

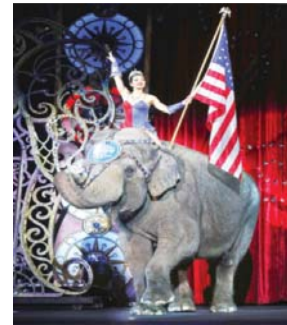
Iraqi invasion memorial museum faces demolition



Outgoing CIA chief rips into Trump over tweets, Russia



Ringling Bros circus closing show after 146 years



Ibrahimovic strikes late to rescue Man United



IN PARIS, TRUMP WARNED OVER MIDDLE EAST PEACE

KUWAIT URGES 'FINAL SETTLEMENT' OF CONFLICT



Min 6°
Max 20°
High Tide 01:29 & 15:18
Low Tide 08:53 & 20:53

EUROWINGS FLIGHT LANDS IN KUWAIT AFTER BOMB THREAT

KUWAIT: A Germany-bound Eurowings passenger flight from Oman landed in Kuwait yesterday over a bomb threat, but no explosives were found onboard, authorities said. The Airbus A330 from Salalah heading to Cologne, Eurowings flight EW117, landed at 8 am at Kuwait International Airport after the captain received word of the threat, said Mansour Al-Hashemi, a spokesman for Kuwait's civil aviation authority. Security officials found no signs of explosives on the aircraft, Hashemi said. He declined to discuss how the threat was made against the aircraft.

Eurowings said there were 287 passengers and 10 crewmembers onboard the plane, which was being flown by SunExpress on its behalf. Eurowings said the flight was a charter for tour company FTI. The plane was diverted to Kuwait "for security reasons and in consultation with the relevant authorities," Eurowings said in an emailed statement, without elaborating. The airline added that the flight would take off at 1 am today to head to Cologne as legal restrictions on maximum crew working time barred it from leaving Kuwait sooner. Passengers were put up at a hotel in the meantime, it said. — AP



PARIS: (From left) Russian Ambassador to France Alexander Orlov, US Secretary of State John Kerry, French President Francois Hollande, French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault, European Union Foreign Policy Chief Federica Mogherini and French State Secretary for European Affairs Harlem Desir pose for a group photo during the Mideast peace conference yesterday. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah is seen in the second row behind Ayrault. — AFP

PARIS: France warned of "serious consequences" yesterday if Donald Trump recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital as representatives from 70 countries met in Paris to try to revive stalled Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts. Neither Israel nor the Palestinians are attending the conference, which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dismissed as "futile". France called the gathering to reaffirm global support for a two-state solution to the seven-decade-old conflict, seen as increasingly intractable.

The Palestinians have warned that Trump's campaign pledge to move the US embassy to the contested city of Jerusalem could torpedo their chances of obtaining an independent state. French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault warned such a move would have "extremely serious consequences" and predicted the incoming US leader would find it impossible to implement. "When you are president of the United States, you cannot take such a stubborn and such a unilateral view on this issue. You have to try to create the conditions for peace," he told France 3 TV.

In a final statement, the conference warned Israel and the Palestinians against "unilateral steps" on Jerusalem and borders that could threaten a two-state solution. It called on them to avoid steps that "prejudice the outcome of negotiations on final status issues, including, inter alia on Jerusalem, borders, security, refugees". It also said the pre 1967 war borders should provide the basis for negotiations, Ayrault said.

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RIYADH: Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz (right) yesterday decorates Spanish King Felipe VI with the cordon of King Abdul Aziz, the highest Saudi honor for a foreigner. — AFP

SPANISH KING MEETS SAUDI KING, WARSHIP SALE MOOTED

RIYADH: Spain's King Felipe VI met yesterday with Saudi King Salman, official media said, during a visit coinciding with talks to sell Spanish warships. King Felipe was guest of honor at a lunch hosted by King Salman, who decorated him with the cordon of King Abdul Aziz, the highest Saudi honor for a foreigner, the Saudi Press Agency said. Later they discussed relations between the two nations and how to further develop them "in various fields", it said.

They also reviewed the situation in the Middle East, before Felipe held separate talks with Saudi Finance Minister Mohammed Al-Jadaan and Minister of Commerce and Investment Majed Al-Qasabi. The Spanish king arrived late Saturday in Riyadh for a three-day stay. Madrid's foreign ministry said its minister Alfonso Dastis, and Public Works Minister Inigo de la Serna, are accompanying Felipe during the visit.

Spanish media have linked this trip to a much-anticipated deal to sell Avante 2200 frigates for an estimated two billion euros (\$2.1 billion). "We can only confirm that negotiations are very advanced to build five warships which would be sold to the Saudi navy," a spokesman for state-owned Spanish ship builder Navantia told AFP. Spain is the seventh largest arms exporter in the world, and Saudi Arabia is one of the biggest buyers of military gear.

This year's budget allocates 191 billion

riyals (\$51 billion) for military spending including equipment and weaponry, down from 205 billion riyals spent in 2016. A separate budget allocation of 97 billion riyals is to pay for new naval bases for the Border Guards, and other security projects. Felipe's father, Juan Carlos, who reigned from 1975 to 2014, has close ties to the Saudi royal family.

A Spanish consortium, Al-Shoula, is building a high-speed railway across the desert to link the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah. The project is behind schedule and is now set to open in 2018. Spanish construction group FCC leads one of three consortia building a \$22.5-billion rapid transit system in the Saudi capital.

If the deal for the five corvettes goes ahead, it would provide jobs for over 2,000 people for several years, said Jose Antonio Fernandez Vidal, a representative of Spain's biggest union, Comisiones Obreras, in the northwestern region of Galicia, which is home to a major shipyard. "We are awaiting this like rain in summer to create jobs in shipyards," he said. Spain's jobless rate of 18.9 percent is the second highest in the European Union after Greece. The contract is not a done deal yet as Saudi Arabia is slashing spending with falling oil prices having led to a drop in revenues. And Spain faces stiff competition. France hopes to sell another type of navy ship to the Saudis, said a source at French defense contractor DCNS. — AFP

MPS FILE GRILLING OVER SPORTS BAN

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Three opposition lawmakers yesterday carried out their threat and filed to grill Minister of Information and Youth Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah for allegedly failing to do enough to end an international ban on Kuwaiti sports. The lawmakers - Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei and Abdulwahab Al-Babtain - also charged the minister of committing a variety of financial and administrative violations in the two ministries.

The grilling blamed the minister for playing a key role in triggering the international suspension on Kuwaiti sports by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), world football body FIFA and several other federations. They also charged him of failing to take the necessary and appropriate steps demanded by IOC and FIFA to end the suspension, which ultimately barred Kuwait from taking part in the qualifiers for the 2019 Asian Cup last week.

The lawmakers claimed that the minister has refused to implement requirements and standards demanded by the international sports organizations, which have maintained the ban. "The minister did not take the necessary measures to resolve the sports crisis in Kuwait and lift the suspension despite the repeated ultimatums that were given to him," the grilling said. "The minister has caused to deprive a generation from external sports participations," it added.

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KUWAIT: (From left) Opposition MPs Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei, Abdulwahab Al-Babtain and Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, who filed to grill the minister of information and youth, arrive for a session at the National Assembly yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

BAHRAIN EXECUTES 3 CONVICTED OVER POLICE BOMBING

DUBAI: Bahrain yesterday carried out its first executions since an Arab Spring uprising rocked the country in 2011, putting to death three men found guilty of a deadly bomb attack on police. Bahrain's public prosecution said the death sentences were carried out by firing squad.

Abbas Al-Samea, Sami Mushaima and Ali Al-Singace were found guilty in 2015 of killing two Bahraini policemen and an Emirati officer deployed to bolster the country's security forces in a bomb attack the previous year. A court upheld their death sentences last Monday. Government forces crushed the 2011 uprising with help from allies Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, but the country continues to face low-level unrest.

Bahrain hosts the US Navy's 5th Fleet, which patrols the waters around the Arabian Peninsula and is the naval counterweight to nearby Shiite powerhouse Iran. Bahrain also maintains close ties to Britain, which is building a naval base of its own in the country. Over the past two and a half months, Prince Charles, Prime Minister Theresa May and Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson have all paid visits to the island.

Hundreds of protesters took to the streets Saturday in solidarity with the condemned men as rumors spread that their executions were imminent. Images shared on social media showed activists blocking roads with burning debris and hurling petrol bombs in clashes with police. Protests and clashes continued yesterday despite a heavy presence of riot police deployed in predominantly Shiite areas.

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KUWAIT HONORS HER SON



In recognition of his contributions to the fields of spinal surgery and orthopedics surgery,

Minister of Health
Dr Jamal Al-Harbi
honored

Dr Abdulrazzaq Al-Obaid
Chief of spinal surgery at the ministry

This comes after the patency that was registered in the United States for a new implant innovation in the field of kyphoplasty. The procedure is a minimal invasive procedure used for pathological fracture secondary to osteoporosis or tumors. With the new technology, the balloon is biodegradable and the cement can be injected into the balloon that will dissolve after the cement solidifies. This is important to prevent any complications, like for example to the spinal canal that may lead to nerve damage. The new technology was tested first in the lab and then followed by an animal study. The human study will follow in the near future. The minister of health congratulated Dr Al-Obaid and recognized his efforts and contributions in the development of spinal surgery both locally and at the international level.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives the 2016 statistical manual of the Ministry of Public Works' projects from Minister Abdurrahman Al-Mutawa.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with a number of ministers and state officials. —Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos

AMIR, CROWN PRINCE RECEIVE MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS PREMIER MEETS HARVARD GRADUATES

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Minister of Public Works Abdurrahman Al-Mutawa at Bayan Palace yesterday. During the reception, Minister Al-Mutawa presented to His Highness the 2016 statistical manual of the Ministry of Public Works' projects. Mutawa later presented the manual to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammed Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Minister of Information and Minister

of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, in addition to Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, Minister of Awaqf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri and Director General of Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) Sheikh Dr Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. Separately, His Highness the Prime Minister received Minister Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah accompanied by graduates of Harvard University from different nationalities. His Highness the Prime Minister during the meeting praised the graduates' tour in the area and wished them success in achieving their goals in practical life. —KUNA



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with graduates of Harvard University.



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah meets with a delegation from the Kuwaiti-Yemeni relief agency. —KUNA

DEPUTY FM RECEIVES RELIEF AGENCY DELEGATION

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Sulaiman Al-Jarallah yesterday received a delegation from the Kuwaiti-Yemeni relief agency, which includes the charity organizations operating in Yemen, and is working in cooperation with the Kuwaiti Society for Relief. The meeting reviewed the agency's efforts to deliver the aid provided by the State of Kuwait to the Yemeni people.

The delegation lauded the generous aid Kuwait offers, which reached different parts of the country. The meeting was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for the Affairs of Al-Jarallah's Office Ambassador Ayham Abdullatif Al-Omer, and Assistant Foreign Minister for Follow-up and Coordination Plenipotentiary Nasser Al-Sabeeh. —KUNA

KUWAIT REAFFIRMS STANCE ON HAVING ARAB SEAT IN UNSC

DOHA: Kuwait has stressed yesterday the importance of reforming the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to improve and bring more transparency to the Council's work. Head of Kuwait's permanent mission to the UN headquarters in New York, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi said that part of the reforms should include fair Arab representation at the UNSC, appropriate with the number of Arab countries and Arab issues discussed by the Council's agenda.

Otaibi, coordinator of the Arab Group on the Council reform, added that UNSC reform can only be realized by bringing greater transparency to the work of the Council and increasing its members according to standards and regulations that would create a

fair balance in representation and efficiency in performance. The reform is still under consideration since talks on the matter began 23 years ago, it is important to find new mechanisms to expand membership at the council, he said.

The meeting, which Qatar called for, came after the UNSC failure in carrying out its responsibilities in underscoring the importance of fast reform. Thirty Members are participating in the two-day meeting, along with the President of the 71st UN General Assembly Peter Thomson and the Co-Chairmen of the Inter-Governmental Negotiation on Security Council Reform Ambassador Mohammad Khairi of Tunisia. —KUNA

AWQAF MINISTER UNDERSCORES SOCIAL UNITY

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti social unity has been a major deep-rooted characteristic of the Kuwaiti people, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri said yesterday. Jabri, who doubles as Minister of Municipal Affairs, made the remark in a keynote speech during the 13th Seminar on Developments of Islamic Thought organized by the Ministry of Awqaf and patronized by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

He said that it is imperative to maintain and safeguard social unity in order to wipe out the horrible phenomenon of terrorism, commending the political leadership's effective response to this scourge. The Muslim world has been hit by the pestilence of terrorism and extremism that has pushed many young people to commit murders and launch bombings, thus seriously distorting the image of the tolerant religion of Islam. However, the minister acknowl-



KUWAIT: Awqaf Minister Mohammad Al-Jabri speaks during the 13th Seminar on Developments of Islamic Thought. —KUNA photos



Awqaf Ministry's Undersecretary Fared Emadi speaks during the 13th Seminar on Developments of Islamic Thought.

edged that the causes of terrorism are very complicated, and terror has various forms and manifestations, calling for sharpening anti-terrorism efforts and overcoming

relevant challenges. Meanwhile, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Fared Emadi said the Arab world needs to effectively fight the

scourge of extremism and hardline thought. He added that the Muslim world's economic problems and sufferings and political contradictions have been used as a pretext for terrorism and extremism.

Therefore, Islamic and world organizations and foundations should exert more concerted efforts to address the reflections of terrorism and to rebuff extremists' easily refuted justifications and excuses as well as to protect young people from extremist thoughts. Political Advisor at the GCC Secretariat General Nawaf Al-Mutairi said the swift regional developments have regrettably imposed security and social challenges on GCC member states. He listed such major challenges as growing terrorist and extremist groups and movements and lack of moderation and tolerance. Mutairi emphasized that the phenomenon of terrorism needs to be addressed by regional and international efforts. —KUNA

KRCS CALLS FOR INT'L COORDINATION FOR BETTER HUMANITARIAN SERVICES

KUWAIT: Chairman of the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Dr Hilal Al-Sayer yesterday emphasized the momentousness of coordinating among the international humanitarian organizations to provide the best services to those afflicted by catastrophes or wars.

During a meeting with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Gulf Director Saeed Hersi, Sayer stressed the importance of drawing up field programs, boosting partnerships and exchanging data and expertise to overcome the logistic challenges hindering delivery of relief aid to Yemeni governorates. He said that he and Hersi discussed the partnership and cooperation between OCHA and the KRCS. Partnership is of the major strategies of relief work, Sayer said. The meeting also addressed the KRCS's efforts in Yemen, Iraq and Syria, especially for assisting people displaced from Aleppo.

Meanwhile, the OCHA Gulf chief lauded the KRCS's leading humanitarian role. It is one of the chief donor agencies on the world scene, he said. Hersi referred to the society's positive response to relief efforts through cooperation with the regional and the UN organizations. He said they are looking forward to further cooperation with the KRCS. —KUNA



KUWAIT: KRCS' Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer meets with OCHA's Gulf Director Saeed Hersi. —KUNA



KRCS DELIVERS 1,200 FOOD BASKETS TO DISPLACED IRAQIS IN IRBIL

IRBIL: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) distributed yesterday 1,200 food baskets to displaced Iraqi families residing in camps in the autonomous region of Kurdistan. Kuwait's Consul General in Irbil Dr Omar Al-Kandari said that the

aid is part of "humanitarian efforts to mitigate the misery of the Iraqi people." Moreover, Kandari noted that KRCS has launched a comprehensive aid package for displaced Iraqis, which includes providing them with nutritious food baskets,

adding that Kuwait's General Consulate will help facilitate the aid process. Meanwhile, KRCS's Director of Disaster Management Yousef Al-Miraj said that KRCS has "delivered humanitarian aid to 1,200 families, all of whom were the recipients of

food baskets." On the "varied" aid package, Al-Miraj said that it covers the basic needs of displaced families in Iraq's Kurdistan region. In the meantime, Al-Barzani Charity official Mohammad Baha-el-Din thanked Kuwait for the "copious

amount" of humanitarian aid given to displaced Iraqis. Kuwait has doled out an incessant flow of aid to displaced Iraqis since 2015, where some 130,000 food baskets were delivered to displaced Iraqis and Syrian refugees. —KUNA

LABOR MARKET FLOODED WITH UNNECESSARY WORKERS: MP

INFO MINISTER DEFENDS RECENT RECRUITMENTS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf said that he met recently with Minister of Social Affairs and Labor Hind Al-Sabeeh, who told him that she is fully aware of the demographic imbalance problem and the to amend the labor law and protect Kuwait against visa traffickers.

Hajraf said that he agreed to the statements made by his colleague Safaa Al-Hashem concerning reducing the number of expats in the country within 4-5 years because the labor market is flooded with unnecessary workers. He also criticized the statements made by Egyptian Minister of Manpower and Immigration Mohamed Safaa, who recently announced plans to find jobs for Egyptians in Kuwait. Hajraf noted that it was unacceptable that foreign embassies in Kuwait have been interfering in domestic matters and violating local laws for their people's interests. "Kuwait is the only GCC state where expats do not respect the laws," he underlined.

Separately, Hajraf said that citizens with severe and medium disabilities will be able to do their transactions online without having to visit the disabled authority. He also noted that during Minister Sabeeh, she told him that she closely watches the disabled authority's performance and would never allow delinquency.



MP Mubarak Al-Hajraf

Info ministry

Meanwhile, and in response to parliamentary inquiries about the number of citizens working for the information ministry versus expats, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said 87 percent of the ministry's employees are Kuwaitis. He also explained that only 311 expats were appointed with contracts, while 897 were hired on temporary one-



Minister Hind Al-Sabeeh

year contracts that are only renewable upon approval from the Civil Service Commission (CSC). "These workers get no incentives or indemnities," he said. Sheikh Salman explained that the same policy is followed at the news and political programs sector. "The same applies to KUNA," he added, noting that the total number of expats working for it was 146, while only 75 worked for the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL).

Housing units

Responding to a parliamentary inquiry, Minister of Housing and Minister of State for Services Yasser Abul said the Public Authority for Housing Welfare contracted local qualified companies to build housing units in Jaber Al-Ahmed, Sabah Al-Ahmed and West Sulaibikhat cities, and that foreign companies were only hired for South Mutlaa City.

Ultimatum

The Cabinet's economic affairs committee gave the Ministry of Commerce and Industry one month to take proper measures to reorganize the construction material subsidies paid to citizens. Notably, the commerce ministry had prepared a full study under former minister Yousef Al-Ali to organize the KD 30,000 construction material subsidies stated in law number 19/2014. Statistics issued by the commerce ministry said 54 percent of the subsidies paid by the ministry were allocated for construction materials, with KD 62 million during the first half of 2016-2017.

Air force division

Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi approved a request by the Defense Ministry to allocate a site to build a new air force division over a total area of 6,250,000 square meters north of the country. Manfouhi also approved a request by the Ministry of Health to allocate a plot to be used as a helipad at Farwaniya Hospital.

KUWAITI CITIZENSHIP

Legalese

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

Citizenship means the status of being a legally recognized subject of a particular country. In every country, there are different procedures, requirements and types of citizenships. In some countries it comes in the form of a card or a smaller passport - in others, you do not get a physical document. In some countries, you need to have money and a business to become a citizen, while in others you can get it by working for a certain amount of years, and so on. Therefore, I am not surprised when I get confused questions from readers regarding Kuwaiti citizenship.

Kuwaiti citizenship has rightfully been a very sensitive matter to discuss, but I am here to explain the law behind the citizenship and not the political aspect of it. Being Kuwaiti means monetary benefits as well as political ones. Therefore, Kuwaiti citizenship is in high demand and unfortunately has been a subject of attempted fraud, a very serious crime! Today I hope I will answer questions by my readers about Kuwaiti citizenship.

How difficult?

Question: Is obtaining Kuwaiti citizenship difficult and if so, how difficult? We applied for citizenship but our application was not accepted and we were told we could not take the matter to court. Is this true?

Fajer: Difficult is all about perspective, but when I personally say it is difficult, I mean the procedure is a lot tougher than other countries in general, but I am sure that there are valid reasons by the Kuwaiti authorities for such procedures, Kuwait is in a very sensitive region and area and these decisions are made to protect Kuwait. As a very patriotic person, I trust that the officials are doing what is best for Kuwait. Citizenship in Kuwait (and many other countries) is seen as a matter of sovereignty and in Kuwait the law states that the matter cannot be taken to court.

Passing citizenship over

Question: I am a Kuwaiti woman married to a non-Kuwaiti man. Can I pass over the citizenship to my husband?

Fajer: Generally speaking, no. With that said, there is a law that allows a Kuwaiti woman to pass on her citizenship to her husband if he is Arab and Muslim.

Long procedure

Question: I was born to a Kuwaiti father, but I have never been to Kuwait and I do not see my father very often. My father does not want me coming to Kuwait. Can I get Kuwaiti citizenship?

Fajer: Yes you can, but if your father is not willing to cooperate with you, then you will have to go through a long procedure before you can obtain the citizenship. My advice would be to hire a lawyer in Kuwait. It will be a lot easier for the lawyers if you have any official Kuwaiti documents or if your dad registered you previously in Kuwait.

For any legal questions, queries or if you need legal assistance, email ask@fajerthelawyer.com

AIRPORT PASSENGER TRAFFIC REACHED 10,848,550 IN 2016

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Official statistics for 2016 showed that total passenger traffic at Kuwait International Airport reached 10,848,550 last year, for both arrivals and departures, the Relations and Security Information Department at the Interior Ministry said in a statement. The arrival figure for Kuwaitis was 1,884,888, while departures were 1,887,753. Meanwhile, GCC nationals recorded 337,340 arrivals and 337,432 departures, while other nationalities saw 3,253,291 departures and 3,147,846 arrivals. It said the number of visas issued at Kuwait airport passports was 216,529, while the fingerprints scanners helped arrest 696 deportees who were trying to reenter the country. In the meantime, 224 people were caught with forged passports, and 164 were carrying passports that do not belong to them. The number of those caught through the fingerprint system and eventually allowed in was 114, 2,744 were sent back, while 1,123 were sent to residency affairs detectives.

Domestic helpers

Meanwhile, the relations and security information department said domestic help department statistics showed the number of complaints received in 2016 was 1,304, including 48 from domestic helpers, 1,236 from employers and 20 from domestic help offices. It also showed that 1,118 domestic helpers were deported with travel documents, while 1,806 offices were inspected and 39 persons were sent to residency affairs detectives. It said that the number of domestic help offices in Kuwait reached 267, while licenses of 42 were revoked.

Injuries

A fire broke out in a house in Qusoor, leaving two people injured, the public relations and information department at Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) said.

KUWAITI OFFICIAL AFFIRMS COMMITMENT TO CUSTOM UNION

CAIRO: The State of Kuwait is committed to meeting requirements for launching the Arab custom union, a visiting official of the Gulf State affirmed yesterday. Establishing the Arab custom federation was endorsed at the Arab economic summit hosted by the State of Kuwait in 2009, where the top leaders entrusted the Arab Economic and Social Council with setting up the federation for boosting pan-Arab economic merger, said Mona Al-Rashidi, the head of the secretariat bureau of the committees at Kuwaiti General Administration for Customs. She was speaking in a statement on sidelines of the 31st session of the Arab custom committee, due at the Arab League for three days. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi speaks during an event held yesterday to demonstrate the use of e-transactions at the municipality. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

CITIZENS DISCOURAGED FROM JOINING OIL SECTOR: UNION

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Deputy chairman of the oil sector's employees syndicate Abbas Awadh described what recent oil recruits are suffering from as a 'continuation of provocative policies' in the oil sector with the aim of limiting the rights of employees and new recruits. Awadh stressed that holders of diplomas and university degrees were demoted the same way indemnity was previously dealt with. "Such practices are meant to discourage citizens from joining the oil sector and replace them with lesser skilled and experienced expats," he said, noting that the syndicate will never allow privatization of the oil sector. "It seems that senior oil sector officials did not learn their lessons when thousands went on strike," he concluded.

E-transactions

Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri said Kuwait Municipality Director Ahmad Al-Manfouhi

briefed him about using e-transactions in the municipality and how it would cut the paperwork needed on issuing all municipality licenses. Jabri added during an event held yesterday to demonstrate the use of e-transactions at the municipality that he saw a presentation showing the details about the project due to be trialed from Feb 1, starting with Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate before using it in all other areas. "This step will be followed by many others to stop corruption and bureaucracy," he added, noting that the automated services system is capable of rejecting any incomplete transaction, and transactions that used to take six weeks will be processed within two days once the system goes in use. Acting director of the Central Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) Qossai Al-Shatti congratulated the municipality and stressed that e-services will be handy for both citizens and engineering firms. Shatti added that CAIT provides technical and operational services to all government establishments.

KUWAIT, INDIA AMEND DOUBLE TAXATION AGREEMENT

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Finance yesterday signed a protocol with India amending the agreement between the two countries to avoid double taxation on income and to prevent tax evasion. The protocol amends the types of Kuwaiti taxes in Article two of the agreement, as well

as Article 26 on exchanging tax data, both on individuals and corporates, the ministry's Undersecretary Khalifa Hamada said in a press release.

He added that Kuwait ratified the form on exchanging tax data of endorsed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and

Development (OECD), noting that the Kuwaiti-Indian agreement was effective as of October 17, 2007. He also said that the agreement on encouraging investments between the two Asian countries was put into effect on June 28, 2003. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Ministry of Finance's Undersecretary Khalifa Hamada and Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain shake hands after signing the protocol. —KUNA

SHEIKHA FARIHA: 'AMIR OF HEARTS' ORCHESTRATED KUWAIT'S PROGRESS

KUWAIT: The late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah led Kuwait to progress in various fields, mainly including urbanization, said President of the Kuwait Association for the Ideal Family Sheikhha Fariha Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Although Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, or "Amir of Hearts", passed away 11 years ago, people will remember him forever, Sheikhha Fariha said in a press release yesterday. During his rule, which began in 1977, the late Amir steered the country's advancement and development in various domains and sectors, she added. She pointed to the great role and achievements made by the State of

Kuwait during the era of Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad, she said, adding that he was chosen Head of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) when its rotating session was held in Kuwait. The late Amir played a key role in the promotion of the OIC's position at the world level and worked hard to establish many regulative laws, she said.

Having been keen on Kuwait's international presence, the late Amir adopted the country's policy for opening up to the world, and established strong relations with many world countries, thus enabling Kuwait to fulfill its people's expectations and ambitions, she added. On the Gulf level, it was the late Amir

who came up with the idea of creating the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and suggested a GCC Advisory Council which acts as a legislator for the six GCC member states.

Furthermore, Kuwait, during his era, made considerable progress in terms of revamping women's status and ensuring gender equality as Kuwaiti women obtained political rights; mainly the appointment of the first female cabinet minister in the country's history, Sheikh Fariha boasted. She quoted the late Amir as having emphasized national unity as the most effective way to create miracles and achieve national development and prosperity. —KUNA

PRIVATE SECTOR TARGETED FOR TOP EMPLOYER: MGRP

KUWAIT: The Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) is hard at work to create of the private sector the major employer of national workforce in the country, through encouraging young people to work in non-government jobs.

The trend is part of the government's efforts to remedy the imbalance in the structure of the local labor market, director of developing national manpower at the MGRP Eman Al-Ansari told a graduation ceremony of 30 job seekers from the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK).

It aims to replace the migrant labor with nationals, Ansari said. The MGRP seeks through manpower development schemes to qualify those seeking jobs in the private sector through training programs in cooperation with various Kuwaiti institutions, she noted. She highlighted the state's high interest in youth as "Kuwait's real wealth," citing a significant saying of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Established amongst the first private higher educational institutions, the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) offers unique experiential education programs which are recognized in the region. The ACK is to "generate human capital equipped with practical knowledge and employability skills that contributes to the economic development and welfare of Kuwait." —KUNA

KISR, ACK JOIN FORCES FOR GREATER OIL PRODUCTION

KUWAIT: Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) and the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) signed an agreement in the field of petroleum engineering, part of efforts to boost oil production. During a press conference held yesterday, KISR's Director General Dr Samira Omar underscored that the agreement signed between both sides will give ACK pupils the opportunity to participate in researches conducted by KISR germane to oil extraction.

Moreover, she noted that such endeavors allow both institutes to share their knowhow with one another, which in turn, results in a more adept workforce. Meanwhile, Director of KISR's Oil Research Department Dr Mina Marafie said that the partnership forged between KISR and ACK will be instrumental in bringing the oil sector's goal for the year 2030 to fruition.

On the agreement, she added that it comprises lectures, workshops and seminars that will prove mutually beneficial for both sides. Similarly, ACK Chairman Abdullah Al-Sharhan noted that the main objective of this agreement is to allow ACK students the chance to partake in activities offered by KISR. He also pointed out that the agreement fits into state plans to bolster the national workforce. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Dr Yousef Al-Amiri, President of the Kuwait House for National Works Museum (center) speaks during the press conference. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A bust of former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein is displayed at the museum.

IRAQI INVASION MEMORIAL MUSEUM FACES DEMOLITION

JULY 1 WAS ULTIMATUM TO VACATE BUILDING

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The only museum in Kuwait telling the story of the 1990 Iraqi invasion - the Kuwait House for National Works Museum - may be demolished soon to complete the road development project in the area. This will be a great loss for the country due to its value and cultural role.

The government had given the museum - located on Street 70 in Shuwaikh - along with other NGOs in the area, an ultimatum until July 1, 2016 to vacate the building. Today, the Kuwait House for National Works remains in the same location, but in fear of being demolished any day, and its electricity may be cut at any moment. The property on which it is located is state property, so the government can forcibly evict it.

Most other NGOs moved to other locations, as they were given replacement buildings by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, as they come under its umbrella. But the museum is under the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, which is supervised by the Ministry of Information, which hasn't provided a replacement place for the museum to move to.

Dr Yousef Al-Amiri, President of the Kuwait House for National Works Museum, held a press conference yesterday at the museum to call on the government to find a place to move to before

it is demolished. "This museum was launched in 1997, and during these 20 years, I collected all the items including the audiovisual materials. I did everything from my own resources with the support of donations. I have spent over KD 600,000 on this historical work, and they want to demolish everything," he said sadly.

Field trips

The museum is very active. "We receive about 150 students daily, who come on school field trips to learn about Kuwait's history. Also, this museum is included on four pages of the curriculum. Moreover, all foreign military delegations visiting Kuwait visit the museum as part of their trips, in addition to other delegations and Kuwaiti visitors and residents. We also have twinning agreements with 27 countries to have a permanent booth for Kuwait at their museums, which is a great achievement for Kuwait," added Amiri. The museum includes many valuable pieces, although it hasn't received any governmental support. "We have a bronze statue of Saddam Hussein, which an American soldier brought for us from Baghdad. We received an offer from a Qatari sheikh who runs a museum there to buy this statue for one million dollars, but I refused, especially after Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammed, one of our major donors, asked me not to sell it. We also have the cigar, diary and

some outfits of Oday, Saddam's son," he added.

"Three years ago, and after long negotiations, the government offered us a 5,000-sq-m plot in Garnata and we paid the fees, but it didn't work out. We are presently located in an area related to Kuwait's history on the seaside, while Garnata is far away, and it may be difficult for foreign visitors to reach us," complained Amiri.

According to him, the ministry of information announced providing an alternative house to move into, but this is only ink on paper. "It's a promise on paper and not in reality. I saw the house but I never received the keys. We communicated with the ministry many times repeatedly, but they never respond. I really don't know what to do and how to deal with the ministry, so this why I call on the media to help us highlight this problem. Also, I know that the government let a private museum have a section at the Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Center that hasn't been launched yet, but they didn't give it to our museum," he said. "The government has refused to support our museum financially since it was founded. And today, it's not even providing an alternative place, although the government gave a grant of \$8.8 million to an Arab country for the maintenance of a museum there, while it refuses to even spend on the maintenance of our air-conditioning system that costs only KD 8,000," he rued.

WHAT DOES THE MUSEUM CONSIST OF?

KUWAIT: The museum comprises of numerous halls that reconstruct the history of Kuwait from that dark day of August 2, 1990 to the day of liberation, when Kuwait again became a free nation. This is accomplished by the use of light and sound effects, voice reconstructed models, paintings, photographs and documentary films. The visitor can find the following:

1 - Reception Hall

Visitors enter the museum and its control center through the reception hall. The walls of this hall are adorned with hand-drawn portraits of the rulers of Kuwait from the late Sheikh Mubarak Al-Kabeer to our present Amir. It also has a large map of Kuwait made of colored glass.

2 - Kuwait Heritage Hall

In this hall are voice recordings of old folk songs and miniature models of old Kuwaiti buildings. Visitors will gain insight into the ancient history of Kuwait. The main objective of this hall is to disprove Iraq's consistent claims of sovereignty over Kuwait. The source of all records is the Kuwait Institute for Research and Studies.

3 - The Invasion Tunnel (the main exhibit)

Considered the main area of the museum, it narrates the story of the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait from Aug 2, 1990 until the liberation of Kuwait on Feb 26, 1991. Using special sound and light effects, it brings to life the systematic destruction by Iraqi soldiers of Kuwait's infrastructure.

4 - Cinema

The cinema is used to screen documentary films about the Gulf War for museum visitors. With a seating capacity of 100, the theater can also be used to conduct lectures and seminars.

5 - Hand-drawn Panorama

The main wall of this hall displays a unique 22-meter-long painting by various Kuwaiti artists that depict the atrocities committed by the invaders, the suffering of the Kuwaiti people during the occupation, and their joy at the liberation of their country. Also highlighted

are paintings dedicated to the struggle of Kuwait women.

6 - Hall of Martyrs and POWs

This hall describes issues related to Kuwait's POWs and martyrs through pictures and mock-ups. It places emphasis on the negative impact the Iraqi invasion has had on the lifestyle and outlook of the Kuwaiti people as well as the rest of the society. Documents as well as pictures of badly-tortured martyrs are on display that incriminate the Iraqi regime for these crimes against the Kuwaiti people. A special zone will be assigned for the portrayal of a life of anguish and torment the Iraqi people led under Saddam Hussein's regime.

7 - Hall of Peace

This hall contains information on each member of the Arab-Western coalition that contributed to the liberation of Kuwait. Touch screen computers provide additional information about the museum.

8 - Photo Exhibit Hall

A large collection of photographs are displayed as a permanent exhibition for the public, as indelible proof of the atrocities committed by Iraq's ruthless regime.

9 - Story of a Martyr

This section illustrates in drama form the real-life account of one of the martyrs - his capture, interrogation, torture and finally his cold-blooded murder in full view of his family. Also exhibited are many of instruments of torture used during the interrogation.

10 - Open Panorama

Many of the weapons used by the Iraqis during the invasion and in the Gulf War, as well as an Iraqi field command tent are displayed in the museum's garden.

11 - Gift Shop

In order to keep their trip to the museum alive in the minds of its visitors, souvenirs, booklets, movies, CDs and stickers outlining the museum's various activities are available at the gift shop.

GULF POPULAR HERITAGE FESTIVAL KICKS OFF



Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah speaks to the press during the event.

KUWAIT: A Gulf popular heritage festival opened yesterday in Sabah Al-Ahmad village, drawing a large turnout in an event sponsored by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. The opening ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Amiri Diwan Advisor and the village's supervisor Mohammad Daifallah Sharar, Deputy village supervisor Sheikh Sabah Fahad Al-Nasser Al-Sabah and the director of the village Saif Al-Shallahi, along with a number of government officials. In a statement to the press, Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah said that the festival will allow the people of Kuwait and the Gulf region the chance to mingle amid a delightful ambiance.

Moreover, he spoke of the greenery galore found in the village, in addition to numerous outstanding services it provides, adding that the festival coincides with the 11th anniversary of the passing of late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, Director General of the Public Authority for Youth (PAY) Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi noted that PAY is participating in the festival, which aims to instill in youth values of national unity and patriotism. Mutairi added that he was hopeful that Kuwaiti youth would be able to showcase a favorable image of Kuwaiti culture. The festival will include a plethora of contests and activities designed to illustrate Kuwait's profound maritime heritage. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah tours the Sabah Al-Ahmad Village after the opening of the Gulf Popular Heritage Festival 2017. — KUNA



INT'L INVENTION FAIR OPENS TODAY: KSC

KUWAIT: The 9th International Invention Fair in the Middle East (IIFME) will take place in Kuwait starting from today with 200 inventors from 36 countries taking part. The three-day event, themed "investor-inventor meeting is to be held under auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah," it will showcase 150 inventions, Kuwait Science Club (KSC) said.

Speaking to reporters on Saturday evening, head of the organizing committee Talal Al-Kharafi extolled His Highness the Amir for his kind patronage of the gathering and limitless support to youth inventors. "His Highness the Amir's care for science and scientists offers encouragement to the KSC activities meant to foster the skills of talented youth," Kharafi said.

"The fair, one of the most significant and largest specialized exhibitions of inventions in

the Middle East, aims to galvanize the Arab and Muslim youth into making innovative achievements in the area of scientific research and market their inventions," he pointed out.

The participation of investors in the event will contribute to the promotion of scientific and technological advancement in the Arab world and Arabian Gulf region. "The event will provide an opportunity for revealing the culture of invention to societies and strengthening the existing relationships among the inventors and corporations," Kharafi noted.

It will offer cash awards totaling in value \$100,000; these include a grand prix of \$15,000, the KSC prize - \$10,000, the GCC Patent Office prize - 50,000 Saudi riyals for the three top winners from the GCC countries, the award of the International Exhibition of Geneva - \$15,000, and an award from World Intellectual Property

Organization (WIPO). Meanwhile, Dr Salam Al-Ablani, director of the scientific culture dept. of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS), affirmed the commitment of the IIFME to providing the conditions necessary for creativity and innovation in science. "KFAS attaches great importance to such events that provide an opportunity for Kuwaiti young inventors to network with their peers from around the globe," he noted.

Dr Al-Ablani welcomed the participation of investors in the event, saying it opens new horizons for inventors to sell their viable and applicable inventions. Chief of the arbitration panel David Farouqi said his panel is made up of more than 35 world-renowned judges who have long experience in assessing the inventions as per the standards set by the International Exhibition of Geneva. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Head of the organizing committee of the 9th International Invention Fair in the Middle East Talal Al-Kharafi (center) speaks during the press conference. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

SURVEY SHOWS KUWAIT HAPPIER IN 2017

56% OF RESPONDENTS SATISFIED WITH THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING

KUWAIT: As we enter the New Year, happiness and wellbeing have come into focus in the Middle East and North Africa. A new survey by Bayt.com, the number one job site in the Middle East, and YouGov, a pioneer in online market research, titled the Bayt.com 'Happiness in the Middle East' survey, revealed that more than half (56 percent) of respondents in Kuwait are satisfied with their current standard of living, at least to some degree.

To determine levels of happiness in the Middle East, the survey addressed elements of respondents' personal lives, their professional lives, their current country of residence, and other aspects of life relating to their health and wellbeing.

Respondents rated the top five most important factors that impact their general happiness levels in their country of residence. In Kuwait, general safety and security was stated by more than half of respondents (56 percent) as the most important factors. This was followed by leading a financially stable life (50 percent), employment opportunities (46 percent), ability to maintain healthy personal relationships (34 percent), and attitude and behavior of people in general (34 percent).

Happiness with personal life

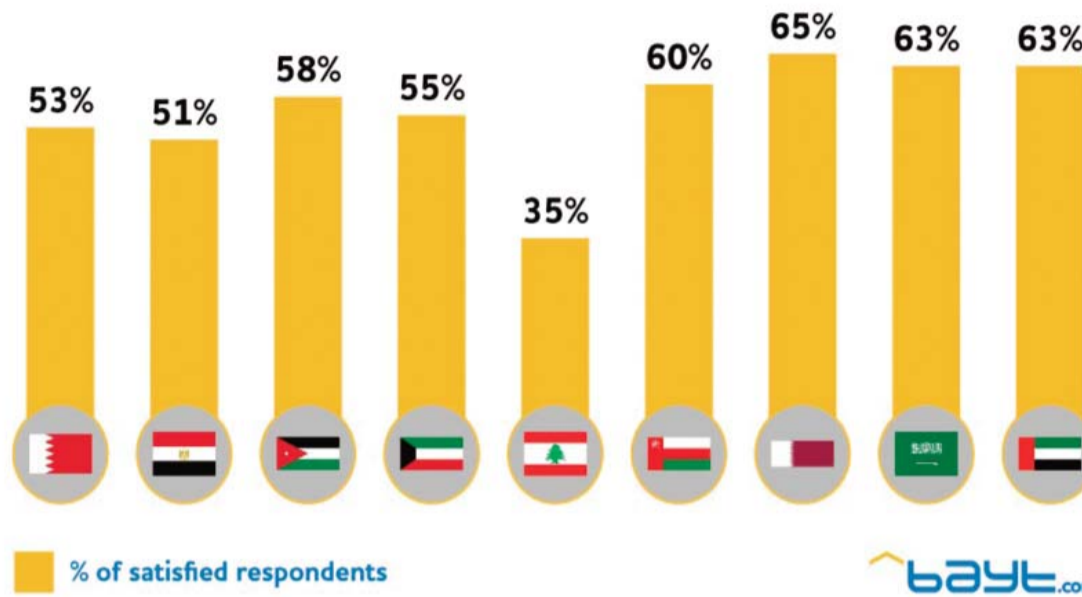
According to the survey, personal life elements that respondents in Kuwait are most satisfied with include relationship with family (84 percent of respondents are satisfied), current physical health (79 percent), mental wellbeing (77 percent), independence to take one's own decisions (69 percent), and support received from family (67 percent).

Health-related factors emerged in the survey as important contributors to Kuwait respondents' happiness and wellbeing. Nearly three quarters (74 percent) of respondents describe their general state of health as good or excellent, and almost half (47 percent) are not currently suffering from any health issues.

Happiness with professional life

As for their professional lives, factors that respondents in Kuwait are most satisfied with include support from colleagues and coworkers (54 percent of

How Satisfied Are You With Your Life in General?



respondents are satisfied), support from managers (49 percent), work-life balance (46 percent), working hours (45 percent), freedom to take decisions at work (42 percent), and recognition at work (39 percent).

Other factors that contribute to Kuwait respondents' work satisfaction revolve around stress levels, and career advancement. More than four in ten (41 percent) respondents are satisfied with the amount of stress they face at work; and more than a third (32 percent) of respondents are satisfied with the availability of career advancement opportunities.

Happiness with country of residence

Across the MENA region, respondents are satisfied with many factors pertaining to their country of residence, including general safety and security (60 percent), ability to maintain healthy personal relationships (65 percent), availability of utilities (62 percent), comfortable weather (60 percent), and opportunities to socialize (49 percent).

Other factors considered by the survey relate to social wellbeing and access to healthcare and other lifestyle amenities.

In Kuwait, respondents are generally satisfied with factors such as availability of utilities (84 percent), general safety and security (71 percent), availability of public transport facilities (59 percent), availability of entertainment avenues (59 percent), and access to healthcare facilities (57 percent).

Happiness and stress

Stress is another element of happiness addressed by the Bayt.com survey. For respondents in Kuwait, factors that contribute the most to stress levels are the increase in the cost of living (69 percent), work related issues (57 percent), and inability to maintain a good work-life balance (41 percent). Nonetheless, nearly one quarter (23 percent) of Kuwait respondents have low stress levels.

"Happiness and wellbeing is prevalent across the Middle East and North Africa, and is most likely linked to many personal, professional, and social factors," said Suhail Masri, Vice President of Employer Solutions at Bayt.com. "We, at the Middle East's #1 Job Site, have always believed that improving happiness and wellbeing is a shared responsibility that we should live by as an organization. We have chosen to concentrate on the professional and career-related angle by persistently producing information and services that aim to address our region's needs, especially when it comes to employment and job search. We will continue to monitor the region's satisfaction levels and empower everyone with what they need as professionals and individuals."

"Despite the various socio economic inconsistencies that the MENA region undergoes, it is positive to see that happiness in Egypt and across the general landscape is highly prevalent. Much of the satisfaction that is felt in the Middle East today is connected to many improvements relating to professional opportunities, standards of living, and overall development," said Arleen Gonsalves, Assistant Research Manager at YouGov.

Data for the 2016 Bayt.com 'Happiness in the Middle East' survey was collected online from December 6, 2016 to December 22, 2016. Results are based on a sample of 3,747 respondents. Cities assessed include UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Syria.

KUWAIT BOURSE WITNESSES RECORD HEFTY CHIPS' BUYING

KUWAIT: Kuwait Bourse posted yesterday record figures, reaping more profits, buoyed by hefty buying covering most exchanged chips, thus reflecting positively on most of the indices.

According to economic analysts, the current bull trend in the national bourse is largely attributed to liquidity pumped by Kuwait Investment Authority, some local and Gulf investment portfolios, targeting small and medium chips.

This trend is also linked to mounting optimism regarding profits of listed companies, namely banks forecast to post noticeable growth and well calculated purchases of stagnant stocks, amid news of their engagement in new projects. The economists forecast earning pocketing, targeting the enlisted stocks after their prices soared.

Maitham Al-Shakhs, the former chief executive officer at Al-Arabi Company for financial brokerage, said that the bourse status has improved due to several positive factors such as Americana's deal, forecast to shift KD 200 million into the market-out of the KD 235 million transaction. He noted in this respect that Kuwait Investment Authority injected KD 100 million into the market last October.—KUNA

REQUIREMENT

ACCOUNTANT VACANCY
for an Educational Institution

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE
(Accounting)

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- Excellent accounting software user and Microsoft
- English language, Arabic preferable
- Transferable Residence

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Crime

Report

POLICEMAN HURT IN HOT PURSUIT

KUWAIT: A traffic policeman was rushed to Adan Hospital for treatment for injuries he suffered after his vehicle flipped over during a chase in Sabahiya. The policeman responded to a call about reckless driving in Sabahiya, but lost control of his car during the chase. Police are looking for the fugitive driver.

Maid commits suicide

An Asian maid jumped to her death from the window of a domestic help office in Hawally. Her body was recovered by the coroner. The maid was returned earlier by her sponsor because she wanted to go back to her country. Police have launched an investigation.

Hit-and-run

A Pakistani man was rushed to Adan Hospital and admitted inside the intensive care unit (ICU) in critical condition after he was run over on Fahaheel Expressway. Detectives are looking for the culprit, who fled the scene.

Duo deported again

Two Bangladeshis, who are very close friends and who were deported from the country six years ago, were arrested and deported once again. Police stopped the two who did not have IDs, but upon inquiries, they were discovered to have been deported twice before. Both had returned to Kuwait using forged passports a year ago. The two were sent to the deportation center.

Cop, cabby fight

A police officer and a taxi driver ended up at the police station for exchanging blows. The off-duty officer got into an argument with the Egyptian taxi driver in Mirqab after the taxi driver swerved towards him. The officer then stopped him and got into a fight. — Al-Rai



Abdul Wahab Al-Johairi

UFIG, UMS JOIN HORECA; EVENT KICKS OFF TODAY

KUWAIT: Under auspices of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, the Horeca Kuwait 2017 exhibition kicks off today with participation of over 80 companies specialized in hospitality, catering and hotel equipment. The three-day event is organized by Leaders Group Company for Consulting and Development in collaboration with the Hospitality Services Company at Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref.

In this regard, the United Food Industries Group (UFIG) and the United Medical Services Company (UMS) announced their participation in the exhibition. Speaking about the exhibition, UFIG's Marketing Manager Abdul Wahab Abdullah Al-Johairi stressed that Horeca had proved its significance in supporting hospitality projects over the past few years, especially since Kuwait is witnessing an upsurge in construction and expansion projects. "This is our first participation," he noted, pointing out that Horeca had become a major platform to stay up to date with the latest in the business.

Johairi added that UFIG has over 25 years of experience, adding that it supplies products of brands such as Sable, Roche, Al-Deek Al-Roumi Restaurant, Planet Donuts and Abu Zaid Konafa. "We also have branches in UAE and Qatar and plan to open a new one in Saudi Arabia soon," he explained.

In the meantime, UMS's General Manager Mo'ezz Ali Sadeq stressed that Horeca is very effective in promoting various projects, adding that this was the reason why UMS decided taking part. Sadeq added that UMS provides products that are supplementary to food services such as aluminum containers, plastic utensils and paper products used in serving, storing and transporting food.



Mo'ezz Sadeq



القلمس

Al-Qabas

THANKS TO MINISTERS

By Dr Nermin Al-Houti

It is impossible that there is nothing positive left in our society and ministries. We thank Allah that there are still some people among us who are optimistic and carry on with their jobs to develop and build a better Kuwait. Our article today sheds light on recent decisions made by the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Higher Education.

The first decision was issued by the new interior minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah to 'ban publication and maintain secrecy of work at the interior ministry'. It is a 100 percent positive decision, and should not be limited to the interior ministry alone. Rather, there should be an agreement between the interior, justice and information ministries, to receive an approval from the cabinet and propose a law to be passed in the National Assembly to ban publication of any criminal case that does not complete its legal and judicial process. Any

media outlet, whether it is public, private or an individual should be punished if they publish anything about any case. This does not go against personal freedom, rather it helps preserve the society.

This does not go against personal freedom, rather it helps preserve the society

Meanwhile, I would like to express gratitude to the new Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Fares for his optimism towards reforming higher education. We laud the stand that he took when he ordered the payment of due payments to students of art institutions. Not only that, but he also ordered that every institution must have a closed bathroom for female employees and give them their own keys, and that for privacy reasons. He gave these immediate orders without waiting for complaints or investigations. We hope that with such a positive approach he will reform what is corrupted at supervisory and scientific posts.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



KUWAIT: Kuwait Fire Services Directorate (KFSD) launched an awareness campaign recently at the Ministry of Defense's camp in Subhan, in cooperation with EQUATE. They gave instructions on how to prevent fires and other incidents during camping.

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

'KICK EXPATS OUT'

By Dr Hassan Abbas

Observing the government and lawmakers' behavior, one can easily see that they are both at war with expatriates residing in Kuwait. The proposed list of costs for the Ministry of Health's healthcare services for expats is really frightening. believe that whoever proposed them expects expats to leave the country, and cannot wait to see the last one of them out. We can easily see that this expulsion policy is adapted by both cabinet and parliament, and is most probably motivated by relatively old parliamentary enthusiasm on the topic; repeated statements made by former MP Abdullah Al-Tamimi come to mind.

Personally, I am neither with nor against expats because what really matters here is not residency in Kuwait, it is rather how useful those people are. So many expats are more honorable than a Kuwaiti traitor or thief. I believe we all know what happened during the Iraqi Invasion, and most of us have come across first or second hand experiences about expats who sacrificed their lives and possessions for Kuwait, whereas some Kuwaiti traitors helped the Baathi invaders or collaborated to rob their own country.

Dear members of the government and distinguished MPs, expats came to Kuwait upon official contracts and visas in order to rightfully earn a living as one of their rights, and in return respect the obligations in those contracts. Anything else is a violation for the contract agreed upon between Kuwaitis and foreigners. Well, I want to point out that both the government and lawmakers adopt a 'double-standards' and simplified view for both citizens and expats. In the case of Kuwaitis, one finds that the government categorizes them to classes A, B and so on, and according to the type of citizenship they hold, the way each category is dealt with varies. On the other hand, it equally views all expats the same, and classifies them all under one single category.

Things should be the other way round. A citizen must be merely viewed as one, while expats should be categorized. Instead of setting laws to deal with expats as one category and classifying them regardless of their levels and standards, they should be divided into those who had been in Kuwait for decades, for instance, those with higher and rare degrees, marginal labor, those married to Kuwaitis and have family relations with them, those who are not related to Kuwaitis, those who have had clean criminal records for years and those who do not have clean criminal records, etc. Therefore, I heartily advise and beg legislators and those making hotshot and rocket-like proposals to be reasonable and up to their responsibilities.

— Translated by Kuwait



KUWAIT: Kuwait Municipality inspectors carried out campaigns in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Hasawi recently, during which they removed two truckloads of vegetables, fruits, furniture, used clothes and electric devices; all sold illegally in both areas.



Gloomy times in Spain's Podemos as divisions rage

INDIA BOAT ACCIDENT TOLL RISES TO 26



PRAGUE: People hold a banner reading Civil march for Aleppo while taking part in a solidarity civil march for Aleppo yesterday in Prague. —AFP

DEADLY CLASHES GRIP FLASHPOINT AREA NEAR SYRIA'S CAPITAL

BEIRUT: Heavy fighting gripped a flashpoint region near Syria's capital yesterday, leaving seven civilians dead and threatening a nationwide truce designed to pave the way towards peace talks. Further east, Syrian government troops lost ground to a brutal assault by the Islamic State group near the key Deir Ezzor military airport. The escalating violence across Syria in recent days augurs ill for peace negotiations in Kazakhstan later this month.

In the Wadi Barada region northwest of Damascus, fresh clashes broke out between rebel groups and advancing government forces, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. Regime shelling of the Deir Qanun village killed seven civilians and wounded at least 20 other people, the Britain-based monitor said. Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said it was the "highest toll" there since the nationwide truce came into force on Dec 30. Omar al-Shami, spokesman for the Wadi Barada Media Committee, said shells struck a temporary shelter where displaced women and children had been seeking refuge.

The activist group published gruesome pictures of what it said was the aftermath of the attack, including photographs of blood-stained floors and body parts wrapped in blankets. Fighting has persisted for weeks in Wadi Barada, which is the main source of water for the capital. Local officials struck a truce with Syrian authorities on Friday to allow maintenance teams

into Wadi Barada to restore water to Damascus, but the deal was called off after chief negotiator Ahmed al-Ghadban was killed the next day.

Local deal null

The two sides accused each other of assassinating the retired army officer, who had only assumed his duties to restore the water supply on Saturday. "The agreement was considered null this morning after the regime's multiple violations and especially after the killing of the negotiations official," Shami said. Shami said the government's maintenance workers left Wadi Barada without completing the repairs, leaving 5.5 million in Damascus and its suburbs without water.

An official from Syria's reconciliation ministry earlier said the local deal in Wadi Barada "had not completely collapsed." "We are communicating and pursuing new efforts in parallel with the ongoing military action," the official said. Many of Syria's battlefronts have quieted since the entry into force of the nationwide ceasefire brokered by regime backer Russia and opposition ally Turkey. The deal excludes IS and its jihadist rival, the Fateh al-Sham Front—formerly known as Al-Nusra Front.

Yesterday, IS fighters edged closer to the key Deir Ezzor military airport, despite heavy air strikes by government warplanes. The Observatory said the raids on Sunday killed five civilians, including two women and two children, in Deir Ezzor. It was the second day of

the jihadist group's brutal assault on regime-held territory around the city, the capital of the oil-rich province by the same name.

US invited to Astana

The fresh advance came "despite more than 120 air strikes carried out by regime forces on jihadist positions since Saturday morning, in addition to heavy artillery fire," said Abdel Rahman. IS unleashed a wave of tunnel bombs and suicide attackers against government forces on Saturday, leaving 12 government fighters dead. Another 20 IS jihadists were killed in the clashes.

The extremist Sunni Muslim group has lost swathes of territory in northern Syria to Kurdish fighters as well as to a Turkish-backed rebel alliance, but it remains on the offensive in other parts of the country. In addition to its push in Deir Ezzor, IS recently recaptured Palmyra in central Syria from government forces. The conflict began with protests against the rule of President Bashar al-Assad in 2011 but has since morphed into a multi-front war.

Although they support opposing sides in Syria's war, Moscow and Ankara have worked closely to negotiate the nationwide truce and to prepare talks in the Kazakh capital Astana on January 23. US president-elect Donald Trump's transition team has been invited to take part in the talks, but has not yet officially responded. Attendance by the new president's team would be a strong signal of Trump's determination to improve relations with Russia. —AFP

SUDAN EXTENDS CEASEFIRE IN THREE CONFLICT AREAS

KHARTOUM: Sudan yesterday extended a ceasefire for six months in the war-torn regions of Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, official media said. "The cabinet headed by President Omar al-Bashir decided to extend the ceasefire by six months," Sudan's official news agency reported. In June, Bashir declared a unilateral four-month truce in the three regions, where fighting between government forces and rebels has killed tens of thousands of people.

He extended it in October to the end of the year and again for a month on Dec 31. The conflict in Darfur—a region of the size of France—erupted in 2003 when ethnic minority rebels took up arms against Bashir's Arab-dominated government, accusing it of marginalizing the region. Similar conflicts also erupted in Blue Nile and South Kordofan states after neighboring South Sudan broke away in 2011. At least 300,000 people have been killed and 2.5 million displaced in Darfur since the conflict began, the UN says. —AFP

REQUIREMENT

ACCOUNTANT VACANCY
for an Educational Institution

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE
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GAMBIA'S PRESIDENT-ELECT IN SENEGAL 'UNTIL INAUGURATION'

DAKAR: The Gambia's president-elect Adama Barrow landed in neighboring Senegal yesterday where he will remain until his planned inauguration this week, Senegalese sources said, following an agreement with west African leaders. The president-elect is due to take power on January 19 when President Yahya Jammeh's mandate runs out, but the long-serving strongman has refused to cede power after disputing the result of a December 1 election won by Barrow.

Senegalese President Macky Sall accepted a request to host Barrow in

Dakar "until his inauguration," the official APS agency said citing an official. "Barrow is in Dakar as of Sunday, just after midnight," the official said. "The Senegalese president accepted the request of his Liberian counterpart Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the current ECOWAS president," it added. A source in the Senegalese presidency confirmed to AFP that Barrow was in Dakar following consultations with heads of state from the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) at a Bamako summit.

ECOWAS, a 15-nation bloc, has repeat-

edly called on Jammeh to respect the result of the vote and leave after 22 years in power. Barrow flew into the Malian capital as a surprise guest at the Africa-France summit after talks broke down Friday between a three-nation west African delegation and Jammeh.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, Sirleaf and Ghana's ex-president John Mahama have appealed to Jammeh to step down twice in person, without success. The leaders of at least 30 nations had gathered in Bamako to discuss jihad on the continent and Africa's impact

on the European migrant crisis—but The Gambia's political impasse dominated events.

The specter of a military intervention has arisen in recent days following declarations by the United Nations and African Union that boots on the ground could get the green light without a rapid resolution of the crisis. Mohamed Ibn Chambas, head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel, said on Friday that ECOWAS would ask the Security Council to approve the deployment of troops to The Gambia if Jammeh continues to

refuse to leave office. ECOWAS has made clear in the past that force will not be ruled out as a last resort, but the Nigerian army has denied reports it is preparing troops for a Gambian intervention. There are just three days left of Jammeh's five-year term, and he has warned the international community against "undue external interference." Jammeh has said he will not stand aside until the country's Supreme Court decides on his legal challenge seeking to annul the result of last month's polls, which he had initially conceded losing. —AFP



MOSUL: A soldier with elite counterterrorism forces rides atop of an armored vehicle celebrating as he holds a flag of the Islamic State group as Iraqi special forces fight against Islamic State militants to regain control of Mosul University, in the eastern side of Mosul, Iraq. —AP

MOSUL UNIVERSITY FULLY LIBERATED BY IRAQI TROOPS

BAGHDAD: US-backed Iraqi government troops yesterday fully liberated the sprawling complex of Mosul University, an Iraqi military spokesman said, a major step in the massive operation to retake the Islamic State group-held city of Mosul. The spokesman for the Joint Military Command, Brig. Gen. Yahya Rasool, declared the campus was under the full control of Iraqi special forces, officially known as the Counter Terrorism Service, who raised the Iraqi flag over its buildings.

The troops searched campus buildings and

removed bombs left by IS militants, Brig. Gen. Haider Fadhil of the special forces said. Fadhil added that the troops also entered the nearby Andalus neighborhood, which he expected would be fully retaken later in the day. Iraqi forces had entered the university grounds Friday and managed to secure more than half of the campus the next day amid tough resistance from IS militants, who mainly deployed sniper and mortar fire to slow down the advancing troops.

Yesterday's progress is the latest in a string of

swift territorial gains in recent weeks by the US-backed Iraqi military. Some 30,000 troops - a force that includes not only Iraq's conventional army but an array of other armed groups, including Shiite and Sunni paramilitary troops and Kurdish fighters - are taking part in the Mosul offensive which begun Oct 17. The Islamic State group captured Mosul in 2014 along with nearly a third of Iraqi territory and large parts of neighboring Syria. Iraq's second-largest city, Mosul is the last major IS urban bastion in the country. —AP

NEW TAXI APP BOOKS A RIDE FOR IVORY COAST MIDDLE CLASS

ABIDJAN: In bustling Abidjan, a homegrown company has tapped into the global taxi app revolution that has spawned Uber and other online transport networks. While Uber has already jumped into several African markets from South Africa to Egypt, Africab seeks to provide Ivory Coast's emerging middle class with a locally-owned high-tech and reliable travel option. Africab's clients can use the company app to book its taxis—which cannot be hailed in the road, and it advertises its services only online. Its fixed fares tend to be higher than for regular taxis, but clients benefit from extra perks. A daytime trip that would cost around 2,000 CFA francs (\$3.2, three Euros) in an old cab can cost 3,300 CFA francs in an Africab.

But the start-up's sleek vehicles—which are owned by the company, not by the driver—are all air-conditioned. They are fitted with tablet devices and offer free Wi-Fi internet access. "Brr, it's cold inside!" jests Ivorian comedian Michel Gohou in an advertising video for Africab's fleet. "Africab is the new way of getting around," brags Vangsy Goma, the founder and managing director of the firm. The company, Goma says on Africab's website, seeks "to build an entrepreneurial culture that is based on technology and respects African identity." The idea for Africab came from trying to navigate Abidjan's unruly traffic, says Goma, a native of the Republic of Congo educated in the US and Europe and married to an Ivorian woman.

Tapping into growth

"When I came here, I often had difficulty organizing journeys. You had to get out on the street, haggle... or sometimes rent a car and brave the traffic," he said. "The cars (regular taxis) were dilapidated, they are often more than 20 years old. Drivers are badly trained and for the most part, there is no air-conditioning." Until political strife erupted in 2010-11, Ivory Coast had long been the star economic performer in west Africa. But when former president Laurent Gbagbo refused to step down despite an election defeat, 3,000 people were killed in months of conflict. With a 10-percent yearly economic growth rate, the west African country is now back on the rails.

The International Monetary Fund said last month that it was on track towards becoming the continent's fastest-growing economy. Companies like Africab are tapping into the budding optimism that the upward trend has brought. Its launch in February 2016 cost one billion CFA francs (1.5 million Euros, \$1.6 million) in investment, of which 800 million was raised by bank loans. Goma is confident about expanding the firm, with a monthly turnover that rose from 20 million CFA francs in April to 60 million by September and a fast-growing portfolio of business clients.

In coming weeks, he says, Africab taxis will take to the streets of Lome and Cotonou, the capital of Togo and the economic capital of Benin. To make it work, the company is striving to adapt its services to local needs. As is often the case in African towns and cities, many of Abidjan's backstreets and alleys have never been named. To get round this, Africab maps the addresses of clients and familiar landmarks. And in a striking contrast with ordinary taxis, Africab drivers are bound to abide by the highway code.

Less stress

Driving on pavements or in emergency lanes to avoid traffic jams is strictly banned, and all company cabbies have to retake both driving and highway code tests. Satisfied client Fatou Bamba, who manages her own company, finds Africab's cars clean and comfortable-plus there's the internet bonus. "Above all, you're safe... You can work inside an Africab and you don't feel the stress of driving and the traffic jams," Bamba said. Taxi driver Ahi Mian, 32, appears happy to have joined Africab's fleet. "It's better for me. I drove a (regular) taxi before. Here we have fixed hours and the car is air-conditioned. But above all, there's less stress," he says. —AFP



ABIDJAN: A man speaks with a regular taxi driver in Abidjan. —AFP

IS GAINS GROUND NEAR KEY EASTERN SYRIAN CITY

BEIRUT: The Islamic State group gained ground around a key eastern Syrian city yesterday, a monitor said, despite a heavy air strikes by government warplanes. The jihadists pressed their brutal assault on Deir Ezzor for the second day, seizing territory near an air base on the city's edges, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "IS seized several hilltops that overlook the airport," and clashes gripped the area yesterday, said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman. The advance came "despite more than 120 air strikes carried out by regime forces on jihadist positions since Saturday morning, in addition to heavy artillery fire," he said.

Around 200,000 people live in Deir Ezzor city, which has been besieged by IS since early 2015 and is the capital of the oil-rich province of the same name. IS already controls more than half the city, but it has sought to capture the remaining government-held territory, including the military

airport. It launched one of its fiercest assaults yet on Saturday, unleashing a wave of tunnel bombs and suicide attackers. At least 12 government fighters and 20 IS jihadists were killed. A military source in Deir Ezzor said that IS was "amassing its forces to attack Deir Ezzor and breach government lines" in order to cut off regime access to the base.

The extremist Sunni Muslim group has lost swathes of territory in northern Syria to Kurdish fighters as well as a Turkish-backed rebel alliance, but it remains on the offensive in other parts of the country. In addition to its push in Deir Ezzor, IS recently recaptured Palmyra in central Syria from government forces. The jihadist faction is excluded from a nationwide ceasefire in Syria, in place since December 30 but increasingly strained by fighting. The truce is meant to pave the way for peace talks later this month in the Kazakh capital Astana. —AFP

CLASHES NEAR DAMASCUS AFTER NEGOTIATOR KILLING

BEIRUT: Heavy clashes erupted overnight between regime and rebel forces near Damascus after the official who negotiated a deal to restore water to the Syrian capital was killed, a monitor said yesterday. Government workers had entered the formerly rebel-held area in the Wadi Barada region near Damascus on Friday to begin restoring water to the capital after weeks of shortages. "Fierce fighting broke out after midnight between regime forces, fighters from Hezbollah and the rebels, after gunmen killed the negotiator, Ahmed al-Ghadban," said Rami Abdel Rahman of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

Ghadban had been on his way to the Ain al-Fijeh spring with maintenance teams, he said. But following the killing of Ghadban, "regime forces and their allies tried to advance to Ain al-Fijeh," bombarding rebel positions with heavy artillery, said Abdel Rahman. The two sides accused each other of killing the retired army officer, who had only assumed his duties to restore the water supply on Saturday. Under the agreement, Ghadban was to oversee teams working to repair the infrastructure that

supplies the capital with water in exchange for a cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of rebel fighters willing to do so.

The official SANA news agency reported on Saturday night that "terrorists opened fire" on Ghadban after he left a meeting with armed groups in the village of Ain al-Fijeh. Activists and civil committees in Wadi Barada denounced the killing of Ghadban, which they said had been ordered by the regime with the intention to "kill any hope of a peaceful solution." In a joint statement, they urged rebel factions not to attend peace talks in the Kazakh capital Astana later this month and called for international observers to monitor the ceasefire.

Fighting has persisted in Wadi Barada since the entry into force on December 30 of the ceasefire brokered by Russia and Turkey. The violence caused damage to pipes, leaving more than five million people in Damascus without water. The ceasefire and planned talks are the latest effort to negotiate an end to a conflict that has killed more than 310,000 people since it began with anti-government protests in March 2011. —AFP



AMMAN: Jordan's newly appointed Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi, right, and newly appointed Education Minister Omar Ahmad Munif Al Razzaz speak together upon their appointment following a meeting at the Jordanian Royal Palace in Amman yesterday. —AP

JORDAN MINISTERS UNSEATED IN RESHUFFLE

AMMAN: Jordan's interior minister lost his job yesterday after criticism following a deadly jihadist attack, in a government reshuffle that also saw long-serving foreign minister Nasser Judeh cast aside. Ten people including a Canadian were shot dead at the popular Jordanian tourist destination of Karak on Dec 18, in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group. Following the attack, some 50 lawmakers called for a motion to censure interior minister Salama Hammad. Yesterday Prime Minister Hani Mulqi said, in a statement from the royal palace, that Hammad was being replaced by Ghaleb Zohbi, a lawyer who had previously held the same post.

The same statement announced that Judeh, who had served as foreign minister since 2009, was making way for Ayman Safadi, formerly an adviser to the king and deputy prime minister. It did not say why

the ministers were being replaced. It is the second reshuffle since Sept 28. Last month's attack in Karak, home to one of the region's biggest Crusader castles, killed seven policemen and two Jordanian civilians as well as a female Canadian tourist. Four assailants were killed by the security forces after an hours-long siege of the castle, where the suspects had fled after opening fire on police.

IS claimed responsibility on Dec 20, saying four "soldiers of the caliphate" used machineguns and hand grenades in the attack. Jordan is part of the US-led military coalition against IS and has carried out air strikes targeting the extremist group. It also hosts coalition troops on its territory. The kingdom was hit by four attacks last year, including a suicide attack in June that killed seven guards near the border with Syria that was also claimed by IS. —AFP

QUAKER GROUP MARKS CENTENNIAL WITH 'WAGING PEACE' EXHIBIT



PHILADELPHIA: Elizabeth Tinker and Noah Smalls install an exhibit at the African American Museum in Philadelphia. —AP

PHILADELPHIA: The American Friends Service Committee is celebrating 100 years of nonviolent activism with an exhibition, "Waging Peace," that showcases the group's accomplishments while also illustrating work that remains to be done. General Secretary Shan Cretin hopes both aspects of the exhibit inspire visitors. "We don't want to just be looking backward, (but) a lot of the issues that are so urgent today - how we treat immigrants, racial justice issues - are issues we have been working on for nearly our entire history," Cretin said. "We don't believe peace is a destination. We believe it's a path. We always have to be working toward peace and justice in our lives."

Founded by Quakers during World War I, the organization has been promoting peace and justice as an expression of faith in action. The centennial exhibit, on display at the African American Museum of Philadelphia through April 30, is divided into four categories: "Ending Discrimination," "Addressing Prisons," "Just Economies," and "Immigrants Rights." "Ending Discrimination" includes two 8-by-8-foot photos, one showing a group of civil activists led by the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. facing a wall of police officers in the 1960s, the other taken in Baltimore in

2015 after Freddie Gray died in police custody.

There's also a first-person account from a former committee staffer who resisted Japanese internment during World War II. In "Addressing Prisons," visitors can crowd onto a floor mat that mimics the size and shape of the 5-by-7-foot solitary confinement cell that committee employee Ojore Lutalo occupied for more than 20 years. "I really wanted to tell personal stories," said exhibit coordinator and content developer Elizabeth Tinker, an independent museum professional. "We want to encourage discussion," she said. One interactive feature highlights the challenges facing immigrants.

Set up like a giant board game, visitors allow rolls of oversized dice to determine citizenship paths. Millionaires and star athletes have a much easier time than those who have family members already in the US. Asylum seekers with proof of persecution have a much easier time immigrating than those without proof - but it's still not fast or easy. Tinker noted that this one category also illustrates why many people enter the US illegally: What parent wouldn't risk violating the law and leaving their home country if they feared their children were in danger there? she asked. —AP

TRUMP CLASHES WITH CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER AS INAUGURATION LOOMS

NEW YORK: Donald Trump's feud with civil rights icon John Lewis is highlighting the president-elect's willingness to attack any and all political rivals even with his inauguration less than a week away. The Republican billionaire slammed the Democratic congressman - and his Atlanta-area district - on Saturday, a day after Lewis described Trump as an illegitimate president. Lewis, like a handful of Democratic lawmakers, vowed to skip Trump's Friday swearing-in ceremony.

Trump tweeted that Lewis "should spend more time on fixing and helping his district, which is in horrible shape and falling apart (not to mention crime infested) rather than falsely complaining about the election results." The incoming president added: "All talk, talk, talk - no action or results. Sad!" Trump continued to jab Lewis on Saturday night, charging that the congressman "should finally focus on the burning and crime infested inner-cities of the US." "I can use all the help I can get!" Trump tweeted.

Personal decision

Trump's response was in line with his aggressive style throughout his unorthodox campaign in which he found political success even while attacking widely lauded figures - a prisoner of war, parents of a slain US

African-American, said on MSNBC. "John Lewis has a walk that very few people in this country - least of all Donald Trump - have ever walked. So you have to respect that and pay attention to that in a real sense," Steele said. One of Lewis' Democratic colleagues, Rep. Ted Lieu, D-Calif., also declared he would skip Trump's inauguration, in part to defend Lewis.

"Trump - who lost the popular vote - has made a series of racist, sexist and bigoted statements. In addition, he has attacked Gold Star parents, veterans such as John McCain and now civil rights icon John Lewis," Lieu said. He added, "For me, the personal decision not to attend the Inauguration is quite simple: Do I stand with Donald Trump, or do I stand with John Lewis? I am standing with John Lewis."

Falling apart

The weekend clash highlighted the sharp contrast between how many African-Americans view Trump's inauguration compared with that of Barack Obama, the nation's first black president, eight years ago. Trump critics also noted that his aggressive tweet came days before the national holiday honoring Martin Luther King Jr. Trump's assertion that Lewis' district is "falling apart" and "crime infested" is hard to back up with facts.

Georgia's 5th Congressional District, which includes the Atlanta metro region, is considered one of the nation's fastest-growing areas, although its crime and poverty rates are higher than the national average. The district has an 8.2 percent unemployment rate and the median household income is about \$48,000, according to the Census Bureau. The area also covers part of the upscale Atlanta neighborhood of Buckhead, along with the headquarters for Fortune 500 companies such as Coca-Cola and Delta Air Lines, Emory University, Georgia Tech, several historically black colleges and universities and the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, one of the world's busiest.

The Lewis-Trump feud began when the 16-term congressman said he would not attend Trump's swearing-in ceremony. It will mark the first time he skipped an inauguration since joining Congress three decades ago. "You know, I believe in forgiveness. I believe in trying to work with people. It will be hard. It's going to be very difficult. I don't see this president-elect as a legitimate president," Lewis said in an interview with NBC's "Meet the Press" set to air Sunday. —AP



WASHINGTON: In this file photo, Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington. —AP

soldier, and a beauty queen, among others. Lewis is among the most revered leaders of the civil rights movement and devoted his life to promoting equal rights for African-Americans. He suffered a fractured skull while leading the march in Selma, Alabama more than a half century ago.

"The tweet is unnecessary, it's unfortunate," former Republican National Committee chairman Michael Steele, who is



MANAUS: Special Operations Command personnel stand by an empty prison cell in the Anisio Jobim Penitentiary Complex where 56 inmates were killed during a riot two weeks ago, in Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil. —AFP

BRAZIL POLICE QUELL DEADLY JAIL RIOT

'AT LEAST 10 DEAD'

BRASILIA: Brazilian police yesterday quelled a riot that left at least 10 people dead in a northern jail, the latest of several gruesome gang-related massacres in the country's overcrowded prisons. Officials raised the death toll from Saturday's riot at the Alcauz prison from three to 10. They earlier said at least three inmates were beheaded. Security forces stormed the prison in northeastern Rio Grande do Norte state at dawn yesterday and restored order after 14 hours of violence, local authorities said. Officials said members of two separate drug gangs had

come out of different parts of the prison and clashed violently.

"There are at least three inmates dead because we were able to see their heads," state prisons manager Zemilton Silva told local media on Saturday. District security authorities said in a statement on Sunday that there were "at least 10 confirmed deaths." "We cannot yet confirm the final number of victims. We are going to verify the extent of the damage," district security official Caio Berreza said on Globo News television. The prison, just outside the state capital Natal, is built

for a maximum of 620 inmates but currently houses 1,083, the state justice department said.

Brazilian media said the riot was thought to be a clash between Brazil's biggest drug gang, the First Capital Command (PCC), and a group allied to its main rival Red Command. It was believed to be part of a war between drug gangs battling for control of one of the world's most important cocaine markets and trafficking routes. A series of massacres early this month left 100 prisoners dead-many of the active members of gangs, authorities said. —AFP

KREMLIN COUNTS DAYS TO TRUMP'S INAUGURATION, BLASTS OBAMA

MOSCOW: Exulted by Donald Trump's victory in the US, the Kremlin is counting the days to his inauguration and venting its anger at Barack Obama's outgoing administration, no holds barred. Careful not to hurt chances for a thaw in US-Russia relations, President Vladimir Putin and other Russian officials have deferred questions about their plans for future contacts with Trump and any agenda for those talks until he takes office on Friday. Trump's open admiration of Putin has brought wide expectations of improved Moscow-Washington relations, but Trump has not articulated a clear Russia policy. His Cabinet nominees include both a retired general with a hawkish stance on Russia and an oil executive who has done extensive business in Russia.

At the same time, Russian officials are blasting the outgoing US administration in distinctly undiplomatic language, dropping all decorum after Obama hit Moscow with more sanctions in his final weeks in office. Moscow calls Obama's team a "bunch of geopolitical losers" engaged in a last-ditch effort to inflict the maximum possible damage to US-Russia ties to make it more difficult for Trump to mend the rift. In a clear effort to avoid risking a rapprochement with Trump, Putin showed a remarkable restraint when the US expelled 35 Russian diplomats over accusations of meddling in the US election campaign. Instead of a usual tit-for-tat response, Putin invited US diplomats' children to a New Year's party at the Kremlin.

Trump's national security adviser, Michael Flynn, and Russia's ambassador to the US were in frequent contact in recent weeks, including on Dec 29, the day Obama hit Moscow with sanctions in retaliation for election-related hacking, according to a senior US official. That call and others suggest that the incoming administration is already laying the groundwork for a possible

thaw with Moscow. Moscow similarly refrained from retaliation when the White House last week added five Russians, including the chief of Russia's top state investigative agency, to the US sanctions list. While Putin and his lieutenants hope Trump will open up to Russia, they know any attempt to fix ties will face massive obstacles, including possible strong resistance in the US Congress.

Tense period

"Any future contacts will have to be prepared quite accurately and thoroughly, as they would follow a tense period," Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. Fyodor Lukyanov, chair of the Council for Foreign and Defense Policies, a group of Russian foreign policy experts, said Syria is one area where a US-Russian rapport is likely. During the call with Flynn, the Russian ambassador invited US officials to a conference on Syria to be held in Kazakhstan later this month, according to a Kazakh official, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the matter. In an interview Friday with The Wall Street Journal, Trump said he might do away with Obama's sanctions if Russia works with the US on battling terrorists and achieving other goals.

The Kremlin would be eager to embrace a US offer of cooperation on Syria. Obama's administration had refused to coordinate action against the IS with Russia, saying Moscow was bent on shoring up Syrian President Bashar Assad. The complexity of the conflict in Syria - where opposition groups backed by regional players are pitted against Assad's troops and often fight each other - makes hopes for quick progress elusive. "Russia and the United States are important players (in Syria) but not the only ones," Lukyanov said. He noted that nuclear arms control is another possi-



MOSCOW: In this file photo Russian President Vladimir Putin attends a meeting with Russian prosecutors in Moscow, Russia. —AP

ble area where Moscow and Washington could try to find common ground. While new arms control treaties are unlikely, the two countries may try to find ways to increase global stability, Lukyanov said.

Putin has pushed for the US to recognize Moscow as an equal global heavyweight and to acknowledge that Russia's ex-Soviet neighbors are in its sphere of "vital interests" - demands rejected by the West. Many in Russia hope that Trump could be more inclined to strike a "grand bargain" with Putin, carving up spheres of influence and helping cement Russia's role as a global power. Alexander Lebedev, a multimillionaire Russian owner of Britain's Evening Standard and Independent newspapers, believes that Putin wants a "big deal" that would envisage cooperation in Syria and possible cooperation in other spheres, including the fight against international financial crime. —AP

LAWMAKERS URGE MAY TO CLARIFY BREXIT INTENTIONS

LONDON: A committee of British lawmakers is urging Prime Minister Theresa May to clarify her intentions on Brexit - particularly whether she intends to keep Britain in the European Union's large single market. The House of Commons' Exiting the EU committee urged May to publish her plan soon and to give lawmakers a vote on whatever deal is concluded with the 28-nation EU. Their report was released Saturday, just days before May is to deliver her vision about Britain's post-EU future in a major speech. "This is going to be a hugely complex task and the outcome will affect us all," committee chair Hilary Benn said. "The government needs to publish its Brexit plan by mid-February at the latest, including its position on membership of the single market and the customs union, so that it can be scrutinized by Parliament and the public."

Members of the committee also

warned that the task of preparing for Brexit was placing a "strain" on departments across the British government and said more staff may be required. The committee is seeking a framework of the UK's future trading relationship with the EU as part of the Article 50 negotiations - arguing that transitional arrangements would be needed for trade to continue if a deal wasn't complete by 2019.

It acknowledged, though, that Britain's government may not be in a position to deliver this objective, since it would also depend on the other 27 members of the EU. "The UK's relationship with the EU is deep and complex, not least in terms of the legal rights of parties in both the UK and the EU-27," the report said. "It would be unsatisfactory and potentially damaging to both sides were the UK to leave the EU with no agreement having been reached." —AP

FACEBOOK ANNOUNCES 'FAKE NEWS' OFFENSIVE IN GERMANY

FRANKFURT: Social media giant Facebook announced yesterday that it will introduce new measures to combat fake news in Germany, as Europe's largest economy and most populous nation enters an election year. "It's important to us that the reports and news posted on Facebook are reliable," a blog post on the Silicon Valley firm's German website read. German politicians have warned that populist parties and foreign nations could use fake news to try and influence parliamentary elections slated for September or October. Facebook's new German initiative

targets "unambiguously wrong reports" being shared on the social media platform. The firm said it would offer a simpler reporting process for users to flag suspected fake news, display warnings next to statements identified as false by independent fact-checking organizations, and cut off advertising revenue to fake news sites presenting themselves as real news organizations. Stories flagged with a fake news warning will not be eligible to be converted into an ad seen by other users or "promoted" into other users' feeds for a fee. —AFP

CONGOLESE M23 REBELS CROSS OVER FROM UGANDA, TAKE VILLAGE

KINSHASA: Congolese rebels who had taken refuge in neighboring Uganda crossed the border overnight armed with weapons, the DR Congo government said yesterday. About 200 former members of M23, an ethnic Tutsi group defeated by the Congolese army in 2013, arrived from Uganda

and took over the village of Ishasha, in North Kivu province, government spokesman Lambert Mende said.

"How could our Ugandan neighbors, with whom we are bound by very serious commitments, allow people who had been living in refugee camps to cross over-armed-into our

territory?" he said. Mende said the Democratic Republic of Congo army (FARDC) had engaged them in "confrontation... because the Congolese army will not allow anyone to cross the border without authorization-and with weapons".

Following M23's defeat, the govern-

ment launched a plan to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate more than 12,000 former rebels, many of whom lived in Uganda and Rwanda where the UN and Kinshasa say they received support. But the return of the former rebels has stalled, with fewer than 200 of the 1,900 sheltering in Uganda and

only 13 out of hundreds left in Rwanda coming back.

Congolese authorities regularly criticize Rwanda and Uganda for allowing "these criminals to circulate freely" within their territory instead of trying them in court. Both countries deny providing backing.—AFP

GLOOMY TIMES IN SPAIN'S PODEMOS AS DIVISIONS RAGE

'REPRODUCING AGE-OLD BEHAVIOR PATTERNS'

MADRID: Spain's Podemos was born in 2014 out of rage over austerity politics and buoyed by its promises of change, but the mood has darkened as fighting ravages the far-left party. As it prepares to celebrate its third birthday and inches closer to a crux congress in February, supporters are watching in dismay-and opponents with glee-as Podemos chief Pablo Iglesias spars with his deputy Inigo Errejon over what

internal battle," says Gabriel Colome, politics professor at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. "They are reproducing age-old behavior patterns typical of other parties." He warned "they do this right, or this project is going to explode."

Airing dirty laundry

After its emergence in January 2014, Podemos

Iglesias and his baby-faced number two started to emerge. But it was only after repeat June elections saw a Podemos-led coalition lose votes that the rift between the combative Iglesias and more moderate Errejon leapt to the fore. While the aim had always been to overtake the Socialists and become Spain's main left-wing force, exactly how to achieve this was a subject of much debate. Should the party continue its struggle for change-but from within institutions it now occupied such as parliament, and in a moderate way that would attract Socialist voters too, as Errejon advocated?

Or should it also go back to the streets, keep resisting and shaking things up as a protest party, as Iglesias wanted? These divergences broke out into the open in September in a war of tweets. "We are already scaring the powerful, that's not the challenge. The challenge is to attract those people who suffer but still don't trust us," Errejon wrote. "Yes comrade @ierrejon but we stopped attracting one million people in June. We seduce more by speaking clearly and being different," Iglesias retorted.

From then on, divisions played out publicly, continuing even as the Socialists (PSOE) imploded and the conservative Popular Party came back to power at the head of a minority government with little support-all of which could have profited Podemos. The situation left supporters in a state of distress. Once an enthusiastic Podemos militant, Tristan Duanel has now stopped all activities for the party, as have others he knows. "We have ended up really bitter," he says. Such has been the dismay that Iglesias felt compelled to apologize last month. "If the press and social media continue to be a stage for us to try and air our dirty laundry, we will destroy Podemos," he recognized.

Two strategies

The issue will likely be set to rest at the party congress in February, when Podemos members will vote for a new leadership council, a process that may or may not unseat Iglesias, and for what direction to take. With this in sight, Errejon's clan published a policy document on Friday acknowledging there were "two strategies" vying for power. On the same day, Iglesias and his team published their own document, in which they warned that "only a united and strong Podemos will be able to rule."

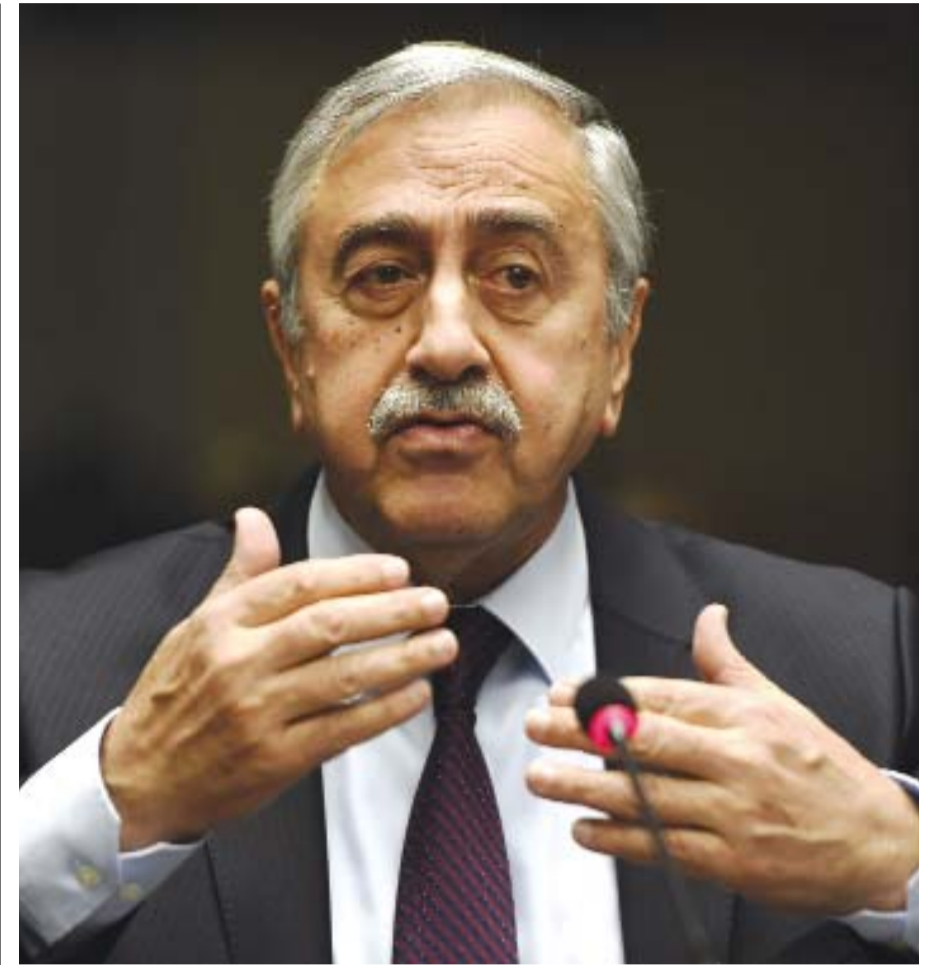
To further complicate matters, a third movement which is neither behind Iglesias or Errejon has emerged as kingmaker. The more radical anti-capitalists, as they call themselves, want to take to the streets again like Iglesias. But they also feel that the party's power is currently in the hands of too few people, calling for decentralization... like Errejon. "They will be pivotal," says political analyst Pablo Simon. He also struck a positive note, saying all was not lost for Podemos and now was the time to resolve their differences. "The PSOE hasn't recovered and cannot challenge them much, and we're far from new elections," he said.—AFP



MADRID: This file photo shows leader of left wing party Podemos Pablo Iglesias (L) and Podemos member Inigo Errejon applauding during The Congress on your Square meeting held at El Pozo cultural center in Vallecas, a neighborhood of Madrid.—AFP

strategy to take. The dispute between the once-inseparable pair has forced party members into one faction or another, played out on social media and in the press, gaining such traction that an apologetic Iglesias warned it could "destroy" Podemos. "It's one thing to have differences, another thing is this hugely exaggerated

rose at meteoric speed to score big in elections just under two years later. In those December 2015 polls, it became Spain's third political force, putting an end to the two-party system but also leaving no grouping with any absolute majority. As coalition negotiations dragged on, rumours of a rift between the charismatic, pony-tailed



GENEVA: Turkish Cypriot leader Mustafa Akinci gestures as he speaks during a press conference on UN-sponsored Cyprus peace talks at the United Nations headquarters in Geneva.—AFP

CYPRUS SECURITY TALKS TO CONCLUDE THIS MONTH

NICOSIA: A working group due to convene on Jan 18 to hammer out security arrangements for a post-settlement Cyprus will meet for two to three days only, followed by another round of high-level talks, a source close to the Turkish Cypriot side said yesterday. Talks in Geneva last week failed to produce a breakthrough in a conflict spanning decades, though the three countries which are stakeholders in Cyprus - Britain, Greece and Turkey - agreed to set up the working group to look at security arrangements after these turned out to be a major sticking point.

The Greek Cypriot side has previously said there was no time frame for the talks. The working group made of technocrats from all countries involved were scheduled to meet at the Swiss resort of Mont Pelerin on Jan 18. "The general agreement is that (working group session) should not take place for more than two or three days," the source told Reuters, requesting anonymity because of the sensitivity of present discussions. This would be followed by a new summit of politicians, possibly at a "higher level" than the foreign ministers who met in Geneva last week, the source said.

"All this should take place within January." Cyprus was split among its ethnic Turkish and Greek populations since

Turkish troops invaded in 1974 in response to a short-lived coup by Greek Cypriot militants seeking union with Greece. But intercommunal violence had simmered since the 1960s when a power-sharing system collapsed soon after independence from Britain. There are also unsettled issues on redrawing the boundaries between the two sides, settling property disputes and on how to co-govern. Greece, Turkey and Britain were assigned as "guarantor" powers in a treaty adopted when Cyprus gained independence of London in 1960.

The Greek side seeks abolition of the guarantor system, accusing Turkey of abusing it through its 1974 invasion and the continued stationing of some 30,000 Turkish troops in the north. The Turkish side says some form of presence must be maintained to protect the minority Turkish side from a repeat of the turbulent 1960s. Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan has said a total pull out of Turkish soldiers from the island is not possible.

Any deal should address how constitutional order should be respected in a united island, as well as protecting it from 'external threats', the Turkish Cypriot source said. Cyprus is on the verge of the volatile Middle East, and less than 100 kilometers away from war-torn Syria.—Reuters

POLICE RELEASE THREE AFTER BRUSSELS ANTI-TERROR RAIDS

BRUSSELS: Belgian police have released three people held overnight following anti-terror raids late Saturday in Brussels, local prosecutors said. Police mounted four raids in the Molenbeek district, which was home to several perpetrators of the jihadist attacks in Paris and Brussels, but found nothing, according to the Brussels prosecutor's office. "Three men were arrested and questioned overnight... they were released afterwards," it said in a statement.

Media reports showed armed police setting up a security perimeter during the operation. The gritty Molenbeek area has gained notoriety recently as the home of several of those who took part in the deadly Islamic State-claimed November 2015

attacks in Paris and the suicide bombings of Brussels airport and the metro in March 2016. Belgian authorities stepped up security after the killings and there have been periodic police raids and arrests since then as the investigations have continued.

Belgian-born French national Salah Abdeslam, the only known jihadist to have survived the Paris massacres, hid in Molenbeek and was arrested there four months later, on March 18, 2016, four days before the attacks on the Belgian capital. Some 20 people have been charged in Belgium in connection with the Paris attacks. Investigators say the Paris and Brussels attacks were carried out by the same cell.—AFP

CHECHEN LEADER SAYS OVER 50 ISLAMIST INSURGENTS DETAINED

MOSCOW: Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov said yesterday his forces had detained more than 50 insurgents linked to the Islamic State jihadist group, completing a major security operation. Kadyrov wrote on Instagram on Sunday that security forces had captured an armed group coordinated by a Chechen fighter located in Syria, with the latest arrests taking place in various locations on Saturday.

"Now the whole group of bandits has been neutralized and more than 50 members have been brought to police stations," Kadyrov said. He also posted a video of himself speaking to a group of the captured men in Chechen.

The Moscow-back leader of the North Caucasus region called the operation-planned since last summer—"a big success for the law enforcement agencies." The Russian North Caucasus is one of the major sources of foreign jihadists fight-

ing in Syria and Iraq. The Chechen leader said police on Saturday detained several participants of the armed group including an "especially dangerous terrorist" named as Imran Datsayev who threw a hand grenade but was captured alive. He said Datsayev testified that he received orders from Islamic State to kill a police officer and had killed a police sergeant last November.

Russia fought two brutal separatist wars over the past two decades in Chechnya but the region has been largely pacified under Kadyrov's iron-fisted rule. A dwindling group of Islamist insurgents are still fighting the authorities in Chechnya and across the volatile North Caucasus, and sporadically launch eye-catching attacks. Kadyrov, a former fighter against Russia's rule who now supports President Vladimir Putin, regularly announces raids to capture insurgents, which he sometimes personally coordinates.—AFP



PARIS: French elected officials and members of the pro-Israel community speak in front of the Israeli Embassy in Paris yesterday during a rally against the Paris Middle East peace conference.—AFP

FRANCE SAYS 'SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES' IF US EMBASSY MOVES TO JERUSALEM

PARIS: French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault said yesterday that if US President-elect Donald Trump moves the American embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem it would have "extremely serious consequences." Speaking as 70 countries gather in Paris to try to revive Israeli-Palestinian peace efforts, Ayrault told French TV he believed Trump would find it "impossible" to fulfil the pledge he made during

his campaign to transfer the embassy.

"When you are president of the United States, you cannot take such a stubborn and such a unilateral view on this issue. You have to try to create the conditions for peace," Ayrault said. Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas warned Saturday that peace could be dealt a mortal blow if Trump, who has vowed unstinting support for Israel, moves the embassy to Jerusalem.

Doing so would reverse decades of US policy that has until now maintained that the final status of Jerusalem-whose eastern and largely Arab side has been occupied by Israel since 1967—should be determined in peace negotiations with the Palestinians. The Paris meeting is mainly symbolic, but comes at a crucial juncture for the Middle East, five days before Trump is sworn in as US president.—AFP

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IN PARIS, TRUMP WARNED OVER...

Continued from Page 1

The Palestinians regard Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state, while Israel proclaims the entire city as its capital. The status of the city is one of the thorniest issues in the conflict. President Francois Hollande told the gathering that the prospect of two independent states coexisting side-by-side was "not the dream of yesterday's system." "It remains the goal of the entire international community for the future," Hollande said.

Netanyahu, who insists only direct talks with the Palestinians can bring peace, has dismissed the Paris meeting as "a last gasp of the past." Yesterday he called it a "futile" exercise aimed at "imposing upon Israel conditions that are incompatible with our national needs". Both Netanyahu and Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas have been invited to meet with Hollande to discuss the conclusions of the Paris talks. Abbas is expected to travel to Paris in the coming weeks but Netanyahu has rejected the offer, French diplomats said.

The conference is mainly symbolic, but comes at a crucial juncture for the Middle East, five days before Trump is sworn in as US president. Trump has said "there's nobody more pro-Israeli than I am" and his choice for ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, is a hardliner who says he looks forward to working from "Israel's eternal capital, Jerusalem".

Israel, which is still seething over a critical UN resolution last month, fears the Paris meeting could produce measures hastily put to the Security Council before Trump takes over. The French have stressed they have no such plans. But EU foreign ministers are set to discuss the conference's conclusions today, EU sources said. It was uncertain whether they would issue a statement, with Britain and some central European countries reluctant to upset the incoming Trump administration, a European diplomat said. US Secretary of State John Kerry, who rebuked Israel recently over its settler activity, joined the Paris talks on his farewell tour, along with delegates from the UN, EU and Arab League.

Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said the Paris conference should focus on an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The conference should concentrate on reaching a "final settlement" for the conflict and not only continuing to manage it, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled told the meeting.

This can be realized through incentives to the Israelis and the Palestinians to resume peace negotiations, creating favorable conditions and climate for interaction and economic, educational and vocational cooperation, he said. "This is likely to lay down bases for peace and dismiss all forms of extremism and violence," he added.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled called for setting a

time limit for completing the negotiations, as well as the immediate implementation of any agreement to be concluded for reaching a two-state solution based on relevant UN resolutions, mainly the UN General Assembly's resolution 194, and the Security Council's resolutions 242, 338, 1397, 1515, 1850 and 2334, in addition to the Arab peace initiative, paving the way for establishing a Palestinian state on the pre-June 1967 borders, with east Jerusalem as its capital.

In order to achieve these goals, the concerned world's bodies - especially the Middle East Quartet, the UNSC's permanent members and the international bodies - have to play an effective role in supporting and implementing them, the Kuwaiti foreign minister noted. He expressed hope that the Quartet would include Arab members to make it more vital and effective.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled expressed deep concern over reports that the new US administration would move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to "Occupied Jerusalem", a matter that is most likely to undermine opportunities for peace and contradict with UNSC resolutions, especially no 478 that states: "Those states that have established diplomatic missions at Jerusalem to withdraw such missions from the Holy City."

At the onset of the address, the chief Kuwaiti diplomat said that the world's public opinion, especially in the Arab region, is closely following the conference and the regional and international momentum it could produce to resume the stalled peace process. Thus, participants in the Paris meeting should seek by all means that the event would lead to the activation of the outcome of previous conferences and initiatives that sought a solution to the Palestinian cause, such as Madrid 1991, Oslo 1993 and Camp David 2000, besides the several resolutions by the UN's General Assembly and the UNSC on the major issue, he said.

The results of not applying UN resolutions and the non-commitment to what have been concluded in relevant international conferences have "aggravated the humanitarian tragedies of the unarmed Palestinian people, and heightened tension in the region", Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled stressed. Moreover, this has been reflected on international peace and stability, as the region started to see the emergence of further crises, such as extremism and terrorism that cannot be dissolved unless the root of the problem, namely the Palestinian issue, is settled, he noted.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said that this year marks the 69th anniversary of the Palestinians' Nakba, suffering and pain, and the 50th anniversary of the occupation of Arab territories in 1967. He also highly appreciated the peace initiative offered by Hollande to save the Mideast peace process, recalling France's stances in support of the Palestinian cause on international levels. — Agencies



A horse walks through deep snow yesterday in its paddock near Ruderatshofen in southern Germany. — AFP

BAHRAIN EXECUTES 3 CONVICTED OVER POLICE BOMBING

Continued from Page 1

areas. Witnesses said shops were shuttered in Daih, where the 2014 bombing happened. Garbage bins were seen overturned and set alight in the streets.

One police officer was wounded when several people shot at a police patrol in Bani

Jamra, west of the capital Manama, the Interior Ministry said yesterday. It gave no further details. The Ashtar Brigade, a Shiite militant group that claimed the 2014 police attack and a number of other bombings in Bahrain, took responsibility for the attack on the police officer on social media.

Bahrain's last execution was of a

Bangladeshi man in 2010. A number of death sentences have been issued since then. The three put to death yesterday were the first who had held Bahraini citizenship executed since 1996, though they were technically stateless at the time of their deaths after being stripped of their citizenship when convicted. — AP

MPS FILE GRILLING OVER SPORTS BAN

Continued from Page 1

IOC, FIFA and several international sports federations suspended Kuwaiti sports bodies in Oct 2015 over alleged government interference in sports. Sheikh Salman and other sports dignitaries had directly accused Kuwaitis with leading positions in international sports and prominent figures leading Kuwaiti sports bodies of orchestrating the suspension, which they described as illegal.

Exploiting the presence of a totally pro-government National Assembly in the past few years, the government introduced a number of legislative amendments including a 2016 law that complicated the suspension crisis. Sheikh Salman implemented the law in August by dissolving the Kuwait Olympic Committee, Kuwait Football Association and several sports federations over alleged misappropriation of public funds and administrative violations.

But with the election of the new Assembly in November, the picture has partially changed. Opposition MPs pressured the minister and the government to accept to change the controver-

sial laws to be compatible with the Olympic Charter and to write to the IOC and FIFA requesting a temporary lifting of the ban until the law has been amended.

Both the IOC and FIFA rejected Kuwait's request. IOC demanded three conditions to lift the ban - the amendment of the laws, withdrawing of all court cases and reinstating all dissolved sports bodies.

Sheikh Salman refused to accept the second and third conditions, and only promised to withdraw the court cases as part of a comprehensive settlement with IOC, which rejected the offer outright. IOC even said the Kuwaiti sports situation had deteriorated further and demanded concrete steps to lift the ban.

The three lawmakers recounted the minister's involvement in sports since he was appointed minister in 2012 and how he played a key role in changing a milestone sports law issued in 2012 and which was compatible with the Olympic Charter. They said the minister was instrumental in getting sports legislations passed in the previous Assembly and which eventually led to the suspension of Kuwait.

They questioned the minister about enacting those legislations without consulting the IOC, and then later compounded the situation by dissolving local sports bodies recognized by international sports organizations.

The grilling also accused the minister of squandering public funds and not taking any measure to stop it at the youth and information ministries and at the public sports authority. It also accused the minister of committing a number of administrative violations in several appointments in the information ministry. Finally, the grilling charged that the ministry played an active role in issuing a number of laws and decisions that negatively impacted the freedom of press and speech in Kuwait, citing the electronic crimes law as an example.

Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem said the grilling will be placed on the agenda of the Jan 31 session and if the minister wants to delay the debate, he has to seek approval from the Assembly. The debate of the grilling could lead to a vote of no-confidence, which will lead to the minister's dismissal if approved by half of the Assembly's 50 elected members.

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Focus

KASICH TO DOUBTERS:
I'M NO LAME DUCK

In less than a year's time, Ohio Gov John Kasich has gone from an "adult in the room" alternative in a fractious Republican presidential field, to a potential convention spoiler in Cleveland, to now facing a hostile new president who reached down personally to seize control of the state GOP. The rollercoaster ride has left many wondering whether Kasich's political star and personal influence have faded. To this, Kasich had a direct answer this week: "You know (how) they talk about lame duck? They never met me."

With his characteristic defiance, Kasich has re-emerged in recent weeks after a period of retreat that followed a painful decision to concede his presidential ambitions for a second time. The 64-year-old Republican has vetoed what would have been one of the nation's most restrictive abortion laws and Republican-backed legislation further delaying Ohio's alternative-energy mandates. He has resumed his public schedule in Ohio and scheduled appearances over the next week in Atlanta for Martin Luther King Jr. Day and in Washington to discuss health care with senators and attend President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration.

Kasich is Republicans' singular 2016 presidential contender never to fall in line behind Trump. His actions cost Kasich control of the Ohio Republican Party on Jan. 6, when then-Chairman Matt Borges was pushed out by Trump's favored candidate after the president-elect made personal phone calls to some central committee members.

"The governor faces some unusual political problems because of the fallout of the presidential election," said John Green, of the University of Akron's Bliss Institute. University of Dayton associate political science professor Nancy Martorano Miller said, "I think the rest of the state GOP is trying to walk that line between the two of them, because we don't know how this is going to play out. The big question marks are how is President Trump going to react to places and things and people that didn't line up behind him?"

That Kasich aides remain engaged on social media and that Kasich is writing op-eds and a book suggest the former congressman isn't done running for office, Miller said. In other words: This, too, is politics. "They may be banking on a strategy that things go horribly wrong for the Republican Party in the next two years," she said. "It's a risky bet."

Voter Support

But Kasich has sustained voter support in his closely divided bellwether state. A Monmouth University Poll in October found that Kasich's anti-Trump stance hadn't hurt his overall favorability rating, though he has lost some support among fellow Republicans and gained some among Democrats.

During public events this week, Kasich espoused a message that's equal parts John F. Kennedy and Mr. Rogers, urging people to ask not what politicians can do for them, but to "stick your nose in somebody else's business" to help solve society's tough problems. Bracing the state for a painful budget cycle, he says that every person is special and that the country needs people engaged in their communities to effect change.

Nazek Habatfha, 35, of Dublin, is a graduate student and Islamic youth leader who petitioned for Kasich's eventual veto of the renewable energy bill. She said Kasich impressed her as he weathered the year's political blows without seeming to betray his values. "Sometimes doing the right thing is not necessarily doing the popular thing. That's really the position that John Kasich is in, as I view it, and I hope that we will look back at John Kasich and say he was that minority voice that stood up for what is right," said Habatfha, a Hillary Clinton voter. "Right now, popular opinion is not on his side." — AP



John Kasich

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WARREN EMBRACES ROLE AS FOIL TO TRUMP

Donald Trump's election has propelled Sen Elizabeth Warren into an even sharper partisan spotlight as she embraces her role as a top Democratic foil to the Republican president-elect. In just the past few weeks, Warren has penned a scathing 16-page critique of Trump's nominee for education secretary, Betsy DeVos; grilled his pick for housing secretary, Ben Carson; co-sponsored legislation requiring the president and vice president to disclose and divest any potential financial conflicts of interest; and signed onto legislation to block the creation of a federal religious registry.

The Massachusetts Democrat is leaning on every lever of power she has - from her fundraising prowess to her social media accounts - to position herself as a leading voice of a party in political exile. "My priorities haven't changed since the day I got into office," Warren said in an interview with AP. "I see my job as making sure the voices of ordinary people aren't drowned out in Washington by those who have money and power."

Her list of grievances with Trump is long and growing longer. But in a shift from the campaign, when Warren lobbed Twitter grenade after Twitter grenade to get under Trump's skin, she says her criticism is now more focused on her top priority: The economic well-being of middle- and working-class families.

She has excoriated Trump's pick for Treasury secretary, Steven Mnuchin, saying he profited from the foreclosure crisis; called out Trump's Department of Labor nominee, fast food entrepreneur Andrew Puzder, after hearing from workers who said they were underpaid, had their wages stolen, and were forced to work in unsafe conditions; and vowed to fight to protect President Barack Obama's health-care law and preserve the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which she helped create.

"The Republicans have put us on the path to repealing the ACA (Affordable Care Act), and that will make a profound difference in the lives of millions of Americans,"

Warren told the AP. "I'm all for making the ACA better, but not for throwing it out. What the Republicans are doing is irresponsible and cruel."

Long view

Warren is taking the political long view. She is an aggressive fundraiser, and through her political action



Elizabeth Warren

committee - PAC for a Level Playing Field - she has doled out hundreds of thousands of dollars in the past two years to Democratic candidates and committees in the hope of strengthening the party's hand in future elections. "The Democrat's agenda is the American people's agenda," she said. Warren won't say whether she is prepping for a possible 2020 run for president, although she has announced plans to run for re-election in 2018, making the case for a second term in part by again pointing to "Donald Trump and his team of billionaires, bigots, and Wall Street bankers" in an email to supporters.

Massachusetts Republicans have labeled Warren a "hyperpartisan bully more interested in scoring political points than delivering actual results." But among voters in her home state where she remains popular, the reaction to Warren's spikes-up approach is more nuanced. "I'm just tired of all the fighting," said Tim Nance, 26, of Newton, who works in macro-economics. "I don't agree with a lot of the things that Trump had to say ... but we've had about eight years or so of gridlock in Washington, and I think that it's important for us to try to put some of the more divisive rhetoric to the side." Jay Fiset, a 30-year-old chef from Somerville, also said that while Trump and Warren may be political polar opposites, it's time to ditch the campaign.

"They're going to butt heads," he said. "But I think that they should come together and try and figure out the problems rather than pinpointing who's doing what wrong." Others see a reason to applaud every Warren missive. "She should definitely keep going hard after him because he hasn't admitted to anything yet. He hasn't apologized for anything," said Dencis Pena, 37, of Boston, who works in the insurance industry. "Until he changes and shows he actually understands the facts, people should not let him off the hook." — AP

IRAN WARY OF RISING US 'HOSTILITY'

A year after its nuclear deal took effect, Iran is increasingly concerned over the arrival of US President-elect Donald Trump, who has threatened to tear up the historic accord. Analysts say it is unlikely the Trump administration will completely dismantle the agreement, which he described as "the worst deal ever negotiated". A series of cabinet appointments, however, have signalled Trump is likely to take a hard line on Tehran. And that will ratchet up pressure on Iran's President Hassan Rouhani, who is making the nuclear deal a centerpiece of his re-election bid this year.

"Some of the people who are taking office in the executive branch have a long history of being against Iran," said Foad Izadi, a professor of international studies at Tehran University. "We are going to see a harsher policy toward Iran during the Trump administration," he said. On Sunday, Iran's top negotiator in the nuclear talks accused Washington of doing "whatever it can to slow down Iran's progress" after the deal. "In the last 12 months, we have witnessed delays and the disrespecting of promises by the US and some countries. Their hostility increases by the day," Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi told reporters.

In confirmation hearings ahead of Trump's January 20 inauguration, several of his cabinet nominees made clear their opposition to a further softening of ties with Tehran. Secretary of state nominee Rex Tillerson said he would recommend a "full review" of the nuclear agreement.

'Stupid' to tear up deal

Defense secretary pick James Mattis said Washington needed to "live up" to its word on the accord, but also described Iran as "the biggest destabilizing force in the Middle East". Despite his fierce rhetoric and the views of senior cabinet members, Trump is not likely to try to reverse the deal, experts say. "The situation may become worse, but the (nuclear deal) will not be torn up, simply because that's stupid," said Nasser Hadian, another professor of international relations at Tehran University.

The agreement, which lifted a wide range of international sanctions in exchange for limits on Iran's nuclear program, took effect on Jan 16, 2016 following years of talks. Negotiated by Tehran and six world powers including the United States, Russia and China, the agreement was widely seen as a major victory for international diplomacy. That would make reneging on the deal nearly impossible and fraught with huge risks, analysts say. "Even the American hawks are all saying don't tear it up," Hadian said.

Instead, Hadian said, the Trump administration is likely to put pressure on Iran in areas outside the nuclear agreement, including with more sanctions based on its human rights record, ballistic missile program and alleged support for "terrorism" in the Middle East. That may be bad news for Rouhani, who is hoping to point to the agreement and the end of Iran's international isolation as he seeks re-election in a presidential vote in May. Rouhani, a moderate, managed to push through the deal despite vocal opposition from hardliners, largely by touting its potential economic benefits for Iranians stung by years of sanctions.

Rouhani 'oversold' accord

In some areas, the deal has started paying off. Iran more than doubled its oil exports to more than 2.5 million barrels per day last year, earning \$29 billion in the nine months leading to Dec 20. Energy giants including France's Total and Anglo-Dutch Shell are lining up to seek oil and gas deals, and manufacturing has been given a boost with

the return of France's PSA, which operates joint ventures with local carmakers.

The lifting of sanctions also allowed the signing of two huge contracts for the purchase of 100 aircraft from European aerospace giant Airbus and another 80 from US rival Boeing. But ordinary Iranians have yet to see much improvement in their daily lives. While the economy grew by six percent between March and September last year and inflation was brought back below 10 percent, joblessness continued to rise, with 12.7 percent of the working population unemployed. Among those under 29, more than a quarter were out of work. Many Iranians believed the nuclear agreement would see a surge in economic activity, including foreign investments, "but a lot of those hopes have not materialized," Izadi said. Iranian officials have accused Washington of failing to abide by the spirit of the deal, including with a raft of other sanctions related to non-nuclear issues that have helped deter major Western banks from returning to Iran. — AFP



An Iranian man walks along a street past a mosaic mural on the first anniversary of the nuclear agreement in the capital Tehran on Saturday. — AFP

Sports

Kerber lurks as
Serena chases
record Slam



Kohli, Jadhav tons
help India eclipse
England's 350



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MAHREZ SCORES TWICE BUT ALGERIA HELD BY ZIMBABWE

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LIVERPOOL: Manchester City's Chilean goalkeeper Claudio Bravo puts out a hand but cannot stop Everton's Belgian striker Kevin Mirallas's shot beating him for their second goal during the English Premier League football match between Everton and Manchester City at Goodison Park in Liverpool, north-west England yesterday.— AFP

GUARDIOLA ROCKED AS EVERTON CRUSH CITY



LIVERPOOL: Pep Guardiola suffered the largest league defeat of his managerial career as Manchester City slumped to a 4-0 loss against Everton yesterday.

Romelu Lukaku and Kevin Mirallas put Everton in control at Goodison Park before teenager Tom Davies scored his first goal for the club and debutant Ademola Lookman completed the rout after coming on as an 89th minute substitute.

It was another chastening experience for City boss Guardiola, who wasn't used to

such humiliation in his trophy-laden spells at Barcelona and Bayern Munich.

The defeat was City's fourth in their last eight league games and left them 10 points behind leaders Chelsea.

Lukaku's 12th goal of the season continued his rich vein of form and the Belgian striker was too hot for City's error-prone defence to handle through a torrid afternoon for Guardiola and company.

As has been the case so often this season, Lukaku's opener in the 34th minute showed up frailties in City's defence and goalkeeping as Davies intercepted a Gael Clichy pass just inside the visitors' half and found Mirallas sprinting into the City area.

With Yaya Toure slow to respond to the runner, and Nicolas Otamendi playing Everton on side from a deep position, Mirallas was able to pick out Lukaku, who

finished with a clinical left-foot strike.

The opening goal had drawn an instant response from Guardiola's team as Sergio Agüero came within a whisker of connecting with Kevin De Bruyne's low cross just six yards from goal.

And Raheem Sterling, from a cleared City corner, just missed the home goal with a powerful half-volley from outside the area.

Although the game had been finally balanced, City had enjoyed the better chances, even before the opening goal. After 11 minutes, Sterling failed with a strong penalty appeal after he went down under slight contact from goalkeeper Joel Robles as he appeared poised to score from another perfect cross from the excellent De Bruyne.

And the Everton keeper was again forced into action, with a strong block to thwart David Silva as the Spaniard looked set to con-

vert yet another decisive pass from De Bruyne.

In first half stoppage-time, City almost snatched what would have been a deserved equaliser after Clichy's left-wing cross found Bacary Sagna whose athletic leap allows him to power a goal bound header which was nodded off the line by Davies.

Better was to come for Everton a minute into the second half when Lukaku sparked the move that led to the second goal, his through ball being touched by City defender John Stones into the path of Ross Barkley.

The England midfielder produced a superb pass for Mirallas whose equally excellent shot from 15 yards flew beyond the dive of Bravo. As City struggled to gain a foothold, Silva's free-kick found ex-Everton defender Stones, booed by his former supporters with every touch, who headed directly at Robles.

But for all their possession, City struggled to place Robles under pressure. On a rare occasion that the home defence allowed Agüero too much space on the edge of their area, the Argentinian's low shot was turned behind expertly by Robles. Any lingering hope of a comeback evaporated in the 78th minute when Davies capped a brilliant midfield display with a deserved goal, his first for the club - the move having been started when he collected the ball in his own half.

Davies carried the ball half the length of the field, exchanged passes with Barkley and then lifted the ball over Bravo, with Lukaku ensuring the ball crept over the line.

Lookman, signed from Charlton this month, added a fourth goal in stoppage-time after Seamus Coleman had charged down a poor attempted clearance by Stones. — AFP

IBRAHIMOVIC RESCUES MAN UTD IN LIVERPOOL DRAW



MANCHESTER: Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored an 84th-minute header as Manchester United prevented Liverpool from recapturing second place in the Premier League table in a 1-1 draw yesterday.

Paul Pogba stood to be United's fall guy at Old Trafford after conceding a soft first-half penalty for handball, which James Milner converted, only for Ibrahimovic to save his blushes.

Ibrahimovic's 19th goal of the season extended United's unbeaten league run to seven games, but after winning the previous six, momentum has been lost.

Jose Mourinho's side remain sixth, four points off the Champions League places, while Liverpool rose one place to third, seven points below leaders Chelsea and beneath Tottenham Hotspur on goal difference.

After draws against Sunderland and

Plymouth Argyle and a defeat at Southampton, Liverpool have gone four games without victory at the start of a calendar year for the first time since 1993.

But with United five points below them, Jurgen Klopp's men remain the more likely champions.

An abdominal injury to Nathaniel Clyne saw Liverpool's 18-year-old right-back Trent Alexander-Arnold given a full league debut and he had the onerous task of handling the livewire Anthony Martial.

Martial scored a memorable goal against Liverpool on his United debut last season and he fashioned the first opening with a deep cross for the leaping Ibrahimovic, who could only volley wide.

Ibrahimovic gave the visiting fans a heart-in-mouth moment when he chased down Dejan Lovren's weak back-pass, with Simon Mignolet's clearance striking him and looping onto the roof of the net.

United appeared to be taking control and in the 19th minute Henrikh Mkhitaryan bisected the Liverpool defence with a neatly judged pass for Pogba, only for the Frenchman to scuff wide with his left foot.

Liverpool's play had been more conspicuous for misplaced passes than anything else,

but errors from Phil Jones and Pogba enabled them to take the lead in the 27th minute.

Jones's heavy touch allowed Roberto Firmino to rob him on the edge of the box, obliging Marcos Rojo to tidy up at the expense of a corner.

Pogba inexplicably leapt with his hands above his head as he defended Milner's set-piece and the Liverpool number seven tucked the ensuing spot-kick past David de Gea for his sixth penalty of the season.

United twice threatened an equaliser before half-time, Ibrahimovic blasting a freekick towards the bottom-left corner and Mkhitaryan taking aim from Ander Herrera's pass, but Mignolet saved twice.

Mourinho took remedial action at the interval, sending on Wayne Rooney for his 450th league appearance and withdrawing Michael Carrick, with Herrera dropping into the holding role.

United spurned a great chance to equalise when, having robbed Alexander-Arnold on halfway, Martial sprinted into the box to meet Mkhitaryan's low cross, only to miscue his attempt at a back-heel.

But with Carrick off, United's back four was exposed to counter-attacks. Divock Origi saw a shot deflected wide, a missed header by



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's English midfielder Michael Carrick (L) vies with Liverpool's German midfielder Emre Can (2L) during the English Premier League football match between Manchester United and Liverpool at Old Trafford in Manchester, north west England, yesterday. — AFP

Jones allowed substitute Philippe Coutinho to slip in Firmino, obliging De Gea to block, and Georginio Wijnaldum headed Emre Can's cross over.

It was left to Ibrahimovic to ride to United's rescue, the Swede steering a fine header over Mignolet from Antonio

Valencia's cross after Marouane Fellaini's header came back off the post.

The noise that Mourinho had called for after United's mid-week League Cup semi-final first-leg win over Hull City duly arrived, but Liverpool withstood the crescendo. — AFP

Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary BUSINESS

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New Porsche Panamera range launched in Kuwait

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KFH GROUP TRADED \$11.4BN IN SUKUK MARKET IN 2016

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WASHINGTON: In this March 3, 2016 file photo, a jogger passes by the Arlington Memorial Bridge at sunrise in Washington. Donald Trump talked during his campaign about making America's infrastructure great again, and his inauguration will put the spotlight on some glaring needs in the nation's capital. —AP

INFRASTRUCTURE MESS PRESENTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRUMP AS INAUGURATION LOOMS, DOUBTS PERSIST OVER CAMPAIGN PROMISES

WASHINGTON: As a candidate, Donald Trump said he wanted to make America's infrastructure great again. As president, he'll have plenty of ways to get started in his new home town.

The Arlington Memorial Bridge, Washington's most recognizable span over the Potomac River, is in such bad shape that it will be closed to all vehicle traffic during Friday's inauguration. Hundreds of thousands will rely on the Metro subway to reach the Capitol and the National Mall, and they'll get a firsthand look at a system that's deteriorated significantly during the past eight years and has repair needs measured in the billions.

Even the Washington Monument is shut down because of a broken elevator. Visitors won't be able to ride to the top again until at least 2019. Political leaders in the region, mostly Democrats, say the city's infrastructure mess presents an opportunity to Trump and Republicans in Congress to show they can govern and deliver on one of the new president's touted campaign promises. But as Trump gets ready to take office, they're not optimistic that he's ready to follow through.

"It'll be in his face. He'll see the worn-out infrastructure right here where he lives," said Eleanor Holmes Norton, a Democrat who's the District of Columbia's delegate in

Congress. "But we don't yet have, especially for the first 100 days, any indication that he wants to start off with a plan."

Trump has promised to employ millions of workers to rebuild the nation's highways, bridges, tunnels and airports and make them "second to none" in the process.

It's an unquestioned need. Nationwide, governments are short \$1.4 trillion of the money needed to make necessary repairs to infrastructure - including drinking, wastewater and mass transit systems - through 2025, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers.

That's the problem with the Arlington Memorial Bridge, which connects the Lincoln Memorial with Arlington National Cemetery and is arguably the region's most pressing need. One of the five spans that bring vehicles across the Potomac River into traffic-choked Washington, it will be forced to close by 2021 without a reconstruction, expected to cost at least \$250 million. The National Park Service won a \$90 million federal grant last year to start the project, but it still looking for a way to come up the rest of the money.

"It's the absolute poster child for our crumbling infrastructure nationally," said Rep. Don Beyer, a Democrat who represents the Virginia side of the bridge. "We're allowing our national capital to crumble before our eyes and the eyes of the whole world. It's pretty embarrassing."

During the campaign, Trump positioned himself as capable of addressing the public works problem because of his business background. But his plans have been open-ended and short on specifics, and many Republicans in Congress are not eager to approve large-scale infrastructure spending.

A paper circulated after the election recommended using \$137 billion in federal tax credits to generate \$1 trillion in private-sector infrastructure investment over a decade. Such private investors are typically interested only in projects that create revenue, such as tolls. That solution isn't practical with many infrastructure projects.

Said Beyer, "I do not want to make Arlington Memorial Bridge a toll bridge." Mayor Muriel Bowser said she hopes the inauguration will be "an opportunity to focus the incoming administration's attention" on the 85-year-old bridge. Vehicles weighing 10 tons or more have been barred from using it since 2014, and during the inauguration, it will be closed to all but pedestrians. Metro, the city's beleaguered subway system, has handled past inaugurations smoothly. The system changes its schedule on Inauguration Day, opening earlier than usual and running trains at rush-hour levels throughout the day. Some downtown stations will be closed for security reasons.

But in 2009 - when 1.8 million people attended President

Barack Obama's first inauguration - Metro was in much better shape. Since then, ridership has declined and service has become less reliable amid a series of calamities, including track fires, derailments and collisions. Metro's leaders say the system needs major new spending to reverse the decline. But elected officials in Maryland, Virginia and the city can't agree on a regional tax to fund the system. Republicans in Congress have been hostile to the suggestion of more federal dollars, saying Metro's problems result from poor management.

To balance Metro's budget, general manager Paul Wiedefeld has proposed laying off workers, raising fares, reducing service and asking local governments for bigger subsidies. The Washington Monument is one thing that will get fixed regardless of whether Trump or Congress takes action. Billionaire philanthropist David Rubenstein came to the rescue of the monument with \$3 million to fix the elevator, just as he paid for major repairs to the 555-foot obelisk after it was damaged in a 2011 earthquake.

Norton said going big on infrastructure could be a political win for Trump. "He seems to understand, if you engage in building something, it tends to generate its own wealth," Norton said. "And by wealth he means jobs, so it would be a perfect way for him to proceed." —AP

UK WANTS RECIPROCAL MARKETS DEAL WITH EU

BERLIN: Britain and the EU should reach a deal allowing reciprocal access to each other's markets though London cannot compromise on regaining immigration control, finance minister Philip Hammond said yesterday.

London and Brussels should not fight against each other's red lines but work in the space in between to find an agreement on Brexit, the chancellor of the Exchequer told Germany's Welt am Sonntag newspaper. Hammond said Britain had not taken a firm position on post-Brexit EU immigration, but the message from the June referendum vote to leave the bloc was: "we must control our immigration policy."

He said European Union citizens would be free to travel to Britain and do business there but the debate was over the right to work, settle and set up business.

"Clearly we need people to come and work in our economy to keep it functioning," he said. But as for having no control, "that has to stop." British Prime Minister Theresa May is to set out details of the government's Brexit negotiating strategy tomorrow.

Hammond said Britain wanted market access without Brussels politics. "We are optimistic that we will be able to reach an agreement that gives reciprocal access to each other's markets. The logic is there," he said. He hinted that London was ready to push through aggressive cuts to business taxes to ensure British-based firms remained competitive in the face of EU tariffs.

Hammond hoped Britain would remain "in the mainstream of European economic and social thinking", but said it would have to change course "if we are forced". "The British people are not going to lie down and say, 'too bad'," he said. "If we have no access to the European market, if we are closed off", then short-term economic damage could follow, but Britain would then be



Philip Hammond

forced to change its model "to regain competitiveness". Britain plans to hand in its two-year notice before April. Hammond said he was expecting to start "substantive negotiations" in the following months.

"We are ambitious to do this as quickly as possible," he said, and "move seamlessly" to the new arrangement in 2019, though there could be an "interim period" before it kicks in.

In a thinly veiled threat that Britain could use its corporate tax as a form of leverage in Brexit negotiations, Hammond told Welt am Sonntag he hoped Britain would remain a European-style economy with corresponding tax and regulation systems.

"But if we are forced to be something different, then we will have to become something different," Hammond said when asked directly about Britain's plans to lower corporate tax. "If we have no access to the European market, if we are closed off, if Britain were to leave the

European Union without an agreement on market access, then we could suffer from economic damage at least in the short-term," he said. "In this case, we could be forced to change our economic model and we will have to change our model to regain competitiveness," Hammond said. "We will change our model, and we will come back, and we will be competitively engaged."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel has said the EU must consider limiting Britain's access to its market if London fails to accept the bloc's 'four freedoms' in Brexit negotiations.

The EU's single market emerged from the 1992 Maastricht Treaty on European integration. This enshrines the EU's "four freedoms" - of movement of goods, capital, people, and services. British Prime Minister Theresa May has repeatedly said she will not reveal her Brexit negotiating strategy before triggering Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty, a step expected by the end of March. May has said she wants Britain to regain control over immigration, restore its sovereignty and also establish the best possible trading relations with the EU.

But senior EU leaders have warned Britain there could be no "cherry picking", and Merkel has urged the 27 remaining EU states not to allow themselves to be divided. Hammond said in the interview Britain had not taken a firm position yet on what form of immigration controls it wants.

"But we are aware that the message from the referendum is that we must control our immigration policy," he added. Hammond said Britain did not want to close its doors completely to EU citizens who wanted to work in the UK. "Clearly we need people to come and work in our economy to keep it functioning," Hammond said. "But we must have overall control." — Agencies

KUWAIT OUTPERFORMS AS SAUDI STALLS, DUBAI SLIPS

MIDEAST STOCKS

DUBAI: Stock markets in the Gulf diverged yesterday with Saudi Arabia stalling near a six-week low and Dubai retreating on profit-taking, while Kuwait continued to outperform. Kuwait's stock market gained 1.9 percent with the largest logistics firm in the Gulf, Agility, and National Bank of Kuwait each climbing 3.0 percent.

Kuwait's index is up 8.2 percent since Jan. 1, outperforming the region after a long period of sluggish performance. "Sentiment is very positive in the market but no change in fundamentals," said Bader Al-Ghannim, head of regional asset management at Kuwait-based Global Investment House. "From an economic perspective the country is well positioned due to prudent fiscal management and a lower fiscal break-even oil price."

Saudi Arabia's index added 0.1 percent. Nine of the top 10 performers were from the insurance segment with Wafa Insurance in the lead, jumping 9.1 percent. Interest in the sector has risen partly because of local media reports late last year that Saudi Arabia was looking at the possibility of including haj and umra pilgrims in a compulsory health insurance scheme.

Almarai rose 0.4 percent after the Gulf's largest dairy company reported a 1 percent increase in fourth-quarter net profit to 488.5 million riyals (\$130 million), roughly in line with analysts' forecasts.

Sales rose marginally and the cost of sales fell. Analysts at NCB Capital said that despite the relatively flat earnings and revenue growth, strong margin expansion from lower operating expenditure and improving sales in Almarai's poultry segment were important positives.

The company, one of the few in Saudi Arabia that give forward guidance, said it would "continue to focus on costs control, efficiency gains and cashflow preservation while maintaining its strategic direction of profitable growth". However the results revealed the dairy and juice segment had suffered its first year-on-year decline in sales, according to NCB Capital. This sent some other food producers lower, with Saudia Dairy and Foodstuff dropping 3.4 percent.

Bank Aljazira, the first bank to report earnings in the kingdom, reported a 4.4 percent drop in fourth-quarter net profit to 152 million riyals. Aljazira cited higher impairment charges for credit losses.

The bank's stock closed 0.4 percent higher after trading lower for most of the session. However, some other banks were knocked lower, with Saudi British Bank dropping 1.4 percent. Egypt's main index rose to yet another record close in healthy trading volume. The index has risen 56 percent since the currency was floated on Nov 3. Arabian Cement jumped its 10 percent daily limit for a third consecutive session to 9.91 Egyptian pounds. — Reuters

GULF BANK HOLDS RED AND SALARY ACCOUNT DRAW

FAHED AL-AZMI RECEIVES KEY TO NEW CADILLAC ESCALADE



Susana Al-Barrak, Manager, Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank handing over the keys to the winner.

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank would like to congratulate Fahed Mohammad Al-Azmi, the lucky winner of the Red and Salary Account quarterly draw held on the 5 January 2017 at The Avenues during the exciting event when Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account KD1 million prize set a new Guinness World Records Achievement for the "largest prize linked to a bank account" in the world!

The lucky new red and salary car winner was welcomed at the Cadillac showroom in Al-Rai Area by Susana Al-Barrak, Manager, Consumer Banking at Gulf Bank. Al-Barrak presented the winner the key to the brand new Cadillac Escalade.

During 2016, Gulf Bank's Salary Offer consisted on instant gifts up to KD 200 and quarterly draws in which it gave away 4 Cadillac cars to the following quarterly lucky winners:

1st quarterly winner (March 31, 2016): Salem Saleh Salem Alajmi (Cadillac CTS)

2nd Quarterly winner (June 30, 2016): Mariam Adel Fahad Alkhamees (Cadillac SRX)

3rd Quarterly winner (September 29, 2016): Ahmad Abdul Azeez Qasem Al-Matrood (Cadillac CTS)

4th Quarterly winner (January 5, 2017): Fahed Mohammad Al-Azmi (Cadillac Escalade).



The new Cadillac Escalade car at Al-Danah yearly millionaire draw event.

INDIA AIRLINES SOAR AS EXPERTS WARN OF TURBULENCE AHEAD

SPICEJET ACQUISITION UNDERSCORES MARKET POTENTIAL

NEW DELHI: A major acquisition by Indian budget airline SpiceJet this week underscored the vast potential of the world's fastest-growing aviation market, but experts say woefully inadequate infrastructure and high operating costs could threaten the industry's rapid expansion.

India's burgeoning middle classes are taking to the skies in ever greater numbers, with passenger growth of 20 percent in 2015 according to industry body IATA-nearly double China's 11-percent increase over the same period.

Low-cost airlines are rushing to expand their fleets to take advantage of that growth, encouraged by a fall in fuel prices that last year pushed several private operators into profit for the first time. SpiceJet, India's fourth biggest airline with a 13-percent market share, said Friday it was buying up to 205 Boeing planes worth \$22 billion to fuel a major expansion of its domestic operations.

Experts say the country's aviation sector holds vast untapped potential, with just 100 million of India's 1.2 billion people taking to the skies last year. But they warn that India's rickety infrastructure could hold back future growth,

with just 90 of the country's more than 460 airports currently operational.

"Consistent 20-percent-plus growth per se is not a cause for celebration if the institutional framework is weak," said Kapil Kaul, South Asia head of industry advisory and research firm CAPA. "This only increases safety and security risks. And skill shortages are also emerging. An urgent fix is required." CAPA has warned that India could face a capacity crisis unless it builds 50 new airports over the next decade.

To avoid that, the government is trying to revive some of the hundreds of disused regional airports-among them a number of "ghost airports" that were built by the government but never used. That is because most airlines opt to increase flights to popular locations rather than adding new routes, analysts say. KPMG and industry body FICCI recently named 44 such airports that could quickly be brought into use in a research report.

In 2015 the government announced a plan to "take flying to the masses" by making air travel affordable for millions more Indians, reviving struggling airports and connecting rural areas.

The policy aims to slash airfares to 2,500 rupees (\$37) per hour of flying on many regional routes through a slew of tax incentives and subsidies. The first round of bids for these subsidized regional routes are due to start this week, with winners getting a three-year exclusive on flying rights. Auctions for routes will be conducted twice a year.

'Costliest and toughest'

High operating costs represent the second major threat to the industry.

High fuel import taxes mean that about 50 percent of an Indian airline's costs go towards fuel, while a scarcity of pilots has pushed up salaries to global levels. "Most of the large cost heads in Indian aviation like fuel, leases, maintenance, airport charges and interest rates are some of the highest in the world," said Amber Dubey, India head of aerospace and defense at global consultancy KPMG. "There are shortages of commanders and bringing in expat pilots is costly and time-consuming... Overall, the Indian market is one of the costliest and toughest to operate in." — AFP

EGYPT TO CUT SUBSIDIES, BOOST REVENUES UNDER REFORM PACKAGE

CAIRO: Egypt will make further cuts to energy subsidies, raise taxes and seek more international financing as it pursues economic reforms this year, Finance Minister Amr El-Garhy said yesterday.

Speaking at a Cairo press conference, Garhy said the steps are part of ongoing economic reforms the country urgently needs. The International Monetary Fund approved last year a \$12 billion loan after Egypt floated its pound and cut energy subsidies. The finance minister also revealed that the IMF loan carries an interest rate of 1.5 to 1.75 percent.

The reforms come as Egypt faces major economic challenges after the political turmoil that followed the 2011 uprising that toppled longtime leader Hosni Mubarak. Economic growth has slowed, investment has fallen sharply and currency reserves have plunged. Egypt's government agreed in November to slash fuel subsidies as part of the IMF reform package but because the country floated its currency at the same time, the subsidy bill ballooned, Garhy said.

The cost of subsidies rose "as a result of the exchange rate we currently have and... that we as a state import a large part of our petroleum needs," he said, without providing figures. "This, right now, is the

biggest challenge" the government faces on the economy, Garhy said. The Egyptian pound, which had been pegged at 8.83 to the dollar before November, was trading at more than 18 pounds to the dollar yesterday. Garhy said the government was also planning to raise the rate of the value added tax by one point to 14 percent as of July. Egypt introduced VAT in September and in December also raised tariffs on hundreds of imported items by up to 60 percent as it seeks to boost government revenues.

Garhy said the IMF deal had raised investor confidence in Egypt, especially as the fund regularly reviews the implementation of the reform package. IMF oversight and twice-yearly reviews "allow all investors... to be assured of the level of seriousness of this (reform) program," Garhy said. The full details of the IMF deal have not yet been disclosed, but as well as providing the interest rate Garhy said yesterday that each tranche would be repaid within 10 years of disbursement, with a 4.5-year grace period. Egypt will also seek to raise more money on international markets, he said, starting with a roadshow from today to promote dollar bonds in the United Arab Emirates, United States and Britain. —AFP



NEW DELHI: This file photograph shows an aircraft of Indian airline SpiceJet making a final approach for landing at Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi. — AFP

DAVOS ELITES STRUGGLE FOR ANSWERS AS TRUMP ERA DAWNS

DAVOS: The global economy is in better shape than it's been in years. Stock markets are booming, oil prices are on the rise again and the risks of a rapid economic slowdown in China, a major source of concern a year ago, have eased.

And yet, as political leaders, CEOs and top bankers make their annual trek up the Swiss Alps to the World Economic Forum in Davos, the mood is anything but celebratory.

Beneath the veneer of optimism over the economic outlook lurks acute anxiety about an increasingly toxic political climate and a deep sense of uncertainty surrounding the US presidency of Donald Trump, who will be inaugurated on the final day of the forum. Last year, the consensus here was that Trump had no chance of being elected. His victory, less than half a year after Britain voted to leave the European Union, was a slap at the principles that elites in Davos have long held dear, from globalisation and free trade to multilateralism.

Trump is the poster child for a new strain of populism that is spreading across the developed world and threatening the post-war liberal democratic order. With elections looming in the Netherlands, France, Germany, and possibly Italy, this year, the nervousness among Davos attendees is palpable.

"Regardless of how you view Trump and his positions, his election has led to a deep, deep sense of uncertainty and that will cast a long shadow over Davos," said Jean-Marie Guehenno, CEO of International Crisis Group, a conflict resolution think-tank. Moises Naim of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was even more blunt: "There is a consensus that something huge is going on, global and in many respects unprecedented. But we don't know what the causes are, nor how to deal with it."

The titles of the discussion panels at the WEF, which runs from Jan. 17-20, evoke the unsettling new landscape. Among them are "Squeezed and Angry: How to Fix the Middle Class Crisis", "Politics of Fear or Rebellion of

the Forgotten?", "Tolerance at the Tipping Point?" and "The Post-EU Era".

The list of leaders attending this year is also telling. The star attraction will be Xi Jinping, the first Chinese president ever to attend Davos. His presence is being seen as a sign of Beijing's growing weight in the world at a time when Trump is promising a more insular, "America first" approach and Europe is pre-occupied with its own troubles, from Brexit to terrorism. British Prime Minister Theresa May, who has the thorny task of taking her country out of the EU, will also be there. But Germany's Angela Merkel, a Davos regular whose reputation for steady, principled leadership would have fit well with the WEF's main theme of "Responsive and Responsible Leadership", will not.

'REJOICING IN THE ELEVATORS'

Perhaps the central question in Davos, a four-day affair of panel discussions, lunches and cocktail parties that delve into subjects as diverse as terrorism, artificial intelligence and wellness, is whether leaders can agree on the root causes of public anger and begin to articulate a response.

A WEF report on global risks released before Davos highlighted "diminishing public trust in institutions" and noted that rebuilding faith in the political process and leaders would be a "difficult task". Guy Standing, the author of several books on the new "precarariat", a class of people who lack job security and reliable earnings, believes more people are coming around to the idea that free-market capitalism needs to be overhauled, including those that have benefited most from it.

"The mainstream corporate types don't want Trump and far-right authoritarians," said Standing, who has been invited to Davos for the first time. "They want a sustainable global economy in which they can do business. More and more of them are sensible enough to realise that they have overreached." —Reuters



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QATAR AIRWAYS TRAVEL FESTIVAL AVAILABLE FOR 1 MORE DAY

DOHA: Qatar Airways' world-travellers still have 1 day to take advantage of exceptional offers across the airline's global network, with the Qatar Airways Travel Festival running until midnight

on 16 January 2017. Travellers booking Qatar Airways flights still have the opportunity to redeem discounts on people travelling together, special companion fares and kids fly free offer

to more than 150 destinations.

Exceptional deals can be found on flights to London from KD 111, per person, Geneva from KD 137, per person, and New York from KD ,234 per person. World-travellers are encouraged to visit qatarairways.com or contact their nearest Qatar Airways sales agent to book.

New for the 2017 Qatar Airways Travel Festival are exclusive partnerships with AccorHotels and Visa. Travellers who book with AccorHotels via the Qatar Airways website will receive exclusive offers on accommodation, while Visa card holders avail a further 15 per cent off flight discounts at the time of booking.

With over 500 prizes available throughout the festival there are still a number of exciting prizes to be won for those travellers booking online, including free upgrades to the World's Best Business Class, Silver and Gold Privilege Club memberships and up to 100,000 Qmiles. Double Qmiles can also be

earned on flights booked by Privilege Club members. Prizes to be availed within Hamad International Airport, Qatar Airways' hub include access to the Al-Maha Lounge, Qatar Duty Free retail vouchers and spa vouchers to be used in The Airport Hotel. Qatar Airways Holidays is also providing fantastic deals on hotels and accommodation across a number of the airline's 150 destinations.

Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Dr Hugh Dunleavy, said: "The Qatar Airways Travel Festival is still running and travellers should hurry to take advantage of extraordinary deals across our global network. The Travel Festival is designed to inspire our travellers to go places together with their nearest and dearest, and we've packaged the festival to cater for everyone. Treat your loved one to ultimate luxury with a companion fare on the World's Best Business Class or take the family on a holiday with our kids fly free offer.

Whoever you choose to take with you in 2017, we look forward to welcoming you on board as we make memories when we go places together."

Enjoy award winning journeys to Far East Asia from KD 99 per person, to Europe from LCY KD,111 per person or to the US from LCY KD,220 per person. Travellers can take advantage of easy connections through the Qatar Airways' hub in Doha, and find themselves in over 150 exciting destinations worldwide.

Passengers taking advantage of the Qatar Airways Travel Festival are encouraged to turn two holidays into one by planning a stopover in Doha, with a new transit visa scheme offering visitors a free transit visa for up to 96 hours on your way to or from your final destination. Combine a quick visit to Doha, with its historic sites and five-star shopping and resorts, with a dream holiday - only available to Qatar Airways passengers.



INFINITI AL BAPTAIN HOLDS INFINITI KUWAIT AFTERSALES COMPETITION

KUWAIT: Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain Co, the authorized distributor of Infiniti vehicles in the State of Kuwait conducted the first 'Infiniti Service Consultant Skills Contest' on January 9, 2017. The contest was created by Infiniti Middle East this year in pursuit of excellence and to further motivate aftersales associates to deliver leading total ownership experience for their customers. Participants were tested on brand, product, total ownership concepts, service processes and Infiniti vehicle technology.

After a gruelling written test and quiz round, the finalists Bader Jihad Jadalallah and Mudassar Hussain contended for the winner title in the final practical test session over two rounds: 'Customer Reception and Estimate' and 'Close-out and Vehicle Delivery'. The contest was attended by top management of Al Babtain Group including COO, Mohamed Shalaby and Group HR GM Abdulmohsen Abdulaziz Al Babtain as well as senior management. Representing Nissan Gulf

were Surendra Acharya, DGM - Aftersales, NGF and Shailendra Singh, Regional Parts Manager, NGF; who praised Al Babtain for their flawless coordination of the event.

Giving the opening speech, Shalaby said "Training is important to our organization for all staff from top management to the entry level as it empowers our people to develop themselves to perform consistently and better every day. This is how we have become market leaders and intend to remain so. The Infiniti brand is the flagship of our organization and we are proud of the quality of our Sales and Service. By introducing the Service Consultant skills contest this year, Infiniti Middle East has clearly demonstrated the importance of developing the frontline staff who deal with our valued customers on a daily basis and are vital to consistent and improved customer satisfaction. The contest will serve as a learning platform for our service advisors to measure their talents and enhance their skills. It

is not just about winning or losing, it is about learning and improving."

Abdulmohsen remarked 'Aftersales service plays a vital role in customer satisfaction and retention and is key to strengthening the bond between the organization and customers. Al Babtain is strongly committed to the development of its staff and this is especially important for our frontline staff who are the first to welcome our customers and therefore are the face of our organization. The Infiniti Service Consultant skills contest is an opportunity for our service consultants to evaluate their skills and empower themselves with the right tools and knowledge to perform their jobs better. I wish the contestants all the best and exhort them to utilize the occasion to develop their talents.' At the end of an exhausting but exhilarating contest, Mudassar was declared the winner. Infiniti Al Babtain wishes him the best in the regional contest in Dubai.



GCC MARKETS REMAINED RESILIENT IN 2016

KFIC Annual Report on Global and GCC Markets

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance and Investment Company (KFIC) clarified in its financial annual report that the International markets closed the year 2016 in bullish territory after enduring a difficult start to the year, with positive economic data coming from Advanced Economies and Emerging Markets. Geopolitical events continued to impact economies on a global standpoint, with the ongoing war in Syria, Yemen, Iraq and numerous terrorist attacks in Turkey creating major security uncertainty around the Middle-East and Europe.

In the United States, the US Federal Reserve was expected to raise interest rates in June 2016, but due to the surprise decision of Brexit, the Fed decided to delay raising interest rates until December 2016, and markets reacted positively towards this news. Donald Trump shocked the world as he won the presidential race to the white house, against all expectations, and US equities also rallied due to the fresh fiscal policies which he would introduce such as ease banking regulation, reducing taxes, and spending heavily on rebuilding infrastructure. A trend toward stronger US economic growth and inflation could be accelerated by President-elect Trump's fiscal plans. Despite the disruption of Brexit, Europe has continued to progress towards a path of slow but steady growth as the ECB has continued to add more stimulus and has continued to boost the quantitative easing measures. Emerging Markets have also performed positively, with the exception of China's economy which has gone through a rebalancing phase and has slowed down due to the fall in commodity prices (further weakened by oil's collapse beginning in 2014).

GCC economies

GCC nations have endured a difficult time economically as the slump in oil prices has forced governments to adjust to the new era of lower oil prices. Countries have been encouraged by agencies such as the IMF to accelerate structural reforms to diversify their economies away from Petrochemicals, boost the functional role of the private sector, and create jobs for their swiftly growing labor forces. Another strategy implemented by GCC governments was to issue international bonds to ease the burden on fiscal reserves and improve overall market liquidity. Saudi Arabia made headlines when it issued international bonds at a grand scale believed to be worth \$17.5 billion, which was the biggest bond sale from an emerging market nation. Qatar also raised \$9 billion in sovereign bonds, Abu Dhabi sold \$5 billion worth of sov-

ign bonds, and Kuwait's planned bond issue worth \$9.9 billion has been delayed until 2017.

In Saudi Arabia, strict austerity measures were implemented which included reducing minister's salaries, decreasing capital expenditures, and delaying paying contractors for construction projects. The Saudi budget for 2017 indicates that austerity measures will continue to take place as subsidies on utilities such as water and electricity will be partially reduced and fuel prices are expected to rise by +40 percent. Major spending increases were set aside for Healthcare which increased by +15 percent and Education & Training by +5 percent from 2016. The 2017 budget is expected to see costly subsidies on utilities such as water and electricity cut, while fuel prices are expected to rise a further +40 percent. In Kuwait, plans were made to introduce income tax, spending cuts and privatization on many public services to attract more foreign investment and boost the economy. However, the parliament was dissolved with cabinet members disagreeing over austerity measures due to fiscal budget constraints and this has delayed the release of the 2017 budget details. In the UAE, the cabinet approved the AED 48.7 billion budget allocated for 2017 which was up by +2.6 percent compared to the previous 2016 budget. The main focus on the budget was to boost infrastructure spending by +27.0 percent as compared to the prior year.

Oman's 2017 budget assumed an average oil price of \$45.0/bbl. The ministry has vowed to focus on issuing international bonds as a method of boosting funds. Oman also has plans to sell major stakes in a string of state companies over the next several years such as Muscat Electricity Distribution Co, which will be completed in the first half of 2017. Qatar's 2017 budget intends to reduce the government's deficit and support growth measures through higher capital spending. Capital project spending will be targeted at transportation and infrastructure +21.2 percent of total spending, health +12.3 percent and Education +10.4 percent. The government also reiterated that it will continue to finance the fiscal deficit through domestic and external debt instruments and not draw down on accumulated reserves. Meanwhile, Bahrain has scaled back 22 municipal projects due to be completed within 2017-2018 as a result of budget cuts. This all comes at a time where Bahrain was stripped of its investment grade credit rating by S&P to "BB" with a stable outlook, from "BBB-" with a negative outlook, which in essence sets it to junk category.

KFH GROUP TRADED \$11.4BN IN SUKUK MARKET IN 2016

AL-ROSHOOD: KFH PRIMARY DEALER IN IILM, GLOBAL MARKET MAKER

KUWAIT: "Kuwait Finance House Group (KFH-Group) volume traded in the Sukuk market reached \$11.4 billion for the year 2016. Such volume is yet another outstanding achievement to be added to KFH record as a primary dealer and a global Sukuk market maker" said Abdulwahab Essa Al-Roshood, Group Chief Treasury Officer at KFH.

He added, in a press release, that the bank managed in 2016 to achieve remarkable development in the Sukuk market at the regional and global levels as it motivated and encouraged a number of conventional and Islamic financial institutions to enter the market. KFH occupied a great share of the secondary market short-term Sukuk trading issued by International Islamic Liquidity Management (IILM) since KFH was nominated "Primary Dealer".

He emphasized that this volume of trading has contributed significantly to the increase of liquidity and to the support of Islamic financial markets. Sukuk boost Islamic finance, strengthen its pillars and highlight KFH role as a pioneer in this market.

He reiterated the focus on the Group efforts, indicating that managing KFH Group efforts contributed in reinforcing leadership in the Sukuk Market, especially that the Group banks



Abdulwahab Essa Al-Roshood

are spread over key regions including Turkey, Malaysia and Bahrain.

Al-Roshood stated that Sukuk are the most significant and powerful low risk investment financing tool which contributes effectively to the process of encountering liquidity crises. Sukuk are characterized as instruments of high liquidity, active secondary market, flexibility and

good returns. Sukuk represent a significant investment outlet for banks and an effective tool to manage liquidity in accordance with CBK regulations. In addition, Sukuk contribute in increasing shareholders profit.

He highlighted that Sukuk contribute significantly in financing income generating and productive projects, thus activate economic growth, indicating several countries worldwide voice interest and mull deliberately issuing sovereign Sukuk in an attempt to plug their budget deficit.

Meanwhile, International Islamic Liquidity Management, IILM expressed appreciation for KFH's excellent and strong performance, indicating that KFH has contributed strongly to the distribution of the IILM Sukuk.

KFH was established in Kuwait in 1977 and is enlisted in the Kuwait Stock Exchange. KFH Group is a global pioneer in the field of Islamic banking services, where it offers a wide array of Islamic products and services, not to mention a high standard of innovation and client service.

KFH manages its operations in the GCC, Asia, and Europe through over 446 branches, including KFH-Turkey, in order to offer services for the bank's clients in Turkey, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Germany, Jordan, and Dubai.

AL-TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al-Najma Account daily draw on January 15, 2017.

The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The winners of the Al-Najma daily draw are: Sabria Rajb Hassan Ali — KD 7000, Abdulrahman Shaker Ali Mohammed — KD 7000, Mohammad Mazafar Haji Mohammad Din — KD 7000, Ahmad Sanded — KD 7000, AbdelHameed Ahmed Shawa — KD 7000.

Al-Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever. With the revamped Al-Najma

account, all your dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000.

The new prizes scheme for Al-Najma account

Daily draw to win KD 7000
Quarterly draws to win great prizes that would start from KD 100,000 to KD 250,000
1ST QUARTER — KD 100 000,
2ND QUARTER — KD 150 000, 3RD QUARTER — KD 200 000, 4TH QUARTER — KD 250 000.

With Al-Najma you have more chances to win greater prizes

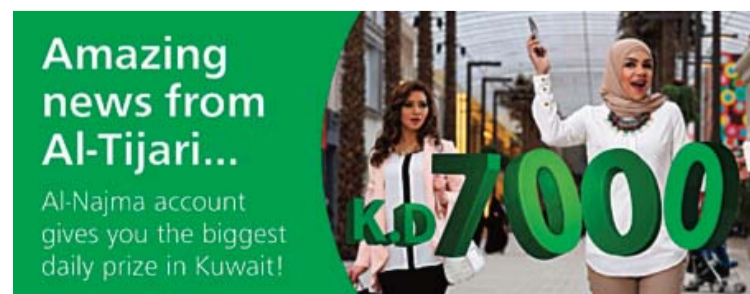
* Each KD 25 kept in your account gives you one chance to win

* Each KD 25 kept in your account for one week will give you a chance to enter the daily draw.

* Each KD 25 kept in your account for 3 months will give you a chance to enter the quarterly draw.

Additional features
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* Obtain all CBK banking services
You deserve to win! Open an account now with just KD 500 and you will enter all draws.



THE BALD AND THE BOLD: EAGLES' RESURGENCE COMES AT A PRICE

PORTLAND, Maine: The eagle has landed - on chickens and rare birds, with talons at the ready. The resurgence of the bald eagle is one of America's greatest conservation success stories. They have come back so strong that in some areas, they are interfering with efforts to preserve more jeopardized species, such as loons and cormorants, wildlife biologists say. And their proliferation is leading to encounters at livestock farms that sometimes end badly - and illegally - for the eagles. Federal protections mean farmers can do little to keep them away, said Ken Klippen, a poultry scientist and former farmer who heads the National Association of Egg Farmers.

"It's a fully protected bird. If you have foxes, coyotes, raccoons, a farmer can do something about that," he said. "But if it's a bald eagle? His hands are tied." The Pennsylvania Game Commission investigated a case in which an eagle was shot dead in the East Penn Township area in 2015. In Steuben County, New York, a sheep farmer and two other people were accused of poisoning sheep carcasses to kill eagles that threatened lambs. And authorities investigated suspicious deaths of 18 bald eagles in Maryland and Delaware last year. Bald eagles were chosen as an American symbol in 1782 and underwent a steep decline in the early and middle 20th century, pushed to the brink of extinction by pesticides, habitat loss and indiscriminate hunting.

A 1930 issue of Popular Science stated that the birds had died off so much that it was possible they would soon "be seen only on coins and the coat of arms of the United States unless drastic action" saved them. Such action came in the form of federal protections, including the 1940 Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, which prevents almost everyone from so much as disturbing the birds and still stands today. The eagles recovered so much that they were removed from the endangered species list in 2007. Today, Audubon Society bird counts show their numbers are climbing, and scientists with the society say they will probably continue to do so. Counters found about 30,000 of them in 2015, more than double the 1995 count. They live in every state but Hawaii.

Breeding colonies

In Maine, where the breeding population of great cormorants is small and efforts to save them are underway, the bald eagles are a problem, said Chris DeSorbo, director of the raptor program at the Biodiversity Research Institute in Portland. Cormorants are seabirds that are widely distributed around the globe, but North America has only a few breeding colonies from Maine to Greenland, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Common loons, decimated by hunting, also sometimes fall victim to eagles and are the subject of repopulation efforts in New England and elsewhere.

"Eagles are very opportunistic predators. They are going to try to take advantage of an easy meal wherever they can," DeSorbo said. "In this case, I think seabird colonies can represent a low risk food resource for them." In other areas, the eagles are assuming a role they played centuries ago - agricultural pest. And it's not just chickens they're getting. Lee Straw, a Maine farmer who raises sheep on an island, said his weaker lambs sometimes fall prey to eagles.

"There's nothing you can do," Straw said. "It's survival of the fittest anyway." Such predation is to be expected because bald eagles are apex predators, said Mark McCollough, an endangered species biologist with the federal Fish and Wildlife Service. The service doesn't consider it a problem, but rather indicative of the species' success at rebuilding. "Yes, eagles are having an effect on other species of wildlife," he said. "But that's natural. Predation like that probably occurred here hundreds of years ago."

The birds are continuing to come back because of protection of wetlands, the increase in water quality and reforestation of farmland, said Geoff LeBaron, a Massachusetts ornithologist and the director of the Audubon Society's annual Christmas bird count event. They haven't yet reached the point where overpopulation is a legitimate concern, he said. "At some point it will reach carrying capacity," he said. "But I think there's plenty of room for more eagles." —AP



AT SEA: This handout photo shows an image taken from a helicopter of crew members of the Yushin Maru, part of the Japanese whaling fleet, scrambling to cover their harpoon at sea in Antarctic waters. —AFP photos

SEA SHEPHERD FINDS JAPANESE SHIP 'WITH SLAUGHTERED WHALE'

SYDNEY: A Japanese ship has been caught with a slaughtered whale in the Antarctic in defiance of an international court decision against Tokyo's hunts, activist group Sea Shepherd said yesterday. The conservationist organization—whose two vessels departed Australia last month for the Southern Ocean to disrupt the hunt—said it spotted the Nisshin Maru in the Australian whale sanctuary around the nation's Antarctic territory. The Japanese fleet set sail on November 18 last year in defiance of a worldwide moratorium on commercial whaling and international opposition. Sea Shepherd released photographs of a dead minke whale on the deck of the Nisshin Maru, a factory ship, adding that the vessel's crew covered the carcass with a tarp when its helicopter approached.

The dead whale is the first to be documented since the ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ), said Sea Shepherd. It has spent more than a decade harassing Japanese harpoon ships during the Southern Hemisphere summer. "The fact that the Japanese crew went to cover up their harpoons and the dead minke whale on deck just shows that they know what they're doing is wrong," the captain of Sea Shepherd's MY Steve Irwin, Wyanda Lublink, said in a statement.

The news came a day after Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met his Australian counterpart Malcolm Turnbull in Sydney, with their talks focusing on trade and defence. Japan is a signatory to the International Whaling Commission's moratorium on whaling in force since 1986. But it exploits a loophole allowing whales to be killed for the purposes of "scientific research".

Australia's Environment Minister Josh Frydenberg said in a statement his government was "deeply disappointed" Japan had returned to whaling in the Southern Ocean this summer. "We will continue our efforts in the International Whaling Commission to strongly oppose commercial whaling and so-called 'scientific' whaling, uphold the moratorium on commercial whaling and promote whale conservation," he added.

In 2014 the United Nations' ICJ ordered Tokyo to end the Antarctic hunt, saying it found permits issued by Japan were "not for purposes of scientific research". Japan cancelled its 2014-15 hunt after the ruling, but restarted it the following year under a new program with a two-thirds cut in the target catch number—saying the fresh plan was genuinely scientific. Tokyo claims it is

trying to prove the whale population is large enough to sustain a return to commercial hunting. But the meat from what it calls scientific

research often ends up on dinner tables. No one was available for comment at Japan's Fisheries Agency. —AFP

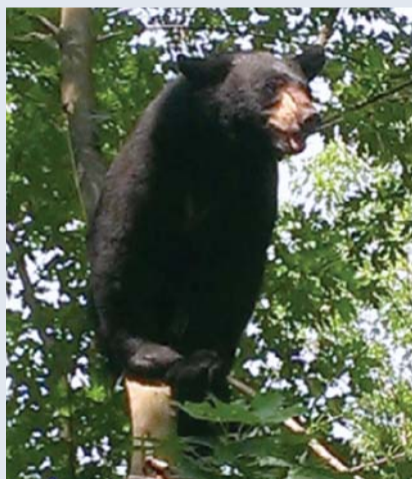


AT SEA: (Above and below) These handout photos show images taken from a helicopter of protected minke whales onboard the Nisshin Maru.



WATCH THE PICNIC BASKET: BEAR SIGHTINGS SURGE IN CONNECTICUT

HARTFORD, Connecticut: Keep an eye on the picnic basket. Bear sightings are surging across Connecticut. The state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection says there were about 6,700 black bear sightings in 2016, a 49 percent increase over the pre-



HARTFORD, Connecticut: In this July 5, 2015 photo provided by the Hartford Police Department, a black bear sits perched in a tree in Hartford, Conn.

vious year. Compare that to only about 450 sightings in 2000. State wildlife biologist Paul Rego said black bear populations in Connecticut and other states have been increasing as land once used for farming has reverted back to forest. About 58 percent of the state is forest now, compared with 29 percent in 1860 when farming was hitting its peak and black bears had disappeared from Connecticut.

"Bears are responding to better habitat now," Rego said. A count by the International Union for Conservation of Nature puts the number at about 850,000 to 950,000 black bears in North America. The population surge in Connecticut since the early 1980s - when bears returned to the state after more than a century - has prompted discussion of possible control measures, but no action is planned, Rego said. The state's had a few reports of bears being aggressive toward people over the years, but none has involved serious injuries.

Jeff Grody was working at his West Hartford home one July morning when he heard noises and went to investigate. What he found was startling: a big black bear that had broken through a screen door and was in his den room. —AP

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STATEMENT FROM THE TAJIK EMBASSY IN KUWAIT

The embassy of Tajikistan in Kuwait released the following statement, which includes a briefing by Sirodjidin Aslov, Tajikistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs in connection with the adoption of the UN General Assembly resolution entitled: 'International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development':

On 21 December 2016 the UN General Assembly adopted with consensus a resolution A/RES/71/222 entitled "International Decade for Action: Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028", sponsored by the 177 UN member states. As you might be aware, the initiative for proclamation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" was launched for the first time by Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan which took place last year in April in the Republic of Korea.

In accordance with the resolution (OP3) the period from 2018 to 2028 is proclaimed as the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" to commence on 22 March 2018 and terminate on 22 March 2028 (22 March - World Water Day).

Speaking at the Water Forum the President stated that "... the modern global challenges and threats, including the financial and economic crisis, population growth, climate change, increase of natural hydro-meteorological phenomena, water scarcity

and, as a result, increasing levels of poverty, spread of infectious diseases, child and maternal mortality still require the mobilization of our efforts and relevant measures".

In this regard, the Head of State proposed that after completion of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015, to work on preparation of a new Decade, which will become a solid platform and promote coordination and promotion of all efforts to address the issues and problems related with water resources. In addition, the new Decade is aimed to continue implementation of the indicated steps of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life, 2005-2015", enriching it with new measures and efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals.

It is widely known that the initiative to proclaim the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015 was also launched by the President of Tajikistan in 2003. That year, by the initiative of Tajikistan, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution, according to which the period of 2005-2015 was proclaimed as the International Decade for Action "Water for Life". Subsequently, as part of this decade Tajikistan initiated to proclaim 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation.

Within the framework of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life" and in accordance with the resolutions of the UN General Assembly three inter-

active dialogues of the UN General Assembly were convened in 2010, 2013 and 2015. In addition, the Government of Tajikistan in cooperation with the United Nations prepared and convened in Dushanbe the following important events:

The Mid-term Comprehensive Review of the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", June 2010; High-level International Conference on Water Cooperation, August 2013; and High-level International Conference on the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", June 2015.

This year in July, the UN Secretary-General issued a report on the implementation of the International Decade for Action "Water for Life", 2005-2015 (A/71/260). According to this report "The Decade was responsible for many accomplishments. No other 10-year period in the history of the United Nations has witnessed as many water-related activities and achievements". Furthermore, the Decade, as the report says, "has shown where the shortfalls lie and what slows down progress on water-related goals and targets. There are still a myriad of constraints on human, institutional and financial resources".

In accordance with the UN General Assembly resolution the objectives of the International Decade for Action "Water for Sustainable Development" will be mainly focused on: sustainable development and integrated management of water resources for the

achievement of social, economic and environmental goals; implementation and promotion of related programs and projects; furtherance of cooperation and partnership at all levels in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals and targets, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, the resolution highlights the importance of promoting efficient water usage at all levels, taking into account the water, food, energy, environment nexus.

In addition, the resolution identifies the following objectives to be pursued: improving knowledge generation and dissemination, facilitating access to knowledge and exchange of good practices, generating new information relevant to the water-related Sustainable Development Goals; pursuing advocacy, networking and promoting partnership and action by different actors to implement the water-related goals and targets; strengthening communication actions at various levels for the implementation of the water-related goals.

This resolution invites the Secretary-General, with the support of UN-Water, to take appropriate steps to plan and organize the activities of the Decade at the global, regional and country levels, taking into account the outcomes of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, and the work of the high-level political forum on sustainable development.



(From Left) Ayman Al-Ali, Chairman of the Higher Organizing Committee of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamad Journalism Excellence Award; Glen Mulcahy, the guest speaker; and Dr Amir Zeid, Director of RISE Center.



Glen Mulcahy



Dr Amir Zeid

AUK'S RISE CENTER HOLDS LECTURE ENTITLED 'MOBILE, VR AND AI - THE FUTURE OF DISRUPTION IN MEDIA'

The Center for Research in Informatics, Sciences and Engineering at the American University of Kuwait presented a lecture entitled, "Mobile, VR and AI - the Future of Disruption in Media" presented by the renowned Glen Mulcahy, Head of Innovation at RTE, Irish national broadcaster, and founder of the "MOJOCON" conference for mobile journalism. The lecture gave a fresh perspective on how technology is incorporated in media, journalism and news reporting. The lecture has been facilitated by the Organizing Committee of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Hamad Journalistic Award.

RISE Director Dr Amir Zeid gave his welcom-

ing remarks noting that nowadays, technology is finding its way into everything, with media and news reporting being no different. Taking over, Mulcahy began to clarify that broadcasters in most places are not catching up fast enough with new trends; they not only tend to ignore them, but they are in denial, taking no effective action to address them. Mulcahy aims to empower journalists to be complete storytellers on their own, as opposed to relying on a full crew. Technology has advanced to the level that regular consumer products are competent enough to produce broadcast-quality reports. This not only saves money, but even the paperwork required for authorizations and permits

are drastically reduced from a broadcaster's perspective.

Moving on to newer and more futuristic technologies, the speaker then discussed 360 recording cameras and the impact of VR (Virtual Reality). Viewers are no longer bound by the fixed angle that the producers want them to see, but through 360 technologies, the experience is extensively more immersive- especially if seen through a VR headset. Drones are also being used to provide coverage for news reporting, which not only catches hard-to-reach angles but is four times cheaper than sending a professional camera man on a helicopter.

While technology has contributed to the advancement of many professions, Glen warned that AI (Artificial Intelligence) is reaching worrying levels. Big conglomerates are using the data collected from us to provide media tailored around our interests and online activities which could be thought of as a borderline impeachment of privacy. It also predicted that by 2029, AI will pass the Turing test; this essentially means that we will not be capable of differentiating between a human and an AI computer.

Bringing the lecture to an end, the speaker wanted to remind the audience that broadcasting networks need to up their game and

start incorporating methods and technologies of this new era for news reporting, agreeing with Einstein that, "We cannot solve a problem by using the same thinking that created the problem in the first place."

The AUK Center for Research in Informatics, Sciences, and Engineering (RISE) serves as AUK's primary source for research and development activities, a bridge to industry, and an important venue for community outreach. RISE adapts an integrative model by forging connections between academic disciplines, local and international innovators, academia and industry, as well as technology and society.



Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa welcomes you to savor authentic Turkish cuisine from griddled meats to aromatic desserts specially prepared by the hotel's Turkish chefs every Monday from 7:00 pm to 11:30 pm. For reservations and more information, please call 22269666.



NSH WITH SPARKLING LIGHT: DAY OF EMOTIONS

The benevolent presence of Padmashri Dr Ravi Pillai added more joy to the celebrations in NSH that filled the day with uncontrollable emotions. Dr Pillai's speech, felt a rare memorable treasure, won a huge thunderous applause from the several hundreds of employees and the large audience. The NSH Vice President Sabu, in his inspiring extempore, appreciated these long serving employees - P V Santhosh Kumar, Henry Rajan, Padma Kumar and T H Abdul Rahiman - highlighted their achievements, quoting them as the finest example of team work in this single largest employer in the Middle East.

The oil and gas business conglomerate that accommodates more than 90,000 employees around the globe, most of them being Indians, presently has projects worth USD 4 bn. NSH is renowned for its technical expertise, innovative edge, commitment to safety and quality and excellence across all aspects of its multi-faceted operations including Building and Infrastructure works, Refineries, Petrochemicals, Fertilizers, LNG Terminals, Steel, Mining, Power, Pipeline projects. To its credit, NSH has the best "best". Recipient of the Safe Contractor in the World, in the Ras Gas job in Qatar by the world renowned Oil and Gas giant Exxon Mobile.

The recipients of the long service awards recalled their memories and expressed their gratitude for NSH playing the Good Samaritan



role for its employees. It has to be noted that recently NSH was honored with the Best Employee Welfare Award, received from the CEO of KNPC.

General Manager Harikumar, Project

Managers Abdul Rahiman, Dileep Kumar Raroth gave their inputs. Santhosh Babu, V G Nair, Manoj Kumar, Ratha Krishna Pillai, Prakash, Harish, KR Mohan were among those present.

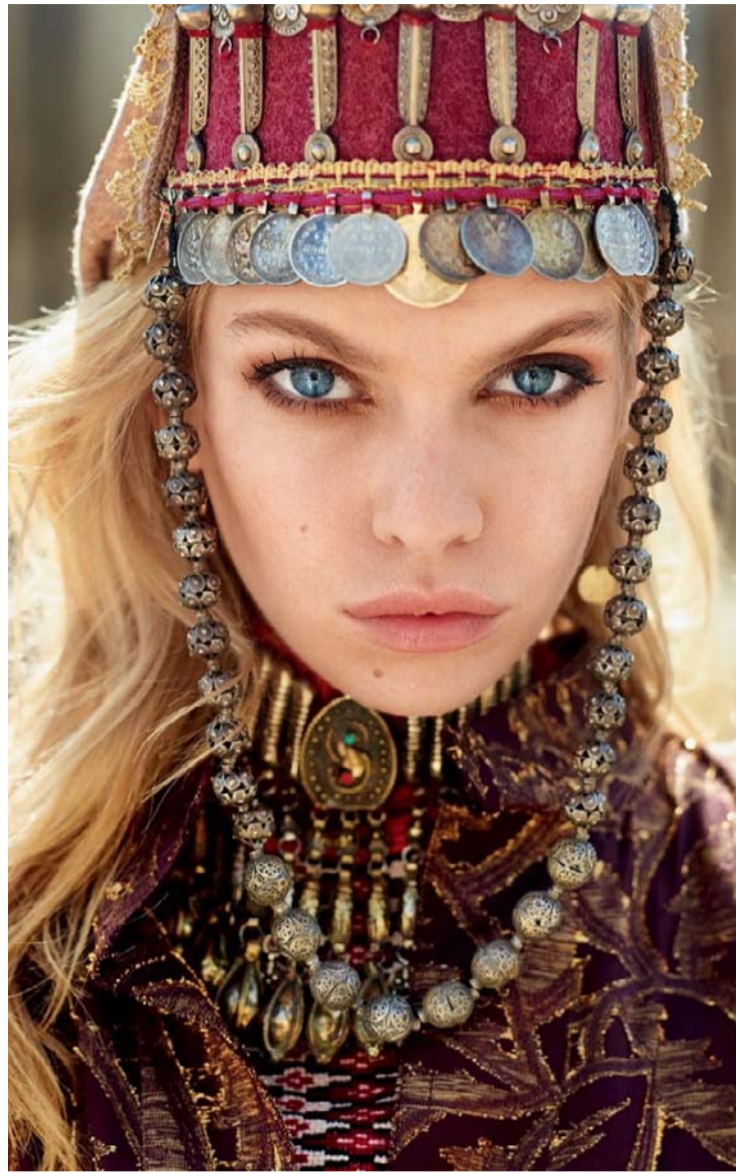


Social worker Pani Anthony has been conferred on the prestigious title Ambassador of Harmony to Russia by Michael Gorbatov, Vice Consul of Russia at a glittering ceremony held under the slogan Youth Icon of the Year 2017, attended by academicians, industrialists, youth and the public. He has been in the forefront of creating awareness among the underprivileged communities and among youth in vital areas such as educational awareness, women's empowerment and environmental issues.



Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah hosted a Palestinian Music Concert at the Amricani Cultural Centre this past Wednesday. The event featured vocalist Maher Al-Ateely and professional Dabkeh performers. As the concert gained further excitement, audience members joined the dance.





Stella Maxwell wants her own emoji

The Victoria's Secret Angel admits she'd love to be depicted in tiny graphic form, complete with her own iconic little wings. Asked which emoji she wished existed, she said: "One of myself, with little wings maybe." And if the 26-year-old beauty was ever able to design her own set of the lingerie company's iconic wings, she knows exactly what she'd like. She said: "[They would be] black, lacy and tight - super-sexy. They wouldn't be that big though. It's not about size but how pretty they look." Stella had a great time walking in the annual Victoria's Secret fashion show in Paris last year, but was concerned about a wardrobe malfunction when she walked for the second time. She explained: "The bejeweled, sheer body suit was my favorite but I felt like it started to ride down my body. I had this feeling to try to pull it up but then I was like, 'Don't start doing that on the runway! But it was epic and I don't think you could see it falling down, so it was all good.'" While Stella admits to working out every day for two weeks before the shows, one thing she would never do as part of her preparations as to have a facial in case her skin reacted badly. She told LOOK magazine: "I didn't have the oxygen facial but Bella Hadid did and said it was amazing. I try not to play around with my skin too much before an event in case it breaks out. Everyone's skin is different."

Emma Stone's love balancing act

Emma Stone thinks it is possible to have a career and find love. The 'La La Land' star - who is still very close with her ex Andrew Garfield despite their split - says balancing a career in the film industry and having a family and love life is all "just about prioritizing". She said: "I don't think it's mutually exclusive, career or love. Meryl Streep seems very in love with her husband. That's a very great family and she's the best there is. So people can find a way to do both, it's just about prioritizing."



However, the 28-year-old actress doesn't believe in a "happily ever after" but insists that doesn't mean a person can't be "happy in a different way". She added: "There is no happily ever after, there isn't always the kiss at the end and it's not always perfect. That's heartbreaking, but the most heartbreaking things in life are the truest. I do love a bittersweet story and I don't find it sad, necessarily. I find it bittersweet, it's realistic in a way that it doesn't all come true, for anyone, ever. "It's not exactly how you pictured it like, 'Oh my God. My life's so perfect.' That's why it makes me so crazy to look at social media, when you see people like, 'It's just the best life ever. I couldn't be happier.' You're like, 'Shut up, that is not true.' Not everything comes together in the best way ever every day. Happily ever after... that's not the reality of life, but you can be happy in a different way than maybe you originally hoped or expected. I love that. Emma has received rave reviews for her role in the feel good musical movie but admits she can be her own worst critic sometimes. She told the Sun on Sunday newspaper: "Stop talking about the [Oscar] buzz! Depending on what emotional state I'm in sometimes I'm like, 'All right kid, you did the best job you could', then at other times I'm like, 'You are literally the worst actor that ever lived.' "How is anyone ever going to think anything other than that? I used to be really like a mean mum to myself. I used to be really hard on myself in a cruel way - and now the cruelty has gone."

SELENA GOMEZ NOT WORRIED ABOUT BELLA HADID

Selena Gomez isn't worried about upsetting Bella Hadid with her relationship with The Weeknd. The 'Heart Wants What It Wants' hit-maker was spotted kissing the 'Can't Feel My Face' singer earlier this week, prompting his ex-girlfriend Bella to unfollow her on Instagram. One source said: "Selena was always the girl who stayed away from a lot of the Taylor Swift crew, except for Taylor. She preferred to be one-on-one with Taylor and didn't like being a part of the whole squad thing." Whilst another added to Us Weekly magazine: "Selena is not good friends with either Gigi or Bella. She knows them through other people, but they are just acquaintances. "She is friendly with them, but not friends with them ... Selena and Gigi were never fond of each other, so Selena definitely doesn't have any stipulations about hooking up with or dating Bella's ex." Meanwhile, despite the



pair splitting two months ago, 20-year-old model Bella still has feelings for her ex. An insider shared previously: "She is actually not over The Weeknd. She still loves him. They are on fine terms, but she is bitter about the romance with Selena. "She was not happy when all of that gossip went everywhere between The Weeknd and Selena. It really hurt her seeing Selena be all up on her man. She still feels like they have a connection." It comes after it was claimed The Weeknd - real name Abel Tesfaye - has had a crush on Selena for some time. A source said: "Abel though always had a thing for Selena. He thinks she is extremely talented and sexy. "They recently started talking before the holidays but she has been on his radar before. They are on the same level with expectations and think the other is really fun. They are taking things slow and getting to know each other."



George Michael's anti-depressant addiction?

George Michael was reportedly addicted to anti-depressants. Former lover Carlos Arturo Ortiz believes an "overdose" may have been the cause of the 'Careless Whisper' singer's tragic death at his home in Oxfordshire on Christmas Day after he previously confessed to being hooked on prescription medication. He said: "I thought something was going to happen to him. I had an intuitive feeling about it last year. And it seems very coincidental to me that he was found dead on Christmas Day because he told me he hated Christmas as there were never any children around. For me it is, sadly, a possibility he may have overdosed. "George's death knocked me sideways, although it didn't surprise me. I found him a lovely down-to-earth man, but also a very melancholic person who I feared might one day take his own life. He told me he was addicted to anti-depressant medicine and trying to wean himself off it and confessed he was unhappy. "We talked about his superstar status and I told him I thought that with his fame and talent and money he had all he needed to be happy in life. But when he started talking about the anti-depressants he took I asked him outright if he was happy in life and he replied, 'No, I'm not.'"

AMBER HEARD IS 'SMITTEN' WITH ELON MUSK

The 'Magic Mike XXL' star is reportedly thrilled she can now go public with the 45-year-old businessman after her divorce with Johnny Depp was finalized. A source told the Sunday

together and she's relieved she can move on with her life. It's an exciting new chapter for both of them." Amber and Elon are said to have been growing close for some time now after they were seen "spending a lot of time" together last summer. Of their meet up in Miami, Florida, one eyewitness said: "They were seen arriving to, and leaving, the same room many times, but always separately." Whilst another added: "Amber was there with her sister. She has been friends with Elon for four years. She had rented a standard suite at the hotel, and he had a bungalow, a poolside duplex room. "He offered Amber and her sister use of his room so they could use the pool and have extra privacy, as he was working on a rocket launch." And another shared: "They all happened to be staying at the Delano. The group hung out at the hotel, rather than in public, understandably, due to all the recent press scrutiny." Amber and Johnny's divorce was finalized on Friday, with her



Mirror newspaper: "Amber is over the moon about her divorce but she is even happier about being able to go public with Elon. "She was telling friends over Christmas how smitten she is with Elon. They are already planning a lot of adventures

lawyer sharing: "This is a great day, all Amber wanted was to be divorced and now she is." Elon recently divorced actress Talulah Riley for a second time after the couple rekindled their romance in 2013 following a year's split.

Jeff Goldblum, is expecting second child with wife Emilie Livingston

Jeff Goldblum and Emilie Livingston are expecting their second child together. The 64-year-old actor and his 34-year-old wife - who welcomed son Charlie Ocean Goldblum into the world in July 2015 - are set to expand their family in April. Emilie shared a throwback picture of herself on Instagram and wrote: "Round our newest addition to the Goldblum family, arriving early April. #growingfamily and #love (sic)." Emilie has since made her Instagram page private. The couple tied the knot in November 2014 in front of their family and friends at the Chateau Marmont in Los Angeles. A source close to the actor said of the big day: "It was a night filled with love, music, and lots of laughs." And Jeff has previously admitted he was like a "teenager" with a crush when he first laid eyes on his Olympic gymnast wife. He said: "I was immediately thrilled by her and walked over. The next couple of days I pursued her. I talked to my friends about her. "I was like a teenager. She makes me and



Charlie laugh. I like the way I make her laugh too. It's important to me, the way we make each other laugh." The actor admitted he never considered having children until he met Emilie. He said: "I never seriously considered it until now. I'm at a different place now. I was enthusiastic to marry Emilie and try to have a baby. "Charlie was born on Independence Day, July 4, while we were shooting 'Independence Day: Resurgence' in Albuquerque! My dad had a younger brother, my uncle Chuckie, whom he adored. 'Charlie' is a form of 'Chuckie'. My uncle was my exact height, looked like me. Chuckie died in his 20s as a pilot in World War II." Meanwhile, Jeff loves spending as much time as possible with his wife and their son. He previously said: "Charlie gets bathed every night at 6:20, the three of us together in the bathtub. It's just delightful. "He goes to bed at the same time every night and takes his naps at the same time. He's been sleeping through the night since he was four months old."

Chelsea Handler is too opinionated



Chelsea Handler claims men don't want to date her because she's opinionated. The 41-year-old talk show host - who has previously dated rapper 50 Cent and TV boss Ted Harbert - is "loud and proud" but knows some people find her intimidating. Explaining her love of Glennon Doyle Melton's book 'Love Warrior', she said: "This is a book I always recommend to all the women in my life. "It's a memoir about growing up as an opinionated girl and the effect that has on the way people treat you, particularly how some men will treat you. "I very much identify with that - I've dealt with it my whole life. "It's the reason why I'm single. Many men are put off a woman who has an opinion. "Apparently a lot of people find me intimidating but I'm loud and proud... in my opinion." Meanwhile, Chelsea has called for internet trolls to have their accounts suspended, or even be prosecuted for their comments. She told ELLE magazine: "There's a strong argument for having heated discussions and disagreeing with somebody in an intelligent, respectable way, but the anonymity afforded to us by being online makes people nasty and behave with real vitriol... "We have to begin holding people accountable for the language they use online. If you say horrible things, your account should be blocked. If you issue a death threat, it's a criminal act."



Stevi Ritchie and Chloe-Jasmine Whichello have reconciled

The former 'X Factor' stars - who called off their engagement in September - are back together and more loved up than ever. A source told The Sun Online: "Despite calling off their engagement, Chloe-Jasmine and Stevi are giving things another go." It was recently rumored that Stevi was set to return to 'Celebrity Big Brother' after he was spotted near the hotel the contestants stayed in before entering the house, but he was actually just accompanying Chloe, who was there to interview contestants. The insider added: "The reason why everyone thought Stevi was going in to the 'CBB' house was because he was spotted outside the hotel that all the celebs stay in. "Actually, he was there to support Chloe, who was asked to do some fun interviews with the contestants before they entered the house. "Despite splitting up, Stevi still loves and cares deeply for Chloe and wanted to be there to support her. "Similarly, Chloe knows that Stevi will

always protect her and stand by her, and she wants things to work between them." Stevi and Chloe met as contestants on 'The X Factor' in 2014 and were due to tie the knot in July. However, the pair didn't make it down the aisle as they split up temporarily in April following a series of blazing rows. They got back together a few months later and held an unofficial ceremony on board a boat in July to prove their love for one another. But they ended their relationship for a second time in September, after Chloe, 25, failed to turn up to Stevi's 36th birthday. A source said at the time: "Stevi and Chloe have split up again. He was absolutely devastated when she stood him up on his birthday even though they had made plans to go out and celebrate. That was almost two weeks ago and he hasn't heard a word from her in that time, he's so upset. "Stevi is also very confused because she hadn't explained why she was a no-show so now he has just assumed that they are over."

Stephanie Davis is 'so in love' with her newborn son

The 23-year-old actress welcomed a baby boy into the world on Friday and took to Instagram one day later to share a picture of the tot's hand grasping



her finger. She captioned the sweet snap: "The day my world became complete. "I've been overwhelmed and so in love with you. Words could never describe. Thank you for all your support! (sic)." While

Stephanie insists her ex-boyfriend Jeremy McConnell, 26, is the newborn's father, he has expressed his doubts but said he will support the baby if it turns out to be his. He told The Sun Online: "I am delighted that Steph has safely had the baby, of course if he is my son I will absolutely step up and do what I can to support him." And Jeremy insisted he has been in touch with his former girlfriend, but she has snubbed his attempts to speak about the situation. He added: "Any timescale for that is in Steph's hands now. "I did reach out to her some weeks ago but didn't hear back." A spokesperson for the actress confirmed on Friday that she had given birth in Liverpool following a 48-hour labor. They said: "We can confirm our client Stephanie Davis today gave birth to a baby boy in Liverpool. Mother and baby are doing fine." Stephanie has not yet revealed her baby's name, even though she has known what she wants to call her son since August. She said last year: "I've picked my boy's name! It's not Albi but that will definitely be a middle name. "I'm going to keep it a secret for now but I will say it's something "We got it when a guy started talking to me while I was with my friends other and knew, so thanks to him! they want a proper lad's name."

Victoria Beckham has shut down plans for a Spice Girls reunion tour after stopping the girls from performing their old songs. The 42-year-old fashion designer has reportedly called on her lawyers to block her bandmates - Mel B, Emma Bunton and Geri Horner - from performing the group's classic tracks. A source said: "The girls are devastated. It is an extremely sad way for things to end ... Victoria was a huge part of their lives and now she is using lawyers to block their comeback. "Victoria is proud of her Spice Girls history but this suggests she wants to cut all links with the group which transformed her life. She is resorting to aggressive legal letters and it is an extremely sad way for things to end after all they have been through together." And Victoria - who has sons Brooklyn, 17, Romeo, 14, and Cruz, 11, and daughter Harper, five, with her husband David Beckham - was said to be "concerned" that the group's legacy could be "damaged" by any new music. A source added to The Sun newspaper: "It became a concern that if the remaining members started mixing classic hits with new songs that were not up to much it would damage their legacy. "Victoria takes herself very seriously now and didn't want to have an association with this project which she felt she would if they sang the classic songs and marketed themselves as the Spice Girls. "She got lawyers

Victoria Beckham blocks Spice Girls reunion

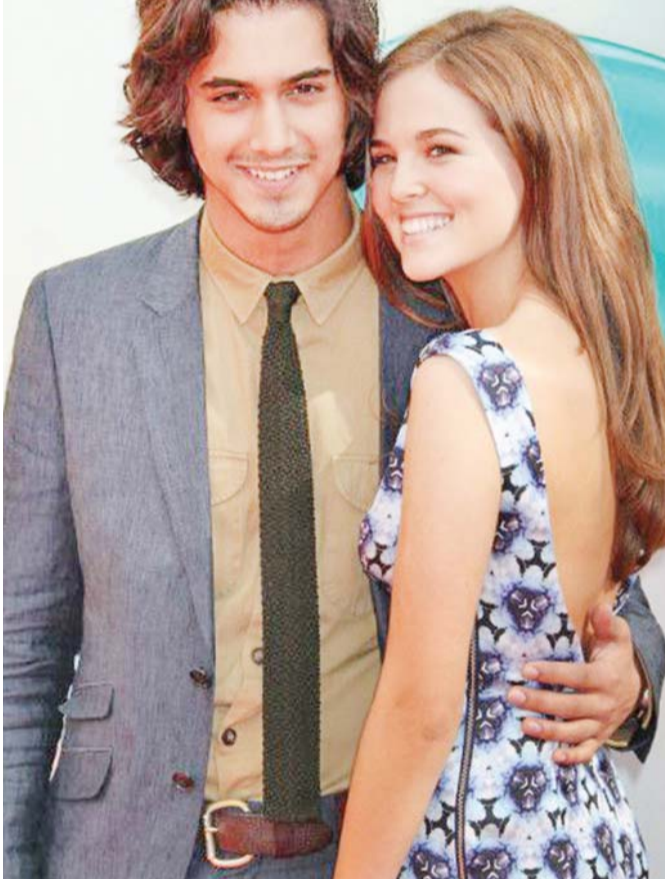


involved as she has a writing credit on the hits and co-owns the companies which control the band's legacy and finances." It comes after it was claimed the group - which also includes Mel C - had changed their plans because Geri,

who is pregnant with her second child, wants to focus on her family. An insider shared: "Geri's priorities have changed. Her baby is due later this year and rather than force a reunion, she's needs to concentrate on more

personal matters. "Getting all the girls in the studio at the same time proved a tough task. What they needed was one main boss-style figure to pull the strings otherwise they would be constantly in limbo."

Zoey Deutch and Avan Jogia have split up



The 'Year of Spectacular Men' co-stars - who started dating over five years ago - ended their relationship late last year, according to E! News. A source told the publication that the split was "amicable" and added: "They broke up four months ago and remain friends." Zoey, 22, and 24-year-old Avan first publicly confirmed their relationship by attending the 2012 Kids' Choice Awards together. Both are being kept busy with their careers right now, as Zoey has two new movies, 'Before I Fall' and 'Rebel in the Rye' due to premiere at the Sundance Film Festival this month. And Avan recently took to the catwalk at the Dolce & Gabbana fashion show in Milan. The pair will next be seen on the big screen together in the indie film 'The Synchronicity' previously about their private relationship. Avan said: "Maybe I've been lucky but I think that it's mostly a choice. I think if you continuously choose to court the public's attention to your relationship, you run the risk of asking them to pry more out of it, but it would also be a bit strange to totally ignore your significant other's existence in public as well. "So just trying to find the line that's most comfortable is important. If you don't want to be a spectacle don't make it a spectacle, and hopefully mostly you'll be left alone."

Paris Jackson grateful for show axe

Paris Jackson is grateful that Sky has axed an "insulting" TV show about her father Michael Jackson. The British broadcaster has decided against airing an episode of the series 'Urban Myths' featuring Michael, Elizabeth Taylor and Marlon Brando after concerns were raised by Paris over the decision to cast Fiennes, a white British man, as the chart-topping pop star who died in 2009 aged 50. She tweeted: "I'm surprised the family's feelings were actually taken into consideration for once, we all really do appreciate it more than y'all know." Michael's nephews TJ and Taj Jackson also took to social media after the decision, with TJ writing: "Thank you to everyone who made their voices heard. As I said it wasn't comedy, it was mockery with no taste. A great victory for his legacy!" and Taj adding: "Thank



you to the fans, you continue to fight for my Uncle Michael's legacy and thank you to the media, for covering the extreme backlash (sic)." The episode featured Michael taking a road trip from New York to Los Angeles with Elizabeth Taylor and Marlon Brando following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. But Paris, 18, was horrified

by the casting and previously took to Twitter to write: "I'm so incredibly offended by it, as I'm sure plenty of people are as well." What's more, Paris accused the makers of the show of intentionally insulting her father and Elizabeth. She wrote: "It angers me to see how obviously intentional it was for them to be this insulting, not just towards my father, but my god-mother liz as well (sic)." Following Paris' public complaints, Sky released a statement which said: "We have taken the decision not to broadcast 'Elizabeth, Michael and Marlon', a half hour episode from the Sky Arts 'Urban Myths' series, in light of the concerns expressed by Michael Jackson's immediate family. "We set out to take a light-hearted look at reportedly true events and never intended to cause any offence. Joseph Fiennes fully supports our decision."

Robin Thicke calls police over custody row

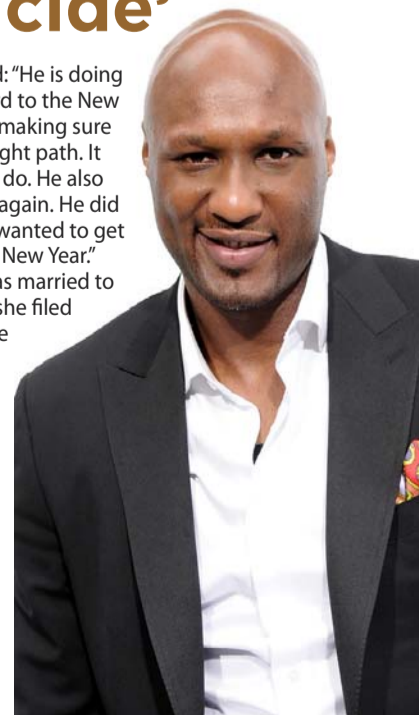


Robin Thicke called police after Paula Patton allegedly violated their custody order. The 'Blurred Lines' hit-maker was accompanied by LA County Sheriff's deputies to his ex-wife's Malibu home on Friday morning, along with a copy of their agreement, after she ignored his calls to take six-year-old Julian for the night, but he still left without the youngster. The showdown came a day after a court refused to limit his custody to daytime monitored visits after the 'Baggage Claim' star sought an emergency order because Julian had complained he had been spanked with excessive force by his father. And when the officers went inside Paula's house to speak with Julian, TMZ reports the youngster told them he was scared of his father and didn't want to go with him. The deputies told Robin they would not take the child against his will. However, a source told the website the couple are close to "reaching some middle ground" on dealing with their custody issues. It was previously claimed Julian had complained to school officials that Robin had spanked him more than once, prompting the staff to report the incident to the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), who opened an investigation. The 41-year-old actress - who split from Robin in 2015 after 10 years of marriage - began denying the singer access to their son before filing for the emergency order. And according to legal documents, she told her 39-year-old former spouse: "Julian is scared of you." The 'Warcraft' actress explained in her declaration that, the day before Julian confided in school staff, he had told her that Robin spanked him "really hard", and when he demonstrated and hit her on the back, it was very painful - but the youngster said he'd been struck even harder. And a school official also submitted a declaration which stated Julian told her Robin frequently "punches" him very hard, while a nanny claimed the 'Back Together' singer had smoked marijuana on several occasions in front of the little boy. Paula also accused her ex-husband of showing up to Julian's kindergarten graduation last June drunk at 8.30am and was "hooting and hollering and making inappropriate jokes" in the Catholic church. However, Robin insisted in his own legal documents that his physical punishments to his son are "consistent with the law" and previously agreed with Paula. He stated: "On a very rare occasion and only as a last resort, I will use light spanking, but it is consistent with the law-open hand on the butt. This is the type of discipline to which Paula and I agreed during our marriage." He also claims the dispute has arisen after he stopped Paula from attending his father Alan Thicke's funeral last month. He said in documents: "Paula did not have a positive relationship with my father and often made negative comments to me about my father. As such, she was not welcome at his funeral."

Lamar Odom: 'I was basically just committing suicide'

Lamar Odom was "basically just committing suicide" when he binged on drugs and alcohol at a brothel in 2015. The 37-year-old former basketball player - who was previously married to reality TV star Khloe Kardashian - collapsed and almost died following an overdose at the Love Ranch in Nevada and Lamar believes it was a cry for help as he had hit rock bottom. In a preview for an upcoming episode of 'The Doctors', he said: "Did I feel ashamed about some of the choices I made? I was basically just committing suicide." Speaking about his state of mind at the time, he said: "Being in that damn brothel and thinking I was going to just rest a little bit. I wasn't in a good place mentally before that incident happened. Me and my wife at the time were going through some things. I was in a dark place. "I guess they say everything happens for a reason. I guess the reason is I'm here. I can tell the story." Lamar recently spent one month in rehab in

San Diego and a source said: "He is doing so great and looking forward to the New Year. "He went to continue making sure he stays sober and on the right path. It was something he chose to do. He also wanted to feel 100 percent again. He did not relapse, but felt like he wanted to get away and start fresh for the New Year." Meanwhile, Lamar - who was married to Khloe for four years before she filed for a divorce in 2013 after he allegedly cheated on her with strippers - recently admitted the only thing missing in his life is Khloe, and he is desperate to win her back. Speaking about what he wants for his future, he said: "Honestly? I want my wife back." The stars will be among the performers at the awards ceremony at The O2 Arena in London on Wednesday February 22nd.





Designers Domenico Dolce (left) and Stefano Gabbana greet the audience at the end of their show during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week in Milan. — AP/AFP photos

Dolce&Gabbana, Versace and Giorgio Armani kickoff Milan Fashion Week



If turmoil brings innovation and renovation, Italian menswear is in for a creative burst. Fashion houses are continuing their reboot of Milan Fashion Week menswear offerings, with notables like Bottega Veneta and Gucci sitting out this round, preferring to combine menswear and womenswear previews next month. That is making room for a plethora of newcomers.

The data indicates that menswear is worth the re-think. Euromonitor market research forecasts that between now and 2020, growth in sales for men's attire and accessories globally will outpace that of women. Last year alone, Italian menswear produced 9 billion euros in revenue. Here are some highlights Saturday of menswear previews for next fall and winter on the first day of Milan Fashion Week:



Courting millennials

Dolce&Gabbana have one-upped themselves, moving the young millennial crowd that has populated their front row in recent seasons onto the runway. Pop star Austin Mahone, dapper in a tux with tapered legs, set the mood, dancing up and down the runway throughout the show, making the moves on the ladies, who included Sylvester Stallone's three daughters.

Dolce&Gabbana's show was titled "The New Princes" and it's clear that they are catering to a young, selfie-savvy generation bred on social media. In an ultimate branding move, the designing pair created a pair of faceQ app-like images of themselves on jackets and sweaters. Alongside the brand's trademark tailored suits, the new collection includes zany plush animal head hoods or backpacks, and Rasta knit hats or crowns over baseball caps, fun-loving Harajuku touches for a generation that prizes its juvenile side. Jeans and jackets were covered with appliques, with royal motifs from crowns to hearts emerging as decorative emojis. The collection was a fast and furious display of graphic prowess with humanized animal motifs alongside the brand's typical religious imagery, a display as breathless as the new generation of star power on the runway.



Models present creations by Dolce Gabbana during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week in Milan.





Cross cultural

The new Versace man is both a traveler who means business and a sportsman who knows how to relax. His suits fit close to the body, paired with dark glasses and two-toned sneakers, topped with double-breasted overcoats, knitted blanket jackets or belted trenches. After hours, he relaxes with hoodies under bomber jackets, worn with the day's trousers or athletic pants. And on the weekend, he hits the outdoors in plaid shirts and shearling coats.

Models crisscrossed the runway beneath arched gates, suggesting a Middle Eastern market. The exotic vibe also was reflected in ethnic patterns that cut diagonally along jackets, or were put tile-like on bombers. Versace's neoclassic Greek patterns were replaced this round with photographic prints of classical sculptures. "This is a collection about the different tribes of Versace men," Donatella Versace wrote in show notes, "and the powerful positivity that can happen when men from different places, different cultures join together."



Models present creations for fashion house Versace during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week.



Classics reinterpreted

Giorgio Armani has reinterpreted classics through the decades with a modern edge for his youthful Emporio Armani line. Armani is hewing to the traditional menswear and womenswear calendars but blurring the line on the runway. Many of the looks were feminized, like flowing knitwear or curved hemlines on short jackets. Trousers tended to be ample and pleated, and Armani employed luxurious fabrics like velvets for men and lots of fur, both as trim and full fur coats.

Double-breasted suits with soft hemlines and loose trousers recalled a 1940s cool, while fur collars on overcoats harkened to a 1970s mod. Armani mixed geode-like patterns with plaids, sticking with gray scale to black for a contemporary urban feel. Thick, furry neck warmers framed the face, while molded brim hats topped the sophisticated silhouette. Hair was slicked back and footwear had thick traction soles. Bags included big pockets on cross-body halters. The color palette was classic: gray, black, tan and olive green. — AP



Models present creations by Italian designer Giorgio Armani during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week in Milan.



Italian designer Giorgio Armani poses with models at the end of his show Emporio Armani during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week.

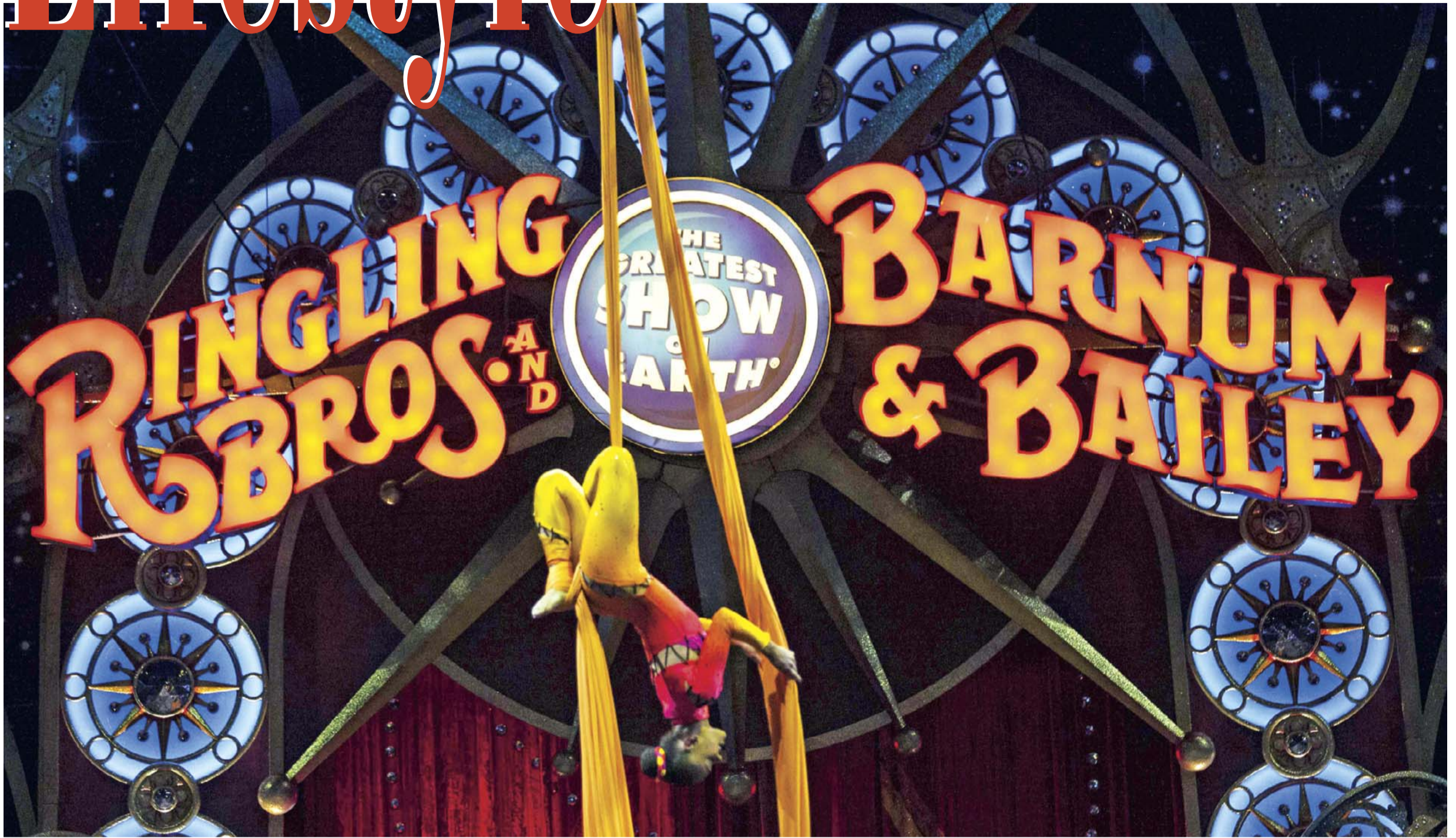


Lifestyle

MONDAY, JANUARY 16, 2017

Dolce&Gabbana, Versace and Giorgio Armani kicks Milan Fashion week

38



This file photo shows a circus performer hanging upside down during a Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus performance in Washington, DC. — AP/AFP photos

The big top comes down: Ringling Bros circus is closing

After 146 years, the curtain is coming down on "The Greatest Show on Earth." The owner of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus told The Associated Press that the show will close forever in May. The iconic American spectacle was felled by a variety of factors, company executives say. Declining attendance combined with high operating costs, along with changing public tastes and prolonged battles with animal rights groups all contributed to its demise. "There isn't any one thing," said Kenneth Feld, chairman and CEO of Feld Entertainment. "This has been a very difficult decision for me and for the entire family."

The company broke the news to circus employees Saturday night after shows in Orlando and Miami. Ringling Bros has two touring circuses this season and will perform 30 shows between now and May. Major stops include Atlanta, Washington, Philadelphia, Boston and Brooklyn. The final shows will be in Providence, Rhode Island, on May 7 and in Uniondale, New York, at the Nassau County Coliseum on May 21. The circus, with its exotic animals, flashy costumes and death-defying acrobats, has been a staple of entertainment in the United States since the mid-1800s. Phineas Taylor Barnum made a traveling spectacle of animals and human oddities popular, while the five Ringling brothers performed juggling acts and skits from their home base in Wisconsin. Eventually, they merged and the modern circus was born. The sprawling troupes traveled around America by train, wowing audiences with the sheer scale of entertainment and exotic animals.

Another era

By midcentury, the circus was routine, wholesome family entertainment. But as the 20th century went on, kids became less and less enthralled. Movies, television, video games and the internet captured young minds. The circus didn't have savvy product merchandising tie-ins or Saturday morning cartoons to shore up its

image. "The competitor in many ways is time," said Feld, adding that transporting the show by rail and other circus quirks - such as providing a traveling school for performers' children - are throwbacks to another era. "It's a different model that we can't see how it works in today's world to justify and maintain an affordable ticket price. So you've got all these things working against it."

The Feld family bought the Ringling circus in 1967. The show was just under 3 hours then. Today, the show is 2 hours and 7 minutes, with the longest segment - a tiger act - clocking in at 12 minutes. "Try getting a 3- or 4-year-old today to sit for 12 minutes," he said. Feld and his daughter Juliette Feld, who is the company's chief operating officer, acknowledged another reality that led to the closing, and it was the one thing that initially drew millions to the show: the animals. Ringling has been targeted by activists who say forcing animals to perform is cruel and unnecessary. People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, a longtime opponent of the circus, wasted no time in claiming victory. "After 36 years of PETA protests, which have awoken the world to the plight of animals in captivity, PETA heralds the end of what has been the saddest show on earth for wild animals, and asks all other animal circuses to follow suit, as this is a sign of changing times," Ingrid Newkirk, president of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, wrote in a statement.

Wayne Pacelle, president and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States, acknowledged the move was "bittersweet" for the Felds but said: "I applaud their decision to move away from an institution grounded on inherently inhumane wild animal acts." In May of 2016, after a long and costly legal battle, the company removed the elephants from the shows and sent the animals to live on a conservation farm in Central Florida. The animals had been the symbol of the circus since Barnum brought an Asian elephant named Jumbo to America in 1882. In 2014, Feld Entertainment won \$25.2 million in



Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey performers are seen during a show Saturday in Orlando, Fla.

settlements from groups including the Humane Society of the United States, ending a 14-year fight over allegations that circus employees mistreated elephants.

'Dramatic drop'

By the time the elephants were removed, public opinion had shifted somewhat. Los Angeles prohibited the use of bull-hooks by elephant trainers and handlers, as did Oakland, California. The city of Asheville, North Carolina nixed wild or exotic animals from performing in the municipally owned, 7,600-seat US Cellular Center. Attendance has been dropping for 10 years, said Juliette Feld, but when the elephants left, there was a "dramatic drop" in ticket sales. Paradoxically, while many said they didn't want big animals to perform in circuses, many others refused to attend a circus without them.

"We know now that one of the major reasons people came to Ringling Bros was getting to see

elephants," she said. "We stand by that decision. We know it was the right decision. This was what audiences wanted to see and it definitely played a major role."

The Felds say their existing animals - lions, tigers, camels, donkeys, alpacas, kangaroos and llamas - will go to suitable homes. Juliette Feld says the company will continue operating the Center for Elephant Conservation.

Some 500 people perform and work on both touring shows. A handful will be placed in positions with the company's other, profitable shows - it owns Monster Jam, Disney on Ice and Marvel Live, among other things - but most will be out of a job. Juliette Feld said the company will help employees with job placement and resumes. In some cases where a circus employee lives on the tour rail car (the circus travels by train), the company will also help with housing relocation. Kenneth Feld became visibly emotional while discussing the decision with a reporter. He said

over the next four months, fans will be able to say goodbye at the remaining shows.

In recent years, Ringling Bros tried to remain relevant, hiring its first African American ringmaster, then its first female ringmaster, and also launching an interactive app. It added elements from its other, popular shows, such as motorbike daredevils and ice skaters. But it seemingly was no match for Pokemon Go and a generation of kids who desire familiar brands and YouTube celebrities. "We tried all these different things to see what would work, and supported it with a lot of funding as well, and we weren't successful in finding the solution," said Kenneth Feld. — AP



In this July 19, 1978 file photo, actor Charlton Heston is shown with Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus clown Prince Paul during the City of Hope's Celebrity Circus opening in Inglewood, Calif.



This file photo shows Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey circus elephants during Barnum's FUNundrum in New York.



Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey performers are seen during a show Saturday in Orlando, Fla.



A Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey clown juggles for fans during a pre-show for fans.