

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017

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Minister: Youth essential for development of tourism

Stark inequality: Eight men as rich as half the world

Saudi carrier flynas signs deal for 80 Airbus planes

Heat is on as stars struggle at Aussie Open


LAWMAKERS SEEK SPECIAL DEBATE ON EXPAT NUMBERS

BILL CALLS TO LOWER VOTING AGE TO 18


 Min 07°
 Max 19°
 High Tide 02:14 & 15:53
 Low Tide 09:27 & 21:38


150 FILS NO: 17113 40 PAGES

conspiracy theories

EASY SCAPEGOATS



By Badrya Darwish

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What's with the intense anti-expat campaign in Kuwait nowadays? Why now? Did we wake up all of a sudden in the morning and discover that we have too many expats on our streets? Yes, I agree we may have a surplus of marginal labor. You can notice them on the streets and see them crowding at the airport. You can drive in some areas and feel that you are in another country.

But this is not a new norm for the Gulf to have expatriate labor working throughout the private sector, and in the government sector to some extent. Now the xenophobia has reached fever pitch and is far over-exaggerated. As if someone is on purpose manipulating this issue to make it Kuwaitis' top nightmare. I go to bed thinking about how many expats are in Kuwait and wake up worrying about what will be left for our children.

Just open any newspaper or any media source and you will see hundreds of comments about expats eating up Kuwait. This ministry is surveying how many expats are there, how many are needed and how many are not needed. We started seeing ministries issuing numbers of expat doctors, nurses and teachers needed or comparing numbers between who's Kuwaiti and who's not among employees.

Since this new parliament took over less than two months back, the only issue they all seem to promote is the anti-expat one. As if we have no other problems or no other issues to discuss and no future to plan or no development to work on. No need to focus on our economy or the future development of the country or the education of our children. Instead they focus on how much we should tax expats and how to get rid of them, to the point that they are almost inciting hatred against every expat in the country.

This is what I find unfair. Many expats are doing a decent job in Kuwait. They are respectable people. We have suffered no harm in dealing with them and we benefit from having them here. But to start counting their salaries and remittances - I find this ridiculous and unfair. Why would someone travel and leave his country and live abroad, if not for a job and financial issues? And if he's sending money home to his family, he's not stealing it. He worked hard for it. I don't think he was given it as a gift.

We know why we have expats here. Kuwait needs expats and we cannot deny this. In many fields. But their exaggerated numbers and existence in Kuwait, we all know who did this. The parliamentarians know it and the government knows who brought these extra expats to Kuwait. It's called human trafficking. So why are we blaming expats in general for this? Why don't we blame those who profited from human trafficking and those who are still doing it and will keep doing it?

This is what we expect from our parliament to discuss. We have a popular proverb in Arabic that says "if you cannot fight the donkey, fight the saddle". In other words, if you cannot challenge the real problem, you pick on a scapegoat. Don't make expats your easy scapegoats. Don't make them the excuse for our failure to build our country, fix our failing hospitals or our useless education system or our collapsing, potholed roads.



KUWAIT: HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (center) presents the Crown Prince Cup to Kuwait Sports Club players after they won the cup for the sixth time yesterday at Jaber Stadium. Kuwait beat Qadsiya Sports Club 5-3 in a penalty shootout after the match ended in a goalless draw after regulation and extra time. National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and other senior officials were also present. — KUNA

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said yesterday he has begun collecting signatures of other MPs to demand holding a special debate in the Assembly to discuss the dangers of the rising numbers of expatriates in the country. Kandari, who criticized expatriates while commenting on the Amiri speech last week, said he expects the debate to be held in February to discuss the implications of the growth in expatriate numbers on the demographic structure.

He said the Assembly wants to know the position of the government regarding this issue and its planned measures to deal with the imbalance in the demographic structure, adding that Kuwaitis should not remain a minority in their own country. According to the latest official statistics, there are around 3.1 million expatriates in Kuwait from a total population of 4.4 million, or 70 percent of the population. Kuwaitis number 1.33 million or 30 percent of the population.

Kandari's move comes a few days after MP Safaa Al-Hashem demanded that the government should take the necessary measures to balance the population within three years by hiking the cost of living for expatriates in the private sector and imposing a variety of taxes on them. Hashem and other MPs failed to say how the government will achieve this difficult task when the Kuwaiti workforce in the private sector makes up just five percent of the 1.6 million workers and employees. They also failed to say how will the government deal with the problem of maids, who have increased to just under 700,000.

Continued on Page 13

HARBI: JABER HOSPITAL FOR KUWAITIS ONLY



KUWAIT: Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi (center) opens three medical centers affiliated to the private Al-Salam International Hospital on Sunday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: Minister of Health Jamal Al-Harbi reaffirmed Sunday that the new world-class Jaber Hospital would start operation in months to serve nationals only. A highly-qualified foreign administration would manage the hospital until training of national cadres is completed to take over later, the minister said in statements to reporters during the inauguration of three medical centers affiliated to the private Al-Salam International Hospital.

"As of next month, the international administrative team will start training 75 national cadres to qualify them to take over management affairs with their foreign peers," he said. He elaborated that the equipment would be delivered to Jaber Hospital starting from June. The hospital will later start operation with outpatient clinics in the first phase, Harbi said. He added that the ministry has prepared a highly-skilled 2,600-member nursing team to work at Jaber Hospital. He however admitted there is a shortage of doctors, technicians and pharmacists.

Harbi stated that after the inauguration

of Jaber Hospital, the ministry would open the new Razi and Amiri Hospitals. "We are also focusing our efforts on Jahra Hospital, which will be the largest hospital in Kuwait," he said. On the medical centers of Al-Salam International Hospital, the minister noted that the centers are for dentistry, kidney diseases and physical therapy. He pointed out that Al-Salam International Hospital offers distinguished healthcare services to Kuwaiti retirees who hold AFIA health insurance cards. The new centers have 12 dentistry clinics and 16 kidney dialysis machines, he said. The minister said he was pleased by the high-quality services provided by Al-Salam Hospital to Kuwaitis.

CEO of Al-Salam International Hospital Dr Ayman Al-Mutawa emphasized the importance of the role played by private medical institutions in easing the burden on government hospitals and medical centers and helping the health ministry realize its strategy and plans. He viewed private medical institutions as key partners of the government in upgrading healthcare services in the country. — KUNA

TURKISH JET CRASHES INTO KYRGYZ VILLAGE, 37 DEAD

BISHKEK: A Turkish cargo jet smashed into a village in Kyrgyzstan yesterday as it tried to land at a nearby airport in dense fog, killing at least 37 people, Kyrgyz officials and the airline said. According to airport officials, the Boeing 747 was supposed to make a stopover at Manas airport, near the capital Bishkek, on its way from Hong Kong to Istanbul, airport officials said, but it crashed in poor visibility at 7:31 am. The plane ploughed on for a few hundred meters through the Dachi Suu village, home to hundreds of families, sheering into mangled pieces and damaging dozens of buildings.

"According to preliminary information, the plane crashed due to a pilot error,"

Kyrgyz Deputy Prime Minister Muhammetkaly Abulgaziev said at a briefing broadcast on state television. Four crewmembers on board were killed. The rest of the dead were villagers. Kyrgyzstan's Emergencies Ministry put the initial toll at 37. The Healthcare Ministry said 13 children and teenagers were among the dead.

HH the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences to Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev over the victims of the plane crash. In the cable, the Amir prayed that Allah Almighty would bless the souls of the victims, and wished the swift recovery of the wounded.

Continued on Page 13



DACHA-SUU, Kyrgyzstan: Rescue personnel work at the crash site of a Turkish cargo plane in this village outside Bishkek yesterday. — AFP



CAIRO: Egyptian children celebrate with a national flag marked with the words 'Tiran' and 'Sanafir' after the Supreme Administrative Court upheld yesterday a ruling voiding a government agreement to hand over the two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia. — AFP

EGYPT COURT REJECTS ISLAND TRANSFERS TO SAUDI ARABIA

CAIRO: Egypt's top administrative court upheld yesterday a ruling voiding a government agreement to hand over two Red Sea islands to Saudi Arabia in a deal that sparked rare protests. The government of President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi had appealed against a lower court ruling in June that found the controversial border demarcation agreement was illegal. In its ruling, the High Administrative Court said it was its "unanimous" decision that the two islands - Tiran and Sanafir - were sovereign Egyptian territories. The courtroom

erupted in cheers as the judge delivered the verdict, with lawyers and activists chanting: "These islands are Egyptian."

The decision came after the government referred the agreement to parliament for a vote. It may further complicate ties between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, a main financial backer of Sisi since the former army chief toppled his Islamist predecessor in 2013. Saudi Arabia has already signaled unease by stopping a promised flow of oil to Egypt, leaving Cairo

Continued on Page 13

KUWAIT CUTS COULD REACH 146-148,000 BPD

KHOBAR, Saudi Arabia: Kuwait's oil output cuts could reach between 146,000 and 148,000 barrels per day, which is more than the reduction to which the OPEC member committed itself under last month's global deal among producers, its oil minister told Sky News Arabia. "We used this opportunity to do maintenance at some wells, whether they were at Burgan field or the northern fields," Essam Al-Marzouq said

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Kuwait Science Club's officials and members of the board.

AMIR, CROWN PRINCE MEET OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received First Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah at Bayan Palace yesterday. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled,

Deputy Premier and Finance Minister Anas Khaled Al-Saleh, Kuwait's Ambassador to Italy Sheikh Ali Al-Khaled Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Kuwait's Ambassador to Mauritania Khaled Al-Shaibani.

Separately, His Highness the Crown Prince received Chairman of the Kuwait Science Club

Ahmad Abdullah Al-Manfouhi, Vice Chairman Talal Jasem Al-Kharafi and members of the board. His Highness listened to a full explanation on the progress of work in various departments of the Science Club, its achievements and ambitious initiatives as well as future plans and programs.

His Highness praised the efforts of those in charge of the Science Club, referring to the attention given by the political leadership to youth as being axioms of construction and development.

His Highness also stressed the need to encourage spirit of innovation and talents at

the local and international levels so as to substantiate the developmental and scientific march of Kuwait, wishing them all the best. The meeting was attended by Chief of Protocol in the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. — KUNA

KRCS DISPATCHES RELIEF SUPPLIES TO SYRIAN REFUGEES IN JORDAN

AMMAN: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) yesterday distributed the 22nd batch of relief aid and supplies to the Syrian refugees in Jordan. The 110-ton aid batch included a variety of food items such as dates, meat and chicken derivatives. Head of the KRCS delegation in Jordan Mohammad Al-Mutairi said that the current shipment is the first to be distributed in 2017, adding that other batches would follow suit over the coming weeks. He

stressed keenness of KRCS to provide relief and humanitarian support to the stricken Syrian people in the neighboring countries and inside Syria and to provide the necessary needs for the refugees through a series of plans and programs in place since the outbreak of the crisis. He praised in this regard the role played by the Jordanian Red Crescent Society, KRCS' main partner, for the facilities it has provided to the Kuwaiti delegations. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah speaks during the ninth meeting of major donors to Syria. — KUNA



Chairman of the International Islamic Charitable Organization and Amiri Diwan Advisor Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq

KUWAIT ARRANGES WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR AID DELIVERY TO SYRIANS

DONORS MEETING TACKLES PROGRESS OF AID TO SYRIA: MAATOUQ

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah said yesterday that the State of Kuwait deals with international organizations that deliver aid to the stricken Syrian people and implements commitments already made at the international conference for donors to support the humanitarian situation in Syria.

Jarallah told reporters on the sidelines of the ninth meeting of the coordinating group of major donors to support the humanitarian situation in Syria that Kuwait is in constant contact with those international humanitarian organizations working on the delivery of such assistance.

He explained that most of the countries that have already announced their obligations and commitments to the Syrian people also deal with those international organizations for the delivery of humanitarian aid. He stressed that the humanitarian situation in Syria is tragic and figures that were mentioned during the meeting are very scary and indicate how terrible the situation is for the Syrian people.

"Unfortunately, we do not see positive signs for an end to this human tragedy," Jarallah noted. He pointed out that efforts and attempts to cease fire are being made but they are fragile till now, however, hopes remain. Jarallah expressed hope that the upcoming talks bear fruit in the capital of Kazakhstan.

Progress

The ninth meeting of major donors to Syria will examine how far pledges of aid made at the Syria donors conference last February in London have come, a Kuwaiti official said yesterday. In a speech to open the meeting, Chairman of the International Islamic Charitable Organization and Amiri Diwan Advisor Dr Abdullah Al-Maatouq noted that the fourth Syria donors conference yielded pledges of aid worth \$10 billion.

Moreover, he said that the meeting comes "mere weeks after the world had borne witness to atrocities and scenes of destruction in the Syrian city of Aleppo." On the plight of displaced people in Aleppo, Maatouq said that they lack basic necessities such as food, water and medicine, many of them are in dire need of medical attention. Speaking on the war in Syria, he said that it largely remains unabated despite an agreement for a ceasefire, adding that the conflict has forced half of the Syrian population out of their homes. Jarallah said meanwhile that the meeting takes place as the war in Syria rages on amid worsening humanitarian conditions. He prodded the international community to step up efforts to find a definitive political solution to the conflict, noting that Kuwait has taken the initiative to ensure that a rigid ceasefire is in place in Syria. "We have to remain determined to expend more efforts to mitigate the misery of the Syrian people," Jarallah said.

Leading role

In the meantime, the UN Secretary General's Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs Dr Ahmad bin Mohammad Al-Muraikhi yesterday commended Kuwait's leading role for promoting the humanitarian dialogue on the Syrian crisis on the international scene.

Kuwait hosted the First, Second and Third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, Muraikhi told the 9th meeting for Syria's major donors in Kuwait. The country co-chaired the fourth one held in London last year. In addition, Kuwait has also hosted all meetings of Syrian's top donors for supporting the humanitarian conditions in Syria, following up the implementation of pledges to help the Syrian people, Al-Muraikhi said.

According to the UN humanitarian official, up

to \$22.2 billion is required to meet the humanitarian needs of 128.6 million people around the globe in 2017, which prompts the world countries and donors to show a more generous response. In Syria, the humanitarian tragedy goes on, Muraikhi said, as \$2.3 billion is wanted to fulfill the Syrians' humanitarian needs, besides \$4.9 billion for the plan of regional response on refugees in 2017. Donors' pledges made in 2016, hit \$3.19 billion that was required for response plan of the Syrian crisis, he said.

Second place

Also yesterday, Assistant UN Secretary-General for Humanitarian Partnerships with Middle East, Central Asia Rashid Khalikov praised Kuwait for hosting the donors' meetings, as well as the country's humanitarian efforts and initiatives. He noted that Kuwait ranked as the second world country in terms of providing humanitarian aid. Khalikov noted that the humanitarian efforts are not likely alone to dissolve the crisis in Syria. There is a dire need for a political solution. He urged the warring parties in the country to commute themselves to the international laws to find a solution and deliver humanitarian aid to the needy and those under siege. Up to 13 million people all over the world are in severe need for humanitarian aid, and 800,000 are in dangerous conditions due to lack of food supplies.

The one-day meeting is attended by representatives of the countries hosting Syrian refugees, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, in addition to the World Bank (WB) and the international humanitarian organizations. Pledges made during the three international conferences Kuwait hosted in 2013, 2014 and 2015, exceeded \$7 billion. Kuwait's contribution in the three events, as well as the London meeting, reached \$1.6 billion. — KUNA



AMMAN: Head of the KRCS delegation in Jordan Mohammad Al-Mutairi is pictured with Head of the Jordanian Red Crescent Dr Mohamed Al-Hadid. — KUNA

HUMANITARIAN CENTER DENOMINATION FEATHER IN KUWAIT'S CAP: NCCAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait being designated by the United Nations (UN) as a "humanitarian center" is the country's biggest accolade, Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Ali Al-Yoha said yesterday.

In a speech to open a seminar on Kuwait's humanitarian efforts toward conflict and relief aid, part of the 23rd "Al-Qurain Cultural Festival" and with participation of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), Al-Yoha underscored the need to bring Kuwait's humanitarian deeds to the limelight. Moreover, he said that the seminar will delve into issues of paramount concern to millions of people, including

armed conflicts, which account for 80 percent of humanitarian crises.

Meanwhile, KRCS Chairman Dr Hilal Al-Sayer said that KRCS has always strived to mitigate the ill effects of crises and disasters that have plagued large parts of the globe. He noted that philanthropy has always been the cornerstone of KRCS's agenda, adding that the society has provided urgent aid to families living in sheer penury. On KRCS' aid, Sayer said it encompasses 76 nations, including Arab, Asian and African countries. He also pointed out that KRCS has won numerous awards for its work in relief and humanitarian aid. — KUNA

KUWAIT BUILDS SCHOOLS, MEDICAL CENTERS IN KURDISTAN

IRBIL: Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) will build five schools and other three medical centers in Irbil and Duhok for displaced Iraqis' camps in Iraqi Kurdistan, who fled their homes from Mosul. Consul General of Kuwait to Irbil Omar Al-Kandiri said yesterday that the Consulate General supervised the signing of two agreements today between KRCS and a construction company in Iraqi Kurdistan region for building five schools and three medical centers to better serve displaced Iraqis.

The newly-built schools and medical centers will be later handed to the Ministries of health and education in Iraqi Kurdistan region, he affirmed. The first school to be handed to Kurdistan region will be called "Kuwait First School" in Irbil Governorate with the capacity of 480 students to offer the displaced Iraqis two separate equal periods, he said.

Great care

Kuwait offers great care to the educational field, he said, adding it will later supply the displaced Iraqi with study desks, class boards and school bags.

The Kuwaiti Consulate General in Irbil is responsible for distributing humanitarian aid to the displaced Iraqis in Kurdistan region, upon the instructions of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's initiative, as His Highness is always keen in



IRBIL: Kuwaiti and Iraqi officials pose for a group photo after signing the agreement.

offering relief to Iraqis, the diplomat said.

Meanwhile, head of KRCS' disasters and emergency department Yousef Fahad Al-Me'raj said that the schools and medical centers will be built within the area of the displaced camps, while the schools will be ready in two months. The schools will be built

according to the latest criteria in the field, while three of them will be constructed as caravans, the project's supervising projects Fayad Hijazi said.

Food packages

In the meantime, KRCS offered yesterday



Kuwait Red Crescent Society workers distribute food packages to displaced Iraqis.

860 food packages to displaced Iraqis from Mosul who are staying in Irbil, in collaboration with Kuwait's General Consulate in Iraqi Kurdistan. The food packages were offered to about 5,000 people, in cooperation with the Barzani Charity Foundation (BCF), Me'raj said. This is part of the KRCS's campaign to help the

displaced Iraqis from Mosul, who are staying outside camps in Irbil's Kasanzan area, he added. The aid came in response to the call by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the "Humanitarian Leader," to alleviate the sufferings of the Iraqi people. — KUNA



KUWAIT: US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman visited Kuwait Times yesterday and discussed with Editor-in-Chief Abd Al-Rahman Al-Alyan matters of mutual concern. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

IFAD PRESIDENT TO VISIT KUWAIT

ROME: President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Dr Kanayo Nwanze said yesterday he would be visiting Kuwait to express gratitude for its continued support for IFAD's anti-poverty programs.

Nwanze, in a statement on eve of traveling to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, said he would be visiting the Arab Gulf country before end of his term on March 31 to discuss with the officials "ways of strengthening our partnerships and common work in future." Nwanze, who will first visit Riyadh and then Kuwait on Wednesday, said the tour would be an opportunity to thank Saudi Arabia and Kuwait "for their relentless support for IFAD and their contributing to

ridding millions of rural people from poverty," Kuwait and Saudi Arabia contributed to the establishment of IFAD in 1987.

Nwanze said his talks in Riyadh and Kuwait would deal with promotion of small agriculture businesses and preservation of water resources in the two countries. He said agricultural and rural development would diversify national economies against drop of oil prices and high unemployment among youth.

The statement said Nwanze would be meeting in Kuwait with Abdulwahab Al-Bader, Director General of Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED). Kuwait has so far contributed more than \$218 million to IFAD. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman. — KUNA

DEFENSE MINISTER MEETS WITH US ENVOY

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah met yesterday with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman on several issues of mutual interest. During the meeting, they also

discussed ways of promoting and developing relations between both friendly countries, mainly military aspects, the Defense Ministry's Directorate of Moral Guidance and Public Relations said in a release. — KUNA

MINISTER READY TO FACE GRILLING

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Information Minister and State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah said he is ready for the grilling submitted against him over the sports suspension. He said he will

take this opportunity to explain facts to the public transparently. He called upon MPs to listen to both views and not just that of one side. He said the grilling is a constitutional right of MPs and "we are also carrying out our duties according to the constitution."

SCPD ENDORSES EPA PROJECT TO PROMOTE SUSTAINED DEVELOPMENT

KUWAIT: The Supreme Council for Planning and Development (SCPD) announced yesterday that it has signed a document for an Environment Public Authority (EPA) project that aims to boost environmental sustainability.

In a statement issued by SCPD, its Secretary General Dr Khaled Mehdi noted that the document will lay the political and economic groundwork for efforts to

enhance environmental resistance, adding that the project illustrates Kuwait's commitment to its goals of sustainable environmental development.

The document was signed in the presence of Mehdi, EPA Director General Sheikh Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and SCPD's Assistant Secretary General for Development Advisory Talal Al-Shimmeri. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Farwaniya Governor Sheikh Faisal Al-Humoud Al-Malek Al-Sabah issued a statement yesterday in response to social media reports about a blind patient who has allegedly been staying in Farwaniya Hospital for two years after being attacked in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. The Egyptian man's suffering has further worsened since his documents went missing. Sheikh Faisal said that he contacted Egyptian Ambassador Yasser Atif and Farwaniya Hospital's Director Dr Humoud Al-Zoubi to offer help. He even offered to pay for procedures to send the patient back to his home country.

CABINET APPROVES RESTRUCTURING PROGRAM, MANPOWER AUTHORITY MERGER

PRIORITY GIVEN TO APPOINTMENT OF KUWAITIS



KUWAIT: Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah chairs the cabinet's meeting yesterday. — KUNA

KUWAIT: The cabinet yesterday approved the merging of the Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (MGRP) into the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM). The decision was made during a routine weekly meeting held at Bayan Palace chaired by Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. The ministers entrusted the authority with coordinating with the MGRP, the Fatwa and Legislation Department and the Civil Service Commission, as well as other relevant bodies to take the necessary legal, regulatory and technical steps to achieve the merge, said Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah.

Yesterday also, the cabinet tasked the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR), in coordination with the Ministry of Public Works, the Kuwait Municipality and the Fatwa and Legislation Department, to take the legal and procedural steps regarding the farms interfering with the right of way of the South Regional Road in Al-Wafra.

The PAAAFR was offered a month grace period, paving the way for the Ministry of Public Works to offer projects on implementing and maintaining the South Regional Road, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah added.

Appointment

Meanwhile, the cabinet approved and referred to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a draft decree on replacing Item 1 of Article 1 of the Civil Service Decree, giving priority to appointment of Kuwaitis, then non-Kuwaitis of Kuwaiti mothers.

Then the ministers reviewed a recommendation by the Committee on Education, Cultural, Social and Health Affairs the regular follow-up reports of the construction program of the Sabah Al-Salem

University City in Al-Shadadiyah for the period July through October 2016. The reports include the steps and measures taken so far for enforcing the regulatory act of the University City, and the status quo of the infrastructure and projects there.

At the onset of the meeting, the cabinet was notified of the message from the Comoro Islands President Azali Assoumani to His Highness the Amir congratulating him on Kuwait's presidency of the Fourth Africa-Arab Summit recently held in Equatorial Guinean. He also expressed desire to promote bilateral ties in all fields.

The ministers were also informed of a message from Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay to His Highness the Amir, reiterating the fact that the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) had proved itself as an Asian constructive organization with an agenda for the future. He also lauded Kuwait's role for enhancing cooperation among the ACD member states since the country hosted the 1st Summit in 2012. The Bhutanese Premier invited his Highness the Amir to visit the Kingdom as part of the efforts to foster bilateral relations.

Following this, the ministers were apprised of the message His Highness the Amir received from Secretary General of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Mohammed Barkindo, who commended Kuwait's leading role for concluding two historical agreements for the good of the world's oil sector. Barkindo also said that Kuwait has been elected to chair OPEC's Ministerial Monitoring Committee. Then the cabinet congratulated Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud on being awarded the King Faisal International Prize (KFIP)- Service to Islam.

Mideast conference

Then, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, briefed the meeting on the outcome of his

participation in the international conference on peace in the Middle East, held in Paris Sunday. The conference stressed that the only solution for the conflict and for achieving peace in the region is establishing an independent and viable Palestinian state on the pre-June 1967 borders, to live side by side with Israel. Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also offered the ministers an account of his talks with Egypt's Foreign Minister Sameh Shukri on the sidelines of the Paris conference. In addition, he informed the meeting of the outcome of the talks he held with President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) President Peter Maurer who visited Kuwait last week. Maurer lauded Kuwait's support to the afflicted people and the needy around the globe. Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled appreciated the ICRC's efforts in the search for Kuwaitis taken POWs and or missing in Iraq, urging harder work to settle the humanitarian issue.

Kandahar attack

Also, the cabinet condemned a recent attack that targeted a guesthouse in Afghanistan's southern city of Kandahar and killed several UAE diplomats, terming it as a "heinous terrorist attack." The cabinet said in a statement following the meeting that Kuwait reiterates its fixed position based on rejecting these terrorist acts that violate all divine religions and human values and norms.

The cabinet offered sincere condolences to the government and people of the UAE over the victims of the attack. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti cabinet welcomed a recent US decision to lift some economic and trade sanctions imposed on Sudan in order to encourage the Sudanese government to keep on its efforts to safeguard human rights and fight terrorism. It appreciated this decision as a positive step that would surely contribute to economic recovery in Sudan, wishing it more stability and prosperity. — KUNA

'HIGH QUALITY' RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS AT SAWABER LOCATION

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Chairman of the structural plan committee at the Municipal Council Ali Al-Moussa said the new plan for Al-Sawaber Complex requires demolition of the old buildings and establishing new high-quality residential projects. He said the area will be opened up with the construction of a new road, and is designed to attract commercial projects in the area and revive it.

During a workshop held by the committee on Sawaber, Moussa said the construction plan of Kuwait City 2030 includes many development

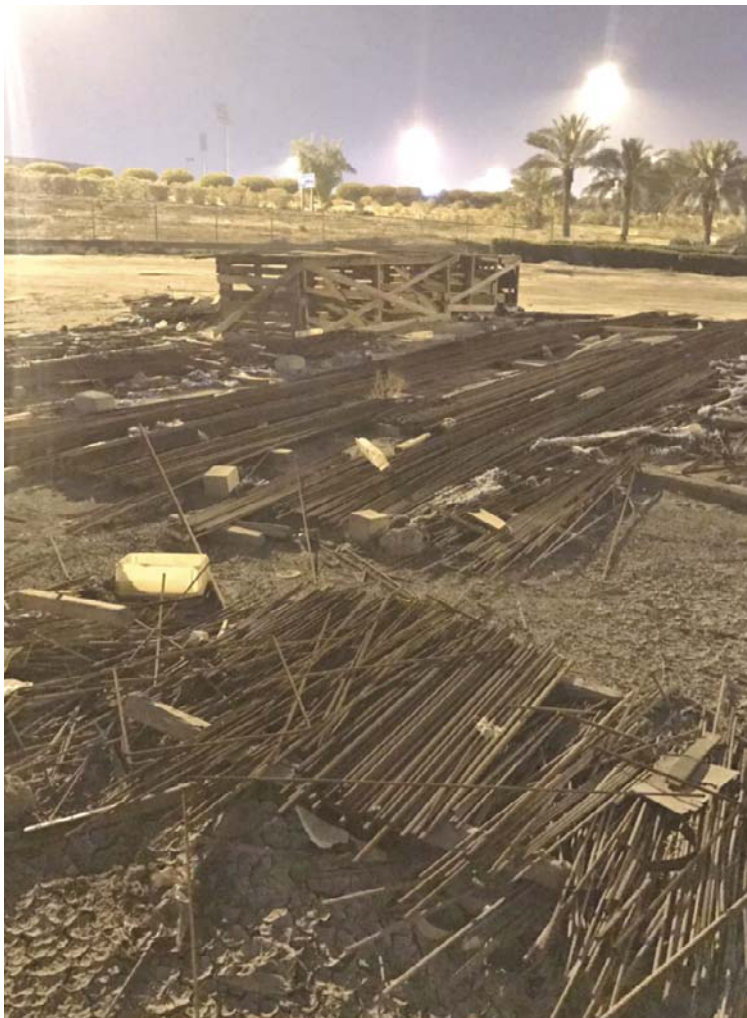
projects including Sawaber, which covers an area of over 38 acres in the middle of the city. He said the current residential complex is dilapidated and highly crowded. He said the council recommended a second phase to study the capital and that began in 2010, and the project proposed that the area be reorganized and changed into a commercial one for offices and services with the same construction percentages and heights.

Renewable energy

The sixth meeting of the renewable energy sources uses development committee was held

yesterday at the ministry of electricity and water. The meeting was chaired by Oil and Electricity and Water Minister Essam Al-Marzouq in the presence of officials from concerned ministries and departments as a response to HH the Amir's initiative to diversify sources of energy by utilizing 15 percent renewable energy.

A video display showed that the committee accounted for 56 renewable energy projects in various areas of the country. Some have already started to function, such as Al-Shaqaya and Sidra 500 in Al-Manaqeeh and the Boubyan water towers project.



Stolen construction material caught with two thieves arrested yesterday, while two others managed to flee.



Rotten olives found during a municipality inspection campaign yesterday.

CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL THIEVES CAUGHT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Two expatriates were caught red-handed stealing construction material in Maidan Hawally, according to a statement from the Ministry of Interior's

relations and security information department. Two other suspects escaped and are being sought by police.

Spoilt food

Kuwait Municipality inspectors raided a food

store in Shuwaikh and confiscated 11.7 tons of spoilt food items and shut down the store. The confiscated material included 10 tons of olives and 1.7 tons of cheese. Thirteen citations were issued, while the confiscated food was destroyed.

In Brief

FM HEADS TO UAE FOR ASIAN MEETING

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah has left for the UAE to attend a ministerial meeting of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue due in Abu Dhabi today. — KUNA



AMIR'S REPRESENTATIVE HEADS TO SAUDI ARABIA

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's Representative, Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah left for Saudi Arabia yesterday, in order to offer condolences over the demise of Prince Mohammed bin Faisal bin Abdul Aziz. — KUNA



AL-JARALLAH MEETS WITH IRAQI OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met yesterday with visiting Undersecretary of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry for Legal Affairs and Multilateral Relations Omar Barazanchi. During the meeting, they discussed Kuwaiti-Iraqi relations and the latest regional and international developments. —KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A mosque's minaret is silhouetted in front of the setting sun. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

OOREDOO CONTINUES TO SUPPORT ENTREPRENEURS IN MUROUJ

AS A STRATEGIC PARTNER TO SUPPORT YOUNG BUSINESS OWNERS

KUWAIT: Ooredoo, the fastest network in Kuwait, is proud to continue its support for Souq Murouj, a youth and entrepreneur market that includes local farm produce, artisanal food products and crafts, with a 'street food' section aimed at highlighting the culinary diversity of Kuwait's local food community. The market also offers a section dedicated for children's activities, and takes place once a month in Murouj. January's market was held last Saturday.

In a statement about this sponsorship, Ooredoo Kuwait underscored its commitment to supporting local businesses and entrepreneurs, especially through such engaging projects that shed light on the efforts and participation of young entrepreneurs. This sponsorship comes in alignment with the company's social responsibility strategy, which in turn is based on the core values of Ooredoo, of caring, connecting and challenging.

Unlike many outdoor markets, Souq Murouj curates a diverse collection of vendors that sell more than just food and

produce. Among the participants in the market last Saturday is Bader Al-Nasser, the founder of Integra Kuwait (@integrakw), a smart homes solution business that uses the latest technologies to help users monitor their homes, control devices, and save electricity through sensors that automatically turn off lights. Al-Nasser said that participation was high, and that interacting with customers visiting the venue provided a good opportunity to network with clients.

Enas Al-Yaseen, founder of Saparadise (@Sparadise_kw), a ladies-only spa, also had a booth in last Saturday's market. She lauded the organization of the market, which she said witnesses good participation for the second consecutive market. Through her booth at the market, she was able to sell hair and skin care products, in addition to vouchers for services at the spa. Ooredoo is a strategic partner in Murouk Market. Updates about the market can be found on Morouj's official Instagram account @muroujkw as well as our Instagram account @OoredooKuwait.



KUWAIT: Bader Al-Nasser visits Souq Murouj.



In my view

HOT AND COLD WARS

By Labeed Abdal

local@kuwaittimes.net



During the 2016 US Presidential Elections, Democratic Candidate Hillary Clinton highlighted some incidents of her opponent, Republic Candidate and eventual winner Donald Trump, sexually abusing a number of women during his time at college, in addition to some complaints filed by women about his alleged sexual harassment. She argued that the President-elect had a racist approach when he spoke about building a wall along

It seems that the slogan of 'change' continued to rule ever since it was used by President Barack Obama

the border of Mexico, and that he also called for more restrictions on Muslims' migration to the US.

However, Trump managed to attract more US citizens to his side by asking them not to return the same old system. It seems that the slogan of 'change' continued to rule ever since it was used by President Barack Obama in both of his electoral campaigns. Eventually, the American people decided to switch choices and move to the Republican Party, especially when researches showed Clinton as being not as popular among the American people as it was believed before.

After the victory of the Republican Party, it is unlikely that we witness many changes in the US administration's approach, because the US is an institutional country. The tenure of former president George W Bush was full of unexpected incidents such as the 9/11 attacks. However, the world will remain governed by the international police station known as the 'Security Council' and the interests of the big five (G5) will remain a priority. Meanwhile, competition between cold and hot wars that will continue, leaving us with only hope for a change that will prioritize peace and security.



KUWAIT: Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah inaugurates the 2017 Horeca Kuwait exhibition. — Photos by Joseph Shagra



Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah visits Crowne Plaza's pavilion.

YOUTH CREATIVITY ESSENTIAL TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: MINISTER 2017 HORECA KUWAIT EXHIBITION UNDERWAY

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The three-day 2017 Horeca Kuwait exhibition kicked off yesterday at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref, with the participation of over 80 companies specialized in hospitality, catering and hotel equipment. The event is organized by the Leaders Group Company for Consulting and Development in collaboration with the Hospitality Services Company.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, and in the pres-

ence of ambassadors, diplomats, businessmen, hoteliers, restaurateurs and chefs from around the world.

Sheikh Salman affirmed Kuwait's interest in the development of the tourism sector, adding it is working to attract Kuwaiti youth to show their creativity in this field. "The tourism sector and its development is part of the future strategy for the country," he said, pointing to the importance of supporting development plans and stimulating trade exhibitions, in addition to its role in supporting and encouraging small and medium enterprises that encourage young people. "There are many youth initiatives participat-

ing in this exhibition as well as a number of specialized training companies in the field of hospitality," he added.

Diversification

Nabila Anjari, General Manager of Leaders Group, said Horeca Kuwait does not only contribute to the development of the food industry, hotel equipment and hospitality sectors, but also helps in supporting plans to transform Kuwait into a touristic country and the diversification of income sources, where tourism projects will contribute about 30,000 jobs in 10 years, and the absorption of national investment of more than KD 700 million

annually. Anjari confirmed that the exhibition is a good opportunity for young people who are interested in establishing investment projects related to the hospitality sector and food industries, especially as the catering sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in Kuwait. She pointed out that the exhibition attracted more than 80 leading companies operating in the field of hospitality and food industries and hotel equipment, shipping and travel. Anjari said Horeca has achieved a leading position in the Middle East, pointing out that Horeca events in Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan are a unique series of specialized events that sup-

port the government's development plans.

Joumana Dammous, General Manager of Hospitality Services, expressed happiness for the great success achieved by Horeca Kuwait, pointing to the overwhelming response from major companies, whether Kuwaiti, Arab or foreign, which reflects confidence in the Kuwaiti market and its importance for investors. Dammous said cooperation between the Leaders Group and Hospitality Services for the sixth consecutive year in organizing Horeca Kuwait opens a wide window for further development and progress for the hospitality and food industry not only in Kuwait, but also in neighboring countries.



Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah is honored during the event.



Official Khaled Fawzi poses with Head Chef Samaan Hilal.



Information Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah greets the judging panel of the cooking competition.



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Crime

Report

TEACHER ‘PICKED ON’
ARSONIST STUDENT: LAWYER

KUWAIT: The public prosecution decided to detain a student accused of setting a fire at Farhan Al-Khalid School to continue interrogating him. The suspect’s lawyer Hawraa Al-Habeeb said her client is an outstanding student and has won medals in sports from the same school and does not need to cheat, as it has been said. She said there is something “dangerous” that will be told to the court. She said the student was being picked on by a teacher, leading to ridicule by other students, and whenever he went to the administration to complain, nothing was done, which caused him a lot of psychological pressure. She said her client is stable and has never violated the law, and all his teachers commend him during parent-teacher meetings.

Child dies

A citizen took his two-year-old son to Jahra Hospital after he received an electric shock from a heater, but the child died on arrival. The father said the boy was playing and fell close to the heater’s wiring.

Thefts

A citizen told police that his 1996-model SUV was stolen from in front of his house in Bayan. Meanwhile, an Egyptian man told Salmiya police that an unidentified person broke the window of his car and stole two laptops from it.

Teenager beaten

A citizen told Jabriya police that his 16-year-old son was beaten by unidentified persons near a fast food restaurant. A case was filed and investigations are underway to identify and locate the suspects.

Liquor possession

An Asian man was arrested by Farwaniya police with liquor in his car. The man attempted to evade a police patrol, and when he was asked to stop, he did not, so he was forced to do so. The suspect claimed he was listening to music, but boxes on the back seat of his car were found to contain 420 bottles of locally-brewed liquor.



Domestic violence

A bedoon woman told Bayan police she was beaten by her husband and was hit hard on the face. A medical report stated that she suffered grazes on the hand after falling. Police are investigating.

Suit and countersuit

A female citizen who works in a Jahra governorate school accused a 13-year-old boy of insulting and beating her. The teen in turn accused her of beating him and submitted a medical report, just like she did. Police are investigating. — Al-Anbaa

Resources



القلمس

Al-Qabas

THE UNNECESSARY DISPOSAL

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

I always get mixed feelings each time I read or hear about the discovery of liquor smuggling attempts. Historically, liquor consumption was not allowed in Kuwait, but until law 206 was issued in the middle of the 1960s, liquor was being sold for non-Muslims in Kuwait by UK’s Kerry McKenzie Company. The company then sold liquor to Muslims, both citizens and expatriates, to have a modest monthly income, and sale outlets were also known to the government. Based on a report published in Al-Qabas on Jan 27, 2009, a news report had been published in 1963 and accused Kerry McKenzie Company of making extreme profits out of selling liquor, further accusing it of ‘monopolizing’ the business, which is quite strange in a country that adopts a free economy system.

The report said that in May 1964, members of Parliament proposed to confiscate all liquor available in the country and destroy it, and there were discussions about the issue and proposing an amendment for article number 206 of the Penal Code. The session saw extensive discussions by several lawmakers, as MP Jassim Al-Qatami said the ban was not enough and was not a solution for any problem. He demanded awareness campaigns regarding the issue and to get the government involved. Meanwhile, MP Dr

Ahmad Al-Khateeb said the phenomenon needed further study and analysis, but the assembly approved the proposed law in principle. Then on Oct 12, 1964 the government agreed to ban import of liquor and intoxicants and revoked all the licenses to sell alcohol, then article number 206 was issued, which jails every person that imported or manufactured liquor with the intention to sell, whereas embassies and foreign diplomatic missions were excluded from this law.

What is important in this issue is that the confiscated liquor is destroyed, according to the explanatory memo of the law. But the quantities of destroyed liquor has increased so much lately, and its value is estimated at tens of millions of dinars and may be more. Therefore, the question is, is it realistic to destroy the liquor while it could be exported to other countries? The return could be used to treat alcoholics among us. The other side is related to what the smuggling process represents in the form of fear. If it was possible for someone to smuggle ten containers without being inspected, this means that one can smuggle things that are more harmful than liquor such as drugs and arms, so are we aware of the size of danger we are exposed to amidst all the corruption that we live in? — Translated by Kuwait Times

In May 1964, members of Parliament proposed to confiscate all liquor available in the country and destroy it

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

SO TYPICAL OF
OUR GOVERNMENT

By Abdulmohsen Jamal

Most documents and historians talk about the roles played by Arab regimes and governments in reviving religious political organizations. This started ever since former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat started reviving and reactivating them in the beginning of 1972 at Cairo University, to counter-strike his opposing leftists powers, whereas his predecessor Jamal Abdul Nasser had severely stricken those religious groups after the Manshiya shooting. Many countries followed Sadat’s footsteps such as Jordan and Kuwait, while the CIA and secret intelligent service played similar roles in Afghanistan until they reached the devastating results because of which Muslims are

we have been paying heavy prices for mixing religion and politics for over 30 years

suffering today. Kuwait’s government has been well-experienced in making allies with religious political powers ever since 1970s for reasons known to everyone. Therefore, when the Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah stood in the parliament expressing support to establishing the so-called ‘negative phenomena committee,’ despite of all of its previous cons such as interference in personal liberties and disturbing social peace by criticizing others’ religious beliefs, this confirmed that the government has gone back to its old habits of making allies with religious political powers, rather than dealing with moderation and fighting extremism. It seems that protect positions and powers is more important.

The problem is that in the Arab World, we have been paying heavy prices for mixing religion and politics for over 30 years. Sadat was killed by the same groups he nurtured and made allies with and Egypt is currently paying the same price by facing terrorism. Syria lost a revolution to get rid a dictator sectarian ruler because it was Islamized. Iraq is being stricken by religious conflicts. Most of the world gave up the Palestinian struggle after this struggle was Islamized by Hamas, who turned the Palestinian cause into a conflict between Muslims and Jews worldwide. Here in Kuwait, we lost our cultural uniqueness, and sectarianism is spreading because of religious political speeches in all government bodies.

In fact, the 2016 parliament’s inception indicates an understanding and alliances between the government and political Islam blocs. Some ministers are trying to protect their positions while the entire government seems to have approved the negative phenomena committee instead of fighting extremism that might lead into confrontation with the whole world. Well, this is typical of our government, but I wonder at what cost? —Translated by Kuwait Times



KUWAIT: A group picture for the selected participants in Fikra Program with representatives from the organizing committee and Gulf Bank.

GULF BANK ANNOUNCES SELECTED PROJECTS’ NAMES ENROLLED IN FIKRA PROGRAM

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank is pleased to announce the eligibility of 15 projects to enroll in the second edition of Fikra Program and debut the training phase. Gulf Bank is the gold sponsor of Fikra Program which transforms ideas into businesses. As a first step, over 170 applications from eager participants were filtered and 40 reached the second stage where they went through an interview process. A judging panel comprised of five members from different sectors gathered to select the appropriate candidates. The jury consisted of: Mariam Al-Rayes from Cubical Services, Mohammed Abdullah from the National Fund for SMEs Development, Dr Samar Baqer from Kuwait University, Fares Al-Enizi from the Program of Restructuring the Workforce and the Executive

Organ of the State, and Saad Al Othman from the Industrial Bank. Participants were later filtered again to reach 27 people. **The jury selected various projects and they are:** ● Mohammad Abdulredha and Nawaf Ibrahim AlRifai - Scientific and Solar ● Jawad Mohammed Al-Shakhs, Hani Mohammed Al-Shakhs, Mashari Mohammed Al-Obeid, and Yasser Habib AlHamad - Little Corner Store ● Maha Ghunaim Al-Otaibi and Ahmad Ali AlKandari - Tal’ab ● Alia Majed Al-Tourky and Anfal Khaled Al Samhan - Hiber ● Shaikha Salem Faqihi - Crowned Scenery

● Abdullah Habib Al-Ali and Fahd Issam AlRoumi - Poly Labs ● Abdulaziz Althekair - Masfity ● Hind Sanad Sanad and Aisha Sanad Sanad - Fashion on Wheels ● Lamees Osamah Nijem and Layal Osamah Nijem - LSQUARE Studios ● Duaa Mehdi Al-Mousawi - Kabati ● May Al Ahmed - Nadi Fatayat Al Mustaqbal ● Ismail Ahmad Al-Tabtabai - Kendaishen ● Mohammad Khazal Khazal, Mohammed AbdulAziz AlMajadi, AbdelSalam Obeid Hussein, and Nasser Faisal AlQatami - BULK ● Abdullah Ali Al-Bahaweid - Wood Works ● Khaled Ahmed Shames Al-Dain - myfRoots The first training session for the selected 15 teams began on Sunday, January 15. The train-

ings, which are closed sessions for the accepted applicants only, will continue every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday until 2 March 2017 from 6:00 pm until 8:00 pm in Al Hamra Tower. The main goal of Fikra Program is to empower a new generation of entrepreneurs to develop successful businesses and advance the local Kuwaiti market. It is an intensive entrepreneurship training that provides aspiring entrepreneurs with the technical skills and business knowledge needed to launch their own businesses such as leadership skills, comprehensive business plan, investment opportunities and others. Additionally, Fikra is a non-profit program designed by Cubical Services- business incubator. It aims at turning young people’s ideas into business projects and to help the youth

achieve their aspirations and to overcome the obstacles of implementation. The program is supported by a range of governmental agencies and companies from the private sector in Kuwait and they are: the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, the National Fund for SMEs Development, Hamra Tower, and Markaz. Gulf Bank’s sponsorship of Fikra comes as part of its social responsibility plan. The Bank is strongly committed to giving back to Kuwait as it supports numerous events and initiatives focusing on youth, education, health and fitness, helping the underprivileged, women’s empowerment, as well as promoting Kuwait’s heritage and culture. For more information on Gulf Bank, please visit one of Gulf Bank’s 56 branches, call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805, log on



26 to hang for Bangladesh abductions and murders

MOGHERINI SAYS EU TO STAND BY IRAN NUCLEAR ACCORD



SERBIA: A migrant is seen inside of an abandoned train wagon used as a makeshift shelter near Belgrade’s main railway station yesterday, with temperatures just below zero Celsius overnight. — AFP

OXFAM SAYS 8 MEN AS RICH AS HALF THE WORLD

‘SO MUCH WEALTH IN THE HANDS OF SO FEW’

DAVOS, Switzerland: The gap between the super-rich and the poorest half of the global population is starker than previously thought, with just eight men, from Bill Gates to Michael Bloomberg, owning as much wealth as 3.6 billion people, according to an analysis by Oxfam released yesterday. Presenting its findings on the dawn of the annual gathering of the global political and business elites in the Swiss ski resort of Davos, anti-poverty organization Oxfam says the gap between the very rich and poor is far greater than just a year ago. It’s urging leaders to do more than pay lip-service to the problem.

If not, it warns, public anger against this kind of inequality will continue to grow and lead to more seismic political changes akin to last year’s election of Donald Trump as US president and Britain’s vote to leave the European Union. “It is obscene for so much wealth to be held in the hands of so few when 1 in 10 people survive on less than \$2 a day,” said Winnie Byanyima, executive director of

Oxfam International, who will be attending the meeting in Davos. “Inequality is trapping hundreds of millions in poverty; it is fracturing our societies and undermining democracy.”

The same report a year earlier said that the richest 62 people on the planet owned as much wealth as the bottom half of the population. However, Oxfam has revised that figure down to eight following new information gathered by Swiss bank Credit Suisse. Oxfam used Forbes’ billionaires list that was last published in March 2016 to make its headline claim. According to the Forbes list, Microsoft founder Gates is the richest individual with a net worth of \$75 billion. The others, in order of ranking, are Amancio Ortega, the Spanish founder of fashion house Inditex, financier Warren Buffett, Mexican business magnate Carlos Slim Helu, Amazon boss Jeff Bezos, Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg,

Oracle’s Larry Ellison and Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York. Oxfam outlined measures that it hopes will be enacted to help

reduce the inequality. They include higher taxes on wealth and income to ensure a more level playing field and to fund investments in public services and jobs, greater cooperation among governments on ensuring workers are paid decently and the rich don’t dodge their taxes. And business leaders should commit to paying their fair share of taxes and a living wage to employees. Max Lawson, Oxfam’s policy adviser, urged billionaires to “do the right thing,” and to do “what Bill Gates has called on them to do, which is pay their taxes.”

The ability of the rich to avoid paying their fair share of taxes was vividly exposed last year in the so-called “Panama Papers,” a leaked trove of data that revealed details on offshore accounts that helped individuals shelter their wealth. “We have a situation where billionaires are paying less tax often than their cleaner or their secretary,” Lawson told The Associated Press. “That’s crazy.” It’s because of this kind of inequality that trust in institutions has fallen sharply since the global financial crisis of 2008,

according to Edelman, one of the world’s biggest marketing firms.

In its own pre-Davos survey of more than 33,000 people across 28 markets, Edelman found the largest-ever drop in trust across government, business, media and even non-governmental organizations. CEO credibility is at an all-time low and government leaders are the least trusted group, according to the survey. The firm’s 2017 Trust Barometer found that 53 percent of respondents believe the current system has failed them in that it is unfair and offers few hopes for the future, with only 15 percent believing it is working. That belief was evident for both the general population and those with college education. “The implications of the global trust crisis are deep and wide-ranging,” said Richard Edelman, the firm’s president and CEO. “It began with the Great Recession of 2008, but like the second and third waves of a tsunami, globalization and technological change have further weakened people’s trust in global institutions. The

consequence is virulent populism and nationalism as the mass population has taken control away from the elites.”

Edelman highlighted how “the emergence of a media echo chamber” that reinforces personal beliefs while shutting out opposing views has magnified this “cycle of distrust.” According to the survey, search engines are trusted more as an information tool than traditional news editors, 59 percent to 41 percent. “People now view media as part of the elite,” said Edelman. “The result is a proclivity for self-referential media and reliance on peers.

The lack of trust in media has also given rise to the fake news phenomenon and politicians speaking directly to the masses,” Edelman said. Business may be best-placed to help improve trust. Companies need to be transparent and honest with their employees about the changes taking place in the work-place, improve skills and pay fairly, he said. The online survey was conducted between Oct 13 and Nov 16, 2016.—AP (See Page 25)

5 DEAD IN SHOOTING AT MEXICO MUSIC FESTIVAL

PLAYA DEL CARMEN, Mexico: A shooting erupted during an electronic music festival at a Mexican beach resort early yesterday, leaving at least five people dead, including one in a stampede as revelers fled in panic. Fifteen people were injured after at least one gunman opened fire and two others—apparently security guards—shot back before dawn inside the Blue Parrot nightclub during the BPM festival in Playa del Carmen, said Quintana Roo state attorney general Miguel Angel Pech. Four of the victims were men, including two from Canada, one from Italy and another from Colombia, Pech said at a news conference.

Organizers said three of the victims were part of the security team. The state government said in a statement the four men died from gunfire while a woman died in the stampede. Four people were detained and authorities are investigating if they were connected to the shooting, Pech said. State public security chief Rodolfo del Angel told Milenio television the shooting may be linked to “a fight between people over a problem that took place inside” the club, but Pech said the investigation was ongoing.

The shooting sowed terror in a part of Mexico that has been largely spared from the drug violence afflicting other parts of the country. “We suddenly had to jump over the metal security barriers because they were shooting. It was horrible. We were very scared,” Eric Alvarez, a 40-year-old Mexican DJ, said outside the club, which has a blue parrot painted on the facade. “A lot of people were panicking,” said Alvarez, who lost his prosthetic teeth while fleeing. Playa del Carmen is 68 kilometers (42 miles) south of Cancun, a Caribbean region known as the Mayan Riviera, which is very popular among American and European tourists.

Bodies on the ground

An editor for London-based music magazine Mixmag who was in the backstage area of the Blue Parrot said at least four or five shots were fired at around 2.45 (0745 GMT) or 3 am. “People started running because there’s an exit in the back. We stopped and hid behind a cement wall, then crawled under a metal table,” Valerie Lee, Mixmag’s US digital editor, was quoted as saying by the magazine. “Security guards at first didn’t think it was shots and kept claiming it was fireworks, saying everything was OK. Then people kept running and said they saw a gun. We kept hiding until they opened the back gate and we ran outside,” Lee said. — AFP

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TURKEY TAKES KEY STEP TO EXPANDING ERDOGAN POWERS

ISTANBUL: Turkey was a key step closer yesterday to dramatically expanding the powers of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan after parliament approved, on first reading, a bill critics fear will lead to one-man rule. The parliament backed the two final sections of the 18-article new constitution late Sunday after a marathon week of debating that began on January 9 and included sessions that often lasted late into the night. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) mustered the necessary 330 or more votes—a three-fifths majority-needed to adopt the constitutional change and send it to a referendum for final approval.

The constitution plan will now go to a second reading in the Ankara parliament expected to start tomorrow where the 18 articles will again be debated one by one. Deputy Prime Minister Numan Kurtulmus

wrote on Twitter that with the changes “God willing, Turkey will reach a more efficient governance model.” He later told A-Haber television in an interview that it was possible the referendum would take place as soon as the start of April.

No good news

The debates have been fractious and last week saw some of the worst fighting in years in the parliament with punches thrown, deputies bloodied and one lawmaker even claiming to have been bitten in the leg. The proposed changes, which would create an executive presidency for the first time in modern Turkey, are controversial and far-reaching. The president would have the power to appoint and fire ministers, while the post of prime minister will be abolished for the first time in Turkey’s history.

Instead, there would be a vice presi-

dent, or possibly several. With Turkey already under a state of emergency for almost six months following the July 15 failed coup, the proposed changes would also widen the scope of conditions in which the president can declare an emergency. Parliamentary elections and presidential ballots would be held simultaneously, with the draft giving Nov 3, 2019 as the poll date. The changes are opposed by the main opposition Republican People’s Party (CHP). The third largest party, the pro-Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) is boycotting the vote.

Opponents have accused Erdogan of marching toward authoritarian rule and seeking total control in the aftermath of the failed July 15 coup aimed at ousting him from power. “The constitutional changes pressed by the ruling party are not good news for Turkey,” Faruk

Logoglu, former deputy leader of the CHP, said. He claimed the plan would prove problematic on a wide range of issues from democracy to judicial independence. In a symbolic gesture, CHP MPs piled up copies of the current constitution by the voting boxes in parliament as they cast their ballots. Meanwhile, a dozen HDP MPs, including the two co-leaders, are behind bars on charges of supporting Kurdish militants, accusations they claim are political, and cannot take part.

Turkey’s rise

The AKP, which has 317 seats in the 550-MP chamber, lacks the necessary three-fifths super majority. But the changes have won the support of most MPs from the fourth party, the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). The MHP’s enigmatic leader Devlet Bahçeli,

who took up the reins of the party in 1997, has emerged as the main ally of the AKP in the constitutional change. Authorities insist that the changes are needed to make government more efficient and would be little different to the presidential systems in the United States or France.

“The constitutional changes will boost our country. God willing, no one will stand in the way of Turkey’s new construction and rise,” Erdogan said on Saturday. Prime minister from 2003 before becoming president in 2014, Erdogan has transformed Turkey in one-and-a-half decades in power, overseeing ambitious infrastructure projects and an industrial resurgence. But critics also accuse him of presiding over a creeping Islamization and polarizing to dangerous levels the country’s diverse society.—AFP

MOGHERINI SAYS EU TO STAND BY IRAN NUCLEAR ACCORD

‘PROOF THAT DIPLOMACY WORKS AND DELIVERS’

BRUSSELS: EU foreign affairs head Federica Mogherini yesterday insisted the bloc will stand by the Iran nuclear accord, bluntly condemned by US President-elect Donald Trump, because it serves Europe’s security needs. “It is proof that diplomacy

works and delivers... The European Union will continue to work for the respect and implementation of this extremely important deal, most of all for our security,” Mogherini told reporters as she went into an EU foreign ministers meeting.

Trump has repeatedly blasted the nuclear accord with Iran as “one of the dumbest deals I have ever seen”, claiming it will not stop Tehran getting atomic weapons.

He repeated the charge in interviews with top European newspapers on Sunday when he also cast fresh doubt on NATO’s role and the EU’s future after Brexit. Mogherini said she would not comment on Trump’s remarks, but claimed-on the first anniversary of the accord she helped negotiate—that much had been accomplished. The agreement “has delivered both on the nuclear-related commitments Iran took and on the firm determination of the international community to fully implement this deal”, she said. As far as the EU was concerned, the accord had resulted in increased trade and economic ties, “which is really significant”, she added. British foreign minister Boris Johnson, who spoke to the press ahead of the EU ministers meeting, also said the accord must be maintained.

He said it had been “a difficult and controversial deal, but one which has stopped the Iranians from acquiring nuclear technology they might otherwise have acquired, and it is a deal which we think has great merit and we want to keep going.” The accord was finally sealed in 2015, before being implemented in Jan 2016, with Tehran agreeing to rein in its nuclear program in return for an easing of punishing Western economic sanctions. US President Barack Obama hailed the accord as one of his major achievements, preventing Iran getting nuclear weapons without having to go to war, but Trump has said repeatedly he will ditch it.—AFP



CHICAGO: This file photo shows US President Barack Obama speaking during his farewell address in Chicago, Illinois.—AFP

SYRIAN REBEL GROUPS SAY WILL ATTEND ASTANA PEACE TALKS

BEIRUT: Syrian rebel groups will attend talks in the Kazakh capital next week aimed at bringing an end to the country’s nearly six-year war, rebel officials said yesterday. “All the rebel groups are going. Everyone has agreed,” said Mohammad Alloush, a leading figure in the Jaish al-Islam (Army of Islam) rebel group. “Astana is a process to end the bloodletting by the regime and its allies. We want to end this series of crimes,” Alloush said. Ahmad al-Othman from the Sultan Murad faction also told AFP that “the rebel groups have decided to go to the talks”.

The meetings in Astana are hosted by regime backer Russia and rebel supporter Turkey, who are working closely to find an end to the Syrian conflict although they have backed opposing sides. The talks are set to begin on Jan 23. Earlier this month, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad said he was “optimistic” about the talks and would be “ready for reconciliation with rebels on the condition that they lay down their arms”, according to the French lawmakers with whom he met.

US president-elect Donald Trump’s transition team has been invited to take part, but has not yet officially responded. The talks are expected to build on a nationwide truce that began on December 30 and initially saw a drop in violence across many of Syria’s battlefronts. The ceasefire excludes the Islamic State jihadist group and its rival, the Fateh al-Sham Front, which changed its name from Al-Nusra Front after breaking ties with Al-Qaeda last year.—AFP



BEIRUT: Syrian Kurdish protesters hold a portrait of jailed Kurdish rebel chief Abdullah Ocalan yesterday, during a demonstration in the northeastern city of Qamishi denouncing that Kurdsish representatives were not invited to take part in the upcoming Astana peace talks.—AFP

IRAN ARRESTS CORRUPTION FUGITIVE AFTER INTERNATIONAL MANHUNT

TEHRAN: An Iranian man accused of helping to embezzle billions of dollars while the country evaded international oil sanctions has been arrested after a lengthy international manhunt, media reported yesterday. Alireza Zibahalat Monfared, 43, is accused of involvement in Iran’s biggest-ever corruption scandal, working alongside tycoon Babak Zanjani who was sentenced to death last year for pocketing \$2.8 billion while helping the country bypass sanctions. The head of Iran’s international police department, Masoud Rezvani, told Mizan Online that Monfared had been extradited via Havana and Moscow before arriving in Tehran on Sunday.

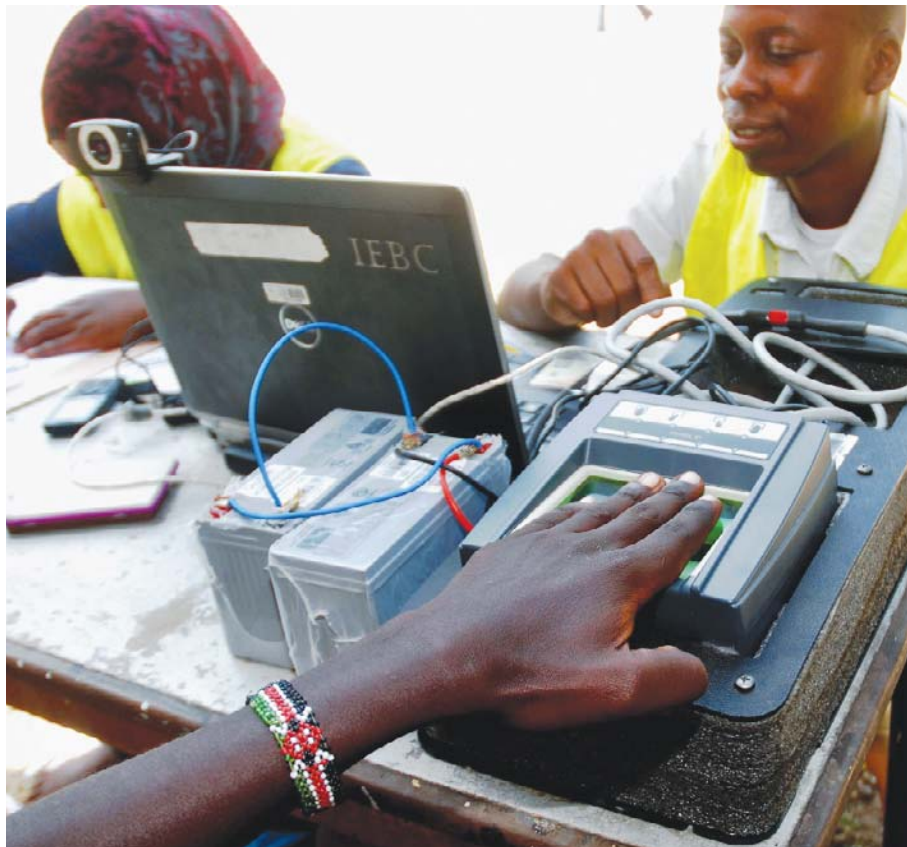
Monfared had various passports and had managed to escape extradition at least once when he was briefly detained in Malaysia, Rezvani added, without giving further details.

Unconfirmed reports said he had finally been arrested in Dominica, according to the state-run Iran Daily newspaper. “He had close contacts with the main individuals in the great oil embezzlement file and was handed to the judiciary,” Rezvani said. Before his trial, Zanjani would regularly boast in media interviews of his wealth and skills in finding ways round global banking sanctions to ensure Iran continued to receive money for international oil sales, saying he acted at all times with the support of then-president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Zanjani’s lawyer, Rasoul Kouhpayehzadeh, welcomed Monfared’s arrest, saying it would prove his client’s innocence. Monfared’s “interrogation and trial will shed light on many issues and unsolved puzzles,” Kouhpayehzadeh said, according to Iran Daily. “My client had no

role in the trade of oil consignments. (Monfared) played an important role in the sale operations... In fact, he did the oil operations.” Zanjani was arrested in 2013, three months after President Hassan Rouhani took office pledging a crackdown on corruption, that has shown limited results.

On Sunday, officials announced the arrest of a suspect accused of stealing 20,000 billion rial (\$500 million) in loans designed for manufacturing projects. In 2014, Iran hanged businessman Mahafarid Amir Khosravi for masterminding a \$2.6 billion banking scam, while one of the main suspects, Bank Mellî’s former chief Mahmoud Reza Khavari, fled to Canada. News of Monfared’s arrest comes on the first anniversary of the lifting of sanctions against Iran following an agreement with world powers over its nuclear program.—AFP



KENYA: A person’s has their fingerprints are scanned during a voter registration drive in Mombasa yesterday.—AFP

KENYA REGISTERS VOTERS AHEAD OF AUGUST 2017 ELECTION

NAIROBI: Kenya’s election commission began a national drive to register millions of new voters ahead of the August presidential poll, with rival parties encouraging their supporters to sign up on time. Kenyans will go to the polls on August 8 in what is set to be a hard-fought general election decided in large part by the core support of candidates’ ethnic constituencies. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) said its ‘Mass Voter Registration’ exercise would last from Monday until Feb 14 when registration will end.

Already 15.9 million Kenyans have registered, more than the 14.4 million who did so for the last election in 2013. IEBC officials predict an additional four to six million will register at nearly 25,000 centers nationwide in the coming weeks. Any Kenyan citizen over the age of 18 and with a national ID card or passport can register by having their finger prints and digital photograph recorded. IEBC chief executive Ezra Chiloba said recent months of “very polarizing debates” and “extreme views on certain policy decisions concerning elections” should end. “Let all Kenyans, leaders across the board, state and non-state actors get out there and mobilize eligible citizens to register as voters,” Chiloba said.

Ethnic census

Both President Uhuru Kenyatta’s ruling party and the newly-formed opposition alliance are eager to get their supporters on the electoral roll. “Citizens have been

turned into voting machines,” warned a weekend editorial in Kenya’s main Daily Nation newspaper, arguing that people should not be coerced into registration by heavy-handed party activists. “Unfortunately, the reason why voter registration has become the epicenter of combat is because voting has been turned into an ethnic census. Political coalitions, which are essentially an amalgam of ethnic entities, want to herd their kindred into voting blocs and use their numeric strength to wrest power.”

Elections in 2013 were bad-tempered, close and disputed by Raila Odinga who came second, but they marked an important break from Odinga’s 2007 loss to Mwai Kibaki, which was followed by weeks of politically motivated ethnic violence that killed over a thousand people. Kenya’s alliance with deputy president William Ruto in 2013 united their respective Kikuyu and Kalenjin ethnic groups, which had fought against each other in 2007. The International Criminal Court (ICC) accused both men of stoking the violence but eventually dropped charges of crimes against humanity after witnesses disappeared or recanted.

Last week five of Kenya’s main opposition parties announced the formation of an alliance to unseat Kenyatta and Ruto, called the National Super Alliance (NASA), promising to back an as yet unnamed joint candidate. Odinga, a Luo who has contested three previous elections, is eager to run once again.—AFP

AT LEAST THREE DEAD IN NIGERIA SUICIDE ATTACK

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria: At least three people were killed and 15 others were injured in a suicide bomb attack on a university campus in northeast Nigeria, police said yesterday. The blast happened at a mosque in the staff quarters area of the University of Maiduguri and is thought to have been carried out by a teenage girl, a local resident and a lecturer said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but suspicion will likely fall on the Islamist group Boko Haram, which has repeatedly used young women and girls as human bombs.

Borno police spokesman Victor Isuku said that before the blast at the mosque, police on patrol shot a girl aged about 12 as she tried to get into the university at about 5:15 am (0415 GMT). “The IED (improvised explosive device) strapped to her body exploded, killing her instantly,” he said in a statement. “Shortly after that a second explosion occurred in a mosque inside the university. Four persons, including a professor and the second suicide bomber, died, while 15 persons sustained various degrees of injuries and were rushed to UMTH (University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital)”.

One local resident, who asked not to be identified, said he heard two explosions at 5:25 am as he was leav-

ing the mosque in his neighborhood. “I rushed to the university, which is not far from my house. On entering, I saw the mosque in a mess. Three people lay dead, including a young girl, whose body was badly mutilated,” he said. “Thirteen other worshippers were killed.” A university lecturer who lives on site confirmed the resident’s account.

No let-up in attacks

Access to the university campus has been strictly controlled, with checkpoints and searches at the gates. But the site, on one of the main thoroughfares leading in to and out of the city, is vast and most areas are badly lit. At least 20,000 people have been killed in the conflict since it began in 2009 and more than 2.6 million others made homeless.

Nigeria maintains the insurgency is in its final stages. Last month said it had flushed out Boko Haram fighters from their stronghold in the Sambisa Forest area of Borno state, of which Maiduguri is the capital. Yet there has been no let-up in attacks both on troops and civilians. On Jan 8, at least five soldiers were killed when rebels targeted a base in Buni Yadi, in neighbouring Yobe state. The following day, suicide bombers killed three in Maiduguri.—AFP

PENCE LOOKS LIKE HE WILL BE TRUMP'S INSIDE MAN IN CONGRESS

WASHINGTON: When Mike Pence landed in Congress after the 2000 election, he was a conservative agitator who often bucked President George W. Bush's agenda. Seventeen years later, he's the vice president-elect and Donald Trump's inside man on Capitol Hill. Pence, who spent a dozen years in Congress before becoming Indiana's governor, is visiting frequently with lawmakers and promising close coordination after Trump's inauguration Friday. In a sign of his attentiveness, Pence will have an office in the House as well as the traditional honorary office for the vice president in the Senate.

Pence's role takes on greater importance, given Trump's ascension to the White House without any experience in elective office. Trump has few long-standing political alliances in Congress and a strained relationship with the Republican establishment, a hangover from the 2016 campaign. Trump's

agenda doesn't always align with Republicans' priorities, and his inflammatory remarks about immigrants, Muslims and women made many in the GOP cringe. Pence has forged an enduring friendship with House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., dating to their early years in Congress, along with other House Republicans crucial to advancing Trump's agenda.

Trusted intermediary

In early meetings with lawmakers, Pence has passed out his personal cellphone number and promised an open line to the administration. "He's the trusted intermediary. He's the person that people on both sides of Pennsylvania Avenue know and trust," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla. If Trump is known for his brash form of disruptive politics, Pence represents the incoming administration in a more traditional manner, exemplified by his polite, Midwestern

demeanor. He joined Trump in New York on Wednesday for the president-elect's first news conference since the Nov 8 election. Pence soon returned to Capitol Hill for meetings with several senators, including Democrats.

Joe Donnelly of Indiana, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Tim Kaine of Virginia. The latter was Hillary Clinton's running mate and Pence's adversary in October's vice president debate. "Opportunities to work together on issues like infrastructure and child care we think represent a significant chance to bring together leaders in both political parties," Pence said after meeting with Kaine. Pence's early days in Washington were marked more by his role as a conservative purist than deal-maker. He opposed the Bush administration on issues such as the president's No Child Left Behind education law and an overhaul of Medicare that provided new prescrip-

tion drug coverage in 2003. Pence was a leading conservative voice, often arguing that the Republican administration had strayed from conservative principles and had failed to curb federal spending. After Republicans were swept from power in the 2006 elections, Pence unsuccessfully challenged Rep. John Boehner, R-Ohio, to become minority leader. Two years later, Boehner backed Pence's entry into the leadership team, elevating the Indiana congressman to chairman of the House GOP conference, the party's Number 3 post. One of the ways Pence built lasting ties with fellow lawmakers was through Bible study.

Pence often joined Ryan, House Financial Services Chairman Jeb Hensarling, R-Texas, and Georgia Rep. Tom Price, Trump's pick to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, for weekly Bible study sessions. — AP



CARACAS: A street coffee vendor shows a new 500-Bolivar-note (74 cents of US dollar) in Caracas yesterday. — AFP

VENEZUELA PRESIDENT RENEWS CRISIS CONTROLS, SNUBS FOES

CARACAS: Venezuela's leader Nicolas Maduro angered his opponents Sunday by refusing to face them for his annual presidential address, fanning tensions as he renewed his emergency powers in a volatile crisis. His decision to give the speech in the pro-Maduro Supreme Court instead of the legislature aggravated a political standoff in the oil-exporting country.

Delivering it inside the court building, he confirmed the depth of Venezuela's economic troubles. Maduro said income from the country's crucial oil exports plunged from more than \$48 billion in 2008 to just \$5.3 billion last year. That has meant less money to fund the social welfare model championed by Maduro and his late predecessor Hugo Chavez. "This revenue model has become unviable," Maduro admitted.

Unconstitutional

Maduro's appearance in the Supreme Court was a snub to his rivals in the National Assembly legislature where the speech is supposed to take place. The new opposition speaker of the assembly, Julio Borges, told reporters Maduro was violating the constitution, which says the address must be delivered in the assembly. Maduro considers the assembly illegitimate because the Supreme Court has disqualified some of its opposition members. The court has consistently ruled in Maduro's favor against the assembly since the opposition majority took over a year ago.

Long, hard year

The opposition MUD coalition blames Maduro for an economic crisis that has prompted deadly riots and looting due to shortages of food and medicine. It wants a popular vote on removing him from office. Maduro denies he is to blame, saying the crisis is the result of a US-backed capitalist conspiracy. His speech on Sunday reviewed a year that saw Venezuela's economic woes deepen. The year 2016 was "the longest and hardest" for his government since it took office after Chavez's death in 2013, he said. Falling prices for Venezuela's crucial oil exports have aggravated the economic cri-

sis, which has forced people to queue for hours to buy rations. The International Monetary Fund forecasts inflation in Venezuela will soar to a mind-boggling 1,660 percent this year. But Maduro vowed to keep "riding out the crisis" through the economic emergency measures. First launched a year ago, they give his government control of food production and other strategic industries. Maduro also promised to expand food aid programs for the poor.

Political battle

The political dispute between Maduro and the MUD has dragged on over the past year with no solution in sight. Vatican-mediated crisis talks between the government and opposition broke down last month, with the opposition accusing Maduro of bad faith. He insisted on Sunday that he is committed to "consolidating" the dialogue. But the opposition has ruled out a return to the talks. It plans fresh street protests on Jan 23. Opposition majority lawmakers in the National Assembly last week passed a motion declaring that Maduro had effectively "abandoned his post" by failing to tackle the economic crisis. Maduro branded that move a "coup" attempt. He launched an "anti-coup commando squad" that arrested seven of Maduro's prominent opponents this week.

Maduro strong

Venezuelan analyst Diego Moya-Ocampos at the research group IHS Markit Country Risk in London forecast ahead of Maduro's address that 2017 will see "a continuation of intervention in the economy, more regulations, inspections of businesses, price and exchange rate controls, more inflation and economic contraction." Although opinion polls indicate that Maduro's popularity is low, he retains the public support of the military high command and control over most state institutions. "I do not see Maduro as likely to be ousted," political scientist Ricardo Sucre said. "He seems to me stronger within his camp. They have passed the hardest of tests against all expectations." — AFP

OMAN ACCEPTS 10 INMATES FROM GUANTANAMO BAY

45 PRISONERS REMAIN IN DETENTION CENTER

DUBAI: Oman said yesterday it accepted 10 detainees from the US prison at Guantanamo Bay ahead of President Barack Obama leaving office, part of his efforts to shrink the facility he promised to close. Oman's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that it had accepted the prisoners at Obama's request. It did not name the prisoners. "In consideration of their humanitarian situation, 10 persons have been released from detention and arrived in the sultanate today for a temporary residence," the statement said.

The US Defense Department did not immediately respond to questions about the transfer. A US defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity as the transfer had yet to be publicly announced by the US, confirmed the prisoners had been sent to Oman. The official declined to elaborate. The Omani Embassy in Washington said it had no other information about the transfer. The US Embassy in Muscat declined to immediately comment. The sultanate of Oman, on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, previously accepted 10 Guantanamo prisoners from Yemen in Jan 2016. Oman also took another six in June 2015. Neighboring Saudi Arabia took four prisoners earlier this month and the United Arab Emirates took 15 in the largest-single transfer during Obama's administration in August. The latest transfers would leave the number of Guantanamo detainees at 45, based on figures the Pentagon issued when four Yemenis were sent to Saudi Arabia on Jan 6.

Oman, ruled by Sultan Qaboos bin Said since 1970, has served as an interlocutor between the West and Iran. It also has negotiated a number of prisoner releases in recent years for Western countries. Yemen, the Arab world's poorest country, remains in the grip of a civil war and a Saudi-led military offensive against the rebels - making returning Guantanamo detainees there impossible. Days earlier, authorities said 19 of the remaining 55 prisoners at the US military base in Cuba



In this June 7, 2014, file photo, the entrance to Camp 5 and Camp 6 at the US military's Guantanamo Bay detention center, at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, Cuba. — AP

were cleared for release and could be freed in the final days of Obama's presidency. Obama has been unable to fulfil promises to close the facility in part because of congressional opposition to transferring any of the detainees to US prisons. Congress ultimately banned the transfer of prisoners to US soil for any reason.

Donald Trump, who will be inaugurated Friday as America's 45th president, said during his campaign that he not only wants to keep Guantanamo open but "load it up with some bad dudes." That's put pressure on the Obama administration to find places to send as many of the prisoners abroad as possible this week.

The US began using its military base on south-east Cuba's isolated, rocky coast to hold prisoners

captured during the Afghanistan invasion, bringing the first planeload on Jan 11, 2002. At its peak, 18 months later, the facility held nearly 680 detainees. There were 242 prisoners when Obama took office in 2009, pledging to close what became a source of international criticism over the mistreatment of detainees and the notion of holding people indefinitely, most without charge. A September report released by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said 122 of 693 detainees transferred out of the prison, or 17.6 percent, returned to fighting. An additional 86 detainees are suspected of having returned to the battlefield, according to the report. The majority of Guantanamo prisoners released have been sent to Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. — AP

OBAMA PREPARES FOR A BUSY RETIREMENT, MORE FREEDOM

WASHINGTON: For Barack Obama, there's a presidential library to build, hundreds of millions of dollars to raise, causes to champion and a book to write. And don't forget that long-promised vacation with his wife. Looming retirement is looking like anything but for the 44th president. Obama's next chapter starts Friday when he becomes an ex-president. He'll be freer to speak his mind, set his own schedule and make some money. Already, Obama is looking ahead to the book he wants to write, and has had talks with Hollywood agent Ari Emanuel about arrangements that could include speaking gigs.

At 55, Obama will be a relatively young ex-president, with plenty of time for a second act. He's ruled out running another campaign for political office - so has his wife - but he has pledged to stay active in the national conversation. With President-elect Donald Trump headed to the White House, Democrats are eager for Obama to play the role of shadow-president, offering direction to those Americans who feel they lost their political compass the day Trump was elected. Obama has said he has plenty of ideas for how his party can revive itself, but after eight years as president, his role will be to offer guidance, not to micromanage.

"I think it's appropriate for me to give advice, because I need some sleep," Obama told NPR last month. "And I've promised Michelle a nice vacation. My girls are getting old enough now where I'm clinging to those very last moments before they are out of the house." Obama is expected to keep a low profile for the first few months after Trump's swearing-in. Following some relaxation time with his wife and daughters in an unnamed location, the family will return to Washington, where they've rented a mansion in the upscale Kalorama neighborhood. Obama has repeatedly praised George W Bush for giving him room to operate without having the ex-president publicly second-guess him at every turn.

Still, Obama has reserved the right to speak out against Trump if he pursues policies the president finds particularly odious, such as a ban on Muslim immigration or mass deportation of children brought to the US illegally. "The party is in bad state and there are no clear, obvious voices for Democrats yet," said Julian Zelizer, a presidential historian at Princeton University. "If there's anyone who could stand up to a President Trump, it's going to be former President Obama." Obama may re-emerge in a more public way around the time he releases his book - probably sometime next year - and goes on a promotional tour.

Obama's chief White House speechwriter, Cody Keenan, is expected to stay with his boss to help him craft the sequel to Obama's two previous best-sellers. Though Obama has yet to fully

settle his plans, four individuals familiar with Obama's thinking said over the last year that he's discussed post-presidency arrangements with Emanuel, a leading talent executive. One of Emanuel's brothers is Obama's former chief of staff, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel. It's unclear whether Obama will sign with Ari Emanuel. But the discussions suggest Obama has been looking to Hollywood for inspiration about ways to engage creatively and on multiple fronts, such as digital media and television. Emanuel didn't respond to a request for comment.

Whatever direction he chooses, Obama will not be pressed financially. He can expect to fetch an advance of more than \$20 million for his book, said Keith Urbahn, a literary agent at Javelin DC who's handled best-sellers for top political figures. "Half of the country still looks at him as their leader," Urbahn said. "From a publishing perspective, he will probably end up with the highest advance of any ex-president in history." It won't be long until Obama and his wife start raising money for the Barack Obama Foundation, which is developing his presidential library and center in Chicago. The price tag is

expected to approach half a billion dollars.

The Obamas will have to hire personnel in the coming months as they engage more heavily in designing the center. While it will be several years before the library is up and running, the foundation has left open the possibility it might start some programming sooner. Former White House aide Amy Brundage, a spokeswoman for the foundation, said it would use 2017 to "build upon the work that has begun" to create a center that inspires people to take on big challenges. Obama also plans to stay involved in his My Brother's Keeper initiative, recently renamed the "Task Force on Improving the Lives of Boys and Young Men of Color and Underserved Youth."

He is also teaming up with former Attorney General Eric Holder on the National Democratic Redistricting Committee, a new initiative to improve Democrats' hand when political districts are redrawn in 2020. The hub of Obama's activity will be his personal office, to be housed in the World Wildlife Fund headquarters not far from his rented home. For the first six months, he'll also have a government-funded office overseeing his transition to ex-president. — AP

IVANKA TRUMP TO CONTINUE WORKING ON WOMEN'S ISSUES

DES MOINES, Iowa: She may not be working in the White House, but that doesn't mean Ivanka Trump is staying out of politics. Although she has said she will have no official role in her father's administration, Ivanka Trump has been quietly laying the groundwork for an effort that could make her perhaps the best-connected policy advocate in Washington. Trump, who has made clear she wants to push for policies benefiting women and girls, last week sought the advice of a group of female executives and media stars in New York City. And transition aides have reached out to congressional staff on childcare policies, an area she has urged President-elect Donald Trump to prioritize.

In a Facebook post detailing her next moves, Ivanka Trump thanked people who had reached out on such issues and added that she is determining the "most impactful and appropriate ways for me to serve our country." It is not clear if Trump will establish herself independently or if she will eventually enter the White House. But operating from the outside may take her into uncharted territory, as there are few recent examples of a first family member without a White House office advocating for policies. The closest model is the first lady, who has an office in the East Wing.

For now, the businesswoman has said

only that she is stepping away from executive roles at the Trump Organization and her lifestyle brand and is moving her family to Washington so that her husband Jared Kushner can take a job as a senior adviser. She has also stressed that she wants to focus on setting her three young children in a new home. But Ivanka Trump is also thinking beyond that. On Thursday, she attended a dinner with female executives at the home of her friend Wendi Deng, ex-wife of media executive Rupert Murdoch. The dinner was put together by Dina Powell, a Goldman Sachs partner who is joining the Trump administration as an assistant to the president and senior counselor for economic initiatives.

Powell has been advising Ivanka Trump and is expected to continue working closely with her. Other guests included MSNBC "Morning Joe" co-host Mika Brzezinski, model Christy Turlington Burns, former White House press secretary Dana Perino, Xerox Chairperson Ursula Burns, Deloitte CEO Cathy Engelbert, Glamour Editor-in-Chief Cynthia Leive and Time Managing Editor Nancy Gibbs. Another attendee, Pattie Sellers, executive director of Fortune's Most Powerful Women Summits, wrote on Fortune.com that Ivanka Trump "explained that she wanted to learn from the efforts of leaders in their fields." — AP



WASHINGTON: President Barack Obama listens as Vice President Joe Biden speaks during a ceremony in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington, where Obama presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. — AP

FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL HOPEFUL VALLS ATTACKED OVER MIGRANTS



PARIS: Candidate for the French left's presidential primaries ahead of the 2017 presidential election and former Prime minister Manuel Valls answers journalists' questions after the second televised debate between the candidates, in Paris. —AFP

PARIS: Former French premier Manuel Valls came under fire Sunday for his cautious stance on taking in refugees during the migrant crisis, in a fraught second debate of leftwing candidates for the presidency. Valls, who quit President Francois Hollande's government last month to stand as a candidate in the primary, was accused of only admitting a few thousand migrants during his time in office. "I get the feeling that the French people were much more generous than their leaders," said Vincent Peillon, a former education minister who is considered an outsider in the contest.

Another candidate, Benoit Hamon, told Valls that France had a duty to "show its values, especially when it comes to migrants and refugees." Valls hit back that "an open-ended policy (of accepting migrants) is not possible." "I think France was right to follow this policy and history has proved us right," he added. The influx of more than one million asylum seekers—mostly from war-torn Syria—into the European Union in 2015 triggered

the worst refugee and migrant crisis on the continent since World War II. France's EU heavyweight neighbor Germany opened its doors, bringing in 890,000 asylum seekers in that year alone and fueling debate about why other EU states could not take more.

Socialists face battle

The French political attacks showed once again that a week ahead of the first round of voting on Jan 22 followed by a runoff on Jan 29, Spanish-born Valls' campaign is struggling to take off. A poll of TV viewers after the debate had Arnaud Montebourg, who served as economy minister in Hollande's government before quitting, as the most convincing of the seven candidates. He polled 29 percent, ahead of 26 percent for Valls. With Hollande ruling out a bid to retain the presidency after a torrid five years in power dogged by unemployment and terror attacks, the Socialists are seeking a presidential candidate who can at least salvage some pride for the party.

Current projections show the Socialist candidate, whoever it is, crashing out in the first round of the election, as voters across Europe lean to the right or opt for anti-establishment and anti-immigration parties like Marine Le Pen's National Front. The majority of polls currently predict that conservative candidate Francois Fillon will face Le Pen in the decisive second round on May 7, although after Donald Trump's win in the United States and the victory of Brexit in Britain, no-one is taking anything for granted.

Looming large over the leftwing primary are Hollande's star former economy minister Emmanuel Macron and Communist-backed firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon, both of whom are running for president outside of the primary system. Macron, a 39-year-old former Rothschild banker who positions himself as "neither of the right or the left," drew a crowd of several thousand supporters when he held a rally in the northern city of Lille on Saturday. —AFP

US VICE PRESIDENT VISITS UKRAINE TO SHOW SUPPORT

‘LAST TRIP AS VICE PRESIDENT TO HONOR THE PROGRESS’

KIEV: Outgoing US Vice President Joe Biden arrived in Ukraine yesterday to support the war-scarred country's leaders amid concerns that ties could chill under Donald Trump. Biden's one-day visit to meet President Petro Poroshenko and Prime Minister Volodymyr

Groysman was his last to Kiev before leaving office and was aimed at underscoring his personal involvement in providing support for the former Soviet country.

Biden has spearheaded efforts by Barack Obama's outgoing administration to push Ukraine

towards reforms as the country struggles with Russia's annexation of Crimea and its support for separatist fighters in the east of the country. But US president-elect Trump's praise for Russian President Vladimir Putin has raised doubts over whether he will pro-

vide further assistance for Kiev. "I wanted to come here one more time in my last trip as vice president to honor how much progress the people of Ukraine have achieved," Biden told journalists at a briefing alongside Poroshenko, saying Americans and Ukrainians were united by deep bonds.

"I hope the next administration will also want to be a supporter and a partner in your continued progress but as you know no one else can do the hard work but the Ukrainian people." Biden's visit comes days after Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed rebels accused each other of disrupting a fragile truce declared in late December. That deal brought fresh hope of an end to almost three years of a conflict that has killed nearly 10,000 people.

Ukraine and its Western allies including the United States accuse Russia of fuelling the war by deploying troops and smuggling arms to separatists, claims Moscow has repeatedly denied. "It is no secret that Russia does not want you to succeed," Biden said, adding that Russia had for the last decade "used corruption to keep Ukraine vulnerable." Despite giving broad economic support for the pro-Western government in Kiev, Obama's administration has held off on supplying lethal assistance.—AFP



KIEV: US Vice President Joe Biden (Left) and Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko shake hands at the end of their joint press statement following their meeting in Kiev yesterday. —AFP

TRUMP ENTERS THE WHITE HOUSE FACING MYRIAD CRISES

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump enters the White House embroiled in scandal, in a pitched battle with the intelligence services and news media, and facing a world on fire. Among the many challenges the president-elect will face after his inauguration on Friday, the most urgent may be to steady the ship. Even before being sworn in, he is facing a Congressional investigation into possible collusion between Russia and his election campaign. Fearing an asterisk is being painted next to his historic victory over Hillary Clinton, Trump has gone on the offensive.

The incoming Republican leader has lashed out at "sleazebag political operatives," the intelligence services-whom he compared to Nazis-and the media, reprising campaign tactics that played well with his base. But add to that serious allegations of nepotism, legal problems over his business interests, the ill-preparedness of some of his cabinet nominees and a fracas over health care reform that has left Republicans in disarray, and the picture gets even bleaker. The image of "Teflon Don"—who as a candidate rode out scandal like no one else in modern political history—is taking on water.

Quite aside from the cost in time and energy of fighting on multiple fronts, the crises appear to be eroding his credibility, the base currency of any presidency. His approval rating stands at 44 percent, according to a Gallup poll—the lowest level of support for any incoming president since the organization began doing the surveys in the Clinton era. In the corresponding period before his presidency, Barack Obama enjoyed an 83 percent rating. That unpopularity will make it much easier for allies to bolt. Republican lawmakers up for re-election or in moderate states and districts are unlikely to go to bat for a deeply unpopular president.

Senator Marco Rubio—a former Trump rival for the Republican presidential nomination—is already openly raising the prospect he could oppose Trump's pick for secretary of state, oil executive Rex Tillerson. Republican governors are also balking at plans to repeal Obamacare, and all the time Trump's victory is being called into question. A massive "Women's March on Washington" is planned for Saturday, the day after his inauguration.

With this kind of sentiment swirling, Trump may be the first president to enter the White House with a bunker mentality.

Peppered the first 100 days of his administration with populist legislation and executive actions would help stem the bleeding—as would avoiding unnecessary fights.

Keep the band together

To help him run the country, Trump has turned to a disparate group of family members, generals, billionaires and establishment Republicans—few of whom have any White House experience. The CEO-turned-commander-in-chief sees his freewheeling style as an asset. It will have a massive impact on how his decisions are framed. A variety of opinions inside the White House can be constructive, or fuel turf wars and jockeying for influence that can split the house asunder. Will Trump's daughter Ivanka or her husband Jared Kushner be the last person in the room? Will it be conservatives like Vice President Mike Pence or hard-right ideologues like chief strategist Steve Bannon?

Strongmen

Trump, like Obama, will take office at a time when rival regional powers are gaining more clout and are not afraid to use it. Preserving US primacy will be a full-time job. In Russia, Vladimir Putin may be the strongest leader since Leonid Brezhnev, as he aggressively tries to renegotiate the terms of the end of the Cold War. Putin's effort to re-establish Moscow's influence in Syria already hobbled the Obama administration. A similar Russian drive in Afghanistan, Libya or eastern Europe could pose serious problems for Trump's bid to smooth relations.

Meanwhile, the president-elect has taken a more bellicose stance toward China, at just the time Beijing is feeling more assertive. Whereas Mao Zedong transformed Chinese society, and Deng Xiaoping made the country an economic power, current leader Xi Jinping wants to make China a diplomatic and military force. Trump and Xi's rival ambitions dramatically raise the possibility that various disputes—from Taiwan to currency rates to freedom of navigation in the South China Sea—could become flashpoints.

Allies

Few have been more perturbed by Trump's election than America's traditional allies. Trump has questioned the value of both NATO—calling it "obsolete" in an interview with the German tabloid Bild and The Times of London published Sunday and Washington's treaty obligations to help secure allies in Asia, which underpin the global order.

"Trump has long believed the United States is being taken advantage of by its allies," said Thomas Wright of the Brookings Institution. "He would prefer that the United States not have to defend other nations, but, if it does, he wants to get paid as much as possible for it." So far, most—including Britain and Japan—have adopted a strategy of engagement, getting close to Trump in order to win his ear.

Situation room

Every president will endure surprise national security crises, but perhaps the biggest foreign crisis facing Trump is well known—North Korea. The country has been working feverishly to fuse two lethal technologies, a ballistic missile capable of reaching the continental United States and a miniaturized nuclear device to be its apocalyptic payload. Trump has already painted that as a red line. "North Korea just stated that it is in the final stages of developing a nuclear weapon capable of reaching parts of the US. It won't happen!" he tweeted. Making sure of that will be far more difficult.

Sanctions against North Korea have had limited impact and Trump's hostility to China would seem to forestall any help from Beijing in squeezing Pyongyang. He could turn to more dramatic responses, from disabling North Korean weapons systems by cyberattack, airstrikes or invasion.

"Trump will hear siren calls to launch a preventive war," said Leon Sigal of the Social Science Research Council. But that would mean trusting US intelligence. "For a president who, as a candidate, repeatedly criticized US military intervention abroad and was skeptical of alliances," Sigal said, "that option might be particularly unpalatable." —AFP



NEW YORK: In this file photo, President-elect Donald Trump speaks during a news conference in the lobby of Trump Tower in New York. —AP

MUTED REACTION IN RUSSIA TO TRUMP'S TALK OF NUCLEAR ARMS CUT

MOSCOW: Suggestions by President-elect Donald Trump that sanctions against Russia could be lifted in exchange for a nuclear arms cut attracted a frosty reception in Moscow yesterday. In an interview with the Times of London published on Sunday, Trump indicated that he could end sanctions imposed on Russia in the aftermath of the 2014 annexation of Crimea in return for a nuclear arms reduction deal. Russia isn't so anxious to get the sanctions lifted that it is prepared to "sacrifice something, especially in what concerns security," said Konstantin Kosachev, the Kremlin-connected chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the upper house of parliament.

Kosachev also told the RIA Novosti news agency that Trump's comments to the Times should be treated with caution because it wasn't an official statement, since Trump hasn't assumed office yet. Washington, along with the European Union, has imposed several rounds of economic sanctions on Russia and travel bans for individuals following Moscow's annexation of Crimea and interference in the conflict in eastern Ukraine. The latest round of US sanctions came at the end of December. President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, sounded similarly cautious with reporters in Moscow later in the day.

"Let's wait until he assumes office before we give assessment to any initiatives," Peskov said. He added that Russia never raises the issue of sanctions in talks with its foreign counterparts and doesn't intend to do so because it's not up to Moscow to scrap them. Another influential Russian lawmaker, Alexei Pushkov, in a tweet late Sunday laughed off warnings of the CIA director about challenges that will follow lifting the sanctions. Speaking on Fox News, CIA Director John Brennan said on Sunday that in his opinion Trump doesn't have "a full understanding of Russian capabilities and the actions they are taking on the world." Pushkov replied on Twitter: "There aren't going to be any consequences. Except for their proponents getting a heart attack." —AP

EU HITS BACK AT TRUMP OVER OBSOLETE NATO

BRUSSELS: Angela Merkel led a sharp European response to US President-elect Donald Trump yesterday after he branded the NATO alliance "obsolete" and criticized the German chancellor's open-door refugee policy. In a hard-hitting interview with two European newspapers, Trump unleashed a volley of verbal attacks on Europe, hailing Britain's decision to leave the European Union and saying more countries were going to quit the bloc.

With fears growing in Europe over Trump's commitment to the transatlantic alliance and over signs he will pivot towards Russia, Merkel warned that the continent now had to take responsibility for itself. "We Europeans have our fate in our own hands," Merkel told reporters in Berlin when asked about Trump's criticisms, adding that she will work towards getting the EU to strengthen the economy and fight terrorism.

Germany's foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said Europe was stunned by Trump's remarks on NATO, just five days ahead of the billionaire businessman's inauguration as president. "The interview statements of the American president-elect... caused, indeed here in Brussels, astonishment and agitation," Steinmeier said as he went from a meeting with NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg to talks with EU counterparts. France's top diplomat Jean-Marc Ayrault said "the best response" to Trump's comments was "the unity of Europeans".

NATO 'obsolete'

Trump's latest remarks have in particular caused further consternation among eastern European NATO countries nervous about Moscow following Russia's annexation of Crimea and involvement in Ukraine. "I said a long time ago that NATO had problems," Trump told The Times of London and Bild, Germany's biggest-selling daily, on Friday. "Number one, it was obsolete, because it was designed many, many years ago," he said, referring to its Cold War, post-World War II origins. "Number two, the countries aren't paying what they're supposed to pay."

On the campaign trail, Trump said he would think twice about helping NATO allies if the United States was not "reasonably reimbursed" for the costs of defending them—a common source of friction in the US-led 28-nation alliance. NATO chief Stoltenberg reiterated that he had full confidence in the US commitment to Europe. "He is absolutely confident that the incoming US administration will remain committed to NATO," spokeswoman Oana Lungescu said. Trump further extended a hand to Russia, which has been hit by a string of sanctions under President Barack Obama over Moscow's involvement in Ukraine, the Syrian war and for suspected cyber attacks to influence the US election.

"Let's see if we can make some good deals with Russia," Trump said, suggesting in vague terms a deal in which nuclear arsenals would be reduced and sanctions against Moscow would be eased. Underscoring the Obama administration's very different stance, US Vice-President Joe Biden made a farewell trip to Ukraine yesterday to show support for the war-scarred country. In another comment that alarmed the Europeans, Trump meanwhile refused to say that he trusted Merkel more than Russian President Vladimir Putin, for whom the next US president has often expressed admiration. "Well, I start off trusting both - but let's see how long that lasts. It may not last long at all," he said.

Trump also directly criticized Merkel for letting Germany admit undocumented migrants into the country, insinuating that this posed a security risk following a wave of Islamic State jihadist attacks in Europe. "I think she made one very catastrophic mistake and that was taking all of these illegals, you know taking all of the people from wherever they come from," Trump said, adding he had "great respect" for the chancellor. Trump went on to threaten punitive 35 percent tariffs on German carmakers like BMW if they build cars in Mexico and not the United States. —AFP

PAKISTAN VILLAGERS ATTACK CONVOY OF QATAR ROYAL HUNTING RARE BIRD

QUETTA: A group of Pakistani villagers brandishing guns and knives attacked the convoy of a Qatar royal family member on an expedition to hunt the houbara bustard, a rare bird whose meat is prized by Arab sheikhs, officials said yesterday. The hunting party was unhurt, but three security guards were wounded during the attack on Sunday evening in Musakhel, in Pakistan's southwestern province of Baluchistan, district deputy commissioner Muhammad Yasar said. "A case has been

registered against 25 people," he added.

Police said the villagers turned violent after they were prevented from meeting the visiting royal to seek donations to build a mosque. A Qatari official involved in the sport of falconry confirmed the attack by a large group of men on a convoy of hunters that included a royal family member. He declined to identify the individual, but said the party was safe.

"Qatari hunters apply and pay for government hunting permits and

donate to local communities and wildlife conservation," the official said. "Unfortunately there have been attacks led by armed groups."

The International Union for Conservation of Nature lists the bustard as a vulnerable species with a global population ranging from 50,000 to 100,000. It has almost vanished on the Arabian peninsula. Last year, Pakistan's Supreme Court lifted a ban on hunting the bird after the government argued it hurt relations with Gulf states whose

wealthy hunters traditionally travel to Pakistan to pursue the endangered species with falcons. To seek favor with communities on whose land they pursue prey, Arab hunters have built roads, schools and mosques in places like Baluchistan and the province of Helmand in neighboring Afghanistan, while residents also benefit from the international-standard airstrips that can spring up.

New four-wheel-drive vehicles brought in for the hunt are sometimes

left behind as gifts for regional leaders. But critics say that hunting with falcons, a practice Arab nomads used to survive life in the desert, is today a reckless hobby that threatens the houbara and funnels money into areas controlled by militias.

In Dec 2015, about 100 gunmen kidnapped at least 26 Qataris from a desert hunting camp in Iraq near the Saudi border. A member of Qatar's ruling family was freed in April 2016, along with an accompanying Pakistani man.—Reuters

INDIAN POLICEMAN ARRESTED OVER ALLEGED RAPE CHARGE

BANGALORE, India: A police officer has been arrested for allegedly raping a mentally challenged woman in southern India, an officer said yesterday. He is accused of raping the 30-year-old woman in a moving vehicle after spotting her walking along a deserted stretch of road and offering her a lift. "The accused ASI (assistant sub inspector) Umesh has been suspended and arrested after the victim's mother filed a complaint on Sunday evening," police superintendent Isha Pant said.

The driver of the vehicle has also been

arrested for abetting the alleged crime and attempting to hide evidence.

The incident in southern Karnataka state took place during a Hindu harvest festival. "As it was a festive weekend, movement of public or vehicles was much less when the incident occurred," Pant said.

India has been shamed in the past by headline-grabbing levels of sexual assault against women, notably in Dec 2012 when a student was gang-raped on a bus in New Delhi and later died of her injuries. —AFP

INDIA POLICE ARREST TAILOR OVER SERIAL CHILD SEX ATTACKS

NEW DELHI: Indian police said yesterday they have arrested a man accused of multiple sexual assaults on young girls in Delhi, revealing he had been arrested on a similar charge last year and released on bail. Police arrested 38-year-old tailor Sunil Rastogi in Delhi on Saturday following complaints from alleged victims and study of CCTV footage, deputy police commissioner Omvir Singh Bishnoi said. The suspect regularly travelled to Delhi from his home in northern Uttarakhand state and targeted young girls in the city as they left school at the end of the day, he said.

Bishnoi said Rastogi was charged with similar offences in Uttarakhand in 2016 but was released on bail, without giving further details. "He has admitted to have attempted to sexually assault more than 100 girls since 2004. Police have registered eight cases, we are still working on

it," Bishnoi said. "He would follow girls, target one who strayed and say 'oh, I know your father. He is a good friend of mine.' He would lure them and take them to a secluded place," he said. Bishnoi said police had registered eight cases against Rastogi including under India's Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act.

India has a grim record of sexual assaults on women and young girls. A UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in 2014 said one in three rape victims in India was a minor and expressed alarm over the widespread sexual abuse of children. Television footage showed Rastogi handcuffed and wearing a balaclava, outside a Delhi police station. "I have been doing this for the past four to five years... I don't know why I did it," he said, speaking Hindi. Police said they had received complaints of kidnap and rape of minor girls in east Delhi over the past two months. —AFP



BANGLADESH: Former Bangladeshi Narayanganj City Corporation councilor Nur Hossain is escorted by police at Narayanganj court in Narayanganj yesterday.—AFP

26 TO HANG FOR BANGLADESH ABDUCTIONS AND MURDERS

'CONVICTIONS OF SECURITY FORCE MEMBERS RARE IN BANGLADESH'

DHAKA: A Bangladesh court yesterday sentenced 26 people to death after hearing how a politician from the ruling Awami League hired members of the country's elite security unit to assassinate political rivals. At the end of a trial that gripped the nation, a judge found all 35 defendants in the case guilty of involvement in the abduction and murder of seven people in the central city of Narayanganj in April 2014. Convictions of security force members are rare in Bangladesh. Rights activists say they frequently carry out unlawful killings and are effectively able to operate in a climate of impunity. Judge Syed Enayet Hossain ordered 26 of the defendants to hang after the year-long trial in Narayanganj, while the other nine were handed prison sentences ranging from seven to 17 years.

"Of the 26 who have been sentenced to hang, 16 were the members of the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB)," prosecutor S M Wazed Ali said. Twenty-three of those convicted were in the crowded court when the verdict was announced but the other 12 are still at large. The bodies of the victims were found floating in a river, three days after witnesses reported seeing a group of people being bundled into the back of an

unmarked van outside the city's international cricket stadium. Among those sentenced to death was Tarek Sayeed, an RAB commander who is the son-in-law of a minister in Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's cabinet.

Bodies dumped

A lawyer who recorded the abductions outside the stadium on his mobile phone was then himself kidnapped, along with his driver. All seven of the victims were suffocated with polythene bags and had their bellies cut before their bodies were dumped in the Shitalakshya river outside the city. Prosecutors described during the trial how Nur Hossain, a local councilor in Narayanganj and at the time a member of Hasina's Awami League, hired RAB officers to kill his arch-rival Nazrul Islam and four of his aides. Hossain, who was among those sentenced to death yesterday, fled to neighboring India after the killings but was later arrested in Kolkata and extradited.

"We're satisfied. We finally got justice," Shakhawat Hossain Khan, a lawyer for the victims, told reporters outside the heavily guarded courtroom yesterday morning. He said the pros-

ecution faced difficulties in bringing the RAB officers to trial and pointed out that they had only been detained after the high court intervened and ordered their arrest. Law and justice minister Anisul Huq said the state had "fulfilled its duty" by bringing the offenders to book. "I believe the verdict will satisfy the people and will dispel the fear this horrendous crime has created," he told reporters.

Opposition parties say hundreds of their activists have been abducted during Hasina's eight years in power and never seen again, although the government denies any involvement by the security forces. Local rights groups say at least 326 people have disappeared since January 2009, many of whom were members or supporters of opposition parties. "Today's verdict will to some extent change public perception that influential people and members of the security forces are above the law," said Nur Khan Liton, acting head of the group Ain o Salish Kendra. "But hundreds of people still remain traceless and in many cases allegedly abducted by the security forces. The government should also investigate every one of these abductions." —AFP



SRINAGAR: An Indian policeman fires teargas at Kashmiri villagers during the funeral of Adil Reshi, a suspected rebel at his residence in Bijbehara, 45 Kilometers south of Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir, yesterday. —AP

PAKISTANIS WHO FLED ARMY OFFENSIVE BEGIN RETURN HOME

PESHAWAR: Thousands of Pakistanis who fled to Afghanistan to escape fighting between the army and militants in the northwestern tribal areas began returning home yesterday, two years after they were displaced, officials said. The first batch of 200 tribal families from North Waziristan district, or some 2,000 people, were being greeted by officials at the Ghulam Khan border crossing, local administrator Kamran Khan Afridi said. He said similar numbers would be arriving daily until Jan 26, with the families first accommodated in camps before being sent back to their villages and towns.

Pakistan's army launched an operation in June 2014 to wipe out militant bases in northwestern tribal areas and bring an end to a bloody insurgency that has cost thousands of civilian lives since 2004. Hundreds of thousands of civilians were forced to leave North Waziristan by the offensive, many fleeing over the border into Afghanistan. Pakistani authorities say 67,000 homes in the tribal belt were completely destroyed, but there has been no independent assessment of the scale of the damage. The country has asked the international community for \$800 million to "rebuild and rehabilitate" the tribal areas.—AFP

TEACHERS KIDNAPPED BY SUSPECTED IS MILITANTS

JALALABAD, Afghanistan: Suspected Islamic State militants kidnapped 12 teachers and two other staff of a religious school in the eastern Afghan province of Nangarhar, officials said. The teachers were taken on Sunday when a group of Islamic State (IS) fighters entered the school in Haska Mina district during an examination, the education department in the provincial capital Jalalabad said.

It was not possible to confirm independ-

ently that the fighters were from IS. No group has claimed responsibility.

"We are saddened by the news and ask security departments, local elders and prominent figures in the area to help us release our teachers," the department said in a statement. Kidnapping for both criminal ransom and political gain is a major problem in Afghanistan. Although foreigners have also been targeted, most victims are Afghans.—Reuters

New routes

The routes to Europe have become more difficult, said Claudette Walls, head of the field office for the International



Organization for Migration (IOM) in Mexico's city of Tapachula. "What's happening in the Mediterranean is that it's becoming more and more hazardous and difficult to take that route," Walls said. "Through Latin America coming all the way up to Mexico and then on to the US has become another route," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Many migrants from Africa fly to Ecuador and Brazil where few visa restrictions allow an easy point of entry into the Americas.

They join the hundreds of thousands of Central American migrants fleeing poverty and gang violence every year, and who have been using the well-trodden route for decades. Immigration officials first noticed African migrants arriving in Mexico in 2013, when around six trickled in a day, mainly through Tapachula along Mexico's southern border with Guatemala. Hundreds now turn up

every day. Last year between 150 to 700 African migrants arrived per day at Tapachula - with a total of 19,000 migrants arriving from Africa and Haiti in 2016 - according to Mexican government figures.

This influx is expected to continue this year, Walls said. Mexico has also seen a tide of Haitians coming through as they seek a better life in the United States. Thousands of Haitians who had lived in Brazil are leaving because of the country's economic recession. Experts also say the surge north reflects a push by migrants to reach the United States and reunite with relatives before US President-elect Donald Trump takes office on Jan 20.

During his campaign, Trump took a hard-line position on immigration, including a pledge to build a wall along the US-Mexico border to keep out illegal immigrants.

Dangers

With few diplomatic ties with African nations, it is difficult for the Mexican authorities to deport illegal migrants from Africa home. As a result, many African migrants are given a temporary transit permit, giving them 20 days to leave Mexico. In practice this allows them to continue their journey towards the United States border without being detained by immigration officials. Like African migrants making the treacherous passage to Europe across the Mediterranean Sea where thousands die each year, the journey through Latin America is also perilous.

Hassan reached Mexico in December, after a four month journey that included a flight from Somalia to Brazil, and then across seven countries on bus, boat and foot. He has spent \$10,000 so far, hiding dollar bills in his underwear and socks. Most migrants say that at some point along their journey they have been robbed and or attacked by local gangs. Paying officials bribes starting at \$20 to allow them to continue their passage is also commonplace, migrants say.

Jose Ramon Cancino, head of migrant affairs at the human rights commission in Chiapas state, where Tapachula is located, said his office received 3,000 complaints last year from migrants, most involving extortion and abuse by police. Hassan said he and a group of migrants from Africa and Asia were robbed at gunpoint in Costa Rica by local criminals.—Reuters

TAIWAN SAYS GANG LINKS IN PROTEST AGAINST HK ACTIVISTS

TAIPEI: Taiwanese authorities said yesterday they were probing criminal gang links to a pro-China protest which targeted Hong Kong pro-democracy activists and rebel legislators in Taiwan. The activists were visiting to attend a forum aimed at linking democracy movements in Hong Kong and Taiwan earlier this month. They were blasted by pro-China groups on the island as promoting a joint independence movement. Although Taiwan is self-ruling, it has never formally declared independence from Beijing, and China considers it part of its territory.

The forum was organized by Taiwan's New Power Party, which advocates for recognition of Taiwan as a nation. The Hong Kong campaigners were greeted at Taipei airport by 200 protesters, with scuffles occurring after six broke through a police line pro-

tecting the activists. Prosecutors said yesterday they were probing whether there were gang links. Chang Wei, son of former gang leader Chang An-lo, known as "White Wolf," has been questioned over the clashes and barred from leaving Taiwan pending further investigation.

Gangster politics

The senior Chang, who headed the Bamboo Union Gang, now leads a small pro-unification party that regularly organizes rallies in support of Beijing. Police confirmed that Chen Tzu-chun, a leader of the Four Seas Gang, is also under investigation over the protests. He remains in custody over a number of cases. Speaking to the Liberty Times, Taiwan police chief Chen Kuo-en said two gangs had participated in the

demonstrations. "The police will not tolerate ... this kind of interference," Chen said. The Four Seas and Bamboo Union are among Taiwan's biggest criminal gangs, known for their involvement in smuggling and gambling.

Chang An-lo has openly supported politicians from the Beijing-friendly Kuomintang party, while Four Seas members were previously accused of attacking a pro-independence politician. Legislator Nathan Law, one of the group to visit Taiwan, was also attacked when he returned to Hong Kong as demonstrators threw liquid and tried to hit him. Law, 23, who advocates self-determination for Hong Kong, said those attacks were also an example of "gangster politics" and accused the Chinese Communist Party of trying to suppress democratic movements. Beijing

has grown increasingly incensed over pro-independence calls from young activists in Hong Kong.

Chinese authorities have also been ratcheting up pressure on Taiwanese president Tsai Ing-wen as she refuses to acknowledge the concept there is only "one China." Last week China's only aircraft carrier proceeded slowly through the Taiwan Strait in what was seen as a show of strength as tensions escalate. The drills came as a heated war of words intensified between Beijing and US President-elect Donald Trump, who broke convention by speaking directly to Taiwanese president Tsai Ing-wen and even suggested Washington could jettison its decades-old "one China" policy. Despite not having official diplomatic ties since it recognized Beijing in 1979, the US is Taiwan's most powerful ally and arms supplier.—AFP



HONG KONG: Carrie Lam speaks at a press conference to announce her candidacy for the 2017 Hong Kong Chief Executive elections yesterday. —AFP

HONG KONG LEADERSHIP HOPEFUL PLEDGES TO HEAL CITY'S HEARTACHE

'BUILD CONSENSUS AND RESTORE FAITH AND HOPE'

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's tough former deputy leader Carrie Lam, widely seen as China's favorite in an upcoming election for the top post, pledged yesterday to end the divided city's "heartache" as she announced her candidacy. Lam was deputy to the unpopular current chief executive Leung Chun-ying until she resigned to contest the poll, but is a less disliked figure. Leung is vilified by the city's pro-democracy camp as a puppet of Beijing squeezing the semi-autonomous city's freedoms.

Hong Kong has become sharply polarized during his four-year term, which has been marked by anti-Beijing protests. Speaking for the first time to confirm her candidacy for the leadership vote in March, Lam was repeatedly asked if she would be another version of Leung, as some critics fear. She said she would try to build consensus and "restore faith and hope." "In

recent years, some situations have emerged in Hong Kong that have made people very concerned and worried, sometimes even caused heartache," Lam, 59, told reporters.

"Like many of you I am worried about the discontent," she added, saying her supporters believed she had the ability to "resolve Hong Kong's deep contradictions." But Lam, who spent 36 years in government, stopped short of acknowledging the discord between pro-Beijing and pro-democracy supporters, saying the public was more concerned about income inequality and sky-high housing costs. "While democracy is something we should go for, we have to take a very pragmatic stance on whether we have the right environment for us to revive the discussion on another political reform in Hong Kong," she said.

Also poised to announce his candidacy is former finance secretary John Tsang. Opinion polls

show him and Lam well ahead in opinion polls, with two other candidates trailing far behind. But the public will not vote for the next leader following the rejection of political reforms put forward by Beijing. The next leader will instead be chosen by a committee of 1,200 mainly pro-Beijing representatives. Lam had presented the reform package, seen by critics as fake democracy, which triggered mass street protests in Hong Kong in late 2014.

The plan offered the public its first chance to vote for the city's leader but said all candidates must be approved by a loyalist committee. The package was eventually voted down by pro-democracy lawmakers. Political analyst Willy Lam said Lam was unlikely to touch on political reform until later in her tenure if she wins. He said she needed to "build bridges" with the pro-democracy camp and show she was not afraid of confronting Beijing.—AFP

PHILIPPINES PROTESTS CHINA'S WEAPONS INSTALLATION ON ISLANDS

MANILA: The Philippines has filed a low-key diplomatic protest with China after a US think tank reported that Beijing appears to have installed anti-aircraft and anti-missile weapons on its man-made islands in the strategically vital South China Sea, the country's top diplomat said yesterday. Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay said the diplomatic communication was issued after the report came out last month.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies report said anti-aircraft guns and weapons systems designed to guard against missile attacks appear to have been placed on all seven of China's newly created islands. Yasay said Philippines that Manila had responded, but did so quietly. "We have taken action on that, we have issued a note verbally," he said, referring to a diplomatic communication that is issued in the third person and is not signed. It is considered less formal than a letter of protest. He did not say when it was issued, adding it was a matter that he did not want to discuss.

"I just want to assure the Filipino people that when we take action at engaging China in this dispute, we do not want to take such aggressive, provocative action that will not solve the problem," he said. "We cannot engage China in a war." Nevertheless, he said, "when there are reports about the build-up of weapon systems in the area, during our watch we made sure that the interests and rights of the Philippines are properly protected." Beijing says the artificial islands are intended to boost maritime safety in the region while downplaying their military utility.

They also buttress China's claim to ownership of practically the entire South China Sea. Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Brunei also claim territory in the waterway, through which an estimated \$5 trillion in global trade passes each year. After China took control of disputed Scarborough Shoal in 2012 and blocked Filipinos from the rich fishing area, then President Benigno Aquino III brought his country's territorial disputes with Beijing to international arbitration. China ignored the Philippine case and refused to recognize the outcome, which was heavily in favor of the Philippines.

President Rodrigo Duterte, who succeeded Aquino in June, has taken steps to mend the strained relations with China. He also has taken an antagonistic stance toward outgoing President Barack Obama's administration after the US leader criticized his deadly crackdown on drugs. In yesterday's interview, Yasay said Duterte is expected to visit Russia sometime in May, and has been invited to both Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russian President Vladimir Putin's hometown.—AP

CHINA WILL TAKE THE GLOVES OFF OVER TAIWAN

BEIJING: China is running out of patience with Donald Trump's stance on Taiwan, state media said yesterday, and will "take the gloves off" if he keeps challenging the One China policy. The US president-elect told the Wall Street Journal over the weekend the longstanding policy was up for negotiation, in his latest comment on the issue. Trump had already irked China by accepting a congratulatory phone call from Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-Wen after he won the presidential election, upending decades of diplomatic precedent in which the US avoided direct public communication with the island's leader.

The foreign ministry, for the second time in two days, warned Trump yesterday the One China policy was non-negotiable. Anyone who tries to use it as a bargaining chip will be met with "common opposition" and will ultimately "shoot oneself in the foot," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular briefing. The China Daily said in an editorial earlier yesterday that Trump "will seldom be given the benefit of the doubt twice, because doing the same thing for a third time shows intent." The Taiwan issue is a "Pandora's box of lethal potential," it added.

While the president-elect had been given the benefit of the doubt so far, it said, if he is "determined to use this gambit on taking office, a period of fierce, damaging interactions will be unavoidable as Beijing will have no choice but to take off the gloves." Trump has threatened

to get tough with what he sees as unfair Chinese trade practices and suggested that the One China policy could become a bargaining chip in this. "Everything is under negotiation, including One China," he told the Journal in the interview published Friday.

Beijing considers Taiwan to be a break-away province to be brought back within its fold, by force if necessary, and the United States switched diplomatic recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979. China first warned Trump on the issue last month after he said he did not see why Washington must "be bound by a One China policy unless we make a deal with China having to do with other things, including trade." But he has less leverage than he might think, warned the Global Times, a nationalistic tabloid thought to have close ties to hawkish elements of the ruling Communist Party.

China will "mercilessly combat those who advocate Taiwan's independence," it said in an editorial yesterday. If Trump chooses to use the island as a bargaining chip, it added, it "may be sacrificed as a result of this despicable strategy." Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen made two stops in the US this month while in transit to diplomatic allies in Central America, despite Beijing's objections. On her return to the island Sunday she said its "new direction" of diplomacy was clear. "We must all continue to work to let Taiwan be seen, to let Taiwan make its contribution to the world."—AFP

JAPAN PLEDGES FRESH AID TO VIETNAM FOR SECURITY

HANOI: Japan pledged \$1.1 billion to Vietnam yesterday as part of a sprawling aid package that targets maritime and security affairs to bolster ties in the face of regional powerhouse China. Hanoi and Tokyo are locked in separate standoffs with Beijing over territorial claims in disputed regional waters, pushing the two countries closer in recent years. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced the 130 billion yen loan package during a two-day visit to Vietnam, which is also aimed at boosting business ties with the fast-growing communist nation.

"The two sides will further cooperation in security and defense," Abe vowed in comments translated into Vietnamese adding that "newly-built patrol vessels" would be supplied to Hanoi. "Both sides agreed on the importance of ensuring the maritime security on the issue of the South China Sea and promoting to resolve conflict by peaceful means and respecting international law," Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc told reporters. Vietnam and China have traded barbs over disputed territory in the South China Sea, where Beijing has built islands capable of hosting military installations.

Shrinking population

Tokyo has also sparred with Beijing over its territorial claims in the East China Sea, and both Japan and Vietnam have repeatedly stressed that maritime disputes should be addressed according to law. Japan has made similar gifts of patrol vessels and aircraft to the Philippines which also has com-

peting maritime claims with China. Climate projects and waste management were also included in the loan aid package announced yesterday on Abe's trip, his third visit to Vietnam as prime minister. Vietnam has come under fire for failing to enforce environmental regulations, especially in the industrial sector.

Last year, Taiwanese steel firm Formosa was blamed for a toxic waste dump that killed tons of fish along Vietnam's central coast. Also high on the agenda were fresh investments from Japan, the world's third largest economy that has been dragged down by a graying and shrinking population. The deal included a Mitsubishi investment in a thermal power plant in central Ha Tinh province and a partnership between Japan's Itochu and Vietnam's Vinatex textile firms. Both sides also pledged to keep trade ties alive in the wake of a promise by US President-elect Donald Trump to scrap the massive Trans-Pacific Partnership on his first day in office.

"We agreed on the importance of promoting the free trade mechanism like TPP," Abe said. Tokyo is an increasingly vital ally to Vietnam—it is the country's largest aid donor and the second largest foreign investor after South Korea. The leaders also announced a visit by Japan's emperor and his wife in the spring, which Abe said would create "momentum for further ties." Both leaders will attend an economic forum today before Abe returns to Japan. His six-day swing through Asia-Pacific also took him to the Philippines, Australia and Indonesia before his final stop in Vietnam.—AFP



PHILIPPINES: Filipino hostage Glenn Alindajao, left, talks to Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Secretary Jesus Dureza prior to boarding a plane for Davao city following his release along with South Korean hostage Park Chul-hong, from his kidnappers in the volatile island of Jolo in southern Philippines. —AP

DUTERTE ORDERS TROOPS TO BLAST MILITANTS AND THEIR HOSTAGES

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said he has ordered his troops to bomb extremists who flee with their captives in a bid to stop a wave of kidnappings at sea, calling the loss of civilian lives in such an attack "collateral damage." Duterte has previously stated that he had told his Indonesian and Malaysian counterparts their forces can blast away as they pursue militants who abduct sailors in waters where the three countries converge and bring their kidnab victims to the southern Philippines. He said in a speech late Saturday that he had given the same orders to Filipino forces.

He said he instructed the navy and the coast guard that "if there are kidnappers and they're trying to escape, bomb them all." "They say 'hostages.' Sorry, collateral damage," he said in a speech to business people in Davao, his southern hometown. He said such an approach would enable the government to get even with the ransom-seeking militants. "You can't gain mileage for your wrongdoing, I will really

have you blasted," he said. His advice to potential victims? "So, really, don't allow yourselves to be kidnapped."

Duterte's remarks reflect the alarm and desperation of the Philippines, along with Malaysia and Indonesia, in halting a series of ransom kidnappings primarily by Abu Sayyaf militants and their allies along a busy waterway for regional trade. On Saturday, ransom-seeking Abu Sayyaf gunmen freed a South Korean captain and his Filipino crewman who were abducted three months ago from their cargo ship. The gunmen handed skipper Park Chul-hong and Glenn Alindajao over to Moro National Liberation Front rebels, who turned them over to Philippine officials in southern Jolo town in predominantly Muslim Sulu province. The Moro rebels, who signed a 1996 peace deal with the government, have helped negotiate the release of several hostages of the smaller but more violent Abu Sayyaf, which is blacklisted by the U.S. as a terrorist organization for kidnappings, beheadings and bombings.—AP



HANOI: Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe speaks at a press conference in Hanoi yesterday. —AFP

SNOW TRAPS 1,000 MOTORISTS IN TUNISIA

TUNIS: Heavy snow trapped around 1,000 motorists in northwest Tunisia, with heavy blizzards from Europe sweeping the Mediterranean country, the prime minister's office said yesterday. Drifts blocked roads including a major highway in the province of Jendouba on Sunday evening, Prime Minister Youssef Chahed's office said. Many motorists stayed trapped in their cars overnight, authorities and local media said.

Rescue services managed to evacuate 80 percent of those trapped and efforts were continuing to return the others to their homes, Abdelkerim Omri, a regional infrastructure official, said yesterday, quoted in local media. The government opened 10 emergency shelters in schools and sports centres, warning the public not to travel unless absolutely necessary. Authorities distributed food and blankets to people trapped in the "monster traffic jam" on the highway, private radio station Mosaïque FM said.

Jendouba's governor, Akram Sebri, said "considerable

quantities of food and liquid gas" had been stockpiled "as a precaution". A delegation of ministers tried yesterday to reach the affected area but were unable to do so as all the roads were cut, said Infrastructure Minister Mohamed Salah Arfaoui. The interior ministry warned Tunisians to postpone all but essential travel.

Winter snowfall is not unusual in the North African country's highlands, but Tunisia has been hit by particularly heavy blizzards from Europe in the past week. Temperatures have plummeted to minus 5 degrees Celsius. The blizzards have hit some of Tunisia's poorest regions, including the provinces of Kasserine, Kef and Siliana. Authorities say children and frail people were evacuated to areas closer to hospitals. A nine-year-old girl died in early January in Jendouba because of the cold, Tunisian media reported. Forecasters say cold temperatures, high winds and heavy snowfall are set to continue at least until the middle of the week. — AFP



A Tunisian girl plays in the snow in the town of Maktar in Tunisia's central Siliana region yesterday. — AFP

TURKISH JET CRASHES INTO KYRGYZ VILLAGE...

Continued from Page 1

Cables of similar sentiments were sent to the Kyrgyz president by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

"I am alone now, all of my neighbors are dead," said Anarkan Kozhoyeva, 65, a pensioner. "Our house was just 20 meters away (from the destroyed area)." An area the size of a football pitch was completely leveled and covered with wreckage. Zumriyat Rezakhanova, another resident of Dacha Suu, said the plane fell "right on the homes" where residents were sleeping. "My sister's home is badly damaged. Luckily she and her family survived," Rezakhanova told AFP.

The plane's tail section was left upside down on top of a shed, next to the empty space where a house had been entirely obliterated. Plumes of smoke rose above the crash site, with some mud-brick buildings razed to the ground and others pierced by parts of the plane. Locals said they had initially thought the area was struck by an earthquake. "Around 7 o'clock in the morning I heard a loud noise and after that all the nearest houses were shaken," resident Andrei Andreyev said. "Everyone got frightened and started to run out of the houses to the street. Nobody understood what was going on because there was a fog, the

weather was not good."

"Our grandson said something was burning," Tajikan, a Dacha Suu resident who identified herself only by her first name, told AFP. "We heard a roar and (what felt) like an earthquake. Many people were sleeping, everything around was burning. One of the parts of the aircraft fell on our neighbor's house. She and her whole family died," the pensioner said.

Atambayev announced today would be a national day of mourning. Initial reports had suggested the plane was operated by Turkish Airlines but Turkish ACT Airlines said it was flying the Boeing 747-400. ACT Airlines said two pilots, a loading expert and an aviation expert were killed in the crash. Kyrgyz officials said representatives of the Interstate Aviation Committee and Turkish authorities would join the crash investigation today. The crew had flown the plane along the same route for the last few months and were familiar with the area, they said.

ACT Airlines said it was "deeply saddened" by the crash and noted that "the cause of the accident is unknown". Boeing, the plane's manufacturer, meanwhile extended its "deepest condolences" over the crash and offered to assist Kyrgyz authorities with the investigation. Elmira Sheripova, a spokeswoman for the emergency services ministry, told AFP that 17 houses had been "completely destroyed" by the plane. — Agencies

KUWAIT CUTS COULD REACH 146-148,000 BPD

Continued from Page 1

in a programme broadcast on Sunday. "Our part of the cut is 133,000. Today I was told that we dropped by 6,000 more, and we might drop to 146,000 to 148,000."

Marzouq said last week that Kuwait had reduced its oil output by more than its commitment, but at that time did not give details. Kuwait agreed to cut 133,000 bpd. Based on statements by oil producing nations so far, there has been more than 60 percent compliance with the production cuts specified by the deal, Marzouq said last week. Some countries may have complied but not announced that yet.

Marzouq told Sky News Arabia that Kuwait's oil invest-

ment strategy had not been changed by falling oil prices. "We have a plan until 2020 to spend around \$120 billion, and this has not changed because we think the fall (of oil prices) was short-term, and these were long-term investments and will have big revenues for the economy," Marzouq said he hoped oil prices would stay between \$55 and \$60 a barrel or move even higher if market fundamentals helped. On the privatization of Kuwait's oil sector, Marzouq said there were some activities which could not be privatized such as exploration and production, but areas related to oil services could be privatized and Kuwait had a plan to do that in the coming two to three years. — Reuters

EGYPT COURT REJECTS ISLAND TRANSFERS...

Continued from Page 1

scrambling to find a new supplier. But relations have cooled over Egypt's stance on war-torn Syria, whose President Bashar Al-Assad is seen as closer to Russia than Saudi Arabia which supports rebels fighting him.

Lawyers present in court told AFP the ruling was final, but a former senior judge said the government could still find a way to appeal it. Mohamed Hamed Al-Gamal, the former head of the administrative court, said the decision was final according to this court's procedure, but it could be unconstitutional. "The law and the constitution affirm the absence of administrative court jurisdiction in sovereign matters such as international treaties," Gamal said. The government may challenge the ruling before the constitutional court, he added.

The deal to hand over the islands, signed during an April visit by Saudi King Salman in which Riyadh showered

Egypt with aid, provoked accusations that Cairo had "sold" the strategic islands. Cairo said the islands were Saudi to start with, but had been leased to Egypt in the 1950s. But even many who agreed with the government objected to the way the deal was announced, buried in a cabinet statement a day after it was signed.

Two rare protests were held in downtown Cairo in April against the deal, leading to clashes with police and arrests of activists. More than 100 people were jailed for up to five years for taking part in demonstrations that police quickly dispersed, but they were later freed on appeal. Police had also made scores of arrests in the lead-up to the protests to discourage a repeat of a large rally on April 15 at which demonstrators chanted anti-regime slogans. Sisi had defended the deal, and said in a televised meeting with politicians that his mother had taught him "not to take other people's belongings". He further requested that the matter not be brought up again. — AFP

LAWMAKERS SEEK SPECIAL DEBATE ON EXPAT...

Continued from Page 1

Several lawmakers have proposed key measures to reduce the number of foreigners in Kuwait by getting rid of around one million expats within five years.

Expatriates have come under tremendous pressure since oil prices began to fall in mid-2014, as most of the government's steps to raise non-oil revenue targeted expatriates while sparing citizens. The government plans to increase electricity and water charges on expatriates from August, while it has decided to raise medical service fees from next month only on foreigners.

In a related development, MP Riyadh Al-Sane asked Minister of Oil and Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq if the ministry has conducted a study on the

impact of raising power charges on inflation in the country. Sane and several other lawmakers had already submitted draft laws calling to scrap a law raising electricity charges and a decision hiking the price of petrol. The Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee is expected to start debating these draft laws next week.

Meanwhile, MP Majed Al-Mutairi yesterday submitted a draft law proposing two key amendments to the election law. The bill proposes to lower the voting age to 18 years from the current 21 and for allowing servicemen and women, who are barred from voting, to cast their vote. Mutairi said lowering the voting age and allowing servicemen to vote will enfranchise a large section of citizens and broaden democratic participation.



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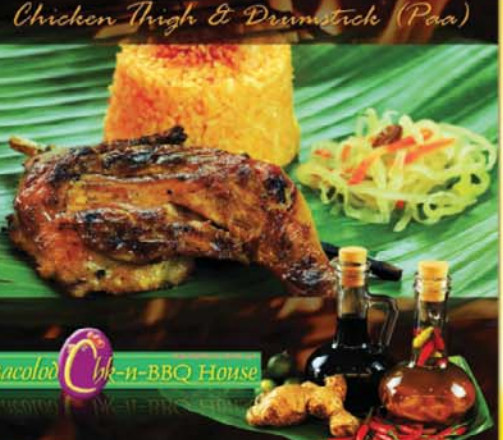
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Focus

AFTER PARIS, ISRAELIS
AND PALESTINIANS
LOOK TO TRUMP'S US

Israel and the Palestinians remain as far apart as ever after a Paris conference, with attention now turning to whether US President-elect Donald Trump will shake up the long-stagnant Middle East peace process. Four days before his inauguration, Trump suggested Monday that for the Middle East peace process, like many issues, his presidency may mean a plunge into uncharted waters. On Sunday, the international community reaffirmed in Paris its commitment to an independent Palestinian state, but Trump in an interview with European newspapers the next day appeared to undermine that, saying the "Palestinians are given so much".

The Paris conference's concluding document welcomed a UN Security Council Resolution on December 23 which condemned Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, considered illegal under international law. The resolution, which was approved thanks to a rare American abstention in the final weeks of the administration of Barack Obama, was "terrible", Trump told The Times of London and Germany's Bild newspaper. "The problem I have is that it makes it (Israel-Palestinian peace) a tougher deal for me to negotiate because the Palestinians are given so much," he said.

Trump also confirmed that his son-in-law Jared Kushner would play a role in trying to negotiate peace. "Jared is such a good kid and he'll make a deal with Israel that no one else can," he said. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu repeatedly denounced the Paris conference as another useless attempt at an international "diktat", arguing that only direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations can lead to peace. For the Netanyahu government, eight years of frosty relations with the Obama administration culminated with the Dec 23 resolution.

Tomorrow's world

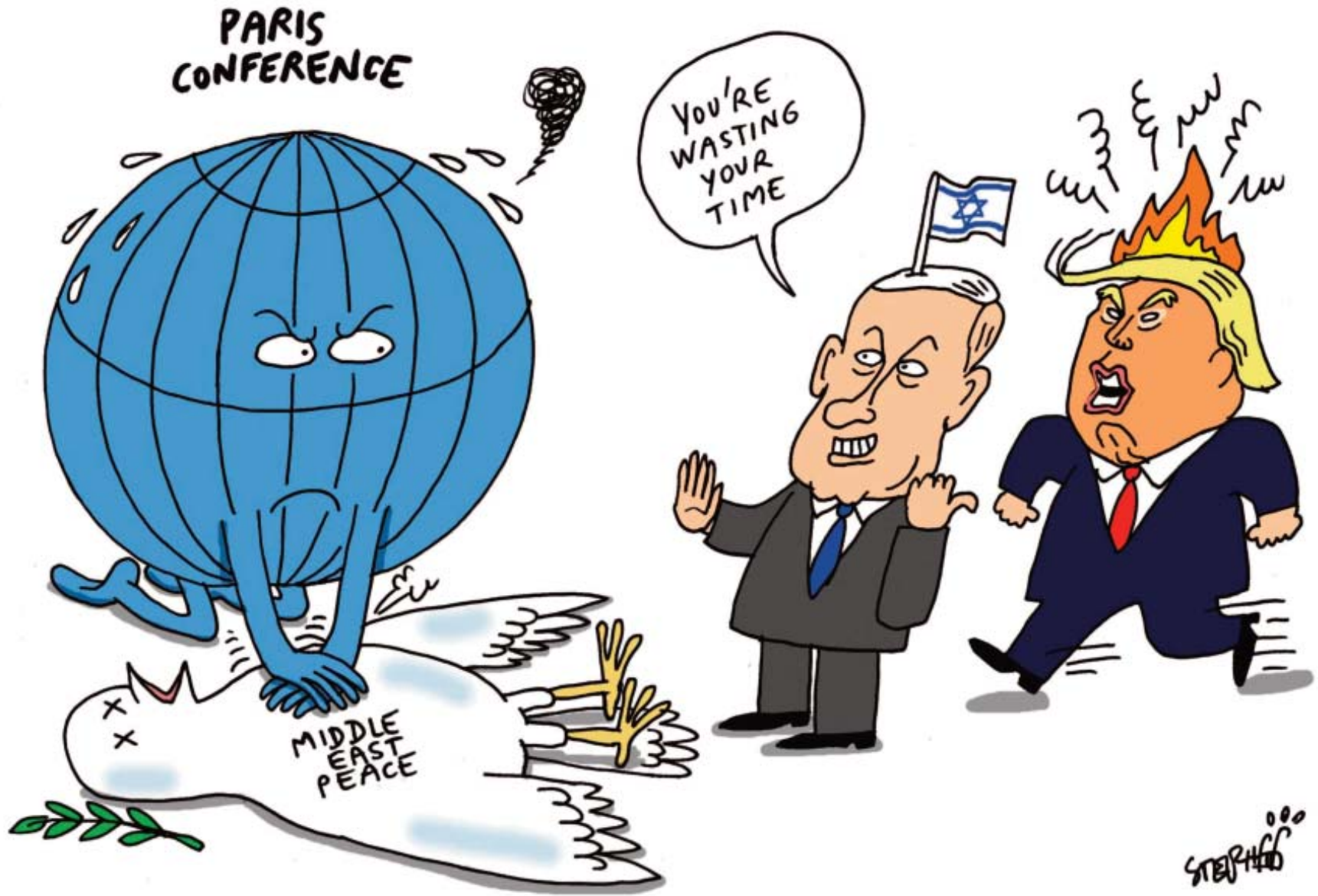
Netanyahu said Sunday he was waiting for Trump, who has said there is no politician as pro-Israeli as him, to enter the Oval Office. The Paris conference was one of the "last spasms of yesterday's world", according to the Israeli premier. "Tomorrow will look different and tomorrow is very close." Referring to the Iranian nuclear deal and settlements in the West Bank, Regional Cooperation Minister Tzachi Hanegbi told reporters: "We can feel comfortable about the fact that the incoming administration, unlike its predecessor, feels the same about two major issues. 'This is a powerful change and I think it is positive for the world.'"

The Palestinian leadership, too, has realized the changes that the Trump presidency could bring. They have started to sound the alarm about Trump's promise to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Such a transfer would break with the consensus of the vast majority of the international community, which does not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The some 70 countries present in Paris warned they would not recognize unilateral actions that threaten a negotiated solution, while Palestinian leaders have threatened retaliatory measures. Asked about the embassy move, Trump refused to comment to The Times and Bild, saying only "we'll see what happens".

Senior Palestinian official Saeb Erakat said the Paris conference "created a momentum" towards the end of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and east Jerusalem, which the Jewish state seized in a 1967 war. Palestinian political scientist Khalil Shaheen welcomed the fact the conference "showed the commitment of dozens of countries to the two-state solution, an important message to the Israelis and the Trump administration".

However, "at the same time, the declaration of the Paris conference was without teeth," he added, referring to the lack of enforcement mechanisms. The Israelis have warned they will not be bound by the declaration. Ofer Zalzberg, an analyst at the International Crisis Group think-tank, admitted the conference had not set out a new policy. But "the Trump administration will have to deal with the fact that the European and Arab countries are saying: 'This is what we are committed to'. In this sense it is not as if it is just disappearing." —AFP

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SWEDISH BANKS - SAFE BET OR RISKY BUSINESS?

Sweden's four largest banks are using a calculation of the risk to their loan portfolios that critics say is flawed and leaves them vulnerable to any correction in the booming housing market. Nordea, Swedbank, SEB and Handelsbanken are among the world's most well capitalized banks and made it through the 2008 financial crisis unscathed, relative to other European banks. Swedish house prices took a small dip during the crisis but have more than tripled in the last 20 years, driven by low interest rates, tax breaks on debt and low building. Swedish households are now among the most indebted in Europe.

Encouraged by the surging prices, banks have stocked up on property loans. They now account for close to 65 percent of the loan portfolios of the big four, according to the Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority (FSA). While they have built up their home lending, the lenders' capital positions also appear to have improved. But critics including Sweden's central bank and the International Monetary Fund say this is because since 2007 the banks were allowed to use a model where they self assess the risk of their portfolios based historic loan losses.

With the housing sector making up such a large chunk of Swedish loans, losses have been low for a long time. This means the amount of capital banks need to reserve against future shortfalls has also been set very low, so they have not built buffers big enough to compensate for bigger losses, they say. "They haven't

(increased their capital). They have reduced the risk-weights and it is quite different because the leverage ratio has been almost constant," Swedish central bank governor Stefan Ingves said in December.

Since 2010, Swedish banks have doubled their core tier 1 capital ratio, a measure of how much money a bank has in relation to risk-weighted assets, to around 24 percent, above the EU average of around 13 percent. But the leverage ratio, the relationship between the bank's capital and its total assets regardless of what risk you assign to them, have remained virtually unchanged at an average of around 4 percent.

Banks put a lower risk weighting on loans that are less likely to fail and set aside less money against losses of those loans. The idea is that this serves as an incentive to reduce the risks in the loan portfolios. Spokesmen for Swedbank, SEB and Handelsbanken declined to comment on the risk weightings. Nordea's head of investor relations, Rodney Alven, said: "What makes us favor risk-adjusted models is that it has taught us a lot about how to manage, minimize and properly price risk. We think that these models have genuinely reduced the risks in the banking system." "We feel we are very well capitalized in every way you measure it," he added.

Self-assessment in the spotlight

Swedish banks often bemoan a heavier regulatory capital burden than counterparts in Europe. Sweden has tried to adopt

a gold-standard approach to capital buffers to preserve the banks' reputations as solid institutions and because of the importance of the financial sector to the economy. Only Switzerland and the Netherlands have a larger financial sector than Sweden in the European Union relative to the size of the economy.

Self-assessed risk-weightings are widely used in Europe but Sweden's are among the lowest, according to the IMF in a 2016 report. Ingves, who was assigned to clean up the Swedish banking system after the 1990s crisis, says it is time to rein the banks in. He has called for a leverage ratio requirement to balance out creative internal models. "It has been proved since the system was launched that banks have had too large degrees of freedom to decide their risk weights and that needs to be revised," Ingves said.

His sentiment is echoed by the IMF which wrote in its report that "available models may suffer from overreliance on recent historical experience, and have difficulties capturing unexpected losses occurring in extreme but plausible scenarios." The internal models are also under scrutiny in other parts of the banking world as the Basel committee is trying to agree on a floor for how low banks risks can be set. The final levels are expected at the end of the month and could see Swedish banks having to set aside more capital against their lending.

The Swedish Bankers' Association says such models are still the best way to capture risk. "If you try to have a single stan-

dard for all banks, it's the ones that work best that are most punished," said Johan Hansing, CEO of the association. "All the Swedish banks have a very strong rating by rating agencies. If there were weaknesses and shortcomings in the Swedish banks' internal models professional actors like rating agencies would detect it."

The Riksbank says that international surveys have shown that there are major differences in banks' risk weights even for identical portfolios. It advocates a leverage ratio requirement of 4 percent now and a hike to 5 percent by 2018. The FSA, responsible for financial stability in Sweden, agrees rules have been too lax. "We agree partly to that criticism and that is why we have tightened rules," Swedish FSA general director Erik Thedeen said. "But it is to simplistic to say that just because the accumulated capital in relation to the assets have not gone up, the capital has not increased."

The FSA has taken a number of measures to shore up the system. A 25 percent risk-weight floor on mortgages has been introduced and banks are forced to count every fifth year as a bad one when calculating for loan losses. The FSA hiked Nordea's capital requirements with 13.8 billion Swedish crowns (\$1.5 billion) in October after a review found that the bank had underestimated the probability for loan losses in its internal models. Asked if it is wise to let banks regulate themselves given that many crises have started with excessive risk-taking by banks, Ingves says: "In retrospect, when you look at it: no, not really." —Reuters

‘YES WE CAN’: OBAMA’S COMPLEX LEGACY

After winning the White House with a call to embrace "the audacity of hope," Barack Obama knows his place in the history books will be measured against the outsized hopes his 2008 election sparked in the United States and abroad. Beyond his wide smile, his legendary Hawaiian sense of calm and his drama-free style of governing, what will be remembered from the Democrat's extraordinary path to power and his two terms as the 44th US president?

Will the son of an absent Kenyan father and a white mother from Kansas, who split his childhood years between the Aloha State and Indonesia, be lauded for bringing down unemployment, the raid that killed Obama bin Laden, or reforming the healthcare system? Will he be praised for revitalizing relations with Cuba or pushing through a global climate agreement? Whatever the historians write, Obama - America's first black president - can certainly claim some bona fide successes.

But one dream got lost along the way: That of national reconciliation. Years of stalemate with an intractable Republican-led Congress and Donald Trump's shock election win - which he did not see coming - at the end of an unprecedentedly aggressive campaign have revealed a deeply divided country. Political divisions are to be expected, with Republicans and Democrats refusing to work together to the point of sometimes paralyzing government.

But racial fault lines also came to the fore during Obama's presidency, and with an unexpected force. Careful not to be seen as a "president for black Americans," Obama paradoxically may have been the wrong leader to move the needle on the race issue. That reality is a bitter pill to swallow for a man who said, in the 2004 speech that put him on the political map, that there is "not a liberal America and a conservative America, there's the United States of America". "There's not a black America and white America and Latino America and Asian America," he said. "There's the United States of America."

But Obama, criticized by some as too much of a policy wonk and sometimes professorial, may not have taken the pulse of Trump's America - a mainly white, working middle class terrified by the whirlwind effects of economic globalization.

Still popular

With his temples a bit grayer now, Barack Hussein Obama will leave the Oval Office at age 55 with his popularity near his all-time high, much like Ronald Reagan in 1989. A relative political novice when he ran for president in 2008, promising to transform the United States under his optimistic banner of "Yes we can," Obama entered the White House in 2009, and the learning curve was steep. Just 47 at the time, four years older than John F Kennedy, he freely admits he initially underestimated the difficulty of doing business in Washington.

He could only shake his head at how Republicans systematically blocked his every move, even if he himself also lacked a certain sense of flexibility in his dealings with Capitol Hill. Confronted with economic and financial chaos upon his arrival in office, with huge sectors of industry at the edge of an abyss, he managed to push through an \$800 billion stimulus package. Then, after an epic battle on Capitol Hill, Obama saw his signature healthcare reform plan - which became known as "Obamacare" - become law. Some 20 million Americans now have health insurance who did not before thanks to the Affordable Care Act, which Trump has pledged to repeal and replace.

Syria casts a shadow

Obama leaves behind a mixed record on the foreign policy front. The surprise Nobel Peace Prize he won in 2009 proved in some ways to be a poisoned chalice. The Nobel committee lauded his "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples" - after less than eight months in office. But in accepting the award, Obama acknowledged his accomplishments were "slight" compared to those of the "giants of history" who preceded him.

However, the onetime senator from Illinois can certainly claim to have made a clean break with the Bush years. He presided over the withdrawal of the vast majority of US troops from Iraq and Afghanistan (from 180,000 to 15,000) and banned waterboarding and other post-9/11 "enhanced interrogation techniques" now widely seen as torture. By bringing Iran - Saudi Arabia's Shiite rival - back into the international fold with a nuclear deal, and by showing that America had other priorities than the Middle East, notably in Asia and Africa, Obama tried to shuffle the deck.

But his prudence and passivity in the face of chaos in war-racked Syria, which has led to the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II, leaves a shadow over his tenure at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. While rejecting his critics, Obama has admitted he was somewhat powerless. "It haunts me constantly," he told Vanity Fair magazine last year. "I do ask myself: 'Was there something that we hadn't thought of? Was there some move that is beyond what was being presented to me that maybe a Churchill could have seen, or an Eisenhower might have figured out?'"

Highs and lows

On certain issues, such as climate change, Obama - a constitutional law expert - learned how to adapt. From the immense disappointment of the failed Copenhagen summit in 2009, he figured out that no global action would occur without Washington and Beijing working together. The Paris accord reached in late 2015 came together in large part thanks to their cooperation. On other issues, from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Obama clearly failed. Two days after taking office, he signed a decree aimed at shutting down the US prison in Cuba within a year. Eight years later, although it holds far fewer inmates, the detention center is still there.

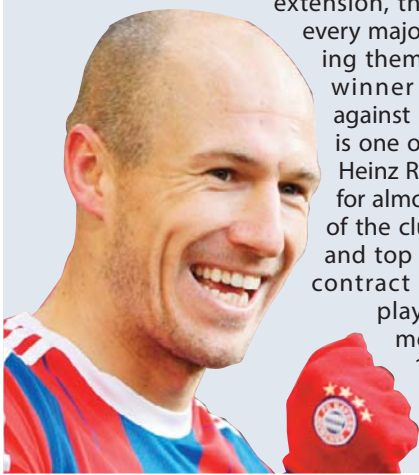
'History zigzags'

A talented orator, Obama will also be remembered for a handful of powerfully delivered speeches. In Charleston, where nine black parishioners were gunned down by a white supremacist during a Bible study session, Obama offered a rousing eulogy - and then began singing "Amazing Grace". The thousands of mourners joined in. In Athens, he recognized how "democracy, like all human institutions, is imperfect. It can be slow; it can be frustrating; it can be hard; it can be messy."

In Chicago, where he cut his political teeth, he tried in his farewell speech this month to channel the energy of those who elected him in Nov 2008. "I'm asking you to believe. Not in my ability to bring about change - but in yours," he said to cheers - and some tears. Conscious that much of his legacy could be picked apart by his successor, Obama has maintained his fierce optimism - his political calling card, mocked by some and hailed by others - until the very end. After Trump's victory, he called on the country to accept that "sometimes, history zigzags" and move forward. It's useless, he said, to "get into a fetal position". —AFP

ROBBEN EXTENDS
BAYERN CONTRACT

BERLIN: Bayern Munich winger Arjen Robben will stay at the German champions until 2018 after the 32-year-old Dutchman signed a one-year contract extension, the club said yesterday. Robben has won every major domestic trophy with Bayern since joining them in 2009 and he scored an 89th-minute winner in the 2013 Champions League final against Borussia Dortmund. "In his position Arjen is one of the best players in the world," CEO Karl-Heinz Rummenigge said. "He has been in Munich for almost eight years and has become a key part of the club." Bayern's French winger Franck Ribery and top scorer Robert Lewandowski also signed contract extensions this season. Robben, who played for Chelsea and Real Madrid before moving to Munich, has scored 82 goals in 152 Bundesliga matches and 21 goals in 53 Champions League games for the German side. — Reuters

THOMAS ROMPS TO SONY
OPEN WIN IN RECORD STYLE

HONOLULU: Challenged only by the record book, Justin Thomas won the Sony Open on Sunday with the lowest 72-hole score in PGA Tour history. Thomas capped off his wonderful week at Waialae that began with a 59 with his second straight victory. He two-putted birdie from 60 feet on the par-5 18th and closed with a 5-under 65 to set the record at 253.

Tommy Armour III shot 254 at the 2003 Texas Open. "It's been an unbelievable week. Unforgettable," Thomas said before going to sign his historic card. Make that two weeks.

The 23-year-old from Kentucky won at Kapalua last week by three shots, then destroyed the full field at the Sony Open to win by seven shots. Thomas is the first player since Tiger Woods in 2009 (Buick Open and Bridgestone Invitational) to win back-to-back weeks by three shots or more.

Justin Rose closed with a 64 to finish alone in second. Jordan Spieth was third after a 63. The first full-field event of the year on the PGA Tour was a one-man show. Thomas began the final round with a seven-shot lead and no one got closer than five shots all day. His only nervous moment was an 8-foot par putt on the sixth hole when he was five shots ahead. He made that, and the rest of the day was a Pacific breeze. Thomas joined Ernie Els in 2003 as the only players to sweep Hawaii, and this performance might have been even better. Thomas was 49-under par for his two weeks, compared with Els at 47 under.

Thomas joined Johnny Miller (1974 and 1975) and Tiger Woods (2003, 2008, 2013) as the only players in 50 years to win three of the their first five starts in a PGA Tour season. It started last fall with the CIMB Classic in Malaysia. He moved to No. 8 in the world.

SA OPEN

Graeme Storm beat Rory McIlroy on the third playoff hole in the SA Open on Sunday for his second European Tour title, 80 days

after the Englishman lost his tour card by 100 euros.

After the 251st-ranked Storm tapped in for a par, the second-ranked McIlroy slid his par putt wide from 7 feet on their fourth visit to the 18th hole at Glendower Golf Club. Storm closed with a 1-under 71 to match McIlroy (68) at 18-under 270. Storm lost his card at the end of last year, only to get a reprieve when American Patrick Reed failed to play enough events to keep his card. Storm also won the 2007 French Open. McIlroy said he will have tests on his back Monday to make sure he is fit enough to play in Abu Dhabi without further damage. Making his first start of the year, McIlroy felt pain in his back before the second round and it lingered throughout the final day.

DIAMOND RESORTS INVITATIONAL

Woody Austin completed a wire-to-wire victory in the Diamond Resorts Invitational and former pitcher Mark Mulder took the celebrity title.

Austin closed with a 6-under 66 on the Four Seasons Resort's Tranquilo course, earning 31 points in the modified Stableford scoring system to finish the three-round event at 104 - eight points ahead of second-place Joe Durant. Austin opened with an 11-under 59.

A three-time winner last year on the PGA Tour Champions, the 52-year-old Austin had seven birdies and one bogey in the final round, with a birdie worth three points, a par one point and a bogey zero points. Coming off off-season hernia surgery, Austin missed only one fairway and one green in regulation Sunday.

Mulder rallied to top of the celebrity division, scoring 30 points in a 67 to finish with 77 points. Former tennis player Mardy Fish, the winner last year, and former kicker Ryan Longwell tied for second with 67 points. Second-round leader Ray Allen was fourth with 66. — AP



HONOLULU: Justin Thomas of the United States celebrates with the trophy after winning the Sony Open in Hawaii at Waialae Country Club on Sunday in Honolulu, Hawaii. — AFP

GANA WINS LATIN AMERICA,
EARNS SPOT IN MASTERS

PANAMA CITY: Toto Gana of Chile atoned for a bogey on the final hole by making a short birdie putt to win a three-man playoff Sunday in the Latin America Amateur Championship and earn a spot in the Masters.

Gana thought he had it won in regulation at the Golf Club of Panama until his 15-foot par putt on the 18th hole caught the right edge of the cup. He closed with a 1-over 71 and slipped into a three-man playoff with his best friend, Joaquin Niemann of Chile, and Alvaro Ortiz of Mexico.

On the second playoff hole, the 433-yard 10th, Gana ripped a drive and had 97 yards to a front pin. He eyed it the whole way until it settled 3 feet from the cup. He calmly tapped in his birdie putt after Ortiz, who missed his birdie try from some 65 feet away, made par. Niemann caught a plugged lie in a bunker and made bogey.

"I don't realize what I've done yet," the 19-year-old Gana said. "It's incredible. Two days ago I was nobody, and now I can't wait to play the Masters."

The winner of the Latin American Amateur, which began three years ago, gets an invitation to play in the Masters and an exemption into the final stage of qualifying for the U.S. Open and British Open.

Gana never trailed over the final 12 holes and needed only a par on the 18th

to win. But he had to scramble just to give himself a chance at par, and it looked as though that would cost him when he hooked his tee shot on the same hole in the playoff. He punched low under a tree to the fairway and hit a pitch to 3 feet to save par. Ortiz, a junior at Arkansas, had a 15-foot birdie putt to win on the same course where his brother, Carlos Ortiz, won a Web.com Tour event in 2014. The putt broke sharply to the left at the end and grazed the cup as Ortiz covered his face with his hat in disbelief.

Gana - his name translates to "win" in English - made good on his second chance with his wedge to 3 feet for the winning birdie. "The door was open to win the championship," Gana said. "And I hit the best shot I've hit in my whole life." It was the second time in three years that a Chilean won the Latin America Amateur. Matias Dominguez won the first year. Paul Chaplet, a 16-year-old from Costa Rica, won last year.

Gana said he wasn't expecting to win when the week started because so many other players had won more tournaments. Niemann won the Junior World at Torrey Pines two years ago and played in the Argentine Open. And now the Chilean teenager is headed to the Masters. "Playing the Masters is a dream for any golfer because it's the most prestigious tournament in the world," he said. — AP

TRUSTED DOCTORS TO WATCH
KENYAN RUNNERS FOR DOPING

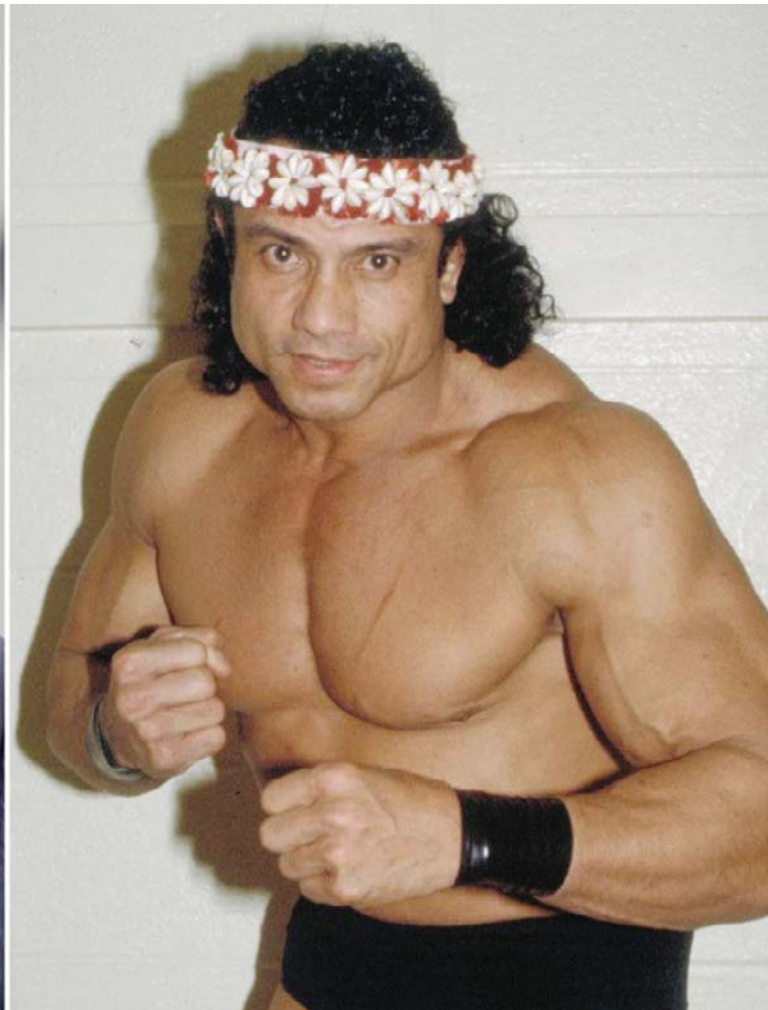
ELDORET: A team of 'trustable' team of doctors will from today start monitoring Kenya's top runners in a bid to stamp out doping that has tainted the country's athletics. The doctors have been chosen by Athletics Kenya and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) which last year warned Kenya over a possible global ban from competition. Athletics Kenya chief Jackson Tuwei said an initial team of five "trustable Kenyan doctors" had been picked to monitor Kenya's top runners and "limit bad medical practices and doping-promoting behaviours by some Kenyan health professionals." The doctors will prepare a monthly report to be sent to the IAAF medical and anti-doping commission. Tuwei warned that any athlete who failed to comply would not be selected for international competition. "It is absolutely mandatory for these elite athletes to go through this network. It is painful, it is strict, it is critical ... but we have to do it," Tuwei said. "Forty-nine athletes have been found to have violated the WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) code in the past five years but were cautioned according to the laws of the land and WADA code." — AFP

INJURED LAURA KENNY
DOUBTFUL FOR WORLDS

LONDON: Olympic champion Laura Kenny's participation in April's Track Cycling World Championships in Hong Kong has been threatened by a hamstring injury, it emerged yesterday. The four-time gold medalist, who under her maiden name of Laura Trott, won two Olympic titles at both the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Games, has now withdrawn from two competitions this month. She will now miss the Six-Day event in Berlin starting Thursday and the UK National Track Championships in Manchester that get underway on January 27. "British Cycling's Laura Kenny has withdrawn from the forthcoming Six Day Berlin and HSBC UK National Track Championships having sustained a hamstring strain," said a statement issued by the national governing body. "Laura is undergoing treatment and hopes to return to full fitness soon." Riders have been known to opt out of the first World Championships following an Olympics but Kenny's injury means she could be forced into missing the April 12-16 edition in Hong Kong. — AFP



Former pro wrestler Jimmy 'Superfly' Snuka.

FORMER PRO WRESTLER JIMMY
'SUPERFLY' SNUKA DEAD AT 73

PHILADELPHIA: Former pro wrestler Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka, who earlier this month was found not competent to stand trial in the 1983 death of his girlfriend, has died at his son-in-law's home in Florida. He was 73.

Attorney Robert Kirwan II said Snuka was taken Sunday to the home near Pompano Beach so that he could spend his last moments there. The family informed him shortly after 1 p.m. Sunday to say he had died, Kirwan said.

Lehigh County Judge Kelly Banach on Jan. 3 dismissed the murder case against the retired WWE star after the defense said he had dementia, was in hospice care in Florida and had six months to live.

Snuka's daughter, Tamina Snuka, also a WWE wrestler, tweeted Sunday afternoon: "I LOVE YOU DAD" with a hashtag #RestWell.

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, also a WWE star, called it "sad news" in a post on his Twitter page. Snuka was charged in 2015 with third-degree murder and involuntary manslaughter in the death of Nancy Argentino, whose body was found more than three decades earlier in their Whitehall Township hotel room. Prosecutors allege she was beaten, while Snuka maintained she died from a fall.

Authorities reopened the investigation after The Morning Call newspaper raised questions about the case in 2013.

Banach had first ruled last summer that Snuka was not competent to stand trial after his attorney argued the ex-athlete suffers from dementia, partly due to the head trauma sustained over a long career in the ring. Prosecutors countered that Snuka's brain shows normal signs of aging and suggested he might be feigning symptoms.

At a hearing last month to re-evaluate Snuka's mental fitness, Snuka's wife told the judge that the family struggles to keep him from leaving home during bouts of psychosis in which he thinks he's late for a wrestling match. Banach then took time to review Snuka's medical records before ruling.

Kirwan said Snuka died "due to complications from his ongoing medical problems."

"The family is simply heartbroken. It's been a long journey," he said. "They are grateful to the judge for dismissing the charges against him."

Snuka wrote about Argentino's death in his 2012 autobiography, maintaining his innocence and saying the episode had ruined his life. "Many terrible things have been written about me hurting Nancy and being responsible for her death, but they are not true," he wrote. "This has been very hard on me and very hard on my family."

To this day, I get nasty notes and threats. It hurts. I never hit Nancy or threatened her." Kirwan said that he believes his client's name will eventually be cleared. Snuka, a native of Fiji who previously lived in Camden County, New Jersey, was known on the wrestling circuit for diving from the ropes and even the top of steel cages in a career that spanned decades. He was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame in 1996. — AP

THOMSON EYES WIN AFTER 24
HOUR VENDEE SPEED MARK

PARIS: Briton Alex Thomson is closing in on longtime leader Armel Le Cleac'h in a dramatic denouement to the Vendee Globe around the world yacht race.

Organisers said yesterday the first finishers were set to arrive Thursday at Sables d'Olonne on the French Atlantic coast. But whether it will be Le Cleac'h bagging the habitual success for France or Thomson scoring a dramatic first British triumph remains unclear after the latter's spectacular attempt to overhaul his rival who is now just 78.7 nautical miles ahead.

Sunday night into early yesterday morning saw Thomson set a new record for distance covered in a single hulled yacht in 24 hours, skimming across 536.81 nautical miles of ocean at an average speed of 22.36 knots.

That outdid the 534.48 nautical miles which Frenchman Francois Gabart set three years ago at an average speed of 22.27 knots. "It's truly magic," said Gabart, commenting for the event's television channel.

"We're heading for a super finish between Armel and Alex. It is fabulous to see these boats go so quick. "The battle between Armel and Alex is magnificent. Armel is not in an easy position, he has much to lose. But he still has quite a few strings to his bow and everything it takes to hang in there."

Organisers expect the race winner to cross the line in this 87th edition between 0700 and 1500 GMT on Thursday and that would itself see another speed mark.

If the winner finishes before 1202 GMT then he will come in just under 74 days at sea. Either 73 or 74 will still smash Gabart's 2013 mark of 78 days 2hr 16min. Le Cleac'h has been leading since December 3 in his Banque Populaire VIII with Welshman Thomson fighting to stay in contention in his Hugo Boss.

Neither man has won the race to date, an unyielding endurance test which Gabart says in his case "radically changed my life."

"I can never return to Sables Olonne as before" winning, he told AFP. Gabart was the youngest ever winner, aged 29, four years ago and was in floods of tears at the finish after his global battle against the elements.

"I was awash with a real cocktail of emotions. First of all there was relief-under pressure for 78 days. Then of course there was pride. And pleasure at meeting up again with loved ones," he reminisced, saying the high lasted "for days, weeks, years even."

As Le Cleac'h and Thomson battle for supremacy to the last, Gabart's next project is to circumnavigate the globe later this year in a multi-hulled, faster vessel. — AFP



Alex Thomson

NEW ZEALAND BOWLERS PRAISED FOR OVERCOMING FIRST INNINGS FAILINGS

WELLINGTON: After being flogged around the Basin Reserve for 595 runs, New Zealand captain Kane Williamson felt his bowlers had responded superbly to set up an improbable seven-wicket first test victory against Bangladesh on the final day yesterday. Williamson scored his 15th test century to lead New Zealand to their target of 217 for the loss of three wickets with 17.2 overs remaining after Bangladesh had been dismissed for 160 in their second innings. "Credit to the bowlers with the way they came back with a lot of energy after a tough first innings," Williamson said. "To bowl Bangladesh out on a very good surface was a tough thing to do.

"To bounce back and achieve that was brilliant and it allowed us to chase down the total." Bangladesh had achieved their second-highest test score in the first innings when Mushfiquir Rahim declared their innings at 595 for eight.

The hosts, however, responded with 536 with Tom Latham scoring 177 as the team produced several big partnerships to get them close to Bangladesh's mammoth total. "To get as close as we did was a fantastic effort... lot of credit to Tom Latham with a big hundred to get us basically back

to parity," Williamson said.

"It then really came down to the second innings and I guess (that's) when we took control of the game. "The guys were very good with the ball on a flat surface." Despite the obvious knock to confidence after scoring almost 600 then losing, Mushfiquir's side had plenty to be pleased with. They showed they can bat down to number seven and their main spinners Mehedi Hasan and Shakib Al Hasan are world-class exponents of slow bowling.

Their inexperienced pace attack with Taskin Ahmed and Subashis Roy on debut, however, were unable to put New Zealand under sustained pressure with the ball.

"We didn't execute our plans the way we should have and if we had, we could have had a 200-run lead in the first innings and it would have been a different ball game," Mushfiquir said. "If you want to take a wicket in test cricket you have to bowl consistently well and we couldn't do that. "We had some great partnerships in the batting but didn't have any in the bowling and we need to do that if you want to get them out. "We will work on that and execute it better in the second Test." — Reuters



WELLINGTON: New Zealand's captain Kane Williamson bats during day five of the first international Test cricket match between New Zealand and Bangladesh at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday. — AFP

STOINIS REPLACES INJURED MARSH

MELBOURNE: Victorian all-rounder Marcus Stoinis will replace the injured Mitchell Marsh in Australia's one day international squad for the ongoing series against Pakistan, Cricket Australia said yesterday.

Fast bowling all-rounder Marsh has been ruled out of the remainder of the five-match series with a shoulder injury, which he sustained in Australia's six-wicket loss against Pakistan in the second one-dayer at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Sunday.

Australia have already added batsman Peter Handscomb to their squad with Chris Lynn ruled out of Thursday's third ODI in

Perth due to an ongoing neck injury.

Stoinis has a single one-day international for Australia to his name, against England in 2015. The 27-year-old will play Melbourne Stars' Big Bash Twenty20 match against Brisbane Heat on Tuesday before he and leg-spinner Adam Zampa, who has been released from the squad to play in the same match, join the one-day team in Perth tomorrow.

The series is tied at 1-1 after Australia won the opener in Brisbane by 92 runs before Pakistan bounced back in Melbourne. —Reuters



MOTERA: An Indian official arranges a poster displaying the design of a proposed cricket stadium during the foundation-stone laying ceremony of the ground in Motera yesterday. — AFP

BANGLADESH CAPTAIN MUSHFIQUR HOSPITALIZED BY BOUNCER

WELLINGTON: Bangladesh captain Mushfiquir Rahim was taken to the hospital by ambulance on Monday after being struck in the head by a bouncer from Tim Southee on the final day of the first cricket test against New Zealand.

His condition was not immediately known. Mushfiquir was already batting with a broken finger and was 13 not out when he tried to duck under a low bouncer and was struck on the back of the helmet.

He began to kneel, then collapsed to the ground and was immediately attended by

medical staff from both teams. Play was delayed by more than 20 minutes as paramedics attended Mushfiquir, who lay motionless on his back near the crease.

Mushfiquir was then taken to nearby Wellington Hospital. He is the second Bangladesh batsman to be taken to hospital by ambulance in this innings. Opening batsman Imrul Kayes was stretchered from the field on Thursday after suffering a serious leg injury. Bangladesh was 114-5 in its second innings, leading New Zealand by 170 runs, when the incident occurred. — AP



WELLINGTON: Bangladesh's Mushfiquir Rahim lifted onto a stretcher by ambulance staff and teammates after being hit in the head during day five of the first international Test cricket match between New Zealand and Bangladesh at the Basin Reserve in Wellington yesterday. — AFP

WILLIAMSON FIRES NEW ZEALAND TO STUNNING WIN

WELLINGTON: Kane Williamson scored his 15th century as New Zealand staged a remarkable fightback to win the first Test against Bangladesh by seven wickets in the final session in Wellington yesterday.

He described it has "a second-innings match" where Bangladesh's first innings 595 and New Zealand's 539 in reply were in effect removed from the equation when the pressure went on.

On a dramatic final day, the Bangladesh second innings ended on 160-9 with captain and prolific scorer Mushfiquir Rahim rushed to hospital after being felled by a bouncer. He was later given the all-clear by doctors but took no further part in the game as Williamson and Ross Taylor launched a batting onslaught reach their 217-run target with time to spare in the final session. Williamson, who ended on 104 not out off 90 balls, said he knew New Zealand had a chance when they managed to get their first innings within 56 runs of Bangladesh.

"From then on it became a second innings match... when you go into the last innings of a Test anything can happen," he said, admitting to some tense moments when New Zealand were 39 for two with Tom Latham departing for 16 and Jeet Raval for 13.

"Coming into last two sessions and either team could win it. That's what Test cricket is about. "When you're two for 30, 200 can be quite a long way away in the last innings." Williamson defended the use of the bouncer as a legitimate weapon to pressure Bangladesh in their second innings but admitted Mushfiquir's injury did not help the tourists.

UNWANTED RECORD

"That certainly didn't help Bangladesh's cause. It was a great (159) first innings and it was very unfortunate he was out with the injury." There were no complaints from Bangladesh about the outcome however, with Tamim Iqbal,

SCOREBOARD

WELLINGTON, New Zealand:

Scoreboard yesterday at the end of the first cricket test between New Zealand and Bangladesh at the Basin Reserve.

Bangladesh, 1st Innings 595-8 decl.

New Zealand, 1st Innings 539

Bangladesh, 2nd Innings (Overnight: 66-3)

Tamim Iqbal b Santner25

Imrul Kayes not out36

Mominul Haque c de Grandhomme b Wagner23

Mahmudullah c Watling b Wagner5

Mehedi Hasan run out1

Shakib Al Hasan c Williamson b Santner0

Sabbir Rahman c Watling b Boult50

Mushfiquir Rahim retired hurt13

Taskin Ahmed b Boult5

Kamrul Islam c de Grandhomme b Southee1

Subashis Roy b Boult0

Extras (1nb)1

TOTAL (all out)160

Overs: 57.5. Batting time: 270 minutes.

Fall of wickets: 1-50, 2-63, 3-66, 4-66, 5-96, 6-137, 7-148, 8-152, 9-160.

Bowling: Trent Boult 13.5-3-53-3, Tim Southee 13-5-34-1,

Mitchell Santner 16-5-36-2, Neil Wagner 15-3-37-2 (1nb).

New Zealand, 2nd Innings

Tom Latham b Mehedi16

Jeet Raval c and b Mehedi13

Kane Williamson not out104

Ross Taylor c Mehedi b Roy60

Henry Nicholls not out4

Extras (14b, 6lb)20

TOTAL (for three wickets)217

Overs: 39.4. Batting time: 176 minutes.

Fall of wickets: 1-32, 2-39, 3-202.

Did not bat: Colin de Grandhomme, B.J. Watling, Mitchell Santner, Tim Southee, Neil Wagner, Trent Boult.

Bowling: Kamrul Islam 7-0-31-0, Mehedi Hasan 11.4-0-66-2, Shakib Al Hasan 10-0-30-0, Taskin Ahmed 6-0-38-0, Subashis Roy 5-0-32-1.

Result: New Zealand won by seven wickets.

Series: New Zealand leads the two-match series 1-0.

who took over the captaincy, saying they only had themselves to blame.

"In the second innings we could have batted well. (We were) unlucky in the sense regarding injury, yes, but we could have batted well," he said with the 595 never considered a match-winning innings.

"We always believed this Test match is not over yet and there will be one session or period of 20-25 overs for both the teams where whoever does well in that small session might win the Test match.

"That's what New Zealand did better than us and that's why they are in winning position today." Williamson and Ross Taylor (60) batted raced along at more than six runs an over in their 163-run third wicket partnership to seal

victory. Williamson brought up his century-levelling the scores with a sweep off Mehedi Hasan to the boundary-before ending the game with a single off the next ball.

Bangladesh had been in command for nearly four days, until their second innings lasted fewer than 58 overs to end at 160 for nine. First innings hero Shakib Al Hasan, whose 217 is a record high score for a Bangladesh batsman, lasted only five balls before going for nought. It was a disappointing sequel to their imposing first innings of 595 for eight declared, presenting them with the unwanted record of the highest score in the first innings to lose a Test. The previous mark was set more than 120 years ago, when Australia scored 586 against England at the Sydney Cricket Ground in 1894. —AFP

KOHLI PROVES KING OF THE CHASE ONCE MORE

NEW DELHI: Virat Kohli appears able to produce miracles with his bat and the India captain masterminded yet another successful chase in Sunday's run-feast against England to enhance his reputation as the second innings king of one-day cricket.

Batting second allows a batsman to set his tempo according to demand, yet it is considered a true litmus test of stroke-making excellence due to the constant scoreboard pressure. This was never more evident than when the opposition racked up 350 runs and reduced India to 63-4 like England did in Pune on Sunday, threatening to spoil Kohli's first match in charge since taking over the limited-overs captaincy. The 28-year-old replied with a sublime 122, forging a 200-run partnership with fellow centurion Kedar Jadhav, to help India chase down the steep target with 11 balls to spare. Kohli's ton equalled Sachin Tendulkar's record of 17 second innings centuries, a fact made even more remarkable considering he took 136 innings fewer than the retired great, who was quick to laud the centurions on Twitter.

Former England captain Michael Vaughan was far more succinct in his assessment of the India captain, who is ranked among the top two in all three formats of the game. "VIRAT KOHLI IS FROM ANOTHER PLANET #Fact," Vaughan tweeted, following it with another entry in which he rated the right-hander as the top batsman in each format. After winning the toss at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Kohli was probably unsure what would constitute a good total at the compact venue hosting only its second one-day international.

Rather unsurprisingly he opted to field and despite cutting a frustrated figure as England bludgeoned India late in their innings, Kohli was calmness personified when his 27th one-day ton helped the hosts take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. This was the third time India has chased down a 350-plus target and on each occasion Kohli has struck a century. Since his 2008 debut, India have overwhelmed targets of 300 or more on eight occasions and Kohli failed to get a century in just two of those wins. This was also the 15th time that a Kohli ton culminated in a successful chase, more than any other batsman has managed in this format.

India's batting mainstay averages a mind-boggling 91 in successful one-day chases but his away record is slightly less impressive. Of his 17th second innings centuries, eight came in away matches and only four outside Asia, including one in Harare. Having built an almost impregnable game and fuelled by an insatiable hunger for runs, Kohli is unlikely to settle for just South Asian dominance and will look to export his second innings excellence to grounds all over the world. —Reuters



PUNE: This file photo taken on Sunday shows India's captain Virat Kohli celebrating after India won the first One-Day International (ODI) cricket match against England at The MCA International Cricket Stadium in Pune. India skipper Virat Kohli has said the self-belief in the team to win from any situation is what drove the hosts to chase down 350 against England in the first one-day international in Pune. — AFP

ZHANG SHUAI SAYS CHINESE PLAYERS READY TO SHINE

MELBOURNE: Zhang Shuai said a group of promising Chinese players who have grown up training together were ready to shine as she breezed into the Australian Open second round yesterday. Zhang rescued her failing career with her run to last year's Melbourne quarter-finals and, now seeded 20th, she impressed again with a 6-0, 6-3 win over Aliaksandra Sasnovich from Belarus.

The 27-year-old world number 23

said she wasn't the only player from Tianjin who could make an impact, as close friend Duan Yingying also won her first match. "I'm really happy for everyone. So many young players now are playing so well. We come from the same city," Zhang said.

"Since eight or nine years old, we've been training in the same training centre. We've been training together a long time so I'm really happy to see so many players from my country and my city

play well. "I hope they can play better and better." China has been waiting for another player to make their breakthrough after the 2014 retirement of Li Na, whose two Grand Slam titles brought tennis to a mass audience in the country.

Duan, also 27, won in straight sets 6-3, 6-4 against Rebecca Sramkova, and can achieve her best Grand Slam performance yet if she beats America's Varvara Lepchenko in round two.

Peng Shuai, who also lives in Tianjin and reached the US Open semi-finals in 2014, joined Zhang and Duan in the second round with a 6-0, 7-6 (7/5) win over Daria Kasatkina.

And Tianjin's Wang Qiang is among four Chinese women who will play their first-round matches today.

Before last year's Australian Open, Zhang had never won a Grand Slam main draw match and was on the verge of quitting tennis.

She said she felt confident on her return to Melbourne, where she will play America's Alison Riske in round two. "I don't want to compare it with last year because last year I did so well and I just want to enjoy this year. I played really well today," she said.

"I'm feeling very confident on court because I like it here so much. I hope I can keep the feeling I had today and play better and better. I'm looking forward to my next match." — AFP

KYRGIOS' NEW APPROACH: KEEP CALM, MOVE ON AT AUSSIE OPEN

MELBOURNE: No tirades at the umpire. No insults directed at spectators. No rackets smashed to smithereens. For Nick Kyrgios, the talented yet combustible bad boy of tennis, it was a rather routine 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 win over Portugal's Gastao Elias in the first round of the Australian Open yesterday. But given the way the Australian imploded at the end of last season, drawing intense criticism and a brief suspension from the sport, an ordinary match without fireworks might be a good thing.

The No. 14-seeded Kyrgios played with focus and composure against Elias, the kind of self control many Australian fans wish he displayed in every match. Playing with a sore left knee, which has bothered him since the beginning of the year, he ended points quickly and conserved his energy throughout the encounter, getting off the court in a swift 85 minutes. "If you happen to go deep, it gets pretty tiring," Kyrgios said. "So you just want to reserve that mental energy and other parts of your body as well. The quicker you can get it done, the better it is for deeper in the week."

The Australian player didn't sound quite as thoughtful in his last news conference of 2016. His season came to an abrupt end at the Shanghai Masters in October when he sped through a match against Mischa Zverev with little effort or apparent care whether he won or lost. At one point, a spectator challenged his professionalism and Kyrgios responded with vitriol, inviting

the man to switch places with him on court. In a testy, post-match news conference, Kyrgios said he didn't owe the spectators anything and added that the fans could "just leave" if they didn't like his attitude. Tennis officials told Kyrgios to leave instead. In a harsh response, the ATP Tour handed him more than US\$40,000 in fines and an eight-week suspension that was later reduced to three when he agreed to consult with a sports psychologist.

STRUGGLING

Yesterday, Kyrgios admitted he had been struggling to maintain his morale at the tail end of a tiring season. "It's hard for me to stay happy on the road," he said. "I get homesick quite easily. It's not easy being away from your home, being away from your girlfriend. I just wanted to be with them."

He's playing in front of a home crowd now, including family and friends who had traveled from his hometown of Canberra, the Australian capital, to watch him play. Will it make a difference? Kyrgios seems to think so - and he believes he's due for a breakthrough at a Grand Slam after reaching the quarterfinals at Wimbledon in 2014 at the Australian Open the following year.

"I just want to get back to it and try to have fun again," he said. "I know I can do well at these tournaments. My level has been great all the last year. I'm 13 in the world. I'm not in a bad space. Try and be positive, try and enjoy myself." — AP



MELBOURNE: Germany's Angelique Kerber hits a return against Ukraine's Lesia Tsurenko during their women's singles match on day one of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

PUIG HOPES FOR GOLDEN FORM IN MELBOURNE

MELBOURNE: Monica Puig would never trade her surprise singles gold at the Rio Games for any grand slam success but Puerto Rico's first Olympic champion felt compelled to lock the medal away amid the lean period that followed her greatest tennis triumph.

She had worn the medal with pride for a while, most notably during a hero's homecoming through the streets of San Juan where thousands of residents in the U.S. territory's capital roared as she rolled by in an open-top bus.

The party was over in New York three weeks later, however, when she was bundled out of the US Open's first round. Puig, who had upset an honour roll of grand slam champions at Rio, was humbled in straight sets by 61st-ranked Chinese Zheng Saisai. After Rio, she lost in the first round of four of her next six tournaments, including her opening two in Brisbane and Sydney in 2017, so it was a hugely relieved Puig who reached the second round of the Australian Open on Monday. "The medal is in a safe in my house now," the 23-year-old told Reuters in an interview after her 6-0 6-1 demolition of Romania's Patricia Maria Tig.

"I carried it around for a good while last year and all of a sudden I didn't really want to spoil the feeling of looking at it and just being in awe of it.

"So every now and then when I need a little bit of a boost I go in there and look at it and know it wasn't a dream, it was real."

By any measure, Rio was a fairytale for Puig. After thrashing French Open champion Garbine Muguruza, she battled past twice Wimbledon winner Petra Kvitova and felled the current world number one Angelique Kerber in the gold medal decider at the Olympic Tennis Centre.

NO SPECIAL TREATMENT

The Rio champion was afforded no spe-

cial treatment by tournament organisers in Melbourne, however, with her opener playing out on far-flung Court 14, where trams rattle by at the northeast corner of the precinct. Puig was nonetheless heartened by Spanish cheers from "about three" Puerto Rican fans in the tiny crowd. "It doesn't matter, really, on which court I play, I'm always going to bring my A-game wherever I play," said the 29th seed, who next faces German Mona Barthel. "Sometimes playing on those courts on the outside, for a first round or something, there's a lot of jitters, it settles you a bit and you feel like it's your own little domain. "I really don't mind it. I don't care if I don't play on the big courts, I just know that whenever it's my time to play there I'll just soak it up."

Regaining her giant-killing confidence may take some time but she is comforted in the knowledge she has the game to do so. "I didn't really know how to handle the (Olympic) success because it came at a time when I wasn't really ready for it and it just sort of happened," she said.

"Definitely there was a lot of fatigue and a lot of mental fatigue. "I was learning how to deal with this for the first time and I had to kind of be a little bit lenient on myself and say, 'hey, ok, learn from this experience and the next time we know what to do'.

"So I know what I'm capable of, I know what I can do. I've just got to go out and do it." While focused on the here and now, Puig looks forward to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the idea of becoming the first woman to defend her title.

"Andy Murray did it," she said of the men's world number one, who won golds for Britain at London and Rio. "If he can do it, I think I can do it as well. "I always seem to elevate my level whenever I have my country's colours on my back. I'm just hoping for a couple of successful years until then." — Reuters



MELBOURNE: Monica Puig of Puerto Rico hits a return against Patricia Maria Tig of Romania during their women's singles first round match on day one of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

MURRAY, KERBER WIN THEIR FIRST MAJOR MATCHES AS TOP SEEDS

MELBOURNE: In his first Grand Slam match with the elevated status of having a knighthood and the No. 1 ranking, Andy Murray berated himself when he made mistakes and frequently yelled during a 7-5, 7-6 (5), 6-2 win over Illya Marchenko. In other words, nothing much has changed. The five-time finalist started on Rod Laver Arena on Monday, taking the first step in his bid for a first Australian Open title.

Angelique Kerber, who is defending a major title and is also the No. 1 seed at a Grand Slam for the first time, had some nervous moments in her 6-2, 5-7, 6-2 win over Lesia Tsurenko.

Kerber won her first Grand Slam title here last year, beating Serena Williams in the final after saving match point in the first round. So after wasting a match point before her serve was broken as Tsurenko rallied to win the second set, Kerber said her mind raced back 12 months.

"To be honest, I was thinking about this," she said. "When I lost the second set, and I had match point, I was thinking about my match last year in the first round - first rounds are always tough." Murray has lost four of the last six finals here - including the last two - to six-time champion Novak Djokovic. But he did take something off his long-time friend at the end of last year when he replaced Djokovic in the top ranking during a stunning finish to the season.

He subsequently received a knighthood in Queen Elizabeth II's New Year's honors list. Murray said the ranking and the civic honors won't change anything, and he faces "the same pressure, same expectations."

There's one thing he desperately wants to change. "I've never won here - I'm going to try to change that this year," he said. Other players who could potentially stand in his way - No. 4 Stan Wawrinka, No. 5 Kei Nishikori and No. 10 Tomas Berdych - had first-round wins. Another, Roger Federer, was set to play his first four-level match in more than six months when he played Jurgen Melzer in a night match.

TOUGH TIME

US Open champion Wawrinka had a tough time in the first night match on Margaret Court Arena, scraping past 35th-ranked Martin Klizan 4-6, 6-4, 7-5, 4-6, 6-4.

In the ninth game of the fifth set, Wawrinka smashed a soft half-volley from Klizan straight back into the Slovakian's body, clipping the frame and just missing his midsection. He stepped over the net to ensure Klizan was OK, then went on to hold serve and broke in the next game to finish off in 3 hours, 24 minutes.

There are 18 American women in the draw, and two recorded wins in the first two matches on Rod Laver. Venus Williams beat Kateryna Kozlova 7-6 (5), 7-5 right after Shelby Rogers' upset 6-3, 6-1 win over fourth-seeded Simona Halep, a result which sent the former French Open finalist out in the first round for the second year running at Melbourne Park.

Rogers made a surprising run to the French Open quarterfinals before losing to eventual champion Garbine Muguruza last year, when she was ranked No. 108, and is still using her success there as motivation.

"The biggest thing I took away from that was just that I can compete with the top players in the world and I'm good enough," she said.

Seventh-seeded Muguruza saved a set point in the first set and needed a medical timeout

before advancing 7-5, 6-4 over Marina Erakovic.

CoCo Vandeweghe overcame a bout of nausea to beat No. 15-seeded Roberta Vinci 6-1, 7-6 (3). Other seeded players who lost were No. 19 Kiki Bertens, No. 23 Daria Kasatkina and No. 26 Laura Siegemund.

The 16-year-old Destanee Aiava became the first player born in this millennium to play in the main draw of a major, but the milestone match ended in a 6-3, 7-6 (4) loss to Mona Barthel. In contrasting openers, Nishikori needed 31/2 hours to beat Andrey Kuznetsov 7-5, 1-6, 6-4, 7-6

(6), 6-2, but Berdych only played a set - which he won 6-1 - before Luca Vanni retired from their match. No. 14 Nick Kyrgios returned from his suspension for underperforming in Shanghai last year by racing through a 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 win against Gastao Elias. Other men's seeds advancing included 2014 U.S. Open champion Marin Cilic, 2008 Australian Open finalist Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, No. 19 John Isner, No. 23 Jack Sock, No. 27 Bernard Tomic, No. 29 Viktor Troicki and No. 31 Sam Querrey. No. 16 Lucas Pouille lost to qualifier Alexander Bublik. — AP

WAWRINKA 'SORRY' FOR KLIZAN BODY BLOW

MELBOURNE: Stan Wawrinka apologised for slamming a ball at Martin Klizan after he survived a tense five-setter to reach the Australian Open second round yesterday.

The three-time Grand Slam champion, fought back from a break down in the final set to overhaul the 35th-ranked Slovak 4-6, 6-4, 7-5, 4-6, 6-4 in 3hr 24min on Margaret Court Arena. There was a dramatic moment in the final set when Wawrinka fired a volley at a defenceless Klizan, who had conceded the point after a rally and was standing at the net. The Swiss fourth seed quickly jumped over the net to offer his apologies as Klizan sunk to his haunches in pain. "That was, for sure, a tough shot for him. The thing is there are some players they fake you, and you stop playing and then they just put up the racket," Wawrinka said.

"So for me I already miss some easy ones. For me the most important thing was to run straight over to him. "I just wanted to make sure he was okay. I realized he was okay. "I'm sorry I touch him in the wrong place. But I

think it was okay at the end."

Klizan preferred not to pass judgement on Wawrinka but he said the Swiss could have hit his volley anywhere on the court. "I stopped playing. He could play anywhere, the whole court," the Slovak said. "He could play anywhere on the court and he hit me." Despite the incident, Wawrinka was relieved to get through a difficult first-up match to stay alive at the year's first major. "It's most important to get through that match, to win. For sure it's a big relief, especially when you are a break down in the fifth, 4-3, 40-15, I'm really happy to get through," he said.

Wawrinka, who beat Rafael Nadal to win the 2014 Australian Open, will next play American Steve Johnson. The Swiss hit 21 aces and 13 winners with his signature single-handed backhand, but made 43 unforced errors as he struggled to contain left-hander Klizan's powerful forehand.

Wawrinka maintained his record of never having lost in the first round at his 12th Australian Open campaign. —AFP



MELBOURNE: Stan Wawrinka of Switzerland hits a return against Martin Klizan of Slovakia during their men's singles first round match on day one of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

POCHETTINO URGES SPURS TO DRAW ON THRILL OF FOXES HUNT

LONDON: Mauricio Pochettino has urged his Tottenham Hotspur side to draw on the experience of their failed title bid last season to launch a successful assault for the Premier League trophy this campaign.

Tottenham chased Leicester City for much of last season but wilted in the final weeks to eventually finish third,

below the Foxes and north London rivals Arsenal. Tottenham's 4-0 thrashing of West Bromwich Albion on Saturday lifted the club to second in the table, seven points behind leaders Chelsea after 21 games, and their sixth league win in a row has shown last year's tilt was not a one-off. "Last season was the first time for 99 percent of the players fighting to

win the Premier League and the important thing is that you are clever. We are showing that we are clever and we learn a lot," Pochettino told British media.

"If you are open and your mind is open that is a good thing and we are showing this season that we are more mature, we compete better and we missed that maybe a little bit last sea-

son. "We are showing after 21 games that we can compete and we are in a very good position. It is true that the gap with Chelsea is still big, but there are a lot of games ahead until the end of the season." Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger and Chelsea boss Antonio Conte have previously expressed their concern that a growing number of play-

ers could be lured by the riches on offer in the Chinese Super League and Pochettino struck a more cautious tone.

"It's crazy money, it looks like they broke the market. If it's true, it's unbelievable but we will see what happens," the Argentine added. Tottenham travel to face fifth-placed Manchester City on Saturday. — Reuters

MOURINHO WANTS MAN UNITED TO SHARPEN UP

MANCHESTER: Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho called on his players to stop spurning chances after they needed an 84th-minute equaliser from Zlatan Ibrahimovic to rescue a 1-1 draw against Liverpool.

Paul Pogba squandered a one-on-one in the early stages of Sunday's game and after his handball allowed James Milner to put Liverpool ahead with a penalty, United were left chasing the game.

Only seven of United's 32 Premier League goals this season have been scored in the first 35 minutes and Mourinho wants his team to stop letting their opponents off the hook. "We are having this problem for the whole season," he told reporters at Old Trafford.

"We start matches normally very, very well and we don't score many goals in the first half of the matches. Normally the first big occasion, the goalkeeper makes a phenomenal save.

"Every goalkeeper that comes here plays fantastic. That save (by Liverpool goalkeeper Simon Mignolet) from Zlatan's free-kick is an amazing save. "And then Paul is in the face of the keeper and missed the target. We have always chances to be in front and it costs us (not) to score goals." Pogba this week became the first footballer to have his own Twitter emoji, which flashed up periodically on the perimeter advertising hoardings. But the world's most expensive footballer produced an error-strewn display and it was his needless handball that enabled Milner to break the deadlock with a 27th-minute penalty.

Ibrahimovic spared his team-mate's blushes late on, stooping to guide a header over Simon Mignolet from Antonio Valencia's cross after substitute Marouane Fellaini had hit the post.

With 14 goals, he is now the Premier League's joint-leading scorer. United, who had won their previous nine matches in all competitions, remain sixth, four points off the top four, while Liverpool trail leaders Chelsea by seven points in third place.

Mourinho, somewhat mischievously, said Liverpool had come to defend and

likened their performance to the ultra-defensive display produced by his side in October's 0-0 draw at Anfield.

'WE'RE STILL THERE'

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp, who felt his team had been "the better side", was aggrieved that Roberto Firmino was booked for his role in a stoppage-time altercation with Ander Herrera.

Firmino shoved Herrera to the ground after the Spaniard had held him back by the shirt, yielding a pair of yellow cards and a frank exchange of views between Mourinho and Klopp on the touchline.

"Roberto is a footballer from here (gesturing to his head) to toe and he wants to stay in the game," Klopp said.

"That's a yellow card for Herrera and nothing else. In the end it's a yellow card for the guy who wants to play football." Klopp also implied that United captain Wayne Rooney, a half-time replacement for Michael Carrick, had been fortunate to avoid punishment for an ugly foul on Milner. "If you are surprised, do me a favour: write it," he told reporters. "For example, if it's an ugly challenge, write it. Don't make it a story of it when I say it."

Liverpool remain without a victory after four games of 2017, but Klopp pointed to selection problems as a mitigating factor. An abdominal injury to Nathaniel Clyne saw 18-year-old Trent Alexander-Arnold make his full league debut at right-back, while Philippe Coutinho was only fit enough for the bench.

Sadio Mane is away at the Africa Cup of Nations with Senegal and Liverpool announced before the game that Joel Matip is awaiting FIFA clearance after refusing to play in the tournament for Cameroon. "In this moment for us maybe it's a little bit more difficult to play our best because not everybody's available," said Klopp. "But we're still there and everybody could see we fight for it 100 percent."

"There will be a moment when we are the better side and everybody's back and in shape, healthy, fit, and then we'll see how the base is then." —AFP



SEVILLA: Real Madrid's defender Sergio Ramos (C) scored an own goal during the Spanish league football match Sevilla FC vs Real Madrid CF at the Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan stadium in Sevilla on Sunday. —AFP

RAMOS OWN GOAL AS SEVILLA ENDS MADRID'S UNBEATEN RUN

MADRID: Sevilla fans enjoyed the last laugh over Sergio Ramos.

Sevilla twice scored late - including an 85th-minute own goal by Ramos - to end Real Madrid's 40-game unbeaten streak and move within one point of its rival atop the Spanish league with a 2-1 victory on Sunday.

It was a tough result for Ramos, who three days ago had angered Sevilla fans after converting a penalty kick "Panenka" style in a Copa del Rey match. Ramos said he was insulted by some supporters of his former team.

On Sunday, the Seville native was jeered nearly every time he touched the ball, and heard even more from the crowd at Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan when he found his own net with a header while trying to clear a cross.

Steven Jovetic then scored Sevilla's winner two minutes into injury time to give Madrid its first defeat since a 2-0 loss at Wolfsburg in April in the quarterfinals of the Champions League last season. Karim Benzema's injury-time equalizer against Sevilla on Thursday had allowed Madrid to break the unbeaten Spanish record that it shared with Barcelona.

Cristiano Ronaldo gave Madrid the lead on Sunday by converting a penalty kick in the 67th.

Madrid had won eight of its last nine games, with its only setback a 1-1 draw at Barcelona earned with a 90th-minute goal by Ramos.

Barcelona stayed third, two points behind Madrid, after beating Las Palmas 5-0 at Camp Nou on Saturday. Fourth-placed Atletico Madrid, which edged Real Betis 1-0 at home for its third win in a row, is six points behind the leader.

Madrid still has a game in hand.

VALENCIA 2, ESPANYOL 1

Valencia finally won again by beating Espanyol 2-1 to end a three-month drought in the league and move further from the relegation zone. Martin Montoya scored from close range in the 17th minute and Santi Mina sealed the victory in the 73rd at Mestalla Stadium as Valencia snapped its eight-game winless streak to open a four-point gap to the relegation teams. David Lopez netted for Espanyol in the 85th but Valencia held on to earn the elusive victory. "This result will give us a lot of confidence to keep on working," Valencia coach Salvador "Voro" Gonzalez said "To improve, we needed to win, and we are very happy." Valencia hadn't won in the league since beating Sporting Gijon 2-1 in October, in what was the first match in charge for Cesare Prandelli, the former Italy coach who resigned during the winter break because of the team's struggles.

"I think it was our best game of the season," Santi Mina said. "We have played well in some other games but we didn't pick up three points."

CELTA VIGO 1, ALAVES 0

Serbian midfielder Nemanja Radjoja scored an 89th-minute winner as Celta Vigo salvaged a 1-0 home win over 10-man Alaves. It was the second consecutive win for Celta, which moved to eighth place. Alaves, 12th in the table, played a man down from the first minute of the second half as Moroccan defender Zouhair Feddal was shown a second yellow card.

SPORTING GIJON 2, EIBAR 3

Eibar scored three times in the first 23 minutes and held on to snap a four-game winless streak. It hadn't won an away match since a third-round game at Granada. It was the seventh loss in the last eight matches for Sporting, which remains in the relegation zone.

GRANADA 1, OSASUNA 1

Last-placed Osasuna saw its winless streak reach 10 games after a draw against second-to-last Granada, which played with 10 men from the 73rd and also had a player sent off in injury time. Promoted Osasuna hasn't won since beating Eibar 3-2 in October. It has lost seven of its 10 games since then. — AP



Matches on TV

(Local Timings)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP 2017

Ghana v Uganda	19:00
beIN SPORTS	
Mali v Egypt	22:00
beIN SPORTS	

ITALIAN CUP

Inter Milano v Bologna	23:00
beIN SPORTS	

LIVERPOOL FRUSTRATED WITH FIFA OVER MATIP ELIGIBILITY

LIVERPOOL: Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp expressed his frustration on Sunday that FIFA has failed to make a swift decision about the eligibility of defender Joel Matip.

Matip withdrew himself from consideration for future selection for Cameroon's national team in September 2015, but his country tried to call him up for the African Nations Cup that started this month.

Although Cameroon finalized its squad for the tournament more than a week ago, without Matip in it, Liverpool says the Cameroon Football Federation has failed to confirm he can play for the club during the African Nations Cup.

The Premier League team has sought clarification from FIFA about the issue, but hasn't been given a decision by world soccer's governing body and did not feel it could take the chance on playing Matip against Manchester United on Sunday. He was therefore withdrawn from selection for a game that finished 1-1 at Old Trafford.

"We, the club, did everything we had to do to make this clear but until now we could not get the response we need to be 100 percent sure that he can play," Klopp said. "It's pretty difficult and pretty frustrat-

ing, to be honest. He's been in training for five days and would have been in the squad, 100 percent, maybe on the pitch today, so I don't think it's fair. But we cannot do more and are still waiting on the decision. We could not take the risk."

Liverpool believes Matip has followed all the correct procedures and considers he should be available for selection during a busy period for the club, which is playing Premier League, FA Cup and League fixtures this month.

"We need to get an answer as quickly as possible because on Wednesday we have the next game (an FA Cup third-round replay at Plymouth) and then another game and another game. We cannot wait forever," Klopp said.

"It is public now, we have this problem and we are not the only team with this problem." Fellow Premier League club West Brom has faced a similar situation with defender Allan Nyom, who has not played in the team's last two matches because it has not had similar clarification from FIFA.

FIFA has the power to ban players it feels have not correctly acceded to the request of their national association. —AP



MAINZ: This Friday, Feb. 12, 2016 file photo shows Joel Matip during a German Bundesliga soccer match between FSV Mainz 05 and FC Schalke 04 in Mainz, Germany. — AP

KLOPP EXPECTS REDS RESPONSE

LONDON: Jurgen Klopp insists Liverpool will use the frustration of their dramatic draw with Manchester United to avoid FA Cup humiliation at fourth tier Plymouth.

Klopp's side were denied a memorable victory over bitter rivals United when Zlatan Ibrahimovic headed a late equaliser at Old Trafford on Sunday. James Milner's first half penalty had put the Reds in front, but they couldn't add a killer second goal and paid the price when Ibrahimovic struck in the 84th minute to leave Liverpool seven points behind Premier League leaders Chelsea.

It was a painful lesson in the value of a lethal forward, something Liverpool have sorely missed for much of the season, and especially during their current run of four games without a win in all competitions. One of those draws came against plucky Plymouth, who took advantage of Klopp's decision to rest all his established stars and send out Liverpool's youngest ever line-up in a goalless third round encounter at Anfield earlier this month.

It was a day to remember for Plymouth and the minnows fancy their chances of causing a famous shock in the replay at Home Park if Klopp fields another weakened team. But the Reds boss is confident his squad will recover from their blip sooner rather than later.

"A lot of people thought playing United was a decisive game for the rest of the season. That's rubbish," said Klopp, whose side will host second tier Wolves in the fourth round if they beat Plymouth. "We went there to win the game which is why we are not 100 percent satisfied." "It was a wild game. I hoped we would have a bit of luck, unfortunately not but it's all good. I can enjoy the result today and the performance tomorrow."

CULTURE SHOCK

After earning a lucrative replay, promotion chasing Plymouth hope to cash in by stunning the five-time European champions. Plymouth manager Derek Adams believes the culture shock facing Liverpool's stars at humble Home Park could work in his team's favour. "Not as luxurious dressing rooms as they have here, even though we're in a porta-cabin. From that point of view, welcome to the real world," he said. In the other third round replays, Crystal Palace manager Sam Allardyce desperately needs to beat third tier Bolton at Selhurst Park. Allardyce is still waiting

for his first victory since arriving at Palace in December to replace the sacked Alan Pardew. Fresh from Saturday's 3-0 loss at West Ham, which left Palace just above the relegation zone, former England boss Allardyce knows an embarrassing loss to Bolton would be a major blow to the Eagles' morale. Manchester City lie in wait for the winners of that tie. Sunderland, another team mired in the relegation battle, travel to fellow Premier League side Burnley, who are on the up after surging away from the bottom three. Southampton host second tier Norwich, with the winner facing Arsenal in the fourth round. —AFP



OYEM: Togo supporters cheer for their team ahead of the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations group C football match between Ivory Coast and Togo in Oyem yesterday. — AFP

Sports

Former pro
wrestler
Jimmy 'Superfly'
Snuka dead at 73



Murray, Kerber win
their first major
matches as top
seeds



TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017

GHANA BEGIN LATEST CUP OF NATIONS BID, EGYPT RETURN

Page 18



ARLINGTON: Dez Bryant #88 of the Dallas Cowboys scores a touchdown past LaDarius Gunter #36 of the Green Bay Packers in the second half during the NFC Divisional Playoff Game at AT&T Stadium on Sunday in Arlington, Texas. — AFP

PACKERS WIN OVER COWBOYS TO REACH NFC TITLE GAME

DALLAS: Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers was left with a few seconds and one shot at winning it and that was enough as Green Bay's 51-yard field goal at the gun gave them a 34-31 playoff win over the Dallas Cowboys on Sunday. Rodgers, the NFL's hottest quarterback, put Green Bay in position to advance to the NFC Championship and kicker Mason Crosby did the rest to launch a Packers' celebration at AT&T Stadium. The Packers moved on to face the Atlanta Falcons next Sunday, with a spot in the Super Bowl at stake.

The final tally came in improbable fashion after the Cowboys tied the game with 44 seconds left. On third down with 12 seconds remaining, Rodgers dialed up some familiar magic.

Scrambling to his left, he rifled a 35-yard completion to tight end Jared Cook, who dragged his toes in bounds at the 33-yard line with three seconds on the clock. Mason followed with a game-winner just inside the left upright, after his first attempt right down the

middle was waived off after the Cowboys called a time-out just before the snap.

Rodgers finished 28 of 43 for 356 yards and two touchdowns, with an interception. Cook caught six passes for 104 yards and a score. Ty Montgomery also had six receptions and scored on two short runs.

The Cowboys' season ends after earning the No. 1 seed in the NFC and an off week for the first round of the playoffs. The Dallas stars came to play, especially their outstanding rookies, quarterback Dak Prescott and running back Ezekiel Elliott. Prescott completed 24 of 38 for 302 yards, three scores and a pick. Elliott rushed 22 times for 125 yards.

INCREDIBLE PERFORMANCES

Dez Bryant had nine catches for 132 yards and two touchdowns. The Cowboys rallied from an 18-point second quarter deficit and were on the verge of overtime after Dan Bailey's 52-yard field goal in the final minute.

But Rodgers proved too much, continuing a run of incredible performances that began in late November and has carried Green Bay to eight straight wins. After a big first half, the Packers didn't skip a beat in opening the third quarter with a touchdown. Rodgers led his team 75 yards in just six plays, ending with the 3-yard toss to Cook. The Cowboys needed an answer, and were driving for another score before the momentum swung back to the visitors. With a second-and-1 at the Green Bay 19, Prescott threw a quick slant that was jumped by Green Bay safety Micah Hyde.

The game's first turnover could have been disastrous for Dallas, but the Packers gave the ball right back. Free safety Jeff Heath picked off Rodgers-his first interception since Nov. 13 — deep in Dallas territory.

Prescott calmly directed a scoring march that ended with a 6-yard pass to Jason Witten and trimmed Green Bay's lead to 28-20 early in the fourth. The Cowboys weren't done. After a rare stop of Rodgers and the

Packers, Dallas put together a clutch game-tying possession.

Prescott not only found Bryant on a 7-yard touchdown on third down, the rookie signal-called bulled his way over the goal line for the 2-point conversion.

Green Bay went into halftime up 21-13 behind 191 yards passing from Rodgers. The Cowboys took the opening kickoff and went 43 yards before Dan Bailey nailed a 50-yard field goal. Green Bay answered with three consecutive touchdown drives covering 75, 90 and 80 yards, respectively, to open up a 21-3 lead midway through the second quarter.

Prescott got Dallas into the end zone for the first time by hooking up with Bryant. Consecutive long completions to Bryant, the latter covering 40 yards for a touchdown, helped breathe life back into the Cowboys.

Bailey's 33-field goal late in the second quarter left Dallas down eight points going into the locker room. — Reuters

RAPTORS ROUT KNICKS, HAWKS DEFEAT BUCKS

TORONTO: The Toronto Raptors left the New York Knicks behind in a hurry in a big third quarter. Toronto had a 25-2 edge in the first 9:20 of the third and coasted to a 116-101 victory Sunday. "I think we just got more physical," said Kyle Lowry, who had 16 points and nine assists before coming out late in the third quarter. "The bigs did a good job of rebounding and we got out and were able to run." Toronto outscored New York 27-8 in the third quarter to take a 96-62 lead.

DeMar DeRozan had 23 points, five rebounds and five assists to lead the Raptors. He joined most of Toronto's starters in resting in the fourth quarter. Norman Powell added 21 points, DeMarre Carroll had 20 points, and Jonas Valanciunas had 12 points and 16 rebounds. The Raptors improved to 27-13, taking the lead for good late in the first quarter. They led by 38 points in the third in winning their third straight game overall and fifth in a row against the Knicks.

Carmelo Anthony led the Knicks with 18 points, Justin Holiday had 17, and Derrick Rose added 16. The Knicks are 2-10 in their last 12 to drop to 18-23. "When you're not scoring, that's when you've got to focus defensively," Knicks coach Jeff Hornacek said of his team's disastrous third quarter. "We weren't good enough playing the defense and it just ballooned up from there."

Hornacek sat his starters from the latter part of the third quarter. "They were not thinking defense, they were thinking offence and their offence wasn't going," he said. "I don't know if it's giving up, you can ask them that but the last group came in and played hard and that's what we need." The Raptors were 12 for 20 from the field in the third quarter, while the Knicks were 4 for 21 overall and 0 for 4 from the 3-point range.

The Knicks also had seven turnovers times in the quarter, leading to 10 Toronto points. The Raptors turned it over four times, but New York was unable score any points off them. "It happened so quickly, a couple of turnovers, they scored four straight times early in that third quarter and we were just looking backwards from that point," Anthony said. DeRozan led the way with 11 points in the third, and Carroll had 10.

Toronto took a 69-54 lead into the halftime break. The Raptors matched their season high in a quarter, scoring 42 in the second. They hit seven 3s in the period, led by Terrence Ross, who went 4 for 5 from beyond the arc. "I was really proud of the way that the starters came out and set the tone, especially starting the third quarter, which has usually been our Achilles heel," Raptors coach Dwane Casey said. "We came out, set the tone and built a 30-point-plus lead, so my hat is off to those guys."

HAWKS 111, BUCKS 98

It didn't take long for Mike Dunleavy to change his mind about the trade that brought him to Atlanta. The 14-year veteran almost sought a buyout when he was acquired by the Hawks in a deal that sent Kyle Korver to Cleveland on Jan. 7. But after he was persuaded to join the club by Hawks coach Mike Budenholzer, it seems like a great fit for both the player and the team.

THUNDER 122, KINGS 118

Russell Westbrook scored 36 points to record his 20th triple-double of the season, and Evan Kanter came off the bench to score 29 as Oklahoma City beat Sacramento at the Golden 1 Center. Westbrook also collected 11 rebounds and 10 assists for the 57th triple-

NBA results/standings									
Oklahoma City 122, Sacramento 118; Chicago 108, Memphis 104; Houston 137, Brooklyn 112; Toronto 116, NY Knicks 101; Atlanta 111, Milwaukee 98; Dallas 98, Minnesota 87.									
Eastern Conference Atlantic Division					Western Conference Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Toronto	27	13	.675	-	Utah	26	16	.619	-
Boston	25	15	.625	2	Oklahoma City	25	17	.595	1
NY Knicks	18	23	.439	9.5	Portland	18	24	.429	8
Philadelphia	12	26	.316	14	Denver	15	23	.395	9
Brooklyn	8	32	.200	19	Minnesota	14	27	.341	11.5
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	29	10	.744	-	Golden State	34	6	.850	-
Milwaukee	20	19	.513	9	LA Clippers	28	14	.667	7
Indiana	20	19	.513	9	Sacramento	16	24	.400	18
Chicago	21	21	.500	9.5	LA Lakers	15	30	.333	21.5
Detroit	19	24	.442	12	Phoenix	13	27	.325	21
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Atlanta	23	17	.575	-	San Antonio	31	9	.775	-
Washington	20	19	.513	2.5	Houston	32	11	.744	0.5
Charlotte	20	20	.500	3	Memphis	25	18	.581	7.5
Orlando	17	25	.405	7	New Orleans	16	25	.390	15.5
Miami	11	30	.268	12.5	Dallas	13	27	.325	18

double of his career. He is two behind Boston Celtics legend Larry Bird for fifth on the NBA's all-time list.

BULLS 108, GRIZZLIES 104

Doug McDermott scored 31 points including two free throws with 6.6 seconds left and Chicago survived a late rally by Memphis to earn a victory at the FedExForum. McDermott, who was averaging 9.7 points entering the game, had struggled in his past four outings by going 7-of-31 shooting with only 21 points. At the half, he recorded 22 points and the Bulls had a 52-46 lead.

PISTONS 102, LAKERS 97

Tobias Harris and Marcus Morris scored 23 points apiece, and Detroit snapped a three-game losing streak with a defeat of Los Angeles at Staples Center. Andre Drummond

collected 15 points and 17 rebounds for the Pistons, who ended a six-game skid at Staples. Reggie Jackson chipped in 16 points and five assists for the Pistons.

ROCKETS 137, NETS 112

James Harden recorded his 12th triple-double of the season with 22 points, 11 assists and 11 rebounds as Houston ended its two-game losing streak. Eric Gordon hit four 3-pointers and paced Houston with 24 points. Trevor Ariza tied a season best with six 3-pointers and added 23 point.

MAVERICKS 98, TIMBERWOLVES 87

The Mavericks had six players score in double figures as they ended Minnesota's three-game winning streak. Dallas was led by Wesley Matthews' 19 points and Dirk Nowitzki's 17. — Agencies

Page 26



US WILL LOOK FOR TRADE DEAL WITH POST-BREXIT BRITAIN

launch two years of EU departure negotiations when she triggers the Article 50 exit process by the end of March, although a legal challenge is still pending before the country's Supreme Court. She has been under pressure to reveal her proposals for the talks that will establish the future relationship between Britain and the EU. Matching reports in several weekly newspapers said she was prepared to accept pulling out of the single market, the European customs union and the European Court of Justice, in order to regain control of EU immigration. "She's gone for the full works. People will know when she said Brexit means Brexit, she really meant it," a government source was quoted as saying in *The Sunday Telegraph*. — AFP



OIL PRICES STALL AS HEDGE FUNDS STOP ADDING TO LONGS

LONDON: Hedge fund bullishness toward the price of crude oil appears to have peaked for the time being, with fund managers booking some profits after the strong rally in the final seven weeks of 2016. Few managers are willing to bet on a pullback in prices at the moment with the number of short positions still toward the bottom end of the range that has prevailed since 2014. But the lack of fresh long positions has removed one of the factors which helped push oil prices higher in the

closing weeks of 2016 and prices have been trending down since the turn of the year. Hedge funds and other money managers cut their net long position in Brent and WTI futures and options by the equivalent of 15 million barrels in the week to Jan 10. The net position declined for the second week running, after rising in five of the previous six weeks, according to an analysis of data published by regulators and exchanges. Hedge funds had amassed a record

net long position of 796 million barrels by the middle of December, up from a recent low of just 422 million barrels in the middle of November. Since then, however, the net long position has been flat or falling, and had been cut to 776 million barrels by Jan 10. Hedge funds long positions still outnumber short positions by a ratio of 7:1, but the ratio is down from almost 8:1 in mid-December. Fund managers are becoming more cautious about the outlook after oil prices rose by almost \$15

per barrel or more than a third in the final seven weeks of 2016. Brent is now trading very close to the average level most traders are forecasting for 2017, according to a Reuters survey. Nearly two-thirds of all respondents thought Brent prices would average \$55 or \$60 in 2017, which is not much different from the closing price of \$54 on Jan 10. There is more bullishness among hedge fund managers about the outlook for US gasoline prices, however.

Money managers have continued to accumulate long positions even as bullishness on crude has stalled. Hedge funds have established a net long position of more than 63 million barrels in gasoline blendstock futures and options, up from 37 million in mid-December and just 28 million in mid-November. The net long position in NYMEX gasoline blendstock is the largest since July 2014, when the price of oil was beginning its long slide. —Reuters



BERN: China's President Xi Jinping (C), Xi's wife Peng Liyuan (L) and Swiss Foreign Minister Didier Burkhalter eat Swiss cheese fondue during a lunch in Bern yesterday. —AFP

XI SAYS CHINESE ECONOMY TO KEEP GROWING STEADILY HEADWINDS FACING GLOBAL ECONOMY

BERN: China's economy will remain stable and keep growing steadily while resisting protectionism, President Xi Jinping told Swiss executives yesterday. "We are confident" Xi said, adding that there were headwinds facing the global economy, which is still weak. "Overall China's economy is performing steadily. In 2016, last year, GDP is expected to grow by 6.7 percent on a year-on-year basis, and that means we missed our set target, but that expectation according to some international institutions will be among the highest among major economies." "Protectionism, populism and de-globalization are on the rise. It's not good for closer economic cooperation globally," he said. Xi, on a state visit to Switzerland before a keynote speech at the World Economic Forum in Davos, said China's economy, with growth expected at 6.7 percent in 2016, was entering a "new normal", and Swiss firms could help it improve quality, and become more efficient, equitable and sustainable. "The restructuring of China's economy and the upgrading of our industries will generate huge new demand," Xi said. "In terms of intellectual manufacturing, finance, insurance, energy conservation, environmental protection, energy generation, electricity, food and medicine, Switzerland has advanced technology and... expertise and could be a new partner for innovation for China."

China owed its economic development to opening up, and Switzerland and China

would work together to reject all forms of protectionism, he said. "We will expand the openness of our service sector and general manufacturing industry to provide more investment opportunities for foreign businesses and create a sound legal and policy environment a legal playing field." China has become Swiss engineering company ABB's second biggest single market, behind only the United States, amid demand for high voltage transmission equipment for the country's burgeoning power grid and factory robots for the Middle Kingdom's car industry. Elevator maker Schindler has designs on rivaling bigger Kone and Otis, a unit of US-based United Technologies, in China, where it has made acquisitions and expanded manufacturing facilities for elevators and escalators. China is the world's biggest elevator market, accounting for about 60 percent of all new equipment orders, and Schindler said it is scouting for more acquisitions. Swiss drug and chemical makers are also fanning out in China. Novartis just completed a \$1 billion research campus in Shanghai, while Clariant is pinning its hopes on rising Chinese consumer demand for products including ingredients for soaps. Meanwhile, China's state-owned China Construction Bank got its Swiss banking license in 2015 and signed a renminbi clearing agreement with Swiss-based Zuercher Kantonalbank just last September. Switzerland is seeking to become a hub of renminbi trading, as China seeks to internationalize its currency and reduce reliance on other nations' money for trade. —Reuters

EMIRATES TO OPEN UP DUBAI LUXURY LOUNGES TO LOWER-TIER FREQUENT FLYERS

DUBAI: Emirates is opening up its lounges at its Dubai hub to lower-tier frequent flyer members in what is the latest move by the world's largest long-haul airline to look for new ways to boost revenues. Emirates, which reported a 75 percent drop in half-year profit in November, had previously restricted access to these lounges to higher-tier frequent flier members and business or first class travellers. In an email sent out to Skywards frequent flier members, seen by Reuters, passengers with Blue-tier status, the lowest of four membership categories, can pay \$100 to access the airline's Dubai business lounge and \$200 for the first class lounge. An Emirates spokeswoman confirmed to Reuters that the email was sent out to Skywards members. Other changes to the lounge access policy include Skywards members being allowed to pay for access for non-member travel companions and upgrading from business to first class lounges, according to the email dated Jan 13. —Reuters

MOZAMBIQUE SAYS WILL MISS \$60M INTEREST PAYMENT

MAPUTO: Mozambique said yesterday it would miss a \$60 million interest payment on a 2023 bond, as its economic crisis deepens over hidden debt, the fall in commodity prices and a cut-off in aid. The country is in talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) over resuming support that was suspended in April due to the hidden debt scandal. "The deteriorating macroeconomic and fiscal situation of the Republic has severely affected the country's public finances," the finance ministry said in a statement in Maputo. "The resulting debt payment capacity of the Republic is therefore extremely limited in 2017, and does not allow the Republic room to make the scheduled interest payment." The statement said Mozambique would not pay a \$60 million interest payment due on Jan 18. Last month, a parliamentary inquiry concluded that the government broke the

law by securing loans worth more than \$2 billion in hidden debt that prompted the IMF and World Bank aid cutoff. The scandal surfaced in 2013, when the government announced a contract for 30 fishing and coastal protection vessels between French shipyards and Ematum, a state-owned company that had previously raised \$850 million on the eurobonds market without lawmakers' knowledge. In April last year, more hidden debt worth \$1.4 billion—contracted without parliamentary approval by two more state-owned firms and the defense ministry—was uncovered. The government claimed the loans were used to fund military vessels and defense equipment, and said it did not disclose them as a matter of national security. The metical currency collapsed by more than 80 percent against the US dollar last year after falling 36 percent in 2015. —AFP

OIL SLIPS ON DOUBTS OVER OUTPUT CUTS

LONDON: Oil prices slipped yesterday, pressured by doubts that large oil producers will reduce production as promised and on expectations that US production would increase again this year. Benchmark Brent crude oil was down 23 cents a barrel at \$55.22 by 1142 GMT and US light crude fell 21 cents to \$52.16. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has agreed to cut production by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) to 32.5 million bpd from Jan 1 in an attempt to clear global oversupply that has depressed prices for more than two years. Russia and other key exporters outside OPEC have said they will also cut output. But global oil production remains high and, with inventories near record levels in many areas, investors doubt that OPEC and its allies can trim output enough to push up prices. "Cuts by OPEC and non-OPEC countries have just started and it will take some time for them to filter through," said Bjarne Schieldrop, chief commodities analyst at SEB Markets in Oslo. "We do not really expect the oil price to strengthen much more in the first quarter of 2017."

Comments by Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih yesterday combined with a federal holiday in the United

States are adding further downward pressure on prices, according to Olivier Jakob of consultancy Petromatrix. Falih said that OPEC and non-OPEC producers are unlikely to extend their agreement to cut oil output beyond six months, especially if global inventories fall to the five-year average. "We don't think it's necessary given the level of compliance," Falih said. "My expectations (are) ... that the rebalancing that started slowly in 2016 will have its full impact by the first half." Russian oil and gas condensate production averaged 11.1 million bpd for Jan. 1-15, two energy industry sources said yesterday, down only 100,000 bpd from December. Russia has committed to a 300,000 bpd cut during the first half of 2017 as a part of the global deal with OPEC. Rising US oil output is also preventing crude from climbing further. Goldman Sachs said it expects year-on-year US oil production to rise by 235,000 bpd in 2017, taking into account wells that have been drilled and are likely to start producing in the first half of the year. US oil output is now at 8.95 million bpd, up from less than 8.5 million bpd in June last year and at similar levels to 2014, when overproduction send the market into a tailspin. —Reuters



ABU DHABI: Costa Rican President Luis Guillermo Solis speaks during the 10th edition of the World Future Energy Summit yesterday in the United Arab Emirates capital Abu Dhabi. —AFP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

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

GCC COUNTRIES

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

ARAB COUNTRIES

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

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	306.850
Euro	323.270

Sterling Pound	379.270
Canadian dollar	229.680
Turkish lira	87.300
Swiss Franc	302.020
Australian Dollar	222.200
US Dollar Buying	305.650

GOLD

20 Gram	238.24
10 Gram	122.04
5 Gram	57.97

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	306.000
Canadian Dolla	233.485
Sterling Pound	369.790
Euro	326.395
Swiss Frank	303.085
Bahrain Dinar	811.180
UAE Dirhams	83.705
Qatari Riyals	84.925
Saudi Riyals	82.525
Jordanian Dinar	432.760
Egyptian Pound	16.619
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.043
Indian Rupees	4.491
Pakistani Rupees	2.919
Bangladesh Taka	3.880
Philippines Peso	6.139
Cyprus pound	168.040
Japanese Yen	3.680
Syrian Pound	2.430

Nepalese Rupees	3.800
Malaysian Ringgit	69.520
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.855
Thai Bhat	9.615
Turkish Lira	81.995

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.370534	0.380534
Czech Korune	0.003880	0.015880
Danish Krone	0.039176	0.044176
Euro	0.316060	0.325060
Norwegian Krone	0.031461	0.036661
Romanian Leu	0.070788	0.070786
Slovakia	0.009213	0.019213
Swedish Krona	0.029599	0.034599
Swiss Franc	0.293706	0.304706
Turkish Lira	0.083197	0.093497
Australasia		
Australian Dollar	0.213530	0.225530
New Zealand Dollar	0.207387	0.216887
America		
Canadian Dollar	0.223283	0.232283
Georgina Lari	0.138592	0.138592
US Dollars	0.302750	0.307150
US Dollars Mint	0.303250	0.307150
Asia		
Bangladesh Taka	0.003572	0.004156
Chinese Yuan	0.042582	0.046082

Hong Kong Dollar	0.037471	0.040221
Indian Rupee	0.002784	0.005518
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002529	0.002709
Kenyan Shilling	0.002985	0.002985
Korean Won	0.000245	0.000260
Malaysian Ringgit	0.064490	0.070490
Nepalese Rupee	0.002940	0.003110
Pakistan Rupee	0.002617	0.002907
Philippine Peso	0.006068	0.006368
Sierra Leone	0.000053	0.000059
Singapore Dollar	0.206634	0.216634
South African Rand	0.016339	0.024839
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001648	0.002228
Taiwan	0.009390	0.009570
Thai Baht	0.008233	0.008783

Arab		
Bahraini Dinar	0.807354	0.815854
Egyptian Pound	0.013255	0.022508
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000181	0.000241
Jordanian Dinar	0.427743	0.436743
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153	0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020226	0.044228
Nigerian Naira	0.000372	0.001007
Omani Riyal	0.790592	0.796272
Qatar Riyal	0.083473	0.084923
Saudi Riyal	0.080740	0.082040
Syrian Pound	0.001302	0.001522
Tunisian Dinar	0.129276	0.137278
Turkish Lira	0.083197	0.093497
UAE Dirhams	0.082120	0.083820
Yemeni Riyal	0.000998	0.001078

SPECIAL REPORT

FATCA AND COMMON REPORTING STANDARD IN KUWAIT
US REPORTING REQUIREMENT AND TAX EXPOSURE

By Alex Law and Claire Dawson,
Deloitte & Touche

The Financial Account Tax Compliance Act ('FATCA'), spearheaded by the United States Internal Revenue Services ('IRS') has been in play since 2014. The aim of FATCA is to identify individuals who are US residents/citizens and using financial accounts outside of the US - essentially flagging individuals who could be avoiding/evading tax in the US.

Jurisdictions around the world have signed or agreed to sign Intergovernmental Agreements with the US to become FATCA compliant (including Kuwait in April 2015). The participating jurisdictions will provide guidance to financial institutions on what to report and how this financial account holder information should be reported to the local Ministry of Finance/Central Bank, this guidance will be made available by the Kuwaiti authorities imminently. The information collected by the authorities will accordingly be exchanged with the US.

Going forward non-compliance could result in penalties and the risk of severe reputational damage - it is therefore advised for all financial institutions to

become FATCA compliant as soon as possible because the information collected as at year end 2016 will be reported before September 2017.

FATCA

Kuwaiti Financial Institutions were required to submit the financial account details of US persons holding these financial accounts in Kuwait to The Ministry of Finance by 30 November 2016. This is in consequence of Kuwait (among hundreds of other countries) being a signatory to an inter-governmental agreement (IGA) with the US. The Kuwait IGA means that foreign financial institutions (including banks, but in certain circumstances, family offices or trusts etc.) must report certain information about their US accounts, including accounts of certain foreign entities with substantial US owners to the local tax authorities / regulators who then transfer the information to the IRS.

The meaning of 'US account' is very broadly defined and opens up the possibility of a bank being required to classify an account as a US account and reporting relevant details of it to the IRS, even though there may be no US tax exposure

or reporting requirement on the part of the individual.

Details of US accounts in other Middle Eastern countries, such as the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman are assumed to have already been passed to the IRS, since the published deadlines for such reporting have already passed. This means that any US person (a US citizen or Green Card holder) in these countries who has not yet regularized their tax affairs with the IRS, may no longer qualify for streamlined filing and the significantly lower penalty regime. Professional advice should be taken immediately in this regard. As for Bahrain, we expect that reporting on US accounts will be in due course. This means that US citizens and Green Card holders in this country should take immediate steps to review their US tax exposure, and make sure that they are fully compliant. It is clear that this window of opportunity to access the streamlined filing process will not be available indefinitely.

Common Reporting Standard

As a global solution to combat tax-avoidance and as a preventative measure to monitor individuals with foreign financial accounts (many of whom may

not be disclosing these accounts to the authorities where they are tax resident), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development ('OECD') has, at the request of the G20 found the answer - the Common Reporting Standard ('CRS'). To date, over one hundred countries have signed up to or agreed to sign up to CRS.

To put things in perspective, CRS has been dubbed the 'Global FATCA'. The Financial Account Tax Compliance Act, driven by the Internal Revenue Service in the United States, which was implemented around the world to flag and track US citizens with foreign financial accounts.

It has been widely reported that Kuwait, along with Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will begin enforcing the implementation of the CRS from January 2017.

The Kuwait tax authorities, like most authorities in the Middle East are yet to release official CRS regulations. Based on the OECD minimum standards guidance it is certain that unlike FATCA, there will not be any minimum threshold for reporting purposes this implies that all account holders of Kuwaiti financial institutions will be subject to CRS reporting where

they are also tax resident in another CRS jurisdiction.

Financial institutions within Kuwait are, broadly speaking, required to collect and report the following information in respect of their reportable customer accounts:

* Client's name, address, jurisdiction of residency, tax identification number ('TIN')

* Date and place of birth of client

* Account number

* Account balance or value

* Total amount of interest paid or credited to the account (gross amount of dividends and sale proceeds in a custody account).

Financial account holders in Kuwait may be asked by financial institutions to provide additional information and documentation and also to self-certify their tax residency status.

Deloitte & Touche, Kuwait has been enrolled as one of the audit firms certified with the Ministry of Finance for the provision of Foreign Account Tax Compliance services FATCA.

Law is Managing Director of Deloitte's International tax Services and Dawson is FATCA and CRS tax lead.



MILAN: A man enters in the building of Italian eyewear company Luxottica yesterday in Milan. French lensmaker Essilor said it has agreed to buy Italy's Luxottica, maker of Ray-Ban sunglasses, in a bid to create a new global giant in the sector. —AFP

SEEING EYE-TO-EYE, ESSILOR AND
LUXOTTICA CREATE LENSWEAR GIANT

PARIS: French lensmaker Essilor has agreed to buy Italy's luxury eyewear maker Luxottica in a bid to create a new global giant in the sector, the two groups announced yesterday.

Shares in Essilor, the world leader in corrective lenses, surged by 13.8 percent on the Paris stock exchange and Luxottica shares were up 8.2 percent in Milan on the news as of 1100 GMT.

The combined group will have a market capitalisation of around 46.2 billion euros (\$49 billion), based on both companies' closing share prices on Friday. Under the terms of the transaction, the family of Leonard Del Vecchio, Luxottica founder and chief executive, will hand over his stake to Essilor, which will then launch a public bid to buy the remaining shares.

Del Vecchio, 81, controls a 62 percent stake via holding company Delfin. "Finally, two products which are naturally complementary, namely frames and lenses, will be designed, manufactured and distributed under the same roof," Del Vecchio said.

"With this agreement my dream to create a major global player in the eyewear industry, fully integrated and excellent in all its parts, comes finally true."

The combined group, to be known as EssilorLuxottica, will have annual sales of more than 15 billion euros and employ a workforce of 140,000 worldwide.

The merger is expected to create synergies that will save between 400 million and 600 million euros a year in the medium term. Bryan, Garnier & Co analysts called the merger "a perfect fit... as both groups are leading their respective categories" of lenses and frames.

But they said the new group "might face anti-trust barriers since it would become a 'hegemonic supplier' for many independent opticians." Del Vecchio will become

chief executive of the new group and Essilor head Hubert Sagnieres, 61, will be his deputy, with "equal powers", a joint statement said.

'The same vision'

"We share the same values, the same vision, the same interest in the products," Sagnieres said. The boards of directors of both companies have approved the transaction. The deal still needs to receive the necessary regulatory approval, but is expected to be completed in the second half of this year.

Del Vecchio returned to the helm in January 2016 after two years of management turmoil sparked by a falling out with his right-hand man Andrea Guerra, who quit in 2014. "Leonardo Del Vecchio's inability to find a successor probably weighed heavily on this idea of coming together" with Essilor, said a strategist at the French brokerage firm Aurel BGC.

"The idea... has been around a long time, and though not on everyone's mind recently, and is now bearing fruit," he added. The two groups made a failed attempt to merge in 2013.

Founded in 1961, Luxottica owns the Ray-Ban, Oakley and Sunglass Hut brands and licenses for designer frames such as Giorgio Armani, Chanel and Ralph Lauren. The Italian group, which employs some 80,000 people, generates annual sales of around nine billion euros, while Essilor booked sales of just over 6.7 billion euros in 2015. Essilor's Sagnieres said: "Our project has one simple motivation: to better respond to the needs of an immense global population in vision correction and vision protection."

The group is to be headquartered in France, at Essilor's location in Charenton-le-Pont, east of Paris, Sagnieres said, without detailing which sites may be shut down. —AFP

IMF BOOSTS GROWTH FORECAST
FOR US, CITES TRUMP IMPACT

GROWTH PROJECTIONS FOR CHINA, GERMANY, JAPAN AND BRITAIN UP

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund is raising its forecast for the US economy this year and in 2018, reflecting an expected boost from the economic policies of President-elect Donald Trump.

The IMF also increased 2017 growth projections for a number of other countries including China, Germany, Japan and Britain, but warned that the global economy faced a number of downside risks including rising protectionist trade pressures. The 189-nation global lending agency's latest economic outlook, released Monday, took note of the significant impact Trump's election has already had in giving a boost to US stock prices, interest rates and the dollar. The new outlook puts US economic growth at 2.3 percent this year and 2.5 percent in 2018. That would be an improvement from lackluster US growth around 1.6 percent in 2016.

During the campaign, Trump said his economic policies of tax cuts, regulatory reform and boosts in infrastructure spending would lift US growth to annual rates of 4 percent.

The new forecast represented a boost of 0.1 percentage point for 2017 compared to the IMF's last forecast released in October and an even bigger boost of 0.4 percentage point for 2018, reflecting an expectation that Trump's program will take time to be implemented.

For the overall global economy, the IMF left its projections unchanged growth of 3.4 percent for this year and 3.6 percent for 2018, both up from 3.1 percent growth in 2016, a year when global growth slowed to its weakest performance since the 2008-2009 financial crisis.

But the IMF saw better prospects in a number of countries, thanks in part to a rebound in growth in many parts of the world in the second half of last

year that provided more momentum going into 2017.

"The global economic landscape started to shift in the second half of 2016," IMF chief economist Maurice Obstfeld said, helped by a rebound in manufacturing activity in many countries and the financial market rally that started with Trump's November election victory.

"Markets have noted that the White House and Congress are in the hands of the same party for the first time in six years and that change points to lower tax rates and possibly higher infrastructure and tax spending,"

Obstfeld said. But Obstfeld said there was a wider than usual range of upside and downside risks in part because of the uncertainty over how much of Trump's program will win congressional approval.

While Trump's election victory boosted economic prospects in the United States, the impact has been uneven for the rest of the world. Some countries could see stronger growth from the increase in activity in the United States, the world's largest economy, but some emerging market countries may face challenges as global interest rates rise.

The new outlook boosted the growth forecast for China, the world's second largest economy, to 6.5 percent this year, up 0.3 percentage point from the October forecasts based on expectations the Chinese government will continue providing stimulus. The outlook also boosted 2017 growth projections for Germany, Japan, Spain and Britain to reflect stronger-than-expected performances in the second half of last year. At the same time, the IMF lowered its forecasts for Italy, South Korea, India and Brazil, reflecting disappointing performances in the last half of 2016. —AP



WASHINGTON: In this Dec 19, 2016, file photo, International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde makes a statement at a news conference, in Washington. The IMF yesterday released its latest forecast for the world economy. —AP

UK'S JOHNSON HAILS TRUMP
OFFER OF QUICK TRADE DEAL

BRUSSELS: British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson attends an EU foreign ministers meeting at the European Council, in Brussels, yesterday. —AFP

BRUSSELS: British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson said yesterday that US President-elect Donald Trump's offer of a quick trade deal with Britain as it leaves the European Union was positive news.

"I think it's very good news that the United States of America wants to do a good free trade deal with us and wants to do it very fast," Johnson said ahead of meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels.

"It's great to hear that from President-elect Donald Trump. Clearly it will have to be a deal that's very much in the interest of both sides but I have no doubt that it will be."

Trump said in an interview with The Times newspaper that Britain leaving the EU would "end up as a great thing" and promised to work for a trade deal with post-Brexit Britain "quickly and done properly". Outgoing US President Barack Obama had warned before Britain's shock June 23 referendum vote to leave the bloc that it would be at the "back of the queue" for any new trade deal. Trump's comments did little to reassure investors, however, following British media reports at the weekend that Prime Minister Theresa May is planning to announce a hard line on Brexit in a major speech today.

Sterling plunged yesterday morning to \$1.186, its lowest level since October's "flash crash" that had sent it to a 31-year low of \$1.1841. —AFP

TURKEY UNEMPLOYMENT
HIGHEST IN HALF DECADE

ISTANBUL: Turkey's unemployment rate in October was the highest in more than five and a half years, the statistical authorities said yesterday, the latest in a slew of bleak indicators for the economy.

The Turkish Statistical Institute, or TurkStat, said the unemployment rate jumped to 11.8 percent in October, a 0.4-point increase from September and a 1.3-point leap from its level a year earlier.

It was also the highest rate since February 2010, when it stood 12 percent, according to TurkStat.

Youth unemployment also rose as 500,000 more people aged 15 and above were without a job last year compared to the previous period, reaching more than three million in October. The data is the latest blow to the

Turkish economy with the lira put under strain by a string of terror attacks, doubts about the sustainability of growth and worries about political instability.

Turkey's robust economic performance - which saw growth of nine percent in 2010 and 2011 - has been a pillar of Erdogan's popular support over the years. But alarm bells started ringing when data showed the economy shrank 1.8 percent in the third quarter last year, the first such contraction since 2009.

Erdogan has claimed the dramatic depreciation of the lira is a conspiracy to "bring Turkey to its knees" and even equated it to a "terrorist attack". He did not say who was to blame for the purported conspiracy, or if he was referring to foreign powers or private currency speculators. —AFP

INVESTORS WARY AS BREXIT, TRUMP UNCERTAINTY GROWS

LONDON: Investors sold sterling and stocks in Europe and Asia yesterday, seeking shelter in gold and the Japanese yen as uncertainty over Britain's departure from the European Union and the policies of US President-elect Donald Trump curbed appetite for risk. The dollar rose, except against the yen, rebounding after suffering its worst week since November, when it was hit by a lack of clarity over what Trump, whose inauguration is on Friday, will do once he assumes office.

US markets were closed for a holiday, potentially exacerbating price moves in thinner than normal trade. The price of gold, a frequently sought haven in uncertain times, hit its highest level since November.

"(The movement) shows that people are looking ahead this week with Trump's inauguration

and discussions on Brexit. There is a lot of uncertainty moving forward," said Brian Lan, managing director at Singapore-based gold dealer GoldSilver Central.

Yields on low-risk German government bonds fell, but those on Italian equivalents rose after rating agency DBRS cut Italy's credit rating after markets closed on Friday, a move that could raise borrowing costs for the country's banks. But the eye-catching mover was sterling, a day before a speech by British Prime Minister Theresa May. Media reported that she would lay out an exit from the EU that would see Britain lose access to the bloc's single market.

The pound fell as low as \$1.1983 in thin early Asian trade, which, barring a sudden "flash crash" in October, was its weakest against the dollar in

32 years. Investors will scrutinize May's speech for clues to whether she plans to prioritize immigration controls in a "hard Brexit" that some analysts say could hurt the economy. The fall in sterling, which makes UK exports cheaper, has contributed to an unprecedented 14-day rally in the blue-chip FTSE 100 stock index.

The index fell marginally yesterday but still outperformed continental European markets. The main STOXX 600 index fell 0.7 percent, as declines in autos and banks offset a rally in eye-wear makers Luxottica and Essilor, who agreed a 46 billion-euro merger.

German carmakers BMW, Daimler and VW fell 2 percent after Trump warned he would impose a 35 percent border tax on vehicles imported to the US market. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-

Pacific shares outside Japan eased 0.6 percent, Japan's Nikkei lost 1 percent as the strong yen hit exporters.

Sterling last traded at \$1.2043, down 1.1 percent on the day. The euro was up 0.6 percent at 87.95 pence while the yen was up 0.8 percent at 137.45 to the pound.

"Every time there's hard Brexit headlines, that triggers a fresh bout of selling," MUFG currency analyst Lee Hardman said. "The fact that the sell-offs usually happen during periods in which there's less liquidity increases the risk we could have a sharper sell-off (today), but as we saw in the flash crash that doesn't mean that's fundamentally justified," he added. The dollar index, which measures

the US currency against six of its peers, rose 0.4 percent. The euro fell 0.5 percent to \$1.0592 while the yen, another perceived safe haven investment, rose 0.4 percent to 114.07 per dollar. US markets were closed yesterday for a holiday. German 10-year bond yields fell 1.9 basis points to 0.25 percent. Italian 10-year yields, by contrast, rose 2.7 bps to 1.93 percent.

Italy's downgrade will mean Italian banks will have to pay more to borrow money from the European Central Bank when they use the country's sovereign bonds as collateral. It may also make Italian debt less attractive for foreign buyers. —Reuters



TOKYO: People look at an electronic stock board of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. —AP

Global

جوابيل

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Monday 16 January 2017

Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low
Price index	▲ 1.17	6,224.00	6,222.83	6,268.18	6,200.02
Weighted Index	▲ 0.98	399.60	398.62	400.75	396.93
KSX 15	▲ 3.39	929.80	926.41	933.81	921.93

Volume	698,267,047
Value (KWD)	60,034,968
Number of Trades	11,591

Security	High	Low	Trades				
			Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	65	55	1162566	69,201	47	55	▼ -5.0
IKARUS	46.0	43.5	864,150	39,099	15	46.0	▲ 1.5
IPG	395	395	9,250	3,654	1	395	▲ 5.0
NAPESCO	850	850	3,357	2,853	1	850	— 0.0
ENERGYH	52	48.5	1,391,350	67,995	67	48.5	▼ -3.5
GPI	56	51	12,654,299	683,357	189	54	— 0.0
ABAR	99	99	3,045	301	1	99	▼ -1.0
Oil & Gas			16,088,017	866,461	321	840.97	▼ -1.93
KFOUC	224	224	21,531	4,823	3	224	▲ 2.0
BPCC	550	530	357,778	192,596	19	550	▲ 20.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	670	— 0.0
ALQURAIN	260	250	1,544,345	393,625	56	260	▲ 5.0
Basic Materials			1,923,654	591,044	78	1113.08	▲ 18.10

KCEM	450	440	75,606	33,523	6	445	▲ 5.0
REFRI	315	315	1,980	624	1	315	— 0.0
CABLE	440	425	898,378	390,760	61	435	▲ 15.0
SHIP	192	190	191,972	36,611	12	192	▼ -2.0
PCEM	980	960	85,700	83,379	15	980	▲ 30.0
PAPER	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	295	— 0.0
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	— 0.0
ACICO	300	290	406,422	118,922	21	290	▼ -5.0
GGMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300	— 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	120	— 0.0
KBMMC	180	180	1,000	180	1	180	▼ -10.0
NICBM	214	210	51,825	10,984	6	212	— 0.0
EQUIPMENT	64	61	3,483,744	217,920	87	62	— 0.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.5	— 0.0
GYPSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
SALBOOKH	71	69	407,328	28,488	26	70	▼ -1.0
AGLTY	700	670	3,169,460	2,165,214	93	690	▲ 10.0
EDU	208	208	64,326	13,380	3	208	— 0.0
CLEANING	58	53	5,007,517	277,663	107	55	▼ -1.0
KGL	69	64	2,897,604	188,650	104	64	▼ -2.0
KPCPC	174	172	27,743	4,789	3	174	— 0.0
HUMANSOFT	2,980	2,980	10,000	29,800	2	2,980	▼ -80.0
NAFAIS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206	— 0.0
SAFWAN	385	380	30,000	11,500	3	385	▼ -5.0
GFC	37.5	35.0	286,118	10,380	14	35.0	▼ -2.5
MAYADEEN	32.0	30.0	14,030,434	435,330	186	30.5	▼ -1.0
CGC	570	540	102,747	56,545	24	540	▼ -20.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0
UPAC	730	720	32,108	23,187	5	730	▲ 30.0
ALAFCO	242	242	12,750	3,086	5	242	▲ 2.0
MUBARRAD	71	68	1,909,255	133,080	51	71	▲ 1.0
LOGISTICS	74	72	3,150,433	231,119	84	73	▼ -1.0
SCEM	86	83	11,000	943	2	86	▼ -2.0
GCEM	80	79	155,000	12,395	6	80	— 0.0
QIC	80	80	29,548	2,364	1	80	— 0.0
FCEM	82	80	1,025,300	83,314	34	81	— 0.0
RKWC	94	94	20,000	1,880	1	94	— 0.0
SPEC	82	81	81,500	6,602	8	82	— 0.0
Industrials			37,656,798	4,612,608	972	1408.07	▼ -9.35

KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	142	— 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	64	— 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
CATTL	222	214	8,788	1,927	6	218	▼ -6.0
DANAH	91	88	8,378,354	751,437	151	88	▼ -2.0
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	196	— 0.0
FOOD	2,620	2,620	263,156	689,469	8	2,620	▲ 20.0
Consumer Goods			8,650,298	1,442,832	165	1139.46	▼ -2.94

MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0
YIACO	265	248	623,930	157,736	31	255	▼ -5
Health Care			623,930	157,736	31	1168.97	▼ -7.80

KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,160	— 0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	265	— 0
SULTAN	67	62	2,191,603	141,364	62	64	▼ -1
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	— 0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	— 0
OUAFUEL	126	122	166,095	20,588	24	124	▼ -2
MUNTAZAHAT	83	80	3,761,398	307,240	89	82	▼ -1
JAZEERA	680	660	96,004	64,767	13	670	▼ -10
SOOR	122	118	107,225	12,912	20	118	▼ -4
FUTUREKID	110	110	69,619	7,658	2	110	▼ -10
ALRAI	138	132	169,012	22,598	14	138	▲ 4
ZMAH	54	52	7,573,699	399,838	202	52	▼ -2
Mezzan	950	950	331,881	315,312	17	960	▲ 10
Consumer Services			14,466,536	1,292,277	443	924.01	▼ -11.65

ZAIN	450	430	13,351,514	5,855,620	265	450	▲ 20
OOREDOO	1,180	1,160	2,547	3,005	2	1,180	▲ 20
HITSTELEC	59	54	16,701,016	943,811	208	56	▼ -1
VIVA	900	880	37,214	33,188	39	890	▼ -10
Telecommunications			30,092,291	6,835,624	514	667.09	▲ 1.97
NBK	680	670	5,315,150	3,562,026	95	670	▼ -10
GBK	248	244	2,734,104	675,254	74	248	▲ 4
CBK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	425	— 0
ABK	305	300	52,000	15,605	7	305	— 0
ALMUTAHED	410	410	20,000	8,200	3	410	▼ -5
KIB	214	212	4,026,832	860,294	65	214	— 0
BURG	310	305	959,560	292,668	41	305	▼ -5
KFIN	600	580	5,331,074	3,148,615	161	590	— 0
BOUBAYAN	410	405	1,652,252	669,386	82	405	▼ -5
AUB	206	202	2,725,924	552,169	44	204	— 0
ITHMR	46.5	43.5	23,002,012	1,029,602	259	44.5	▼ -1
WARBABANK	228	220	12,352,273	2,784,144	258	228	▲ 8
Banks			58,171,181	13,597,962	1,089	877.10	▼ -2.13

KINS	290	290	1,341	389	1	290	— 0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	720	— 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	455	— 0.0
WINS	106	100	35,906	3,651	6	100	▼ -6.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0
FTI	50	47.5	141,250	6,741	13	50	— 0.0
WETHAQ	40.5	37.5	801,570	31,012	59	39.5	— 0.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0
Insurance			980,067	41,793	79	1047.10	▼ -6.76

Security	High	Low	Trades				
			Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	45.0	43.5	24334640	1,083,582	264	44.5	▲ 2.0
KRE	73	71	1,184,951	85,098	29	72	— 0.0
URC	102	98	54,095	5,327	8	102	▲ 2.0
NRE	126	116	11,497,063	1,389,297	167	118	▼ -4.0
SRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	360	— 0.0
TAM	445	420	200	87	2	445	— 0.0
AREEC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	— 0.0
MASSALEH	55	54	1,030	56	2	55	▲ 4.0
ARABREC	39.0	37.5	7,285,821	279,043	114	38.5	— 0.0
ERESCO	47.0	44.5	1,838,084	84,391	57	45.5	— 0.0
MABANEE	890	880	55,943	49,244	4	890	— 0.0
INJAZZAT	80	79	1,633,070	129,017	44	79	▼ -1.0
INVESTORS	30.0	28.5	49,049,518	1,440,955	383	29.0	— 0.0
IRC	37.0	33.5	3,135,563	112,054	70	36.0	▲ 1.0
ALTUARIA	84	81	6,070,921	501,189	89	83	▲ 2.0
SANAM	44.0	39.5	894,572	35,760	26	39.5	▼ -2.5
AAYANRE	71	69	1,102,684	77,173	40	70	▼ -2.0
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	69	— 0.0
ALAQARIA	34.5	32.5	839,450	28,373	27	34.5	▲ 1.0
MAZAYA	124	120	5,511,255	667,936	128	120	▼ -2.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0	— 0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89	— 0.0
TJARA	62	59	1,143,709	68,979	26	60	— 0.0
TAMEER	28.5	26.5	6,303,927	173,686	127	28.0	— 0.0
ARKAN	90	86	1,716,300	148,802	13	87	— 0.0
ARGAN	196	196	100	20	1	196	▲ 4.0
ABYAR	28.5	27.0	25,133,018	698,391	206	27.5	— 0.0
MUNSHAAT	69	66	11,131,370	761,234	203	68	▲ 4.0
FIRSTDUBAI	77	71	4,107,700	303,526	138	73	▼ -2.0
KBT	57	53	9,314,675	509,180	190	55	— 0.0
REAM	186	186	2,000	372	1	186	— 0.0
MENA	27.5	26.0	13,005,961	351,331	198	26.5	— 0.0
ALMUDON	49.5	45.0	10,952,122	485,772	229	48.5	▲ 1.0
MARAKEZ	38.0	35.5	25,500	909	4	38.0	▲ 2.0
REMAJ	65	63	4,640,477	296,801	94	64	— 0.0
AWJ	79	77	1,557,400	120,608	37	78	▼ -1.0
Real Estate			202,663,119	9,888,191	2,921	983.78	▲ 3.94

KINV	93	91	1,462,061	134,491	70	92	▲ 3.0
FACIL	176	170	352,919	61,036	23	174	▲ 4.0
IFA	42.5	41.0	10,011,928	420,471	170	41.0	▼ -1.0
NINV	116	106	22,463,938	2,508,878	375	112	▲ 4.0
KPROJ	510	500	2,276,482	1,160,799	39	510	— 0.0
COAST	50	47.0	30,568,822	1,507,407	373	50	▲ 2.5
SECH	58	54	23,828,555	1,325,911	355	55	▲ 1.0
SOC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	89	— 0.0
ARZAN	40.5	38.5	1,832,025	72,270	49	39.0	▼ -1.0
MARKAZ	100	100	1,022	102	1	100	▲ 5.0
KMEFIC	31.0	29.0	427,700	12,629	22	29.0	▼ -1.0
ALAMAN	58	55	5,090,180	286,311	86	55	▼ -1.

WHO ARE THE 8 RICHEST PEOPLE? ALL MEN, MOSTLY AMERICANS

LONDON: The eight individuals who own as much as half of the rest of the planet are all men, and have largely made their fortunes in technology. Most are American, with one European and one Mexican in the mix. Several have pledged to give it all to charity.

The eight tycoons' net worth, as calculated by Forbes magazine, was cited yesterday by anti-poverty activists Oxfam in a report highlighting income inequality. Although most of them will not be joining the annual gathering of business and political elites in the Swiss town of Davos this week, the extraordinary individual wealth they typify will be part of the discussions in Davos on inequality.

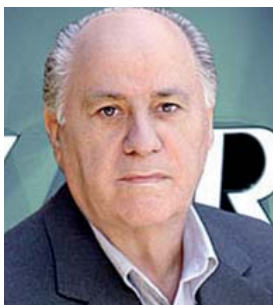
Here's a look at who they are.
Bill Gates: \$75 billion



The man whose name is a byword for billionaire. Gates co-founded Microsoft in the mid-70s, growing it into the world's biggest software company and helping to make computers a household item. He quit as CEO in 2000 and pledged to devote his fortune to his philanthropic activities in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He has gradually reduced his ownership in Microsoft to less than 3 percent, with the bulk of his wealth in a private firm. He's the only one on the list who's a regular at Davos.

Amancio Ortega: \$67 billion

The richest person in Europe, Ortega opened the first Zara fashion shop in 1975. Now, the chain, part of Ortega's Inditex group, has 7,000 shops globally. Its boom in popularity is largely due to a low cost model that com-



Warren Buffett: \$60.8 billion



The Oracle of Omaha, as he's known for the way his every investment decision is followed by thousands. Buffett began investing as a teenager in the 1940s and gradually grew his firm, Berkshire Hathaway. Buffett, 86, is notoriously frugal and favors investing in companies with proven business models over new industries, such as in technology. He's said he will give away the bulk of his wealth to philanthropy. Since 2006, he's been donating blocks of Berkshire stock to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Carlos Slim Helu: \$50 billion



petes with the likes of H&M. As Zara and Inditex grew in size, Ortega, a Spaniard, held on to a majority stake of 59 percent in the company, which has a market value of over 97 billion euros (\$102 billion).

He was ranked as the richest person three years ago, but saw his net worth hit by a downturn in Latin American economies. U.S. President-elect Donald Trump's threats to scrap free trade deals and build a wall on the US-Mexico border have also hurt shares in his business interests. Forbes estimates his net worth dropped \$5 billion in the four days after Trump's election.

Jeff Bezos: \$45.2 billion



The founder and CEO of Amazon.com helped revolutionize the retail industry by popularizing online shopping. What was initially an online book shop now sells pretty much anything. Bezos has reached beyond Amazon, in which he holds a 17 percent stake, to try his hand in other industries. He's bought the Washington Post and set up an aerospace company, Blue Origin, that aims to make space accessible to tourists and paying customers.

Mark Zuckerberg: \$44.6 billion



He founded Facebook in 2004 while a college student to connect other Harvard students. The company went on to become popular globally and listed its shares publicly in 2012, making Zuckerberg, now 32, a multibillionaire. He's managed to make Facebook profitable where rivals like Twitter have lagged, and expanded it with targeted acquisitions. He

and his wife have pledged to sell 99 percent of their holdings in Facebook - over 400 million shares, worth about \$50 billion - to support philanthropic causes.

Larry Ellison: \$43.6 billion



As a young programmer in the '70s, Ellison's first big client was the CIA. The name of the project was "Oracle." In 1977, Ellison and associates used that name for their company, which creates software that helps manage databases and has since become an industry standard. Ellison has recently focused more on cloud computing, in which data is stored and managed across a network of computers. His fortune comes from the 27 percent stake he still owns in Oracle, a company worth \$160 billion.

Michael Bloomberg: \$40 billion



Created the eponymous financial information provider in 1981 after getting laid off from an investment bank. Bloomberg made it a lucrative business in particular by selling data terminals to financial services firms. The multi-screen terminals became essential tools in the industry, incorporating real-time market information with a news service. Bloomberg, who reportedly retains an 88 percent stake in the privately held company, turned to politics in 2001, becoming mayor of New York City for three terms. —AP



DETROIT: Shinola CEO Tom Lewand is seen at the watch factory in Detroit, Michigan. —AFP

IN DETROIT, SHINOLA IS 'MADE IN USA' SUCCESS STORY

DETROIT: From the outside, there's nothing much to say about this nondescript, hulking building in downtown Detroit, once the cradle of American industry. But inside this former General Motors research lab, the fifth floor has been transformed into a state-of-the-art workshop producing watches and high-end bicycles.

Welcome to Shinola, a young American luxury lifestyle company breathing new life into the "Made in USA" label—a designation championed by President-elect Donald Trump.

The firm, which shares the building with a design school, has built an open factory space with wooden desks reminiscent of 1950s movie sets and high-tech machinery. Watches, handbags, appointment books and other accessories carrying the "Made in Detroit" label are turned out here, while the bikes-made from parts designed in neighboring Wisconsin—and turntables, a new product, are assembled at the flagship store located nearby.

Dozens of employees work here—most of them African Americans, who make up the majority of residents in this blighted working-class city, forced into bankruptcy in 2013 under the weight of its massive debt. Detroit suffered hugely from the decline of US manufacturing and especially the difficulties facing the "Big Three"—auto giants General Motors, Ford and Fiat Chrysler.

The unemployment rate hit 10.4 percent in November, compared to the national average of 4.6 percent, according to official statistics.

Success story

Shinola's marketing pitch, a narrative built on the city's woes, differentiates the company from most high-end brands around the world. "The rich heritage of manufacturing in Detroit makes it natural," says Tom Lewand, a lawyer and former president of the Detroit Lions NFL team, who took the helm of the company in June.

"When people hear the story of Shinola, when they hear the story that new jobs have been created to manufacture, whether it be handbags, watches or bags, they appreciate that."

Former US president Bill Clinton, who owns a dozen Shinola watches—which run between \$500 and \$1,500 — is one of the fans. "We need more American success stories like Shinola in Detroit," he said in October 2014. Shinola was launched in 2011 by the Greek-born billionaire Tom Kartsotis, co-founder of the popular watch brand Fossil.

The company, which took its name from a defunct shoe-polish manufacturer from the 1960s, marketed its first watch in 2013, the Runwell. The company currently employs 600 people, after starting with just nine. It has 18 stores—two of them outside the United States, in London and Toronto and boasts a turnover of \$100 million.

Made in Switzerland?

The company, which has not yet made it into the black and has not ruled out going public, took something of a body blow last year when the Federal Trade Commission asked it to stop boasting that it manufactures in the United States.

Indeed, it imports most of the parts for its well-known watches. The Swiss specialist in quartz movement Ronda AG, which is a shareholder, supplies 70 percent of the quartz movement parts. And the watch faces, crowns and hands come from Asia.

For employees, many of whom are former auto workers, the FTC's argument is meaningless. Shinola "is revitalizing (Detroit). It's producing jobs, it gives us something positive going forward," says Damon Love, hired without training in the leather department nearly three years ago after being laid off by a local automotive supplier.

"We can do the same things as the Swiss, even better," said Koko Mary, who works in watch assembly. The former employee of a radio provider for Cadillac now has health insurance and a retirement savings plan—new and welcome benefits.

The minimum hourly wage is more than \$15, said Lewand, compared to about \$8.90 in the rest of Michigan. Late this year, the company will market its first audio headphones to compete with Beats—and then hopes to take on the lucrative eyewear market, a product it plans to produce on Chicago's South Side. —AFP

CHINA TO TARGET AROUND 6.5% GROWTH IN 2017

STABILITY WATCHWORD AHEAD OF LEADERSHIP TRANSITION IN AUTUMN

BEIJING: China will lower its 2017 economic growth target to around 6.5 percent from last year's 6.5-7 percent, policy sources said, reinforcing a policy shift from supporting growth to pushing reforms to contain debt and housing risks. The proposed target was endorsed by top leaders at the closed-door Central Economic Work Conference in mid-December, according to four sources with knowledge of the meeting outcome. "The target will be around 6.5 percent, which indicates that slightly slower growth is acceptable," said one of the sources, a policy adviser.

The State Council Information Office, the public relations arm of the government, declined to comment. The world's second-largest economy likely grew around 6.7 percent last year - roughly in the middle of the government's target range - but it faces increasing uncertainties in 2017, the head of China's state planning agency said on Jan. 10.

Policy stimulus measures - evident in record lending from mostly state-owned banks and increased government spending - have fuelled worries among top leaders about high debt levels and an overheating housing market that could threaten financial stability if not addressed, the sources said. Under the central bank's recently announced "prudent and neutral" stance, it is expected to guide market interest rates higher to help put the brakes on flush credit conditions, which should also support the

weakening yuan, the sources said. "They've put more emphasis on controlling risks, and monetary policy could be a bit tighter," said a second policy source, though he characterized the change as 'fine-tuning' ahead of a key party meeting in the autumn at which there will be a change in the top leadership.

"They are keen to keep economic growth stable before the 19th party congress," the source said. Top leaders have pledged to stem the growth of asset bubbles in 2017 and place greater importance on the prevention of financial risk, while keeping the economy on a path of stable and healthy growth.

China's banks doled out a record 12.56 trillion yuan (\$1.82 trillion) of loans in 2016 as the government encouraged more credit-fuelled stimulus to meet its economic growth target, despite worries about the risks of an explosive jump in debt.

REFORM VS GROWTH

The economy needs to grow at least 6.5 percent between 2016 and 2020 to meet Beijing's goals of doubling GDP and per capita income by 2020 from 2010 levels. But they have also pledged "decisive results" by 2020 on a wide range of reforms to let market forces play a bigger role in driving the economy away from inefficient state-owned enterprises, which in the short term could slow output.

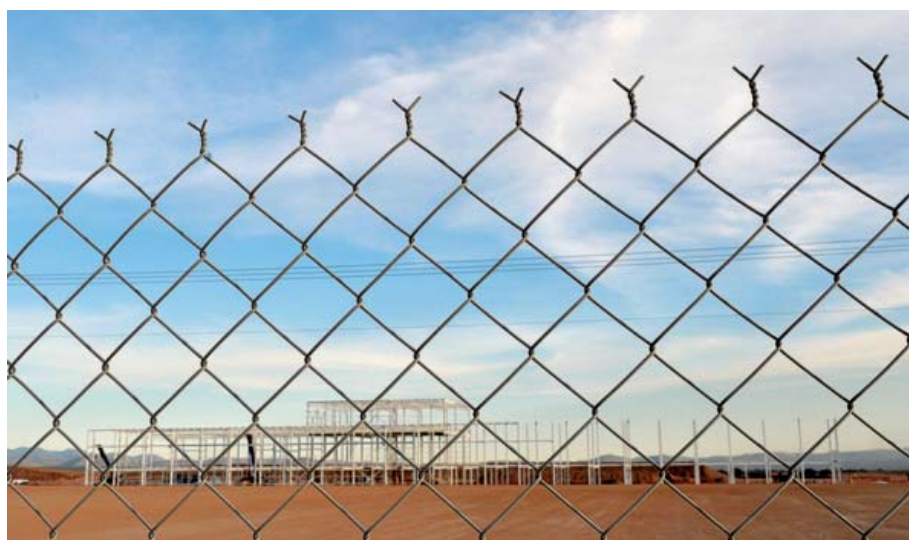
Last year's expected growth of 6.7 percent, though the slowest in 26 years, will have given

the government a little more room to manoeuvre, but Beijing will not tolerate a sharp slowdown ahead of the leadership transition, the policy sources said. The 2017 growth target will be announced at the annual meeting of the National People's Congress, the country's parliament, in early March.

The sources said government was set to maintain a 3 percent inflation target this year, suggesting policymakers are less worried about a sharp surge in consumer prices, despite surging factory-gate costs in recent months. December consumer prices rose 2.1 percent from a year earlier, easing from a 2.3 percent rise in November, while producer prices jumped 5.5 percent in December year-on-year, the most since September 2011.

China's producer price jump, fuelled by rising commodity prices, has yet to filter into consumer prices due to weak demand, so the central bank is not yet under big pressure to tighten policy.

Even if inflation hits 3 percent in some months this year, the central bank would have to assess whether the economy is on a solid footing before raising interest rates, which may help the struggling yuan, the policy sources said. "If you don't want the exchange rate to depreciate, you should tighten credit, but there could be problems in debt prices and market liquidity - how to balance them is a very difficult thing," one of the sources said. —Reuters



Unfinished buildings remain in the site of a called off Ford car factory in Villa de Reyes, near San Luis Potosi, Mexico. In a rocky desert of northern Mexico, impoverished villagers fear they may be the first people in the world to suffer the impact of US President-elect Donald Trump's trade crackdown. —AFP

INDIA'S RELIANCE POSTS 10% PROFIT RISE

MUMBAI: Indian conglomerate Reliance Industries beat analyst estimates yesterday to post a 10 percent rise in standalone net profits, boosted by improving margins from its core business of oil refining. The Mumbai-based firm owned by India's wealthiest man, Mukesh Ambani, said standalone net profit for the three months through December 31 rose to 80.22 billion rupees (\$1.18 billion) from 72.96 billion rupees a year earlier.

Revenues for the period were up nine percent to 666 billion rupees. A Bloomberg survey of 11 analysts had projected the standalone net profit to come in at 78.4 billion rupees. Reliance said in a statement that its gross refining margin, the profit earned from each barrel of crude, was up to \$10.8 in the December quarter from \$10.1 in the previous quarter. Refining margins are a key profitability gauge for Reliance, one of the world's largest refiners. The company has delivered "record performances in challenging market conditions," Ambani said in a statement. Last month RIL's new telecom venture Jio, which was launched with much fanfare in September, extended free services up to March 2017. The company has poured more than \$15 billion into the telecom venture on wireless spectrum and infrastructure and experts believe it will be a game changer for the group as it tries to diversify. —AFP

YUKOS, MOSCOW LAWYERS BACK IN COURT IN \$50BN APPEAL CASE

THE HAGUE: Former shareholders of defunct Russian oil giant Yukos were back in a Dutch court yesterday as Moscow's lawyers pressed judges for a quick resolution of a complex appeals case.

The claimants, led by the former main shareholder GML, in July last year appealed a Dutch court's decision to overturn a ruling ordering Moscow to pay them a record \$50 billion in dam-

ages. "The Russian Federation has a significant interest in an expedient and concentrated conduct of this appeal," Russian Federation representative Albert Jan van den Berg told judges at The Hague's Appeals Court. The \$50 billion in damages "is a massive amount, also for the Russian Federation," Van den Berg said, adding Russia "is entitled to obtain a final decision upholding the judgement of the

District Court as quickly as possible." Yukos was once Russia's biggest post-Soviet oil company but was broken up after its former owner, Kremlin critic and ex-tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky was arrested in 2003.

His arrest came shortly after Russian President Vladimir Putin, then prime minister, warned the nation's growing class of oligarchs against meddling in politics.

Yukos was sold off in opaque auctions to state companies led by Rosneft between 2004 and 2006. State-owned Rosneft was then small, but has since become a leading player among the world's biggest listed oil companies by production volume. The claimants have sought since 2005 to win compensation for what they say are their losses caused by the break-up of Yukos. —AFP

KIB LAUNCHES TRAINING PROGRAM FOR RETAIL BANKING STAFF

KUWAIT: As part of its ongoing strategy to invest in local talents and promote the professional growth and development of its employees, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) launched a comprehensive training and development program dedicated to its Retail Banking employees.

The new Retail Banking Training Program was designed to provide frontline managers, customer service officers and sales staff with the knowledge, tools and practical skills needed to provide first-rate, bespoke service to customers. Through a series of intensive training courses, interactive workshops and a dedicated coaching system, the program offers ongoing training platforms and development opportunities to both current and new employees.

According to the Assistant General

Manager, Retail Banking Department at KIB, Rami Khalifa, the creation of the new training program comes in line with the Bank's long-term strategy to become the "Islamic Bank of Choice" in Kuwait - for both customers and employees. In addition to its continued efforts to develop its offerings to provide customers with innovative, contemporary, and market-leading Islamic banking solutions, KIB has devoted a major part of its strategic plans to human capital development.

A key component of the program was the introduction of a new coaching system; an innovative training model featuring dedicated in-house coaches. In addition to leading all training workshops and courses, these highly qualified and professionally certified trainers serve as a refer-

ence for all Retail Banking employees, providing guidance and individual training when necessary.

"The goal with this program is to take our employees to the next level, equipping them with the tools that would enable them to provide customers with an exceptional overall banking experience. We do not want to simply meet our customer's needs; our ultimate aim is to exceed their expectations on every level," added Khalifa.

During 2016, KIB initiated two full-scale training courses, targeting more than 220 employees from across the Retail Banking Department. This included a 2-month Service Level Training Program, which focused on enhancing the level and quality of service offered to customers, as well as an ongoing Product Knowledge



Rami Khalifa

Training Program. Several other specialized workshops and courses have been carried out under the umbrella of the program, including an intensive course aimed at teaching sign language to employees at KIB's six special needs friendly branches.

"One of KIB's core driving principles is its commitment to support the national workforce, and we are heavily focused on attracting, and subsequently nurturing and developing, the brightest young Kuwaiti talents. Over the past year, in addition to welcoming a wealth of new talent to the Bank, we have implemented an aggressive professional development scheme - focusing specifically on our Retail Banking employees given that they are the cornerstone of the customer banking experience," noted Khalifa.

AUB ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL HASSAD SAVING PROGRAM

KUWAIT: Ahli United Bank held its weekly draw of Al-Hassad Islamic Saving program January 11, 2017. This program offers the biggest prize amount to the largest number of winners. The prize program succeeded in becoming the first prize account in Kuwait compliant with the Islamic Sharia principles. The program has been developed to fulfil the needs of the Bank customers and increase their opportunities in winning sizeable and attractive prizes in

Dalal Fadhel Almesri, Abdulhameed Ismaeil Neamatallah, Taha Mohammad Al Anezi, Ali Hussain Al Enez, Huda Abdulaziz Al Hbaishi, Eman Mohammad, Ibrahim Ali Alkandari, Dakheel Ali Aldakheel, Nayif Mohammed Al Huomayli, Mohammad Jassim Al Ateeqi, Hatim Ali Bholli, Ghazayel Mohammad Salem, Qasem Mohammad Al Dehoun, Naser Omar, Zeyad Mostafa Darweesh, Shalu Jouykutty, Ahmed Husain A Aziz, Adel Ebrahim, Ebtihal Alawi Husain, Salwa Radhi Ali, Fareed Hamza Rahmatalla, Zainab Ali Moh'd, Mohammed Redha isa.

The prize program of Al Hassad Islamic Saving from Ahli United Bank offers a weekly grand prize worth KD 25,000 in addition to 25 weekly prizes worth a total of KD 25,000 distributed to 25 winners, KD 1,000 for each winner.

In addition, prizes of Al Hassad Islamic saving program from Ahli United Bank offer 4 quarterly grand prizes announced in quarterly draws. Each is a "Salary for Life" prize which is worth KD 250,000, noting that Hassad customers of AUB Kuwait and AUB Bahrain are eligible to participate in the prize draws as per the scheme terms and conditions.

In general, Ahli United Bank continues to offer innovative tools and means to meet the needs of its customers to match the Bank's long history of distinctive services which extend over 74 years during which the Bank managed to take the lead among local banks.



addition to enjoying the latest banking advantages that Ahli United Bank provides.

On this occasion, the bank issued the following press release: Al Hassad Islamic saving program offers the highest amounts of prizes which amount to KD 3.4 million per year.

This Program also offers 26 weekly prizes, with the highest number of weekly winners. The Islamic Hassad Saving Account may be opened by the lowest amount to open an account, which is KD 100. The winner of the weekly grand prize in the amount of KD 25,000 is: Suad Ahmed A Nabi.

The winners of the KD 1,000 prize each: Omran Aadel Omar, Hussain Kh h Alali,



KFH TAKES PART IN AUTO MOTO 2017 RIBBON-CUTTING CEREMONY

BANK STRATEGIC PARTNER FOR THIRD YEAR IN A ROW

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) took part in the motor show Auto Moto 2017 ribbon cutting ceremony held at 360 Mall in the framework of its strategic partnership for the third year in a row. KFH participation emanates from its endeavors to offer clients and visitors a vast and comprehensive array of financing solutions especially that KFH enjoys a proven track record of success in the activity of car financing in collaboration with local dealerships.

Present at the event were officials from KFH in addition to a number of officials from different ministries, and representatives of car dealerships and international auto factories. The Kuwait Motor Show Automoto 17 is Kuwait's only motor show displaying more than 30 brands by authorized dealerships in Kuwait. The show is bringing the newest releases of 2017 to the public under one roof. Over 40 years in the auto market, KFH has proven its active role and contributions in this market where it reiterated its flagship status and leading position in financing automobiles. KFH spares no efforts in strengthening its role in the auto market by revitalizing the market, increasing sales and addressing the requirements of clients and suppliers alike.

KFH cars showrooms have become important destination for those who are interested in buying cars. KFH Al-Shuwaikh showroom brings together over 20 automotive brands under one umbrella which gives clients the opportunity to choose and compare between cars, thus add value to clients' car-buying experience. It is worth noting that the Motor Show is organized by EPR and held under the patronage of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth



KFH participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony during the Auto Moto show.

Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah.

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.

KFH's mission is to achieve highest levels of excellence and innovation in the field of client service, while developing common interest for all those concerned with the financial institution. KFH's vision is to spearhead the global development in Islamic financial services, and to upgrade the bank into the level of becoming the most sustainable profitable Islamic bank in the world.



DAVOS: Police is on guard next to the Congress Center during the 47th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, WEF, in Davos yesterday. — AP

TRADE STRAINS, DOLLAR DANGER CLOUD OPTIMISM IN DAVOS

DAVOS: A trade war between the United States and China and a strengthening dollar are among the biggest threats to a brightening global economic outlook, according to leading economists at the World Economic Forum in Davos. As political leaders, businessmen and bankers converge on the resort in the Swiss Alps this week, they can draw hope from a more benign economic picture and a rally in global stock markets on expectations of major stimulus under a new US administration led by Donald Trump. The backdrop is brighter than it was a year ago, when concerns about a rapid economic slowdown in China led to what Credit Suisse CEO Tidjane Thiam described at the time as "the worst start to any year on record in financial markets ever."

"I am more optimistic than last year. If no major political or geopolitical uncertainties materialize and derail the world economy, it might even surprise to the upside in 2017," Axel Weber, the chairman of Swiss bank UBS and a former president of the German Bundesbank, told Reuters.

Still, there are big storm clouds on the horizon. "It is too early to give the all clear," Weber continued. "This cyclical upswing hides but does not solve the world's underlying structural problems, which are excessive debt, over-reliance on monetary policy, and adverse demographic developments."

Among the biggest concerns for 2017 cited by the half dozen economists interviewed by Reuters was the threat of a US-China trade war, and broader economic tensions, triggered by what they fear could be a more confrontational Trump administration. Trump is threatening to brand China a currency manipulator and impose heavy tariffs on imports of Chinese goods. Last month he named leading Chinese critic Peter Navarro, author of the book "Death by China," as a top trade adviser.

"This is the key uncertainty because you don't know how much the rhetoric is a ploy to get better deals," said Raghuram Rajan, an economist at the University of Chicago who stepped down as governor of India's central bank last September. "I'm worried about the people he is surrounding himself with. If they have a more protectionist

world view and believe the reason the US is not doing well is because others are cheating that creates a certain kind of rhetoric that could end up very badly for the world."

CURRENCY RISKS

Last month, the US Federal Reserve hiked interest rates for just the second time in a decade, a sign that the lengthy period of ultra-loose monetary policy that followed the global financial crisis may be coming to an end. The World Bank said last week that it expects global growth to accelerate to 2.7 percent this year, up from a post-crisis low of 2.3 percent in 2016, on the back of a pickup in US growth and a recovery in emerging markets fuelled by a rise in commodity prices. A year ago in Davos, both Rajan and Weber warned about the limits of loose monetary policy. But now that the Fed is in tightening mode, a new set of risks has emerged. One is a further strengthening of the dollar, which is already hovering near 14-year highs against the euro. A further appreciation could widen the US trade deficit, increasing pressure on Trump to resort to protectionist policies. It could also expose weaknesses in the balance sheets of borrowers outside the United States who have borrowed in dollars but hold domestic currency assets.

In Europe, by contrast, a stronger dollar could add fuel to a solid if unspectacular economic recovery, allowing the European Central Bank to plot an end to its own easy money policies including the bond-buying, or quantitative easing (QE), program it recently extended through to the end of 2017. While welcome, this would also come with risks, particularly for the peripheral euro zone countries that have come to depend on QE to keep a lid on their borrowing costs. "Just when you think the euro zone is stable it might turn out not to be," said Kenneth Rogoff of Harvard University, a former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "If U.S. interest rates continue to rise and the dollar appreciates against the euro it's going to start getting very hard for (ECB President) Mario Draghi to tell the story that he's doing QE to prop up inflation. If he ever slows down on QE, the vulnerabilities of the periphery countries are huge." — Reuters

SINKING BANKS DRAG DOWN SAUDI STOCKS

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: A slide in banking shares after earnings at a major bank missed analysts' estimates dragged down Saudi Arabia's stock market yesterday, while markets in the rest of the region were mixed.

Riyad Bank, the first major Saudi bank to report fourth-quarter earnings, posted a 66 percent fall in net profit to 293 million riyals (\$78 million), citing higher impairment charges for credit losses as well as lower operating income from fees and commissions. It was the sixth quarter in the last seven in which Riyadh Bank reported either declining or flat profits, highlighting the challenges the kingdom's banks face as growth in lending and deposits is constrained by sagging oil prices, which have dampened spending by the government, companies and consumers.

Analysts polled by Reuters had on average forecast Riyadh Bank would make a profit of 780 million riyals, and its results were taken as a sign that fourth-quarter earnings at other banks might also disappoint. Riyadh Bank shares dropped 2.7 percent yesterday. In all, shares in 11 of 12 listed Saudi banks fell, with Banque Saudi Fransi losing 3.0 percent. The Saudi stock market index fell 1.6 percent to a seven-week low of 6,824 points.

Oil shipper Bahri sank 5.0 percent after its

quarterly net profit came in at 327.8 million riyals versus 566.4 million riyals a year ago. Alistithmar Capital and Albilad Capital had forecast 454.6 million and 431 million riyals. Two petrochemical firms reported quarterly earnings in line with estimates but still saw their shares fall. Saudi Kayan Petrochemical Co dropped 4.0 percent after swinging to a net profit of 103.65 million riyals from a loss of 624.14 million riyals a year ago. And Saudi Arabia Fertilizers Co slipped 1.0 percent after reporting a 24.9 percent drop in profit. Falling stocks outnumbered gainers by 147 to 15. Among the gainers, Al Jouf Cement climbed 1.1 percent after announcing a 10 percent capital increase through an issue of bonus shares. Dubai's Emirates NBD, the biggest bank in the emirate, beat analysts' estimates with a 13 percent fall in profit to 1.86 billion dirhams (\$506 million); analysts had on average forecast 1.62 billion dirhams.

But its illiquid shares still fell in thin volume, closing 1.2 percent lower, and Dubai's index edged down 0.3 percent as trading volume halved from the previous day. In Qatar, the index edged up 0.2 percent to a fresh four-month closing high of 10,759 points.

Qatar National Bank dropped as much as 2.2 percent in early trade after reporting an 8.3 percent increase in fourth-quarter net profit to 2.75

billion riyals (\$755 million);

EFG Hermes had forecast 2.99 billion riyals and SICO Bahrain, 3.44 billion riyals. But the stock closed 0.4 percent higher at 166.50 riyals. "Net interest margins continued to compress amid intense rivalry in local lending market and higher funding costs, while a negative USD position (which deteriorated further last year) poses downside risks to margins," Arqaam Capital said of QNB's earnings. It rates the stock "hold" with a 163 riyal target.

Kuwait's index, which has surged 8.2 percent since the end of last year, outperforming the region after a long period of sluggish performance, closed up 0.02 percent but well off its intra-day high. Trading activity shrank slightly from the massive volume registered on Sunday, but was still at its second highest level since January 2014. In Egypt, the index fell 0.2 percent. Global Telecom dropped 3.9 percent to 7.41 Egyptian pounds (\$0.40) after its board approved a plan to buy back 524.6 million treasury shares and cancel its listing of global depositary receipts on the London Stock Exchange. But Commercial International Bank rose 3.0 percent to 78.40 pounds after HSBC raised its rating of the stock to "buy" from "hold" and lifted the target price to 88 pounds from 70 pounds. — Reuters

PROBE FINDS BATTERY WAS MAIN CAUSE OF NOTE 7 FIRES

SEOUL: A Samsung Electronics Co Ltd investigation into what caused some Galaxy Note 7 smartphones to catch fire has concluded that the battery was the main reason, a person familiar with the matter told Reuters yesterday.

The world's biggest smartphone maker is seeking to put behind it one of the biggest product safety failures in tech history as it prepares to launch the Galaxy S8, one of its flagship phones, sometime in the first half of this year. Investors and analysts say it is critical for Samsung to provide a convincing and detailed explanation about

what went wrong with the Note 7 and how it will prevent such problems from recurring if it is to regain consumer trust.

"They've got to make sure they come clean and they've got to reassure buyers as to why this won't happen again," said Bryan Ma, Singapore-based analyst for researcher IDC.

The results of the investigation will likely be announced on Jan. 23, a day before it announces detailed fourth-quarter earnings results, said the person, who was not authorised to speak publicly on the matter and declined to be identified. Koh Dong-

jin, head of Samsung's mobile business, will likely announce the results as well as new measures the firm is taking to prevent similar problems in future devices, the person said.

A Samsung spokesman declined to comment. Samsung initially announced a recall of some 2.5 million Note 7 phones in September and identified the cause of the fire as a manufacturing process problem at one of its suppliers, later identified as affiliate Samsung SDI Co Ltd. But new Note 7s with what Samsung said were safe batteries from

a different supplier continued to catch fire, forcing the company to permanently halt sales of the device and dealing a 6.1 trillion won (\$5.2 billion) blow to Samsung's operating profit over three quarters. "To me it'd be surprising if they said it was a supplier issue," IDC's Ma said, adding he suspects Samsung may not have given enough room for the battery inside the phone.

The company in October said it will examine all aspects of the phone, including hardware design and soft-

ware, and would hire third-party firms as part of its probe.

The source told Reuters yesterday that Samsung was able to replicate the fires during its investigation and that the cause for the fires could not be explained by hardware design or software-related matters. While prospects for its smartphone business this year remain a major question mark for Samsung, profits are expected to rise sharply on the back of rising memory chip prices and growing sales of organic light-emitting diode screens for smartphones. —Reuters



SEOUL: People walk past the Samsung logo at the Samsung group headquarters in Seoul yesterday. —AFP

SAMSUNG IN ROUGH PATCH WITH ARREST REQUEST AND RECALLS

SEOUL, South Korea: A request by South Korean prosecutors to arrest Lee Jae-yong, the 48-year-old vice chairman and de facto leader of Samsung Electronics, has added to the troubles for the country's most valuable company after a spate of recalls last year.

Lee faces allegations he offered \$36 million in bribes to a friend of President Park Geun-hye, who has been impeached. Prosecutors say they also suspect him of embezzlement and lying under oath. A Seoul court will review the request for his arrest Wednesday and will likely decide on it within this week.

Here is what you need to know about the entanglement of the world's largest smartphone maker in the scandal:

SAMSUNG'S LINK TO THE SCANDAL

Samsung is alleged to have made substantial donations to nonprofit foundations controlled by Choi Soon-sil, a confidante of Park's who has been jailed and is on trial for allegedly using her connections with the president to extort money and favors from companies and unlawfully interfere with government affairs.

South Korean prosecutors say the company agreed to pay more than \$18 million to a company Choi set up to finance equestrian training of her daughter in Germany. It also helped pay for a winter sports center run by Choi's niece. Of four Samsung executives prosecutors have questioned Lee is the only one they have asked to arrest. The prosecutors say they plan to summon Park for questioning as a possible suspect. The company has said it never made donations to win favors.

LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

Since Lee Jae-yong's father suffered a heart attack in May 2014, the company has been trying to accelerate a leadership succession from the 72-year-old father to his son. The younger Lee has held various executive positions at Samsung Electronics but owned less than a 1 percent stake in the company in 2014. Inheriting his father's 3-percent stake would cost him billions of dollars in inheritance taxes. To strengthen his control over the company without having to lay out a fortune in either taxes or share purchases, the Samsung group chose in 2015 to merge two of its member companies, Samsung C&T and Cheil Industries. Lee was the biggest shareholder in Cheil. The merger made him the biggest shareholder in Samsung

C&T, increasing the share of Samsung Electronics shares that he effectively controls to about 5 percent.

Minority shareholders of Samsung C&T, including the US hedge fund Elliott Management, opposed the merger, saying it benefited the Lee family at their expense. Prosecutors have indicted a former health minister, Moon Hyung-pyo, for allegedly abusing his power in asking the national pension fund to support the Samsung merger plan at Park's request.

EXPLODING PHONES AND WASHERS

Just weeks before Samsung was dragged into the political scandal, the company discontinued its flagship smartphone, the Galaxy Note 7, after finding it was prone to overheat and catch fire. The recalls began shortly after the smartphone was launched in August.

Samsung has estimated the total cost of the recall at at least \$5.3 billion and slashed its third-quarter profit forecast. The recalls and safety concerns stung, and company officials say they plan to soon announce a definitive conclusion on why the phones were overheating.

In another upset, about a month after the Note 7 was discontinued, nearly 3 million Samsung washing machines were recalled in the US following several reports of injuries - including a broken jaw - due to "excessive vibration."

PROFIT MACHINE

Samsung has postponed the personnel reshuffle it usually announces every December. An arrest for Lee also might slow decision making on big investments and long-term strategy. But Lee is not involved in day-to-day management, so the company's smartphone and chip sales would be unlikely to suffer much immediate damage from his absence.

The company remains a profit machine thanks to its formidable business in making microchips for computers and mobile devices. Earlier this month, Samsung said its October-December operating profit jumped 50 percent to \$7.8 billion, its best performance in more than three years. It is due to give more details on its earnings in a conference call scheduled for Jan. 24.

Before prosecutors requested Lee's arrest, Samsung Electronic's share price had been setting record highs, with shareholders anticipating generous dividends. Yesterday, it fell 2 percent. —AP

S KOREA PROSECUTOR SEEKS ARREST OF SAMSUNG CHIEF

SAMSUNG REJECTS ACCUSATIONS CHIEF PAID BRIBES

SEOUL: South Korea's special prosecutor yesterday sought a warrant to arrest the head of Samsung Group, the country's largest conglomerate, accusing him of paying multi-million dollar bribes to a friend of President Park Geun-hye. Investigators had grilled Samsung Group chief Jay Y Lee for 22 straight hours last week as a suspect in a corruption scandal, which last month led to parliament impeaching Park.

The special prosecutor's office accused Lee of paying bribes totalling 43 billion won (\$36.42 million) to organizations linked to Choi Soon-sil, a friend of the president who is at the centre of the scandal, in order to secure the 2015 merger of two affiliates and cement his control of the family business.

The 48-year-old Lee, who became the de facto head of the Samsung Group after his father, Lee Kun-hee, was incapacitated by a heart attack in 2014, was also accused of embezzlement and perjury, according to the prosecution's application for an arrest warrant.

"The special prosecutors' office, in making this decision to seek an arrest warrant, determined that while the country's economic conditions are important, upholding justice takes precedence," special prosecution spokesman Lee Kyu-chul told a media briefing. Prosecutors have evidence showing that Park and Choi shared profits made through bribery payments, he said, without elaborating. Lee is due to appear on Wednesday morning at the Seoul central district court, which will decide whether to grant the arrest warrant.

Samsung, whose companies generate \$230 billion in revenue, equivalent to about 17 percent of South Korea's economy, rejected the accusation that Lee paid bribes. "It is difficult to understand the special prosecutors' decision," it said in an emailed statement.

Prosecutors have been looking into whether Samsung's support for foundations and a company backed by Choi was linked to the National Pension Service's 2015 decision to support a controversial \$8 billion merger of Samsung C&T Corp and Cheil Industries Inc.

Samsung has acknowledged providing funds to the institutions but has repeatedly denied accusations of lobbying to push through the merg-

er. "It is especially hard to accept the special prosecutor's assertion that there was improper request for a favor related to the merger or succession of control," it said yesterday.

NPS chairman Moon Hyung-pyo was indicted yesterday on charges of abuse of power and giving false testimony. Last month he acknowledged ordering the world's third-largest pension fund to support the merger of Samsung C&T Corp and Cheil Industries in 2015 while heading the health ministry, which oversees the NPS. The special prosecutor's office said in its indictment of Moon that

SHARES HIT

Prosecutors opted not to seek the arrest of three other Samsung executives they had questioned, including Vice Chairman Choi Gee-sung, a group veteran who is seen as Jay Y Lee's mentor and a likely caretaker head of the conglomerate in the event Lee is arrested. Shares in flagship Samsung Electronics, the world's biggest maker of smartphones, flat-screen TVs and memory chips, ended 2.14 percent lower, underperforming the 0.61 percent drop in the broader market.

Investors say that while key Samsung businesses are run by profes-

sentence in 2009 for tax evasion. He was later pardoned. Public opinion has in recent years grown less tolerant of leniency extended to the heads of conglomerates, or chaebols, for the sake of the economy.

POLITICAL CRISIS

South Korea has been gripped by political crisis for months, with Park impeached in December. If the impeachment is upheld by the Constitutional Court, an election would be held in two months, with former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon expected to be a candidate.



SEOUL: Lee Jae-yong (center), vice chairman of Samsung Electronics, arrives to be questioned as a suspect in bribery case in the massive influence-peddling scandal that led to the president's impeachment at the office of the independent counsel in Seoul. The special prosecutors' office said yesterday that it requested an arrest warrant for Lee, the 48-year-old Samsung Electronics vice chairman. —AP

Park, through her aides, ordered Moon to ensure the merger of the two Samsung companies succeeded. Park, 64, remains in office but has been stripped of her powers while the Constitutional Court decides whether to make her the country's first democratically elected leader to be forced from office. Park has denied wrongdoing but admitted to carelessness in her relationship with Choi, a friend for four decades. Choi, in jail as she undergoes criminal trial and also denies wrongdoing.

sional CEOs and would not be hurt on an operational basis if Lee is arrested, his absence would slow bigger-picture decision-making.

The Korea Employers Federation, a business lobby, said arresting Lee would undermine confidence both in Samsung and the country's economy, Asia's fourth-largest, and called the special prosecutor's probe "very regrettable." South Korea has seen numerous corporate scandals over the years. Jay Y. Lee's father Lee Kun-hee was himself handed a three-year suspended jail

Choi, in detention and on trial on charges of abuse of power and attempted fraud, again denied wrongdoing yesterday in an appearance at the Constitutional Court's impeachment trial. She also denied having any prior knowledge of the Samsung Group's controversial 2015 merger of two affiliates. "Even if I knew, I could not have passed on any information because I have no knowledge about mergers or hedge funds, anything like that, in the first place," Choi told the court. —Reuters

CHINA'S TECH FIRM LEECO WINS \$2.2 BILLION LIFELINE

BEIJING: Cash-strapped Chinese tech firm LeEco secured a \$2.2 billion investment from a group led by property developer Sunac China Holdings, but shares in the rescuer plunged yesterday on news of the deal.

Hong Kong-listed Sunac said Friday it would plough 15.04 billion yuan into the sprawling LeEco empire, which has interests in various sectors including self-driving cars, smartphones, film making, and TV-set manufacturing. Its diverse ventures pit the company against Apple, Netflix, and Tesla and home-grown Chinese champions Baidu, Tencent, and Alibaba.

But the company's relentless expansion has put a strain on its cash flow, and in November billionaire founder Jia Yueting told employees the company grew too quickly and was short of funds.

Shares in its Shenzhen-listed LeShi affiliate dived more than 36 percent last year and in December were suspended from trading before restarting yesterday. It ended down 1.12 percent at 35.40 yuan in Shenzhen. The deal will make Sunac the second-largest shareholder of LeEco, with 8.61 percent equity in LeShi Internet, 15 percent in LeShi Pictures, and 33.5 percent in the TV unit Leshi Zhixin, Sunac said in an announcement to the Hong Kong stock exchange.

But shares in Sunac plunged as much as 10 percent in Hong Kong yesterday before paring the losses to end 7.96 percent lower at HK\$6.71. At an event Sunday in Beijing, Jia was full of optimism, declaring that "though the road is bumpy, our dream is getting closer". Jia and Sunac Chairman Sun Hongbing were born in the same region of China, northern Shanxi



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province, and had a positive six-hour meeting last month, Sun said, adding that it gave him the "impetuous urge to invest".

The deal takes Sunac far outside its primary business in buying and developing property.

"Overseas investors see this as relatively negative to Sunac," David Yang, of UOB Kayhian Investment told Bloomberg News. The deal "can hardly bring much profit contribution in the

near term." Sunac last year struck the largest number of deals in China, being involved in 13 deals totalling \$4.2 billion, according to Bloomberg News.

"While we're firmly optimistic about the real estate industry for the next five to 10 years, we've since long ago started an exploration journey to prepare for 10 years later," Sun said. —AFP

AIRBUS CEO SEES 'FLYING CAR' PROTOTYPE READY BY YEAR-END

MUNICH: Airbus Group plans to test a prototype for a self-piloted flying car as a way of avoiding gridlock on city roads by the end of the year, the aerospace group's chief executive said yesterday.

Airbus last year formed a division called Urban Air Mobility that is exploring concepts such as a vehicle to transport individuals or a helicopter-style vehicle that can carry multiple riders. The aim would be for people to book the vehicle using an app, similar to car-sharing schemes. "One hundred years ago, urban transport went underground, now we have the technological wherewithal to go above ground," Airbus CEO Tom Enders told the DLD digital tech conference in Munich, adding he hoped the Airbus could fly a demonstration vehicle for single-person transport by the end of the year.

"We are in an experimentation

phase, we take this development very seriously," he said, adding that Airbus recognized such technologies would have to be clean to avoid further polluting congested cities. He said using the skies could also reduce costs for city infrastructure planners. "With flying, you don't need to pour billions into concrete bridges and roads," he said.

Enders said Airbus, as the world's largest maker of commercial helicopters, wanted to invest to make the most of new technologies such as autonomous driving and artificial intelligence, to usher in what amounts to an era of flying cars.

"If we ignore these developments, we will be pushed out of important segments of the business," he said. A spokesman for Airbus declined to say how much the company was investing in urban mobility. —Reuters

UK EXPERTS WARN OF TRUMP CLIMATE SCIENCE CLAMPDOWN

PARIS: More than 100 of Britain's top climate scientists yesterday urged Prime Minister Theresa May to press US President-elect Donald Trump to safeguard government-led research on global warming. "We stand ready to support and assist our counterparts in the United States... in resisting any political attempts to prevent, hamper or interfere with vital research on climate change,"

they wrote in an open letter to May, sent to AFP. A senior advisor to Trump has called for an end to climate research programs at NASA, which provides vital data to scientists in the US and around the world.

Trump himself has called climate change a "hoax". Several of his cabinet nominees have expressed similar views or opposed environmental protection

policies in previous postings. May should press Trump to "acknowledge the scientific evidence about the risks of climate change" and support the Paris Agreement, the scientists said. The 196-nation Paris climate treaty vows to hold global warming to below two degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit), and to provide money for poor countries coping with its impacts.

The letter added that Britain must be "prepared to respond decisively" should Trump's administration take action to undermine climate research. In interviews with two European newspapers published yesterday, Trump confirmed his intention to meet with May soon after his inauguration as president on Friday. Britain has several of the world's leading institutions for the study of

global warming and its impacts, including the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research and the Environmental Change Institute at Oxford. Former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher was the first world leader to publically recognize the risks of climate change in 1988, the scientists noted. Thatcher established the Hadley Centre in the government-run Met Office. — AFP

TRUMP VOWS 'INSURANCE FOR EVERYBODY' IN REPLACING OBAMACARE

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Donald Trump aims to replace Obamacare with a plan that would envisage "insurance for everybody," he said in an interview with the Washington Post published on Sunday night. Trump did not give the newspaper specifics about his proposals to replace Democratic President Barack Obama's signature health insurance law, but said the plan was nearly



NEW YORK: File photo shows President-elect Donald Trump speaks during a news conference in the lobby of Trump Tower in New York. — AP

finished and he was ready to unveil it alongside the leaders of the Republican-controlled Congress. The Republican president-elect takes office on Friday.

"It's very much formulated down to the final strokes. We haven't put it in quite yet but we're going to be doing it soon," Trump told the Post, adding he was waiting for his nominee for health and human services

secretary, Tom Price, to be confirmed. The plan, he said, would include "lower numbers, much lower deductibles," without elaborating. "We're going to have insurance for everybody," Trump said. "There was a philosophy in some circles that if you can't pay for it, you don't get it. That's not going to happen with us."

Trump was also quoted as saying in the interview that he would target pharmaceutical companies over drug pricing and insist they negotiate directly with the Medicare and Medicaid government health plans for the elderly and poor. US House Republicans won passage on Friday of a measure starting the process of dismantling the Affordable Care Act, popularly known as Obamacare, despite concerns about not having a ready replacement and the potential financial cost of repealing the law.

With the vote, Republicans began delivering on their promise to end Obamacare, also a campaign pledge of Trump, who has called the program a "disaster." The law, which expanded health coverage to some 20 million people, has been plagued by increases in insurance premiums and deductibles and by some large insurers leaving the system.

Republicans have called Obamacare federal government overreach and have sought to undermine it in Congress and the courts since it was passed by Democratic majorities in the House and Senate in 2010. Democrats say Obamacare has allowed growing numbers of Americans to get medical insurance and helped slow the rise in healthcare spending. — AP

OSLO TEMPORARILY BARS DIESEL CARS TO COMBAT POLLUTION

OSLO: Oslo will ban diesel cars from the road for at least two days this week in a bid to combat rising air pollution, angering some motorists after they were urged to buy diesel cars a few years ago. The ban, announced by the city late Sunday, will go into effect today on municipal roads but will not apply on the national motorways that criss-cross the Norwegian capital. Better atmospheric conditions are expected on Thursday. Motorists violating the ban will be fined 1,500 kroner (166 euros, \$176).

This is the first time Oslo has implemented a ban of this type after the city council made up of the labor and Greens parties agreed in principle in February 2016 on the use of such a measure. While diesel cars emit less carbon dioxide (CO2) they emit more nitrogen dioxide (NO2). "In Oslo, we can't ask children, the elderly and those suffering from respiratory problems to remain holed up at home because the air is too dangerous to breathe," Greens city councilor Lan Marie Nguyen Berg told Norwegian media.

The measure has angered some motorists, who were encouraged in 2006 by Norwegian authorities to opt for diesel vehi-

cles, which at the time were considered a better environmental choice than petrol-fuelled cars. "Make up your minds. It wasn't very long ago that diesel was recommended over petrol by Jens (Stoltenberg, the former prime minister, now NATO's secretary general). Not sure you really know what is best," wrote an annoyed Irene Signora Maier Tziotas on the Facebook page of newspaper Verdens Gang (VG). Others used even stronger language. Mazhar Keshvari, an MP from the populist right Progress Party which is a member of the coalition government, urged motorists to seek compensation.

"The biggest swindle of Norwegian motorists has now become a reality," he told TV2. "This was part of the red-green government's (Stoltenberg's coalition) ingenious climate measures," he ironized. "Not only did they recommend motorists to buy diesel cars, they also changed the taxes to make them less expensive. That led a lot of people to buy a car that they can't use now," he lamented. Other Norwegians were more philosophical. Very good measure. We should introduce a permanent ban on diesel in all big cities. — AFP



SINGAPORE: This file photo shows former newspaper editor Seah Chiang Nee smiling during an interview at his home in Singapore. — AFP

SOUTHEAST ASIA'S FIRST HEART TRANSPLANT PATIENT DIES AT 76

SINGAPORE: Southeast Asia's first heart transplant patient and one of the world's longest surviving cases has died, his family said yesterday, more than 31 years after his operation. Singaporean Seah Chiang Nee, a former newspaper editor, died aged 76 in a local hospital on Sunday, his wife Patricia Wong told AFP. He was hospitalized in July. Seah underwent heart transplant surgery on October 12, 1985 in Sydney, when doctors removed his organ in a five-and-a-half hour operation and replaced it with that of a 17-year-old boy who had just died. "Based on his record he should be one of the longest-surviving in the world," said Kenneth Ng, a cardiologist at the Mount

Elizabeth Novena Hospital in Singapore.

"The median survival rate for heart transplant is only 10 years... so it is definitely on the high end." The world's longest surviving heart transplant patient was a Briton named John McCafferty, who died at age 73 last year, 33 years after the transplant, according to British media reports. In an interview with AFP in 2005, 20 years after the operation, Seah said he would have been content to live for four or five years after the transplant. He said he had never imagined he would be able to welcome the new millennium. "Twenty years is a long, long time and I'm already very grateful," he said then. — AFP



LOS ANGELES: Sen Kamala Harris, D-Calif., at podium, joins health care workers to save the Affordable Care Act across the country outside LAC+USC Medical Center in Los Angeles Sunday. — AP photos

THOUSANDS RALLY TO RESIST REPUBLICAN HEALTH LAW REPEAL DRIVE

'I'M GOING TO GET REALLY SICK AND MY LIFE WILL BE AT RISK'

WARREN, Michigan: Thousands of people showed up in freezing temperatures on Sunday in Michigan to hear Sen Bernie Sanders denounce Republican efforts to repeal President Barack Obama's health care law, one of dozens of rallies Democrats staged across the country to highlight opposition. Labor unions were a strong presence at the demonstration in a parking lot at Macomb Community College in the Detroit suburb of Warren, where some people carried signs saying "Save our Health Care." Lisa Bible, 55, of Bancroft, Michigan, said she has an autoimmune disease and high cholesterol. She said the existing law has been an answer to her and her husband's prayers, but she worries that if it's repealed her family may get stuck with her medical bills.

"I'm going to get really sick and my life will be at risk," said Bible, an online antique dealer. President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to overturn and replace the Affordable Care Act and majority Republicans in Congress this week began the process of repealing it using a budget maneuver that requires a bare majority in the Senate. "This is the wealthiest country in the history of the world. It is time we got our national priorities right," Sanders told the Michigan rally. The law has delivered health coverage to about 20 million people but is saddled with problems such as rapidly rising premiums and large co-payments.

Britt Waligorski, 31, a health care administrator for a dental practice, said she didn't get health insurance through work but has been covered through the health law for three years. While the premiums have gone up, she said she is concerned that services for women will be taken away if it is repealed.

"It's done a lot for women for their annual checkups, for mammograms-women's health in general. If this gets repealed, we're going to go back to the old days when that's not covered," she said. The health law has provided subsidies and Medicaid coverage for millions who don't get insurance at work. It has required insurers to cover certain services such as family planning and people who are already ill, and has placed limits



LOS ANGELES: Sen Kamala Harris, D-Calif., at podium, cheers health care workers to save the Affordable Care Act across the country.

on the amount that the sick and elderly can be billed for health care.

Larger companies

Sanders, a strong supporter of the law, made several visits to the state last year during the Michigan primary and defeated Hillary Clinton there. But in a major surprise, Michigan narrowly voted for Trump on Nov 8, the first Republican presidential candidate to carry the state since 1988. Rallies in some other cities in support of the health law also were well attended. Police estimated about 600 people showed up in Portland, Maine. Hundreds also attended events in Newark, New Jersey, Johnston, Rhode Island,

Richmond, Virginia and Boston. Republicans want to end the fines that enforce the requirement that many individuals buy coverage and that larger companies provide it to workers.

But they face internal disagreements on how to pay for any replacement and how to protect consumers and insurers during a long phase-in of an alternative. Mark Heller, 45, a civil rights, immigration and labor attorney who drove to the Michigan event from Toledo, Ohio, said that stopping Republicans from repealing the law may take more than attending rallies. "I think that it's going to take civil disobedience to turn this around because they have the votes in both the Senate and the House, and the president," he said. — AP

NO NEW ANTIDEPRESSANTS IN SIGHT DESPITE GROWING NEED, EXPERTS WARN

LONDON: It is likely to be at least 10 years before any new generation of antidepressants comes to market, despite evidence that depression and anxiety rates are increasing across the world, specialists said. The depression drug pipeline has run dry partly due to a "failure of science" they said, but also due to big pharma pulling investment out of research and development (R&D) in the neuroscience field because the profit potential is uncertain.

"I'd be very surprised if we were to see any new drugs for depression in the next decade. The pharmaceutical industry is simply not investing in the research because it can't make money from these drugs," Guy Goodwin, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Oxford, told reporters at a London briefing. Andrea Cipriani, a consultant psychiatrist at Oxford, said such risk aversion was understandable given uncertain returns and the approximately billion dollar cost of developing and bringing a new drug to market.

"It's a lot of money to spend, and there's a high rate of failure," Cipriani said. Treatment for depression usually involves either medication, some form of psychotherapy, or a combination

of both. But up to half of all people treated fail to get better with first-line antidepressants, and around a third of patients are resistant to relevant medications.

Depression rates rising

The experts said that since the current generation of SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) antidepressants - including Eli Lilly's blockbuster Prozac - are widely available as cheap generics, there is reluctance among health services to fund expensive new drugs that may not be much better. That is partly because existing medications, whilst by no means perfect, are quite effective in more than half of patients, the specialists said, and partly because in this condition in particular, placebo can have a massive impact.

That makes it difficult, they explained, to show that a new drug is working above and beyond a positive placebo response and an already effective generation of available drugs. Depression is already one of the most common forms of mental illness, affecting more than 350 million people worldwide and ranking as the leading cause of disability globally, according to

the World Health Organization.

And rates are rising. Glyn Lewis, a professor of psychiatric epidemiology at University College London, cited data for England showing a doubling in prescriptions for antidepressants in a decade, to 61 million in 2015 from 31 million in 2005. In the United States too, more people than ever are taking antidepressants. A study in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) in 2015 found that prevalence almost doubled from 1999 to 2012, rising to 13 from 6.9 percent.

Yet several major drug companies including GlaxoSmithKline and AstraZeneca have scaled right back on neuroscience R&D in recent years, citing unfavorable risk-reward prospects. Goodwin said the absence of a drug development pipeline was also due to lagging scientific research into what is really happening in the brains of those who do and do not respond to current antidepressants.

"It's partly a failure of science, to be frank," said Goodwin. "Scientists have to ... get more of an understanding about how these things actually work before we can then propose ways to improve them." — Reuters

THE GLOBAL CHAIN THAT PRODUCES YOUR FISH



GRIMSBY, ENGLAND, United Kingdom: This file photo shows boxes of fresh fish which have been sold at auction are dispatched from the Auction Hall of Grimsby Fish Market in Grimsby, northern England, on January 9, 2017. — AFP photos



VILLENEUVE-LA-GARENNE, HAUTS-DE-SEINE, France: This file photo shows fish pictured in the fresh fish section of an hypermarket store of French retail giant Carrefour, in Villeneuve-la-garenne, near Paris.

PARIS: That smoked salmon you bought for the New Year's festivities has a story to tell. The salmon may have been raised in Scotland-but it probably began life as roe in Norway. Harvested at a coastal farm, the fish may have been sent to Poland to be smoked. It may even have travelled halfway around the world to China to be sliced. It eventually arrived, wrapped in that tempting package, in your supermarket. Globalization has changed the world in many ways, but fish farming is one of the starkest examples of its benefits and hidden costs. The nexus of the world fish-farming trade is China-the biggest exporter of fish products, the biggest producer of farmed fish and a major importer as well.

With battalions of lost-cost workers, linked to markets by a network of ocean-going refrigerated ships, China is the go-to place for labor-intensive fish processing. In just a few clicks on

Alibaba, the Chinese online trading hub, you can buy three tons of Norwegian filleted mackerel shipped from the port city of Qingdao for delivery within 45 days. "There is a significant amount of bulk frozen fish sent to China just for filleting," said a source from an association of importers in an EU country. "The temperature of the fish is brought up to enable the filleting but the fish are not completely defrosted." The practice has helped transform the Chinese coastal provinces of Liaoning and Shandong into global centers for fish processing.

But globalized fish farming leaves a mighty carbon footprint and has other impacts, many of which are unseen for the consumer. Don Staniford, an activist and director of the Global Alliance Against Industrial Aquaculture, called the fish industry's production and transportation chain "madness".

Environmental cost

"The iconic image of Scottish salmon-a wild salmon leaping out of the river-has gone. The Scottish salmon farming industry is dominated, 60-70 percent, by Norwegian companies," he said. The biggest such company, Marine Harvest, is the world's largest producer of Atlantic salmon, some 420,000 tonnes in 2015. Scottish salmon farms import eggs from Norway, the fish food from Chile and then send the fish to Poland-"because it's cheaper"-for smoking, said Staniford. "Consumers don't realize that cheap supermarket salmon comes with a huge social and environment cost," he added.

One such problem is that integrated markets, with the free flow of fish and fish products across borders, may spread disease and new bugs. Antibiotic-resistant diseases or parasites such as sea lice require bulk slaughter

on giant fish farms, pushing up prices. Chile, the world's second-largest producer behind Norway, suffered the ravages of an algae bloom in early 2016, resulting in high mortality, reducing its expected production by 30 percent.

Despite such setbacks, the economic potential remains enormous. According to Allied Market Research, the global aquaculture market will be worth \$242-billion (228 billion euros) in 2022, compared to \$169-billion in 2015. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and World Bank go further and say that by 2030 two-thirds of the seafood on people's plates will come from aquaculture farms.

Employment mirrors changes

The tipping point may have come in 2014. Only 81.5 million tons of fish were netted at

sea-down from a historic peak of 86.4 million tons, according to the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). For the first time, more farmed fish were consumed than wild fish. On a broader employment level, fishing and aquaculture account for an estimated 56.6 million jobs across the globe. But a breakdown of the numbers again underlines change. Those involved in catching fish has fallen from 83 percent in 1990 to 67 percent in 2014 — with the corresponding numbers in aquaculture almost doubling.

The evolution of the industry has also been driven by overfishing, with fewer wild fish now being caught, leading to a concentration of large multinational fisheries. "We are seeing a new phenomenon of deals that have consolidated the sector in Europe and the world," said Francois Chartier, an economic specialist at Greenpeace. — AFP

PROTECT COMMON LAND: INDIAN CLASSICAL SINGER MAKES UNUSUAL APPEAL

MUMBAI: A popular Indian classical singer stars in a new music video appealing for the protection of common land in Chennai city, amid an increasingly bitter fight over the use of communal lands for industry and development. 'Chennai Poromboke Paadal', or Chennai common land song, sung by Carnatic music vocalist T.M. Krishna, is about the destruction of Ennore creek in the southern Indian city. While the world "poromboke" in Tamil originally meant community land, including water sources and grazing land, it has come to be used as a pejorative term for both people and places. "Poromboke is in the margins, and people who are dependent on them are also relegated to the margins," said environmental activist Nityanand Jayaraman, who drew attention to the destruction of the creek, which activists say is being polluted by thermal power stations and a port.

"These lands are important to communities dependent on them, and are of great importance to the environment. But the word itself is now a dirty word, and it's reflected in our devaluing of common lands," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. Common lands, including government forest areas, make up more than a third of India's total land area, according to the last survey in 1998. Common lands provide food, water, fodder and livelihood to rural communities, and also help maintain ecological balance.

As demand for land rises in India to boost growth, common lands are being taken over for industrial and development projects, including mines, power plants and colleges. "The takeover of common lands is arguably larger in scale than

the takeover of private lands, affects far more people, and is often more brutal," said Shankar Gopalakrishnan at rights group Campaign for Survival and Dignity. While several laws have been introduced to protect the land rights of farmers and indigenous communities, the laws are diluted and poorly implemented, activists say. The Ennore creek, a network of rivulets and mangroves, is the pathway for two rivers draining into the Bay of Bengal. In the music video, a group of musicians wearing pollution masks sit at the edge of the creek, with Krishna singing the colloquial Tamil song in classic Carnatic style, as smokestacks and transmission towers gradually appear in the background. "Poromboke is not for you, poromboke is not for me; it is for the community, it is for the earth," he sings.

"Poromboke is in your care; poromboke is in my care. It is our common responsibility towards nature, towards the earth." A panel set up to study the effects of the damage to Ennore creek last April recommended penalties on polluting industries, as well as a moratorium on their expansion. It also blamed government agencies including the pollution control board and coastal management authority for turning a blind eye to the damage.

In response, government officials said the industries were asked to dredge the creek ahead of the monsoon rains, and monitor the dumping of fly ash and earth. The music video, which has been viewed more than 55,000 times on YouTube since its weekend launch, may help spur more action, said Jayaraman, who tapped his friends for money to make the video. — Reuters

ARMED WITH APPS AND CROPS, WOMEN LEAD BATTLE TO SAVE SENEGAL'S SHRINKING FARMLAND

'SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL, WE ONLY KNOW THIS PLACE'

NDIAEL, Senegal: The women of Thiamene, a tiny straw hut village in northern Senegal, used to scrape together a living by collecting wild baobab fruit and selling milk from their cows. But their earnings have plummeted since an Italian-Senegalese agribusiness, Senhuile, took over the surrounding land five years ago, blocking their paths to the local market and river, and spraying pesticides that make their herds scatter, they say. "Life here is precarious, especially for women," said 42-year-old Fatimata Sow in the village square, gazing at the vast landscape of arid ground dotted with the stumps of trees.

While the men in her community do larger-scale agricultural work or have jobs in the nearby town, it is women who tend to the gardens and raise the animals that keep families fed. "The unhappiness and suffering we have lived from the impact of Senhuile is hard to express," said Sow. Vittoria Graziani, a spokeswoman for Senhuile's majority shareholder Tampieri Group, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in December the local population had signed agreements with the company - which villagers deny - and that Senhuile was open to hearing their concerns.

Female-led work is vital to rural communities like Sow's, yet women are often the first to suffer from large land deals and disputes, which are common across West Africa where statute law clashes with tribal customs, activists say. Now,

women in Senegal are fighting back, from young coders designing a mobile app to help women buy land to civil society groups rallying female villagers to stand up to multinationals. "Before, it was unthinkable for women to be part of the decision-making regarding land at both local and national levels, said Solange Bandiaky-Badjji, Africa director at the U.S.-based Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI). "Now, women are organizing for change," she added.

Fighting back

In Senegal, the law dictates that virtually all land belongs to the state, though occupants can purchase ownership and registration documents. In practice, especially in rural areas, customary law reigns and communities dictate who uses land. While women in Senegal make up half of the agricultural work force, only one in 20 owns land, United Nations data shows. Across much of sub-Saharan Africa, tradition dictates that women are not allowed to inherit land, and can only access it through their fathers or husbands. Even then, the plots they are granted are often the least productive. While women can apply for land ownership, only group applications are accepted and very few of the requests are granted, said the Prospective Agricultural and Rural Initiative. But Boury Tounkara, a young female coder in the northern city of Saint Louis, is developing an app

along with three colleagues to fight gender discrimination in land buying. One feature will allow women to start the buying process without identifying themselves, reducing the potential for bias.

"We hear about these problems all the time," said Tounkara, who visited communities near the wetland reserve of Ndiel, where Thiamene is located, to ask women what would help them. "We always see men creating apps so we thought, why not us?" Female lawyers are also working with civil society to help women understand their land rights and gain legal recognition. While the gender gap in land rights is not enshrined in statute law, it is deeply engrained in society, they say. "It is not just a problem for women," said Yande Ndiaye of the Association of Senegalese Women Lawyers (AJS). "It is a question of sustainable development and food security."

Changing landscape

In 2012, the Senegalese government leased 20,000 hectares of land to industrial vegetable grower Senhuile in Ndiel, which is home to 37 villages, including Thiamene. The vast area, with no roads or infrastructure, was one of the last places in northern Senegal where traditional pastoralists could allow their herds to roam freely. While Graziani said Senhuile has provided jobs and infrastructure to local people, villagers say the company has brought them nothing but harm. — Reuters

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M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

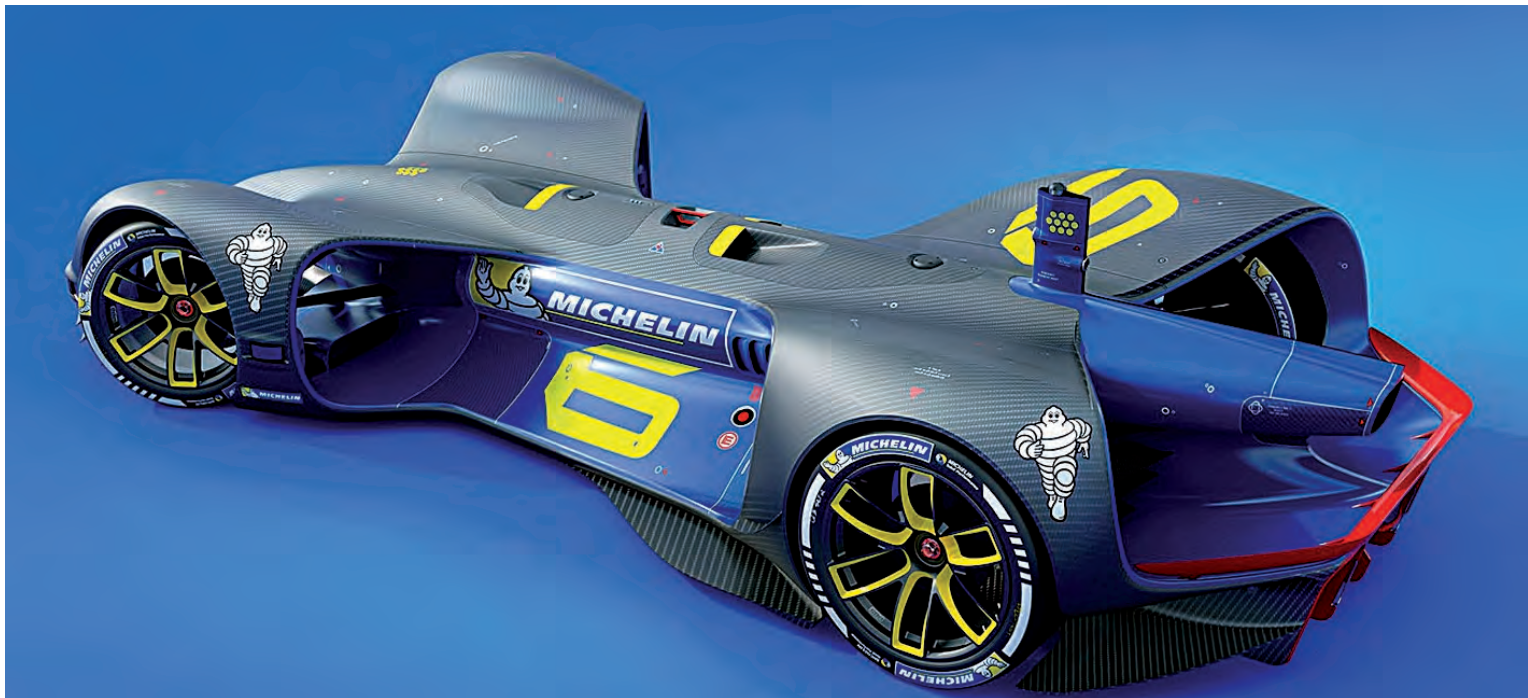
Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



ASIAN NIGHT AT INN & GO KUWAIT PLAZA HOTEL

Take your taste buds for a journey across Asian delicacies at INN & GO Kuwait Plaza Hotel. Asian Theme Night Dinner buffet every Friday at Al-Dallah Restaurant. Children under six years dine for free. Browsing at the Pan Asian buffet, the selections are splendid! There are several choices available such as a live noodles station, and the "Maki Roll". Of

course the appetizer, salad, soup, dessert stations are also present. The main course buffet includes Asian specialties from Philippines Thailand, China, Korea and India. Al-Dallah restaurant is located on the Mezzanine floor of the INN & Go Kuwait Plaza Hotel. Diners can enjoy a pleasant dining experience in a relaxed environment.



ROBORACE JOINS HANDS WITH MICHELIN IN DEVELOPING TIRES FOR DRIVERLESS RACE CARS

Roborace Ltd, a new venture working to develop a series for driverless race cars, has named Michelin Motorsports its official tire partner. Michelin Motorsports said it will use "next-generation" road-going tires for the series, which will run as a companion to the Formula E electric racing series now in its third season and for which Michelin is the spec tire supplier. Michelin's role as tire supplier extends to helping Roborace develop its car. Roborace has been testing its mule the past few months at Michelin's testing facility in Ladoux, France.

"Michelin impressed us every time we met, and they deeply understand the powerful opportunity of what road travel will become. They are pushing us, and themselves, to develop a world that moves from possibility to reality."

Their commitment to safety and innovation, and the way we inspire each other to design the best possible solutions makes this a perfect partnership" said Roborace CEO Denis Sverdllov. "We have been following the championship's progress very closely and have been testing privately with them for some time," Michelin Motorsport Director Pascal Couasnon said.

"We are very impressed by the speed at which Roborace has been developing driverless technology and hardware for its championship. Driverless technology is coming and we want to be at the forefront in terms of research and development."

Michelin, the leading tyre company, is dedicated to sustainably improving the mobility of goods and people by manufacturing, distributing and marketing tyres for every type of vehicle.

It also offers innovative business support services, digital mobility services and publishes travel guides, hotel and restaurant guides, maps and road atlases. Headquartered in Clermont-Ferrand, France, Michelin is present in 170 countries, has 112,300 employees and operates 68 production plants in 17 countries. The Group also has a Technology Center, responsible for research and development, with operations in Europe, North America and Asia. (www.michelin.com) Michelin's regional headquarters for Africa, India and the Middle East (AIM) is based in Dubai, UAE. Michelin tires, exclusively distributed in Kuwait by Kuwait Automotive Imports Co (Al-Shaya and Al-Sagar) in its 5 TYREPLUS branches in Shuwaikh (2), Jahara, Ahamadi and Sharq and through network of dealers.

BURGAN BANK SPONSORS 'SPARK MARATHON 2017'

KUWAIT: Borgan Bank concluded its strategic sponsorship of the second SPARK Marathon, Kuwait's biggest charity race event of 2017 which was organized by SPARK Athletic Centre over a period of two days, from January 14th till January 15th at Marina Crescent.

A sporting event considered to be the country's most spectacular and biggest, witnessed an overwhelming participation of over 3 thousand people from different nationalities. The race was open to individuals and families from all age groups competing in featuring four categories; 5 km run, 10 km run, 21 km run, and 42 km run with cash prizes which added up to 100 thousand dollars. The two-day event also included a full-fledged program of entertaining activities for all ages. All profits generated from the marathon will proceed to charities participating in it, which include Hayatt Breast Cancer Foundation and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Commenting on the successful conclusion of the sponsorship, which received great turnout and positive feedback from those participating, Loulwa Abdulla Al-Ayoubi - Senior Manager External Affairs - Corporate Communications at Borgan Bank Group said, "One of the reasons we are passionate supporters of the SPARK Marathon is because of the impact it has on individuals and how it brings new energy and a distinct passion in its health awareness initiative. As part of our corporate social responsibility, the bank always

strives to encourage people for living a healthy lifestyle through a platform that can help individuals integrate sports and fitness into their daily lives."

"Borgan Bank strongly believes in its relationship with SPARK Athletic Centre, which is repeatedly known to promote sports excellence and we are proud to be part of this positive cause through the participation of 70 staff members," added Ayoubi.

Ayoubi also expressed the bank's pleasure and contentment with the positive outcome of this local event with international standards that has showcased Kuwait as a host for world class sporting events. The bank over the years has been an active advocate of sports and strongly believes that promoting healthy living is a shared responsibility between the private sector and non-profit organizations.

It is worth mentioning that Borgan Bank's support to this initiative falls under its recently launched full-fledged community program entitled "ENGAGE" - Together to be the change. This program sheds light on important aspects affecting every segment of the society by promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social and health initiatives.

Borgan Bank's approach to "ENGAGE" begins with a vital principle that as a Kuwaiti financial institution, its conduct and policies should be aligned with the needs and interests of the Kuwaiti society.



Saeed Ahmed, Senior Photographer of "Contemporary Japan" Magazine, Kuwait receiving the Best Photographer of the Year Award for Overseas from Mohammad Yamin Siddiqui, President of the Punjab Press Council. Pakistan Photographic Conference 2016 at Al Hamra Cultural Complex, Lahore was organized by the Punjab Press Council (Photographers Wing).



The Najla Al-Naqqi Forum hosts a press conference on Sunday to discuss the topic of people forging disability certificates to take advantage of privileges the state gives to citizens with special needs. Several activists are set to speak during the event.



Loulwa Al-Ayoubi, Senior External Affairs Manager, Borgan Bank and Abdulmohsen Al-Babtain, Head of Spark Marathon Organizing committee present awards to winners.



OSN MOVIES

ACTION

01:45 The November Man
03:45 Sharknado 3: Oh Hell No!
05:15 Heatstroke
07:00 Blown Away
09:00 Nick Of Time
10:30 Jupiter Ascending
12:45 Double Team
14:30 Blown Away
16:30 Nick Of Time
18:15 Jupiter Ascending
20:30 Fast & Furious 7
23:00 Forbidden Empire

ANIMAL
PLANET HD

00:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
00:55 Gator Boys
01:50 River Monsters
02:45 Gorilla School
03:10 Gorilla School
03:40 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
04:35 Tanked
05:25 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
06:15 Gator Boys
07:02 River Monsters
07:49 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
08:36 Night
09:00 Night
09:25 America's Cutest Pets
10:15 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
11:10 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
12:05 Tanked
13:00 America's Cutest Pets
13:55 Gorilla School
14:20 Going Ape
14:50 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
15:45 Gator Boys
16:40 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
17:35 Tanked
18:30 River Monsters
19:25 Rugged Justice
20:20 Lone Star Law
21:15 Tanked
22:10 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
23:05 Rugged Justice

BBC
FIRST

00:40 Casualty
01:35 Undercover
02:35 Prey
03:20 Ripper Street
04:15 Silent Witness

08:15 Disorderly Conduct: Video On
Patrol
09:05 Impractical Jokers
09:30 Ridiculousness
09:55 Tosh.0
10:20 Key And Peele
10:45 Workaholics
11:10 The It Crowd
11:35 Ridiculousness
12:00 Tattoo Disasters
12:25 Tattoo Disasters
12:50 IdiotSitter
13:15 Workaholics
13:40 The It Crowd
14:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On
Patrol
14:55 Ridiculousness
15:20 Tattoo Disasters
15:45 Tattoo Disasters
16:10 IdiotSitter
16:35 Ridiculousness
17:00 Impractical Jokers
17:30 Workaholics
17:55 Tosh.0
18:25 Workaholics
18:50 Frankenfood
19:15 Frankenfood
19:39 The It Crowd
20:03 Bondi Ink
20:51 IdiotSitter
21:13 Important Things With Demetri
Marlin
21:37 Ridiculousness
22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
22:30 The Meltdown With Jonah And
Kumail
22:54 The Jim Gaffigan Show
23:18 Broad City
23:42 Broad City

Discovery
Family

00:15 What Happened Next?
00:40 Ultimate Survival
01:30 Nextworld
02:20 Atlas 4D
03:10 World's Toughest Expeditions With
James Cracknell
04:00 What Happened Next?
04:25 What Happened Next?
04:50 Ultimate Survival
05:40 How It's Made
06:05 How It's Made
06:30 Storm Chasers
07:20 Mythbusters
08:00 Do You Know?
08:15 Doki
08:35 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
09:00 K9 Cops
09:45 How It's Made
10:05 How It's Made

12:15 Good Luck Charlie
12:40 Good Luck Charlie
13:05 Shake It Up
13:30 Shake It Up
13:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
14:00 Welcome To The Ronks
14:15 Gravity Falls
14:40 Hank Zipzer
15:05 Star Darlings
15:10 Austin & Ally
15:35 Austin & Ally
16:00 Jessie
16:25 Jessie
16:50 Rolling To The Ronks
17:15 Frozen: Magic Of The Northern
Lights
17:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And
Cat Noir
17:45 Elena Of Avalor
18:10 Bunk'd
18:35 Descendants Wicked World
18:40 Girl Meets World
19:05 Bizaardvark
19:30 Liv And Maddie
19:55 Best Friends Whenever
20:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
20:25 The Next Step
20:50 Austin & Ally
21:15 Star Darlings
21:20 Shake It Up
21:45 Backstage
22:10 Liv And Maddie
22:35 Cracked
22:40 The Next Step
23:05 Best Friends Whenever
23:30 Mako Mermaids
23:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts

Disney
JUNIOR

00:00 Sofia The First
00:30 Sofia The First
00:55 PJ Masks
01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
01:35 The Hive
01:45 Loopdidoo
02:00 Henry Hugglemonster
02:15 Calimero
02:30 Art Attack
02:50 Zou
03:05 Loopdidoo
03:20 Henry Hugglemonster
03:35 Calimero
03:50 Zou
04:05 Art Attack
04:30 The Hive
04:40 Loopdidoo
04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
05:10 Art Attack
05:35 Loopdidoo
05:50 Calimero

11:35 Gold Rush
12:25 Deadliest Catch
13:15 Sean Conway - Running Britain
14:05 How Do They Do It?
14:30 The Liquidator
14:55 The Liquidator
15:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
16:10 What On Earth?
17:00 Deadliest Catch
17:50 Fast N' Loud
18:40 Wheeler Dealers: Trading Up
19:30 How Do They Do It?
19:55 How Do They Do It?
20:20 What On Earth?
21:10 The Liquidator
21:35 The Liquidator
22:00 The Island With Bear Grylls
22:50 Bear Grylls: Mission Survive
23:40 Venom Hunters

Disney
XD

00:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA
07:00 Danger Mouse
07:25 Gravity Falls
07:50 The 7D
08:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
08:15 Counterfeit Cat
08:40 Supa Strikas
09:10 K.C. Undercover
09:35 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
10:00 Lab Rats
10:25 Lab Rats
10:50 Danger Mouse
11:20 Supa Strikas
11:45 Supa Strikas
12:10 Counterfeit Cat
12:35 Pair Of Kings
13:00 Pair Of Kings
13:30 Future-Worm!
13:55 Lab Rats Elite Force
14:20 Lab Rats Elite Force
14:45 Atomic Puppet
15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
15:15 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron
Revolution
15:40 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much
Everything
16:05 Lab Rats Elite Force
16:30 Disney Cookabout
16:55 Danger Mouse
17:25 K.C. Undercover
17:50 Future-Worm!
18:15 Gravity Falls
18:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
19:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
19:10 Supa Strikas
19:35 Supa Strikas
20:00 Atomic Puppet
20:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much
Everything
20:55 K.C. Undercover
21:20 Counterfeit Cat
21:45 Mighty Med
22:10 Pickle And Peanut
22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
22:45 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron
Revolution
23:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
23:35 Boyster

E
HD

00:00 El News
00:15 Rob & Chyna
01:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
01:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
02:50 Hollywood Cycle
03:50 LA Clippers Dance Squad
04:45 LA Clippers Dance Squad
05:40 LA Clippers Dance Squad
06:30 Celebrity Style Story
07:00 Courtney And Kim Take Miami
07:55 El News
08:10 Courtney And Kim Take Miami
09:10 El News
10:10 Courtney And Kim Take Miami
11:10 Courtney And Kim Take Miami
12:05 Courtney And Kim Take Miami
13:00 El News
13:15 Courtney And Kim Take Miami
14:10 Courtney And Kim Take Miami
15:05 Courtney And Kim Take Miami
16:00 El News
16:15 WAGs Miami
17:15 WAGs Miami
18:10 WAGs Miami
19:05 WAGs Miami
20:00 Bolched
20:30 Celebrity Style Story
21:00 Celebrity Style Story
21:30 Celebrity Style Story
22:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
23:30 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
Food Network HD

food
network

00:00 Restaurant Stakeout
01:00 Mystery Diners
01:30 Mystery Diners
02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
03:00 Man Fire Food

03:30 Man Fire Food
04:00 Chopped
05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
06:00 Barefoot Contessa
06:30 Barefoot Contessa
07:00 The Kitchen
08:00 The Pioneer Woman
08:30 The Pioneer Woman
09:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
09:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
10:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
10:30 Valerie's Home Cooking
11:00 The Kitchen
12:00 The Pioneer Woman
12:30 The Pioneer Woman
13:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
13:30 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
15:00 Chopped
16:00 The Kitchen
17:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
17:30 Valerie's Home Cooking
18:00 Chopped
19:00 Iron Chef America
20:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
20:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
21:00 Man Fire Food
21:30 Man Fire Food
22:00 Man v Food
22:30 Man v Food
23:00 Iron Chef America

itv
CHOICE

00:15 Coronation Street
00:40 Coronation Street
01:10 The Chase
02:00 Emmerdale
02:30 Coronation Street
03:00 Coronation Street
03:30 Come Dine With Me Couples
04:25 Endeavour
06:15 Safe House
07:10 Don't Tell The Bride
08:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
09:00 Endeavour
10:30 Callie-Anne Cooks Into The Wild
11:00 Safe House
11:55 Don't Tell The Bride
12:55 Come Dine With Me Couples
13:45 Emmerdale
14:15 Coronation Street
14:45 Coronation Street
15:10 Don't Tell The Bride
16:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
17:00 Murdoch Mysteries
17:55 Murdoch Mysteries
18:50 Safe House
19:45 Emmerdale
20:15 Coronation Street
20:45 Coronation Street
21:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
22:00 Murdoch Mysteries
22:55 Murdoch Mysteries
23:50 Emmerdale

H2
HD

00:00 Monster Quest
01:00 The Universe
02:00 Patton 360
03:00 Mud Men
04:00 America's Book Of Secrets
04:50 Ancient Aliens
05:40 Monster Quest
06:30 The Universe
07:20 Patton 360
08:10 The Universe
09:00 Mud Men
10:00 America's Book Of Secrets
11:00 Ancient Aliens
12:00 Monster Quest
13:00 The Universe
14:00 Patton 360
15:00 Mud Men
16:00 America's Book Of Secrets
17:00 Ancient Aliens
18:00 Monster Quest
19:00 The Universe
20:00 Patton 360
21:00 Mud Men
22:00 America's Book Of Secrets
23:00 Ancient Aliens

H
HD
HISTORY

00:30 American Pickers
01:20 Time Team
02:10 The Curse Of Oak Island
03:00 Hunting Hitler
03:50 Street Food Wars
04:15 American Pickers
05:05 Pawn Stars
05:30 Pawn Stars
06:00 Mountain Men
07:00 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
07:25 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
07:50 Shipping Wars
08:15 Shipping Wars
08:40 Counting Cars
09:05 Counting Cars
09:30 Pawn Stars
09:55 Pawn Stars
10:20 Storage Wars



PIXELS ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

10:45 Storage Wars
11:10 American Pickers
12:00 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The
Superstition...
12:50 Time Team
13:40 Swamp People
14:30 Ax Men
15:20 Mountain Men
16:10 Ice Road Truckers
17:00 Counting Cars
17:25 Counting Cars
17:50 Pawn Stars
18:15 Pawn Stars
18:40 Hunting Hitler
19:30 The Curse Of Oak Island
20:20 Ax Men
21:10 American Pickers
22:00 Mountain Men
22:50 Sean Bean On Waterloo
23:40 Swamp People

05:40 Expedition Wild
06:35 Game Of Lions
07:30 Savage Kingdom
08:25 Ultimate Animal Countdown
09:20 Expedition Wild
10:15 World's Deadliest
11:10 Monster Fish
12:05 Natural Born Monsters
13:00 When Sharks Attack
13:55 Crocodile King
14:50 Wild Russia
15:45 Animal Fight Club
16:40 Ultimate Animal Countdown
17:35 World's Deadliest
18:30 Monster Fish
19:25 Natural Born Monsters
20:20 Animal Fight Club
21:10 Ultimate Animal Countdown
22:00 World's Deadliest
22:50 Monster Fish
23:40 Natural Born Monsters

NAT GEO
people HD

00:20 Rustic Adventures Italy
00:45 Rustic Adventures Italy
01:10 Home Strange Home
02:00 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
02:25 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
02:50 Street Food Around The World
03:15 Street Food Around The World
03:40 Wineroads
04:05 Great Escapes
04:30 Miguel's Feasts
04:55 The Food Files
05:20 The Food Files
05:45 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
06:10 My Dubai
06:35 What's For Sale?
07:00 What's For Sale?
07:25 Food School
07:50 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
08:15 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
08:40 Street Food Around The World
09:05 Street Food Around The World
09:30 Wineroads
09:55 Great Escapes
10:20 Miguel's Feasts
10:45 The Food Files
11:10 The Food Files
11:35 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
12:00 My Dubai
12:25 What's For Sale?
12:50 What's For Sale?
13:15 Food School
13:40 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet
14:05 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
14:35 Street Food Around The World
15:00 Street Food Around The World
15:30 Wineroads
15:55 Great Escapes
16:25 Miguel's Feasts
16:50 The Food Files
17:20 Glamour Puds
17:45 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
18:15 Sara's Australia Unveiled
18:40 What's For Sale?
19:10 What's For Sale?
19:35 Food School
20:05 Great Escapes
20:30 Miguel's Feasts
21:00 The Food Files
21:25 Glamour Puds
21:50 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
22:15 Sara's Australia Unveiled
22:40 What's For Sale?
23:05 What's For Sale?
23:30 Food School
23:55 Food Lover's Guide To The Planet

NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
CHANNEL HD

00:20 Megacities
01:10 The Border
02:00 Highway Thru Hell
03:00 Dirty Rotten Survival
03:55 Continent 7: Antarctica
04:50 The Border
05:45 Born To Ride
06:40 Access 360 World Heritage
07:35 Live Free Or Die
08:30 Highway Thru Hell
09:25 Bad Trip
10:20 Born To Ride
11:15 Years Of Living Dangerously
12:10 Continent 7: Antarctica
13:05 Air Crash Investigation
14:00 Bad Trip
15:00 Highway Thru Hell
16:00 Live Free Or Die
17:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
18:00 Continent 7: Antarctica
19:00 Air Crash Investigation
20:00 Live Free Or Die
21:00 Years Of Living Dangerously
21:50 Continent 7: Antarctica
22:40 Air Crash Investigation
23:30 Live Free Or Die

NAT GEO
WILD HD

00:30 Hunting The Hammerhead
01:20 Swamp Lions
02:10 India's Lost Worlds
03:00 Game Of Lions
03:50 Savage Kingdom
04:45 Ultimate Animal Countdown

OSN MOVIES
DRAMA

00:00 The Snitch Cartel
02:00 Healing
04:00 Extracted
06:00 Big Eyes
08:00 Invasion Day
10:00 Don't Wake Mommy
12:00 Healing
14:00 The Reckoning
16:00 Before I Disappear
18:00 Don't Wake Mommy
20:00 Wildlife
22:00 Kajaki

OSN MOVIES HD

FAMILY

00:00 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
02:00 The Last Song
04:00 Get Santa
06:00 The Boxtrolls
08:00 Open Season: Scared Silly
10:00 The Amazing Wizard Of Paws
12:00 The Boxtrolls
14:00 My Girl
16:00 Santa's Little Helper
18:00 Emma's Chance
20:00 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
22:00 Little Women

OSN MOVIES HD

00:15 Focus
02:00 Tiger House
04:00 Paper Towns
06:00 Racing Hearts
08:00 A Birder's Guide To Everything
10:00 Point Break
12:00 In The Heart Of The Sea
14:15 Where Hope Grows
16:00 5 Fights Up
18:00 The Peanut Movie
20:00 The 5th Wave
22:00 Concussion

OSN MOVIES HD

COMEDY

01:15 Death At A Funeral
03:00 The Bad News Bears (2005)
05:00 10 Things I Hate About You
07:00 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
09:00 Pixels
11:00 10 Things I Hate About You
13:00 The Bad News Bears (2005)
15:00 The Beautician And The Beast
17:00 Pixels
19:00 Forces Of Nature
21:00 She's Funny That Way
23:00 A Million Ways To Die In The West

OSN MOVIES

FESTIVAL

00:30 Hustle And Flow
02:30 The Informant
04:30 Foreverland
06:30 Seabiscuit
08:30 Late Blooms
10:00 Foreverland
12:00 Finding Forrester
13:00 Jack Strong
15:30 Late Blooms
18:00 Days Of Heaven
21:30 The Benefactor
23:30 Farewell My Queen

OSN MOVIES HD

KIDS

00:30 The Three Dogateers
02:15 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure
04:00 The Boxcar Children
05:30 Blackie And Kanuto
07:00 Looney Tunes: Rabbit's Run
08:30 Marco Macaco
10:00 Memory Loss
11:45 The Three Dogateers
13:30 The Boxcar Children
15:15 Egon And Donci
17:00 Alpha Dogz: Pups United



FAST & FURIOUS 7 ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

05:10 Casualty
06:00 The Musketeers
07:00 Casualty
08:00 Casualty
08:55 Death In Paradise
09:50 Stella
10:35 The Musketeers
11:30 Casualty
12:30 Death In Paradise
13:25 Stella
14:20 The Musketeers
15:15 Casualty
16:15 Death In Paradise
17:10 Stella
18:05 The Musketeers
19:00 Doctors
19:30 Doctors
20:00 Being Elleen
20:30 Call The Midwife: Christmas
Special 2016
22:00 Sherlock
23:30 Ripper Street

crime
& investigation
network

00:00 Homicide Hunter
01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
02:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
03:00 When Life Means Life
04:00 Homicide Hunter
05:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
06:00 Killers: Behind The Myth
07:00 When Life Means Life
08:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
09:00 Evil Up Close
10:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
11:00 Homicide Hunter
12:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
13:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
14:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
15:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
16:00 Evil Up Close
17:00 The First 48
18:00 Homicide Hunter
19:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
20:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
21:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
22:00 The First 48
23:00 Evil Up Close

COMEDY
CENTRAL

00:05 Tosh.0
00:30 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
01:00 The Half Hour
01:25 South Park
01:50 South Park
02:15 Tosh.0
02:40 Inside Amy Schumer
03:05 South Park
03:30 South Park
04:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
04:25 Disorderly Conduct: Video On
Patrol
05:15 Key And Peele
05:40 Impractical Jokers
06:05 Ridiculousness
06:30 Tattoo Disasters
06:55 Tattoo Disasters
07:20 Catch A Contractor

10:30 Nextworld
11:20 Mythbusters
12:10 Storm Chasers
13:00 K9 Cops
13:50 Ultimate Survival
14:40 How It's Made
15:05 How It's Made
15:30 Storm Chasers
16:15 Mythbusters
17:00 Doki
17:20 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
17:45 Do You Know?
18:00 Guinness World Records
Smashed New Zealand
18:25 Guinness World Records
Smashed New Zealand
18:50 Guinness World Records
Smashed UK
19:40 Nextworld
20:30 How It's Made
20:55 How It's Made
21:20 Mythbusters
22:10 Australia Smashes Guinness
World Records
22:35 Guinness World Records
Smashed New Zealand
23:00 Guinness World Records
Smashed UK
23:50 What Happened Next?

Disney
CHANNEL
HD

00:00 Binny And The Ghost
00:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage
Witch
00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage
Witch
01:10 Hank Zipzer
01:35 Binny And The Ghost
02:00 Violetta
02:45 The Hive
02:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage
Witch
03:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage
Witch
03:40 Hank Zipzer
04:05 Binny And The Ghost
04:30 Violetta
05:15 The Hive
05:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage
Witch
05:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage
Witch
06:10 Hank Zipzer
06:35 Binny And The Ghost
07:00 Violetta
07:45 The Hive
07:50 Mouk
08:00 Jessie
08:25 Jessie
08:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And
Cat Noir
09:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
09:20 Elena Of Avalor
09:45 Bunk'd
10:10 Gravity Falls
10:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
11:00 Wizards Of Waverly Place
11:25 A.N.T. Farm
11:50 A.N.T. Farm

Discovery
CHANNEL
HD

04:40 Fast N' Loud
05:30 The Liquidator
06:00 How Do They Do It?
06:30 How Do They Do It?
07:00 Deadliest Catch
08:40 Fast N' Loud
09:30 What On Earth?
10:20 The Liquidator
10:45 How Do They Do It?
11:10 How Do They Do It?

Kuwait Times

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017



Kuwait
CINEMA

SHARQIA-1		A MONSTER CALLS		7:15 PM		AVENUES-1		
MOANA	11:45 AM	A MONSTER CALLS		9:30 PM		WARRIOR'S GATE		12:30 PM
MOANA	2:00 PM	A MONSTER CALLS		11:45 PM		WARRIOR'S GATE		3:00 PM
MOANA	4:15 PM					WARRIOR'S GATE		5:30 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	6:30 PM	FANAR-1				WARRIOR'S GATE		7:45 PM
THE GREAT WALL	9:45 PM	THE GREAT WALL		11:30 AM		WARRIOR'S GATE		10:15 PM
KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	3:30 PM	THE GREAT WALL		2:00 PM		WARRIOR'S GATE		12:30 AM
GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu	6:30 PM	SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA		4:15 PM		KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu		7:30 PM
KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	9:30 PM	THE GREAT WALL		6:00 PM		KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu		10:30 PM
THE GREAT WALL	12:15 AM	ASSASSIN'S CREED		8:15 PM		WARRIOR'S GATE		1:15 AM
		THE GREAT WALL		10:45 PM				
SHARQIA-2		KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu		3:30 PM		AVENUES-2		
A MONSTER CALLS	12:45 PM	GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu		6:30 PM		MOANA -3D- 4DX		1:15 PM
A MONSTER CALLS	3:00 PM	KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu		9:30 PM		MOANA -3D- 4DX		3:45 PM
GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu	4:00 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED		1:00 AM		MOANA -3D- 4DX		6:00 PM
A MONSTER CALLS	5:15 PM					THE GREAT WALL -3D- 4DX		8:15 PM
A MONSTER CALLS	7:30 PM	FANAR-2				THE GREAT WALL -3D- 4DX		10:30 PM
THE GREAT WALL	7:30 PM	PATRIOTS DAY		1:30 PM		ASSASSIN'S CREED -3D- 4DX		12:45 AM
A MONSTER CALLS	9:45 PM	MOANA		4:15 PM				
A MONSTER CALLS	12:05 AM	BAIRAVAA - Tamil		6:30 PM		AVENUES-3		
		PATRIOTS DAY		9:45 PM		THE GREAT WALL		1:30 PM
		PATRIOTS DAY		12:30 AM		THE GREAT WALL		4:15 PM
SHARQIA-3						THE GREAT WALL		7:00 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	1:15 PM	FANAR-3				THE GREAT WALL		9:45 PM
MOANA	1:45 PM	SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA		11:45 AM		GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu		1:30 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	4:00 PM	SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA		1:45 PM		GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu		4:15 PM
MOANA	4:30 PM	DANGAL -Hindi		3:30 PM		GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu		7:00 PM
THE GREAT WALL	6:45 PM	GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu		3:45 PM		GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu		9:45 PM
A MONSTER CALLS	6:45 PM	DANGAL -Hindi		6:45 PM		THE GREAT WALL		12:30 AM
PATRIOTS DAY	9:00 PM	NO THU+FRI+MON						
PATRIOTS DAY	11:45 PM	KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu		7:00 PM		AVENUES-4		
		DANGAL -Hindi		10:00 PM		A MONSTER CALLS		12:15 PM
MUHALAB-1		THE GREAT WALL		1:15 AM		A MONSTER CALLS		2:30 PM
THE GREAT WALL	1:00 PM					A MONSTER CALLS		4:45 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	3:45 PM	MARINA-1				Special Show" LEVEL UP"		4:45 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	7:00 PM	THE GREAT WALL		1:15 PM		DANGAL -Hindi		7:00 PM
THE GREAT WALL	10:15 PM	MOANA		3:30 PM		A MONSTER CALLS		10:15 PM
THE GREAT WALL	1:30 PM	MOANA		5:45 PM		A MONSTER CALLS		12:30 AM
KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	4:00 PM	THE GREAT WALL		8:00 PM				
KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	7:00 PM	THE GREAT WALL		10:15 PM		A MONSTER CALLS-CINESCAPE 11- 2D		5:00 PM
GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu	10:00 PM	THE GREAT WALL		12:30 AM		A MONSTER CALLS-CINESCAPE 11- 2D		7:15 PM
THU+FRI+MON						THE GREAT WALL-CINESCAPE 11- 3D		9:30 PM
THE GREAT WALL	12:45 AM					A MONSTER CALLS-CINESCAPE 11- 2D		11:45 PM
MUHALAB-2		MARINA-2						
PATRIOTS DAY	11:30 AM	A MONSTER CALLS		12:15 PM		360°- 1		
GAUTAMIPUTRA SATAKARNI -Telugu	2:00 PM	A MONSTER CALLS		2:45 PM		PATRIOTS DAY		1:30 PM
FRIMOANA	2:15 PM	A MONSTER CALLS		5:00 PM		PATRIOTS DAY		4:15 PM
MOANA	4:45 PM	A MONSTER CALLS		7:15 PM		PATRIOTS DAY		7:00 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	7:00 PM	A MONSTER CALLS		9:30 PM		PATRIOTS DAY		9:45 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	9:45 PM			11:45 PM		PATRIOTS DAY		12:30 AM
PATRIOTS DAY	12:30 AM	MARINA-3						
MUHALAB-3		PATRIOTS DAY		1:00 PM		360°- 2		
A MONSTER CALLS	12:15 PM	ASSASSIN'S CREED		1:30 PM		WARRIOR'S GATE		11:30 AM
KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	1:45 PM	PATRIOTS DAY		3:45 PM		DANGAL -Hindi		1:45 PM
A MONSTER CALLS	2:30 PM	PATRIOTS DAY		6:30 PM		DANGAL -Hindi		5:00 PM
A MONSTER CALLS	4:45 PM	PATRIOTS DAY		9:15 PM		DANGAL -Hindi		8:15 PM
		PATRIOTS DAY		12:05 AM		DANGAL -Hindi		11:30 PM

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Mohammad Salim S/o Azizul Haque, Passport No F2525309, Civil ID No 272020116835, has changed my name to Mohammad Aslam hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5257)

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation
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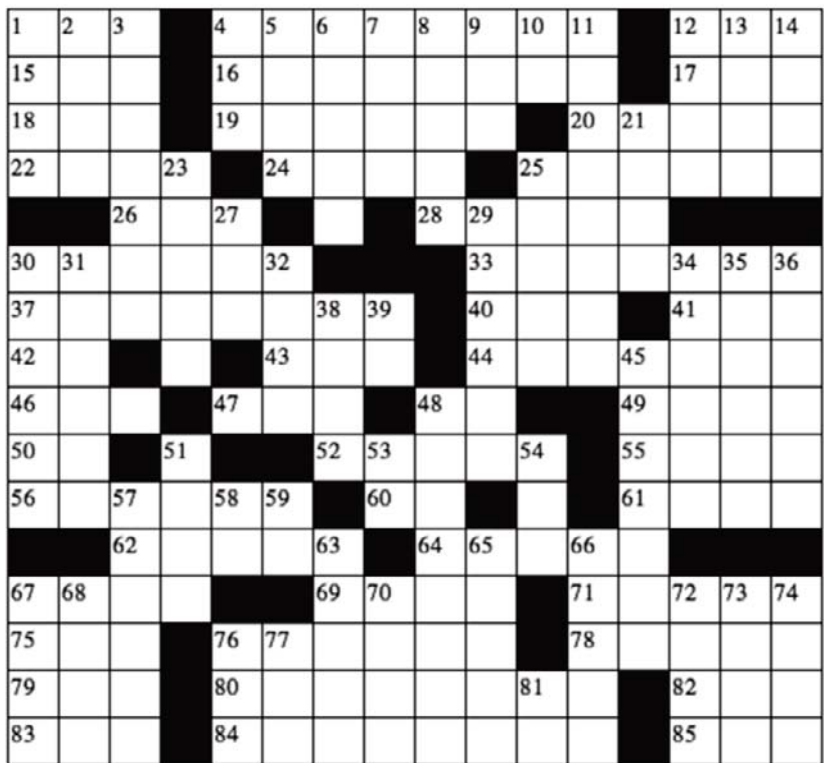
Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 17/1/2017				Departure Flights on Tuesday 17/1/2017				Arrival Flights on Tuesday 17/1/2017				Departure Flights on Tuesday 17/1/2017			
Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	KAC	788	Jeddah	13:45	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	KAC	792	Madinah	13:50	Airlines	Flt	Route	Time	FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20	QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	AIC	976	Goa/Chennai	00:05	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30	ETD	920	Abu Dhabi	00:45	JZR	324	Al Najaf	14:25
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KAC	692	Muscat	14:30	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:50	BON	102	Sarajevo	14:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	MSC	406	Sohag	01:00	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
MSC	411	Asyut	01:00	KAC	542	Cairo	14:45	BBC	144	Chittagong/Dhaka	01:30	KAC	561	Amman	15:00
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	KAC	672	Dubai	14:50	KLM	411	Amsterdam	01:35	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
KAC	102	London	01:25	KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55	MSC	412	Asyut	01:55	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:15
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	618	Doha	15:00	KAC	417	Manila	02:00	PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	15:20
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:25	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	KAC	286	Dhaka	15:20	THY	773	Istanbul	02:25	KAC	513	Tehran	15:25
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:55	QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:35	KAC	777	Riyadh	16:00
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45	KAC	745	Dammam	16:00
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	JZR	535	Cairo	16:10	KKK	6505	Istanbul	03:55	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	FDB	051	Dubai	16:25	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55	KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
RJA	644	Amman	03:05	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	RJA	640	Amman	16:55	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	CLX	7785	Doha	17:00	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	KAC	118	New York	17:00	KAC	167	Paris	04:25	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
KAC	358	Kochi	03:30	SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	QTR	1077	Doha	04:40	FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
KAC	206	Islamabad	03:45	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00	KAC	615	Bahrain	17:35
KAC	1544	Cairo	03:55	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45	QTR	1087	Doha	05:50	KAC	343	Chennai	17:40
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	325	Al Najaf	17:50	JZR	560	Sohag	06:05	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	NIA	251	Alexandria	17:55	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30	UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
THY	6376	Istanbul	05:05	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	06:35	JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
JZR	529	Asyut	05:15	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10	KAC	153	Istanbul	06:50	RJA	641	Amman	17:

CROSSWORD 1493



ACROSS

- 1. (British) A waterproof raincoat made of rubberized fabric.
- 4. An ancient branch of the Semitic languages.
- 12. 1,000,000,000 periods per second.
- 15. An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- 16. Small genus of North American herbs having mostly basal leaves and slender racemes of delicate white flowers.
- 17. An affirmative.
- 18. A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- 19. A membrane (one of 3) that envelops the brain and spinal cord.
- 20. Of or relating to or characteristic of Cuba or the people of Cuba.
- 22. In a murderous frenzy as if possessed by a demon.
- 24. A long depression in the surface of the land that usually contains a river.
- 26. A master's degree in education.
- 28. Dried out by heat or excessive exposure to sunlight.
- 30. A midnight meeting of witches to practice witchcraft and sorcery.
- 33. Genus of low-growing mat-forming New Zealand plants.
- 37. Sedative-hypnotic drug (trade name Quaalude) that is a drug of abuse.
- 40. (computer science) The part of a computer (a microprocessor chip) that does most of the data processing.
- 41. A cruel and brutal fellow.
- 42. A monarchy in northwestern Europe occupying most of the British Isles.
- 43. The cry made by sheep.
- 44. A simple protein containing mainly basic amino acids.
- 46. Fermented alcoholic beverage similar to but heavier than beer.
- 47. A light touch or stroke.
- 49. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
- 50. A state in New England.
- 52. Dwell (archaic).
- 55. Not final or absolute.
- 56. A drug (trade names Atarax and Vistaril) used as a tranquilizer to treat anxiety and motion sickness.
- 60. A highly unstable radioactive element (the heaviest of the halogen series).
- 61. (Greek mythology) Goddess of the earth and mother of Cronus and the Titans in ancient mythology.
- 62. An indehiscent fruit derived from a single ovary having one or many seeds within a fleshy wall or pericarp.
- 64. Measuring instrument in which the echo of a pulse of microwave radiation is used to detect and locate distant objects.
- 67. Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- 69. The complete duration of something.
- 71. The capital and largest city of Bangladesh.
- 75. Someone who is morally reprehensible.
- 78. Affect with wonder.
- 79. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- 80. Of or relating to the former British colony of Georgia.
- 82. The United Nations agency concerned with the international organization of food and agriculture.
- 83. The habitation of wild animals.
- 84. Bulldog ants.
- 85. Bulky grayish-brown eagle with a short wedge-shaped white tail.

DOWN

- 1. Any of various minerals consisting of hydrous silicates of aluminum or potassium etc. that crystallize in forms that allow perfect cleavage into very thin leaves.
- 2. (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- 3. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
- 4. A unit of pressure.
- 5. Capital and largest city of the Ukraine.
- 6. Valuable fiber plant of East Indies now widespread in cultivation.
- 7. Fleshy and usually brightly colored cover of some seeds that develops from the ovule stalk and partially or entirely envelops the seed.
- 8. The brightest star in Cygnus.
- 9. Being nine more than fifty.
- 10. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- 11. Consisting of or resembling mother-of-pearl.
- 12. Shift from one side of the ship to the other.
- 13. Perceive sound.
- 14. (informal terms) "gave me a cockamamie reason for not going".
- 21. Relating to the Urdu language.
- 23. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- 25. Similar to the giraffe but smaller with much shorter neck and stripe on the legs.
- 27. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
- 29. Constructed with or in the form of an arch or arches.
- 31. Any of several small auks of north Pacific coasts.
- 32. The lowest brass wind instrument.
- 34. Evergreen or deciduous shrubs or small trees of United States to Antilles and eastern Asia to the Himalaya.
- 35. Convert into ions.
- 36. Any of various deciduous or evergreen ornamental shrubs of the genus Abelia having opposite simple leaves and cymes of small white or pink or purplish flowers.
- 38. A Chadik language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- 39. (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- 45. A Chinese puzzle consisting of a square divided into seven pieces that must be arranged to match particular designs.
- 48. More aromatic and acidic than oranges.
- 51. Decapod having eyes on short stalks and a broad flattened carapace with a small abdomen folded under the thorax and pincers.
- 53. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
- 54. Late time of life.
- 57. A port city in southwestern Iran.
- 58. A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- 59. Being ten more than eighty.
- 63. British politician (born in the United States) who was the first woman to sit in the British House of Commons (1879-1964).
- 65. Ludicrously odd.
- 66. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
- 68. An enclosure made of wire or metal bars in which birds or animals are kept.
- 70. A city in the European part of Russia.
- 72. A small restaurant where drinks and snacks are sold.
- 73. A male monarch or emperor (especially of Russia prior to 1917).
- 74. (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
- 76. One of the five major classes of immunoglobulins.
- 77. French marshal in the Napoleonic Wars (1769-1815).
- 81. The branch of computer science that deal with writing computer programs that can solve problems creatively.

Yesterday's Solution

C	R	O		C	L	A	M	B	A	K	E		G	A	P
H	A	T		H	E	R	A	L	D	I	C		O	L	A
A	N	T		A	R	A	N	E	A		C	A	N	I	D
L	E	A	R	N		W	E	A	N			N	A	B	U
K	E	R	U	G	M	A		C	A	M	B	O	D	I	A
			L	E	A	K		H		A	L	A			
A	L	E	E		F		E			T	A		L	A	B
D	I	P		K	A	M	I	K	A	Z	E		E	L	L
A	N	O	V	A		A	R	E	N	A		I	N	G	A
M	A	C	A	W		S	A	B	A	H		X	I	A	N
S	C	H	N	A	P	S		A	S		B	O	N	E	D
			A	K	E	E		B		R	A	D			
B	A	G	D	A	D		X		G	I	R	I	A	M	A
A	R	E	A		D	A	L	L	A	S		D	E	A	L
S	C	A	T		L	A	V	A	G	E		A	R	I	A
S	A	N	E		E	R	I	V	A	N		E	Y	A	S

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You will begin to find yourself digging for answers today that you never knew you really cared about before. It could be that you are feeling more protective or proud of your professional status and are seeking to maintain or improve your position. Avoid mental power struggles with others. Encouragement from others and the interchange of ideas spark your energy and help to create or teach an upbeat frame of mind. Remember that the mind can achieve whatever it can conceive. This could be an inner joy, balance, laughter, letting go, forgiveness, etc. You will see how important it is to integrate positive elements into your life. Read some self-help books and learn some lighthearted and fun one-liner sayings that will help you with this integration.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You are ready to understand what comes next in your life and you seem eager to get down to business. Conflicts at work may have you wishing everyone would become better organized. The immediate authority figure is easy for you to understand and work with but there are many interruptions that cause confusing messages from higher-ups. You do well to focus on the projects at your desk and complete your tasks by quitting time. A friend, who always asks for help, now wants to help you this afternoon. You and your friends will be able to visit and enjoy activities together. There are comparisons of jobs, family, children, homes and health-healthy competitions are fun. You enjoy the opportunity to interact with your friends.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is a chance to understand those around you as you work to become as patient as possible. Some people just need a boost in the right direction and that may be the case today. Lunch with a co-worker may have you talking over past trips that you have each taken and the highlights you enjoyed. There is a feeling of support and camaraderie that you did not know could exist in the workplace today. Helping a friend this afternoon may give you some productive ideas for yourself. You may find yourself talkative with young people this evening. Your laughter is encouraging to all who are around you. Celebrations are easy to find, if one is looking. Respect your limits and separate yourself from these young people in time to cuddle with your loved one.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

On the business front, you may have a great deal of trouble trying to come in first in some business competition, especially if there is a showy, high-energy, fast-talking type of individual. However, when one observes your enduring patience and the way you follow through with your responsibilities, you have them all beat. You are determined to see some project through to the end and you will not let others flatten your ambition. A dream or wish you had some time ago may now come true. Your cheerfulness is appreciated. You are able to boost someone's low spirit today. If you are willing to relax and just let life flow to you as it will, you could be in for excellent opportunities. You will probably spend a romantic evening with someone special.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

There is a false sense of urgency today. You may feel that you want to dive into situations that are over your head-money matters or arguments may occur. Then you might wonder what got you into the hot water in the first place. Pay attention to those feelings that have you needing to jump to the call so quickly. You can dash to the needs of others if you want, but there are many false calls-listen first. There are extra work opportunities as well as travel opportunities just now. There could also be some unexpected expenses as well. It may be wise to just say no to any extracurricular activities. Other opportunities will come up later to achieve, expand your knowledge and move upward. Begin to think about a focus for your energies.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may want to reevaluate your thinking now, particularly with regard to some changes you want to present to higher-ups. Your inspiration and imagination will guide you. Your superiors are watching the way that you handle yourself. Others may disagree with your thinking-careful. Believe in yourself so that others will believe in you too. Your job can bring you a great deal of satisfaction so be wise: pace yourself, be a good sport and know that your opportunity will come. Your wit is only one of the necessary elements to your peacefulness. You may want to take someone along on a shopping trip this afternoon. Your choices in coordinating colors and styles are unique and the input from a friend can be encouraging. It is time for something new.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

If a new business idea is going to work, it may take some planning. You could receive an award and then have it taken back because of some technicality. You will find ways to get around most difficulties today. The biggest lesson this month is in learning how to move forward and allow for delays, distractions, cancellations, etc. You are not slowed by much and you should not stop to make a point. Instead, express your ideas through your work and the way in which you work. Things may seem almost magical in the way they work out in your favor. A young person may be an irritating factor this afternoon. You may have to stop and give all your attention over to just listening. You will find very little else is needed. The time you spend in listening is appreciated.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a good time for clear deliberation and solving any problem. You are in a serious frame of mind and find yourself dealing with matters of much concern and responsibility. Your viewpoint may take some adjusting today. Any project that has seemed slow will begin to improve now. This is a time you can really throw yourself into your work. The academically inclined should do well just now-there is also a boost in travel prospects. Community activities this afternoon may fit into your schedule. You have a need to be respected and you will achieve this as you organize people and encourage a group in their efforts to effect some sort of positive change in the community. There are some exciting and intelligent new friends coming your way.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

You may feel blocked as others could make it difficult for you to express yourself. Bide your time and amazing things happen. A problem is solved, a phone call is supportive and an afternoon snack is yummy, etc. As you look for ways to help improve a situation... You succeed. This could be as simple as cleaning away old files or helping to organize a meeting. There is a lot of energy available for disciplined work. Find the time to have a side interest such as a second job, volunteer work, charity, hobby, etc. Use your creativeness! You will benefit from relaxing in the evenings and enjoying the family. This evening you find yourself feeling more private and in a stay-at-home mood. You might experiment with flavoring popcorn.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A mystery in the workplace is not something in which you should become involved. Time will disclose the answer and you will be pleased you never did anything but help take on a little more work. Curiosity and just supposing is the best hint that you need to move forward with your own projects. Although you might like to hurry to get your work done, caution should rule this day. This is also a good time to take stock of your work and make any changes that you feel necessary. A shopping expedition is in order soon; however, you may want to wait just a few more days before spending the money since there are birthday presents that have yet to be opened. Your compassion is strong for helping others but this evening is just for you. Happy birthday!



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Sympathy and understanding are important qualities that take on greater meaning now. It's wisdom, not knowledge, that counts most. Coming to understand how you got where you are today may give you an attitude of appreciation. Do not give up; your goals are within your reach. Be careful that you do not overspend or indulge too much just now. This is a great time to be with others and to work together. You may be sought after as just the person for a particular job. Your management and directional abilities are in high focus and although you may prefer to socialize, the energies are not right for small talk. This is a time when you can expect a little boost, some extra support or recognition from those around you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You have an assistant or helper at work that will go the extra mile for you. Ask plenty of questions in order to understand something that may have been going on without your knowledge. You may be encouraged to expand your thinking with regard to education. Perhaps it is time to teach or take a class just to test the waters. A friend or other close associate may be ready to end his or her involvement. Perhaps your intuition is working for you and changes were not a big surprise. You will not have to worry for long because you make friends easily. Your romantic appeal is strong today and if you are looking, you could find what you are looking for soon. Weather conditions enthrall you, so look hard; you might see some interesting patterns.

WORD SEARCH

Farm

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a common farm animal.

H A Y E S E E H C B A L E R
E T U R K E Y S H O R S E L
N B E S O W I N G S E E D I
R U C C F E N C E O E W S V
E T F H U W H S W N D E R E
M T I E H D U G A O L L E S
R E C E R O O V U B L L T T
A R A N H T R V A O H P S O
F T T B I E I T P A R H O C
C D A R H A S L R P A T O K
S R A T A L R V I R W G R L
N E A I I C E G R Z O O K I
E E E O R S T O M A E R C M
W N S D T Y W O T S N R O C
E R U T S A P S R W E E D S

BALER
BARN
BUTTER
CAT
CHEESE
CORN
COW
CREAM
DAIRY
DOG

FARMER
FENCE
FERTILIZER
GOATS
GRAIN
HARROW
HARVEST
HAY
HEN
HORSE

HOUSE
LIVESTOCK
MILK
PASTURE
PIG
PLOW
PRODUCE
ROOSTER
SEEDS
SOIL

SOWING SEED
STABLES
TRACTOR
TROUGH
TURKEYS
WEATHERVANE
WEEDS
WELL
WHEAT

Fantasy World 2

G E N T L E H I L L S M O U N T A I N S
N V E O E O S E X A S L G D I O
I I L Y R M N T N T R O L L H
K L L L E T M R I S E P O E S T
M I L H A I O O A H E R D I W H
S I C E Z B C P E H T S I W H O R
G R A A D L A L T I R C M E D N
A O R O L S D A F I D R C M E D N
I D E O U S T C T M O E A N A E
W R O L M A P H A S L S G R N P
A A D A E D U A T K Y S I O F T
G O N H E T W R L C A R C C I R R
O O A M A R K E T A W R O I A U
N N W S W O R R A L C O D N W O C
K N I G H T I D R A B R E B U D C
H I T A R W O E G A L L I V B E

ARCHERS
ARMOR
ARROWS
AXE
BARD
BLACKSMITH
BOW
COURT
CRYSTAL BALL
DRAGON

DWARF
ELF
EVIL
FAERIES
GOBLET
GOLD COINS
GOOD
HEADSMAN
KING
KNIGHT

LORDS
MAGIC
MARKET
MINOTAUR
MOUNTAINS
PALACE
POTION
PRINCESS
SILVER

SPELL
SWORD
THRONE
TROLL
UNICORN
VILLAGE
WAGON
WAND
WIZARD
WRAITH

The hidden message is: THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE

Daily SuDoku

	4	7		5	1		3	
8		6				5	4	1
	2		4	3			7	
			8				2	7
1	8		2	4	7		5	6
2	7				6			
	1			6	4		8	
4	9	2				7		5
	5		9	7		4	1	

Yesterday's Solution

2	1	4	9	6	5	8	3	7
8	7	9	3	4	2	5	1	6
3	5	6	1	7	8	4	2	9
7	4	1	8	2	3	6	9	5
6	2	5	4	9	7	1	8	3
9	3	8	6	5	1	7	4	2
5	6	3	2	1	4	9	7	8
4	8	7	5	3	9	2	6	1
1	9	2	7	8	6	3	5	4

For labor-related inquiries
and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khalidiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khalidiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlis Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

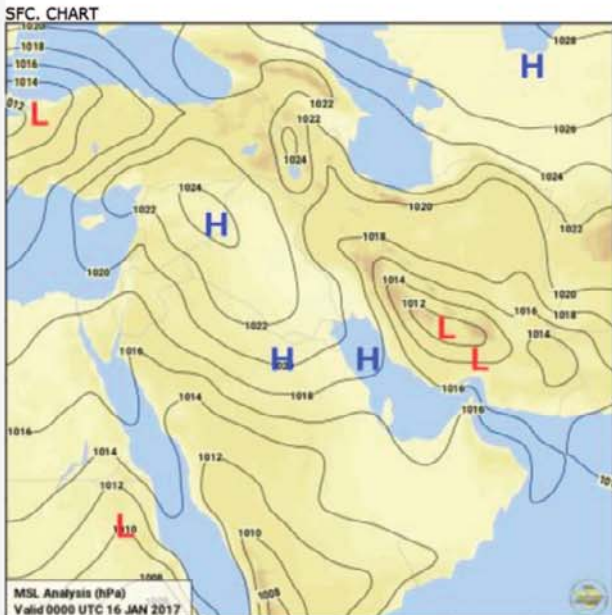


Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 16/01/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 19 °C

By Day : Sunny with light to moderate northerly to north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 35 km/h
By Night : Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 15 - 35 km/h



Four-Day Forecast

	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Expected Weather	Mostly sunny	partly cloudy to cloudy+ light rain	partly cloudy	sunny
Min Temp °C	09	09	10	11
Max Temp °C	19	19	20	21
Wind Direction	north westerly	variable	variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly	north westerly to light variable
Wind Speed km/h	12 - 32	08 - 22	08 - 28	06 - 26

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	13	18
KUWAIT AIRPORT	12	19
ABDALY	06	20
BUBYAN	10	15
JAHR	11	20
FAILAKA ISLAND	12	17
SALMIYAH	13	18
AHMADI	14	18
JAL ALIYAH	06	19
QAROH ISLAND	17	19
UMM AL-MARADEM	17	20
NUWAISIB	15	19
WAFRA	12	20
MANAGISH	08	21
SALMY	06	19
MUTRIBA	06	21

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	20
Min Temp (°C)	04
Max Rel Hum (%)	78
Min Rel Hum (%)	26
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	36 SE
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

	Sunrise	06:43
	Sunset	17:12

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:20
Sunrise	06:43
Zuhr	11:58
Asr	14:53
Sunset	17:12
Isha	18:33

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaezem	23926920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadad	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Refae	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
Dr Adrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	
Dr. Farida Al-Habib MD, PH.D, FACC	2611555-2622555
Inaya German Medical Center Te: 2575077 Fax: 25723123	

Psychologists
/Psychotherapists

Soor Center
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Fax: 2290 1688

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www.soorcenter.com

Kaizen center
25716707

Noor Clinic
23845955

William Schuilenberg, RPC 2290-1677
Zaina Al Zabin, M.Sc. 2290-1677



In this file photo, stained glass adorns a wall at Caffe Lena in Saratoga Springs as its 50th anniversary approached. — AP photos



Catie Curtis performs at Caffe Lena in Saratoga Springs as its 50th anniversary approached.



In this 1962 file photo provided by the Joe Alper Photo Collection LLC, Bob Dylan, left, his girlfriend Suze Rotollo center and Lena Spencer gather around a table at her coffeehouse, Caffe Lena in Saratoga Springs, NY.



In this 1960 file photo provided by the Joe Alper Photo Collection LLC, patrons listen to a performance by folksinger and songwriter, Jackie Washington (aka Jack Landron) at Caffe Lena, in the year it was opened by Lena Spencer, in Saratoga Springs, NY.



In this 1960 file photo provided by the Joe Alper Photo Collection LLC, patrons gather inside Caffe Lena, opened by Lena Spencer in 1960, in Saratoga Springs, NY.



In this file photo provided by Joseph Deuel, the newly-renovated Caffe Lena is pictured in Saratoga Springs, NY, the day before its doors reopened after a six-month renovation.

Repaired and ready: Venue where a young Dylan played reopens

Bob Dylan would surely still recognize the low-ceilinged room in Caffe Lena where he played a couple of gigs almost 60 years ago. But just about everything else about a venue that bills itself as the nation's oldest continuously operating coffeehouse has undergone some major upgrades as part of a \$2 million renovation project bankrolled in part by folk music performers themselves.

Dylan performed twice there early in his career, when the young singer born in Minnesota as Robert Zimmerman was just making his way onto New York City's folk scene. The same brown wooden shutters bracket the windows and the same exposed brick wall provides background for the corner where he sang and played acoustic guitar during weekend performances in 1961 and '62.

But the old plank floor worn smooth by countless tapping feet is gone, replaced by a new hardwood version. The narrow staircase leading to the second-floor venue also has been replaced, as has the small stage, sound system, kitchen and restrooms. Seating has been boosted from 85 to about 105, and wine and beer are being served for the first time in the venerable coffeehouse's history. Yet when the newly installed lighting dims and the night's performer hits the first chord, Caffe Lena still has the intimate setting that generations of musicians and folk music fans have come to revere.

"It's a legendary place," said Jeff Place, archivist for Smithsonian Folkways, the nonprofit record label of the Smithsonian Institution. "For singer-songwriters, playing there is like playing Carnegie Hall for classical musicians." Caffe Lena recently reopened after being closed for six months for the renovations. Performances were moved to other nearby venues in Saratoga Springs, the famous resort and thoroughbred racing town 165 miles north of New York City. Under a philanthropic partnership with a local developer, the organization turned over its adjacent small parking lot to the builder, who's constructing a four-story building that will house condos and retail businesses.

In return, Bonacio Construction has put \$500,000 into the renovation project, including installing an elevator that will make Caffe Lena fully accessible to the disabled. A campaign has raised another \$1 million. Caffe Lena is still raising the final \$500,000 for the upgrades, scheduled to be completed this spring. Among the folk musicians contributing funds: Arlo Guthrie, honorary chairman of the coffeehouse's fundraising campaign. Locally and regionally known



In this file photo provided by Joseph Deuel, the newly-renovated Caffe Lena is pictured in Saratoga Springs, NY, the day before its doors reopened after a six-month renovation.

musicians have also pitched in, while other performers - including Peter Yarrow and Noel Paul Stookey of Peter, Paul and Mary fame - contributed vocals for a fundraising video.

Rising rent

Sarah Craig, the coffeehouse's executive director, said Dylan has been approached for a contribution but "has not yet committed specific support." Caffe Lena first opened in May 1960, by Lena Spencer and her husband, Bill, bohemian artists from Massachusetts. He left not long after Dylan's performances, but Lena stayed on, gradually attracting a dedicated following and booking an ever-growing roster of folk music stalwarts, including Dave Van Ronk, Joan Baez, Don McClean and Guthrie. The lean years tended to outnumber the flush ones, and by the late 1980s, Spencer was living in a back room at

her coffeehouse, displaced from her Saratoga apartment by rising rent. She died at age 66 in 1989. Volunteers and later the nonprofit group formed in the 1990s have kept her place open for new generations of folk music fans.

The renovations were long overdue in a 120-year-old building that wasn't up to code, Craig said. "Now we have a place in line with our reputation for the type of music that happens here," she said. For George Ward, a folk musician and longtime Caffe Lena performer and supporter, the face-lift hasn't erased the venue's downhome vibe. "It had to change just in order to be safe and comfortable," said Ward, 78. "It so far it feels really good." — AP

Broadway star Jennifer Holliday pulls out of Trump concert

Facing fan backlash, Broadway star Jennifer Holliday has backed out of performing at Donald Trump's inauguration concert, the singer said in an open letter posted Saturday. Trump's inaugural committee had announced Friday that Holliday, a Tony award winner who is black, would perform in a concert at the Lincoln Memorial on the eve of the tycoon's inauguration, joining a lineup featuring country stars Toby Keith and Lee Greenwood. But disgruntled fans-including many from the LGBT community-took to Twitter to denounce Holliday's slated participation.



This file photo shows singer Jennifer Holliday performs onstage during Fox's "American Idol 2012" results show at Nokia Theatre LA Live on May 23, 2012 in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

"#JenniferHolliday singing at Trump's inauguration is a betrayal of our diverse arts community," wrote one Twitter user. "Reconsider-it's not worth selling out!" The inauguration would have had a rare African American performer in Holliday, who has sung for Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton and both Bush presidents. She said that in accepting the invitation to sing for Trump she was simply "keeping in my tradition of being a 'bipartisan songbird.'" But in her letter published by TheWrap entertainment news site, Holliday said she decided to pull out of the concert after reading an essay published by the Daily Beast titled "Jennifer Holliday will perform at Trump's inauguration, which is heartbreaking to gay fans."

"My only choice must now be to stand with the LGBT community and to state unequivocally that I WILL NOT PERFORM FOR THE WELCOME CONCERT OR FOR ANY OF THE INAUGURATION FESTIVITIES!" Holliday wrote. "I sincerely apologize for my lapse of judgment, for being uneducated on the issues that affect every American at this crucial time in history and for causing such dismay and heartbreak to my fans." Holliday said she was "deeply indebted" to the LGBT community, noting that its members were "mostly responsible for birthing my career." Holliday won a Tony Award in 1982 for the original Broadway musical "Dreamgirls," later turned into a movie with Beyonce and Jennifer Hudson.

The Trump team has struggled to recruit prominent artists for the looming inauguration, with the American arts and entertainment community broadly backing his opponent Democrat Hillary Clinton. The inauguration lineup pales in comparison to the star power amassed by Barack Obama. A similar inauguration-eve concert at the Lincoln Memorial in 2009 drew Beyonce, Shakira, Bruce Springsteen, U2 and Stevie Wonder, as well as country superstar Garth Brooks. — AFP

'Hidden Figures' soars in second week atop box office

"Hidden Figures," a story about three black women mathematicians who helped NASA put the first men in space, soared into its second week atop the box office, industry estimates for North America showed on Sunday. The Fox film, a biographical comedy-drama based on a book of the same name, stars Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer and Janelle Monae, whose characters must deal with segregation in the 1950s and 1960s workplace. It brought in \$20.5 million in the US and Canada this weekend, according to box office monitor Exhibitor Relations, and \$59.68 million since it premiered four weeks ago.

"La La Land," a nostalgic tribute to the Golden Age of Hollywood musicals that just took home eight Golden Globes, rocketed to the number two spot. It took in \$14.5 million (\$77.08 million overall). Universal's animated musical "Sing" was in third, with a \$13.8 million take over the weekend and an accumulated total of \$238.5 million. The

first stand-alone episode in the eight-film "Star Wars" series, "Rogue One" follows the mission of rebel alliance fighters trying to steal plans to the Empire's feared Death Star. The movie pulled in \$13.76 million over the weekend, according to box office monitor Exhibitor Relations, bringing its four-week total to \$502.29 million. In its first weekend out, "The Bye Bye Man" notched fifth place, taking in \$13.38 million. The horror flick is based on a chapter Robert Damon Schneck's book "The President's Vampire."

Rounding out the Top five are:

- "Patriot's Day" (\$12 million)
- "Monster Trucks" (\$10.5 million)
- "Sleepless" (\$8.47 million)
- "Underworld: Blood Wars" (\$5.8 million)
- "Passengers" (\$5.5 million) —AFP



This image released by Twentieth Century Fox shows Taraji P. Henson as Katherine Johnson, center, in a scene from "Hidden Figures." — AP

FASHION



Donald Trump and wife Melania Trump are seen around Lincoln Center during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York City. — AFP photos



Donald Trump and Melania Trump attend the 9th Annual "Dressed To Kilt" charity fashion show at Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City.



This file photo shows Melania Trump, wife of Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, arriving on stage on the first day of the Republican National Convention at the Quicken Loans Arena in Cleveland, Ohio.



Melania Trump is seen around Lincoln Center during Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in New York City.

First lady Melania and the political fashion police

She may be tall, slim and a former model, but incoming first lady Melania Trump faces a new kind of fashion police designers refusing to dress her because of her husband's politics. She has posed nude for GQ, modeled in Paris and graced the cover of Vogue, yet what Melania wears to the inaugural balls on Friday night could be the most important sartorial decision of her life. "It's hard to find a great dress for this inauguration," Donald Trump told The New York Times, trying to present the event as a society sell-out, though whether that is true remains to be seen.

From Mamie Eisenhower's pink peau de soie gown to Michelle Obama's white Jason Wu confection in 2009, inaugural gowns worn by America's first ladies have wound up in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Melania has high heels to fill. Not only is she the only first lady to come from the fashion world, she succeeds one of the most stylish and beloved first ladies of all. Obama seduced the fashion world with her deft mix of high street favorites and high fashion, championing young and minority designers, managing to look both relatable and effortlessly chic at the same time.

It remains unclear what path Melania will take. Years

ago, she said she would like to be a "traditional" first lady like Jackie Kennedy-famed for her timeless elegance and love of French as well as American fashion. But she comes into the role at a time when an unprecedented number of designers are saying she simply isn't their style or urging each other not to dress her because of her husband's insult-dishing, divisive campaign. Sophie Theallet was the first.

Incompatible

"The rhetoric of racism, sexism and xenophobia unleashed by her husband's presidential campaign are incompatible with the shared values we live by," Theallet announced last November. Emotions were raw. Much of the largely Democratic-leaning fashion industry backed Trump's opponent Hillary Clinton and poured money into her campaign. "Personally, I'd rather put my energy into helping out those who will be hurt by Trump and his supporters," Marc Jacobs told Women's Wear Daily. But top designers such as Carolina Herrera, Diane von Furstenberg and Tommy Hilfiger all said they would be honored to dress Melania.

Hilfiger, who has an office in Trump Tower, told

Women's Wear Daily that anyone should be "proud" to dress the new first lady and Trump's daughter Ivanka—who is also expected to take on a prominent role in Washington. But in some ways, the debate is irrelevant. Melania, known to shop online, can snap up any fashion piece she wants without asking permission. When she wore a Dolce & Gabbana black dress on New Year's Eve, the first Stefano Gabbana heard about it was when he stumbled across a picture online. He took to Instagram with pride, tapping out five hearts and a "thank you." Others say refusing to dress Melania stoops to the lowest denominator of the campaign. "Our role as part of the fashion industry is to promote beauty, inclusiveness, diversity," von Furstenberg has said.

Buy American

But what is Melania's style? Campaign and post-election appearances are rare, but she favors the sleek, figure-hugging and glossy look of a wealthy New York woman-manicured within an inch of her life but not particularly individual. She buys expensive and she buys European, perhaps hardly surprising for a Slovenian-born woman-Christian Dior for her wedding, but also Emilia Wickstead and a

\$2,200 Roksanda Ilincic dress on the campaign trail. Famously there was also a hot pink Gucci pussy-bow blouse at a presidential debate as her husband was under fire for lewd remarks about groping women.

But on election night, she shopped locally: glowing with pride in a one-shoulder Ralph Lauren white jumpsuit, bought off the rack. She's already under pressure to shrug off her European taste and, if not mix it up with cheaper outfits to appear more in touch, then become a poster girl for the country's huge fashion industry. "The first lady-elect should support American fashion as did her predecessors," Vera Wang told Women's Wear Daily. But she does have one powerful advocate in her corner: long-time friend and former Vogue director turned inauguration planner Stephanie Winston Wolkoff. "Don't underestimate (Melania) just because she is quiet and reserved," Wolkoff told luxury lifestyle publication DuJour before the election. "She has always said, when and if the time comes, she will step up." — AFP



Prada goes in search of the naive, Missoni bursts with color

This is the season of renewal, with new faces at some of Milan's top fashion brands. New creative directors made their debuts Sunday during the second day of Milan Fashion Week at Salvatore Ferragamo and Dirk Bikkembergs, days after Marni and Zegna set off in a new direction. Roberto Cavalli and Brioni, meanwhile, took a runway break this season as they worked out what their future creative directions would be after parting ways with their stylists. Here are some highlights of menswear previews for next fall and winter on Sunday, the second day of Milan Fashion Week.

In search of naivete

Miuccia Prada was in search of the naive for her new collection. She found herself in the 1970s, a world of leather and corduroy, oil landscape paintings and natural amulets. "That is what came out. I didn't want it, but it came out naturally," Prada said backstage, adding that the 1970s were "a very important moment for protests, for rights, for humanity." So the corduroy leisure suit with big pockets, the soft cashmere sweaters with fuzzy reproductions of landscapes, the furry shoes sticking out from the cuffed bell bottom pants and the hand-knit pullovers mimicking a stain glass window are all her expressions of normality. And the collection, in its simplicity, is her protest against excess, the modern need for everything to be big. The collection also featured womenswear, including leather jackets with stud detailing, slit leather walking skirts and brimmed corduroy caps.

Amulets of shells, stones or branches that Prada said she plucked from the woods herself accented the looks for

both men and women. Colors stayed in a 1970s design palette of brown, tans, rust and orange, breaking out for richly hued purple and blood-red furs. Bags included hard cases or oversized document holders in cow's skin.

Colorburst

Missoni is bursting with color for next season's collection, with layered looks to enliven any urban center. But if Angela Missoni had one specifically in mind, it is Tokyo - not for its adventurous youth counterculture or traditional silhouette, but its enduring craftsmanship. Much of the detailing of the collection shown Sunday in Milan was inspired by Japan, including the star-fish shaped metallic embroidery on knitwear inspired by Shibori designs. Patchwork overcoats employed the technique of kimono making. And boxy jackets recalled Japanese workwear.

Together, the urban nature of the collection cannot be denied. But taken by piece, there were many seafaring references, from thick duffel coats with robe fasteners, high-neck cable knit sweaters with matching caps, and bucket hats in the Missoni zigzag that had a sailor-geek vibe. Short scarves were tied around the neck. The hats, which also include a beret, were the result of one of Missoni's many collaborations, this one with the Parisian milliner Larose. The modus operandi was layering without regard to conventions of pattern and color. A sweater in a blur of green and yellow is worn over a neat blue-and-white striped shirt and orange, red and purple plaid trousers. "It is for sure a sport-lux. There is, overall, a comfortable silhouette. We can call it 'soft tailoring,'" Missoni said backstage.



Models present creations for fashion house Prada during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week. — AP/AFP photos



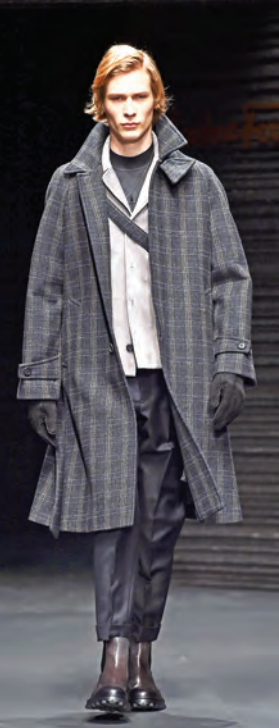
Models present creations for Plein Sport men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 collection, during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week.



Back to roots
He landed in America as a teen and thrust himself into the melting pot, where he had his first success. The story of a young Salvatore Ferragamo, who started out making shoes for Hollywood before returning to Italy to launch his fashion brand, inspired French designer Guillaume Meilland's debut collection as menswear design director. The clean looks followed Ferragamo's journey from a carefree youth to the more put-together sophistication of an experienced traveler.
Youthful touches included rough embroidery in contrasting kinetic lines on the backs of jackets or on shirts worn with tailored suits. The silhouette was boxy with square jackets over loose pants. "The embroidery translates the busy-ness of the street. The show is about Salvatore on the street, a young man on the street, and the allegory of the busy-ness is translated in the diversity of the boy's silhouettes," Meilland said. Boyish sweaters tucked into trousers, or hung out of the back of jackets, for a dash-about feel. Bulky knit mittens exuded hominess.
The collection is strong on the brand's trademark leather garments, featuring aviator jackets and biker jackets. Shoes included an American-style work boot with thick sole covered with rubber studs, alongside finer Italian footwear. "I

want to bring the idea of ease, of comfort, to menswear," Meilland said backstage. "I want to get rid of conformity."
Rumpled iconoclast
Marni has taken a rumpled, colorful turn. The new Marni man, as imagined by creative director Francesco Risso in his debut season, is something of a light-hearted vagabond. The brand's heritage fur appears in hats that have the appearance of colorful wigs, as square tufts on jacket sleeves, wisps on collars and finally, in their full glory, as fluffy overcoats. There is a geometry to the looks, reflected in the square cuts of the suits and the plaid and checks of the prints. Woolen suits have a rumpled, train-hopping feel. Tops project optical illusions, created from mismatched patches of striped fabric.
Sweaters feature naive 1970s graphics, tucked into high-waist, big-fitting corduroy trousers. Quilted trousers in pajama prints are paired with bomber jackets. The effect is that of an iconoclast, which seems influenced in some measure by Risso's last employer, Prada. The designer, who studied in Florence, New York and London, took over from the brand's creator, Consuelo Castiglioni, who stepped down last October, citing personal reasons.

Luxury activewear
Phillip Plein has found what he says is an untapped niche: luxury activewear. On the first day of Milan Fashion Week, the German designer debuted his new Plein Sport line, which he only first envisioned last June after discovering that the biggest grossing textile companies weren't traditional fashion houses, but Nike and Adidas. "Active sportswear is one of the biggest segments, but we don't have even one luxury alternative," Plein told the assembled fashion crowd. Until now.
Gymnasts flipped in Plein Sport pants. Muscle-bound boxers shimmied in shorts. Skiers donned silvery parkas with black face masks. Female runners were clad in floral running tights and tops. A kickboxer wore a midriff-baring neoprene top over tights. And dancers splashed in a pool of shallow water to the rhythmic beat of drums. While there was a collective groan of disappointment from the crowd when Plein, the Milan fashion world's premier showman, announced last season he would be moving to New York with his main line, the designer showed he has plenty of party left for Milan. — AP



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

Models present creations for fashion house Salvatore Ferragamo during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week in Milan.



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



Centrepont sale campaign steals the show at Cristal Festival

Centrepont is one of the few homegrown fashion retailers in the region that has effectively used the strength of its digital muscle and engaged with new media to create innovative marketing campaigns that have both engaged its audience and elevated the brand in the mind of its customers. The regional big wig's creative efforts have been rewarded at the recent award ceremonies that bestowed Centrepont with the highest awards for its innovatively executed marketing campaigns and retail prowess.



The region's largest family fashion retailer received multiple awards for the clutter-breaking advertising of its latest Sale campaign at the globally celebrated 16th Annual Cristal Festival that took place earlier this month at Courchevel in France. It bagged nine Cristals, including three Gold, at the festival that is considered one of the biggest advertising events in the world. The regional retailer won under the categories of Film and Film Craft for its superbly crafted work on the 2016 sale campaign.

In a region that is known for its year-long sales and shopping festivals, Centrepont's campaign stood out in an overtly competitive and cluttered category and effectively drove footfalls to the stores, with its disruptive visuals and message.

"We wanted to be as unconventional as possible. There is a dearth of creativity when it comes to sales and promotions in the region and we wanted to push the limit. We received a fantastic response for our initial ad that was released in August and we are looking forward to the audience response to our new film," states Shyam Sunder, Head of Marketing of Centrepont. He adds, "The CP Sale is the biggest event in the fashion segment in the region. It contributes to a major percentage of our overall sales. The objective was also to build a property that would uplift our brand."

The ad campaign was released in a two-film series, the first titled 'Sabotage' and the former titled 'Lies'. The films are the creative brilliance of agency Impact BBDO Dubai. Shot in black and white, they raise the point that while there isn't much you can do to counter all the indignities life hurls at you, the least you can do is visit the Centrepont SALE and look good.

"As much as a sales campaign is fun to do, this was a serious job with significant business implications. We needed to deliver an idea that ticks all boxes and at the same time captures people's hearts & minds and provokes them to act," says Fadi Yaish, ECD of Impact BBDO, Dubai.

The dark satirical treatment of the ad is a departure from the brand's brighter visuals and light family focused campaigns. It has been raising a stir in the advertising fraternity and has received praise from marketers and customers alike with close to 8 million views on YouTube and Facebook alone.

Max announces latest Denim and Activewear collections across all stores in the MENA region

Max, the largest value fashion brand in the region, has announced the launch of its latest Denim and Activewear collection for men, women and children. This season's denim collection is inspired by antique indigo washes, in a deep and dark cast. The Activewear collection features a range of apparel for performance with a unique style that makes a powerful statement. Both collections will be available across all Max stores in the MENA region and online in UAE from January 18th.

Denim collection

This season's denim collection will feature placement prints and 3D-effect slogans for men, and added embellishments for women. The classic vintage trucker is given a new sense of life with precise cut and fit modifications. Seam manipulations on oversized 80's fits create new and shrunken fitted shapes while raw hems add eye catching interest to the appearance. The flowing elongated length of the long line shirt dress allows it to be used in two ways - either as a closed button jacket or a long-line dress. The classic denim shirt and the long line shirt dress are wardrobe essentials, while the prevailing cropped hemlines continue to make girlfriend jeans important denim wear this season.

The super soft yet stylish jeggings are here to stay as it is the perfect blend of style and comfort, while the culotte is fast on its way to becoming a summer essential. With styles ranging from A-line mini to midi skirts, the button down skirt is crucial to the denim collection just like the 5 pocket jeans with eye catching destroyed and damaged details.

The new denim collection comes with a complete new range of functional lightweight denim-wear for spring/summer 2017, like the bomber jacket.

Activewear collection

In the Activewear line, the hoodie jacket features colour blocking details, contrast zippers, piping and trims with creative slogans making it a key product for the season. Linear outlines with reflective long tape prints and contrast trimmings make the Activewear pants a modern legging for performance. The deep armhole & neckline are highlights of the traditional loose knit top - an easy cover up for the gym. A crucial essential for this season is the knee length capri. The jacquard pattern detail is geometrically precise that maximizes the stretch fit, making a bold statement. Emerging from the 90's sportswear the functional and elastic strap and hem becomes more graphic in the performance bra top that conveys strong motivational statements. The long lined vest has panel detailing with a shaped front that ends at the waist giving a flattering feel. The toned down neon shade & block texts highlights the bold, graphic message on these performance bottoms.

Both Denim and Activewear collections will be available in-store and online across the MENA region from January 18th 2017. Customers can log on to www.maxfashion.com to start shopping from the widest variety of apparel in value fashion.



Lifestyle

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2017

First lady Melania and
the political fashion police

37



An owl is pictured on January 12, 2017 in Hannover zoo. — AFP

Lack of customers final nail for Lebanon coffin maker



In a tiny workshop in Lebanon's Tripoli, coffin maker Michel Homsy takes a drag on a cigarette, surrounded by his carefully crafted handiwork, waiting for customers that never seem to arrive. He hasn't sold one of his hand-made wooden caskets in a year, due to competition from machine-made coffins but also to dwindling numbers of Christians in the northern port city. Most of Tripoli's residents are Muslims, who are buried in a simple shroud and have no need for Homsy's talents. And most of the Christians he once catered to have left the city in waves, fleeing first the country's 1975-1990 civil war, and then sporadic violence between local neighborhoods.

"The last people who bought a coffin from me a year ago got it for their mum, who was living here," Homsy told AFP, sitting in the sole chair in his dusty workshop. "After buying it, they left and haven't come back." Homsy began making wooden coffins in 1964, following in the footsteps of his father, though his first job was in the workshop of a competitor. He was inspired early on by a woodwork teacher and went into the coffin making business while just a teenager.

After three years at a rival workshop, he joined his father's business in the Zahriyeh district, at the time a mixed neighborhood of different sects. Initially, business was brisk, with the father-son pair making four or five coffins a month. The handmade caskets sold for anything from \$100 for the simplest kind to thousands of dollars for more elaborate options. It took time for him to convince his father that he was up to the trade. "When I first started working with him he wouldn't let me touch anything, he just asked me to organize tools," said Homsy, 65. "But when he got tired I started working with my hands, and he liked my work." "My father didn't teach me about coffins, but he taught me to love wood."

'Soft like silk'

Homsy's passion is evident in the work he continues to do, despite the dearth of customers. He works meticulously with pieces purchased from local wood wholesalers, cutting each to size with a handsaw before smoothing it to a fine finish. "Put your hand on the wood and feel how rough it is," he says before sanding it down. "Now feel it and see how it's become soft like silk." He nails the parts together and varnishes them, using several brushes to make sure every last spot is covered. The final step is to add the cloth lining inside. But that process waits until a buyer has chosen the casket, so nowadays Homsy is surrounded by unlined coffins.

It takes him anywhere from three days to a week to finish a coffin, but with so little demand, these days he takes his time and works on one for up to a month. Coffin making is virtually the only trade Homsy has ever known. He and his father worked throughout the early years of the civil war that erupted in 1975. But in 1982, when the fearsome Sunni Islamic Unification Movement militia began targeting Christians, Homsy decided to flee. He moved to Germany and worked as a car mechanic for eight months, but returned home after learning his mother was ill.

"I spent everything I had earned in Germany so she could get well, and thank God, she did," he says. Back in Tripoli, Homsy resumed making coffins with his father, but business had already started to dwindle as local Christians fled. By the end of the war in 1990, Homsy was making just one coffin a month and was forced to take up a cleaning job on the side to make ends meet for his wife and two children.

No new customers

Even peacetime brought no new customers for Homsy. Many Christians who had left failed to return, while others fled sporadic bouts of violence between the Jabal Mohsen and Bab Al-Tebbaneh neighborhoods, near to Homsy's district, or felt it was now too dangerous to come to his workshop. While no official figures exist for the number of Christians in Tripoli, they made up just 22,000 of around 200,000 registered voters in the city in 2010, of which only 4,500 cast a ballot. Even that figure may overstate the number of Christians who actually live there. Lebanese voters are registered for life in the district where they were born, even if they move later on.



Some of those who voted in Tripoli may have lived elsewhere for decades. It's a depressing turn of affairs for Homsy, who has decided not to teach his son his craft. Passersby say hello, but don't stop in, and he cancelled his phone line after being unable to pay his bills. "At church, people talk to me and say hello to me but nobody stands near me for more than a minute," he says. "Maybe they think I'm close to death or that their life will get shorter if they talk to me." But despite the difficult prospects, Homsy says he plans to stay open, waiting for clients. "Where would I go? Maybe work will come at some point. I'm waiting. Either I work or I die." — AFP

Michel Homsy, the last craftsman building handmade coffins in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli, works at his shop. — AFP photos