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Mubarak Al-Kabeer port to revitalize ties with Iraq



Demolitions spark deadly violence in Arab Israeli village



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150 FILS
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MPs SLAM RISING EXPAT NUMBERS, REMITTANCES

ASSEMBLY PANEL TALKS IRAN, TRUMP WITH GOVT



Min 09°
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High Tide 03:52 & 16:59
Low Tide 10:33 & 23:18

KOC UNION HOLDS SIT-IN AGAINST PRIVATIZATION

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) labor union held a sit-in yesterday evening at its headquarters in Ahmadi in protest over statements made by Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq on privatizing the oil sector. The protest was attended by some lawmakers and members of other labor syndicates, all of whom expressed total rejection of the government's intentions to privatize the sector.

MPs Khaled Al-Otaibi, Nayef Al-Merdas and Faisal Al-Kandari stressed their support of the oil sector employees' demands. They noted that being new to the post, the oil minister should comply with the demands or face a grilling. Rejecting any privatization plans, the lawmakers argued the concept of privatization in Kuwait is different than that in other parts of the world, since oil is Kuwait's only source of national income. They also warned that privatization will harm Kuwaiti oil sector employees, including around 450 lab technicians and engineers.

In a program broadcast on Sunday, Marzouq told Sky News Arabia that Kuwait's oil investment 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 the 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 this in the coming two to three years.



KUWAIT: The Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) labor union holds a sit-in yesterday at its headquarters in Ahmadi against the privatization of the oil sector. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Lawmakers who had signed on a motion for a special debate on the rising numbers of expatriates in the country yesterday demanded that the session be held on Feb 2. MPs Abdulkarim Al-Kandari, Riyadh Al-Adasani, Mohammad Al-Dallal, Waleed Al-Tabtabaei and Abdulwahab Al-Babtain signed the motion and said they want to debate the government's failure in checking the number of expatriates in the country and halting visa trafficking.

The motion said that Kuwaiti citizens are concerned that they have become a minority in their own country, especially as the government has failed to control the rising number of expatriates. The lawmakers said they want the debate to focus on the implications of the large number of expatriates on infrastructure, especially health, education, power and traffic services, which are already in a bad shape. They want the debate to discuss the size of remittances being sent out of the country by expatriates without any benefit to the state. The lawmakers demanded to know the measures adopted by the government in this effect.

Meanwhile, MP Safaa Al-Hashem, who had called for a clampdown on expatriates and for making them pay charges for using roads, yesterday reiterated her call, saying that Kuwait no longer needs expatriates as Kuwaiti citizens can run the country. She did not elaborate.

But a large number of writers, human rights defenders and activists yesterday strongly criticized MPs for their discriminatory statements targeting expatriates and calling for deporting a large number of them. Director of Kuwait Human Rights Association Mohammad Al-Humaidi said that before MPs and the government start

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany Gerhard Schroeder, in presence of the President of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ali Al-Ghanem. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with members of Al-Marafi family.

AMIR RECEIVES FORMER GERMAN CHANCELLOR

COMPANY TO PROVIDE FREE WI-FI AROUND KUWAIT

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany and honorary President of the German Near and Middle East Association Gerhard Schroeder. President of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Ali Mohammed Thunayan Al-Ghanem and Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah were present at the meeting. The German official later met with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received Abdulfatah Mohammad Marafi, Abdulelah Mohammad Marafi, Mohammad Taqi Marafi, Yagoub Sadiq Marafi, Yosef Sadiq Marafi. The Marafi family dedicated a book entitled 'Mohammad Rafie Hussein Marafi: a man of business, politics, and humanity'.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of

Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah. Furthermore, His Highness the Crown Prince received Chief of Kuwait National Security Bureau Sheikh Thamer Ali Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

In other news, His Highness the Prime Minister received stockholders of a newly established water company. The company's stockholders shared their visions and future plans for diversifying water resources in the country. His Highness the Premier praised the company for its strategic goals in amplifying water production in the country, advising them to follow high standards of water production. Sheikh Thamer Al-Sabah attended the meeting.

His Highness the Prime Minister also received Chairman of the Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology Salem Al-Uthaina, as the Wireless Mobile Data Company (WiMD) is preparing to launch its free Wi-Fi service in the country. The meeting discussed a complete review of the WiMD's plan to provide free Wi-Fi service in all parts of the country. — KUNA



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with members of the Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology.

KUWAITI DEPUTY FM HEADS TO MALAYSIA FOR OIC MEETING

KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah departed yesterday to Malaysia, heading a Kuwaiti delegation for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) emergency meeting today. The meeting is scheduled to discuss violations committed against Rohingya minority of Myanmar.

OIC's Special Envoy for Myanmar Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar said on Tuesday that "Malaysia proposed the meeting because of the urgency of the matter, and not because we want to interfere in Myanmar's internal affairs. The main objective was to create protection for the ethnic minority, whose rights as citizens have been denied, he added.

The ongoing troubles in the Rakhine state had caused thousands of Rohingya to flee Myanmar with reports of atrocities, including rape and murder. Whole villages are said to have been burned to the ground, in some cases with the residents still in their houses. —KUNA



Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah

ARMY CHIEF MEETS BRITISH ENVOY, GCC MILITARY OFFICIAL

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khoder discussed yesterday with Britain Ambassador to Kuwait Mathew Lodge and Military Attache in the embassy Colonel Finlay Mclean issues of common interest. The two sides also tackled military topics and ways to boost bilateral ties between the two countries, Ministry of Defense Moral and Guidance Public Relation Office said in a statement.

Earlier, Khoder met with the GCC Military Affairs General Secretariat's outgoing Assistant Director Brigadier Khalifa Hamid Al-Ka'abi. The ministry's statement added the meetings were attended by a number of senior military officials.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah discussed with Secretary General of the Arab Interior Ministers' Council Dr Mohammed bin Ali Komen the main issues put on the agenda of the upcoming meeting of the Arab ministers' council. The Interior Ministry said in a statement that Sheikh Khaled received from Komen an invitation to attend the council's meeting in Tunis next March.

The statement noted that Sheikh Khaled was briefed on the council's secretary general's efforts and Arab joint work throughout years. Komen, meanwhile, expressed appreciation to Sheikh Khaled for the warm welcome he received. Komen also praised Kuwait's efforts and commitment to Arab cooperation in various fields. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah meets with Secretary General of the Arab Interior Ministers' Council Dr Mohammed bin Ali Komen. — KUNA

BIN DUAIJ FOUNTAIN: OLDEST, MOST ICONIC IN KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Bin Duaij fountain, which was established by charitable figure Abdulaziz Mohammad Al-Duaij in 1876, is considered the oldest and most iconic drinking fountain in the State of Kuwait. The Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs was the body responsible for maintaining the fountain since 1966; however, this duty was transferred to the Kuwait Awqaf Public Foundation. — KUNA



22 INSURED RETIRED WOMEN GIVE BIRTH AT PRIVATE HOSPITALS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Director of the 'Afa' health insurance program at the Ministry of Health Dr Adnan Al-Rasheed announced that 22 retired women had given birth in private hospitals under the program in its first three months. Rasheed added that the total number of private hospital admissions using the system since its inception was 4,441, and that 1,727 patients underwent surgeries, in addition to conducting 8,750 MRIs and CT scans and 2,651 endoscopies.

Rasheed stressed the strict control of the mechanism used in providing the service to beneficiaries in various private sector hospitals. He added that regular inspection tours were in progress at all private hospitals and medical centers, in addition to using an online link concerning Afa users. Rasheed said Afa users can call the hotline 1811110 for any inquiries about the system or to file complaints.

New attorneys

The Supreme Judiciary Council issued a decision forming a special committee to interview new public prosecutor attorneys headed by the Public Prosecutor General Chancellor Dherar Al-Assousi. The committee will meet next week to set the conditions and set a date for a written exam.

UNPAID WORKERS GO ON STRIKE AT CLEAN FUEL PROJECT'S SITE

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A number of contracted employees at the Clean Fuel Project's site went on strike because of delayed payment of their salaries, according to their statements. Video footage went viral on social media showing expatriate workers staging a demonstration at a location in Ahmadi within the project's construction site. Commenting on the issue, Acting Director of the Public Authority for Manpower Abdullah Al-Motoutah said that a decision was taken to suspend the workers' employer until he pays the overdue payments. He further indicated that authority inspector rushed to the scene immediately after seeing the videos online in order to investigate the matter, adding that the employer was summoned there as well.

Baseless allegations

Separately, Kuwait National Petroleum Company's (KNPC)'s official spokesperson and deputy CEO for supplementary services Bassem Al-Essa stressed that recent social media reports about a complaint filed by one of the company's employees is full of baseless allegations. Essa added that KNPC followed up the employee's complaint in which he claimed that the company deducted from his salary for revealing a contractor's violation of a contract signed with him to secure the company sites. "KNPC respects and appreciates all its employees, but the allegations mentioned on social media and in a TV interview are completely untrue," Essa said, explaining that the deduction had not been made for disciplinary reasons but rather to recollect sums that the employee had unlawfully received due to inaccurate data. "The complainant was already met by deputy CEO for supplementary services on Dec 22, 2016, and we explained the reason of the deduction and told him to pay back in installments if he wishes to do so," Essa added.

Equal privileges

During a meeting with Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq, the head of the Oil Ministry Employees Syndicate Adel Al-Hojob stressed the rights of ministry employee to get equal financial and administrative privileges and incentives as the ones given to those working in the oil sector. "The ministry directly supervises the units working in oil and gas and the state's rights in them," he explained, reminding that the Civil Service Commission (CSC) had stated that ministry employees could be treated equally as those working in the oil sector after amending article 3 of the service law number 15/1975. "Therefore, we urge the minister to work on amending our legal status," he stressed. Hojob added that the syndicate rejects privatizing the oil sector because it would lead to many problems, especially since Kuwait mainly relies on oil as its source of national income.

In my view

A POINT OF VIEW ON THE DEMOGRAPHIC IMBALANCE

By Abdelmajeed Al-Shatti

Statements by Social Affairs Minister and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Subaih about the imbalance in the population structure, and what was published on social media about the population data and percentage of non-Kuwaiti residents reaching nearly 70 percent of the total population of 4.4 million, drew many reactions. Most of them were negative, although this imbalance has been present for a long time and continuing for more than 60 years.

Kuwait's population, according to the first census in 1957, was nearly 206,000, and Kuwaitis made up 55 percent of it. Then, with construction, development, economic growth and abundance of oil since Kuwait's independence, the population structure changed in favor of expats. Census numbers in 1965 said the percentage of non-Kuwaitis was around 64 percent of the population then. Their numbers continued to rise until their percentage reached nearly 72 percent in 1985, as the census showed for that year. That percentage reached its lowest in the few years that followed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The demographic plan expects the Kuwaiti growth rate to increase by 2.7 percent and this will lead to reducing the percentage of expats from 70 percent now to 68.7 percent, which is a small percentage without a doubt, but it prevents more deterioration of the situation. I believe this is a realistic percentage although small, and I agree with what the economic affairs minister said, that we need 15 years to reach to a 40 vs 60 percent ratio between Kuwaitis and others.

When we look at the expat community, we find that it is characterized by a male majority at 67 percent of the total, and due to the nature of most expats' work, we find that they have a low level of education, as the percentage of those with intermediate education and lower is 71 percent, because most expat laborers work in the construction, building and family service sectors, and this makes it difficult to replace them with Kuwaiti workers. Around five percent of expats are in violation of the residency law.

Expats' percentage reached 59 percent in 1995, then started to rise until we reached the current percentage. Labor used in the various development projects contributed to this increase, such as construction of roads, oil sector projects, hospitals, the opera house and bridges.

The population balance and correcting the population structure was and still is the most notable of the goals of the various five-year development plans in Kuwait since we started preparing them. We, for example, find that one of the main goals of the five-year plan 2010-2014 includes facing the population structure imbalance and increasing citizens' proportion to 35 percent of total population, but this was not achieved and the state did not succeed as the numbers mentioned above indicate. The current plan 2015-2019 indicates the "absence of a clear vision of population policy" within one of the most current challenges in the field of human development.

The current plan aims, within other goals related to human development, to reduce the growth rate of expats to 2.4 percent from 3.58 percent in 2014 as interior ministry data show. Realigning the population structure requires cooperation from all, as there are many suggested solutions that were repeated and approved in multiple development plans, most of which did not see the light of day, so it is necessary to reconsider the economic and social philosophy of the state. Education should be developed and taken better care of, and graduates should be linked with requirements of the marketplace.

Some took advantage of citizenship for welfare gains by trading in residencies and commercial licenses. I hope that the state is serious about fighting residency trade, as it included it in its current five-year plan, and that its method should not be the same as that of fighting corruption at the municipality, and MPs should hold it accountable if it becomes lax in this regard. The sponsorship system must be abolished and a more efficient and less corrupt system should be found. The sponsorship system contributes to defects in the marketplace, distorts wages and harms Kuwait's reputation. There must be seriousness in eradicating corruption and resolving the bedoon issue.

We must change our lifestyle, because it is not realistic for us to rely on this number of expats in our homes for raising our children and demand the state to correct the population structure. The miserable suggestions such as imposing fees on expat transfers and others are not beneficial and will create a black market and a secondary market that will be difficult to control, and the cost of implementing and supervising it will be higher than the benefit to be gained.

Dealing with imbalance of the economic structure with a 'Trumpish' suggestion and 'populist' laws and procedures is not beneficial, and is economically, socially and politically costly. Our need for expat labor will continue and in large numbers, because of the growing number of requests for housing and the living standard of Kuwaiti families, our dependence on expats for services in our daily life, and our need for various services provided by teachers, doctors and engineers. The need for expats is an economic, social and political necessity, and it is a must to deal with the population structure based on this principle. - Translated by Kuwait Times (the same article was published yesterday in Al-Jarida Arabic daily).



HORECA KUWAIT ATTRACTED OVER 6,000 VISITORS: ANJERI EXHIBITION AREA INCREASED FROM TO 6,000 SQUARE METERS: NAJIA

KUWAIT: Leaders Group's General Manager Nabila Al-Anjeri stressed that the 2017 Horeca Kuwait 2017 which concluded yesterday achieved remarkable success and managed to attract over 6,000 visitors including experts, company owners, businessmen and a large number of ambassadors and diplomats.

Anjeri added that such success highlights the role that the public sector can play to activate commercial exchanges and boost the economy, which would eventually provide enough job opportunities, support the government's development plan and help it set short and medium term strategies to diversify sources of national income. She added that sectors like tourism, hospitality, shipment and storage should be taken as top priorities when considering such strategies.

Speaking during a special ceremony held by the event's organizing committee to honor participants in the international cooking competition, Anjeri also thanked the

Information Minister and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah for patronizing the exhibition. She also thanked all participants, sponsors and members of the cooking competition's judging panel. Anjeri also thanked Hospitality Services Company; the main organizer of Horeca exhibitions around the Middle East, for cooperating with Leaders Group in organizing the 2017 Horeca Kuwait exhibition. She stressed the need to give extra attention to tourism development in order to make Kuwait an important Middle Eastern touristic destination.

Meanwhile, head of Horeca supreme organizing committee Mohammed Najia highlighted the event's development since its inception in 2012, noting that the first exhibition was held over a total area of 1,500 square meters, whereas the most recent event was held over an area of 6,000 square meters. He also noted that participating companies increased from 30 on the maiden exhibition to over 80 in 2017.



"Participants in the first cooking competition were 150, while over 300 took part this year," he added. Further, Najia said that an agreement was made with sponsors to organize the Horeca event next year in the period of January 22-24, 2018.



KUWAIT: Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudan meets with Kurdistan Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry's (KFCCI) President Dr Dara Al-Khayat and other officials. — KUNA

MUBARAK AL-KABEER PORT TO REKINDLE TIES WITH IRAQ: MINISTER

KUWAIT: The Mubarak Al-Kabeer port's location will be instrumental in rejuvenating Kuwait's economic and commercial relations with Iraq, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudan said yesterday.

In a statement to the press after meeting with Kurdistan Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (KFCCI) President Dr Dara Al-Khayat, along with an accompanying delegation, Roudan said that economic ties with Iraq have been hit hard as a result of political upheaval in Baghdad.

Moreover, he said that he discussed with the Iraqi delegation

plans to facilitate the flow of goods between both nations, adding that the meeting will be a Launchpad for greater bilateral investment opportunities.

Meanwhile, Khayat noted that Kuwaiti companies willing to invest in the autonomous region will be given special perks as it relates to the customs process. The Iraqi official also pointed out that the meeting tackled plans to bolster economic ties between the two Gulf neighbors. The Iraqi delegation is on an official visit to the country to examine with Kuwaiti officials strategies for closer economic ties. — KUNA

AIRPORT THIEF ARRESTED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Farwaniya detectives arrested a man responsible for multiple thefts committed at Kuwait International Airport. Investigations led detectives to identify an Egyptian man who had several phones and a tablet, in addition to cash with him at the time of his arrest. The man admitted that he stole small bags and emptied them in the bathroom. He also told police about shops where he sold the stolen material, and led officers to items he had not sold yet. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Passport renewal

The Interior Ministry's Citizenship and Passports Department will stop issuance of old Kuwaiti passports from Jan 19 to 21, 2017. It said it will not accept passport renewal applications from Thursday, Jan 19, as the information technology department will carry out preliminary tests on issuing electronic passports, which requires a halt in the issuance of passports during the test period.

Unlicensed cafes

Kuwait Municipality's public relations department said its Hawally branch carried out a campaign against unlicensed cafes in Hawally, resulting in the removal of 18 violations. Hawally branch Director Falah Al-Shimmari said the campaign was carried out on the instructions of Municipality Director General Ahmad Al-Manfouhi and direct follow-up by Deputy Director General for Hawally and Ahmadi Affairs Fahd Al-Otaibi.

Driver rescued

Wafra Fire Center responded to an accident that trapped a health minister's driver in the vehicle along with a doctor and two nurses. The driver was taken to hospital by a medevac chopper.

No injuries

Jahra firefighters rushed to put out a tent fire in front of a house in the area yesterday. The fire was contained quickly to keep it from spreading. No injuries were reported.

Meeting

Kuwait Fire Services Directorate's Director General Lt Gen Khalid Al-Mikrad received Vice President of Rosenbauer Fire Trucks Company and CEO of Al-Kharafi Company Musad Anwar.



KUWAIT: This photo released by the Interior Ministry yesterday shows phones and cash found with a thief who stole them from passengers at Kuwait International Airport.

Letters to Badrya

Madam,

I read your column in Kuwait Times. I'm an Indian and work here for only KD 100. We leave our countries and spend a tough life here. We work hard day and night for our families. We feel very bad when someone talks to us rudely or behaves badly with us. Sometimes we feel we are mere slaves and were born only to serve others.

But we are happy because this country provides us money for our families. I like it that you spread good thoughts about expats in this country.

YA

Madam,

Thank you for your column 'Easy Scapegoats'.

Habib
An expat in Kuwait



Abdalmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain and Interior Ministry inaugurates first licensing department

In cooperation with General Traffic Department to provide car license plates



KUWAIT: Abdalmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, the authorized agent of Nissan, Infiniti and Renault vehicles in the State of Kuwait, hosted yesterday high officials from Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (MOI), General Department of Citizenship & Travel Documents, General Department of Traffic, Information System Directorate in celebration of the opening of the first licensing department at the Nissan showroom in Al-Rai.

The authorized licensing department is to deliver registered number plates for newly purchased vehicles from Abdalmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co, and car dealerships in Kuwait at the Nissan Al-Rai showroom, bearing in mind that this service exists in the Nissan Ahmadi showroom as well.

Commenting on the opening of the licensing department, Mohammed Shalaby, Chief Operating Officer at Al Babtain Group said, "Al-Babtain works diligently to meet its customers' needs by providing them with the highest levels of services to ease their vehicle

purchase process including their related legal documentation and operational needs."

Shalaby continued, "Abdalmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain is honored to offer this unique service in Kuwait. This fruitful cooperation between the Ministry of Interior, General Department of Traffic and Al-Babtain Group offers customers value added services and ensures that their legal paperwork is handled with utmost efficiency through our customer service team." The customer service team at the licensing department

will foresee all comprehensive requirements needed to acquire newly registered number plates including allowing customers to pay fines and follow-up on issues.

Established since 1948, Abdalmohsen Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Co. continues to prove to be a company with best practices and total customer focus as it moves from strength to strength positioning itself as a market leader for introducing and sustaining partnerships across national levels.



The Interior Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary of Citizenship and Passports Affairs Major General Mazen Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.



Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic Affairs, Director General of the General Directorate of Traffic, Major General Fahd Salem Al-Shuwaie.



Saleh Al-Babtain, Chief Executive Officer of Al-Babtain Group



Retired Major General Yaqoub Mohammed Yaseen, General Director of the Federation and car dealerships.



Director of General Department of Service Centers Major-General Adib Suwaidan.



— Photos by Joseph Shagra

27 DIAGNOSED WITH COLON CANCER LAST YEAR

EARLY DETECTION SAVES LIVES: DR HASHASH



Dr Wafaa Al-Hashash

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Head of Gastroenterology and Liver Unit at Al-Sabah Hospital Dr Wafaa Al-Hashash released a statement recently to spread awareness about the importance of early tests for the detection of colon cancer. She quoted international studies and researches which all recommend undergoing examinations before the age of 50.

Dr Hashash said colon cancer is widespread in Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Kuwait. Unhealthy eating habits, including excessive consumption of

fast food are among several reasons that lead to colon cancer, she said, urging people who eat junk food frequently to switch to a healthier lifestyle. Dr Hashash said that the number of cases for people who were tested last year was 2,210, of which 533 cases (24.1 percent) tested positive for several diseases. Out of the positive cases, the number of men diagnosed with polyps was 279 (55 percent) and women was 277 (45 percent). The cases that tested positive for cancer include 18 men and nine women, Dr Hashash said. She noted that early detection tests are available at Health Ministry facilities.



ZAIN ANNOUNCES SEVENTH WINNER IN 'PAY ONLINE AND WIN' CAMPAIGN

KUWAIT: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, announced the winner of the seventh week of its 'Pay Online and Win' draw that saw a weekly postpaid winner of four valuable prizes when paying their bill using Zain's website or app as well as a grand prize at the final draw that will be held next week.

Zain announced Khalid Mohamed Yaseen Al-Yaseen winner of 4 valuable prizes in the seventh week of the

draw, including iPhone 7, Touch Hotspot LTE-A with free 1.5 TB Prepaid Internet line valid for 3 months, and PlayStation 4 (1 TB).

The final draw will be held on the 22nd of January, where the grand prize winner will receive iPhone 7, iPhone 7 Plus, Touch Hotspot LTE-A with free 1.5 TB Prepaid Internet line valid for 3 months, and a PlayStation 4 (1 TB). Postpaid customers will get one chance to enter the final draw for

every KD1 paid through Zain's digital channels, including the company's website (pay.kw.zain.com) and Zain's app available for iOS and Android.

Zain launched this exciting promotional campaign to reinforce its leadership position and its pledge in offering the best products and services to meet its customers' personal and professional telecommunications needs, who are considered Kuwait's biggest family of subscribers.

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Manila	112	612
Paris	124	724
London	142	522
New York	205	928
Los Angeles	350	1,958

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Al-Qabas

FEELING SEASICK ON THE GOVERNMENT'S SHIP

By Mohammad Al-Abdeljader

New authorities were established few years ago, in a move that is contrary to the calls of merging authorities and removing overlaps between state departments. The government has failed for over 25 years to merge any authorities or move any sectors, saving perhaps for alleviating some of the burdens on Kuwait Municipality and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor in the form of the creation of the Public Authority for Manpower and Public Authority for the Disabled. However, the government is yet to introduce laws to develop the functional performance of its departments. With that in mind, trying to analyze this situation will leave us suffering from similar symptoms to those felt by someone suffering from sea sickness.

I will mention here a number of newly established authorities, some of which I did not understand the

All of these new departments were established by the cabinet in recent years, when it is supposed to merge and restructure state departments

purpose of, in an attempt to comprehend their role and the purpose of their establishment. They include:

- Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects.
- Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport.
- Public Authority for Communications and Information Technology.
- General Authority to Take Care of the Printing and Publication of Holy Quran.
- Kuwait Drug and Food Control Administration.
- Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority.

There are departments in the state such as the government performance's follow up authority, technical department for privatization, information technology department, financial auditors' department, and a number of authorities which most people never new about until differences between officials there started to come to surface, such as the case with the Public Anti-Corruption Authority. All of these new departments were established by the cabinet in recent years, when it is supposed to merge and restructure state departments. I personally got sea sick while boarding the government's ship as it struggles to find safe grounds to dock on because of all of its conflicting decisions.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Anbaa

GAZING, SILENT VIOLENCE

Al-Anbaa

By Salah Al-Sayer

If you give a Middle Eastern child a pen and paper and ask him to draw a symbol for violence, he will probably draw a picture of a dead person, blood or a

bomber bombing people, whereas a Western child will likely draw a dead insect or a broken dish. The concept of violence and harming others in a society that allows husbands to beat their wives differs from that in Western societies where laws incriminate a husband for having sex with his own wife against her will and subjects him to penal measures in that case. In our minds, violence is associated with assault, killing, blood, beating, sabotage and wars against enemies and rivals. Any other concepts and practices of violence are absent to us.

With the secrets they enclose, various forms of violence are being practiced within families in many houses such as beating children, subduing and abusing domes-

tic helpers or spouses despising one another. The same happens in schools where some pupils are subjected to violence from teachers or their peers. We also practice violence on streets with disrespecting traffic rules. Environmental violence is also practiced by individuals and governments.

One of the forms of violence is gazing at each other and violating their privacy, which is a bad habit prevailing in our societies. One can easily notice that it does not exist in civilized nations that have less forms of violence among people and are ruled by laws. In these nations, benignant forms of violence prevail as violent sports such as rodeo and riding wild horses, violent games such as rugby or American football, mountain biking, ice skating and most recently, games where players jump some hurdles between skyscrapers.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

One of the forms of violence is gazing at each other and violating their privacy

Crime

Report

MAN JAILED FOR FORGING DOCUMENTS

KUWAIT: The criminal court sentenced a citizen to four years in jail but refrained from announcing its verdict on 16 others in a case in which they were all accused of forging Saudi school certificates and submitting them to Kuwait's education ministry for accreditation. The education ministry had asked the Saudi Embassy about several certificates claimed to be issued by them, but contained false information. It sent the embassy a list containing names of the suspects involved.

Not responsible

The criminal court released an Egyptian man and lifted a travel ban order issued against him in a case in which he was accused of insulting His Highness the Amir, the Kuwaiti judiciary and members of the Kuwaiti society. The court based its verdict on a medical report which confirmed that he was not responsible for his actions. A Kuwait University committee had decided the suspect was not responsible for his actions, despite the fact that a health ministry report issued earlier said that he was.

Cybercrime

The public prosecution decided to jail a man for 21 days for insulting the attorney general in statements posted on his Twitter account. The court made its verdict after it received a statement from the Interior Ministry department tasked with fighting cybercrimes.

Physical assault

A bedoon (stateless) woman was taken to a hospital in critical condition after being beaten by unidentified persons in Riqqa. Police are waiting for her condition to improve to question her. Meanwhile, a citizen sustained a stab wound in his arm during a fight with another citizen, who fled the scene. The injured man was taken to hospital by paramedics for treatment. Police are looking for the suspect. Separately, an Indian deliveryman accused two persons in an SUV of beating him in Fahd Al-Ahmad and robbing his money and documents. Investigations are underway. — Al-Rai



IBS HONORS 36 KFH EMPLOYEES

KUWAIT: Institute of Banking Studies (IBS) honored 36 employees from Kuwait Finance House (KFH) upon their successful completion of the Professional Certification Programs for the Year 2015-2016 in a graduation ceremony held at Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry under patronage of Governor of the Central Bank of Kuwait Dr Mohammad Al-Hashel amidst a large attendance of executive managers and HR and training managers from all local banks.

The certificates included Risk Management Certificate (RMC), Certificate in Credit Management (CCM) and Advanced Certificate in Credit Management (ACCM), Certified Bank Branch Manager (CBBM), and Certified Assistant Bank Branch Manager (CABBM).

KFH is among the first in number of graduates in

comparison to all local banks and financial institutions which confirms its keenness to hone the skills of its human resources and raise their qualifications for the benefit of the bank and its clients.

Obtaining such certificates motivates other employees and contributes to improve capabilities to compete and prove success. KFH spares no efforts to arm its staff and equip them with all what they need to support their efforts for the sake of improving themselves scientifically and practically.

Professor Yaqoub Al-Refaei, the Director General of IBS applauded, in his speech in the graduation ceremony, KFH's significant role in improving the national human capital which reflects the outstanding performance and contributes in achieving the comprehensive development in the country.

SERVICE OFFICE OPENED AT DISABLED SPORTS CLUB

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: An office was opened at Kuwait Disabled Sports Club to finalize disabled citizens' transactions instead of them going to the nearby citizen service office for the same purpose, President Shafi Mohammad Al-Hajiri announced. This was done to make it easier for disabled citizens and their

families to process their transactions, he added. The office presents free printing services and other services in support of all people with special needs in Kuwait. It is the fruit of partnership between the Kuwait Disabled Sports Club and all bodies concerned with caring for people with special needs, including the Public Authority for the Disabled, Hajiri said.



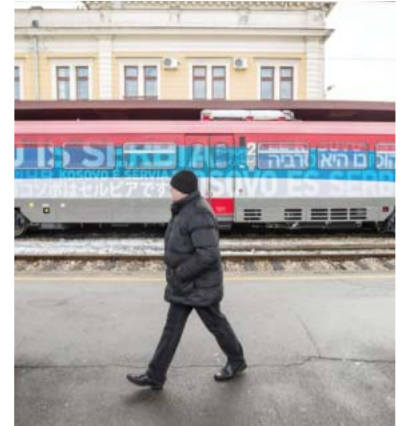
Shafi Al-Hajiri

Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A woman weaving wool at Sadu House. — KUNA photo



Serbia and Kosovo declare war of words

FEARS OF MASS KILLINGS AS IS ADVANCES ON SYRIA'S DEIR EZZOR



UMM AL-HIRAN: Bedouins cry following the destruction of houses yesterday in the Bedouin village of Umm Al-Hiran, which is not recognized by the Israeli government, near the southern city of Beersheba, in the Negev desert. — AFP

DEMOLITIONS SPARK VIOLENCE IN ARAB ISRAELI VILLAGE

UMM AL-HEIRAN, Israel: Demolitions in an Arab Israeli village activists say has been targeted by racist policies sparked violence yesterday, with a policeman killed and the man accused of attacking him shot dead. A prominent Arab Israeli lawmaker was also wounded in the confrontation in Umm al-Heiran in southern Israel, where activists have long sought to draw attention to what they call the unjust practice of demolishing Arab homes. Police said the man killed, a local resident, was active in the Israeli Islamic Movement and may have been influenced by the Islamic State organization a claim residents strongly denied, calling him a respected teacher.

"A vehicle driven by a terrorist from the Islamic Movement intended to strike a number of officers and carry out an attack," police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said in a statement. "The officers responded and the terrorist was neutralized." Later statements confirmed that the alleged attacker was dead and that a 34-year-old policeman, Erez Levi, was also killed. Village activist Raed Abu al-Qiyan named the driver as Yacoub Abu al-Qiyan, a member of his Bedouin clan. Residents said he was 47, the father of around a dozen children and owned one of five buildings being demolished yesterday. "The Israeli narrative is a lie. He was a revered school teacher," he said. "He has no relations with the Islamic Movement. "He was in his car and they shot at him from everywhere." Injured lawmaker Ayman Odeh heads the Joint List, a coalition of mainly Arab parties and the third-largest bloc in parliament. One of his aides said he was wounded by police, with photographs that spread online showing him with a bloodied head. "They attacked the MP and other people-demonstrators with stun grenades, tear gas directly in people's faces," Odeh's aide, Anan Maalouf, told Israeli army radio. "There was no car-ramming attack here. There were no clashes here between the demonstrators and police."

Pre-dawn confrontation

One activist said residents had moved their cars to the entrance of the village at around 5:00 am (0300 GMT) in a bid to block the demolition operation. Police then forced

their way in and fired flares, lighting up the pre-dawn sky, according to the activist, Isaac Kates Rose, who was there at the time. Shooting could later be heard and the sound of a car crashing, he said. At some point later, Odeh was caught up in the confrontation and wounded, activists say. Five excavators were later seen entering the village, with demolitions beginning at around 11.15 am (0915 GMT). Security forces took up positions on rooftops and guarded the area around the demolitions, keeping residents away.

Residents gathered around the village's mosque, with women wailing as the demolitions started. Israeli authorities regularly carry out demolitions of Bedouin homes they deem to have been built illegally. However, building permits are extremely difficult to obtain, according to residents and activists, who say Jewish Israelis are given preferential treatment. Umm al-Heiran has become particularly symbolic, with residents having waged a years-long legal fight against demolition orders. Located in the Negev desert, the village is home to around 1,000 inhabitants who mainly live in small, concrete buildings, relying on solar panels for electricity and raising livestock.

Racist judgment?

In 2013, Israel's cabinet approved the establishment of two new Jewish communities in the Negev, Kesif and Hiran. In order to make way for the two new towns, the Bedouin village, which is unrecognized by the authorities, must first be removed. In 2015, Israel's supreme court approved the removal, saying that since the residents could theoretically live in the new towns, the move did not constitute discrimination.

The government says Umm al-Heiran's residents are to be moved to the nearby Bedouin village of Hura, which is already home to some 300 families. "The Israeli Supreme Court's decision to allow the state to proceed with its plan to demolish the village, which has existed for 60 years, in order to establish a Jewish town called 'Hiran' over its ruins, is one of the most racist judgments that the Court has ever issued," rights group Adalah, which has represented the villagers in court, said in a statement yesterday.—AFP

MALI CAR BOMB KILLS 50 IN FRESH BLOW TO PEACE

GAO, Mali: A suicide bombing targeting militia groups committed to restoring peace in Mali left nearly 50 people dead yesterday and struck a fresh blow at long-running efforts to stabilize the troubled north. The car bomb attack in Gao, the region's biggest city, targeted a camp grouping former rebels and pro-government militia who are signatories to a 2015 peace accord struck with the government. The attack occurred as former rebels from the Tuareg-led CMA movement prepared to go on a joint patrol with pro-government militia members, under the terms of the peace deal.

Mali's north fell under the control of Tuareg-led rebels and jihadist groups linked to Al-Qaeda in 2012. The Islamists sidelined the rebels to take sole control. Although they were largely ousted by a French-led military operation in Jan 2013, implementation of the peace accord has been piecemeal with insurgents still active across large parts of the region. The joint patrols, which also include regular Malian army troops, are supposed to help prepare for the reorganization of the army.

President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita ordered three days of national mourning following the attack, the worst in the country in recent years. Defense Minister Abdoulaye Idrissa Maiga was to fly to Gao later yesterday. The provisional toll is "47 dead and several injured," said state TV broadcaster ORTM. Earlier, a hospital source in Gao said at least 40 people had died and 60 were hurt. The UN peacekeeping mission MINUSMA said dozens had died and many more were hurt. "The explosion caused heavy

losses. According to preliminary information, dozens of deaths and dozens of injuries are reported among the 600 individuals hosted in the camp," a statement said. The attack took place at 8.40 am (GMT) as the former rival groups "were due to soon leave on a joint patrol," a MINUSMA source added. The powerful blast, which went off during a training session, ripped apart bodies, scattering limbs across the camp, a witness said. The vehicle used in the blast bore the logo of the unit coordinating the joint patrols, army spokesman Diarran Kone said.

Fragile peace

The assailant "came to town alone to procure equipment and fit the vehicle out to commit a suicide attack," a Malian security source who asked not to be named said. There was no immediate claim of responsibility but the camp is very close to Gao airport, a key transport hub which was closed briefly in late November following an attack blamed on jihadists. The car bomb destroyed prefabricated hangars used by MINUSMA's aircraft and damage to the installations and debris on the runway made the airport temporarily unusable. "The joint patrols were the target," French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault told French media yesterday. "The political aim is to hamper the peace process and reconciliation." "Peace remains fragile," he added. France is considering a UN Security Council draft resolution that would set up a sanctions regime for Mali to target opponents of the peace deal signed 19 months ago. — AFP

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KALYAN JEWELLERS

IRAN HOSTILE TO US INVOLVEMENT IN SYRIA TALKS

TEHRAN: Iranian officials said yesterday they were strongly opposed to the United States joining Syrian peace talks in Kazakhstan next week, local media reported. "We are hostile to their presence and we have not invited them," Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said late Tuesday, according to the Tasnim news agency. That goes against the position of the other two organizers of the talks-

Russia and Turkey-which have said the new US administration of Donald Trump should be represented in Astana on Monday. Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council which oversees international coordination on the Syrian war, confirmed yesterday that Iran had refused to invite the US.

"There is no reason for the United States to participate in the organizing of

political initiatives in the Syrian crisis and it is out of the question that they should have a role in the Astana negotiations," he said, according to the official IRNA news agency. Next week's talks, which aim to bring together representatives of the Syrian government and rebel groups, mark the first time since the conflict began in 2011 that the US has not been at the centre of peace negotiations. Foreign

ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi said that any expansion of participants "could increase the risk of failure".

"Our policy is to not add other countries at this stage," he said. The talks come in the wake of President Bashar al-Assad's symbolic victory last month in retaking Aleppo, Syria's second city and a key rebel stronghold through much of the war. Iran and Russia have been the key diplomatic

and military backers of Syria in the war, while Turkey has supported rebel groups. The three countries are still discussing which officials will travel to Astana, Ghasemi said, adding that other countries could be included in later stages if the "first steps" are successful. "The meeting will not be at the ministerial level. It will probably be at the deputy minister level," he said.—AFP

POPULAR SUFI LEADER IN MOROCCO DIES AGED 95

BABAT: The head of one of Morocco's biggest Sufi orders, with tens of thousands of followers at home and abroad, died yesterday aged 95, an official and local media said. Sheikh Sidi Hamza al-Qadiri al-Boutchichi had been the spiritual leader of the Qadiriya Boutchichiya order since 1972. He died in the northwestern city of Oujda and was to be buried in the nearby town of Madagh where he was born and his order is based, local media reported. Seen as a "living master" by his followers and famed for his wisdom and kindness, he was believed to be descended from the Prophet Mohammed and belonged to a long line of Sufi leaders.

Every year hundreds of thousands of pilgrims came from across the world to Madagh to celebrate Mawlid, the Prophet

Mohammed's birthday, and hear the ageing Sufi leader preach. Before he died, he designated his eldest son, Sidi Jamal, to succeed him, a spokesman for the brotherhood told the local press. His followers included French rapper Abd al Malik. Sufism is an offshoot of mainstream Islam which focuses on meditation, inner purity and finding a mystical pathway towards God.

Sufis spend time studying the Koran, chanting and dancing to enter a spiritual trance. With hundreds of millions of followers across the world, Sufism has deep roots in popular culture in Morocco and across West Africa. Various Sufi orders are active in Turkey, the Middle East and Central Asia. Followers of Salafist and Wahhabist interpretations of Islam see Sufism as heretical.—AFP

TOP COMMANDER ANNOUNCES LIBERATION OF EAST MOSUL

BARTALLA, Iraq: Iraqi forces have fully retaken east Mosul from the Islamic State group, a top commander said yesterday, three months after a huge offensive against the jihadist bastion was launched. Elite forces have in recent days entered the last neighborhoods on the eastern side of Mosul, on the left bank of the Tigris River that runs through the city. Speaking at a press conference in Bartalla, a town east of Mosul, Staff General Talib al-Sheghati, who heads the Counter-Terrorism Service, announced "the liberation... of the left bank".

Sheghati added however that while the east of the city could be considered under government control, some work remained to be done to flush out the last holdout jihadists. The "important lines and important areas are finished," he said, adding that "there is only a bit of the northern (front) remaining." Yesterday's announcement marks the end of a phase in the operation launched on Oct 17 to retake Mosul, Iraq's second city and the last major urban stronghold IS has in the country. The offensive, Iraq's largest military operation in years with tens of thousands of fighters involved, began with a focus on sparsely populated areas around Mosul.

CTS entered the city proper in November and encountered tougher than expected resistance from IS, whose fighters launched a huge number of suicide car bombs against advancing Iraqi forces. The going was tough for weeks but a fresh push coordinated with other federal forces and backed by the US-led coalition was launched in December and yielded quick and decisive gains. The west bank of Mosul

is a bit smaller but is home to the narrow streets of the Old City-impassable to most military vehicles-and to some of the city's traditionally most dyed-in-the-wool jihadist neighborhoods. Brigadier General Yahya Rasool also stressed that despite Sheghati's announcement, there would be more fighting in east Mosul in the coming days.

Narrow streets

"Sheghati is the head of CTS and he was talking about areas under CTS control. There are some neighborhoods that are still being liberated and that could take a few days," he said. All the bridges across the Tigris in Mosul have been either blown up by IS or destroyed by coalition air strikes, which has made it very difficult for Iraqi forces to resupply its fighters in the city's east. It will also make it difficult for elite Iraqi forces to attack the west bank without redeploying to other fronts west of the river that have been largely static for weeks.

Interior ministry and federal police forces have held positions just south of Mosul airport, which lies on the southern edge of the city and west of the Tigris, since November. Punching into densely populated areas however and confronting intense resistance from IS in urban environments is a type of operation which is left largely to CTS. The fighting inside Mosul has been complicated by the continued presence of much of its population, which did not or could not flee when Iraqi forces started advancing. According to the United Nations, around 150,000 people are currently displaced as a result of the three-month-old offensive.—AFP



IDLIB: Syrians gather around a heavily damaged house following a reported airstrike that targeted the Idlib bus station yesterday.—AFP

FEARS OF MASS KILLINGS AS IS ADVANCES ON SYRIA'S DEIR EZZOR

CIVILIANS TERRIFIED AND ANXIOUS

HASAKEH, Syria: As the Islamic State group closes in on Syria's Deir Ezzor, residents said they are terrified of falling victim to the mass killings for which the jihadists have become infamous. Besieged by IS since early 2015, the government-held third of Deir Ezzor city is home to an estimated 100,000 people. Since Saturday, IS has steadily advanced in a fresh assault on the city, sparking fears among residents of widespread atrocities. "Civilians in the city are terrified and anxious, afraid that IS will enter the city since they accuse us of being 'regime thugs'," said Abu Nour, 51.

He spoke by phone from inside the city, roughly one kilometer from approaching IS forces. Deir Ezzor sits in the oil-rich eastern province of the same name, most of which is controlled by IS. Abu Nour said that residents were haunted by previous abductions and mass executions carried out by IS in the broader province. "The way they killed them is stuck in people's minds here," he said. IS is notorious for using particularly gruesome methods to kill mili-

tary rivals and civilians alike, including beheading, lighting them on fire, or launching rockets at them from just meters away.

As the group advanced on ancient city Palmyra in 2015, it killed dozens of civilians, accusing them of being regime loyalists, then staged mass executions of government troops in the city's theatre. According to one activist group, IS has already begun executing Syrian soldiers it took captive during the clashes in Deir Ezzor. IS executed 10 soldiers "by driving over them with tanks," said Omar Abu Leila, an activist from Deir Ezzor 24, which publishes news on the city. "If IS seizes regime-held neighborhoods, it could carry out massacres. This is a huge source of concern for us," he said.

Hunger will ravage us

In its push for Deir Ezzor, the jihadist group has launched salvos of rockets on the neighborhoods it besieged. "Shells have rained down on us for five days," Umm Inas, another resident, said by phone. "There's very little movement in

the street because people are afraid of these shells, which spare no one," the 45-year-old said. She warned the humanitarian situation was getting increasingly dire, after the World Food Program said on Tuesday it could no longer carry out air drops over the city because of the fighting. "If the situation continues like this, hunger will ravage us. The air drops were our only lifeline," Umm Inas said.

The WFP has been dropping humanitarian aid into Deir Ezzor since April 2016, and the government-held area is the only place in Syria where the agency has permission for the drops. In the past, government and Russian warplanes have also delivered desperately needed humanitarian aid to the city via air drops. A medical source in the city told AFP more than 100 civilians had been wounded in the recent fighting, and some were taken north to the Kurdish-majority city of Qamishli. "Some intractable cases were flown to Qamishli because they need special treatment that isn't available in Deir Ezzor," the source said.—AFP



BARTALLA: A masked Iraqi counter-terrorism service member (CTS) poses for a picture in the town of Bartalla, east of Mosul, as they search for Islamic State (IS) group fighters yesterday, during an ongoing military operation against the jihadists.—AFP

GAMBIA'S JAMMEH CLINGS ON AS TOURISTS FLEE

BANJUL, Gambia: Gambian President Yahya Jammeh looked determined to cling to power yesterday as his mandate came to an end, while tourists packed onto planes in an exodus sparked by the country's state of emergency. Jammeh said Tuesday the emergency measure was necessary due to interference of foreign powers in the country's Dec 1 election, which the president of 22 years lost to opponent Adama Barrow. Barrow, who is currently sheltering in neighboring Senegal, maintains his inauguration will go ahead today on Gambian soil, putting the country on a collision course.

Jammeh's declaration immediately triggered travel advisory warnings by Britain and the Netherlands, with around 1,000 British tourists expected to leave on special flights on Wednesday alone. "It's because of the uncertainty and the likelihood an ECOWAS standby force will have to be deployed," a diplomatic source said. The 15-nation Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS) has repeatedly urged Jammeh to respect the

outcome of the vote and step aside, a call backed by the UN Security Council, African Union and others.

In Washington, the US State Department urged Jammeh to "peacefully hand over power" to Barrow, but a military option is becoming more likely by the hour. A source at Nigeria's military HQ said a deployment to Senegal, whose territory surrounds The Gambia, would happen "very soon." Under the Gambian constitution a state of emergency lasts up to 90 days if the national assembly confirms it-which the legislature did late Tuesday.

Brian and Yvonne Souch, a couple from Witney in southern England, said they were unaware of the potential risk of flying to the country 10 days ago and felt tour company Thomas Cook should have kept them better informed. "We didn't know anything until we came down for breakfast," Brian Souch said, sitting in shorts and sleeveless T-shirt in the lobby of a hotel in the Kololi tourist strip.—AFP

PATIENCE WEARS THIN IN FALLUJAH, SIX MONTHS AFTER IS OUSTER

FALLUJAH, Iraq: More than six months after Iraqi forces retook Fallujah from the Islamic State group, reconstruction is slow and the government risks alienating those residents who have returned to the city. "There are no members of the Daesh terrorist organization left in Fallujah," the police chief, Colonel Jamal al-Jumaili, said, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "Fallujah is a safe city," he insisted. Iraqi forces retook Fallujah, an emblematic jihadist bastion just 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of Baghdad, in June 2016 with relative ease but that victory came at a hefty price. A large number of homes were destroyed by the fighting and several neighborhoods are still off-limits to civilians due to the possible presence of booby-traps planted by IS in their retreat.

The Norwegian Refugee Council said last month that only about 10 percent of homes in Fallujah were inhabitable. "Nothing works here, there's no water, no electricity and houses have been destroyed," said Firas Mahmud, a 25-year-old who returned to Fallujah after IS was defeated and is currently unemployed. Another man met on the street in Fallujah had the same grievances and complained of the lack of services and jobs. "The authorities must do something," said the young man, who gave his name as Mustafa. The Fallujah municipality defended its record but Mayor Issa al-Sayer mostly called for "the help of the international community to allow Fallujah residents to live in stability."

Lack of funds

Baghdad has promised to enable the speedy return of Fallujah residents, who were all displaced during the reconquest of their city, but the government is cash-strapped. Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's government "lacks or may lack the focus and resources to adequately budget for an adequate reconstruction effort," said Omar Lamrani, an analyst with the Stratfor think tank. "Baghdad's finances are already stretched with low energy prices and the costly demands of war, and corruption and cronyism affect the direction of the limited funds available," he said.

The risk that observers were warning against before the operation to retake Fallujah even started is that unkept promises will fuel a sense among its Sunni residents that they are being marginalized by the government, which is domi-

nated by Shiite parties. Fallujah has long been known as a rebel city and over the past decade and a half been a hub of opposition, first to occupying US-led forces and then to the Iraqi government.

In the winter of 2012-2013, protests spread across Anbar province, in which Fallujah lies, complaining that Iraq's Sunni minority was being stigmatized by then prime minister Nuri al-Maliki. In January 2014, rebels took control of the city, which was eventually overrun by jihadists from what became known as the Islamic State group. To retake Fallujah, Baghdad relied on its regular forces but also on the Hashed al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation), a paramilitary organization dominated by Shiite militia groups with close ties to Iran.

Hashed presence

The police chief insisted that "only the army and the police are present" inside the city. Hashed al-Shaabi forces hold positions in towns and rural areas around the city, he said. Some residents of the overwhelmingly Sunni area continue to be afraid of the Hashed al-Shaabi, some

of whose components have been accused of sectarian-motivated abuses against civilians. United Nations human rights chief Zeid Raad Al Hussein said in July that there was strong evidence that Ketaab Hezbollah, one of the main militias that fought alongside security forces in the operation, carried out atrocities.

Such allegations complicate the government's efforts to win over the population, "a critical step if it wishes to maintain a secure control over the city in the long run," Lamrani said. Hashed "leadership has increasingly exerted efforts recently to crack down on negative sectarianism, though such behavior unfortunately continues to exist at some level in the lower ranks," he said.

The analyst warned the same concern applied to Mosul, IS's last major stronghold in Iraq. Three months into a huge operation, the head of Iraq's special forces announced that the eastern side of the city had been "liberated" but the other half is still fully under IS control. Hashed forces have cleared vast, mostly desert areas southwest of Mosul but not entered the city.—AFP



FALLUJAH: Iraqi men walk past damaged buildings in a street in the city of Fallujah, that was recaptured from the Islamic State (IS) group about six months ago, as life starts to slowly return to the city.—AFP

OBAMA COMMUTES SENTENCE OF WIKILEAKER MANNING

WASHINGTON: US President Barack Obama on Tuesday slashed the sentence of transgender army private Chelsea Manning, who had been sentenced to 35 years behind bars for handing classified US documents to WikiLeaks. Obama pardoned 64 people and commuted the sentences of 209 others including 29-year-old Manning, who will now be released in May in one of his final acts as president. Manning was convicted in August 2013 of espionage and other offenses, after admitting to the leak of 700,000 sensitive military and diplomatic documents.

The cache included military logs from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and cables offering sensitive—and often embarrassing—bare knuckle-diplomatic assessments of foreign leaders and world events. Then Bradley Manning pleaded guilty and was sentenced by military court martial. She has since been held in an all-male prison, at times in solitary confinement, and has

attempted to commit suicide twice. Activists had argued her sentence is excessive and point to the psychological frailty of the transgender soldier.

"This move could quite literally save Chelsea's life," said Chase Strangio of the American Civil Liberties Union. Still, Obama's move is something of a surprise, coming in the midst of a scandal over election-related hacking. Obama has imposed sanctions on Russian intelligence services over the hack of Democratic party emails, some of which were released via WikiLeaks.

Victory

In recent weeks the White House had refused to be drawn on a possible commutation or pardon. But spokesman Josh Earnest did attempt to paint a stark difference between Manning—who went through the courts and admitted wrongdoing—and the likes of Edward Snowden. Snowden, a former NSA contractor, fled to Hong Kong

and then Russia in 2013 after revealing a highly classified global communications and internet surveillance system. He was not on Obama's list of commutations or pardons, but did tweet his thanks.

"Let it be said here in earnest, with good heart: Thanks, Obama," WikiLeaks—which has been linked to last year's election hacks—claimed "victory" and thanked those who campaigned on Manning's behalf. "Your courage & determination made the impossible possible," the group tweeted, citing founder Julian Assange. But there was no suggestion Assange—who is holed up in the Ecuadoran embassy in London—would make good on a promise to be extradited to the United States if Manning was freed.

"If Obama grants Manning clemency Assange will agree to US extradition despite clear unconstitutionality of DoJ case," the group tweeted last week. White House officials dismissed any link between

WikiLeaks' pledge and Obama's decision on Manning.

Backlash

Republicans expressed outrage at Obama's decision. "This is just outrageous," said House Speaker Paul Ryan. "Chelsea Manning's treachery put American lives at risk and exposed some of our nation's most sensitive secrets." "President Obama now leaves in place a dangerous precedent that those who compromise our national security won't be held accountable for their crimes." Republican Senator Tom Cotton, who is tipped as a possible future leader of the party, expressed fury at Obama's decision, saying "we ought not treat a traitor like a martyr."

"I don't understand why the president would feel special compassion for someone who endangered the lives of our troops, diplomats, intelligence officers, and allies," Republicans have been on the back foot over Russian hacks that appeared to

help their presidential candidate Donald Trump. Among the others who received commutations was Puerto Rican nationalist Oscar Lopez-Rivera, who has been in prison for more than three decades on terrorism charges. Obama also pardoned James Cartwright, a former four-star general who lied to the FBI about his discussions with journalists about Iran's nuclear program.

Another round of commutations is expected on Thursday, officials suggested. Many will look to see whether the new list includes Bowe Bergdahl, a US Army sergeant held captive for five years by the Taliban before his release in a prisoner swap. He is due to be court-martialed for desertion. Other names omitted Tuesday were General David Petraeus—who pleaded guilty to improperly sharing classified information—and Obama's ally Hillary Clinton. There had been wild speculation that Obama may choose to preemptively pardon her, forestalling any Trump-led prose-

TRUMP: 'I DON'T LIKE TWEETING'

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump, whose early-morning rants and policy pronouncements on Twitter have left the world hanging on his every typed word, said he doesn't like using the social media platform in comments to air yesterday. "I don't like tweeting," Trump told Fox News's "Fox & Friends" program. "I have other things I could be doing. But I get very dishonest media, very dishonest press. And it's my only way that I can counteract," he said in excerpts of the interview released late Tuesday. Since winning the presidency in November, the Republican has exploited Twitter to make administrative announcements, weigh in on foreign policy—and hurl barbs at anyone who crosses him.

Asked if he would continue to use it as president, Trump said: "Yes." Over the weekend, the billionaire businessman became embroiled in his latest Twitter spat when he tangled with civil rights movement icon Congressman John Lewis. The 76-year-old said he would not attend Trump's inauguration on Friday, citing what he called Russian interference in the election. "Congressman John Lewis should spend more time on fixing and helping his district, which is in horrible shape and falling apart (not to mention crime infested) rather than falsely complaining about the election results," Trump tweeted in response. "All talk, talk,

talk-no action or results. Sad!"

In the Fox interview, Trump continued his attack saying Lewis had never skipped an inauguration, although the congressman's office later acknowledged he had missed George W Bush's in 2001. "So he got caught and it's pretty bad. So let's see what happens," Trump said. Lewis is among a growing list of Congress members, currently around 50, who have said they will boycott Trump's inauguration, which the president-elect has welcomed as a way to create space for more spectators. "As far as other people not going, that's OK, because we need seats so badly," Trump said. "I hope they give me their tickets."

A-list celebrities have also backed off in droves, leaving Trump struggling like none of his predecessors to find household names as entertainment. "Many of the celebrities that are saying they're not going, they were never invited. I don't want the celebrities, I want the people, and we have the biggest celebrities in the world there," Trump told Fox. He took a similar line towards fashion designers, many of whom have declined to clothe his wife Melania or have discouraged others from dressing the former model. Asked about Tom Ford's refusal, Trump said that his wife: "Never asked Tom Ford, doesn't like Tom Ford, doesn't like his designs."—AFP



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

TRUMP NEEDS TO LEARN HOW TO CRY FROM OBAMA

'SQUEEZING OUT A TEAR WOULD HAVE AN AMAZING EFFECT'

PARIS: Donald Trump has one big lesson to learn from outgoing US President Barack Obama—he needs to learn to be cool about crying. "If he could squeeze one tear out during his inauguration" on Friday, "people will turn around quite quickly their feelings towards him", British behavioral expert Judi James said. "Clearly he is going to go swanning out there with his alpha male feathers strutting, but if at the right moment he could squeeze out a tear it would have an amazing effect on people," said the author of "The Body Language Bible." "I think there is quite an emotional guy in there somewhere," said added. Showing his emotions certainly worked for Obama, James argued.

The president has wept at least 10 times on camera since he took office, most tellingly when tears poured down his cheeks last year when he talked about the toll gun violence was taking on America. He wiped away another few earlier this month when paying tribute to his wife Michelle and his teenage daughters in a farewell speech in Chicago. Tears are one of the most powerful weapons politicians have in their arsenals, James insisted.

And for Trump, "crying would be ideal" to allay the worries of a world fretting about what his presidency will hold, she said. "I think so many people are depending on Trump now that unmasking himself as quite a warm, well-meaning character with values that he has been hiding all this time" would go a long way.

For her, Obama's tears helped show his sincerity, connected him with the public and undercut his reputation as an intellectual.

Tears show empathy

"Tears help to bring him down from the pedestal. He is a bit more of a New Man. You can imagine him doing the shopping whereas up to now the US presidency has been an alpha male preserve. And it is again (with Trump)." Obama's comfort with big emotions was also evident when he surprised his tearful vice president Joe Biden with the highest US civilian honor last week as they prepared to leave office. Crying specialist Lauren Bylsma, an assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Pittsburgh, said it was clear that "Obama is a man that is comfortable expressing his emotions in public."

"In terms of character, we know that crying is associated with personality traits such as higher levels of empathy," she said. Despite his hard man image, Russian leader Vladimir Putin has also shed tears several times in public, mostly notably after winning back the presidency in 2012 despite street protests he claimed were orchestrated by the West. Crying at the pain of others makes politicians particularly attractive, James added. But psychologist Jean-Pierre Friedman insisted politicians well up more because they are afraid of losing power. "Most of them are not the sensitive type. They cry the day they lose power," said the French psychoanalyst and author of two books on politician's inner lives.

Danger of faking it
They would take the loss of power "as a bereavement, or not being able to put their projects into force." Whatever the case, Friedman said he could not imagine Trump ever blubbing publicly. "He's someone from another generation. Fifty years ago the attitude was 'men do not cry'. He's a hardened old cowboy." Indeed, the president-elect has ridiculed those who cried at his election victory and was famously irked by a crying baby at one of his rallies. James, however, is convinced that he is capable of shedding a tear in public.

"I think Trump could cry, but it would be more to do with self-pity or even anger", which does not go down so well. But tears can also be

a politician's undoing, James warned, particularly if they are seen as put on. She pointed to the former British prime minister Tony Blair whose emotional openness was first seen as a breath of fresh air only to be later ridiculed.

"Subliminally people are very good at spotting real tears from fake ones. "When Tony Blair blinked back the tears after the death of Princess Diana... it created a huge moment of empathy, particularly as the British royal family were not coming up with the tears. That bonded people with Blair." But he used the same technique a lot over the years, usually when he was put on the spot. "We saw him do it too much, particularly over the war in Iraq. It looked like tears to order," she added.—AFP

TRUMP SUPPORTERS FLOCK TO WASHINGTON FOR INAUGURAL

WASHINGTON: Republican Linda Cools journeyed from Chicago to Washington to be a part of history: the upcoming inauguration of her favorite candidate Donald Trump to be the United States' 45th president. "I'm very excited. It'll be wonderful to see a new transition, a peaceful transition that does not happen globally," the 50-year-old public relations writer said as she shopped for Trump inauguration souvenirs just a stone's throw from the White House. Trump fans are converging on the nation's capital ahead of Friday's swearing in, keen to bear witness as the political novice takes the reins of US government—and eager to see his legions of critics proven wrong.

As authorities fenced off parts of the inaugural parade route and viewing area, the weather was not obliging the city's visitors Tuesday as rain drenched the US Capitol grounds and Washington Mall, where some 800,000 people are expected to gather on Friday. But several visitors were already soaking up the patriotic spectacle that accompanies the transfer of power every four years. Reconciliation should be the first order of business when Trump delivers his inaugural address, Cools said, acknowledging the divisive campaign fight between Trump and Democratic rival Hillary Clinton.

"I think it's more of a coming together than a coming apart," she nodded, calling for Trump to temper his rhetoric. "We'd like him to reel it in a little bit." It will be Cools's first inauguration, and she spent the day visiting the city's monuments including the Lincoln Memorial, where she admitted to turning emotional as she listened to a military band. "It reminds you how important what we have here is," she said. Vasi Gaua and her husband traveled from San Bernardino, California for the inauguration, and despite the rain and frustrations with catching a city tour bus they remained optimistic about Friday's "historic moment."

"I was always a big fan" of Trump, she said. "I like how he's forward with people, tells it like it is." Gaua, 35, helps with her family's landscape business back home. But she and her husband were spending the week in Washington, thrilled that they snagged inauguration tickets through their congressman. Gaua recognized the divisions exposed during the campaign, but suggested the coming days be for healing, not protests. At least 50 US House Democrats have announced they will not attend the inauguration. "I mean... he's your president, what are you going to do about it, if he's not your president?" she bristled. "You can always move."

Hot mess

Nick Allen, a remodeling business owner from Columbia, Missouri who voted for Trump, said he and his family were in town for an FBI graduation ceremony, and stayed for the inauguration. "The country was due

for a change, while at the same time it should be an interesting presidency," Allen, 47, said cautiously. "We're all wondering what it's going to be like" with an outsider at the helm, he said. In other words, Trump is "a hot mess," Allen's wife interjected. Republican skeptics have also arrived, hoping their new commander in chief can dial back his confrontational rhetoric, heal a divided nation and focus on leading the world's biggest economy.

"I'm trying to get on the bandwagon, but it's a challenge," admitted Peter Kelly of New York, as he took in the splendor of the American flag-draped lobby of the new Trump International Hotel blocks from the White House. "I want to hear him give a speech of inclusiveness, and what America's importance in the world is, and not take an arrogant tone about it." Outside the US Capitol, some Democratic visitors were refusing to let the election's outcome ruin their plans.

Angie Norton, who works in pharmaceuticals in northern California, joined her sister-in-law Eden Arnold, and Arnold's two children and mother for a major trip to Washington. As Clinton supporters, instead of celebrating Trump's rise they are set to join protests against a man that Norton insists "instills hate." "We came for Hillary Clinton's inauguration and this other guy was elected," Norton quipped. Her family had been looking forward to seeing the first woman ascend to the Oval Office. Instead, they will witness the dawn of the Trump era. "We did not want to cancel the trip," Norton insisted. "Everything was paid for."—AFP



NEW YORK: Donald Trump Holds Meetings At Trump Tower Stephen Miller, Donald Trump's incoming senior White House adviser for policy, arrives at Trump Tower in New York City yesterday.—AFP

EX-US PRESIDENT GEORGE H W BUSH HOSPITALIZED

WASHINGTON: Former US president George H W Bush has been hospitalized yet again in Houston, local media reported yesterday. The 92-year-old, who has seen his share of recent health incidents, had fallen ill but was in stable condition and "doing fine," his chief of staff Jean Becker told the Houston Chronicle. The former president was admitted to Houston Methodist Hospital and is expected to return home in several days, although the reason for his hospitalization was not provided, according to local CBS affiliate KHOU.

The oldest of the four living former US presidents, Bush, who served in office from 1989 to 1993, uses a wheelchair and has

seemed frail in recent public appearances. Bush is the patriarch of one of America's most prominent political dynasties and is father to former US president George W Bush (2001-2009) and former Florida governor Jeb Bush, who was a Republican contender in the US presidential primary.

In July 2015, the 41st president was treated in a Maine hospital after falling and breaking a bone in his neck. The previous December, he was admitted to Houston Methodist Hospital for breathing problems. Bush was treated at the same facility in November 2012 for bronchitis, spending nearly two months in the hospital.—AFP



HOUSTON: In this file photo, former President George H W Bush waves as he arrives at NRG Stadium before the NCAA Final Four tournament college basketball semifinal game between Villanova and Oklahoma in Houston.—AP

REELING ITALY HIT BY QUAKE TRIPLE-PUNCH

ROME: Three earthquakes hit central Italy yesterday in a stinging triple-punch that brought fresh terror to an area still reeling from deadly quakes last year and struggling to cope with heavy snowfall. Monitors said the first quake, which struck at 10.25 am (0925 GMT) was around 5.3 magnitude. A second, some 50 minutes later, was put at 5.7 magnitude by the European Mediterranean Seismological Centre (EMSC) and was quickly followed by a third, measured at 5.5.

The tremors were felt across the Abruzzo, Lazio and Marche regions and also in Rome, over 100 kilometers away. Train services on some mainlines and the Rome underground were suspended on safety grounds. The Italian foreign ministry building and some schools in the capital were evacuated. Those schools that were

not already closed due to snow in towns and villages closer to the affected area were also evacuated.

Emergency services mobilized helicopters to check the impact of the quakes and the national civil protection agency was assessing the damage in villages closest to the epicenter. There were no immediate reports of building collapses but residents of the city of Aquila, where over 300 people died in a 2009 earthquake, rushed into the snow-covered streets in scenes of panic.

Did we do something bad?

The epicenters of the quakes were pinpointed in an area close to Amatrice, the mountain town devastated by the first of the earthquakes which struck the mountainous centre of the country between

August and October last year. Nearly 300 people died in that 6.0 magnitude quake, most of them in or close to Amatrice, a beauty spot which was packed with holiday makers at the height of the summer season. Two further quakes rattled the region in October, with the most powerful measuring 6.5 magnitude.

The latest quake came in the wake of 36 hours of continuous snowfall in areas close to Amatrice and another badly-hit mountain town, Norcia. Amatrice mayor Sergio Pirozzi cursed his town's bad luck. "I don't know if we did something bad. That's what I have been asking since yesterday. We have got up to two meters of snow and now another earthquake. What can I say? I have no words." Stefano Petrucci, mayor of nearby Accumoli, described the situation as

"dramatic." "The roads are impassable because of the snow and we have hardly any trucks available to clear them, some of them are broken down. We can't fight a war with bows and arrows."

A vulnerable country

As a result of last year's quakes many residents have been evacuated to temporary accommodation outside the earthquake-prone zone. The last of 2016's major quakes, which struck on October 30, was the most powerful since a 6.9 magnitude one struck near Naples in southern Italy in 1980, leaving 3,000 people dead. The October quakes did not directly result in any deaths but thousands were left homeless and scores of historic buildings suffered serious damage, much of it irreparable. Italy has long been

accustomed to dealing with earthquakes and the Amatrice disaster in particular led to questions being asked as to why so many buildings had not been upgraded to ensure they did not pose a threat to life in the event of predictable tremors.

Much of Italy's land mass and some of its surrounding waters are prone to seismic activity with the highest risk concentrated along its mountainous central spine. Italy straddles the Eurasian and African tectonic plates, making it vulnerable to seismic activity when they move. The worst disaster of recent times was the 1980 one near Naples. The worst of the 20th Century was in 1908 when an estimated 95,000 died in tidal waves following a quake centered in the waters between mainland Italy and Sicily.—AFP

ESTONIANS JOIN PARAMILITARY FORCES TO FACE RUSSIA FEARS

NARVA, Estonia: A machine guns rattles as pale and exhausted teams of Estonian weekend warriors struggle to climb a final obstacle: the wall of Narva Castle facing their country's powerful neighbour Russia. The bullets fired on the snowy banks of the Narva river separating Estonia from Russia are blanks, but the steely determination of volunteers participating in Utria Assault, the NATO member's biggest annual military competition, is palpable. Ruth Maadla, a waitress who spends her weekends as a paramilitary volunteer, said she would give her all to help defend the small Baltic nation of 1.3 million people "if anything ever happened".

Sporting white winter camouflage gear, a headlamp and a huge backpack, the 29-year-old who has just finished a brutal 90-kilometre (56-mile) marching race in bone-chilling subzero temperatures is in high-spirits, despite being caked in mud and nursing painful blisters on her heels. Like other east Europeans, Estonians were deeply disturbed by Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and its subsequent support for separatists in eastern Ukraine. US President-elect Donald Trump then raised more concerns with his campaign threat to think twice about defending NATO's eastern allies.

These factors coupled with Kremlin sabre rattling in the Baltic region—especially in its heavily militarized Kaliningrad exclave—have triggered a paramilitary revival in eastern European states that were under Moscow's thumb during the Soviet era. Part of the USSR until 1991, Estonia has seen its Kaitseliit volunteer paramilitary force expand by 10 percent over the last two years.

Citizens with strong will

With 16,000 members-up to 25,600 including units for women and children the organization is seen as a crucial extension of the EU member's modest military force comprising 6,500 peacetime personnel, half of them conscripts. While some paramilitary volunteers play war games to hone skills like shooting or orienteering, others prefer more peaceful duty like welding knitting needles to make socks for war victims in eastern Ukraine. The Kaitseliit force has even attracted some volunteers who are ethnic Russian, part of Estonia's largest minority accounting for about a quarter of its population.

Kaitseliit commander, Brigadier General Meelis Kiili, describes the force he leads as "a very important element in deterrence" when facing Russia. The role of "ordinary citizens with a strong will to defend" must not be

underestimated, Kiili said, as he congratulated a troupe of volunteers exhausted after the two sleepless nights they spent marching through snowy forests in the race. Many are former military conscripts, but more and more ordinary Estonians and women, like Maadla or Sille Laks, are joining. A 30-year-old cyber security expert from Tallinn, Laks said that she has spent around 400 hours in Kaitseliit basic training over three months.

"It's about doing something for my country," said the athletic public servant as she braved the freezing cold before dawn to supervise one of the checkpoints in the competition.

While NATO's collective defense clause is the bottom-line guarantee of Estonia's security, analysts acknowledge that paramilitaries do have a role to play. "In the worst case scenario, Russia could advance very swiftly to take all of Estonia, but with its own resistance, Estonia could buy more time" for help to arrive, said Kristi Raik, a senior Baltic security researcher at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, stressing that any such attack was unlikely at the moment.

Under NATO's wing

Moscow upped the ante in the Baltic region late last year by deploying nuclear-capable Iskander missiles into its Kaliningrad outpost bordering NATO member Lithuania and Poland and sending two ships capable of launching warheads to the Baltic Sea.

The move came on the heels of NATO's decision to deploy four multinational battalions to eastern Europe, including a 1,100-strong rotational unit that will be stationed as of April at the Tapa military base, an hour's drive from the Estonian capital Tallinn. Over the next few months, the United States will also deploy part of a 3,500-troop armored brigade to Estonia and Baltic neighbors Latvia and Lithuania.

They have all eyed Trump's pro-Moscow rhetoric with mounting unease. Ordered by the outgoing Obama administration to reinforce NATO's vulnerable eastern flank, the US brigade arrived in Poland last week as part of one of the largest deployment of US forces in Europe since the Cold War, an operation that Moscow angrily branded a security threat. While the advent of a Trump presidency adds an element of uncertainty to future US commitment to defend vulnerable eastern European allies, Estonia's paramilitary chief remains confident about NATO's resolve. "It's not only Trump we are talking about, NATO has 28 members," Kiili said.—AFP



BELGRADE: This file photo shows a man walking past a train bound for Kosovo at the main railway station in Belgrade. — AFP

SERBIA AND KOSOVO DECLARE WAR OF WORDS

'SERBIA COUNTS ON THE ASSISTANCE OF RUSSIA'

PRISTINA: A propagandist train, a rising wall and the ghosts of the late 1990s conflict: Serbia and Kosovo are engaged in a disturbing war of symbols and words, unprecedented in recent years. "Kosovo is Serbia" said a message in 20 languages on the side of a train, painted in the colors of the Serbian flag, which left Belgrade on Saturday, destined for northern Kosovo. The move was lambasted as a "deliberate provocation" by Kosovo's President Hashim Thaci, who suggested it was part of a plan to annex the Serb-populated north of his country.

"Serbia counts on the assistance of Russia," said Thaci. A former Serbian province with a predominantly ethnic Albanian population, Kosovo unilaterally declared independence in 2008, a decade after its Albanian insurgents fought the forces of Belgrade's late strongman Slobodan Milosevic. Kosovo's sovereignty has since been recognized by more than 100 countries, but not by Serbia and its traditional ally Russia. The train, decorated inside with Serbian Orthodox religious imagery, supposedly represented the freedom of movement of Serb people—a crucial point in a normalization process between the two sides that began back in 2011.

Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vucic eventually halted the train before it crossed the border but he also upped the pressure, saying he took the decision to "avoid a conflict and save lives" based on fears the train would be attacked.

He accused the Kosovo government of sending police units to the north to "provoke a wide-ranging conflict", alleging plans to blow up the tracks that were denied by Pristina.

"We do not want war, but we will even send the army if needed to protect Serbs from possible killings," Serbian President Tomislav Nikolic told reporters on Saturday. Speaking to Western diplomats the following day, Kosovo's Foreign Minister Enver Hoxhaj said that Belgrade's actions towards Kosovo "show that Serbia wants to ignite new conflicts." Belgrade and Pristina both aspire to join the European Union, and EU-brokered talks between the two sides since 2011 have led to greater freedom of movement and goods and improved police cooperation.

But nearly 20 years after the Kosovo war in which 13,000 people were killed, progress has stalled. The disputes are accumulating: Kosovo's citizens were outraged at the Jan 4 arrest in France of former premier Ramush Haradinaj on suspicion of war crimes, owing to an international arrest warrant issued by Belgrade.

A former head of the insurgent Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), Haradinaj has been released on bail but cannot leave France while an extradition request from Belgrade is examined, which could take months. He has twice before been tried and acquitted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague.

Building a wall

Relations have further deteriorated in the town of Mitrovica in northern Kosovo, where Serb authorities have started erecting a concrete wall on the banks of the Ibar river. The wall's construction, by a bridge that divides the town's Serb-dominated north and largely ethnic Albanian south, has angered Pristina, which says it is cementing the town's divisions and must be knocked down. But the mayor of North Mitrovica, Goran Rakic, says the wall is simply practical and will protect pedestrians from traffic. It is not up to Pristina to decide "what would and what would not be built," he warned. Kosovo Prime Minister Isa Mustafa said that the issue of the wall "will be settled in accordance with the law."

Serbian political analyst Aleksandar Popov said the renewed tensions could be explained by domestic politics, with Serbia entering a campaigning period ahead of presidential elections in April. Kosovo remains a sensitive issue 18 years after a NATO bombing campaign against Serbia aimed at ending the war, and Popov said the ruling SNS party wanted to anticipate voters' criticisms over how they have handled Kosovo and relations with Europe. Belul Beqaj, a political sciences professor in Kosovo, said Belgrade's leaders had a habit of trying to distract voters from internal problems by focusing on Kosovo ahead of elections. — AFP



NARVA: Estonian volunteers participate in a military training during Utria Assault, the NATO member's biggest annual military competition in Narva. — AFP

EAST TIMOR TO HOLD PRESIDENTIAL POLL IN MARCH

DILI, East Timor: East Timor will hold a presidential election on March 20, an official said yesterday, and Nobel Peace laureate Jose Ramos Horta may try to make a comeback as head of state. It will be the third presidential vote in the tiny island nation since it won independence in 2002 following a brutal, 24-year occupation by neighboring Indonesia. "The president... issued a decree Tuesday which stated that the first round of the presidential election will be held on March 20," Nelyo Isaac Sarmiento, state secretary for social information, said.

Ramos-Horta, who lived in exile during the years of occupation and was East Timor's voice on the international stage, was a major figure in the country's politics for a decade after independence serving as both prime minister and president. He lost his post as president in 2012 elections and vowed to step back from politics, but analysts say he is considering running in the March polls for the largely ceremonial post. However his likely rival Francisco Guterres—a former guerrilla fighter known

by his nom de guerre "Lu Olo"—is seen as a stronger candidate.

Up to six candidates are expected to compete in the first round in March, said Sarmiento, although none has officially declared their candidacy. No candidate is expected to win the required 50 percent of the vote on March 20, meaning a run-off will likely be held on April 20. Incumbent President Taur Matan Ruak is not expected to stand. "Ruak has said he will not stand again as president and is very widely expected to run for parliament, with the intention of becoming prime minister," said Damien Kingsbury, an East Timor expert at Australia's Deakin University.

Nearly 750,000 Timorese are registered voters, Sarmiento said. The presidential poll sets the stage for parliamentary elections expected in July, which are more important as they will decide who becomes prime minister. During the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, a poor country of 1.1 million people with an oil-dependent economy, around 183,000 people died from fighting, starvation or disease.—AFP

JOBLESS DAD-OF-SIX WELCOMES FINLAND'S BASIC INCOME TRIAL

HELSINKI: For just one hour of work, Juha Jarvinen had to fill out piles of paperwork only to see his unemployment insurance docketed. But with Finland's universal basic income test, he's hoping for a fresh start. As of Jan 1, a two-year experiment will see 2,000 unemployed Finns receive a monthly unconditional payment of 560 Euros (\$590). If the test is successful, the plan will be rolled out nationwide, though the exact amount and conditions remain vague at this stage. Finland's pro-austerity, centre-right government wants to test whether the guaranteed income, perhaps somewhat counter intuitively, spurs the jobless to get off the couch and find work.

Jarvinen, a 37-year-old father of six, will receive the money no strings attached, in addition to his monthly child allowance benefits of 800 Euros. The big difference compared to unemployment insurance is that if he finds a job he is free to earn as much money as he can, and it won't affect his universal basic income. The Finnish Social Insurance Institution (KELA) insists none of the test participants will lose out financially during the experiment. Jarvinen is enthusiastic, convinced the guaranteed income will be a game-changer.

"Five years ago my business went bankrupt and ever since I've wanted to become an entrepreneur again," he said. But each time he was tempted to take odd jobs to make a little extra cash, there was no incentive for him to work since his unemployment insurance would have been reduced by the same amount. Describing the period after his bankruptcy as a "humiliation", Jarvinen ended up turning down small jobs, holding out instead for a full-time job with a proper salary. His family has had to scrape by with his wife's salary from her

nursing job, his modest unemployment benefits, and their child allowance benefits.

But they've had to do without extras, in a country home to one of the most generous cradle-to-grave welfare states but where the cost of living is high. Designed as an incentive to help the unemployed get a foot back in the labor market, the universal basic income experiment has received broad backing across Finland's political spectrum. The public is however more divided. Left-wing voters support the idea—some even say the amount is too low—while those on the right see a risk of complacency.

Stimulate employment

The national confederation of employee unions, SAK, says it fears a sale on labor. "We're not in favor of labor markets where decent wages are not paid and employees' living is partly financed by social security. In practice, that'd be a subsidy to the companies," SAK chairman Jarkko Ekoranta says. Euro zone member Finland is slowly recovering from a three-year recession that ended in 2015, but its unemployment rate is still relatively high at 8.7 percent and, more worryingly, every third unemployed person has been out of work for over a year. — AFP



HELSINKI: This file photo shows a client entering the Employment Agency in Helsinki, Finland. — AFP

PAKISTAN WILL NOT FREE DOCTOR WHO HELPED US FIND BIN LADEN

ISLAMABAD: A jailed Pakistani doctor believed to have helped the CIA hunt down al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden will be neither released nor handed to the United States, Pakistan's law minister has told legislators, media reported yesterday. Dr Shakil Afridi, hailed as a hero by US officials, was arrested after US forces killed bin Laden in May 2011 in a secret raid in a northern Pakistani town that plunged relations between the uneasy strategic partners to a new low. Pakistan has accused the doctor of running a fake vaccination campaign in which he collected DNA samples to help the US

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) confirm bin Laden's identity.

Afridi was arrested soon after the bin Laden raid and charged with having ties to militant Islamists, which he denied. "The law is taking its course and Afridi is having full opportunity of a fair trial," the Daily Times newspaper quoted Law Minister Zahid Hamid as telling the upper house, in response to a lawmaker's query about reports of a possible release. "Afridi worked against the law and our national interest, and the Pakistan government has repeatedly been telling the United States that

under our law he committed a crime and was facing the law." In 2012, Afridi was sentenced to 33 years in prison after being convicted of being a member of militant group Lashkar-e-Islam. That conviction was overturned in 2013, but Afridi was then charged with murder, relating to the death of a patient eight years earlier. He remains in jail awaiting trial. Many Pakistanis were infuriated by the US raid to grab bin Laden in the military garrison town of Abbottabad, just a two-hour drive from Islamabad, the capital. Pakistani officials describe bin Laden's long presence in Abbottabad as a security lapse and reject

any suggestion that members of the military or intelligence services were complicit in hiding him.

Last May, Pakistan's foreign ministry angrily criticized US President-elect Donald Trump for saying he could get Pakistan to free Afridi "within two minutes." Pakistan joined the US war on militancy after the Sept 11, 2001, attacks on the United States. But US officials often describe Islamabad as an unreliable partner that has sheltered the Afghan Taliban leadership and demand tougher action against militant groups based along its border with Afghanistan. —Reuters

OIC ENVOY CALLS FOR UN INTERVENTION TO AVOID GENOCIDE OF ROHINGYA MUSLIMS

KUALA LUMPUR: The United Nations should intervene in Myanmar's Rakhine State to stop further escalation of violence against Rohingya Muslims and avoid another genocide like in Cambodia and Rwanda, said the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's special envoy to Myanmar. The conflict which has left at least 86 dead and an estimated 66,000 people fleeing into Bangladesh since it started on Oct 9, 2016, is no longer an internal issue but of international concern, said Syed Hamid Albar, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Special Envoy to Myanmar.

Syed Hamid said the OIC should seek UN intervention. His comments come ahead of a special OIC meeting called by Malaysia today to discuss measures to deal with the conflict affecting the Rohingya minority, who are predominantly Muslim. "We don't want to see another genocide like in Cambodia or Rwanda," Syed Hamid told Reuters in an interview ahead of the meeting in Kuala Lumpur. "The international community just observed, and how many people died? We have lessons from the past, for us to learn from and see what we can do," he said. The OIC represents 57 states and acts as the collective voice of the Muslim world.

Refugees, residents and human rights groups say Myanmar soldiers have committed summary executions, raped Rohingya women and burned homes since military operations started in the north of Rakhine State on Oct 9. The government of predominantly Buddhist Myanmar, led by Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, has denied the accusations, saying many of the reports are fabricated, and it insists the strife in Rakhine State, where many Rohingya live,

is an internal matter. The military operations were in response to attacks on security posts near Myanmar's border with Bangladesh that killed nine police officers.

The Myanmar government has said that militants with overseas Islamist links were responsible. A Myanmar government spokesman said it will not attend the OIC meet as it is not an Islamic country, but that it had already made its actions clear to ASEAN members at their last meeting in December, and that UN intervention would only end up facing "unwanted resistance from local people." "So that's why the international community should have a positive approach and understand widely our country's conflict situation," said Zaw Htay, a spokesman for the office of Myanmar President Htin Kyaw. About 56,000 Rohingya now live in Muslim-majority Malaysia having fled previous unrest in Myanmar.

Malaysia, which is Southeast Asia's third-largest economy, broke the tradition of non-intervention by members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) by speaking out on the conflict, calling on the 10-member bloc to coordinate humanitarian aid and investigate alleged atrocities committed against the ethnic group. Zaw Htay criticized Malaysia for its outspoken position on the conflict, saying the country should manage "its own political crisis" and "avoid encouraging extremism and violence" in Myanmar. "Our new government is working seriously and carefully on the situation in Rakhine. We are working on a very complicated and tough problem with this internal conflict, so we need time to prevent it happening again," Zaw Htay said. —Reuters



INDIA: In this file photo, Bull tamers try to control a bull during an ancient heroic sporting event of the Tamils called Jallikattu, in Palamedu, about 575 kilometers south of Chennai, India. —AP

PROTESTS IN SOUTHERN INDIAN STATE OVER BULL TAMING BAN

DEMONSTRATORS CALL TO PRESERVE CULTURE

CHENNAI, India: A ban on a bull-taming festival, which has been blighted by allegations that the beasts are doped with liquor and then taunted with chili powder, triggered street protests in southern India yesterday. Demonstrators, mostly students, thronged the busy Marina Beach area in the city of Chennai to demand the lifting of the ban on the traditional Jallikattu event which is held during the winter harvest festival. "We are protesting against the ban and demand that it should be immediately lifted. We are here in support of preserving the culture of Tamils," Selva Kumar, a student leader at the protest site, said.

The protesters in Chennai, who began gathering on Tuesday night, say they will camp out until the authorities announce that the event will be allowed in future. India's Supreme Court outlawed Jallikattu last year after a plea by animal rights groups which have long argued that the event-held every year in different parts of Tamil Nadu state-is cruel. Unlike in traditional Spanish bullfighting, the animals are let loose into open fields and young men then compete to subdue them bare-handed.

Critics say organizers lace the bulls' feed with liquor to make them less steady on their feet and chuck chili powder into their faces to throw them into a sudden frenzy as they are released from a holding pen. The rights group PETA has released footage it says shows bull farmers doping their animals ahead of the event. But organizers of the festival insist the animals suffer no harm and Jallikattu is an established part of Tamil culture. Tensions have been escalating for the last week after hundreds of people were detained by police for allegedly organizing local Jallikattu contests in defiance of the court ban.

Police say the protests have remained peaceful so far but have spread to large parts of the state. Several popular Tamil film stars have voiced their support for the demonstrators as has India's leading spin bowler Ravichandran Ashwin. Opposition and ruling

parties in the state have also criticized the ban and want Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to have it overturned. A government led by Modi's predecessor did order a ban in 2011 but it was effectively ignored until last year's Supreme Court ruling. —AFP

TWO KILLED IN CLASHES OVER LAND FOR POWER STATION IN EASTERN INDIA

KOLKATA, India: Two people were killed and about a dozen wounded in eastern India when villagers protesting the takeover of their land for a power station clashed with police and government officials in the latest instance of violence over land use in the country. Hundreds of villagers blocked roads and burned tyres on Tuesday in Bhargar in West Bengal state to protest the construction of a substation by state-owned Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. Police fired tear gas and beat back crowds with batons. Two people died of gunshot wounds, although the police denied they had fired upon the protesters.

"The police showed restraint," said Sunil Chowdhury, the district police superintendent. Several policemen were injured and their vehicles damaged by protesters, he said. An investigation into the shootings is underway, he said. A protester, who asked not to be named for fear of retaliation, said shots were fired by the police and officials who supported the project. Local media reported political factions opposed to the state chief minister may have been to blame.

Work on the substation, being built on about 6 hectares of land, was suspended last

week after days of protests by villagers who objected to the transmission towers over their farmland and demanded more compensation. Government and company officials had said they would hold talks with the villagers to resolve the situation. "Work on the project will not resume if the villagers do not want it," said Mukul Roy, a member of the state's ruling Trinamool Congress party. Conflicts related to land have risen in India as demand for land for industrial and development projects has grown.

Farmers reluctant to give up land have stalled major projects, putting billions of dollars of investment at risk, according to a recent report. Several states have diluted laws to make land acquisitions easier for industrial and development projects as they try to boost growth and provide jobs. Last year, India's top court said land acquired by West Bengal for a Tata Motors factory must be returned to farmers after a decade-long battle during which the factory was moved to a different state. Mamata Banerjee, who led protests against the Tata land deal, was elected in 2011 to become the state's chief minister and has said her government will not forcefully acquire land. —Reuters



KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's Foreign Minister Anifah Aman speaks at a news conference, on the eve of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) meeting to discuss the Rohingya Muslims crisis, in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. —AFP

SRI LANKA SCUTTLES MOVE TO LEGITIMIZE HOMOSEXUALITY

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's cabinet has rejected a proposal to end discrimination based on sexual orientation because it could legitimize homosexuality, which is illegal on the island, a government minister said yesterday. Sri Lanka's 1883 penal code, a legacy of its British colonial rulers, makes sex between men punishable by 12 years in jail, although the law is rarely enforced. Health Minister Rajitha Senarathne said the cabinet had refused to endorse a provision in a proposed human rights plan that would have undermined the code.

"There was a provision referring to the sexual orientation of individuals and we clearly said it was not acceptable," said Senarathne, who is also the government

spokesman. "The government is against homosexuality, but we will not prosecute anyone for practicing it," the minister said, adding that the island's conservative Buddhist clergy was also opposed to the provision. He said the proposed National Human Rights Action Plan included a provision to remove "discrimination based on sexual orientation." "People could interpret this (rights plan) in their favor," the minister said, adding that the government did not want to create "social problems" by inviting a challenge to the law. Following intense campaigning by a gay rights group in 1995, the then government agreed to review the penal code that prohibited sex between men. —AFP



LAHORE: A Pakistani vendor waits for customers at a street side stall during heavy fog in Lahore yesterday. —AFP

CAMBODIAN WOMEN RESCUED FROM SEX SLAVERY IN JAPAN

PHNOM PENH: Seven Cambodian women have been rescued from a restaurant in Japan where they were allegedly forced into sex work after a victim made a desperate Facebook plea for help, an official said yesterday. The women, who are in their 20s, were lured to work at the restaurant in central Honshu island November with promise of high wages by a Japanese owner who arranged visas and airfares for them, the Cambodian foreign ministry said in a statement "But (he) threatened and forced the victims to have sex with guests at the restaurant and did not pay them salaries," the statement said.

Cambodian foreign ministry spokesman Chum Sounry said the women were rescued in mid-December after a victim wrote a plea for help on the Facebook page of the Cambodian embassy in Japan. Japanese authorities in Gunma prefecture, west of Tokyo, were then alerted. Six of the women are now staying at the Cambodian embassy in

Tokyo awaiting repatriation today while the seventh victim was sent home late last month for health reasons. Cambodian officials did not say if the Japanese restaurant owner was arrested or faced any charges. Japan has long been a destination for women from Southeast Asia seeking higher wages who often find themselves forced into sex work or indentured labor.

Last August the Philippines warned its citizens against illegally travelling to Japan in search of work, saying they often risked being trafficked for sex or forced labor. Washington's annual report on people trafficking says Japan remains a "destination, source and transit" country for human trafficking despite a recent increase in prosecutions. "Traffickers strictly control the movement of victims using debt bondage, threats of violence or deportation, blackmail, passport retention, and other coercive psychological methods," the State Department's 2016 "Trafficking in Persons" report says. —AFP

INDO POLICE QUESTION ISLAMIST LEADER AS AUTHORITIES WARN OVER EXTREMISM

JAKARTA: Indonesian police yesterday said they were investigating whether the controversial leader of a hardline Islamist group insulted the country's secular state ideology, as concern grows over the clout of fundamentalist groups. National police chief Tito Karnavian has warned against creeping Islamic extremism in the country of 250 million, home to dozens of religious and ethnic groups, and where the vast majority of citizens practice a moderate form of Islam.

Police are questioning Habib Rizieq,

head of the hard line Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), a key organizer of recent rallies by hundreds of thousands of Muslims against Jakarta's governor, an ethnic Chinese Christian, who is on trial over accusations that he insulted the Muslim holy book, the Quran. "We have started a formal investigation... We may name him a suspect soon," said West Java police spokesman Yusri Yunus. "Unfortunately, democracy is being misused by certain groups to limit other people's freedoms, for instance, by those with fun-

damentalist or Wahabi thinking who then target minorities," he added, referring to a puritanical strand of Islam originating in Saudi Arabia.

Police in the province of West Java have been questioning Rizieq over claims that he made defamatory comments in 2014 about one of Indonesia's founding fathers, Sukarno, and questioned the legitimacy of the state ideology Pancasila. If found guilty, he could face up to four years in prison. Rizieq has denied wrongdoing, according to media. Police said the complaint was

brought against Rizieq in October last year by Sukarno's daughter, Sukmawati Sukarnoputri. The cleric and his organization FPI also had their accounts on social network Twitter suspended this week over what the company called violations of its rules. Twitter did not say how the group violated its rules, media reported.

Rizieq and his followers have vowed to press their demand for Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama to be jailed, with another rally set for Feb 11, just days before the Jakarta governor

elections. "We see what happened with the Twitter accounts as a form of discrimination against the Muslim people," said Novel Bamukmin, head of the FPI's Jakarta chapter, which is calling for a boycott of Twitter. Late last year the FPI led some of Indonesia's biggest rallies in nearly 20 years targeting the Jakarta governor. There are concerns Purnama has been unfairly targeted as he runs for reelection next month and that the government has not done enough to protect the rights of religious and ethnic minorities.—Reuters

PHILIPPINE POLICE MURDERED SOUTH KOREAN BUSINESSMAN

MANILA: Philippine police kidnapped and murdered a South Korean businessman, then led his wife to believe he was alive for months to extort money from her, authorities said yesterday. The killing is the latest in a long series of criminal acts by the Philippine police force, regarded as one of the nation's most corrupt institutions, and has fuelled concerns about its role enforcing President Rodrigo Duterte's deadly crime war. The man disappeared from his home in the northern city of Angeles in Oct last year, and his wife initially paid a ransom of five million pesos (\$100,000), national police spokesman Dionardo Carlos said.

However, the man was strangled to death and burned to ashes in a crematorium on the day he was abducted, the South Korean foreign ministry said, citing a Philippine government report. The crematorium was owned by a former police officer, the foreign ministry said. The South Korean government identified the man only by his surname of Ji and said he was in his 50's. Philippine media said he was a businessman who had been living in the Philippines since 2008 and had been working for a manpower company. South Korean Foreign Minister Yun Byung-Se demanded answers after receiving a phone call from Philippine Foreign Secretary Perfecto Yasay to inform him of the murder.

"Minister Yun, expressing grave shock over the implication of Philippine police officers in the case, asked that the Philippine government get to the bottom of the case and bring those responsible to justice," a foreign ministry spokesman said. Ricky Santa Isabel, one of the officers accused of going to Ji's house and abducting him, surrendered this week, according to Carlos, the police spokesman. He said another two officers who went with him to the house, as well as their superior, were under investigation. All four accused officers were from the Anti-Illegal Drugs Group based at national police headquarters in Manila, according to Carlos.

He said a retired police officer was also

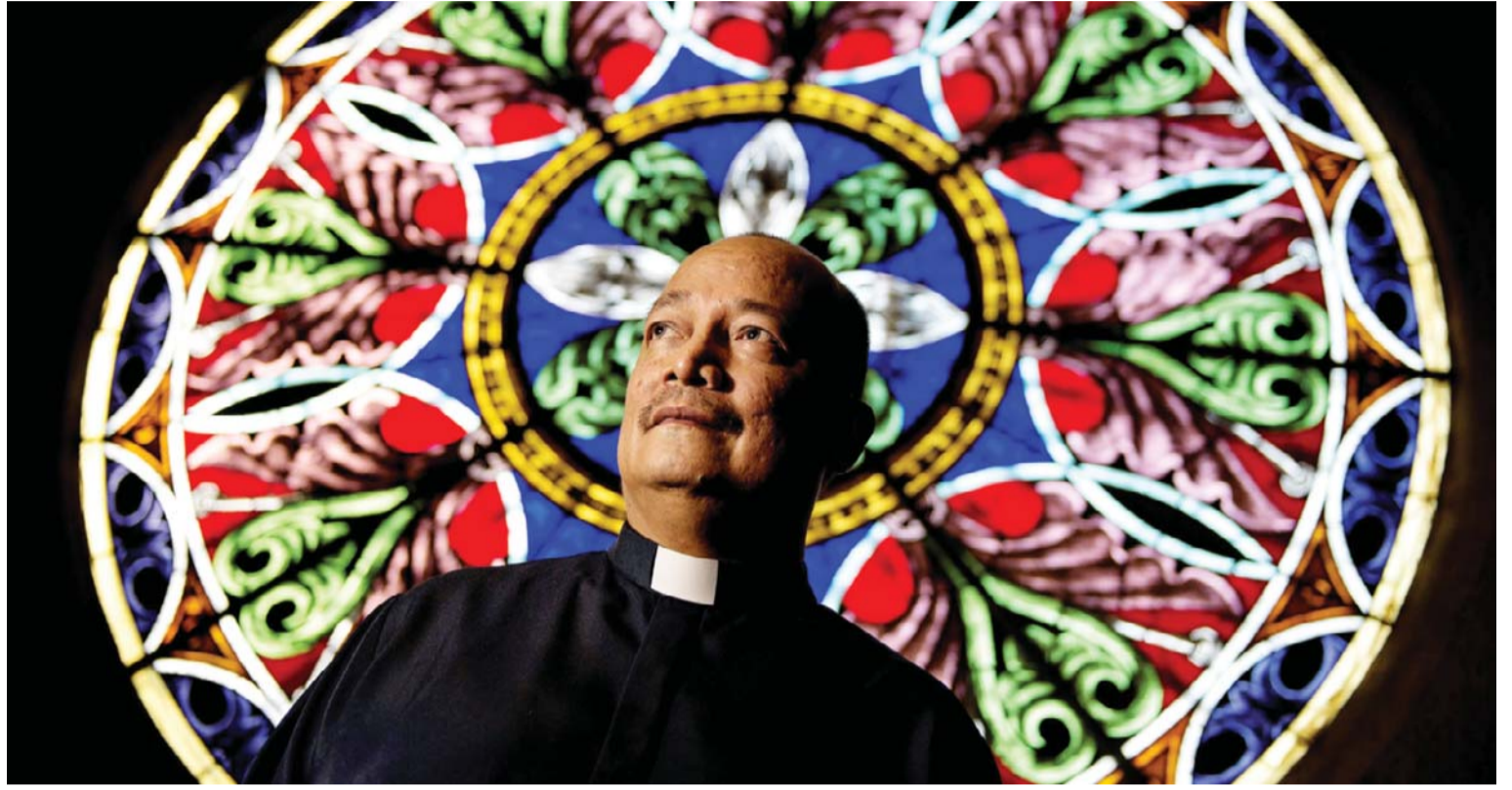
believed to be involved but had fled to Canada, and that there were South Korean accomplices. Carlos did not elaborate on the identities or actions of the South Korean suspects.

Fake drug raid

Santa Isabel and his two colleagues went to Ji's house on the pretext of a drug raid, according to Carlos. The abductors demanded from Ji's wife a ransom of eight million pesos on Oct 30, 12 days after he was killed, according to the Philippine Daily Inquirer newspaper, which first reported the news. It said that she paid five million pesos (\$100,000), but the kidnappers then demanded another 4.5 million pesos and continued to say he was alive.

The case has drawn criticism from some lawmakers and media in the Philippines as an example of corrupt policemen expanding their illegal activities after being given freedoms by Duterte to prosecute his war on drugs. Duterte has encouraged police to kill drug traffickers and addicts, and vowed to shield them from prosecution. Nearly 6,000 people have died in Duterte's drug war since he took office in the middle of last year. Carlos insisted, the abduction of Ji was not related to Duterte's drug war, saying the problem of kidnappings for ransom by corrupt police had existed for a long time. "It turned out it was an old modus operandi where bad cops claim there is a drug raid and turn it into a kidnap for ransom," Carlos said.

At least 167 policemen are under investigation for being involved in various money-making rackets, some of them under the cover of the drug war, Metro Manila police chief Oscar Albayalde told reporters. The police force was among the most corrupt national agencies, according to a 2015 report from the national ombudsman. A 2013 survey by anti-graft watchdog Transparency International also found that the police force was perceived by Filipinos to be the Philippines' most corrupt institution.—AFP



MANILA: This photo shows Catholic Father Atilano Fajardo posing for a portrait at a church inside the Adamson University in Manila.—AFP

PHILIPPINE CHURCH SPEAKS OUT ON DRUG KILLINGS

CHURCH AT FOREFRONT AGAINST EXTRAJUDICIAL KILLINGS

MANILA: People going to mass at one of the most famous churches in the Philippine capital over Christmas were met by a disturbing sight: poster-size pictures of Filipinos dying in pools of blood. The shock Baclaran church exhibit was part of a campaign by one of the nation's oldest and most powerful institutions to stop the killings under President Rodrigo Duterte's war against drugs, which has claimed about 6,000 thousand lives. "The Church right now is asserting its influence, that's why in the coming months the Church will be at the forefront in leading against extrajudicial killings," Jerome Secillano, public affairs chief for the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said.

The Catholic Church, counting eight out of every 10 Filipinos among its flock, wants the Duterte presidency to succeed, but would be remiss in its moral obligation to protect life by keeping quiet, according to Secillano. "The drug war is not any more in accord with the legal processes, and the moral norms are being violated and so now is the time for the Church to speak up," he said. Duterte was elected in a landslide last year, after vowing on the campaign trail to eradicate illegal drugs in society by killing tens of thousands of people.

Police have reported killing 2,250 drug suspects since Duterte assumed office, with 3,710 others murdered by unknown suspects who at times have left signs at the crime scenes accusing their victims of being drug dealers or addicts. Duterte has made no apologies for the killings, saying he would be happy to "slaughter" three million drug addicts to stop the Philippines from descending into a Latin American-style narco state.

Popular crackdown

While Duterte's crackdown has been condemned by human rights activists and some Western governments for allegedly unleashing a wave of extrajudicial killings, the president has retained huge support from Filipinos hoping his strongman style will fix crime, corruption and other intractable problems. With such support and also because of various intimidation tactics, few politicians or other influential people have spoken out. For months the Church, which played a leading role in the ouster of dictator Ferdinand Marcos and corrupt president Joseph Estrada, also held its tongue.

Church leaders said they wanted to give Duterte, who won the May elections by 6.6 million votes, a chance to implement his programs and make the Philippines a safer place. They had also hoped to influence him quietly, holding a series of private meetings with Duterte and one of his top aides, according to Manila priest Atilano Fajardo, who is now helping to lead the Church's campaign against the killings. Meanwhile, some priests and bishops, like ordinary people, were too scared to speak out, according to Secillano. "Not too many churches and people are actually keen on speaking up against these killings because of fear," he said.

Campaign begins

To start the pushback, Archbishop Socrates Villegas, president of the bishops conference, issued a pastoral letter to his flock in October. "I am ashamed of the things I read about the Philippines in the international media and more ashamed of what I hear from our leaders," Villegas said then. "I can no longer give a word of condolence to the bereaved families because I also need to be assured even a bit that things will get better and not become worse." In a Christmas message, Manila Cardinal Luis Tagle, the country's highest-ranking Church official, lamented Filipinos losing their sense of "hospitality," in what was seen as a criticism of the killings. "Why is there room for destroying lives but minute space for saving them?" Tagle said.

Some churches around the Philippines have since put up banners denouncing extrajudicial killings, while priests have helped to organize rela-

tives of the slain into a watchdog group called Network Against Killings in the Philippines. Over the coming weeks, the Church also plans to train widows and other female relatives of men killed in mainly slum communities to document the deaths so they can bring criminal charges against police. Church leaders take pains to emphasize they have not given up on Duterte and they are not campaigning against his rule, just the killings. "Prayer can move mountains. We believe that Duterte can still change his position, so we need to pray," Fajardo said.

What impact the Church campaign against the

killings will have on government policy remains uncertain. But it is taking heart from a fresh survey showing eight in 10 Filipinos now fear they or their friends could be next to be killed. "When you fear... to people on the ground, there is a lot of fear... many people, especially the urban poor, feel that anybody can be tagged and killed," Manila bishop Broderick Pabillo said. Visitors at the Baclaran photo exhibit who agreed to speak were generally hesitant to criticize the government but said they had seen enough. "What is happening is horrible. They should not be killing defenseless people," said churchgoer Gina Loranza, 48.—AFP



MANILA: The wife of a South Korean businessman, who was kidnapped and murdered by at least three police officers in the Philippines, arrives at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) headquarters in Manila yesterday.—AFP

THAI SOUTH MUSLIMS MOURN DEATH OF REBEL SPIRITUAL LEADER

BANGKOK: Muslims across Thailand's restive "Deep South" are mourning the death of Sapae-ing Basor, the spiritual leader of a near 13-year rebellion against Bangkok's rule that has claimed more than 6,800 lives. Sapae-ing established a leading Islamic school and became a folkloric figure for many Malay-Muslims in Thailand's culturally distinct far south despite being in self-exile since 2004. The insurgency sees separatist rebels carry out near-daily attacks on security forces and perceived collaborators with the Thai state, which colonized the region over a century ago.

The majority of the dead are civilians in a conflict that has seen both insurgents and Thailand's military accused of rights abuses. Sapae-ing, who was in his eighties, died peacefully on Jan 10 across the Thai border in Malaysia where he had lived since fleeing treason charges. The school he founded is believed to have incubated many rank-and-file rebels. "He was a philosopher who played an important role in education," said a statement by the Mara Patani, a group representing some rebel factions in peace talks with the Thai junta, confirming his death.

Mosques have been packed across the south for special prayers since his death was confirmed. Thailand-based security analyst Don Pathan said his schools became "pillars of Malay identity" drawing the ire of Thai authorities as the insurgency gathered

pace. "He was a Yoda-like figure.. he had a mystique," Pathan said, explaining that Sapae-ing's profile grew through the 1980s and 90s as he "spoke up for Malay identity and refused to bow down to the Thai state."

Thailand's military elite have long been accused by the kingdom's minority groups of enforcing a centralized concept of "Thainess" at the expense of diversity. In the Malay-speaking south, for example, Thai language and script has been enforced for decades, fuelling anger and resentment. Sapae-ing's legend grew across the unrest-hit southern states despite his relative silence in self-exile. Zachary Abuza, a specialist on Southeast Asian militant groups, said he had a galvanizing role in the rebellion-although his operational links with rebel foot soldiers are unknown.

"This is a movement with almost no known leadership. He was as close as it got... being on the run for 13 years gave him a bit of a Robin Hood status." An end to the fighting remains distant despite peace contacts. The armed insurgents, dominated by the publicity-averse Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), want an amnesty for their operatives and serious discussion on devolution, leading to independence. The Thai junta remain coy on ceding powers and do not believe the rebel groups they have command-and-control over the militant foot soldiers.—AFP

HONG KONG LEADER SLAMS INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's unpopular pro-Beijing leader Leung Chun-ying faced protests yesterday as he spoke out against the city's independence movement in his final policy address. Leung will step down in July after a four-year term marked by anti-Beijing rallies as fears grow that Chinese authorities are squeezing Hong Kong's freedoms. Frustration at lack of political reform has sparked movements seeking self-determination or even independence for the semi-autonomous city, angering Chinese authorities.

As he struggled to start his speech due to heckling, some pro-democracy lawmakers held up signs depicting Leung as a monkey and calling him a "liar." "As we benefit from the opportunities brought by the development of our country and the national policies in our favor, we must clearly recognize that Hong Kong is an inalienable part of our country," Leung said in the annual address. "This is both a legal fact and an internationally recognized political reality, leaving no room whatsoever for Hong Kong to become independent or separate from the motherland in any manner," he added.

Residents must "safeguard national sovereignty, security and territorial integrity," said Leung, who did not mention any plans for kick starting democratic reform in his speech, after a controversial Beijing-backed package was shelved following massive protests in 2014. Joseph Cheng, a political scientist and pro-democracy activist, criticized

Leung for sidestepping "basic issues" including his "political suppression of the opposition." Answering reporters' questions, Leung said his government had worked hard to push political

reform and that a minority had resisted.

He said people must accept Beijing's roadmap, which declared the public could vote for its leader, but only after nominees were vetted by an election committee. Currently that committee—which is largely made up of special interest groups skewed towards Beijing-selects the leader with no public vote. The Beijing-backed reform plan was dismissed as "fake democracy" by opponents and voted down in the legislature by pro-democracy lawmakers.

Amnesty International Hong Kong last week said human rights were at their worst since the city was handed back to China by Britain in 1997, in the wake of the disappearance of five city booksellers known for publishing salacious titles about Chinese leaders, and interference by Beijing in a range of areas, from media to education. The government has also been accused of a witch hunt after two pro-independence lawmakers were forced to give up their seats last year. Four more pro-democracy legislators face a judicial review into whether they should be disqualified.

However, Leung said the city still enjoyed a high degree of autonomy and pledged his government would "uphold Hong Kong's core values, including human rights, liberty, democracy, the rule of law and integrity." Leung framed the city's economic strategy within Beijing's latest five-year plan and its One Belt, One Road initiative, which calls for constructing vast rail and infrastructure links connecting Chinese exporters to markets across Eurasia. Around 100 protesters gathered outside the legislature, protesting over pension funds and workers' rights.—AFP



HONG KONG: Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying speaks at a press conference after delivering his final policy address to the Legislative Council in the Admiralty district of Hong Kong yesterday.—AFP



A man cleans snow from his car after heavy snowfall in the hilltown of Murree, some 58 km northeast of Islamabad, Pakistan yesterday. The mercury dropped to minus 2 degrees centigrade in some areas including Kalam, Swat, Upper Dir, Lower Dir and Chitral after heavy snowfall blocked roads during the harsh winter. — AP

EARTH BREAKS HEAT RECORD IN 2016 FOR THIRD YEAR IN A ROW

MIAMI: Last year, the Earth sweltered under the hottest temperatures in modern times for the third year in a row, US scientists said yesterday, raising new concerns about the quickening pace of climate change. Temperatures spiked to new national highs in parts of India, Kuwait and Iran, while sea ice melted faster than ever in the fragile Arctic, said the report by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Taking a global average of the land and sea surface tem-

peratures for the entire year, NOAA found the data for "2016 was the highest since record keeping began in 1880," said the announcement. The global average temperature last year was 1.69 Fahrenheit (0.94 Celsius) above the 20th century average, and 0.07 degrees F (0.04 C) warmer than in 2015, the last record-setting year, according to NOAA. This was "not a huge margin to set a new record but it is larger than the typical margin," Deke Arndt, chief of NOAA global climate monitoring, said on a conference call with

reporters. A separate analysis by the US space agency NASA also found that 2016 was the hottest on record. The World Meteorological Organization in Geneva confirmed the US findings, and noted that atmospheric concentrations of both carbon dioxide and methane reached new highs.

Upward trend

The main reason for the rise is the burning of fossil fuels like oil and gas, which send carbon dioxide, methane and other pollutants known as greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere and warm the planet. The mounting toll of industrialization on the Earth's natural balance is increasingly apparent in the record books of recent decades. "Since the start of the 21st century, the annual global temperature record has been broken five times (2005, 2010, 2014, 2015 and 2016)," said NOAA.

Another factor has been the Pacific Ocean warming trend of El Nino, which experts say exacerbates the planet's already rising warmth. El Nino comes and goes. The latest episode became particularly strong in 2015, and subsided about halfway through 2016. But El Nino was responsible for just a small fraction of last year's warmth, according to Peter Stott, acting director of Britain's Met Office Hadley Center. "The main contributor to warming over the last 150 years is human influence on climate from increasing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere," he said.

This year is likely be cooler, but probably not by much, said Gavin Schmidt, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies in New York. "Because the long-term trends are so clear, it is still going to be a top-five year in our analysis. I'm pretty confident about that," he told reporters.

Last year, all of North America was the warmest since records began in 1910, breaking that region's last record set

in 1998. Europe and Asia each saw their third hottest years on record, while Australia marked its fourth warmest year since records began more than a century ago. Unusual spikes in temperature were seen in Phalodi, India, which reached 51 C on May 19 - marking India's hottest temperature ever. Dehloran, Iran hit 53 C on July 22, a new national record.

Meanwhile, Mitribah, Kuwait hit an all-time high of 54 C on July 21, which may be the highest temperature ever recorded in all of Asia, NOAA said. Planet-wide, the heat led to more melting at the poles. In the Arctic, average annual sea ice extent was approximately 10.2 million square kilometers, the smallest annual average in the record, NOAA said. Antarctic annual sea ice extent was the second smallest on record.

Dangers

Unusually hot years wreak havoc on the planet by increasing rainfall in some parts of the world while leading to drought in others, damaging crops. Fish and birds must migrate farther than ever to find suitable temperatures and habitats. Diseases can spread faster in the warming waters, sickening marine life and killing corals. Glaciers and polar ice caps melt, accelerating sea level rise that will eventually swallow many of the globe's coastal communities, home to some one billion people.

Experts say the only solution is to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, in favor of Earth-friendly renewable energy such as wind and solar. "Climate change is one of the great challenges of the twenty first century and shows no signs of slowing down," said Mark Maslin, professor of climatology at University College London. "The decarbonization of the global economy is the ultimate goal to prevent the worst effects of climate change." — AFP

MPS SLAM RISING EXPAT NUMBERS, REMITTANCES

Continued from Page 1

issuing statements calling to expel expatriates, they should first hold to account those who brought them here, starting with the big ones.

Activist and former election candidate Aroub Al-Rifai wrote on her Twitter that it is wrong and shameful to look down on expatriates when the problems associated with them "were created by us". Prominent economist Abdulmajeed Al-Shatti said in an article in Al-Jarida newspaper that it was not possible and not even helpful for the Kuwaiti economy to get rid of a large number of expatriates at once, adding that this should be done gradually over two decades and more.

In another development, the National Assembly's foreign relations committee yesterday discussed with Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah regional and international developments, especially relations with Iran and expected political changes after US President-Elect Donald Trump takes office. Head of the

committee MP Ali Al-Deqbasi said the government answered the panel's questions about continuous Iranian provocations and acts of aggression against Kuwait and the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

He said that during the meeting, the committee expressed strong popular protest against Iranian practices and called on the government for continued caution, but also for continuing dialogue in order to resolve the problems to ensure security amid the prevailing regional turmoil. Deqbasi expressed strong trust in the political leadership and its measures to safeguard Kuwait's security and sovereignty, and also supported the foreign ministry's efforts to protect Kuwait's interests.

Asked if any government fears were expressed over a change in the US policy after Trump takes office tomorrow, Deqbasi said the committee received assurances from the government about Kuwait's neutral position and also heard about all possible scenarios of what could happen in the United States. Deqbasi denied that the meeting discussed the Gulf security pact.



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Focus

MAY'S BREXIT: GOING IT ALONE, HOPING FOR AN EU TRADE DEAL

Prime Minister Theresa May has finally outlined what Brexit really means for her: Britain going it alone, fully disentangled from the European Union while hoping the bloc will agree to a comprehensive trade deal. Britain will exit the EU's vast internal market for goods and services and will instead try for a "bold and ambitious" free trade agreement (FTA), rejecting the kind of arrangements some other European countries, such as Norway and Switzerland, have for trade with the world's biggest economic region.

In her speech on Tuesday, May called for a deal to be done within two years, emphasized cooperation with the bloc and called for a "phased-in" transition to Brexit. The value of the pound reversed recent losses and staged its biggest single-day rally against the US dollar since at least 1998. But there was a lukewarm reception from political leaders in EU countries, a reminder that agreeing the kind of trade deal May wants will be an arduous - even painful - task.

"Where is the give for all the take?" asked the Czech Republic's secretary of state for EU affairs, Tomas Prouza, on Twitter. Ireland's government said it was under no illusion about the scale of Brexit. May outlined 12 negotiating priorities, including limiting immigration, exiting jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice, and ending full membership of the customs union that sets external tariffs for goods imported into the bloc. Aiming for a comprehensive free trade agreement (FTA) means she can enter negotiations with an almost blank canvas, largely free of politically unpopular compromises around freedom of movement or large payments into the EU's budget.

FTA chance

But the process of agreeing an FTA is fraught with risk. May has said she wants to agree Britain's future relationship with the EU within two years, followed by a period of implementation. Free trade deals usually take far longer than two years to agree - Canada's FTA with the EU will have taken seven years by the time it is expected to come into force. "(The) prolonged uncertainty over forming agreements will present a significant challenge to the economy and one from which consumers cannot be called upon to buy our way out," said Jagjit Chadha, director of Britain's National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

Consumer spending has been a main driver of Britain's economy recently, with other sources of growth like trade and investment lagging. Getting rid of barriers to trade in services, the dominant sector in Britain's economy, is also likely to be hard, although those backing Brexit argue barriers already exist within the EU. And the deeper the trade agreement, the more EU regulation Britain would have to abide by, according to the Centre for European Reform think tank.

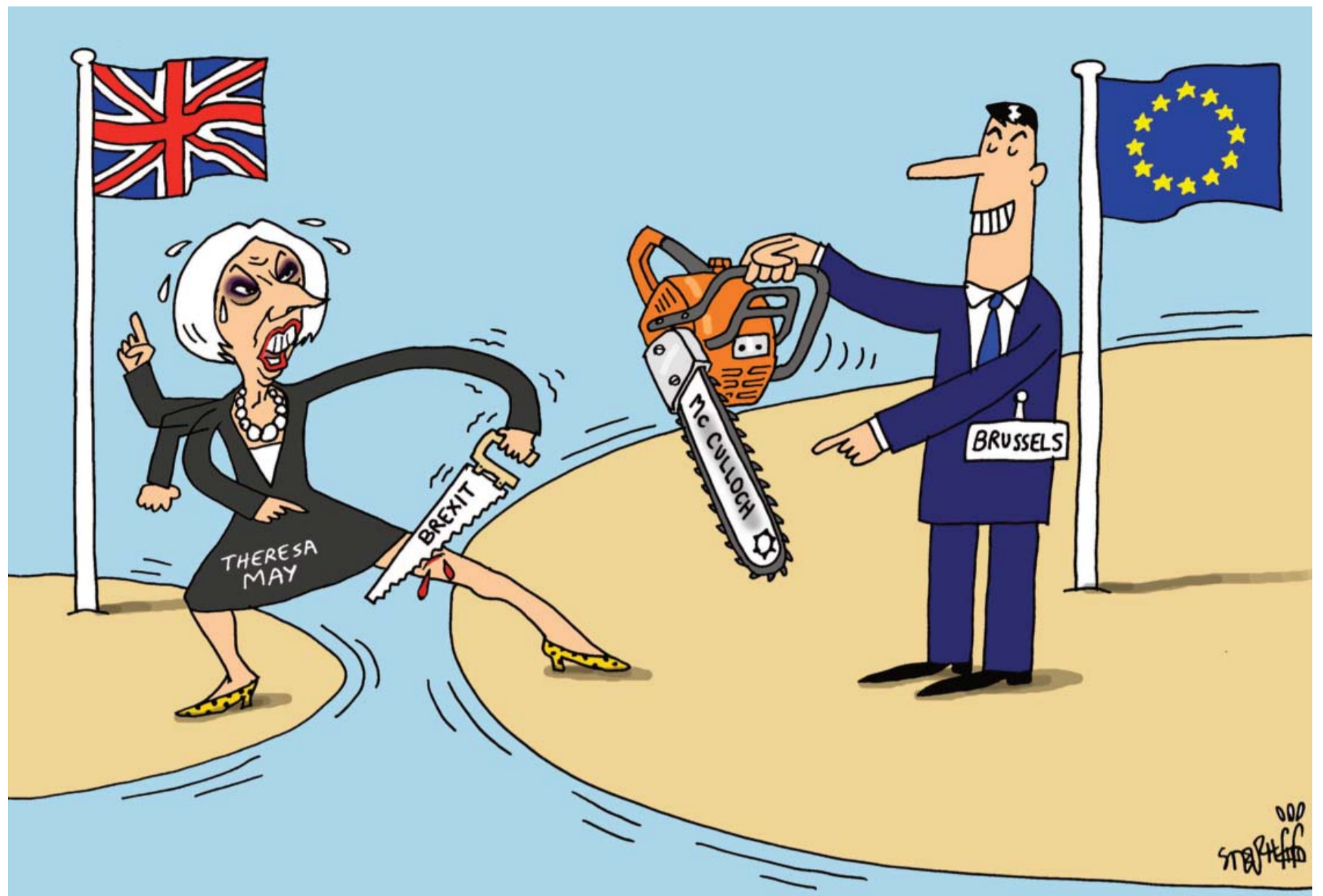
Supporters of the FTA option argue this would allow Britain to trade with the EU largely as before while also leaving it free to agree trade deals directly with other countries such as the United States, its biggest individual export partner, and emerging markets such as Brazil and India. Brexit supporters also point to Britain's large goods deficit with the EU - a record 8.59 billion pounds in November 2016. They say the bloc could not afford to cut it off.

Nuclear option

May seems to see this as a bargaining chip, stating in her speech that no deal is better than a bad deal - effectively acknowledging that Britain could resort to World Trade Organization rules, which set upper limits on tariffs countries can impose. In such a scenario, Britain would face barriers on services, particularly in highly regulated sectors such as finance. That would be a "very dangerous path", according to J P Morgan economist Malcolm Barr.

"One might expect a successful negotiating strategy to have ambitious objectives and a credible fallback position. May certainly has the former. But we doubt the prime minister has the latter," he said in a note to clients. Tellingly, just as May was setting out her pitch for an internationalist Britain built on cooperation, her finance minister Philip Hammond told parliament that Britain could get tough if a comprehensive FTA with the EU is not forthcoming, and slash business taxes in retaliation. "If we don't (get a sensible Brexit deal) the people of this country are not simply going to lie down and accept that they will be poorer," Hammond said. "We will do whatever it takes to maintain our competitiveness and protect our standard of living." — Reuters

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TRUMP SHAKES POSTWAR ORDER, IN BLOW TO EUROPE

Europe must pull together or risk being sidelined as Donald Trump signals the end of a postwar transatlantic partnership credited with keeping the peace for the past 70 years, analysts and officials say. Fears about the US president-elect's isolationist stance became a reality this week when Trump challenged basic assumptions about the role of an "obsolete" NATO and backed the break-up of the European Union. The shock was palpable among countries that up to now have considered themselves among Washington's closest allies but now face a sobering new reality when the billionaire businessman is inaugurated on Friday.

Europe already faces a host of problems - Britain's impending EU exit, a nasty standoff with Russia, and turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa driving terrorism and the worst migrant crisis since World War II. Against this backdrop, Europe could now have to take the difficult but very costly steps required to provide security for itself after decades of sheltering under the US security umbrella. "If EU leaders fail to pull together and speak up much more loudly than before, they risk being sidelined," said analysts Stefan Lehne and Heather Grabbe, writing for Carnegie Europe. "To the extent that Washington engages with Europe at all, it will likely deal with countries individually. When a leader opposes his agenda, Trump's government may well seek to play off one European against another."

Europe its own master

European leaders reacted with shock at Trump's comments. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whom Trump said had made a "catastrophic decision" to let in a million refugees, insisted that "we Europeans have our fate in our own hands." Her foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said there was "astonishment" in the EU. French President Francois Hollande meanwhile insisted Europe "has no need for outside advice to tell it what it has to do."

France and Germany have led recent efforts to create an EU defence plan, based on coordination and shared weapons procurement in order to cut costs and boost integration. EU foreign affairs head Federica Mogherini has in turn formulated a global strategy based on the idea the bloc should achieve "strategic autonomy," coupled with increased cooperation with NATO. NATO groups 22 of the EU's 28 member states and many of those, led by Britain but including several former Soviet satellites in the east, believe that the US-led alliance - not Brussels - is the only real collective defense option against a more assertive Russia.

On that basis, President Barack Obama won NATO leaders' backing for the biggest military build-up since the end of the Cold War in response to Russia's Ukraine intervention and annexation of Crimea. But what if NATO under Trump is not so willing to come to their aid? "If President Trump

calls into question the European decision (to bolster NATO), EU member states will have to consider increasing strategic autonomy by reinforcing collective defense inside the EU," said analyst Felix Arteaga at the Elcano Royal Institute think-tank in Madrid. A key test would be if Trump goes over Europe's heads to do a Ukraine deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin, badly wrong footing the allies, analysts said.

Europe, US shared interests

Other analysts say Trump may have been misunderstood or had talked too loosely. Professor Zbigniew Lewicki, chairman of the Polish Institute of International Affairs, said: "I think he considers NATO obsolete in the sense of being ineffective fighting terrorism rather than

trying to disband it, which I don't think he wants to do." "When it comes to deeds, I don't think he will do anything to destroy NATO, or for that matter, to destroy, if he could, the European Union. I trust him more than his words."

Ian Lesser, vice president at the German Marshall Fund of the United States in Brussels, said Trump's comments should be treated seriously but not over-dramatically. His call, for example, for the allies to share more of the NATO spending burden reflected longstanding and well-known US concerns that had also been pushed by Obama, Lesser said. The bottom line was that the US and Europe have shared interests and values binding them together. "The US commitment to Europe was not a bargain deal; it was driven by very important US interests and that remains the case," he said. — AFP

COMEBACK QUEEN? HILLARY RUMORS WON'T GO AWAY

The prospect of a Hillary Clinton comeback after her shock loss to Donald Trump could hardly be less certain, but in New York where she is revered, plenty of people dream of her running for mayor. Her public appearances since the election have been largely confined to walks in the woods close to her Chappaqua home, where she is photographed in minimal makeup by neighbors mourning her defeat and repelled by the president-elect.

The 69-year-old former secretary of state otherwise emerged to present pop star Katy Perry with an award at a UNICEF ball and has been photographed at smart restaurants such as the Polo Bar, dining with fashion designer Ralph Lauren who custom-made the pantsuit in which she conceded defeat to Trump. Then there was also a December meeting with donors at which the New York Times said that she blamed her loss on Russian President Vladimir Putin and the late-hour FBI intervention over her email scandal.

In a city where nearly 80 percent of the electorate voted for her, Clinton can forget that she polarized the electorate and the millions of Americans who consider her the incarnation of an abhorrent political class. On Jan 8, she got a standing ovation on Broadway when she attended the last night of The Color Purple - in stark contrast to Vice President-elect Mike Pence who was booed and lectured when he went to Hamilton in November.

On Friday she will attend Trump's inauguration - her first major appearance in months - when cameras will be watching for the slightest reaction from the woman who

hoped to shatter the ultimate glass ceiling and become the first female commander-in-chief of the world's most powerful democracy. While the Democrat lost the crucial Electoral College by 232 to 306, she won the popular vote by more than 2.7 million ballots - more than any white man as her supporters delight in pointing out.

Confidante Neera Tanden told CNN that Clinton would never run for office again, but several media outlets have reported on rumors and speculation that she's been asked to consider a run for New York mayor this November. The job would put her in charge of Trump's hometown, but the fact that the current incumbent - Bill de Blasio - once managed her New York senate campaign and is running again, makes the prospect reportedly more unlikely.

Trump's hometown foe

But as the rumors have spread, Clinton has done nothing to give them credence or to shoot them down. Even tabloid the New York Post, which was hostile to Clinton the presidential candidate, urged her to run against the left-leaning mayor it opposes. "Secretary Clinton, we'd love to see you run for mayor. New York City needs you," it wrote on Jan 6. It listed her attributes and work ethic, and implied it would not be difficult for Clinton to become a city resident and build ties to city neighborhoods. "While it's not the glass ceiling she hoped to break, New York has never had a woman mayor. Isn't it past time for that to change?" finished the editorial. — AFP

GITMO, THE INFAMOUS JAIL OBAMA COULD NOT SHUT

Despite a flurry of last-minute releases from Guantanamo Bay, President Barack Obama is set to fail in his eight-year quest to close the infamous military detention center. One of his first acts as president in 2009 was to issue an executive order to shut the controversial jail within a year, but it is clear it will remain open when he leaves office tomorrow. "I don't anticipate that we will succeed in that goal of closing the prison, but it's not for a lack of trying," White House press secretary Josh Earnest told his final media briefing on Tuesday.

Obama's successor, President-elect Donald Trump, has vowed not just to keep Guantanamo open, but to boost the number of terror suspects housed there - even raising the prospect of US citizens being sent to the facility. "We're gonna load it up with some bad dudes, believe me, we're gonna load it up," Trump said while campaigning last year. He separately said "it would be fine" if US terror suspects were sent there for trial.

On Monday, 10 former detainees - eight Yemenis and two Afghans - were sent to Oman, bringing the remaining Guantanamo population to 45, down from 242 when Obama took office. Several more have been cleared for transfer, and a US official told AFP to expect a "handful" more by tomorrow - despite Trump's call this month for "no further releases". But dozens of inmates will remain in indefinite detention on day one of the Trump presidency.

"President Obama's legacy on Guantanamo isn't just about those he transfers, it's also about those he leaves behind," Elizabeth Beavers, a senior campaigner with Amnesty International USA, told AFP. "There is a risk that the prison could become permanent, with those remaining at risk of torture or other ill-treatment."

Of the 45 men still at Guantanamo, nine are cleared for

transfer and another 26 remain in legal limbo - the so-called "forever prisoners" who have not been charged with anything but are deemed too dangerous to release. The other 10, including the alleged plotters of the Sept 11, 2001 attacks, are going through a glacially slow military prosecution at Guantanamo. They are due in a Guantanamo military court next week for yet another pre-trial hearing.

Jihadi 'recruitment tool'

Obama struggled to find a solution to the vexed question of what to do with the forever detainees, and it is uncertain they could be convicted in a civilian court. The outgoing president had tried to transfer many detainees abroad and bring the most high-value ones to the United States, but funding was blocked by Republicans and even some in his own Democratic party pushed back against closure plans.

An oft-cited reason for keeping Guantanamo open is the recidivism rate. About 30 percent of detainees released are suspected or confirmed to have re-engaged against US interests, though the rate dropped sharply among those released under Obama. Guantanamo first opened in early 2002, hastily erected on a grassy hillside on America's naval base in Cuba, where detainees would be out of the reach of federal US courts.

The men arrived in orange jumpsuits, shackled and blindfolded - and sometimes were trundled around the outdoor prison camp on gurneys that looked like giant wheelbarrows. Some had been kidnapped by foes in Afghanistan and sold to the Americans for a bounty, often on the basis of slim or made-up evidence. The cages they were held in have long since been shut and modern, high-

security facilities erected to replace them at a cost of millions of dollars.

Obama repeatedly said the controversial prison served as a "recruitment tool" for terrorist organizations and was a waste of money - it currently costs about \$7 million to keep each detainee there per year. He has laid the blame for Guantanamo's continued use squarely at lawmakers' feet. "I have not been able to close the darn thing because of the congressional restrictions that have been placed on us," he said last year.

'For the duration'

Countries receiving former detainees must give guarantees they will be monitored and participate in rehabilitation programs. Six former Guantanamo inmates were resettled in Uruguay in 2014, but the men floundered in the Spanish-speaking nation and one went on hunger strike to demand being sent elsewhere. "They are rebuilding their lives in Uruguay, but among the six, at least five are struggling," Christian Mirza, who heads the case for the Uruguay government, told AFP.

Retired general James Mattis, who is set to become Trump's defense secretary, last week said America retains the legal right to capture enemy combatants and hold them as prisoners "for the duration of a war." "Long-term detention is appropriate when an unprivileged enemy belligerent poses a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States," he told lawmakers last week. But how many new inmates will actually end up in Guantanamo is tough to predict. Obama widely expanded the use of drones in counterterrorism operations and if US agencies have solid intelligence on a terror suspect, they now tend to simply send a drone to kill him. — AFP

BERDYCH PULLS OUT OF DAVIS CUP TIE

PRAGUE: Tomas Berdych became the latest player to pull out of Czech Republic's first-round Davis Cup tie in Australia on March 3-5, he announced after making it through to the third round of the Australian Open yesterday. The 31-year-old world number 10 beat Ryan Harrison to set up a third-round clash in Melbourne with Roger Federer and said he needed some rest and wanted to focus on his ATP season. Czech Davis Cup captain Jaroslav Navratil has already had to discount world number 86 Adam Pavlasek over a wrist injury and 118th-ranked Lukas Rosol, coming back from an Achilles tendon injury. World number 53 Jiri Vesely is expected to lead the Czech team, paired with 102nd-ranked veteran Radek Stepanek. Navratil is likely to also call up 154th-ranked Jan Satral and 238th-ranked Zdenek Kolar for their Davis Cup debut. "This is reality. I am still talking to players who might go and I will announce the team next week," Navratil told the Czech news agency CTK. —AFP



BRITISH SPRINTERS SERIOUSLY INJURED IN SPAIN ACCIDENT

LONDON: British sprinters James Ellington and Nigel Levine have been seriously injured in a road traffic accident in Tenerife, British Athletics said yesterday. The incident, which occurred on Tuesday evening, left both in hospital with leg and pelvic injuries. "Regretfully we can confirm that James Ellington and Nigel Levine have sustained injuries following a road accident in Tenerife on Tuesday evening," a statement said. "Both athletes are receiving medical treatment and are conscious and stable. British Athletics medical staff are with the athletes and liaising with hospital staff over their treatment." An update on their conditions is expected later. Levine, who specialises in the 400m, competed at the London 2012 Olympics and was part of the British squad that won relay gold at the 2014 European Championships in Zurich. Ellington made the British team at last year's Rio Olympics where he finished fifth in his 100m heat. He also took part in the London Olympics where he was eliminated in the 200m heats. — Reuters

KENYA RECALLS INJERA FOR WELLINGTON WORLD SERIES

NAIROBI: Kenya has made five changes to their team for the third round of the HSBC sevens world series in Wellington with top try scorer Collins Injera rejoining the side. Injera, who holds the all-time record of 235 tries, was one of two key players who were dropped for the two opening rounds in Dubai and Cape Town following a bonus payment dispute with the Kenya Rugby Union (KRU) late last year. The dispute had a big impact on the team's overall preparation, but head coach Innocent Simiyu is happy the team is back at full strength for the 16-team world series. "We didn't have enough build-up for the first two rounds but we are happy the long break has given us enough time to train together as a team," he said. "We are happy to have Injera back in the squad. He has trained very hard and we hope his tries will help us consolidate our position in the series." Kenya, holders of the Singapore Sevens title, is currently placed tenth with 17 points after two rounds. South Africa head the standings on 41 points with England two points behind in second place. Defending champions Fiji are third with 32 points. — AFP



The three winners of Red Bull CPD 2016.



First place - Nissan Drifts to podium dominance in storming Red Bull season finale.

NISSAN DRIFTS TO PODIUM DOMINANCE IN STORMING RED BULL SEASON FINALE

DUBAI: Nissan has once again demonstrated its legendary motorsport prowess, with the three podium finishers at the Red Bull Car Park Drift Final 2016 all driving Nissan Silvia sports cars.

"This company's heritage when it comes to motorsport is the envy of the world," says Samir Cherfan, Managing Director of Nissan Middle East. "And as the motorsport scene continues to evolve, so do we. To be successful at drifting at this level, which is absolutely top tier, a driver needs a car that's completely controllable."

"That the three podium finishers in the

recent Red Bull championship final were all driving Nissans says all anyone needs to know about how in tune we are, and have always been, with the unique demands of competitors, from drifters to endurance racers and everything in between."

Nissan has been at the cutting edge of world motorsport for eight decades, being involved at every level, from grass roots amateurs to Formula 1. The company's vehicles have proved ideal for use in many applications due to their intelligent design, rugged engineering and inherent reliability, and Nissan's own NISMO brand has con-

tinued to set new standards in performance that has been bred at the world's most demanding motorsport events and venues.

At the Red Bull Car Park Drift Final 2016, which concluded on 9 December, a trio of Omani competition drivers took the top three places, with Haitham Al Hadidy taking the crown as 'King of Drift'. Just 18-years old, Al Hadidy's performance was remarkable, especially as this was his first time competing at a professional level. He scored 390 points to take first place, with previous champion, Ali Al Balushi coming

in second and Tarek Al Shaihani achieving third in a formidable array of talent from across the Middle East.

EXCITING EVENT

"We would like to congratulate Haitham Al Hadidy," adds Fadi Ghosn, Chief Marketing Officer at Nissan Middle East, "for taking the crown at Red Bull Car Park Drift Final. At Nissan Middle East, motorsport is in our DNA and we are proud to be the partners of such an exciting event. This has been a particularly exciting year for Nissan in the high performance space, having

launched our NISMO models in the region and being part of the Red Bull Car Park Drift 2016. We would like to congratulate all of the drivers who participated in this year's event and we look forward to more excitement in 2017."

Rear-wheel drive Nissan cars have proved to be ideal for drifting competitions and, in December 2014, Nissan Middle East set a new Guinness World Record for the longest twin vehicle drift. To achieve that feat, two Nissan 370Zs were drifted together on track, without stopping, for a distance of 28.52 kilometres.



First place winner of Red Bull CPD 2016.



Second place winner.



Third place winner.

PORTE NABS TOUR SECOND STAGE WITH BOLD BREAKAWAY

ADELAIDE: Tasmanian Richie Porte buried his demons from two years ago by demolishing his rivals and clinching the second stage of the Tour Down Under in Adelaide yesterday. Porte, who made a costly tactical error on the same stage in 2015 that foiled his chances of winning the Tour, made a decisive move with two kilometres (1.24 miles) remaining in a gruelling 148.5-kilometre stage through the Adelaide Hills.

Movistar's Gorka Izaguirre went with the BMC Racing rider, but the Spaniard did not have the legs to stay with Porte who won the stage in three hours, 46 minutes and six seconds. Porte, who has three times fallen short of winning the overall standings at the Tour, signalled his intentions by pulling away and Izaguirre was left to battle it out with Colombia's Esteban Chaves for the second spot.

Izaguirre won that duel in the end, finishing 16 seconds behind Porte, with Chaves at his rear wheel as they crossed the line. Porte's BMC team-mate and 2015 Tour Down Under winner, Rohan Dennis, finished fourth.

The riders were spared the searing heat of the opening day, when the route was shortened due to the brutal conditions and Caleb Ewan prevailed.

It was a satisfying win for Porte, who finished fifth in last year's Tour de France, but had not raced since breaking his shoulder in a crash at the Rio Olympics in August.

"I've got good climbing legs and I didn't want to wait around," said Porte. "I have got a good gap on general classification. There's some stressful days coming up, so we won't be counting our chickens until they hatch." It was Porte's first win since stage five at last year's Tour Down Under. Germany's Jasha Sutterlin was the first rider to break away and, at one, point led by close to five minutes. — AFP



ADELAIDE: Australian cyclist Richie Porte from Team BMC stands on the podium after winning the second stage of the Tour Down Under cycling race from Stirling to Paracombe yesterday. —AFP

EUROPE ANNOUNCES CHANGES TO RYDER CUP QUALIFYING SYSTEM

ABU DHABI: Europe's team for the 2018 Ryder Cup in France will have an extra captain's pick and is set to contain more in-form players following a revamp of the qualifying system in the wake of a big loss to the United States last year.

The aim is clear: To give captain Thomas Bjorn the best possible team to regain the cup. Jolted by Europe's 17-11 loss in Hazeltine, Europe announced changes yesterday that see the number of captain's selections increased from three to four, while more points will be earned at events in the latter stages of qualifying to ensure that in-form players have a better chance of making the team. A third change to the qualification process will see no Ryder Cup qualifying points on offer at tournaments staged on the PGA Tour in the same weeks as the European Tour's newly introduced Rolex Series - a group of eight events that will have enhanced status and prize money.

The changes were approved late Tuesday at a meeting of the European Tour's tournament committee in Abu Dhabi, where the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship is being played this week. "I'm confident that

we're going to have the 12 best European players representing us in France," European captain Thomas Bjorn said. It was felt by some that



Thomas Bjorn

Europe did not field its best team at Hazeltine because of restrictions with the qualifying system. Alex Noren, for example, was the hottest player in Europe in the second half of 2016 but his wins in July and September came too late to get him in Darren Clarke's side. "From my own experience," Bjorn said, "when you make all your points in November and December the year before, it can be quite daunting to play in the Ryder Cup when you haven't played particularly

well for three or four months coming into it."

"I don't think you can, at any time in sports, take away from guys that are in form." While keen to have the best players at his disposal, Bjorn also was wary of preserving the standing of the European Tour in the face of competition from the lucrative PGA Tour. As a result, the rule that a player must be a member of the European Tour to be eligible for the Ryder Cup was retained. That ruled out US-based Englishman Paul Casey from getting in the 2016 team, as he was refusing to join the European Tour for family reasons.

Also, from 2018 onward, players cannot be a future Ryder Cup captain or vice-captain if they decline membership of the European Tour or fail to fulfil the minimum obligation of playing at least four events on tour each season. "I think we've got a good balance," British Open champion Henrik Stenson said of the changes.

On whether being European should be enough to be eligible for the European team, Stenson added: "I think the ask of being a member is not that hard. — AP

BEKELE SETS 02:01:30 MARATHON CAREER TARGET

DUBAI: Triple Olympic track champion Kenenisa Bekele, the second-fastest marathon runner in history, said yesterday he can shave around 90 seconds off the current world record over the classic 26.2 mile distance before he retires. Ethiopian Bekele, widely regarded as the greatest distance runner of all time and world record holder over 10,000 and

5,000 metres, is making an attempt at the world record this Friday at the Dubai Marathon. He ran two hours, three minutes and three seconds when winning Berlin last September, six seconds outside Dennis Kimetto's world record of 2:02:57 set on the same course in 2014. The 34-year-old, who said he is eyeing "just the world record" this week,

told reporters he believes he can run "around 2:01:30" before retiring. The last time Bekele competed in the Dubai Marathon was in 2015 when an injury forced him to pull out mid-race. "I am fully confident. My preparation is going well. I am healthy enough," he said on the sidelines of a press conference ahead of Friday's race. He said he

expects a better time than in Berlin. To run 2:01:30 Bekele said he would need to change his training programme. "The way you prepare yourself is very different. You need nutrition groups and facilities have to be perfect," he said, adding that he had not changed his preparations since Berlin. Dubai is offering a bonus 250,000 dollars to any runner

who can break the world record this week on top of the 200,000 dollar first place prize money. Bekele, who is also due to run the London Marathon in April, the Ethiopian told reporters he would put his hand up for selection for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 if he was fit. Bekele was left out of the Ethiopian team for last year's Rio Games. — Reuters

RUGBY PLAYER SUSPENDED FOR 'LEAK' TO BROTHER

LONDON: Family members meeting up on New Year's Eve is routine and unlikely to rouse suspicions - unless you are brothers on rival sports teams playing the next day.

Sale Sharks, a northern English rugby team, said Tuesday it had suspended winger Tom Arscott after accusing him of leaking information to the opposition. That team, Bristol, featured Tom's brother Luke in the squad on New Year's Day and beat Sale 24-23 in the Premiership.

Tom Arscott used to play alongside Luke at Bristol until 2010 and Sale is suggesting he had split loyalties, making a complaint to the Rugby Football Union.

"If you do your own analysis, you probably don't need the information, because teams do the same most weeks," Sale director of rugby Steve Diamond said. "But in the same breath, I think there's an element of trust you need, and loyalty."

When signing a sports contract, Diamond stressed that "information is sacrosanct to the team's performance and that can't be discussed, certainly with opposition teams."

Even during small talk with the family,

Neither of the brothers played in the match. Luke was an unused replacement and Tom was not included in Sale's match-day squad.

Bristol thinks the investigation is preposterous. "Tom Arscott and Luke Arscott met on New Year's Eve at the team hotel, which is not unusual, for family living in different parts of the country to meet up," Bristol head coach Mark Tainton said.

"We're more than happy for them to meet up beforehand and have a conversation." Unlike brother Tom, Luke Arscott continues to have the backing of his team. "Following the conversation between the brothers, nothing was said or passed to the Bristol coaches of any sporting value, nor did it change the strategy in which we approached the game in any way, shape or form," Tainton said.

"As a club, we are entirely confident we have not acted in a way that is against the spirit and values of rugby. We are disappointed in how this episode has been handled so publicly, especially considering there has been no contact from Sale Sharks to date." — AP

SCOTLAND COACH COTTER NAMES SQUAD FOR FINAL CAMPAIGN

EDINBURGH: Vern Cotter is hoping Scotland can give him a memorable final Six Nations campaign before the New Zealander coach steps aside for home-grown talent Gregor Townsend. Cotter, who has turned Scotland round both in terms of morale and performance levels from the demoralised unit he took over in 2014, named a 37-man squad for the tournament which kicks off with a daunting home match with Ireland at Murrayfield on February 4.

Scrum-half and points kicker Greig Laidlaw—who is heading to 54-year-old Cotter's old club Top 14 giants Clermont next season—retains the captaincy and will continue his half-back partnership with fly-half Finn Russell. "We now prepare to enter the Six Nations and face our first opposition, Ireland, at home next month who are now ranked highly in the world, and deservedly so, after wins over New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, so it's a tough start," said Cotter.

"I think the addition of bonus-points will probably open up the games a little more and I think that's a good thing. I think we'll see a little more play and perhaps a few more risks in the game, which is exciting." Despite his positive impact, Cotter's contract was not renewed principally because

selectors feared losing Townsend to a foreign club, after the former international built up a good reputation in charge of Glasgow Warriors. Cotter, who will take charge of Top 14 outfit Montpellier next term, has recalled centre Matt Scott, who has won his place back after being left out of last November Tests with 12 tries in 18 appearances for his English club Gloucester this season.

Scott is no rookie with 36 caps to his name but Cotter has named an uncapped scrummaging duo in New Zealand-born prop Simon Berghan, 26, and 25-year-old backrow forward Cornell du Preez, who was born in South Africa. Berghan, who joined Edinburgh in 2013, is eligible to represent Scotland through his grandfather whilst du Preez became eligible to represent Scotland last year after completing three years of residency in the country. "It's a well-balanced and exciting group that have played a lot of rugby together, know each other well and are ambitious to do well in a Scotland jersey," said Cotter.

"I think if we get our mind-set right we can be competitive and push for wins in every game in this campaign. "When you look down the list of names from Greig Laidlaw as captain, a solid looking group that's been together for a while." — AFP



COLUMBUS: Carolina Hurricanes forward Sebastian Aho, center, of Finland, scores between Columbus Blue Jackets goalie Sergei Bobrovsky, left, of Russia, and defenseman David Savard during the first period of an NHL hockey game in Columbus, Ohio, Tuesday. — AP

DUBINSKY SCORES TWICE AS BLUE JACKETS BEAT CANES

COLUMBUS: Brandon Dubinsky ended a 17-game scoring drought with two goals while Boone Jenner had a goal and an assist as the Columbus Blue Jackets beat the Carolina Hurricanes 4-1 on Tuesday night. Lukas Sedlak also scored for Columbus while Ryan Murray and Cam Atkinson had a pair of assists each. All-Star Sergei Bobrovsky returned after missing the past three games because of illness and made 24 saves. The Blue Jackets got their third win in seven games since ending a 16-game winning streak and pulled even with Washington atop the unforgiving Metropolitan Division. Sebastian Aho scored for the Hurricanes, who ended a four-game winning streak. Cam Ward was pulled after allowing four goals on 19 shots, and Alex Nedeljkovic stopped all 17 shots in his first NHL appearance.

STARS 7, RANGERS 6

Patrick Sharp scored twice while Jamie Benn and Patrick Eaves had a goal and two assists each as Dallas held on for a wild victory over New York. Cody Eakin had a goal and an assist while Antoine Roussel and Adam Cracknell also scored as the Stars won for the third time in nine games. Radek Faksa and Lauri Korpikoski each had two assists. Derek Stepan had two goals and an assist while Mika Zibanejad also scored twice and Pavel Buchnevich had a goal and two assists for the Rangers. Chris Kreider had a goal and an assist while Mats Zuccarello had three assists and Rick Nash had two helpers. Antti Niemi made 22 saves on 28 shots for Dallas before being replaced in the third period by Kari Lehtonen, who finished with 12 saves.

DEVILS 4, WILD 3

Beau Bennett scored with 2:17 remaining to lift New Jersey over Minnesota in an unexpected victory. Pavel Zacha, Adam Henrique and Kyle Palmieri also scored for New Jersey, which went 3-0 on its four-game road trip. Cory Schneider made 32 saves. Jared Spurgeon, Jason Zucker and Erik Haula scored for Minnesota, which had won 17 of its previous 20 games. Devan Dubnyk stopped 22 shots for the Wild. Bennett scored his third of the season and first in eight games after Blake Coleman sent a centering pass to him after falling down in the corner.

BLACKHAWKS 6, AVALANCHE 4

Vinnie Hinostroza scored twice in the third period, including the go-ahead goal with 11:49 remaining, as Chicago rallied for a win over Colorado. Tanner Kero had two goals and Nick Schmaltz and Brent Seabrook also scored for Chicago, which snapped a two-game losing streak. The Blackhawks switched around their line combinations, breaking up the Jonathan Toews Marian Hossa tandem in an effort to spark the offense. It certainly worked with Hinostroza, Kero and Hossa combining for eight points. Hossa had three assists. Matt Duchene had two goals and Blake Comeau and Matt Nieto also scored for the last-place Avalanche.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, SABRES 3

Auston Matthews, Leo Komarov and Matt Martin each scored in a nine-minute span in the second period as Toronto rallied to beat Buffalo for its 10th win in 13 games. Toronto came back after trailing 2-0 through 20 minutes, getting its first victory this season when behind after one period. It wasn't all rosy for the Leafs, though. Top defenseman Morgan Rielly left after the first period with a lower-body injury. Frederik Andersen made 24 saves for Toronto and James van

Riemsdyk also scored. Kyle Okposo, Evander Kane and William Carrier each scored for Buffalo. Robin Lehner and Anders Nilsson allowed four goals combined on 32 shots.

goalie Pekka Rinne and in with 7:32 left for his 10th goal of the season and first in nine games. The shutout was the second of the season for Miller and the 38th of his career. Vancouver snapped a four-game losing streak that included

NHL results/standings

NY Rangers 3, New Jersey 2 (SO); Chicago 4, San Jose 1; Ottawa 6, NY Islanders 2; Columbus 4, Vancouver 3 (OT); Winnipeg 4, Colorado 1; Boston 1, Los Angeles 0.

Western Conference							Eastern Conference						
Central Division							Atlantic Division						
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Chicago	22	8	4	98	80	48	Montreal	20	7	4	96	69	
Minnesota	18	8	4	89	60	40							
St. Louis	17	11	4	91	93	38							
Winnipeg	15	16	3	90	100	33							
Dallas	13	14	6	84	101	32							
Nashville	13	12	5	87	88	31							
Colorado	11	18	1	65	97	23							
Pacific Division							Metropolitan Division						
San Jose	19	12	1	80	72	39	NY Rangers	23	10	1	113	75	
Anaheim	16	11	5	91	90	37	Pittsburgh	20	7	5	109	90	
Edmonton	16	12	5	97	90	37	Columbus	20	5	4	98	61	
Los Angeles	16	13	2	79	78	34	Washington	19	8	3	81	66	
Calgary	16	15	2	85	96	34	Philadelphia	19	11	3	106	100	
Vancouver	13	16	3	80	100	29	Carolina	13	11	7	82	87	
Arizona	11	15	5	70	97	27	New Jersey	12	12	7	74	93	
							NY Islanders	11	14	6	81	99	

FLAMES 5, PANTHERS 2

Mikael Backlund scored twice in a 13-second span in the second period to break a 2-all tie as Calgary beat Florida. Backlund also had an assist for his fourth three-point effort in the last 17 games. Mark Giordano had a goal and two assists, and Kris Versteeg and Sean Monahan also scored. Vincent Trocheck had both goals for Florida to continue his red-hot scoring. The Panthers leading scorer has nine points (five goals, four assists) during a five-game point streak.

SENATORS 6, BLUES 4

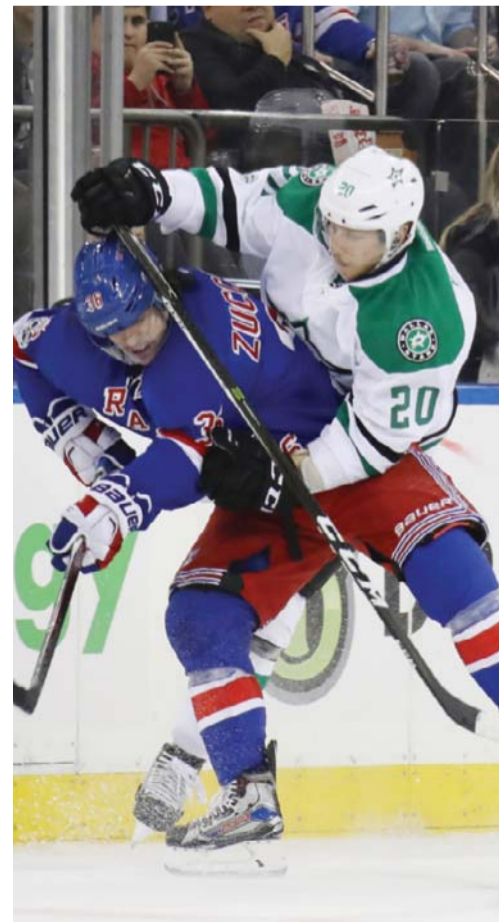
Mike Hoffman and Mark Stone each scored twice to lead Ottawa over St. Louis. Jean-Gabriel Pageau and Bobby Ryan also scored for the Senators, who won their fourth straight at Scottrade Center for the first time in team history. Mike Condon made 19 saves. Paul Stastny, Kevin Shattenkirk, Alexander Steen and Patrik Berglund scored for the Blues, who had their two-game winning streak snapped. Carter Hutton made 18 saves.

DUCKS 2, LIGHTNING 1, OT

Rickard Rakell scored a power-play goal off a faceoff 54 seconds into overtime as Anaheim beat Tampa Bay for its seventh win in nine games. Rakell ripped a vicious shot past Ben Bishop for the 19th goal of his standout season for the first-place Ducks, who earned a point for the 12th time in 13 games. Captain Ryan Getzlaf also scored his first goal at Honda Center this season and John Gibson made 27 saves. Valtteri Filppula scored and Bishop made 19 saves for the Lightning, who followed up a 2-1 win at Los Angeles on Monday with another strong defensive game.

CANUCKS 1, PREDATORS 0

Henrik Sedin scored in the third period for his 999th NHL point while Ryan Miller made 30 saves as Vancouver beat Nashville. With the teams playing a tight, close-checking game, Sedin fired the rebound of Luca Sbisa's shot off



NEW YORK: Mats Zuccarello #36 of the New York Rangers and Cody Eakin #20 of the Dallas Stars get tangled up during the first period at Madison Square Garden on Tuesday in New York City. —AFP



EDINBURGH: In this Sunday, March 13, 2016 file photo, France's head coach Guy Noves looks on ahead of their Six Nations rugby union international match at Murrayfield stadium, Edinburgh, Scotland. France coach Guy Noves has selected four uncapped players and recalled center Yann David for his Six Nations squad ahead of the opening game away to defending champion and Grand Slam winner England on Feb. 4. Lock Arthur Iturria, prop Mohamed Boughanmi, backrower Fabien Sanconnie and fullback Geoffrey Palis are the newcomers. — AP

THOMSON IN LATE SURGE TO CATCH VENDEE GLOBE LEADER LE CLEAC'H

LES SABLES D'OLONNE: Briton Alex Thomson made a late surge to catch race leader Armel Le Cleac'h of France yesterday as both sailors edged close to the finish of the solo round-the-world Vendee Globe race. About 100,000 fans are expected to greet them today after more than 73 days of racing. Thomson is 34.75 nautical miles behind Le Cleac'h, who is hoping to win the event for the first time after two second-place finishes in the last two races in 2009 and 2013.

Le Cleac'h, aboard Banque Populaire, is on course to cross the finish line around 1700 GMT on Thursday, about three hours ahead of Thomson's Hugo Boss, but a late upset is still possible.

"I'm so excited but so stressed, my heart is racing. I'm getting very emotional," Sarah Thomson, Alex's twin sister, told Reuters.

"He's always pushed through the problems, he's so determined. I believe one hundred per cent he can win this race. He can pull it out of the bag, it's amazing the things he's done in his life where he has come out on top. I have no doubt he could win this race."

Dino Dimeo, author of "Vendee Globe, the Adventurers of the Great South", believes Thomson is facing an almost impossible task. "Le Cleac'h should pull it off but Thomson is taking all the risks," he told Reuters.

"Of course he could change tack before Le Cleac'h but he would then finish upwind. Le Cleac'h must be very tense as the closer you get to land there will be many fishing boats, ferries on the way but he knows this area by heart and he's not one to make mistakes." —Reuters

NECK INJURY FORCES AUSTRALIA'S LYNN OUT OF ODI SERIES

ADELAIDE: Australia batsman Chris Lynn has been told to rest for several weeks due to a persistent neck injury and was ruled out of the squad for the rest of their one-day series against Pakistan and the Chappell-Hadlee series against New Zealand.

The 26-year-old has been troubled by a bulging disc in his neck for some time and was using medication to control the pain. He made his one-day international

debut in the first game of the series against Pakistan before being released to visit a specialist in Brisbane on Tuesday, where he was advised to rest for several weeks, Australia coach Darren Lehmann said.

"He's been playing through a lot of pain even during the (Big Bash) and he's got to the stage where he can't function anymore," Lehmann told reporters in Perth ahead of their third ODI against

Pakistan. "He'll have a couple of weeks of no cricket ... he's got to calm down the neck because it's quite aggravated."

"He'll start his rehab now and he won't be doing too much strenuous stuff before he hopefully gets back for the Sri Lanka series."

Australia host Sri Lanka for three Twenty20 internationals in late February after travelling to New Zealand for the three return matches in the Chappell-

Hadlee one-day series. Lehmann added that Peter Handscomb, who has impressed as a test batsman since making his debut in November, would make his ODI debut against Pakistan today.

"He's done really well so this is a good reward for a good summer," Lehmann said of Handscomb, who has scored two centuries and two half centuries in his seven test innings.

"Obviously we want four quality

batters at the top so he'll get his chance there. "It's bad luck for Chris Lynn ... the number four spot is there and Peter has done a really good job in the test matches so he gets a crack at it." Rookie pace bowler Billy Stanlake will also replace Mitchell Starc for the game at the WACA, with the series locked at 1-1 after Pakistan won the second game in Melbourne on Sunday by six wickets. —Reuters

MUSHFIQUR BANGLADESH BLOW, NZ ZEALAND EYE RANKINGS RISE

CHRISTCHURCH: Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim is unlikely to play in the second Test against New Zealand in Christchurch tomorrow, denting the tourists' hopes of avoiding defeat in the two-Test series. New Zealand will overtake Pakistan and move to fifth in the world Test team rankings should they complete a 2-0 Test sweep following their dramatic victory earlier this week in Wellington's first Test.

Mushfiqur was concussed after being hit on the head by a short-pitched delivery and rushed to hospital yesterday, but Bangladesh officials said Wednesday it was a hairline thumb fracture that would keep him sidelined.

"His finger injury is worse," team physiotherapist Dean Conway told reporters. "The hairline crack that has been found is new. He will need to give more time for this injury." There was no confirmation that Mushfiqur would sit out, but he has been advised by doctors not to rush back after being hit on the back of the helmet by a Tim Southee bouncer.

Conway said that the Bangladesh skipper "may need three to four weeks to return." His injury, which came with memories still fresh of Australian Phil Hughes being killed in Sydney just over two years ago, has again put the spotlight on the use of the short-pitched delivery as a fast-bowling tactic.

BOUNCER FEARS

Opinion is divided with two former New Zealand internationals, Warren Lees and Lance Cairns, joining the debate yesterday on opposite sides.

Former wicketkeeper Lees said the use of the bouncer had gone too far and umpires needed to get tough.

"It is not just because the batsman was carted off to hospital. It has been concerning me for some time," Lees told the New Zealand Herald.

"The umpires are a wee bit lenient. The guy at square leg has to be more switched on. It is sort of getting out of control."

Cairns, who suffered a fractured skull when felled by Pakistan quick bowler Wasim Akram in 1985, said short-pitched deliveries were part of a bowler's armoury.

"When you think about... the number of deaths caused by this delivery, Hughes' tragic ending is the only one I've ever heard of," he told Fairfax Media.

"Do you hear people wanting to ban the use of cars, motorbikes, bikes because of fatalities? No you don't. But lessons must be learnt from these tragedies, and this is why they've got tougher on the design of the helmet."

While Bangladesh posted several batting records in the first Test, including the unwelcome title of scoring the highest first innings total of 595 in a losing effort, they have had little success in their first overseas tour in more than two years.

Captain Kane Williamson guided the side home in Wellington with an undefeated 104. His 15th century put him one behind Ross Taylor who in turn is one behind the New Zealand record of 17 held by the late Martin Crowe.

Coach Mike Hesson said the race between Williamson and Taylor to overtake Crowe can only be good for New Zealand.

"I hope they not only go past (Crowe's) record but they keep going toe-for-toe for a while," he said.

New Zealand swept Bangladesh 3-0 in both the preceding one-day and Twenty20 series. —AFP



ROUEN: Saudi Arabia's pivot Mahdi Alsalem (C) passes the ball during the 25th IHF Men's World Championship 2017 Group C handball match Saudi Arabia vs Hungary yesterday at the Kindarena in Rouen. — AFP

GERMANY, QATAR SURGE INTO LAST 16 AT WORLDS

PARIS: Germany and Qatar battled into the knock-out round of the World Handball Championships with pool-phase wins over Saudi Arabia 38-24 and Argentina 21-17 respectively on Tuesday as holders France beat Russia 35-24 to take pole position in their group.

For European champions Germany it was a third win from three games in Group C and they even partially rested their star winger Uwe Gensheimer, who nevertheless racked up four goals in 30 minutes in Rouen and oversaw a first half where the result was wrapped up with the score 21-13 at the break. "It was difficult to keep the concentration high in this game, but this was quite normal after we had a similar match against Chile," said Germany coach Dagur Sigurdsson.

"Now we have to step up and show a

higher quality against Belarus tomorrow." Qatar stunned Group D rivals Argentina in Paris in a low-scoring affair and the Qataris can thank their goalkeeper Danijel Saric for his 14 saves.

It means neither regional rivals Bahrain nor the Argentines can catch them in the standings. Tunisia could have secured a last-16 spot too in Group B but for a late collapse after they let slip a 28-23 lead in the last five minutes as Slovenia fought back to force a thrilling 28-28 draw. That means Macedonia are also through to the next round without throwing a further ball, while Tunisia have been overtaken by Iceland, who beat Angola 33-19, with one more group game to play.

In Group B top spot will be played between Spain and Slovenia today. The four top teams out of six in each group advance to the next round. France and Russia are

already through to the last 16 so the battle in the western city of Nantes was for top spot in Group A. Adrien Dipanda and Kentin Mahe starred for the the French, who have won three of the last four world titles, scoring 15 goals between them, ensuring the top spot which gives the titleholders a more favourable path to the semi-finals.

"We've shown that we were very strong on both sides of the court tonight, against a Russian team that was to be taken very seriously," said France's Nedim Remili.

"Now that the first spot's secured, we're going to stay as focused as possible in order not to lose the confidence we've gathered."

Also in Group A, Norway beat Brazil 39-26 thanks to seven goals from Sander Sagosen, with both teams already through to the knock-out round. Poland edged Japan 26-25 with both teams already eliminated. — AFP

PACKERS-FALCONS NFC MATCHUP EXPECTED TO PRODUCE BIG OFFENSE

FLOWERY BRANCH: The high-scoring offenses of the Atlanta Falcons and Green Bay Packers appear poised to provide a memorable send-off for the Georgia Dome in Sunday's NFC championship game.

The Falcons led the NFL in scoring. Even so, they know it won't be easy to keep up with the scoring pace set by quarterback Aaron Rodgers and the Packers.

"It's obvious they've got a stud at quarterback," Falcons left tackle Jake Matthews said Tuesday. "We've played a lot of great teams with great players at quarterback... Whatever it takes, we just have to put up as many points as we need to."

Matthews said the weekly message from offensive coordinator Kyle Shanahan is "I don't know if we're going to have to win 6-3 or 40-37."

Of those alternatives, 40-37 appears to be the more likely target, in part because the Atlanta and Green Bay defenses don't dominate the statistics like their offensive counterparts. The game will be the Falcons' farewell to the Georgia Dome, which will be demolished in the offseason. The Falcons will move into the \$1.5 billion Mercedes-Benz Stadium next season.

The Falcons and Packers finished the regular season ranked 28th and 31st, respectively, in pass defense. The Falcons allowed 25.4 points per game to rank 27th, only a few spots below the Packers (24.2) at 21st. Atlanta led the NFL with 33.8 points per game.

Green Bay linebacker Nick Perry said the goal will be to prevent big plays.

"They are very explosive," Perry said. "When we look at the film, we have to make sure we don't give up those explosive plays. Everything lives off that. They are good at what they do. We are going to look

at the film and go over it and make sure we prevent as much as we can of those guys giving up explosive plays."

The Falcons advanced with a 36-20 divisional playoff win over Seattle last week. Green Bay's offense also rolled in a 34-31 win over Dallas.

Despite the unimpressive season totals, Atlanta allowed fewer than 20 points in four of its last six regular-season games. But none of those games were against Rodgers.

The Falcons have faced Russell Wilson, Cam Newton and Drew Brees in their past three games. Asked who compares with Rodgers, Falcons linebacker De'Vondre Campbell had a quick answer. "Nobody. It's just that simple," Campbell said. "The things that he can do, it's just amazing to see. There's no one I can compare him to."

The Falcons are led by MVP candidate Matt Ryan, the All-Pro who ranked second in the NFL in yards passing and TD passes. Atlanta's offense featured depth, as Ryan threw scoring passes to a record 13 players during the season, and balance with running back Devonta Freeman and Tevin Coleman.

Atlanta's offense provides nice support for its defense, but cornerback Jalen Collins insisted Tuesday he doesn't want to have to rely on that strength.

"You don't go in the game thinking you're going to give up hundreds of yards and a bunch of points," Collins said. "We're looking forward to trying to limit the points as best we can and give our offense an opportunity to put points on the board."

Falcons cornerback Robert Alford said expectations for a high-scoring game gives the defense reason "to have a chip on our shoulders." Added Alford: "We're all going to have something to prove. I love it." — AP



GREEN BAY: In this Dec. 8, 2014, file photo, Atlanta Falcons quarterback Matt Ryan (2) talks to Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers after an NFL football game in Green Bay, Wis. The Packers and Falcons play in the NFC Championship on Sunday, Jan. 22, 2017, in Atlanta. — AP

HANDSCOMB TO MAKE ODI DEBUT AGAINST PAKISTAN

SYDNEY: Middle-order batsman Peter Handscomb will make his limited overs debut for Australia against Pakistan in the third one-day international in Perth today.

Handscomb replaces the injured Mitchell Marsh after a highly successful introduction to Test cricket in which the 25-year-old scored two centuries and two fifties in his first four appearances in the recent series against South Africa and Pakistan.

"He's done really well, he's been outstanding. So good reward for a good summer," Australian coach Darren Lehmann told reporters yesterday. "Obviously we want four quality batters going at the top so he'll get his chance there."

"He played a one-day style innings for us in the Sydney Test, so he's got all the shots and he's quite innovative," Lehmann said. Fast bowler Billy Stanlake comes in for Mitchell Starc, who is being rested. Chris Lynn, who missed Sunday's loss because of a neck injury, will be out for the remainder of the five-match series which is tied at 1-1, Lehman said.

Australia: Steve Smith (capt), David Warner, Usman Khawaja, Peter Handscomb, Travis Head, Glenn Maxwell, Matthew Wade, James Faulkner, Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood, Billy Stanlake. —AFP



Peter Handscomb

PRICEY FOREIGN PLAYERS WEAR OUT CHINA WELCOME

SHANGHAI: China is cracking down on the use of pricey foreign players by its domestic league teams just as sides are gearing up for the coming season. Here's how it happened:

GETTING THE BALL ROLLING

The Chinese domestic league had been steadily growing by the time President Xi Jinping took office in 2012 and increasing attention was paid to past comments he had made declaring his vision of China becoming a football superpower. The focus on his remarks is widely cited as encouraging lavish spending on foreign talent by the big businesses that own Chinese Super League teams as well as ramped-up investment in grassroots development.

FOREIGN INVASION

Hoping to fan interest in Chinese football and in some cases please Xi top teams sought to outdo each other with foreign player signings, especially in the past few years.

Last month Chelsea's Brazilian midfielder Oscar confirmed a record-breaking move to Shanghai SIPG worth a reported 60 million euros (around \$63 million) — the fifth time in a year the Asian football transfer record was broken. Brazilians Hulk and Alex Teixeira, Argentina's Carlos Tevez and others have also been lured to China for eye-watering sums. Tevez, for example, is headed to Shanghai Shenhua for a reported 38 million euros per season, which would make the 32-year-old the

highest-earning footballer in the world even more than compatriot Lionel Messi and Portugal star Cristiano Ronaldo.

THE CRACKDOWN

Facing slowing economic growth, China's government had already been trying to stem capital flight and what it describes as reckless spending and, in that context, the stunning transfer price tags were practically inviting a crackdown. On January 6, the sports ministry warned it would take action against teams that shell out "irrational" sums.

This week the Chinese Football Association went a step further, cutting the number of foreign players that top-flight teams could field from four to no

more than three per match for the coming 2017 season, which starts in March.

STEMMING THE FLOW

Since the sports ministry's edict, only one major foreign signing has taken place: Tianjin TEDA snagged Chelsea's Nigerian midfielder John Obi Mikel for about 8.5 million euros, according to transfermarketweb.com. Shu Yuhui, the chairman of Super League side Tianjin Quanjian, told state media this week the clampdown had scuppered his team's plans to buy Chelsea's Spanish striker Diego Costa and a host of other Europe-based stars.

MIXED REACTIONS

The Chinese public and fans appear

to be broadly supportive of the new curbs, with hopes that more money will flow into developing the skill level of Chinese players. China's national team is currently ranked a lowly 81st in the world, just behind Saint Kitts and Nevis with its population of around 50,000 people compared with China's 1.3 billion.

Sports industry insiders, meanwhile, have said the astronomical sums had become divorced from business sense and needed to be reined in.

But some fans have complained the official heavy-handedness will prevent domestic footballers learning from top foreign talent and forcing fans to endure boring play as they await the emergence of the hoped-for Chinese football "superpower". —AFP

TROUBLE IN PARADISE, GUAM PLAYERS THREATEN STRIKE

TOKYO: Guam's footballers could go on strike after the palm-fringed Pacific island voted to withdraw its national side from the final round of Asian Cup qualifiers.

The Guam Football Association have blamed the bombshell decision made late last month on "financial constraints" but long-serving captain Jason Cunliffe slammed the move, telling AFP the players may respond by downing tools. "Absolutely we are considering not playing," the 33-year-old forward said in a telephone interview.

"Obviously with the blatant disrespect that they've shown us, that's definitely something we're considering. It's a joke, it came completely out of the blue," added Cunliffe, the tiny nation's record goalscorer. "The players are devastated. People who know nothing about the game are making the big decisions for Guam football."

Once the whipping boys of Asian football, the tiny honeymoon island struck a blow for the underdog by reaching the final round of Asian Cup qualifiers last year.

More famous for its sun-kissed beaches and coral reefs, Guam's giant-killing antics under their former English coach Gary White saw them finish fourth in their group in the second round of Asia's World Cup qualifiers. Guam, with a population of just 170,000 and ranked 182nd in the world, consistently punched above their weight, beating Turkmenistan and India, a country of 1.2 billion.

Cunliffe revealed that senior players had approached former United States forward Landon Donovan about coaching the team to help generate extra sponsorship revenue. But despite meeting Guam football chief Richard Lai for emergency talks,

Cunliffe said no formal offer materialised before the January 9 deadline to withdraw from the Asian Cup qualifiers.

'LOOKING FOR EXCUSES'

"They were basically looking for every excuse for why it couldn't work," said Cunliffe, still clinging to the hope of a dramatic late reversal before the January 23 draw. "Having your national team play in the region's biggest tournament should be what you strive for, not pulling out the one time you actually have the chance to qualify." Lai was not immediately available for comment. However, in a press release he claimed Guam could not afford the estimated \$1.2 million it would cost to compete in the Asian Cup qualifiers and would focus on investing in youth and grassroots football. Cunliffe fumed: "Youth development and investing in your full national team, which is the pinnacle of international football, shouldn't be mutually exclusive."

Several senior Guam players now look set to be denied the opportunity of playing in another major tournament.

"We went out and asked guys like A.J. (DeLaGarza) to take a chance and help us grow the game in Guam," said Cunliffe.

"Then you literally pull the rug out from under them, guys who gave up any chance of playing for the United States," he added. "He's 29 and you're telling him the next big tournament you could qualify for would be the 2022 World Cup—I'm embarrassed." Cunliffe admits his stance could spell the end of his international career.

"I would not be surprised," he said. "But I'll bite that bullet. If I don't speak up then it won't change—even if it takes us going on strike." —AFP



MIAMI: Miami Heat forward James Johnson, left, drives past Houston Rockets forward Trevor Ariza during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, in Miami. — AP

MIAMI BEAT ROCKETS, RAPTORS STUN NETS

MIAMI: Goran Dragic had 21 points and eight assists while Wayne Ellington scored 18 off the bench as the Miami Heat overcame another triple-double from James Harden to beat the Houston Rockets 109-103 on Tuesday night. Dion Waiters scored 17 and Tyler Johnson had 16 while James Johnson added 15 for the Heat. Hassan Whiteside finished with 14 points and 15 rebounds. Harden had 40 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists for the Rockets (32-12), his 13th triple-double of the season. He shot 12 for 30 from the field and got his triple-double with an assist to Montrezl Harrell with 12.6 seconds left, an uncontested dunk with the Heat simply waiting for the clock to run out. An 8-0 run midway through the fourth quarter put Miami up for good in a game that was back-and-forth for 42 minutes.

RAPTORS 119, NETS 109

DeMar DeRozan had 36 points and 11 rebounds while Cory Joseph scored a career-high 33 as Toronto beat free-falling Brooklyn. Toronto won its fourth straight game and extended Brooklyn's losing streak to 11 in a row. The Nets have not won since Dec. 26. Terrence Ross added 15 points for the Raptors, who opened the game with an 11-0 run but fell behind after the first quarter. Brook Lopez had 28 points for the Nets.

MAVERICKS 99, BULLS 98

Wesley Matthews made a go-ahead 3-pointer from the wing with 12 seconds left as Dallas beat Chicago for its first three-game winning streak of the season. Six players scored in double figures for the Mavericks, including all five starters. Harrison Barnes had 20 points, Seth Curry added 18 and Dirk Nowitzki finished with 10 points and 10 rebounds. Dallas trailed 98-96 after Jimmy Butler made a long jumper over Matthews with 23 seconds left but Mavericks coach Rick Carlisle decided against a timeout and Deron Williams drove into the lane before kicking out to Matthews for the 3. Chicago had one last chance but Dwyane Wade missed a potential game-winning jumper from the corner on his 35th birthday as time expired. Butler finished with 24 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds for the Bulls, who had won two in a row. Robin Lopez scored 21, and Wade had 17 on 8-for-21 shooting.

SPURS 122, TIMBERWOLVES 114

Kawhi Leonard had 34 points as San Antonio overcame a strong start by Minnesota. Leonard's fourth straight 30-point game helped him become the first San Antonio player to score 950 points in the first half of a season since Tim Duncan in 2003. Coming off a career-high 38 on Saturday against Phoenix in Mexico City, Leonard was 12 for 17 from the field. LaMarcus Aldridge added 29 points on 12-for-20 shooting, spoiling Minnesota coach Tom Thibodeau's 59th birthday. San Antonio had difficulty with Minnesota's explosive starting lineup. Karl-Anthony Towns had 27 points and 16 rebounds, and Ricky Rubio added 21 points and 14 assists.

NUGGETS 127, LAKERS 121
Nikola Jokic had 29 points and 15 rebounds as Denver withstood a furious late rally by Los Angeles. Denver led by 19 late in the third quarter only to see the Lakers close to 120-119 with under two minutes to play. Wilson Chandler responded with a dunk for the Nuggets and scored five points in the final

1:40, sending Los Angeles to its fifth consecutive defeat. Will Barton added 26 points and eight assists to help the Nuggets win their third straight. Kenneth Faried had 20 points and seven rebounds. Lou Williams scored 24 points and Nick Young had 22 for the struggling Lakers, who have won just five of their last 26 games. —AP

NBA results/standings

Dallas 99, Chicago 98; Toronto 119, Brooklyn 109; Miami 109, Houston 103.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference					
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division					
W	L	PCT	GB	Utah	LA Clippers	Portland	Minnesota		
Toronto	28	13	.683	-	27	16	.628	-	
Boston	26	15	.634	2	Oklahoma City	25	18	.581	2
NY Knicks	18	24	.429	10.5	Denver	17	23	.425	8.5
Philadelphia	13	26	.333	14	Portland	18	25	.419	9
Brooklyn	8	33	.195	20	Minnesota	14	28	.333	12.5
Central Division				Pacific Division					
Cleveland	29	11	.725	-	Golden State	35	6	.854	-
Indiana	21	19	.525	8	LA Clippers	29	14	.674	7
Milwaukee	20	20	.500	9	Sacramento	16	24	.400	18.5
Chicago	21	22	.488	9.5	LA Lakers	15	31	.326	22.5
Detroit	19	24	.442	11.5	Phoenix	13	28	.317	22
Southeast Division				Southwest Division					
Atlanta	24	17	.585	-	San Antonio	32	9	.780	-
Washington	21	19	.525	2.5	Houston	32	12	.727	1.5
Charlotte	20	21	.488	4	Memphis	25	18	.581	8
Orlando	17	26	.395	8	New Orleans	16	26	.381	16.5
Miami	12	30	.286	12.5	Dallas	14	27	.341	18

SENEGAL HAVE LAST EIGHT PLACE IN SIGHT

FRANCEVILLE: Sadio Mane-inspired Senegal will become the first qualifiers for the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations quarter-finals if they defeat upstarts Zimbabwe in Franceville today. Senegal enter the match with three points, Algeria and Zimbabwe have one each and Tunisia none. The northern African neighbours meet in the first match of a double-header in southeastern Gabon.

Qualifying with a game to spare would make a welcome change for the Teranga Lions after two disastrous recent Cup of Nations campaigns. Ranked among the favourites when Gabon co-hosted the 2012 tournament, Senegal fell to Zambia, co-hosts Equatorial Guinea and Libya and made a humiliating early exit. Three years later they returned to Equatorial Guinea and after beating Ghana, drew with South Africa and lost to Algeria to once again bow out after the first round. Coach and former national team star Aliou Cisse is convinced Senegal will not commit the same mistakes this time.

THRILLER

"Perhaps we were overconfident in previous campaigns and believed the media hype about being among the favourites," he told reporters in this remote city. "I believe there is more humility within the squad now—a realisation that we are just one of many contenders to become African champions. "We are good enough to go all the way and bring the trophy to Senegal for the first time, but many difficult matches lie ahead." Beating Tunisia 2-0 last Sunday through goals from Liverpool attacker Mane and Kara Mbodj within the first 30 minutes was a promising start for Cisse and his squad. Only three of the eight first-round matches played so far across the four groups

have produced victories and Senegal were the only side to win by more than one goal.

However, Mane acknowledged that Tunisia were wasteful and had a shot that possibly crossed the goal-line ruled out by the referee. "We made a great start," said the star who finished third behind winner Riyad Mahrez of Algeria and Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang of Gabon in the 2016 African Footballer of the Year poll. "But we have won nothing yet. The history of this competition is littered with teams who achieved great results at the start only to be eliminated long before the final.

"It is crucial that we take this tournament one match at a time. Right now our focus is solely on Zimbabwe, who are a good team." Considered lightweights before the group kicked off because of their lowly 30th ranking in Africa and rare Cup of Nations appearances, Zimbabwe surprisingly held Algeria 2-2 in a thriller. It could have been even better for the Warriors as they rallied from conceding an early goal to take a lead they held for 53 minutes until Mahrez salvaged a point with his second goal. For coach Callisto Pasuwa, one of four locals among the 16 coaches at the Cup of Nations, the result vindicated his long-held belief that Zimbabwean footballers can match the best in Africa.

"I hope that by holding an Algerian team containing Mahrez and several other stars, we can get rid of an inferiority complex we sometimes possess," he told reporters.

A concern for Pasuwa is the fitness of star Belgium-based striker Knowledge Musona, who retired injured early against Algeria. Should Senegal defeat Zimbabwe, 2004 champions Tunisia will be eliminated if they lose to Algeria, who have also won the competition once. —AFP



LIBREVILLE: Gabon supporters cheer for their team ahead of the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations group A football match between Gabon and Burkina Faso at the Stade de l'Amitie Sino-Gabonaise in Libreville yesterday. — AFP

XABI ALONSO TO RETIRE IN JUNE

BERLIN: Spanish World Cup winner and double European champion Xabi Alonso is set to retire at the end of the season when his Bayern Munich contract expires, a report in Germany said. Leaders Bayern kick off the second half of the Bundesliga season at Freiburg on Friday in their bid for a fifth straight German league title with the 35-year-old Alonso poised to end his playing career in June. It would mean the German giants could lose significant experience for next season with club captain and ex-Germany skipper Philipp Lahm also reportedly considering retiring in June to take over as Bayern's team manager. According to Sport Bild, Alonso has already told club bosses he does not want to sign a contract extension.

Having joined Bayern for the 2014/15 season, Alonso is bidding to finish with a third straight German league title with Munich currently three points clear in the table.

Alonso has won 16 titles for clubs and

country, including the 2010 World Cup and the 2008 and 2012 European championships with Spain, making 114 international appearances.

He retired from international duty in August 2014. He has won the Champions League twice with two different clubs. He started out at Real Sociedad and joined Liverpool in 2004 after being named Spanish player of the year in 2003.

He was part of the Liverpool side which famously won the 2005 Champions League title in a penalty shoot-out, coming back from 3-0 down against AC Milan in Istanbul.

After five years and 143 English Premier League appearances with Liverpool, Alonso joined Real Madrid in 2009. He again won the Champions League in 2014 when current Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti steered Real to a 4-1 win over Atletico Madrid before Alonso transferred to Germany for the 2014/15 season. — AFP

SPORTING GIJON PART WITH COACH AFTER FOUR STRAIGHT DEFEATS

BARCELONA: Sporting Gijon parted company with coach Abelardo Fernandez by mutual consent on Tuesday following a downward spiral of results that has left them in the relegation zone.

"After a meeting between the club's board of directors today Real Sporting have decided, by mutual agreement

with Abelardo Fernandez, that he will leave his role as coach of the first team," the club said in a statement.

"The decision has been taken after analysing the team's situation and results. "Real Sporting wishes to show its gratitude for the commitment, effort and professionalism of "Pitu" Abelardo while in charge of the team and for his disposi-

tion in signing the agreement to depart the club, which will always be his home. The club wishes him every luck in the future."

Fernandez, a native of Gijon, had strong ties to the club, having come through the academy and played as a centre back for them for five years until joining Barcelona in 1994.

His first job in management was in charge of the club's reserve side in 2008, a role he reassumed in 2012 until taking over the first team in 2014.

Despite being subject to a transfer ban due to the club's financial problems, Abelardo led Sporting back to La Liga after a three-year absence in his first full season. They secured their status top

flight status on the final day of the last campaign. His impact has waned in his third season in charge, however, with his side winning just three of 18 league games. They have lost their last four league encounters to leave them 18th in the standings on 12 points, four below 17th-placed Valencia, who also have a game in hand. — Reuters

CAMEROON HAVE NOT ASKED FOR BAN ON LIVERPOOL'S MATIP

LIBREVILLE: Cameroon have not asked FIFA to stop defender Joel Matip playing for Liverpool during the African Nations Cup but they have not given the Premier League club the green light to field the player either, Cameroon officials said yesterday.

They are unlikely to give clearance because that would cause an outcry in Cameroon where eight players turned down call ups for the finals in Gabon, African soccer sources told Reuters.

The Cameroon Football Federation (FECAFOOT) has made no official comment on the issue, while Liverpool are consulting their lawyers before deciding whether to play him.

Soccer's world governing body FIFA told the Merseyside club to make up their own minds on whether Matip could play, saying on Monday it had directed Liverpool to "the applicable provisions" of the regulations.

Matip was left out of the squad for Sunday's 1-1 Premier League draw at Manchester United and yesterday's FA Cup third-round replay away to fourth-tier Plymouth Argyle because world governing body FIFA had not confirmed he was eligible. West Bromwich Albion took the same precaution with fullback Allan Nyom for Saturday's 4-0 defeat at Tottenham Hotspur.

However, Ajax Amsterdam used keeper

Andre Onana - one of the eight who decided not to play for Cameroon at the tournament - on Sunday in a 3-1 win at PEC Zwolle in the Dutch championship.

Cameroon officials, speaking to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said it would up to FIFA to decide if any action should be taken but Cameroon had "moved on" from the matter.

Matip was called up for the finals despite having not played for the Indomitable Lions since last year's World Cup in Brazil.

"Liverpool have subsequently repeatedly sought, as a matter of urgency, clarity from FIFA in this regard," the club said.

"It is Liverpool's view that the player should be available for club football during the period of the competition and (we) will continue to work for a speedy and unambiguous resolution."

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said he would seek advice from the club's lawyers before using Matip.

"As you can imagine, we are in a lot of talks. We've done transfers quicker than this. It's already long term but now it's getting really tense on our side," he told British media. "We've tried everything but at the end I have to make the decision. Of course I have to ask (Liverpool's lawyers) but the decision is for me to make. I could put him in the lineup." — Reuters



PORT-GENTIL: Egypt's goalkeeper Ahmed El-Shenawy punches the ball away from the goal during the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations group D football match between Mali and Egypt in Port-Gentil yesterday. —AFP

EGYPTIAN FOOTBALL STAR PLACED ON 'TERROR' LIST

CAIRO: Egypt has added Mohamed Aboutrika - one of the most successful African footballers of his generation - to its terror watch list on suspicions he financed the banned Muslim Brotherhood, his lawyer said Tuesday.

The Brotherhood was outlawed in 2013, months after the army overthrew Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, who hailed from the movement.

A court official said Tuesday that Aboutrika was one of more than 1,500 people, including Morsi and other Muslim Brotherhood members behind bars, who were added to the watch list last week.

In 2015 a government committee froze the assets of the former player for Cairo-based club Al Ahly and Egypt's national team, two years after he retired.

According to an anti-terror law imposed in 2015 by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, anyone on the country's terror list is subject to a travel ban, with their passport and assets liable to be frozen. Aboutrika helped deliver repeated victories for Egypt in the African Cup and played on winning Al Ahly teams in the African Champions League. He publicly endorsed Morsi's presidential bid in 2012. Morsi went on to become Egypt's first democratically elected president, only for the army, prompted by large protests against the Islamist, to oust him one year later and crack down on his supporters.

Aboutrika's lawyer Mohamed Osman said that the court's decision to add him to the terror watch list was "contrary to the law", saying the retired player "has not been convicted or formally notified of any of the charges against him."

"We will appeal this decision," he said, adding that "if he is added to the list there will be many legal consequences,

notably the travel ban."

ASSET FREEZE

The freeze on Aboutrika's assets is still in force, despite two court orders that it be lifted, Osman added.

In an interview with state-run Al-Ahram newspaper in May 2015, Aboutrika denied that his company - or any of his partners - had ever funded the Islamist movement. Aboutrika is currently in Qatar working as a commentator for beIN sports channel, Osman told AFP yesterday. The footballer's fans took to social media to express their anger at the ruling, tweeting with the Arabic hashtag #Aboutrika_is_not_a_terrorist.

Former Egypt international and Tottenham Hotspur striker Ahmed Hossam, "Mido", called on authorities to clarify if they had evidence Aboutrika was linked to terrorism.

"Until that time we will all keep defending him and I will continue to support him," he tweeted. "I doubt a man of his character could do anything against Egypt." Television presenter Wael al-Ibrashy said that "instead of being put on a list of glory, of champions, he has been put on a list of terrorists."

Since Morsi's overthrow, a police crackdown against the Brotherhood has left hundreds dead and thousands jailed.

Militants, mainly Islamic State group jihadists in the Sinai Peninsula, have killed hundreds of policemen and soldiers in attacks.

The Brotherhood, which espoused change through elections, denies it is involved in the violence, but analysts believe that segments of the group have turned to attacking police. Aboutrika retired in 2013, and the 38-year-old has since avoided expressing his political views publicly. — AFP



DOHA: This file photo taken on May 17, 2013 shows Baniyas' Egyptian striker Mohamed Aboutrika controlling the ball during the GCC Champions League first leg final football match against Al-Khor in Doha. Egyptian court has added former football star Mohamed Aboutrika to the authorities' terror list, his lawyer said yesterday, based on suspicions he financed the banned Muslim Brotherhood. — AFP

EGYPT HELD ON CUP OF NATIONS RETURN

PORT-GENTIL: Essam El Hadary became the oldest player ever to appear at the Africa Cup of Nations as Egypt drew 0-0 with Mali on their return to the tournament on Tuesday. The 44-year-old goalkeeper came off the bench in the first half to replace the injured Ahmed El Shennawy and beat the old mark set by compatriot Hossam Hassan, who was 39 when he played at the 2006 Cup of Nations. Otherwise, the Pharaohs' return to Africa's biggest stage after a seven-year absence proved to be something of an anti-climax with neither side creating many chances on a terrible playing surface in Port-Gentil. The result means Ghana are in control of Group D following their 1-0 win against Uganda earlier in the day at the same venue. Ghana meet Mali next on Saturday while Egypt face Uganda later the same day. "It was a very difficult game. In the second half we played better but our players were very tired towards the end," said Egypt's Argentine coach Hector Cuper. "We would be much happier of course if we had won but this will not really change too much what we need to do in our coming games." Egypt had not been seen at a Cup of Nations since winning a record seventh title, and third in a row, in 2010.

This was always going to be a big test for them against a Malian side who may as well have been playing at home.

The large Malian community in Port-Gentil - an oil-rich seaport perched on Gabon's western tip - turned out to give their side colourful and vociferous backing and made up most of the crowd of 12,600. Mali might have won an early penalty when Moussa Marega was bundled over by Ali Gabr in the box but South African referee Daniel Bennett waved play on. El Shennawy then touched a Lassana Coulibaly header around the post before having to be replaced in the 25th minute by El Hadary, who celebrated his 44th birthday on Sunday.

The veteran did not have much to do and it was Egypt who had the best opportunities from then on, Tarek Hamed setting up Arsenal midfielder Mohamed Elneny for a first-time effort that went narrowly over. Some Malian fans performed their evening prayer in the stadium concourse at half time before returning to witness a stodgy second period. Egypt could have opened the scoring on the counterattack in the 54th minute, pouncing on a fresh-air swipe by Sambou Yatabare at the other end of the field. Mahmoud Abdel-Moneim's cross from the

left was met by a flying header from Marwan Mohsen, but Mali's goalkeeper Oumar Sissoko produced a superb reaction stop to turn the ball over. — AFP

Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

SPAIN COPA DEL REY

Atletico de Madrid v Eibar 21:15

Real Sociedad v Barcelona 23:15

beIN SPORTS 1 HD

beIN SPORTS 3 HD

ITALIAN CUP

AS Roma v UC Sampdoria 23:00

beIN SPORTS

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

Algeria v Tunisia 19:00

beIN SPORTS

Senegal v Zimbabwe 22:00

beIN SPORTS

FIFA'S VAN BASTEN REVEALS RADICAL VISION

BERLIN: Time penalties instead of yellow cards, no off-side rule and more substitutions: legendary ex-striker Marco van Basten, FIFA's technical director, has a radical vision of football's future. "We must keep looking for ways to improve the game, to make it more honest, more dynamic, more interesting, so that what we offer is attractive enough," the 52-year-old Dutchman told German magazine Sport Bild. "There are lots of variations which need to be tested in the coming years." Van Basten, who became FIFA's technical director last October, has a string of revolutionary suggestions, some of which he hopes could be in place for the expanded 48-team World Cup in 2026 — and some of which would be hugely controversial.

He wants to see football copy rugby union, where only the captain can directly address the referee and a yellow card means a player is temporarily sent off.

"A yellow card (in football) against an opposing player doesn't currently give the attacking team much," said van Basten.

"One idea is to replace the yellow card with a time penalty of five or 10 minutes. That would frighten teams. "It is hard to play 10 against 11, let alone with eight or nine. We're also thinking about allowing more than three substitutions during games. "Last month I met (Manchester City coach) Pep Guardiola, who asked, 'Why aren't six substitutions possible?'"

Van Basten also wants to introduce a "shoot-out" where a player has eight seconds to beat the goalkeeper to replace extra time and traditional penalty kicks.

"Each team would have five attempts. The referee whistles, then the player runs at the goalkeeper from 25 metres out," he said. "The goalkeeper can't leave his area and if he parries, it's over. It would be spectacular for the spectators and more interesting for a player. "In a penalty shoot-out, it is over for the taker in a second." Former AC Milan, Ajax and Netherlands goal machine van Basten is head of FIFA's technical areas, ranging from football technology innovation to refereeing.

However, any of the far-reaching changes he wants would need to be ratified by the executive committee of world football's governing body. If he gets his way, he would dump the off-side rule. "Football currently resembles handball where nine players, plus the goalkeeper, pack the penalty area and (the defence) is like a wall," he said. "They abolished the off-

side rule in field hockey and there were no problems." If that is revolutionary, van Basten is also concerned at how some teams have become experts at slowing the game down in the dying stages when they are narrowly ahead. "We're discussing how to make the time more effective in the last 10 minutes," he said, adding that he wants to see the number of competitive matches reduced to protect the game's top stars. — AFP



AMSTERDAM: In this Friday, May 20, 2016 file photo, Dutch former soccer star Marco van Basten is seated in front of the logo of the Dutch soccer association KNVB during a presentation of video referee assistance in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Former AC Milan and Netherlands forward Marco van Basten is using his role as technical director at FIFA to propose a series of changes to soccer to stir a debate. — AP

Sports

Dubinsky scores
twice as Blue
Jackets beat CanesEgyptian football
star placed on
'terror' list

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2017

GERMANY, QATAR SURGE INTO LAST 16 AT WORLDS

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MELBOURNE: Germany's Angelique Kerber eyes on the ball to make a forehand return to compatriot Carina Witthoef during their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday. — AP

NO CAKEWALK FOR BIRTHDAY GIRL KERBER, FEDERER

MELBOURNE: Roger Federer was made to work by 200th-ranked Noah Rubin at the Australian Open yesterday—and it was no cakewalk for birthday girl Angelique Kerber either. In what could be ominous signs for Federer, America's Rubin kept him largely at bay in the first set and broke in the third, before the 35-year-old won it 7-5, 6-3, 7-6 (7/3).

The 17th seed and 17-time Grand Slam champion, feeling his way back from injury, will face a much tougher assignment in the third round against old rival Tomas Berdych.

"That's not an easy draw," Federer said of Berdych. "He's beaten me at New York and he's beaten me at Wimbledon too, and the Olympics. "He would like to beat me here. Maybe he has already and I've forgotten."

He wasn't the only leading player challenged in the second round as Kerber, the women's top seed and defending champion, dropped a set against world number 89 Carina Witthoef.

Kerber 'double-bagelled' Witthoef two years ago at Wimbledon, but she was extended by her fellow German in her 6-2, 6-7 (3/7), 6-2 win.

The match ended on a light note as Kerber, who turned 29 yesterday, was treated to a rendition of "Happy Birthday" by the Rod Laver Arena crowd.

"I was doing I think a lot of mistakes in the important moments. But at the end, I'm happy that I won the match," said the world number one.

Kerber joined Venus Williams and Svetlana Kuznetsova in round three as the Grand Slam-winning veterans enjoyed smoother progress in sunny conditions on day three.

'ZERO, LIKE ZERO'

In the men's draw, Japanese fifth seed Kei Nishikori marched into the third round alongside former finalist Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, with both winning in straight sets.

Nishikori was extended to five sets in his first-round win over Andrey Kuznetsov, but he found the going a little easier in his 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 victory against Jeremy Chardy.

However, he said he hadn't completely clicked into gear, complaining of "up and

down" form after he was broken three times by the 72nd-ranked Frenchman.

"It was too much up and down, too many service breaks for me, but it's great to win in straight sets," said Nishikori, who had his serve broken three times by Chardy.

Nishikori, who believes he is due a first major win this year, next plays either Lukas Lacko or Dudi Sela, with Berdych or Federer awaiting in the fourth round.

France's Tsonga, who is seeded 12th and was runner-up to Novak Djokovic in 2008, beat Serbia's Dusan Lajovic 6-2, 6-2, 6-3 to go through.

Stan Wawrinka, the 2014 winner, recovered from his tetchy five-setter with Martin

Klizan to beat Steve Johnson 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

In the women's draw, 36-year-old Williams continued her smooth progress when she beat qualifier Stefanie Voegele 6-3, 6-2 to set up a meeting with China's Duan Yingying.

"I don't know anything about her. I have never seen her play. Zero, like zero," Williams said of Duan.

Williams, the oldest player in the women's draw, pulled out of the doubles competition with her sister Serena as a precaution to rest a sore elbow.

Russia's Kuznetsova thrashed Australian wildcard Jaimee Fourlis 6-2, 6-1 to set up a third-round clash with 31-year-old Serb Jelena Jankovic. — AFP

KYRGIOS BOOED OFF COURT
IN NEW 'TANKING' ROW

MELBOURNE: Bad boy Nick Kyrgios was booed off court and accused of giving up as he crashed out of the Australian Open second round in a stormy five-set defeat to Andreas Seppi yesterday. In a madcap match, 14th seed Kyrgios looked in command with a two sets lead before a familiar meltdown in the third set changed the complexion of the contest.

The 89th-ranked Seppi, who saved a match point, advanced to a third-round match with Belgium's Steve Darcis with a 1-6, 6-7 (1/7), 6-4, 6-2, 10-8 win in three hours, nine minutes.

Kyrgios was booed off the court by some of the fans, while tennis great John McEnroe hit out at the brash youngster. "What I don't understand, what I can't accept, is when he stops trying. It's a black eye for the sport," McEnroe said during television match commentary.

Kyrgios said of McEnroe's criticism: "My body was sore. I was hurting. I mean, John McEnroe. Good on him. Great career. Good on him." Kyrgios was also dismissive of the booing, saying, "Yes, obviously it's not the greatest thing to hear. 10-8 in the fifth, getting booed off, definitely not the best feeling." While there was mixed feelings over Kyrgios's stormy exit, Seppi was savouring a memorable victory after losing in five sets to the Australian on the same court at the 2015 Australian Open.

"Maybe it was meant to be. It was a tough match and I didn't start well. I could not get the rhythm but I started to play better," he said. "Last time I was two sets up and lost and I tried to do the same this time.

I kept on fighting and did very well in the important moments at the end."

Kyrgios is making his return from a ban for "lack of

best efforts" commonly known as tanking, during a match in Shanghai, and has been seeing a psychologist.

But yet again Kyrgios' brittle temperament snapped during the third set as Seppi came storming back after looking out for the count. Asked how he collapsed so spectacularly, Kyrgios told reporters: "Poor management, I guess. I think I didn't have the best preparation. It's on me. "I did a couple things in the off-season that I'm probably not going to do next time. My body's not in good enough shape. You live and you learn." Kyrgios was given a warning for an audible obscenity by chair umpire Carlos Ramos before he bounced his racquet angrily into the court after a break of service.

Ramos docked him a point penalty as Seppi served out for the third set to turn the tide against the volatile Australian. The 32-year-old Italian maintained his composure and seized the advantage as Kyrgios suddenly switched off. Instead of regathering his composure, Kyrgios rushed through his service games giving away cheap points.

Unflappable Seppi quickly levelled the match and took it into a fifth set after earlier looking headed for a straight-sets exit. Kyrgios rallied and held three break points at 4-3, only for Seppi to save them all and level as the home crowd exhorted every point from the Australian. Kyrgios held a match point at 8-7 but Seppi saved with a magnificent deep forehand winner before the Australian double-faulted on break point to give Seppi his winning chance.

Seppi brought up two match points at 9-8 and won with an ace, dumping Kyrgios out of his home Grand Slam after two rounds. — AFP



MELBOURNE: Australia's Nick Kyrgios hits a return against Italy's Andreas Seppi during their men's singles match on day three of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP



Field to Ford: Vietnam's globalization winners

DOLLAR RECOVERS AS POUND FALLS BACK



LONDON: Construction cranes are pictured near Tower Bridge at sunrise. British business leaders welcomed Theresa May on her Brexit clarity Tuesday but insisted the UK prime minister must deliver on her pledge to secure access to the EU single market. — AFP

ECONOMY OBSTRUCTS GREATER POWER FOR ERDOGAN
 FLAGGING ECONOMY COULD PRESENT UNEXPECTED ROADBLOCK

ANKARA: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is closer to getting a power boost after parliament's first approval of a bill to change the constitution, but the flagging economy could present an unexpected roadblock. The Turkish parliament approved late Sunday, on first reading, a bill to create an executive presidency like in France or the United States, but which critics fear will lead to one-man rule. However, after a bloody 2016 during which hundreds of people were killed in multiple terror attacks and a failed coup last summer, the Turkish economy is losing momentum. Unemployment is increasing, inflation is rising, economic growth is slowing down and the Turkish lira is reaching record lows against the US dollar.

Investor confidence has fallen while tourism has dramatically dropped with holidaymakers avoiding the country last year because of the violence and political instability. This is in stark contrast to the booming

Turkish economy under the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), co-founded by Erdogan, since 2002. One of the main reasons for Erdogan and the AKP's continued electoral success was this boom that followed the 2001 financial crisis. It even made itself known with a new lira that no longer had six extra zeros introduced in 2005.

From fast trains connecting big cities to new bridges, large hospitals to the development of long-neglected central Turkish cities, the AKP ploughed money into areas that had not seen such rapid development. The constitution plan has now gone to a second reading in the parliament on Wednesday where the 18 articles will again be debated one by one. If approved again with 330 votes from the 550-seat parliament, it will go to a referendum, expected this spring, for the people to decide.

'A vote on Erdogan's leadership'

Questions were raised this week over

whether the worsening economy would affect Erdogan's chances of winning the public vote for constitutional changes. Jean Marcou, professor at Sciences Po Grenoble and associate researcher at the French Institute of Anatolian Studies, said the current state of the economy could affect the AKP's voters. But he noted that the government played the "security card" to create fear among the Turkish public, suggesting safety and peace could play a bigger role in people's decision.

Marcou said Erdogan presented himself as the leader to tackle the security troubles in the southeast where the state is fighting against Kurdish rebels, to rid the Islamic State group and battle against his former ally-turned-foe Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen whose movement is blamed for the July 15 attempted putsch.

Erdogan has also repeatedly urged Turks to change their foreign currency into lira to stimulate the currency which was at 3.78 against

the greenback on Wednesday afternoon. Less than a month ago, it was 3.52 against the dollar. The president attributed the dizzying fall of the lira to interference in the markets with elements he called "terrorists" aimed at "putting Turkey on its knees".

For Murat Yetkin, editor-in-chief of Hurriyet Daily News, it would be unlikely that the "economic difficulties of today will dramatically affect the result of the referendum" because the vote is about Erdogan.

"If the country goes to a referendum, it will not be about the government or its economic program. Many people will not even consider it as a radical shift in Turkey's administrative system, but 'Yes' or 'No' to Erdogan's leadership."

'Relative prosperity'

According to Ilter Turan, emeritus professor of political science at Istanbul's Bilgi University, when the people decide on the changes, their

motivations will be varied. "Concerning the change of constitution, liking or not the government is not the only factor. In these times, the problems that Turkey has can end up in the rejection of the people," Turan told AFP.

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 president, or possibly several.

According to Jean-Francois Perouse, director of the French Institute of Anatolian Studies in Istanbul, there still remained the belief that if the electorate does not support Erdogan, this would "jeopardize relative prosperity". "It remains to be seen whether explanations provided by Erdogan (on the economy) will convince people, and given the public's state of mind, they can convince," Perouse said. — AFP

SAUDI ELECTRICITY WEIGHS ON RIYADH AS EGYPT PULLS BACK

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Shares in Saudi Electricity Co (SEC) weighed on Saudi Arabia's stock market yesterday after the company reported a wider net loss for the fourth quarter, while Egypt's index pulled back as local traders booked gains in blue chips.

The Saudi equities index edged down 0.3 percent as SEC slumped 3.4 percent after posting a quarterly loss of 2.34 billion riyals (\$624 million), much worse than NCB Capital's forecast of a loss of 1.04 billion riyals.

SEC cited higher energy prices and operating costs. National Industrialization (Tasnee) lost 2.1 percent to 16.30 riyals after trading as much as 1.8 percent higher earlier in the session. The titanium dioxide producer swung to a net profit of 123.4 million riyals in the fourth quarter from a net loss of 686.6 million riyals a year earlier, citing an increase in sales volume and a decline in non-core operating expenses.

Advanced Petrochemical lost 0.2 percent despite reporting a 43.8 percent jump in fourth-quarter net profit. But Alinma Bank added 2.8 percent after it made 390 million riyals in the fourth quarter, a 1 percent rise, in line with analysts' average forecast of 389 million riyals. Analysts at Riyad Capital said the bank's 4.1 percent deposit growth was "impressive given tighter market conditions earlier in the year".

The largest medical insurer, BUPA Arabia, closed flat after reporting a 7.6 percent decline in fourth-quarter net profit, citing an increase in net claims and lower gross written

premiums. But United Cooperative Assurance jumped 4.6 percent after swinging to a net profit from a loss. In Cairo, the blue-chip index pulled back 1.0 percent from an all-time high in heavy trade. However, foreign investors remained net buyers of shares.

Global telecom

Orascom Telecom, the most heavily traded share, retreated 6.0 percent. Global Telecom Holding dropped 3.1 percent after Russia's Vedomosti daily reported Vimpelcom wanted to swap its majority stake in Global Telecom for around 12 percent of its own shares owned by Norway's Telenor.

Qatar's index pulled back 0.4 percent from a five-month high hit on Tuesday, with Doha Bank closing 0.8 percent lower after surging 6 percent on the previous day. But Masraf Al Rayan, which jumped 4.0 percent on Tuesday after saying its board had recommended a higher dividend for 2016 despite an 8 percent decline in fourth-quarter net profit, added a further 0.7 percent.

Dubai's index swung 0.6 percent higher, gaining momentum in the final hour of trade as investors bought shares that have underperformed this year. Emaar Properties climbed 1.3 percent and Dubai Financial Market added 1.5 percent. Banking shares helped lift Abu Dhabi's index 0.7 percent. National Bank of Abu Dhabi added 1.4 percent and First Gulf Bank rose 1.5 percent; the two plan to merge this quarter. — Reuters

US AUTO WORKERS STAYING RESIGNED TO UNCERTAINTY

FLAT ROCK: Detroit, the once-thriving capital of the US automobile industry, has seen most of its jobs move overseas, leaving the remaining workers at the "Big Three" auto plants wondering about the future. As the jobs have vanished so has the security and benefits they once offered that helped make the American middle class the engine of the world economy.

When Janet Parker, 46, learned she would be hired by Ford, she was sure it meant the start of a worry-free working life. Eight years later, she is dis-

illusioned. "Things have changed for the worse," said Parker, who works in a plant building axles and is still not entitled to employee benefits. "It's declined for a lot of the employees."

The lack of certainty auto workers have in their future is a persistent burden, and efforts by the once-powerful United Auto Workers labor union to stem the tide have borne little fruit. Parker says that income from her husband's job at a Fiat Chrysler plant is what allows her to make ends meet. "I don't make enough money to do every-

thing we do," she said. "If it wasn't for him, I'd be riding a bike."

The downhill slide for US auto workers began after 2000 and gathered pace in 2009 with the near-collapse of the Big Three-Ford, GM and Chrysler-during the global financial crisis. That year, GM and Chrysler declared bankruptcy and were taken over by the federal government as part of a highly unpopular, \$80 billion taxpayer-funded bailout. Ford also laid off thousands of workers and shuttered factories. "Our plant was always working. You could count on that," said Michael Gilliken, a team leader at a factory making the popular Ford F-150 pickup. But starting in 2005, overtime ended, the first warning sign.

'You start to get frightened'

One by one, such perks and benefits as free meals and training centers which had convinced young generations in the region to forgo higher education and follow in the footsteps of their parents-began to disappear. "It shocked us. We were not prepared for that," said Gilliken, a father of five who managed to save his job thanks to his seniority. "You are talking about selling the car, selling the house. You start to get frightened."

Gilliken had to accept a freeze on pay raises and a pay cut. While the 2008 crisis did force the Big Three to cut production, automation, competition from Asia and the free-trade pact linking the United States, Canada and Mexico also put dents in the domestic industry. "The trade agreements have caused wage suppression," said Scott Houldieson, a regional UAW executive and employee at a Ford plant in Chicago. — AFP



DETROIT: An art piece done by street artists Alexandre Farto, AKA UHILLS & JR in the dPOP! space in the basement of the Chrysler House. This piece was done in Detroit, the once-thriving capital of the American automobile industry, has seen most of its jobs move overseas. — AFP

BUSINESS EUPHORIA OVER TRUMP GIVES WAY TO CAUTION, CONFUSION

BUSINESS COMMUNITY SAYS THEY REMAIN OPTIMISTIC

WASHINGTON: Early optimism among business lobbyists and executives that Donald Trump's election heralded better days has slowly given way to uncertainty as the president-elect fires off mixed and sometimes confusing messages on healthcare, taxes and trade. An initial euphoria in the business world fueled a powerful post-election stock rally. Some of that has frayed as questions arise over the nuts and bolts of Trump's campaign promises, although many in the business community said they remain optimistic.

Doubts deepened over the weekend as Trump declared he would replace President Barack Obama's signature healthcare plan known as Obamacare with "insurance for everybody" - a goal far beyond Republican designs - and criticized a key component of a plan in Congress to overhaul corporate taxes. "It is fair to say that since the election, there has been mounting uncertainty about exactly what the specific policies are likely to be with regard to tax reform and replacing Obamacare," a financial industry official said.

Expectations for faster growth, tax reform and a quick repeal of Obamacare, officially known as the Affordable Care Act, have "given way to 'We are not really sure what he means by that,'" the official said. A veteran Republican financial lobbyist said she is under constant pressure from clients to predict what the new administration is planning, but she has no reliable answers for them.

'Goat rodeo'

In the sessions, Wall Street lobbyists were encouraged to talk fast: a giant television screen overhead counted down two minutes of allotted time. "It was a goat rodeo. We all got a couple minutes to speak. What can you really say in that time?" said another financial services lobbyist. "They wanted to check the box - 'We're listening to Wall Street'. But who even knows where these transition people will be in a few days?"

Lobbyists also have been alarmed that the transition team has not included them in preparations for confirmation hearings for many nominated Cabinet officials, including potential Treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin. "If you want someone to explain how Elizabeth Warren can



WASHINGTON DC: The Capitol in Washington is seen at dawn yesterday as the city prepares for Friday's inauguration of Donald Trump as president. — AP

hammer you 12 different ways, ask a lobbyist," said the financial services lobbyist, referring to the Massachusetts senator who is a frequent critic of Wall Street.

Even Trump's website sowed confusion about his intentions. A promise to dismantle the Dodd-Frank regulatory reforms was removed at the end of last year and has not been replaced. A Trump spokesperson blamed a redesign, but bank lobbyists are not so sure - other content made it through the redesign.

Some companies have been reassured by Trump's Cabinet nominees, who are seen as more predictable and supportive of the business establishment than the impulsive president-elect. Senator Jeff Sessions, Trump's pick for attorney general, has deep differences on values with the technology sector, but is seen as an important Trump counterweight because he is a "deliberate decision-maker not prone to big dramatic mood swings," a source at one major Silicon Valley firm said.

Many lobbyists and business officials said they remain optimistic and cautioned against reading too deeply into tweets or comments that Trump makes on policy. "If Obama or Bush opined on a policy ... most of Washington assumed that raising that question was a well-vetted intentional decision to send a signal," a senior US Chamber of Commerce official said. Trump, by contrast, may simply be raising policy issues because he has questions on them, the chamber official said.

The same financial industry official who acknowledged the uncertain climate also said he remains optimistic. "There were a lot of candidates who were interviewed. There were names floated out there and ... it was kind of a chaotic process," the official said, referring to the process of picking candidates to fill Cabinet and other administration positions. "But overall, I think one can make the observation that in making the final selections, Trump has shown ... a very surprising even-handedness." — Reuters

SUKUK MARKET SHARE TO GROW FOLLOWING 2016

Dubai/London: Sukuk issuance in core markets rose by 26% in 2016 and broadly maintained its share of capital markets funding despite large conventional bond issues by Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Qatar, Fitch Ratings says. We expect sukuk issuance to grow at a similar rate in 2017 and believe market share will rise as more sovereigns issue sukuk alongside conventional bonds.

New sukuk issuance with a maturity over 18 months from the core markets of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey and Pakistan rose to USD40bn in 2016 from about USD32bn a year earlier. This represented 28.5% of total bond and sukuk issuance in these

FITCH RATING

markets in 2016, down marginally from 29% in 2015. We focus on longer-term issuances because frequently rolled-over short-term debt can distort underlying trends.

The proportion would have been higher, but for the return of Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi and Qatar to the sovereign bond market with combined issuance of USD31.5bn. They probably opted for bond financing to attract international investors. However, seven of 10 key markets did issue sovereign sukuk in 2016 and other sovereigns in the GCC region have indicated they could issue sukuk, or a mix, in the future,

reinforcing our view that the market share of sukuk will gradually rise. Oil exporters in the Middle East are also becoming an important source of the flow of international bond and sukuk issuances, and that trend should continue.

The decision on whether sovereigns issue bonds or sukuk is driven by three main factors: the target investor and funding base, whether there is an existing sukuk structure and Islamic finance strategy, and the needs and size of the Islamic finance industry, because Islamic banks cannot invest in traditional bonds. Outside core markets, issuance prospects are limited due to a lack of standardization, which makes structuring sukuk a more complex and time-consuming process than a traditional bond.

Dominant issuers

Sovereigns are likely to remain the dominant issuers, but bank issuance may also rise in some markets, driven by issuance to meet regulatory capital requirements. Basel III implications for liquidity are fairly significant in GCC countries as banks have a substantial contractual maturity mismatch between medium-term lending and very short-term customer deposits.

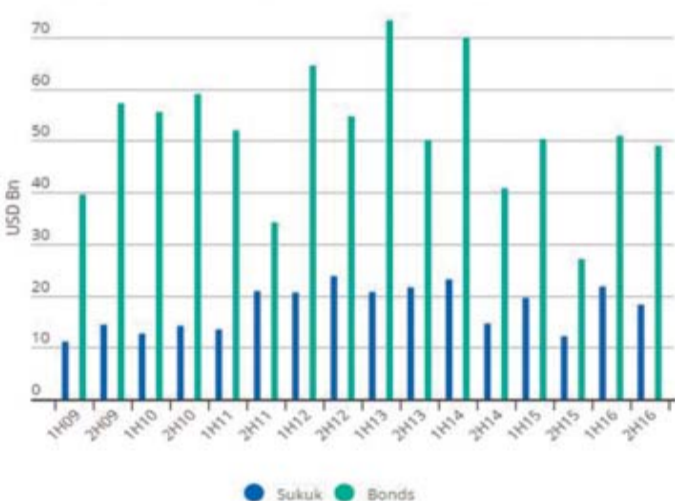
Malaysian companies continue to be the most active corporate issuers. Several other key markets have introduced or updated sukuk

laws in the past few years, including Saudi Arabia, Oman and Kuwait, which should gradually boost issuance by creating a standardized structure and improving transparency.

The recent sovereign bond issues from the GCC region should also help create a capital market pricing benchmark and lower bank liquidity could reduce the pricing gap between capital market funding and the bank loans on which GCC corporates have traditionally relied. The biggest remaining roadblocks to corporate issuance are the development of debt-management expertise and a change in the corporate culture to increase financial and management transparency.

GCC corporates that tap capital markets are more likely to issue sukuk or a mixture of both, rather than only bonds to attract a wider local and regional investor base. In addition, some corporates are limited to only sharia-compliant borrowing by their own rules or by their desire to be included in Islamic investment funds and indexes. As a result, corporate capital markets activity is essential for sukuk to grow significantly in terms of proportion of total issuance. The main risks to our forecast of continued issuance growth are from economic or political upheaval that significantly reduced investor demand, a much faster than expected rise in US interest rates or a rapid recovery in oil prices that reduced the funding needs of key sovereigns.

Sukuk and Bond Issuance



National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report

At 02:00 PM Previous Day

Global Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Dow Jones	19,885.73	19,826.77	-58.96	▼	-0.30
NASDAQ	5,574.12	5,538.73	-35.39	▼	-0.63
S&P 500	2,274.64	2,267.89	-6.75	▼	-0.30
Financial Times	7,220.38	7,234.77	14.39	▲	0.20
DAX	11,540.00	11,554.99	14.99	▲	0.13
CAC 40	4,859.69	4,838.54	-21.15	▼	-0.44
Swiss	8,304.10	8,292.72	-11.38	▼	-0.14
Nikkei 225	18,813.53	18,894.37	80.84	▲	0.43
Topix	1,509.10	1,513.86	4.76	▲	0.32
Hang Seng	22,840.97	23,098.26	257.29	▲	1.13
Straits Times	3,012.77	3,000.22	-12.55	▼	-0.42

MENA Stock Indices					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait	6,301.12	6,351.77	50.65	▲	0.80
Saudi Arabia	6,873.53	6,857.37	-16.16	▼	-0.24
Dubai	3,672.31	3,694.14	21.83	▲	0.59
Abu Dhabi	4,663.14	4,695.91	32.77	▲	0.70
Bahrain	1,229.38	1,233.78	4.40	▲	0.36
Qatar	10,927.83	10,880.15	-47.68	▼	-0.44
Oman	5,737.24	5,720.77	-16.47	▼	-0.29
Lebanon	1,215.95	1,207.03	-8.92	▼	-0.73
Jordan	2,170.51	2,164.68	-5.83	▼	-0.27
Egypt	13,436.10	13,502.60	66.50	▲	0.49
Morocco	12,343.08	12,254.63	-88.46	▼	-0.72
Tunisia	5,579.81	5,582.19	2.38	▲	0.04

Global Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	Kuwaiti Dinar	Saudi Riyal	US Dollar	Euro	Sterling Pound	Swiss Franc	Japanese Yen	Australian Dollar
Kuwait Dinar		12.1827	3.2621	3.0527	2.6500	3.2709	369.86	4.3195
Saudi Riyal	0.08208		0.2678	0.2506	0.2175	0.2685	30.36	0.3546
US Dollar	0.30655	3.7346		0.9358	0.8123	1.0027	113.38	1.3242
Euro	0.32758	3.9908	1.0686		0.8683	1.0716	121.17	1.4160
Sterling Pound	0.37736	4.5973	1.2310	1.1517		1.2343	139.59	1.6300
Swiss Franc	0.30572	3.7245	0.9973	0.9332	0.8102		113.13	1.3206
Japanese Yen	0.00270	0.0329	0.0088	0.0083	0.0072	0.0088		0.0117
Australian Dollar	0.23151	2.8204	0.7552	0.7062	0.6135	0.7572	85.62	

MENA Currencies Exchange Rate								
Currency	US Dollar	Kuwaiti Dollar	Saudi Riyal	Bahraini Dinar	Qatari Riyal	Omani Riyal	Emirates Dirham	Egyptian Pound
US Dollar		0.30655	3.7346	0.3741	3.6267	0.3832	3.6573	18.7900
Kuwaiti Dinar	3.2621		12.1827	1.2202	11.8307	1.2499	11.9305	61.2951
Saudi Riyal	0.2678	0.08208		0.1002	0.9711	0.1026	0.9793	5.0313
Bahraini Dinar	2.6734	0.81954	9.9842		9.6958	1.0243	9.7776	50.2339
Qatari Riyal	0.2757	0.08453	1.0298	0.1031		0.1056	1.0084	5.1810
Omani Riyal	2.6099	0.80008	9.7471	0.9762	9.4655		9.5453	49.0408
Emirates Dirham	0.2734	0.08382	1.0211	0.1023	0.9916	0.1048		5.1377
Egyptian Pound	0.0532	0.01631	0.1988	0.0199	0.1930	0.0204	0.1946	

Global Interest Rates					
Currency	1-Week	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.75	1.13	1.44	1.75	2.06
US Dollar	0.72	0.76	1.02	1.33	1.70
Euro	-0.39	-0.38	-0.34	-0.23	-0.09
Sterling Pound	0.24	0.26	0.35	0.52	0.77
Swiss Franc	-0.78	-0.78	-0.72	-0.66	-0.50
Australian Dollar	1.59	1.67	1.63	1.64	1.69
Japanese Yen	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	0.02	0.13

Global Bond Yields				
Country	2-Year	5-Year	10-Year	30-Year
United States	1.16	1.85	2.35	2.95
Europe	-0.75	-0.50	0.33	1.07
United Kingdom	0.17	0.55	1.32	1.97

Commodities					
Index	Previous Close	Last Price	Change	Daily Performance %	Yearly Performance %
Kuwait Oil	52.53	50.81	-1.72	▼	-3.27
Brent	54.04	52.89	-1.15	▼	-2.13
West Texas	52.50	52.40	-0.10	▼	-0.19
Gold	1216.46	1212.09	-4.37	▼	-0.36
Silver	17.16	17.13	-0.03	▼	-0.19

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
Bahraini Riyal	797.427
UAE Dirham	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	44.855
Chinese Yuan Renminbi	9.615
Thai Baht	8.995
Turkish Lira	81.995

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
Europe		
British Pound	0.363456	0.373458
Czech Korune	0.004040	0.016040
Danish Krone	0.039746	0.044746
Euro	0.320411	0.329411
Norwegian Krone	0.031915	0.037116
Romanian Leu	0.072257	0.072257
Slovakia	0.009185	0.019185
Swedish Krona	0.030225	0.035225
Swiss Franc	0.297215	0.308215
Turkish Lira	0.077912	0.088212

Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.221488 0.233468
New Zealand Dollar	0.212132 0.221632

America	
Canadian Dollar	0.227747 0.236747
Georgina Lari	0.138321 0.138321
US Dollars	0.302150 0.306550
US Dollars Mint	0.302650 0.306550

Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003871 0.004255
Chinese Yuan	0.042976 0.046476
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037397 0.040147
Indian Rupee	0.002836 0.005511
Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018 0.000024

Japanese Yen	0.002609	0.002789
Kenyan Shilling	0.002941	0.002941
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065051	0.071051
Nepalese Rupee	0.003148	0.003318
Pakistan Rupee	0.002764	0.003054
Philippine Peso	0.006049	0.006349
Sierra Leone	0.000038	0.000044
Singapore Dollar	0.209526	0.219526
South African Rand	0.016525	0.025025
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001683	0.002263
Taiwan	0.009577	0.009757
Thai Baht	0.008323	0.008873

Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.805763 0.814263
Egyptian Pound	0.013214 0.022467
Iranian Riyal	0.000085 0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000181 0.000241
Jordanian Dinar	0.426895 0.435895
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000 1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000153 0.000253
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020163 0.044163
Nigerian Naira	0.000370 0.001006
Omani Riyal	0.789033 0.794713
Qatari Riyal	0.083308 0.084758
Saudi Riyal	0.080580 0.081880
Syrian Pound	0.001299 0.001519
Tunisian Dinar	0.129308 0.137308
Turkish Lira	0.077912 0.088212
UAE Dirhams	0.081956 0.083656
Yemeni Riyal	0.000

SEOUL COURT PONDERES ARREST OF SAMSUNG DE FACTO HEAD

SEOUL: A South Korean court is considering whether to approve the arrest of Samsung Electronics vice chairman Lee Jae-yong, one of the country's wealthiest business leaders, on charges of bribery and other offenses. Lee, the only son of Samsung's chairman, did not speak to a crowd of reporters waiting while arriving and leaving the Seoul Central District Court yesterday. After the four-hour hearing he was taken to a detention center near Seoul to await the court's decision.

If Lee's arrest is approved, prosecutors can detain him for up to 21 days before formally charging him, said the court's spokesman Shin Jae-hwan. The judge will announce a decision on the arrest warrant today, Shin said, though the exact timing was unclear. Samsung is South Korea's biggest family-controlled conglomerate, or chaebol, with businesses encompassing consumer electronics, shipbuilding and life insurance. The company is the world's biggest maker of smartphones and computer "memory" chips.

The company had a challenging year even before getting drawn into an influence-peddling scandal that led to the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye. In 2016, Samsung Electronics had several product recalls,

including the discontinuation of Galaxy Note 7 smartphones that tended to overheat or catch fire. Prosecutors requested Lee's arrest for allegedly bribing Park and a confidante of hers, Choi Soon-sil, who is on trial for meddling in state affairs.

Lee, 48, faces allegations of giving bribes worth 43 billion won (\$36 million) to Choi and the president in hopes of winning government backing for a contentious Samsung merger in 2015. Prosecutors also suspect Lee of embezzlement and of lying under oath during a parliamentary hearing last month. Lee has been serving as the de facto head of Samsung since his father suffered a heart attack in 2014.

Prosecutors plan to summon Park, who is awaiting a court's decision on whether to uphold her impeachment, to question her about the bribery allegations. A former health minister, Moon Hyung-pyo, was indicted on Monday for pressuring pension fund officials to support the Samsung merger. Prosecutors say they believe Moon, who now heads the pension fund, acted on behalf of Park, who ordered him to ensure the Samsung merger went smoothly. The merger helped Lee increase his control over Samsung Electronics, South Korea's most valuable company. — AFP



HAI DUONG: This picture taken on January 11, 2017 shows a Vietnamese worker welding in the body shop at the Ford automotive plant in the northern province of Hai Duong. — AFP

FIELD TO FORD: VIETNAM'S GLOBALIZATION WINNERS

VIETNAM'S FREE TRADE EMBRACE IS TRANSFORMING LIVES

HAI DUONG: Nguyen Thi Thanh Loan grew up on a small plot of land in rural Vietnam, with just enough food to eat, few new clothes and no disposable income. Today, she works in a Ford factory assembling cars from Chinese, Thai, American and European parts, her children drink imported milk and Coca Cola and she holidays with her family-winners of the globalization lottery. "Before children didn't have a lot of clothes or food, but life improved after their parents got factory jobs," Loan, 36, told AFP at the Ford plant near Hanoi.

She is among millions whose lives have been transformed by Vietnam's free trade embrace, a process that began in the 1980s and has hauled the communist nation out of the penury of the post-war years. Vietnam now boasts one of Southeast Asia's fastest growing economies driven by exports of cheaply made goods, from Nike shoes to Samsung phones.

The progress is forecast to continue-albeit at lower-than-expected growth rates-despite a vow by US President-elect Donald Trump to dismantle a massive Pacific Rim trade deal that Vietnam had hoped would bring a jobs bonanza. Yet Trump's crusade to save American jobs he says are gobled up by cheap overseas labor, comes while his

own daughter, Ivanka, makes some items for her clothing line in Vietnam.

Even if the sprawling Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade pact runs aground, Vietnam says it has no plans to close its doors on trade. "By going global, by going regional, Vietnam has clearly reaped the benefits of globalization," World Bank Vietnam Country Director Ousmane Dione told AFP, citing large reductions in poverty.

Farms to freeways

A glance around Hai Duong, 50 kilometers from the capital, reveals why Vietnam has staked its future on free trade. Since Ford first opened its doors 20 years ago the area has morphed from an agrarian backwater into an industrial zone peppered with foreign-owned factories churning out electronics, clothing and machinery.

Vegetable plots and fishing ponds have been replaced by a four-lane highway for trucks carrying goods for export. Held back by years of war and crippling Soviet-style policies, Vietnam has boasted an annual GDP growth of over five percent for the past five years straight-though it failed to reach its ambitious target last year.

The country first opened its economy to foreign firms in the 1980s and investment gathered

pace after the US scrapped a war-era trade embargo in 1994. Exports now account for 90 percent of GDP, while the average annual income has surged from some \$290 two decades ago to around \$2,100 today, according to the World Bank.

In Hai Duong the average Ford factory worker can earn more than twice that although still a far cry from the average American manufacturing wage of about \$43,000. "Everything has changed," said Nguyen Van Tuan, 48, a part-time chauffeur, who grew up in a house made of mud and straw. Today Tuan is proud of his three-storey concrete home-bought for \$800 Ford paid for his land 20 years ago. It sits on a paved road dotted with shops selling iPhones and Japanese badminton rackets. His two kids have now moved to Taiwan, a country higher-up the manufacturing value chain.

Centuries apart

For Ford, Vietnam's abundance of cheap labor and expanding domestic market is a magnet-it sells cars locally to an upwardly mobile middle class. Not that the wins of globalization are universal. Vietnam remains a tightly-controlled authoritarian regime, independent unions are banned and dissent is swiftly muzzled. —AFP



SEOUL: Samsung Group's heir-apparent Lee Jae-Yong (C) leaves for a waiting facility after attending a court hearing on whether he will be issued with an arrest warrant at the Seoul Central District Court. — AFP

Chevrolet Alghanim invigorates its lineup with exclusive models at Auto Moto 2017

2017 Corvette Grand Sport and Tahoe LT Z71 Midnight Edition captivate youth's attention and interest



Chevrolet Middle East and Chevrolet Alghanim have participated in one of the most anticipated automotive shows in Kuwait, which was the 2017 AutoMoto that took place at Mall 360, from January 12th until January 21st 2017. Throngs of youth and Chevrolet fans were impressed by the Chevrolet Alghanim's stand, prompting them to take pictures and share them on social media as well as reserve their favorite vehicles on the spot. Two of the biggest surprises at the stand were the Tahoe Midnight Edition and the 2017 Corvette Grand Sport, which, in addition to the Camaro ZL1, were the center of attraction that brought all power fans together.



2017 Corvette Grand Sport

Grand Sport combines signature Corvette DNA with ingenious engineering to create a stunning aerodynamic sports car with a wider body that includes sophisticated aerodynamic and cooling elements. Its exterior features include Removable Roof Panel, Bi-functional Xenon Headlights, Power Heated Mirrors, Rear Spoiler and Front 19" and Rear 20" Black Aluminum Wheel.

The 2017 Grand Sport features a 6.2L DI V8 engine, capable of 460 horsepower and 6500-rpm engine output with added 8-speed Automatic Transmission. The car's safety features include 4-wheel Disc

Brakes and Magnetic Ride Control. Inside, drivers and passengers alike will enjoy the Leather Seat Trim, Bucket Seats (Power Heated and Vented), BOSE Sound System with 10 Speakers, MyLink Infotainment System with 8" Color Touch Screen and Head-up Display.

Tahoe Midnight Edition

Considered one of the most coveted looks, the Tahoe LT Z71 Midnight Edition features out a striking black color that adds thrill, mystery and style on the road. Youths in particular will appreciate the Midnight mesh grill, the exclusive Chevrolet bowties at the front and

the rear, Metallic Wheels, recovery hooks and door handles.

As the ultimate expression of power, the Tahoe raises the stakes by offering a 5.3L V8 355HP engine, Remote Vehicle Start System, Front and Rear Parking Assist, Rear View Camera and Fog Lamps on all standard trims. Tahoe offers a number of ingenious premium features such as Bose Centerpoint Surround Sound with 10-speakers, Front Bucket Seats with Perforated Leather-appointed Heated and Cooled Seat Cushions, Entertainment System with Rear Seat DVD and Driver Assist Package and more.

Chevrolet Care

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A. Alghanim & Sons will receive the benefits of the Chevrolet Care Program, which entails new levels of post-sale support and trust. The Chevrolet Care is an exceptional customer service that is based on four main pillars: competitive and transparent service costs (especially for four-wheel drive vehicles), scheduled service appointment booking with same day delivery, quality service by certified technicians and 3yr/100,000km warranty with 24x7 roadside assistance for 4 years.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT OF 2016 ARTICLE IV MISSION

IMF REPORT ON KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Kuwait's fiscal and external accounts have been adversely affected by the lower oil prices, and financing needs have emerged. Resilient nonoil activity and strong oversight by the Central Bank of Kuwait have kept the financial sector sound. The key challenge for policymakers is to implement the government's comprehensive six-pillar reform plan, which aims at promoting fiscal consolidation and boosting private sector growth, diversification, and job creation for nationals. Notwithstanding large buffers that provide policy space to smooth the necessary adjustment, policymakers have initiated important fiscal reforms.

These should be sustained to gradually raise fiscal savings, focusing on further rationalizing energy subsidies, containing the wage bill and increasing nonoil revenue, which will create space for higher growth-enhancing capital outlays. Better aligning labor market incentives, promoting higher productivity through privatization and partnerships with the private sector, and further efforts to improve the business climate are key to encourage diversification, private sector development and employment opportunities for nationals. The IMF team highly values the candid and comprehensive discussions with the Kuwaiti authorities. Staff would like to express its sincere gratitude to them for their hospitality and excellent cooperation.

Recent Macro-Financial Developments

1. Economic activity in the nonoil sector has continued to expand, albeit at a slower pace, reflecting the impact of lower oil prices. Non hydrocarbon growth slowed from 5 percent to an estimated 3 1/2 percent in 2015, as lower confidence weighed on consumption. Notwithstanding an improvement in project implementation under the five-year Development Plan, available indicators point to a further modest softening in nonoil growth this year. However, with oil production recovering after three consecutive years of decline, overall growth is on track to reach about 3 1/2 in 2016. Inflation, which has been hovering at around 3 percent, is set for an uptick to about 3 1/2 this year, reflecting the recent gasoline price increases.

2. The financial sector has remained sound and credit conditions favorable. As of June 2016, banks featured high capitalization (capital adequacy ratio of 17.9 percent), robust profitability (return on assets of 1 percent), low nonperforming loans (ratio of 2.4 percent), and high loan-loss provisioning (206 percent coverage). Bank liquidity has improved, supported by a recovery in deposits of government entities. Credit to the private sector has been increasing at a solid pace (about 63/4 percent year-over-year in September 2016), driven mainly by installment loans. Nevertheless, a few sectors to which banks have sizable exposures have shown some weakening. The real estate sector is confronted with a further slowdown in the volume and the value of sales. Nonfinancial corporate earnings have continued to deteriorate. Stock prices have registered broad-based declines since mid-2014 and have remained volatile. Banks' exposure to Investment Companies has been reduced to 3 percent on average, but the latter are exposed to real estate and local and regional equities.

3. Notwithstanding efforts to contain government spending, the fiscal and external accounts have deteriorated markedly. Dwindling oil revenues have pushed the government's fiscal balance-excluding investment income and after mandatory transfers to the Future Generations Fund (FGF)-into a large deficit of over 17 percent of GDP in 2015/16, generating significant financing needs. Even when including investment income and before transfers to the FGF, fiscal surpluses have vanished. The underlying (non-oil) fiscal position has nevertheless improved over the past two years, reflecting a decline in the subsidy bill, non-recurrence of one-off spending, and efforts to curtail current expenditure. The composition of government expenditure has also improved in favor of growth-enhancing capital spending. The external current account surplus has also declined significantly, reaching 5 1/4 percent of GDP in 2015 and is set to fall further to 4 1/2 percent in 2016.

4. Financing needs have thus far been met mainly by drawing down financial buffers, and the government has also started borrowing. The government deficit has been financed mainly through draw down of General Reserve Fund (GRF) assets. The issuance of domestic bonds has been stepped up this year, contributing to a net financing of about KD 1.4 billion year to date-over half the targeted amount for 2016/17. The government has also announced its intention to tap international capital markets to raise up to KD 2.9 billion.

Macro-financial Outlook and Risks

5. Growth is expected to gain momentum over the medium term, supported by infrastructure investment. A continued improvement in project implementation under the Kuwait Development Plan will support a gradual recovery in real nonoil GDP growth to about 3 1/2 percent in 2017 and 4 percent thereafter. Hydrocarbon output is set to increase by 2 percent annually, consistent with investment in the sector. Overall, real GDP growth would reach about 3 percent over the medium term. Inflation is expected to temporarily increase to 4 1/2 percent in 2017, reflecting energy prices increases in 2016-17, before easing gradually. Higher hydrocarbon exports will lift the current account surplus above 10 percent of GDP by 2021.

6. Kuwait's fiscal position is projected to improve modestly, but financing needs after transfers to the FGF will remain large. The mission's baseline scenario assumes oil prices will gradually recover to some \$60 by 2021. It takes into account the fiscal impact of the measures recently enacted (increase in gasoline prices and legislated electricity and water price reform) but does not factor in the government's planned fiscal reforms that have not yet been implemented.

Under this baseline scenario, the government fiscal balance after transfers to the FGF is projected to decline from about 17 1/2 percent of GDP this year to some 13 percent of GDP over the medium term, and cumulative gross financing needs would amount to about KD 35 billion over the next 6 years. These are assumed to be covered by a continued drawdown of assets in the GRF, measured amounts of domestic bond issuance to avoid crowding out private sector investment, and some external borrowing.

7. This macro-fiscal environment is expected to remain broadly supportive of financial stability and credit growth. Growth enhancing capital expenditures will support bank profitability and internal capital generation. While there are downside risks to asset quality, loss absorption buffers are high. Credit growth has been robust, but the significant contribution of installment loans that are secured by salary assignments mitigates concerns of a build-up of financial risks.

8. However, Kuwait would remain significantly exposed to a number of potential external and domestic risks under the baseline scenario. The main risk to the outlook is a further sustained drop in oil prices, which would lead to larger deficits and financing needs. Although the government's strong credit rating (AA) would enable it to tap international markets, investors' appetite for GCC bonds could decline in case of large regional financing needs.

Kuwait would, therefore, be faced with the tradeoff of issuing more domestic debt, at the risk of squeezing domestic liquidity and crowding out private sector credit, or allowing readily available buffers to run lower. Other risks include reform setbacks or slow Development Plan implementation, which could entail a larger fiscal deficit and slower growth. Heightened security risks could also affect investor confidence and more volatile global financial conditions could increase borrowing costs. The mission and the authorities' banking stress tests indicate that the financial system is resilient to severe solvency and liquidity shocks, but a protracted period of lower oil prices has the potential to increase liquidity and credit risks, exacerbate stock market volatility, and negatively affect real estate prices.

Policy Discussion

9. A gradual but sustained fiscal effort is needed to reduce vulnerabilities and bring government savings closer to levels consistent with intergenerational equity. Under the mission's baseline projections, rising gross government debt and large fiscal financing needs make the fiscal position more vulnerable to shocks. In addition, the nonoil balance is projected to diverge from levels consistent with intergenerational equity by some 20 percent of nonoil GDP by 2021, calling for a significant additional increase in fiscal saving. At the same time, large fiscal buffers and low debt allow for a gradual approach to consolidation that supports growth and financial sector stability.

10. The mission recommends an adjustment path that will allow for achieving the intergenerational equity over a ten-year period. This would entail reducing the government deficit (after transfer to the FGF) from a projected 17 1/2 percent of GDP in 2015/16 to about 7 percent by 2021 and broadly eliminating this deficit by 2025. This proposed path, which strikes a balance between achieving necessary fiscal savings and mitigating the impact of adjustment on growth, can be achieved through a combination of the main expenditure and revenue reforms included in the government's six-pillar reform plan.

11. The mission supports the authorities' plan to raise nonhydrocarbon revenue as part of the medium-term fiscal consolidation program. This includes introducing a value-added tax (VAT) at a rate of 5 percent, as well as raising excise tax on tobacco and sugary drinks. These measures will be implemented in the context of the regional GCC agreement and could generate additional revenue in the order of 13/4 percent of GDP. The mission

encourages the authorities to step up tax administration reforms so as to implement the VAT as early as possible. In addition, the authorities are preparing a business profit tax reform that will apply to all enterprises. At a rate of 10 percent, it could raise an additional 11/2 percent of GDP in revenue by 2020. Staff also supports the government's plans to gradually adjust the price of government services.

12. Further subsidy reform is critical. The government has taken important steps this year to raise gasoline and utility prices. The mission encourages the authorities to move ahead with their plans to further rationalize energy subsidies (estimated to have amounted to about 6 percent of GDP in 2015/16). Gradual implementation would help reduce the inflationary impact and give time to businesses to adjust. Mitigating measures should be designed so as to target the most vulnerable households and promote energy efficiency. A well-designed communication strategy, highlighting the budgetary costs and distortions generated by energy subsidies, as well as their distributional impact and the planned compensatory measures, would help build consensus for these reforms.

13. The mission welcomes the authorities' intention to control the wage bill as part of the medium-term fiscal effort. The authorities' proposed wage reform is intended to help simplify and harmonize the wage structure and centralize wage policy decisions. In view of the already high total government wage bill-including in comparison with peers-the reform should be designed in a way to ensure that the overall wage bill does not rise further, and that any initial costs of moving to the new wage grid are offset by savings in allowances and bonuses. Moreover, to allow better control over future wage growth, the reform should provide flexibility in setting wage increases. Over time, this would help reduce the wage gap with the private sector, reduce nationals' reservation wages, enhance private sector competitiveness, and facilitate diversification of the economy in a way that maximizes the participation of nationals. The mission also encourages the authorities to limit employment growth, while promoting private sector job creation for nationals, and communicate early on about its objectives to help reset expectations.

14. Further streamlining other current spending will create space for higher growth-enhancing investment. Containing transfers to enterprises and households and goods and services would contribute to the adjustment effort, while allowing for higher capital outlays. This would in turn mitigate the contractionary impact of fiscal adjustment, provided it is accompanied by public investment management reforms to improve implementation capacity and efficiency. In this regard, the mission welcomes the efforts underway to better prioritize projects through strengthened appraisal processes, with emphasis on encouraging diversification and employment opportunities for nationals. Systematic ex-post evaluation and effective implementation of the anti-corruption framework are also important.

15. A medium-term fiscal framework is needed to guide fiscal consolidation and reduce implementation risks. The mission welcomes the ongoing efforts to strengthen budget planning, including the move from the annual incremental budgets to medium-term budgets starting in FY2017/18 and the planned introduction of three-year expenditure ceilings.

These reforms should take place within the context of a comprehensive medium-term framework, guided by an overarching long-term fiscal policy objective (for example based on intergenerational equity considerations) and setting a consistent path for an intermediary target (a nonoil fiscal balance objective would help delink spending from oil revenue volatility). In this context, the mission underscores the importance of developing a top-down approach, strengthening budget processes-including by reducing the fragmentation of the investment budget-and expenditure control mechanisms, and developing

reporting and accountability mechanisms.

16. Borrowing and investment decisions should be guided by a comprehensive asset-liability management strategy that takes into account macro-financial implications. The appropriate mix between the various borrowing and investment options should be guided by a systematic assessment of their relative costs and benefits, including that of maintaining liquid buffers as insurance against shocks. The macro-financial impact of these options should also be assessed carefully, taking into consideration the implications of building up debt and the impact of borrowing on domestic liquidity, credit, and central bank reserves. In this regard, coordination with CBK will remain important. A balanced approach entailing domestic and external borrowing from diversified investors and drawdowns in GRF assets would help maintain adequate buffers, take advantage of the current favorable borrowing conditions, and mitigate potential negative macro-financial implications.

17. Continued progress toward strengthening the institutional and legal frameworks for debt management and increased transparency would help. The establishment of a high-level debt committee, backed by the creation of new debt management unit (DMU) at the ministry of finance, provides a strong basis for coordination across all relevant government bodies.

Further efforts are ongoing to clarify responsibilities and improve institutional cooperation and fully operationalize the DMU. It would also be important to put in place a medium-term debt strategy. The mission welcomes the authorities' intention to address legal hurdles that constrain the amounts and type of instruments that can be issued, including Sukuk, hence helping broaden the investor base. Maintaining a debt ceiling would, however, help maintain fiscal discipline.

Improved disclosure of the government's assets and liabilities, moving to more comprehensive fiscal accounts, and improving timeliness of intra-year budgetary execution data would help strengthen investor confidence and reduce borrowing costs. Promoting a deep and liquid government debt market that facilitates private debt issuance is important to foster capital market and private sector development. Introducing regular auctions, communicating transparently, and developing secondary markets would help in this regard.

18. The mission considers the peg to an undisclosed basket appropriate, as it has provided an effective nominal anchor. The authorities are fully committed to the current exchange rate regime. The modest depreciation against the dollar since mid-2014 (7 percent) on account of having a basket rather than dollar peg has been helpful during a period of dollar strength. Staff's external sector assessment suggests a moderate current account gap, the bulk of which would be closed by increasing fiscal savings as recommended over the medium term. The mission notes that over the longer term, as the economy diversifies, the benefits of greater exchange rate flexibility may increase.

Safeguarding financial stability

19. The CBK has been proactive in strengthening regulatory oversight and mitigating financial stability risks. Banks are under Basel III regulations for capital, liquidity, and leverage. Macro-prudential measures-to prevent excessive debt build up by households and limit banks' exposure to real estate and equities-are being enforced to minimize systemic risks. A new corporate governance framework has also recently been introduced. In light of the potential risks from a sustained further decline in oil prices, and given high loan concentrations, common exposures and interconnectedness of the financial system, the CBK's enhanced surveillance bodes well for early identification of financial stability risks. In particular, the mission welcomes the ongoing initiatives to strengthen stress testing techniques, develop early warning indica-

tors, step up efforts to monitor deposit trends, and identify emerging pressures in corporate and household balance sheets.

20. A number of steps would help further strengthen financial sector resilience. The mission underscored that a formal framework for operationalizing macro-prudential measures would help maintain appropriate coverage of risks over time and the balance between preempting the buildup of excessive risks and alleviating possible liquidity shocks and procyclicality in credit and asset markets. Reforms to strengthen the insolvency regime are ongoing in collaboration with the World Bank. Progress on this front, combined with judicial reforms to introduce commercial courts and expedite enforcement, would help minimize losses-given-default. While the CBK is well-equipped to deal with possible liquidity shortages-as it applies five liquidity requirement instruments, including the liquidity coverage ratio and the net stable funding ratio-developing a liquidity forecasting framework would also help anticipate potential system-wide pressures. Sustaining efforts to streamline noncore bank activities where corporate structures are complex would facilitate risk identification and effective supervision.

21. Strengthening the crisis management framework would promote market discipline and safeguard fiscal resources. A special resolution regime for banks has not yet been put in place. A blanket guarantee covers all banking system deposits. Consideration should be given to establishing frameworks that allow for least-cost and effective resolution in the event of stress in the banking system. Formalizing arrangements between key regulatory institutions would also help improve crisis preparedness. The mission welcomes the advanced arrangements for technical cooperation with the IMF in these areas.

Private sector-led growth

22. Creating jobs for a growing young national population will require addressing labor market inefficiencies and encouraging private sector development and diversification. Labor market and civil service reforms should aim at improving incentives for nationals to take up jobs in the private sector, including by managing expectations about the limited future availability of public sector jobs. Sustaining the recent efforts to streamline public sector wages and benefits would also contribute to making the private sector more attractive and encourage the hiring of nationals by private-sector firms. Boosting the private sector demand for nationals' labor will also require fostering an education system that reduces skill mismatches.

23. The mission welcomes the focus of the government's six-pillar reform plan on privatization and PPPs. Building on stronger legal and institutional frameworks, the government aims at a greater use of these options to enhance the role of the private sector in the economy and upgrade infrastructure. While the privatization program is still in its early stages, several Build-Operate-Transfer projects are in the pipeline. Continued progress toward establishing clear timetables, advancing preparatory work to strengthen underlying assets, and promoting a transparent environment that fosters competition and reduces hidden costs and contingent liabilities for the government will help stimulate private sector investment and boost productivity.

24. Further improving the business environment is important to foster diversification. Recent efforts include the opening of the Kuwait Business Center, a one-stop window that will help streamline registration and licensing procedures, and steps toward digitalizing administrative procedures. Given the central role SMEs can play in economic diversification and job creation, a similar initiative is planned for SMEs. The mission emphasized the need to sustain reforms to facilitate access to land and finance, reduce the burden of administrative procedures and excessive regulations, and foster competition. It welcomed the authorities' intention to improve the functioning of the National Fund for SMEs development to free up resources for small businesses. Consideration could be given to reviewing the hurdles to SMEs' access to finance, including the potential impact of the cap on lending rate spreads.

Kuwait; Selected Economic Indicators, 2013-21

	2013	2014	Est. 2015	Proj.						
				2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Oil and gas sector										
Total oil and gas exports (billions of U.S. dollars)	108.6	97.6	48.8	45.0	54.0	57.8	60.4	63.7	66.5	
Average oil export price (U.S. dollars/barrel)	105.4	98.0	51.9	44.0	51.9	54.4	55.9	57.8	59.3	
Crude oil production (millions of barrels/day)	2.93	2.87	2.86	2.97	3.03	3.09	3.15	3.22	3.28	
(Annual percentage change, unless otherwise indicated)										
National accounts and prices										
Nominal GDP (market prices, in billions of Kuwaiti dinar)	49.4	46.3	34.3	33.8	38.2	41.1	43.9	47.1	50.4	
Nominal GDP (market prices, in billions of U.S. dollars)	174.2	162.7	114.1	111.3	125.8	135.3	144.6	155.2	166.0	
Real GDP (at factor cost)	0.4	0.6	1.2	3.6	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.9	
Real oil GDP	-1.8	-2.1	-0.3	3.9	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	
Real non-oil GDP	4.0	5.0	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.5	4.0	4.0	4.0	
CPI inflation (average)	2.7	2.9	3.2	3.4	4.5	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.4	
Unemployment rate (Kuwaiti nationals)	4.7	5.0	4.7	
(Percent of GDP at market prices)										
Budgetary operations ¹										
Revenue	73.8	67.3	52.6	54.3	55.9	55.1	54.0	53.0	51.3	
Oil	60.3	52.0	35.3	36.7	39.2	39.1	38.6	38.0	37.1	
Non-oil, of which:	13.6	15.4	17.2	17.6	16.7	15.9	15.4	14.9	14.2	
Investment income	9.0	10.5	13.6	13.9	13.3	12.7	12.3	11.9	11.3	
Expenditures	38.3	48.8	52.6	53.7	51.0	49.9	49.5	49.1	48.8	
Expense	34.1	43.4	44.9	45.6	43.1	42.0	41.5	40.9	40.4	
Capital	4.1	5.5	7.6	8.1	7.8	7.9	8.1	8.2	8.4	
Balance	35.6	18.5	0.0	0.7	4.9	5.2	4.5	3.8	2.5	
Balance (after transfer to FGF and excl. inv. income)	20.0	2.4	-17.5							

DOLLAR RECOVERS AS POUND FALLS BACK

LONDON: The dollar recovered against its major peers yesterday after taking a battering the previous day, while the pound fell back having surged on the UK's Brexit plans. European stock markets were largely steady around midday following gains for Asian indices. "The FTSE 100 has given up early gains despite the pound continuing to pull back from yesterday's strong rally, the index hindered by a Pearson profits warning and weakness among miners and financials," said Mike van Dulken, head of research at Accendo Markets.

Shares in UK publisher Pearson plunged up to 28 percent after it issued a profit warning and said it would sell holdings in Penguin Random

House, a joint venture with German media company Bertelsmann. "The rising anxiety and uncertainty ahead of Donald Trump's inauguration this coming Friday has exposed the greenback to heavy losses," said FXTM Research analyst Lukman Otunuga.

"With optimism slowly fading over the series of interest rate hikes under Trump and the lack of clarity provided on the proposed fiscal stimulus measures weighing on sentiment, the dollar may find itself vulnerable to further losses," he added. The greenback plunged Tuesday following comments from the US president-elect in an interview that it was too strong and that a weak Chinese yuan was "killing us", fuelling concerns

of a possible currency war.

The sell-off marked a sharp turnaround for the US unit, which has been surging since Trump's November election on expectations his big-spending, tax-cutting plans will fan inflation and force a Federal Reserve rate hike. Trump's comments came days before he takes the oath of office tomorrow, with market-watchers hoping his speech will provide some detail on his plans for the US economy as well as his intentions on the global trade front.

On Tuesday, Chinese President Xi Jinping warned at the World Economic Forum in Davos against protectionism, alluding to Trump's plans to tear up global trade deals, saying it was like

"locking oneself in a dark room. Wind and rain may be kept outside, but so is light and air".

'Brexit vote positive'

In European trade yesterday the dollar was up on the yen, euro and pound but struggled against higher-yielding units including South Korea's won, the Australian dollar and Malaysian ringgit. The pound fell on profit-taking during a volatile week for the currency. Having plunged Monday to October lows against the greenback on worries about Britain's plans for a clean break from the European Union, it bounced back sharply Tuesday.

This was after British Prime Minister Theresa May set out her plan to leave the customs union and single market in a so-called "hard Brexit", and promised to let

parliament vote on the deal. "May's announcement that both houses of parliament will vote on the final Brexit deal is positive for the pound, as the process, at a minimum, should ensure that the most severe outcomes are avoided," said Oanda trader Stephen Innes.

Sterling shot up three percent-its biggest gain since 2008 — to more than \$1.24 following her remarks, having plunged below \$1.20 Monday as news emerged of her plans. "There is nothing like clarity to turn around a market," said McKenna. In Asia yesterday, Hong Kong rallied 1.1 percent, boosted by a flood of mainland Chinese investors picking up stocks considered cheap compared with those north of the border, while a pick-up in the yuan eased fears about the mainland economy. — AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report						Global	
Wednesday 18 January 2017							
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low		
Price Index	▲ 50.65	6,351.77	6,301.12	6,359.05	6,296.79	Volume	832,549,247
Weighted Index	▼ -1.17	407.86	409.03	409.95	405.97	Value (KWD)	65,081,737
KSX 15	▼ -8.45	949.51	957.96	959.81	945.09	Number of Trades	12,641
Trades						Trades	
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KWD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	64	59	231900	14,178	21	59	▼ -1.0
KARJUS	49.0	47.0	1,129,000	54,399	22	49.0	▲ 2.5
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	395	— 0.0
NAPESCO	890	860	21,424	18,425	3	860	▲ 18.0
ENERGYH	50	48.5	499,000	24,159	24	49.0	▼ -0.5
GPI	57	55	15,695,040	873,045	232	56	▲ 1.0
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	— 0.0
Oil & Gas			17,566,364	984,306	302	857.99	▲ 5.26
KFOUC	238	232	369,210	86,163	31	236	▲ 2.0
BPCC	570	550	911,521	511,310	56	560	▲ 10.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	670	— 0.0
ALQURAIN	275	255	3,241,505	866,129	69	275	▲ 19.0
Basic Materials			4,522,236	1,463,692	199	1148.69	▲ 20.07
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	490	— 0.0
REFRI	310	310	30,000	9,300	4	310	▲ 5.0
CABLE	445	430	423,063	185,492	40	435	▼ -15.0
SHIP	194	190	257,963	49,429	17	194	▲ 2.0
PCEM	990	970	111,000	108,690	14	980	— 0.0
PAPER	300	280	210,100	62,280	13	300	▲ 25.0
MRC	65	64	19,990	1,289	2	64	▼ -1.0
ADICO	290	285	454,842	130,045	22	285	▼ -6.0
GSIMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	390	— 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	120	— 0.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	190	— 0.0
NICBM	214	212	10,000	2,128	2	214	▲ 2.0
EQUIPMENT	67	62	10,145,813	652,991	219	65	▲ 3.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.5	— 0.0
GYPSSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
SALBOOKH	72	69	1,622,894	115,144	70	71	▲ 2.0
AGLTY	710	690	4,023,916	2,803,910	108	690	— 0.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	208	— 0.0
CLEANING	59	56	5,642,868	323,409	132	57	▼ -2.0
KGL	69	66	4,321,660	290,700	88	68	— 0.0
KKPC	178	178	22,200	3,932	2	178	▲ 4.0
HUMANSOFT	2,960	2,900	454,858	1,353,767	47	2,960	▲ 60.0
NAFAIS	174	170	6,758	1,175	2	170	▼ -6.0
SAFWAN	385	385	10,000	3,850	1	385	— 0.0
GFC	37.5	35.0	84,986	3,047	10	37.0	— 0.0
MAYADEEN	33.0	31.5	33,329,823	1,076,418	248	32.5	▲ 1.0
CGC	550	530	196,090	89,473	37	550	— 0.0
MTCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	96	— 0.0
UPAC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	730	— 0.0
ALAFCO	250	248	448,446	112,037	23	250	▲ 4.0
MUBARRAD	78	72	4,364,591	330,106	83	77	▲ 4.0
LOGISTICS	79	74	15,132,350	1,154,932	249	79	▲ 5.0
SCEM	86	86	165,000	14,190	6	86	▼ -1.0
GCEM	87	85	968,518	82,683	26	85	— 0.0
QIC	82	80	20,000	1,620	2	82	▼ -2.0
FCEM	88	85	4,245,530	368,399	68	86	— 0.0
RKWC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	97	— 0.0
SPEC	85	84	283,850	23,854	16	84	▼ -1.0
Industrials			86,873,179	9,354,284	1,551	1411.45	▲ 13.26
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	142	— 0.0
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	54	— 0.0
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	214	— 0.0
DANAH	90	89	5,925,776	531,750	116	90	— 0.0
POULT	180	180	20,477	3,686	3	180	▼ -16.0
FOOD	2,640	2,620	105,338	276,749	15	2,620	— 0.0
Consumer Goods			6,051,591	812,194	134	1114.31	▼ -18.77
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0
YIACO	295	250	205,640	68,354	32	255	— 0.0
Health Care			265,649	68,354	32	1168.97	— 0.00
KCIN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1,160	— 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	265	— 0.0
SULTAN	71	66	1,925,541	135,581	74	71	▲ 5.0
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	50	— 0.0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	— 0.0
OULAFUEL	130	128	40,435	5,198	20	128	▼ -2.0
MUNTAAHAT	87	84	2,865,074	244,136	101	85	— 0.0
JAZEERA	670	660	55,419	37,097	9	670	▼ -30.0
SOOR	126	122	180,002	22,441	20	124	— 0.0
FUTUREKID	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	106	— 0.0
ALRAI	136	132	383,262	51,551	18	136	— 0.0
ZMAH	59	54	7,930,200	447,162	178	56	▲ 2.0
Mezzan	990	960	347,900	335,283	29	960	▼ -20.0
Consumer Services			13,727,833	1,278,448	449	935.62	▲ 0.94
ZAIN	495	455	7,826,974	3,003,083	211	460	▼ -5.0
COREDDO	1,180	1,180	2,813	3,319	7	1,180	— 0.0
HITSTELEC	66	60	32,867,731	2,075,458	359	65	▲ 4.0
VVA	910	890	49,480	44,596	36	900	▲ 10.0
Telecommunications			40,729,998	5,726,446	613	684.65	▲ 11.34
NBK	710	690	3,514,779	2,451,573	102	700	— 0.0
GBK	265	260	854,090	225,611	34	260	▼ -5.0
CBK	420	420	10,000	4,200	1	420	▼ -5.0
ABK	320	310	590,407	187,026	16	320	— 0.0
ALMUTAHED	420	415	61,126	25,648	11	420	▼ -5.0
KIB	220	218	3,724,100	819,001	59	220	— 0.0
BURG	325	315	1,454,921	465,510	61	325	— 0.0
KFIN	600	590	4,877,185	2,921,209	194	590	▼ -20.0
BOUBAYAN	410	405	597,788	245,080	60	410	— 0.0
AUB	206	202	1,411,030	287,796	33	206	▲ 2.0
ITHARR	49.5	48.5	22,971,342	1,130,150	216	49.5	▲ 3.0
WARBABANK	244	238	17,054,108	4,148,967	373	244	▲ 2.0
Banks			67,120,876	12,909,472	1,160	909.14	▲ 11.82
KINS	290	290	1,775	515	1	290	— 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	720	— 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	485	— 0.0
WINS	100	100	52,385	5,239	2	100	— 0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0
FTI	50	50	1,500	75	1	50	— 0.0
WETHAQ	42.0	39.5	691,993	27,858	30	42.0	▲ 2.0
BKQWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0
Insurance			737,653	33,686	34	1056.69	▲ 7.67
SOKDOK	49.5	48.0	149,9967	732,418	175	49.5	▲ 2.5
KRE	74	71	7,042,252	509,317	149	73	▼ -1.0
URC	108	98	168,681	17,998	16	108	▲ 2.0
NRE	138	126	11,204,378	1,494,830	163	134	▲ 6.0
SRE	360	360	191,340	68,892	3	360	— 0.0
TAM	445	445	36,174	18,097	1	445	— 0.0
AREC	190	184	38,968	7,214	6	184	▼ -6.0
MASSALEH	57	52	44,276	2,323	6	52	▼ -6.0
ARABREC	42.5	41.5	6,001,182	252,373	98	42.5	▲ 1.5
ERESCO	48.5	46.0	5,570,520	264,655	132	48.0	▲ 2.0
MABANEE	900	880	467,506	415,569	22	890	▼ -20.0
INIAZZAT	81	79	249,900	20,012	10	81	— 0.0
INVESTORS	32.0	30.0	62,937,662	1,935,613	463	30.0	▼ -6.5
IRC	39.5	38.0	3,806,647	147,433	90	38.5	▲ 1.0
ALTUJARIA	84	83	1,130,917	94,051	22	84	— 0.0
SANAM	44.5	41.5	1,475,200	64,271	25		

QATAR AIRWAYS EXTENDS ITS POPULAR TRAVEL FESTIVAL FOR TWO MORE DAYS

DOHA: Qatar Airways has extended its popular Travel Festival with exceptional discounts continuing for people travelling together, special companion fares and kids fly free.

The extended promotional period covers flights on board the airline's World's Best Business Class and Economy Class, on flights across its global network of more than 150 places until 15 December 2017.

Exceptional deals can be found on flights to London from KWD 111, per person, Geneva from KWD 137, per person, and New York from KWD, 234 per person. World-travelers are encouraged to visit qatarairways.com or contact their nearest Qatar Airways sales agent to book. Qatar Airways has partnered with Accor Hotels and leading payments technology company Visa, to give passengers discounts on accommodation as part of the festival. Travelers who

book with Accor Hotels at AccorHotels.com will receive exclusive offers on accommodation. Visa card holders can also avail up to 15 per cent further off flights at the time of booking.

Qatar Airways Chief Commercial Officer, Dr. Hugh Dunleavy, said: "I'm really excited to be able to extend our best-ever Travel Festival by an additional two days. The Travel Festival has, as expected, been very popular and so far we have given away more than 200 Golden Tickets and 500 prizes through our social media channels.

This extension encourages our travelers to seize the opportunity on exceptional deals to incredible destinations across our global network. With the Qatar Airways Travel Festival the world can take advantage of further discounts from our main partners' Accor Hotels and Visa and have a chance to win further great prizes."



This year's online Golden Ticket offer has again created a hive of activity on Qatar Airways' social media channels where travelers could uncover clues to access further discounts and even claim \$0 fare tickets to dream destinations.

Thousands of customers from across the globe have eagerly searched for the magic travel dates, with over 200 hundred zero-fare 'golden' tickets being found so far.

Qatar Airways Holidays is also providing an extension to its fantastic deals on hotels and accommodation across a number of the airline's 150 destinations. Double Qmiles can also be earned on flights booked by Privilege Club members. Passengers taking advantage of Qatar Airways' extended Travel Festival are encouraged to turn two holidays into one by planning a stopover in Doha, with a new transit visa scheme offering visitors a free transit visa for up to 96 hours on your way to or from your final destination. Combine a quick visit to Doha, with its historic sites and five-star shopping and resorts, with a dream holiday - only available to Qatar Airways passengers.

TARGET LOWERS PROFIT AND SALES OUTLOOK

NEW YORK: Target cut its fourth-quarter profit and sales outlook after the discounter says it had sluggish holiday sales and traffic in its stores that offset a surging online business. Its shares fell nearly 4 percent in premarket trading and shares of several other major retailers such as Kohl's and Macy's also fell. The disappointing holiday season is a setback for Target, which like many other retailers is trying to reinvent itself to be more nimble in a changing landscape where online leader Amazon.com is setting the rules.

Target stepped up its value messages, ramped up its holiday marketing and showcased new homegrown brands like a children's clothing line called Cat & Jack. Apparently, it wasn't enough to draw shoppers to its stores, and that underscores the challenges for the industry. A string of retailers including Kohl's and Macy's recently lowered their outlooks after weak holiday sales despite their aggressive marketing and merchandising efforts.

Target said yesterday that revenue at stores opened at least a year were down 1.3 percent for the November and December period. The company, based in Minneapolis, now says the key barometer for a retailer's

health will decline 1 percent to 1.5 percent in the quarter, compared to guidance of down 1 percent to up 1 percent. For the November and December period, total sales dropped 4.9 percent, reflecting the impact of the December 2015 sales of Target's pharmacy and clinic business.

In a statement, Target CEO Brian Cornell said that while he was pleased with Black Friday sales, online sales growth of more 40 percent and continued strength in key "signature" categories like clothing and home, the results were offset by early season weakness and disappointing traffic sales trends in the stores. The company said the weak spots were electronics and entertainment, where the key sales measure declined in the high single digit range and food and essentials, both of which saw the figure decline in the low single-digit range.

Target says costs associated with shifting its efforts to online services and a highly promotional competitive environment hurt fourth-quarter margins. Target now expects adjusted earnings per share to be \$1.45 to \$1.55, compared with an earlier guidance of \$1.55 to \$1.75. Analysts were expecting \$1.65 per share, according to FactSet. — AP



AL-SAYER TAKES TOP HONOR: LITMUS WINS AT ARAB MEDIA FORUM AWARDS

RECOGNITION FOR EFFORTS IN UNIQUE AND CREATIVE ADVERTISING

KUWAIT: Litmus Advertising, Kuwait based creative agency and one of the Al-Sayer Group Holding Companies recently won first place in the print category for its work on Toyota at the 2016 Arab Media Forum Creativity Awards which was conducted under the patronage of Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah, Minister of



Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs. The event was attended by the Information Ministry Undersecretary Tareq Al Mizrim and the Undersecretary of New Media at the Ministry of Information Youssef Mustafa along with distinguished media members and celebrities from Kuwait. This is the second year in row

Litmus has been recognized at the awards, following its success with both Toyota and Lexus in 2015. This recognition is backed by their continued development, which now benefits from an affiliation with MENACOM headquartered in Dubai. Litmus advertising works with different business groups of Al-Sayer including Toyota, Lexus, Bahrah Trading Company as well as with other clients such as Caribou Coffee, McDonalds and Gulf Insurance Group.

HSBC WILL LIKELY SWITCH JOBS TO FRANCE ON BREXIT

LONDON: HSBC bank would likely switch 1,000 jobs to Paris from London, with Britain planning to leave the EU single market under Brexit, chief executive Stuart Gulliver told Bloomberg Television. Speaking from the World Economic Forum in the Swiss ski resort Davos, Gulliver said in an interview that "about 1,000 jobs which are carrying out activities which are covered by European legislation... would probably need, in our case, to go to France."

While Gulliver had in the past already hinted at such a switch of investment banking jobs, his comments appeared more precise as he suggested France would take precedence over other EU nations. "We bought Credit Commercial de France in 2002, so we have a full service universal bank in France. And so for us, it's France."

Activities covered by European financial regulation that would need to move equate

to about 20 percent of revenue earned by HSBC's investment bank division in London, Gulliver added. He was speaking Tuesday, shortly after British Prime Minister Theresa May said Britain would pull out of the European single market to control EU immigration, as she unveiled plans for a clean break from Brussels for the first time.

At the same time however, May stressed the need for the greatest possible access to the market with Britain as an outsider. The UK financial sector has long feared the loss of "passporting" rights-which allows EU member states to trade across national borders. That provides a crucial gateway for companies to access the rest of the bloc. Lobby group the British Bankers' Association cautioned in October that international lenders with operations in the UK are ready to transfer some of their activities out of the country from early 2017. — AFP

GOLDMAN SACHS RESULTS BEAT ESTIMATES, HELPED BY TRADING

NEW YORK: Goldman Sachs reported fourth-quarter earnings that beat analysts' forecasts yesterday as the bank recovered from a difficult quarter a year earlier. Results were particularly strong at Goldman's trading desks in the last three months of the year.

The New York-based investment bank earned \$2.35 billion, or \$5.08 a share, compared with \$765 million, or \$1.27 per share, in the same period a year earlier. Last year's results included a \$5 billion legal settlement with the Department of Justice relat-

ed to the bank's dealings during the housing bubble and financial crisis.

The results beat analysts' expectations of \$4.76 per share. "After a challenging first half, the firm performed well for the remainder of the year as the operating environment improved," CEO Lloyd Blankfein said in a statement. Like Morgan Stanley, which reported its results on Tuesday, Goldman had a strong quarter in its trading operations, benefiting from a market rally following the U.S. presidential election. — AP

BOURSA KUWAIT: OFFICIAL MEMBER IN THE ICMA

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait is proud to announce that it has been accorded the official membership to join the International Capital Market Association (ICMA) on 1 January 2017. Commenting on this occasion, Boursa Kuwait Vice Chairman

international community with access to a pool of expert professional market knowledge will keep us regularly informed of trends and developments in the industry that can only be beneficial to our national economy. In addition to that, Boursa Kuwait will contribute to an efficient dialogue with the regulators and the exchange members alike." ICMA is an international membership association which currently has over 500 members located in approximately 60 countries. The ICMA seeks to promote resilient and well-functioning international debt capital markets.

It is worth noting that the ICMA works to help build trust in the industry by promoting internationally accepted standards of market practice through the development of appropriate, industry accepted, guidelines, rules, recommendations and standard documentation, to maintain and enhance the framework of cross border issuing, trading and investing in debt instruments. It also brings all segments of the industry together both the buy side and sell side, and encourages the issuance of financial regulations which promote the resilience, efficiency and cost effectiveness of international debt capital markets.



and CEO, Khaled Abdulrazzaq Al Khaled said in a press statement that "Joining the ICMA is a major step for Boursa Kuwait. This puts us on the international map as contributors to the capital market as a whole and as active participants in shaping the future of the Kuwaiti market through dialogues on the international best practices." Mr Al Khaled added: "To be part of an

MALABAR GOLD & DIAMONDS ANNOUNCES MAJOR DH335MN RETAIL EXPANSION PLANS

DUBAI: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one of the world's largest gold and diamond jewellery retailer, announces a major investment amounting Dh335 million (US\$91.28 million) in expansion plans of its retail network. The plan will see an addition of 24 stores in three months, from January 2017 to March 2017 period, taking the number of total outlets to 185 by the end of March 2017, up from 161 as of yesterday.

Out of the 24 new outlets, 9 will be in the UAE, 7 in India, 5 in Saudi Arabia, 2 in Bahrain and 1 in Kuwait. Of these, 7 outlets will be opened yesterday, taking the number of total outlets to 168, including 82 in India and 86 internationally. The expansion will add more than 1,000 professionals to the group's existing manpower strength of 9,000 and cross the 10,000 employee mark by March this year.

The move marks a major investment in expansion at a time when many gold and jewellery retailers have struggled to manage their existing operations due to challenging global economic environment. Despite the tough market conditions resulted by lower demand, higher price of gold and demonetization process in India, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has decided to push ahead with expansion, which demonstrates its confidence in the growth of market in future.

"This is one of our single largest vertical expansion drives. The expansion at a crucial time reflects our renewed confidence and strong commitment to the Gulf, India and Far East markets," Mr. MP Ahamed, Chairman of Malabar Group, said. "Investment in downturn market requires courage and strong risk appetite. Our latest expansion demonstrates our long-term vision and a sustainable business development roadmap that we can manage mostly with our own resources." "The expansion is aimed at serving more communities and nationalities, especially people from the Philippines, African Arab communities, the Levant as well as the Western countries. The extended network will help us acquire a greater customer base", he added.

The price of gold has risen in almost every major world economy during 2016, suggesting that the dark days are over and good times are coming back. The gold price is almost 10 percent higher today than what it had been 12 months ago. Abdul Salam KP, Group Executive Director of Malabar Group said that consumers were cautious last year "Retail activities are a reflection of the consumer sentiment. Due to the market conditions, consumers exercised caution. However things are looking brighter as we started the New Year with a lot of positive indications," he added. The current price of gold jewellery is ideal for buyers, company officials say. Shamlal Ahamed MP, Managing Director - International Operations of Malabar Gold & Diamonds' says, "Due to the market conditions, consumers on an average purchased less gold. However, although the average ticket size was low,



the transaction value remained almost flat - which means the number of customers have grown". "Data from our own sales across the network shows that we have acquired more customers last year - who purchased from us for the first time - that compensated for the lower average purchase transaction value", Mr Shamlal revealed.

"I believe the current market conditions are best suited for buyers as the price of gold is expected to rise. This year, we expect consumers to be less cautious and buy more - a trend that will lift consumption", he added. Malabar Gold & Diamonds is the

flagship company of Malabar Group, a leading diversified Indian business conglomerate. The group owned by over 1,700 investors was ranked among the top 5 jewellery retailers globally. Established in 1993 in the Indian state of Kerala, Malabar Gold & Diamonds today has a strong retail network of over 161 outlets spread across nine countries. Malabar Gold & Diamonds had earlier announced donating 5 percent of its profits in CSR activities aimed at supporting the societies across five key areas: Education, Women Empowerment, Healthcare and Research, Housing and Environment.

MASTERCARD HELPS EXPAND FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN PAKISTAN BY OPTIMIZING NATIONAL ID CARDS

KUWAIT: Mastercard, a leading technology company in the global payments industry, announced a strategic collaboration with Pakistan's NADRA Technologies to optimize National ID cards with electronic payments functionality. The move will allow Pakistani citizens to carry out financial transactions and receive government disbursements by utilizing the unique 13-digit identification number of their identity card. Citizens will also be able to use their National ID to send and receive domestic and international remittances, eliminating the requirement to physically visit a bank branch or currency exchange house to meet their money transfer needs.

Under the terms of the agreement, Mastercard will also use its next-generation payment processing technologies to process all online payments made by Pakistani citizens for

the issuance of National ID cards, passports or any other document provisioned by NADRA Technologies. The announcement was made during Mastercard's participation in the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2017, taking place from 17-20 January in Davos, Switzerland.

"This is a huge step forward in our efforts to expand financial inclusion in Pakistan," said Khalid Elgibali, Division President, MENA, Mastercard. "As the nature of personal and business transactions becomes more sophisticated, Mastercard is dedicated to pioneering solutions that enable payments in a swift, convenient and reliable manner. We are excited to partner with NADRA Technologies to turn the National ID card into a singular touch point for payments and remittances, and thus open up avenues that minimize handling of cash in favor of a more secure electronic payment method."

AUDIOBOOKS SEE BOOM IN DIGITAL, MULTITASKING AGE

NEW YORK: Curling up with a paperback may be a forgotten luxury for many thanks to today's busy lifestyles, but listening to a book on the go, while shopping or jogging, is fast becoming the new norm. Gone are the cumbersome cassette sets that could cost three times as much as an old-fashioned book and often featured only excerpts to cut down on costs.

Now, audiobooks are just a click away and can be uploaded onto a smartphone for the same, if not lower, price as the print edition. Mary Beth Roche, president and publisher of Macmillan Audio, says their reader feedback suggests many use audiobooks as a "multitasking tool," a way to "consume books when their eyes are busy." For others-whose work lives may involve long stretches at the screen-they are a way to unplug.

"It's sort of nice to sit back, and relax and have a story told to you," said Roche. Some 35,574 audiobook titles were released in the United States in 2015, according to the Audio Publishers Association, an eight-fold increase over five years. That year, sales of books read out loud reached \$1.77 billion, an annual jump of 20 percent.

According to the Author Earnings website, Amazon largely dominates the market-even more so than for the print book industry-with around 119,000 audiobooks sold per day in January 2016. At the core of its earnings is industry leader Audible, which Amazon bought in 2008. The tech and retail giant also offers subscription deals, including one book per month for \$14.95. Most major publishers now have dedicated audiobook teams.

A favorite in the car

In the United States, audiobooks have long been serious business-simply because Americans on average spend so much time in their cars. "What we found out is that's a way for consumers to make that time in traffic, quality time," said Roche. "Even way back when it was the cassette and then the CD, the number one place that people listen is in the car. We do find that a long car trip or a long

commute is often what triggers someone to try an audiobook and to experience it for the first time and then they find other places where they can listen." When audiobooks became available in digital format, people started using them during other activities-when out shopping or jogging, performing household tasks or crafting.

'Lose myself'

For thriller author John Hart, gyms and shops are not necessarily the best place to enjoy a book. "But if it's a quite contemplative type of environment, driving or working in a quiet manner, it's probably a great way to experience these books," he said. "Driving your car on a long trip I find for instance an audiobook is every bit as satisfying as sitting in a quiet room and reading and in fact it can even become more so completely immersive. I'd lose myself in the experience."

The audio rights for Hart's first book were sold to Recorded Books. After that, his publisher Macmillan sought to retain control of the audiobook as well as the print rights. Anthony Goff, senior vice president at Hachette Book Group, noted that authors today have a much keener interest than before in the audiobook version of their works, sometimes suggesting readers or offering to do the reading themselves.

Most celebrities who recently published autobiographical works in the United States also provided recordings of the volumes, including Bruce Springsteen, Carrie Fisher and Bernie Sanders. On average, audiobooks account for 10 percent of sales of the print version, said Roche. But the figure is greater for some genres, such as science fiction, fantasy and especially self-help works. Roche estimates that at least 1,000 copies of a given audiobook must be sold in order to start making a profit. That's because they can be expensive to produce. "We still count on print to lead the charge, but I do believe that audio sales are helping to expand the market and finding new fans for our authors," said Goff. — AFP



JAKARTA: In this Friday, Jan 13, 2017, photo, a customer looks at a used tape recorder at a flea market on the outskirts of Jakarta, Indonesia. The waste from discarded electronic gadgets and appliances has increased by two-thirds in East Asia over five years, posing a growing threat to health and the environment unless proper disposal becomes the norm. — AP

CLOCKS FAILED ONBOARD NAVIGATION SATELLITES

PARIS: The European Space Agency announced yesterday there were "failed" clocks onboard some of the 18 navigation satellites it has launched for Galileo, Europe's beleaguered rival to America's GPS. So far, the problem has not affected operation of the system, which announced early, initial service in December, ESA Director General Jan Woerner told journalists in Paris, adding it was "a sensitive issue".

"Unfortunately we have right now the situation that we have failed rubidium clocks as well as failed hydrogen maser clocks-nine in total," Woerner said. He was referring to the two types of atomic clock used for Galileo-two rubidium and two hydrogen maser clocks per satellite. Each satellite needs only one working clock for the system to function, the rest are backup. Three rubidium and six hydrogen maser clocks are not working, said Woerner.

"We don't know whether we can revitalize them, it's much too early for that," he added. None of the 18 satellites launched to date have been declared inoperative as a result.

Two of the failed clocks were on a single satellite. "So far, the operational ability is not affected," said Woerner. "However, we are not blind... If this failure has some systematic reason we have to be careful."

The cause is being investigated, and ESA has yet to decide how to proceed with future satellite launches, said Woerner. Galileo will ultimately comprise 30 operational satellites. "We have to look into... whether we find finally some systematic root cause and to change it, or whether we have to just go on" and rely on the backup clocks, Woerner said.

According to ESA, Galileo boasts the most accurate atomic clocks ever used for geolocalization. Similar to traditional clocks relying on the tick of a pendulum, atomic clocks also count regular oscillations, in this case switches between energy states of atoms stimulated by heat or light. The project has already experienced many setbacks, taking 17 years and more than triple the original budget to going live in December. — AFP

FOR DRIVERLESS CARS, A MORAL DILEMMA: WHO LIVES OR DIES? HUMAN CHOICE IN MACHINE HANDS

BOSTON: Imagine you're behind the wheel when your brakes fail. As you speed toward a crowded crosswalk, you're confronted with an impossible choice: veer right and mow down a large group of elderly people, or veer left into a woman pushing a stroller. Now imagine you're riding in the back of a self-driving car. How would it decide?

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology are asking people worldwide how they think a robot car should handle such life-or-death decisions. Their goal is not just for better algorithms and ethical tenets to guide autonomous vehicles, but to understand what it will take for society to accept the vehicles and use them. Their findings present a dilemma for car makers and governments eager to introduce self-driving vehicles on the promise that they'll be safer than human-controlled cars. People prefer a self-driving car to act in the greater good, sacrificing its passenger if it can save a crowd of pedestrians. They just don't want to get into that car.

"There is a real risk that if we don't understand those psychological barriers and address them through regulation and public outreach, we may undermine the entire enterprise," said Iyad Rahwan, an associate professor at the MIT Media Lab. "People will say they're not comfortable with this. It would stifle what I think will be a very good thing for humanity."

After publishing research last year surveying US residents, Rahwan and colleagues at the University of Toulouse in France and the University of California, Irvine, are now expanding their surveys and looking at how responses vary in different countries. They are also using a website created by MIT researchers called the Moral Machine, which allows people to play the role of judging who lives or dies. A jaywalking person or several dogs riding in the driverless car? A pregnant woman or a homeless man?

Broad differences

Preliminary, unpublished research based on millions of responses from more than 160 countries shows broad differences between East and West. More prominent in the United States and Europe are judgments that reflect the utilitarian principle of minimizing total harm over all else, Rahwan said. The thought experiment is familiar to ethicists, who have grappled with such dilemmas since British philosopher Philippa Foot in the 1960s presented a similar question about a runaway trolley. But it's too unrealistic for some focused on how the vehicles act in ordinary situations. Just 5 miles from MIT's Media Lab in Cambridge, the first self-driving car to roll out on Massachusetts public roads began testing this month in Boston's Seaport District.

"We approach the problem from a bit more of a practical, engineering perspective," said NuTonomy CEO Karl Iagnemma, whose Cambridge-based company has also piloted self-driving taxis in Singapore. Iagnemma said the study's moral dilemmas are "vanishingly rare." Designing a safe vehicle, not a "sophisticated ethical creature," is the focus of his engineering team as they tweak the software that guides their electric Renault Zoe past Boston snowbanks. "When a driverless car looks out on the world, it's not able to distinguish the age of a pedestrian or the number of occupants in a car," Iagnemma said. "Even if we wanted to imbue an autonomous vehicle with an ethical engine, we don't have the technical capability today to do so." Focusing too much on the stark "trolley problem" risks marginalizing the study of how best to address self-driving ethics, said Noah Goodall, a scientist at the Virginia Transportation Research Council. Engineers already program cars to make moral choices, such as when they slow down and leave space after detecting a bicyclist. "All these cars do risk management. It just doesn't look like a trolley problem," Goodall said. Rahwan agrees with self-driving enthusiasts that freeing vehicles from human error could save many lives. — AP

CALIFORNIA FINISHES FINAL SAFETY REVIEW OF WELLS AFTER BLOWOUT

LOS ANGELES: A California natural gas storage facility where a blowout spewed methane for nearly four months has completed a safety review required to resume operations, though it might never return to full capacity, state officials said yesterday.

The Southern California Gas Co facility at Aliso Canyon has been crippled more than a year since the blowout discovered in October 2015 drove 8,000 families from their Los Angeles homes and led to mass complaints of nosebleeds, nausea, headaches and other maladies. Fewer than a third of the 113 wells at the aging former oil field have passed rigorous inspections ordered after the blowout. The remaining ones have been taken out of service and must pass state-mandated tests within a year or be permanently sealed.

The state could sign off as soon as next month to allow use of the approved wells to store more gas, though the company would be restricted to about a third of the facility's storage capacity, the Department of Conservation said. While the facility has a capacity of 83 billion cubic feet, the state has set a storage limit of 29 billion cubic feet - about double the amount of natural gas that remains in caverns more than a mile underground. The state said the maximum safe capacity is 65 billion cubic feet, far below the full capacity.

"At this point in time, there's no information that would indicate that returning to that whole capacity of the 83 billion cubic feet would ever be needed," said Edward Randolph of the California Public Utilities Commission. SoCalGas did not respond specifically to questions about the reduced capacity, saying in a statement that it was reviewing the additional guidelines.

Aliso Canyon is the largest natural gas storage site in the West and is considered critical to the Los Angeles area for home heating and to power gas-fired electricity plants during energy spikes. However, blackouts predicted without the facility in full operation have not occurred, and many nearby residents want it permanently shut down after enduring the stench, ailments and frustration after the blowout. — AP



CISCO REVEALS THE CURRENT STATE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN RETAIL

KUWAIT: Cisco analysts are hailing 2016 as the best year for holiday sales growth since 2005. However, this growth is not coming from the traditional brick and mortar channel. Instead, Internet shoppers saved the holiday season by setting new records for online sales during Black Friday, Cyber Monday and Bounceback Tuesday. This has huge implications for the industry and for retailers' 2017 technology plans.

The multi-channel shopper is fueling a wave of digital disruption that threatens to put nearly half of retailer leaders out of business if they don't transform themselves digitally. A new research report released today by Cisco, "Reinventing Retail: Cisco Reveals How Stores Can Surge Ahead on the Digital Transformation Journey" reveals that despite the risks, retailers around the world are moving too slowly when it comes to digital transformation and may not be investing in the right places. The holiday season's choppy sales report and the recent closing of big box stores is just the beginning.

Brick and mortar stores

"The shakeup caused by digital disruption is already underway with many major retailers announcing the closure of hundreds of their brick and mortar stores in recent months, in order to better compete in a landscape where physical and digital channels are increasingly converging," said Mike Weston, Vice President, Cisco Middle East. "Yet, there remains a tremendous opportunity, with the potential for retailers to generate more than \$506 billion in value that can be achieved through digital transformation. Retailers need to make more progress in digitizing their workforce and their core operations in order to execute on the innovative customer experiences they want to deliver, and to position themselves for success in the new retail landscape."

In an effort to help retailers achieve digital transformation, Cisco previously released a "A Roadmap to Digital Value in the Retail Industry," which guides retailers through three phases: (1)Enable digital capabilities, (2)Differentiate their brand through new digital capabilities, and (3)Define new business models through digital disruption.

To understand the progress retailers have made on that roadmap and in executing on their own digital transformation journeys, Cisco has spent the past 10 months facilitating in-depth workshops with more than 200 retail executives from North and South America and regions of Europe, representing brick-and-mortar retailers, e-commerce, apparel manufacturers, food service and other segments of retail. The new report reveals where they are on their journey to digital transformation, where they are currently prioritizing their digital technology investments and what they may not know about the flaws in their digitization strategies.

Key Highlights:

- Retailers are stuck in the early phase of the digital roadmap. Retailers' digital investment priorities remain concentrated in the earliest, "Enable" phase of the roadmap (49 percent), which is focused on more mature IT technologies

that enable existing capabilities and processes, IT agility and operational efficiency.

- Retailers are missing a \$187 billion opportunity by not prioritizing investments in Employee Productivity. These technologies and use cases deliver the greatest value from digitization by increasing associate efficiency, optimizing the checkout and improving worker collaboration. Prioritizing investments in these areas not only improves operational productivity and associate effectiveness, but also contribute to improved shopper experiences and increased loyalty. Just 6 percent of retailers' investment priorities are focused on Employee Productivity use cases, despite the fact that Cisco estimates that these use cases deliver the greatest return on investment for retailers.



**Mike Weston - Vice President
Cisco Middle East**

- Retailers are not investing enough in the areas that create competitive differentiation and new revenue streams. Only 29 percent of retailers' investment priorities are currently focused on the "Differentiate" phase and only 22 percent in the "Define" phase, the second and third phases of the roadmap, respectively. These are the more advanced phases of the roadmap, where retailers can differentiate their brand based on unique digital capabilities and services, or define new business models and revenue streams through digital disruption. These findings indicate that most retailers have not made enough progress when it comes to digital transformation and may be at risk of being out-performed by faster moving, more innovative retail ventures.

Some sub-segments of the retail industry are making more progress on their path to digital transformation than others. New York-based apparel manufacturers and garment industry retailers have placed 58 percent of their digital investment priorities within the Differentiate and Define phases of the roadmap, compared with just 39 percent from the brick-and-mortar retailers, department stores and food service retailers that Cisco spoke with in the southern region of the US.

DOCTOR OFFICES THAT LOOK LIKE APPLE STORES

SAN FRANCISCO: After a relative suffered a heart attack a few years ago, Silicon Valley entrepreneur Adrian Aoun got an unsettling look at a health-care system that he diagnosed as an inefficient and outdated mess.

Now he believes he has a remedy. It's called Forward, a health-management service that charges a \$149 per month - roughly \$1,800 a year - to tend to all of its patients' primary-care needs. And not just with traditional doctoring, either; Forward plans to deploy body scanners, sensors, giant touch-screen monitors, infrared devices and other high-tech gizmos that could make a doctor's appointment feel more like a trip to an Apple store. "Doctors are super smart, but they are set up for failure in so many ways," Aoun says. "We haven't built the tools that they need to operate in modern life. No one wants to go to the doctor's office today. We want to change that."

Not quite all-you-can-eat

Forward will still refer patients to outside specialists when its primary-care doctors can't deal with certain health problems; same goes for hospital admissions. And there are bound to be health insurance headaches that Forward isn't attempting to address. That means Forward is unlikely to become a cure-all,

especially because its membership fee isn't cheap, said Paul Ginsburg, a health-policy expert at the University of Southern California. "Primary care is a very small part of the cost for what health insurance covers," Ginsburg said. "So, even after paying nearly \$2,000 a year, you are still going to have to buy health insurance to cover everything else." But Aoun is convinced his high-tech approach can start to make things better.

High tech primary medicine

Forward's patients can view all their medical information on a mobile app they can use to message a "care team" available around the clock. All blood and DNA tests are done at Forward's offices instead of being farmed out; the company says patients will be able to review the results in a matter of minutes instead of days later.

People with longer term issues such as obesity, high blood pressure or skin problems will go home with sensors that can transmit data back to Forward. Its computers will then alert doctors if any troubling trends surface, allowing them to be addressed before they become more serious.

Forward's attempt at a medical makeover began Tuesday with the opening of its first office in San Francisco. The converted cloth-

ing store spans 3,500 square feet, enough to accommodate six exam rooms and a team of doctors. The office should be able to accommodate 12,000 patients in total before turning people away. Additional Forward offices are planned in other major U.S. cities, although Aoun won't say where they will be located or when they may open.

Testing concerns

While Forward's concept of technology-driven preventative care may make sense, experts like Ginsburg worry that its emphasis on health-monitoring sensors could prompt doctors to run unnecessary tests that do little to improve patient health. "The notion of scanning people who don't have a problem has been very solidly dismissed by the medical profession for a while," Ginsburg said.

Studies have shown that the best way to remain healthy is to eat right, exercise and get plenty of sleep, added R. Adams Dudley, director of the Center for Healthcare Value at the University of California, San Francisco. "Sensing people all up isn't going to change any of that," Dudley said. But Dudley believes Forward has the potential to be very profitable if its focus on technology appeals primarily to younger people who typically

have few health issues. Justin Shaffer, 34, fits that demographic. He thinks Forward has been worth its monthly fee since he joined the service last year during its testing phase. "I wouldn't necessarily say it feels like a tech-heavy experience. I would say it just feels like a better experience," Shaffer said after picking up a scale at Forward's office to help monitor his weight.

The AI will see you now

Forward hopes to provide more hands-on attention from primary-care doctors freed from paperwork and other bureaucratic frustrations, while backing them up with sophisticated algorithms that analyze the digital data stockpiled about its patients.

It's an example of artificial intelligence, the ability of computers to learn from the data that they collect. Artificial intelligence, or AI, is an Aoun specialty. He sold an AI startup called Wavvi to Google for about \$30 million in 2013 and then stayed on for a couple years to help work on some of the technology that now powers Google's voice-controlled assistant. But Dudley doubts Forward's AI will be very effective unless it's able to build a large network of offices that attracts millions of patients. "A human brain can learn faster than a machine unless the machine has a massive database to analyze," Dudley said. — AP

GLOBAL WARMING COULD STEAL POSTCARD-PERFECT DAYS

WASHINGTON: Global warming is going to steal away some of those postcard-perfect weather days in the future, according to a first-of-its-kind projection of nice weather. On average, Earth will have 10 fewer days of mild and mostly dry weather by the end of the century, the researchers estimate. Some places will get more days perfect for picnics or outdoor weddings, while other places will lose a lot. Rio de Janeiro, Miami and much of Africa are big losers, while Europe and Seattle will gain nicer weather.

"It's the type of weather where you can go outside and do something fun," said study lead author Karin van der Wiel, a meteorology researcher at Princeton University and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "It's not too

cold. It's not too hot. It's not too humid." For the past three decades, the world has averaged 74 mild days a year. But by 2035 that will shrink to 70 and then 64 by the last two decades of the century, according to the study, published yesterday in the journal *Climatic Change*. Mild weather was defined as between 68 and 86 degrees with low humidity and no more than a trace of rain.

Any change depends on where you live and the time of year. For example, on average, the US will lose nine mild summer days by the end of the century, although most is gained back with more mild days in the winter, spring and fall. The report estimates that Washington, Chicago, New York and Dallas will lose two weeks of pleasant summer weather but some is gained back. On average, Washington loses 13 mild

days; Atlanta, 12; Chicago, 9; Denver and New York, 6; and Dallas, 1. The biggest losers will be the tropics and nearly all of Africa, eastern South America, South Asia and northern Australia. Rio de Janeiro, on average, will see 40 mild days disappear.

Extreme conditions

Miami will lose its only mild summer day and nearly a month of spring and fall mild days by 2100. "The changes are more dramatic in parts of the developing world, where you have high concentrations of populations," said NOAA climate scientist and co-author Sarah Kapnick. Other places, especially northern developed ones, will gain some of what the tropics lost. England and northern Europe are big winners. Seattle should pick up nine mild days and

Los Angeles, which already has a lot of nice weather, gets six extra by the end of the century. The scientists didn't specifically focus on whether the loss of mild days has already started globally, but they did see it happening in much of Africa and South America, Van der Wiel said. Climate scientists usually focus on extreme weather - record heat, tropical cyclones, droughts, floods - and how they could get worse as the world warms. Kapnick said she wanted to look at nice weather because her friends kept asking her what day to choose for good wedding weather. The team used a middle ground scenario for global warming - not worst-case runaway carbon pollution and not dramatic cuts in emissions of heat-trapping gases - and ran different computer simulations to see what would happen.

It's not just fewer nice days to enjoy. Fewer mild days will also harm agricultural production and allow disease-carrying insects to thrive more in more places, said University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd. Stanford University climate scientist Chris Field, who led an international study of extreme weather, questioned the purpose of the study: "Extreme conditions are the sharp end of the climate stick. It is in the extremes when things break and damage occurs." National Center for Atmospheric Research scientist Gerald Meehl, who also studies extreme weather, said a decrease in mild weather may not quite have the economic and health costs but there are other factors such as tourism "or simple human enjoyment." —AP



DAMASCUS: Syrian Lamis al-Haffar (left), 82-year-old general manager of Dar al-Saada retirement home, moves with the help of a walker at the home, in the Syrian capital Damascus. — AFP photos

AT SYRIA RETIREMENT HOME, ELDERLY LEFT BEHIND BY WAR 'FEELS HUMILIATED BY HER SOLITUDE'

DAMASCUS: Alone in her room at an overcrowded retirement home in Damascus, Naz Ashiti thumbs through photographs of her daughters overseas, her eyes lingering on features she has not seen in years. Sending aging family members to a retirement home was once unthinkable for most Syrians, but almost six years of war and displacement have left many with little choice. As the conflict has claimed the lives of young people, or forced them to escape abroad, their parents have been consigned to increasingly oversubscribed care homes.

Ashiti, 85, is one of the 140 elderly Syrians being cared for at Dar al-Saada (Home of Happiness) — one of the capital's biggest homes

for old people. "I came here because my house was destroyed and my children were each displaced to a different country," says Ashiti, a member of a well-off family that owned land near the capital. Her three daughters now live in Jordan, Germany and Iraqi Kurdistan, but Ashiti stayed in Damascus after she was forced to flee the rebel-held town of Douma under government siege since 2012.

Every day, Ashiti reads or writes in her diary, waiting for her children to call. She watches her small television set in her room whenever there is electricity, hoping to hear good news about her home in Douma or the countries where her children are living. "We were living with dignity

in our house. Here the service is excellent, the place is warm, but today I feel humiliated by my solitude," she said. "I didn't expect to spend the rest of my life looking at photos of my children and lamenting over them."

Bed as refuge

Residents at Dar al-Saada pay a monthly fee of \$120 for meals, care and a bed in a room with two other people, equipped with a television, a small table and an electric heater. Metal railings are mounted on the walls for support, and there are lifts so the elderly can skip the stairs. Of the complex's four floors, one is reserved for residents who cannot afford to pay for their accommodation. The home was already nearing capacity before war broke out in Syria in 2011, but would only receive requests for a bed there once or twice a month.

But since the eruption of Syria's war—which has displaced millions and killed at least 310,000 — elderly Syrians without families are flocking to Dar al-Saada. New requests come in daily, says 82-year-old general manager Lamis al-Haffar, who helped found the charity that runs the home 25 years ago. Despite her own advanced age, Haffar shuffles around on her walker and oversees all the home's operations—down to the amount of salt in the stew. "Because of the problems in Syria, many young people were forced to flee and leave their parents, who stayed on their own and weren't able to provide for themselves," Haffar says. Out of seven old people's homes in Damascus, three are private and four are government-run. "Every time there is a new empty bed I feel sad and happy at the same time I know someone has died and left us, but I'm happy because that bed will be a refuge for someone in a tough place, who hasn't found anywhere to sleep," says Haffar. "Getting a bed here has become a final dream for many old people in that situation."

Separated by death, siege

The home in the Mazzeh district west of Damascus welcomes visitors, but few of its elderly residents there are called on by their children. Hassania, 75, keeps a small box of sweets to distribute to occasional visitors and her fellow residents. She lost her son Ahmed in 2012, when he was killed in an explosion near Damascus, and still asks her friends to pray for him. "I depended on Ahmed for everything. I never thought there would come a day when he would die and leave me all alone," Hassania says. Nearby, Hamida al-Haddad fiddles with her prayer beads, her hands shaking uncontrollably as she recites the Quran under her breath.

Haddad has gone two years without seeing her children, who live in their besieged hometown of Madaya, about 40 kilometers from Damascus. "I was sick at home and my son brought me to hospital in Damascus two days before they closed the road," the 85-year-old says. "When I wanted to go home, the road was closed and I was forced to sleep in the street until a young man brought me to Dar Al-Saada." With heartbreak in her eyes, she stares out of the window, trying to avoid the gaze of those around her. "The war pushed me away from my children and grandchildren, and I feel I will die before the road opens and I see them again," she adds. "Death with my children is better than life away from them." — AFP



DAMASCUS: Naz Ashiti, a Syrian woman from the rebel-held town of Douma, sits in her room at the Dar al-Saada (Home of Happiness) retirement home, in the Syrian capital Damascus.

IRAQI HOSPITAL OFFERS AEROBICS FOR FEMALE CANCER PATIENTS

SULAIMANIYA, Iraq: Three days per week, a group of women gather at a sport center in the Iraqi Kurdish city of Sulaimaniya for aerobic classes. The aim of the sessions is not to lose weight and build stamina, but to reduce the harmful effects of radiotherapy and chemotherapy and to ease cancer-related fatigue. The exercises are part of a rehabilitation program for female cancer patients at Hiwa Cancer Hospital, the only specialized cancer facility in northern Iraq's Kurdistan region.

All the women involved have undergone painful cancer treatments and some have had breasts removed. Most have suffered from tiredness and psychological distress due to the disease. "I had both of my breasts removed," said 66-year-old cancer patient Nisreen Abdullah, who has attended the three-hour-long classes each week for the last three months. She says the workouts have helped her feel much better. "I wish that all the patients would come here to improve their

health," Abdullah said.

The aerobic sessions began four years ago after an agreement between the hospital and a local gym owner, Farah Mawared. The aim was to provide physical training for cancer patients who completed chemotherapy treatment. Since then, about 120 women have taken part in the classes, according to Mawared and Shwan Ali Tawfeeq, who works as a hematologist-oncologist at the hospital. "Sport is very important in improving the psychological condition of the patients as many of them experience anxiety, fear and depression," Tawfeeq said.

One patient, who gave her name as Kulthum, said her right breast was removed after five years ago. She was subjected to several chemotherapy doses, she said, and underwent laser photo-radiation. "A friend told me about this center," said Kulthum. "She advised me to go and so I did ... I really benefited a lot from these exercises." — Reuters

CHINA TELLS LOCAL METEOROLOGICAL BUREAUS TO STOP SMOG ALERTS

BEIJING: China is suspending local meteorological bureaus from issuing smog alerts, media reported yesterday, raising suspicions the government is attempting to suppress information about the country's air pollution as public anger over the issue grows.

China's Meteorological Administration notified local bureaus Tuesday to "immediately stop issuing smog alerts," according to a photo of a notice posted on China's Twitter-like social media platform Weibo. Instead, the local departments can issue alerts for "fog" when visibility is less than 10 km, according to the notice.

The notice was issued because local "meteorological bureaus and the environmental protection administration often disagree when they issue smog-related information," a representative from the China Meteorological Administration told the Chinese website *The Paper*. "A joint alerting mechanism will be formulated to consult how to and who should issue alerts for smog," the representative said. One single department will now be responsible for issuing smog alerts, *The Paper* reported.

The reports met with stinging criticism from online commentators who have long doubted the credibility of official data on air pollution. "Before, they cheated us separately, and now, they are going to cheat us together," one person said on Weibo. "Even though they are working on a unified alert standard, they should not stop the existing alert system," another replied. The Chinese government has a color-coded system of

smog alerts, topping out at red when severe pollution is likely to last more than 72 hours. The notice sets off a series of emergency measures, ranging from taking cars off the road to closing heavily polluting factories.

Local authorities have long hesitated to issue the notices over fears that they will harm economic performance, even when pollution levels are literally off the charts. In late 2015, China issued its first ever red alert in response to public anger over the government's reluctance to take action after a wave of suffocating smog hit the country's northeast. In the past, local and national authorities have issued contradictory, confusing alerts, one ordering factories and schools to be closed and one not. Bad air is a source of enduring public anger in China, which has seen fast economic growth in recent decades but at the cost of widespread environmental problems.

In recent weeks, parents in particular have expressed outrage over the smog that regularly affect hundreds of millions and has led to high levels of lung cancer, demanding that schools be equipped with air purifiers. Earlier this month, many took to social media to express their anger about the thick smog that choked Beijing for over a week around the New Year but found their articles quickly deleted, a move that only increased their frustration. "When people are gagged, the sky will be blue," said one sarcasm-laced Weibo comment. —AFP

BASI, WORLD'S OLDEST PANDA, TURNS 37

BEIJING: Basi, the oldest giant panda living in captivity, celebrated her 37th birthday yesterday wearing a crown and getting a special birthday cake. Tourists eagerly snapped photos as Basi, whose age is equivalent to 140 human years, slurped a soup of maize flour and eggs from a cake-shaped bowl at the Fuzhou Giant Panda Research Centre in southern China.

The panda can only be fed liquids and a

small amount of bamboo leaves, state broadcaster CCTV said. Basi has high blood pressure and needed cataract surgery several years ago, but overall she was in good health, CCTV said. Although the International Union for the Conservation of Nature downgraded the giant panda's status to "vulnerable" from "endangered" in September last year, the species still relies on conservation programs, conservationists say. — Reuters



CHINA: Giant panda Basi sniffs a birthday cake prepared by her keepers at Fuzhou Panda World in Fuzhou, east China's Fujian province yesterday. — AFP

STUDY FORECASTS BALMIER ENGLAND, HOTTER MUMBAI

PARIS: Northern Europe, Canada and Russia will enjoy balmy winters by century's end even as the average number of mild days per year declines worldwide, a climate study said yesterday. Using models based on mid-range global warming projections, American researchers calculated there will be 10 fewer days of mild weather per year globally by 2100. But there will be large regional differences, said a team from the National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and Princeton University. "The largest decreases are found in the tropics and subtropics whereas the mid-latitudes are projected to have a small increase," they wrote in the journal *Climatic Change*.

Today, the world enjoys 74 days of mild weather per year on average—about 20 percent of the total. Global warming's biggest winners will be Canada and large parts of the United States, northern Europe, parts of China and Russia, the South American region of Patagonia, Tasmania and New Zealand, the study found. "In some of these areas, mild weather will drop during increasingly hot and humid summers but become more plentiful in fall, winter and spring as winters warm and the shoulder seasons last longer," said a statement.

Africa, Asia and Latin America will be deprived of most mild days, with some regions losing 15 to 50 days per year. "The loss of mild weather days, especially during summer when they can serve to break up

extended heat waves, also could significantly affect public health," said a statement. Of some 40 representative cities picked by the researchers, the biggest loser by far is Lima—which will be robbed of 114 mild days per year from about 326 today. Dakar will lose 57 of its 171 annual mild days and Mumbai 44 — more than half its current 82 days. Miami will be stripped of 28 of its 97 annual fair weather days.

Economic risk

The biggest winner on the list is London with a gain 24 days from 69 per year today, followed by Amsterdam, Puerto Montt in Chile and Melbourne with 19 each, and Kathmandu in Nepal with 18. In the shorter term, the global annual average will be four fewer mild weather days by 2035, said the team. Most climate modeling forecasts entail dire warnings of a rise in extreme weather events such as hurricanes, heat waves, droughts and floods. The latest study is the first to look at something that affects vastly more people: mild weather, its authors said.

"Extreme weather is difficult to relate to because it may happen only once in your lifetime," said Princeton researcher Karin van der Wiel. Mild weather is described in the study as "pleasant", neither too hot, too cold, too humid or too rainy. Fewer balmy days could mean losses for tourism, sport participation and outdoor activities such as picnics, music festivals and weddings, said the team. — AFP

STATES ARGUE IN COURT FOR MORE SAY OVER ENDANGERED SPECIES

DENVER: A battle over how to save endangered wolves in the Southwest moves to a federal appeals court yesterday as judges hear arguments on whether states can block the federal government from reintroducing wildlife within their borders. The Interior Department is asking the Denver-based 10th Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn a preliminary injunction that bars the department from releasing more captive-bred Mexican gray wolves into the wild in New Mexico without that state's approval.

It's the latest skirmish in the federal government's long and troubled effort to restore the rare wolves to part of their original range under the Endangered Species Act. It comes as the future of the law is in question, with Congress and the White House in the control of Republicans who generally see it as an impediment to jobs and economic development. New Mexico has multiple complaints about the Mexican gray wolf program, and in 2015 it refused to issue a permit to the US Fish and Wildlife Service - part of the Interior Department - to release more of the predators in the state. New Mexico also announced it

might sue the agency.

Fish and Wildlife decided to release more wolves anyway, citing an urgent need to expand the wild population to prevent inbreeding. New Mexico officials went to court, and a federal judge in

New Mexico issued an order last year blocking further releases while the dispute is resolved. The Interior Department appealed to the 10th Circuit. Appeals court judges generally take weeks or months to issue a ruling after hearing oral arguments. Even if the court sides with the government, it's not clear whether president-elect Donald Trump's administration will continue to fight after he takes office.

New Mexico state attorneys contend the Endangered Species Act and federal rules require the Fish and Wildlife Service to cooperate with the state and not release more wolves without state permission. They also made a states' rights argument, saying states have the primary responsibility to manage wildlife. Eighteen other states filed a friend-of-the-court brief siding with New Mexico. Interior Department lawyers argue the law allows the department to go around



NEW MEXICO: In this undated file photo provided by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, a Mexican gray wolf leaves cover at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, Socorro County, New Mexico. — AP

the state, if necessary, to save a species. The preliminary injunction against more releases "threatens the survival in the wild of a protected species," they said in written arguments.

Failed attempts

A coalition of environmental groups, led by Defenders of Wildlife, intervened on the Interior Department's side. They argue that the state's legal interpretation

would wrongly give them veto power over measures to save a federally protected species. Reintroducing wolves is always contentious because they sometimes attack domestic livestock as well as game animals prized by hunters. Last year, the Interior Department's internal watchdog said the Fish and Wildlife Service had not fulfilled its obligation to remove Mexican gray wolves that preyed on pets and cattle.

The Mexican wolf program has had other problems, including multiple failed attempts to update the original 1982 recovery plan. Fish and Wildlife has agreed to produce a new plan this year to settle a lawsuit filed by conservation groups. New Mexico officials also complain that federal officials tripled the target number of wolves in the wild - from about 100 to 300 - without sufficient justification. Only about 100 Mexican gray wolves live in the wild. They nearly disappeared in the 1970s, and the federal government added them to the endangered species list in 1976. The US Fish and Wildlife Service began reintroducing them in New Mexico and Arizona starting in 1998. — AP

DRUGMAKERS IN DAVOS SHIFT FOCUS TO CHRONIC DISEASES OF POOR

DAVOS, Switzerland: Two decades after they were spurred into action to tackle AIDS in Africa, global drug makers said yesterday they would invest \$50 billion over three years to fight cancer and other non-communicable diseases in poor countries. Twenty-two companies, including Pfizer, Merck, Novartis, Roche, Sanofi and GlaxoSmithKline, will contribute funds and expertise to the project, which is backed by the World Bank.

The so-called Access Accelerated initiative was announced at the World Economic Forum in Davos and aims to improve both treatment and prevention. In the past, the focus of healthcare in poorer parts of the world has been on fighting infectious diseases, whether through vaccinations, drug programs or the roll-out of anti-malarial bed

nets. Today, however, the healthcare burden is shifting as deaths from these conditions decline and people in increasingly urbanized populations succumb to diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart and lung disorders fuelled by Western lifestyles.

Such non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are responsible for nearly 70 percent of all deaths worldwide and almost three quarters of them occur in low- and middle-income countries, according to the World Health Organization.

Severin Schwan, the chief executive of Roche, the world's largest maker of cancer drugs, said his company and others were already implementing preferential pricing for the developing world but cost was only one obstacle. — Reuters



DAVOS: Members of the new Hydrogen Council pose for a picture during the launch of the Hydrogen Council in Davos. — AFP

FIRMS PUSH HYDROGEN AS TOP GREEN ENERGY SOURCE

'CHALLENGE TO EXPAND ITS USE ONTO A MASS SCALE'

WITH DROUGHT LOOMING, SRI LANKA TRIES SOMETHING NEW

COLOMBO: With rainfall in many areas just a third of that last year and many water reservoirs far below normal levels, Sri Lankans have begun holding traditional ceremonies to invoke rain - some with the participation of President Maithripala Sirisena. But this time, national officials are also doing something new to prepare for what many fear could be the worst drought in decades: Developing plans, in advance, to deal with it.

Those include everything from allowing communities to take only drinking water from drying reservoirs to removing taxes on imported rice and looking for alternatives to hydropower to maintain the national electric grid. "The change came about because we were able to predict the onset of the drought well in advance and with detailed information," said Lalith Chandrapala, the head of Sri Lanka's Meteorological Department. The country has had clear signs since last October that drought was coming, officials say.

During 2016, Sri Lanka had only one period of exceptionally high rainfall, with some areas receiving over 300 mm of rain in three days, leading to flooding and landslides. Apart from that, rain was less than normal almost all year. "We have a rainfall deficit and it is likely to stay that way until the next monsoon" in June and July,

Chandrapala said. According to the Meteorological Department, in some districts rainfall has been 30 to 40 percent of normal levels. Some of these districts are also among the country's largest agriculture producers.

Less rice, less power

The lack of rainfall severely affected paddy rice production in the last growing season. According to the Disaster Management Center (DMC) only around 300,000 hectares out of a possible 800,000 were cultivated, largely because of a lack of irrigation water. Reservoirs that will provide water for the next growing season, which starts in March, need to be at least half filled by that time to support a normal harvest. But DMC officials and Chandrapala said the country's main reservoirs were currently less than a third full.

"It nothing like I have ever seen before," said Ranjith Punyawardena, an agro-climatologist at the Department of Agriculture. The lack of water is likely both to hurt agriculture and cut into supplies of vital hydropower. Already, as a result of drought, the country is getting 80 percent of its electricity from coal and oil and only 11 percent from hydropower. Normally, at this time of year, the country would get at least 40 percent of its electricity from hydropower, according to the electricity board. — Reuters

DAVOS, Switzerland: Over a dozen leading European and Asian firms have teamed up to promote the use of hydrogen as a clean fuel and cut the production of harmful gasses that lead to global warming. Convened on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, the first Hydrogen Council brought together 13 firms, among them top carmakers BMW, Daimler, Honda, Hyundai and Toyota as well as leading industrial gas companies Air Liquide and Linde. Others at the gathering late Tuesday included energy firms Alstom, Engie, Shell and Total as well as mining company AngloAmerican.

Scientists have long pursued the use of electric fuel cells for cars that use hydrogen-the lightest element with the atomic number 1 — as the byproduct of its combustion is water and not gases that cause climate change. Air Liquide's chief executive Benoit Potier described the council as "key leaders of the energy transport and industry sector joining forces to express a common vision of the key role hydrogen will play in the future to bring a solution to the ener-

gy transition." In particular, the firms will share data and research to make hydrogen technologies profitable, as well working on international standards to help speed their adoption. They will also try to convince governments to support the technology, another indispensable condition for its success. "At the early stage, unless we have strong government support, this transformation" into a decarbonizes society "is impossible".

Energy storage solution

Those participating in the Hydrogen Council insist the applications for hydrogen go beyond fuel cells for cars. One of the major challenges for renewable energy technologies such as solar and wind is storing the energy produced if it can't be used immediately. Besides building expensive mega-batteries, current options include pumping water up to reservoirs to produce hydro power when energy is needed. Fuel cell technology, used in reverse, could help resolve this problem. "If you take this solar electricity

you don't know what to do with, you electrolyze water, this makes hydrogen, which is a gas you can put in the natural gas network," Total's chief executive Patrick Pouyanne said. This not only makes use of the surplus electricity, but it also makes investment in solar and wind projects more profitable. "We've mastered the technology, but the challenge now is to expand its use onto a mass scale," said Pouyanne.

We can do it

Bringing down costs will play an important role. "If we manage to reduce costs all along the production chain, then hydrogen will become a solution for moving energy where it is needed," said Engie's chief Didier Holleaux. One area that still needs work is improving the efficiency of electrolyzers, which split water into hydrogen and oxygen, as well as reducing the cost of them through mass production. Bertrand Piccard, the Swiss pilot who last year flew around the world in an aircraft powered only by the sun, was enthusiastic about the technology. — AFP

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BACOLOD CHK-N-BBQ HOUSE CELEBRATES GRAND OPENING

Bacolod Chk-n-BBQ House was founded by an enterprising couple who started the business in 2004 after years of working in the food manufacturing and fast-food restaurant industry. The famous food chain had its origins in the Philippines' City of Smiles, Bacolod city back in the early 70s. It was an instant hit among the Negrenses (as people from the Negros province are called) and this spurred the iconic Bacolod Chicken Inasal of which it is popularly known now. The taste is a unique blend of spices punctuated by the sweet spicy aroma of the coconut vinegar where the meat has been tenderized after hours of marinating in it. Grilled to the right crispiness and juiciness over charcoal, the taste is as uniquely Filipino unlike any other typical chicken barbecue out there. Best eaten with bare hands and dipped in a combination of cane vinegar, soy sauce, lime fruit and chili peppers, chicken inasal is the perfect combination with garlic rice baste in annatto oil (chicken oil to many).

Bacolod Chk-n-BBQ House is a Filipinos themed, middle price range casual dining restaurant chain that seeks to become a Filipino restaurant institution known not only for its authentic tasting chicken inasal and traditional Filipino dishes but also for its penchant of provid-

ing great food experience giving enjoyable and lasting memories to customers. The original recipes which was passed on for two generations now is still the original recipe and cooking process that has remained true to its origins and taste. Aside from the popular chicken inasal, Bacolod Chk n BBQ House serves other popular Ilonggo dishes such as La Paz Batchoy, Pancit Molo, Kansi and Kadyos Baboy Langka. Other equally popular Filipino dishes are the pork and chicken sisig, Kare Kare, Sinigang na Bangus, Pinakbet and Gising gising to name a few.

With a strong foothold in the local market with branches in the Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao region, the brand has since expanded to the Middle East, with branches in UAE, Qatar, Muscat, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and now in Kuwait. The first outlet in Kuwait is located in Fahaheel, in al Haur complex, which is conveniently located within the heart of shopping area Fahaheel.

The Ambassador of Philippines Renato Pedro O Villa graced the occasion and cut the ribbon on Thursday 12th of January 2017, thereafter declaring the store open. While enjoying the food and distinct taste of the Bacolod style cuisine, Renato had all praise for the decor, the atmosphere and the set-up of the restaurant.



NESPRESSO ADDS NEW FLAVORED COFFEE TO PROFESSIONAL RANGE



KUWAIT: Nespresso is introducing two new coffees to enable its professional customers to cater to consumer demand for flavored coffee out of home. The two coffees — Espresso Caramel and Espresso Vanilla — will form a permanent line of flavored coffee, extending the professional range to a total of 13 varieties.

Research by Symrise in 2015 found that millennial coffee consumers now demand a variety of flavored coffee and that 56% are open to trying new unique flavors if they are offered by their favorite brands. Following the success of the coffees in the Nespresso Original Line range for the in-home market, Nespresso is making them available to professional customers across the hotel, restaurant, business and office sectors so they can help consumers enjoy their favorite aromas out of the home.

The Espresso Caramel and Espresso Vanilla are based on Espresso Forte and balanced with natural

aromas, boasting intense aromatic profiles. The coffees have an intensity of seven which instills a strong profile of flavor forming a delicious crema. Nespresso recommends the Espresso cup size to enjoy the coffee at its best.

"The hospitality industry is always seeking new ways to delight their customers with exceptional coffee experiences. With this in mind, we have developed two new flavored coffees, which can be enjoyed alone or combined with milk to create interesting recipes for today's coffee connoisseurs. We continuously innovate to provide only the most delectable Grands Crus, giving our restaurant and hotel customers the opportunity to create the perfect coffee moment each time," said Reto Bruegger, Head of B2B at Nestle Nespresso. The Espresso Caramel and Espresso Vanilla Caramel are now available to all professional Nespresso customers in Kuwait.



NESPRESSO UPBEAT ABOUT KUWAIT MARKET

By Faten Omar

Since 1996, Nespresso has provided business-to-business solutions, designed to meet the needs of some of the most discerning hosts in the world's foremost hotels and restaurants as well as those of business customers. Today, the business-to-business team at Nespresso provides a range of products and services to professional customers in more than 64 countries worldwide. The business solutions offered by Nespresso focus on various business channels, mainly offices, Horeca and travel, providing services and solutions to answer the specific needs of its customers in each sector.



Kuwait Times spoke with Manuel Sancho, Business Development Manager of Nespresso Middle East, Africa & Caribbean (MEAC), to learn more about their participation in the Horeca exhibition and the new flavors that were launched. Because of the high-demand from customers, "Nespresso decided to launch new espresso flavors, with the sweetness of espresso caramel and the stunningly silky flavors of espresso vanilla," Sancho said.

"Nespresso is participating for the fourth time in Horeca due to the success of the previous ones. In this exhibition, we can find new customers specialized in hospitality, restaurants and hotel business that are interested in the coffee market," he said, adding that the exhibition is also giving the company the opportunity to meet its customers in person. "The Kuwait market is a very interesting market for us. Most of our business is from hotels, and we are growing nicely. We are happy about our business in Kuwait," he said.

Sancho pointed out that the business-to-business sector is getting more important not only in Kuwait, but world-wide. "We compete in both the business-to-consumer and business-to-business segments, allowing consumers to enjoy our highest quality coffees at home and to recreate these perfect coffee moments wherever they may be," he told Kuwait Times. He affirmed that the hospitality industry is seeking new ways to make customers satisfied with exceptional coffee experiences.

The ongoing innovations by Nespresso in the business-to-business sector continue to set the standard for customer care and provide a level of value-added service unmatched in the industry. At the end of the interview, Sancho assured that he would like to listen to customer feedback about new suggested flavors.



— Photos by Joseph Shagra



CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL FITNESS A MAJOR CONCERN FOR PARENTS: FANTASY WORLD

With the rise of technological advancements, there has been a shift in trends. Kids now entertain themselves through smartphones and tabs by playing games and watching videos for countless hours. This is a major concern for parents as it involves no physical activity, which idles them as they spend a substantial amount of time on their device.

Before technology became very popular amongst all age groups, children used to go outside and play, discovering the environment around them as a means of entertainment. Outdoor play helps children develop their physical fitness, having a very healthy lifestyle, thus obesity and diabetes amongst kids was very uncommon. Additionally, children's physical fitness develops their confidence and self-esteem and helps develop their mental health. According to researcher's physical activity helps calm kids down thus they become more attentive and focused in the classroom.

Dr Ebaa Al-Ozairi, Chief Medical Officer, Consultant Diabetologist Endocrinologist and Clinical Nutritionist at Dasman Diabetes Institute, stated recently that: "Parents should take advantage of the weather these days to urge their children to opt for the games that require movement such as cycling, running, playing football and get involved in other creative outdoor activities. These activities have a positive impact on their health, especially since obesity in children is on the rise." Dr Ozairi stressed that obesity is considered

as the gateway to many diseases such as type 2 diabetes and other conditions". Hence advised that "parents should encourage their children to adopt a more physically-active lifestyle as it contributes to one's wellness." She further advised to get exposed to the direct sunlight to synthesize vitamin D, and to cut down fatty and junk food.

However, today's kids are not engaged in physical activity but instead sit and gaze for many hours on their smartphones and tabs; hence many health problems rise amongst the children. It becomes a challenge for parents today to encourage their children to exercise and stay fit. Fantasy World acknowledged this problem and offers a wide array of outdoor play toys and products that aid children's physical development and well-being as the brand believes that kids truly deserve the best. Fantasy World caters to every child's desire but also understands genuine parental

concerns. That is why it has provided many solutions that answer the needs of both parents and children alike.

Speaking on the outdoor products Harvey Dulku, Fantasy World's Retail Director said: "We understand that children's health is very important. As it improves their physical and emotional capabilities, and helps them to become more independent. Now is a great time to spend outdoors and enjoy the pleasant weather. We understand parents continuously strive to find ways to improve their kid's physical fitness, and for that reason we are always on the look for the latest outdoor products that encourage kids to play outdoors." Fantasy World is known for having the latest, best and trendiest toys in Kuwait and that it never compromises on the quality of the toys it offers. The stores are known to be the ultimate hub for outdoor play products that encourage kids to

explore the great outdoors."

In parallel, Burhan Abdul Malik Kazi, Fantasy World's Marketing Specialist said: "We have a wide range of high quality products brought from different parts of the world in our outdoors and sports section. We have the high quality Eastern Jungle Gym (exclusively available only at Fantasy World) value for money Plum Activity Gym sets. We have wide range of Trampolines and Inflatable bouncers that come in different attractive shapes and sizes for children to jump all day long, it's really amazing to find the amount of calories children burn while jumping, laughing and having fun in them. Fantasy World also offers traditional garden games and life sized toys that can be enjoyed in gardens, so your children will now be playing the same snakes and ladders or ludo but not in their app but physically in your backyard or garden. Kids health is not only a major concern for older kids but also for those in the early years of life which is why we at Fantasy World has a wide assortment of high quality outdoor products from renowned brands like 'Little Tikes' and 'Kiddieland' for the early years."

Customers are invited to visit any of Fantasy World's stores in Kuwait to explore and experience new toys available at Al-Rai, Bustan Mall, The Avenues and Souq Sharq. Voice any inquiries and concerns by visiting Fantasy World's social media platforms on Facebook (fantasyworldtoyskuwait), Instagram (fantasyworldtoys) and YouTube (fantasyworldkuwait).

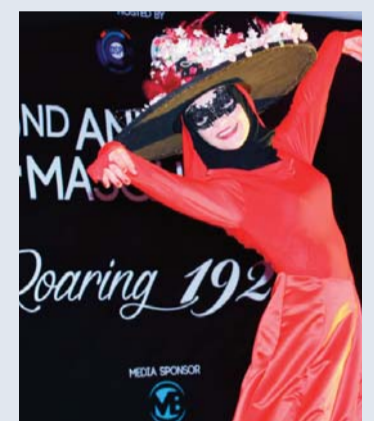


UPSHOT COMPANY ORGANIZES EXHIBITION

The first press conference to announce an exhibition to be organized by Upshot Company was held by Sheikh Duajj Al-Khalifa at Kuwait Plaza Hotel recently in the presence of media and showbiz personalities, including actor and director Jamil Al-Qahtani from Saudi Arabia, actress Baraa from Bahrain and actor Khadeeja Al-Shaye from Kuwait. A concert and a performance for youth skills were displayed during the conference, featuring participants from all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. The exhibition is set to take place in April 2017

at Kuwait International Fairground. It will include many activities and contests. It will also include raffle draws for valuable prizes.

The CEO of Upshot Company thanked Sheikh Duajj Al-Khalifa Al-Sabah for his support of the exhibition and presented him with a memento. Meanwhile Sheikh Duajj Al-Khalifa lauded the event and called on Kuwaitis to support the exhibition by attending and participating in its activities. The exhibition will include 129 booths, and competitions for cash prizes of up to \$7,000.



TAJIKISTAN INTRODUCES NEW ELECTRONIC VISA PROCESSING



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan said a new electronic system of visa processing and issuance for foreign nationals and stateless persons will be introduced at diplomatic missions and consular offices of the Republic of Tajikistan overseas and the Main Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan from Jan 1, 2017. The new system's objective is to simplify the Tajik visa processing procedures and it is another step in the introduction of electronic public services.

Foreign nationals and stateless persons need to submit the necessary documents to obtain a Tajik visa at the diplomatic missions and consulates of Tajikistan overseas and to extend their visas at the Main Consular Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan at www.visa.gov.tj. Depending on the results of pre-assessment, consular officers may invite applicants via email for necessary processing procedures.

It should be outlined that a Tajik visa to be issued in the country's airports upon arrival will also be processed via the website of www.visa.gov.tj. As a result of pre-assessment, the system sends visa confirmation to applicants, which needs to be presented before departure and in consular offices at airports as a supporting document to obtain a Tajik visa.

With a view to prevent any misunderstanding, the new electronic system for Tajik visa processing is not associated with the Tajik e-Visa System. The Tajik e-Visa is processed at www.evisa.tj. It is a single-entry visa issued for a period of 90 days, but its holder can stay in Tajikistan not more than 45 days starting from the arrival date. e-Visa is not subject to extension except in force-majeure situations.

BELGIAN BAND REGALES AUDIENCE

By Faten Omar

The Embassy of Belgium, in collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, organized a concert by popular Belgian band Ansatz Der Maschine, which performed on Tuesday at the Abdulhussain Abdulredha Theater in Salmiya.

During his opening speech, Andy Detaille, Ambassador of

Belgium to Kuwait, said the Belgium Embassy was glad to see so many people attend the concert after the hard work that went in organizing it. "This concert would not be complete without the hard work of Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters Ali Al-Youha and his team," he said.

The concert was successful, with a large enthusiastic crowd singing along. The performance combined electronics with acoustic violins, drums, guitars and voices. The band has

released four albums so far and performed in major clubs and festivals in Belgium, Holland, France, Germany and Eastern Europe, but this was their first show in the region.

Detaille said a variety of events will be held to mark Belgian Day, including an exhibition by Belgian artist Frederik Jassogne from Jan 23 to 25 at Hamra Mall and Belgian Culinary Days at Crowne Plaza Hotel with chef Jerone Vanandroye from Jan 25 to 27.



— Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



- 00:50 River Monsters
- 01:45 Going Ape
- 02:10 Going Ape
- 02:40 Wild Animal Rescue
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 River Monsters
- 06:49 The Pool Master
- 07:36 Night
- 08:00 America's Cutest Pets
- 08:25 Wild Animal Rescue
- 10:10 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 America's Cutest Pets
- 12:55 Going Ape
- 13:20 Going Ape
- 13:50 Wild Animal Rescue
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 River Monsters
- 18:25 The Lion Queen
- 19:20 The Vet Life
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 22:05 The Lion Queen
- 23:00 The Vet Life

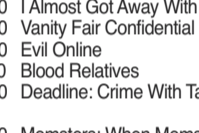
- 16:50 Fast N' Loud
- 17:40 Wheeler Dealers: Trading Up
- 18:30 How Do They Do It?
- 19:20 What On Earth?
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 The Liquidator
- 21:00 So You Think You'd Survive?
- 21:50 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 22:40 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud



- 00:00 The Universe
- 01:00 Patton 360
- 02:00 Mud Men
- 03:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 03:50 Ancient Aliens
- 04:40 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
- 05:30 The Universe
- 06:20 Patton 360
- 07:10 The Universe
- 08:00 Mud Men
- 09:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 10:00 Ancient Aliens
- 11:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 12:00 The Universe
- 13:00 Patton 360
- 14:00 Mud Men
- 15:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 16:00 Ancient Aliens
- 17:00 Ultimate Guide To The Presidents
- 18:00 The Universe
- 19:00 Patton 360
- 20:00 Mud Men
- 21:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 22:00 Ancient Aliens



- 00:40 Jonbenet: An American Murder Mystery
- 01:30 Southern Fried Homicide
- 02:20 Judgment Day: Prison Or Parole
- 03:10 Nowhere To Hide
- 04:00 Jonbenet: An American Murder Mystery
- 04:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 05:36 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 06:24 Evil Online
- 07:12 Blood Relatives
- 08:00 Monsters: When Moms Go Bad
- 08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 09:40 Vanity Fair Confidential
- 10:30 Evil Online
- 11:20 Blood Relatives
- 12:10 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 13:00 Monsters: When Moms Go Bad
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 On The Case With Paula Zahn



- 00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:35 The Hive
- 00:45 Loopidoo
- 01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:15 Calimero
- 01:30 Art Attack
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Loopidoo
- 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:35 Calimero
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 The Hive
- 03:40 Loopidoo
- 03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:10 Art Attack
- 04:35 Loopidoo
- 04:50 Calimero
- 05:05 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Zou



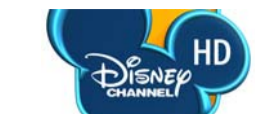
- 06:00 Danger Mouse
- 06:25 Gravity Falls
- 06:50 The 7D
- 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 07:15 Counterfeit Cat
- 07:40 Supa Strikas
- 08:10 K.C. Undercover
- 08:35 Star Wars Freemaker
- 08:50 Leapu And Pitbull
- 09:20 Counting Cars
- 09:25 Lab Rats
- 09:50 Danger Mouse
- 10:20 Supa Strikas
- 10:45 Supa Strikas



- 00:00 Food Network Star
- 01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 02:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:00 Chopped
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Barefoot Contessa
- 06:00 The Kitchen
- 07:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 09:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 10:00 The Kitchen



- 00:40 Mythbusters
- 01:30 How Do They Do It?
- 01:55 Food Factory
- 02:20 How Things Work
- 03:10 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
- 04:00 Prototype This
- 04:48 Mythbusters
- 05:36 How Things Work
- 06:24 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
- 07:12 How Do They Do It?
- 07:36 Food Factory
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:26 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
- 09:14 Mythbusters
- 10:02 Prototype This
- 10:50 How Do They Do It?
- 11:14 Food Factory
- 11:38 How Things Work
- 12:26 Mythbusters
- 13:14 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
- 14:02 How Do They Do It?
- 14:26 Food Factory
- 14:50 Prototype This
- 15:38 How Things Work
- 16:26 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
- 17:14 Mythbusters
- 18:02 Prototype This



- 00:10 Hank Zipzer
- 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 01:00 Violetta
- 01:45 The Hive
- 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 02:40 Hank Zipzer
- 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 03:30 Violetta
- 04:15 The Hive
- 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:10 Hank Zipzer
- 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 06:00 Violetta
- 06:45 The Hive
- 06:50 Mouk
- 07:00 Jessie
- 07:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 08:15 Frozen: Magic Of The Northern Lights
- 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 08:45 Bunk'd
- 09:10 Gravity Falls
- 09:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 10:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:05 Shake It Up
- 12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 13:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 13:15 Gravity Falls
- 13:40 Hank Zipzer
- 14:05 Star Darlings
- 14:10 Austin & Ally
- 15:00 Jessie
- 15:50 Rolling To The Ronks
- 16:15 Sunny Bunnies
- 16:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 16:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 17:10 Bunk'd
- 17:35 Frozen: Magic Of The Northern Lights
- 17:40 Girl Meets World
- 18:05 Bizaardvark
- 18:30 Liv And Maddie
- 18:55 Best Friends Whenever
- 19:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:25 The Next Step
- 19:50 Austin & Ally
- 20:15 Star Darlings
- 20:20 Shake It Up
- 20:45 Backstage
- 21:10 Liv And Maddie
- 21:35 Cracked
- 21:40 The Next Step
- 22:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 22:30 Mako Mermaids



- 00:00 My Haunted Vacation
- 01:00 Psychic Kids
- 02:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
- 03:00 My Crazy Ex
- 04:00 My Haunted Vacation
- 05:00 Psychic Kids
- 06:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover
- 07:00 Fritzi By Fred Dinenage
- 08:00 Evil Up Close
- 09:00 Gangs Of Britain...
- 10:00 Homicide Hunter
- 11:00 Campus Nightmares
- 14:00 Ms. Murder
- 15:00 Evil Up Close
- 16:00 The First 48
- 17:00 Homicide Hunter
- 18:00 Gangs Of Britain...
- 19:00 Gangs Of Britain...
- 20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
- 21:00 The First 48
- 22:00 Evil Up Close
- 23:00 Homicide Hunter



- 00:30 Nextworld
- 01:20 Wildest Africa
- 02:10 Finding Bigfoot
- 03:00 What Happened Next?
- 03:25 What Happened Next?
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 04:40 How It's Made
- 05:05 How It's Made
- 05:30 Storm Chasers
- 06:20 Mythbusters
- 07:00 Do You Know?
- 07:15 Doki
- 07:35 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 08:00 K9 Cops
- 08:45 How It's Made
- 09:05 How It's Made
- 09:30 Nextworld
- 10:20 Mythbusters
- 11:10 Storm Chasers
- 12:00 K9 Cops



WHIPLASH ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 22:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 22:25 Gummi Bears
- 22:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 23:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 00:35 The Hive
- 00:45 Loopidoo
- 01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:15 Calimero
- 01:30 Art Attack
- 01:50 Zou
- 02:05 Loopidoo
- 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:35 Calimero
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Art Attack
- 03:30 The Hive
- 03:40 Loopidoo
- 03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 04:10 Art Attack
- 04:35 Loopidoo
- 04:50 Calimero
- 05:05 Art Attack
- 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:45 Zou

- 07:15 Shipping Wars
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:05 Car Hunters
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 08:55 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Alone
- 11:50 Time Team
- 12:40 Swamp People
- 13:30 Ax Men
- 14:20 Mountain Men
- 15:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 16:00 Counting Cars
- 16:25 Counting Cars
- 16:50 Pawn Stars
- 17:15 Pawn Stars
- 17:40 Leapu And Pitbull
- 18:30 Counting Cars
- 18:55 Car Hunters
- 19:20 Ax Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 America's Greatest Prison Breaks
- 22:40 Hunting Hitler
- 23:30 American Pickers

- 21:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 22:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 00:20 Snake Paradise
- 01:10 Dangerous Encounters
- 02:00 Hyena Queen
- 02:50 I, Predator
- 03:45 How Human Are You?
- 04:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 05:35 Hyena Queen
- 06:30 I, Predator
- 07:25 How Human Are You?
- 08:20 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 09:15 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 10:10 Cian Of The Meerkat
- 11:05 World's Weirdest (2015)
- 12:00 Sharks In The City
- 12:55 The Lakeshore Killers
- 13:50 Killer Shots
- 14:45 Ultimate Animals
- 15:40 Sea Of Hope
- 16:35 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 17:30 Rescue Ink
- 18:25 World's Weirdest (2015)
- 19:20 Ultimate Animals
- 20:10 Sea Of Hope
- 21:00 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 21:50 Rescue Ink
- 22:40 World's Weirdest (2015)
- 23:30 Sharks In The City



- 00:10 The Chase
- 01:00 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Coronation Street
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:30 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 03:25 Jericho
- 04:15 Shetland
- 05:15 Agatha Christie's Partners In Crime
- 06:10 Don't Tell The Bride
- 07:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 08:00 Jericho
- 09:00 Shetland
- 10:00 Agatha Christie's Partners In Crime
- 10:55 Don't Tell The Bride
- 11:55 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 12:45 Emmerdale
- 13:15 Coronation Street
- 14:10 Don't Tell The Bride
- 15:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 16:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 16:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 17:50 Agatha Christie's Partners In Crime
- 18:45 Emmerdale
- 19:15 Coronation Street
- 20:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 21:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Coronation Street



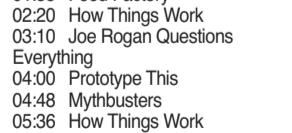
- 00:10 My Restaurant In India
- 01:00 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 01:25 A Is For Apple
- 01:50 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 02:15 Food School
- 02:40 What's For Sale?
- 03:05 What's For Sale?
- 03:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 04:20 My Restaurant In India
- 04:45 Grandma's Boy
- 05:35 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 06:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 06:50 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 07:15 A Is For Apple
- 07:40 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 08:05 Food School
- 08:30 What's For Sale?
- 09:20 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 10:10 My Restaurant In India
- 10:35 Grandma's Boy
- 11:00 Miguel's Feasts
- 11:25 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 11:50 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 12:40 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 13:05 A Is For Apple
- 13:35 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 14:00 Food School
- 14:30 What's For Sale?
- 15:25 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 16:20 My Restaurant In India
- 16:45 Grandma's Boy
- 17:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 18:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 19:05 What's For Sale?
- 19:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 20:25 My Restaurant In India
- 20:50 Grandma's Boy
- 21:15 Grandma's Boy



ALIEN OUTPOST ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 12:50 Ultimate Survival
- 13:40 How It's Made
- 14:05 How It's Made
- 14:30 Storm Chasers
- 15:15 Mythbusters
- 16:00 Doki
- 16:30 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 16:45 Do You Know?
- 17:00 Space Voyages
- 17:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 18:40 Nextworld
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Space Voyages
- 22:00 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 22:50 What Happened Next?
- 23:15 What Happened Next?
- 23:40 Ultimate Survival

- 11:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:00 Siba's Table
- 13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:00 Chopped
- 15:00 The Kitchen
- 16:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 17:00 Chopped
- 18:00 Iron Chef America
- 19:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 20:00 Private Chef
- 21:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 22:00 Iron Chef America



- 00:20 Wheeler Dealers: Trading Up
- 01:10 Blowing Up History
- 02:00 Mega Shippers
- 02:50 Impossible Engineering
- 03:40 Fast N' Loud
- 04:30 The Liquidator
- 05:00 How Do They Do It?
- 05:30 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 Deadliest Catch
- 06:50 Wheeler Dealers: Trading Up
- 07:40 Fast N' Loud
- 08:30 What On Earth?
- 09:20 The Liquidator
- 09:45 How Do They Do It?
- 10:10 How Do They Do It?
- 10:35 Blowing Up History
- 11:25 Mega Shippers
- 12:15 Impossible Engineering
- 13:05 How Do They Do It?
- 13:30 The Liquidator
- 13:55 The Liquidator
- 14:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 15:10 What On Earth?
- 16:00 Deadliest Catch

- 06:00 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 06:45 Loopidoo
- 07:00 Zou
- 07:15 Calimero
- 07:30 Loopidoo
- 07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 08:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 08:05 PJ Masks
- 08:15 Goldie & Bear
- 08:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 08:45 Miles From Tomorrow
- 08:55 The Lion Guard
- 09:20 Doc McStuffins
- 09:35 Goldie & Bear
- 09:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 10:00 PJ Masks
- 10:15 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 10:35 Sofia The First
- 11:00 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Doc McStuffins
- 11:55 Doc McStuffins
- 12:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 12:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 13:15 Gummi Bears
- 13:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 15:30 Little Mermaid
- 15:55 Unbungalivable
- 16:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 16:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 16:55 The Lion Guard
- 17:20 Goldie & Bear
- 17:50 PJ Masks
- 18:15 Sofia The First
- 18:40 Doc McStuffins
- 19:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 19:30 Little Mermaid
- 20:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 20:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 21:00 Unbungalivable
- 21:05 Goldie & Bear
- 21:35 Miles From Tomorrow



- 00:20 Time Team
- 01:10 Counting Cars
- 01:35 Car Hunters
- 02:00 Forged In Fire
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 06:25 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 06:50 Shipping Wars

- 04:15 Desperate Hours
- 04:45 Chasing UFOs
- 05:40 Strippers: Cars For Cash
- 06:35 Beyond Magic With DMC
- 07:30 Megastructures
- 08:25 Mega Factories
- 09:20 Chasing UFOs
- 10:15 The War Generals
- 11:10 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
- 12:05 Locked Up Abroad
- 13:00 Mega Factories
- 14:00 Megastructures
- 15:00 Beyond Magic With DMC
- 16:00 The War Generals
- 17:00 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
- 18:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 19:00 Taboo USA
- 20:00 The War Generals
- 20:50 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
- 21:40 Locked Up Abroad



- 00:45 Ouija
- 02:15 Alien Outpost
- 04:00 Bermuda Tentacles
- 06:00 Jurassic World
- 08:15 Seventh Son
- 10:00 Legendary Tomb Of The Dragon
- 11:45 Panic Room
- 13:45 Jurassic World
- 16:00 Blunt Force Trauma
- 17:45 Seventh Son
- 19:30 Avengers: Age Of Ultron
- 22:00 Swordfish
- 23:45 The Watermen



- 00:00 Bates Motel
- 01:00 How To Get Away With Murder
- 02:00 How To Get Away With Murder
- 03:00 Mistresses
- 04:00 Royal Pains
- 05:00 Good Morning America - Weekend
- 06:00 Prison Break
- 07:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 08:00 Unforgettable
- 09:00 Heartbeat
- 10:00 Prison Break
- 11:00 Unforgettable
- 12:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 13:00 The Fosters
- 14:00 Heartbeat
- 15:00 Live Good Morning America
- 17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 18:00 This Is Us
- 19:00 The Fosters
- 20:00 Criminal Minds
- 21:00 Homeland
- 22:00 Tyrant
- 23:00 Tyrant



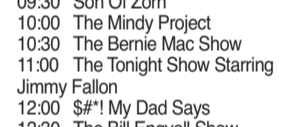
- 00:00 Please Give
- 02:00 Hot Rod
- 04:00 The Proposal
- 06:00 Shanghai Noon
- 08:00 Overboard
- 10:00 The Proposal
- 12:00 Hot Rod
- 14:00 The Butcher's Wife
- 16:00 Overboard
- 18:00 Just Married
- 20:00 Playing It Cool
- 22:00 Someone Marry Barry



- 00:30 Happy Endings
- 01:00 Happy Endings
- 01:30 Bordertown
- 02:00 Bordertown
- 02:30 The Big C
- 03:00 New Girl
- 03:30 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
- 04:00 The Bill Engvall Show
- 04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 05:30 Trophy Wife
- 06:00 \$#! My Dad Says
- 06:30 The Bernie Mac Show
- 07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 08:00 The Bill Engvall Show
- 08:30 Trophy Wife
- 09:00 New Girl
- 09:30 Son Of Zorn
- 10:00 The Mindy Project
- 10:30 The Bernie Mac Show
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
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- 19:00 Son Of Zorn
- 19:30 The Mindy Project
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Happy Endings



- 01:30 Tilti
- 04:00 Mystic River
- 06:15 Mood Indigo
- 08:30 Ordinary People
- 10:45 Testament Of Youth
- 13:00 Eight Men Out
- 15:00 Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
- 17:00 Ordinary People
- 19:15 Gridiron Gang
- 21:30 Frankie And Johnny
- 23:30 Carlos



- 00:30 Happy Endings
- 01:00 Happy Endings
- 01:30 Bordertown
- 02:00 Bordertown
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- 19:30 The Mindy Project
- 20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 21:00 Happy Endings

CLASSIFIEDS



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 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (19/01/2017 TO 25/01/2017)

SHARQIA-1	
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:30 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	2:30 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	4:30 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	6:30 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	8:30 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	10:30 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:30 AM

SHARQIA-2	
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	1:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	3:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	5:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	7:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	9:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	11:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	1:00 AM

SHARQIA-3	
BALLERINA	12:00 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	2:00 PM
BALLERINA	5:15 PM
THE GREAT WALL	7:15 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	9:30 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	12:15 AM

MUHALAB-1	
DANGAL -Hindi	11:45 AM
BALLERINA	3:00 PM
BALLERINA	5:00 PM
BALLERINA	2:00 PM
KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	4:00 PM
KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	7:00 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	9:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	1:00 AM

MUHALAB-2	
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	2:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	4:00 PM
BALLERINA	4:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	6:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	8:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	10:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:05 AM

MUHALAB-3	
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	2:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	4:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	6:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	8:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	10:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:15 AM

FANAR-1	
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	11:30 AM

BALLERINA	
BALLERINA	1:30 PM
BALLERINA	3:30 PM
BALLERINA	5:30 PM
A MONSTER CALLS	7:30 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	9:45 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	12:30 AM

FANAR-2	
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:45 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	2:45 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	4:45 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	6:45 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	8:45 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	10:45 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:45 AM

FANAR-3	
DANGAL -Hindi	12:30 PM
THE GREAT WALL	4:00 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	6:15 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	9:30 PM
THE GREAT WALL	12:45 AM

FANAR-4	
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	2:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	4:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	6:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	8:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	10:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:15 AM

MARINA-1	
THE GREAT WALL	11:45 AM
BALLERINA	2:30 PM
MOANA	4:45 PM
THE GREAT WALL	7:00 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	9:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:05 AM

MARINA-2	
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	2:00 PM
BALLERINA	4:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	6:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	8:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	10:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:05 AM

MARINA-3	
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	2:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	4:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	6:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	8:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	10:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:45 AM

AVENUES-1	
SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA	11:30 AM
THE GREAT WALL	1:30 PM
SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA	1:30 PM
A MONSTER CALLS	3:45 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	6:00 PM
A MONSTER CALLS	8:45 PM
THE GREAT WALL	11:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	1:15 AM

AVENUES-2	
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX	12:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX	2:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX	4:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX	6:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX	8:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX	10:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX	12:15 AM

AVENUES-3	
PATRIOTS DAY	1:00 PM
THE GREAT WALL	1:30 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	4:00 PM
KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	4:00 PM
KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	6:45 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	9:45 PM
PATRIOTS DAY	12:30 AM

360°-1	
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	2:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	4:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	6:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	8:00 PM
NO FRI	
Special Show "xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE" FRI	8:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	10:00 PM
AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:05 AM

360°-2	
DANGAL -Hindi	1:45 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	5:00 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	8:15 PM
DANGAL -Hindi	11:30 PM

360°-3	
THE BYE BYE MAN	11:45 AM
SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA	2:00 PM
SING	4:15 PM
THE BYE BYE MAN	6:30 PM
THE BYE BYE MAN	8:45 PM
THE BYE BYE MAN	11:00 PM
THE BYE BYE MAN	1:15 AM

REQUIRED

New coffee shop opening soon. Looking for talented baristas to join immediately.

If interested please send your resume to: titaninternational.gtc@gmail.com

CHANGE OF NAME

M.A. Nijam S/o Abdul Alam holder of Indian Passport No. G1276440, Civil ID No. 278041804378 has changed my name to Nijam Mohamed Meeran, hereinafter in all my dealings and documents I will be known by name of Nijam Mohamed Meeran. (C5258) 19-1-2017

F2525309, Civil ID No 272020116835, has changed my name to Mohammad Aslam hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5257) 18-1-2017

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation for Filipino Bachelor ONLY near Big Jamiya Farwaniya. Available already, Contact 66826412 or 97512782 19-1-2017

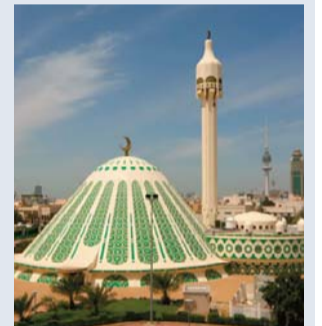
I, Mohammad Salim S/o Azizul Haque, Passport No

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is **1889988**

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	05:20
Shorook	06:43
Duhr:	11:59
Asr:	14:55
Maghrib:	17:15
Isha:	18:36



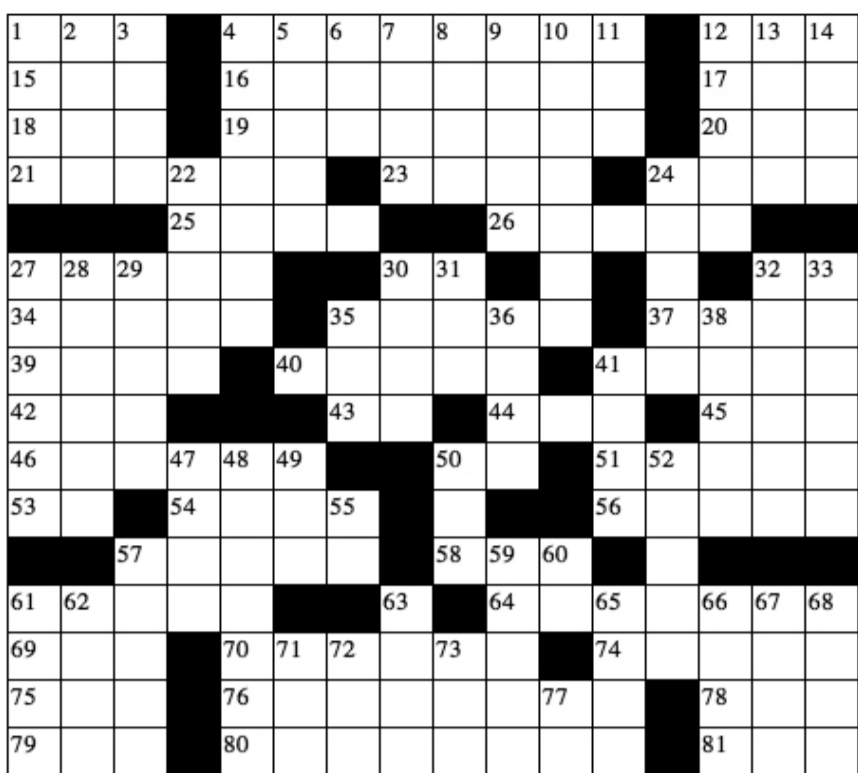
Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Thursday 19/1/2017				Departure Flights on Thursday 19/1/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
KAC	788	Jeddah	13:45	KAC	155	Istanbul	13:50
FEG	931	Alexandria	13:55	MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55	FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	AXB	394	Kozhikode	14:10
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	UAE	872	Dubai	14:15
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	KAC	561	Amman	14:20
KAC	692	Muscat	14:30	KAC	521	Al Najaf	14:45
KAC	414	Bangkok	14:35	KNE	382	Taif	14:50
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	BON	102	Sarajevo	14:55
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45	FEG	932	Alexandria	14:55
KAC	672	Dubai	14:50	KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55	FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	KAC	785	Jeddah	15:15
OMA	645	Muscat	15:35	PAL	669	Manila	15:20
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45	GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50	QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55	JZR	188	Dubai	15:40
SAW	705	Damascus	16:00	SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KNE	531	Jeddah	16:05	KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10	KAC	283	Dhaka	16:15
JZR	779	Jeddah	16:10	ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10	KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
FDB	051	Dubai	16:25	ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35	OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
RJA	640	Amman	16:55	SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
JZR	787	Riyadh	17:00	KNE	532	Jeddah	16:55
KAC	118	New York	17:00	KAC	675	Dubai	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15	JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30	JZR	240	Amman	17:15
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45	FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
NIA	251	Alexandria	17:55	KAC	615	Bahrain	17:35
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00	QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
FDB	063	Dubai	18:10	KAC	343	Chennai	17:40
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20	UAE	858	Cairo	17:45
KAC	522	Al Najaf	18:25	RJA	641	Amman	17:55
MSR	620	Cairo	18:30	KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
QTR	1080	Doha	18:50	SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25	KAC	353	BLR	18:15
KAC	502	Beirut	19:30	GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30	JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
GFA	674	Dubai	19:45	NIA	252	Alexandria	18:55
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50	FDB	064	Dubai	19:05
KAC	166	Rome	19:55	JZR	124	Bahrain	19:15
KAC	168	Paris	19:55	UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
KNE	381	Taif	19:55	MSR	621	Cairo	19:30
KAC	562	Amman	20:00	QTR	1081	Doha	19:50
MSR	618	Alexandria	20:05	ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
OMA	647	Muscat	20:10	GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
JZR	189	Dubai	20:15	KAC	383	Delhi	20:30
QTR	1088	Doha	20:35	FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45	KAC	361	Colombo	20:35
FDB	5053	Dubai	20:50	KAC	775	Riyadh	20:45
KAC	616	Bahrain	20:50	KNE	232	Riyadh	20:55
JAI	572	Mumbai	20:55	MSR	619	Alexandria	21:05
KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15	OMA	648	Muscat	21:10
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20	KAC	619	Doha	21:20
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20	QTR	1089	Doha	21:35
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25	DLH	634	Doha	21:35
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40	DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45	FDB	5054	Dubai	21:50
KAC	676	Dubai	21:45	JAI	571	Mumbai	21:55
KAC	174	Munich	22:00	KAC	205	Islamabad	22:00
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00	KAC	351	Kochi	22:00
KLM	417	Amsterdam	22:05	KAC	783	Jeddah	22:10
JZR	125	Bahrain	22:05	ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
NIA	151	Cairo	22:10	MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15	ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
AIC	981	Chennai/Ahmedabad	22:25	GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
JZR	241	Amman	22:45	KAC	301	Mumbai	22:45
JZR	185	Dubai	23:15	KAC	1543	Cairo	22:45
KAC	156	Istanbul	23:25	KAC	381	Delhi	22:45
FDB	071	Dubai	23:45	UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:50	KLM	417	Dammam/Amsterdam	23:05
				ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
				NIA	152	Cairo	23:10

CROSSWORD 1495



ACROSS

- The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
- A sheath for a sword or dagger or bayonet.
- Consisting of or made of wood of the oak tree.
- Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
- Genus of slender often tree-like spiny cacti with solitary showy nocturnal white or pink flowers.
- A user interface in which you type commands instead of choosing them from a menu or selecting an icon.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- An insertion into a calendar.
- A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- A river in western Europe that rises in northern France and flows generally east into Belgium where it joins the Neuse at Namur.
- Having little physical or spiritual strength.
- A slender double-reed instrument.
- Mild form of diabetes mellitus that develops gradually in adults.
- Wild ox of the Malay Archipelago.
- Afflicted with or marked by anxious uneasiness or trouble or grief.
- A percussion instrument consisting of a metal plate that is struck with a soft-headed drumstick.
- A girl or young woman who is unmarried.
- A sheet or band of fibrous connective tissue separating or binding together muscles and organs etc.
- A hospital unit staffed and equipped to provide intensive care.
- A Mid-Atlantic state.
- The 22nd letter of the Greek alphabet.
- A rapid bustling commotion.
- Fig tree of India noted for great size and longevity.
- Essential oil or perfume obtained from flowers.
- A public promotion of some product or service.
- Type genus of the Anatidae.
- A river that rises in central Germany and flows north to join the Elbe River.
- Being one hundred more than two hundred.
- Obvious and dull.
- The type of environment in which an organism or group normally lives or occurs.
- American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- An ascogonium having the spore-bearing layer of cells (the hymenium) on a broad disklike receptacle.
- Jordan's port.
- The smallest multiple that is exactly divisible by every member of a set of numbers.
- A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
- A logarithmic unit of sound intensity equal to 10 decibels.
- A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
- Low stinging nettle of Central and South America having velvety brownish-green toothed leaves and clusters of small green flowers.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.

DOWN

- By bad luck.
- Kamarupan languages spoken in north-eastern India and western Burma.
- A fraudulent business scheme.
- An ice containing milk.
- Engraving or carving in low relief on a stone (as in a brooch or ring).
- Someone who engages in arbitrage (who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential).
- The part of the face above the eyes.
- A digestive juice secreted by the liver and stored in the gallbladder.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Asia or the peoples of Asia or their languages or culture.
- In a dangerously risky manner.
- A barrier constructed to contain the flow of water or to keep out the sea.
- English scholastic philosopher and assumed author of Occam's Razor (1285-1349).
- (botany) Of or relating to the axil.
- Ulcerated chilblain on the heel.
- A percussion instrument consisting of a pair of hollow pieces of wood or bone (usually held between the thumb and fingers) that are made to click together (as by Spanish dancers) in rhythm with the dance.
- A river in northern Italy that flows south-east into the Adriatic Sea.
- Spaced apart.
- An important question that is in dispute and must be settled.
- A cord that is drawn through eyelets or around hooks in order to draw together two edges (as of a shoe or garment).
- The law enforcement agency in the Justice Department.
- Of or at or relating to an anode.
- Refuse to acknowledge.
- Someone who is morally reprehensible.
- Related to or located at the back.
- A member of the Siouan people formerly living in the Missouri river valley in NE Nebraska.
- Portuguese explorer who in 1488 was the first European to get round the Cape of Good Hope (thus establishing a sea route from the Atlantic to Asia) (1450-1500).
- Large burrowing rodent of South and Central America.
- Release from a clasp.
- The syllable naming the sixth (submediant) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- A landlocked mountainous republic in southeast central Asia north of Afghanistan.
- Conforming to truth.
- (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
- An African river that flows northwest into Lake Chad.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
- (Greek mythology) Daughter of Zeus and Demeter.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- A sock with a separation for the big toe.
- In bed.
- The basic unit of money in Western Samoa.
- A health resort near a spring or at the seaside.
- Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc.
- The 13th letter of the Hebrew alphabet.
- Being nine more than ninety.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

The work that you do or the job that you perform may be more meaningful to you at this time. You feel a love of law and order and have a sense of appreciation for responsibility and duty. Things that may have once been viewed as problems or obstacles are merely used for the valuable lessons that they represent. Your viewpoint may be maturing in many ways. Certainly those around you could notice a remarkable change in your attitude about many things. The good life, and all that is fine and luxurious, may be what you value for now. You could enjoy making your own way and finding solutions to the many challenges you may encounter. Things just seem to be working together for your benefit. The competition of late is no longer a problem; relax.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

This is a good time to consolidate and organize your affairs or rearrange your living situation. You could be seen by others as just the person to be put in charge of some project requiring a conservative mind. You are able to see through to the truth of most situations and can ignore some difficulties that would upset or disturb most. You happily go about your own business and complete whatever you set out to accomplish. Marriage and other close relationships keep you active and expressive. You look forward to time with your loved ones and can make all sorts of fun plans. You easily promote harmony in the interaction between people. You may be able to enjoy and value your own life situation today. Good luck follows you all day long.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Clear decisions affecting others could be made in the workplace now. Ideas and thoughts will take on a clear understanding. You may be very articulate in communicating. Think about it; you could run your own radio show about the subject matter that is your expertise. This may mean a radio show helping people with computers, home care, health care, job issues, finance, budgeting, etc. Community issues are in the air and a round table discussion can become heated but fun. Perhaps the kids in the neighborhood want a community park and exercise or play equipment. This may take several meetings before everyone can agree or money issues can be tackled. This evening is good for a romantic book or movie.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Make sure your expectations are realistic. Any area of improvement or change can take place now through some form of discipline. Discipline for you may mean the opportunity to stay focused with few interruptions-your thoughts or someone else's. This may prove to be a good mind-training session, particularly if you can keep your own mind focused. As for others, you cannot control their interruptions except to tell them you are heavily into your work and you will get back to them soon. This afternoon is a good time to have your car checked with, perhaps, an oil change. A happy home life and a successful career are the goals you hold dear. Fun times are ahead this evening with friends-big plans are in the makings for a big get-together soon.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today is one of your best days this month. You may find yourself in a remembering type of mood-thinking about old relationships, past vacations, past reunions, etc. You may be easily persuaded to skip school, work or some other obligation. If you can insert some creative license into your daily routine, you will find that your tasks become more exciting. An outside event could shed light on some issues now-in a good way. A boost of encouragement will come your way this evening and harmony will prevail. Family and home are in a flux for the positive. New habits, new friends and a new you will find you looking forward to the goals of the future. This could mean some great ideas on profession or travel or yearned for education.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You are a hero to many people as you go gently through your day. You are learning to ease up on any negative feelings, realizing that you are part of the whole. Most of all, you are learning to accept the differences in people, along with the desire to guide others through example-which is truly, the only way. There is a feeling today of having less fear and more confidence in your own choices. This afternoon you busy yourself with new projects and time to achieve more than you had imagined you could. A satisfaction at the end of your day reflects in the way you interact with your family and friends. With a fresh new year ahead you may decide to order a horoscope reading that will help you understand the flow of energies and the possibilities of choices.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Business is underway as usual today but foresight is important and you may want to be more attentive to the possibilities of change. Pure technological knowledge is no longer appreciated as it once was. Learning about new things and not being afraid to take on new challenges will be the open door for new opportunities in the work field. Opportunities prevail and you may find yourself wanting and able to do almost anything. Today and tomorrow, you may be successful in getting a loan, getting an extension on a payment or having travel opportunities, and then enjoying quiet evenings at home. The universe points to your taking the lead in whatever you decide to do. Set clear priorities to help eliminate the clutter in your mind and on your desk.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You will earn a good living and you will slowly build up a sound base for financial security as you go along your steady pace. Review your options for investments and get guidance on which way to go with this endeavor. Your talents and capabilities are many. Did you know it only you can deprive yourself of anything. Do not fight this understanding, for it is truly the beginning of many bright sunny days. You are inventive, original and high tech. Power becomes a compelling idea, perhaps even an aphrodisiac-and you have a stronger than usual supply of it now. Use it, do not abuse it-or you might find that it is a two-edged sword! It is easy for you to attract love and money this evening. You could inherit something of great value.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

If you need to seek professional advice, today and the next day are excellent times to seek help. Business seems to be affected by absolutely nothing for the next few days. This is a time for ideas and thinking. After you put some final changes on a business plan, you may see an increase in business, but generally, the flow of money stays about the same. At least the tendency is not a downward spiral! Be careful of your own expenses-something you thought you wanted today may hold no interest for you tomorrow. Any ongoing problem with a member of the family or a loved one will be solved today. A good book or movie is appreciated this evening. A busy day in the work world calls for a little fantasy to help you relax later this evening.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You treat a difficult person kindly and you may be surprised at the positive response from this person in the future. This is not a person that is always rude, just a person that may not be thoughtful. You know where you stand with this person and always get an honest answer. Before much time passes, you may have a new friend. Lean and mean is a structured environment you may be looking forward to when it comes to business, yours or that of the business for which you work. Kind is good but honest is better. Now it is time to introduce a gentle kindness along with an organized work environment. This is the beginning of new goals for you in this workplace, perhaps your own secret goals for success.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

You should find this a time of good fortune. Many opportunities are available for you to create a little good fortune. It is easy to see which path is the one to take. Opportunities proliferate and you may find yourself ready to expand your knowledge or help others to do the same. Taking on added risks can bring big rewards. The close personal ties that you have with others could be very important to you at this time, particularly marriage and other partnerships. These are all associations that could contribute to your success and happiness and could teach you some very significant lessons in the process. Nostalgia and domesticity will be strong now and could help you in some new understandings about how much you need security and a feeling of attachment.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You will need to act quickly and decisively to capture all the good opportunities that flow your way today. Growth, happiness and prosperity are yours. You will soon find that money will no longer be the sole yardstick you use with which to measure your success. Your sense of responsibility is so well developed that you end up managing most situations that you become involved with now. You are disciplined, work hard and are good at getting others to work with and for you. Essentials are what count. Others may think you are more educated than you are, for you tend to assume an authoritarian stance. You may even enjoy the thought of having authority and probably treat authority, the elderly and your teachers with great respect.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Fish 2

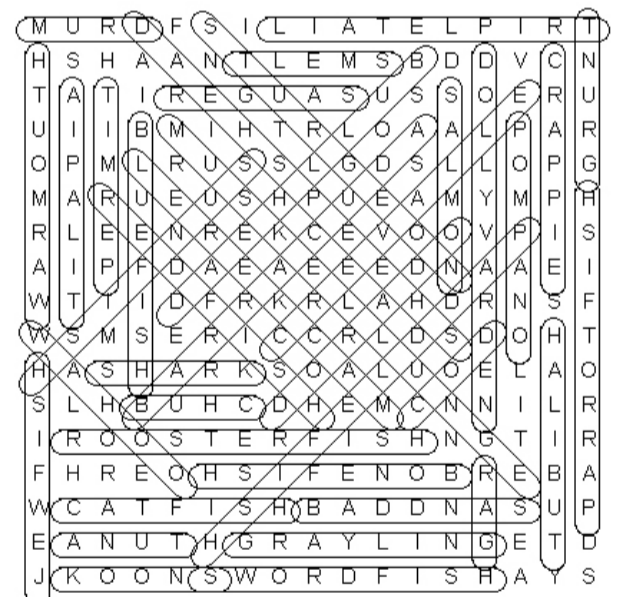
Find and circle all of the fish that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message - a Benjamin Franklin quotation.



- | | | | |
|--------------|-----------|-------------|------------|
| AMBERJACK | CROAKER | PICKEREL | SOLE |
| BASS | DOLPHIN | PIKE | SPEARFISH |
| BONEFISH | FLOUNDER | POLLOCK | STEELHEAD |
| BULLHEAD | GOLDFISH | PORGY | TARPON |
| CATFISH | GROUPER | PUMPKINSEED | TROUT |
| CHUB | HADDOCK | ROCKFISH | TUNNY |
| COD | HOUNDFISH | SAILFISH | WALLEYE |
| CRAPPIE | LINGCOD | SHAD | WEAKFISH |
| CREVALLE | MARLIN | SHEEFISH | WHITEFISH |
| DOLLY VARDEN | PERCH | SNAPPER | YELLOWTAIL |
| COBIA | | | |

Yesterday's Solution

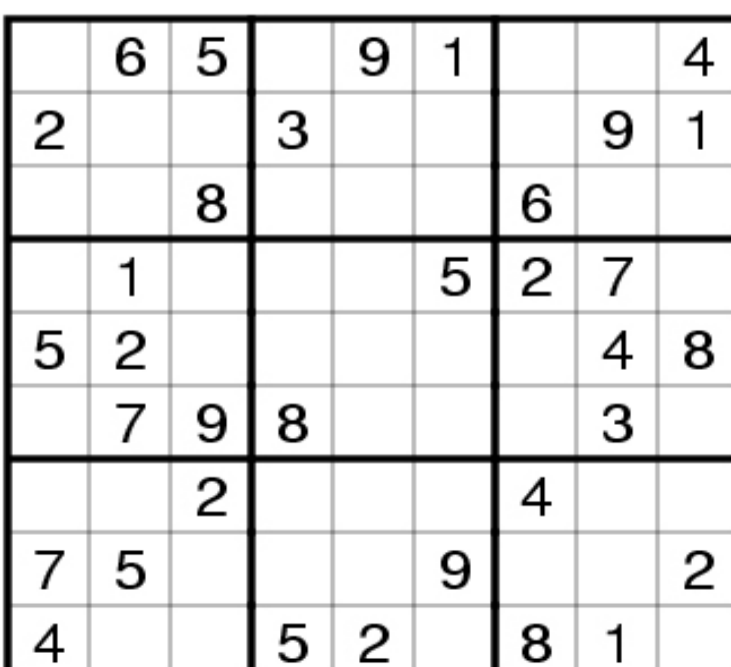
Fish 1



- | | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| BARRACUDA | DORADO | PARROTFISH | SMELT |
| BLUEFISH | DRUM | PERMIT | SNOOK |
| BONEFISH | GAR | POMPANO | STURGEON |
| BULLHEAD | GRAYLING | REDFISH | SUNFISH |
| CATFISH | GRUNT | ROOSTERFISH | SWORDFISH |
| CHUB | HALIBUT | SALMON | TILAPIA |
| COD | JEWFISH | SAND DAB | TRIPLETAIL |
| CRAPPIE | MACKEREL | SAUGER | TUNA |
| CREVALLE | MUSKELLUNGE | SHARK | WAHOO |
| DOLLY VARDEN | PADDLEFISH | SHEEPSHEAD | WARMOUTH |

The hidden sentence is: FISH AND VISITORS SMELL IN THREE DAYS

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khalidiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaee Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam 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 Ikhlas Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



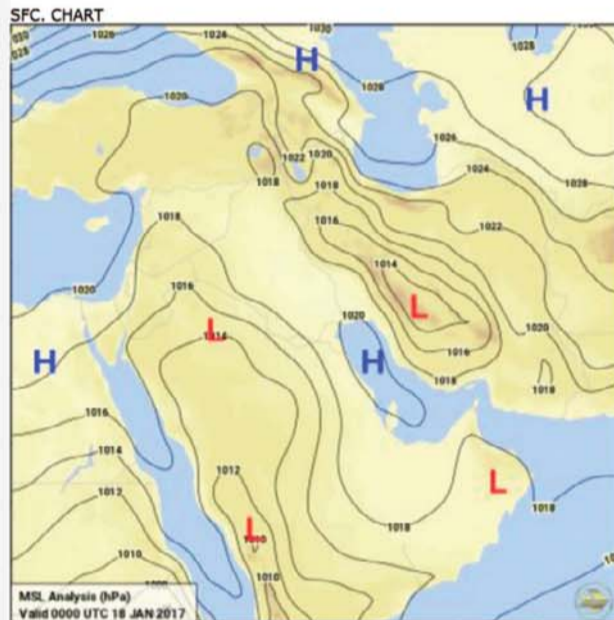
Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw

Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 18/01/2017-12:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 18 °C

By Day : Partly cloudy with light variable wind changing to light to moderate north easterly wind, with speed of 06 - 26 km/h
By Night : Partly cloudy with light to moderate south easterly to light variable wind, with speed of 08 - 26 km/h with a chance for fog forming at night



Four-Day Forecast

	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Expected Weather	partly cloudy	sunny	partly cloudy + scattered rain	partly cloudy
Min Temp °C	10	11	10	10
Max Temp °C	20	21	19	20
Wind Direction	north easterly to light variable	north westerly	north westerly to light variable	variable wind changing to north westerly later on
Wind Speed km/h	06 - 26	10 - 30	06 - 26	12 - 35

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	11	19
KUWAIT AIRPORT	06	18
ABDALY	07	19
BUBYAN	08	19
JAHRA	09	19
FAILAKA ISLAND	09	19
SALMIYAH	12	18
AHMADI	12	18
JAL ALIYAH	07	19
QAROH ISLAND	14	17
UMM AL-MARADEM	14	17
NUWAISIB	08	19
WAFRA	07	20
MANAGISH	07	19
SALMY	05	17
MUTRIBA	06	20

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	19
Min Temp (°C)	07
Max Rel Hum (%)	76
Min Rel Hum (%)	35
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	43 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

Sunrise	06:43
Sunset	17:14

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:20
Sunrise	06:43
Zuhr	11:58
Asr	14:54
Sunset	17:14
Isha	18:35

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antigua	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists Dr. Abdallah Al-Mansoor 25622444 Dr. Samy Al-Rabea 25752222 Dr. Masoma Habeeb 25321171 Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy 25739999 Dr. Mohsen Abel 25757700 Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl 25732223 Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly 25732223 Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT) Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner 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-Mikhaizeem 23926920 Dr. Kathem Maarafi 25730465 Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadah 25655528 Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi 24577781 Dr. Dina Abdallah Al-Rafea 25333501 Urologists Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy 22641534 Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul 22639955 Dr. Khaleel Abdallah Al-Awadi 22616660 Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C) 25313120 Dr. Leons Joseph 66703427	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 Aliyami 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 Gupare 23713100 Dr. Zacharias Mathew 24334282 Dermatology Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University 23845955 Dentists Dr. Anil Thomas 3729596/3729581 Dr. Shamah Al-Matar 22641071/2 Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed 22562226 Dr. Abdallah Al-Amer 22561444 Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan 22619557 Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrah 22525888 Dr. Abdallah Al-Duweisan 25653755 Dr. Bader Al-Ansari 25620111 Neurologists Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri 25633324 Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan 25345875 Gastrologists Dr. Sami Aman 22636464 Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly 25322030 Dr. Foad Abdallah Al-Ali 22633135	Endocrinologist Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman 25339330 Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari 25658888 Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr 25329924 Physiotherapists & VD Dr. Deyaa Shehab 25722291 Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees 22666288 Rheumatologists: Dr. Adel Al-Awadi 25330060 Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah 25722290 Internist, Chest & Heart DR. Mohammed 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
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AL-JOTHEN LAUNCHES THE ONE & ONLY ORIGINAL 'BRAZILIAN BLOWOUT'



Al-Jothen continues to acquire the best of the renowned international brands and welcomes Brazilian Blowout to its portfolio; the number one hair smoothing treatment in the world by a long shot!

Al-Jothen has always been at the helm of the beauty industry in the region for the past 25 years. Its Silver Jubilee year is marked by unveiling one of the most celebrated niche brands in the hair care industry, The One & Only Original 'Brazilian Blowout'. The event was hosted at the picturesque Movenpick Hotel with a calm sea in the background yesterday. The launch was graced by the very beautiful Yalda Golsharifi, one of the attending opinion leaders favored in the professional industry whom in turn has appraised its results from a salon owner perspective in front of a 100 attending salons. The event was then carried forward by the Lead Hair Stylists & Educators from Brazilian Blowout USA.

Technicians, managers and salon owners from top salons across Kuwait were present along with the media to witness the launch and the ease with which messy, frizzy hair was turned into sleek straight hair, that anyone would pride. Straight hair being the basic trend and need world-

wide, Brazilian Blowout is the global leader in this sector and is ranked as the number one hair smoothing treatment in the world.

The treatment originated in Brazil with the use of indigenous ingredients like acai berry and annatto seed. The liquid keratin formula in the Brazilian Blowout creates a protective layer around all strands of hair, shielding it against external damage and reducing the frizz by sealing the cuticle. The end result was straight, more hydrated and 'ready for heat styling' hair.

Brazilian Blowout in comparison to other keratin treatments is more flexible as it can be tailored to specific hair types. Moreover, after any Brazilian Blowout treatment, one can go back to normal routine like swimming, exercising, putting their hair into a ponytail and so on, without any restrictions. The Brazilian Blowout 3-step smoothing treatment live demonstration was followed by Brazilian Blowout's fastest moving, record hitting and quickest hair treatment for split ends. This treatment is everyone's favorite and was extremely interactive! It is a 5-minute in-salon one-step treatment that magically eliminates split ends.

Also, more treasure from the Brazilian Blowout was unveiled, as it is not just about straightening, but a whole lot more. With the introduction of their new range of products called the Brazilian Bond Builder (abbreviated to b3), they foray into the hair color industry with a whole new perspective. The best part of this one-step treatment is that it can be used with any hair color formulation and it requires no added time to the color service. The b3 uses a specifically engineered copolymer technology which not only prevents hair damage during the color services but also helps in longer color retention and liveliness of the hair.

Yalda Golsharifi was engaged in a one-on-one Snapchat interaction with the lead educators from the United States. The fun and details of the event was not restricted to the attendees inside the hall. Yalda had 'interactively snapped' her chat with the educator and much more on her social media account. The event was also covered on social media platforms of Al-Jothen and was well attended by the media for a full event coverage.

Red Hot Chili Peppers to head new Lollapalooza Paris

The Red Hot Chili Peppers, The Weeknd and the Pixies will play the inaugural Paris edition of Lollapalooza as the longstanding US alternative culture festival expands. Lollapalooza will take place on July 22-23 at the Longchamp Racecourse in the west of the French capital, the Parisian government announced in November. Unveiling the lineup on Tuesday, promoter Live Nation said the headliners would include veteran Los Angeles alternative band Red Hot Chili Peppers, fellow US rockers Imagine Dragons and R&B sensation The Weeknd.

Other performers will include indie rock icons the Pixies, the sultry baroque singer Lana Del Rey and Liam Gallagher, the volatile former frontman of Oasis. Lollapalooza Paris will also have a share of French artists including DJ Snake, the producer who has won vast success on the US dance music scene. Other French acts include psychedelic rockers La

Femme and IAM, one of the formative French hip-hop acts. Lollapalooza was launched in the early 1990s by Jane's Addiction frontman Perry Farrell during the US boom of alternative music, with the festival conceived as a traveling festival that would explore non-mainstream music and culture.

After criticism that the festival was becoming increasingly commodified, Lollapalooza shut down but re-emerged as in 2005 as an annual event with a regular venue of Chicago. The festival has since expanded to Latin America, with versions in Argentina, Brazil and Chile, as well as Europe starting with a 2015 edition in Berlin. The Paris edition comes as the Western world sees a surge of music festivals, which increasingly are seen by artists as a vital source of revenue as traditional recording sales sag. — AFP



US band Red Hot Chili Peppers perform at the orange stage at Roskilde festival in Roskilde. — AFP



In this March 20, 2015 file photo, film director Roman Polanski gestures during a debate at the Paris Book Fair in Paris. — AP

Polanski to preside over French cinema awards ceremony

Filmmaker Roman Polanski will preside over this year's Cesars Awards ceremony, the French equivalent of the Oscars. The Academy of Arts and Techniques of cinema said yesterday the 83-year-old Polanski is expected to deliver the opening and closing speeches during the Feb. 24 ceremony in Paris.

Polanski, who lives in France, won eight Cesars over the course of his career, including for best director in

2014 for his film Venus in Furs. Alain Terzian, the president of the academy, said Polanski is an "insatiable esthete reinventing his art and works over the years." Polanski is wanted in the US in a case involving sex with a minor that has been hanging over him for almost 40 years. He won the best-director Academy Award for "The Pianist" in 2003. — AP



Long-awaited Tupac biopic set for 2017 release

A long-awaited biopic on slain rap legend Tupac Shakur is set for release in mid-2017, the film production company said Tuesday. "All Eyez On Me," named after the title of one of Tupac's albums, will come out in US theaters on June 16, which would have been the rapper's 46th birthday, Summit Entertainment said. The movie project was announced nearly six years ago with previous participants to include John Singleton, a director closely linked with hip-hop culture whose previous films included 1993's "Poetic Justice," a drama starring Tupac and Janet Jackson.

But the film underwent a series of personnel changes and missed a goal of release in time for the 20th anniversary of Tupac's still murky 1996 killing in Las Vegas. "All Eyez on Me" was ultimately led by veteran music video director Benny Boom. Tupac will be played by little-known actor Demetrius Shipp, Jr, whose father was a producer for Tupac. While Shipp has no major acting credits, a trailer for "All Eyez on Me" showed that he has a startling physical resemblance to Tupac, who was slender with an expressive, mustachioed face.

"Why I took on this role is to give people a side of him that they never had. To really get a greater understanding of him and his life, and why things ended up the way they did," Shipp told hip-hop magazine XXL last year. Tupac, who died at age 25, remains one of the most influential figures in hip-hop, retaining a global following for his emotionally intense lyricism and theatrical flair. "All Eyez On Me" will come out two years after the box-office success of "Straight Outta Compton," the biopic of another major Southern California hip-hop outfit, gangsta rappers N.W.A. — AFP

Review

In 'The Founder' backstabbing with fries on the side

Ketchup, mustard, two pickles. In John Lee Hancock's "The Founder," about Ray Kroc and the making of McDonald's, the ingredients for success are ruthlessly simple. When Kroc (Michael Keaton), a struggling traveling salesman selling milkshake mixers, first beelines to San Bernardino, California, in 1954 to get a look at Dick (Nick Offerman) and Mac (John Carroll Lynch) McDonald's burger joint, he stands agog at the counter. Moments after he orders, Kroc is handed his burger and fries in a bag, but he might as well have been flame-grilled by lightning. "But I just ordered," he stutters. Kroc quickly recognizes the revolutionary power of the McDonald's restaurant and becomes its franchise-driver and the pre-eminent proselytizer of an empire built on burgers. The arches, an invention of Dick's just like its other innovations, will spread "from sea to shining sea," Kroc vows. As a gathering place for families, it will be "the new American church, open seven days a week," he says.

"It requires a certain kind of mind to see the beauty in a hamburger bun," wrote David Halberstam of the minds behind McDonald's in "The Fifties." Of course, the genius behind McDonald's lied largely with Dick McDonald, who engineered the "speedee service system" of its assembly line-like kitchen, designed its layout and focused its tiny menu. But the ironically titled "The Founder" is not about him. It's about Kroc, a hard-drinking, slightly shifty Illinois salesman who took the idea of the McDonalds and spread it around the world through sheer (and sometimes unscrupulous) force of will and savvy standardization. In

the opening scenes, Kroc, struggling to eke out a living on the road, faithfully listens to Norman Vincent Peale's "The Power of Positive Thinking." "Persistence, determination alone are all powerful," Kroc absorbs.

'big picture'

"The Founder" is a quintessentially post-war American story about a self-made man largely made by others. Kroc, who died in 1984, fashioned himself as the "big picture" visionary to the McDonald brothers' enterprise. Though McDonald's had by 1954 already sold 21 franchises, Kroc's zeal for expansion was compulsive and it turned him into a billionaire. The McDonald brothers quickly realize, as Dick says, that they've let a wolf in the hen house. They begin fighting over issues that in their world are of massive importance, like milkshakes. Defending his high standards, Dick warns of "crass commercialism" infecting the franchise, and somewhere, Ronald McDonald chokes on a Big Mac.

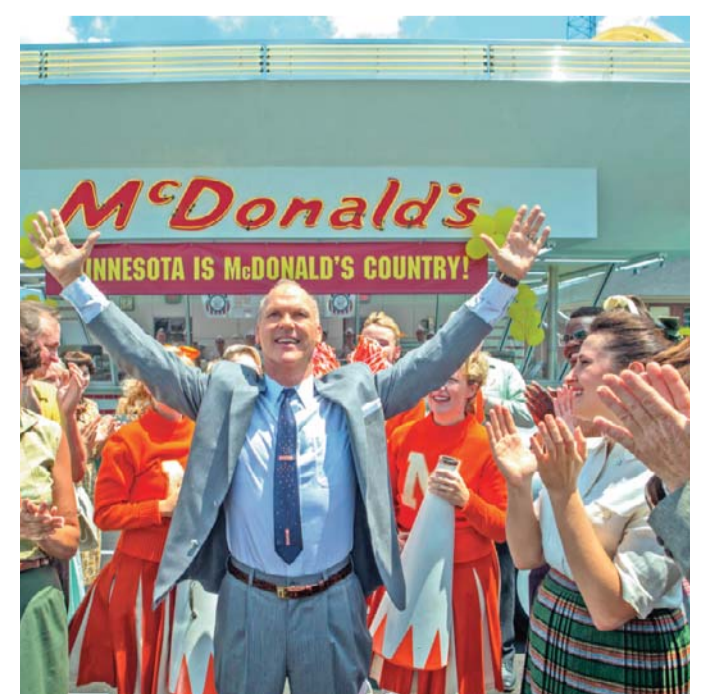
But Kroc outmaneuvers them and eventually takes control of the company, leaving the run-over McDonalds to stare blankly at the yellow-and-red Frankenstein they've created. "I'm national," a swelling Kroc declares. "You're local." Yet if there's any tragedy in "The Founder," it's not in the fate of the McDonald brothers but in Kroc's success. The film is penned by Robert D Siegel, whose "The Wrestler" and "Big Fan" also reflected the dark underbellies of American dreams. But "The Founder," like its subject, is a little mechanical and a little too timid to really

take a bite out of McDonald's. It's less a full meal than a drive-thru order.

Step-by-step

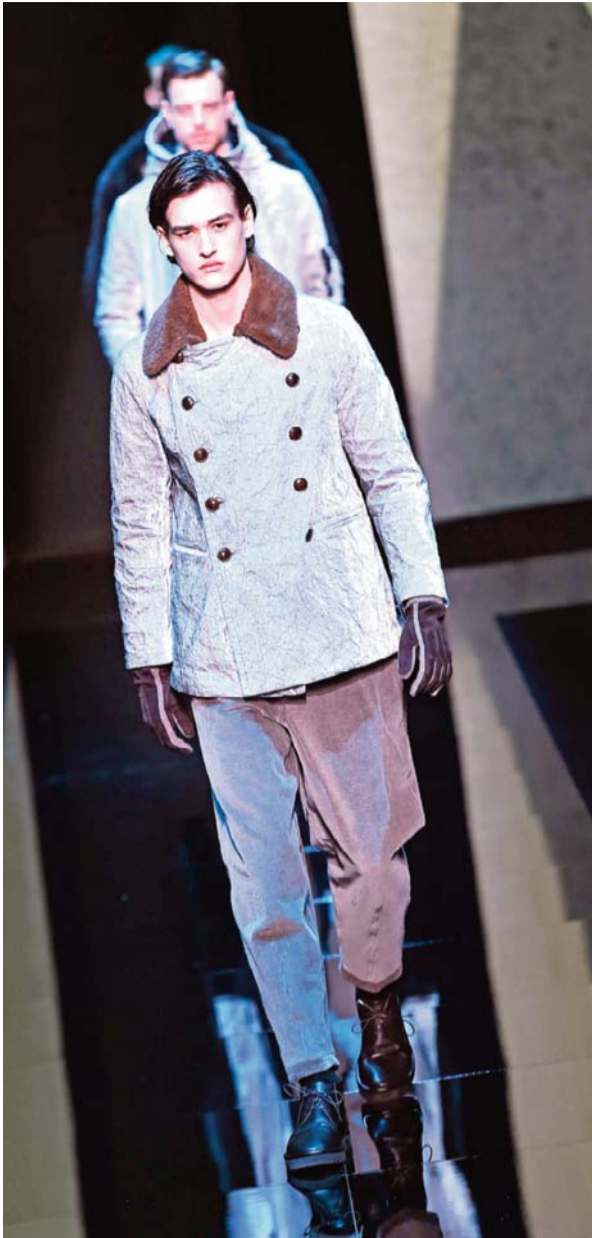
Hancock's film stays laser-focused on Kroc, and with the naturally appealing Keaton playing him, our sympathies initially slide toward him. But unease steadily creeps in, especially as Kroc, while espousing the virtues of family, callously jettisons his quietly steadfast wife (Laura Dern) for another man's (Linda Cardellini). The bad taste of day-old McNuggets begins to form in our mouths as our hero turns villain, and a successful one at that. Keaton chomps on the role, a Willy Loman who strikes it rich. Like Bryan Cranston on "Breaking Bad," we can see the wheels turning behind his eyes in his step-by-step drive for power, albeit selling a slightly healthier product than Walter White peddled. The frightful thing about "The Founder," though, is that for all Kroc's backstabbing and double-crossing, he's right. Remorseless brutality, just like fresh buns, turns out to be a necessary ingredient in business. Would you like fries with that? "The Founder," a Weinstein Co release, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of

America for "brief strong language." Running time: 115 minutes. Three stars out of four. MPAA Definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13. — AP



This image released by The Weinstein Company shows Michael Keaton, center, in a scene from, "The Founder." — AP

FASHION



ARMANI AS FURRY WRAPPER-IN-CHIEF FOR MILAN MENSWEAR SEASON

There have been lots of warm fuzzies on the Milan runway this season: shaggy fur, furry footwear, thick knits, big gloves, droopy caps, face-framing neck-warmers. All useful for hunkering down in turbulent times. Four days of menswear previews for next winter and fall at Milan Fashion Week ended Tuesday with a focus on soft tailoring and comfortable looks.

Blazers tended to be long, and paired with loose-fitting trousers. Overcoats, if not furry, had fur collars. Shoes had big soles with fresh detailing like rubberized studs or built-in socks, but most of all tufts of adorable fur. There was a nostalgic return to homey knitted gloves and caps. Designers also opted for a rough look with half-finished accents, big embroidery and some deconstruction. Bags were big, ready for a quick getaway. Colors tended toward deeper urban shades of gray and black, with flashes of white, and some designers opted for color blocks. Some highlights from the final day of Milan Fashion Week, which included previews by three Asian designers supported by the National Italian Fashion Chamber:

Armani is wrapper-in-chief

Giorgio Armani was the first among wrappers this menswear season. Armani defined the silhouette of his easy tailored looks with a novelty: sleeve scarves that

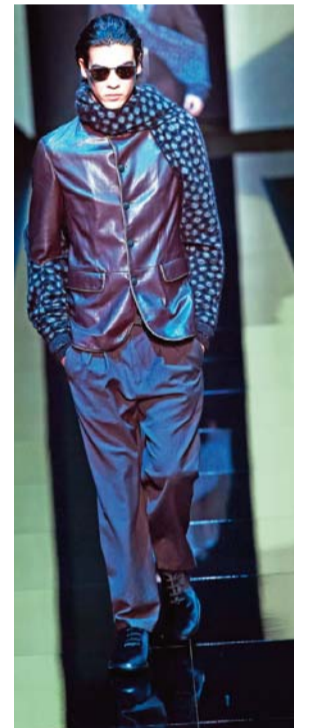
warm the arms and wrap across the chest. Armani opted for a generous variety, from fine knits in prints or contrast colors for sunny days when an overcoat might be too much, to chunkier furry versions.

The designer also brought back the tie and three-piece dressing for day, in soothing charcoals with a dark velvet double-breasted vest for a dandy look, finished with a narrow-brimmed Trilby hat. Masculinity was projected in geometric patterns including triangular blocks on zip-up hoodies and softer alpaca pullovers. Hiking boots completed many looks and bags included satchels and doctor bags.

For truly cold days, there were large hooded coats and shaggy furs.

Milan welcomes a new generation

Giorgio Armani continued a recent tradition of inviting up-and-coming designers to preview their collections in his theater. He has helped launched the likes of Stella Jean, Andrea Pompilio and Au Jour Le Jour in recent seasons. This round, the choices were all Asian designers, which the head of the Italian fashion chamber, Carlo Capasa, said was deliberate. "We wanted to give a sign of internationality," Capasa said. "Milan Fashion Week is an open week. We wanted to capture the energy from wherever it comes."



Models present creations for fashion house Giorgio Armani during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week in Milan. — AP/AFP photos



FASHION



Silhouette plays for Yoshio Kubo
 Yoshio Kubo's manifesto was spare on the page: "I always focus on new details for outfits. I try to see outfits from different angles. I make a story for each season, which people never imagine." The US-trained designer, who has based his eponymous yoshiokubo line in Tokyo, gave the collection an East-meet-West feel, playing with layers and volumes and deconstructing familiar codes. "I destroy the silhouette," Kubo said backstage.

The looks would suit any self-respecting rocker. Kimono-style jackets are paired with drop-crotch trousers, while Western blazers are deconstructed by unzipping the shoulders, letting them slouch down shawl-like. Patchworks of white bandana patterns on black leather had a tattoo effect, reflected also in the temporary tattoos on some models' necks. The 42-year-old Japanese designer worked as an assistant designer for haute couture house Robert Denes in New York after graduating from Philadelphia University's school of textile and science.

Bucolic storybook looks for Moto Guo
 Malaysian designer Moto Guo was the first to concede that the Armani theater was not used to such "crazy" looks. The 26-year-old designer's collection looked like it walked out of a 1960s grammar school reader, with graphic lines, exaggerated details and soft shades alternating with garish patterns. The show was built around the bucolic fashion story of a Japanese boy, depicted as a fanciful documentary about his life with an American voiceover.

"You see how he styles himself, what is his wardrobe," the designer said backstage. "Sometimes you understand. Sometimes you have to guess." Exaggerated proportions defined the collection, including a huge rounded tie with zigzag detailing, jackets with mismatched external pockets and felt beanies in primary colors, some with propellers. The final look featured a jacket with stiff, oversized arms that appeared fashioned from striped mattress pads.



A winter rawness in Milan
 The Chinese label Consistence is keeping it raw for fashionable men next winter and fall. Designers Fang Fang and Tien Lu base their brand in London, and their motto is balancing the casual and the formal. The designers played with deconstruction. Suits featured what appeared to be a tailor's basting stitching, and sewn-in pockets were external, not internal. White shirts incorporated dark jacket sleeves, and rough frenetic stitching on shirts and blazers suggested a seamstress had let herself go to a rock music soundtrack.

Jackets were missing lapels, which turned up, on their own, as scarves. Belted straps worked as apulets or trailed off arms and backs. A sporty two-tone fur sweatshirt and bomber jacket ensured the label's luxury credentials. — AP



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



Models present creations for fashion house Dsquared2 during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week.



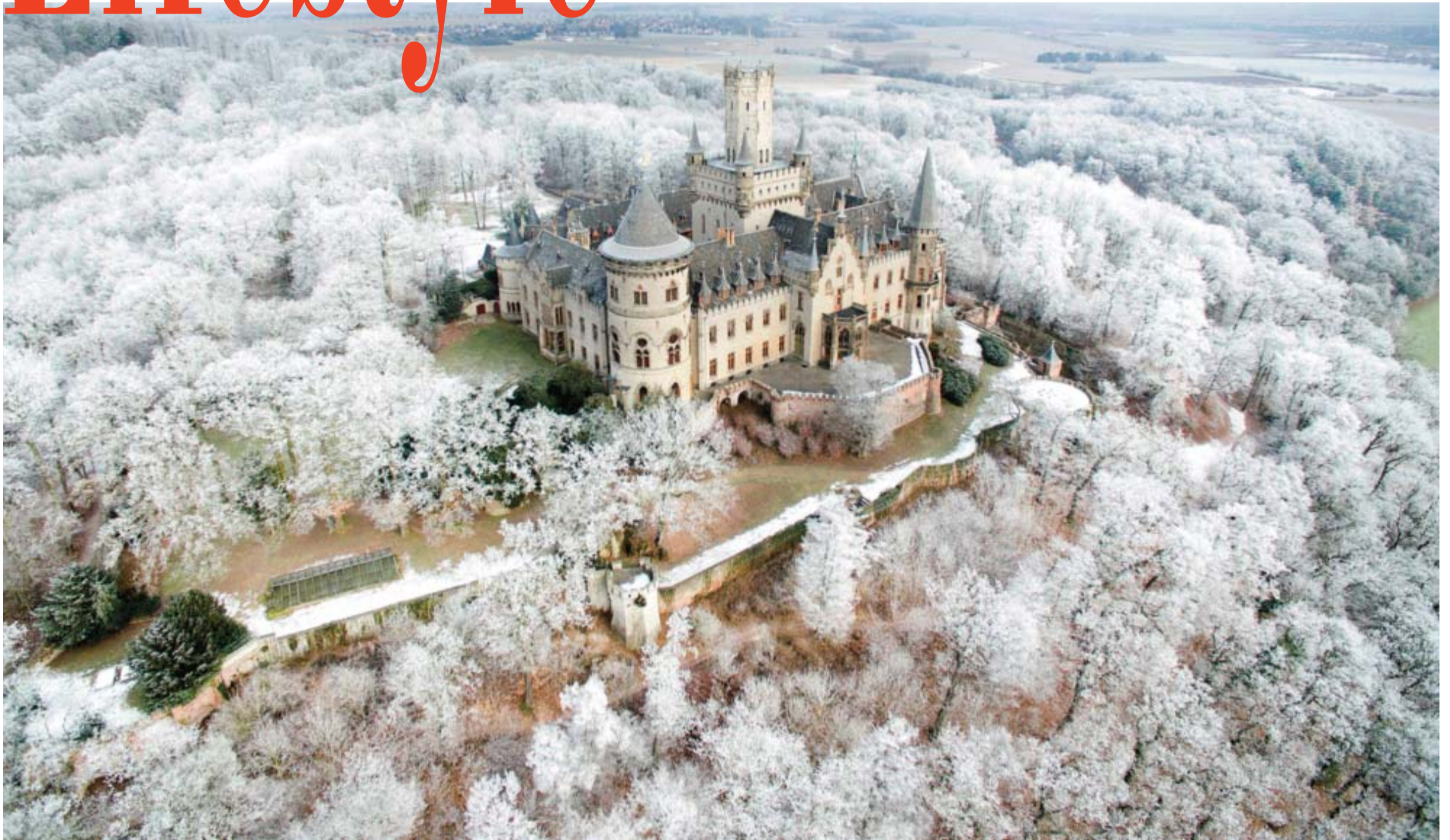
Models present creations for fashion house Moschino during the Men's Fall-Winter 2017-2018 fashion week in Milan.

Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2017

Armani as furry wrapper-in-chieffor Milan menswear season

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Aerial view taken yesterday with a drone shows the Marienburg Castle near Pattensen, northern Germany, standing amidst a snow-covered forest. — AFP

ITALY TOASTS ITS REAL-LIFE SHERLOCK HOLMES

With his Sherlock Holmes-style penchant for using multiple disguises to help crack his cases, Giuseppe Dosi was no ordinary policeman. And nearly 36 years after his death, Italians are still discovering the secrets of the "artist detective". Dosi, who was born in 1891, abandoned his dreams of a career on the stage as a young man. After two years treading the boards however, he never lost his relish for the challenge of taking on a new role. A priest, a banker, a German doctor and a Czech army officer with a pronounced limp were just some of the parts the Rome-born officer played in the course of a long career.

And like Arthur Conan Doyle's eccentric creation, Holmes, the Italian was not opposed to a little cross-dressing, if he felt posing as a woman would help him get his man. Interest in Dosi has been spurred by a new biography, written by a serving police chief, a documentary about his life and by some of the detective's professional archives being placed online. "He had a type of postcard printed for friends and colleagues which showed him in 17 different disguises corresponding to the different identities he assumed in the course of 17 different investigations," said Alessia Glielmi, an archivist at Rome's Historical Museum of the Liberation who is an expert on Dosi. "As well as the disguised characters, he had four fully-formed identities he used with all the necessary papers and back story to support them," Glielmi told AFP.

Mysterious balcony fall

After his entry into the police force, Dosi's bosses quickly found ways of making use of his talent for imitation, trusting him with sensitive missions in Italy and abroad. One early one involved infiltrating a group of Swiss-based Italian anarchists who were, it was feared, plotting to assassinate the then king, Vittorio Emanuele III. In 1922, when the poet and politician Gabriele D'Annunzio fell from his balcony in mysterious circumstances, it was Dosi who was put in charge of the delicate investigation.

"That involved one of his best disguises," said Glielmi, describing how the detective adopted the persona of Karel Kradokwill, an exiled Czech who spoke Italian with a thick German accent and trailed one ostensibly semi-paralysed leg behind him as a result of a war wound. By going undercover in this way, Dosi was able to establish that D'Annunzio's balcony mishap was down to a row with his combustible mistress rather than any political plot against him.

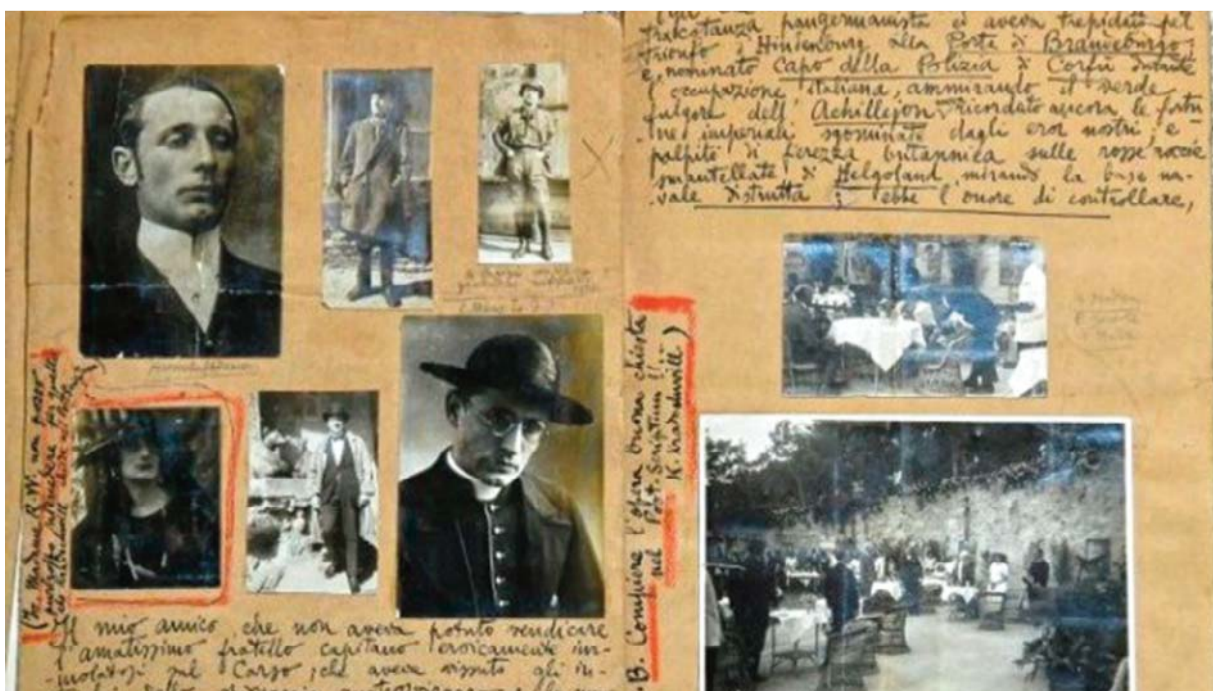
The case was closed, prompting D'Annunzio, once he became aware of the deception, to denounce Dosi as a "dirty cop." What the writer did not know was that the officer had also used his time in his house to make copies of some of the poet's private correspondence-racy love letters to his mistress only recently identified as historical documents for the insight they offer into the life of D'Annunzio. In 1927 Dosi became involved in a famous miscarriage of justice case centred on a series of murders and rapes of young girls in Rome. Under pressure to find a culprit, the authorities pinned the blame on a photographer, Gino Girolimoni, feeding incriminating details to the press that led to the suspect being dubbed the Monster of Rome.

Investigator for Allied forces

Dosi was not convinced and managed to get the investigation reopened, putting together a case against a British clergyman who may have been the actual culprit but was able to skip the country before his arrest. In an Italy then under fascist rule, this kind of independent thinking did not go down well, although Dosi was far from being an active resistant to dictator Benito Mussolini's authoritarian rule. Towards the end of the 1930s he began to think of leaving the police and wrote a memoir which revealed numerous details of his investigations as well as treating his bosses to some stinging criticism.

That was to prove a final straw for his superiors. Suspended from the police, Dosi was imprisoned in Rome in 1939 and then transferred to an asylum for the mentally ill, where he languished for 17 months until his release in January 1941. After three years confined to a desk job, another noteworthy episode got him back in the investigative saddle. In June 1944, as Allied forces were entering the Italian capital, an angry mob attacked a former German prison, freeing the prisoners and then setting it ablaze.

With the help of a young German soldier, Dosi went into the burning building and recovered a huge stock of documents that were to prove vital for subsequent prosecutions of Italians, who had collaborated with the Nazis. Dosi handed the papers over to Allied commanders and got taken on as a special investigator for two years. In 1946 he returned to the ranks of the Italian police, rising to the grade of commissioner before his retirement, 10 years later. He died, aged 89, in 1981.-AFP



A priest, a banker, a German doctor and a Czech army officer with a pronounced limp were just some of the parts played by Italian detective Giuseppe Dosi. — AFP

Vogue Knitting Live



A giant reproduction of Claude Monet's Woman with a Parasol, produced by Citemomes, knitters from around Europe who knitted 100,000 squares to make this all-knit version of the iconic painting is on display at Vogue Knitting Live!, a conference of knitters and crocheters in New York. — AFP

Indian court acquits actor Salman Khan of using illegal arms

Top Bollywood star Salman Khan was acquitted by a court yesterday on a charge of using unlicensed weapons while hunting for rare blackbucks in a western India wildlife preserve 18 years ago. Khan, 51, was present as Chief Judicial Magistrate Dalpat Singh Rajpurohit announced his acquittal in Jodhpur, a city in Rajasthan state. His attorney, Hastimal Saraswat, said the magistrate dismissed the charge against Khan for lack of evidence. If convicted, he would have faced up to seven years in prison. The prosecution argued that the license for a revolver and a rifle allegedly used by Khan had expired in 1998.

As Khan's fans cheered his acquittal, he tweeted: "Thank you for all the support and good wishes." The Indian court system is notoriously slow, and it often takes years and even decades for cases to go to trial. Apart from the illegal weapons case, police filed three poaching cases against Khan during the shooting of one of his films in Jodhpur in 1998. He was convicted by a lower court and sentenced to jail terms of one and five years in two cases. But the actor challenged the verdict in a higher court, which said there was no evidence to suggest that the pellets recovered from the animals were fired from Khan's gun. He is still facing trial in a third case of alleged poaching of two rare blackbucks.

Khan, who has starred in more than 90 Hindi-language films, has had other brushes with the law. In 2014, the Mumbai High Court acquitted the actor in a drunken-driving, hit-and-run case from more than a decade ago. The judges found that prosecutors had failed to prove charges of culpable homicide, in which they accused Khan of driving while



Bollywood actor Salman Khan arrives at his home in Mumbai, India.

intoxicated in 2002 and running over five men sleeping on a sidewalk in Mumbai, killing one of them. The government of Maharashtra state, of which Mumbai is the capital, has challenged his acquittal in the Supreme Court. — AP