' Privilege Club will receive double Q-miles on their bookings during Shop Qatar.

Visitors to Shop Qatar can also take advantage of a range of accommodation offers at Qatar's globally-recognised hospitality sector, when booking through Expedia.com.

Live entertainment and cultural shows

The festival's colourful live entertainment schedule, offers a rich array of cultural shows, performances by singing sensations and unlimited family-friendly entertainment.

Members of the public can enjoy the thrilling African Circus evening shows daily between January 8 and 21 in the outdoor area surrounding Hyatt Plaza. On weekdays, shows begin at 6.30 pm and 8 pm and on weekends, there will be three shows beginning at 5.30 pm, 7 pm and 9 pm.

Family-friendly entertainment can also be

found at Magical Festival Village - a Shop Qatar partner - located close to Katara Cultural Village. The Village houses over 400 shopping outlets, dozens of cafes and restaurants and is bordered by public seating areas where visitors can relax and enjoy the ambience and lovely climate.

On the weekends, award-winning music sensations Majid AlMuhandes and Hussain Al-Jassmi will take the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) theatre stage to serenade their fans at the 'Arabic Night' and 'Khaleeji Night' concerts scheduled for Friday, 20 and 27 January respectively.

Festival organizers have also announced that on the last weekend of Shop Qatar, Broadway's longest-running musical, CATS will come to the QNCC Theatre to wow audiences in matinee and soiree performances between the 1-4 February.

And, from 2-4 February, Shop Qatar presents the first winter edition of Doha Comedy Festival, bringing together a special lineup of 15 stand-up comedians from nine countries.

Tickets for all performances range from QAR 120 to QAR 1,250 and can be bought at Virgin Megastores and online through the store's website. Tickets for the concerts can also be purchased at platinumlist.net. Style-savvy visitors and residents can get real-time update on the latest trends at a Shop Qatar fashion show due to be held on the last week of the festival.



Fireworks on the Corniche

US GAS PRICES TUMBLE, BUT MARKET TIGHTENING

LONDON: US natural gas prices plunged on Tuesday amid forecasts that temperatures will be average or higher across most population centres by the middle of January. Earlier forecasts had predicted colder temperatures would persist through most of January, boosting heating demand.

But the correction in gas prices comes after hedge funds had amassed unusually large bullish bets, helping drive prices up by more than 40 percent in the last two months. Once some of the frothiness caused by the big build-up of hedge fund positions has been blown off, prices are likely to continue trending upwards in 2017.

Polar vortex

Futures prices for gas delivered to Henry Hub in February fell on Tuesday by almost 40 cents per million British thermal units, or nearly 11 percent. Prices for gas delivered in July were down more than 25 cents, or around 7 percent, compared with the previous close.

The trigger for the sell-off seems to have been revised weather forecasts showing temperatures across most of the United States would be higher by mid-January.

The projected weakening of the circumpolar vortex had been expected to allow masses of much colder air to wander south over the United States. It now appears likely that the worst of the cold will occur over the Eurasian landmass, while temperatures will be normal or above normal over most of North America.

Hedge funds

The plunge in front-month prices was the largest for almost three years, but came after they had risen 42 percent since early November. By the end of 2016, hedge funds had amassed the largest net long position in natural gas futures and options for more than two years. Hedge funds held a net long position equivalent to 2,927 billion cubic feet of gas on Dec. 27, according to an analysis of data published by the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

Fund managers' net position had increased by the equivalent of 1,641 billion cubic feet or 128 percent in just six weeks. The concentration of positions left the market vulnerable to correction once prices stopped rising and funds attempted to take some of their profits.

Tight market

Despite the sell-off, the underlying state of the gas market appears tight, which is a big turn round from the first quarter of 2016. US working gas stocks in underground storage declined by 687 billion cubic feet during the final six weeks of 2016, the largest seasonal decline since 2013.

By Dec. 23, stocks were 413 billion cubic feet, or 11 percent, below the level at the same point in 2015, according to the US Energy Information Administration. Stocks were also 79 billion cubic feet, or 2 percent, below the 2011-2015 average, the first time

in 2016 stocks had fallen below the five-year average. The enormous glut of gas left at the end of the winter of 2015/16 has been erased by the very low prices which prevailed through most of 2016. The number of rigs drilling for gas in the United States fell to its lowest level for more than a quarter of a century in August 2016 as producers scaled back work on new wells.

Meanwhile, the combination of above average temperatures from the end of May through September and low gas prices encouraged record gas combustion by electricity producers.

Warm autumn

The US gas market has been tightening consistently since April as production has fallen and consumption has soared.

The full extent of the tightening has been masked until recently by the unusually mild start to the 2016/17 heating season.

Unusually warm weather last summer, which caused gas stocks to rise much more slowly during the injection season, lingered into autumn, causing stocks to start drawing down later than normal. Concerns about storage space running out resulted in a sharp drop in prices during the second half of October and the first half of November. But the arrival of the first blast of much colder than normal weather in December and a second cold spell forecast in early January has shifted attention back to the underlying market tightness. Enormous draw downs in gas stocks in the first three weeks of December have underscored just how much tighter the market has become.

Gas stocks fell in December much faster compared with 2015 than can be accounted for by the cold weather alone. Stocks fell by an extra 144 billion cubic feet in the first three weeks of December after adjusting for temperatures. Stocks have now fallen below the five-year average even though heating demand so far this season has been 18 percent below the long-term average.

2017 Outlook

Gas drilling has picked up in response to rising prices, with the number of rigs up from a low of 81 in August to 132 at the end of the year, according to oilfield services company Baker Hughes.

The much larger increase in oil-well drilling since May will also increase gas supplies through the production of more associated or casinghead gas. But gas consumption is also set to rise this year as another 11.5 gigawatts of gas-fired power generating capacity is installed by the end of 2017. Super-efficient combined-cycle gas turbines (CCGTs) are displacing smaller, older, less-efficient and less-flexible coal-fired power plants. So gas prices will need to be higher on average during 2017 to sustain increased drilling and curb gas consumption by reducing the number of hours run by CCGTs. Once some of the speculative froth has blown off the gas market, prices are likely to resume rising. — Reuters



LONDON: People walk past a branch of Next retail store on Oxford Street in central London yesterday. — AFP

BRITISH RETAILER NEXT CUTS 2016/17 PROFIT GUIDANCE

'EXCEPTIONAL' LEVELS OF UNCERTAINTY SEEN IN 2018

LONDON: British clothing retailer Next yesterday cut profit guidance for its current financial year and warned on the outlook for the next, highlighting "exceptional" levels of uncertainty in the sector.

Next, which trades from about 540 shops in Britain and Ireland, from franchised stores overseas and online, has been Britain's most successful clothing retailer of the last decade but 2016 proved to be its toughest year since 2008 and its shares fell by a third. The firm has said Britons are spending less on clothes and instead splashing out on holidays, eating out and events. It is also braced for costs to rise following the plunge in the pound after Brexit and higher wage bills.

Kicking off the UK Christmas trading update season Next said its central guidance was for pretax profit of 792 million pounds (\$971 million) for its year to Jan. 2017, down from the 805 million pounds it had previously forecast. The firm also set out its expectations for the 2017-18 year, predicting a pretax profit range of 680-780 million pounds, below analysts' average forecast of 784 million pounds, according to Reuters data.

"The fact that sales continued to decline in quarter four, beyond the anniversary of the start of the slowdown in November 2015, means that we expect the cyclical slow-down in spending on clothing and footwear to continue into next year," said the firm.

In the 54 days to Dec. 24, the bulk of its fourth quarter, its full price sales fell 0.4 percent, compared with a third quarter fall of 3.5 percent.

It cautioned that it may see a further squeeze in general spending as inflation begins to erode real earnings growth. Next also reiterated that following the devaluation of Sterling it expects prices on like-for-like garments to rise, but by no more than 5 percent. It expects that this will depress sales revenue by around 0.5 percent. The firm forecast full price sales for 2017-18 in a range of down 4.5 percent to up 1.5 percent. Next also highlighted increased costs it faces in 2017-18, including the National Living Wage, higher business rates, the apprenticeship levy and higher energy taxes.

Shares in Next slid 11 percent on the news, dragging down stock values of clothing competitors Marks and Spencer and Associated British Foods, which also owns budget garment

chain Primark. In a trading update, Next said the weak pound would result in prices of its garments rising by up to five percent in its financial year to January 2018. "In the year ahead we face a number of inflationary pressures in our cost base," Next said in a statement.

British annual inflation is at the highest level in more than two years as a slide in sterling to multi-year lows against the dollar and euro following the Brexit vote in June has lifted the cost of raw materials imported by Britain.

"We may see a further squeeze in general spending as inflation begins to erode real earnings growth," Next added. The group did, however, note that its overseas sales would be boosted this year by the currency's weakness. A weak pound makes British-made goods more price-competitive than those made by foreign rivals.

Following a weak Christmas trading period, Next said pre-tax profits would be slightly lower than expected for the year to January 2017. They could tumble by as much as 14 percent in the year to January 2018, but may fall by only two percent, it said in further guidance yesterday. — Agencies

GLOBAL EQUITIES RALLY ON UPBEAT ECONOMIC DATA

LONDON: Upbeat global economic data and growing signs that inflation on both sides of the Atlantic is accelerating fuelled a second day of 2017 gains across world stock markets yesterday, and lifted the euro and oil prices. A batch of reports from Europe showed that French consumer confidence hit a nine-year high, business activity across the eurozone rose at the fastest pace in more than five years and inflation in the euro zone is its highest in over three years.

This followed similarly upbeat reports this week on US, British, Chinese and Japanese busi-

ness activity and helped steer investors towards riskier assets that benefit from higher interest rates - such as equities - and away from lower-yielding assets, including bonds. "Over the month, confidence increased in the manufacturing sector and stabilized in services, amid solid new orders and businesses, strong optimism and elevated backlog of works," said Apolline Menut, economist at Barclays.

"This suggests that euro area activity is poised for a strong start in 2017," she said. Economists at HSBC yesterday raised their 2017

and 2018 forecasts for global growth and inflation, the first time in nearly five years they have upped these outlooks over a two-year horizon.

At midsession in Europe on Wednesday, Europe's index of leading 300 shares was flat at 1,445 points, supported by a 0.5-percent rise in financials but capped by the strength of the single currency. The FTSEuroFirst 300 hit a 1-year high on Tuesday. One of the biggest movers on major European bourses was UK retailer Next. Its shares fell as much as 14 percent after a profit warning. The stock has lost nearly 40 percent

over the past year. MSCI's benchmark global index rose for a second day to trade 0.3 percent higher, and its index of major Asian shares excluding Japan rose for a seventh consecutive day, gaining 0.4 percent. US futures pointed to a higher opening of up to 0.2 percent on Wall Street, priming the Dow Jones for another test of the 20,000-point mark.

FED MINUTES

The potential for further US rate hikes this year ensured profit-taking on the dollar's run on Tuesday was limited to 0.2 percent against a basket of currencies. The dollar's strength in Asian trading helped Japan's exporter-heavy stock market rally

toward its biggest daily increase for almost two months. In its first trading day of the year, the Nikkei climbed 2.50 percent and looked set for the highest close since December 2015. It was further aided by domestic data showing factory activity had expanded at the fastest pace in a year. The euro rose 0.3 percent to \$1.0435, and the dollar gave up earlier gains against the yen to trade little changed at 117.75 yen.

The continued grind higher in eurozone inflation is lifting inflation expectations closer to the European Central Bank's target of just below 2 percent. This offers some welcome relief to ECB policymakers who for years have struggled to lift growth and inflation. — Reuters

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report						
Wednesday 04 January 2017						
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low	
Price Index	▲ 12.81	5,787.84	5,775.03	5,787.84	5,760.64	
Weighted Index	▲ 1.43	383.63	382.20	385.42	380.42	
KXS 15	▲ 4.73	898.09	893.36	905.86	886.45	

Volume		Value (KWD)		Number of Trades	
Volume	279,901,517	Value (KWD)	28,540,209	Number of Trades	5,348

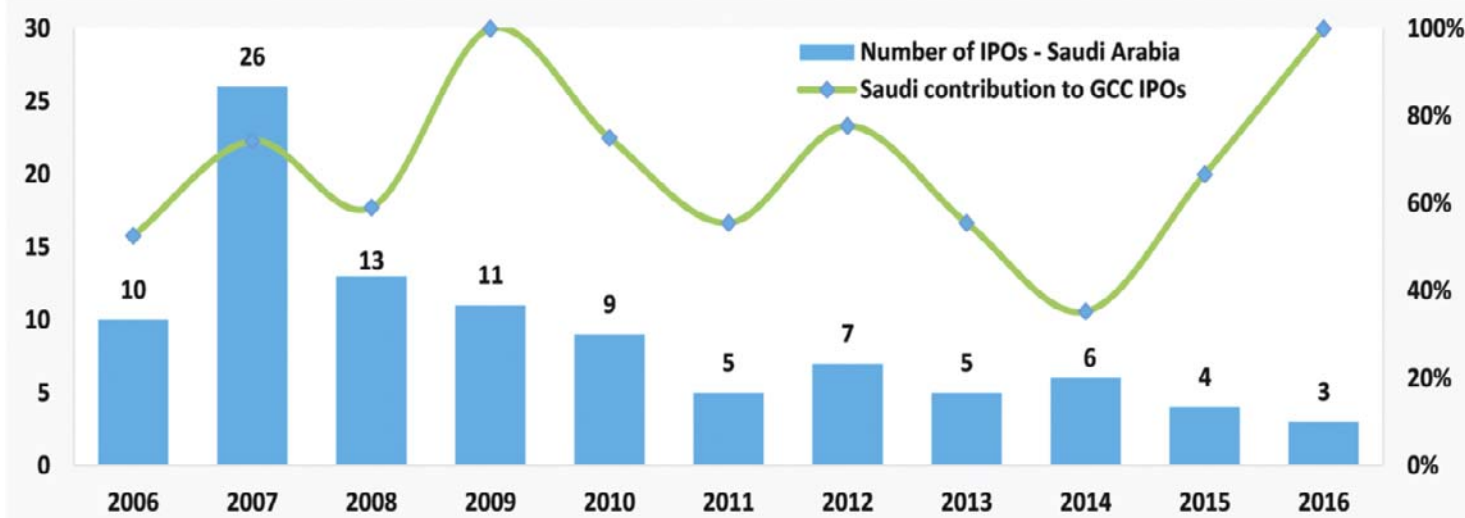
Trades						
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last Change
MARIN	67	64	15050	963	3	67 -- 0.0
IKARUS	42.0	41.0	605,075	25,068	14	42.0 ▲ 1.0
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	365 -- 0.0
NAFESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	820 -- 0.0
ENERGYH	42.5	42.5	500	21	1	42.5 -- 0.0
GPI	45.0	44.0	5,197,295	230,343	97	44.0 ▼ -1.0
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190 -- 0.0
Oil & Gas			5,817,920	256,385	115	786.56 ▼ -0.19
KFOUC	182	182	17,500	3,185	1	182 -- 0.0
BPCC	495	490	177,220	86,974	9	495 -- 0.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	660 -- 0.0
ALQURAIN	230	228	68,784	15,818	9	230 -- 0.0
Basic Materials			263,504	105,977	19	1004.81 -- 0.00
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	410 -- 0.0
REFRI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	315 -- 0.0
CABLE	385	380	143,832	55,059	14	385 ▲ 5.0
SHIP	188	180	1,109,720	206,893	70	188 ▲ 10.0
PCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	910 -- 0.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	295 -- 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	60 -- 0.0
ACICO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	270 -- 0.0
GMCM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300 -- 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	118 -- 0.0
KBMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190 -- 0.0
NICBM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	210 -- 0.0
EQUIPMENT	65	60	17,110,470	1,063,927	376	61 -- 0.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.5 -- 0.0
GYPSON	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95 -- 0.0
SALBOOKH	68	64	404,557	26,940	45	68 ▲ 2.0
AGLTY	670	630	4,577,212	2,977,507	137	650 ▲ 20.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206 -- 0.0
CLEANING	45.5	44.5	255,500	11,495	5	45.5 -- 0.0
KGL	63	60	425,643	26,130	24	63 ▲ 2.0
KPCP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	172 -- 0.0
HUMANSOFT	2,600	2,600	257,065	668,369	29	2,600 ▼ -100.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206 -- 0.0
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385 -- 0.0
GFC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	34.5 -- 0.0
MAYADEEN	27.0	26.0	3,312,064	87,064	53	26.5 ▼ -0.5
CGC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	560 -- 0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56 -- 0.0
UPAC	700	700	35,400	24,780	5	700 -- 0.0
ALAFAC	244	236	308,750	73,086	10	236 ▼ -8.0
MUBARRAD	64	60	3,879,850	241,651	70	64 ▲ 5.0
LOGISTICS	73	73	310,930	22,698	11	73 -- 0.0
SCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	86 -- 0.0
GCEM	75	74	262,009	19,613	6	75 ▲ 1.0
QIC	80	80	10,000	800	1	80 ▲ 1.0
KCEM	80	78	577,850	45,634	7	79 -- 0.0
RKWC	91	90	205,000	18,455	4	91 ▼ -1.0
SPEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	80 -- 0.0
Industrials			33,185,652	5,570,101	867	1335.32 ▼ -6.09
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	136 -- 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64 -- 0.0
PAPCO	95	95	5,001	475	1	95 -- 0.0
CATTL	214	214	135	29	1	214 -- 0.0
DANAH	88	87	83,100	7,230	9	88 ▲ 2.0
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196 -- 0.0
FOOD	2,600	2,600	461,005	1,196,613	5	2,600 ▼ -20.0
Consumer Goods			549,241	1,206,347	16	1129.27 ▲ 3.67
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	260 -- 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920 -- 0.0
YIACO	350	310	3,800	1,312	5	335 ▲ 5
Health Care			3,800	1,312	6	1241.87 ▲ 3.59
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,180 -- 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	265 -- 0.0
SULTAN	59	57	1,256,214	72,926	38	58 ▲ 1
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50 -- 0.0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385 -- 0.0
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192 -- 0.0
OUFAFUEL	122	118	91,154	10,946	20	120 ▲ 4
MUNTAZAHAT	81	79	701,772	56,142	27	80 ▼ -1
JAZEERA	750	740	135,553	100,365	13	740 ▼ -10
SOOR	116	116	17,855	2,071	9	116 ▲ 2
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	106 -- 0.0
ALRAI	142	138	17,000	2,414	3	142 ▲ 6
ZIMAH	43.0	41.5	381,440	16,199	20	43.0 ▲ 1
Mezzan	960	930	767,369	727,433	43	950 ▲ 20
Consumer Services			3,368,357	988,496	173	921.48 ▲ 3.88
ZAIN	425	415	3,934,404	1,644,377	81	425 ▲ 10
OOREDOO	1,180	1,160	7,255	8,426	5	1,160 ▲ 20
HITSTELEC	42.5	42.0	2,812,682	119,117	59	42.5 ▲ 1
VIVA	920	910	34,340	31,333	37	920 ▲ 10
Telecommunications			6,788,681	1,803,252	182	635.93 ▲ 9.25
NBK	680	650	3,984,783	2,646,420	80	660 -- 0.0
GBK	238	236	702,070	167,039	19	238 -- 0.0
CBK	410	410	21,325	8,743	1	410 -- 0.0
ABK	295	295	50,590	14,924	4	295 ▼ -5
ALMUTAHED	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	410 -- 0.0
KIB	206	204	3,079,500	631,277	50	204 ▼ -2
BURG	305	305	207,128	63,174	10	305 -- 0.0
KFIN	560	540	4,421,563	2,442,970	119	550 -- 0.0
BOUBAYAN	400	395	1,287,145	514,027	40	400 ▲ 5
AUB	196	194	711,691	138,372	17	194 ▲ 2
ITHMR	42.5	40.5	15,046,542	623,925	191	41.0 -- 0.0
WARBANK	224	220	1,582,048	350,283	90	224 ▲ 2
Banks			31,094,385	7,601,154	621	844.88 ▲ 1.08
KINS	280	280	18,846	5,277	2	280 -- 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	670 -- 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	455 -- 0.0
WINS	102	102	12,520	1,277	1	102 ▼ -2.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180 -- 0.0
FTI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	49.0 -- 0.0
WETHAQ	31.5	30.5	130,010	4,029	10	31.5 ▲ 1.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355 -- 0.0
Insurance			161,376	10,583	13	996.21 ▲ 1.59

Trades		Volume		Value (KD)		Trades		Last Change	
SOKOUK	36.0	35.5	187,1450	66,811	39	36.0 -- 0.0			
KRE	65	64	2,148,431	138,754	24	65 ▲ 1.0			
URC	94	94	72,200	6,787	4	94 ▼ -2.0			
NRE	112	106	6,896,989	758,028	102	110 ▲ 4.0			
SRE	305	305	750,281	206,400	5	365 ▲ 10.0			
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	470 -- 0.0			
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190 -- 0.0			
MASSALEH	40.0	40.0	6,000	240	1	40.0 -- 0.0			
ARABREC	30.5	30.0	289,999	8,811	9	30.5 -- 0.0			
ERESCO	42.5	41.0	10,992,262	460,467	186	42.5 ▲ 2.0			
MABANEE	860	850	128,443	109,346	9	860 -- 0.0			
INJAZZAT	76	76	54,000	4,104	4	76 -- 0.0			
INVESTORS	23.5	23.0	6,035,073	139,165	60	23.5 ▲ 0.5			
IRC	27.0	26.5	829,010	21,989	22	27.0 ▼ -0.5			
ALTUARIA	80	79	1,030,733	81,556	22	80 -- 0.0			
SANAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	31.5 -- 0.0			
AAYANRE	69	64	597,500	39,658	25	69 ▲ 5.0			
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	69 -- 0.0			
ALAQARIA	25.0	24.0	114,750	2,771	9	24.0 ▲ 0.5			
MAZAYA	112	110	1,634,250	179,778	37	112 ▲ 2.0			
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0 -- 0.0			
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89 -- 0.0			
TUARA	48.0	45.5	147,917	7,093	7	48.0 -- 0.0			
TAAMEER	22.0	22.0	3,895,000	85,690	42	22.0 ▲ 0.5			
ARKAN	90	90	124,000	11,160	4	90 -- 0.0			
ARGAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	176 -- 0.0			

GCC WITNESSES MUTED IPO ACTIVITY IN 2016

KAMCO MARKET REPORT

Saudi Arabia contribution to GCC IPO activity - 2006 to 2016



KUWAIT: The IPO market in the GCC further halved in 2016, after witnessing muted activity in 2015, and trends exhibited during the year was the lowest seen in fifteen years. Total number of corporate IPOs/listings in the region fell y-o-y to 3 issuances from 6 deals witnessed in 2015. Capital issuances via IPOs also reached its lowest levels since 2013 (\$702 million), as capital raised plunged by 50 percent y-o-y from 2015 to \$745 million. Corporates looking to enter the market preferred to stay on the sidelines, and were met with periodic surprises throughout 2016. The surprises, mostly event related, included the Brexit outcome and US presidential election results, along continued volatility in oil commodity markets up until the OPEC agreement was reached on a production cut.

Global IPO activity dips to lowest since 2013; APAC continues to provide leadership globally as well, IPO trends receded in 2016, albeit at a slower pace compared to the GCC, as the number of IPO issuances fell by 16 percent to 1,055 deals, while capital raised declined by 33 percent to \$132.5 billion, as per EY. The Asia Pacific region (APAC) reportedly dominated IPO activity globally in 2016 with 60 percent of the number of deals and 54 percent of the proceeds raised, as confidence reportedly returned to the Greater China IPO market. The US markets for IPOs witnessed its slowest year since 2009, as per the consultant, both in terms of number of deals and proceeds, as global macroeconomic certainty, market volatility and monetary policy uncertainty led to slower activity. EMEIA witnessed divergent trends, as public issuances in developed markets slowed, while emerging markets saw increased activity.

REITs make their way

The silver lining in the GCC public issuances market was the listing of two Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) in Q4-16. Riyadh REIT, launched by Riyadh Capital, which was capitalized at SAR 500 million and was listed in November-16 in Saudi Arabia, and realized an upper circuit limit of a 10 percent daily return on day one post the listing, and finished the year up by 8.2 percent. Eskan Bank Realty

Income Trust from Bahrain which was under-subscribed by 5 percent, traded on 2 January 2017 at a price of BHD 0.107 per unit. UAE, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have REIT regulations in place, while Qatar and Kuwait's regulatory authorities are yet to issue regulations for the development of listed REITs. The first IPO that was recorded in 2017 was from Qatar, after its hiatus in 2016, as Investment Holding Group (IHG) looks to raise around QAR 491 million at a pricing of QAR 10.1/share by January-2017.

Looking for leadership in 2017

KAMCO Research expects corporates in the GCC IPO market to wait it out, and look for better macroeconomic data points to be visible before entering the market. Corporate issuers would likely look for leadership from larger issuers in terms of activity as well, to confirm positive trends for floatation. Issuers are likely to look at equity market valuations and market performance in early 2017, while firm future timelines from government-sponsored entities such as Aramco should provide much needed confidence for corporate issuers as well.

GCC IPOs by Industry

Corporate IPO action in the region came to a standstill in H2-16 as the market lacked confidence. Equity markets remained extremely volatile in the region, especially the Tadawul All Share index, as it remained extremely volatile in the first ten months of the year. This led issuers to stay away from the market and looking for a sustained period of confidence for their issuances. The index however finally pulled back and recovered with a strong rally in November and December to close in the green for 2016. Key drivers were the agreement on OPEC production cuts, strong liquidity in global equity market trends, and also confidence flowing from the oversubscription of the international sovereign bond sale of \$17.5 billion. Though Q3-16 was affected by the lull of business activity during Eid & summer holidays, the issuer market was more looking for firmer conditions to test the market, in our view.

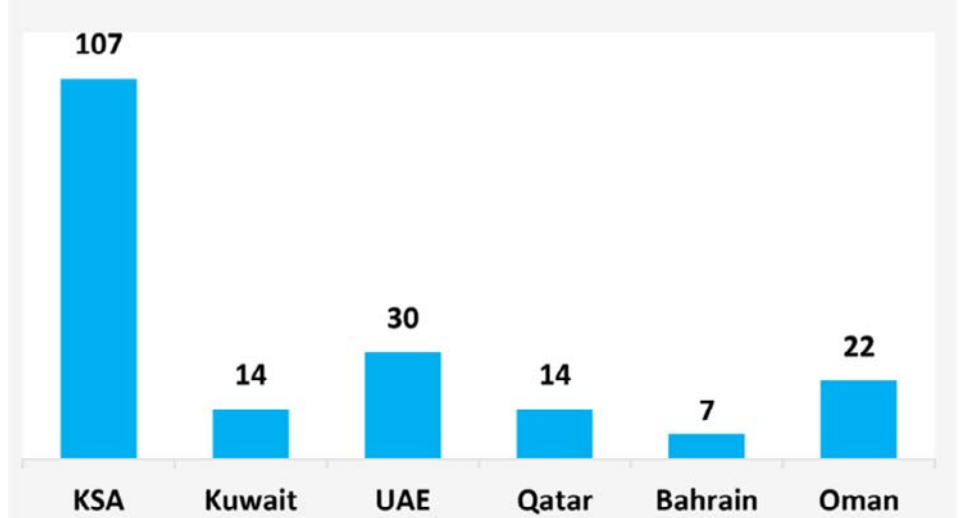
In terms of industries, the three corporate IPOs in the GCC were split between the Health Care, Mining & Metals, and Consumer Durables industries during 2016. Financial

services remained the most prominent industry in terms of issuances during the past 15 years, followed by Industrial Manufacturing and Oil & Gas. On the other hand, after a year dominated by the Transportation industry (2015), Healthcare raised the largest amount of capital at approximately \$471 million in 2016, from the IPO of Saudi Arabian corporate - Middle East Healthcare Company (MEHC). Saudi Arabia continued to remain the dominant player in the region's primary corporate capital markets, as all IPOs in the year that passed originated from the kingdom. Apart from MEHC, the TASI further listed Yamamah Steel Industries Company (\$147 million) and Lazurde Company for Jewelry (\$127 million) on the exchange.

Saudi contribution

All corporate IPOs listed in the GCC during 2016 remained oversubscribed, with Yamamah Steel receiving the maximum response from investors, as the issue was oversubscribed by 4.8 times. Lazurde Company for Jewelry received significant positive response as well, as the issue was oversubscribed by

GCC IPOs by country - 2001 to 2016



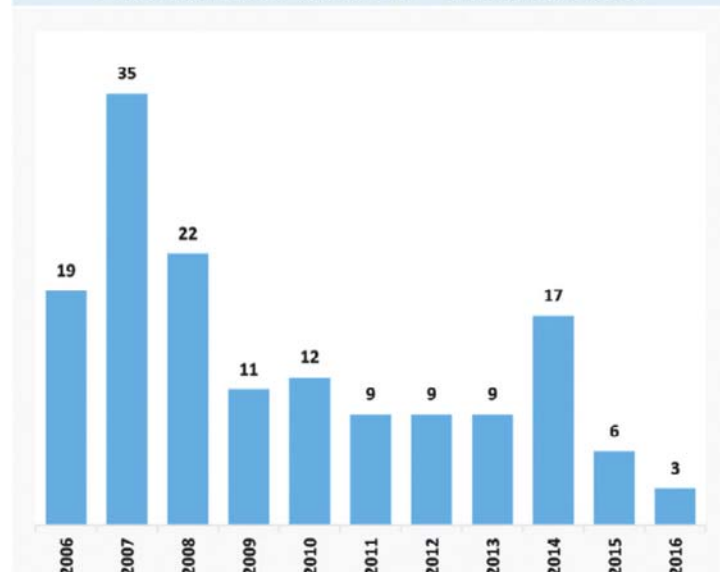
over 2.9 times, followed by Middle East Healthcare Company from which saw its IPO being oversubscribed by 2.7 times. Despite the volatility, KSA remained the only active GCC IPO market in 2016, as it saw all 3 of the region's corporate IPO deals listed on its exchange. In terms of individual country contribution to overall GCC IPO activity, Saudi Arabia continues to be the most important contributor. Despite the overall slowdown in activity in the region, Saudi Arabia contributed to 68 percent of the IPOs since 2006 and also contributed to an average of 5 deals per year over the past five years.

Global IPOs

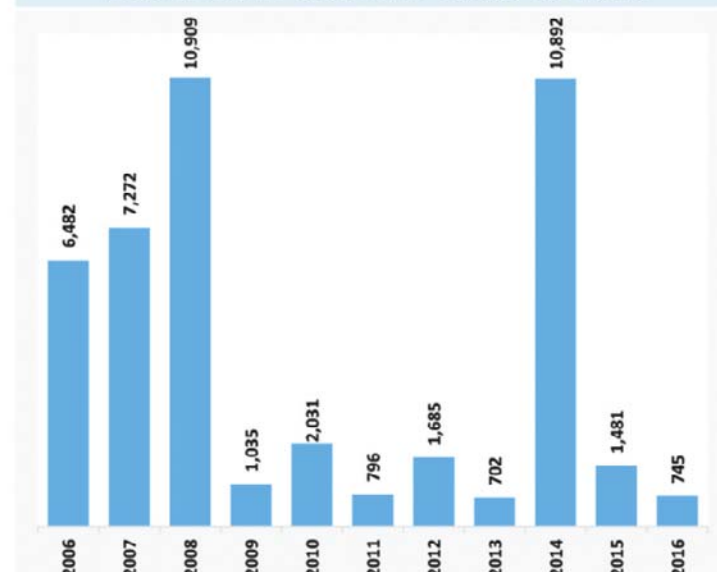
Globally, IPOs in 2016 fell below its previous 10-year annual global median of over 1,200 deals, as all regions decreased on a y-o-y basis both in terms of number of deals and proceeds raised. The Asia region saw the number of deals fall by 6 percent to 673 deals raising, while proceeds raised fell by a higher 21 percent to \$71.5 billion as per EY. Greater China was the key contributor to activity in the APAC region as 331 IPOs were recorded in the region while issuances dipped 23 percent y-o-y from 2015 to \$46.2 billion. The EMEIA region which includes Middle East and India came in second both in terms of IPO deal numbers and proceeds. Nevertheless capital raised was down 44 percent y-o-y, at \$37.7 billion, while the number of deals fell 25 percent y-o-y to 285 IPOs. US IPOs witnessed a weaker year in 2016, as IPO deal numbers were down 36 percent from 2015 at 112 deals, and capital raised through primary issues was down 37 percent to \$21.3 billion.

Of the three names that were listed on GCC exchanges during 2016, only one name - Middle East Healthcare Company closed the year in the green. This resulted in an average performance of a negative 15.4 percent for stocks listed during 2016. The negative performance for the listings was largely driven by Lazurde Company for Jewelry which plunged by 41.5 percent by the end of 2016 from its listing date of June-16, while Yamamah Steel Industries lost ground post listing and declined by over 19 percent.

GCC number of IPOs - 2006 to 2016



GCC IPOs in USD Mn - 2006 to 2016



GOLD HITS NEAR 4-WEEK HIGH AS DOLLAR RETREATS

LONDON: Gold touched a near-four week high yesterday as the dollar edged back from a 14-year peak and physical demand from major consumers China and India increased. Spot gold climbed to its highest since Dec 9 at \$1,167.56 an ounce and was up 0.6 percent at \$1,165.54 by 1246 GMT.

US gold futures climbed \$4.20 to \$1,166.10 an ounce. "The dollar index has consolidated and the big outflow from exchange-traded products (ETPs), which has been the biggest headwind for gold in the past few months, has stopped recently," Julius Baer analyst Carsten Menke said.

Holdings of the SPDR Gold Trust, the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, dropped 1 percent to 813.87 tons on Tuesday. Holdings are down about 14 percent since the US presidential election in November. "It is too early to tell if we are going to have a stabilisation in the holdings because the fundamental backdrop hasn't really changed and we are still in this positive post-Trump election environment where we are hoping for better growth in the States, a stronger dollar and higher interest rates," Menke said.

The dollar index fell back from its highest level since late 2002, hit after US manufacturing data beat expectations on Tuesday. A weaker dollar increases demand for commodities priced in the greenback by making them cheaper for holders of other currencies.

"If the (US) rate hike frequency picks up we are likely to see bond prices rise further, that would in turn encourage investors to switch out of ETFs into alternative assets," said NAB analyst Yvonne Lai.

The Chinese New Year holiday in the first quarter of 2017 is likely to result in some physical restocking of metal there, analysts said.

"Physical demand from China and India is quite strong at the moment," NAB's Lai said. "With the upcoming Chinese New Year there is a seasonally strong period for jewellery and in India the shortage of cash has prompted some safe-haven buying from Indian consumers as source of wealth."

Gold imports to Turkey rose to 36.7 tons in December, their highest monthly level in just over two years, data from the Istanbul bourse showed yesterday.

Silver was up 0.7 percent at \$16.35 an ounce, after hitting near three-week highs in the last session. Platinum rose to four-week highs of \$948.40 an ounce, extending a 4 percent increase in the previous session. Palladium gained 3 percent to \$730.45 an ounce, having climbed 4.5 percent on Tuesday. The metal is mostly used to clean up exhaust emissions from gasoline vehicles. "It is possible that some market participants have been buying palladium in particular in anticipation of record-high vehicle sales in the US," Commerzbank said in a note. — Reuters

BRITISH CONSUMERS BORROW AT FASTEST RATE IN 11 YEARS

LONDON: British consumer borrowing increased by the biggest amount in more than 11 years in November, boosting the unexpectedly robust post-Brexit vote economy in what could prove to be a big spending spree ahead of an expected rise in prices. Net consumer lending beat expectations to jump by 1.926 billion pounds (\$2.36 billion) in November - the biggest monthly rise since March 2005 - and is 10.8 percent higher than a year earlier, Bank of England data showed yesterday. Overall economic growth in Britain is likely to have been among the fastest of advanced economies in 2016. But it will face a tougher test this year as the effect of sterling's sharp fall since June's Brexit vote to leave the European Union starts to show up in consumer prices.

Consumer spending was the main motor for British growth in the three months after the referendum, with households saving the smallest share of their income since 2008. Yesterday's figures suggest this trend continued into the end of 2016, but it is unclear how much longer it will last. "Such rapid growth in unsecured credit is unsustainable over the medium-term, and the recent fall back in consumer confidence suggests that households will borrow more cautiously in 2017, subduing growth in consumption," Pantheon Macroeconomics economist Samuel Tombs said in a note to clients.

Consumer sentiment surveys have shown shoppers are concerned about the economic outlook as Britain prepares to start two years of talks to leave the EU, though they are still willing to make major purchases. In a possible harbinger, major clothing retailer Next cut its profit forecast for the current financial year on Wednesday after a poor Christmas and warned of a further decline in 2017-18.

The move sent shockwaves through the sector as Next was the strongest performer of the last decade.

Bargains

November's hefty borrowing figures could reflect shoppers taking advantage of Black Friday deals ahead of expected price rises, said Martin Beck, an adviser to forecasters EY ITEM Club. The British Retail Consortium said

continuing turmoil over Brexit. It said its December Composite Purchasing Managers Index came in at a final 54.4 points, up from November's 53.9 points. December was initially also given at 53.9 points. The PMI measures companies' readiness to spend on their business and so gives a good idea of how the underlying economy is performing.

Any reading above the boom-bust 50 points line indicates the economy is expanding. IHS Markit chief business econ-



LONDON: Construction takes place at a development next to Battersea Power Station in south west London yesterday. Construction output rose at its fastest pace for nine months in December 2016, even though imported raw material prices have risen, as a result of the drop in sterling caused by the Brexit vote last June. — AFP

high street prices fell in December at the slowest rate since mid-2015, and construction firms blamed a weaker currency for the biggest jump in costs since 2011 in a survey by financial data company Markit.

Economists expect overall consumer price inflation to approach 3 percent in 2017, up from less than 1 percent for 2016 as a whole, while output growth halves to little more than 1 percent. House price growth is also likely to slow to around 2 percent from twice that in 2016, according to mortgage lender Nationwide Building Society. The post-

Brexit vote economy, however, has surprised many economists. Growth to date has been much stronger than forecast just a few months ago, and there is little immediate sign of this changing. The Markit construction PMI showed activity rising at the fastest rate since March, bolstered by stronger house-building. This tallied with the BoE data which showed robust demand for mortgages. Lenders approved 67,505 home loans in November, in line with economists' forecasts in a Reuters poll and the highest since March. — Reuters

EUROZONE ECONOMY HITS NEAR 6-YR HIGH: SURVEY

BRUSSELS: Eurozone business activity hit its highest rate since May 2011 in December but the outlook remains hostage to political developments, a closely watched survey showed yesterday.

Data monitoring company IHS Markit said its report suggested the 19-nation eurozone economy was set for solid growth but nothing could be guaranteed as "political uncertainty dominates" - an apparent reference to the election of Donald Trump and

economist Chris Williamson said the December figures "signal an even stronger end to 2016 than the preliminary flash numbers, though whether this provides a much-needed springboard for the euro area's recovery to gain further momentum in 2017 remains very uncertain."

"Much depends on political events over the course of the next year," Williamson said, without specifying what issues he was referring to. He said the report pointed to eco-

nomical growth of 0.4 percent in the last three months of 2016, up from 0.3 percent in the third and second quarters, supported by a weaker euro and the European Central Bank's unprecedented stimulus program. "The concern is that domestic demand is likely to remain subdued over the course of 2017 as political uncertainty dominates, resulting in another year of disappointing growth across the region as a whole," he added. — AFP

AUB HOLDS SEMINAR ON PROPERTY INVESTMENT TAX IN UK

KUWAIT: In line with its commitment to provide excellent private banking services, Ahli United Bank (AUB) has recently held a seminar joining the Bank's Private Banking customers with London's top-notch property and legal consultants to discuss the latest updates that could affect customers' current and future property investments in the United Kingdom. During the seminar, experienced consultants came especially for the event - Piers Master, partner at London's prestigious Charles Russell Speechless law firm, and Kyra Motley from Taylor Wessing law firm, both provided insightful information about the new UK Inheritance Tax Law that will come into effect as of April 2017. In the details, the UK is imposing a 40 percent tax on offshore companies owned by members of the same family upon the death of any of the shareholders, excluding companies with unrelated owners. Medhat Tawfik, AUB's Private Banking

& Wealth Management General Manager said: "We're fully committed to consolidating and growing our Private Banking & Wealth Management portfolio by organizing high-profile events that provide customers with valuable insights to optimize their investments. During this seminar for example, we're shedding light on a new inheritance tax law that could directly affect offshore Kuwaiti family businesses which own properties in the UK."

According to Tawfik, the UK maintains its competitive edge in terms of taxation policies, despite several challenging laws adopted in the past few years, as customers can manage to limit the effects of such regulations by seeking the right legal counsel from AUB's experts.

In this line, Tawfik added: "Customers are highly recommended to follow the legal advice provided to them during the seminar. They should start with having a closer look at their offshore owner-

ship structure to have a better understanding of how the new law will affect their ownership of properties in the UK. This will allow them to be prepared and plan ahead, even before the law is passed, by seeking knowledgeable tax consultancy and providing alternative solutions that could reduce the tax amount. AUB will continue to support its customers in this direction, while providing them with valuable data and updates on how to securely acquire real estate in the United Kingdom."

It is noteworthy that AUB is planning a further private seminar for their Private Banking customers, whereby the legal team will be returning to Kuwait during the second week of January 2017 to advise on the best action to take before the Inheritance Tax Law comes into effect. For more information on AUB's wide range of products and services, customers can visit any of the Bank's branches, or call its Hayakum telebank-



Medhat Tawfik during the AUB seminar.

ing service on 1812000. Customers can also log on to the Bank's website www.ahliunited.com.kw to find out more about its latest activities.



KIB SHOWCASES KUWAIT'S HERITAGE WITH 2017 CALENDAR

KUWAIT: In a continuation of its program of cultural awareness initiatives focusing on highlighting Kuwait's rich national heritage, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has dedicated its 2017 calendar to shedding light on some of the country's most prominent cul-

marks are the Maritime Museum, Beit Dickson Cultural Centre, Sheikh Mubarak's Kiosk Museum, the Free Art Atelier, Kuwait Police Museum, Sadu House and Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiya.

"We thought this would be a great opportunity for us to highlight Kuwait's unique culture; showcasing its storied history, and raising awareness of the country's colorful heritage. These twelve landmarks are truly an embodiment of Kuwait's long and eventful journey over the years," said Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB. "As part of our social responsibility program, we have always been keen on launching and supporting initiatives that seek to highlight Kuwait's cultural roots, especially the Islamic facets of its heritage."

Najia further pointed out that as a leading national financial institution, KIB is keen on helping realize the vision of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, which focuses on spreading Kuwait's cultural message on a national, regional and international level; this vision which recently manifested itself in His Highness' participation in the "Safeguarding Endangered Cultural Heritage" conference which took place recently in Abu Dhabi.



tural landmarks and national museums.

In an effort to raise awareness amongst the local community about key national monuments, this year's calendar highlights twelve iconic cultural institutions, representing some of the biggest milestones in Kuwait's rich history. The featured museums and cultural centers tell the story of Kuwait through the eras; from the ancient to the modern. Amongst the featured land-

AFTER STEALING THE SHOW AT CES '17, HONOR 6X IS LAUNCHING IN MIDEAST

A MIGHTY BUDGET SMARTPHONE CREATED FOR DIGITAL NATIVES

KUWAIT: Built for the cost-conscious yet uncompromising Internet-minded millennial, the Honor 6X is the perfect technological budget beast. It features an innovative dual-lens rear camera offering a wide aperture range (F/0.95-F/16) that gives all the latitude to unleash your creative potential. Embodying the "Double the Experience" motto that millennials live and breathe, the Honor 6X breaks new ground at CES 2017 with its premium dual-lens rear camera, extended battery life and rock-solid performance. The main 12MP camera of the Honor 6X dual lens rear camera is responsible for the composition of the image while the 2MP camera helps to get depth of field information, resulting in beautiful shots that are sharp and crisp. Combined with the camera's wide aperture (F/0.95), the Honor 6X produces professional-looking background blur to make your subjects stand out. This, coupled with a 1.25um pixel size, enables the Honor 6X to capture quality shots even in low-light settings. The Honor 6X's camera uses Phase Detection Auto Focus technology, which allows for an ultra-fast camera focus speed of 0.3 seconds.

Fueled by Kirin 655 boasting an octa-core architecture, the Honor 6X is built to provide a glitch-free user experience. Kirin 655 packs four cores clocked at 2.1GHz and another four at 1.7 GHz. Supported by 3GB RAM and a powerful i5 co-processor, the Honor 6X allows you to seamlessly game, browse and listen to music or run multiple apps at the same time, it also boasts an internal storage memory of 32GB.

Running on a powerful 3340 mAh battery, Honor 6X offers an exceptional battery life. With its 16nm CPU and power saving technology further reducing power consumption, the Honor 6X provides 2.15 days of usage and 1.54 days of heavy usage on a single full charge. On a single full charge, the Honor 6X allows you to enjoy up to 11.5 hours of video, 70 hours of music, or up to 8 hours of gaming.

Featuring a generous 5.5-inch full HD (1920x1080p) display, the ergonomically designed Honor 6X boasts a full metal slim body (8.2mm thick) with 2.5D glass on the front and curved panel on the back.

The Honor 6X comes in three colors - gold, silver and grey. It will be available for purchase from 5 January in the Middle East including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, etc, at a selling price of 919 AED/SAR.

"Millennial smartphone users in the Middle East region have integrated the technology

seamlessly in to every aspect of their life and are looking for a device that can match both their lifestyle and their pocket. With the honor 6x, we are bringing our consumers a device that is perfectly tailored to the desired experience for a digital native," said Chris Sun Baigong, Vice President Huawei honor Middle East CBG

"Geared towards those unwilling to cut back on performance, Honor 6X is a device engi-

neered with uncompromising excellence," said George Zhao, president of honor. "Understanding the 'double or nothing' lifestyle of millennials, we designed Honor 6X with enough muscle power to allow them to share, explore, and enjoy life to the fullest."

1 Data based on Honor lab test. Battery life may vary based on usage patterns and network conditions.



SPAIN'S BANKS RECOVER BUT TOXIC ASSETS REMAIN

MADRID: Hit by a severe crisis several years ago, Spain's banking sector has recovered but at a cost as thousands are laid off and it struggles to get rid of toxic assets. "The system is closer to putting most of the crisis legacies behind it," analysts at the International Monetary Fund in charge of Spain said in a recent report.

Still, the ghosts of a crisis that saw the European Union bail out the sector have recently been revived as Italy suffers a similar predicament, with the state having to rescue Monte dei Paschi di Siena, the world's oldest bank. The EU lent 41 billion (\$43 billion) euros to rescue the Spanish banking sector in the spring of 2012, compared to some 50 billion euros in Greece, as an example.

At the time, Spain was waist-deep in a financial crisis caused when a property bubble burst in 2008 after years of euphoria that saw loans granted almost blindly to households incapable of reimbursing them.

Bad debt down

Since then, though, the share of problem loans in the balance sheets of Spain's banks has dropped considerably. In the second quarter of 2016, it stood at an average of 6 percent, according to the European Banking Authority (EBA) regulatory agency.

This is slightly above the European median of 5.4 percent, but well below that of Italy, Portugal or Greece, which stands at 16.4, 20 and 47 percent respectively. Spain's central bank, which is even stricter in its calculations of the share of bad loans, said in November that it stood at an average of 9.2 percent, against a high of 13.6 percent at the end of 2013. The Moody's ratings agency predicts this should continue to drop thanks to "favorable macroeconomic conditions" such as expected growth of 3.2 percent in 2016, double the eurozone average.

Banks are also much stricter in granting loans now. But on a darker note, they are struggling to sell the huge amount of property seized during the crisis from households that could not pay, as buyers remain scarce.

"Despite the mild recovery in the housing market observed in 2015, banks' real estate repossessions continue to exceed the volume of properties that banks manage to sell," Moody's said in a note.

The agency values the amount of "problematic" assets still in banks' hands at 350 billion euros.—AFP

AL DANAH DRAW **TODAY IS THE DAY**

WIN 1 MILLION DINARS

BIGGEST DRAW OF 2017

JANUARY 5, 2017 • THE AVENUES • 7PM

e-gulfbank.com • 1 805 805

GULF BANK'S MILLIONAIRE DRAW, BIGGEST DRAW OF 2017, TODAY

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is proud to hold its biggest draw event for 2017, the Al-Danah Millionaire Draw, today, Thursday, 5 January 2017 starting 7 pm at The Avenues Mall.

Gulf Bank is the only Bank in Kuwait to offer a cash prize of KD1 million. The Bank will also be receiving a well-known international celebrity for this prize during the event, please stay tuned for the exciting revelation that will once again place Kuwait and Gulf Bank on the international stage.

The Bank invites you all to take part and join the Al-Danah millionaire draw; you might be a lucky winner if you are an eligible Gulf Bank account holder!

In addition to the Al-Danah KD1 million, Gulf Bank will be giving away KD 3,000 cash with the exciting "Catch the Cash" competition, where participants will step inside a flying cash box and catch as many notes as they can in 10 seconds. Participants can then exchange those notes for real cash, on spot! There will also be other cash prizes of KD 1,000 each and a brand new Cadillac Escalade car will be won on the spot at the event with Gulf Bank's Salary and red accounts.

The event will feature special appearances from the popular actor/comedian "Weld Al-Deera, Khaled Al-Agrooga," the notable radio host Khaled Al-Ansari, and the talented musician from the group "The Concert" Mohammad Al-Sarraf who is also a member of the Gulf Bank family!

The event kicks off at 5 pm with kid's activities ranging from face painting, henna, and balloons to mascots. The main draw events start at 7pm.

To participate in the upcoming Al-Danah millionaire draw, customers must already have an Al-Danah account containing a minimum of KD 200. Chances of winning can be increased by adding to the amount deposited in Al-Danah account. This will also maximize your chances of winning up to KD 500,000 quarterly, and one of the two KD 1,000 cash prizes that are drawn each working day.

New red Account or Salary Account customers who have opened an account and transferred their student allowance or salary are also eligible to enter the draws.

Now this is your chance to begin 2017 in a prosperous way!

'more' prizes

Pay your bills and win cash prizes every KD 1 gives you a chance to win

VIVA Web - Quick Pay or Self Care

VIVA 102 IVR (Interactive Voice Response)

VIVA App

Kiosk

Direct Debit

Daily Prize - KD 100 • Monthly Grand Prize - KD 1000 •

Services

Call 102 viva.com.kw [viva](https://www.facebook.com/viva) [viva](https://www.instagram.com/viva) [viva](https://www.youtube.com/viva) [viva](https://www.tiktok.com/viva)

VIVA ANNOUNCES 10TH & LAST WEEK'S WINNERS OF 'MORE' PRIZES CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, announced 10th and last week draw's winners of KD 100, of "more" prizes campaign for postpaid customers.

The name of November's big prize winner, KD 1000, is Hasan Saad Reja Alrashedi. As for names of daily prize winners, KD 100, from 18 December until 24 December, were as follows: Mariam Ali Ibrahim Alsultan, Eman Yaqoub Khudhur Almesbah, Musaed Rajaam Salem Alami, Dhari Tareq Bader Salem Almutawaa, Yaser Othman Abdulhameed Othman, Nawal Falah Nasser Alhajer, Fahad Saeed Mutlaq Alharbi.

VIVA gave the customers a wonderful opportunity to win amazing cash prizes, KD 100 daily and KD 1000 at the end of each month, once they pay their VIVA bills through Direct Debit, VIVA website, VIVA's Kiosks, VIVA App or by calling 102. Customers

earned one chance for each KD 1.

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things Possible for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established an unrivalled position in the market through its customer centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions; a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation (4G LTE) network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability.

HERE COME 'SMART STORES' WITH ROBOTS, INTERACTIVE SHELVES

LAS VEGAS: Tomorrow's retail stores want to take a page from their online rivals by embracing advanced technology - everything from helpful robots to interactive mirrors to shelves embedded with sensors. The goal: Use these real-world store features to lure shoppers back from the internet, and maybe even nudge them to spend more in the process. Amazon's new experimental grocery store in Seattle, opening in early 2017, will let shoppers buy goods without needing to stop at a checkout line. Sensors track items as shoppers put them into baskets or return them to the shelf. The shopper's Amazon account gets automatically charged.

"Amazon, for good or bad, has been setting the path," said Robert Hetu, research director at Gartner Research. "Each retailer is going to have to respond in some way. But it's not one-size-fits-all." Kroger, Neiman Marcus and Lowe's are among the companies already experimenting with futuristic retail stores. Robots, for instance, could help guide shoppers to the right aisle, while augmented reality apps could help you see how a particular shade of paint will look in the living room - or how you might look in a pair of jeans. Many of these technologies will be unveiled or demonstrated at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas, which begins

Tuesday with media previews.

Plenty of retailers have learned through trial and error - that technology can't get too far ahead of shoppers. It has to be easy to use and beneficial to shoppers in some way, whether it's to save time or money. If retailers get it right, they might succeed in boosting spending at retail stores at a time when consumers increasingly prefer to shop online. Here are five technologies coming to a store near you.

Smart Shelves

Web retailers have plenty of data on their customers. Some of these online technologies can even track shoppers from site to site to lure them back with what's known as retargeting ads - promos targeted to what that shopper has looked at before, but didn't actually buy. Smart shelves with sensors promise the same kind of in-depth consumer behavior analytics at retail stores.

At a Kroger store in Cold Spring, Ohio, shelves currently show digitized price tags and information about the products. The next step is to tie that to individual shoppers. For example, for a shopper who prefers gluten-free products, the price tags could light up in the aisle where all the gluten-free

options are. The company says this will all be done with the customer's permission.

Perch Interactive, a startup that is working with chains like Sunglass Hut and fragrance maker Jo Malone, uses laser and motion sensors to detect when a product is picked up. Perch monitors the interactions and lets retailers know what people pick up but don't buy. It also offers recommendations: When a shopper picks up a Jo Malone product, an interactive display pops up to show a complementary fragrance.

Robots

Amazon and other retailers have long used robots in warehouses to help package and ship orders. But what about interacting with shoppers? Home improvement retailer Lowe's is testing robots in one of its San Jose, California, stores, and plans to roll them out to 10 more stores in the state this year. Besides scanning shelves for inventory, the robots can guide customers to specific products in both English and Spanish.

Shoppers will also start seeing robots that interact with them more deeply. Japanese joint venture SoftBank Robotics is testing a 4-foot humanoid robot called Pepper at two Westfield Malls in

California. They greet shoppers and can do a little dance, but have the potential to send messages geared to people's age and gender through facial recognition. SoftBank Robotics says it's working with clothing retailers to help suggest outfits to shoppers.

Interactive Mirrors

High-end clothing stores are testing interactive mirrors in dressing areas, a key place where shoppers decide whether to buy or not. Neiman Marcus has installed these outside fitting rooms at 20 stores to offer shoppers a 360-degree view of what an outfit looks like. Shoppers can make side-by-side comparisons without having to try them all on. They can also share video with friends for feedback. Variations include capturing a customer's session at the beauty counter and emailing a video to help the person recreate the look at home.

Rent the Runway, an online retailer that lets people rent high-end clothing, teamed up with Samsung to have digital displays highlight its online inventory for shoppers at a new location in New York. A mirror in the store is planned to recommend items that go with what the customer is wearing. — AP

CHRYSLER NEW TECH-RICH CONCEPT CAR EYES YOUTH

LAS VEGAS: Fiat-Chrysler on Tuesday unveiled a concept car designed for millennials: An electric-powered minivan with modular components that can be adapted for autonomous driving. The Chrysler Portal concept car was unveiled at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas to show off its technology in a design that is radically different from its counterparts. Inside a boxy exterior, the vehicle has an adaptable, modular "third space" that can be modified for passengers or cargo.

The company said it can be used in "semi-autonomous operation," where a driver has the option to turn control over to the vehicle under certain highway driving situations. The Portal, like some new tech-rich vehicles, uses an array of sensors to monitor conditions that can assist drivers. It is also "engineered to upgrade to higher levels of autonomy as technology progresses," according to a statement.

FCA's Tim Kuniskis said the concept was backed by "significant research on the millennial generation." "Millennials have clearly defined that they want a vehicle that will grow with them as they experience life changes," he added. "FCA is a leader in family transportation and it was essential that we fully explored the idea of what a vehicle could look like for this emerging genera-

tion." The vehicle, for which production plans have not yet been announced, is designed as a family car that can be adapted for commercial use or car-sharing.

Chrysler engineer Ashley Edgar said it was loosely based on the Chrysler Pacifica but is "a new platform." She said the design is "very focused on modularity," adding that "it grows with you, it evolves with you." For example, seats can be added as a family grows to avoid the need for a new vehicle. It has full-color, changing LED lighting on the front, side portals and rear that allows it to take on different colors and can be tailored for personal, business or drive settings.

In terms of electronics, the car is designed with facial recognition and voice biometrics to recognize the driver to customize lighting, music and other settings. It can also work with emerging safety technologies such as vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle to infrastructure communication. Edgar said that although there were no specific production plans for the car some features were "very close" to being implemented on a production car. The Italian-American firm is working with a number of partners on the car including Adient, Magneti Marelli, Panasonic Automotive and Samsung Electronics. — AFP



LAS VEGAS: A man tests out a flying machine in a HYPERSUIT virtual reality simulator during the 2017 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) on Tuesday. — AFP

TECH OUTLOOK DAMPENED BY POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW KICKS OFF

LAS VEGAS: As tech industry leaders gather for an annual extravaganza showcasing hot new products, political uncertainty is casting a cloud over the sector. The election of Donald Trump and the Brexit referendum are among the factors weighing on the outlook. And a strong US dollar may cut into spending for many consumers around the world. With the Consumer Electronics Show kicking off this week in Las Vegas, the organizers are predicting that industry revenue would shrink for the fourth consecutive year.

Consumer Technology Association senior director of market research Steve Koenig revealed the forecast Tuesday, predicting the amount of money people around the world spend on smartphones and other gadgets this year would tally \$929 billion as compared to \$950 billion in 2016. Koenig said the "underpinning" of the global forecast was "uncertainty with the election of Trump and with Brexit." "This air of uncertainty certainly is going to impact discretionary spending of consumers; business investment, and investment by governments," Koenig contended.

Nearly half of the money spent on consumer technology will be for smartphones, which were forecast to account for 47 percent of spending on devices. "Mobility really does make the world go around," Koenig said during a CTA presentation ahead of the official opening of the show today. "The smartphone is the center of the consumer technology universe."

'Magnificent Seven'

Smartphones, tablets, desktop computers, laptops, televisions, cameras, and smartwatches

made up a set of categories expected to account for some 81 percent, or \$754 billion, in consumer electronics industry revenue this year. This is the first time smartwatches have made it into what Koenig called the "Magnificent Seven" revenue generating products in the industry. "We are seeing a lot of traction in smart watches," Koenig said. "Wearable (computing devices) are generating lots of innovation that is fueling lots of growth."

In one of the first events at the show, Chinese electronics giant Huawei announced the global launch of its mid-range Honor 6x smartphone which includes dual-lens camera technology and is aimed at young consumers. The smartphone, which was launched in China last year, will be available in 13 new markets this month, including the United States, at a price of \$249 to \$299, the company announced at CES. Huawei has emerged as the world's third largest smartphone vendor but has had only limited success in the United States.

Huawei, which has a declared goal of becoming the number one smartphone maker, faces a crowded market behind the top two sellers, competing against other Chinese firms such as Lenovo and Xiaomi and South Korea's LG, which have also slated announcements at the electronics show.

Hitting the road

Fiat-Chrysler, meanwhile, used CES to unveil a Portal concept car designed for millennials: An electric-powered minivan with modular components that can be adapted for autonomous driving. Inside a boxy exterior, the vehicle has an

adaptable, modular "third space" that can be modified for passengers or cargo. The company said it can be used in "semi-autonomous operation," where a driver has the option to turn control over to the vehicle under certain highway driving situations.

The Portal uses an array of sensors to monitor conditions that can assist drivers and is designed to allow upgrades for more self-driving capabilities. FCA's Tim Kuniskis said the concept was backed by "significant research on the millennial generation." "Millennials have clearly defined that they want a vehicle that will grow with them as they experience life changes," he added. The vehicle, for which production plans have not yet been announced, is designed as a family car that can be adapted for commercial use or car-sharing.

Futuristic, self-driving cars are expected to be among the hot topics at CES as vehicle and component companies show off innovations heading for market. Industry newcomer Faraday Future was at CES to unveil its first production vehicle in a challenge to Tesla electric cars. The company, backed by Chinese billionaire Jia Yueting (YT Jia), announced that it would begin taking reservations for deliveries in 2018 with a \$5,000 deposit for its FF91 model, which can go 604 km between chargings. CES will officially open its doors today in the Las Vegas Convention Center after two days of press briefings in which companies compete to grab public attention. More than 3,800 exhibitors and at least 165,000 visitors were expected to take part in what was billed as the biggest CES event in the show's 50-year history. — AFP



LAS VEGAS: Exterior designer Matt Dunford speaks beside the unveiled Fiat Chrysler Portal Concept car during the Fiat Chrysler press conference at CES 2017 on Tuesday. — AFP

CARNIVAL TURNING CRUISE SHIPS INTO 'SMART CITIES'

LAS VEGAS: Leisure travel colossus Carnival Corporation is putting a spin on technology used at Disney World to turn cruise ships into what it bills as smart cities at sea. Carnival on Tuesday introduced an "Ocean Medallion" designed to tailor trips to individual passengers by learning their tastes and on-board habits, and even keeping track of roaming children. The travel giant, which has 10 cruise brands, unveiled the lightweight, waterproof medallions in Las Vegas as the Consumer Electronics Show gadget extravaganza prepared to get underway.

Capable of whispering wirelessly to a web of on-board sensors, the medallions are designed to help cruise operators anticipate guests' needs, making note of a favorite wine, say, and prompting suggestions as the journey progresses, according to Nytec, the US company behind the technology. Carnival plans to roll out the devices on its Regal Princess cruise ship late this year, with two more ships following next year. The medallions

let crew know where people are and where they might be heading, helping with tasks ranging from unlocking cabin doors for guests to anticipating which pools or restaurants might need back-up staff or letting housekeeping know when the time is right to tidy up.

Medallions also act as wallets, charging purchases to people's shipboard accounts, with identities confirmed by photos that pop up on workers' screens and allow people to be greeted by name. "Carnival is about to launch a concept that is really a smart city on a cruise ship," Carnival Corporation spokeswoman Vicki Johnson told AFP. "Cruise ships are very city-like when you boil things down." Carnival executive John Padgett, who worked on the project, was previously a vice president at Walt Disney Parks & Resorts in Florida, where he helped bring to life MagicBand smart bracelets that used short-range signals to replace wallets, tickets, and room keys. — AFP



LAS VEGAS: Miles Clark of Carnival Corp demonstrates the Ocean Compass interface before CES International on Tuesday. — AP

ELECTRIC CAR STARTUP UNVEILS 'NEW SPECIES'

LAS VEGAS: Faraday Future, the secretive electric car startup with ambitions to overtake Tesla, unveiled its first production vehicle Tuesday, proclaiming it to be a "new species" for personal transportation. The company, backed by Chinese billionaire Jia Yueting (YT Jia), announced at the Consumer Electronics Show that it would begin taking reservations for deliveries in 2018 with a \$5,000 deposit for its FF91 model. Faraday, which last year unveiled its prototype and is building a factory outside Las Vegas, did not offer details on pricing of the new vehicle.

But it touted specifications on battery range, power and acceleration which pointed to a high-end vehicle, outperforming Tesla on key benchmarks. In one key benchmark, the Faraday offers an estimated 378 miles (604 kilometers) of range before needed recharging, based on US testing standards, better than Tesla's 315 miles. Based on European testing standards, the range is 700 kilometers or some 435 miles.

"This is day one of a new era of mobility," said executive vice president of engineering Nick Sampson. "This is the first of a new species." Because Faraday started from scratch, "we don't

have to follow outdated practices or retrofit existing equipment," Sampson said. "We have to flip the auto industry on its head." The vehicle is packed with technology: It has a semi-autonomous mode which allows for self-park-

ing, and multiple modems to connect to the internet. It personalizes settings for each driver and occupant. "Everyone in the car will have their own seat configured for them," Sampson said. — AFP



LAS VEGAS: LeEco CEO Jia Yueting (left) and Nick Sampson, Faraday Future's senior vice president of product research and development, shake hands after unveiling the FF91 electric car at CES on Tuesday. — AP

HOW WE SHOP HURTS ENDANGERED SPECIES

PARIS: The hidden danger to wildlife posed by imported consumer goods—an espresso coffee in Beijing, a tofu salad in Chicago—can now be pinpointed and measured, researchers said yesterday. Crunching huge amounts of data, they unveiled a global “threat map” detailing the impact on endangered species of exports to the United States, China, Japan and the European Union. To procure beans for that coffee or tofu, for example, forests have been cleared in Sumatra, Indonesia and in Brazil’s Mato Grosso, adding incrementally to the habitat loss driving dozens of animals and plants towards extinction.

The global supply chain of manufactured goods—from iPhones to Ikea furniture—can also contribute to wildlife decline. Focusing on nearly 7,000 land and marine species classified as threatened by the International Union for the

Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the researchers traced “hotspots” of biodiversity loss to hundreds of commodities and their distant markets. In earlier work, they concluded that thirty percent of worldwide species threats are due to international trade. The new study, published in the journal *Nature Ecology and Evolution*, reveals which nations’ consumers drive species loss most. It also suggests where conservation efforts should be focused.

Animal habitats razed

Currently, 90 percent of the more than \$6 billion (5.75 billion euros) mobilized each year for species conservation is spent within rich nations where money is raised. “Yet these countries are rarely where threat hotspots lie,” said senior author Keiichi Kanemoto, a professor at Shinshu University in

Matsumoto, Japan. The study provides tools to calculate what percentage of the species threat in one country is due to consumption of goods in another, he told AFP. About two percent of the total threat to the endangered stub-footed toad in Brazil, for example, can be attributed directly to logging linked to goods exported to the United States.

Timber harvested in Malaysia and exported mainly to the EU and China has similarly robbed the Asian elephant, the greater spotted eagle and the Sun bear of habitat. And forests cleared in southern Brazil’s highlands for beef production encroaches on the woolly spider monkey, along with many other species.

‘Mass extinction event’

“We identified biodiversity threat hotspots that are predominantly driven by just a small number of countries,”

Kanemoto told AFP. “This should make it easier to initiate direct collaborations between producers and consumers.” Finding new solutions for species loss has become urgent. Earth has entered a “mass extinction event” in which animals and plants are disappearing up to 1,000 times more quickly than just a few centuries ago, according to scientists.

There have only been six such wipe-outs in the last half-billion years, some claiming up to 95 percent of all lifeforms. Trade-related threats to wildlife can be indirect, and occur in unexpected places. A large and growing demand for olive oil from Spain and Portugal, for example, could help push the endangered Iberian lynx into oblivion due to the construction of dams to control irrigation.

The calculations do not cover illegal trade in wildlife, such as ivory from elephant tusks or rare birds and reptiles

sold as pets. On paper, many threatened animals and plants are protected under the UN Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). But cross-border traffic, worth up to \$150 billion a year, in these species live or as body parts—remains brisk. Nor do they take into account other factors such as urban sprawl, local hunting for food, or climate change.

The study found that trade-related threats are highly concentrated geographically, at both ends of trade routes. For those driven by US consumption, for example, the five percent of land area most affected accounts for nearly a quarter of the country’s total impact. In the oceans, the five percent of area most affected by US appetites includes more than 60 percent of threatened species habitats.—AFP

THE GOAT SLAUGHTERHOUSE THAT DRIVES A KENYAN SLUM’S ECONOMY

‘MOST OF US HERE DEPEND ON THESE SLAUGHTERHOUSES FOR A LIVING’

KIAMAIKO, Kenya: Dressed in a white apron and black gum boots, 24-year-old Osman Idris waits patiently outside a Nairobi slaughterhouse as scores of customers stream past in search of fresh meat. A delivery man, Idris is just one of many residents of Kiamaiko, a slum 12 kms northeast of the Kenyan capital, who is making a decent living from its thriving trade in goat meat. Unlike the majority of Kenyan slums where unemployment, insecurity and crime are rife, Kiamaiko has seen more jobs and small businesses flourish as a result of the goat market. “Most of us here depend on these slaughterhouses for a living, it’s our daily hustle,” said Idris, his eyes searching for clients who might need his services.

Nearly 1 billion people live in slums where their survival often depends on the informal economy - activities such as hawking clothes, food and other goods on the street that do not fully comply with tax or labor market regulations. The United Nations says improving transport, sanitation, hospitals and schools is imperative in slums, but authorities must also work to integrate shanty towns and their informal economies into

their cities. Success will require policies to address the problems faced by slum dwellers and their businesses including a lack of documents to prove land or property ownership which allows re-sale or loans, according to a senior official at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). “Given its size and importance, the informal economy is a fundamental element of accelerating Africa’s long term vision for development,” said Edlam Abera Yemeru, a UNECA specialist on urbanisation policies.

Rising cost of rent

UNECA estimates that overall nearly 70 percent of workers in sub-Saharan Africa are engaged in the informal economy. Increasingly, African governments are exploring new ways to slash red tape and help legalize micro-businesses to give slum dwellers a legitimate income to invest and improve their lives - while creating a new taxation stream for city administrations, experts say. Africa’s population of slum dwellers is expected to rapidly increase in the coming years with United Nations projecting that around 187 million more Africans will live in cities in the next decade, boosting both formal and informal urban economies.

In Kiamaiko residents say the goat market has transformed the sprawling slum - once notorious for guns and young, violent thugs - and even attracted investment. “The slum used to be very risky,” Idris told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. “I’ve witnessed countless muggings here before, but since the slaughterhouses started expanding they have opened up job opportunities for youths thus helping reduce cases of crime and violence.” The growth of the goat market has led to other businesses opening their doors from car wash points to barber shops, fruit and vegetable stores to money transfer services and even recreation centers, locals say. But not all residents are happy. In some areas, the cost of rent has soared placing pressure on poorer families to leave their neighborhoods in search of cheaper housing further away from Nairobi’s peripheral settlements and potential jobs. “We can no longer afford to pay rent here. The rent has surged tenfold and only those that can afford a year’s rent in advance are favored by the landlords,” said Macharia Karanja, a mechanic who has lived in the slum for the last 10 years.

Jobs mean services

Karanja says he and many other young men have become trapped in a vicious cycle of low incomes and family responsibilities at a young age. “Most of the traders in the slaughterhouse business have bought ghetto houses and converted them into two to three storey buildings which have become unaffordable,” he said. While some residents have been forced out of Kiamaiko, others like Abdul Hassan are happy wealthier new tenants can afford services such as garbage collection and security.

“At least tenants from these high-end houses don’t give us headaches like those in ghettos. They are very co-operative when it comes to paying our services,” said Hassan, a member of a self-help group that collects garbage in the area. Kiamaiko’s fast-growing slum economy has also started to attract investors, residents say. “The slum has become safer, less risky and more attractive to outside investors,” said John Kibichu, a beer distributor. “The local environment has made it possible for businesses to operate 24 hours a day and traders are all keen to grab a share of the revenue generated in this slum.”—Reuters



MARATHON, Florida: Photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau shows staff at the Florida Keys-based Turtle Hospital, including from left, Alastir McArthur, Bette Zirkelbach, Richie Moretti and Marika Weber; begin to care for critically endangered Kemp’s ridley sea turtles flown from New England to the hospital in Marathon, Florida, after being rescued from coastal waters of Cape Cod, Mass, suffering from cold stunning.

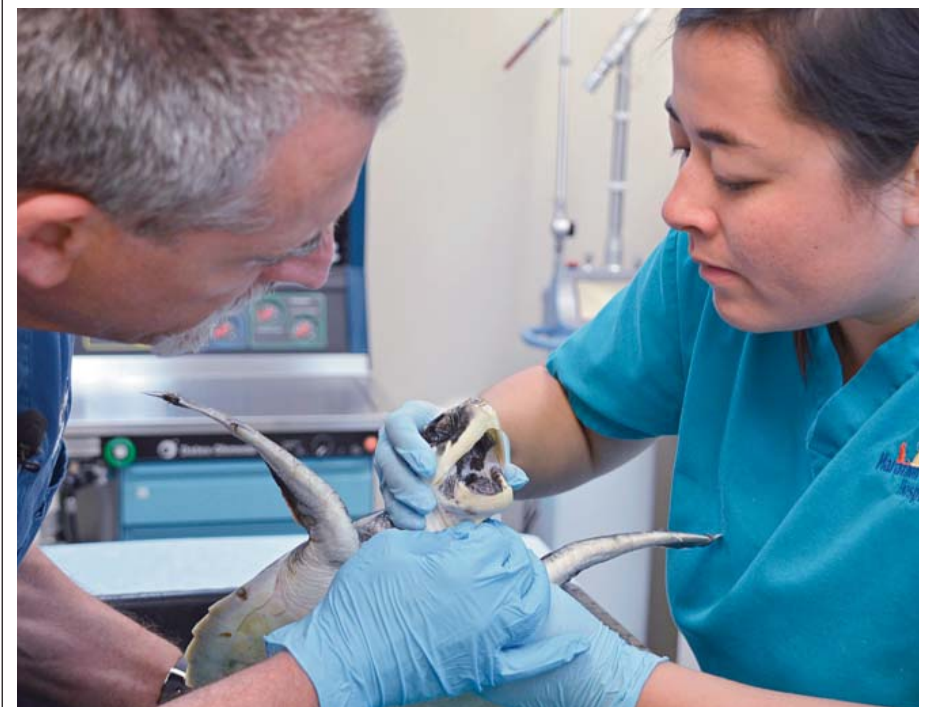
SEA TURTLES RESCUED OFF CAPE COD MOVED TO FLORIDA KEYS

MARATHON, Florida: Fifteen critically endangered Kemp’s ridley sea turtles are warming up at the Florida Keys-based Turtle Hospital after being rescued from cold waters off Cape Cod, Massachusetts. The juvenile turtles have pneumonia as a result of “cold stunning” but are expected to make a full recovery, officials said Tuesday. “Cold stunning” is a hypothermic reaction that occurs when sea turtles are exposed to cold water for a prolonged time.

“They came in when the water was warm, and they didn’t go out with the Gulf Stream,” Turtle Hospital manager Bette Zirkelbach said of that warmer ocean current. “The cold weather moved in and the turtles didn’t get out in time.” The turtles, which range from two to 10 pounds each, were flown Monday night to the Florida Keys from Norwood, Massachusetts.

They were transported in towel-lined boxes en route to the Turtle Hospital. “They’re going to be treated at the Turtle Hospital with broad spectrum antibiotics,” Zirkelbach said. “We’re going to give them vitamins, a healthy diet, and we’re going to keep them in warm water, 75 degrees. That will warm them up and let those medications do their work.”

The reptiles are likely to be released in waters off Florida after they recover. Kemp’s ridley sea turtles are the most endangered of all turtle species, Zirkelbach said. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration says on its website that the species is most common along the Gulf coasts of Mexico and of such US states as Texas, Louisiana and Florida. It also is found along the Atlantic coast in the Southeast and as far north as New England during the summer and fall.—AP



MARATHON, Florida: In this late photo provided by the Florida Keys News Bureau, veterinarians Doug Mader and Helen Ingraham examine a critically endangered Kemp’s ridley sea turtle flown from New England to the hospital in Marathon.

OBAMA, PENCE TO CAPITOL AS HEALTH CARE OVERHAUL FIGHT BEGINS

WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama is traveling to the Capitol to give congressional Democrats advice on how to combat the Republican drive to dismantle his health care overhaul. Vice President-elect Mike Pence is meeting with GOP lawmakers to discuss the best way to send Obama’s cherished law to its graveyard and replace it with - well, something. The separate strategy sessions were coming on the second day of the new, GOP-led Congress. In 16 days, Republican Donald Trump replaces Obama at the White House, putting the party’s longtime goal of annulling much of the 2010 health care overhaul within reach.

Plenty of questions remain, including the repeal bill’s details, costs and when it would take effect. Republicans also face divisions over the next step - replacement legislation - that will likely take months or years to resolve. While they can hardly prevent the GOP repeal effort from proceeding, the president and House and Senate Democrats were meeting Wednesday to discuss how to best defend a law that’s extended health insurance coverage to 20 million Americans and which Obama considers one of the proudest pillars of his legacy.

Political support

“The more the people understand what’s included in the Affordable Care Act and how they benefit from it, the more popular the program is, and the harder it is for Republicans to have political support for tearing it down,” White House spokesman Josh Earnest told reporters Tuesday, using the law’s formal name. “The president’s message to them is that they should be out there telling the sto-

ries of their constituents who are benefiting from this law,” Earnest said. “I think that’s certainly the most important thing they can do.”

Pence was meeting Wednesday morning with House Republicans to discuss their health care drive and planned to attend a lunch with Senate Republicans. Republicans eager to show quick action against Obama’s health care law took an initial procedural step Tuesday, introducing a budget bill that would have to be considered under a parliamentary procedure that would prevent Democrats from using a Senate filibuster to protect the health care law.

Republicans control the Senate by a 52-48 margin, but it takes 60 votes to end a filibuster, a procedural roadblock that can kill legislation. The Senate was expected to complete the budget by next week. House approval would follow. “This is the first step toward relief for Americans struggling under Obamacare,” said House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis. The budget legislation gives congressional committees until Jan. 27 - a blink of an eye for lawmakers - to write legislation repealing major parts of the health care law. Likely targets include the law’s tax penalties for people who don’t obtain insurance, its requirement that many companies cover workers and tax increases on higher-earning individuals and many health care firms.

Aware they have no chance of quickly agreeing on replacement legislation, Republicans plan to delay when their repeal would actually take effect. A range of 18 months to three years - perhaps longer - has been under discussion. Trump has provided few specifics about how he would revamp the nation’s \$3 trillion-a-year health care system.

Steps he and congressional Republicans have mentioned include greater reliance on tax credits to help people afford coverage.

Prompt insurance

Republicans don’t want to abruptly end health care coverage for millions of voters who live in GOP-represented districts and states, or cause chaos in health care markets and prompt insurance companies to stop selling policies. So they are considering including provisions in their repeal bill to protect consumers and insurers during the transition period. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., a member of the GOP Senate leadership, said that could include money to temporarily continue helping people afford to buy coverage and language letting the Department of Health and Human Services help stabilize insurance markets.

“Everyone realizes there’s going to have to be a phase-in, phase-out period,” Thune said Tuesday. Underscoring one challenge facing Republicans, a report Wednesday from a non-partisan anti-deficit group estimated that repealing the health care law entirely would add to federal deficits, and that replacement legislation would require significant funding. The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget analysis found that complete repeal would add up to \$350 billion to federal deficits over a decade. That’s because the Medicare cuts and tax increases used to finance Obama’s law exceed the amount of money spent to expand the breadth of coverage. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimated in December 2015 that an earlier bill repealing much but not all of Obama’s law would save around \$300 billion over 10 years. Obama vetoed that bill.—AP

TRIAL TO BEGIN OVER MENINGITIS OUTBREAK THAT KILLED 64 TOTAL

BOSTON: Jury selection is set to begin in the murder trial of a former top executive at a Massachusetts compounding pharmacy that has been blamed for a national meningitis outbreak that killed 64 people in 2012. Barry Cadden is charged with 25 counts of murder and other offenses under federal racketeering laws. He is the co-founder and former head pharmacist of New England Compounding Center in Framingham.

Federal prosecutors allege that the center used expired ingredients and failed to follow industry cleanliness standards, resulting in tainted steroid injections. Hundreds across the country were sickened with fungal meningitis in the fall of 2012. Cadden has pleaded not guilty. His lawyer has said that prosecutors overreached in charged him with causing deaths. Jury selection is scheduled to begin today in US District Court.—AP



BOSTON: In this file photo, Barry Cadden leaves the federal courthouse in Boston after a hearing.—AP

CZECHS DETECT BIRD FLU ON 2 FARMS, IN DEAD SWANS

PRAGUE: Czech authorities yesterday said they had detected highly-contagious bird flu at two small poultry farms and in dead swans in the first such cases in a decade. “Bird flu was diagnosed in swans that died in southern Moravia and at family farms in Moravsky Krumlov and Ivancice,” Agriculture Minister Marian Jurecka told reporters in Prague.

Zbynek Semerad, head of the Czech State Veterinary Administration, said tests were expected to fully confirm the H5N8 strain that has been detected in over a dozen European countries including Britain, France and Germany since October.

Media reports said 20 animals had already been killed in Ivancice while another 100 were slated for slaughter at the Moravsky Krumlov farm, both of which are in the southeastern corner of this EU country. Veterinarians are planning to cull all poultry stocks at neighboring farms, Semerad added. When the last highly-contagious case was found in 2007, vets had to cull more than 171,000 animals at large farms and more than 1,900 at family farms. Nearby Hungary has had the highest number of outbreaks in the past three months, with at least 200 cases reported in farms and in wild birds.—AFP

SOME DINO EGGS TOOK MONTHS TO HATCH, PERHAPS LEADING TO EXTINCTION: STUDY

WASHINGTON: The eggs of non-avian dinosaurs took three to six months to hatch, a long incubation period that could help explain dinosaurs' mass extinction 65 million years ago, according to new research. Findings published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences show that non-avian dinosaur incubation mirrored that of reptiles—a prolonged time before hatching that could have impacted dinosaurs' ability to compete with other animal populations that were breeding faster. Many researchers previously assumed both non-avian and avian dinosaurs' incubation length was more in line with today's birds, whose eggs hatch in 11 to 85 days.

Scientists conducted the study by using a high-definition microscope to examine the growth lines on the fossilized teeth of two rare, well-preserved non-avian

dinosaur embryos. "These are the lines that are laid down when any animal's teeth develops," said Gregory Erickson, a Florida State University professor and one of the study's lead authors. "They're kind of like tree rings, but they're put down daily. "We could literally count them to see how long each dinosaur had been developing." From their observations of the growth lines they determined how old the two embryos were when they died—three and six months, respectively.

The findings indicate that birds—living descendants of avian dinosaurs likely evolved quicker incubation rates after branching off from other types of dinosaurs. That development gave birds an advantage to survive predators as well as environmental disasters like flooding or drought—as well as catastrophes like the one that killed off the dinosaurs. —AFP

INDIA TO LAUNCH 103 SATELLITES IN RECORD SINGLE MISSION

NEW DELHI: India will launch a rocket carrying 103 satellites next month in a record single mission, a report said yesterday, as its famously frugal space agency looks to zoom ahead in the commercial space race. The rocket is set to blast off from the southern spaceport of Sriharikota in February carrying three Indian satellites and 100 foreign ones including from the US, France and Germany, the Press Trust of India said. If successful, India will set a world record as the first country to launch the most satellites in one go and leave behind Russia, which launched 39 satellites in a single mission in June 2014.

"We are making a century by launching over 100 satellites at one go," S. Somnath, a director at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), was quoted as saying at a science convention in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh. Another official told AFP that most of the 100 foreign satellites were meant for commercial purposes while the Indian satellites were intended to observe and measure the Earth's atmosphere. The business of putting commercial satellites into space for a fee is growing as phone, Internet and other companies as well as

countries seek greater and more high-tech communications.

India is competing with other international players for a greater share of that launch market, and is known for its low-cost space program. Last June, India set a national record after it successfully launched a rocket carrying 20 satellites, including 13 from the US. In May, it successfully launched its first mini space shuttle as it joined

the global race to make reusable rockets. It sent an unmanned rocket to orbit Mars in 2013 at a cost of just \$73 million, compared with NASA's Maven Mars mission which had a \$671 million price tag.

ISRO is also mulling the idea of missions to Jupiter and Venus, according to PTI. "We are looking at other planets that we can explore... two of them are Jupiter and Venus," M Nageswara Rao, an associate director at ISRO, said Wednesday, adding "it may take few years from now". Prime Minister Narendra Modi has often hailed India's budget space technology, quipping in 2014 that a rocket that launched four foreign satellites into orbit had cost less to make than Hollywood film "Gravity". —AFP

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS LINKED TO LOWER RISK OF HEART DISEASE

NEW YORK: Omega-3 fatty acids in fish and dietary supplements are associated with lower odds of heart disease even in people already at elevated risk because of excessive levels of fats or bad cholesterol in their blood, a research review suggests. The American Heart Association recommends eating at least two servings of fish a week and considering supplements of omega-3 fatty acids when that's not possible. Previous research has linked omega-3s to a lower risk of abnormal heartbeats, less fats in the blood, reduced risk of artery-clogging deposits known as plaque, and slightly lower blood pressure.

For the current study, researchers examined previously published research on two omega-3s: EPA (eicosapentaenoic acid) and DHA (docosahexaenoic acid). They found that consumption of omega-3s in food or supplements was associated with a 16 percent lower risk of heart disease in people with high triglycerides, or fats, in the blood,

and a 14 percent lower risk for patients with elevated low-density lipoprotein (LDL) cholesterol, the bad kind.

"The collective evidence from all studies supports a beneficial role of EPA and DHA on coronary heart disease, and stronger associations were observed among those who may benefit acutely from EPA and DHA, such as those with elevated triglyceride levels and those with elevated low-density lipoprotein cholesterol," said lead study author Dominik Alexander of EpidStat Institute, with offices in Seattle, Washington, and Ann Arbor, Michigan.

To examine the connection between omega-3s and heart disease, researchers analyzed data from 18 trials that randomly assigned about 93,000 people to get a certain amount of these nutrients. Across these randomized trials, they found omega-3s associated with a 6 percent lower risk of heart disease, but this was too small to rule out the possibility it was due to chance. —Reuters

LAND OF ENDANGERED ANCIENT OLIVE TREES

'NOW WE REALIZE THAT THEY ARE THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD TREES'

TRAIGUERA, Spain: The sun sets in eastern Spain and dozens of ancient olive trees cast long shadows on the ground. Once dug up and sold as luxury items for the wealthy, they are increasingly protected as farmers and authorities realize these trees, some of which were planted by the Romans, are an invaluable part of Spain's heritage. Near the town of Traiguera, Amador Peset, 37, gets out of his old 4x4 and, in the biting wind, cuts across a field before stopping before a majestic tree.

"You're probably in front of the biggest olive tree in the world... with a girth of 10.2 meters (33.5 feet)," the farmer says proudly. Botanists say a circumference of 10 meters indicates a tree is over a thousand years old—which means this specimen was around when the area was still under Muslim rule. Peset lovingly tends 106 such "monuments", cleaning their gnarled branches and ridding them of weeds that suck their sap like vampires.

Longevity, resistance

Joan Porta, another farmer, says that just a few years back, olive trees were largely ignored in fields also full of almond and other fruit trees, vines or wheat. In fact, they were often used for firewood in farms. "Now we realize that they are thousand-year-old trees," the 75-year-old says, pointing to the jewel in his own field's crown. It is aged 1,702 years according to a dating method used by the Polytechnic University of Madrid—which means it was planted under the Roman emperor Constantine.

Brought to Spain by the Greeks and the Romans, olive trees now cover 2.5 million hectares (6.2 million acres) of land. Such is the attraction of these long-living trees that they have become a must-have luxury item for some wealthy people. In the mid 2000s, "people would talk uneasily about how some trees were torn out, how they would see trucks loaded up" with large trunks, says Maria Teresa Adell. Adell manages an association of 27 towns and cities in the Valencia region including Traiguera—as well as the neighboring areas of Catalonia and Aragon, which, among other things, works towards protecting their olive tree heritage.

According to the group, hundreds of the ancient trees were ripped out during the 2000s and taken away to be sold for high prices in garden centers or specialized auctions. Online foreign garden centers still offer "ancient" olive trees for sale, such as Todd's Botanics in Britain, where one specimen from Valencia is priced at 3,500 pounds (\$4,300, 4,100 euros). "I buy one or two every year," says owner Mark Macdonald, adding however that he only purchases trees already in ready-to-plant clods.

60,000 euros

As for those who buy them, they tend to have money—people such as French wine magnate Bernard Magrez, who told AFP he had planted olive trees in the grounds of several of his Bordeaux estates including the prestigious Chateau Pape Clement, aged "between 1,015 and 1,860 years". For Cesar-Javier Palacios, spokesman for the Felix Rodriguez de la Fuente environmental foundation, taking them away from their native soil "is like taking a cathedral and putting it somewhere else." Not so, argues Roamhy Machoir-Heras, who organized a big ancient olive tree auction in 2011 where Magrez bought his specimens. Hers were already in clods, and "we saved them," she said. Of 44 specimens, some were sold for more than 60,000 euros. Those that didn't go to Magrez's estates went to a "sumptuous collection" in the Middle East, she added.

Ban trade 'like for ivory'

Palacios, though, has launched a petition "against the plundering of old olive trees" on Change.org that has garnered 154,000 signatures so far. "We are asking... for regulations banning the traffic, like for ivory," he said, adding however that the trade in olive trees has started to slow as peo-



TRAIGUERA, Spain: People look at the oldest olive tree in Spain, growing in the municipality of Uldecona. —AFP photos



TRAIGUERA, Spain: A man looks at the oldest olive tree in Spain.



TRAIGUERA, Spain: A man looks at the millennia old olive tree, famous for "staring" in the film "the Olive" by Spanish director Iciar Bollain.

ple realize these are "heritage treasures". Concepcion Munoz, an agronomist at the University of Cordoba, has counted 260 different varieties in Spain, of which there sometimes only remains one specimen.

In 2006, the Valencia region banned the practice of tearing out trees with a girth of more than six meters. Various towns and cities in Valencia, Catalonia and Aragon have also inventoried nearly 5,000 of the oldest trees with a view to protecting them. This makes it the region with the "highest

concentration of ancient olive trees in the world," says Adell, even if there are also many in Italy and Greece. And to persuade farmers, Adell's grouping of municipalities has also found an economic argument—producing oil from trees that are on the official inventory and are thus protected. A liter costs around 18 euros in the area, 40 euros in Barcelona and up to 90 euros in China. Peset, for one, is sold on the idea. He is negotiating with Chinese buyers interested in ordering a thousand bottles to use in cosmetics. —AFP

CLINIC PAGE



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OOREDOO ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF KD 1,000 PREPAID CAMPAIGN

ONGOING UNTIL END OF JANUARY



Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, announced names of the winners of its prepaid campaign of KD 1,000. The winners are Shinju Thomas, Alberto Antonio, Khalaf Hafeth, and Cengiz Dal. The campaign is ongoing until the end of January, giving prepaid users daily prizes including free minutes, internet and SMS, in addition to monthly draws on KD 1000 cash prizes. All Ooredoo prepaid line users are automatically eligible for a daily draw, and will receive either free minutes, internet credit or SMS credit, and are eligible to enter for every KD 1 they spend using Ooredoo services. Prepaid users will also enter a monthly draw on a cash prize of KD 1000.

This campaign is in alignment with Ooredoo's strategy of caring, connecting and challenging, aiming to enrich the experience of customers. Ooredoo Kuwait has recently won the title "Speedtest Awards Winner 2016" by Ookla, the company that operates the famous website Speedtest.net, a tool that measures network speed on users' devices. The awards are based on speed test results conducted by hundreds of thousands of actual smartphone users in Kuwait.

Ooredoo regularly benchmarks its services in relation to all competition, and results have indicated that it scores higher than competition in terms of speed and capacity. The tests were conducted in various locations and under different conditions across Kuwait to better measure the network's strength. In addition to its services in its branches across Kuwait, Ooredoo offers exclusive plans on smartphones, tablets and gaming devices to its customers on its online store, www.shop.ooredoo.com.kw.



KKMA FARWANIYA BRANCH COMMITTEE ELECTED NEW OFFICE BEARERS

Kuwait Kerala Muslim Association (KKMA) Farwaniya Branch elected their office bearers for the year 2017-2018 in the Branch general body meeting held at Ideal Auditorium, Farwaniya.

Meeting was presided over by Sulfiqer. General Secretary Rasheed V. presented annual report. Treasurer Shareef presented financial report and Aboobacker presented Audit Report of 2015-2016 respectively.

The meeting was inaugurated by KKMA Vice President N.A Muneer and KKMA Advisor Board Member Sageer Thrikaripur made keynote speech.

K.C Kareem controlled the election procedure and the general body meeting unanimously elected the following office bearers:

Sulfiqer M.P (President), Rasheed V. (General Secretary), Yousuf C.V (Treasurer),

Secretaries: Sajid TKP (Admin), Thelath (IT), Abbobacke V (Organizing) Vice Presidents : Muhammed Shareef (Benefit), Ummerkutty M.V (Development), Muhammed Saleem (Charity), Yakooob Mattubayal (Magnet), further an executive of 55 members were also nominated.

AP Salam, Ibrahim Kunnil, KC Gafoor gave felicitation Speeches. Basheer Mankadav Welcomed the Audience and Muhammed Jassim made Qirath. Yousuf CV casted vote of Thanks.



Minister of Education Mohammad Al-Faris visited the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training yesterday where he met with some of its officials.



MMF KUWAIT CELEBRATES CHRISTMAS, NEW YEAR

Malayali Media Forum, Kuwait organized Christmas and New Year celebrations recently, bringing in the forum members and their families to an evening of festivities and camaraderie. The program held at Haitham Royal Restaurant, Farwaniya, was presided over by MMF general convener Sam

Pynummoodu. Theatre person Babu Chackola inaugurated the event.

Program convener Sathar Kunnil delivered a Christmas and New Year message. Felicitation speeches were made by journalists Sajeev K Peter, Thomas Kadavil, Mohamed Riyaz, Abdul Fatah, Nixon George, Aziz

Thikkodi, T V Hikmath, Nijaz Kassim, Mustafa, Noufal Moodadi, Muneer Ahmed and Anil P Alex.

The highlight of the day was a musical program led by famous singer in Malayali community Biju Thikkodi. MMF convener Ismayil Payyoli welcomed the gathering while convener Salim Kottayil proposed a vote of thanks.

Greetings



Ibrahim Ismail Ibrahim Al-Ruwaini celebrated his birthday with family and friends.



Here's wishing you a Very Happy Birthday Yusuf Ali Shaik! May Allah bless you with all the joys and happiness. LOTS of Love from: Abbu & Ammi, Badey Abbu & Ammi (Tanveer), Chacha & Chachi (Zaheer), Mama (Imthiyaz & Khader), Uncle - Munwar, Hakeem (FICO), Habeeb, Friends & Relatives from Kuwait & India.

WHAT'S ON - SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All photos submitted for What's On should be minimum 200dpi. Articles must be in plain text and should include name and phone numbers. Articles and photos that fail to meet these requirements will not be published.

Please send them to news@kuwaittimes.net



PAINTING COMPETITION CONCLUDES

Kala(Art) Kuwait recently conducted the 'NIRAM 2016' Children's Day painting competition. The winners were announced as follows:

* Amalia Rose James Consolation Indian Community School, Jr. Branch, Salmiya I

* Alvis Joby Consolation Indian Community School, Jr. Branch, Salmiya LKG

* Aaron Varghese James 3rd Prize Indian Community School, Jr. Branch, Salmiya IV

* Mariya Hatim Contractor Consolation Indian Community School, Jr. Branch, Salmiya II

* 65 Nathan George Cherian Consolation Indian Community School, Jr. Branch, Salmiya III

* 66 Akshaya Jayasankar Consolation Indian Community School, Jr. Branch, Salmiya IV

* B.Thaarini Consolation Indian Community School, Jr. Branch, Salmiya V



GUST STUDENTS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE 2-WEEK IT TRAINING

Gulf University for Science and Technology (GUST) organized a two-week training program for the Computer Science Networks class, led by Networks Professor Dr Israa Omran in collaboration with the university's IT Department, the first of its kind for the university. The goal of the training was to provide the students with hands-on experience in a real work environment complementing what they've learned throughout the semester. Twenty one seniors completing the networks course entered the training program, where they learned how to make successful connections between devices, how switches, routers and servers work, and how to troubleshoot various network-related issues.

The IT Department team organized hands on activities for the students, and discussed topics such as virtual LANs, routers, connections, and switches and servers. Computer Science Department Head, Dr Taher Ali, said: "The success of this course not only proved the capability of our students, but also how responsive the university is to those capabilities. This course has now opened doors for CS students to exercise their skills, implement what they learn in class, and even gain real job experience". Following the success of this course, the GUST IT Department will be providing several advanced training courses throughout the year, as well as opportune part-time

positions for interested students based on their training performance. Upon completing the training course, students were awarded practical certificates by Eng. Paul Zalloua, Assistant Vice President of Planning and Development, Dr Taher Ali, Computer Science Department Head, and Networks Professor, Dr Israa Omran. The GUST Computer Science Department has been working consciously over the past two years to increase engagement with the students and community through several initiatives such as the addition of new course electives, organization of a specialized orientation program for CS students and high school students, and participation in local and international competitions.



The National Bank of Kuwait sponsored a trip carried out recently by Loyac to Sri Lanka, where it held its annual camp for high school students.



The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) visited the Education Ministry's Special Education Department as well as a number of schools for people with special needs, where they distributed stationary and other gifts to students.



The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Media Department hosted senior citizens from elderly care homes of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor at its camp in Subhan, where they met with the department's director Brigadier General Adel Al-Hashash.

OSN MOVIES

ACTION

- 00:00 Close Range
- 01:30 Constantine
- 03:45 Cradle 2 The Grave
- 05:45 Justice League vs. Bizarro League
- 07:00 Sherlock Holmes
- 09:15 Last Action Hero
- 11:30 Last Knights
- 13:30 Blown Away
- 15:45 Sherlock Holmes
- 18:00 Seventh Son
- 19:45 Last Knights
- 21:45 Fast & Furious 7

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:00 The Pool Master
- 00:55 Gator Boys
- 01:50 Big Fish Man
- 02:45 Bondi Vet
- 03:10 Bondi Vet
- 03:40 Hunt For The Russian Tiger
- 04:35 Tanked
- 05:25 Hunt For The Russian Tiger
- 06:15 Gator Boys
- 07:02 Big Fish Man
- 07:49 The Pool Master
- 08:36 Night
- 09:00 Night
- 09:25 Groomer Has It
- 10:15 Hunt For The Russian Tiger
- 11:10 Mutant Planet
- 12:05 Tanked
- 13:00 America's Cutest Pets
- 13:55 Bondi Vet
- 14:20 Bondi Vet
- 14:50 Hunt For The Russian Tiger
- 15:45 Gator Boys
- 16:40 Mutant Planet
- 17:35 Tanked
- 18:30 Hunt For The Russian Tiger
- 19:25 Big Fish Man
- 20:20 Wildest Islands Of Indonesia
- 21:15 Tanked
- 22:10 Extinct Or Alive: The Tasmanian Tiger
- 23:05 Mutant Planet

BBC FIRST

- 00:35 Doctors
- 01:05 Eastenders
- 01:35 Doctor Foster
- 02:30 The Musketeers
- 03:25 Orphan Black

Discovery Family

- 18:25 Workaholics
- 18:45 Urban Tarzan
- 19:39 The It Crowd
- 20:03 Lip Sync Battle
- 20:50 I Live With Models
- 21:13 Impractical Jokers
- 21:37 Ridiculousness
- 22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 22:30 Inside Amy Schumer
- 22:54 Chappelle's Show
- 23:18 Tosh.0
- 00:15 Destroyed In Seconds
- 00:40 Beyond Survival With Les Stroud
- 01:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 02:20 Dogs: The Untold Story
- 03:10 Finding Bigfoot
- 04:00 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:25 Destroyed In Seconds
- 04:50 Beyond Survival With Les Stroud
- 05:40 How It's Made
- 06:05 How It's Made
- 06:30 Storm Chasers
- 07:20 Mythbusters
- 08:00 Do You Know?
- 08:15 Kenny The Shark
- 08:35 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
- 09:00 K9 Cops
- 09:45 How It's Made
- 10:05 How It's Made
- 10:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 11:20 Mythbusters
- 12:10 Storm Chasers
- 13:00 K9 Cops
- 13:50 Beyond Survival With Les Stroud
- 14:40 How It's Made
- 15:05 How It's Made
- 15:30 Storm Chasers
- 16:15 Mythbusters
- 17:00 Kenny The Shark
- 17:20 Adventure 8: Zoo Games
- 17:45 Do You Know?
- 18:00 Space Voyages
- 18:50 How The Universe Works
- 19:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?
- 20:30 How It's Made
- 20:55 How It's Made
- 21:20 Mythbusters
- 22:10 Space Voyages
- 23:00 How The Universe Works
- 23:50 Destroyed In Seconds

Disney Channel HD

- 00:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 00:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 The Hive
- 01:45 Loopydoo
- 02:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:15 Calimero
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Loopydoo
- 03:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:35 Calimero
- 03:50 Zou
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 The Hive
- 04:40 Loopydoo
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:10 Art Attack
- 05:35 Loopydoo
- 05:50 Calimero
- 06:05 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Zou
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:45 Loopydoo
- 08:00 Zou
- 08:15 Calimero
- 08:30 Loopydoo
- 08:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 09:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 09:05 PJ Masks
- 09:15 Goldie & Bear
- 09:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 09:45 Miles From Tomorrow
- 09:55 Sofia The First
- 10:20 Doc McStuffins
- 10:35 Goldie & Bear
- 10:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 11:00 PJ Masks
- 11:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 11:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 11:35 Sofia The First
- 12:00 Sofia The First
- 12:30 Doc McStuffins
- 12:55 Doc McStuffins
- 13:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 13:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 14:15 Gummi Bears
- 14:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 15:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 15:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 16:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 16:30 Little Mermaid
- 16:55 Unbungalable
- 17:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 17:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 17:55 The Lion Guard
- 18:20 Goldie & Bear
- 18:50 PJ Masks
- 19:15 Sofia The First
- 19:40 Doc McStuffins
- 20:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:30 Little Mermaid
- 21:00 Miles From Tomorrow

- 14:20 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 14:45 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 15:40 Counterfeit Cat
- 15:50 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 16:05 K.C. Undercover
- 16:30 Atomic Puppet
- 16:55 Lab Rats
- 17:25 Danger Mouse
- 17:50 Future-Worm!
- 18:15 Lab Rats: On The Edge
- 19:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:10 Supa Strikas
- 19:35 Supa Strikas
- 20:00 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 20:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 20:55 K.C. Undercover
- 21:20 Counterfeit Cat
- 21:45 Mighty Med
- 22:10 Pickle And Peanut
- 22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 22:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
- 23:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 23:35 Boyster

E! HD

- 00:00 E! News
- 00:15 Botched
- 01:05 Botched
- 01:55 Botched
- 02:50 E! News
- 03:50 LA Clippers Dance Squad
- 04:45 LA Clippers Dance Squad
- 05:40 LA Clippers Dance Squad
- 06:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 07:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 07:55 E! News
- 08:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 08:40 Kourtney & Khloe Take Miami
- 09:10 E! News
- 10:10 Kourtney & Khloe Take Miami
- 10:40 Kourtney & Khloe Take Miami
- 11:10 Kourtney & Khloe Take Miami
- 11:35 Kourtney & Khloe Take Miami
- 12:05 Kourtney & Khloe Take Miami
- 12:30 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 13:00 E! News
- 13:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 13:40 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 14:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 14:35 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 15:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 15:30 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 16:00 E! News
- 16:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 16:45 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
- 17:15 Rob & Chyna
- 18:10 Rob & Chyna
- 19:05 Celebrity Style Story
- 19:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 20:00 E! News
- 21:00 Mariah's World
- 22:00 Mariah's World
- 23:00 Botched
- 23:30 Botched

food network

- 00:00 Chopped
- 01:00 Chopped South Africa
- 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
- 06:30 Barefoot Contessa
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table
- 09:30 Siba's Table
- 10:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 10:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table
- 13:30 Siba's Table
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 Anna Olson: Bake
- 17:30 Anna Olson: Bake
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Iron Chef America
- 20:00 Siba's Table
- 20:30 Siba's Table
- 21:00 Private Chef
- 21:30 Private Chef
- 22:00 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera
- 22:30 Jenny Morris Cooks The Riviera
- 23:00 Iron Chef America

itv choice

- 00:15 Coronation Street
- 00:40 Coronation Street
- 01:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
- 02:00 Emmerdale

- 02:30 Coronation Street
- 03:00 Coronation Street
- 03:30 Alphabetical
- 04:25 Jericho
- 05:20 Royal Stories
- 05:50 Royal Stories
- 06:15 Black Work
- 07:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
- 08:05 Alphabetical
- 09:00 Jericho
- 10:00 Royal Stories
- 10:30 Royal Stories
- 11:00 Black Work
- 11:55 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
- 12:50 Alphabetical
- 13:45 Emmerdale
- 14:15 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Coronation Street
- 15:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh
- 16:10 Alphabetical
- 17:55 Big Star's Little Star
- 18:50 Black Work
- 19:45 Emmerdale
- 20:15 Coronation Street
- 20:45 Coronation Street
- 21:10 Alphabetical
- 22:00 Big Star's Little Star
- 22:55 Paul O'Grady's Favourite Fairy Tales
- 23:50 Emmerdale

H2 HD

- 00:00 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
- 01:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 02:00 How The States Got Their Shape
- 03:00 Ancient Impossible
- 04:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 04:50 Ancient Aliens
- 05:40 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
- 06:30 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 07:20 How The States Got Their Shape
- 08:10 The Universe
- 09:00 Ancient Impossible
- 10:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 11:00 Ancient Aliens
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- 18:00 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
- 19:00 Hangar 1: The UFO Files
- 20:00 How The States Got Their Shape
- 21:00 Ancient Impossible
- 22:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 23:00 Ancient Aliens

HISTORY HD

- 00:05 American Restoration
- 00:30 American Pickers
- 01:20 Time Team
- 02:10 Counting Cars
- 02:35 Car Hunters
- 03:00 Fifth Gear
- 03:50 Storage Wars
- 04:15 American Pickers
- 05:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:30 Pawn Stars
- 06:00 Mountain Men
- 07:00 Swamp People
- 07:50 Ax Men
- 08:40 Counting Cars
- 09:05 Car Hunters
- 09:30 Storage Wars Texas
- 09:55 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 10:20 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 10:45 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 11:10 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 11:35 Counting Cars: Best Of
- 12:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 18:40 Leepu And Pitbull
- 19:30 Counting Cars
- 19:55 Car Hunters
- 20:20 Ax Men
- 21:10 American Pickers
- 22:00 DB Cooper: Case Closed?
- 23:40 Hunting Hitler

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:20 Fish Of The Day
- 00:45 Places We Go
- 01:10 My Restaurant In India
- 01:35 My Restaurant In India
- 02:00 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 02:25 A Is For Apple
- 03:15 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 03:45 What's For Sale?
- 04:05 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 04:30 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 04:55 Lucky Chow
- 05:20 My Restaurant In India
- 05:45 Grandma's Boy
- 06:10 Grandma's Boy



FAST & FURIOUS 7 ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 04:10 Silent Witness
- 05:05 Doctors
- 05:35 Eastenders
- 06:10 Doctor Who
- 07:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Doctors
- 08:00 Eastenders
- 08:35 Holly City
- 09:35 Call The Midwife
- 10:40 Doctor Who
- 11:30 Doctors
- 12:00 Eastenders
- 12:30 Death In Paradise
- 13:25 Call The Midwife
- 14:20 Doctor Who
- 15:15 Doctors
- 15:45 Eastenders
- 16:15 Death In Paradise
- 17:10 Call The Midwife
- 18:05 Doctor Who
- 19:00 Doctors
- 19:30 Eastenders
- 20:05 Death In Paradise
- 21:00 Holly City
- 22:00 Benidorm
- 22:50 Doors Open

- 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:10 Hank Zipzer
- 01:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:00 Violetta
- 02:45 The Hive
- 02:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:40 Hank Zipzer
- 04:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 04:30 Violetta
- 05:15 The Hive
- 05:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 06:10 Hank Zipzer
- 06:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 07:00 Violetta
- 07:45 The Hive
- 07:50 Mouk
- 08:00 Dog With A Blog
- 08:25 Dog With A Blog
- 08:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 08:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 09:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 09:45 Star Darlings
- 09:50 Liv And Maddie
- 10:15 Jessie
- 10:40 Jessie
- 11:05 Jessie
- 11:30 Starstruck
- 13:00 The 7D
- 13:10 Austin & Ally
- 13:35 Austin & Ally
- 14:00 Liv And Maddie
- 14:25 Liv And Maddie
- 14:50 Shake It Up
- 15:15 Shake It Up
- 15:40 Dog With A Blog
- 16:05 Dog With A Blog
- 16:30 Good Luck Charlie
- 16:55 Good Luck Charlie
- 17:20 Girl Meets World
- 17:45 Girl Meets World
- 18:10 Elena Of Avalor
- 18:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 19:00 The Next Step
- 19:25 Descendants Wicked World
- 19:30 Liv And Maddie
- 19:55 Star Darlings
- 20:00 Bunk'd
- 20:25 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 20:30 Austin & Ally
- 20:55 Descendants Wicked World
- 21:00 Backstage
- 21:25 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 21:30 Elena Of Avalor
- 21:55 Best Friends Whenever
- 22:20 Jessie
- 23:35 H2O: Just Add Water

- 21:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 22:00 Unbungalable
- 22:05 Goldie & Bear
- 22:35 Miles From Tomorrow
- 23:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 23:25 Gummi Bears
- 23:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 00:30 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
- 01:20 Wheeler Dealers
- 02:10 Blue Collar Backers
- 03:00 Mega Shippers
- 03:50 Impossible Engineering
- 04:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
- 05:30 The Liquidator
- 06:00 How Do They Do It?
- 06:30 How Do They Do It?
- 07:00 Deadliest Catch
- 07:50 Wheeler Dealers
- 08:40 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
- 09:30 The Weapon Hunter
- 10:20 The Liquidator
- 10:45 How Do They Do It?
- 11:10 How Do They Do It?
- 11:35 Blue Collar Backers
- 12:25 Mega Shippers
- 13:15 Impossible Engineering
- 14:05 How Do They Do It?
- 14:30 Storage Hunters UK
- 14:55 The Liquidator
- 15:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 16:10 The Weapon Hunter
- 17:00 Deadliest Catch
- 17:50 Fat N' Furious: Rolling Thunder
- 18:40 Wheeler Dealers
- 19:30 How Do They Do It?
- 19:55 How Do They Do It?
- 20:20 Big Giant Swords
- 21:10 Storage Hunters UK
- 21:35 The Liquidator
- 22:00 Salvage Hunters
- 22:50 Marooned With Ed Stafford
- 23:40 Treasure Quest: Snake Island

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:05 Tosh.0
- 00:30 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 01:00 The Meltdown With Jonah And Kumail
- 01:25 South Park
- 01:50 South Park
- 02:15 Tosh.0
- 02:40 Broad City
- 03:05 South Park
- 03:30 South Park
- 04:00 Workaholics
- 04:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 05:15 Key And Peele
- 05:40 Impractical Jokers
- 06:05 Ridiculousness
- 06:30 Lip Sync Battle
- 06:55 Lip Sync Battle
- 07:20 Frankenfoot
- 07:50 Frankenfoot
- 08:15 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 09:05 Impractical Jokers
- 09:30 Ridiculousness
- 09:55 Tosh.0
- 10:20 Key And Peele
- 10:45 Workaholics
- 11:10 The It Crowd
- 11:35 Ridiculousness
- 12:00 Lip Sync Battle
- 12:25 Lip Sync Battle
- 12:50 I Live With Models
- 13:15 Workaholics
- 13:40 The It Crowd
- 14:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 14:55 Ridiculousness
- 15:20 Lip Sync Battle: All Stars Live
- 16:10 I Live With Models
- 16:35 Ridiculousness
- 17:00 Impractical Jokers
- 17:30 Workaholics
- 17:55 Tosh.0

- 00:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA
- 07:00 Supa Strikas
- 07:25 Supa Strikas
- 07:50 Counterfeit Cat
- 08:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 08:15 K.C. Undercover
- 08:40 Atomic Puppet
- 09:10 Lab Rats
- 09:35 Danger Mouse
- 10:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Action Hero
- 10:50 Kirby Buckets
- 11:20 Kirby Buckets
- 11:45 Gravity Falls
- 12:10 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 12:35 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 13:00 Counterfeit Cat
- 13:30 K.C. Undercover
- 13:55 K.C. Undercover

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 00:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 00:55 PJ Masks

KELSEY GRAMMER
IS CHARLES BUNBURY
YOU CAN BANK WITH HIM... YOU JUST CAN'T BANK ON HIM

TAMSI GREIG MATTHEW HORNE WITH ANDREW SACHS AND JOHN MICHAEL HIGGINS

BREAKING THE BANK

IF HE WANTS TO GET HIS WIFE BACK... HE HAS TO GET HER BANK BACK

BREAKING THE BANK ON OSN MOVIES HD

JAMIE KENNEDY REBECCA BLUMHAGEN MALIK YOBA
JOSEPH GANNASCOLI MICHAEL KOSTROFF

Sometimes love is what happens while we're busy making...

OTHER PLANS
A JOE ECKARDT FILM

OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

- 06:35 Miguels Tropical Kitchen
- 07:00 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 07:50 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
- 08:15 A Is For Apple
- 08:40 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 09:05 What's For Sale?
- 09:30 What's For Sale?
- 09:55 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
- 10:20 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
- 10:45 Lucky Chow
- 11:10 My Restaurant In India
- 11:35 Grandma's Boy
- 12:00 Grandma's Boy
- 12:25 Miguels Tropical Kitchen
- 12:50 Around The World In 80 Dishes
- 13:40 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 14:05 A Is For Apple
- 14:35 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 15:00 Food School
- 15:30 What's For Sale?
- 15:55 What's For Sale?
- 16:25 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 16:50 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 17:20 My Restaurant In India
- 17:45 Grandma's Boy
- 18:15 Grandma's Boy
- 18:40 Miguels Tropical Kitchen
- 19:10 Billionaire's Paradise
- 20:05 What's For Sale?
- 20:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 21:00 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 21:25 My Restaurant In India
- 21:50 Grandma's Boy
- 22:15 Grandma's Boy
- 22:40 Miguels Tropical Kitchen
- 23:05 Billionaire's Paradise
- 23:55 Ariana's Persian Kitchen

- 14:00 Healing
- 16:00 Wildlife
- 18:00 Before I Disappear
- 20:00 Big Eyes
- 22:00 Cake

00:00 The Detour

- 00:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 01:30 Happy Endings
- 02:30 Happy Endings
- 03:00 Silicon Valley
- 03:30 Silicon Valley
- 04:00 The Detour
- 04:30 Baby Daddy
- 05:00 Angie Tribeca
- 05:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 06:30 Breaking In
- 07:00 Tili Death
- 07:30 Living With Fran
- 08:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 09:00 Angie Tribeca
- 09:30 Breaking In
- 10:00 New Girl
- 10:30 Telenovela
- 11:00 Telenovela
- 11:30 Living With Fran
- 12:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 13:00 Tili Death
- 13:30 Angie Tribeca
- 14:00 Breaking In
- 14:30 Living With Fran
- 15:00 Baby Daddy
- 15:30 Telenovela
- 16:00 Telenovela
- 16:30 Happy Endings
- 17:00 Happy Endings
- 17:30 Tili Death
- 18:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 19:00 New Girl
- 19:30 The Last Man On Earth
- 20:00 The Last Man On Earth
- 20:30 Young & Hungry
- 21:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 22:00 Happy Endings
- 22:30 Happy Endings
- 23:00 Vice Principals
- 23:30 Vice Principals

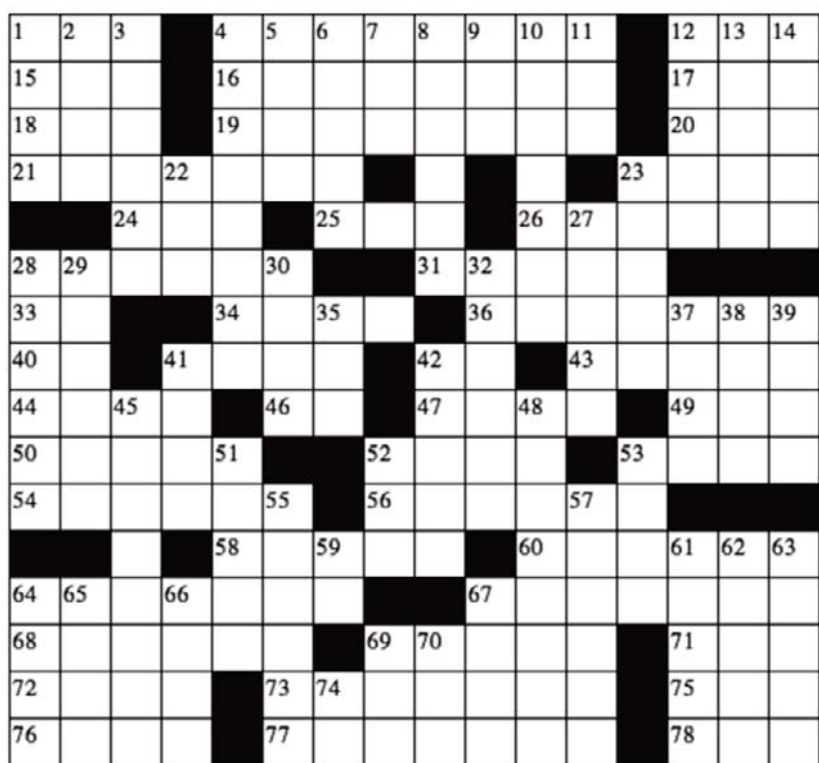
OSN FIRST HD COMEDY

- 06:35 Miguels Tropical Kitchen
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- 23:05 Billionaire's Paradise
- 23:55 Ariana's Persian Kitchen

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CHANNEL HD

- 00:20 Paranatural
- 01:10 Desperate Hours
- 01:35 Desperate Hours
- 02:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
- 03:00 Hubble's Amazing Journey
- 03:55 Startalk
- 04:50 Desperate Hours
- 05:15 Desperate Hours
- 05:45 Chasing UFOs
- 06:40 Strippers: Cars For Cash
- 07:35 Beyond Magic With DMC
- 08:30 Megastructures
- 09:25 Mega Factories
- 10:20 Chasing UFOs
- 11:15 Hitler's Secret Attack On America
- 12:10 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
- 13:05 Locked Up Abroad
- 14:00 Mega Factories
- 15:00 Megastructures
- 16:00 Beyond Magic With DMC
- 17:00 Nazi Death Camp: The Great Escape
- 18:00 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
- 19:00 Locked Up Abroad

CROSSWORD 1481



ACROSS

- Fiddler crabs.
- Capable of becoming hot.
- One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- The upper side of the thighs of a seated person.
- A diuretic (trade name Osmitol) used to promote the excretion of urine.
- The Tibeto-Burman language spoken in the Dali region of Yunnan.
- The compass point that is one point east (clockwise) of due north.
- Weapon consisting of a fighting ax.
- A port in southern Lebanon on the Mediterranean Sea.
- Roman general who commanded the fleet that defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium (63-12 BC).
- An extension at the end and at right angles to the main building.
- (prefix) Reverse of or absence of.
- Conducive to peace.
- An industrial city in southern Poland on the Vistula.
- A linguistic element added to a word to produce an inflected or derived form v. 1.
- 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.
- Thin and fit.
- An Asian republic at east end of Mediterranean.
- A linear unit of length equal to 12 inches or a third of a yard.
- Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
- Thin fibrous bark of the paper mulberry and Pipturus albidus.
- (astronomy) The angular distance of a celestial point measured westward along the celestial equator from the zenith crossing.
- A system of one or more computers and associated software with common storage.
- Worthless or oversimplified ideas.
- An independent ruler or chieftain (especially in Africa or Arabia).
- The agent to whom property involved in a bailment is delivered.
- A range of mountains (usually with jagged peaks and irregular outline).
- (Greek mythology) A Titan who was forced by Zeus to bear the sky on his shoulders.
- The basic unit of money in Finland.
- Fudge made with brown sugar and butter and milk and nuts.
- Agile long-legged rabbit-sized rodent of Central and South America and West Indies.
- A master's degree in business.
- Plants with sword-shaped leaves and erect stalks bearing bright-colored flowers composed of three petals and three drooping sepals.
- Dry red Italian table wine from the Chianti region of Tuscany.
- A decree that prohibits something.
- A small narrow pointed missile that is thrown or shot.
- (of hair) Made smooth by applying a sticky or glossy substance.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

- The inner and longer of the two bones of the human forearm.
- Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
- South American cavy.
- A portable electric appliance for heating or cooking or keeping food warm.
- A program under which employees regularly accumulate shares and may ultimately assume control of the company.
- The capital and largest city of Jordan.
- Brief episode in which the brain gets insufficient blood supply.
- (Greek mythology) Goddess of wisdom and useful arts and prudent warfare.
- An undergarment worn by women to support their breasts.
- A person who is deemed to be despicable or contemptible.
- Large northern deer with enormous flattened antlers in the male.
- Realistic Norwegian author who wrote plays on social and political themes (1828-1906).
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- English theoretical physicist who applied relativity theory to quantum mechanics and predicted the existence of antimatter and the positron (1902-1984).
- A kind of person.
- The cardinal number that is the sum of five and one.
- A flowering shrub bearing currants or gooseberries.
- Small genus of mediterranean shrubs.
- Goddess of fate.
- Feed, care for, and rear young birds for flight.
- A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- Type genus of the Nepidae.
- A strategically located monarchy on the southern and eastern coasts of the Arabian Peninsula.
- The back side of the neck.
- A Gaelic-speaking Celt in Ireland or Scotland or the Isle of Man.
- Any of the openings to the nasal cavities that allow air to flow through the cavities to the pharynx.
- A loose dressing gown for women.
- Spread or diffuse through.
- Show a response or a reaction to something.
- North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
- An outlying farm building for storing grain or animal feed and housing farm animals.
- Motivation based on ideas of right and wrong.
- Used of decomposing oils or fats.
- A white soft metallic element that tarnishes readily.
- A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- A city in northern India.
- Remove from office.
- A coil of rope or wool or yarn.
- Being one more than two.
- An enclosed space.
- A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 100 liters.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Taking your profession seriously, you may push a little harder than usual to accomplish your goals. You are accurate and precise in your work and may find that while others need plenty of time for their work, you can get a multitude of things accomplished in a reasonable amount of time. This may cause a little jealousy in the workplace but you enjoy competing with yourself enough to rise above any problem. You spend this afternoon finishing up old business. There is an impatience now to move forward with some project but tend to the plans first and the results will be quite profitable. A problem seems to clear up magically this afternoon. You attract people that know how to make their money grow and are in control of their lives.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Your professional outlook is excellent and you will accomplish quite a lot this day. In a meeting this afternoon, you get your thoughts and ideas across to others very well. There is good communication. This is a very telling time for your career. Perhaps this is a time when you need to act quickly and decisively in order to capture the good opportunities flowing your way. On the way home this evening, you might consider picking up a few cut flowers from the florist for some color in your home. Insurance updates and electronically marking your possessions may be a focus much of this week. Close relationships take on more emotional depth. Feeling cared for and needed is comfortable and you enjoy sharing and enjoying your loved ones.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You can make a difference in a few people's thought processes today through your attitude. Someone in the workplace or among your co-worker friends may be very negative. When asked, your views can help bring in a new perspective. You may not know how the confusion or frustrations began but you can help guide and show the possibilities of thinking outside the box, so to speak. Good tools for solving problems free us from becoming bogged down in unrealistic thinking. There is an old saying, let it flow and let it go! do not take chances or risks just now. Be satisfied with the ordinary and the usual. Novel ideas or insights could be more damaging than useful. Compliment the cook this evening.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Whether you have experienced success or failure at this time, you take it in stride as a learning experience and move on to new activities. This rise-above-all-odds attitude is part of why others look to you for encouragement. The ways in which you conduct business, projects or community concerns just now, depend on how much power you have. There is some desire to do things differently and this may stir you into creating some sort of recommendation on paper. Do not be too surprised that your ideas are not accepted or wait a while. Even if your idea never catches on, you got the attention that it takes to be included on the next decision-making team and you created some good energy around an idea. The expression of your creativity is endless.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

How do you make a positive difference in other people's lives? Does what you say make a difference to people? These are some deep questions you may be asking this morning as some people leave and others enter your life. We are all free to choose the people that are around us and yes, even if one is related by blood. It is good to continuously add new people into your life. A sensitive group or candid discussion with someone you trust may help you to see yourself better. You are appreciated for your compassion, intelligence, sharp business mind and a willingness to create a positive change in many areas of importance. Your frame of mind is positive and you are encouraged about your future. This evening you may seek out a party.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Use your psychic insights now when it comes to your persuasive skills. You will find your self-expression is highlighted and you will have ideas and thoughts that can be beneficial toward the professional results you are seeking. A friend or relative will be seeking advice from you today on some hot emotional issues. You will be able to find the truth and give some important insights into the situation. Others value you for your ability to make practical decisions. Work for a balance in all areas of your life. Avoid making major purchases until you have been able to check out other prices in other stores on the same type of item. You are quite charming and you will have every opportunity to gain the attention of a loved one with little effort this evening.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Clarify the relative importance of your tasks today so that you can remain focused and have your priorities in order. Arrange your list in order of most important to least important. This could be enlightening as well as helpful information. This is the way to work with the more positive phase for you now. Getting down to basics and dealing with any open-ended business matters is a good thing. An irritating problem concerning a friend may come to your attention and eventually you will need to make some decisions regarding this matter. Start thinking about your limitations and how you rise above them. It is easy for others to accept your kindness. Learn to keep a positive flow of thinking and keep your good inner peace, thus making yourself a positive leader.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Business or career projects may need adjustments now. Keep your dance card open because romance is a definite goal! With so many things on your mind, it may be hard to concentrate on routine matters. However, routine matters are where you will find your accomplishments. To get the best results in financial affairs, you need to be less concerned about security and more willing to take risks. Your instincts are strong. You will be able to have a focus on what you want to accomplish and even, perhaps, start anew on some project with a clearer idea of what you want. Poetry and art may be possible this evening. Enjoy some form of relaxation; for example, movies, books or all other healthy forms of escape could prove very enjoyable now.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Group efforts at work will be productive. Group work is fun for several of you! It may be difficult, however, to keep the flow of thought in one direction. It is a great time to be with others and to work together. Laughter and some talking are expected and do not slow the production rate. Cooperative efforts as well as rewards are enjoyed later perhaps a free meal or an award presentation. This evening is another productive time. You could find yourself taking a class, teaching or expressing your views in a city council meeting. This is a full day with interactions between many people. Family is an important part of your relaxation this evening. A sense of humor is important to build a bond with loved ones. Laughter is more fun when it is shared.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

This may be the day that you acquire the responsibility for the care of a budget within a certain department, division or office. You are conservative and this way of thinking may be what puts you in charge. You are ambitious and your humble attitude will be important later today when you may be challenged. This evening you may find there is an opportunity coming up that will give you a chance to try out for a part in a play or some other type of entertainment. This would be a good time to consider the opportunity for others to see your talents. With your imagination, you could create your own skit or creatively gain a part in a show. Writing a children's play would also be a possibility and lots of fun. Tonight is for family.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Things are happening and your career or path depends on your own ambition and drive, which are strong now. A similar problem, like one from the past, appears today, but you are much more able to handle this situation the second time around. You may even wonder why you thought it was a problem. Your sense of humor comes into play when you are with your friends in a social situation this afternoon. Trying to push forward an idea may not be timed right for now. If you get the feeling an idea is not understood, try again, another day. An older person may be in your life for part of the evening and you may find yourself trying to lend a helping hand. Since young people may be watching you in the way you handle this older person, you set the example.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Review and define your career goals and you will be focused and ready for all sorts of miracles. This is a time for getting ahead, a time for combining business and pleasure, a time to enjoy your career and savor its rewards. A need to prove yourself can lead to all kinds of challenges and can lead to a new you that leaves the old behind like an outgrown shell. An enhanced sense of personal possibility and potential is at hand. This is a time of incredible psychological growth, which can lead to personal success. You are interested in health, physical fitness and stamina at this time. You look to an older mentor for spiritual or emotional strength as a rule. You become involved in new enthusiasms perhaps an electric car, a property to purchase, etc.

WORD SEARCH

Car Parts

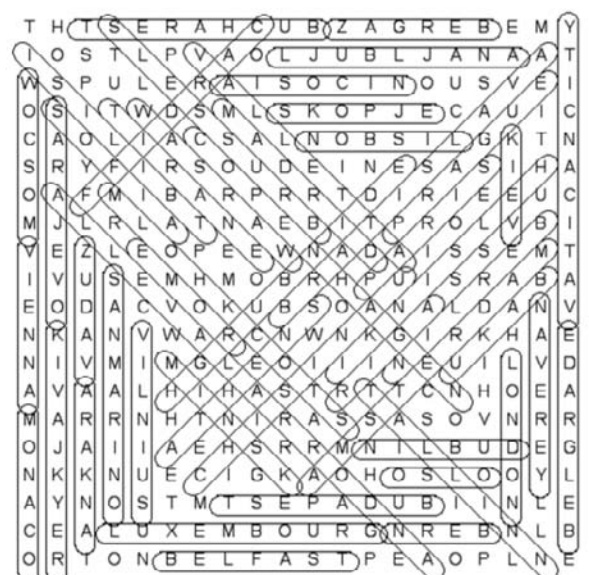
Find and circle all of the car parts that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional car part.



- | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| AIR BAG | CLUTCH | GAS TANK | STARTER |
| AIR CONDITIONER | COOLING FAN | HEADLIGHT | STEERING WHEEL |
| ALTERNATOR | CRANKCASE | HOOD | SUSPENSION |
| AXLE | CRUISE CONTROL | HORN | TAIL LIGHT |
| BATTERY | DEFOGGER | IGNITION | TIRES |
| BODY | DEFROSTER | MUFFLER | TRANSMISSION |
| BRAKE | DOOR | POWER WINDOW | TRUNK |
| BUMPER | DRIVE LINE | RADIATOR | TURN SIGNAL |
| CAR SEAT | DRIVESHAFT | RADIO | WHEEL RIM |
| CARBURETOR | ENGINE | REAR VIEW MIRROR | WHEELS |
| CARRIER RACK | FRAME | ROOF | WINDSHIELD |
| CHILD SEAT | FUSE | SEAT BELT | |

Yesterday Solution

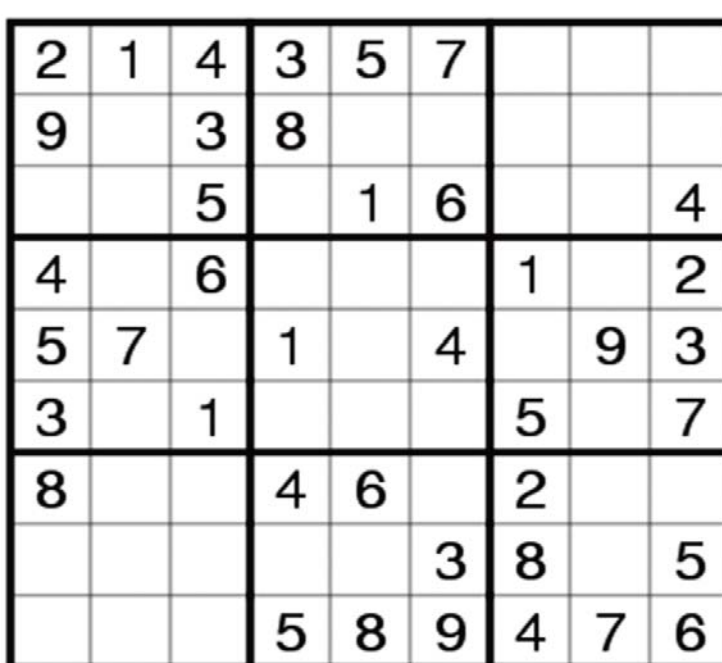
Capital Cities of Europe



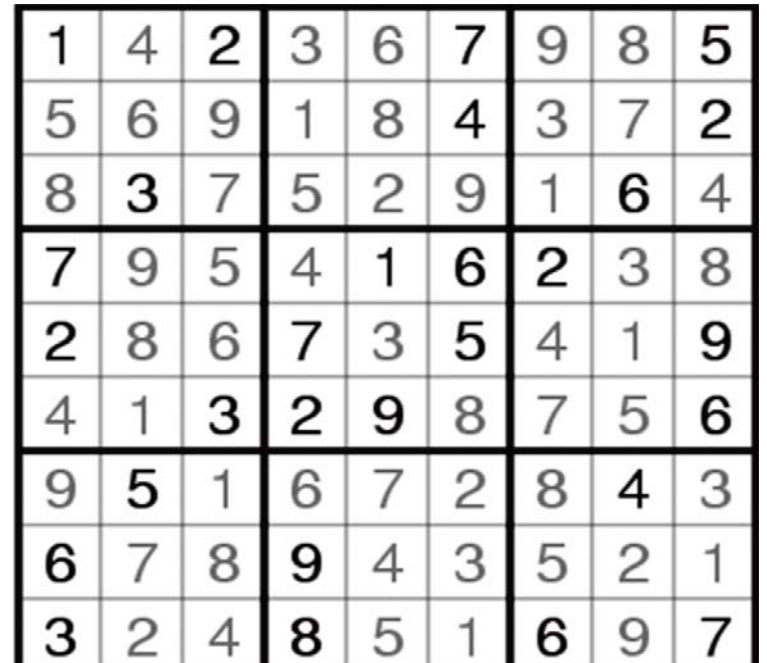
- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| AMSTERDAM (Netherlands) | EDINBURGH (Scotland) | ROME (Italy) |
| ANDORRA LA VELLA (Andorra) | HELSINKI (Finland) | SAN MARINO (San Marino) |
| ANKARA (Turkey) | KIEV (Ukraine) | SARAJEVO (Bosnia-Herzegovina) |
| ATHENS (Greece) | LISBON (Portugal) | SKOPJE (Macedonia) |
| BAKU (Azerbaijan) | LJUBLJANA (Slovenia) | SOFIA (Bulgaria) |
| BELFAST (Northern Ireland) | LONDON (England) | STOCKHOLM (Sweden) |
| BELGRADE (Serbia/Montenegro) | LUXEMBOURG (Luxembourg) | TALLINN (Estonia) |
| BERLIN (Germany) | MADRID (Spain) | TBILISI (Georgia) |
| BERN (Switzerland) | MINSK (Belarus) | TIJANE (Albania) |
| BRATISLAVA (Slovakia) | MONACO (Monaco) | VADUZ (Liechtenstein) |
| BRUSSELS (Belgium) | MOSCOW (Russian Federation) | VALLLETTA (Malta) |
| BUCHAREST (Romania) | NICOSIA (Cyprus) | VATICAN CITY (Vatican City) |
| BUDAPEST (Hungary) | OSLO (Norway) | VIENNA (Austria) |
| CARDIFF (Wales) | PARIS (France) | VILNIUS (Lithuania) |
| CHISINAU (Moldova) | PRAGUE (Czech Republic) | WARSAW (Poland) |
| COPENHAGEN (Denmark) | REYKJAVIK (Iceland) | YEREVAN (Armenia) |
| DUBLIN (Ireland) | RIGA (Latvia) | ZAGREB (Croatia) |

The hidden sentence is: THE MOST POPULOUS CITY IN EUROPE IS MOSCOW WHICH HAS OVER EIGHT MILLION PEOPLE

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaheel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khaldiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khaldiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 6819 - 6817
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

DAY: Wednesday

04/01/2017

Valid From 7 AM To 7 PM

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

BY DAY: Sunny with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 35 km/h

BY NIGHT: Cold with light to moderate freshening gradually over coastal areas north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 40 km/h

STATION	MAX. EXP.	MIN. REC.
KUWAIT CITY	21 °C	12 °C
KUWAIT AIRPORT	20 °C	10 °C
ABDALY	21 °C	06 °C
BUBYAN	21 °C	08 °C
JAHRA	21 °C	10 °C
FAILAKA ISLAND	20 °C	11 °C
SALMIYAH	18 °C	12 °C
AHMADI	19 °C	13 °C
NUWAISIB	21 °C	09 °C
WAFRA	22 °C	09 °C
SALMY	18 °C	05 °C

DAY	DATE	WEATHER	MAX. Temp.	MIN. Temp.	Wind Direction	Wind Speed
Thursday	01/05	Sunny	20 °C	09 °C	NW	20 - 40 km/h
Friday	01/06	Clouds to increase gradually	21 °C	09 °C	NW	20 - 40 km/h
Saturday	01/07	Sunny + chance for fog at night	23 °C	08 °C	VRB	08 - 18 km/h
Sunday	01/08	Sunny + fog forming at early morning	24 °C	11 °C	VRB-SE	06 - 26 km/h

PRAYER TIMES	RECORDED YESTERDAY AT KUWAIT AIRPORT
Fajr 05:19	MAX. Temp. 21 °C
Sunrise 06:43	MIN. Temp. 12 °C
Zuhr 11:53	MAX. RH 61 %
Asr 14:44	MIN. RH 26 %
Sunset 17:03	MAX. Wind N 39 km/h
Isha 18:25	TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR. 0 mm

All times are local time unless otherwise stated. U.P.0 2017/01/04 03:04 UTC V1.00 T2.4 2-1/ع.خ.ق

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Malorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guyana	00592	Switzerland	0041
Haiti	00509	Syria	00963
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Serbia	00381
Honduras	00504	Taiwan	00886
Hong Kong	00852	Tanzania	00255
Hungary	0036	Thailand	0066
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Togo	00228
Iceland	00354	Tonga	00676
India	0091	Tokelau	00690
Indian Ocean	00873	Trinidad	001868
Indonesia	0062	Tunisia	00216
Iran	0098	Turkey	0090
Iraq	00964	Tuvalu	00688
Ireland	00353	Uganda	00256
Italy	0039	Ukraine	00380
Ivory Coast	00225	United Arab Emirates	00976
Jamaica	001876	United Kingdom	0044
Japan	0081	Uruguay	00598
Jordan	00962	USA	001
Kazakhstan	007	Uzbekistan	00998
Kenya	00254	Vanuatu	00678
Kiribati	00686	Venezuela	00582
Kuwait	00965	Vietnam	0084
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Laos	00856	Virgin Islands US	001340
Latvia	00371	Wales (UK)	0044
Lebanon	00961	Yemen	00967
Liberia	00231	Yugoslavia	00381
Libya	00218	Zambia	00260
Lesotho	00266	Zimbabwe	00263



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25722222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25644678
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohamme Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhazeem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoubi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Refae	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Humayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s. Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarooof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam	
Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdalateef Al-Katrah	22525888
Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Musaed Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR. Mohammed Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib	2611555-2622555
MD, PH.D, FACC	
Inaya German Medical Center	
Te: 2575077	
Fax: 25723123	



The Northwestern Mutual "Waves of Hope" float, winner of the Animation Trophy rolls along the 128th Rose Parade.



Rose Queen Victoria Castellanos, of Temple City High School, waves to the crowd at the 128th Rose Parade in Pasadena, Calif. — AP photos



Photo shows Susan Brown and Christian Guntert.



Dancers with the Escuela Secundaria Tecnica Industrial No. 3. Buhos Marching Band from Xalapa, Veracruz, Mexico perform.



La Canada Flintridge Tournament of Roses Association float "Backyard Rocketeer" whose residents are involved with the deep-space exploration projects conducted at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory participate at the 128th Rose Parade.



The Bachelor, "Echoes of Love," winner of the Presidents' Trophy for Most effective floral use and presentation, rolls along the 128th Rose Parade.



The Dole Packaged Foods, "Spirit of Hawaii," float, the winner of the Sweepstakes Trophy for most beautiful entry in the parade with outstanding floral presentation and design rolls in the 128th Rose Parade.

Couple together 17 years marry on Rose Parade float

Christian Guntert was lying on his back, gluing seeds to the bottom of a giant faux pizza for a Rose Parade float when a teenager made a casual comment about his wife. When the 58-year-old Guntert told the girl that he and his longtime girlfriend actually weren't married, she screamed: "You're not married?!" The shocked question reverberated in the 80,000-square-foot California warehouse last December, where teams of volunteers were building a dozen floats for the annual, nationally televised parade in Pasadena.

Soon, volunteers had surrounded Guntert and his girlfriend of 17 years, 56-year-old Susan Brown, offering their various skills to make a wedding happen right then and there on the float. One said he was an ordained minister and could perform the ceremony, another offered to sing during the wedding, and a photographer said she could snap photos. "Susan kind of looked at herself and at me, we were all dirty and covered in glue and flower parts," Guntert said. "Susan said, 'You know, I'd really like to have a pretty dress.'"

So the couple decided to postpone the wedding for a year. Now Brown has a pretty dress, they have a perfectly good float, and the same team of volunteers made the ceremony happened on Saturday, two days before the 128th annual parade. The couple said "I do" on top of a float that was ridden by the parade's queen and her court. The float was festooned with thousands of flowers beneath a giant gold crown, which served as a makeshift altar for the ceremony.

The unique setting was appropriate for Guntert and Brown, who have spent the past decade volunteering to decorate Rose Parade floats - an endeavor that has them working 12-hour days between Christmas and New Year's on what would be vacation time from their jobs as government workers in San Bernardino County. Over the years, the couple has formed what they call their "float family," people they've grown close to but only see once a year for the annual decorating. The entire group was at the ceremony, along with family members and other friends.

The wedding came 17 years after the couple first struck up a conversation online, when internet dating was in its infancy. Though neither was looking for romance, their conversations grew into a friendship and not long after, love. Guntert was living in Northern California at the time, and Brown and her then 6-year-old daughter were a six-hour drive south in Victorville, about 70 miles northeast of Los Angeles in the Mojave Desert. After a three-year long-distance relationship, Guntert relocated to Victorville. The pair talked about marriage over the years but Guntert never quite got around to getting down on one knee and proposing - one of Brown's few requirements.

It took their Rose Parade "float family" and their near-impromptu wedding last year to spur Guntert into action. On Valentine's Day morning this year, he brought a cup of coffee and a ring to Brown and formally proposed marriage. "He put a ring on it," Brown said. "It made me cry." Though the wedding setting on the queen's float carries a great



The UPS Store Inc., "Books Bring Us Together" float, winner of the Isabella Coleman Trophy, follows the Arcadia High School band.



The 24-Hour Fitness, "Do More With Your 24," float entry, winner of the Crown City Innovation Trophy for best use of imagination and innovation to advance the art of floral design, rolls along the 128th Rose Parade.



The Cal Poly Universities float, winner of the Founders' Trophy for most beautiful float built and decorated by volunteers from a community or organization, rolls along the 128th Rose Parade.



The Miracle-Gro float "Everything's Coming Up Roses," winner of the Queen's Trophy for most effective use and display of roses rolls along the 128th Rose Parade.



This file photo shows US singer Janet Jackson as she performs during the Dubai World Cup horse racing event at the Meydan racecourse in the United Arab Emirates of Dubai. — AFP

Janet Jackson gives birth to son at age 50

Pop superstar Janet Jackson gave birth to her first child at age 50 on Tuesday, her spokesperson said Tuesday. Jackson and her husband Wissam Al Mana, a Qatari businessman, welcomed their son Eissa into the world after a "stress-free" delivery. "Janet had a stress-free healthy delivery and is resting comfortably," read the star's official statement, which did not provide further details. The younger sister of late king of pop Michael Jackson in April stunned fans by halting a global tour and saying that she and her husband were "planning our family."

Natural pregnancies are highly unusual, but not impossible, for women past their mid-40s. In vitro fertilization can extend the age at which women can have children. In October, People Magazine published a photo of the middle-aged celebrity on the

beach holding her baby bump. Jackson had been discreet about her personal life and did not immediately publicize her 2012 marriage to tycoon Al Mana, whose company sells luxury fashion brands throughout Gulf Arab kingdoms.

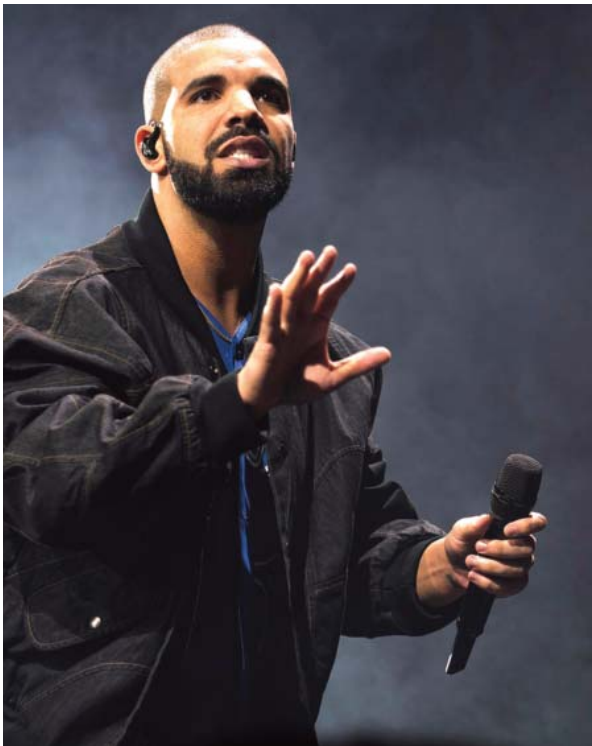
The singer won an international fan base in the late 1980s with her albums "Control" and "Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation 1814," which brought together pop music and funk with the emerging genre of hip-hop. The albums were notable for their socially conscious lyrics, in which Jackson identified with women's empowerment, and were accompanied by intricately choreographed live shows. — AFP

Drake leads iHeartRadio Music Awards nominations with 12

Drake leads the nominations for the 2017 iHeartRadio Music Awards with 12, including male artist of the year, while electronic duo The Chainsmokers has 11 nominations, including song of the year for "Closer" with Halsey. iHeartMedia and Turner announced the nominees yesterday. It was also announced that Bruno Mars will perform at the fourth annual awards show, to be held March 5 in Los Angeles

and televised on TBS, TNT and truTV, as well as simulcast on iHeartMedia stations.

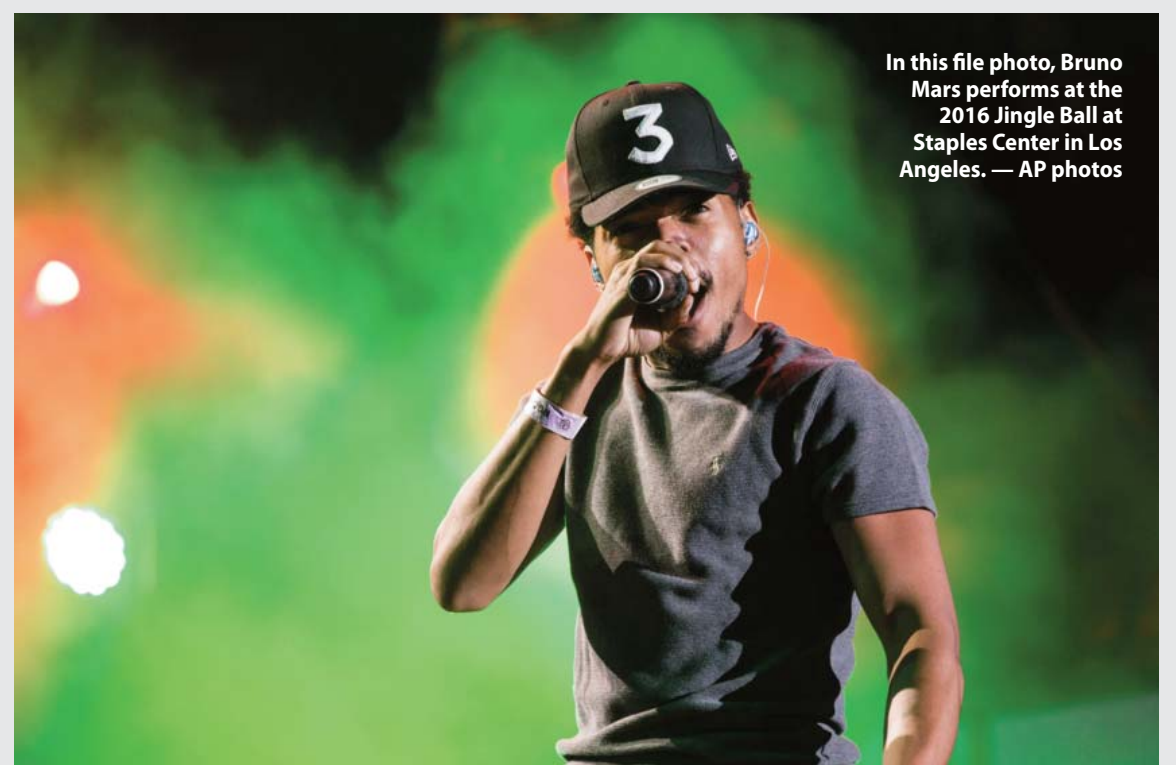
This year's show has been expanded to more than 30 categories. Other multiple nominees include twenty one pilots, Rihanna, Justin Bieber, Ariana Grande, Beyonce, Daya, Halsey, Nicky Jam and Sia. — AP



In this file photo, Drake performs onstage in Toronto.



In this file photo, Bruno Mars performs at the 2016 Jingle Ball at Staples Center in Los Angeles. — AP photos



In this file photo, Bruno Mars performs at the 2016 Jingle Ball at Staples Center in Los Angeles. — AP photos

Tool, Chance the Rapper, Phoenix to headline Governors Ball

Tool, Chance the Rapper and Phoenix are set to headline the Governors Ball music festival in New York City this summer. Founders Entertainment announced yesterday that Lorde, Childish Gambino, Wu-Tang Clan, Rae Sremmurd and Phantogram will also perform during the three-day event on Randall's Island Park from June 2-4.

Tickets go on sale Friday. The festival is in its seventh year. The Governors Ball will mark Tool's first NYC performance in 11 years. Other performers include Bleachers, Cage the Elephant, Flume, BANKS, Schoolboy Q, Marshmello, Franz Ferdinand, Wiz Khalifa, Charli XCX, Kehlani and Tove Lo. — AP

Reynolds, Fisher to get joint funeral

Screen icon Debbie Reynolds and her daughter, "Star Wars" legend Carrie Fisher, are to be buried side by side among numerous stars of Hollywood's Golden Age, US media reported Tuesday. ABC News said a private memorial service limited to family and close friends would take place today. Reynolds's son Todd Fisher told ABC's "20/20" on Friday he was planning a joint service at Forest Lawn Memorial Park in the Hollywood Hills with the help of Billie Lourd, his niece and Carrie Fisher's daughter.

The Hollywood Reporter quoted a family source as confirming there would also be an event at the Beverly Hills compound where Reynolds and Fisher were neighbors. "I'm not sure what they're calling it—a funeral or a wake—but it will be today at the house," the source said. "It will be exactly what they both wanted, to be together." The family is understood to be discussing a public memorial, although no plans have been announced.

Other celebrities laid to rest at Forest Lawn include Bette Davis, Reynolds's onscreen mother in "A Catered Affair" (1956), and Reynolds's close friend Liberace. Silent film star Buster Keaton, Oscar-winning Rod Steiger and David Carradine, the star of "Kung Fu" and Quentin Tarantino's "Kill Bill" films, are also buried there.

Reynolds, who tap-danced her way into American hearts as a star of "Singin' in the Rain," died on Wednesday last week, a day after daughter Carrie Fisher's death.

The 84-year-old suffered a stroke at the Beverly Hills compound as she was making funeral arrangements for Fisher, who had suffered a heart attack. "She didn't die of a broken heart. She just left to be with Carrie," Todd Fisher told "20/20." Fisher, who catapulted to worldwide stardom as rebel warrior Princess Leia in the original "Star Wars" trilogy, died in Los Angeles four days after suffering a heart attack on a transatlantic flight. She was 60.

Lourd opened up on Monday about losing her mother and grandmother just a day apart, telling her Instagram followers their prayers and kind words had given her strength "during a time I thought strength could not exist." "There are no words to express how much I will miss my Abadaba and my one and only Mommy. Your love and support means the world to me," the 24-year-old wrote. "Bright Lights: Starring Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds," a documentary about Reynolds's at-times rocky relationship with her daughter, premiered at this year's Cannes Film Festival and is due to air on HBO on Saturday. — AFP



This file photo shows actor Reda Kateb posing during a photocall of the movie "Les Beaux Jours d'Aranjuez" presented in competition at the 73rd Venice Film Festival at Venice Lido. — AFP

'Django' biopic to open Berlin film fest

The Berlin film festival will open next month with the premiere of a biopic about Gypsy-jazz great Django Reinhardt focused on his family's persecution by the Nazis, organizers said yesterday. The French production, "Django," marks the directorial debut of Etienne Comar, a screenwriter and producer behind hits such as "Of Gods and Men" and "My King" and co-producer of the award-winning film about radical Islam "Timbuktu." "Django" will compete for the Golden Bear top prize at the Berlinale, the first major European film festival of the year, running February 9-19.

Reinhardt, a virtuoso guitarist and composer who shot to global renown with his delicate melodies, belonged to the Sinti minority and was forced to flee German-occupied Paris in 1943. "Django Reinhardt was one of the most brilliant pioneers of European jazz and the father of Gypsy Swing. 'Django' grippingly portrays one chapter in the musician's eventful life and is a poignant tale of survival," festival director Dieter Kosslick said in a statement.

"Constant danger, flight and the atrocities committed against his family could not make him stop playing."

The film stars Reda Kateb, who appeared with Viggo Mortensen in the Algeria-set war drama "Far From Men." The Berlinale is still putting the final touches on its line-up but last month announced the first entries for its main showcase. "The Dinner" by Oren Moverman stars Richard Gere, Laura Linney and Steve Coogan in a thriller based on a Dutch novel by Herman Koch. British director Sally Potter will unveil "The Party" starring Patricia Clarkson and Bruno Ganz. Romanian filmmaker Calin Peter Netzer, who scooped the Golden Bear in 2013 for "Child's Pose," will enter the competition with "Ana, mon amour." Cult Finnish director Aki Kaurismaki will present his latest feature, "The Other Side of Hope." And director Andres Veiel will premiere a documentary about the 20th century German sculptor and performance artist Joseph Beuys. — AFP

Review

IN UPLIFTING 'HIDDEN FIGURES,' THREE WOMEN'S RISE

Theodore Melfi's buoyant "Hidden Figures" is an old-fashioned feel-good movie with powerful contemporary relevance, spearheaded by a trio of unstoppable actresses playing black women who wouldn't be stopped. Set in 1961 Virginia, the fact-based "Hidden Figures," adapted from Margot Lee Shetterly's non-fiction book, is about three peripheral characters at NASA who made important contributions to the space race. Their workplace, at Langley, is segregated (with separate bathrooms and drinking fountains) and the offices are uniformly run by white males in suits. But the talent and smarts of mathematician Katherine Johnson (Taraji P. Henson), budding engineer Mary Jackson (Janelle Monae) and computer supervisor Dorothy Vaughan (Octavia Spencer) are becoming impossible to ignore.

Metaphors are all around. While rockets lift off, the women of "Hidden Figures" strive for their own upward movement. Arithmetic surrounds them, but they're continuously underestimated. "That's NASA for you. Fast with rocket ships, slow with advancement," says Kirsten Dunst's manager. Johnson is pulled out of a pool of computers (human ones, though a room-sized IBM makes a late appearance) and brought into the all-white rocket center to check the trajectories and calculations of the scientists rushing to match Sputnik and lift John Glenn (Glen Powell) into space. Their leader is Al Harrison (a

fine, scene-chewing Kevin Costner), who compassionately responds to Johnson's rise.

But "Hidden Figures," punctuated by bright original songs by Pharrell Williams (who also collaborated with Hans Zimmer and Benjamin Wallfisch on the score), avoids many of the typical notes of a civil rights drama and keeps its focus on its three indomitable leads and their characters' private lives. Nobody would mistake it for a deeply complicated examination of segregation and no one will wonder if Melfi's film is going to end on a high note.



Instead, "Hidden Figures" is a straightforward, satisfying tale of triumph, full of warmth and crowd-pleasing scenes that its excellent cast lends spirit and verve to. Henson fiercely delivers the film's big, cathartic moment, one that will surely resonate for audiences familiar with her plight. In such scenes, "Hidden Figures" feels both of the '60s and of now. These are figures that have often been hidden from movie screens, too. But of the formidable threesome, it's Monae who most stands out. Following her role in Barry Jenkins' "Moonlight" (whose Mahershala Ali also appears here, captivatingly as a military officer and love interest), the R&B singer has made an altogether arresting big-screen debut this fall. Regal, powerful and tender, she just might be a full-on Movie Star. The real rocket of "Hidden Figures" is Monae. "Hidden Figures," a 20th Century Fox release, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for "thematic elements and some language." Running time: 126 minutes. Three stars out of four. — AP

This image released by Twentieth Century Fox shows Janelle Monae, from left, Taraji P. Henson and Octavia Spencer in a scene from "Hidden Figures." — AP



This file photo shows actresses Debbie Reynolds (left), recipient of the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award, and Carrie Fisher posing in the press room at the 21st Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards at The Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

FEATURE

Colonial satire parade still going in Ghana after almost a century



The Red Cross group performs on stilts during the Winneba Fancy Dress festival.



Affuah Appiawah Sey and her cousin poses during the Winneba Fancy Dress, known locally as Kakamotobi in the coastal town of Winneba. — AFP photos

A fancy dress New Year festival that began almost a century ago in Ghana as a searing satire of colonial life is still thriving today, with hundreds of people dressing up and donning masks. On the streets of Winneba, a fishing town a two-hour drive from the capital Accra, a four-meter tall Santa Claus waving Ghana's flag marches past a wolf shimmying to the jazzy beats played by a brass band. Children wearing matching pink and white cowboy outfits decorated in silver tinsel and Christmas ornaments dance along with their parents in the friendly but fierce-annual costume competition held just after New Year's Day. The Winneba event is a "passion festival", organizer James Kofi Annan told AFP.

"Whether you are in Winneba or elsewhere, you want to come." The Winneba Fancy Dress Festival has its roots in colonial Ghana, when Dutch and English settlers would wear masks at New Year parties. Ghanaians in Winneba began forming masquerade groups in the 1920's in part to poke fun at the life and dress of the Europeans, explained Annan. What began as a subversive depiction of colonial life transformed into a beloved cultural event.

After Ghana achieved independence in 1957, President Kwame Nkrumah's administration endorsed and promoted the annual Winneba



Performers arrive to take part in the Winneba Fancy Dress festival.

The father and son are also joined by Isaac's cousin, Mark Koomson, 42, and his son, Theophilus, also five. The two young boys held hands as they marched in the procession. Dressed in pink and white, they were pint-sized reflections of their fathers. Neon pink feathers lined their white, handmade boots, with pink rope decorating their white trousers. Their vests were festooned with tassels. They wore pink and white masks with long noses under pink sun hats decorated with feathers and tinfoil.

Family legacy

Both fathers want their sons to carry on the tradition of the annual festival. "I am growing older, he is supposed to come and take over from me. I have been doing it for 32 years. It is in my family," Ambrado said. Koomson said it was emotional to have his son march alongside him, explaining that his great-great grandfather was a founding member of the Red Cross. In the end, the Red Cross lost out to the Tumus group, who impressed the judges with their costumes that sent a message of "harmony and unity", Annan said.



Young participants take part in the Winneba Fancy Dress festival.



Two performers pose in fancy costumes during the Winneba Fancy Dress.

festival. This year's event saw five groups of about 100 members vying for the top trophy. The groups—the Nobles, Egyaa, Tumus, Red Cross and Group Five—have their own marching bands to provide the soundtrack to fast-paced, rhythmic dancing and marching formations. To perfect their moves before the big day, they practiced in secret locations around Winneba, including in the bush and abandoned buildings. Almost everything the revelers wear is custom-made for the event, from the harlequin outfits sewn in leather and velvet to the multicolored hand-stitched boots and tall crowns.

Cowboy boots and tinsel

The costumes are adorned with a glittering array of embroidery, tinsel and Christmas balls. The performers all wear masks, some handmade, others more generic. Santa is a favorite, and there is at least one Obama among the dancers. The groups, made up of women, men, boys and girls, work to wow the judges with three different dance routines throughout the day. Isaac Ambrado, 43, an architect and proud member of the Red Cross group, has brought his five-year-old son Gabriel to perform for the first time.

While there was no specific theme linking the outfits, Annan noted that they took care to use harmonious colors. The Tumus group showed discipline in their well-choreographed routines, but it was their passionate performance that endeared them to the judges. As Annan put it, "they were on top of virtually everything". — AFP



Performers take part in the Winneba Fancy Dress festival.



Handmade costumes for the Red Cross group are laid out ready for the Winneba Fancy Dress festival.



Performers on stilts rest during the Winneba Fancy Dress festival.



Family and friends from the Red Cross group get ready for the start of the Winneba Fancy Dress festival.



Young people dressed up in costumes make their way for the start of the Winneba Fancy Dress festival.



A marching music band perform during the Winneba Fancy Dress.



People gather to watch the Winneba Fancy Dress festival.

FEATURES



Hairdressers work on the hair of a client reading a book from a mini-library in a hairdressing salon in Abidjan. — AFP photos



A hairdresser reads a book from a mini-library in a hairdressing salon.



A hairdresser works on the hair of a client reading a book from a mini-library in a hairdressing salon.



A woman who gets her hair done reads a book from a mini library at a hairdressing salon in Abidjan.



Hairdressers work on the hair of a client reading a book from a mini-library in a hairdressing salon.

HAIR SALON? LIBRARY? NOVEL TIME FOR IVORY COAST WOMEN

As many African women spend much of their spare time in hair salons, Ivory Coast's chief librarian, also a woman, came up with a brainwave scheme to help them read and learn to read. Crammed on shelves between hair extensions, untangling creams and straightening lotions, a total 23 hair salons now offer customers a range of books on loan from the National Library. "Libraries are practically non-existent in our suburbs and the ones that do exist get very few visitors, and rarely women," said chief librarian Chantal Adjiman, who launched the project in 2012.

With little time on their hands between work and child care, most women simply do not have the opportunity to seek out books. So the library decided it was best to take books to one of their "regular meeting-places". "Ivorian women are charmers," said Adjiman. "They can spend more than an hour and a half in a hair salon." At the National Library building, where 1,750 books have been set aside for the hair salons, staff pack novels, children's books and also essays about women's or children's rights into boxes.

young woman sits reading on a bench oblivious to the noise or the banter of the traders nearby. "I've got no money to buy books so I often come here just to read," she said. Inside the salon, where a woman under a hood hair dryer thumbs a novel, owner Benedicte Ouguehi says the presence of the books has attracted new customers. Even hairdressers working out in the open come by the salon to borrow books for their clients, she adds.

rather they did something more educational," she said. Inagohi has even set up a reading corner for children, used both by children accompanying their mothers and those who live in her own building. The presence of the books, whether they be for children or for adults, gives women who cannot read and write the incentive to learn, and even men are beginning to turn up in women's hair salons to borrow them, said librarian Adjiman. "Ivorians love reading but have no access to books," she said. — AFP

'I come here just to read'

Outside one of the hair salons, located in a market, a

In Abidjan's well-heeled district of Cocody, 66-year-old salon owner Justine Inagohi says she immediately agreed to sign onto the scheme. "Women gossip under the dryers, I'd



A copy of an annotated version of Adolf Hitler's book 'Mein Kampf' prior to a press conference for its presentation in Munich, southern Germany.



This file photo shows a copy of an annotated version of Adolf Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" prior to a press conference for its presentation in Munich, southern Germany. — AFP photos

Hitler's 'Mein Kampf' becomes German bestseller

The first reprint of Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in Germany since World War II has proved a surprise bestseller, heading for its sixth print run, its publisher said Tuesday. The Institute of Contemporary History of Munich (IfZ) said around 85,000 copies of the new annotated version of the Nazi leader's anti-Semitic manifesto had flown off the shelves since its release last January. However the respected institute said that far from promoting far-right ideology, the publication had enriched a debate about the renewed rise of "authoritarian political views" in contemporary Western society.

regional bookstores showed that they tended to be "customers interested in politics and history as well as educators" and not "reactionaries or rightwing radicals". Nevertheless, the IfZ said it would maintain a restrictive policy on international rights. For now, only English and French editions are planned despite strong interest from many countries. The institute released the annotated version of "Mein Kampf" last January, just days after the copyright of the manifesto expired.

It had initially planned to print only 4,000 copies but boosted production immediately based on intense demand. The sixth print run will hit bookstores in late January. The two-volume work had figured on the non-fiction bestseller list in weekly magazine Der Spiegel over much of the last year, and even topped the list for two weeks in April. The institute also organized a successful series of presentations and debates around "Mein Kampf" across Germany and in other European cities, which it said allowed it to measure the impact of the new edition.

Bavaria was handed the rights to the book in 1945 when the Allies gave it control of the main Nazi publishing house following Hitler's defeat. For 70 years, it refused to allow the inflammatory tract to be republished out of respect for victims of the Nazis and to prevent incitement of hatred. But "Mein Kampf"—which means "My Struggle"—fell into the public domain on January 1 and the institute said it feared a version without critical commentary could hit the market.

"It turned out that the fear the publication would promote Hitler's ideology or even make it socially acceptable and give neo-Nazis a new propaganda platform was totally unfounded," IfZ director Andreas Wirsching said in a statement. "To the contrary, the debate about Hitler's worldview and his approach to propaganda offered a chance to look at the causes and consequences of totalitarian ideologies, at a time in which authoritarian political views and rightwing slogans are gaining ground."

Partly autobiographical, "Mein Kampf" outlines Hitler's ideology that formed the basis for Nazism. He wrote it in 1924 while he was imprisoned in Bavaria for treason after his failed Beer Hall Putsch. The book set out two ideas that he put into practice as Germany's leader going into World War II: annexing neighboring countries to gain "Lebensraum", or "living space", for Germans, and his hatred of Jews, which led to the Holocaust. Some 12.4 million copies were published in Germany and from 1936, the Nazi state gave a copy to all newlyweds as a wedding gift. — AFP

'Not reactionaries or radicals'

The institute said the data collected about buyers by

Football: Curtain call for fabled Boateng brothers

The tale of the Boateng brothers Jerome, George and Kevin-Prince-two of whom made history by facing each other at a World Cup finals-has hit the stage in Berlin. The play 'Peng-Peng Boateng' (Bang-Bang Boateng) is based on the 2012 book 'The Boateng Brothers' by sports journalist Michael Horeni with dance scenes replacing football matches. The tale charts the brothers' different paths from the football pitches of Berlin. Kevin-Prince is an ex-Portsmouth, AC Milan and Tottenham Hotspur midfielder, now playing for Las Palmas in Spain.

He is known for a strong work ethic and has become one of the world's best center-backs. In one scene, Jerome, played by actor Nyamandi Mushayavanhu, suffers in training, accepting the iron discipline needed to succeed in German football, living under draconian rules to win his coach's confidence.

George became a rapper after a prison spell, while Bayern Munich defender Jerome won the 2014 World Cup with Germany. The Boatengs made World Cup history at the 2010 finals in South Africa by becoming the first brothers to play each other when Kevin-Prince's Ghana lost 1-0 to Jerome's Germany in a group game. The siblings are sons of a German mother and Ghanaian father. But while George and Kevin-Prince were raised by their mother in Berlin's working-class district of Wedding, Jerome lived with his father in the affluent suburb of Wilmersdorf.

Meanwhile, his brothers show a tendency to rebel, but there is a danger in stereotyping the characters, says Mushayavanhu. "A lot had been heard about the brothers in advance and many people pigeon-hole them," said Mushayavanhu. "George is the so-called bad guy, Kevin-Prince is the bad guy and Jerome is the good guy, but it's not that simple when you look into it." Tamar Aslan plays Kevin-Prince, the talented midfielder who had been a key member of Germany's Under-21 team, but was thrown out of the squad, which later won the 2009 Junior European title, after an ill-advised nightclub visit.

"It's a bit of 'Wedding meets Wilmersdorf', the bad brothers against the good brother and how they actually became who they are," director Nicole Oder told AFP. "We used dance to replace the football and we partly improvised on the basis of the book, which means we have developed a part-documentary, part-fictional story." Despite Oder's best efforts, the "Peng-Peng Boateng" team have never met the brothers.

On stage, the character is tormented by the sanction and, unable to accept his punishment, decides never to play for Germany again and opts instead for his father's country Ghana. "The character of Kevin is the most interesting," said Aslan. "We really see the warrior in him. 'Germany don't want me? Ok, well I will play for Ghana, but I will continue to play.' The actor says the cast read the original book and countless interviews with the brothers to get a feel for the characters they would be playing.

Political storms
Jerome, the youngest of the trio, is portrayed as the shy child who grew up to become a world champion, model and multimillionaire. He has been held up by German Chancellor Angela Merkel as a model of integration and is one of the most recognizable faces in Germany. But he has also been dragged into political storms in the past. Alexander Gauland, deputy leader of the populist AfD party, said in June that "people think of him as a good footballer, but they do not want a Boateng as a neighbor"—comments which drew widespread condemnation.

Each performance, which lasts 90 minutes, is physically demanding for the actors, as the story revolves around football matches told through dance, leaving them as tired as after a typical football match. "It was a great challenge for us to bring the physical energy of football onto the stage and it was quite clear we could not play football," admitted choreographer Raphael Hillebrand. "Every time someone plays football in our play, it's a dance for us." — AFP



(From left) Actors Nyamandi Mushayavanhu, Daniel Mandolini and Tamer Arslan pose after the premiere of the theater play "Peng Peng Boateng" in Berlin. — AFP

Lifestyle

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Hair salon? Library? Novel time for I. Coast women

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Children play at river Atrato in Tagachi municipality, Antioquia department, Colombia. — AFP

At Deer Valley, it pays to see the powder through the trees

Skiers who've ducked into the trees at Deer Valley know that this mountain resort, for all its luxury accommodations and film-star guests, isn't just a pretty place. The powder stashes in the trees are about as good as they get. And that makes a mountain which is not terribly difficult overall - more than 65 percent of Deer Valley's runs range from easy to intermediate - attractive to skiers looking for a challenge. There are ample opportunities to take a cue from the mountain resort's namesake wildlife and swiftly bound into the woods.

'There are many options to relax, work out, enjoy a great meal and spa'

During the annual Sundance Film Festival, which starts Jan 19 in nearby Park City, Utah, it's easier to find pristine powder filling spaces between aspen trees than a movie ticket. That's because many festival patrons are more interested in parties and premieres than putting on skis. "We can have powder skiing three days after a big storm," said Olympic skier Heidi Voelker, Deer Valley's ski ambassador. "There's more terrain here than people realize." She's given tours in which she's worn out advanced skiers who began the day with low expectations because of all the green (easy) and blue (intermediate) on the trail map.

Other reasons that Deer Valley's powder stashes stay pristine include a snowboard ban and limits on the number of daily skiers, which also means relatively short lift lines. And of course, many skiers prefer Deer Valley's groomed cruiser trails. Deer Valley also invests considerable resources in "glading," where a crew

spends about 4,800 work hours clearing dead or diseased trees, branches, brush, etc. This makes the remaining trees healthier while making the area more navigable on skis - not to mention supplying the resort's Silver Lake and Empire lodges with up to 50 cords of fireplace wood.

Another factor keeping crowds down is price. Deer Valley was imagined as a luxury mountain resort by its founder, Edgar Stern. Its high-end ambiance is routinely compared to Aspen's, where Stern was a regular before investing in Park City. Lodging rates during Sundance can run thousands of dollars a night. Deer Valley's daily lift ticket is also the second-highest in the area at \$128. Only Park City Mountain Resort charges more, \$139. Daily lift tickets at other area resorts range from \$79 at Brighton to \$106 at Snowbird, with Solitude charging \$83 and Alta \$96.

Greg Bensel, an executive for the NFL's New Orleans Saints and NBA's New Orleans Pelicans, has made Deer Valley his family's go-to ski destination for the past decade. "The amenities at Deer Valley are second to none; they cater to their visitors very well," said Bensel, listing the Stein Erickson Lodge, the Montage and St. Regis Resort among his favorite spots. "We enjoy the fact that the runs and lifts are not overly crowded. There are many options to relax, work out, enjoy a great meal, spa - whatever you wish - and everything is very close."

Heidi's highlights

Voelker, an Olympian in 1988, '92 and '94, recommends a few spots in particular for advanced skiers. Those include the Daly Chutes and (unmarked) glades just east of the chutes known as "X-Files." Also along the upper, central part of the ski area are the Sunset Glade and opposing Ontario Bowl - the latter also having glade skiing, but a little more cleared out. On the far west side are Lady Morgan Bowl, and below that a challenging tree-filled headwall called Centennial. On the far east side are the Mayflower chutes, and farther down the mountain are Triangle Trees. The Daly



Chutes and X-Files require some hiking from the upper part of the Orion run, reachable on the Empire Express lift. "People don't take the time to go into X-Files because of the little hike, so you can lap in there and it's just beautiful, aspen skiing and you feel like you're kind of the only one in there if you're willing to make that little effort."

Getting there and around

The resort is relatively easy to reach - usually less than an hour's drive from Salt Lake City's main airport - with transportation options for those who don't want to rent a car. Locals take considerable pride in Deer Valley's reliable, convenient and free shuttle service. It not only runs between lodges and other

slope-side developments, but also has stops in Park City. Visitors are encouraged to use the shuttle service to reduce traffic congestion - particularly during the Sundance festival.

Dining

Between the lodges at Deer Valley and the offerings in Park City, dining ranges from casual to fancy, from pizza to sushi to Tex-Mex to traditional European alpine themes. Local favorites include Adolph's (Swiss), where the menu includes beef bourguignon fondue; Royal Street Cafe for casual American fare like bison burgers; and the Mariposa (fine dining), with organic and gluten-free cuisine. — AP

This undated photo provided by Deer Valley Resort in Park City, Utah, shows the snowy slopes of Bald Mountain. — AP photos



This photo shows skier making his way through a powder stash through the trees.



This photo shows a skier making his way down a snowy slope through the trees.



This undated photo shows a skier making his way down a snowy slope through the trees.