



Assembly panel reviews Interior Ministry budget



At least 39 killed as Indian train derailed



Producers say oil output cut on track



Kuwait Times infographic: NBA Power Rankings



ISRAEL OKS SETTLER HOMES AFTER TRUMP TAKES OFFICE

US IN 'BEGINNING STAGES' OF TALKS TO MOVE US EMBASSY



Min 07°
Max 18°
High Tide 09:25 & 19:57
Low Tide 03:03 & 13:44

150 FILS
NO: 17119
40 PAGES

EXPATS IN LIMBO AFTER INSURANCE CONTRACT NIXED

KUWAIT: Interior Ministry sources said directors of residency affairs in all six governorates were instructed to issue temporary residencies for one month only for expats applying to renew their residencies. This is due to the cancellation of a contract between the health ministry and the company that provided health insurance that is compulsory for all expatriates in Kuwait. Expatriates under temporary residencies may not leave the country and if they travel, will not be allowed to return and will have to reapply for a new visa. The health ministry canceled the health insurance contract so that a new contract could be signed with a new provider. But as health insurance is required by law for all residency applications, no new residencies or renewal of residencies can be processed until the insurance matter is resolved.

SAUDI FINANCE MINISTRY REJECTS REMITTANCE FEES

RIYADH: The Saudi finance ministry said yesterday there would be no fees applied on remittances out of the country, days after the kingdom's advisory Shura Council said it was looking at a proposal to impose a 6 percent levy on expatriate remittances. Saudi Arabia is "committed to the principle of free movement of capital in and out of the kingdom, in line with international standards," the ministry's said on its official Twitter account. Around a third of Saudi Arabia's 30 million inhabitants are foreigners, many of them attracted by the absence of tax and higher pay than they can get at home. Proposals endorsed by the Shura Council are not always adopted and the kingdom's central bank governor and finance minister said in the autumn that there were no plans to tax remittances or income. — Reuters



Palestinian laborers work at a construction site in a new housing project in the Israeli settlement of Maale Adumim, east of Jerusalem, yesterday. — AFP

JERUSALEM: Israel approved hundreds of new settler homes in east Jerusalem yesterday, hours before Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was to speak to US President Donald Trump for the first time since his inauguration. But a potentially explosive plan to annex a large West Bank Jewish settlement near Jerusalem unilaterally was shelved until after Netanyahu and Trump meet face-to-face. Meanwhile, the White House said yesterday that it is in the early stages of talks to fulfill Trump's pledge to move the US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. "We are at the very beginning stages of even discussing this subject," White House spokesman Sean Spicer said in a statement.

The US Congress passed a law in 1995 describing Jerusalem as capital of Israel and saying it should not be divided, but successive Republican and Democratic presidents have used their foreign policy powers to maintain the US Embassy in Tel Aviv and to back negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians on the status of Jerusalem. In early December, then-President Barack Obama renewed the presidential waiver until the beginning of June. It is unclear whether Trump would be able to legally override that waiver and go ahead with relocation of the embassy.

"This evening there will be a telephone conversation between President Trump and myself," Netanyahu told a cabinet meeting yesterday. "There are many issues between us, including the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the situation in Syria and the Iranian threat." The White House confirmed that such a call was scheduled, but did not give further details.

Continued on Page 13

GOVT: UK WARNING ON KUWAIT ATTACKS 'ROUTINE MEASURE'

KUWAIT: In response to a British warning Saturday of "likely attacks in Kuwait", Kuwait's Foreign Ministry assured the warnings are a routine measure and issued not for Kuwait, only for the Middle East and most of European countries. In an advisory, Britain had warned its nationals travelling to Kuwait that attacks in Kuwait are "very likely", adding they should "take care" if they plan to travel in "conservative" areas like Jahra and Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh. It advised Britons in Kuwait to "be vigilant at all times, particularly in crowded places popular with foreign nationals, and take additional security precautions". In a statement to KUNA, Assistant Foreign Minister for

European Affairs Waleed Al-Khubaizi said the foreign ministry has contacted the interior ministry to learn if there is anything justified in this warning from the British Foreign Office. "They have affirmed that they did not receive any warnings or information from the relevant British bodies about the likelihood of security threats," Khubaizi told KUNA.

He stressed that the ministry closely followed up the warning published on the British Foreign Office website and contacted the UK Embassy in Kuwait to ask about the warning. He said British diplomats have promised to convey the Kuwaiti inquiries to relevant bodies in the UK.

Similar warnings have been issued by the British Foreign Office for most regional countries, so it was a routine action, he said, adding that Kuwait is still waiting for an official reply from the British side.

The British Embassy in Kuwait said no warning for traveling to any Gulf states including Kuwait has been issued.

The embassy is confident of Kuwait's interior ministry's ability to maintain security, it said in a statement. This warning is not uncommon, and is the result of British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson's promise to the parliament to revise the ministry's travel advisories to all countries. — KUNA



BANJUL: Gambia's defeated leader Yahya Jammeh waves to supporters at the airport as he departs on Saturday. — AP

TROOPS NEAR BANJUL AFTER JAMMEH FLEES

BANJUL, Gambia: West African troops approached the Gambian capital yesterday to secure President Adama Barrow's arrival from neighboring Senegal, as controversy erupted over the assurances offered to Yahya Jammeh to guarantee his departure. Jammeh flew out of The Gambia on Saturday, ending 22 years at the helm of the tiny west African nation, and landed in Equatorial Guinea where he is expected to settle with his family. The Senegalese general leading a joint force of troops from five African nations said soldiers had nonetheless entered The Gambia to "control strategic points to ensure the safety of the population and facilitate... Barrow's assumption of his role."

An AFP journalist stationed across the river that divides the Banjul peninsula from the northern part of the country said around 100 heavily armed Senegalese troops travelling with armored vehicles were waiting to move into the capital. Senegalese forces had briefly crossed into the former British colony on Thursday but

pulled out shortly afterwards, with Sunday's troop movement the first by soldiers from the joint force. Marcel Alain de Souza, a top official with the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), which organized the deployment, said the country "could not be left open" for long, and that Barrow must be in place "as soon as possible". A senior Senegalese military source told AFP that his forces had met little resistance yesterday, as army chief Ousman Badjie has already declared his loyalty to Barrow.

Following Barrow's win in the December 1 election, Jammeh refused to step down, triggering weeks of uncertainty that almost ended in a full military intervention. The longtime leader, wearing his habitual white flowing robes, waved to supporters before boarding a small, unmarked plane at Banjul airport alongside Guinea's President Alpha Conde after two days of talks over a departure deal.

Continued on Page 13

ROCKY START FOR NEW WHITE HOUSE

TRUMP INFLATES INAUGURATION CROWD, SLAMS PROTESTS

DUBAI TOUGHENS FIRE RULES AFTER HIGH-RISE BLAZES

DUBAI: Dubai yesterday announced tougher fire rules in a bid to minimize risks after several spectacular blazes that have ripped through skyscrapers in the modern Gulf emirate. Major fires have hit Dubai high-rises in recent years and spread quickly, mostly due to flammable material used in cladding, a covering or coating used on the side of the buildings.

Civil Defense Lieutenant Taher Hassan Al-Taher announced the new regulations at a security exhibition during which authorities also launched Dubai's new fire and safety code for the emirate. According to Taher builders must abide by a new requirement to ensure that the flammability of the cladding is as close to zero as possible. "There is a requirement to minimize it to zero," Taher said.

Builders will also have to regularly carry out maintenance on the cladding panels and replace them after a certain date, he added. "There is a timeline for all cladding (and) there is maintenance for everything. By that time they'll have to change it," Taher said, speaking in English. Those who violate the rules will face fines up to 50,000 dirhams (\$13,623), he added. He said he didn't know who would pay for the re-cladding, which is expected to be costly. Asked how authorities would ensure buildings change their cladding, he said: "That's still on the table."

Dubai is home to Burj Al-Khalifa, the world's tallest tower. The modern city state has experienced a real estate boom over the years with hundreds of skyscrapers built in a short lapse of time with many tiled with flammable cladding. Most towers built before 2012 have reportedly used non-fire-rated exterior panels. Fires have hit several high-rise buildings in the Dubai, famed for its record-breaking skyscrapers. On New Year's Eve 2015 a huge blaze ripped through the luxury Address Downtown Hotel, injuring 16 people just a few hours before a spectacular fireworks display nearby.

Continued on Page 13

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's White House came under fire yesterday for falsely accusing media of misreporting inaugural crowd numbers, after millions took to the streets in protest against the new president. The brash billionaire and his chief spokesman launched a startling assault on the media on Saturday, Trump's first full day in office, accusing reporters of downplaying the turnout at his swearing-in ceremony.

The attack came as more than two million people flooded US cities in protests led by women opposed to Trump, who many fear will roll back the rights of women, immigrants and minorities. The scale of the mass protests, echoed in sister rallies around the world, highlight the challenge former reality TV star Trump faces as he leads the world's most powerful nation - taking office with

an approval rating of just 37 percent. Usually, new US leaders start the job with approval ratings above 50 percent, and this has put 70-year-old Trump, who comments regularly about his popularity and ratings, on the defensive.

Trump and his chief spokesman lambasted the media for the reporting of the inauguration turnout, in what analysts said was an attempt to change the subject. Non-stop news network coverage of Saturday's sprawling demonstrations against Trump were replaced within hours by debate over his "war on the media", which is likely to play well among his supporters. Visiting the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters in Virginia, Trump insisted, despite evidence to the contrary, that he drew 1.5 million people to his Friday swearing-in ceremony.

Continued on Page 13



LANGLEY, Virginia: US President Donald Trump speaks at CIA headquarters on Saturday. — AFP



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with the visiting envoy for Jordanian King Abdullah II Prince Ali bin Al-Hussein. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah.

AMIR RECEIVES MESSAGE FROM JORDANIAN KING

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace visiting envoy for Jordanian King Abdullah II Prince Ali bin Al-Hussein, along with an accompanying delegation. Prince Ali bin Al-Hussein relayed to His Highness the Amir a message from the Jordanian King germane to special bilateral ties and the latest

regional and international occurrences.

His Highness the Amir conveyed his greetings to King Abdullah II, wishing the Hashemite Kingdom persistent development and prosperity. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs

Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince met with Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah, as well as Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with British International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox. — KUNA

PRIME MINISTER MEETS BRITISH INT'L TRADE SECRETARY



KUWAIT: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh meets with British Secretary of State for International Trade Liam Fox.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah accompanied by Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Mubarak Al-Sabah and Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan received yesterday British International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by the premier's Diwan President Sheikha Itemad Khaled Ahmad Jaber Al-Sabah. The visiting British official also met with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, in presence of ministers Sheikh Mohammad and Roudhan, as well as Managing Director of Kuwait Investment Authority Bader Al-Saad. —KUNA

KUWAIT DISPATCHES HUMANITARIAN AID TO SYRIAN REFUGEES IN TURKEY



ANKARA: A Kuwaiti convoy carrying medical aid earmarked for Syrian refugees crossed into southern Turkey yesterday, Kuwait's Al-Rahma International Charity announced. Head of Al-Rahma International's office in Syria Waleed Al-Suwailem said that a contingent of doctors from Kuwait Medical Association has tended to around 625 patients at Emel Hospital in the town of Reyhanli in the southern province of Hatay. Moreover, he noted that the aid is part of a campaign launched by Al-Rahma International to provide relief for the people of the war-torn Syrian city of Aleppo.

On the scope of assistance, Suwailem said that Al-Rahma International has delivered \$70 million worth of aid since the start of the Syrian conflict. Meanwhile, Kuwait's Al-Najat Charity distributed humanitarian aid to Syrian refugees in the province of Hatay, which included food baskets, heaters and pecuniary assistance.

Meanwhile, Head of Al-Najat Charity's relief projects Thamer Al-Sahib said that the aid also comprises recreational and educational activities for children. He also added that the aid aims to mitigate the misery that thousands of Syrian refugee families are mired in. —KUNA

FOREIGN MINISTER RECEIVES NEW AMBASSADORS' CREDENTIALS

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah received yesterday the credentials of the new Uzbek ambassador to the State of Kuwait. The Foreign Ministry quoted Sheikh Sabah Khaled as praising during the meeting the friendly ties with the Uzbek Republic, wishing to see further promotion of the bonds between Kuwait and the republic. Senior ministry officials attended the ceremonial meeting.

Meanwhile, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled received credentials of the new ambassador of the Republic of Benin to the country.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs quoted in a statement Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled as lauding the bilateral ties between the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Benin. The ceremonial meeting was attended by ranking ministry officials. Also yesterday, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled received the outgoing ambassador of Swaziland. During the meeting, the minister lauded the diplomat's efforts during his tenure, namely his contributions to boosting the bilateral ties bonding the State of Kuwait with the Kingdom. The ceremonial meeting was attended by ranking ministry officials. — KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives credentials of the new Uzbek ambassador to Kuwait. — KUNA



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah receives credentials of the new ambassador of Benin to Kuwait.



KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah meets with the outgoing ambassador of Swaziland.

In my view

KUWAIT'S ISLAM

By Hamad Al-Sharhan

Kuwait is proudly a Muslim country. And to those who wonder 'what does that mean in this world and in this time in which everything has changed?' I say: Islam isn't comparable with other religions that speak mainly to the individual. Islam, in contrast, speaks in equal strength both to the individual and the society.

The commandments to the individual are clear and known by all. As for the society, Islam commands it to be a 'Muslim' society in the sense that a stranger should know that he or she is in a Muslim country. The call for prayer is heard a loud five times a day, alcohol and pork products are not seen in markets, banks move slowly to Islamic practices and will all eventually become interest-free, Islamic criminal law is enforced, the tiny remainder of non-Islamic laws will be amended, and so on.

The issues that the Western World experiences are far from our part of the world. We shouldn't allow Globalization to conquer our quarters after the West withdrew its military forces out of most of them. The issue of sexual orientation, for example, occupies a large space in the Western mind but is a 'no brainer' to us. Instead of allowing these ideas to seep into our culture, our guards at the gates should fight them and expose them for what they are: foreign, absurd, and invalid.

Our guards at the gates are our media. Our national and value-led media.

NATO CENTER TO TAKE TIES TO NEW LEVEL: NSB

KUWAIT: NATO's new Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) regional center in Kuwait will be instrumental in solidifying strategic relations between ICI member nations, the National Security Bureau (NSB) said yesterday. The NSB-controlled center, which opens tomorrow, will allow NATO the opportunity to share its knowhow with Kuwait, where NATO instructors will be guiding officials from across Kuwait's government spectrum and Gulf ICI member nations, a statement by NSB noted.

Moreover, the statement revealed that the center is complete with sprawling halls to be used by government institutions for educational purposes. Meanwhile, the training courses to be offered include topics such as electronic security and crisis management, the statement noted, adding that Kuwait, which joined the ICI in 2004, has always been an active member of the ICI. The center, which was Kuwait's brainchild, was first proposed during a 2012 ICI meeting and was subsequently approved during a NATO summit in Chicago. Kuwait and NATO also signed an agreement last year in efforts to bolster bilateral cooperation. — KUNA

WOMEN GO TO COURT TO DEMAND EQUALITY

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: A number of female citizens filed a case at the constitutional court demanding equality with men as per the Kuwaiti constitution. Details about the complaints were not immediately available. Several laws in Kuwait differentiate between male and female citizens, most notably the citizenship law which allows men to pass their nationality down to their children, unlike Kuwaiti mothers, in addition to laws that regulate inheritance and divorce. Meanwhile, Article 153 of the Penal Code stipulates significantly reduced punishments for 'honor killing' convicts.

Court order

Lawyer Khaled Al-Kafifa said the administrative court ordered appointing a client of his, who is a ruling family, as director at the information ministry. Kafifa added that his client had been serving as acting director before someone less competent and from outside the department was appointed in her place.

Do dissolution

Municipal Council Chairman Muhallhel Al-Khaled denied social media reports about dissolving the council and calling for new elections. Khaled stressed that the council and some members still meet, even during the current recess. He also urged those behind such rumors to seek accurate information from official sources.

Inventors society

Chairperson of the Kuwait Society for Supporting

Inventors Fatima Al-Thallab said the society had been proclaimed by Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's decision number 1/29/2016, which was published in the official gazette Al-Kuwait Al-Youm on Dec 18, 2016 with the aim of taking care of Kuwaiti inventors and developing their skills in order to achieve a prestigious status in various international scientific communities. Thallab stressed the need to take care of inventors, especially since Kuwaiti youth had already made many internationally-accredited inventions and won various international awards. "Membership will be open soon and a press conference will be held to announce the society's aims," she said, adding that interested members could contact her for further inquiries.

Cardiac operations

Sabah Al-Ahmed Cardiology Center announced preparing a well-studied plan for the medical services it provides patients. The center announced receiving elite Kuwaiti doctors after they got fellowships in three geriatric cardiology-related majors. Cardiac catheterization specialist Dr Nader Al-Assousi, fellow at McGill University, Canada, said that the center provides intervention cardiac catheterization with international standards and competence. Assousi added that the center's future plans include activating the one-day catheterization process, where patients are discharged one day after the procedure to be followed up at OPD, which is a standard measure followed in some countries with the aim of reducing the number of patients on waiting lists.



KUWAIT: MPs Adnan Abdulsamad (center), Riyadh Al-Adasani (right) and Abdullah Al-Roumi attend the parliament's budgets and final statement committee's meeting yesterday.— Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

PANEL REVIEWS INTERIOR MINISTRY'S BUDGET

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Chairman of the parliament's budgets and final statement committee MP Adnan Abdulsamad said that the committee met with Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah yesterday to discuss the ministry's final statement for the fiscal year 2015-2016 and the remarks made on it by the State Audit Bureau. During the meeting, the committee stressed that the new administration was showing more cooperation, but remarked that auditors detected some contradicting data and delay in response and hoped that this would be avoided in the future.

The committee added that the ministry's financial and administrative affairs department needs more discipline as the final statement report showed using KD 79 million allocated for recruiting more citizens to pay reservation allowances and retirees' indemnity. Further, the committee called for resolving the problems in collecting revenues, namely those of traffic fines and those from photocopy and typing centers at various facilities affiliated to the ministry. It also urged the State Audit Bureau to investigate the ministry's hospitality, ceremonies, gifts and trips' budget, especially since the sum actually spent this year exceeded the KD 2 million budget by KD 8 million.

Legalese

RENT LAWS KUWAIT

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

I know that rent issues can be of major concern for my clients and readers, and therefore I like to write about the issue from time to time. But before I answer your questions, I want to make a few things clear. If you have a case against you at court, or if you end up paying your rent at court, then expect a case to be filed against you, and this means that you will need to either be prepared to write your defense in Arabic or to hire a lawyer; which would be the more logical step. My suggestion is to always be prepared and have a 'Plan B' should issues arise.

Five-year period

Question: I have been living in an apartment for 12 years and I renewed my tenancy agreement with the landlord in 2015. Can the landlord increase the rent before the five-year period is complete?

Fajer: Generally, rent for private or residency (non-commercial) properties can only be increased once every five years. With that said, your landlord can increase the rent if you agree to the proposed increase in rent. So if your landlord brings in a contract with an increased rent amount and you sign it, then you have agreed to the amount, or if your landlord processes an amount and you pay it, then you have agreed to the increase. Let me give an example.

Your rent is KD 200 and five years have not passed for you as a tenant in the flat. Your landlord requests an increase to KD 300. You feel pressured. You end up paying him the KD 300. Your payment can be seen as proof that you agree to the proposed increase in rent.

Your landlord can also by law increase the rent before five years, if you are paying 50 percent less than the market price. Let me give another example. You are paying KD 200. Your neighbors are all paying KD 450 for the same apartment. Than your landlord has the right to increase the rent. This can also be tricky, because sometimes it is not so clear if someone is paying 50 percent less than the market price. The court has the final discretion in such matters.

One-year contract

Question: I have been living in an apartment for 18 months, but only had a one year contract. Does that mean that my contract automatically renewed itself for a year? And if so does that mean I cannot leave till the remaining six months are over?

Fajer: If the term of your rent's contract ends, yet you continue to occupy the space and pay the rent in a timely manner, then your contract is renewed for the period of your rent payment. For example, if you pay monthly, then your contract is renewed month by month even though you initially had a one year contract. To put it in simple terms, anything beyond the initial term of your contract is renewed according to what you are paying for.

Question: My question to you pertains to the raising of rents by landlords. What is the criteria that landlords use to raise the rents? Is there any law stipulating the maximum percentage that a landlord can raise the rent to, or does the law leave it to his discretion?

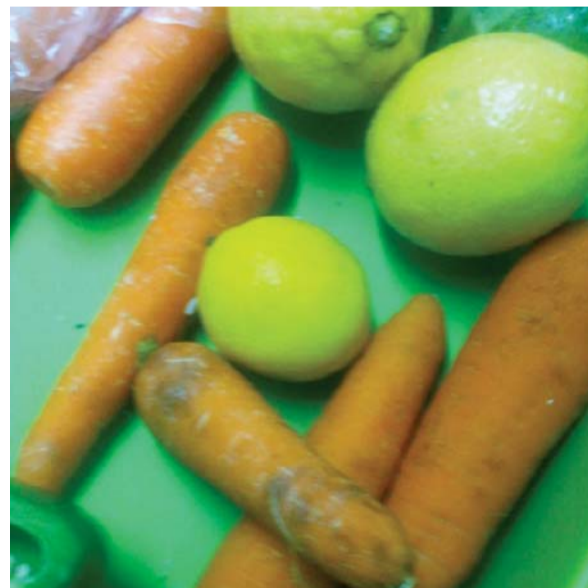
Fajer: Well, if the landlord is raising the rent (after five years of you occupying the space, as mentioned above), then he can only raise it if it is 50 percent less than the market price and can only raise it up to the average market price. How do you calculate the average market price? You see how much a place with the same standards as your building in the same location is going for. That might not be so easy to determine as places differ all the time.

Paying at court

Question: I keep reading from you and hearing from friends as well that if I am having disputes with my landlord I can pay rent at court. Is this true? And how or where do I go?

Fajer: Yes, it is true that you can pay your rent at court. There are different court buildings in Kuwait, with the major court 'the Palace of Justice' being located in Kuwait City. You should check the nearest court to your residential area; there is one main court building in every Kuwaiti governorate. Once you find the building, you will need to speak some Arabic and ask for directions to the rental court. Take with you your rental agreement and civil ID and deposit the money at court; you will get a receipt instantly.

For any legal questions or queries, email ask@fajerthelawyer.com.



TONS OF BAD FOOD CONFISCATED

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: More than two tons of food were confiscated during a surprise campaign carried out recently in Al-Rai area to inspect the quality of food served at restaurants and cafes there. One

restaurant and a cafe were closed during the campaign as well, Kuwait Municipality's Public Relations Department said in a statement. The department urged the public to report any complaints related to food they believe is unfit for human consumption to the hotline 1844448.

KUWAIT'S IICO DOLES OUT AID FOR SYRIAN FAMILIES IN JORDAN



AMMAN: Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) official Ziyad Abu Taleb. — KUNA

AMMAN: Kuwait's International Islamic Charity Organization (IICO) carried out yesterday the second phase of an urgent relief program for thousands of Syrian refugee families residing in Jordan. IICO official Ziyad Abu Taleb said in a statement that the current campaign comprises the winter installment of aid, earmarked for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.

Moreover, he noted that the aid campaign is a donation from Chairman of Kuwait's National Security Bureau His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, which encompasses refugee families across the Hashemite Kingdom.

On the aid, Abu Taleb said it includes necessities such as food, heaters and sums of money to cover housing expenses. Meanwhile, Director of the Islamic Orphanage Mehsen Al-Rimawi expressed his gratitude for Kuwait's persistent support since the start of the Syrian conflict, saying the country has become a "center for philanthropy." — KUNA



Aid to be distributed to Syrian families.

In Brief

KPC PROMOTES PRIVATE SECTOR'S ROLE

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) Sunday affirmed keenness on promoting the private sector role in the oil industries, through multiplying national products and local ventures. Nezar Al-Adsani, the KPC Deputy Chairman, said in a statement that the corporation aims at enhancing the private sector role in the sector and developing manufacturing by the local oil companies, with aim of creating new jobs for the citizens. — KUNA



NAVY DRILL TOMORROW

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Naval Force will be conducting live ammunition exercises tomorrow and Wednesday, from 7:00 am until 5:00 pm, the Ministry of Defense announced yesterday. The shooting range will be 16.5 nautical miles east of Ras Al Julai'a to Qaruh island and six nautical miles east of Ras Azzour to Umm Al-Maradem island, a statement by the ministry noted. To ensure maximum safety, the statement urged sea-goers to steer clear of the area on the announced dates. — KUNA



GOLD PRICE EXCEEDS \$1,200

KUWAIT: Gold in the past week's trades climbed to \$1,204 per ounce, buoyed by the declining American dollar against other hard currencies, Sabaek Al-Kuwait said in a report yesterday. The precious metal continued rising for the fourth consecutive week, posting the highest rise in two months, with forecast the ounce rate might hit the level of \$1,250. Gold has capitalized on jitters and uncertainties related to Donald Trump's takeover of the presidential post in the US, the report said. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A photo taken from inside the Sadu House. — KUNA



KUWAIT DISPATCHES 10 TONS OF RELIEF SUPPLIES TO DISPLACED IRAQIS



IRBIL: A planeload of 10 tons of relief and medical supplies, dispatched by the State of Kuwait, landed at Irbil Airport on Saturday as part of ongoing Kuwaiti aid for Iraqis who have been forced by war and violence to evict their homes and take up refuge in northern Iraq. Dr Omar Al-Kanderi, the State of Kuwait General Consul in Irbil, said that the cargo includes medicines such as medical drugs for children and medical equipment. He thanked the Kuwaiti Relief Society for securing the badly needed drugs. The operation is part of the Kuwaiti campaign, "Kuwait on your side," and in line with the humanitarian campaign, top architect of which is His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who has repeatedly expressed keenness on soothing pains and hardships of the wars' afflicted Iraqis, the diplomat indicated. "This air bridge to deliver the Kuwaiti assistance to the relocated Iraqis will persist," said the General Consul, Al-Kanderi, in his statement to the Kuwaiti news agency. Meanwhile, Khaled Al-Nouri, the head of Nineveh pharmacies association, expressed

deep gratitude to the State of Kuwait for aiding the relocated, particularly those who have fled their homes from the theater of military operations involving government forces and militants of the so-called Islamic State. Large amounts of the Kuwait-dispatched supplies have reached the relocated people in regions in Mosul that have been freed from the militants. Last Wednesday, a Kuwaiti shipment of 10 tons of medicines arrived in Irbil. The cargo included two makeshift hospitals. Governor of Nineveh Nowfal Al-Sultan yesterday praised efforts of the Kuwait Society for Relief through its provision of humanitarian supplies to the needy displaced Iraqis of Mosul. Sultan expressed in a thank you letter his appreciation for the tremendous efforts of the society towards the displaced Iraqis of Mosul, a matter he said reflected Kuwait's responsibilities towards the needy peoples. The society has and is still offering humanitarian and medical aid to the needy Iraqis particularly for those in Nineveh Governorate. The society had dispatched a shipment of medical supplies to the Ministry of Health in Kurdistan last August for the displaced Iraqis. — KUNA

AMBASSADOR CALLS ON INVESTORS TO BENEFIT FROM TIES WITH CUBA

STUDENTS TOUR VARIOUS HISTORIC, TOURISTIC SITES IN ALBANIA

HAVANA/TIRANA: Kuwait's Ambassador to Cuba Mohammad Fadhel Khalaf called on Kuwaiti investors and the private sector to seize the opportunity and benefit from investments available in the Republic of Cuba. The ambassador made his remarks after a luncheon hosted last night for the Kuwaiti students visiting Cuba, part of tour organized by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) in cooperation with the ministry of Education. Khalaf added that such opportunity comes after the recent normalization between the US and Cuba, in addition to historical and critical times for Cuba and its international relations. The ambassador noted that the State of Kuwait has been repeatedly calling for normalizing ties between the US and Cuba, reaffirming Kuwait's position in the UN and its vote against imposing sanctions on Cuba. With regard to Kuwaiti-Cuban relations, Khalaf noted that the two nations enjoy exceptional ties and covers all fields, asserting on the strong ties between the two nations. The ambassador noted that such relations dates back to 1974, when Cuba opened its embassy in Kuwait, making it the first diplomatic mission for Cuba in the Gulf. However, the ambassador added Kuwait's embassy in Cuba was opened in 2010 after a visit by His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Sabah and the signing of several cooperation agreements, including cultural, economic, and trade agreements.



HAVANA: Kuwait's Ambassador to Cuba Mohammad Fadhel Khalaf poses for a group photo with Kuwaiti students currently visiting the Caribbean state. — KUNA

Historic sites

In other news, Kuwaiti students yesterday toured historic and touristic sites in Albania, including the memorial site for KFAED and Albania. The tour came during a trip organized by KFAED for Kuwaiti students to the European country. KFAED media executive Amira Al-Kanderi said that the trip, which will last till January 28th, will help students become aware of the fund's contributions in Albania. The trip, within the KFAED's "Be among the outstanding ones" students program, will highlight the fund's projects in Albania since 1993, said Al-Kanderi. Meanwhile, student Heba Hayati expressed in a similar statement her admiration and pride for Kuwait's efforts through KFAED aid to the Republic of Albania. Seven loans were provided by the fund to Albania worth KD 33.438 million, (\$113.6 million) to finance projects within agriculture, transportation, and infrastructure. On an annual basis, the KFAED organizes trips to mainly showcase Kuwait's huge role in providing assistance to other countries. In a previous statement, KFAED said that these trips contributed to the development of students' skills in research for knowledge, in addition to helping them to discover their own abilities. — KUNA



TIRANA: Kuwaiti students pose for a group photo during a tour to the historic and touristic sites in Albania.



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Crime

Report

CAR CHASE IN FAIHA

KUWAIT: A car chase between two citizens and two police vehicles in Faiha area left two patrol vehicles damaged, while a lieutenant was nearly run over during the incident. The chase ended with the arrest of two citizens, one of whom is wanted to serve 12 years jail sentence. Liquor and paraphernalia were found in the vehicle the two men were driving. Capital security stopped the vehicle at a checkpoint near the intersection of Faiha and Dhahiyat Abdullah Al-Salem areas. When a lieutenant asked the driver for his ID, the man drove off, nearly running over the officer. Two other officers chased the vehicle in Faiha area, when the suspects' car hit the patrol vehicle and flipped on the side, then hit another patrol trying to escape, but the men were finally caught and arrested. The passenger was found intoxicated. License plates were found in the car that may be used in criminal activity.

Police in brawl

Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt General Suleiman Al-Fahad ordered the arrest of a criminal detectives officer and a traffic patrolman after the two exchanged blows during an argument. The two were marring a checkpoint in Kabd area when they began arguing and the fight escalated into a physical altercation.

Stolen bike found

A citizen was shocked to see the man who stole his motorcycle enjoying a ride on Arabian Gulf road, so he stopped the thief and then called police. Police arrived and arrested the thief and took him to the police station.

Man with liquor caught

Patrol officers stopped a Sri Lankan man in Mangaf after they grew suspicious of him, then found 64 bottles of homebrewed liquor in his possession. He was also found wanted and his residency expired. He was taken to the proper authorities for further action.

Drug addict arrested

A citizen filed a case at a Hawally governorate police station against her 18-year-old son whom she accused of being addicted to drugs. Police accompanied the woman to her home where they found the young man under the influence of narcotics. He was taken into custody and will be entered into a rehabilitation program.

Expat thief caught

Farwaniya police arrested an expatriate for committing several thefts and armed robberies. Several complaints were made about the robberies by a man on a motorcycle. He was caught red handed and sent to concerned authorities.

Videoclip blackmail

A citizen sought police's help to stop her boyfriend from blackmailing her with a video clip he recorded with her. The woman wanted to end the relationship, but he threatened to expose her if she does. Detectives arrested the man who admitted the charges. — Translated from the Arabic Press



Al-Anbaa

MINISTER ROUDHAN'S GOOD DEEDS

By Saad Al-Motesh

It was a commendable thing what Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan did. We ought to thank him for his swift response to a problem facing a young Kuwaiti entrepreneur with the small projects program, which means that the government is serious in solving problems and complications facing citizens.

I know nothing about the young man's project, but Roudhan's reaction will open the door for anybody facing red tape and bureaucracy from employees at the small projects support fund. It is as if those employees are giving the funds out of their own pockets. We need to know the reason for rejecting any project.

In this regard, let me remind you of an old story about someone who went to the beach with friends and while swimming, he wanted to make a practical joke and started yelling for help, pretending to be drowning. He burst into laughter when

they jumped in to save his life and told them he was joking. A while later, this wise guy did the same thing again, and his friends hurried to rescue him, but the third time, when he was actually drowning, they ignored his cries and he drowned!

Roudhan's reaction will open the door for anybody facing red tape and bureaucracy

This story ought to be comprehended by everybody because complaints will grow in number and many will yell for help and unless those cries are real, officials will take them as fake ones like those of the guy who drowned. My advice to everybody is to take advantage of the presence of this young minister in office. He is one of you and comes from a veteran political family. His father and his late grandfather have always been keen on doing only good deeds.

Long live those who make true complaints and down with those claiming to have rights by shouting loudly!

— Translated by Kuwait Times



Al-Rai

THE DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

By Dr Khalid Al-Saleh

The demographic structure forces its agenda on the two authorities' - this was the headline in a local daily a few days ago, a headline that got on my nerves, as if both authorities can change the demographic structure in Kuwait. Gentlemen, the demographic structure has been under study for more than 30 years, and symposiums were held over it, and it was mentioned in tens of columns, and was argued in every Kuwaiti diwaniya and by every Kuwaiti in the country. The demographic structure is not in the hands of the government or the National Assembly. If it was presented by the Assembly and the government, it would have caused more complications and more interference.

The demographic structure is an economic and political issue. Buildings that were built with one or two rooms - for whom were they built? The businessmen who are importing products and sending them to the market - who will buy them all? That apart from restaurants that are being opened in large numbers, importing human beings by the droves, and the sponsor trade that made the destitute very rich and created new classes. All these agents and representatives will not allow their interests to be interrupted for the sake of Kuwait. There are no longer those who care about Kuwait except on the radio and TV.

The demographic structure is also a political issue, as there are political leaders, who for many reasons cannot say no to some Arab countries and justify their weakness by saying Kuwait needs relations with certain Arab states such as Egypt for the sake of political balance between its neighbors.

Economic and political powers are the key to resolving the demographic structure, and because the correct key is the one we benefit from in opening the door, it is a must that we admit that reducing the number of expatriates is extremely impossible. No one can prevent or reduce entry of some communities as long as politicians are afraid and businessmen are not satisfied. This is a universal norm that never changes - the correct solution is that discussions over the demographic structure should be over the quality of expatriate manpower, and not their number.

Ladies and gentlemen, do not discuss reduction of the number of expats because this is not possible - the structure of expats is more important. Kuwaitis are complaining of a type of manpower who do not have knowledge or experience, and sometimes they do not understand the law. They have spread in our country, so how do we stop this futility? How do we prevent the power technician who does not know the difference between the electric current and water current from entering our country? This is the essence of the solution that does not clash with the interests of politicians and economists.

If the issue was discussed in the dimension of quality and not quantity, we will benefit from the expat as much as he benefits from us, and we will stop the waves of expats that corrupt everything beautiful in Kuwait. Only then can we return Kuwait's interest to the front and all parties will be satisfied with us.

— Translated by Kuwait Times



37 COMPETITORS WIN GOLD, 60 WIN SILVER, 98 WIN BRONZE AT HORECA KUWAIT 2017

KUWAIT: The third and final day of the Horeca Kuwait 2017 exhibition was full of activities, including an honoring ceremony for the winners in the international cooking competition. Leaders Group's General Manager Nabila Al-Anjeri and Hospitality Services Company's General Manager Jumanah Damos honored the 37 winners who earned gold medals.

The competition's jury panel, comprising of 10 experts announced the winners' names noting. In addition to the gold medal winners, 60 competitors won silver and 98 won bronze medals. The jury also announced that Kuwait Sheraton Hotel won the highest number of gold medals, as seven of its chefs won first place in various competitions they took part in.

Further, the jury said that over 300 competitors took part in various categories of the competition, which is a

record number. The panel added that the competitions highly appealed to visitors who enjoyed watching chefs carve works out of chocolate, ice and fruits.

Speaking on the occasion, the panel's head chef Sam'an Hilal said that the Horeca cooking competition helps support the hospitality sector, adding that it has attracted more participants compared to previous years. Meanwhile, Anjeri stressed that the exhibition achieved remarkable success. She also thanked all participating and sponsoring companies, the jury and competitors, in addition to the media. In the meantime, a number of participating company owners thanked Leaders Group, the event's organizer, for extending the area at the exhibition allocated for their booths as requested, and for hosted various activities during the three-day event, which attracted over 6,000 visitors.



ABK PARTICIPATES IN THE 31ST COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING DESIGN EXHIBITION

KUWAIT: Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) recently announced its participation in the 31st College of Engineering's Design Exhibition at Kuwait University (KU), which was held on 18 and 19 January, 2017 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

ABK reinforced its active role in supporting Kuwait's youth and the education sector by sponsoring three different projects exhibited by graduating students. The Bank's Corporate

Communications team attended the exhibition and viewed the different projects as the students presented their work.

ABK is committed to supporting students and encouraging them to maximize their potential. The Bank strongly believes that the role these students will play in the future of Kuwait is invaluable and it is a duty to support them through the most critical phases of their education and to

show them the options they have, in terms of career choice.

The Bank continuously supports students through the 'ABK Academy', which focuses on developing students banking skills and equips them with the necessary training to prepare them for the work place. For more information about Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit eahli.com or contact a customer service agent via 'Ahlan Ahli' at 1899899.



KIB GOLD SPONSOR OF COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND PETROLEUM EXHIBITION

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) sponsored the 31st Engineering Projects Exhibition organized by the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University, which was held under the patronage of Sheikh Mohammed Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, with the participation of the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS).

KIB's gold sponsorship comes as a continuation of the Bank's efforts to provide financial and moral support to various social programs and community initiatives, particularly those that target youth and students. The Bank actively seeks to empower young local talents, fostering their creativity and encouraging their innovations to enable them to contribute to national development across all sectors.

Fahad Alsarhan, Team Leader of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, said: "Youth empowerment continues to be one of the main pillars of our social responsibility program. We have always been committed to offering our support and patronage to aspiring creative talents and young innovators; as we adamantly believe in the importance of investing in national talents and the need to empower youth with knowledge and education. This exhibition is a perfect example showcasing the innovative drive and creative spirit of Kuwait's youth, and we are proud of the role we are playing in nurturing and supporting the limitless potential of this country's younger generations."

KIB has always been dedicated to providing comprehensive support to the youth population in Kuwait. The



Bank participates in various youth-focused initiatives throughout the year, focusing especially on career and student fairs in an effort to attract young local talents into the banking sector. KIB also offers a number of tailored products and banking solutions that are crafted to suit their contemporary lifestyles and meet their particular financial needs. This includes the Shabab Al-Dawli youth account, as well as numerous promotional campaigns and special offers taking place during the year.



India rail disaster kills 36

FRENCH SOCIALISTS SEEK RELEVANCE IN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

NEARLY 70 KILLED IN FRESH YEMEN FIGHTING
 'DESPITE FIREPOWER, REBELS STILL CONTROL CAPITAL'

ADEN: Clashes in Yemen killed at least 66 people in 24 hours, medics and security sources said yesterday, as pro-government forces pushed to oust rebels from a key stretch of coastline. Air strikes by a Saudi-led coalition and fighting near the strategic Bab al-Mandab strait killed at least 52 fighters among Shiite Huthi rebels and allied troops loyal to ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh, the sources said. Fourteen members of the pro-government forces were also killed.

Forces loyal to President Abdrabbo Mansour Hadi

launched a vast offensive on Jan 7 to retake the Dhubab district overlooking the Bab al-Mandab, a key maritime route connecting the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. Coalition warplanes and Apache attack helicopters have been pounding rebels in support of pro-Hadi forces advancing toward the Red Sea city of Mokha, military sources said. By Sunday, loyalist forces were within 10 kilometers of Mokha, they said, but the offensive has been slowed by mines laid by rebels.

The rebels took their dead to a military hospital in

Hodeida, a major western port city they control, a medical source said. The hospital received 14 dead on Saturday and 38 yesterday, as well as 55 wounded rebels, the source said. On the pro-government side, 14 soldiers were killed and 22 wounded, according to medics in the southern port city of Aden where Hadi's government is based. The Saudi-led coalition intervened in Yemen in March 2015 in support of the beleaguered president.

But despite its massively superior firepower, the

rebels and their allies still control the capital Sanaa and much of the central and northern highlands, as well as the 450-kilometer Red Sea coast. United Nations peace envoy Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed arrived in Sanaa yesterday for talks and to push a peace plan that would restore a ceasefire and lead to a political transition in the country. The plan would lead to a political transition under which Hadi's powers would be significantly reduced. —AFP



SANAA: Security forces guard Sanaa International Airport as they wait for the arrival of the UN Special Envoy to Yemen yesterday. —AFP

TRUMP WIN CREATES UNCERTAINTY FOR WIND AND SOLAR POWER

HONOLULU: President Donald Trump has disputed climate change, pledged a revival of coal and disparaged wind power, and his nominee to head the Energy Department was once highly skeptical of the agency's value. What this means for states' efforts to promote renewable energy is an open question. States that are pushing for greater reliance on wind and solar power are not quite sure what to expect as Trump takes over. Many of them depend heavily on federal renewable-energy tax credits, grants and research, much of which comes from the Energy Department.

Former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, Trump's pick to lead the department, presents a contradictory figure: A Texas oil promoter, he also oversaw a huge expansion of wind-energy production while governor. When he ran for president in 2011, he included Energy on a list of departments he thought should be abolished, though he disavowed the idea Thursday at his Senate confirmation hearing. "We don't know what version of Perry is going to show up," said Michael Webber, deputy director of the Energy Institute at the University of Texas, Austin.

Renewable energy accounts for about 15 percent of the electricity generated in the United States. And 29 states have set targets for boosting their reliance on such power. Officials, experts and advocates in more than a half-dozen states with some of the most ambitious goals told The Associated Press that they are on course to meet their targets. Most said that while Trump policies could slow the expansion, they won't stop it.

The price of harnessing the power of the sun and wind has dropped so much that in many areas of the country, experts say it could be competitive with traditional power sources such as coal and natural gas even without federal subsidies. Further, they do not expect a fast repeal of the key federal tax credits that have propelled the industry for years. Still, policies aimed at bringing more renewable power online quickly are not expected while Trump is in office.

"We need to be moving faster, not slower," said Jeff Forward, president of the trade group Renewable Energy Vermont. "I fear we're tapping on the brakes right now." Those who promote renewable energy are concerned because Trump has expressed doubts about whether climate change is real, even though scientists agree that it is happening and that the burning of fossil fuels is a major reason for it. Trump also has called for reviving the coal industry, which has struggled in part because of the rise of renewable energy. And he has criticized wind turbines near Palm Springs, California, both for killing birds and for looking like a "junkyard."

Perry, at his confirmation hearings, said he believes climate change is happening and that some of it is caused by human activity. He also said he favors an "all of the above" energy policy, the way he did in Texas, and wants the federal government to continue research on renewable energy. He didn't say what he thought of green-energy tax credits and other incentives. The federal wind credit is set to be phased out in 2019, and the solar one, four years after that. Those incentives and other federal spending on renewable energy in fiscal year 2015 totaled about \$10 billion, nearly twice as much as similar subsidies for fossil fuels.

In Hawaii, federal tax credits reduced the price for developers and homeowners by about \$125 million annually from 2011 to 2014, according to an analysis by Blue Planet Foundation. During that time, the portion of the state's electricity coming from renewable nearly doubled from 12 to 21 percent. Randy Iwase, chairman of the Hawaii Public Utilities Commission, said incentives are important to the

state's goal of having 100 percent of its power generated from renewable sources by 2045, the nation's most aggressive target.

"We are in a toddler stage," he said. "When you lose focus, when attention is distracted, when you make it less of a priority, the toddler kind of wobbles." The Energy Department said in a report last year that the cost of getting power from wind fell more than 40 percent from 2008 to 2015, and solar panel prices dropped more than 60 percent in that period. Market forces have made green power big in Republican-led states, with wind turbines springing up along the Great Plains from Iowa to Texas. In those places - many of which have low or no green-energy requirements - the arguments for renewable power are more often cost savings and job creation, rather than the environmental benefits. —AP

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SYRIA REBELS ARRIVE IN ASTANA FOR TALKS WITH REGIME

ASTANA: Members of the Syrian opposition delegation arrived yesterday in the Kazakh capital Astana for face-to-face peace talks with the war-torn nation's government. The talks, set to begin today, will be the first time a delegation composed exclusively of rebel groups will negotiate with the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Chief opposition negotiator Mohammad Allouh flew into Astana yesterday morning, accord-

ing to an AFP correspondent who saw the delegation arrive.

He was accompanied by around a dozen rebel figures, including Fares Buyush of the Idlib Army, Hassan Ibrahim of the Southern Front and Mamoun Hajj Moussa of Suqur al-Sham. A source close to the opposition's team told AFP that the delegation had been broadened from eight rebel figures to a total of 14, in addition to 21 legal and political advisers.

The 10-member government delegation, headed by its UN ambassador Bashar al-Jaafari, left Damascus yesterday, according to Syrian state news agency SANA.

Rebels have insisted the talks will focus solely on reinforcing a frail nationwide truce brokered by opposition supporter Turkey and regime ally Russia last month. Although the two countries have backed opposing sides of Syria's nearly six-year conflict, they have

worked hand-in-hand in recent weeks to secure an end to the brutal war that has killed more than 300,000. The Astana talks, which Assad ally Iran is also helping organize, will be the first test of this new partnership.

They will be held in the city's luxury Rixos President Hotel, where staff members were setting up a single large table in a conference room under blue banners bearing the hashtag

#AstanaProcess. Rebels and regime figures are expected to sit in the same room, along with UN envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura. De Mistura on Sunday hailed the talks as a "good initiative" in comments carried by Russian news agencies. In addition to the hundreds of thousands killed, more than half of the country's population has been displaced since Syria's conflict erupted in March 2011 with protests against Assad's rule.—AFP

TURKISH POLICE CAPTURE SUSPECT IN ISTANBUL ROCKET ATTACKS

ANKARA: Turkish authorities captured a man believed to be among those responsible for rocket attacks on the Istanbul police headquarters and the offices of the ruling AK Party on Friday evening, police sources said yesterday. Armed assailants attacked Istanbul's police headquarters and an office of the ruling AK Party with rocket launchers on Friday evening. There were no reports of casualties from the attacks.

Police sources said the suspect, identified on Saturday as a member of the outlawed Revolutionary People's Liberation Army-Front (DHKP-C), was captured in the northwestern province of Tekirdag, along with a gun and a grenade. He is also believed to be behind an assault on police

in Istanbul on Saturday, the sources said. There have been no claims of responsibility for the attacks. The police sources said questioning of five other suspects detained in Istanbul on Saturday in relation to Friday's attacks was continuing.

The outlawed DHKP-C is listed as a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. It has staged suicide attacks against Turkish police and the US Embassy in recent years. NATO member Turkey has been hit by a spate of bombings and shootings in the past year, including a twin bombing claimed by Kurdish militants outside a soccer stadium in Istanbul on Dec. 10 that killed 44 people.—Reuters

IN MOSUL BATTLE, IRAQI FORCES FACE FEWER IS-PLANTED BOMBS

MOSUL, Iraq: Iraqi forces used to facing deserted, explosives-rigged streets and booby-trapped buildings have not encountered as many bombs planted by jihadists in Mosul as they did in earlier battles against them. The Islamic State group has no qualms about killing civilians, but the presence of a large number of residents in Iraq's second city discouraged the jihadists from extensively sowing it with explosives, officers say.

While previous urban battlefields in Iraq's war against IS were largely depopulated by the time the country's forces moved in, Mosul still sheltered a million-plus people when the offensive to retake it was launched three months ago. If explosives had been widely planted by the jihadists ahead of the battle, they would have been at risk of being triggered before Iraqi forces arrived. So while the systematic mining of roads and rigging of buildings with bombs has arguably been IS's signature defense system against Iraqi forces, in Mosul, the jihadists had to change tack.

Iraqi forces have seen less booby-trapping in Mosul than in Anbar and Salaheddin provinces, where earlier key battles against IS took place, said Staff Lieutenant General Abdulghani al-Assadi, a top commander in the elite Counter-Terrorism Service. "The reason is the families remained in their neighborhoods, in their houses," Assadi said. Some residents of the city have ventured out of their homes just moments after the fighting died down, and in recaptured areas of eastern Mosul, stores are reopening, goods are displayed in front of shops, civilian cars and pedestrians move along some streets and children play outside.

No comparison

Staff Lieutenant General Sami al-Aridhi, another senior CTS commander, said there was "no comparison" between the number of bombs planted in Mosul and those in Anbar province, where Iraqi forces retook the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah from IS. There are fewer because "here in Mosul, the residents didn't leave," Aridhi said. "Now, when we advance into any neighborhood, we don't think that the street is booby-trapped; our vehicles move normally."

IS needed civilians in Mosul to maintain at least the veneer of a functioning "state," and extensively planting bombs that could be triggered by residents would have both reduced their defensive utility and risked stoking popular anger against the jihadists. This does not mean that IS has completely forgone the use of bombs in Mosul. It is a

"change of strategy" for IS, said Captain Qaisar Fawzi, an officer in an Iraqi army engineering battalion. "They did not rely on roadside bombs, they relied on explosives-rigged vehicles," he added.

Vehicles rigged with bombs "are indeed the enemy's weapon of choice in the battle of Mosul," said Colonel John Dorrian, spokesman for the US-led anti-IS coalition. But, according to Assadi, in "important areas, the residents were displaced... and (IS) started to booby-trap them." Lise Grande, the UN's humanitarian coordinator for Iraq, said that bombs planted by IS have still posed a threat to civilians. "People who are trying to flee Mosul... have stepped on booby-traps and IEDs (improvised explosive devices)," killing some and wounding others, Grande said.

Civilians obstacle to both sides

And "based on experiences from other occupied areas, we're worried that IEDs have been planted by (IS) in schools, hospitals and other public buildings," she said. The large numbers of civilians in Mosul have also hampered Iraqi offensive operations. Aridhi said that while security forces could previously strike IS from a distance, "here, we are not able to use any fire, because citizens are present." "We are delayed because people are present," he said. Assadi agreed, saying that there is "little booby-trapping, few bombs, but (many) citizens whom we must protect."

Iraqi forces do however still use heavy weapons in Mosul: helicopters and warplanes have frequently carried out strikes inside the city, and artillery as well as large unguided rockets are fired inside it. The combination of civilians staying in the city and the lower number of bombs planted inside it means life has returned to some recaptured areas in Mosul far quicker than in other cities retaken from IS. Parts of Ramadi and Fallujah are still uninhabitable, but while some houses and buildings in Mosul have been wrecked and streets are cratered by bombs and strewn with rubble, other places have escaped largely unharmed.

"The booby-trapping began after the start of the Mosul operation," said resident Raed Mohammed, speaking to AFP at a roundabout in the city's east where street vendors were out selling goods, but which was still overlooked by an IS billboard and marred by damaged buildings. People were going about their daily lives before that and, had the jihadists extensively planted bombs, "it's likely that they themselves would have been exposed to explosions."—AFP



BUDAPEST: Candles and flowers are placed at the Szinyei Merse Pal High-school in Budapest, to commemorate the victims of a bus accident in Italy.—AP

HORROR COACH CRASH KILLS 16 IN HUNGARY

'MASSES TO HOLD NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING'

BUDAPEST: Hungary was yesterday, mourning 16 people killed when a coach carrying Hungarian teenagers home from a skiing trip crashed in northern Italy. The mass of flowers, candles and messages for the victims of Friday's tragedy continued to grow outside the children's school in central Budapest, which is getting ready to welcome students back today. The tragedy occurred when the coach crashed into a bridge pillar on a motorway near the northern city of Verona, then burst into flames. But investigators probing the cause of the crash have found no sign that the driver braked before the collision.

Some victims were catapulted out of the bus on impact but mostly they perished inside. Those who escaped did so by desperately smashing windows and leaping out. The crash has shocked Hungary which will hold a national day of mourning on Monday. Late on Saturday, several hundred people gathered outside Budapest's Pal Szinyei-Merse secondary school in freezing temperatures to silently pay their respects as scores of tiny candle flames flickered. "I spent many happy years here," said 24-year-old Timea Deutsch, who left the school five years ago. "It's tragic."

Victims' identification difficult

Speaking to AFP by phone, school director Gabor Jaky said the staff were making preparations so that everyone there could "convey the sadness and mourning we are all feeling." "We are also working with counselors to help the children and their families work through this tragedy," he said. "The majority of the children were 15-16 years old, so a number of classes were affected." At the time of the crash, there were 56 people on board. As well as the 16 victims, another 28 people were injured, Italian police said. Two of the injured, both adults, were in critical condition, Hungary's consul said late Saturday.

Flags will fly half-mast outside parliament on Monday as part of the day of mourning, the government said. "Black flags will be hung on public buildings and schools should find a way to mourn the victims of this accident with dignity before and after classes," it said. Cardinal Peter Erdo called on worshippers to remember the victims at church services around the country. "I am praying for the unfortunates who died and for the swift recovery of the injured," Erdo said in a statement. Foreign Minister Peter Szijarto said yesterday that the victims were so badly charred that it may take several days yet to identify them all. He said the repatriation of the injured started yesterday.

Heroic teacher

Hungarian police yesterday began their own enquiry parallel to that of the Italian authorities. Tibor Czako, head of the Pizolit company that owned the bus said it was "in

good condition" and "road-ready" before the crash. Verona traffic police chief Girolamo Lacquaniti said Saturday no other vehicle was involved, suggesting a mechanical fault or human error was the cause. "The coach was travelling at quite a constant speed and we haven't found any traces of braking," Lacquaniti said on Italian radio. One of the two drivers on board was among those killed, Italian media reported. Judith Timaffy, Hungary's consul, said the death toll could have been worse were it not for a teacher, who went back to rescue some of the children.

The teacher, whose son and daughter were reportedly on board, was thought to be one of those seriously injured. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban expressed his shock in a statement on Saturday, saying he was praying for "the families and loved ones of those affected by this tragedy." And Russian President Vladimir Putin, with whom Orban enjoys good relations, also sent his condolences. "It is especially tragic that children and teens became the victims of the accident," Putin wrote, according to a Kremlin statement.—AFP

FOUR QAEDA MEMBERS KILLED IN YEMEN DRONE STRIKES

ADEN: Four suspected Al-Qaeda members were killed in drone strikes in central Yemen likely carried out by US forces, a security source said yesterday. The source, asking not to be identified, said three "armed fighters of Al-Qaeda" died when their vehicle was struck on Saturday in the Sawmaa region of Al-Bayda province. A drone strike on Friday killed a local military instructor for Al-Qaeda in the same province, he said.

The United States, which considers Al-Qaeda's Yemen-based franchise, Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), to be its most dangerous, is the only force operating drones over Yemen. But it only sporadically reports on a long-running bombing campaign against AQAP. Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State jihadist group have exploited a power vacuum created by the two-year-old conflict in Yemen between the government and Shiite Huthi rebels, especially in the country's south and southeast.—AFP

DAYLONG SPASM OF VIOLENCE LEAVES 27 DEAD IN NORTH BRAZIL

SAO PAULO: A wave of violence has left 27 people dead in the Brazilian state of Para, a bloodletting authorities say might have been provoked by the murder of a police officer. The killings took place over a daylong stretch from Friday into Saturday, and included what authorities said appeared to be several execution-style murders. A government statement said officials are investigating whether the deadly

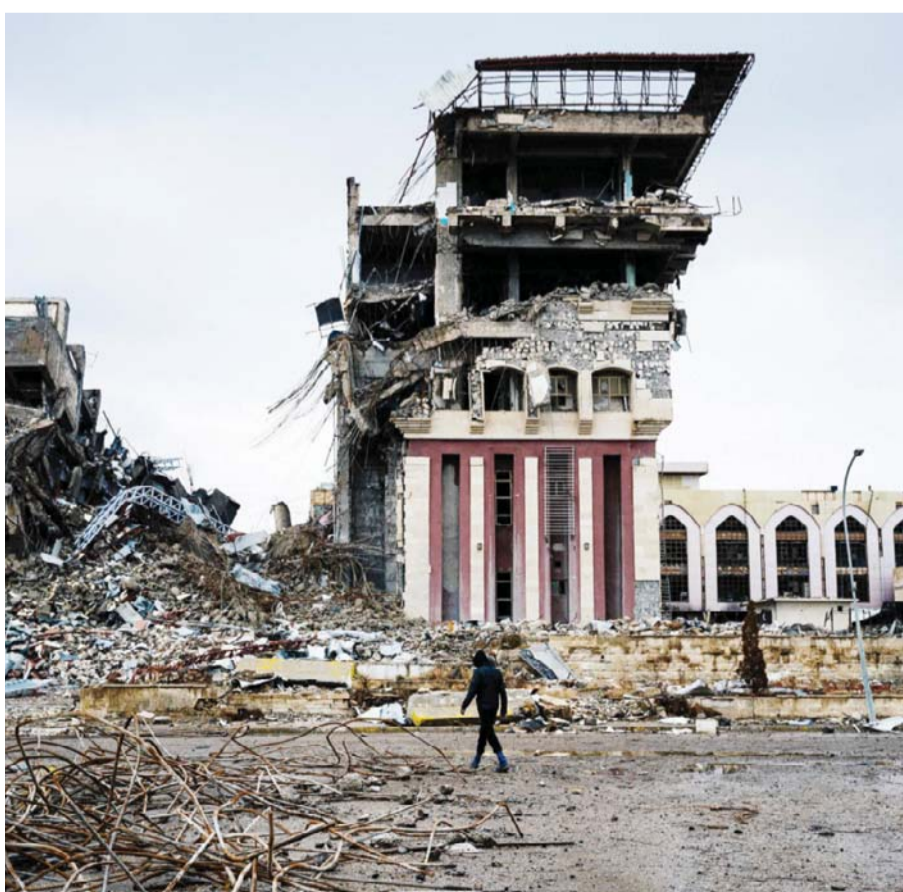
violence-centered mostly in and around the city of Belem was linked to the death of Rafael da Silva Costa, an officer fatally shot early Friday during a police operation on the city outskirts. Brazil has had an unusually bloody start to the year, especially in its impoverished north, which has also been wracked by prison violence that claimed the lives of scores of inmates in recent weeks.—AFP

GERMAN POLICE ARREST ACCOMPLICE OF AUSTRIAN TERROR SUSPECT

BERLIN: German police said yesterday they have arrested a man accused of having ties to a suspected Islamic extremist captured in Austria and thought to have been plotting an attack. A spokesman for the state police in North Rhine-Westphalia said the man was taken into custody on Saturday in the western city of Neuss on a warrant for "planning a serious crime targeting the state." He declined to provide further details. German news magazine Focus had reported earlier, citing judicial sources, that the elite SEK command force had stormed the man's flat on the suspicion he was planning a bombing targeting police and soldiers. Focus said the man and the teenage suspect arrested late Friday in Vienna, an Austrian citizen from the

Albanian minority, were believed to have "experimented with material to build explosives" in the flat in Neuss.

German police confiscated computers and mobile phones from the home, and the suspect's wife was temporarily detained for questioning, according to the report. Focus said the man arrested in Austria had told investigators that he had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) group and revealed the link to the accomplice in Neuss. Germany has been on high alert since a Tunisian failed asylum seeker, Anis Amri, ploughed a lorry through a crowded Berlin Christmas market in December in an attack that killed 12 people. IS claimed the deadly assault.—AFP



MOSUL: An Iraqi man walks outside Mosul's University yesterday, a week after Iraqi counter-terrorism service (CTS) retook it from the Islamic State (IS) jihadists.—AFP

TRUMP HOTEL STARTS INAUGURAL TRADITION AMID ETHICS CONCERN

WASHINGTON: Red, white and blue balloons rained down over crystal chandeliers in the soaring atrium of the Trump International Hotel at midnight in "a new inaugural tradition," its social media account promised. But while President Donald Trump's hotel in Washington did serve as a hub of Friday's inaugural activities, it also stands as ground zero for what top Democrats and some ethics advisers see as his unique web of conflicts of interest. Trump's lease with the federal government to develop and operate a hotel inside the historic Old Post Office building expressly prohibits any elected official from benefiting from the property, yet Trump has not divested from his company or this particular project.

The government's General Services Administration previously said it would refrain from commenting on the apparent contract violation until Trump took office, which he did at noon Friday. The agency did not respond to requests for comment. "I think it's a simple matter of amending the lease," said Patrick Keogh, a real estate investor in Austin, Texas, who has developed projects for the GSA and other federal agencies. He said Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter and chief negotiator on the hotel, should ask the GSA to exempt her father from that provision of the contract. The GSA should make the process public and transparent, Keogh said.

Others say Trump must relinquish ownership of the hotel. More broadly, they argue, Trump should sell off his company and put the cash into a blind trust as previous presidents have done. He is not legally required to do so, but it's become common for presidents to separate themselves from their personal finances to avoid any possible conflicts with national policy. The liberal-funded watchdog group Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington complained to the GSA that it should terminate its deal or take legal action because the president had violated the conditions of the lease.

Conflicts of interest

The American Civil Liberties Union said it had filed a Freedom of Information Act request for documents about Trump's conflicts of interest, including any recent memos, emails and other private communications on the issue with his transition team. The Washington hotel also attracted protesters on Friday and Saturday. People participating in the women's march Saturday booed in unison as they walked by, and many left their protest signs in front of the building. Trump handed control of his international real estate development, property management and licensing company to his two adult sons.

To help ease the appearance of conflicts of interest, the company said it would not enter into any new international deals, promised to hire a compliance officer and ethics adviser to vet domestic deals, donate foreign profit from its hotels and refrain from doing anything that could be perceived as exploiting the office of the presidency. "The Trump Organization has directed that no communications of the organization, including social media accounts, will

reference or otherwise be tied to President-elect Trump's role as president of the United States or the office of the presidency," a company attorney wrote in a briefing released earlier this month.

Trump has voluntarily taken these measures, since few conflict laws apply to the president or vice president. That means people will have to trust that the president and his company are following through. "We are waiting for you Mr. President! Thank you!" Trump's Washington hotel wrote on its Twitter account shortly before the president was scheduled to roll past the Pennsylvania Avenue property as part of the inaugural parade. Indeed, Trump hopped out of his motorcade to walk and wave in front of the hotel. The tweet would appear to violate the company's no-reference-to-the-president policy. Trump Organization representatives did not respond to requests for comment.

Just another phase

Patricia Tang, the Washington hotel's director of sales and marketing - who said she was responsible for social media - did not directly answer a questions about the possible violation. But she said, "We have nothing to do with the administration. We have nothing to do with the presidency. We just want to be the best possible luxury hotel that we can be." The new White House raised eyebrows on its first day by posting on its official website a biography of first lady Melania Trump that included an explicit reference to her jewelry collection, which it noted was sold on the home-shopping channel QVC. By Saturday, that line had been edited and simplified to say that she had "launched her own jewelry collection."

A spokeswoman for the first lady said the website was updated out of "an abundance of caution" and that the jewelry line is no longer available in any case. There have also been questions about what the Trump Organization means by no "new" foreign deals. Earlier this week, the company confirmed it wanted to expand at one of its Scottish resorts, including plans to add a golf course. A spokeswoman for the resort said the expansion is just another "phase" of a project outlined in a planning document approved by the local government years ago, and so did not break any Trump promise.

But Richard Painter, chief ethics lawyer under former President George W. Bush, said every phase of a real estate project is like a new deal, requiring financing and government permits, and allowing foreigners to hold something back that the president might want in hopes he will shape public policy in their favor. Trump's administration addressed one potential conflict when the Justice Department on Saturday said federal anti-nepotism laws do not prevent the president from appointing his son-in-law to his administration.

That clears the way for Jared Kushner, Ivanka Trump's husband, to take a post as a senior adviser. Federal anti-nepotism laws prevent relatives from being appointed to government positions. The Trump transition team argued, and a career Justice attorney agreed, the laws apply to jobs in federal agencies, not White House posts. —AP



WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump shakes hands with Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer of NY, as he is joined by the Congressional leadership and his family while he formally signs his cabinet nominations into law, in the President's Room of the Senate on Capitol Hill in Washington. — AP

CAUTIOUS WELCOME FROM CONGRESSIONAL REPUBLICANS TO TRUMP ERA

'THE HOUSE AND TRUMP HAVE SAME PRIORITIES'

WASHINGTON: Congressional Republicans anxiously monitor President Donald Trump's Twitter feed, parse his pronouncements, and brace for potential controversy each time he gives an interview. But GOP lawmakers also say they're growing increasingly accustomed to expecting the unexpected from Trump, and they're learning to take his abrupt pivots in stride, even when what he says stirs divisions or casts doubt on key Republican goals. So at the dawn of the Trump presidency, the most optimistic Republicans on Capitol Hill have high hopes they can learn to work with the new chief executive to bring about positive change for a bitterly divided nation.

The GOP has monopoly control over Washington for the first time in a decade, and Republicans are keenly aware that voters expect them to deliver. "It's what the American people want. It's refreshing," said House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif. "You'll see the House and Trump working closely together. We have the same priorities." Many congressional Republicans, from Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., on down, were slow to embrace Trump's candidacy, and some of those concerns linger. Several lawmakers are wary of Trump's foreign policy stances, such as his skepticism toward NATO. Trump's fickleness, his tendency to embrace a position one day before seeming to abandon it the next, confounds some in his party.

That happened recently on health care and taxes, the two domestic issues for Congress this year. In a pair of high-profile interviews this month, Trump made a surprise call for health insurance for everyone and cast doubt on a core plank of the House GOP tax plan, before softening both stances in subsequent interviews. GOP Rep. Mark Sanford of South Carolina, his state's governor for eight years before coming to

Congress, said a chief executive needs to take a stand. "It's OK in a campaign world to cause people to not be sure of how you're going to react, it keeps them on edge and maybe not on their full game," Sanford said. "In the world of governance, it can be disastrous."

Trump himself disclosed that Ryan called him up and asked him to stop talking about taxes, because "it's very complicated stuff." But in general, Ryan and other members of GOP leadership, who are in frequent contact with Trump and his top aides, tend to be sanguine about Trump's erratic public pronouncements. They say that as rank-and-file lawmakers get to know Trump better their concerns will be quieted, too. President Barack Obama came under criticism from lawmakers of both parties for his hands-off approach to Congress, his apparent disinterest in schmoozing with lawmakers or using the trappings of his office to woo them.

Access to insurance

Top lawmakers and aides say they've already impressed upon Trump's lieutenants the importance of care and feeding of lawmakers, and they predict Trump will have better congressional relations than Obama. "There's an inclination this president has toward personal relationships, meaningful personal relationships," said Rep. Patrick McHenry of North Carolina, a member of the House GOP leadership. "So day by day, members get more comfortable with how this president expresses his power and utilizes his power. Even if they don't fully grasp it, they're gaining comfort with his approach." Some Trump supporters have said they learned to take the new president seriously, but not literally, over the course of the campaign, and GOP lawmakers are learning to do the same.

After Trump made his comment about every-

one having insurance once Obama's health care plan is repealed, lawmakers quickly decided that what Trump actually meant was that everyone should have "access" to insurance, which is the standard GOP talking point. "I guess you'd probably have to ask him what exactly he means by that, but my assumption is that it's a reference to what most of us have been talking about," said Sen. John Thune, R-S.D. "And that is we want to make sure that everybody in the country has access to a health insurance plan that works for them and is affordable."

Similarly, Trump surprised some lawmakers by declaring he had his own health care plan on the verge of completion; if so, no one has seen it. But others shrugged it off, concluding that Trump was probably really just talking about the proposals under development between Trump's transition team and GOP leadership. Lawmakers got an early taste of the power of Trump's Twitter feed as the 115th Congress came into session at the beginning of January. As their first act, House Republicans decided behind closed doors to gut an independent ethics office. But when Trump tweeted his disapproval amid a public backlash, the GOP immediately reversed course.

Now the hope among Republican lawmakers is that Trump will spare them his Twitter fire and focus instead on recalcitrant Senate Democrats, nudging them into helping the GOP replace Obama's health law and overhaul tax laws. But as Trump begins governing, even supporters on Capitol Hill say they can't predict what will happen next. "It's Donald Trump, you should expect the unexpected," former Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, said Friday as Trump prepared to take the oath. "If you think the last 12 months have been pretty crazy, wait till you see the next 12 months." —AP



WASHINGTON: In this photo, police stand guard outside the Trump International Hotel on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington. —AP

11 PEOPLE KILLED IN GEORGIA FOLLOWING SEVERE WEATHER

ATLANTA: Eleven people were killed and 23 were injured after severe weather struck southern Georgia, officials said yesterday. Catherine Howden of the Georgia Emergency Management Agency said the deaths occurred in Cook, Brooks and Berrien counties in southern Georgia near the Georgia-Florida line. She said the deaths were related to severe weather but could not specify whether tornadoes were the cause. Tornado warnings had been issued for parts of Georgia overnight. Local officials are still assessing the area.

No other information was immediately available.

The southeastern United States has been pounded by storms, high winds and unstable weather over the weekend. Four people died after a tornado with winds above 136 mph tore a 25-mile path across southern Mississippi before dawn Saturday. The National Weather Service in Jacksonville, Florida, has issued a tornado warning for Echols, Clinch and Ware counties in southeastern Georgia. A severe thunderstorm warning was in effect for the Florida panhandle. —AP

MISSISSIPPI TORNADO WREAKS HAVOC; KILLS 4

HATTIESBURG, Mississippi: Rain was pouring down in the pre-dawn darkness, and the wind was picking up as Darryl McMorris ran for his daughters' bedroom. The windows started blowing out as he dove on top of his girls, grabbing one under each arm as he tried to protect them. "As soon as I did that it seemed like we were flying in the air," he recalled Saturday. Walls began to collapse and the house began to blow apart as his daughters screamed. But he held on tight. When the tornado finished ripping its way through their Hattiesburg home he and the two girls were under a wall. Their house appears to be a total loss, bedding tossed 50 feet into a tree and their oldest daughter asking, "Is God mad at us?" But they're alive. "I don't see how we survived this," said his fiancée Shanise.

Across the tornado's devastating path, families were taking stock of the damage, hugging friends and neighbors, grieving over the remains of their homes and in many cases mourning those killed. Authorities said four people died when the twister touched down around 3.35 am Saturday. Shannon Hefferan, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service, says damage reports indicate it touched down in Lamar County before ripping into Forrest County and skirting just south of downtown Hattiesburg - the state's fourth largest city. The tornado continued across the Leaf River into neighboring Petal. Emergency management officials said the severe weather also damaged Perry and Jones counties.

Teams are out assessing the damage. Already they know that the tornado was accompanied by a deluge of rain - 3.42 inches over a six to seven hour period Saturday morning - Hefferan said. And the bad weather isn't over yet. The weather service anticipates another round Saturday night. A tornado watch was already in effect until 9 pm in parts of southeastern Louisiana and southern Mississippi, warning that hail, gusting winds and tornadoes are possible. Forrest County Coroner Butch Benedict on Saturday afternoon released the names of the dead: Earnest Perkins, 58; Cleveland Madison, 20; David Wayne McCoy, 47 and Simona Cox, 72.

Monica McCarty lost her father - Perkins - who died in the same trailer park where she and her boyfriend live and her son - Madison - who was apparently crushed to death while in bed at her mother's house where he lived. Standing amid

the tornado's carnage, McCarty wept as her boyfriend, Tackeem Molley, comforted her. "They couldn't get him out of the house. They said he was lying in the bed," McCarty said of her son. Molley said he and McCarty were in a trailer when the storm hit. Molley, whose bare foot was bandaged, said he climbed out through a hole in what had either been the trailer's roof or wall. "I had a little hole I could squeeze out of," he said.

Destruction

In the surrounding neighborhood, power company trucks ran up and down the streets and city backhoe plowed debris from the road. Dozens of homes were damaged. Sheet metal was strewn everywhere. Trees turned into spindly sticks were lying across power lines. At least three nearby churches had sustained damage. Mayor Johnny DuPree has signed an emergency declaration for the city, which reported "significant injuries" and structural damage. Greg Flynn of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency said "massive damage" was reported. At least 50 people have been treated for injuries at two area

hospitals, he said. Gov. Phil Bryant visited the damaged areas Saturday. Insurance Commissioner Mike Chaney says insured damage is likely to top \$200 million.

"You've got so many buildings that are for all practical purposes totally destroyed," said Andy Case, a disaster recovery specialist with the Department of Insurance. Emergency management officials reported 16,000 customers were without power as power companies rushed to restore electricity where damage allowed. At William Carey University, a Baptist institution south of downtown Hattiesburg, almost every building on campus suffered at least superficial damage. Many were heavily damaged. College officials closed the campus where 3,200 students study and 800 students live and are not sure when it will reopen. Saturday afternoon parents and students streamed onto campus to remove belongings from damaged dorms with some students making their way over shattered glass or around fallen bricks to reach their room. For students in their dorms when the tornado struck, it was terrifying. —AP



MISSISSIPPI: Lanada Miller stands before the remains of her trailer home being ripped apart, while leaving two other trailers with exterior damage, in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. —AP

TRUMP TWEETS CRITICISM OVER US PROTESTS

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump took to Twitter yesterday to criticize the millions of people across the United States who marched in protests against him a day earlier, including the celebrities who took part. "Watched protests yesterday but was under the impression that we just had an election! Why didn't these people vote? Celebs hurt cause badly," Trump tweeted. More than two million people flooded US cities Saturday in protests led by women opposed to Trump, who many fear will roll back the rights of women, immigrants and minorities.

The scale of the mass protests, echoed in sister rallies around the world, highlight the depth of resistance to the former reality TV star, two days after he was sworn in as president with an approval rating of just 37 percent. Pop diva Madonna made an unannounced appearance Saturday in Washington, joining hundreds of thousands of protesters who rallied for women's rights in defiance of Trump. Other celebrities at the massive demonstration included actresses Scarlett Johansson, Ashley Judd and America Ferrera, filmmaker Michael Moore and the feminist icon Gloria Steinem. —AP

UK GOVT ACCUSED OF COVERING UP FAILED NUCLEAR MISSILE TEST

LONDON: The British government was accused yesterday of covering up a failed test of its nuclear weapons deterrent last year, just weeks before lawmakers voted to renew the system. Prime Minister Theresa May refused to say whether she knew about the reported malfunction of an unarmed missile when she urged MPs to support updating the Trident nuclear system. The Sunday Times newspaper, citing a senior naval source, claimed that the Trident II D5 missile failed after being launched from a British submarine off the coast of Florida in June.

The cause of the failure is top secret but the source suggested the missile may have veered off in

the wrong direction toward the United States. "There was a major panic at the highest level of government and the military after the first test of our nuclear deterrent in four years ended in disastrous failure," the source told the paper. "Ultimately Downing Street decided to cover up the failed test. If the information was made public, they knew how damaging it would be to the credibility of our nuclear deterrent."

The malfunction came just weeks before the House of Commons was asked on July 18 to approve the replacement of the ageing submarines that carry Britain's nuclear arsenal. May was not

prime minister at the time of the test, but she took office shortly before the vote and successfully appealed to lawmakers to approve the £41 billion (47 billion euro, \$50.7 billion) project. In a BBC interview yesterday, she sidestepped questions about whether she knew about the malfunction when she made her statement to MPs. "What we were talking about is whether or not we should renew Trident," she said. "I have absolute faith in our Trident missiles," she continued, adding that tests take place "regularly."

Opposition Labor leader Jeremy Corbyn, a long-standing opponent of nuclear weapons, said it was

a "pretty catastrophic error" for a missile to go in the wrong direction. A government spokesman confirmed the Royal Navy conducted a routine test launch of an unarmed missile last June from HMS Vengeance, one of Britain's four nuclear-armed submarines. It was "part of an operation which is designed to certify the submarine and its crew," he said. "Vengeance and her crew were successfully tested and certified, allowing Vengeance to return into service. We have absolute confidence in our independent nuclear deterrent," he said. Britain is one of only three nuclear-armed NATO nations, along with the United States and France. —AFP



FRANCE: A woman casts her ballot at the first round for the French left's presidential primaries ahead of the 2017 presidential election, in Marseille, southern France, yesterday. — AP

FRENCH SOCIALISTS SEEK RELEVANCE IN PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY

PARIS: France's Socialists voted yesterday in the first round of their presidential primary with candidates including former prime minister Manuel Valls seeking traction in an election tilting to the right. After deeply unpopular President Francois Hollande ruled himself out of the race, Valls quit his cabinet and was the favorite to win the nomination when the seven candidates began campaigning. But his bid has been viewed by some observers as lackluster and two contenders from the party's left flank—protectionist maverick Arnaud Montebourg and Benoit Hamon—will push him hard to reach next yesterday's runoff.

The odds will be stacked against the victor, with many polls showing the Socialist candidate will be eliminated in the first round of the presidential election on Apr 23. The election appears to be shaping up as a three-way battle between conservative ex-premier Francois Fillon, far-right leader Marine Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron, a 39-year-old ex-economy minister who is outpacing his former Socialist government colleagues.

Battle for survival

With voters across Europe moving to the right, most polls currently show a Fillon-Le Pen runoff is the most likely scenario in May. National

Front leader Le Pen told a meeting of rightwing populist parties in Germany on Saturday that Europe was about to "wake up" following the victory of Donald Trump in the US election and the British vote to leave the European Union. The Socialists' primary is therefore viewed as a crucial test of the party's ability to survive and even reinvent itself. One voter in southwest France said he had voted for Hamon, who has proposed to pay the poor and 18 to 25-year-olds a "universal income" of 600 Euros (\$641) a month.

"I voted for Benoit Hamon because to me he is the one best placed to redress the Socialist party," said Jean Claude, speaking in the small town of Millau. Dominique, a voter in his 40s who cast his ballot in eastern Paris, said he had opted for Valls. "My main concern is that the left reaches the second round (of the presidential election). Valls is the most credible option against Macron," he said. Macron, a relative newcomer to politics, resigned from the government in August to set up his own centrist movement and his speeches have been packed to capacity in recent weeks. A poll published Thursday gave Macron between 17 and 21 percent of the vote in the first round of the election. "The Macron effect is real," said political analyst Stephane Rozes.

Tactical voting?

Some Socialist heavyweights have hinted they could support Macron over their party's nominee if he looks to have a better chance against Le Pen. Asked in a TV debate Thursday whether they would contemplate stepping aside and backing Macron, Valls, Montebourg and Hamon all demurred. Macron himself has ruled out a pact with the Socialists, announcing Thursday he would field his own candidates in parliamentary elections in June. Communist-backed firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon, who like Macron is polling in double digits, also risks splitting the leftwing vote.

The Socialist party is expecting around 1.5 million voters to take part yesterday, far fewer than the 4.0 million who turned out for the centre-right Republicans primary. Valls, who was slapped this week by a protester, set out to modernize the party but has struggled to unite his camp, with his rivals accusing him of betraying leftist ideals by forcing through labor market reforms. The four other candidates running in the primary are former education minister Vincent Peillon, ecologist Francois de Rugy, ex-MEP Jean-Luc Bennahmias and radical left candidate Sylvia Pinel. —AFP

UK'S MAY TO DISCUSS TRADE, NATO IN WHITE HOUSE WITH TRUMP

LONDON: British Prime Minister Theresa May said yesterday she plans to discuss free trade and the importance of the NATO military alliance when she becomes the first foreign leader to meet with US President Donald Trump in Washington. The White House's invitation for May to meet with Trump on Friday was seen in

Britain as affirmation that Trump values the vaunted "special relationship" between the United States and its longtime ally across the Atlantic. She told BBC's Andrew Marr that the Trump team is interested in discussing a new trade arrangement with Britain despite the "America first" theme of Trump's inaugural

address and his vow to evaluate every trade deal for its possible benefits to the United States.

Any national leader would do the same when deciding whether to sign a trade pact, May said. Britain sees a future trade agreement with the United States as vital as the country prepares to leave the European Union. However, Britain's desire for increased trade could clash with Trump's protectionist stance. May said she would also raise the value of the NATO military alliance during the meeting. She called it the "bulwark" of Europe's defense system. Trump has rattled European allies by suggesting NATO is "obsolete" and that the United States might not come to the aid of countries that don't meet targets for their own defense spending. May maintained that Trump understands NATO's vital role. European leaders worry about a watering down of the NATO role given the increasingly aggressive actions by Russia in recent years.

The prime minister did not directly answer questions about whether she will use Friday's meeting to challenge Trump over derogatory comments he has made about women. May criticized crude remarks of his that surfaced during the presidential campaign. But she said she would speak out if she finds his future behavior or comments "unacceptable." May said she has a long track record promoting equal rights for women, adding that she is proud to be Britain's second female prime minister. "When I sit down, I think the biggest statement that will be made about the role of women is the fact that I will be there as a female prime minister, prime minister of the United Kingdom, directly talking to him about the interests that we share," she said. —AP



SWITZERLAND: British Prime Minister Theresa May speaks on the third day of the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. —AP

POPE WARNS AGAINST POPULISM AND 'SAVIORS' LIKE HITLER

MADRID: Pope Francis on Saturday warned against populism, saying it could lead to the election of "saviors" like Hitler. In an hour-long interview with Spanish newspaper El Pais conducted as Donald Trump was being sworn in as US president, the pontiff also condemned the idea of using walls and barbed wire to keep out foreigners. "Of course crises provoke fears and worries," he said but added that for him "the example of populism in the European sense of the word is Germany in 1933."

"Germany... was looking for a leader, someone who would give her back her

identity and there was a little man named Adolf Hitler who said 'I can do it.' "Hitler did not steal power," the pope said. "He was elected by his people and then he destroyed his people." The Germans at that time also wanted to protect themselves with "walls and barbed wire so that others cannot take away their identity," he said. "The case of Germany is classic," he said, adding that Hitler gave them a "deformed identity and we know what it produced." Pope Francis however underscored that it was too early to pass judgment on Trump. "Let's see. Let's see what he does and then we will evaluate," he said. —AFP

14 MEMBERS OF PRO-GOVT MILITIA KILLED IN MALI ATTACK

BAMAKO: A pro-government militia in Mali said it had lost 14 fighters in an attack blamed on former rebels Saturday, three days after a suicide car bomber left more than 70 dead. Some 77 people were killed and 120 wounded in the suicide blast Wednesday which targeted a camp in northern Gao housing former rebels and pro-government militia who are signatories to a 2015 peace accord struck with the government. Hundreds of people gathered in the capital Bamako Saturday to pay their respects to victims of the attack on the last of three days of national mourning called by President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita.

The attack, Mali's worst in years, was claimed by the group of Algerian jihadist Mokhtar Belmokhtar, allied to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). 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. Despite hopes of unity in the wake of the blast, fresh clashes broke out Saturday between groups that have signed up to the agreement, according to the pro-government group GATIA (the Imghad and Allies Tuareg Self-Defence Group).

A post near Tin-Assako in the north-

eastern Kidal region was attacked Saturday, GATIA secretary general Fahad Ag Almahoud said, accusing "elements of the CMA"—referring to ex-rebels from the Coordination of Azawad Movements (CMA). "The toll was high—there were 14 victims," he said. The information was confirmed by a Kidal resident reached by telephone, but the CMA did not immediately respond to the allegations. 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 January 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. The United Nations has deployed 13,000 troops in Mali while France, the former colonial power, has an additional 4,000 soldiers stationed there. The UN Security Council agreed last week to consider setting up a sanctions regime for Mali to punish those who are hindering efforts to implement the 2015 peace accord. —AFP



ITALY: In this undated photo, rescuers work in the area of the avalanche-hit Rigopiano hotel, central Italy. — AP

NO SIGNS OF LIFE ON FOURTH DAY OF ITALIAN AVALANCHE RESCUE

PENNE, Italy: Rescuers combing the wreckage of an Italian hotel in a bid to find survivors of a devastating avalanche detected no signs of life overnight, officials said yesterday. As the painstaking rescue operation entered a fourth day, firefighters and mountain rescue experts again had to battle extreme weather conditions as they tried to locate the 23 people thought to be trapped under a vast pile of snow and the mangled ruins of the Hotel Rigopiano. Nine people have been pulled alive from the rubble since rescuers first reached the remote hotel in the mountains of central Italy early on Thursday.

All of them were located on Friday and no other potential survivors have been identified since then. But with scores of them working round the clock, the rescuers were refusing to give up hope that more people could still be clinging to life somewhere under the wreckage. Five bodies have been recovered so far and there were two other survivors who were outside the hotel when the avalanche struck at nightfall on Wednesday. It followed a series of powerful earthquakes in the region earlier in the day and some 36 hours of heavy snow. —AFP

TUNISIA'S POWERFUL UGTT UNION MEETS TO CHOOSE NEW CHIEF

TUNIS: Tunisia's Nobel Peace Prize-winning UGTT labor union opened a key annual congress yesterday to debate strategy and elect a new leader. The powerful Tunisian General Labor Union played a key role in the 2011 revolution that toppled longtime dictator Zine el Abidine Ben Ali. It has also been at the heart of the country's post-revolution transition, seen as a rare success story after the Arab Spring revolutions. The congress, attended by some 500 delegates, is set to elect a new leader to replace Houcine Abassi, who took office in 2011 just months after Ben Ali's fall.

With more than half a million mem-

bers, the UGTT was among four civil society groups that played an important part in a 2013 national dialogue that helped salvage the country's democratic transition. The groups were jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015. Two former UGTT officials are serving in the cabinet of Prime Minister Youssef Chahed. But the union has kept its activist outlook—a public sector wage freeze in the autumn prompted it to threaten a general strike. Abassi, 69, has urged his successor to "continue on the same path of militancy." His deputies Bouali Mbarki and Nouredine Taboubi are favored for the position. —AFP

Social Media Executive
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 Advisory Services - Kuwait

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 Qatar Airways - KSA

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 Conditioning Company - KSA

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 Resilience - ATKINS
 KSA

You will be responsible for leading bespoke project teams to design, develop, and delivering innovative solutions for clients within agreed timescales and budgets, having knowledge of relevant legislation and good practice coupled with a sound understanding of emergency planning and business continuity principles to provide relevant support to our clients.

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You will be responsible for cargo execution operations for all vessel calls within a given scope, including system updates and overall performance, driving efficiency, productivity and innovation in tasks and scope by working closely with the GSC, managing and inspiring cost-consciousness across functions to ensure constant reduction of costs.

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 Generic Engineering
 Technology - Qatar

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MH370 FAMILIES PLEAD FOR SEARCH TO CONTINUE AT AUSTRALIA MEET

SYDNEY: Grieving relatives of MH370 passengers will appeal for the hunt for the missing airliner to continue at a meeting between the Australian and Malaysian transport ministers in Perth yesterday. Australia, Malaysia and China on Tuesday suspended the deep sea hunt in the southern Indian Ocean almost three years after the Boeing 777 disappeared on March 8, 2014 with 239

people on board. "The MH370 next-of-kin implore the government of Malaysia to use this opportunity to urgently consult and reconsider the decision to suspend the search for MH370," campaign group Voice370 said in a statement.

"Personal letters appealing for a continuation of search from many family members are to be delivered personally to the Malaysia Minister of Transport during his visit to Perth." No trace of the plane has been found in the 120,000 square-kilometer designated search zone. But three fragments recovered on western Indian Ocean shorelines have been confirmed as coming from MH370. "I understand the disappointment and frustration felt by the families," Australia's Transport Minister Darren Chester said in a statement. "The tripartite decision to

suspend the search in the absence of any credible new evidence leading to the specific location of the aircraft was not taken lightly," he added.

The meeting with his Malaysian counterpart Liow Tiong Lai was informal, according to the statement. Both ministers are set to meet the crew of Fugro Equator the last ship to leave the search area off Australia's west coast in Perth today. Chester has left the door open for future operations, saying Wednesday the search could be revived if there is "credible new evidence" pinpointing MH370's location.

The relative group's statement pointed out that the Aus\$200 million (US\$150 million) price tag of the underwater hunt was still less than the cost of the Boeing 777-200. —AFP



INDIA: Rescue workers search for victims at the site of the derailment of the Jagdalpur-Bhubaneswar express train near Kunderu station in southern Andhra Pradesh state yesterday. —AFP

INDIA RAIL DISASTER KILLS 36 'FEARS TOLL MAY RISE'

NEW DELHI: Rescuers struggled yesterday to pull survivors from the wreckage of a train crash which killed 36 passengers in southern India, the latest in a series of disasters on the country's creaking rail network.

Officials were investigating whether Maoist rebels had tampered with the track, after eight coaches and the engine of the Jagdalpur-Bhubaneswar express were derailed at around 11.00 pm (1730 GMT) on Saturday. "The death toll has gone up to 36. It is a possibility that it may rise further," Anil Kumar Saxena, national railway spokesman, said.

Another railways official J P Mishra earlier said some 50 injured have been moved to nearby hospitals. The accident happened near Kunderu railway station in the remote district of Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh state. It came only two months after nearly 150 people were killed in a similar disaster, highlighting the malaise on a network which is one of the world's largest. Saxena said government officials and emergency workers worked through the night to try to find survivors. The spokesman said investigators were considering possible sabotage of the tracks by Maoist rebels, who he said were active in the area. "It is being looked into, it is one of the many angles we are looking into," he said.

"There is some suspicion (of sabotage) because two other trains had crossed over smoothly using the same tracks earlier in the night." Police in Odisha, where the train was

headed, dismissed any involvement by Maoist rebels known as Naxals in the derailment. "We totally reject any possibility of Maoist involvement in the derailment. Kunderu is not a Naxal-hit area," an unidentified senior intelligence officer was quoted as saying by the Press Trust of India. Television footage showed a line of carriages lying on their sides as rescuers in neon orange safety vests and hard hats tried to hoist passengers through the windows while locals looked on.

Workers carried a half-naked passenger covered in dust on a stretcher out of a tilted carriage. Another TV image showed a man lying faced down, crushed under mangled heaps of wreckage. Injured victims lay on hospital beds and stretchers, their limbs swathed in bandages. Mishra told the NDTV news network there were some 600 people in the carriages that derailed. He added that 10 buses have been arranged for passengers who escaped injury to travel to the Odisha state capital of Bhubaneswar.

Frequent accidents

The train came off the track nearly 160 kilometers from Visakhapatnam, the nearest city to the accident site. Rail traffic on the coast line has been suspended. Chief ministers of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh expressed their grief over the latest tragedy, while Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu said he was rushing to the spot. Prabhu announced compensation of 200,000 rupees (\$2,936) for the relatives of the dead and 50,000

for those injured. India's railway network is still the main form of long-distance travel in the vast country, but it is poorly funded and deadly accidents occur relatively often.

On Friday 10 coaches of an express train were derailed in the western state of Rajasthan, leaving many passengers with minor injuries. The latest deadly incident comes two months after 146 people were killed when a passenger train was derailed near Kanpur, in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, in one of the country's worst rail disasters for decades. Last month two people were killed and dozens injured after another train derailed, also near Kanpur. In 2014 an express train ploughed into a stationary freight train, also in Uttar Pradesh, killing 26 people. A 2012 government report said almost 15,000 people were killed every year on India's railways and described the loss of life as an annual "massacre".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has pledged to invest \$137 billion over five years to modernize the crumbling railways, making them safer, faster and more efficient. Writing on Twitter, Modi sent his condolences to the victims' families. "My thoughts are with those who lost their loved ones... the tragedy is saddening," said the prime minister. Modi's government has signed numerous deals with private companies to upgrade the ageing network. Japan has agreed to provide \$12 billion in soft loans to build India's first bullet train, though plans remain in their infancy. —AFP

PHILIPPINES VOWS NO WHITEWASH IN S KOREAN'S MURDER

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's office vowed yesterday there would be no cover-up or whitewash in the investigation into a South Korean murder by police. The kidnapping and killing of the businessman has fuelled fears about widespread abuse by officers as they prosecute Duterte's deadly anti-drug war. The businessman disappeared from his home in Angeles City north of Manila last October. Police from a special anti-drug unit abducted him under the guise of a raid on illegal drugs.

A policeman then strangled him inside Camp Crame, the national police headquarters in Manila, the Justice Department said last week. "We are outraged by the abduction and slay of a South Korean executive inside Camp Crame," said Duterte's spokesman Ernesto Abella. "We assure everyone that there will be no whitewash or cover-up. We will not tolerate abusive, errant policemen who betray the organization." The kidnappers demanded a ransom from the victim's wife and she initially paid five million pesos (\$100,000), thinking he was still alive, authorities said last week when they first announced details of the police officers' involvement.

The policemen for months led the wife to believe her husband was alive but he had been in fact killed on the day he was abducted, investigators said. The officers involved were from a task force focused solely on illegal drugs and stationed at the sprawling Camp Crame. The incident has shocked and angered the South Korean government, with Foreign Minister Yun Byung-Se demanding those behind the crime be brought to justice.

The police have come under intense scrutiny as the frontline troops in Duterte's efforts to eradicate illegal drugs in society, with human rights groups accusing them of mass extrajudicial killings. 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 repeatedly promised to protect police from prosecution if they are charged with murder for killing a drug suspect, leading to fears corrupt officers feel they have a green light to commit crimes in the name of the drug war. —AFP

SUSPECTED REBELS KILL TWO SOLDIERS IN INDIA'S NORTHEAST

GUWAHATI: Suspected militants ambushed an army vehicle yesterday and killed two paramilitary troopers in India's restive northeastern state of Assam, police said. The rebels lobbed grenades at the troopers before detonating a small bomb in Tinsukia district, police said. "Two Assam Rifles soldiers have been killed by rebels," said additional director general of police Mukesh Agarwala, adding that a gun battle broke out when security forces retaliated. He said police and troops have launched a search of the region, some 500 kilometers from Assam's main city of Guwahati.

Local media reports said the troopers were escorting tourists back from a festival in the neighboring state of Arunachal

Pradesh when their vehicles came under attack. Police said it was not immediately clear whether anyone sustained injuries. Northeast India, linked to the rest of the country by a narrow land corridor, has seen decades of unrest among ethnic and separatist groups. The region is home to dozens of tribal groups and small guerrilla armies that resist rule from New Delhi.

Many are fighting for independent homelands for their tribes and often compete against each other. More than 10,000 people, mostly civilians, have lost their lives to insurgency in Assam during the past two decades. In November heavily armed militants ambushed an army convoy in Assam, killing three soldiers and injuring four. —AFP

CHINA INVESTIGATES FORMER LOCAL PARTY BOSS FOR BRIBERY

BEIJING: China's top prosecutor's office said yesterday it is conducting a bribery investigation into a high-ranking official who was the mayor of a port city at the time of a warehouse explosion that killed 173 people. The two-sentence announcement about Huang Xingguo by the national prosecutor's office made no mention of the explosion in a warehouse in Tianjin, a city of 15 million people east of Beijing. But other officials have been punished on charges they took bribes to ignore safety violations that led to the blast, one of China's deadliest workplace accidents. Investigators found the warehouse held illegal stores of the combustible fertilizer ammonium nitrate, which caught fire and caused a series of blasts.

At a public meeting last year, Huang, who was the city's interim Communist Party chief and mayor, expressed "deep compunction" about the explosion. State media reported in September that he had been removed from his positions. He was expelled from the ruling party this month.

The country's Central Committee for Discipline Inspection said Huang had "severely violated political discipline," according to the official Xinhua News Agency. It said he took "huge bribes of property and money" and used his position to improperly benefit his son and others.

Most of the people killed in the explosion were firefighters and police who weren't told ammonium nitrate was in the building. The accident drew international attention to China's workplace safety problems and endemic corruption. Chinese President Xi Jinping has launched a signature national anti-corruption campaign snaring officials and party cadres at all levels. The head of a logistics company linked to the blast was given a suspended death sentence and lesser penalties were imposed on 48 other government officials and company employees. And the former head of China's national safety regulator, the State Administration of Work Safety, was charged last year with taking bribes and embezzlement. —AP



SANTIAGO: View of a fire in Pumanque, 140 km south of Santiago. —AFP

CATASTROPHIC WILDFIRES RAGE IN CENTRAL CHILE

PUMANQUE, Chile: Authorities declared a state of catastrophe in central Chile as crews Saturday fought vast forest fires described as the worst in decades. More than 450 square kilometers were ablaze in the O'Higgins region—an area roughly the size of Vienna or Tel Aviv. As fire and emergency crews were brought in, officials evacuated 200 people from the mostly rural area south of the capital Santiago. Some 30 homes were affected in Cardenal Caro and Colchagua provinces, the National Emergency Office (ONEMI) said. A local ONEMI official, Josefina Lopez, said that no one was hurt but there was economic damage.

Agriculture Minister Carlos Furche told national radio the disaster was "a sort of earthquake" for the region. President Michelle Bachelet took time out of hosting a visit by French counterpart Francois Hollande to monitor the situation and declare the state of catastrophe, which allows soldiers to be used to help battle the fire. A farming emergency was also decreed. Bachelet said France was offering help and she was also reaching out to other countries. Chile's National Forestry Corporation said on Friday that outside assistance was needed. Interior Minister Mario Fernandez said helicopters and planes in particular were required. —AFP



CHENNAI: A protestor holds a placard supporting Jallikattu, a traditional bull-taming sport banned by India's top court, as thousands gather demanding that the sport be allowed to resume unhindered at the Marina beach in Chennai, India, yesterday. —AP

TWO KILLED IN INDIAN BULL-WRESTLING FESTIVAL

NEW DELHI: Two people were gored to death yesterday in a bull-wrestling festival in southern India, a report said, a day after a ban on the controversial sport was overturned. Several towns and villages in the southern state of Tamil Nadu celebrated the popular Jallikattu festival yesterday after week-long protests prompted authorities to approve an executive order lifting a Supreme Court ban on it. But rampaging bulls sprinting through the village of Rappoosal in Pudukottai district fatally gored the two victims and injured 28 others, the Press Trust of India (PTI) cited local police as saying.

The Supreme Court last year outlawed Jallikattu after a plea by animal rights groups, which have long accused those taking part in the event-held annually across Tamil Nadu-of cruelty to the animals. The state's residents say Jallikattu is a crucial part of their culture and identity. Growing tensions over the past week in the state capital Chennai and other cities led Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday to issue an executive order that this year's event go ahead. But thousands have continued to protest and refused to celebrate

the festival, saying they want a permanent lifting of the court ban and not just a temporary order.

Chief Minister O Panneerselvam assured Tamils that the executive order would be made into a law during his state's next session of parliament starting today, according to PTI. Panneerselvam was scheduled to launch the Jallikattu festival in the town of Alanganallur in Madurai district, where the sport is most popular. But he was forced to cancel his appearance due to strong protests. In Jallikattu, young men struggle to grab the bulls by their sharpened horns or jump on their backs as the beasts, festooned with marigolds, charge down the road.

Unlike in Spanish bullfighting, young men compete to subdue them bare-handed. But critics say organizers lace the bulls' feed with liquor to make them less steady on their feet and throw chili powder in their faces to send them into a sudden frenzy as they are released from a holding pen. Organizers of the centuries-old festival insist the beasts suffer no harm and call the event an established part of Tamil culture. —AFP

DUBAI TOUGHENS FIRE RULES AFTER HIGH-RISE...

Continued from Page 1

The blaze was broadcast live worldwide, but authorities went ahead with the festivities despite the inferno, with residents and tourists gathered nearby to watch a dazzling fireworks display even as smoke billowed out of the tower. The fire sparked panic as the fire spread along the facade of the Address Downtown Hotel but only 16 people were injured. The Address Downtown remains closed and under repair. Yesterday, new cladding tiles could be seen installed on its exterior. Emaar, the state-backed developer behind the tower, did not immediately respond to questions about the new cladding.

Dubai has promised new fire regulation to govern construction companies, developers, building material suppliers and owners for months. But in announcing the new rules yesterday, authorities focused on details like how many pages the new law runs - 1,384 pages as opposed to 707 previously - as opposed to what they require. Dubai Civil Defense said the new law was not yet available for the public to read.

The United Arab Emirates has "proven to have the lowest number of fire casualties," said Sajid Raza, a member of the UAE Fire Code Council, putting the rate at 0.23 person per every 10,000 people. The UAE's rate

of fire casualties is "much lower than many advanced countries," he told a conference at the same exhibition. Taher said the low number of fire casualties is due to awareness campaigns and fire drills that are conducted at schools, hotels and residential buildings regularly.

Electric short circuits have been behind most of Dubai's fires, according to Dubai Civil Defense chief Major General Rashid Al-Matrooshi. "More than 70 percent of fires in building are caused by electricity," he said. Dubai is looking into introducing nanotechnology that could put out the fire instantly, he said. "To avoid using large fire extinguishers, a (nanotechnology) piece that is 2 centimeters by 2 centimeters can be used to fight the cause of the fire," he told the same forum. He said Dubai is hoping to start production of such devices in the first quarter of this year. These micro-extinguishers reportedly release fire extinguishing gas as soon as the temperature reaches a certain level.

In July last year, a fire gutted the 75-storey Sulafa tower in Dubai marina, with the flames spreading up quickly at least 15 floors of the building. In November 2015, a fire engulfed three residential blocs in central Dubai and led to services on a metro line being suspended, although no one was hurt. In Feb 2015, a blaze gutted one of the emirate's tallest buildings, also in the Dubai Marina neighborhood. — Agencies

TROOPS NEAR BANJUL AFTER JAMMEH FLEES

Continued from Page 1

He left behind a small minority of diehard supporters, some of whom wept as his plane departed.

The choice of Equatorial Guinea for his exile has helped ease concerns that Jammeh might interfere in his nation's politics if he stayed in Guinea, whose border is not far from The Gambia's eastern region. The strongman personally controlled certain sections of the security forces, and his long tenure was marked by systematic rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and arbitrary detention. But critics have raised concerns over the wording of a statement issued by the UN, ECOWAS and the African Union that seemed to offer Jammeh comfortable guarantees for his future.

"No legislative measures" would be taken that would infringe the "dignity, security, safety and rights" of Jammeh or his family, it said, noting that he could return when he pleased and that property "lawfully" belonging to him would not be seized. Equatorial Guinea is not a signatory to the Rome Statute that established the International Criminal Court, meaning Jammeh would not be extradited in the event he was charged with crimes against humanity or other serious offences. One Banjul-based diplomat described the provision for Jammeh to return to The Gambia without hindrance as ill-advised. Experts told AFP

the document was not legally binding and would be left to the interpretation of the new government.

Jammeh took power in a 1994 coup from the country's only other president since independence from Britain, Dawda Jawara, making this The Gambia's first democratic transition of power. "We are going to wait for Barrow at the airport all the way to State House. Before we were scared to come out," said security guard Babacar Jallow, describing Jammeh as "a killer". With Jammeh gone, all eyes will be on the Barrow administration as they make their first steps as a government of reform and development.

"The will of the people has come to be - at last," said Isatou Touray, a key official in the government-in-waiting. "Democracy is back, you can't stop the people." The first priority will be to ensure the safe return of tens of thousands of people who have fled in recent weeks fearing a bloody end to the crisis, Touray said on Saturday. The crisis had also sparked the exodus of thousands of foreign visitors, dealing a potentially devastating blow to a country which earns up to 20 percent of its income from tourism. The United States yesterday hailed "the commitment to democracy and the restraint shown by the Gambian people over the past weeks," as well as the leadership showed by west African heads of state who mediated the crisis. — AFP

ISRAEL OKS SETTLER HOMES AFTER TRUMP TAKES...

Continued from Page 1

Trump has pledged strong support for Israel and vowed during his campaign to recognize Jerusalem as the country's capital despite the city's contested status. Israeli rightwing politicians have welcomed his election, with hardliners who oppose a Palestinian state hoping it will allow them to move forward with their long-held goal of annexing most of the West Bank. The United States is Israel's most important ally, providing it with more than \$3 billion per year in defense aid, but Obama grew frustrated with Israeli settlement building. He declined to veto a Dec 23 UN Security Council resolution condemning settlements. Trump had called for the resolution to be vetoed.

In an initial move following Trump's inauguration, Israeli officials yesterday approved building permits for 566 settler homes in the urban settlements of Pisgat Zeev, Ramat Shlomo and Ramot in annexed east Jerusalem. "The rules of the game have changed with Donald Trump's arrival as president," Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Meir Turjeman told AFP. "We no longer have our hands tied as in the time of Barack Obama. Now we can finally build."

The Palestinian presidency condemned the move, calling it a violation of the UN resolution. A draft bill to annex the Maale Adumim settlement in the occupied West Bank had been on the agenda for approval by a ministerial committee legislation yesterday. Such a move could badly damage prospects for a two-state solution. But the inner circle of senior ministers known as the security cabinet blocked it for the time being, a member said. "What was decided was to wait for the meeting which will certainly take place within a few weeks," Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz told Israeli public radio. "Then we shall have another (ministerial) debate on the matter," he said.

Annexing Maale Adumim unilaterally would set off alarm bells globally, with many warning that it would be another step towards dividing the occupied West Bank between north and south, making a contiguous Palestinian state difficult to achieve. But for some Israeli ministers who oppose a Palestinian state, that is precisely the point. "We have to tell the American administration what we want and not wait for orders from the administration," Justice Minister Ayelet Shaked told Israel's army radio.

Maale Adumim, in a strategic location east of Jerusalem, has some 37,000 residents. Some peace proposals have envisioned it becoming part of Israel in land swaps agreed with the Palestinians, but not unilaterally. It was unclear whether the annexation proposal would apply to another key area called E1, located between the settlement and east Jerusalem. The Palestinians see east Jerusalem as the capital of their future state, while Israel views the entire city as its capital.

Settlements watchdog Ir Amim said "the annexation of Maale Adumim and E1 will block east Jerusalem on its eastern side, swallow up its last development reserves and deepen the detachment from the West Bank. "Given Maale Adumim's critical location in the heart of the West Bank, the international community has for years been following with special concern all developments in this area, seen as a touchstone for the viability of a two-state solution."

Israel occupied the West Bank and east Jerusalem in 1967, and later annexed east Jerusalem in a move never recognized by the international community. Settlements in both the West Bank and east Jerusalem are viewed as illegal under international law. Some 400,000 Israeli settlers live in the West Bank, with another 200,000 in east Jerusalem. In comparison, around 2.9 million Palestinians live in the West Bank and east Jerusalem. — Agencies

ROCKY START FOR NEW WHITE HOUSE

Continued from Page 1

"I made a speech. I looked out, the field was, it looked like a million, million and a half people," he told CIA staff. "They showed a field where there were practically nobody standing there. And they said, Donald Trump did not draw well," he added. The comments drew criticism from outgoing CIA director John Brennan, who resigned on Friday, according to a New York Times report. The Times quoted Nick Shapiro, who served as Brennan's chief of staff saying Brennan "is deeply saddened and angered at Donald Trump's despicable display of self-aggrandizement in front of CIA's Memorial Wall of Agency heroes. "Brennan says that Trump should be ashamed of himself," Shapiro added.

White House press secretary Sean Spicer doubled down on the media assault, using his first press conference in the White House briefing room to blast the journalists seated before him for "deliberately false reporting" on crowd size. "This was the largest audience to ever witness an inauguration, period!" Spicer said. "These attempts to lessen the enthusiasm of the inauguration are shameful and wrong." Spicer left the briefing without taking questions.

An estimated 1.8 million people flooded the National Mall area in 2009 when Barack Obama was first sworn in as president, according to federal and local agencies at the time. Washington authorities reportedly predicted 800,000 to 900,000 would attend Trump's inauguration Friday, about half of the 2009 crowd.

Spicer appeared eager to lay down the new law with the press, whom Trump criticized repeatedly on the campaign trail and even branded mainstream media outlets "fake news". The intensity of Spicer's delivery suggested he and Trump were furious at the coverage of the inauguration, which many outlets said fell well short of Obama's 2009 inaugural in terms of crowd size.

A comparison of aerial photos taken on January 20, 2009 and Friday appeared to bear that out. Washington city authorities do not provide official crowd counts but TV footage clearly showed the gathering did not stretch all the way to the Washington Monument, as Trump asserted.

Trump's attack at the CIA headquarters came as he made a fence-mending mission after his public rejection of the assessment by US intelligence agencies that Russia meddled to try to help him win the November election. Trump, standing in front of a spot sacred to the CIA - a wall with stars honoring employees killed while serving the country - proclaimed he was fully behind the spy agency.

Trump took to Twitter early yesterday to needle the estimated two million people who marched in women-led mass protests against him a day earlier, including celebrities who took part. "Watched protests yesterday but was under the impression that we just had an election! Why didn't these people vote? Celebs hurt cause badly," Trump tweeted. A second, more formally worded, missive followed an hour later in which the Republican leader stressed that he respected the right to demonstrate. "Peaceful protests are a hallmark of our democracy. Even if I don't always agree, I recognize the rights of people to express their views," he tweeted.

There was no official crowd count for the largest march, in Washington, but organizers told AFP they were confident it drew one million people, protesting any rollback of the rights of women, immigrants and minorities under Trump's presidency. At least a million people marched in other US cities, according to a tally of official counts for 15 major demonstrations compiled by CNN. That figure did not include the many smaller sister marches held across the country and worldwide, which organizers numbered at over 600. — Agencies



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Focus

WA STATE SUFFERS AS FEWER CHINESE COME TO PARTY

In a remote casino in northeastern Myanmar, China's pervasive campaign against graft has taken its toll. Hundreds of local traders and farmers place petty bets as low as 10 cents, outnumbering a few Chinese who were once the VIPs of a gambling hall decorated with chandeliers and Renaissance-style paintings. "The business has been really bad since Chinese tourists stopped coming," said casino waitress Ling Ling who was considering leaving Pangsang, capital of the self-proclaimed Wa State that borders China, to look for better paying jobs.

The three-storey gambling parlor, with some 1,000 workers, offers games from jackpot slot machines to high-stakes VIP rooms featuring bets of up to \$16,000. It is deep in the Wa hills in one of Asia's poorest regions, where its majority ethnic Wa farmers earn an annual income of \$115. In the statelet the size of Belgium controlled by the United Wa State Army (UWSA), Myanmar's strongest ethnic armed group, the once bustling gambling industry is not the only casualty from the falling number of high-roller mainland punters.

From shopkeepers to moto-taxi drivers, local people said Beijing's tightening of visas for Chinese gamblers travelling to the Wa in recent years - part of the anti-corruption campaign launched by President Xi Jinping - has cast a shadow on livelihoods in the exclusive territory. The Wa State is now trying to diversify its economy, which relies heavily on China as a market for its exports of rubber and metals such as tin. Reuters visited the rugged territory in October - a rare trip by a major international news organisation that offered a glimpse into the Chinese-speaking statelet of 600,000 people that is beyond the control of Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi's government.

Poppy Eradication

The Wa State took shape in 1989, after the Communist Party of Burma disintegrated following a purge by Wa leaders. The 30,000-strong UWSA signed a ceasefire with the Myanmar army shortly afterwards and the two sides have not fought in years. Wa leaders say the region, which used to grow opium on a vast scale, underwent an eradication campaign against the plant used for production of heroin more than a decade ago. Poppy fields were replaced by plantations, mostly rubber, as well as coffee and tea, they say.

Many plantations are backed by investors from China, alongside businessmen connected to the Wa State leadership. Their "state-supported private companies", as described by several Wa leaders, control key businesses in the territory from gasoline to mining. "I hope there is more foreign investment so that I can diversify my business," said C Yang, son of a UWSA commander who owns a rubber plantation of 132 acres.

The stocky 25-year-old is typical of the wealthy, if narrow, Wa elite. The rubber plantation affords him a comfortable life in a mansion overlooking Pangsang, and fancy gadgets such as the newest model of iPhone and a fine-tuned Toyota Hilux truck. All these goods are unattainable for regular citizens in Wa, where life expectancy, at 60, is 5 years below Myanmar and 16 years behind neighboring China. Some Wa farmers rely on a World Food Program (WFP) operation to supplement what they can produce.

The agency, active throughout the area which has also experienced outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases such as tuberculosis, had planned to deliver 152 metric tons of food last year through its community asset creation program. "We don't have enough doctors and we are in need for medicines. We need help from the international community," said Tun Kyi, who oversees the Wa Healthcare Bureau.

No Opportunities

The Wa education program is in an equally poor state. The illiteracy rate stands at 90 percent, with 83 percent of adults having less than a year of schooling or none at all, according to a 2008 report by Health Poverty Action. That is in sharp contrast to Myanmar's illiteracy rate of less than 5 percent, based on data from the United Nations. Business owners and the Wa political elite send their children to China for schooling.

"Their parents want them to learn Chinese and to work in China, because children educated in Wa schools can't join the Chinese education system and have no opportunities," said Wa Wa Myint, a teacher at an elementary school of 700. Back in downtown Pangsang, bright, neon signs dangling from low-rise hotels, massage parlours and bars light up the main street a few minutes walk from a border crossing with China. — Reuters

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WHAT'S ANNOYING ASIAN NATIONS MOST?

How can you get under the skin of an Asian country? Diplomatic body searches, bomber flights, shrine statues and even doormats have set governments on edge. Here's a nation-by-nation look at Asia's figurative, and in one case literal, sacred cows:

SOUTH KOREA

South Korea takes offense first, and most regularly, with Japan, largely over disputes stemming from Tokyo's 35-year colonization of the Korean Peninsula in the early 20th century. But President Donald Trump has proven surprisingly good at pushing buttons in Seoul in recent months. During his campaign, Trump suggested that the United States would let South Korea defend itself from North Korean aggression if Seoul didn't pay more for the stationing of 28,500 American troops in the country. He also described a 2012 bilateral free trade agreement that was portrayed as a major landmark as killing American jobs.

Fewer or no US boots on the ground and calls for renegotiating the trade accord would raise serious questions for many in South Korea about the decades-long military alliance between the countries that was forged in the bloodshed of the Korean War. And then there's Seoul's northern rival, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un staged two nuclear tests and a string of ballistic missile test-firings last year. There's always the fear a direct attack like the deadly 2010 shelling of a South Korean island. Another attack will likely trigger retaliatory strikes by the South, which has grown tired of Pyongyang's repeated provocations.

Japan regularly infuriates Seoul when senior politicians visit a shrine that honors war dead including convicted criminals; when Tokyo renews claims to disputed islets; and when officials approve history textbooks that Seoul believes whitewash Japan's wartime aggression.

INDIA

Indians have long been known as a touchy bunch, so much so the makers of last year's blockbuster sequel "Independence Day 2" reportedly excluded all Indian landmarks from the scenes of mayhem and devastation wrought by the movie's invading aliens. In some cases, Indians have been so easily offended that it's taken everyone else by surprise, such as when a superbug discovered in New Delhi was named after the Indian capital, or when an Indian diplomat was subjected to a routine body search when arrested in 2013 for allegedly mistreating her Indian maid in New York City.

When the world was celebrating the 2012 discovery of the Higgs boson particle, some Indians griped that all the credit was going to British physicist Peter Higgs while the world was ignoring Indian scientist Satyendranath Bose whose work in the 1920s helped define the subatomic boson particle named after him. In recent years, many in Hindu-dominated India have been perceived to be intolerant of criticism against Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as their religion. Self-appointed "cow vigilantes" have attacked villagers suspected of killing cows, considered

sacred in Hinduism and yet a vital source of income for many Muslims.

When former US President Barack Obama in 2015 urged greater tolerance and harmony in India's multicultural society, he was widely derided for taking a shot at India's dignity. Last week, Amazon.com pulled doormats depicting the Indian flag from its Canadian retail website after the Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj threatened to deny Indian visas to Amazon employees if the company did not apologize and withdraw the product. Protests erupted a year ago after doormats depicting Hindu gods were sold online. There were also reports that India's independence leader Mohandas K Gandhi was featured on flip-flops in what many Indians view as disrespectful.

British rock band Coldplay triggered anger with a music video on India that showed stereotypical images of the country with Hindu holy men, peacocks and colorful festivals. Critics argued that it ignored the vast changes in the country following the economic boom that has transformed the face of Indian cities and towns. In 2008, Danny Boyle's multiple-Oscar winning film, "Slumdog Millionaire" also faced similar criticism for its portrayal of poverty and corruption in India.

CHINA

No issue is perhaps more sensitive and important to China than the status of Taiwan and Trump thrust the issue into the spotlight weeks before his inauguration by taking a congratulatory phone call from the island's president. That led Beijing to reiterate the one-China principle that has underpinned China-US relations since they were normalized in 1979. While China is keeping its powder dry for now, further moves to bestow legitimacy on the island's government or offer it big arms packages and other forms of support would likely draw a furious response.

China has also been irked over recent US comments on the South China Sea, particularly its building of man-made islands equipped with airstrips and military defenses. Despite the construction, Beijing intensely dislikes accusations of militarizing the sensitive region, which it claims virtually in its entirety. However, the issue appears significantly less volatile now than last summer, when China was incensed by an international arbitration ruling invalidating its maritime claims.

Economic concerns remain foremost for the leadership and officials have responded to complaints from Trump and others over alleged unfair trade practices by again arguing against restrictions on the export of sensitive US technologies, along with growing negative sentiment against Chinese investment in economies overseas that keep companies such as communications giant Huawei out of the US market. And as always, China is prone to lash out against all criticism of its policies toward political dissidents and ethnic minorities in Tibet and Xinjiang.

NORTH KOREA

Although just about anything that the United States does can be counted on to push North Korea's buttons -

and be used by the regime to whip up popular anti-US sentiment - one thing the US has started doing with more regularity lately hit an especially sore nerve. Because of the massive, wide-scale destruction caused by bombing during the Korean War, which essentially flattened the very vulnerable Pyongyang, flights by US long-range bombers like the B-52 not only get the regime's attention but do seem to cause genuine anger and anxiety.

Such flights have become a more common response following North Korean nuclear tests or other military activities seen by Washington as particularly provocative. They have the added benefit of reassuring American allies Japan and South Korea, but at the same time underscore the vast gap in perceptions between the United States, where the 1950-53 fighting on the Korean Peninsula is known as the "forgotten war," and in North Korea, where it was a defining an extremely brutal chapter in the nation's history.

AUSTRALIA

Australia's hardline stance on asylum seekers has frayed ties with its neighbor and close ally Indonesia, and drawn global condemnation from human rights groups. Under Australia's policies, asylum seekers from Asia, the Middle East and Africa who arrive by boat, usually from Indonesian ports, are sent to grim detention camps in remote Pacific island nations and are refused settlement in Australia. Any boats intercepted at sea are turned back or sunk, with their passengers and crews sent to Indonesia in life boats. The turn-back policy has caused friction with Indonesia, which was especially rankled after reports emerged that the Australian navy paid people smugglers to return a boat of migrants to Indonesian waters.

JAPAN

A "comfort women" statue is currently the hottest button between Japan and South Korea. The statue of an anonymous Asian-faced girl is supposed to represent all the women across Asia and from The Netherlands who were the victims of sexual abuses by Japanese wartime military. It is part of Seoul's campaign to gain global sympathy for its suffering under the Japanese colonial rule, just as Japan has increasingly pushed back from its earlier recognition of responsibility.

Also reflecting Seoul's deep-rooted colonial-era enmity is a statue of South Korean patriot Ahn Jung-Geun, who assassinated Japan's former top official in Korea, Hirobumi Ito, in 1909. Then there are islands. Japan's Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida described as "unacceptable" the use of the South Korean name for disputed islands in the official website for the 2018 Pyeongchang Olympics.

The website introduces the islets as Dokdo, while Japan refers to them as Takeshima. The website also refers to the waters that Japan calls Sea of Japan under the South Korean name, East Sea. In China, a memorial hall of Nanjing that highlights the 1937 massacre by Japanese troops is a thorny issue that still divides the view between the two sides. — AP

TRUMP PROMISES BIG CHANGE, PICKS SMALL FIGHTS

US President Donald Trump won the White House promising big changes to the nation's economy, health care system and foreign policy. He spent his first full day in office picking small fights. Trump turned what was intended to be a bridge-building visit to the CIA on Saturday into a media-bashing session centered on what he saw as low-ball reports about the crowd size on Inauguration Day. He berated a magazine journalist by name for an inaccurate report about Oval Office decor that had been quickly corrected. Then, he dispatched his press secretary, Sean Spicer, to the White House briefing room to reinforce the message in an angry tirade that included false and easy-to-check - statements.

The day left no doubt that Trump will govern, at least for now, as he campaigned: Fixating on seemingly minor issues, letting no perceived slight slip by unchallenged, and, sometimes, creating his own set of facts. Indeed, some of Trump's remarks at CIA headquarters, with agency brass looking on, might well have come at one of his raucous campaign rallies. But this time, it was a memorial to fallen CIA agents that served as the backdrop for Trump's declaration that journalists are "the most dishonest human beings on Earth". "I have a running

war with the media," Trump said, looking out at an audience of men and women who have played a direct role in the nation's wars against terrorism.

Even with Trump's track record, it was a remarkable scene. High-level CIA leaders stood silently as the commander in chief unleashed his off-topic attacks, though other agency employees who had volunteered to attend the event cheered the president on. Trump has long been easily sidetracked by relatively insignificant issues, particularly those that threaten to chip away at his carefully cultivated image as the ultimate winner. He repeatedly inflated his crowd counts during the campaign, even though he was easily drawing bigger audiences than his rivals. When during a general election debate Democrat Hillary Clinton raised old comments Trump had made about a beauty queen's weight, he took the bait and spent several days defending what he had said two decades earlier.

It seemed to be no coincidence that Trump's fixation on the inaugural crowd came on a day when throngs of women flocked to Washington for a protest against his presidency. The march appeared to draw larger crowds than the one that gathered on the National Mall to watch Trump be

sworn in as the 45th president of the United States. The women's march was widely covered on cable news, which Trump watches regularly. His motorcade routes Saturday also gave him an up-close look at the protesters, including some who lined the street and shouted at the president as he pulled back into the White House.

Distrust

In theory, the pace and pressures of the presidency should leave Trump with less capacity to respond to every irritation. He now leads the world's largest economy and most powerful military. His loyal supporters have pinned their hopes for change in Washington squarely on him, believing that his unconventional background and style will allow him to succeed where other politicians have failed. But Trump appears to have concluded that his ability to do so hinges in part on tearing down the national media, an institution whose attention he simultaneously craves. While most presidents view the day's headlines as a sideshow, Trump sees them as a daily barometer of his standing.

He's benefited from his supporters' deep distrust of journalists and the reality that most media pundits predicted his

defeat in the campaign - never mind the fact that many Republicans, including some now serving in senior White House roles, did as well. His active presence on Twitter and other social media sites has given him the ability to command attention for his own version of events, which is often replicated by pro-Trump outlets.

Now Trump has all the trappings of the presidency to promote his version of events as well. When Spicer stepped into the White House briefing room Saturday evening, the pack of ever-ready journalists that work out of the West Wing was at the ready to chronicle his remarks. Spicer, a Washington veteran who served in former President George W Bush's administration, was nearly shouting as he read off a script.

Like his boss, he played loose with the facts, including his claim that white "floor coverings" to protect the grass on the National Mall were used for the first time and drew attention to any empty space. The same coverings were used four years ago. Ari Fleischer, who stood at the same podium as Bush's first press secretary, wrote on Twitter: "This is called a statement you are told to make by the President. And you know the President is watching." — AP

COLTS SACK GENERAL MANAGER GRIGSON

INDIANAPOLIS: The Indianapolis Colts fired general manager Ryan Grigson on Saturday after the team missed the NFL playoffs for the second consecutive season, Colts owner Jim Irsay announced Saturday. Irsay also said that Chuck Pagano would remain as the Colts' head coach in 2017. "I will say that this timing was right for us," Irsay said. "We needed the time to go through the process. Internally, we worked through some things even through this week that gave us some direction on our final decision and I'm very excited about the direction we're going." The Colts went 8-8 this season, finishing third in the AFC South division and missing the post-season again. Grigson, who was in his first general manager role, had overseen the Colts for the past five seasons. The Colts signed Pagano to a four-year contract extension a year ago. He has a 49-31 record in five seasons with Indianapolis. After the Colts' final regular-season game, Pagano said he expected to be back in 2017. "That's the plan," Pagano said. "I don't have any reason to believe why I wouldn't be (back)." — AFP



TOUR OF QATAR TO RETURN IN 2018

DOHA: The Tour of Qatar, cancelled this year because of an apparent lack of sponsorship, will return in 2018, the head of the emirate's cycling federation told state media yesterday. Mohammed Al-Kuwari, the new president of the Qatar Cycling and Triathlon Federation, said the stage race will be held again after a year's gap in 2017 to allow the tiny Gulf country to help develop stronger national teams. "During the coming period, the federation is planning to organise strong local tournaments in a bid to discover local talents to represent the Qatari national teams," Kuwari told the Qatar News Agency in an interview. He added: "The federation will host international tournaments again next year, the most important of which will be the Tour of Qatar." It was announced in December by the UCI, world cycling's governing body, that the 2017 edition of the tour-and the women's Tour of Qatar-would be cancelled, apparently over a lack of a sponsor. "It is understood the decision follows difficulty attracting sponsor financial support," said the UCI at the time. —AFP

CHEN STUNS WAGNER TO WIN FIRST US CROWN

KANSAS CITY: Teenager Karen Chen claimed her first national title in shocking fashion Saturday by upsetting the favourites in the free skate at the US National Figure Skating Championships. The 17-year-old dynamo became the first skater since 2011 to win the title other than Ashley Wagner or defending champion Gracie Gold. After a record performance in Thursday's short programme, Chen posted the top free skate score Saturday for a combined total of 214.22. Wagner finished second with 211.78 points and Mariah Bell won the bronze. Gold finished well back in sixth. Chen delivered an emotional free skate to the music "Jealousy Tiger" at the Spirit Center arena in Kansas City. "I skated such a great short and I was definitely thrilled with it," Chen said. "So I had some pressure going into the long, thinking I really had a chance at this." Earlier in the day, Maia and Alex Shibutani won their second straight ice dance title while Haven Denney and Brandon Frazier returned from an injury to capture the pairs crown. —AFP



MONACO: French driver Sebastien Ogier (R) and his co-driver Julien Ingrassia (L) celebrate on the podium as they hold the trophy after winning the 85th Rallye of Monte-Carlo, in Monaco, yesterday. —AFP

OGIER WINS MONTE CARLO RALLY WITH NEW TEAM

MONACO: Sebastien Ogier made the perfect start to the defense of his world title by winning the season-opening Monte Carlo rally yesterday clinching the 39th race win of his career and first for his new team. The 33-year-old Frenchman, who also won Monte Carlo in commanding style last year, won what he considers his favorite race for the fourth straight year. Over snow and icy roads in the French Alps, he finished 2 minutes, 15 seconds ahead of Finnish driver Jari-Matti Latvala and about 3 minutes clear of Estonia's Ott Tanak, who held on despite being hampered by engine problems. Ogier, who has won the past four world titles, is looking to become only the second driver to win five. Countryman Sebastien Loeb holds the record with nine, all won consecutively. Last month, Ogier announced that he was leaving Volkswagen to drive the Ford Fiesta for M Sport this season, and he had only minimal practice time to get accustomed to the car before this race. Overnight, he led Tanak by 47 seconds and Latvala by 2:20. He was given some unexpected help, however, when Belgian driver Thierry

Neuville sustained a puncture on Saturday's last stage when he was in the race lead, which meant that Ogier moved up into first place. Despite finishing third in Sunday's first stage - which was won by Spaniard Dani Sordo - Ogier padded out his lead over Tanak to nearly one minute. With Tanak struggling with engine problems and incurring a time penalty, Ogier was even further ahead after stage 15, which featured the climb to the 1,604-meter summit of the iconic Col de Turini. Tanak dropped down to third and Latvala moved into second. Stage 16 was cancelled for safety reasons because there were too many spectators, leaving just the final power stage. Neuville salvaged some pride by winning it to claim five bonus points and climb up to 12th overall, having drifted down to 15th after Saturday's mishap. Neuville will look to bounce back at the next event in the 13-race season, which is in Sweden in three weeks. On Thursday night, a spectator was killed after being hit by a car. Organizers said the spectator was struck by a car driven by New Zealand driver Hayden Paddon during the first of Monte Carlo's two night stages. — AP

CANON TO SPONSOR RUGBY WORLD CUP 2019 TOURNAMENT

KUWAIT: Canon, world leader in imaging, announced yesterday that it has renewed its contract and become the first company to serve as an official sponsor for Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan, which will take place in twelve host cities across the country from 20 September to 2 November. Hosted every four years, Rugby World Cup is one of the world's most prestigious sporting events with the world's top 20 national teams competing across 48 matches to win the ultimate prize in the sport, the Webb Ellis Cup. Japan 2019 will be the event's ninth edition and the first in Asia. The 2015 Tournament, which was hosted in England, was the best attended with 2.48 million fans, the most viewed with record broadcast, digital and social coverage in more than 207 nations. As with other sporting competitions in the past, Canon will provide behind-the-scenes support to members of the press covering the Rugby World Cup 2019, including camera and lens maintenance services and product loans, to enable photographers to capture all the action of the tournament. The Canon Group will also provide the print and copying solutions used by the Tournament Organising Committee, supporting the event by facilitating the printout of handout materials and the streamlining of document workflows. As a Rugby World Cup 2019 official sponsor, Canon offers the full support of its diverse imaging businesses, ranging

from cameras, lenses, video camcorders and network cameras to copiers, multi-function devices, printers, projectors and medical equipment. Canon Inc. Chairman & CEO Fujio Mitarai said: "Following on from Rugby World Cup 2015 in England, Canon is delighted to continue backing the tournament, which will take place in Asia for the first time, as an official sponsor of Rugby World Cup 2019 in Japan. In addition to supporting professional photographers from Japan and overseas as they capture the intense action of the world's top teams facing off in peak condition; Canon, working together with the organising committee, relevant authorities, local government and other corporate sponsors, will do the utmost to support Rugby World Cup 2019 throughout Japan." World Rugby Chairman Bill Beaumont said: "We are delighted to be extending our relationship with Canon as a Rugby World Cup 2019 official sponsor. Canon is an important supporter of rugby in Japan, an innovator in its field and a perfect match for our premier event. "This exciting relationship underscores the significant global appeal of the first Rugby World Cup in Asia and we look forward to working in partnership with Canon to extend the reach and impact of the sport in Japan, across Asia and around the globe." Canon will continue contributing to the advancement of sports through its products and technologies.



HIRSCHER TAKES CONTROL AFTER KITZBUEHEL WIN

KITZBUEHEL: Austrian Marcel Hirscher admitted that seeing his Norwegian rival Henrik Kristoffersen ski out had determined how to tackle the decisive second run of the men's World Cup slalom that he went on to win yesterday. Kristoffersen, winner of four slaloms this season, was one of a raft of top skiers to bomb out on a tricky, technical course that Briton Dave Ryding surprisingly topped before the afternoon's second run. Chasing a sixth consecutive crystal globe, Hirscher clocked a combined time of 1min 45.23sec for his 42nd victory on the World Cup circuit. It was the perfect boost for the 27 year old-who also won the Kitzbuehel slalom in 2013 - ahead of the February 6-19 World Ski Championships in St Moritz. "The first run was definitely not what I was hoping for," said Hirscher, who finished ninth in the opening descent, more than a second off Ryding's pace. "The feeling during the run was okay, I was skiing on the edge, pushing as hard as I could, but all in all, when I crossed the finish line it was not so good, one second behind the very good skiing of Dave Ryding, which was really great to see." Hirscher added: "In between the first and second runs, there was a lot of thinking about how I could change something. It helped that Henrik was not scoring, it made my decision a bit easier to go for an all-in run."

Hirscher duly put in a trademark devastating second run to claim an impressive victory, his second in Kitzbuehel after 2013. It stretched his lead atop the World Cup overall standings and also saw him leapfrog Kristoffersen in the slalom table. Hirscher has now amassed 1,080pts in the overall standings, with Kristoffersen on 692, followed by France's Alexis Pinturault (681) and Norwegian Kjetil Jansrud (544). But the Austrian admitted it had not been pleasant viewing from the finish area when Ryding came down. "If an athlete is able to put such a good time into the snow on the first run, he's able to win the race," Hirscher smiled. "At the bottom, I was hopeful that my advantage was enough for today. There have been many close decisions this season, and I just said to myself 'let's just watch the race and see who wins'."



KITZBUEHEL: Marcel Hirscher of Austria looks on during the FIS World Cup men's slalom race at Hahnenkamm in Kitzbuehel, Austria yesterday. —AFP

'ATYPICAL PODIUM' Hirscher also hailed what he called an "atypical podium, if I can say that. It's amazing to have a new face on the podium", with Ryding's training partner Alexander Khoroshilov of Russia claiming third. Ryding's first run had raised the prospect of a massive upset on the Ganslern course, with the slalom raced in perfect conditions with temperatures around -8 degrees celsius (18F) and clear skies. But the 30-year-old Briton acknowledged that he had been left stunned by the second run laid down by Hirscher. "If I'm honest I watched Marcel and I didn't know if I had that in me," said Ryding, whose second place matched Britain's previous best alpine skiing result achieved by Konrad Bartelski in the 1981 Val Gardena downhill.

"I did what I could on the second run. It definitely feels like a win and it's something I'll remember for the rest of my life," said Ryding, who cut his teeth on a small dry slope north of Liverpool before tasting real snow aged 13. The result, he said, was "thanks to a lot of work and consistent effort, sacrifice, I've been getting better and better and today was a good day, I made no mistakes". "Maybe Kitzbuehel suits me. I had a good second run last year before skiing out and I took some heart from that." Ryding added: "Any race in Austria is incredible. You can't dream of skiing down there, with screaming and shouting fans go crazy. Kitzbuehel... It means the world to me. I heard the fans coming down and I was thinking that maybe it's for Marcel and not me!" —AFP



GARMISCH-PANTERKIRCHEN: Switzerland's Lara Gut competes during an alpine ski, women's World Cup super-G, in Garmisch-Pantherkirchen, Germany, yesterday. —AP

GUT REMAINS PERFECT IN SUPER-G, VONN STRUGGLES

KITZBUEHEL: Defending overall World Cup champion Lara Gut extended her perfect run in super-G this season with a comfortable win yesterday while Lindsey Vonn struggled to a ninth-place finish. For her third straight super-G victory, Swiss skier Gut finished 0.67 seconds ahead of Stephanie Venier of Austria and 0.86 in front of Tina Weirather of Liechtenstein in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. Vonn, who won a downhill Saturday in just the second race of her comeback from a knee injury and a broken arm, finished 1.65 seconds behind. "It was hard, very bumpy and very icy, also with the light it's very dark so it's hard to get a good feeling on this snow and this slope," Vonn said. "I didn't see Lara's run but I'm sure she skied very well. It really took some aggressive skiing today to win. I didn't quite have that today." Gut didn't appear satisfied with her performance initially, shaking her head in the finish area,

but her smile grew wider when it became clear that she had secured her 22nd career victory. Gut became the fourth woman to win the first three super-G races of the season after Carole Merle (1988-89), Katja Seizinger (1997-98) and Vonn (2015-16). With 100 points awarded for wins, Gut put a big dent in Mikaela Shiffrin's lead in the overall standings. Shiffrin, more of a technical specialist who was not racing this weekend, now holds a 135-point lead over Gut. Vonn started after Gut and immediately made a tactical error early in her run then had a tough time negotiating the more technical giant slalom-like turns midway down the Kandahar course, which was set by a Swiss coach. Still, the American appeared content and acknowledged the crowd upon reaching the finish with a wave of her ski pole. "It's a good first step. Like the downhill it took me one race to get into it," Vonn said. "So I think

today was positive. I didn't ski my best. I had some trouble with the ice. But I will train some more before. Cortina. I love Cortina so I'm really looking forward to next week." The women's circuit travels to San Vigilio di Marebbe, Italy, for a giant slalom on Tuesday before more speed races in Cortina d'Ampezzo next weekend. While Vonn has won a record 27 super-G races, it's going to take her more time to get up to speed in the discipline compared to downhill. Unlike downhill, super-G races are not preceded by official training runs, meaning Vonn will need to work harder with her coaches to regain her form in time for next month's world championships in St. Moritz, Switzerland. Vonn broke her upper right arm 10 weeks ago in a training crash on Copper Mountain, Colorado, while recovering from a left knee injury that ended her season prematurely in February. —AP

BEAGLE SCORES IN OVERTIME AS CAPITALS BEAT STARS 4-3

DALLAS: Jay Beagle's goal at 19 seconds of overtime lifted the Washington Capitals to a 4-3 victory over the Dallas Stars at American Airlines Center on Saturday. Washington won the opening faceoff in overtime and Beagle drove hard to the net to finish off a pass from Evgeny Kuznetsov. Washington extended its point streak to 13 games (11-0-2) and won in Dallas for the first time since the 2008 season. Alex Ovechkin and T.J. Oshie scored power-play goals in the third period to force overtime for the Capitals while Andre Burakovsky scored the game's first goal. Philipp Grubauer made 32 saves for Washington. Adam Cracknell, Patrick Eaves and Jamie Benn scored for Dallas. Kari Lehtonen made 18 saves.

OILERS 7, FLAMES 3

Jordan Eberle had two goals and two assists and goaltender Laurent Brossoit picked up his first NHL win as Edmonton blasted Calgary. Brossoit made 38 saves in his first NHL start this season and seventh career game. Anton Slepyshev, Mark Letestu, Connor McDavid, Oscar Klefbom and Ryan Nugent-Hopkins (empty net) also scored for the Oilers. Matthew Tkachuk, Sean Monahan and Lance Bouma scored for the Flames. Edmonton chased Calgary goaltender Chad Johnson by scoring on three of its first four shots.

DEVILS 4, FLYERS 1

Rookie Miles Wood drew a game-changing penalty and recorded the first two-goal game of his NHL career to lead surging New Jersey past struggling Philadelphia. Kyle Palmieri and Pavel Zacha also recorded goals and Michael Cammalleri picked up two assists to give the Devils their fourth win in their last six games (4-1-1). Goaltender Keith Kinkaid, who started for the second straight night in place of an ill Corey Schneider, turned aside 35 shots. Rookie Travis Konecny scored for Philadelphia, which was returning from a bye week and is 3-9-3 since its 10-game win streak in December. The Flyers allowed four or more goals in five straight games and in nine of their last 12 overall.

BLUE JACKETS 3, HURRICANES 2

Markus Hannikainen scored his first NHL goal as Columbus knocked off Carolina. Scott Hartnell scored the game-winning goal his second of the night after receiving a tape-to-tape pass from linemate Sam Gagner near the midway point of the third period. Hannikainen slid a rebound past Carolina goaltender Michael Leighton at 4:49 of the first period as Columbus improved to 4-5-0 since winning 16 straight games. Sebastian Aho netted a power-play goal and defenseman Justin Faulk scored his ninth goal of the season for the Hurricanes, who lost 7-1 to Pittsburgh on Friday night. Leighton made 17 saves.

SABRES 3, CANADIENS 2 (OT)

Zach Bogosian scored the overtime winner to lift Buffalo over Montreal. Brian Gionta and Cody Franson also scored for the Sabres. Artturi Lehkonen and Phillip Danault connected for the Canadiens. Robin Lehner made 36 saves for Buffalo while Carey Price stopped 35 shots for Montreal. The Sabres came close to ending it in the dying seconds of regulation, but Price stood tall on a partial break by Matt Moulson before following it up with a perfectly timed flash of the glove on Rasmus Ristolainen.

WILD 5, DUCKS 3

Ryan Suter celebrated his birthday in grand style, setting up the tying goal and

scoring the game-winner less than a minute later as Minnesota rallied past Anaheim. Erik Haula and Jason Zucker each had two goals-Zucker's second coming on a late breakaway-and Devan Dubnyk had 26 saves for the Wild. It was Minnesota's second victory over the Ducks in the past two weeks. Stefan Noesen, Cam Fowler and Corey Perry scored for Anaheim, which lost starting goaltender John Gibson to an upper-body injury late in the first period. The Ducks are 5-2-1 in their last eight games, with both regulation losses against the Wild.

SHARKS 3, AVALANCHE 2 (OT)

David Schlemko scored his second goal of the season 1:18 into overtime to give San Jose its fourth straight victory. Schlemko crashed the net to punch home a rebound of Logan Couture's second shot of overtime. Melker Karlsson and Joel Ward scored for the Sharks, who visit Colorado today. Francois Beauchemin and Mikhail Grigorenko scored for the Avalanche. Rookie goaltender Spencer Martin made 27 saves in his NHL debut for Colorado.

SENATORS 3, MAPLE LEAFS 2 (SO)

Tom Pyatt scored the decisive goal in the shootout for Ottawa. Toronto took a 2-1 lead on a goal by Matt Martin in the third period only to have the Senators tie the game with 1:11 to play on a power play on a goal by Mike Hoffman. Bobby Ryan scored in regulation and in the shootout for Ottawa, which finished 3-0-0 on its three-game road trip. Tyler Bozak scored for the Maple Leafs (21-14-9), who lost two in a row.

JETS 5, BLUES 3

Bryan Little scored twice and Ondrej Pavelec improved to 2-0 since being recalled from the minors as Winnipeg stopped St. Louis. Pavelec, who made 34 saves, was recalled from the AHL Manitoba on Tuesday. Blake Wheeler, Nik Ehlers and Mark Scheifele also scored for the Jets. The Blues hit the scoreboard with defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk scoring twice and Paul Stastny providing the other. Phoenix Copley, playing in only his second NHL game, turned aside 24 shots for the Blues.

ISLANDERS 4, KINGS 2

Anders Lee scored his second goal of the game with 10:29 remaining in the third period as New York improved to 2-0-0 under interim coach Doug Weight. Lee recorded his fourth two-goal game of the season, the ninth of his career and the second straight versus Los Angeles. John Tavares and Nick Leddy set up both Lee goals while Tavares and Jason Chimera also scored for the Islanders. Jeff Carter and Drew Doughty scored in the opening 4:06 of the third period for the Kings. Peter Budaj made 32 saves for Los Angeles, which dropped its third straight and lost for the fifth time in eight games.

COYOTES 5, LIGHTNING 3

Radim Vrbata matched a career high with four points (a goal and three assists) as Arizona snapped a four-game losing streak with a victory over struggling Tampa Bay. Rookie Christian Fischer became the 11th Coyotes player to score in his NHL debut this season. Martin Hanzal, Tobias Rieder and Michel Stone also scored for Arizona, which got 44 saves from Mike Smith. Smith is 5-0-2 when saving 40 or more shots. Cedric Paquette, Vladislav Namestnikov and Ondrej Palat scored for Tampa Bay, which is 2-7-1 in its last 10 games. Ben Bishop stopped 12 of 17 shots for the Lightning before he was pulled after two periods in favor of Andrei Vasilevskiy (six saves). —Reuters



MELBOURNE: Coco Vandeweghe of the US hits a return against Germany's Angelique Kerber during their women's singles fourth round match on day seven of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. —AFP

TOP-RANKED MURRAY, KERBER CRASH IN DAY OF UPSETS

MELBOURNE: World number ones Andy Murray and Angelique Kerber both crashed out of the Australian Open on a day of major upsets yesterday, as Roger Federer fought his way closer to an 18th Grand Slam title.

Murray was stunned by 50th-ranked serve-and-volley specialist Mischa Zverev in four sets before Kerber, the women's title-holder, tamely succumbed 6-2, 6-3 to Coco Vandeweghe.

The unpredictable results, following six-time champion Novak Djokovic's stunning loss in the second round, opened the door to a host of challengers-with Federer leading the charge.

The 35-year-old Swiss won the last of his record 17 Slam titles in 2012, but he took full advantage of Murray's demise with a 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 win over Kei Nishikori.

Federer, who looks back to full fitness after a six-month injury lay-off, said the hard-fought, fourth-round win could be significant as he now eyes a quarter-final with Zverev.

"This is a huge moment for me in my career," Federer said. "I was telling myself, 'Stay calm'. I feel fit, I've trained as hard as I possibly can in the off-season. That's what you tell yourself and you hope it pays off," he added. Murray had been the hot favourite after Djokovic's shock exit, but the Briton lost 7-5, 5-7, 6-2, 6-4 to Germany's Zverev to extend his wait for a

first Melbourne title. The Briton was never expected to be troubled by the 29-year-old, who has never won an ATP title, but he suffered his earliest Melbourne departure in eight years. It isn't since the 2004 French Open that the top two men's seeds have gone out before the quarter-finals, and for Murray, a five-time losing finalist, it meant yet more Melbourne misery.

"I've had tough losses in my career in the past. I've come back from them. This is a tough one," Murray said. "I'm sure I'll come back okay from it. But right now I'm obviously very down because I wanted to go further in this event, and it wasn't to be."

'LITTLE COMA'

Zverev, a former junior rival of Murray's, stretched to a series of elastic volleys to frustrate the Scot, coming to the net 118 times as he reached his first major quarter-final.

"I was like in a little coma, just serving and volleying my way through it. There were a few points where I didn't know how I pulled it off but somehow I made it," he said. Meanwhile Stan Wawrinka, who won the first of his three Grand Slam titles in Melbourne in 2014, came through 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/4) against Italy's Andreas Seppi.

The formidable Swiss, now into his fourth

Australian Open quarter-final, will play France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, who came from a set down to beat British surprise package Dan Evans.

Kerber's maiden Grand Slam title defence, and first major tournament as world number one, ended poorly as she came off distinctly second-best to the aggressive Vandeweghe.

The unseeded American broke Kerber's serve four times and was on top at the net and from the baseline as she grabbed her first win over a world number one. In the quarter-finals, Vandeweghe, who halted Eugenie Bouchard in the previous round, faces French Open champion Garbine Muguruza, who swamped Romania's Sorana Cirstea 6-2, 6-3.

Earlier Venus Williams, the oldest player in the women's draw at 36, also became one of the first into the last eight when she beat German qualifier Mona Barthel 6-3, 7-5.

The seven-time Grand Slam winner allowed herself to dream of a possible final with her sister Serena, who is steaming through the other side of the draw in search of her 23rd major title. "That could hopefully happen. We both still have to work very hard to get there," Venus Williams said. Her quarter-final opponent is Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, who beat fellow Russian Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-3, 6-3 to reach her first Australian Open quarter-final in nine attempts. — AFP

SERENA WILLIAMS AND BARBORA STRYCOVA RENEW GRAND SLAM RIVALRY

MELBOURNE: Serena Williams and Barbora Strycova meet for the third time today, and once again it's on one of the grandest stages in tennis. Williams, seeking her Open era-record 23rd major title, has beaten the Czech player both previous times. Both were in 2012 and in straight sets at majors - in the second round at the Australian Open, and in the first round at Wimbledon.

They come into Monday's opening match on Rod Laver Arena without having dropped a set in their three previous matches. But that's where the similarity ends: Strycova's fourth-round appearance last year at Melbourne Park was her best result here; Williams is a six-time champion.

Still, Strycova wouldn't have it any other way. "That's why you train, why you work hard, to play these matches on these stages and against the best one," she said. "She's a powerful player, and I'm so small.

"I don't give anything for free, and I fight all the time. She's human, and she is beatable." And more about that height difference: Strycova is 1.64 meters (5 foot-4), Williams is 1.75 (5 foot-9). Williams said she's familiar with Strycova's game "I have seen her play a lot ... she's super fit, she has a good game, she's very aggressive, Williams said. Here is a brief look at some of the other matches Monday which complete the fourth round:

No. 9 Rafael Nadal vs. No. 6 Gael Monfils: The Spanish lefthander has beaten the often-acrobatic Monfils 12 out of the 14 times they've played, and the last four matches in a row. Nadal, the 14-time Grand Slam champion and only remaining major winner in this half, is coming off a tough five-set, four-hour win over 19-year-old Alexander Zverev. US Open semifinalist Monfils beat Philipp Kohlschreiber in straight sets. They open night play on Rod Laver Arena.

MILOS RAONIC

No. 3 Milos Raonic vs. No. 13 Roberto Bautista Agut: Raonic has had a cold and fever since his first-round match, but his career record against Bautista Agut might make him feel better - he's 4-0. "(He) tries to take over a little bit more with the forehand. Also, you know, doesn't suck you in as much into his game," Raonic said. "So I've been able to find the solutions for him a few times in the past ... it's going to be a match that I'm going to have to step up and dictate and take it on my terms."

JOHANNA KONTA

No. 9 Johanna Konta vs. No. 30 Ekaterina Makarova, the rematch: Konta came out of nowhere last year to make it to the semifinals here to start a breakout year. She won the Sydney International to this season. She owns a 3-0 record against Makarova, a semifinalist at Melbourne Park in 2015. "We played fourth round last year here and we had an incredibly close one, I believe it was 10-8 (actually it was 8-6) in the third. I'm ready for a battle and it will be nothing short of that."

KATARINA PLISKOVA

No. 5 Katarina Pliskova vs. No. 22 Daria Gavrilova: Last year's U.S. Open finalist Pliskova will attempt to end the strong run of the Russian-born Australian. Pliskova has beaten Gavrilova both previous times they played. "I'm used to having the crowd against me, so nothing's going to surprise me," Pliskova said. Gavrilova said Pliskova was playing "unbelievable" tennis and that at the beginning of the tournament, she picked Pliskova to win it, if it wasn't her. — AP



MELBOURNE: Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka celebrates his win against Italy's Andreas Seppi during their fourth round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday. — AP

IMPROVING 'STANIMAL' PUTS RIVALS ON NOTICE

MELBOURNE: Stan Wawrinka warned he was getting stronger as the Australian Open goes on as he swept past Andreas Seppi to reach the quarter-finals yesterday.

The US Open champion was taken to five sets by Martin Klizan in the first round but he is warming to the task and beat Italy's Seppi 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/4). "Probably my level, confidence," Wawrinka said, when asked why he was so hard to beat in the latter stages of tournaments. "Mentally I know I can beat any player on any day. "It's tough to say. I'm just focused on myself. I think in general, my level, when I'm at the top of my game, I can beat any player." Wawrinka, the 2014 champion, will next play French 12th seed Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, who beat Britain's Dan Evans 6-7 (4/7), 6-2, 6-4, 6-4. The Swiss leads Tsonga 4-3 in their head-to-head.

"I think this match was the best match of the tournament so far, that's for sure," Wawrinka said of his victory over Seppi.

"I'm not really worrying about trying to improve every match, trying to play better or not. I know that my level is there, that physically I'm feeling good." He added that he was surprised by top-

ranked Andy Murray's upset by Mischa Zverev, which along with Novak Djokovic's exit offers a big chance to the remaining players.

"It's big surprise that they are not in the draw anymore, but my next match is the quarter-final," he said. "I'm not thinking about semi or final, that I will not have to play Andy or Novak. That's the last thing in my head... I just think it's an interesting tournament."

In a tight struggle on Margaret Court Arena, Wawrinka only converted two of his nine break point opportunities and dropped his serve twice to Seppi. It was Wawrinka's ninth win in 12 encounters with the Italian, who knocked out Australia's big hope Nick Kyrgios in the second round. Wawrinka hit 17 aces, 53 winners and made 41 unforced errors in overcoming Seppi to move into the second week of the Grand Slam. Among Wawrinka's three Grand Slam titles is his win over Rafael Nadal in Melbourne three years ago, when he became the first player to defeat the top two seeds en route to a major title since Spaniard Sergie Bruguera won Roland Garros in 1993. Wawrinka also won the 2015 French Open and last year's US Open, both times conquering Djokovic. — AFP

NHL results/standings

San Jose 3, Colorado 2 (OT); Edmonton 7, Calgary 3; Minnesota 5, Anaheim 3; Arizona 5, Tampa Bay 3; Washington 4, Dallas 3 (OT); Ottawa 3, Toronto 2 (SO); Buffalo 3, Montreal 2 (OT); NY Islanders 4, Los Angeles 2; New Jersey 4, Philadelphia 1; Columbus 3, Carolina 2; Winnipeg 5, St. Louis 3.

Western Conference							
Central Division							
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Minnesota	30	10	5	150	102	65	Ottawa 25 15 4 116 113 54
Chicago	29	14	5	133	120	63	Boston 23 20 6 122 124 52
Nashville	22	17	7	126	120	51	Toronto 21 14 9 136 131 51
St. Louis	23	19	5	134	147	51	Florida 20 19 9 112 133 49
Winnipeg	22	23	4	140	151	48	Buffalo 19 18 9 110 128 47
Dallas	19	20	9	129	151	47	Detroit 20 19 7 120 135 47
Colorado	13	29	2	89	148	28	Tampa Bay 21 22 5 130 142 47
Pacific Division							
Anaheim	26	14	9	130	123	61	Washington 31 9 6 149 100 68
San Jose	29	16	2	125	107	60	Columbus 31 10 4 148 100 66
Edmonton	26	15	8	144	131	60	Pittsburgh 29 11 5 164 133 63
Calgary	24	22	3	130	138	51	NY Rangers 29 16 1 163 125 59
Vancouver	22	19	6	114	131	50	Philadelphia 22 19 6 133 152 50
Los Angeles	22	20	4	115	117	48	Carolina 21 18 7 125 131 49
Arizona	14	26	6	102	150	34	New Jersey 20 19 9 110 136 49
							NY Islanders 19 17 8 127 130 46
Eastern Conference							
Atlantic Division							
Montreal	28	13	7	144	121	63	Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)



CALGARY: Sam Bennett #93 of the Calgary Flames carries the puck against Kris Russell #4 of the Edmonton Oilers during an NHL game at Scotiabank Saddledome on Saturday in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. — AFP

BANGLADESH PLAYER ARRESTED OVER PHOTOS OF GIRLFRIEND

DHAKA: Bangladesh police yesterday arrested national cricketer Arafat Sunny for allegedly breaching strict internet laws after his girlfriend accused him of uploading sensitive photos on social media. Police raided the home of the 30-year-old slow left-arm bowler in the Dhaka suburb of Aminbazar after his longtime girlfriend filed a complaint two weeks ago, said local police chief Jamaluddin Mir.

"She said Sunny opened up a fake Facebook account of hers and posted their personal photos, which she found offensive and defamatory," he told AFP. "We have arrested him and sent him to the court, seeking to take him into custody for five days for questioning."

If found guilty Sunny could face up to 14 years in jail or a fine of 10 million taka (\$126,340) under the controversial law, which local right groups say is being

used to crack down on dissent. There was no immediate comment from the cricketer. "It seems to be a personal matter. We don't want to comment now, however, we are observing (the situation)," Bangladesh Cricket Board chief executive Nizamuddin Chowdhury told AFP. The spinner has played 16 one-day internationals, taking 24 wickets, and 10 Twenty20 internationals in which he picked up 12 wickets. He was suspended

from international matches during the 2016 ICC World Twenty20 for an illegal bowling action. Since then he has been playing domestic first-class cricket for Dhaka Metropolis. Sunny is the third national team cricketer to have been arrested in recent years, after pacemen Rubel Hossain and Shahadat Hossain. Rubel was jailed in 2015 after he was charged in a rape case filed by an actress who

claimed to be his fiancée. The fast bowler was however granted bail days after his arrest to join the squad for the 2015 World Cup. The actress later withdrew the charges. Shahadat spent nearly two months in custody last year after he and his wife were arrested on charges of torturing an 11-year-old girl whom he employed as a maid. A court acquitted the couple. —AFP

INJURED MATHEWS WINS IT FOR SRI LANKA

JOHANNESBURG: Injured captain Angelo Mathews hit two sixes in the last over to hand Sri Lanka a series-levelling three-wicket win in the second Twenty20 international against South Africa yesterday. But the win came at a cost. Mathews said at the after-match presentation that he could miss the rest of the tour after twisting his right ankle when he dived to avoid being run out in the penultimate over. "It's pretty bad, I think I will be out for a couple of weeks," said Mathews, who made 54 not out as Sri Lanka chased down a low South African total of 113 with two balls to spare.

The third and final Twenty20 international will be played in Cape Town on Wednesday, followed by five one-day internationals, finishing on February 10. On an unusually dry, slow Wanderers pitch, South Africa were bowled out in 19.3 overs.

Left-arm wrist spinner Lakshan Sandakan, playing in his first T20 international-although he has played in three Test matches and a one-day international—took four for 23 and bamboozled the South African batsmen with his ability to spin the ball both ways.

Seamers Isara Udana and Nuwan Kulasekera took three for 13 and two for 10 respectively. Heino Kuhn top-scored for South Africa with 29. New fast bowler

discovery Lungi Ngidi gave South Africa hope of defending their low total, taking four for 19.

BIG HIT

Ngidi, who was man of the match when South Africa won the first game in Centurion, took three wickets in an electrifying three-over opening spell, then came back to take another wicket in the 15th over, at the end of which Sri Lanka were 89 for four.

It came down to eight needed off the last seven balls when man of the match Mathews was injured after a risky leg bye. He managed to hobble a single off Wayne Parnell's last ball to keep the strike.

Mathews went for a big hit off the first ball of the last over, bowled by left-arm spinner Jon-Jon Smuts, and was dropped by a diving Heino Kuhn at deep midwicket.

He did not take a run. He hit the next ball for six to level the scores and two balls later finished the match with another six. "I had to hit sixes because I couldn't run," he said. South African captain Farhaan Behardien said: "On a deck that was a little bit slow, Sri Lanka kept taking wickets and we couldn't launch at the end. "We were put under pressure today. But the guys really fought hard and I'm proud of them." —AFP



KOLKATA: Indian team pose with trophy after winning the series after their third one day international cricket match against England at Eden Gardens in Kolkata, India, yesterday. —AP

JADHAV'S 90 IN VAIN AS ENGLAND WINS THIRD ODI

KOLKATA: England narrowly avoided an Indian sweep of the one-day international series, winning the third and final cricket match by five runs as Ben Stokes took 3-63 and Kedar Jadhav's fighting 90 went in vain yesterday.

India fell short on 316-9 in reply to England's 321-8 in 50 overs. Stokes blasted an undefeated 57 off 39 balls to propel the tourists' innings late on, after Jason Roy (65) and Jonny Bairstow (56) both scored half-centuries.

India won the first two ODIs to take the series 2-1. India started badly as its openers' poor form continued. David Willey (1-8), who went off with an injured shoulder later in the innings, bowled Ajinkya Rahane (1) in the second over. Lokesh Rahul (11) skied a catch while attempting a wild pull off Jake Ball (2-56) in the sixth over.

Virat Kohli (55) then put on 65 runs for the third wicket with Yuvraj Singh (45) but they didn't look in control of the chase against England's pacers.

Dropped on 35 by Ball at fine leg, Indian skipper Kohli reached his 39th ODI half-century off 54 balls, as India's 100 came in the 19th over. Stokes got the big breakthrough in the next over with Kohli caught behind.

After adding 31 runs with MS Dhoni (25) for the fourth wicket, Singh holed out to Sam Billings in the deep off Liam Plunkett (1-65). England continued to claim regular wickets as Dhoni too departed in the 32nd over, caught behind off Ball.

India was 173-5 at that stage, but Jadhav put on 104 runs for the sixth wicket with Hardik Pandya (56). The duo started off slowly but, with

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA: Scoreboard yesterday from the third one-day international between India and England at Eden Gardens:

England Innings		India Innings	
Jason Roy b Jadeja	65	Ajinkya Rahane b Willey	1
Sam Billings c Bumrah b Jadeja	35	Lokesh Rahul c Buttler b Ball	11
Jonny Bairstow c Jadeja b Pandya	56	Virat Kohli c Buttler b Stokes	55
Eoin Morgan c Bumrah b Pandya	43	Yuvraj Singh c Billings b Plunkett	45
Moeen Ali c Jadeja b Bumrah	11	MS Dhoni c Buttler b Ball	25
Ben Stokes not out	57	Kedar Jadhav c Billings b Woakes	90
Moeen Ali c Jadeja b Bumrah	2	Hardik Pandya b Stokes	56
Chris Woakes run out Kumar/Dhoni	34	Ravindra Jadeja c Bairstow b Woakes	10
Liam Plunkett run out Pandey (sub)/Dhoni	1	Ravichandran Ashwin c Woakes b Stokes	1
Extras (1b, 8lb, 7w, 1nb)	17	Bhuvneshwar Kumar not out	0
TOTAL: (for eight wickets)	321	Jasprit Bumrah not out	0
Overs: 50. Minutes: 221.		Extras (8lb, 13w, 1nb)	22
Did not bat: David Willey, Jake Ball.		TOTAL: (for nine wickets)	316
Fall of wickets: 1-98, 2-110, 3-194, 4-212, 5-237, 6-246, 7-319, 8-321.		Overs: 50. Minutes: 241.	
Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 8-0-56-0 (2w), Hardik Pandya 10-1-49-3 (1w), Jasprit Bumrah 10-1-68-1 (1nb, 3w), Yuvraj Singh 3-0-17-0, Ravindra Jadeja 10-0-62-2, Ravichandran Ashwin 9-0-60-0.		Fall of wickets: 1-13, 2-37, 3-102, 4-133, 5-173, 6-277, 7-291, 8-297, 9-316.	
		Bowling: Chris Woakes 10-0-75-2 (1nb), David Willey 2-0-8-1 (5w), Jake Ball 10-0-56-2 (1w), Liam Plunkett 10-0-65-1 (2w), Ben Stokes 10-0-63-3 (5w), Moeen Ali 8-0-41-0.	

the run-rate rising, they played some attacking strokes to change the complexion of the chase.

They put on 50 off only 45 balls, as India's 200 came up in the 36th over. Jadhav reached his maiden ODI half-century off 46 balls, while Pandya scored his first half-century in international cricket too, off only 38 deliveries.

Stokes bowled Pandya in the 46th over, and India needed 43 runs off the last 24 balls. Ravindra Jadeja (10) and Ravichandran Ashwin (1) couldn't do much, but Jadhav, who hit 12

fours and 1 six in all, took his side close.

With 16 needed off the last over, Jadhav smacked the first two balls for 10 runs, before holing out to Billings in the deep. Chris Woakes (2-75) then held his nerve as England registered its first win on the tour, stretching back to the test series in November and December.

India won the first ODI in Pune by three wickets, and the second ODI in Cuttack by 15 runs. The three-match Twenty20 series starts in Kanpur on Thursday. — AP

SCOREBOARD

JOHANNESBURG: Scores in the second Twenty20 international between South Africa and Sri Lanka at the Wanderers Stadium yesterday.

South Africa		Sri Lanka	
J. Smuts c Sandakan b Kulasekera	4	N. Dickwella c Mosehle b Ngidi	22
H. Kuhn st Chandimal b Sandakan	29	D. de Silva c Miller b Ngidi	2
T. de Bruyn c D. de Silva b Udana	7	K. Mendis b Ngidi	4
M. Mosehle c Chandimal b Sandakan	11	D. Chandimal c Mosehle b Ngidi	22
D. Miller c Mathews b D. de Silva	11	A. Mathews not out	54
F. Behardien c Chandimal b Udana	27	A. Gunaratne lbw b Imran Tahir	3
W. Parnell c Mathews b Sandakan	3	S. Prasanna c Imran Tahir b Smuts	2
A. Phehlukwayo c Chandimal b Sandakan	0	T. de Silva c Behardien b Parnell	3
A. Phangiso c Gunaratne b Udana	13	N. Kulasekera not out	0
Imran Tahir b Kulasekera	1	Extras (b3, lb2, w2)	7
L. Ngidi not out	2	Total (7 wickets, 19.4 overs)	119
Extras (lb2, w3)	5	Fall of wickets: 1-11 (D. de Silva), 2-15 (Mendis), 3-35 (Dickwella), 4-86 (Chandimal), 5-93 (Gunaratne), 6-97 (Prasanna), 7-105 (T. de Silva)	
Total (19.3 overs)	113	Bowling: Ngidi 4-0-19-4 (1w), Parnell 3-0-16-1, Phehlukwayo 2-0-22-0, Imran Tahir 4-0-14-1, Phangiso 4-0-24-0, Smuts 2-4-0-19-1 (1w)	
Fall of wickets: 1-5 (Smuts), 2-13 (De Bruyn), 3-41 (Mosehle), 4-57 (Kuhn), 5-68 (Miller), 6-74 (Parnell), 7-74 (Phehlukwayo), 8-107 (Behardien), 9-109 (Imran Tahir)		Did not bat: I. Udana, L. Sandakan	
Bowling: Mathews 2-0-11-0, Kulasekera 3-0-10-2, Udana 2-3-0-13-3 (1w), Prasanna 3-0-24-0, Sandakan 4-0-23-4 (2w), Gunaratne 4-0-27-0, D. de Silva 1-0-3-1.		Result: Sri Lanka won by three wickets	
		Series: The three-match series is tied at 1-1	



JOHANNESBURG: Sri Lanka batsman Angelo Mathews takes a run during the second T20 match between South Africa and Sri Lanka yesterday at Wanderers Cricket Ground in Johannesburg. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

SYDNEY: Complete scoreboard from the fourth one-day international between Australia and Pakistan in Sydney yesterday.

Australia		Pakistan	
U. Khawaja c Rizwan b Hasan	30	Azhar Ali c Smith b Hazlewood	7
D. Warner c Rizwan b Hasan	130	Sharjeel Khan c Warner b Zampa	74
S. Smith lbw Hasan	49	Babar Azam c Hazlewood b Head	31
T. Head c Shoaib b Amir	51	Mohammad Hafeez c sub (Faulkner) b Zampa	40
G. Maxwell c Sharjeel b Hasan	78	Shoaib Malik c Warner b Head	47
M. Wade c Imad b Hasan	5	Umar Akmal c Cummins b Starc	11
M. Starc not out	0	Mohammad Rizwan lbw Zampa	10
Extras (lb8, w2)	10	Imad Wasim c Wade b Hazlewood	25
Total (for 6 wickets, 50 overs)	353	Mohammad Amir c Wade b Cummins	5
Fall of wickets: 1-92 (Khawaja), 2-212 (Warner), 3-213 (Smith), 4-313 (Head), 5-339 (Wade), 6-353 (Maxwell)		Hasan Ali not out	8
Bowling: Hafeez 9-0-54-0, Amir, 10-0-75-1, Junaid 10-0-82-0 (1nb), Hasan 10-1-52-5 (1nb), Imad 9-0-69-0, Shoaib 2-0-13-0.		Junaid Khan b Hazlewood	0
		Extras (lb5, w4)	9
		Total (all out, 43.5 overs)	267
		Fall of wickets: 1-15 (Azhar), 2-88 (Babar), 3-119 (Sharjeel), 4-183 (Hafeez), 5-215 (Shoaib), 6-218 (Umar), 7-245 (Rizwan), 8-252 (Amir), 9-267 (Wasim), 10-267 (Junaid).	
		Bowling: Starc 7-0-42-1 (3w), Hazlewood 8.5-0-54-3, Cummins 8-0-45-1, Head 10-0-66-2, Zampa 10-0-55-3 (1w).	
		Australia won by 86 runs	
		Australia lead series 3-1	

WARNER HELPS AUSTRALIA SEAL ODI SERIES WIN OVER PAKISTAN

SYDNEY: Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur blasted his players after their blunders helped Australia secure their one-day series at Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday, taking a 3-1 lead in the five match series.

Set an imposing 354 to win, Pakistan were never really in the hunt.

After Australia made 353 for six on the back of a David Warner century that was aided by appalling fielding from the tourists, Pakistan replied with 267 from 43.5 overs. A frustrated Arthur was left lamenting another sloppy fielding effort marked by a number of dropped catches.

"We can't compete with a side like Australia if we give their top five that many chances," he said. "It's unacceptable, those standards we set as a cricket team those standards haven't been met. Is it skill level, attitude, or is it fatigue?"

Opener Sharjeel Khan, who dropped two catches in the Australian innings, whacked out 74 from just 47 balls, but once he fell to recalled leg-spinner Adam Zampa Pakistan's fate was all but sealed.

Warner backed his form with the bat by doing what the Pakistanis couldn't and hanging on to two excellent catches.

He was pleased to have the series wrapped up ahead of the final game in Adelaide on Thursday, saying the team "played fantastic".

After Australian captain Steve Smith won the toss, the home side took advantage of a placid wicket and the hapless

Pakistan fielding. Warner top-scored with 130 but Pakistan did not help themselves, conceding a number of overthrows and dropped catches at crucial times.

He was dropped on 113 when Hasan Ali grassed a simple chance at mid-off from spinner Imad Wasim.

Smith scored 49 off 48 balls, but was let off at 10 when Sharjeel made a lazy one-handed attempt at gully from Junaid Khan's bowling.

Sharjeel also dropped Travis Head when he was on 28, again to the chagrin of the luckless Junaid. Head went on to make 51.

And Hasan put down a difficult chance off Glenn Maxwell when he was on eight and the Australian ended on 78. Despite his two dropped catches Hasan redeemed himself by taking five for 52, easily the best of the Pakistan bowlers.

Warner and Smith put on 120 for the second wicket to put Australia in a commanding position before Hasan removed both in the space of three balls to give the tourists a lift.

However, Head and Maxwell then cut loose to add 100 for the fourth wicket in 64 balls. Pakistan recalled captain Azhar Ali after a hamstring injury at the expense of Asad Shafiq, while Australia recalled Mitchell Starc and spinner Zampa for James Faulkner and Billy Stanlake. Zampa, controversially overlooked for the upcoming India tour, took his opportunity with 3-55 from his 10 overs. —AFP



SYDNEY: Australia's Adam Zampa bowls during the fourth one-day international (ODI) cricket match between Australia and Pakistan in Sydney yesterday. — AFP

KUWAIT TIMES NBA POWER RANKINGS

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: In addition to its usual coverage of the NBA, Kuwait Times introduces a new feature this year: the NBA Power Rankings. It is a weekly list ranking each team based on its performance during the week. In this week's edition, the Warriors remain in top, the Cavaliers slid two spots and a new team cracked into the top five. (For any comments or suggestions, e-mail the writer at: ajabr@kuwaittimes.net)



1- Golden State Warriors (37 - 6) Last week: 1 - The Warriors defeated the Cavs, Thunder and Rockets respectively in their last three games with relative ease. They enter Monday on a six-game winning streak, have won ten of their last 11 games, have scored over 120 points in eight games during that stretch, and lead the league in offensive, defensive and net ratings. We knew entering the season that they would be good, but now they are venturing into 'scary good' territories.



2- San Antonio Spurs (34 - 9) Last week: 3 - Kawhi Leonard has scored at least 30 points for sixth consecutive games, including a career-high 41 points in Saturday's win over the Cavs. Meanwhile, LeBron James, whose career winning percentage against the Spurs has dropped to 45 percent, has coined San Antonio's longtime coach Gregg Popovich as the greatest of all time.



3- Houston Rockets (34 - 13) Last week: 5 - The Rockets finally figured out a way to beat the Grizzlies on Friday after second-year forward Sam Dekker contributed with 30 points on 12-of-19 shooting (6-of-11 3-pointers) in his first career start. It was an important morale-boosting win following a tough loss to the Warriors one night earlier.



4- Cleveland Cavaliers (30 - 12) Last week: 2 - In Saturday's loss to the Spurs, LeBron James scored 29 points on 5-of-8 shooting while defended by Kawhi Leonard, but the Cavs were 0-of-5 on passes from James when Leonard started and finished the possession as his primary defender (per ESPN Stats and Information).



5- Utah Jazz (29 - 16) Last week: 8 - George Hill made a statement in his first match against his former team on Saturday, finishing with a season-high 30 points, six rebounds, five assists and leading Utah to victory. One night earlier, Rudy Gobert recorded 27 points and 25 rebounds, both career highs, to power his team over the Mavs.



6- Toronto Raptors (28 - 15) Last week: 4 - The Raptors have shown the kind of flaws such as lack of rebounding and failure to properly defend the pick-and-roll that can be very costly in the playoffs. Potential postseason matchups against Charlotte (who handed them a humbling 113-78 defeat on Friday) or Chicago (whom they haven't beaten since Dec 2013) could spill yet another first-round exit for Canada's team.



7- Boston Celtics (26 - 17) Last week: 6 - In Saturday's loss to the Blazers, Isaiah Thomas scored 21 points on 6-of-12 shooting in the fourth quarter and overtime, but the rest of the team went for 16 points and shot 6-of-21 combined. Thomas is having a career year, but needs help from his supporting cast in order for the Celtics to have a successful season.



8- Los Angeles Clippers (29 - 16) Last week: 7 - The Clippers have lost to the Timberwolves and Nuggets in the first two games played since Chris Paul fill to injury. They are likely to have Blake Griffin back from injury this week, which is good news since the Clippers will need contributions from everyone on the team as they hope to survive the 6-to-8 weeks' timeline given for Paul's return.



9- Atlanta Hawks (26 - 18) Last week: 11 - In Saturday's win over the 76ers, Paul Millsap scored 22 points and 10 rebounds while Dwight Howard finished with 13 points and 15 rebounds, and the duo showed the kind of dominance the Hawks had hoped would be established when the latter was signed last summer.



10- Memphis Grizzlies (26 - 20) Last week: 9 - The Grizzlies have lost three of their last four games, most recently on Saturday to the Rockets whom they have beaten twice before this season. Meanwhile, Marc Gasol is making his case to be selected to play in the All-Star Game for the third time in the past six seasons.



11- Oklahoma City Thunder (25 - 19) Last week: 10 - Russell Westbrook made it clear that he was not concerned about being snubbed from the All-Star Game's starting lineups. The Thunder guard, who has won All-Star Game MVP in each of the last two seasons and remains on course to finish this season averaging a triple-double, is an all-but-certain selection for the Western Conference's reserves.



12- Charlotte Hornets (23 - 21) Last week: 17 - Kimba Walker outscored the entire Raptors' squad 16-15 in the third quarter of Charlotte's 113-78 win over Toronto on Friday, and finished the game with 32 points on 11-of-16 shooting. He is focusing more on winning rather than making it to the All-Star Game, which is shown evident by the Hornets' current three-game winning streak.



13- Washington Wizards (23 - 20) Last week: 14 - Markieff Morris couldn't help prevent his twin brother, Marcus, from making the game-winning tip in that propelled the Pistons to victory over the Wizards on Saturday. However, his great play has been significant in Washington's recent success (they have won four of their last five).



14- Detroit Pistons (21 - 24) Last week: 20 - And much like his twin brother, Marcus Morris has also been contributing nicely to his team's recent success. The Pistons have won three straight games entering Monday, including a commanding victory on Wednesday over the Hawks in which they outrebounded Atlanta 60-32.



15- Chicago Bulls (22 - 23) Last week: 15 - The Bulls know that they have not been playing well as of late; Dwyane Wade tweeted an apology to Bulls' fans following Friday's loss to Atlanta, while Jimmy Butler shared his frustration in postgame comments. Butler himself has been playing great, but lack of energy from the rest of the team has hindered Chicago's success for the most part.



16- Indiana Pacers (22 - 21) Last week: 13 - The Pacers won seven of eight games before dropping two matches to the Lakers and Jazz respectively. They have managed to find ways to win despite being a below-average rebounding team, but that formula is not sustainable enough if the team hopes to make a strong playoffs' push.



17- Portland Trail Blazers (19 - 27) Last week: 16 - Damian Lillard and CJ McCollum joined Stephen Curry and Kevin Durant as the only teammates this season to have scored 1,000 points apiece. The dynamic duo led their team to victory over Boston on Saturday. Meanwhile, rebounding and low-post defense remain glaring issues for the Blazers.



18- Denver Nuggets (18 - 24) Last week: 24 - The Nuggets have won four of their last five games largely behind solid play from center Nikola Jokic, who has recorded three straight games with at least 25 points and 10 rebounds last week. The team continues to shop center Jusuf Nurkic with hopes of improving their lineup.



19- Milwaukee Bucks (20 - 23) Last week: 12 - Giannis Antetokounmpo earned his place as a starter in the NBA All-Star Game as he continues to lead his team in points, assists, rebounds, blocks and steals.



20- Minnesota Timberwolves (15 - 28) Last week: 21 - The Wolves played against teams with winning records in four of their last five games, and emerged victorious in three of them. In the meantime, they hope to find a savior for Ricky Rubio after the Pistons' Stan Van Gundy shut down rumors of a trade that would land Detroit's Reggie Jackson in Minnesota.



21- New York Knicks (19 - 26) Last week: 19 - Carmelo Anthony has a no-trade clause in his contract, but he hinted recently that he might consider waiving it if the Knicks' management told him that they needed to make a change.



22- Philadelphia 76ers (15 - 27) Last week: 26 - Realistically speaking, the 76ers have a shot at making the playoffs this season, something that was never a topic of consideration in the past couple of years. Joel Embiid has scored 20 or more points in 10 consecutive games before sitting out for rest in Saturday's match against the Hawks.



23- New Orleans Pelicans (17 - 27) Last week: 18 - The 143 total points they allowed the Nets to score in Friday's loss was hardly the only bad number the Pelicans have seen that night. They also allowed Brooklyn to shoot 57 percent from the field, 50 percent from the three-point line and 90 percent from the free-throw line (per ESPN Stats and Information).



24- Phoenix Suns (14 - 29) Last week: 22 - The Suns enter Monday tied with the Mavs as having the worst record in the Western Conference. While coach Earl Watson declared that Tyson Chandler is likely not going to be traded by the trade deadline, the same cannot be said about PJ Tucker and Brandon Knight.



25- Orlando Magic (18 - 27) Last week: 25 - Emphasis on defense was considered the motive behind the acquisition of both Serge Ibaka and Bismack Biyombo this past summer, but the team has shown little progress at that end so far this season. Bad defense was to blame for the team's seven losses in their last nine games.



26- Sacramento Kings (16 - 27) Last week: 23 - The Kings have lost five straight games and received more bad news this week: forward Rudy Gay will miss the rest of the season with a fully ruptured Achilles tendon; an injury he sustained in Wednesday's loss to the Pacers.



27- Miami Heat (14 - 30) Last week: 29 - Goran Dragic helped Miami beat Houston on Tuesday, and then the Heat won two more games for their first three-game winning streak of the season. Dion Waiters scored 33 points in Saturday's victory over the Bucks.



28- Dallas Mavericks (14 - 29) Last week: 27 - Dirk Nowitzki had one of the worst shooting nights of his career in Friday's loss to the Jazz, going 1-of-13 from the floor. He played well though to help Dallas record its first three-game winning streak this season (from Jan 12 to Jan 17).



29- Los Angeles Lakers (16 - 31) Last week: 28 - The Lakers recorded a big win over the Pacers on Friday that ended a five-game losing streak. Coach Luke Walton credit rookie forward Brandon Ingram for the win, providing high energy and faring well playing against Indiana's Paul George.



30- Brooklyn Nets (9 - 34) Last week: 30 - The Nets continue to monitor the development of their young assets such as Rondae Hollis-Jefferson, Sean Kilpatrick, Isaiah Whitehead and Caris LeVert. In the meantime, veterans Brook Lopez, Bojan Bogdanovic and Luis Scola played key roles to help Brooklyn beat New Orleans on Friday and end an 11-game losing streak.



CLEVELAND: Kawhi Leonard #2 of the San Antonio Spurs shoots over Tristan Thompson #13 of the Cleveland Cavaliers during the second half at Quicken Loans Arena on Saturday in Cleveland, Ohio. The Spurs defeated the Cavaliers 118-115. — AFP

LEONARD SCORES 41, SPURS DOWN CAVALIERS 118-115

CLEVELAND: Kawhi Leonard capped his career-high, 41-point night with a dunk in the final seconds and the San Antonio Spurs held on for a 118-115 overtime victory Saturday night against the Cleveland Cavaliers. LeBron James tied up Leonard for a jump ball with 13 seconds left and the Cavs down 3. James won the tip, but the ball was headed out of bounds when Kevin Love saved it and fired it behind his back inbounds. Leonard caught the pass and sprinted to the other end for the dunk and the clincher with four seconds left.

Pistons 113, Wizards 112

Marcus Morris made a putback at the buzzer to give Detroit a victory over Washington at The Palace. The Pistons, who gave away a 16-point lead in the fourth quarter, got off three shots during a wild scramble in the closing seconds before Morris' game-winner. Morris finished with a game-high 25 points and 11 rebounds.

Hornets 112, Nets 105

Nicolas Batum converted a four-point play and hit another 3-pointer in a span of 31 seconds down the stretch, and Charlotte pulled out a victory over Brooklyn at the Spectrum Center. Batum hit a 3-pointer, was fouled and converted the free throw to give the Hornets the lead for good at 101-98 with 3:21 left. Then he hit another 3-pointer on the Hornets' next possession to push the lead to 104-98 with 2:50 remaining. The Hornets pushed the lead to nine from

there and never let the Nets closer than five again.

Hawks 110, 76ers 93

Philadelphia, which had won eight of its past 10 games, are no longer pushovers, but the 76ers remain foils for Atlanta. Paul Millsap had 22 points and 10 rebounds as the Hawks took advantage of the absence of rookie standout Joel Embiid and 21 Philadelphia turnovers en route to victory.

Trail Blazers 127, Celtics 123 (OT)

Portland ended a four-game losing streak and rode star guard Damian Lillard to a victory over Boston in overtime. Lillard, who had three points at halftime, scored 25 points after the break, seven of them in overtime, as the Trail Blazers handed the Celtics their second straight home loss.

Heat 109, Bucks 97

Dion Waiters tied his career high with 33 points to lead the Miami Heat to their third straight win, beating Milwaukee at AmericanAirlines Arena. Suns 107, Knicks 105 Devin Booker poured in 26 points, including what turned out to be the game-winner, to give Phoenix a win over New York at Madison Square Garden. Booker's backcourt mate, Eric Bledsoe, contributed 23 points and seven assists for the Suns. Center Tyson Chandler grabbed 16 rebounds, extending his streak to seven straight games with at least 15 rebounds, a team record.

Rockets 119, Grizzlies 95

James Harden posted another dou-

ble-double with 29 points with 10 assists and forward Sam Dekker scored a career-high 30 points as Houston cruised to a victory over Memphis at FedExForum. Harden did much of his damage at the foul line, where he was 11 of 12. He finished 7 of 9 from the floor and 4 of 6 from 3-point range. He also had six rebounds, three steals, and six turnovers. Dekker made 12 of 19 shots and was 6 of 11 behind the arc.

Nuggets 123, Clippers 98

Nikola Jokic had 19 points and 10 rebounds and Wilson Chandler had 16 points and seven rebounds as Denver beat Los Angeles. Danilo Gallinari and Will Barton scored 18 points apiece for Denver, which led by as many as 35 in the rout.

Jazz 109, Pacers 100

George Hill scored a season-high 30 points in his first game against his former team and Utah ran away with a victory over Indiana. Gordon Hayward added 27 points while Rudy Gobert chipped in 19 points and 11 rebounds for Utah. The Jazz won a season-best sixth straight game.

Bulls 102, Kings 99

Dwyane Wade scored 30 points and made several defensive stops in the fourth quarter, and Chicago held on for a win over Sacramento. Jimmy Butler added 23 points for the Bulls. Chicago snapped a two-game losing streak and improved to 14-9 on its home court. — Reuters

NBA results/standings

Denver 123, LA Clippers 98; Utah 109, Indiana 100; San Antonio 118, Cleveland 115 (OT); Houston 119, Memphis 95; Phoenix 107, NY Knicks 105; Miami 109, Milwaukee 97; Charlotte 112, Brooklyn 105; Atlanta 110, Philadelphia 93; Detroit 113, Washington 112; Portland 127, Boston 123 (OT).

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	Utah	29	16	.644	-	
Toronto	28	15	.651	Oklahoma City	25	19	.568	3.5	
Boston	26	17	.605	Denver	18	24	.429	9.5	
NY Knicks	19	26	.422	Portland	19	27	.413	10.5	
Philadelphia	15	27	.357	Minnesota	15	28	.349	13	
Brooklyn	9	34	.209	19	Pacific Division				
Central Division					Golden State	37	6	.860	-
Cleveland	30	12	.714	LA Clippers	29	16	.644	9	
Indiana	22	21	.512	Sacramento	16	27	.372	21	
Chicago	22	23	.489	LA Lakers	16	31	.340	23	
Detroit	21	24	.467	Phoenix	14	29	.326	23	
Milwaukee	20	23	.465	10.5	Southwest Division				
Southeast Division					San Antonio	34	9	.791	-
Atlanta	26	18	.591	Houston	34	13	.723	2	
Washington	23	20	.535	Memphis	26	20	.565	9.5	
Charlotte	23	21	.523	New Orleans	17	27	.386	17.5	
Orlando	18	27	.400	Dallas	14	29	.326	20	
Miami	14	30	.318	12					

SPURS COACH POPOVICH BLASTS PRESIDENT TRUMP

CLEVELAND: Gregg Popovich would blast President Donald Trump.

San Antonio's longtime coach, who has been highly critical of Trump in the past, went on a lengthy rant about the new president on Saturday night, calling him a bully and saying he hopes he can change while in office.

While meeting with reporters before the Spurs played the NBA champion Cavaliers, Popovich didn't hold back in offering his disdain for Trump and members of his administration. Popovich initially was asked about his views on the women's marches in Washington and around the world before he unloaded on Trump. "Their message is obvious," the five-time champion coach said of the protesters. "Our president comes in with the lowest (approval) rating of anybody whoever came into the office. And there's a majority of people out there, since Hillary (Clinton) won the popular

vote, that don't buy his act. And I just wish that he was more - had the ability to be more - mature enough to do something that really is inclusive rather than just talking and saying, 'I'm going to include everybody.' He could talk to the groups that he disrespected and maligned during the primary and really make somebody believe it. But so far, we've got (to) a point where you really can't believe anything that comes out of his mouth. You really can't."

As he said following Trump's election in November, Popovich wants Trump to succeed but believes he will do so only if he changes. Popovich pointed out that Trump visited CIA headquarters on his first official day in office, but used the occasion to talk about himself.

"Instead of honoring the 117 people behind him where he was speaking, he talked about the size of the crowd," Popovich said. "That's worrisome. I'd just

feel better if somebody was in that position that showed the maturity and psychological and emotional level of somebody that was his age. It's dangerous and it doesn't do us any good. I hope he does a great job, but there's a difference between respecting the office of the presidency and who occupies it.

"And that respect has to be earned." Popovich was also critical of those who don't hold Trump accountable for his words. "It's hard to be respectful of someone when we all have kids and we're watching him be misogynistic and xenophobic and racist and make fun of handicapped people. And what really bothers me are the people around him: the Sean Spicers, the Kellyanne Conways, the Reince Priebuses that know who he is and actually have the cynical approach and disingenuous attitude to really defend him and try to make it look like he didn't say what he said. — AFP

MONACO THRASH LORIENT TO GO CLEAR AT TOP

PARIS: Gabriel Boschilia and Valere Germain both struck twice as a rampant Monaco routed bottom side Lorient 4-0 yesterday to climb two points clear of Nice at the top of Ligue 1.

Brazilian striker Boschilia netted a brace inside the opening half hour as Monaco punished slack Lorient defending in driving rain at the Stade Louis II before Germain curled in a third on 37 minutes. The Frenchman then grabbed his second on the hour as Leonardo Jardim's free-scoring side collected a fifth win in six games to claim the outright lead, following Nice's 1-1 draw at

Bastia on Friday. Third are Paris Saint-Germain, three points behind Monaco, and the two go head to head in the French capital next weekend in a championship six-pointer. "We had a very good first half and we managed the game well today," said Jardim, who singled out Boschilia for praise.

"I played him today because he is a quality player who works hard," added Jardim, before hitting out a fixture schedule which sees Monaco in action again on Wednesday in a League Cup semi-final at home to Nancy.

Monaco face a busy run of games over

the next month as they compete on four fronts at home and in Europe.

Boschilia made the most of a rare start by hooking home in the 24th minute after Lorient goalkeeper Benjamin Lecomte failed to adequately deal with Radamel Falcao's looping header in the box. Lecomte was again culpable four minutes later when Boschilia found the net from the edge of the area as the ball rolled through the legs of the visiting goalkeeper. Lorient paid the price for more sloppy play as Falcao won the ball back deep in the visitors' half before firing against the base of the post. The ball

rebounded back to Germain, who steered neatly into the far corner.

Germain rounded out a thumping win 14 minutes into the second half after Lorient skipper Michael Ciani was dispossessed by Djibril Sidibe. The France full-back slipped the striker in behind the defence with Lecomte again beaten between his legs.

Lorient remain two points adrift at the foot of the table. On Saturday, Edinson Cavani scored both goals, taking his tally this season to 20, as PSG snapped Nantes' four-game winning run with a 2-0 victory at the Stade de la Beaujoire. Arnaud

Souquet earned Nice a point against Bastia in Corsica on Friday, equalising with a header after Prince Oniangue had given the hosts an early lead in a game marred by what Italy striker Mario Balotelli said was persistent racial abuse directed at him from the home fans. The Nice bus was also pelted with stones and the French league's disciplinary committee said it will look into the incidents.

Lyon host Marseille in a later game as both teams look to return to winning ways after their respective four-game winning streaks were brought to a halt last weekend. —AFP

English Premier League table

LONDON: English Premier League table after yesterday's early matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Chelsea	22	18	1	3	47	15	55
Arsenal	22	14	5	3	50	23	47
Tottenham	22	13	7	2	45	16	46
Liverpool	22	13	6	3	51	27	45
Man City	22	13	4	5	43	28	43
Man Utd	22	11	8	3	33	21	41
Everton	22	10	6	6	33	23	36
West Brom	22	9	5	8	30	28	32
Stoke	22	7	7	8	28	34	28
West Ham	22	8	4	10	29	36	28
Southampton	22	7	6	9	22	26	27
Bournemouth	22	7	5	10	32	39	26
Burnley	22	8	2	12	24	33	26
Watford	22	6	6	10	25	38	24
Leicester	22	5	6	11	24	37	21
Middlesbrough	22	4	8	10	18	25	20
Swansea	22	5	3	14	26	51	18
Crystal Palace	22	4	4	14	30	41	16
Hull	22	4	4	14	20	47	16
Sunderland	22	4	3	15	20	42	15

Italian Serie A Table

LONDON: Italian Serie A table after yesterday's early game (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Juventus	20	16	0	4	42	16	48
Roma	20	14	2	4	41	18	44
Napoli	21	13	5	3	47	24	44
Lazio	21	12	4	5	35	24	40
AC Milan	20	11	4	5	31	24	37
Inter Milan	20	11	3	6	33	23	36
Atalanta	20	11	2	7	32	24	35
Florentina	20	9	6	5	33	25	33
Torino	20	8	6	6	38	29	30
Cagliari	20	8	2	10	31	44	26
Udinese	20	7	4	9	25	27	25
Chievo	21	7	4	10	21	30	25
Sampdoria	20	6	6	8	22	26	24
Bologna	19	6	5	8	18	25	23
Genoa	20	6	5	9	22	27	23
Sassuolo	20	6	3	11	28	34	21
Empoli	20	4	6	10	11	26	18
Palermo	20	2	4	14	17	40	10
Crotone	19	2	3	14	14	34	9
Pescara	19	1	6	12	15	36	9

Spanish La Liga Table

LONDON: Spanish La Liga table after yesterday's early match (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Real Madrid	18	13	4	1	48	17	43
Sevilla	19	13	3	3	42	25	42
Barcelona	18	11	5	2	47	17	38
Atletico Madrid	18	10	4	4	32	14	34
Real Sociedad	18	10	2	6	30	25	32
Villarreal	19	8	7	4	26	14	31
Athletic Bilbao	18	8	4	6	22	19	28
Celta Vigo	18	8	3	7	29	32	27
Eibar	18	7	5	6	25	24	26
Espanyol	19	6	8	5	25	26	26



LONDON: Arsenal's Alexis Sanchez, right, scores a penalty at the end of the match against Burnley, during their English Premier League soccer match at The Emirates Stadium in London, yesterday. — AP

SAINTS FORGET FONTE FUSS TO BEAT LEICESTER

Southampton	3
Leicester	0

SOUTHAMPTON: Southampton put the row over former captain Jose Fonte's departure to one side as they beat struggling champions Leicester 3-0 in the Premier League at St Mary's yesterday.

Fonte joined top-flight rivals West Ham in an £8 million (\$9.9 million, 9.2 million euros) move on Friday, with the Portugal defender having been dropped by Southampton manager Claude Puel earlier this month after he handed in a transfer request. But the Saints, no stranger to seeing their players leave for more lucrative offers at 'bigger' English clubs during the transfer window, shrugged off Fonte's loss to end a run of four straight Premier League defeats in style.

For Leicester, this latest loss was their 11th in 22 league games so far this season and left them worryingly close to the relegation zone. Southampton were 2-0 up before half-time thanks to goals from James Ward-Prowse and Jay Rodriguez.

The south coast side wrapped up just their seventh league win of the current campaign four minutes from time when Dusan Tadic scored from the penalty spot.

Victory was just the boost Southampton needed ahead of their League Cup semi-final second leg clash against Liverpool on Wednesday, with the Saints taking a 1-0 lead to Anfield. Southampton made a bright start, with Leicester goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel making a good save to deny Nathan Redmond before Demarai Gray tested Fraser Forster at the other end.

But the goal the hosts had been threatening arrived in the 26th minute after a flu-

id attack. Cedric Soares sped down the right and cut the ball back to Ward-Prowse, whose first-time curling shot just had enough power to beat the diving Schmeichel.

It was Ward-Prowse's first goal in 22 games in all competitions for the club since he was on target against West Ham on September 25.

Ward-Prowse then turned provider as Southampton doubled their lead 13 minutes later. Poor defending has been a feature of faltering champions Leicester's play this season and another example came when Claudio Ranieri's side failed to deal with Ward-Prowse's free-kick into the box.

The ball skimmed off Leicester centre-back Wes Morgan's head and Rodriguez fired home from close range.

Southampton, who three days after their Liverpool clash face Arsenal in the fourth round of the FA Cup, thought they had a third goal 15 minutes from time when Morgan, under pressure from Maya Yoshida, put Tadic's free-kick into his own net. But referee Michael Oliver, after consulting with his linesman, disallowed the goal for a marginal offside decision. Morgan, however, fell foul of the officials when he brought down Shane Long inside the box to concede a penalty, with Tadic firing the ensuing spot-kick high past Schmeichel and into the roof of the net. — AFP

Live Matches on TV
(Local Timings)

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP	
Senegal v Algeria	22:00
BeIN SPORTS	
Zimbabwe v Tunisia	22:00
BeIN SPORTS	



SOUTHAMPTON: Leicester City's Nigerian midfielder Wilfred Ndidi (L) vies with Southampton's Danish midfielder Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg during the English Premier League football match between Southampton and Leicester City at St Mary's Stadium in Southampton, southern England yesterday. — AFP

ICE-COOL SANCHEZ LIFTS 10-MAN ARSENAL TO DRAMATIC WIN

Arsenal	2
Burnley	1

LONDON: Alexis Sanchez kept his nerve to haul 10-man Arsenal into second place in the Premier League as the Chilean's last-gasp penalty sealed a dramatic 2-1 home win over Burnley yesterday. Arsene Wenger's side appeared to have blown their chance to get back in the title race when Burnley's Andre Gray scored a stoppage-time penalty to cancel out Shkodran Mustafi's first goal for Arsenal.

Arsenal had been forced to play the last 25 minutes with 10 men after Granit Xhaka was shown a straight red card for a reckless lunge on Steven Defour.

But the Gunners refused to be denied and Sanchez converted from the spot with virtually the last kick of an incredible finish at the Emirates Stadium to ensure his team leapfrogged Tottenham and Liverpool in the title chase. The north Londoners have now won four of their last five league games and remain in touch with leaders Chelsea ahead of their summit meeting at Stamford Bridge on February 4.

At the start of the season Wenger challenged his players to dominate against the league's middle classes after dropping too many points against supposedly inferior opponents in recent years. This was exactly the kind of gritty response he had hoped for. Early on Mesut Ozil weaved his way into a shooting position on the edge of the area, only to see Burnley goalkeeper Tom Heaton push away his low strike. Alex Iwobi was next to threaten as the young winger drove his shot just wide after a typically incisive Arsenal raid. Burnley tried to hit back, with a powerful Ashley Barnes effort forcing Petr Cech into a fine save. Perhaps inspired by the Arsenal fans who had unveiled a banner featuring a picture of the forward with his two pet dogs, Sanchez was hounding the Burnley defence, but he couldn't find a way past Heaton, who dived to his right to block the forward's long-range effort.

When Sanchez sized up another chance 12 yards out, he found Burnley were defending so deep that six blue-shirted players stood between him and the goal, an obstacle even the Chilean dynamo couldn't overcome with a shot that curled wide.

REDEMPTION

For all their territorial dominance, Arsenal still needed to deliver the knockout blow in the second half. Aaron Ramsey was guilty of overelaborating when he tried a spectacular scorpion kick that looped over. Sanchez tried to show him the way with a scorching drive that narrowly cleared the crossbar. Just as Arsenal's supporters were starting to groan about their team's profligacy, the breakthrough finally arrived in the 59th minute. Ozil whipped over an out-swinging corner and German defender Mustafi peeled away from his marker to glance a deft header past Heaton and into the far corner.

What should have been a comfortable finish for Arsenal was transformed six minutes later when Xhaka launched into a two-footed foul on Defour that left referee Jon Moss with no choice but to send off the Swiss midfielder. Defour

almost exacted immediate revenge with a free-kick that Cech pushed over and suddenly Arsenal didn't look so secure. Arsenal tried to batten down the hatches, but playing a cautious game has never been their forte and substitute Francis Coquelin gave away a penalty three minutes into stoppage time when he tripped Barnes. Gray drilled the spot-kick down the middle and Wenger, furious with the decision, was sent down the tunnel moments later after com-

plaining bitterly. But the drama wasn't over and Arsenal, throwing bodies forward in search of redemption, won a penalty of their own seven minutes into stoppage time when Laurent Koscielny was caught in the face by Ben Mee's high boot.

Sanchez was calmness personified as he capped a remarkable finale by delicately clipping the penalty past Heaton for his 15th league goal of the season. — AFP

SEVILLA STAGE FIGHTBACK, ATLETICO HELD IN BILBAO

BARCELONA: Sevilla followed last week's recovery against La Liga leaders Real Madrid by staging another stirring comeback to win 4-3 at Osasuna yesterday, a victory that keeps the pressure on Zinedine Zidane's side.

Yet Atletico Madrid faltered again near the top of the table despite a brilliant strike from Antoine Griezmann earning them a 2-2 draw at Athletic Bilbao.

Late goals from Franco Vazquez and Pablo Sarabia secured the points for Sevilla after their captain Vicente Iborra had scored for both sides in an action-packed clash between teams from opposite ends of the table.

Jorge Sampaoli's side, now a point off the pace but having played a game more, have enjoyed consistent results at home but their poor away form looked set to haunt them again when Sergio Leon put bottom side Osasuna ahead in the 15th minute.

Iborra pulled Sevilla level two minutes before halftime by following up Stevan Jovetic's cross to score after he had thumped the post, but shot his side in the foot in the 63rd by diverting an Osasuna cross into his own net. He made amends two minutes later by knocking the ball into the opposition net on the rebound to equalise again with Osasuna claiming it should have been ruled out for offside. Vazquez gave Sevilla the lead for the first time by heading in from a corner after 80 minutes, sparking

more furious protests from Osasuna who claimed he had shoved an opponent before the cross came in. Substitute Sarabia sealed a fifth straight league win by scoring a fourth Sevilla goal from the edge of the area in the 91st minute to put his side on 42 points from 19 games, their biggest ever total for the first half of a season.

Kenan Kodro then scored a consolation goal for the hosts in the 92nd minute. In Bilbao, a three-game winning streak in the league for Atletico Madrid came to an end despite Diego Simeone's side getting off to a dream start. Koke's cross, which was intended for Griezmann, went straight into the net in the third minute but the home side got over the shock, drawing level in the 43rd with a thumping strike from Inigo Lekue. Oscar de Marcos headed Athletic in front in the 56th minute, threatening to end Simeone's perfect record of four wins from four in the Basque club's new stadium, which opened in 2013. Griezmann had other ideas, however. He produced a classy chipped finish from a tight angle after straying an inch offside but after the goal was ruled out, he retained his focus to deliver a low finish off the far post with 10 minutes remaining. Atletico remain fourth in the standings on 35 points while Athletic are seventh on 29, two points behind Villarreal in sixth. Later champions Barcelona, third on 38, travel to Eibar. Real Madrid beat Malaga 2-1 on Saturday. — Reuters



PAMPOLONA: Osasuna's Serbian coach Petar Vasiljevic (R) shouts instructions to players during the Spanish league football match CA Osasuna vs Sevilla FC at El Sadar stadium in Pamplona yesterday. — AFP

Sports

Hirscher takes control after Kitzbuehel win



Jadhav's 90 in vain as England wins third ODI



MONDAY, JANUARY 23, 2017

ICE-COOL SANCHEZ LIFTS 10-MAN ARSENAL TO DRAMATIC WIN

Page 19



LONDON: Chelsea's Brazilian-born Spanish striker Diego Costa (2nd R) jumps to head the ball clear during the English Premier League football match between Chelsea and Hull City at Stamford Bridge in London yesterday. — AFP

COSTA GIVES CHELSEA BREATHING SPACE

	Chelsea 2
	Hull 0

LONDON: Diego Costa marked his comeback with a goal as Chelsea overcame an obdurate Hull City side 2-0 yesterday to surge eight points clear at the Premier League summit. Costa missed Chelsea's 3-0 win at Leicester City last weekend due to a back problem, amid reports he had rowed with a fitness coach after being unsettled by a big-money offer from China.

But after returning to the starting XI, his 15th goal of the campaign set Antonio Conte's side en route to an eighth straight home league win, which was rubber-stamped by Gary Cahill's late header.

With Tottenham Hotspur, Liverpool, Manchester City and Manchester United all dropping points and Costa back in the fold, Conte was left to reflect on something approaching a perfect weekend.

The Costa furore, and a recent 2-0 defeat at Tottenham, had threatened to rob Chelsea of their momentum, but they will go into back-to-back games against Liverpool and Arsenal with belief restored.

Marco Silva's Hull remain in the relegation zone, their disappointment compounded by injuries to Ryan Mason and Curtis Davies, the former being taken to hospital after an aerial collision with Cahill.

Costa replaced Willian in the only change to the Chelsea team that won at Leicester and he almost found the net inside 11 seconds, chesting down a headed clearance and volleying just wide.

The game's early rhythm evaporated following a nasty clash of heads between Cahill and Mason, who had to be stretchered off after receiving treatment on the pitch for around eight minutes.

Tom Huddlestone had dragged a shot across goal and wide prior to the stoppage and Hull continued to probe after it. Harry Maguire ambled forward from centre-back and saw a shot deflected into the side-netting and from Evandro's corner, the Hull number five's header had to be fielded by goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois.

PENALTY APPEAL APIECE

But while Hull continued to threaten sporadically, Maguire working Courtois again with a thumping drive from 25 yards, as the first half wore on the home side began to tighten the screw.

Marcos Alonso had a deflected effort palmed over by Eldin Jakupovic, while Pedro Rodriguez might have had a penalty after Hull debutant Omar Elabdellaoui blundered into him from behind. The nine minutes of added time yielded by Mason's injury produced the breakthrough. Chelsea were aggrieved that Davies avoided a second yellow card for lunging in on Pedro, but they were celebrating shortly after. Alonso's crossfield pass

found Victor Moses on the right and he shifted the ball outside Andy Robertson before cutting the ball back for Costa to sweep home. The penalty grievances were levelled up four minutes into the second half when Alonso escaped sanction despite clattering Abel Hernandez on the back of the foot as they competed for possession.

Costa twice threatened to double Chelsea's lead, but even with Davies forced off by an apparent hamstring problem, Hull continued to poke and probe, drawing groans from the home fans.

After seeing Courtois make another save, albeit to repel an off-target Michael Dawson effort, Conte made a double change, sending on Willian and Cesc Fabregas for Hazard and Pedro.

Fabregas made an instant impact, with his left-wing free-kick headed in by Cahill in the 81st minute for Chelsea's second goal. Costa was denied a second by Jakupovic's legs, but when he departed two minutes later, to be replaced by Michy Batshuayi, cries of "Diego!" echoed around the ground. — AFP

FLEETWOOD WINS IN ABU DHABI

ABU DHABI: Tommy Fleetwood broke free from a pack of contenders containing three major champions to win the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship by one shot yesterday, ending the Englishman's 31/2-year wait for a second European Tour title.

In a tense final round in which five players held the lead, the 26-year-old Fleetwood chipped in for eagle from 20 yards at the par-5 10th hole to spark a back nine of 31. That helped him to a 5-under 67, the lowest score of a windy day, and 17 under overall. Only an eagle from Pablo Larrazabal in the final group could deny Fleetwood, and when the 2014 champion's approach came up short, Fleetwood celebrated with his team behind the green.

Major winners Dustin Johnson (68), Martin Kaymer (69) and Henrik Stenson (69) were in the chasing pack all day, with three-time winner Kaymer leading on his own for two holes before dropping three shots in a five-hole stretch around the turn.

Johnson, the US Open champion, eagled the last for a 68 and a share of second place with Larrazabal on 16 under. Kaymer also eagled No. 18 and was in a three-way share for 4th place with Kiradech Aphibarnrat and Bernd Wiesberger.

Fleetwood's only previous win came at the Johnnie Walker Championship at Gleneagles in August 2013. He had missed the cut at four of his previous five appearances in Abu Dhabi, which many players use as their first event of the year, but had come into the tournament in decent form with 10 top-20 finishes in 12 events stretching back to September.

"You know (if) you keep knocking on the door, it would come," said Fleetwood, who is distinctive with his long, flowing hair. "I didn't really think it would be this week."

This win will lift him from a ranking of No. 102 into the top 50.

"I thought maybe my second win would come sooner, to be honest," he said. — AP



ABU DHABI: Tommy Fleetwood of England holds the trophy after he won the Abu Dhabi Golf Championship, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, yesterday. — AP

DYBALA, HIGUAIN STRIKE AS JUVE HUMBLE LAZIO

MILAN: Paulo Dybala hit a fifth-minute opener and Gonzalo Higuain added a quick second as Juventus humbled Lazio 2-0 yesterday to restore their four-point lead over Roma. Despite a poor record against the Turin giants in recent years, Lazio travelled to Turin looking to end the Serie A champions' 26-match unbeaten league run at home.

But Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri overcame a number of enforced absences to send out a reshuffled side that should have finished with a far more generous tally, Higuain, his 87th minute replacement Mark Pjaca, and several other players spurning scoring chances in a fairly one-sided encounter.

Juve's 16th win of the campaign leaves Allegri's men four points ahead of Roma, who can reduce the gap to a point with a win over Cagliari in late game. Napoli sit third, also at four points off the pace, following a 2-1 win at AC Milan on Saturday that left the Rossoneri fifth, 11 points behind Juventus. Back in Champions League action at Porto next month, Allegri said: "I asked the

lads for a big team performance because that's what we need in Europe, and they pulled through. "We made a few little mistakes but defensively they did really well. I realised in midweek we had to change a few things."

Left smarting by a 2-1 defeat at Fiorentina last week, Allegri rested key defender Andrea Barzagli and although wingback Dani Alves returned from injury the former Barcelona star was only fit enough for a place on the bench. Lazio were missing suspended Senad Lulic, hit Dusan Basta sidelined with injury and striker Keita Balde Dialo at the Africa Cup of Nations.

Simone Inzaghi's men had lost their last eight meetings with Juve, home and away in all competitions, and despite their good intentions the visitors were soon playing catch-up. On Juve's first real chance, Mario Mandzukic nodded the ball into the path of Dybala for the Argentinian to send a delightfully-hit volley with the outside of his boot past Federico Marchetti and into the far bottom corner. — AFP



OIL MARKET VOLATILITY MAY EXTEND TO 2017



DHAKA: Bangladeshi vegetable vendors wait for customers at a wholesale market in Dhaka yesterday. Dhaka Kawran Bazar is a major business district and wholesale market place in Dhaka. — AFP

OIL PRODUCERS SAY OUTPUT CUT ON TRACK

MINISTERS LAUD STRONG OPEC, NON-OPEC COMPLIANCE

VIENNA: Oil producers said yesterday that their landmark December deal to slash output by almost two million barrels per day was on track, as they met to review progress. "Compliance is great, it's been really fantastic," Khaled Al-Falih, energy minister of oil behemoth Saudi Arabia, was quoted by Bloomberg as saying.

"Based on everything I know, I think it's been one of the best agreements we've had for a long time," he said in Vienna. Eleven of OPEC's 13 members along with 11 non-OPEC countries have agreed to make cuts for the first half of the year. OPEC members Nigeria and Libya, both suffering setbacks in production, were given exemptions. "The Kingdom [of Saudi Arabia] has taken the initiative and other countries took part in very significant actions," Al-Falih told reporters following the meeting.

"Despite demand usually being lower in the first quarter in winter, the actions taken by the Kingdom and many other countries has impacted the market in a tangible way and we have seen the impact in spot prices," Al-Falih said.

"The deal is a success...All the countries are sticking to the deal...[the] results are above expectations," Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said after the first meeting of a committee set up to monitor the deal. Ministers said 1.5 million of almost 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) had been taken out of the market already.

Countries involved in the deal could reduce their output by 1.7 million bpd by the end of the month, Interfax news agency quoted Novak as saying. The aim is to reduce a global glut that has depressed oil prices and blown a huge hole in the public finances of producer nations, despite being good news for consumers. Markets initially welcomed the accord in December, sending oil prices up to an 18-month high of \$58. But they have since slipped back on concerns countries may not stick to their commitments—as has happened under previous deals. Falih he said however that producers have already removed 1.5 million bpd from the market, more than 80 percent of their collective target.

Brent oil prices that fell to \$27.10 a barrel a year ago have held above \$50 per barrel since OPEC producers agreed on Dec. 10 to lower output in the first half of 2017.

The cuts are aimed at reducing a global glut in oil that has weighed on oil prices for more than two years. Falih said implementation of agreed cuts had been "fantastic" and he hoped for 100 percent compliance in February.

"We will not accept anything less than 100 percent compliance," Kuwaiti oil minister Essam Al-Marzouq, who chairs the five-member ministerial compliance committee, told a news conference. The other members of the committee represent Algeria, Venezuela, Russia and Oman.

Venezuela has achieved more than half of its planned 95,000 bpd cut, Oil Minister Nelson Martinez told reporters.

SHRINKING INVENTORIES

Full compliance could take global oil inventories back

close to their five-year average by mid-2017, lowering oil in storage by around 300 million barrels, Falih said. "[There are] no surprises so far in terms of demand or supply from other sources so there is no reason for us to suddenly come in January and say we need a bigger reduction or a longer period," he said.

Saudi Arabia is producing slightly below 10 million bpd and has informed buyers of substantial cuts scheduled for next month, he said. Russia has cut its oil output by around 100,000 bpd, Novak said, double what was originally planned. He said Russian oil production had averaged around 11.15 million bpd this month.

He told reporters it was too early to talk about extending the current deal beyond the planned six months but that remained an option. "Everyone sees that the agreements on oil production cuts have already have a positive effect on oil markets. The market has become more stable and predictable," Novak said.

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed yesterday that a technical joint committee (JTC) would be created comprising a representative for each of the five members of the monitoring committee and as well as the OPEC presidency, which is currently held by Saudi Arabia. The JTC will cooperate with the OPEC Secretariat in compiling production data which will be presented to the ministerial monitoring committee by the 17th of every month, OPEC said in a news release. The monitoring committee will communicate after the 17th of every month and plans two meetings ahead of the next ordinary OPEC meeting in Vienna on May 25. The next meeting in March is set for Kuwait.

SHALE IMPACT

Ministers were also keen to highlight that any increase in high-cost US shale oil production as a result of rising oil prices would be absorbed by rising demand. "We are not worried that production in the US is increasing as prices go up because I think this will be absorbed by an increase in demand," Al-Marzouq said. Qatari Energy Minister Mohammed Al-Sada said with increasing demand "shale oil will all be catered for." Russia's Novak also said he was not worried about higher oil output in the United States.

Russia has reduced production by an average of 100,000 bpd, a milestone it had not expected to reach until next month, Novak said. Russia has said it would make a daily reduction of 300,000 barrels by April or May. Saudi Arabia has already exceeded its target with an output reduction of more than 500,000 bpd, Falih said, while Algeria and Kuwait have also cut to levels beyond their targets, Bloomberg reported. Other OPEC members such as Iraq and Venezuela have not yet reached their quotas but say they are more than halfway there. OPEC's total production fell by 221,000 bpd to 33.1 million bpd in December, according to secondary sources data in OPEC's monthly report published last week. — Agencies

KUWAIT STOCKS JUMP, STRONGEST IN GULF

MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

DUBAI: Share prices in Kuwait jumped in very heavy trade yesterday, the top performing market in a strong Gulf region, while tax fears continued to weigh on prices in Egypt. The Kuwaiti market index surged 3.2 percent, its biggest rise in more than two years, to a 23-month high, while trading volume was the biggest since mid-2013. The index is up 15.6 percent so far this year, far outperforming other Gulf bourses. The narrower Kuwait 15 index of blue-chips is up 9.6 percent.

The market attracts little non-Arab foreign investment and with a trailing price/earnings ratio near 15 times, it is not cheap compared with its neighbors or emerging markets in general. Nevertheless, fund managers said some regional funds as well as local retail investors were piling into the market to profit from its momentum. Because of its huge oil reserves and small population, Kuwait has been hit less hard than most countries in the region by low oil prices.

"Kuwait remains the most resilient country to lower oil prices in the Gulf Cooperation Council," Arqaam Capital said in a report. The appointment of a new chairman of the Kuwait Stock Exchange on Jan. 7 has raised hopes for stronger efforts to eventually upgrade Kuwait from frontier market to emerging market status. Pakistan will move to MSCI's emerging market index in May, and some frontier funds withdrawing from Pakistan as a result are expected to go to Kuwait.

Also, investors who accept an offer to buy out minority shareholders in Kuwait Food Co (Americana) this month may put the proceeds into other Kuwaiti stocks; about \$1 billion could be involved. Much of the bull run is focusing on financial stocks; Burgan Bank climbed 6.3 percent and Kuwait Finance House added 5.2 percent yesterday. But nine of the day's 10 most heavily traded stocks rose sharply, suggesting investors were pouring money into most shares that moved significantly.

SAUDI, EGYPT

Saudi Arabia's index fell in early trade after poor fourth-quarter earnings from some major companies, but it closed 0.3 percent higher as builder Khodari jumped 9.1 percent. The stock has been buoyed since November by signs of improving conditions for the

construction sector as the government makes delayed payments on its debts to companies in the industry.

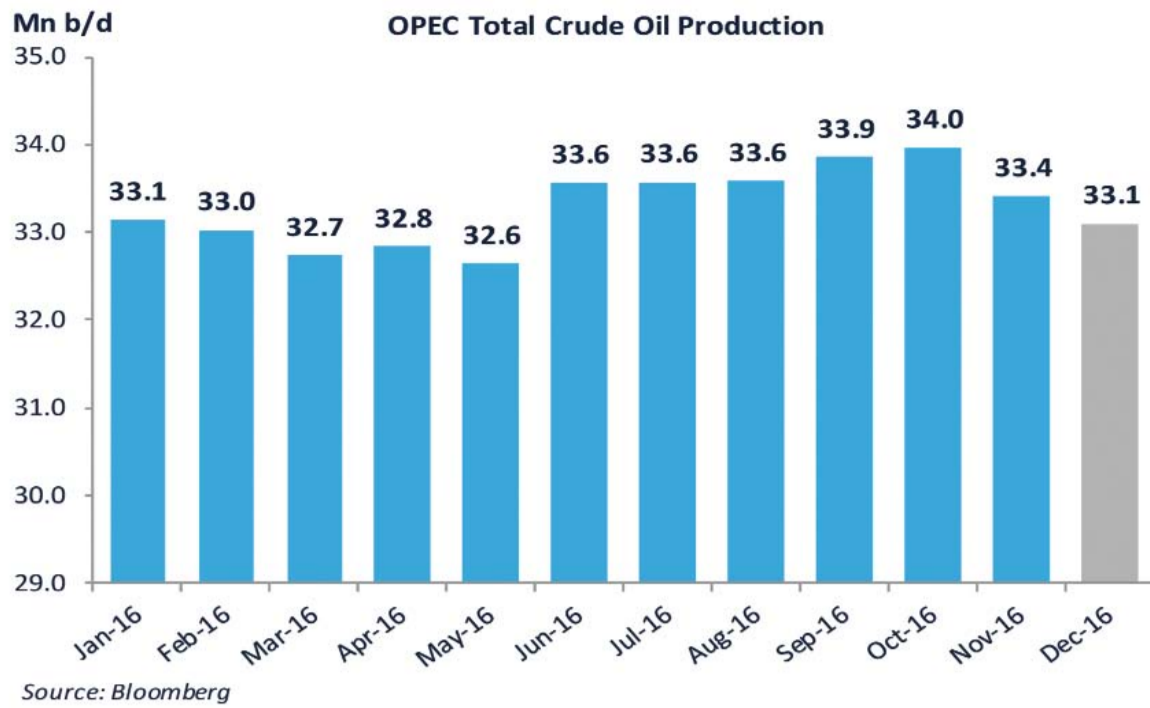
Real estate developer Dar Al Arkan, which could benefit from the government's plans to stimulate the housing sector this year, climbed 7.0 percent. Saudi Basic Industries rose 0.5 percent after agreeing to acquire the 50 percent it does not already own in its petrochemical venture with Shell Arabia, a unit of Royal Dutch Shell, for \$820 million.

Those three stocks helped to offset weakness in banks, which were hit by higher than expected fourth-quarter provisions against bad debts at several lenders. Alawwal Bank fell 3.4 percent after swinging to a net loss of 249.3 million riyals; Alistithmar Capital and EFG Hermes had forecast profit of 330.5 million and 438 million. Saudi British Bank dropped 1.6 percent after posting a 35 percent fall in fourth-quarter net profit, while Samba Financial Group sank 3.7 percent after reporting a 12 percent drop in profit. Savola plunged as much as 9.5 percent during the day, but closed only 2 percent lower, after reporting a net loss of 964.3 million riyals; analysts had predicted a profit.

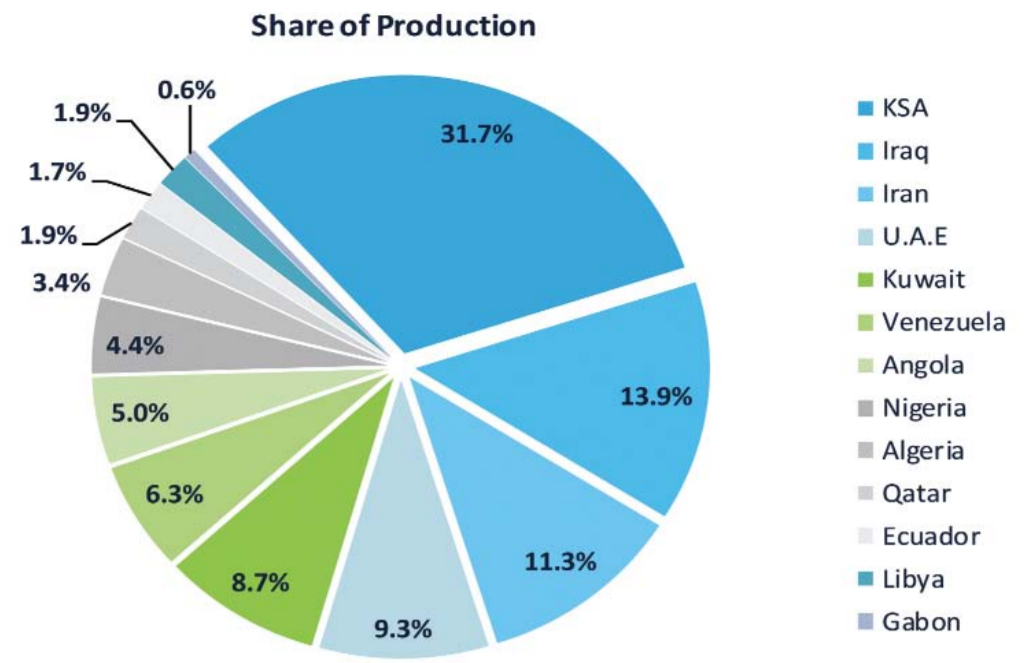
Dubai's index gained 0.7 percent as the most heavily traded stock, builder Drake & Scull, which has exposure to Saudi Arabia, climbed 4.8 percent. Property developer Deyaar rose 2 percent after state news agency WAM reported it had signed a memorandum of understanding with Dubai South, the master developer of the area around Dubai's Al Maktoum International Airport, for a multi-purpose development. Strong banking shares pushed Qatar's index up 0.2 percent, with Qatar National Bank gaining 2.4 percent.

Abu Dhabi's index slipped 0.1 percent but Waha Capital's share price soared to hit its 15 percent daily limit in the heaviest trading volume since late 2014. Egypt's share market index dropped a further 0.7 percent after tumbling 3.7 percent on Thursday, when Reuters reported that the authorities were considering temporarily reintroducing a stamp duty charge on stock market transactions.

Alexandria Mineral Oils surged 7 percent, however, after saying first-half net profit rose to 545.8 million Egyptian pounds (\$29.3 million), up from 157 million pounds in the same period a year ago. — Reuters



Source: Bloomberg



Source: Bloomberg

OIL MARKET VOLATILITY MAY EXTEND TO 2017

KAMCO Oil Market Report

KUWAIT: The year 2016 recorded one of the most volatile years for the oil market with crude prices reaching the lowest level in more than a decade as oil producers continued to pump oil at breakneck speed in order to retain their market share. The obvious victims were high cost producers, especially shale producers in the US and Canada; however, the rate of fall in production due to the decline in oil prices was much slower than initially expected as shale producers pushed the life of existing oil wells and curbed new drilling activity. Events like the wildfires in Canada and the political issues in some of the OPEC producers did provide intermittent support to oil prices, but a sustained support and a stronger reaction always came from the ongoing negotiations related to production cut agreements that was reached toward the end of the year. OPEC crude closed the year at a price of \$53.3/b and Brent crude at \$55/b, the highest level in 18-months with a yearly gain of 70 percent and 50 percent, respectively.

Much of the aforementioned gains came during 2H-16 and especially during December-16 as both OPEC and non-OPEC producers committed to output cuts, a deal that was highly uncertain as per oil watchers.

More surprising was the adherence to the oil output cuts as seen from the headlines during January-17 with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait reducing their respective oil outputs by more than the committed quantities.

Saudi Arabia's oil output fell to a 22-month low level of below 10 mb/d in January-17, while Kuwait's oil output fell to 2.707 mb/d as oil well maintenance coincided with output cut agreements. The Kingdom's energy minister also said that they would consider extending the production agreement beyond the six months as the pace of market rebalancing is expected to accelerate due to the agreement coupled with robust demand in the market. However, he expressed confidence that there may be no need to extend the agreement due to the bullish signals backed by the unexpectedly high demand and larger than agreed production cuts by OPEC and non-OPEC members. He echoed a similar comment made by the OPEC Secretary General who said that world oil inventories will start to decline by 2Q-17 and oil producers will decide in May-17 on whether to extend their output cuts beyond 1H-17.

Meanwhile, IEA recently gave a contrarian view on the short term oil market in 2017. The agency said that oil prices are expected to fall later this year despite the OPEC agreement as US shale producers would pump more as a response to rising oil prices. This would have an opposite impact on oil prices and is expected to remain volatile during the year. This was evident in the slow and steady increase in oil rig count in the US, which increased consistently over eleven weeks until last week when it declined by seven to 522 rigs. This is in line with our expectation that an oil price of over \$ 50/b would trigger additional output from US shale producers. This would partly offset the impact of the OPEC agreement and push market rebalancing to late 2017.

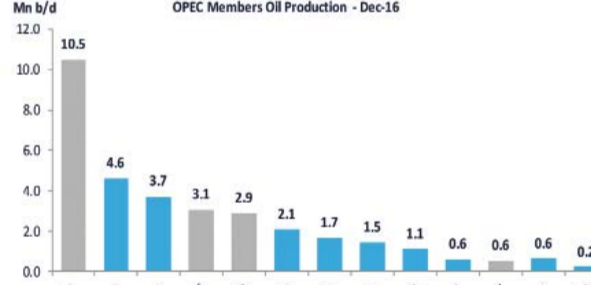
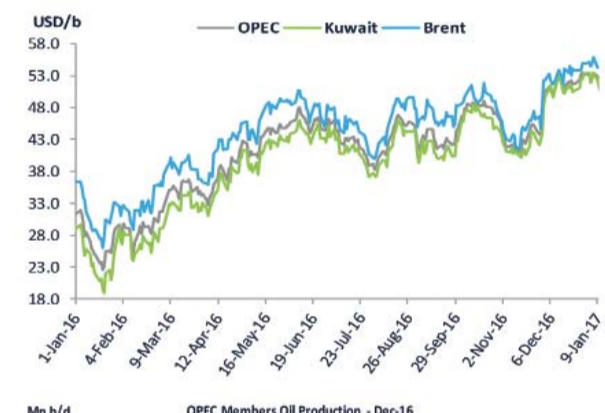
Oil prices

Oil market rallied during December-16 and in the first half of January-17 with crude prices touching the highest level in 18-months. The surge was initially backed by news about the output agreement between OPEC and non-OPEC producers and was further supported by updates on successful implementation of the agreed upon cuts, especially by sizable producers including Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Algeria. The average monthly OPEC crude price during December-16 increased by a strong 20 percent to \$ 51.67/b, the highest monthly average since July-15. The rise in Kuwait average crude price was even stronger at 21.5 percent and stood at \$ 51.13/b

while Brent crude increased by 19.1 percent to reach an average price of \$53.29/b during December-16. Crude price was further supported by weakness in the greenback which declined to the lowest level in five weeks against a basket of currencies after USD-related comments were made by the new incoming US president. Further support on the supply side came from China which is said to have reduced oil production by almost 7 percent during 2016, the first decline since 2009 and the biggest one since 1990.

Moreover, production is forecasted to decline at the same pace during 2017 despite the rise in oil price as the country's largest oil fields are fast aging in addition to higher production cost. Furthermore, China's National Development and Reform Commission said in a report that the country's oil output is expected to decline to an average of around 200 mb/d by 2020 as compared to an average of 215 mb/d during 2011-2015. Production in the overall Asia Pacific region is also expected to fall with China accounting for the bulk of this decline. This augurs well for OPEC players as it is expected to increase China's dependence on oil imports, which reportedly increased by 9 percent m-o-m in December-16 to 8.57 mb/d.

The average monthly OPEC crude price during December-16 increased by a strong 20 percent to \$51.67/b, the highest monthly average since July-15. The rise in Kuwait average crude price was even stronger at 21.5 percent and stood at \$51.13/b while Brent crude



Source for the above charts : OPEC and Bloomberg

increased by 19.1 percent to reach an average price of \$53.29/b during December-16. Crude prices continued the surge during January-17 on positive news although the pace of growth was much muted at close to 2 percent by mid-month.

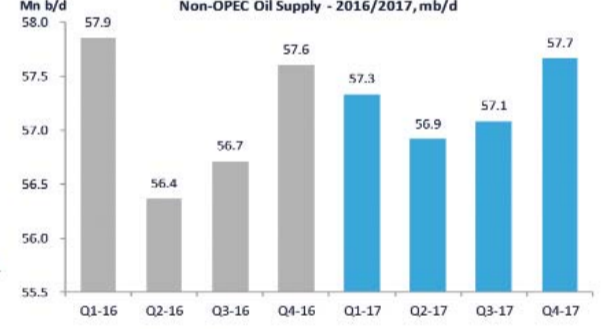
World Oil Demand

Total world oil demand for 2016 was revised up by 10 tb/d and is now expected to see a growth of 1.25 mb/d to reach an average of 94.44 mb/d. The marginal increase was primarily on the back of better-than-expected oil demand in OECD Asia Pacific and OECD Europe (+30 tb/d for Q3-16) as demand for petrochemical feedstock surged along with heating fuel requirement led by colder-than-

expected weather. Demand numbers for the OECD Asia Pacific region was raised by a total 100 tb/d for Q2-16 and Q3-16 on the back of better than expected demand growth in South Korea that extended till the last quarter. The OECD Europe region witnessed higher demand for transportation fuels and naphtha specifically Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the UK. On the other hand, demand from OECD Americas was slashed by 20 tb/d for Q1-16 and 30 tb/d for Q4-16 due to warmer-than-expected weather conditions across the continent that affected demand for heating fuel and thereby partly offsetting the demand increase in other regions.

For the non-OECD countries, demand growth saw an upward adjustment for Other Asia (+20 tb/d) and China (+10 tb/d), while demand expectations for Latin America (-50 tb/d in 4Q-16) and the Middle East (-20 tb/d in Q3-16 and -80 tb/d in Q4-16) region was lowered. The revision for Middle East region reflected substitution effect in Saudi Arabia as well as slower-than-expected regional economic growth.

Oil demand growth for 2017 was also upgraded at an equal pace as in 2016 and is now expected to grow by 1.16 mb/d to reach 95.6 mb/d for the year. The revision was primarily on the back of higher expected demand growth in OECD Europe (+50 tb/d in Q1-17 and +30 tb/d in Q2-17) during the first quarter of 2017 owing to cold weather conditions across the continent as well as improvement in transportation fuel demand. The expect-



ed improvement in the region's economic growth also augurs well for higher demand for crude. On the other hand, demand expectations from Other Asia was downgraded for 1H-17, specifically from India, owing to the demonetization policy that is expected to affect economic growth and oil demand. Demand expectations from India was lowered by 20 tb/d each for the first three quarter of 2017, reflecting marginal slowdown in economic growth as well as the higher base effect.

World Oil Supply

Non-OPEC supply growth expectations for 2016 saw an upward revision of 70 tb/d as compared to the previous expectations and is now expected to contract by

0.71 mb/d to reach 57.14 mb/d. The revision reflected higher supply from Norway, Russia and the US during the last quarter of 2016. Moreover, production data for the last quarter resulted in upward revision of 248 tb/d in OECD and 48 tb/d for the FSU region. In addition, non-OPEC supply declined at a faster pace during the last quarter as compared to the previous year. In terms of regional split, OECD Americas, Latin America and China witnessed strong decline during 2016. According to the latest OPEC monthly report, world oil supply during December-16 declined by 0.3 mb/d to 96.92 mb/d as compared to November-16 although it was higher by 0.71 mb/d as compared to December-15. On the other hand, non-OPEC oil supply for 2017 saw a downward revision of 0.18 mb/d and is now projected to grow by 0.12 mb/d to average at 57.26 mb/d. The revision reflected lower oil supply from Russia, Kazakhstan, China, Congo and Norway partially due to the oil output agreement between OPEC and non-OPEC producers. Nevertheless, US oil supply for 2017 was upgraded by 0.23 mb/d as a result of higher rig count and stronger cash flows for oil producers. Meanwhile, the decline in oil supply from China could help the oil market and support prices as oil producers in the country are shutting mature oil fields that are costly to operate. According to IEA, China's output is expected to decline by 0.24 mb/d during 2017 as a result of the cut in spending by oil producers.

OPEC Oil Production and Spare Capacity

In terms of oil production, 2016 witnessed an increase of 576 tb/d or 2.0 percent in its output from the current OPEC members (that excludes Indonesia but includes Gabon) to reach 33.1 mb/d in December-16. Indonesia was suspended from the group less than a year after the country joined OPEC as it did not agree to cut its production by 5 percent as required by the OPEC agreement. The increase for 2016 was primarily on the back of more than 1 mb/d increase in oil production from Iran followed by 260 tb/d increase in Libya and 230 tb/d increase in production by Saudi Arabia as compared to 2015. Iraq and UAE also added a combined 300 tb/d during 2016 as compared to 2015. On the other hand, the biggest decline was reported by Nigeria with its production down by 440 tb/d followed closely by 396 tb/d decline in Venezuela and 189 tb/d decline in Angola. On a month-on-month basis, oil production by the group declined by 0.9 percent or 310 tb/d on the back of a steep decline of 200 tb/d reported by Nigeria followed by 50 tb/d and 40 tb/d decline reported by Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, respectively. After reporting rising oil output for the last three consecutive months, Nigeria's output declined during December-16 due to unplanned field maintenance as well as strike by port workers.

Meanwhile, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia implemented a total reduction of close to 0.7 mb/d which is close to 40 percent of the total OPEC and non-OPEC planned output cut. Kuwait has even indicated that the cuts could be extended by another 10 tb/d to 146-148 tb/d from the current output cut of close to 139 tb/d. For Saudi Arabia, according to KAMCO Research's calculations, the Kingdom slashed its production by at least 544 tb/d to close to an average production level of 10 mb/d. However, it is reported that the two countries are expected to resume production at the neutral zone that is shared between the two countries and is shut since as long as 2014, although the two agreed that any additional production would not raise their respective outputs beyond the new limits. KAMCO Research sees the current strength in the oil market only as a temporary relief and we believe that despite the expected rebalancing, which we believe would be fragile, oil price would remain in a tight range in the near term.

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES	
Japanese Yen	2.670
Indian Rupees	4.494
Pakistani Rupees	2.919
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.043
Nepali Rupees	2.810
Singapore Dollar	215.490
Hongkong Dollar	39.446
Bangladesh Taka	3.865
Philippine Peso	6.144
Thai Baht	8.687

GCC COUNTRIES	
Saudi Riyal	81.654
Qatari Riyal	84.101
ani Riyal	795.218
Bahraini Dinar	813.070
UAE Dirham	83.367

ARAB COUNTRIES	
Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.350
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.259
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.229
Tunisian Dinar	134.510
Jordanian Dinar	431.200
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.040
Syrian Lira	2.182
Morocco Dirham	31.003

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES	
US Dollar Transfer	306.000
Euro	329.560
Sterling Pound	380.360
Canadian dollar	230.770
Turkish lira	81.760

Swiss Franc	307.230
Australian Dollar	232.870
US Dollar Buying	304.800

GOLD	
20 Gram	247.740
10 Gram	126.790
5 Gram	64.240

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.650
Canadian Dolla	230.220
Sterling Pound	379.810
Euro	328.770
Swiss Frank	306.490
Bahrain Dinar	810.255
UAE Dirhams	83.610
Saudi Riyals	84.830
Jordanian Dinar	82.435
Egyptian Pound	432.270
Sri Lankan Rupees	16.511
Indian Rupees	2.040
Pakistani Rupees	4.489
Bangladesh Taka	2.915
Philippines Peso	3.871
Cyprus pound	6.138
Japanese Yen	167.850
Syrian Pound	3.665
Nepalese Rupees	2.425
Malaysian Ringgit	3.800
	69.600

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.870
Thai Bhat	9.625
Turkish Lira	81.470

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY	SELL
British Pound	0.372786	0.382785
Czech Korune	0.004111	0.016111
Danish Krone	0.039972	0.044972
Euro	0.322801	0.331801
Norwegian Krone	0.032405	0.037605
Romanian Leu	0.084806	0.084806
Slovakia	0.009174	0.019174
Swedish Krona	0.030385	0.035385
Swiss Franc	0.299606	0.310606
Turkish Lira	0.077162	0.087462

Australasia	BUY	SELL
Australian Dollar	0.223417	0.235417
New Zealand Dollar	0.213816	0.223316

America	BUY	SELL
Canadian Dollar	0.224376	0.233376
Georgina Lari	0.138207	0.138207
US Dollars	0.301900	0.306300
US Dollars Mint	0.302400	0.306300

Asia	BUY	SELL
Bangladesh Taka	0.003667	0.004251
Chinese Yuan	0.043135	0.046635
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037388	0.040118
Indian Rupee	0.002832	0.005512

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002594	0.002774
Kenyan Shilling	0.003003	0.003003
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065229	0.071229
Nepalese Rupee	0.003146	0.003316
Pakistan Rupee	0.002762	0.003052
Philippine Peso	0.006059	0.006359
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.020137	0.219238
South African Rand	0.016289	0.024789
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001696	0.002276
Taiwan	0.009670	0.009850
Thai Baht	0.008332	0.008882

Arab	BUY	SELL
Bahraini Dinar	0.805100	0.813600
Egyptian Pound	0.013197	0.022450
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000182	0.000242
Jordanian Dinar	0.426542	0.435542
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000148	0.000248
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020137	0.044137
Nigerian Naira	0.001268	0.001903
Omani Riyal	0.788384	0.794064
Qatar Riyal	0.083239	0.084689
Saudi Riyal	0.080513	0.081813
Syrian Pound	0.001298	0.001518
Tunisian Dinar	0.129493	0.137493
Turkish Lira	0.077162	0.087462
UAE Dirhams	0.081888	0.083588
Yemeni Riyal	0.000995	0.001075

IN DEBT AND AFRAID: DEALING WITH DEBT COLLECTORS

It's a scary place to be - in debt and afraid. A new Consumer Financial Protection Bureau report found that more than one in four consumers felt threatened when contacted by debt collectors. The first-ever national survey of consumer experiences with debt collectors found consumers often faced calls that came too often, at odd hours and contained warnings of jail time and other threats. Some were contacted for debts they didn't owe. And many said when they asked the collector to stop contacting them, the request was ignored.

CFPB Director Rich Cordray said the report casts a "troubling light" on the industry, and that the bureau is working to stop abuses. But what are your rights when facing off with a debt collector? A few things to know:

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

The CFPB says debt collection is a multi-billion dollar industry affecting 70 million consumers. People are most often contacted about medical and credit card debt. And more consumers complain to the CFPB about debt collection than any other financial product or service.

The Federal Trade Commission, which enforces the Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, also said debt collectors generate more complaints to its offices than any other industry. While many debt collectors are careful to comply with consumer protection laws, some engage in illegal practices.

YOU ARE PROTECTED

The Fair Debt Collection Practices Act provides protection for those being pursued for personal

debts, such as money owed on a credit card account, an auto loan or a mortgage. It doesn't cover debts incurred to run a business.

YOU HAVE RIGHTS

Debt collectors can contact you by phone, letter, email or text message, as long as they follow the rules and disclose that they are debt collectors. It's against the law for a debt collector to pretend to be someone else to harass, threaten or deceive you.

They may not contact you at inconvenient times or places, such as early in the morning or late at night. And they may not contact you at work if they're told not to.

Debt collectors may not harass, oppress, or abuse you, according to the FTC. That includes threats of violence or using obscene language. Federal law also limits the number of calls a debt collector can place. Collectors cannot lie to collect a debt, by falsely representing themselves or the amount you owe. And other than trying to obtain information about you, such as a telephone number or whereabouts, a debt collector generally is not permitted to discuss your debt with anyone other than you, your spouse, or your attorney.

YOU CAN TAKE ACTION

Report any problems you have with a debt collector to your state Attorney General's office, the Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. Many states have their own debt collection laws that vary from federal law, so contact your attorney general's office for help. — AP



RICHMOND: In this March 26, 2015, file photo, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Director Richard Cordray speaks during a panel discussion in Richmond, Va. A new CFPB report found that more than one in four consumers felt threatened when contacted by debt collectors. Cordray said the report casts a "troubling light" on the industry, and that the bureau is working to stop abuses. — AP

News

in brief

Kuwait oil price up 15 cents to \$50.28 pb

KUWAIT: The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 15 cents to \$50.28 per barrel Friday as oppose to \$50.13 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) on Saturday. At the global level, the price went up due to expectations that OPEC and Non-OPEC members will fulfill their deal to reduce their oil output despite news regarding the increase in US petroleum excavation activities. The price of the Brent crude went up by \$1.33 to \$55.49 per barrel while the American Crude which went up by \$1.05 to \$52.42 pb.

US dollar stable against KD at 0.305

KUWAIT: The rate of the US dollar was stable against the Kuwaiti Dinar at 0.305, while the Euro went up to KD 0.326, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. According to the CBK, the rate of exchange for the Sterling pound also went up to KD 0.377, as well as the Swiss Franc up to KD 0.304 and the Japanese yen stood firm at KD 0.002. In the United States the dollar exchange rate stabilized compared to the major currencies in last Friday's trading due to the unclear vision in the international markets before the inauguration of US President Donald Trump. This came after a fluctuating week due to uncertainty regarding the policies of the newly appointed US president toward the US economy.

Iraq announces sale of \$1bn in bonds guaranteed by US

BAGHDAD: Iraq announced the sale of \$1 billion in bonds guaranteed by the United States, paying an interest of 2.1 percent, far below the 9 percent yield on the country's non-guaranteed debt. The US-guaranteed five-year bonds were issued on Wednesday, the finance ministry said in a statement yesterday. The Iraqi government, which relies almost exclusively on oil income, has struggled to pay its bills since crude prices dropped in 2014, the same year that Islamic State militants seized a third of the country's territory. The Iraqi government in November said it plans to issue \$2 billion worth of bonds on international markets to help narrow its budget deficit in 2017.

SABIC to acquire remaining stake in Saudi JV with Shell

DUBAI: Saudi Basic Industries Corp (SABIC) has signed an agreement to acquire the remaining stake of its joint venture with Shell Arabia, a unit of Royal Dutch Shell in Saudi Arabia for \$820 million, SABIC said yesterday. The agreement which is expected to be complete before the end of this year is subject to regulatory measures, SABIC said. It said it signed another memorandum of understanding yesterday with Shell Arabia to boost cooperation in international and local investment opportunities.

UK RETAILERS RACE TO KEEP UP WITH ONLINE DEMAND

PRESSURE MOUNTS AS RETAILERS ENGAGE ON MULTIPLE PLATFORMS

LONDON: British fashion retailers will switch their spending firepower to technology from the high street in 2017 after online shopping became the key driver of sales growth over the all-important festive period. Marks & Spencer is investing in apps, its website and logistics, while spending 350 million pounds over five years to close 10 percent of clothing and home space.

Department store John Lewis said it was cutting staff bonuses in part to enable it to invest in its online operations after 40 percent of its Christmas sales came from the web. And Next, which failed to keep up with rivals for a second Christmas in a row, will spend 10 million pounds to improve its online operations and marketing. "They will have to invest in infrastructure and it will weigh on margins, but if you get it right you have a profitable online business," said one large institutional investor in UK retail who asked not to be named due to company policy.

"And you can engage on multiple platforms." The renewed drive in technology comes as British web-only players ASOS and Boohoo continue to race ahead, helping Britons to embrace online shopping more quickly than their European cousins.

And the pressure is relentless. ASOS, with nearly 5 million active users in the UK, said it would increase its own capital expenditure to keep ahead of the pack after it posted 18 percent UK sales growth in the four months to the end of the year.

Boohoo grew British sales by 31 percent in the same period. Online sales have been booming in Britain for years, with e-commerce accounting for nearly a quarter of all purchases in December, according to the British Retail Consortium. In the 52 weeks to Dec. 18, overall fashion sales fell 2 percent, according to market research firm Kantar Worldpanel, while pure online players grew 7 percent as fashion lovers snapped up goods through simple apps on their mobile.

While trading updates show that traditional retailers grew their sales by selling additional goods to customers picking up online orders in store, the move online also brings new challenges such as the high number of goods that are returned. The signs of the change can be seen across the country, on small high streets where independent shops have shut - hurt by high business rates - and on the stock market where the share price of Boohoo has jumped by 500 percent in two years.

Pick-up lockers at railway stations and petrol pumps mean parcels can be picked up at any time, while changing rooms in standalone sites in the centre of towns allow purchases to be tried on and instantly sent back if not wanted, making it as easy to shop online as it is to wander down a high street.

The industry estimates that around 30 percent of womenswear items bought online are returned.

Traditional retailers have harnessed the web by persuading customers to pick up online-ordered goods in-store, forcing firms to speed up delivery logistics and increase storage space in their shops.

"The role of the shop does change," said Charlie Mayfield, chairman of the employee-owned John Lewis Partnership. "We are still opening shops but we will be opening fewer going forward and we will be investing more in changing existing shops so they can fulfil that different role more."

THINKING DIGITAL

The 133-year-old Marks & Spencer, which has struggled for years to grow its clothing business, beat forecasts for Christmas trading as investment in its app for iPad and mobile devices helped boost online sales. More than 60 percent of all goods sold online were picked up in store-known as click and collect. Seeking to adapt the business to meet the new demand, it said in November it would not return additional cash to shareholders in

the second half. Debenhams, Britain's No. 2 department store chain, also beat forecasts as those customers shopping online and in-store spent about two and a half times more than a shopper in one place.

The group, which appointed Sergio Bucher as CEO in October, is set to unveil its plans for the future in April and analysts at Liberum have said that could entail higher spending.

And Britain's biggest department store John Lewis, one of the leading retailers online over the last 15 years, said it would speed up its internet strategy after 40 percent of its Christmas sales came from the web, up from 36 percent last year. "You might have expected to see a slowdown in the rate of growth but it has basically continued on the same trajectory," Mayfield said. "And we've got very good data which shows the relationship between shops and online sales is strong."

But the cost to transform the business is clear, with operating profit down 31 percent in the six months to end July. John

Lewis said trading profit would come under pressure this year and the need to invest, plus the weaker pound, meant staff bonuses would be "significantly" lower.

Thomson Reuters data shows that 2017 full-year pretax profit at M&S and Debenhams is also expected to fall around 18 and 12 percent respectively. Despite the high costs, the experience of retailer Next shows that the big names have little choice but to follow their online peers if they want to remain competitive. Next will invest to improve its website and online marketing in a recognition that it may have fallen behind the standard of some competitors, where sites carry more content including video and numerous photographs to show how an item would look.

"If it's not convenient and the check-out process is not good or you don't portray the product in the right way, then people will just open up another app and order somewhere else," the institutional investor said. "It's as simple as that these days." —Reuters



LONDON: Marks & Spencer is investing in apps, its website and logistics, while spending 350 million pounds over five years to close 10 percent of clothing and home space.



MONTRET: Former Economy minister Arnaud Montebourg looks on before voting during the first round of the French left's presidential primary election, in Montret, eastern France yesterday. —AP

PLUNGING LIRA PRESSURES TURKISH RETAILERS AS ECONOMY SLOWS

ISTANBUL: Turkish businessman Tekin Acar had contracts to open branches of his leading cosmetics chain in ten new shopping malls this year. A few days ago he cancelled nine of them after sharp falls in the lira meant he would struggle to afford the rents.

Turkey's currency has lost around a quarter of its value since the middle of last year, causing havoc for retailers selling imported goods or paying rent pegged to the US dollar. Many were already suffering from a sharp economic slowdown and dwindling tourism numbers after a spate of deadly bombings. Foreign brands in Turkey are also suffering. Dutch clothing chain C&A, Britain's Topshop, German cosmetics firm Douglas and U.S.-based dietary supplement retailer GNC have disappeared from shopping centres in recent months.

Retail spaces in some of Istanbul's biggest malls stand empty. "Since many brands have closed up stores one by one, people don't notice it," said Acar, who founded the cosmetics chain that bears his name in 1979 and has 76 stores across Turkey. "In my 46-year career, it's the first time I'm having trouble paying my rent, utilities and salaries. I've put all my income from other businesses into this, I've increased capital but it isn't enough. I'm not George Soros, this is it for me." Hundreds of malls sprung up across Turkey in the past two decades, symbols of the rapid consumption-led growth that helped build President Tayyip Erdogan's reputation when he was prime minister from 2003-2014.

But that growth has left structural weaknesses

in the economy, and the suffering retail sector and wider economic malaise come at an awkward time for Erdogan. He is expected to seek popular support in a spring referendum for bolstering the powers of his office and can ill-afford a sharp slowdown.

Acar's business has been further hit by a hike last week in import taxes on some cosmetics and by restrictions on the products for which credit card payments can be taken in instalments, part of a drive to boost Turkey's savings rate. Many of the new malls were financed with dollar and euro loans and their owners, who have seen their debt burden rise as the lira fell, charge rent in hard currency to offset the risk.

The payback period for shopping mall developers in Istanbul has risen in recent years to an average of 22 years from 15-16, largely due to exchange rate risk and uncertainty about rental incomes, according to Hulusi Belgu, head of the Turkish Council of Shopping Centres (AYD).

His association estimates that \$53 billion has been invested in the country's 377 shopping malls over the past few decades, 70 percent of it financed through debt, much of it dollar and euro-denominated. There was "constant demand" from retailers to seek rent reductions because of the weaker lira, Belgu told Reuters, and mall developers - despite their own financial pressures - were having to do their best to help.

"In the end, the mall investors look at the rent to turnover ratios and act accordingly. We pull the rents to healthy ratios that allow (the retailers) to survive," he said.

FALLING CONFIDENCE

The lira has fallen as much as 10 percent against the dollar since the start of 2017, making it the world's worst performing major currency. That comes on top of double-digit falls both last year and the year before. Erdogan has urged Turks to sell dollars to prop up the lira, calling for a "sense of national mobilization", while the central bank has taken steps to tighten lira liquidity.

Financial market investors say only a sharp interest rate hike when the central bank meets on Jan. 24 will put a floor under the lira's losses, although Erdogan has long been opposed to such a move, fearing it will further slow growth.

The lira's fall has been a major blow to middle-class Turks, for whom life is largely dollar-denominated. Fuel prices and private school fees, clothing and electronics have all risen in price with the lira's decline, denting consumer sentiment.

Economic growth in the third quarter, the latest data available, turned negative for the first time in seven years and is forecast at just 3.2 percent for 2016, a far cry from the high single-digit rates on which Erdogan built his reputation as prime minister from 2003-14. "It's crucial for retailers to reduce the cost of rent during tumultuous times as the decline in sales puts a stress on our financials and rent is among the largest fixed costs for our sector," said Ahmet Can Tarkan, head of Dilasima Group, a boutique fashion retailer. Dilasima, which operates 43 stores in five cities, imports Italian brands including MaxMara, Furla and Marella, meaning its cost of goods has risen in lira terms, as well as its rents. — Reuters

ARAMCO OPERATING 220 RIGS

KHOBAR: Oil and gas company Saudi Aramco is operating about 220 drilling rigs thanks to continued investment in capacity despite low oil prices, Saudi Arabia's energy minister told Sky News Arabia in a program broadcast yesterday.

Khalid Al-Falih, who is also chairman of Aramco, said that continuous investment in drilling enables Saudi Arabia to offset the gradual decline in output from mature fields and that the kingdom is maintaining production capacity at 12.5 million barrels per day. "We have not reduced the number of drilling rigs during the crisis. Around 220 rigs

are in operation," he said.

"Aramco can capitalize on low production costs to increase funding for these ongoing investments from its own resources, and they have absolutely not been affected by the drop in prices."

In the past couple of years Aramco has saved on drilling costs by obtaining discounts from oil field service companies and suppliers. Industry sources told Reuters last year that Aramco was operating about 212 oil and gas rigs, a level it had kept steady since 2015. That number did not include rigs used to drill water wells. —Reuters

US STOCKS RISE, DOLLAR FALLS AS TRUMP ERA BEGINS

NEW YORK: US stocks rose and the dollar fell Friday as Donald Trump was officially sworn in as the president of the United States and Barack Obama's term ended. Trump's inauguration dominated a day that saw most major equity markets rise as the long-telegraphed transfer of power in the world's biggest economy finally took place.

Trump's election sparked a massive US stock rally in the six weeks that followed, amid expectations the new US president would enact pro-growth measures, such as tax cuts, public works spending and regulatory rollbacks.

However, markets have traded sideways over the last month as investors wait for con-

crete progress on that wish list. The S&P 500 added 0.3 percent to finish the week slightly lower, while the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.5 percent. "Right now, we can say that the stock market is in a deliberation phase, recognizing that the time has arrived for the legislative reality to live up to the hope of the post-election rally; and knowing full well that governing in this interconnected world is never as easy as campaigning in this interconnected world," said Briefing.com analyst Patrick O'Hare.

Adopting a populist and sometimes angry tone in his inaugural address, Trump blasted international trade deals and promised to put

America first. "Every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs will be made to benefit American workers and American families," Trump said. "We must protect our borders from the ravages of other countries making our products, stealing our companies, and destroying our jobs."

Stocks cut their gains after the speech, although they stayed in positive throughout the afternoon. While analysts have cheered talk of tax cuts, they fear Trump could start a trade war.

Indeed, shortly after the ceremony, the White House announced plans to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, and pull out unless it gets a "fair deal."

"The market wasn't wild about it, perhaps a bit of a negative tone taken rather than a positive tone," said JJ Kinahan, chief market strategist at TD Ameritrade.

Kinahan said the market is waiting for concrete progress on tax reform and other key growth measures after rallying aggressively after the election in anticipation of major change.

"The market is always 'What's next?'" Kinahan said. "Until we see some implementation plan, we're going to continue with this nervousness." The dollar fell against the euro, pound and yen. Trump has said the dollar is too high and is crimping American growth.

Trump also has lashed out at China over its currency and threatened tariffs on the world's second-biggest economy, raising the possibility of a "new cold war between

the US and China," said Kathy Lien of BK Asset Management.

"None of this is positive for the US dollar or the US economy." Earlier, London's benchmark FTSE 100 dipped 0.1 percent, while Frankfurt's DAX 30 index won 0.2 percent and the Paris CAC 40 gained 0.2 percent.

Chinese growth

Ahead of Trump's big day, markets were cheered by data showing China's economy enjoyed its first growth pick-up in two years. The Chinese economy expanded by 6.8 percent in the final quarter of last year, the first improvement since the end of 2014. While China's National Bureau of Statistics welcomed the data, it stressed that "the domestic and external conditions are still complicated and severe." —AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report										
Sunday 22 January 2017										
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low					
Price index	▲ 206.03	6,641.78	6,435.75	6,644.77	6,435.75					
Weighted Index	▲ 10.71	418.93	408.22	419.84	408.22					
KSX 15	▲ 25.01	969.86	944.85	974.53	944.14					
Trades										
Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change			
MARIN	69	60	300893	19,530	19	60	▼ -4.0			
IKARUS	54	49.5	1,962,000	101,566	48	49.5	▼ -1.5			
IPG	400	395	21,000	8,300	3	400	▲ 5.0			
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0	— 0.0			
ENERGYH	56	53	1,860,602	102,400	84	55	▲ 3.0			
GPI	66	61	24,052,995	1,534,330	350	65	▲ 4.0			
ADAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	— 0.0			
Oil & Gas			28,197,290	1,786,766	504	899.77	▲ 13.93			
KFOUC	238	228	180,211	41,840	19	238	▲ 8.0			
BPCC	580	550	782,700	441,942	24	580	▲ 20.0			
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	670	— 0.0			
ALQURAIN	280	270	1,628,034	459,690	48	285	▲ 15.0			
Basic Materials			2,590,945	943,473	91	1173.56	▲ 36.89			
KCEM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	440	— 0.0			
REFRI	305	300	123,345	37,104	5	305	— 0.0			
CABLE	470	450	1,548,087	720,691	87	470	▲ 25.0			
SHIP	210	200	350,800	72,681	18	210	▲ 10.0			
PCEM	990	980	100,000	98,010	9	980	— 0.0			
PAPER	310	295	59,250	18,225	15	310	▲ 10.0			
MRC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	84	— 0.0			
AGICO	305	290	421,248	125,506	40	295	— 0.0			
GGMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300	— 0.0			
HCC	110	110	129	14	1	110	▼ -10.0			
KBMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0			
NICBM	214	208	90,298	18,884	7	214	▲ 4.0			
EQUIPMENT	73	69	6,321,842	451,329	146	72	▲ 4.0			
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.5	— 0.0			
GYPSSUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0			
SALBOOKH	81	79	2,803,919	224,461	92	81	▲ 5.0			
AGLTY	700	680	2,073,931	1,423,281	86	690	— 0.0			
EDU	212	202	43,350	9,015	4	206	▼ -6.0			
CLEANING	61	57	7,190,354	423,498	168	60	▲ 3.0			
KGL	71	65	12,475,909	860,427	232	70	▲ 3.0			
KPC	188	180	75,169	13,860	6	188	▲ 10.0			
HUMANSOFT	2,960	2,880	40,012	115,315	15	2,960	▼ -20.0			
NAFAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170	— 0.0			
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0			
GFC	40.5	38.0	210,044	8,389	7	40.5	▲ 2.5			
MAYADEEN	37.5	36.0	21,349,066	790,254	191	37.5	▲ 2.5			
CGC	520	500	49,774	25,572	15	520	— 0.0			
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0			
UPAC	780	770	3,510	2,713	4	780	▲ 50.0			
ALAFQ	250	246	599,800	148,872	25	248	▲ 2.0			
MUBARRAD	86	82	5,042,008	428,256	83	86	▲ 5.0			
LOGISTICS	83	78	12,423,834	998,896	227	83	▲ 5.0			
SCEM	88	85	140,010	12,191	8	88	▲ 3.0			
GCEM	89	86	1,532,000	133,661	36	87	▲ 2.0			
QIC	81	81	200,000	16,200	4	81	▲ 1.0			
FCEM	90	88	1,228,010	108,857	32	89	▲ 2.0			
RKWC	86	84	124,284	12,022	7	86	▲ 3.0			
SPEC	91	88	2,981,300	229,513	89	91	▲ 5.0			
Industrials			79,181,083	7,527,657	1,859	1434.49	▲ 17.05			
KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	142	— 0.0			
NSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	54	— 0.0			
IPACO	100	100	9,000	900	1	100	▲ 5.0			
CATTL	234	218	11,510	2,688	4	234	▲ 10.0			
DANAH	94	89	14,565,519	1,354,448	309	94	▲ 5.0			
POOL	182	182	1,810	293	1	182	▲ 2.0			
FOOD	2,620	2,600	1,265,557	3,315,526	7	2,600	▼ -20.0			
Consumer Goods			15,853,196	4,673,855	322	1140.91	▲ 23.41			
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	250	— 0.0			
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0			
YIACO	270	244	276,700	71,677	14	270	▲ 10			
Health Care			276,700	71,677	14	1179.75	▲ 7.18			
KCIN	1,180	1,160	6,160	7,160	5	1,180	▲ 20			
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	285	— 0.0			
SULTAN	81	79	1,325,611	98,659	33	81	▲ 5			
CABLETV	47.5	47.5	3,500	166	1	47.5	▲ 3			
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0			
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	— 0.0			
QULAFUEL	136	132	102,568	13,875	24	134	▲ 4			
MUNTAZAHAT	90	85	12,808,807	1,112,187	167	90	▲ 5			
JAZERA	680	670	175,576	119,384	23	680	— 0.0			
SOOR	132	124	297,428	37,998	30	130	▲ 6			
FUTUREKID	126	126	1,880	237	1	126	▲ 10			
ALRAI	142	134	1,489,022	206,356	71	140	▲ 6			
ZIMAH	63	56	7,145,701	436,776	202	63	▲ 5			
Mezzan	980	950	974,672	938,528	55	960	▲ 20			
Consumer Services			24,040,925	2,971,225	612	974.61	▲ 32.57			
ZAIN	495	470	26,364,410	12,879,037	644	490	▲ 20			
QOREDOO	1,180	1,160	11,427	13,442	6	1,180	— 0.0			
HITSTELEC	72	68	30,209,881	2,090,009	449	71	▲ 3			
VIVA	910	890	57,488	51,984	38	910	▲ 10			
Telecommunications			56,643,206	15,034,470	1,137	720.94	▲ 16.26			
NBK	700	690	2,568,117	1,784,070	84	690	— 0.0			
GBK	280	260	4,230,712	1,155,010	99	280	▲ 25			
CBK	425	420	13,821	5,855	4	425	▲ 5			
ABK	330	325	40,001	13,005	4	330	▲ 5			
ALMUTAHED	430	420	28,481	12,445	11	430	— 0.0			
KIB	230	226	5,612,716	1,273,549	119	228	▲ 2			
BURG	340	320	9,533,402	3,162,189	152	340	▲ 20			
KFIN	610	580	11,031,895	6,983,109	314	610	▲ 30			
BOUBYAN	420	410	2,995,610	1,242,274	100	415	▲ 5			
AUB	218	210	2,901,537	618,094	55	218	▲ 10			
ITHMR	59	58	4,667,888	275,403	66	59	▲ 5			
WARBABANK	250	246	13,713,773	3,410,339	318	250	▲ 4			
Banks			57,938,953	19,935,338	1,328	954.14	▲ 35.78			
KINS	290	285	56,981	16,424	2	290	— 0.0			
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	720	— 0.0			
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	— 0.0			
WINS	106	104	24,458	2,545	5	104	▲ 2.0			
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0			
FTI	50	48.0	417,500	20,811	18	50	— 0.0			
WETHAQ	45.5	43.5	324,400	14,702	6	45.5	▲ 2.5			
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0			
Insurance			823,339	54,482	31	1072.85	▲ 11.85			

For more information, call Global Investment House on 1 80 42 42, www.globalinv.net



NEW YORK: Fred DeMarco (left) and fellow traders work in their booth on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. — AP

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	19,732.40	19,82								

WELCOME TO TRUMPLAND; BUT MARKETS JITTERY

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

KUWAIT: The past ten US presidential terms show that there is a tendency for markets to turn very optimistic and record gains at the end of the first 100 days of a new administration; a period called the honeymoon of the president.

This time, as we went into Trump's inauguration, markets were rapidly disappointed by the speech of the new president that didn't waste any time and directly invoked protectionism and placing America first. The negative tone of the speech came as a surprise to many analysts who expected a more uplifting message relative to the campaign rhetoric.

This is why, for the moment, markets continue to fade the two months old Trump rally as a growing number of analysts have cautioned and voiced out that a trade war between the US and its major trading partners could be negative and likely to drag the global economy into a major recession.

Locally, with the US economy approaching the Federal Reserve's dual mandate of full employment and price stability, Fed Chairwoman Yellen cautioned this week against allowing the US economy to run "hot". With monetary policy still modestly accommodative, she mentioned that the Fed should continue to raise interest rates slowly. "I think that allowing the economy to run markedly and persistently "hot" would be risky and unwise," Yellen said. "I consider it prudent to adjust the stance of monetary policy gradually over time," she added. Regarding the labor market she said: "In the coming months, I expect some further strengthening in labor market conditions as the economy continues to expand at a moderate pace."

Yellen also suggested that the idea to expand the US economy with fiscal stimulus is preferable when there is more slack in the labor force. A fiscal support by President Donald Trump could boost demand for workers in areas where labor is already tight. That in turn, could fuel inflation, force the Federal Reserve to raise rates faster than expected, and increase the probability of another recession.

In parallel, the events in Europe did not provide any market excitement as the ECB left interest rates unchanged as expected with Draghi's statement and press conference after the announcement sent initially the Euro lower despite him saying that he didn't want to get drawn into the currency race to the bottom. His tone was however dovish with no mention of tapering. The currency losses were later pared as markets digested what was said and realized that not much had changed. Perhaps Trump's statement that the "Strong dollar is killing us," also incited investors to move out of the Dollar even with Yellen remaining on the hawkish side.

On a different sensitive topic as of late, the UK Prime Minister May stated this week that the country "cannot possibly" remain within the European single market, as staying in would mean not leaving the EU at all. The speech confirmed the Government's intention to pull out of the single market when Britain leaves the EU, ending months of uncertainty and confusion following the June referendum. With her speech, May finally pulled the plug with a 12-point plan for leaving the EU, two months before she pulls the two-year exit trigger Article 50. She also announced parliament would get to vote on the final deal agreed between the UK and the EU.

In addition to May's speech, Bank of England chief economist and member of the Monetary Policy Committee Andy Haldane admitted that the Bank was wrong on Brexit. Stating that if we were to look at how the British consumer performed in the course of last year, it's almost as though the referendum had not taken place.

On the currency front, the US dollar index opened the week at 101.47 and fell on Tuesday to a one month low of 100.26, after Trump said the US dollar is too strong and a weak Chinese Yuan was negative for the Dollar. The major events of the end of the week didn't help sending the dollar down to close on Friday at 100.81.

Sterling Pound started the week deep into negative territory at a 3-month low of 1.1979 against the dollar as fears of a hard Brexit gained control of the market. However, May's speech on Tuesday helped remove markets' uncertainties confusion, and helped squeeze out investors who were betting on another collapse of the currency. The currency soared almost by 2.6% the largest one day up move since 2008 after Prime Minister Theresa May promised a parliamentary vote on Britain's deal to leave the EU. The currency closed the week at 1.2374.

In the commodities complex, gold prices

likely to keep a positive mood towards the overall manufacturing outlook and the main feature is evidence of a further increase in inflationary pressures. This will also keep the Fed stay on high alert over inflationary trends. Although there was no immediate evidence that a stronger dollar has curbed inflationary pressure, new orders index nonetheless could indicate some impact that is likely to grow if the new administration adopt protectionist policies and get into potential trade wars.

Moreover, the Philly Fed manufacturing outlook strengthened to a 24-month high, maintaining a confidence in the manufacturing sector. Most manufacturers in the Philadelphia region expect business to be better six months from now. In summary, the current manufacturing index accelerated from a revised reading of 19.7 in December to 23.6 this month. Forty percent of the firms reported increases in activity this month and 17% reported decreases. The general activity index has remained positive for six consecutive months.

Draghi keeps the status quo

The European central bank stayed on the sideline with its loose monetary policy on Thursday, with the refinancing rate at 0% and its deposit rate at minus 0.4%. The asset pur-



chases will persist at EUR 80 billion a month until the end of March and then at EUR 60 billion a month from April to December, or beyond, if necessary. The central bank sets its policy with the goal of reaching an inflation rate close to 2%. It has missed this goal for nearly four years and its own predictions see it still missing that goal in 2019. But inflation has started to rebound, hitting 1.1% in December, the fastest rate of growth since September 2013.

Manufacturing indices

The general business conditions for the state of New York retreated from an 8-month high of 7.6 in December to 6.5 in January as American factories activity have been pressured by weaker global demand, a strong dollar that makes US goods more expensive abroad and an energy rout that has led oil-sector firms to slash budgets. Shipments and new orders remained positive on the other side and inventories edged higher for the first time in more than a year.

Although disappointing, the overall data is

started the week around the \$1,200 level surging to a 40-day high of \$1,218.64 on Tuesday after US President-Elect Donald Trump complained about a strong dollar. Gold prices remain supported into the New Year on the back of numerous uncertainties surrounding global affairs.

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The German economic sentiment brightened at the start of the year and improved to its highest level in seven months in January, although the data was less than what analysts expected. The slight increase is attributed to the improved economic situation across the European continent. In details, the German economic sentiment rose to 16.6 points in January from 13.8 in December versus a forecast of 18.9.

Rates – 22 January, 2017

Currencies	Previous Week Levels				This Week's Expected Range		3-Month Forward
	Open	Low	High	Close	Minimum	Maximum	
EUR	1.0621	1.0578	1.0718	1.0699	1.0515	1.0870	1.0755
GBP	1.1979	1.1979	1.2415	1.2374	1.2135	1.2590	1.2411
JPY	114.41	112.55	115.61	114.60	112.55	116.90	114.19
CHF	1.0103	0.9992	1.0136	1.0012	0.9845	1.0215	0.9973

Unemployment continues to drop

For the past few months, the UK Prime Minister allowed uncertainties around the trigger of Article 50 and the degree of the sought separation from the EU. The subject matter was so confusing that many in other European capitals questioned whether Britain would leave at all.

This week, May finally confirmed that Britain will leave the single market and the customs union, and will thus be able to negotiate its own trade deals with third party economies.

Moreover, she expressed her wishes to wrap up the negotiations within the two years permitted by Article 50, launching the exit process by the end of March. On the economic data, cost of living in Britain soared to the highest rate in two-and-a-half years due to the pound's 20% drop since the "Brexit" vote which continues to push up costs in the UK. The Official figures for December showed the increase in air fares, food prices and fuel costs all helped to drive the CPI to 1.6% from November's 1.2%.

Separate producer price inflation figures showed that the price of goods bought from factories rose 2.7% in December compared with a year ago, as manufacturers started to pass on the higher input costs to their customers. Furthermore, the prices paid by factories for raw materials and energy jumped by 15.8% over the year, the largest increase since September 2011. In conclusion, it is likely that the UK starts to feel the overall economic impact of Brexit in 2017 with the rising inflation fuelled by a weaker currency and higher energy prices. Add on this the Brexit negotiations, this year is likely to test the UK economic resilience.

Despite the ongoing uncertainties, November was another strong month for the labor market in the UK with unemployment rate remaining for a third consecutive month at its lowest level for more than a decade at 4.8%. The number of individuals in the work force however has also fallen for a second consecutive report, the first back-to-back fall since mid-2015. In three months to November, unemployment decreased by 52,000 to 1.6 million.

China's GDP grows

China's economic growth slightly increased for the first time in two years in the final quarter of 2016, supported by government spending and cheap credit, giving the country some breathing room heading into what is expected to be a volatile 2017.

Despite the better than expected fourth-quarter supported by a massive wave of government stimulus, debt and low interest rates, it is still the sixth successive year the economy has slowed and the lowest annual GDP growth recorded in 26 years.

In details, the economy grew 6.8% on a

yearly basis in the fourth quarter of 2016, above market expectations and driving 2016 growth to 6.7%, within the 6.5 to 7.0% range targeted by the government. Growth was mostly helped by internal consumption growing close to 10% on a yearly basis, whereas industrial production remained stable around 6%. Fixed-asset investment continued to be a negative component of growth and further decelerated over the course of the year. Meanwhile, retail sales rose 10.9% against 10.7% expected for December and industrial production grew 6.0% against expectations of 6.1%. Nevertheless, the Chinese data released failed to give a significant boost to commodity prices in the beginning of 2017.

According to Japan's finance minister, the country wants to communicate closely with the new US administration under incoming President Donald Trump in order to maintain stability in currencies. As also stated that he won't fret about every single currency move, while adding that it was desirable for currencies not to fluctuate wildly.

In parallel, Bank of Japan deputy governor Nakaso also spoke this week stating that while the Japanese financial system remains stable, he reiterated that the responsibility of the central banks was to ensure that its monetary policy action does not destabilize international financial system. He also mentioned that it was important to monitor, analyze carefully the dollar funding environment of non-US banks as an area of potential vulnerability of the global economy.

Finally, Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda said that the prospects of faster US growth may push up the dollar, and he offered an upbeat view on the world economy, dismissing concerns that protectionism could spread and undermine global trade. According to Kuroda, "growth in the US" economy is likely to accelerate this year and next year, and price inflation may rise somewhat. All of this may make interest rates rise and the dollar might also appreciate."

On the exchange rate, he mentioned that "exchange rate movement is very difficult to predict. You cannot say anything definite because exchange rates are affected by so many factors, not just interest rates and economic growth."

Finally, Kuroda dismissed concerns that incoming US President Donald Trump's policies and European elections this year could trigger a global tide of protectionism and hurt world trade. "Most countries, including the G7 and G20 major economies are strongly committed to promoting global trade, and so can help prevent protectionism from spreading."

Kuwait

Kuwaiti dinar at 0.30515
The USDKWD opened at 0.30515 yesterday morning.



ETIHAD AIRWAYS TO INCREASE MALDIVES FREQUENCY DURING SUMMER SEASON

ABU DHABI: Etihad Airways yesterday announced four additional weekly flights on the popular Abu Dhabi - Male route, increasing frequency to the idyllic Maldives to 11 services a week between 1 July and 17 September 2017. The capacity increase will cater to high demand during the peak summer season. The announcement comes as the Abu Dhabi-based airline completed five years of operations to the Maldives.

The summer expansion will be supported by a two-class A320 aircraft operating the route, with 16 Business and 120 Economy seats. The four extra flights each week will provide more options for local passengers travelling between Abu Dhabi and Male with an early morning arrival into the Maldives islands.

Overall connectivity to and from key destinations in the GCC and Europe will increase and, new two-way connectivity

will be established from markets such as Edinburgh, Jeddah, Madrid, Moscow and Zurich. Over the past five years, Etihad Airways has carried more than 450,000 passengers on the route, with the majority travelling to the Maldives from Abu Dhabi, the GCC and key European markets.

The Maldives is the ultimate honeymoon and leisure destination, with Male being the gateway to the premium leisure destination. Etihad Airways is a key contributor to the Maldivian economy, supporting the vibrant tourism and fishing industries.

Etihad Airways launched daily scheduled flights between the capital cities of the United Arab Emirates and the Maldives on 1 November 2011.

The additional flights will operate every Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday between 1 July and 17 September 2017.

98% OF MENA RESPONDENTS PLAN ON LOOKING FOR NEW JOBS IN 2017

BAYT.COM 'CAREER PROSPECTS IN MIDDLE EAST' POLL

DUBAI: With the New Year comes a new outlook on career prospects and goals for many professionals in the Middle East. A new Bayt.com poll called, 'Career Prospects in the Middle East' revealed that 98 percent of respondents plan on looking for a new job in 2017 - and nearly all of them (95.1 percent) feel more prepared and qualified to apply for jobs this year than they were in 2016.

Reflecting on their careers in 2016, four in ten (40.9 percent) respondents feel satisfied with their career growth during the past year, and more than half (52.7 percent) of respondents say that they stuck to the career resolutions they made last year. Overall, the majority of respondents are feeling good about the year ahead. When asked to describe how they feel, more than half (55.6 percent) used the word "positive", and another fifth (18.5 percent) used the word "excited".

High optimism for career growth

More than two thirds (68.2 percent) of respondents claim that they do their career goals ready for 2017. What's more, nearly nine in ten (88.5 percent) state that they are likely to achieve their career goals in 2017, with six in ten (61.9 percent) stating that they are "very likely" to do so.

MENA professionals have their goals set high for the year ahead, with nine in ten (89.5 percent) respondents stating that they'll have more job responsibilities in 2017 and almost the same amount (85.3 percent) claiming that they will start taking more initiative at work. More than nine in ten (91.9 percent) claim that they will dedicate more time for training and development. As for those who will remain in their current position, three quarters (75.5 percent) of respondents feel very optimistic about getting a raise this year, and nearly the same amount (74.8 percent) feel very optimistic about getting promoted in 2017.

Finding more jobs online

For a majority (58.6 percent) of respondents, finding a new job is at the top of their list of career goals, followed by improving skills and productivity (22.5 percent). To reach these goals, more than eight in ten (83.7 percent) claim that

they will spend more time looking for jobs online in 2017.

For those looking for new employment opportunities, 53.2 percent say that they will look for career opportunities in 2017 using online job sites and other methods, while 29.8 percent will exclusively use online job sites. Less than one in 10 respondents will use companies' websites (7.1 percent), personal networks (6.4 percent), or social media (3.5 percent) for finding jobs.

When it comes to location preferences, nearly nine in ten (87.2 percent) respondents say that they want to work in the Gulf region in 2017.

Along with the high optimism and proactive planning, there are some barriers that job seekers acknowledge. The main barriers that hold respondents back from achieving their career goals are a lack of growth opportunities (27.7 percent), a lack of funding (22.6 percent), a lack of experience (14.5 percent), poor company management (14.3 percent), a lack of work-life balance (10.9 percent), too much competition (5.1 percent), and fear of failure (4.9 percent).

"It is evident that job seekers in the MENA region are determined and inspired to seek

more career opportunities and better professional development strategies," Said Suhail Masri, VP Employer Solutions, Bayt.com. "The fact that 83.7 percent of respondents will spend more time searching for jobs online and that the majority will be using online job sites over any other search method, highlight the value that Bayt.com offers to the region's professionals. We have witnessed a tremendous growth in the number of professionals who use Bayt.com to access the career tools and information they need. In fact, job seekers in 2017 are able to have daily access to over 10,000 jobs announced on Bayt.com. Our poll points to the increased efforts on the job seeker side and we will soon be revealing the region's hiring potential in the bi-annual Bayt.com Middle East Job Index survey."

Data for the 2017 Bayt.com 'Career Prospects in the Middle East' poll was collected online from December 10, 2016 to January 13, 2017. Results are based on a sample of 9,934 respondents. Countries that participated are the UAE, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, Qatar, KSA, Yemen, and Others



JAKARTA: Employees of bakery prepare for business in Jakarta on Saturday. — AFP

KIB USHERS IN A DIVERSE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY PROGRAM IN 2016

KUWAIT: Since inception, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) has been committed to an all-encompassing social responsibility philosophy, reflecting the Bank's long-standing dedication to humanitarianism and corporate citizenship. However, it was the Bank's transformation to a Sharia-compliant bank in 2007 that ushered in a completely new era for its social responsibility program.

Given its position as a leading national financial institution, KIB has always believed that it has an important duty to fulfill towards its local community. In 2016, the Bank focused on implementing a comprehensive and integrated social responsibility strategy, covering a number of key areas, including: religion, humanitarianism, social programs, philanthropy, sports, environment, healthcare, nationalism, culture and education. According to Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit, KIB remains committed to not only providing the best financial solutions, but also the best social initiatives and community programs that truly serve all segments of the community.

Religious initiatives

KIB is committed to organizing and supporting religious programs and initiatives, which seek to promote and strengthen Islamic values, principles and morals across society. According to Najia, this year KIB developed a comprehensive social responsibility program during the holy month of Ramadan, which led to it being honored by Al-Manaber Al-Quraniya Society. The Bank's program included the launch of a Ramadan campaign under the title "Al Dawli #Weyak" - highlighting KIB's commitment to remaining close to both its customers and its employees. The Bank also focused on highlighting the key social values associated with Ramadan through its "Weyak" TV commercial. Najia further added that KIB is committed to reinforcing the values of generosity within the community, organizing daily Iftar meals and distributing food packages to families in need throughout the holy month.

KIB is also a strong advocate of teaching Quran to young generations, organizing a number of Quran recitation competitions for students and children of its employees. Additionally, KIB sought to celebrate the annual Haj season; visiting Haj delegations as well as customers who were set to

embark on the holy pilgrimage to Holy Makkah, gifting them the Bank's annual Hajj and Umra Guide.

Students and youth

Speaking about KIB's commitment to supporting youth and students, Najia said that the Bank supports countless youth-focused initiatives. Amongst its many efforts in this area in 2016, KIB offered its support to the Public Relations Club at Gulf University of Science and Technology (GUST), and sponsored a number of graduation projects developed by students from the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University. In line with its commitment to support young national talents and university graduates in their professional development, KIB also participated in several job and student fairs. Additionally, KIB supported the "My Business" entrepreneurial program for students, organizing training programs for its participants which sought to introduce them to the banking sector in general, and the inner workings of Islamic banks specifically.

Promoting a culture of sports

As the saying goes "healthy mind, healthy body", and KIB has always believed in the importance of promoting a culture of fitness and sports throughout society. Within this context, Najia noted that KIB invested significant efforts and resources in 2016 to help foster and support a number of local sporting talents. Within this context, the Bank sponsored the late Adullah Mishari Al-Roudan's indoor football tournament during Ramadan for the fifth consecutive year, in addition to sponsoring the late Jassim Al-Sharhan Ramadan football tournament, the Flair Fitness Competition at GUST and the Pink Steps Ladies Walkathon organized by Cancer Aware Nation (CAN). KIB also focuses on promoting sports amongst its employees, encouraging its employees to participate in several national sports tournaments.

A healthier future for the community

As a strong advocate of healthy living, KIB is dedicated to promoting health consciousness and general well-being across all segments of the community in Kuwait. Najia said that the Bank adopts a holistic approach in supporting leading local healthcare organizations and initiatives. As part of

its efforts in this area, KIB offered its strategic sponsorship to Al-Sidra Association for the Psychological Care of Cancer Patients and its silver sponsorship to the "Diabetes Challenge Trip," organized by the Blue Circle volunteer group, in addition to sponsoring the Ahmadi School Program for Oral Health. Furthermore, KIB regularly hosts the Blood Bank's mobile unit at its head offices, in an effort to encourage its staff to donate blood.

Supporting Kuwait's champions

With a wealth of talent and creativity in Kuwait, KIB seeks to support and nurture talented individuals across all fields and sectors, enabling them to prosper and play an active role in building the country's future. In 2016, KIB honored inventor Engineer Mubarak Taher, who received an international patent for his system, "The Dynamic Network for Oil & Gas Production". The Bank also supported motorcycle champion, Nasser Al-Khadra, who took part in numerous local and international tournaments, and Jet Ski champion, Abdullah Al Fadel, who took part in the King's Cup World Jet Ski Championship in Thailand. Furthermore, KIB sponsored the Kuwaiti showjumping team featuring jockeys Ghazi Al Jurai, Ahmad Al-Mudaheka, Abdullah Hamadah and Ahmad Al-Ansari, who competed internationally under the Bank's name.

Fostering connections with children and the elderly

As part of the Bank's all-encompassing social responsibility program, Najia noted that KIB devotes special attention to the elderly and children. Throughout the year, KIB seeks to celebrate special occasions with these two segments, organizing visits to special needs children and seniors, hospital patients, the Bank's children's account customers, children at the Kuwait Orphanage and residents of the Elderly Care Center.

National and social events

Najia also pointed out that KIB is committed to supporting activities that stimulate national and social development. In 2016, the Bank sponsored and supported a number of leading national social events, including: the Hala Ramadan Exhibition, supporting successful local youth initiatives; Light Expo, an event for young female entrepreneurs and small business projects; the 5th Tmkeen Youth Empowerment

Symposium; Training Gate International's special event commemorating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities; Safira CSR Company's "Expand Your Successes: Common Factors of Successful Women" Conference; the Kuwait Corporate Social Responsibility Conference & Exhibition; the Fifth Arabian Social Media Exhibition; the 14th Fireman's Day Carnival; the Ideal Mother Award for mothers with disabled children; and the United Gulf Traffic Week, which took place under the title "Your Decision Determines your Destiny".

Demonstrating its pride in its national identity and heritage, KIB also focused heavily on supporting and sponsoring national events. To commemorate National and Liberation Days, KIB distributed special gifts to people born on February 25th and 26th.

Employees...partners in success

KIB believes that its employees are its greatest assets. From honoring its outstanding employees to maintaining a rolling calendar of training programs for staff, KIB dedicates a huge portion of its social responsibility program to its internal population. Within this vein, KIB sustains a full calendar of social events and programs throughout the year for its staff, including the Bank's Ghabqa during the holy month of Ramadan.

Well-deserved recognition

Concluding his statement, Najia pointed out that the numerous prestigious national and international awards that KIB received in 2016 have served as a great source of motivation, driving the Bank towards greater achievements in the future. KIB received the "Best Banking Vision" Award from CPI Financial, reaffirming the Bank's leading position within the Islamic banking sector. KIB was also honored at the 15th ceremony recognizing excellence in labor nationalization policies in the private sector across the GCC. Furthermore, in recognition of its commitment to its corporate citizenship, KIB received the Corporate Social Responsibility Excellence Award from the Arab Organization for Corporate Social Responsibility, the Corporate Social Responsibility Award 2016 from Banker Middle East, and the "My Ambition Social Responsibility Award" at the "My Ambition Defeats My Disability" Conference, the latter in acknowledgement of its efforts to support the special needs community in Kuwait.

BARCLAYS REINFORCES GROWTH AMBITIONS THROUGHOUT 2017

THREE NEW SENIOR BANKERS APPOINTED IN MENA

KUWAIT: Barclays announced yesterday the appointment of three new senior bankers in its Wealth and Investment Management division for Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Antoine Roger Chemali and David Stephan both join Barclays Wealth and Investment Management division as directors, while Owen Dayson joins as a Vice President. All three bankers will cover MENA with the specific objective of extending Barclays Wealth and Investment Management presence across the region.

The appointments underscore Barclays' strong growth ambitions in the MENA region and reinforce its position as a priority market for the group in 2017. Barclays is seeking to further expand its team in the Wealth and Investment Management division in the MENA region throughout the year.

Commenting on the Bank's growth strategy in the region, Cedric Lizin, Head of Middle East and Africa, Barclays Wealth and Investment Management, said: "Our ambition throughout 2017 is to further strengthen Barclays' award-winning Wealth and Investment Management division in MENA, thus offering clients world class service and advice while providing them with the opportunity to access the entire breadth of Barclays global capabilities. With these hires, Barclays continues to expand its



Cedric Lizin

team across the MENA region while adopting a more focused approach to providing clients with bespoke financial solutions."

He added: "We are delighted that Antoine, David and Owen, in conjunction with our existing teams, will be able to use their experience to accelerate Barclays' efforts towards achieving its

ambitions in MENA through offering global expertise at a local level, therefore blending global investment insights with local client needs. They will also highlight our 'Integrated Banking Model' adopted in the region to enable our client base to access and leverage Barclays' global capabilities and reach in corporate and investment banking."

Antoine started his career in Paris at Deutsche Bank and CIC Private Bank Group as a portfolio manager and international private banker, before moving to BNP-Paribas and then Gatehouse Bank in London as an investment banker covering the Middle East. He joined HSBC Private Bank in 2011 to focus on the Saudi Arabian market servicing high and ultra-high net worth individuals out of London in complex wealth solutions and portfolio management.

David started his banking career at American Express Bank in New York before moving to London in 2000. He joined HSBC in 2004 and progressed to Director of Private Wealth Solutions, focusing on ultra-high net worth Middle Eastern families.

Owen Dayson started his career in the early 2000's as a Financial Advisor working in both the UK and Hong Kong. Most recently, he has specialized in managing substantial high and ultra-high net worth client portfolios in KSA and other countries across the region.

AL-TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al Najma Account daily draw yesterday. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The winners of the Al-Najma daily draw are:

Nouf Mubarak Al Hajeri — KD 7000,
Eid Habib Zaghtot — KD 7000,
Burhanuddin Akbar Ali Texi — KD 7000,
Darakshan Yakub Mohammed Yakub — KD 7000,
Najeeb Mohammad Al-Dhubaib — KD 7000,

Al-Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever. With the revamped Al-Najma account, all your dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000.

The new prizes scheme for Al-Najma account:
Daily draw to win KD 7000

Quarterly draws to win great prizes that would start from KD 100,000 to KD 250,000

1ST QUARTER — KD 100,000,
2ND QUARTER — KD 150,000,
3RD QUARTER — KD 200,000,
4TH QUARTER — KD 250,000.

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

- Each KD 25 kept in your account gives you one chance to win
- Each KD 25 kept in your account for one week will give you a chance to enter the daily draw.
- Each KD 25 kept in your account for 3 months will give you chance to enter the quarterly draw.

Additional features:

- ATM card
- Issue a credit card against your account
- Obtain all CBK banking services
- You deserve to win! Open an account now with just KD 500 and you will enter all draws.

NIGERIA'S AVIATION SECTOR HITS TURBULENCE

LAGOS: Nigeria may consider itself a regional aviation hub but years of mismanagement and now recession have blighted domestic airline operations, making delays and cancellations the norm.

Industry experts say the sector needs a fundamental overhaul, pointing to opaque management practices, rampant corruption and risks for passengers from security and dilapidated infrastructure.

Arik Air, which has a 60 percent share of domestic flights and is the country's biggest private carrier, has found itself increasingly in the firing line of disgruntled passengers.

Earlier this month, irate passengers beat up one of its executives at Lagos international airport after the third consecutive cancellation of their flight to Johannesburg. In December, Arik operations were grounded by a 24-hour strike by employees demanding the payment of seven months arrears in salary.

There was no response from Arik when asked to comment on the situation by AFP.

Other domestic operators are struggling. Aero Contractors, the second biggest carrier, stopped services for four months at the end of last year because of "serious financial difficulties".

For John Ojikutu, an aviation security consultant, most Nigerian airlines run their businesses like a grocery store. "They just want to make profit," he told AFP.

The result is airlines in Nigeria generally have a short life span: in 35 years more than 40 operators have gone bust, including Nigeria Airways, which collapsed in 2003.

Dollar shortage

Ojikutu said the airlines are heavily in debt and "taking advantage" of the country. "People are... operating without paying the fuel marketers, without paying their staff, without paying for the services they're given (insurance, maintenance)," he said.

"If they are not making profit, the question is what do they really do with all this money?... They are selling tickets every day. "As long as we don't have a strong, credible, independent regulatory agency we cannot have a viable aviation industry in this country."

In their defence, the airlines blame a lack of foreign currency that has left them unable to pay fuel suppliers or, in some cases, landing charges at airports outside Nigeria. Nigeria is one of Africa's main oil producers but is forced to

export crude and import petroleum products because of a lack of domestic refining capacity.

The fall in the price of crude on international markets has seen the naira currency lose value against the dollar and Nigerian banks no longer have enough liquidity. Foreign airlines such as United and Iberia have stopped flights to Nigeria because of difficulties in repatriating profits in dollars.

In September last year, members of the House of Representatives asked the government to declare a state of emergency in the aviation sector, saying 160,000 jobs were at risk.

Lawmakers also called for an investigation into the alleged misappropriation of 120 billion naira (357 million euros) of public funds in 2012 meant to modernize the sector.

Airport closure

Two years ago, the Nigerian state got on the board of several airlines, including Arik and Aero, through its Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria. But according to Ojikutu, no serious audit has been carried out to evaluate the real financial situation of the companies.

"Fundors and banks may have been too lenient in granting credit to Nigerian airlines for excessive expansion on the basis that somehow government (or AMCON) will step in to protect banks from failing due to non-performing loans to airlines," added Joachim Vermooten, an expert in transport economics at the University Johannesburg.

Another major challenge is upgrading ageing infrastructure which cannot handle the millions of passengers who now travel every day through Nigerian airports.

From early March for example, the airport in Abuja will close for six weeks for major resurfacing work on the only runway serving the federal capital. The runway, which was built in 1982 with a life span of 20 years, is now "completely gone" and "unsafe for operation", according to the aviation minister Hadi Sirika.

"The entire structure of the runway has failed," he has said. Passengers for Abuja will have to land at Kaduna, some 200 kilometers to the north, and transit to the capital by bus on a road known for frequent kidnappings. The airport closure is the talk of Abuja, underlining not just Nigeria's reliance on air transport but the lack of a viable alternative. — AFP



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BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI ACCOUNT

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the lucky winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a prize of KD 5,000.

The lucky winners for the daily draws took home a cash-prize of KD 5,000 each, and they are:

1. Fahad Bader Ibrahim Malak
2. Zenab Bader Hedar Saraj
3. Yousif Obaid Hmoud Al-Enezi
4. Owayed Mohsen Sameer Alsulaili
5. Ahmad Abdullah Ibraheem Al-Faylakawi

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a Quarterly Draw with more chances to win higher rewards, entitling one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers Daily and quarterly Draws, the Quarterly Draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for 2 months prior to draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account, will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances of becoming a winner. The more customers deposit, the higher the chances they receive of winning.

For more information on opening a Yawmi account or about the new quarterly draw, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch and receive all the details, or simply call the bank's Call Center at 1804080 where customer service representatives will be delighted to assist with any questions on the Yawmi account or any of the bank's products and services.

Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. "People come first" is the foundation on which its products and services are developed.

SINGAPORE 2G SWITCH-OFF HIGHLIGHTS DIGITAL DIVIDE

SINGAPORE: When Singapore pulls the plug on its 2G mobile phone network this year, thousands of people could be stuck without a signal - digital have-nots left behind by the relentless march of technology. From technophobic pensioners to cash-strapped migrant workers, some 140,000 people in highly-wired Singapore still use the city-state's second generation (2G) network and cheap, robust handsets.

First rolled out in 1994 - when playing Snake was the pinnacle of mobile entertainment - 2G has long been superseded technologically, with new gold standard 5G offering lightning fast connectivity for a generation used to streaming movies and TV directly to phones. Singapore, which has one of the world's highest rates of smartphone penetration, plans to turn off 2G in April in order to re-allocate scarce radio frequency spectrum and meet surging consumer demand for high-speed data.

"It makes sense for a market like Singapore as operators need more capacity for data services," Charles Moon, an analyst with information technology research

firm Ovum, told AFP. Japan and South Korea and US telecom giant AT&T have already shut down their 2G networks and Australia is set to stop the service in September. Singapore recently banned the sale of 2G-only mobile phones and new prepaid SIM cards no longer work on 2G handsets.

But globally, 2G is not set to vanish, even as the number of smartphones is projected to soar from four billion last year to some six billion by 2020, according to IHS Markit data. By 2021, 2G will still account for some 11 percent of total mobile subscriptions worldwide - mostly in Africa and Latin America, analyst Moon said. "Affordability is the major factor driving continued use," he said, adding that the longer battery life and durability of 2G handsets was also important.

'Use a payphone'

In wealthy Singapore, those most affected by the shift are likely to be the city's migrant worker population, who rely on cheap 2G phones to stay in touch with



SINGAPORE: This photograph taken on Jan 17, 2017 shows an elderly man displaying his 2G mobile phone. — AFP

family back home. "This is really their connection to the rest of the world," said Debbie Fordyce of migrant worker welfare group Transient Workers Count Too, which is asking the public to donate old 3G

phones to help affected laborers. Bangladeshi construction worker Roshid Mamun said his three-year-old Nokia handset was all he could afford. "I can talk my family, I can call them, if I need help, I

can contact people," he told AFP.

Sahadat, 26, another Bangladeshi worker, who goes by one name, said he was worried he would not be able to afford a 3G phone to make his daily call to hear his one-year-old son say "Papa". The cheapest 3G-enabled phones ranged from Sg\$35 to Sg\$99 (\$25 to \$70) in local phone shops. Normal voice calls and text messages on 2G and 3G networks cost the same. For others devotees of 2G, it is the simplicity of the solid, old handsets that is the main selling point, and 80-year-old retiree Tan Ah Phong said he is dreading the April deadline. "We only need phones to make calls," he said. "Just looking at the number of functions on a lot of phones nowadays gives me a headache."

Lee Soo Eng, 86, says her daughter gave her a touchscreen smartphone two months ago but she regrets giving up her 2G device. "At this age, my memory is not good, so I keep forgetting how to unlock it or use it to call," she said. "When I need to contact anybody, I will just use a public payphone," she said. — AFP



BASMA MEDIA LAUNCHES MAIDEN DIGITAL PLATFORM

DUBAI: BASMA Media launched a one-of-a-kind specialized media platform that provides innovative digital solutions covering all media sectors across the world. 'OMNESmedia.com' is a unique state-of-the-art socio-informative Web Portal that empowers all parties concerned with the media industry, including advertisers, PR professionals and others to connect, measure and reach their objectives through one single platform that caters to all kinds of media, marketing and advertorial requirements.

The launch ceremony was held at Joharah Ballroom, Madinet Jumeirah, Dubai, in the presence of Sheikh Sultan Bin Ahmed Al Qasimi, Chairman of BASMA Media. Also attending the event were top national and international media executives, decision-makers, content creators, PR & communication experts and professionals and businessmen, in addition to a large number of journalists and reporters from UAE and different parts of the Arab world.

In his inaugural address, Sheikh Sultan Al Qasimi said: "OMNESmedia.com is the maiden step in our ambitious quest for excellence that started since the establishment of BASMA Media. The launch of the portal represents a significant milestone that will create an optimal environment for communication, bringing together all segments of the media industry under one platform."

He added: "After diligent work and tireless efforts to turn a big dream into reality, an in-depth study conducted through specialized expertise of the Arab and global media industry, has fructified into the development of first-of-their-kind digital solutions. These solutions will be represented in a unique platform conducive to identifying the requirements of this vital sector through cutting-edge digitization technologies."

Sheikh Sultan Al-Qasimi also termed the new website a "groundbreaking develop-

ment that will revolutionize traditional approaches and meet the changing paradigms of media landscape in the digital age". Further, he extended his thanks to the honorable attendees who added value to the launch ceremony by their presence, urging them to access the website and share their views and feedback.

BASMA Media CEO Nasser Al-Sarami underlined the paramount importance of the new portal in creating a common ground for collaborative interaction between different media organs that fulfills the respective business requirements of all media sectors.

He commented: "The new platform shall redefine the mechanism at work in the media scene by providing professional, sophisticated and modern tools that meet the growing needs of different media organizations. This will be well-orchestrated through an integrated strategy that utilizes the media services provided by decision makers and major media entities."

He elaborated: "OMNESmedia.com represents an innovative platform that meets the requirements and fulfills the aspirations of ambitious young people seeking a career in the media field by updating them on a regular basis on all relevant job openings and matches."

Furthermore, he added that the website provides its members with the possibility of developing a "favorites" list for their regular contacts as well as the option to send invitations for others to join the website and get in contact with industry peers and colleagues. This list will streamline liaising, improve communications and strengthen interrelations between media professionals. Sarami concluded by expressing hope that 'OMNESmedia.com' would truly add significant value and prove to be an innovative asset to the media industry at this critical phase of fundamental change.

INDIA EYES AI AS CYBER WARFARE THREATS GROW

NEW DELHI: In the darkened offices of a tech start-up, a handful of computer engineers sifts through a mountain of intelligence data that would normally be the work of a small army of Indian security agents. "We use artificial intelligence (AI) to look for patterns in the past to predict future behavior," says Tarun Wig as he explains why he hopes his company Innefu can do more business with India's government. "Cyber warfare isn't a movie, it's happening right now... We lost out on the industrial revolution, we lost out on the defence revolution - let's not lose out in the cyber revolution."

While other countries have long relied on AI to gather intelligence, India - sometimes seemingly addicted to paperwork - has continued to use agents to eyeball reams of data gathered over the years. It's a process that sucks up time and can often miss crucial information. India has been in three wars with its neighbors since independence and the target of numerous cross-border attacks, including in 2008 when Pakistan-based extremists killed more than 160 people in Mumbai.

Now the threat from cyber attacks is growing and its vulnerability has been exposed. Some 22,000 pages of data related to submarines that a French government-owned company was building for the Indian navy were leaked to the media last year. Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi's Twitter account was hacked in November while the elite National Security Guard's website was reportedly defaced with profanity-laden messages for Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month. "Our idea starting out was that if the next war is fought on cyber, we need our own weapons," said Wig as he talks through software developed for India's needs.

Octopus tentacles

Innefu got a foot in the lucrative business of government contracts after resolving a thorny test case for a law enforcement agency that wanted to determine the background to an incident along one of India's borders. The agency handed over two CDs with about 1,500 intelligence documents, including social media snippets, such as posts on planned protests. Innefu had to train the machine to read the agency's language, including abbreviations, and then began extracting information on what happened, who were the main players and how they interacted with each other.



NEW DELHI: In this photograph taken on Dec 13, 2016, Abhishek Sharma (left) and Tarun Wig, founders of Indian IT security solutions company Innefu Labs speak during an interview at their offices. — AFP

Its newest offering Prophecy is modelled on products made by Palantir Technologies, a private security firm whose founders include Paypal co-founder Peter Thiel and whose clientele includes the CIA and the FBI. "Prophecy is like an octopus with multiple tentacles that pulls data from multiple places," said Innefu co-founder Abhishek Sharma. While the use of AI is commonplace elsewhere in Asia, it is still in its infancy in India.

About 75 percent of respondents to a recent survey by consulting firm EY India said cybersecurity deployed in their organizations does not meet their needs, pointing to big opportunities for companies such as Innefu. Although Innefu is the only Indian company known to specialize in national security, other Indian companies such as Arya.ai and Haptik are also tapping what should be a lucrative market.

Banks have started to use AI to target products to customers and doctors are using it in a couple of experiments to map a patient's medical history in order to devise new lines of treatment. Work is also underway to create a system that can act as a backbone for all electronic war-

fare programs for the Indian army. But most of this is still at the laboratory stage, experts say.

AI laggards

"It's expensive and our society is not used to automated decision-making," Jiten Jain, chief of Indian Infosec Consortium, an industry body, told AFP. "We're still used to manual and human decision-making." Subimal Bhattacharjee, a cyber security expert, said India had been caught off guard by the need to upscale its use of AI. "We are definitely laggards in comparison to China and South Korea and the US," he said. Innefu operates from the eighth floor of a nondescript Delhi commercial complex that houses chartered accountants and eateries. Its windows are darkened with thick black paper, while clusters of wires sprout from walls adorned with photos of goddess Lakshmi, the purveyor of wealth.

But despite its humble surroundings, it is confident an ongoing trial of Prophecy will lead to more business with India's security services - whom Wig expects to be naturally inclined to go local. "You can't really trust such sensitive data with foreign companies," said Wig. — AFP

DIGITAL SHADOWS STRENGTHENS ITS TEAM OF ADVISORS WITH VETERANS

DUBAI: Digital Shadows today announced that several leading cybersecurity luminaries including Art Coviello, Tim Belcher, Jim Bandanza, Dr Srinivas Mantripragada and Ian Cook have joined the company's advisors as the business heads into its sixth year of operation. "We are excited to welcome such respected Security figures to help Digital Shadows as it enters the next phase of its expansion and growth," said Alastair Paterson, CEO and co-Founder of Digital Shadows. "The first five years of our company have set the groundwork in place for us to build upon so we can continue to improve what we do securing our customers around the world, and with this strengthened advisory panel, we can face the future with even more confidence."

Coviello was former Executive Chairman of RSA, The Security Division of EMC. During Coviello's two-decade career at RSA, the company evolved to become a leader in information security, including security analytics, identity, and Governance, Risk & Compliance (GRC). Coviello was a driving force in RSA's rapid growth during his tenure, increasing revenue from \$25 million in 1995 to revenues of more than \$1 billion in 2014.

Since retiring from RSA, Coviello works with companies, industries, and governments to continue informing and shaping the evolution of security strategy to meet the challenges facing organizations today and tomorrow. Mr. Coviello's decades of expertise and influence have made him a recognized leader in the industry and he plays key roles in national and international cyber-security initiatives and is a regular speaker at conferences and forums around the world.

Belcher has been a Director of White Ops, Inc. since January 2015. He serves as Member of Advisory Board at Invincea, Inc and Security Growth Partners. Mr. Tim Belcher served as the Chief Technology Officer at NetWitness Corp. since April 30, 2007. He is also the co-founder of NetWitness. Bandanza brings over 20 years of enterprise security and software experience to the Digital Shadows Advisory Board as CRO/Chief Operating Officer at CounterTack. Mantripragada is responsible for the



Art Coviello



Daniel Moskowitz

overall product direction, technology and architecture at RedShift Networks. Srinivas has 16 plus years of experience in building and delivering cutting edge solutions in Systems, Networking, Security, Communications and Infrastructure companies.

Cook joins Digital Shadows in an advisory role helping the business focus its efforts better towards incident responders and analysts. Mr Cook is CEO and Founder of Corbels Security Services and has 35 years of experience in advising businesses in their strategic decisions including Saudi American Bank, Citigroup, Merrill Lynch, Barclays, Team Cymru, and numerous technology start-ups. He is also mentor at Cyber London (CyLon); Europe's first cyber security accelerator; and at HutZero; the UK's first cybersecurity bootcamp. As well as sitting on many Advisory Boards

In addition Digital Shadows has strengthened its executive leadership team with the appointment of Daniel Moskowitz as Chief Financial Officer based in the San Francisco headquarters. Formerly CFO of AtHoc which he helped grow from \$10-\$40m+ in ARR, before steering its successful acquisition by

Blackberry. Moskowitz been through several other successful startup exits and cut his teeth at global firms including Intel, BMC and Intuit.

Digital Shadows provides organizations with cyber situational awareness, a complete view of an organization's digital footprint and the profile of their attackers. Digital Shadows SearchLight continuously monitors more than 100 million data sources in 27 languages across the visible, deep and dark web. Supported with expertise from the company's intelligence operations team, it provides an "attacker's eye view" of organizations' exposed data and the risks requiring mitigation, in order to prevent, detect and help contain cyber-related incidents.

Digital Shadows closed 2016 with more than 880 percent revenue growth over 2015, and experienced significant customer expansion in both the United States and Europe, across verticals such as financial services, pharmaceuticals, retail and technology. The company grew rapidly hitting 100 employees in the second half of 2016 and a new office in Dallas to add to the sites in San Francisco and London.

SMALL BUSINESSES UNDERESTIMATE THREATS OF IRRESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEES

DUBAI: Small companies of up to 50 employees are significantly less concerned about employee activities leading to cybersecurity breaches than larger corporations. Only 36% of small businesses worry about their staff's carelessness while more than half of medium-sized and large enterprises consider it a major concern, says IT Security Risks Report 2016 by Kaspersky Lab.

Uninformed or careless staff, whose inappropriate use of IT resources can put an organization's cyberprotection in jeopardy, can harm businesses of any size. According to the survey, employee actions are among top three security challenges that make companies worldwide feel vulnerable. 61% of the businesses surveyed globally that experienced cybersecurity incidents in 2016, admitted that careless and uninformed employee behavior was a contributor.

Like large corporations, small and medium-sized businesses face the challenge of managing a constantly evolving IT infrastructure, as well as accommodating BYOD trends: 87.5 percent of UAE companies reported that the amount of smartphones used for work had increased over the last three years and 79 percent confirmed that the same is applicable for tablets. This new business reality is forcing management to pay more attention to IT security and the centralized control of potentially dangerous

employee activities, even in the smallest businesses.

"In small businesses without dedicated IT personnel, it is often the case that staff have to implement cybersecurity themselves - for example, by installing free anti-malware solutions with limited functionality. This poses major risks for a company because one employee's carelessness can easily affect all data within the organization - leading to instant losses in time, clients' data and money". Businesses should implement solutions specifically designed for small and medium-sized businesses, with protection that any IT administrator, even with low IT skills, can easily maintain from everywhere," said Vladimir Zapolyansky, Head of SMB Marketing, Kaspersky Lab.

Companies can protect themselves with a range of solutions dedicated to meet the specific requirements of very small, small and medium-sized business as their needs vary. The Kaspersky Endpoint Security for Business and Kaspersky Small Office Security provide multi-layered protection from well-known and emerging threats, while Kaspersky Endpoint Security Cloud, with its simple cloud-based console, provides business owners and senior non-IT management with a cost-efficient and intuitive tool to ensure cybersecurity without needing additional hardware or IT-personnel.

HEARTBURN PILLS TIED TO SERIOUS BACTERIAL INFECTIONS

SCOTLAND: People who take popular heartburn pills known as proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) may be more likely to develop intestinal infections than people who don't take these medications, a Scottish study suggests. The pills work by stopping cells in the stomach lining from producing too much of the acid that can cause ulcers and reflux symptoms such as heartburn. Researchers examined data on about 188,000 people who used these drugs and about 377,000 similar individuals who didn't take PPIs. Compared to people who didn't use the drugs, those who did were at higher risk for a severe form of diarrhea caused by the Clostridium difficile bacteria. Their odds of this infection

were 1.4 times higher when they were hospitalized and 1.7 times higher when they weren't in the hospital.

In addition, PPI users had a 4.5 times greater risk of getting Campylobacter infections, a common form of food poisoning, if they were hospitalized and a 3.7 times higher risk when they weren't hospitalized. "Reducing stomach acid, which acts as a barrier to infection, increases the chance of getting a GI infection," said senior study author Dr Thomas MacDonald, a pharmacology researcher at the University of Dundee in Scotland. "The main risk of PPIs are gastrointestinal infections," MacDonald added by email.

MacDonald and colleagues analyzed

data on stool samples collected from patients in Scotland between 1999 and 2013. Overall, there were 22,705 positive test results for bacterial infections. This included 15,273 people with C. difficile and 6,590 cases of Campylobacter, the authors reported in the British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology. Researchers also tested for Salmonella, Shigella and Escherichia coli, or E. coli, but didn't find an association between PPIs and these infections.

One limitation of the study is that it only included data on people who took PPIs with a prescription, even though these drugs have been available in Scotland since 2004 without a prescription, the authors note.

Researchers also lacked data on other factors that can influence the risk of bacterial infections such as obesity, smoking and alcohol use. Previous research on PPIs and infections has produced mixed results, with some studies suggesting an association and others failing to establish a connection, noted Dr. Wojciech Marlicz, a gastroenterology researcher at Pomeranian Medical University in Poland who wasn't involved in the study.

Millions of people worldwide take PPIs, which are available without a prescription in Europe and the US, which means even a slight increase in the odds of bacterial infections can still impact a lot of patients. "The main

problem with PPI use is their general overuse," Marlicz said by email. "These drugs are very potent and safe when used according to indication." "Some patients will gain clear benefits from PPIs as they have stomach problems, such as ulcers which will heal better with less acid," said Dr. Claire Steves, a researcher at King's College London who wasn't involved in the study. "However other patients may take these as preventatives, or for mild symptoms," Steves added by email. "This study would prompt us to reassess the risk and benefit for each individual, and in some cases alternatives - such as changing diet or lifestyle - may be better options." —Reuters



TOKYO: A white beluga throws beans to visitors at the Hakkeijima Sea Paradise aquarium in Yokohama, suburban Tokyo yesterday as part of the upcoming Setsubun festival to greet the coming of spring. —AFP

PRETERM BIRTH LINKED TO HEALTH PROBLEMS IN ADOLESCENCE

SWEDEN: Adolescents who were born extremely premature are much more likely to have chronic health problems than their peers who were delivered at full term, a Swedish study suggests. Pregnancy normally lasts about 40 weeks, and babies born after 37 weeks are considered full term. The study focused on extremely preterm infants, delivered at 23 to 25 weeks gestation. In the weeks immediately after birth, these early arrivals often have difficulty breathing and digesting food. They can also encounter longer-term challenges such as impaired vision, hearing, and cognitive skills as well as social and behavioral problems.

"Children born extremely preterm at 23 to 25 weeks gestation face an increased risk of chronic health problems such as neurodevelopmental handicap (mostly mild or moderate), asthma, and behavioral difficulties," said study co-author Dr Aijaz Farooqi, a researcher at the University Hospital of Umea in Sweden. "At school age, many extremely preterm children whose general intelligence is normal or in the lower normal range have motor impairments, behavioral problems, social problems and academic underachievement," Farooqi added by email.

Farooqi's team studied 134 youngsters ages 10 to 15 who were born extremely preterm, plus

103 children who were full-term infants but otherwise similar.

Compared to the full-term group, adolescents in the preemie group were 15 times more likely to have severe physical or mental impairments and more than five times as likely to require more medical or educational services than children typically need, the study found. Overall, 64 percent of the preemies in the study had functional limitations, compared with 6 percent of the full-term teens, researchers report in Pediatrics.

This included mental or emotional developmental delays as well as an inability to play and socialize. In addition, 60 percent of the adolescents who were preterm infants needed special equipment or assistance to complete daily tasks like walking, feeding, dressing and using the bathroom, compared to just 29 percent of the teens who were born full-term.

Roughly 64 percent of the teens born preterm needed routine care from a physician or specialist for a chronic health problem or special services like physical or occupational therapy, nursing care or special school arrangements. That was true for 25 percent of other kids in the study.

Even though the study didn't examine what factors might cause problems for extremely

preterm babies who survive to adolescence, disruptions in brain and central nervous system development may be part of the problem, Farooqi said. The study was small and it wasn't designed to see how birth timing influences health in adolescence, however.

Complications that are common in extremely preterm infants, such as central nervous system injuries, lung disease, eye problems and infections, "have been shown to be related to many of the chronic health problems" Farooqi noted. Still, there are things parents can do for preemies that may make a difference later on, said Dr Jill Zwicker, a researcher at the University of British Columbia in Canada who wasn't involved in the study. "When deemed safe to do so, parents can help their babies by holding them skin-to-skin while in the nursery, which is mutually beneficial for parents and babies," Zwicker said by email. "Throughout childhood, parents can support their child's development by providing enriching opportunities for learning - reading to them, providing opportunities to move and play, exploring the environment, engaging with other children - and so on," Zwicker added. "Early developmental intervention, such as occupational and physical therapy, can also improve outcomes." —Reuters

ARE 'NATURAL' CIGARETTE SMOKERS BEING MISLED?

NEW YORK: Natural American Spirit tobacco products are marketed as "natural" and "additive-free," and many users think that means the cigarettes are safer to smoke, according to a recent US study. This raises the concern that people who might otherwise quit smoking might switch to American Spirit instead, thinking they will be safer, the researchers write in the journal Tobacco Control.

In a national survey of smokers, almost 64 percent of Natural American Spirit users considered their own brand to be "safer" than other cigarettes, while only 8 percent of those who used other tobacco brands thought this. "American Spirit smokers are being misled," said lead study author Jennifer Pearson, a research investigator at Schroeder Institute for Tobacco Research and Policy Studies at Truth Initiative in Washington, DC.

"They believe that their product is less harmful than other brands but there is absolutely no evidence to support that belief," Pearson told Reuters Health by email. Natural American Spirit cigarettes and loose tobacco are made by Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company, which is owned by Reynolds American. The

product packaging describes them as being "100 percent additive-free" and some products are made with organically-grown tobacco. The packaging also carries the statement, "No additives in our tobacco does NOT mean a safer cigarette."

In August 2015, however, the FDA issued a warning letter to Santa Fe Natural and two other tobacco manufacturers, stating that their labeling and advertising of products as "natural" and "additive-free" violates section 911 of the Tobacco Control Act, because it improperly implies that "the tobacco products present a lower risk of tobacco-related disease or is less harmful than one or more other commercially marketed tobacco products," the study team notes. To determine whether American Spirit smokers view the brand this way, Pearson and her team analyzed data from over 30,000 adult smokers who participated in a national study of Americans and tobacco use in 2013 and 2014.

Participants identified their usual brand of cigarettes and answered questions about whether they thought their brand was more, less or equally harmful compared to other cigarette brands.

The smokers also noted how often they think about the harm from their tobacco use and answered questions about their drug or alcohol use as well as their mental and physical health and lifestyles. Overall, 2.3 percent of smokers reported Natural American Spirit as their usual brand.

Harmful as others

Nearly 36 percent of American Spirit smokers believed their brand was as harmful as other brands and less than 1 percent believed their brand was more harmful. In comparison, 83 percent of smokers of other brands thought their brand was just as harmful as others, and 8 percent thought it was more harmful. People who thought often about the harms of tobacco use were more likely to smoke American Spirits, compared with people who rarely or never thought about this question, researchers found.

This is especially concerning, they write, as these people might be more likely to quit if they didn't believe their cigarettes were less harmful.

American Spirit smokers were more likely than other smokers to

be under 35 years old and to have used alcohol or marijuana in the past month.

LGBTQ smokers were also more likely to choose American Spirit cigarettes as their preferred brand, and the researchers note that American Spirit ads specifically target this group, which is already at greater risk for worse health. "Many smokers erroneously believe that most of the harm from smoking comes from additives or chemicals that companies add to the tobacco," said David Hammond, an associate professor at the University of Waterloo in Canada. "Therefore, marketing American cigarettes as organic or additive free promotes the belief that the brand is less harmful than others," Hammond, who was not involved in the study, said by email.

Cigarette smoke contains thousands of chemicals with or without additives and all burning cigarettes are equally harmful, Hammond added. Smoking "natural" cigarettes is not a way to reduce harm, Pearson said, "inhaling burnt tobacco is harmful whether it's organic, additive-free, or natural, it doesn't matter." The Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company had no comment on the study.

DIVER LUCKY TO BE ALIVE AFTER AUSTRALIA SHARK ATTACK

SYDNEY: An experienced diver is lucky to be alive after he was mauled by a large shark in a remote area near the Great Barrier Reef, Australian paramedics said yesterday. The 55-year-old was diving with friends about 60 nautical miles east of Murray Island in the Torres Strait on Saturday when he was attacked by the four-meter (13-foot) bull shark. "He has severe bites to his left arm and some minor lacerations across his stomach," Queensland Ambulance Service paramedic David Cameron told AFP.

The man was taken by boat to Murray Island, three hours from the dive site,

where he was treated by a nurse. He was in a stable condition yesterday and due to undergo microsurgery, Cameron said. "There are several different types of sharks out near Murray Island, but the bull shark can be quite aggressive, so he is very, very lucky," he added. Although sharks are known to inhabit the area - which is popular for crayfishing and free diving - attacks were uncommon, the paramedic said.

Experts say shark attacks are increasing as water sports become more popular and bait fish move closer to shore, but fatalities remain rare. —AFP

CHINESE HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS SET THEIR SIGHTS ON SMOG

BEIJING: Toxic smog has found itself in the dock in China, as the authorities are taken to court over a problem that has choked entire regions, put public health at risk and forced the closure of schools and roads. At the helm is a group of human rights lawyers, who despite increasing government hostility to their work on some of China's most sensitive cases, say popular feeling is behind them when it comes to pollution that is literally off the charts.

"Chinese people aren't too concerned about societal problems and things that aren't happening to them personally, but this issue is different: everyone is a victim and is personally influenced by breathing polluted air," lawyer Yu Wensheng told AFP. He is among a group of six lawyers who began filing their suits in December after a choking cloud of haze descended on China's northeast, affecting some 460 million people. The campaign comes amid growing public anger over China's bad air, which has fuelled protests and spurred emigration among the wealthy.

Yu, who has defended prominent civil rights lawyers targeted by the government and people detained for supporting Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, said the importance and impact of the pollution suit "far exceeds" his previous human rights cases. Even acquaintances opposed to Yu's politics and police at a client's detention center had expressed support, he said, noting it was "very unusual".

'Mostly symbolic'

However, there are concerns authorities might be trying to muzzle online discussion on the issue and quell discontent by suppressing information on air quality. In December, a week of thick haze forced cities across the northeast to go on "red alert" for nearly a week, closing schools, factories and construction sites and taking around half of vehicles off the roads. As visibility dropped and airports cancelled hundreds of flights, people took to social media to vent their rage against a government that had long promised to solve the problem. But comments about the heavy smog quickly began disappearing from the web.

On Wednesday, the Meteorological Administration also ordered local weather bureaus to stop issuing smog alerts, which authorities said was intended to improve

coordination. A document submitted by Yu's associate to the Beijing Second Intermediate People's Court accused the government of "severe dereliction of duty" in pollution management and sacrificing human health in pursuit of "toxic GDP growth" by turning a blind eye to the excessive emissions of local companies.

The lawyers have little hope of winning or even successfully filing their cases and are viewing the suits as "mostly symbolic," Yu said. The document asked for authorities to publish an apology online and in the local state-run newspaper for a week, and hand over compensation of 65 yuan (\$9.50) for the price of his smog mask and 9,999 yuan for emotional damages.

He hopes the suits will help keep the issue in the public eye, adding he wants to inspire others to file complaints. "Our main goal is to raise people's awareness of pollution and wake them up to how the government should bear responsibility for its inaction and ineffectual response," he said. Notably, China can clear the skies for important occasions such as the 2014 APEC summit or the 2008 Olympics, but does so selectively due to the high economic cost. "They can do it, but they do not," Yu said.

'Smog victims ourselves'

Another lawyer Ma Wei, who is suing the city of Tianjin, said he has received no official response even weeks after the court was legally required to issue one. Instead, the public security bureau and other authorities have tried to pressure him to retract his suit. "I refused and told them, 'I'm doing this so that you can breathe clean air, too,'" he said.

The lawyers are used to harassment. Since President Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, the country has cracked down on civil rights defenders. Though the government initially targeted political activists and human rights campaigners, it has increasingly turned its attention to the legal professionals who represent them. In 2014, authorities imprisoned and tortured Yu for 99 days for allegedly "disturbing public order". Still, he is not afraid. "We are lawyers," he said, "but also first and foremost citizens and smog victims ourselves." "If we do things according to the law and still get detained," he added, "it will be just the thing to show people the true nature of our so-called 'rule of law'." —AFP



BEIJING: Chinese lawyer Yu Wensheng poses for a portrait in Beijing. —AFP

CANCER PATIENTS WITH DEPRESSION HAVE RESOURCES

NEW YORK: Cancer patients who experience depression can use both therapy and lifestyle tools to help support their mental health, according to a new patient resource from the JAMA Oncology journal. People with cancer, as well as their doctors, need to remember that mental health is as important as physical health for these patients, the authors note.

"Understandably, cancer treatment is primarily focused on obtaining medical remission," said Rachel Roos Pokorney, a therapist based in New York City who co-wrote the one-page primer intended for patients. The page is based on recommendations given by the American Cancer Society and the National Institute of Mental Health. "There is still an unfortunate lack of awareness about the importance of treating the mental along with the physical, both in general and in regards to cancer patients," she told Reuters Health. The patient resource explains that physical changes, limitations from symptoms and treatment and uncertainty about the future all put cancer patients at risk for depression.

But nontherapeutic tools, such as physical activity, a healthy diet, and a strong social network can help the body, improve mood and reduce stress, the authors write. "There is a basic connection that the mind and body have that is very important to remember," Pokorney said. "It is of the utmost importance to always take care of your mind by taking care of your body, and vice versa. This is especially important for cancer patients."

Therapeutic tools, such as medication, support groups and individual therapy, can help as well. In fact, social workers, psychia-

trists and psychologists are becoming more involved with cancer-based care in recent years, she said. "As cancer treatment advances, there are more cancer survivors who are in need of long-term care, which is no longer limited to physical symptoms," said Gleneara Bates of Columbia University Medical Center in New York City, who co-authored the patient page with Pokorney.

"The emotional burden of cancer has real-life effects on not just patients but their primary caregivers and family members," she told Reuters Health by email. "Cancer has historically been seen as an 'old man's disease,' and this is no longer the case." Bates and Pokorney note that using cognitive behavioral therapy and dialectical behavioral therapy to help patients identify and manage their emotions and thoughts to improve depressive symptoms is gaining support - both as a result of evidence-based studies and the rising mindfulness trend.

Depressive symptoms

"Treatment for cancer-related depression is not one-size-fits-all," Bates said. "Patients and health care providers should discuss all aspects of mental health to find the best combination." Cancer patients may often experience depressive symptoms after treatment has ended, said Dr Lynne Padgett, strategic director of hospital systems for the American Cancer Society in Atlanta, Georgia. "Patients may experience symptoms when everything should be 'OK' because of the long-lasting effects of cancer and the treatments," Dr Padgett, who was not involved in the patient resource, told Reuters Health. — Reuters



KAMPALA: Telecommunications engineer Olivia Koburongo holds a baby in front of pneumonia-diagnosing "smart jacket" at the Makerere University of Public Health. —AFP photos

UGANDANS INVENT 'SMART JACKET' TO DIAGNOSE PNEUMONIA

KAMPALA: A team of Ugandan engineers has invented a "smart jacket" that diagnoses pneumonia faster than a doctor, offering hope against a disease which kills more children worldwide than any other. The idea came to Olivia Koburongo, 26, after her grandmother fell ill, and was moved from hospital to hospital before being properly diagnosed with pneumonia. "It was now too late to save her," said Koburongo. "It was too hard to keep track of her vitals, of how she's doing, and that is how I thought of a way to automate the whole process and keep track of her health."

Koburongo took her idea to fellow telecommunications engineering graduate Brian Turyabagye, 24, and together with a team of doctors they came up with the "Mama-Ope" (Mother's Hope) kit made up of a biomedical smart jacket and a mobile phone application which does the diagnosis. Pneumonia-a severe lung infection-kills up to 24,000 Ugandan children under the age of five per year, many of whom are misdiagnosed as having malaria, according to the UN children's agency UNICEF. A lack of access to laboratory testing and infrastructure in poor communities means health

workers often have to rely on simple clinical examinations to make their diagnoses.

Bluetooth diagnosis

With the easy-to-use Mama-Ope kit, health workers merely have to slip the jacket onto the child, and its sensors will pick up sound patterns from the lungs, temperature and breathing rate. "The processed information is sent to a mobile phone app (via Bluetooth) which analyses the information in comparison to known data so as to get an estimate of the strength of the disease," said Turyabagye. The jacket, which is still only a prototype, can diagnose pneumonia up to three times faster than a doctor and reduces human error, according to studies done by its inventors.

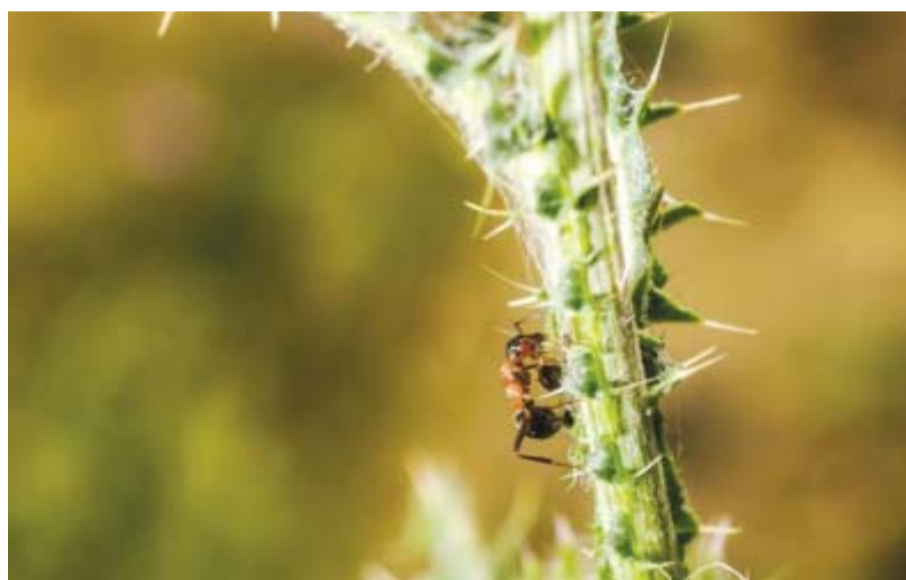
Traditionally doctors use a stethoscope to listen for abnormal crackling or bubbling sounds in the lungs, however if medics suspect malaria or tuberculosis which also include respiratory distress-the time lost treating those rather than pneumonia could prove deadly for their patient. "The problem we're trying to solve is diagnosing pneumonia at an early stage before it gets severe and we're also trying to solve the problem of not enough manpower in

hospitals because currently we have a doctor to patient ratio which is one to 24,000 in the country," said Koburongo.

Global ambition

Turyabagye said plans were underway to have the kit piloted in Uganda's referral hospitals and then trickle down to remote health centers. "Once you have this information captured on cloud storage, it means a doctor who is not even in the rural area, who is not on the ground, can access the same information from any patient and it helps in making an informed decision," he added. The team is also working on patenting the kit, which is shortlisted for the 2017 Royal Academy of Engineering Africa Prize.

"Once it is successful (in Uganda) we hope it is rolled out to other African countries and major parts of the world where pneumonia is killing thousands of children," said Koburongo. According to UNICEF, most of the 900,000 annual deaths of children under five due to pneumonia occur in south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. This is more than other causes of childhood death such as diarrhoea, malaria, meningitis or HIV/AIDS. —AFP



MIAMI: Researchers say the way ants navigate shows that their mental capacity is more complex than previously thought. —AFP

ANTS ARE EXPERT NAVIGATORS, EVEN WALKING BACKWARDS

MIAMI: Despite their tiny size, ants are sophisticated navigators that can find their way even while walking backwards, and these skills could help inspire better robots, scientists say.

The findings in this week's edition of the journal Current Biology are based on a colony of desert ants that were studied to see how they navigated home while carrying pieces of a cookie. Carrying small bits, they walked forward. But with larger pieces, they dragged them backwards toward their nest, occasionally dropping the food to check the sun's position and reorient themselves.

Researchers said this practice of checking the environment and matching their progress against their memories of their surroundings shows the insects' mental

capacity is more complex than previously thought. "Ants have a relatively tiny brain, less than the size of a pinhead. Yet they can navigate successfully under many difficult conditions, including going backward," said co-author Barbara Webb, a professor at the University of Edinburgh's School of Informatics.

"Understanding their behavior gives us new insights into brain function, and has inspired us to build robot systems that mimic their functions." Researchers say the ants' process could be useful to people, because it could help them develop new computer algorithms to guide robots. The research team included scientists at the University of Lincoln, Australian National University, and the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS). —AFP



KAMPALA: Telecommunications engineer Olivia Koburongo presents the mama-ope kit at the Makerere University of Public Health.



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All of Mais Catering's menu varieties are prepared from fresh ingredients which are delivered directly from specialized nutrition farmers and famous suppliers from all over the world in addition to which our team of chefs comprises of specialized professional, Mais Catering team is proud in its unique service of presenting specialized menus that fits different tastes, ranging from traditional, classical Middle Eastern dishes to modern dishes that utilizes the most advanced cooking methods internationally.

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event was in your own residence or at an outside venue, Mais Catering has the required knowledge and vast organizing experience to turn any space to a spectacular scene that exceeds all expectations.

Mais Catering shall not stop innovating and improving its services to fit the changing needs of the clients. If you were planning a dinner, rest assured that your menu shall suit your event and your design and that your guests shall enjoy the most delicious dishes and the most elegant services. Thanks to our decades of experience in servicing customers in Kuwait since 1953, Mais Catering remains the best choice to cover all private celebrations requirements. For more information, you can reach us at the phone number: 22054242 or visit our website www.maiscatering.com Our team shall answer all of your inquiries.



CROWNE PLAZA AND HOLIDAY INN KUWAIT AL-THURAYA CITY SHINES AT HORECA KUWAIT

Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Kuwait Al-Thuraya City was one of the sponsors of the hospitality exhibition HORECA Kuwait 2017 held at Kuwait International Fair grounds organized by the Leaders Group for Consultations and Training in cooperation with Hospitality Services.

Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Al-Thuraya City affirmed their strong foothold in its culinary expertise by winning various prizes at the food

competitions held during the exhibition. The kitchen experts of Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Kuwait Al-Thuraya City were the proud winners of 1 gold, 1 silver, and 3 bronze medals apart from other special appreciation certificates. All the winners including were on cloud nine to be adjudged the winners and attributed their winning to the great team effort and support from the top management of the hotel. "We are extremely proud and excited to have a winning

team by our side. The team puts in a great effort and we try to do our best in promoting their skills," said Antoine Flouty, Area General Manager, Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Kuwait Al-Thuraya City while congratulating his team.

The winners of the cooking competitions were awarded at a grand ceremony on the last day of the event different cooking competitions held as part of the exhibition. HORECA Kuwait stands out among similar regional exhibitions for being a meeting place for leading companies in hospitality and catering sector under one roof, as well as an attraction for young people interested in this field.

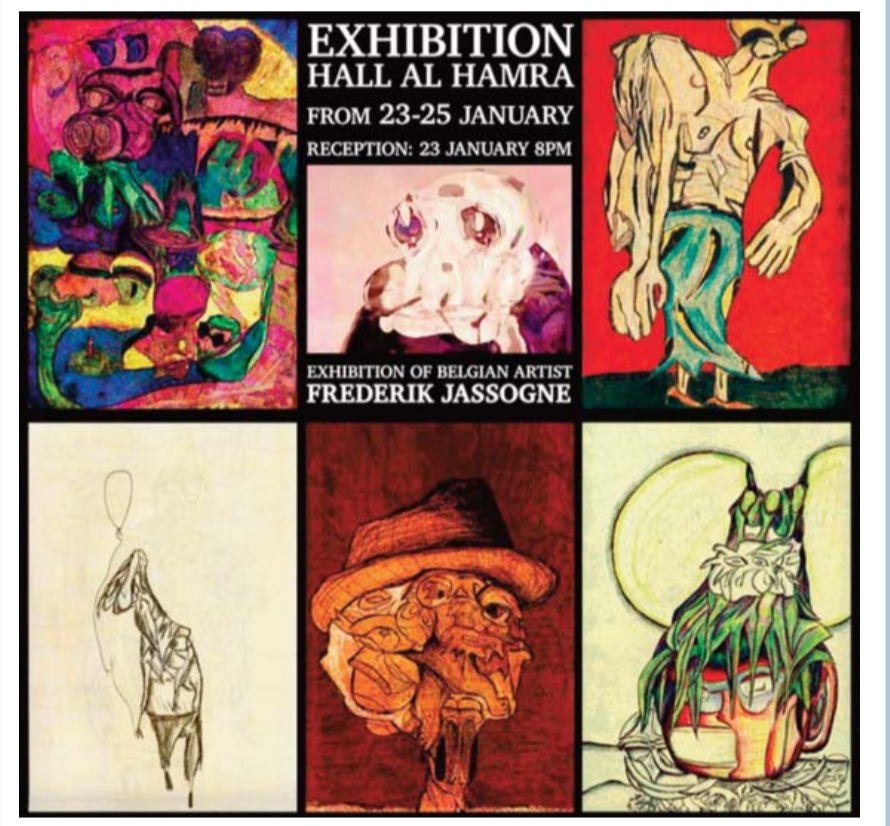
With 8 restaurants and a cafe within the hotel, Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Kuwait Al-Thuraya City is a gastronome's delight for indulgence. Exotic flavors from around the world are available at the Silk all day dining restaurant of Crowne Plaza and Al-Ahmedi International Buffet of Holiday Inn Kuwait Al-Thuraya City, the steaks of the West are done just the way you like it at the Rib Eye Steakhouse, the food of the Persian royals is yours at the Shabestan Iranian restaurant, while elegant teas and pastries complete your day at the Espresso. Royal flavors are experienced at the Jamawar Indian restaurant, authentic Japanese is yours at the Sakura, delights of the seas come alive at the Al-Noukhaza and traditional Lebanese is the order of the day at the Ayam Zaman restaurant. Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn Kuwait Al-Thuraya City team look forward to the next year's event where they will be prepared to show many more of their culinary talents and add more feathers to their cap.



BELGIAN EMBASSY ORGANIZES FREDERIK JASSOGNE EXHIBITION

The Belgian embassy is organizing a free art exhibition for Frederik Jassogne today, as part of a series of events for the Belgian Days in Kuwait. Frederik Jassogne (1984) is an upcoming artistic talent and has a signature technique of embedding digital and interactive technologies in modern art. By embedding childhood drawings in a digital landscape, the art of Jassogne

offers us emotional resonance in times of digital solitude and escapism. Frederik has mostly been active in the international theatre and opera-scene since 2008, for which he created artistic video-designs. This spring he will create the video-designs for 'Trompe-La-Mort' for the Opera of Paris, a breakthrough in his career. During the exhibition, also video-projections will be shown.



The Rasameel Team held its second meeting recently to discuss its future plans which include programs to help improve the quality of education that early stage students receive. Team leader Dr Hind Al-Rabbah chaired the meeting, which was also attended by the team's consultant Narjis Al-Shatti.

CHEVROLET ALGHANIM ATTRACTS MASSES AT GULFRUN EVENT

As part of its aggressive push to make the year 2017 memorable for all of its fans and customers, Yusuf A Alghanim and Sons Automotive, the exclusive distributor of Chevrolet vehicles in Kuwait, has followed up its amazing showing at Auto Moto with a thrilling participation at the GulfRun event, which took place at the outdoor area of Murooj in the Sixth Ring Road during the weekend, from Jan 19 until Jan 21 2017. The automotive giant stole the spotlight by showcasing three of its iconic vehicles, where each its own right has garnered the admiration and interest of the young attendees. These extraordinary vehicles are the fast Camaro ZL1, the stunning Corvette Z06 and the breathtaking Silverado (Midnight Edition).

Launched in 2008, GulfRun is widely lauded as one of the most significant automotive shows in Kuwait, specialized in bringing the latest sports car and speed races. The event

continues to attract throngs of professionals drivers and car enthusiasts while getting the general public interested in automotive, effectively making it the premier car show in Kuwait. The event also offered a number of conferences and roundtables where visitors got to ask their burning questions to professional car racers and other prominent figures in the industry.

Camaro ZL1 - The fastest in its history
Leading the GulfRun lineup at the Chevrolet stand is none other than the Camaro ZL1, which is considered the first production car to use a new, advanced 10-speed automatic gearbox, which offers strong economy and performance benefits. Acceleration is delivered via a new supercharged 6.2L V-8 engine, with estimated 650hp. Its 0-100kph time is a mere 3.6 seconds, and it can complete the quarter mile in 11.4 seconds at a speed of 204 kph.

The Camaro ZL1 also comes equipped with front and rear 6-piston Brembo Brakes, Chevrolet MyLink audio with navigation and 8-inch display, sporty Recaro front seats, hood insert with exposed carbon fiber weave and 20-inch wheels in graphite premium paint.

Corvette Z06 - Outshines the rest
The track-inspired Z06 features a precision-sculpted exterior design that's as functional as it is beautiful, for improved grip, aerodynamics, more airflow and better overall track performance. The Z06 was designed from the start to be an open-top vehicle, equipped with dual Xenon headlamps, 19-inch front wheels and 20-inch rear wheels in black aluminum paint. Z06 is powered by 6.2L aluminum V8 DI engine delivering 650 horsepower with Active Rev Matching and 7-speed manual transmission. The car also features Magnetic Selective Ride Control, Brembo Brakes with 4-wheel anti-

lock and 4-wheel disc, 10-speaker BOSE system with bass box and sport Seats, heated and ventilated for driver and front passenger.

Silverado Midnight Edition - The allure of the dark

Considered one of the most coveted looks, the Midnight Edition of Silverado features a striking black color that adds thrill, mystery and style on the road. Youths in particular will appreciate the blacked-out chromes, bed cover, and the off-road wheels and tires.

As an unstoppable force of power, the Silverado raises the stakes by offering a V8 5.3L engine capable of generating 355hp, 6-speed automatic transmission and Chevrolet MyLink audio system with 8-inch display.

A Special visit from Kuwait Corvette Club

Among the special visitors that Chevrolet had received at its GulfRun stand were the

cherished members of the Kuwait Corvette Club. Enamored by their favorite masterpiece vehicle, the members got to take pictures and ask all there is to ask about the extraordinary features that make the Corvette Z06 admiringly exceptional.

Chevrolet Care

All customers who purchase a Chevrolet from Yusuf A Alghanim and 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.





AMERICANA OPENS TGI FRIDAY'S, OLIVE GARDEN AT THE LAKE MALL

Kuwait Food Company (Americana) opened the 11th branch of TGI Friday's in Kuwait, and the second branch of Olive Garden in the country during a grand celebration held recently at the Lake Mall in Funaitees area. Americana officials, businessmen, media personalities and other guests attended the ceremony. The location of the new restaurants is distinguished by being

adjacent to the 'dancing fountain' at Lake Mall, which adds a beautiful and serene atmosphere rich with vibrant colors and musical tunes. The new TGI Friday's branch join ten others in Kuwait. TGI Friday's is a renowned American restaurants' chain with a history that goes back over 50 years of presence around the world. The first branch opened in Kuwait in 1996. The newest branch is the most

modern among the chain's outlets, and is characterized by its design that combines the restaurant's history and requirements of modern designs. Meanwhile, Olive Garden's newest branch is the second in Kuwait after the first one opened in Avenues Mall. The American-Italian food chain has over 200 branches around the world.





- 00:50 Gator Boys
- 01:45 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 02:40 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 03:35 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 06:49 River Monsters
- 07:36 Meet The Orangutans
- 08:00 Meet The Orangutans
- 08:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 09:15 Wild Animal Repo
- 10:10 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 12:55 Going Ape
- 13:20 Going Ape
- 13:50 Wild Animal Repo
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 River Monsters
- 18:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 19:20 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 22:05 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
- 23:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
- 23:55 Gator Boys

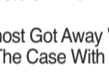
- 16:50 Fast N' Loud
- 17:40 Wheeler Dealers: Trading Up
- 18:30 How Do They Do It?
- 18:55 How Do They Do It?
- 19:20 What On Earth?
- 20:10 The Liquidator
- 20:35 The Liquidator
- 21:00 Gold Rush
- 21:50 Deadliest Catch
- 23:30 Fast N' Loud



- 00:00 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
- 01:00 Monster Quest
- 02:00 Ancient Impossible
- 03:00 How 2 Win
- 03:50 Ancient Aliens
- 04:40 Serial Killer Earth
- 05:30 Blood And Glory: The Civil War In Color
- 06:20 Engineering Disasters
- 07:10 The Universe
- 08:00 Monster Quest
- 09:00 Ancient Impossible
- 10:00 How 2 Win
- 11:00 Ancient Aliens
- 12:00 Serial Killer Earth
- 13:00 Ancient Impossible
- 14:00 Monster Quest
- 15:00 Ancient Impossible
- 16:00 How 2 Win
- 17:00 Ancient Aliens
- 18:00 Serial Killer Earth
- 19:00 Patton 360
- 20:00 Mud Men
- 21:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 22:00 Ancient Aliens
- 23:00 Monster Quest



- 00:40 Blood Relatives
- 01:30 Cell Block Psychic
- 02:20 The Haunted
- 03:10 True Nightmares
- 04:00 Judgment Day: Prison Or Parole
- 04:48 Evil Online
- 08:00 Monsters: When Moms Go Bad
- 08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 09:40 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 10:30 Evil Online
- 11:20 Blood Relatives
- 12:10 Nowhere To Hide
- 13:00 Monsters: When Moms Go Bad
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 On The Case With Paula Zahn
- 15:30 Evil Online
- 16:20 Blood Relatives
- 17:10 Evil Online
- 18:00 Monsters: When Moms Go Bad

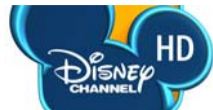


- 00:05 What Happened Next?
- 00:30 Nextworld
- 01:20 Nextworld
- 02:10 Storm Chasers
- 03:00 Storm Chasers
- 03:50 Ultimate Survival
- 06:20 How It's Made
- 06:40 How It's Made
- 07:00 Do You Know?
- 07:15 Doki
- 07:35 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 08:00 K9 Cops
- 08:45 How It's Made
- 09:00 How It's Made
- 09:30 Nextworld
- 10:20 Mythbusters
- 11:10 Storm Chasers
- 12:00 K9 Cops
- 12:50 Ultimate Survival
- 13:40 How It's Made

- 00:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
- 01:00 Private Chef
- 02:00 Chopped
- 03:00 Food Network Star
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 06:00 The Kitchen
- 07:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:00 Siba's Table
- 09:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 10:00 The Kitchen



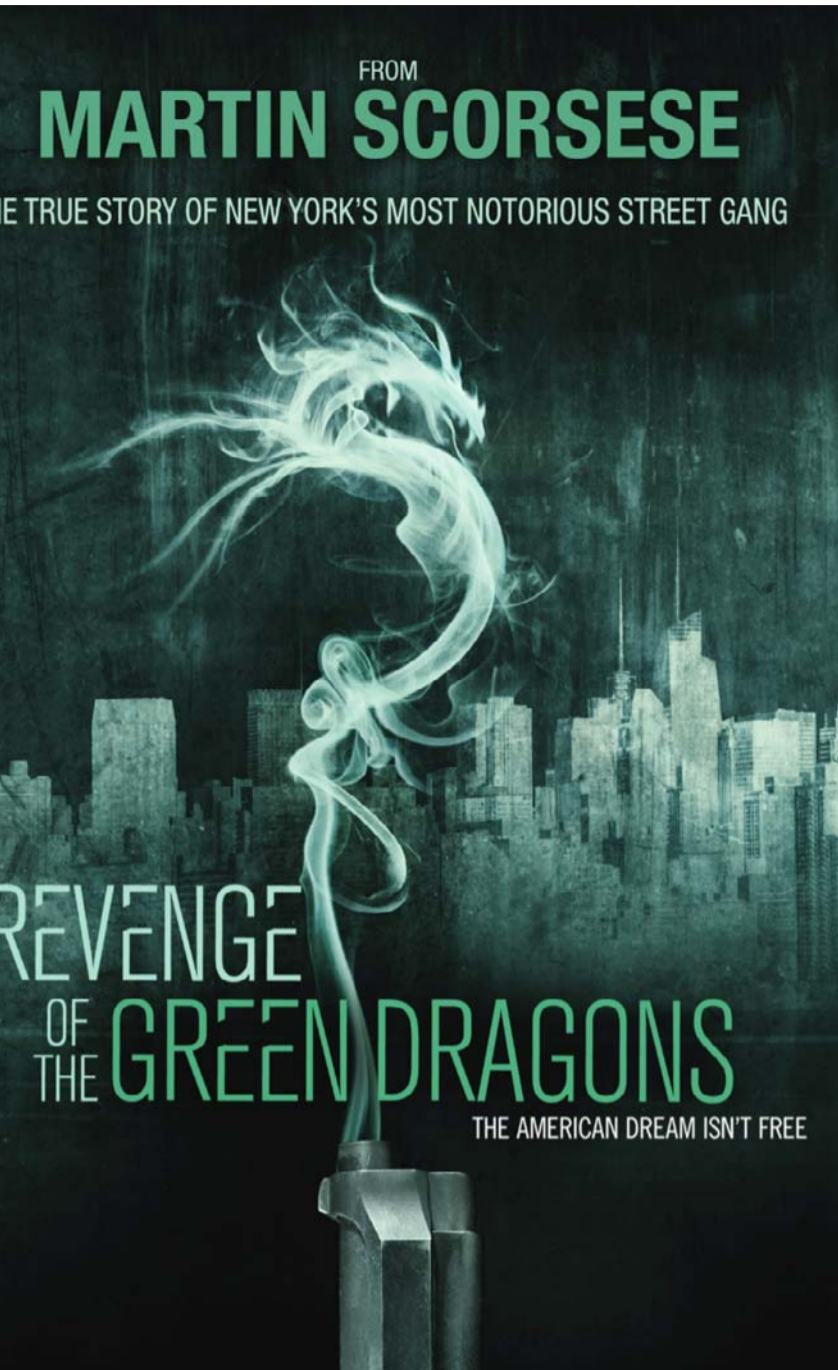
- 00:00 Siba's Table: Fast Feasts
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- 03:00 Food Network Star
- 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 05:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
- 06:00 The Kitchen
- 07:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:00 Siba's Table
- 09:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 10:00 The Kitchen



- 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 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 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 Descendants Wicked World
- 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
- 22:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
- 23:00 Binny And The Ghost



- 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



REVENGE OF THE GREEN DRAGONS ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 22:25 Gummi Bears
- 23:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 23:30 Sofia The First
- 23:55 PJ Masks
- 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 Adventures
- 09:00 Lab Rats
- 09:25 Lab Rats
- 09:50 Danger Mouse
- 10:20 Supa Strikas
- 10:45 Supa Strikas



- 07:15 Shipping Wars
- 07:40 Counting Cars
- 08:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:20 Storage Wars
- 09:45 Storage Wars
- 10:10 American Pickers
- 11:00 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 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 Storage Wars
- 18:30 Pawn Stars
- 18:55 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 19:20 Ax Men
- 20:10 American Pickers
- 21:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
- 21:50 Hunting Hiller
- 22:40 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
- 23:30 American Pickers



- 00:20 World's Deadliest
- 01:10 Monster Fish
- 02:00 Swamp Lions
- 02:50 India's Lost Worlds
- 03:45 Wild 24
- 04:40 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 05:35 Swamp Lions
- 06:30 India's Lost Worlds
- 07:25 Wild 24
- 08:20 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 09:15 World's Weirdest (2015)
- 10:10 Killer Shots
- 11:05 World's Deadliest
- 12:00 Pond Stars
- 12:55 Snake Underworld
- 13:50 India's Lost Worlds
- 14:45 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 15:40 Wild Galapagos
- 16:35 World's Weirdest (2015)
- 17:30 Planet Carnivore
- 18:25 Warrior Bees
- 19:20 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 20:10 Wild Galapagos
- 21:00 World's Weirdest (2015)
- 21:50 Planet Carnivore
- 22:40 Warrior Bees
- 23:30 Pond Stars



- 00:10 The Chase
- 01:00 Emmerdale
- 01:30 Emmerdale
- 02:00 Coronation Street
- 02:30 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 03:25 Midsomer Murders
- 05:15 Agatha Christie's Partners In Crime
- 06:10 Don't Tell The Bride
- 07:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 08:00 Midsomer Murders
- 09:30 Tracey Ullman's Show
- 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
- 13:45 Coronation Street
- 14:10 Don't Tell The Bride
- 15:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 16:00 Endeavour
- 17:50 Grantchester
- 18:45 Emmerdale
- 19:15 Coronation Street
- 19:45 Coronation Street
- 20:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 21:00 Endeavour
- 22:50 Emmerdale
- 23:15 Coronation Street
- 23:40 Coronation Street



- 00:10 Wicked Tuna
- 01:00 Explorer
- 02:00 The Real Saddam Hussein
- 02:55 Beyond Magic With DMC
- 03:50 Wicked Tuna
- 04:45 Big, Bigger, Biggest
- 05:40 Megacities

- 06:35 Facing...
- 07:30 Reagan: The Assassination Attempt
- 08:25 Nazi Underworld
- 09:20 Big, Bigger, Biggest
- 10:15 The Border
- 11:10 Highway Thru Hell
- 12:05 Dirty Rotten Survival
- 13:00 Nazi Underworld
- 14:00 Explorer
- 15:00 The Real Saddam Hussein
- 16:00 The Border
- 17:00 Highway Thru Hell
- 18:00 Dirty Rotten Survival
- 19:00 Mega Factories
- 20:00 The Border
- 20:50 Highway Thru Hell
- 21:40 Dirty Rotten Survival
- 22:30 Mega Factories
- 23:20 Megacities



- 00:00 Roadies
- 01:00 How To Get Away With Murder
- 02:00 How To Get Away With Murder
- 03:00 Mistresses
- 04:00 The Fosters
- 05:00 Royal Pains
- 06:00 Good Morning America - Weekend
- 07:00 Quantic
- 08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 09:00 Notorious
- 10:00 Quantic
- 11:00 Quantic
- 12:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
- 13:00 The Fosters
- 14:00 Notorious
- 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 The Goldbergs
- 01:30 Girls
- 02:00 Girls
- 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 The Last Man On Earth
- 10:00 The Mindy Project
- 10:30 The Bernie Mac Show
- 11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
- 12:00 \$#! My Dad Says
- 12:30 The Bill Engvall Show
- 13:00 Trophy Wife
- 13:30 The Bernie Mac Show
- 14:00 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
- 14:30 The Last Man On Earth
- 15:00 The Mindy Project
- 15:30 The Simpsons
- 16:30 \$#! My Dad Says
- 17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
- 18:00 New Girl
- 18:30 Cooper Barrett's Guide To Surviving
- 19:00 Dr. Ken
- 19:30 The Mindy Project
- 20:00 The Goldbergs
- 21:00 The Simpsons
- 22:00 You're The Worst
- 22:30 You're The Worst
- 23:00 The Big C



- 01:00 All The Wilderness
- 03:00 Miss You Already
- 05:00 The Grand Seduction
- 07:00 Krampus
- 09:00 Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials
- 11:15 I'll See You In My Dreams
- 13:00 The Age Of Adaline
- 15:00 Believe
- 17:00 Kindergarten Cop 2
- 19:00 Ride Along 2
- 21:00 The Man From U.N.C.L.E.
- 23:00 10 Cloverfield Lane



- 01:00 Before I Disappear
- 03:00 Wildlike
- 05:00 Don't Wake Mommy
- 07:00 The Reckoning
- 09:00 Selma
- 11:15 Before I Disappear
- 13:00 Wildlike
- 15:00 Cas & Dylan
- 16:45 Selma
- 19:00 Enter Nowhere
- 21:00 Dying Of The Light
- 23:00 The Bronx Bull



- 01:00 Beyond The Mask
- 03:00 Little Man Tate
- 05:00 Storm Rider
- 07:00 Curious George
- 09:00 Hotel Transylvania 2
- 11:00 Storm Rider
- 13:00 Christmas Trade
- 15:00 The Tale Of Despereaux
- 17:00 Peter Pan Live!
- 19:15 Black Beauty
- 21:00 It Takes Two
- 23:00 The Tale Of Despereaux



THE GRAND SEDUCTION ON OSN MOVIES HD

- 14:05 How It's Made
- 14:30 Storm Chasers
- 15:15 Mythbusters
- 16:00 Doki
- 16:20 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 16:45 Do You Know?
- 17:00 Atlas 4D
- 17:50 World's Toughest Expeditions With James Cracknell
- 18:40 Nextworld
- 19:30 How It's Made
- 19:55 How It's Made
- 20:20 Mythbusters
- 21:10 Atlas 4D
- 22:00 World's Toughest Expeditions With James Cracknell
- 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 Restaurant Takeover
- 20:00 Mystery Diners
- 21:00 Restaurant Takeover
- 22:00 Iron Chef America



- 00:15 Origins
- 00:40 Prototype This
- 01:30 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
- 02:20 Powering The Future
- 03:10 Mythbusters
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:26 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
- 09:14 Mythbusters
- 10:02 Powering The Future
- 10:50 How Do They Do It?
- 11:14 Food Factory
- 11:38 Mythbusters
- 12:28 Mythbusters
- 13:14 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
- 14:02 How Do They Do It?
- 14:26 Food Factory
- 14:50 Powering The Future
- 15:38 Mythbusters
- 16:26 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
- 17:14 Mythbusters
- 18:02 Powering The Future
- 18:50 Joe Rogan Questions Everything
- 19:40 Mythbusters
- 20:30 Stephen Hawking's Universe
- 21:20 How Do They Do It?
- 21:45 Food Factory
- 22:10 Nextworld

- 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 Neverland 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 Neverland Pirates
- 10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 10:35 Sofia The First
- 11:30 Doc McStuffins
- 11:55 Doc McStuffins
- 12:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 13:15 Gummi Bears
- 13:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 14:10 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 PJ Masks
- 20:30 PJ Masks
- 21:00 Unbungalivable
- 21:05 Goldie & Bear
- 21:35 Miles From Tomorrow
- 22:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West

- 11:10 Counterfeit Cat
- 11:35 Pair Of Kings
- 12:30 Future-Worm!
- 12:55 Lab Rats
- 13:45 Atomic Puppet
- 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:15 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
- 14:40 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 15:05 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 15:30 Disney Cookbook
- 15:55 Danger Mouse
- 16:25 K.C. Undercover
- 17:15 Gravity Falls
- 17:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 18:10 Supa Strikas
- 19:00 Atomic Puppet
- 19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 19:55 K.C. Undercover
- 20:20 Counterfeit Cat
- 20:45 Mighty Med
- 21:10 Pickle And Peanut
- 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 21:45 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
- 22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 22:35 Booster



- 00:20 Time Team
- 01:10 Pawn Stars
- 01:35 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 02:00 Storage Wars
- 02:50 Storage Wars
- 03:15 American Pickers
- 04:05 Pawn Stars
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Mountain Men
- 06:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 06:50 Shipping Wars



BEYOND THE MASK ON OSN MOVIES FAMILY HD

CLASSIFIEDS



Kuwait Times
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www.kuwaittimes.net
 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (19/01/2017 TO 25/01/2017)

Time	Programme
12:30 PM	SHARQIA-1
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	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
1:00 PM	SHARQIA-2
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	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
12:00 PM	SHARQIA-3
2:00 PM	BALLERINA
5:15 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
7:15 PM	BALLERINA
9:30 PM	THE GREAT WALL
12:15 AM	PATRIOTS DAY
11:45 AM	MUHALAB-1
3:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
5:00 PM	BALLERINA
7:00 PM	BALLERINA
9:45 PM	KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu
1:00 AM	KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu
12:00 PM	MUHALAB-2
2:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
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	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
12:15 PM	MUHALAB-3
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	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
12:45 PM	FANAR-1
1:30 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
3:30 PM	BALLERINA
5:30 PM	BALLERINA
7:30 PM	A MONSTER CALLS
9:45 PM	PATRIOTS DAY
12:30 AM	PATRIOTS DAY
12:45 PM	FANAR-2
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	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
12:30 PM	FANAR-3
4:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
6:15 PM	THE GREAT WALL
9:30 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
12:45 AM	THE GREAT WALL
12:15 PM	FANAR-4
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	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
11:45 AM	MARINA-1
2:30 PM	THE GREAT WALL
4:45 PM	BALLERINA
7:00 PM	MOANA
9:15 PM	THE GREAT WALL
12:05 AM	PATRIOTS DAY
12:00 PM	MARINA-2
2:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
4:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
6:00 PM	BALLERINA
8:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
10:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
12:05 AM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
12:45 PM	MARINA-3
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 PM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE

11:30 AM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
1:30 PM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
3:30 PM	AVENUES-1
5:30 PM	SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA
7:30 PM	THE GREAT WALL
9:45 PM	SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA
12:30 AM	A MONSTER CALLS
12:45 PM	PATRIOTS DAY
12:45 PM	A MONSTER CALLS
11:00 PM	THE GREAT WALL
1:15 AM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
12:15 PM	AVENUES-2
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	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX
1:00 PM	AVENUES-3
1:30 PM	PATRIOTS DAY
4:00 PM	THE GREAT WALL
4:00 PM	PATRIOTS DAY
6:45 PM	KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu
9:45 PM	KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu
12:30 AM	PATRIOTS DAY
12:00 PM	360°- 1
2:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
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	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
10:00 PM	360°- 2
1:45 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
5:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
8:15 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
11:30 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
11:45 AM	360°- 3
2:00 PM	THE BYE BYE MAN
4:15 PM	SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA
6:30 PM	SING
8:45 PM	THE BYE BYE MAN

10:45 PM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
12:45 AM	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
11:30 AM	AVENUES-1
1:30 PM	SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA
3:30 PM	THE GREAT WALL
5:30 PM	SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA
7:30 PM	A MONSTER CALLS
9:45 PM	PATRIOTS DAY
11:00 PM	A MONSTER CALLS
1:15 AM	THE GREAT WALL
12:15 PM	AVENUES-2
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	xxc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX
1:00 PM	AVENUES-3
1:30 PM	PATRIOTS DAY
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5:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
8:15 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
11:30 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
11:45 AM	360°- 3
2:00 PM	THE BYE BYE MAN
4:15 PM	SURF'S UP 2: WAVEMANIA
6:30 PM	SING
8:45 PM	THE BYE BYE MAN

CHANGE OF NAME

I, Iddin Kunhi Pallibali Abbas S/o Abbas Pallibali, Passport No. L1458495 & Civil ID No. 281060107647. have changed my name as Aboobakkar Siddiq vide affidavit dated 14.12.2016 before notary Sirajuddin, Mangalore (C 5259)

I, Jamil Lobo wife of Patrick Lobo holder of Indian Passport No. G3196491 and Civil ID No. 282062803579 has changed my name to Jamil Avelino Fernandes hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Jamil Avelino Fernandes. (C 5260) 23-1-2017

M.A. Nijam S/o Abdal 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

I, Mohammad Salim S/o Azizul Haque, Passport No. F2525309, Civil ID No. 272020116835, has changed my name to Mohammad Aslam hereinafter in all my dealings and documents. (C 5257) 18-1-2017

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation for Filipino Bachelor ONLY near Big Jamiya Farwaniya. Available already, Contact 66826412 or 97512782 19-1-2017

EMERGENCY 112

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is 1889988

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	05:19
Shorook	06:42
Duhr:	12:00
Asr:	14:57
Maghrib:	17:17
Isha:	18:38

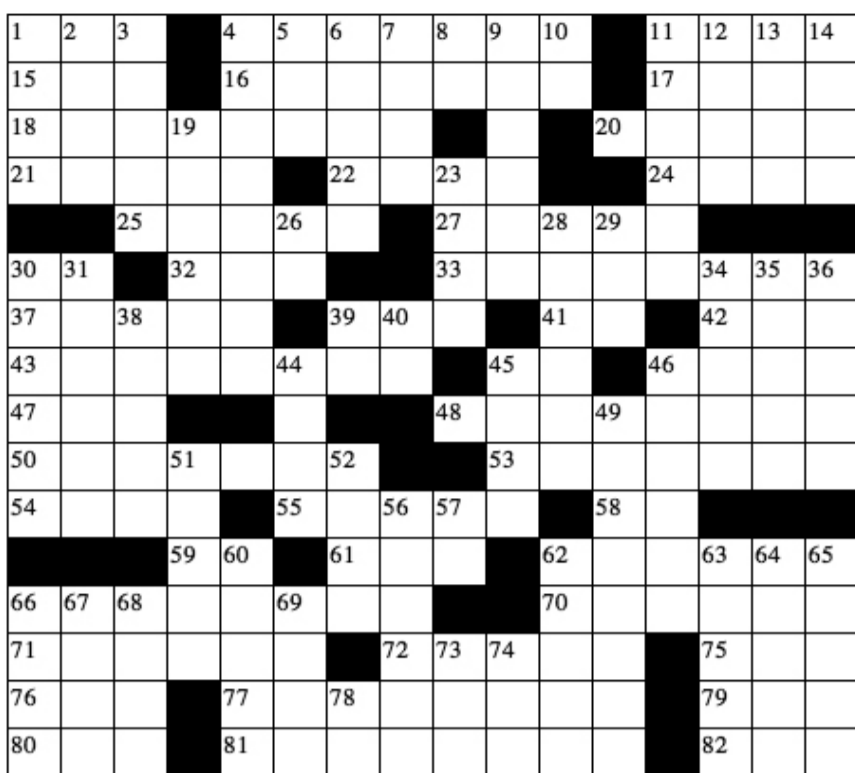
Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 23/1/2017				Departure Flights on Monday 23/1/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20	KAC	286	Dhaka	15:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	ABY	857	Dubai	15:45
KAC	102	London	00:55	ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55
KAC	742	Dammam	01:00	SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
FDK	803	Damascus	01:00	QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
RJA	642	Amman	01:05	JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	FDB	051	Dubai	16:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	KAC	788	Jeddah	16:30
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	RJA	640	Amman	16:55
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	KAC	118	New York	17:00
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	SWA	510	Riyadh	17:15
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	KAC	502	Beirut	18:45
BAW	157	London	06:40	QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KAC	620	Doha	19:50
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	KAC	166	Rome	19:55
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	KNE	381	Taif	19:55
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	KAC	694	Muscat	20:00
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	OMA	647	Muscat	20:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00	KAC	174	Munich	20:45
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	FDB	5053	Dubai	21:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
FDK	801	Damascus	11:45	JZR	534	Cairo	21:20
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	101	London	21:20
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10	ABY	126	Sharjah	21:25
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	UAE	856	Dubai	21:40
FEG	953	Asyut	12:35	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	21:45
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	KAC	613	Bahrain	22:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	FDB	056	Dubai	22:15
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	161	Geneva	22:25
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30	QTR	1071	Doha	22:45
KAC	564	Amman	13:40	KAC	787	Jeddah	22:45
KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55	KAC	501	Beirut	22:55
FEG	931	Alexandria	13:55	IRA	666	Esfahan	23:00
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00	GFA	214	Bahrain	23:15
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	23:45
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	JZR	776	Jeddah	23:50
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30	AXB	890	Mangalore	23:55
KAC	414	Bangkok	14:35	FDK	802	Damascus	
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	MEA	405	Beirut	
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45	MSC	402	Alexandria	
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55	FEG	934	Sohag	
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15	JZR	176	Dubai	
				MSR	611	Cairo	
				FDB	076	Dubai	
				UAE	872	Dubai	

CROSSWORD 1499



ACROSS

1. A nucleic acid consisting of large molecules shaped like a double helix.
4. A political theory advocating an authoritarian hierarchical government (as opposed to democracy or liberalism).
11. Open-heart surgery in which the rib cage is opened and a section of a blood vessel is grafted from the aorta to the coronary artery to bypass the blocked section of the coronary artery and improve the blood supply to the heart.
15. An implement used to propel or steer a boat.
16. Brownish Old World bunting often eaten as a delicacy.
17. A woman hired to suckle a child of someone else.
18. Incited, especially deliberately, to anger.
20. A French river that flows through the heart of Paris and then northward into the English Channel.
21. Declare or acknowledge to be true.
22. Type genus of the Ranidae.
24. Having wisdom that comes with age and experience.
25. An ancient city on the Nile in Egypt.
27. Naked freshwater or marine or parasitic protozoa that form temporary pseudopods for feeding and locomotion.
30. Being ten more than one hundred ninety-two.
32. Goddess of the dead and queen of the underworld.
33. The visual percept of a region.
37. Minute aquatic herbs floating on or below the water surface of still water consisting of a leaflike frond or plant body and single root.
41. A hard gray lustrous metallic element that is highly corrosion-resistant.
42. An ancient Hebrew unit of capacity equal to 10 baths or 10 ephahs.
43. Having odor or a characteristic odor.
47. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
48. Capable of being borne though unpleasant.
50. Overfilled or compacted or concentrated.
53. Small creeping evergreen shrubs.
54. A former copper coin of Pakistan.
55. A clique that seeks power usually through intrigue.
58. Being one hundred more than three hundred.
59. 1/10 gram.
61. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
66. Not necessary.
70. In truth (often tends to intensify).
71. The 3 goddesses of fate or destiny.
72. Place in a line or arrange so as to be parallel.
75. A master's degree in business.
76. An early form of modern jazz (originating around 1940).
77. Succulent carpet-forming plant having small brilliant reddish-pink flowers.
79. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
80. A Turkish unit of weight equal to about 2.75 pounds.
81. Tropical trees having one-seeded fruit.
82. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. Amino acid that is formed in the liver and converted into dopamine in the brain.
2. An aromatic ointment used in antiquity.
3. Any property detected by the olfactory system.
4. Clothing worn on a person's feet.
5. (Judaism) Sacred chest where the ancient Hebrews kept the two tablets containing the Ten Commandments.
6. Of a stern or strict bearing or demeanor.
7. The closing section of a musical composition.
8. Being nine more than forty.
9. A mountain peak in the Andes in Bolivia (21,391 feet high).
10. A hard brittle gray polyvalent metallic element that resembles iron but is not magnetic.
11. Conqueror of Gaul and master of Italy (100-44 BC).
12. Type genus of the Amiidae.
13. A vigorous bowl.
14. Clarified butter used in Indian cookery.
19. The Sustainer.
23. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
26. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
28. Take or catch as if in a snare or trap.
29. A long thin fluffy scarf of feathers or fur.
31. Consisting of or made of cedar.
34. Jordan's port.
35. Small Peruvian evergreen with broad rounded head and slender pendant branches with attractive clusters of greenish flowers followed by clusters of rose-pink fruits.
36. Type genus of the Ardeidae.
38. A person of subnormal intelligence.
39. Of or related to the genital and urinary organs or their functions.
40. A soft silver-white ductile metallic element (liquid at normal temperatures).
44. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
45. An intuitive awareness.
46. Capital and largest city of Iraq.
49. The property of being extremely abundant.
51. Any of many long-legged birds that wade in water in search of food.
52. Small European freshwater fish with a slender bluish-green body.
56. Wish harm upon.
57. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
60. Wheelwork consisting of a connected set of rotating gears by which force is transmitted or motion or torque is changed.
62. To some (great or small) extent.
63. A subsidiary proposition that is assumed to be true in order to prove another proposition.
64. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
65. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
67. A sheltered and secluded place.
68. Monotypic genus of palms of Australasia.
69. Relatively deep or strong.
73. A boy or man.
74. Being one more than two.
78. An uproarious party.

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

This is the day you have decided to allocate some time to tend to personal business. You get out the trusty notepad and take notes on whatever you may need to review, locate or report in order to keep your records, pay bills or write letters. You absorb needed information, and may not look up until you have your project completed. Take the afternoon to enjoy some time for outside sports or other exercise, or perhaps a movie with a friend. The stores are still open this afternoon as you stop by a garden shop and discover the vegetables you can plant for a winter garden. It is interesting that what this time of year has to offer. You may be pleased with the progress you have made this day so you may consider doodling with some self-created poetry or music.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Although you remain in a quiet mood most of the morning, you may jump to the call of any needy voice. This may involve an encouraging word to a family member or a smile for a little child. You always seem able to create a harmony. Communication with those living some distance from you could have you planning entertainment or greeting committees. There could be visiting dignitaries. This is the time to plan your next vacation, possibly a weekend ski trip. If you are not going on a trip soon you will be visiting with someone who is widely traveled. You find yourself busy and active this evening but there is a window of opportunity for a healing to take place, if needed. Allow art to transform your thoughts this evening.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

There is great confidence with your professional life. You are quite busy now and you may not be paying attention to your finances. Watch the mail this week and pay attention to the bank statement when it comes; make sure all your areas are covered. You could see some monetary rewards from teaching your hobby if you wish. Your self-image can improve through teaching because there are many people that would like to be taught what you know about your hobby. Just knowing you can succeed in making a home project work will give you quite a lot of security and peace of mind. You have the opportunity to be a tremendous help to a friend this evening, though you may not realize it immediately. Take the time to really listen to this needy individual.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You can sometimes be restless. You always seem to be in search of something new. Today is no exception. You will be feeling this restlessness from time to time rather intensely. You will also be moving toward a better balance in your life as you pay attention to the little changes that might be needed to create that balance. When this restless time occurs, you must realize it is a time to take a trip back through the last few days to see what happened to create the imbalance. Perhaps less sleep, worries, anticipation, etc. It is also time to look forward. This may mean a new project, a new sales approach or updating your surroundings in some way. Always involve yourself in at least two interests each day, the creative and the business. Blessings are counted.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

How you feel about yourself is expressed in the way you communicate with others. Today you may try to see if you can keep a steady-as-she-goes type of pace. This is a better time to reflect on your own life and perhaps those close to you. If you are home today, you may want to snuggle in a warm room and read a good book. If you are working, this day will be productive, particularly if you can concentrate on writing or computer-related work, etc. Compliment the people in your life; either teach your lessons or support you in some way. A grateful attitude emits respectfulness and this behavior will take you into many positive places. Your mood is in a healing place today, no matter where you are located. Relax to a different sort of music tonight.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may have been too busy this week to communicate with family members or confer with the one who matters most in your life. Whatever kept you busy is important but now it is time to dismiss last week and enjoy your family. It is good for them to enjoy you. Laughter lightens the heart and brings hope and a healthy attitude. This is the more important of your communication developments this year and has much to teach you. Tonight is a good time to keep your appointment with a loved one. Open up and let this person in on the good things you want to accomplish this year. The recent research you do in the professional realm may be taking a bit more time than usual but it won't stop you from setting aside time to enjoy these people you love.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A lucky day! The secret to your financial security is in your attitude and today your attitude and thinking about money is positive. It is the little touches that matter as you go forth to execute your plans. Either you are a newly hired or you have hired some people that have high expectations because you are motivated! It is possible your profession is in the restaurant business. You are determined to give a secret family recipe away every year at this time. Most likely the business you gain at this time will be phenomenal. Your granny had lots of recipes; you also have your inventions. Money represents power, freedom, prestige and safety. Money in itself is not everything we make it out to be. It is, however, an instrument in life-take care of it.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

You may find it better to write down your thoughts today instead of expressing them verbally. Frustration could be easy to experience if you are trying to change an old habit, or the thinking of another person. Easy does it; just express these thoughts and know that the truth will eventually take hold. Your easygoing manner will be more encouraging than a pushy one. Wisely giving yourself time to think through tough situations, you can become quite convincing in creating a change for the positive. This is a good money day; in fact, beginning now through next week, there will be opportunities to double your investments! Perhaps you will decide to go to Las Vegas, or you will employ a good financial advisor. Use your common sense to guide you.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 19)

You are interested in everything and everyone with very few prejudices to interfere. People pay attention when you make strong statements. You will find that you must gather facts that will back you up on some issue in the workplace. You are successful in your search to convince, change, put an end to or add to any other big piece of information needing attention now. If you have not noticed, progress comes from outside forces this month. Being in control is an important factor here and learning to share the control will create progress. Before the day is over there will be compliments and encouragement coming your way. This boost gives you lots of energy in making decisions and accomplishing your goals. The evening is fun.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Intuitive insights come and go but today's forecast is almost too much to resist! Keep track of your intuitive visions for at least a month, perhaps a longer time with a notebook. You may enjoy research into just what makes you tick and what your accomplishments are in the intuitive field. Communicating with others of your own sex is an enjoyable way to learn more about yourself. You may come to the realization that you are happy with just who you are and what you have accomplished. Other people enjoy being with you. This will be a full day of work, but with determination, you will complete your tasks and enjoy the fun parts of the day as the day unfolds. This evening, a loved one gives you encouragement for whatever you need.



Aquarius (January 20-February 18)

Phone call last night may have been from friends wanting your attention. You show up at a fun type of surprise reunion and spend the rest of this day in total amazement. Whether you are being entertained or whether you are being reunited with one or two persons that you knew some time ago... This is a weird but gratifying day. Later today you make it a point to feed animals and put water around where needed in case it turns into a really cold evening. A garden shop or nursery may have just the plants you want for a big color exhibit at your house next spring-at least you can plan. You are imaginative and people will come from all around when it is time to view your shower of flowers. A lucky streak this evening may be a fluke... Happy birthday!



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your communication abilities may depend upon your concentration and your concentration will improve as the day advances. Others may interrupt you, or make it difficult for you to express yourself. Your ideas will be supported however, and the more patient you can be, the more interest you will gain to your benefit. Take notes to stay focused. Emotions are sentimental and you may enjoy listening to others express their ideas or experiences. You may feel particularly empathetic with a friend or loved one. Someone may compliment you and enjoy your sense of humor. This evening is a great time to be with others. There is an opportunity to be more understanding about the plight of others and perhaps you will lend a helping hand.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Fruit

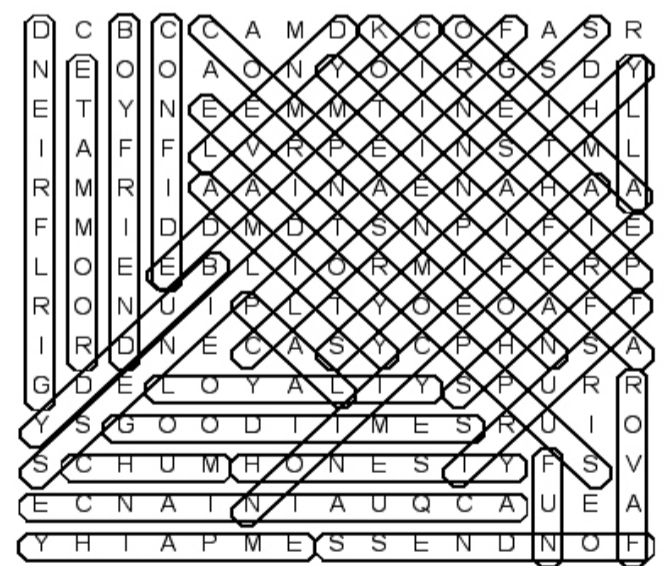
Find and circle all of the fruit that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell an additional fruit.



- | | | |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| APPLES | DATE | ORANGE |
| APRICOT | FIG | PAPAYA |
| AVOCADO | GRAPEFRUIT | PEACH |
| BANANA | GRAPES | PEAR |
| BLACKBERRY | KIWIFRUIT | PERSIMMON |
| BLUEBERRY | KUMQUAT | PINEAPPLE |
| CANTALOUPE | LEMON | PLUM |
| CHERRIES | LIME | POMEGRANATE |
| CHOKECHERRY | LYCHEE | RASPBERRY |
| COCONUT | MANGO | RHUBARB |
| CRABAPPLE | MULBERRY | STRAWBERRY |
| CRANBERRY | NECTARINE | WATERMELON |

Yesterday's Solution

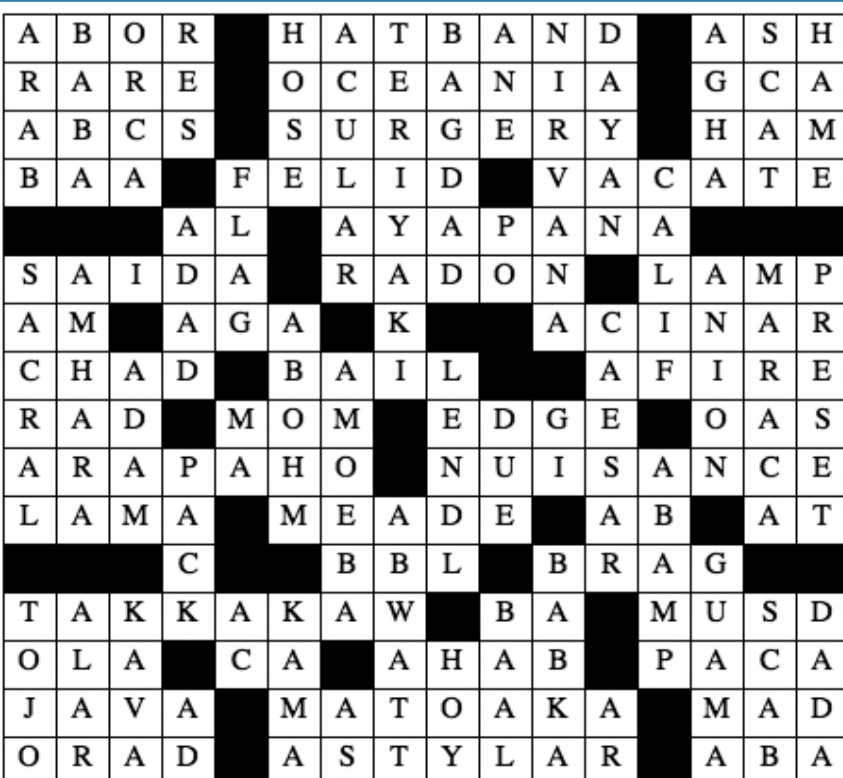
Friendship



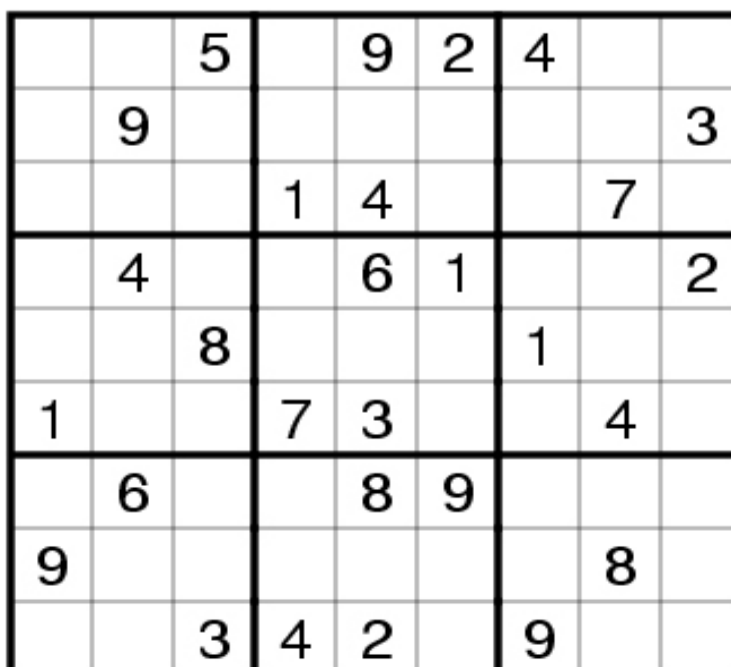
- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|------------|
| ACQUAINTANCE | COMPANION | HONESTY |
| AFFECTION | COMRADE | KINSHIP |
| AFFINITY | CONFIDE | LEND |
| ALLY | EMPATHY | LOYALTY |
| AMIGO | FAVOR | PAL |
| AMITY | FONDNESS | ROOMMATE |
| BOYFRIEND | FRIENDLINESS | SHARE |
| BUDDY | FUN | SUPPORTIVE |
| CHUM | GIRLFRIEND | SYMPATHY |
| CLOSENESS | GOOD TIMES | TRUST |

The hidden message is: CAMARADERIE

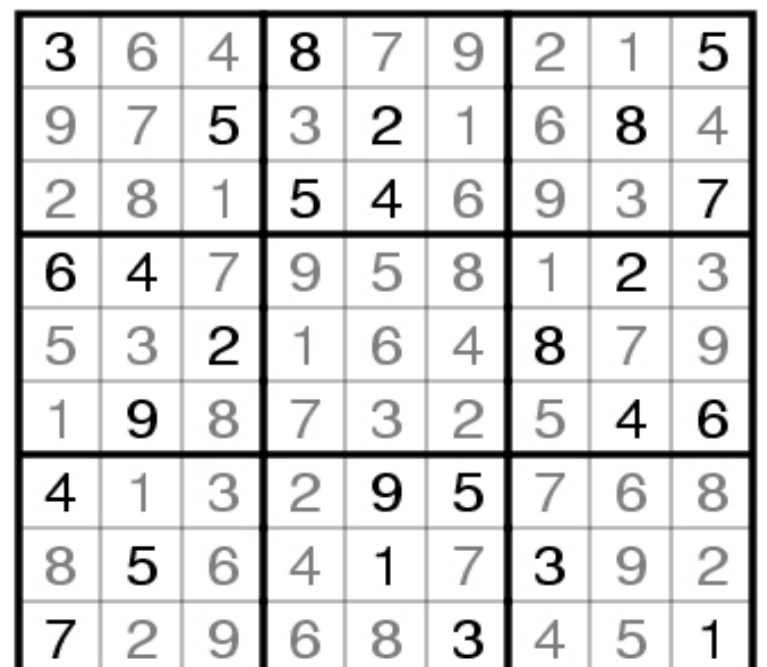
Yesterday's Solution



Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





Stills from the play 'Ningalenne Communistakki'.

Theatre of the 1950s revisited

KALPAK reproduces 65-year-old play

By Sajeev K Peter

KALPAK Kuwait, a well-known theatre troupe of the expat community, staged 'Ningalenne Communistakki' in Kuwait, a blockbuster Malayalam drama of the 1950s that transformed Kerala's social arena. By staging the three-and-half-hour play three times on a single day in Kuwait, KALPAK has not only created a milestone for the troupe, but took many theatre-lovers for a ride down memory lane.

"It is easier said than done. 'Ningalenne Communistakki' (You Made Me A Communist), was probably the most challenging theatrical initiative we have ever undertaken over the last two decades of our theatre life in Kuwait," said Babu Chakola, the director and the moving force behind the theatre group. KALPAK has produced scores of plays including dramas based on the Bible and the Mahabharata in addition to social plays.

"It was like the famous saying, 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' The play itself presented enormous challenges for us," Chakola said elaborating the risks involved in producing the drama which was staged more than 5,000 times across India in 1950s.

The Malayalam play, written and directed by late theatre thespian Thoppil Bhasi, transformed the state's political and social domains with its iconic subject and presentation. "No mention of Malayalam theatre can be complete without referring to late Thoppil Bhasi and his brainchild Kerala People's Arts Club (KPAC). The history of KPAC is a part of the socio-political and cultural history of Kerala," said Chakola.

'Ningalenne Communistakki' was the second

and most popular stage play of KPAC that propelled the troupe into the forefront of Kerala cultural scene and played a historical role in popularizing the communist movement in the state during 1950s eventually leading to the establishment of the first democratically elected communist ministry in the world in 1957 in Kerala under E M S Namboodiripad.

"Primarily, we had to meet the expectations of a drama that has created history in India. Secondly, we had to recreate an era of 1950s, its social and political milieu. So in every aspect of the play, from the script and characterization to dialogue and dialect, stage setting and costume, we had to take utmost care to do a semblance of justice to a play of that stature," he explained.

Challenges

"Interestingly, many of my friends including fellow theatre people warned me about the possible risks and challenges involved in producing it. But we decided to pick up the gauntlet, come what may," Chakola said.

Chakola, the well-known stage designer Sujathaan Master and Kumar Trithala visited late Thoppil Bhasi's residence in Kerala and received the script from his wife Ammini Amma. Daunting at first, KALPAK went ahead with the project in right earnest. The rehearsals started off with a 4-month production schedule. KALPAK faced its greatest test when the Indian embassy cancelled the booking of the auditorium just two days prior to the staging. Regaining composure from the shock, Chakola recouped and looked frenetically for an alternative venue. "We managed to find a venue at Boys' Scouts' Auditorium in Hawally at



last and staged the play within seven days of its original schedule," he said.

Well-received by the theatre enthusiasts in Kuwait, the play managed to successfully recapture the essence of the fifties. Many theatre-buffs could even feel that they could revisit the vibrant theatre experience of the 1950s. With very convincing performances, the stellar actors of KALPAK recreated those characters of the past such as Pappu, Paramu Pillai and Paramu Pillai who are forever etched in the memories of theatre lovers

in Kerala. The cast includes an array of actors like Babu Chakola, Kumar Trithala, John Kozhenchery, Pradeep Vengola, Shajahan Kodungalloor, Aji Paravoor, Chandran Puthur, Dennis Tharakan, Sasi Kozhenjery, Bimalkumar, Shashankan, K R Rajan, Manu Mathew, Deena Deennis Tharakan, Sheeja Davis Tharakan, Kumari Alvia Shiju, Master Ivin Shiju and Pranav Shivakumar.

The directorial brilliance of Chakola shone through the play. Well-known stage designer Sujathaan Master expertly recreated the backdrops



Theatre director Babu Chakola

for the drama transporting the audience back to the Kerala of the fifties. While Chirackal Raju did the lighting for the play, Varghese Paul provided the sound and Siby arranged the lights. Others who worked off stage included Sasi Kozhenchery (Assistant direction), Manoj Mavelikkara (background music), Idikkula Mathew (program convener), Reji Mathew (PRO) Ajayan (technical support), Sajeeesh Vayanad (stage setting), Anil Sopanam (makeup).

As a committed theatre activist and the winner of Kalashri award instituted by Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi, Chakola is already in the workshop of his new drama. "Theatre is inextricably linked with human life and my life is linked with theatre," Chakola quipped.

Sundance Film Review

Before I Fall

To a film critic, reviewing YA movies can feel like being forced to relive the horrors of high school over and over again. But to a teenager, that doesn't sound like such a bad thing, especially when the characters are pretty and potentially more fabulous than you are. That's basically the appeal of "Before I Fall," by Russo-Young's impressively stylish adaptation of the popular Lauren Oliver novel, in which the most beautiful girl in school dies on one of the best days of her life, only to be reborn at the beginning of it, blessed/cursed to repeat Feb 12 until she gets it right.

Like "Groundhog Day" for audiences too young to get the reference, "Before I Fall" suggests that the decisions we make really matter, though it's not at all clear about why Sam Kingston ("Vampire Academy" star Zoey Deutch) is caught in an infinite loop, or what she needs to do to break it. While the story easily could have fallen into a broken-record rut, "Nobody Walks" director Russo-Young finds ways of making the day in question feel fresh each time Sam lives it, while giving the overall presentation a look, feel, and voice that's distinct from the vast swatch of YA movies. Shot in elegant widescreen and set to a soundtrack of empowerment ballads, "Before I Fall" forgoes the overlit Disney

night to boyfriend Rob (Kian Lawley). Only, instead of getting lucky-if the word really applies to being deflowered by a drunken Neanderthal-Sam and her friends die in a grisly car accident, and presto, she's back in bed, at the beginning of the same day.

'Cupid Day'

It's Feb 12, "Cupid Day" at school: Students buy roses to send to one another, resulting in a giant popularity contest that leaves Sam and Lindsay glowing, and at least one of their classmates smoldering with resentment. "I'm in heteronormative hell," groans the lesbian who sits to Sam's right (they're studying Sisyphus in literature class, but they might as well be learning the meaning of *deja vu* in French). But one of the roses Sam receives is special, bearing a note that suggests that the superficial, self-centered persona she puts on for her friends isn't the real her; whoever sent it knows there's a deeper, more sympathetic side to Sam.

That's the first clue in an elaborate supernatural mystery-one with no rules and little in the way of logic, but a compelling enough momentum that most audiences won't mind-that leads to what Sam must do to move on. But what kind of person is Sam

really? If she were a good student, it probably wouldn't take her nearly so long to figure out how to break the cycle. And if she truly were considerate, she wouldn't be in this predicament in the first place. With her chestnut hair and perfect porcelain-doll features, Sam suggests what uptight "Desperate Housewives" neighbor Bree Van De Kamp must have been like in high school, only here, she's been given the chance to do something significant-and an infinite number of tries to figure out what that should be. Sam tries it every which way: One day, she's nice to everyone around her, the next, she alienates all her family and friends. She even decides to stay home from the party, succeeding in sparing her own life, but not that of another important character.

Positive change

Sam might not have seemed like a terribly interesting or deep character when we meet her, but screenwriter Maria Maggenti ensures that audiences gradually come to appreciate both the layers to her personality and the hidden connections that link Sam and those around her as the film unfolds. Meanwhile, Russo-Young's job is to keep Feb. 12 from getting over-familiar, even as her egocentric protagonist's mounting ennui finally compels her to stop focusing on herself and look for a solution that can genuinely change things. Even once the credits roll, "Before I Fall" remains a bit confusing on this point: Is Sam trying to save her own life, or is she trying to make a positive change that will leave the world better once she's gone?

And what happens to all those days she lived incorrectly? Are they like failed lives in a video game, or do they continue on to create parallel experiences? Such questions distract from novelist Oliver's point, which has more to do with school bullying and the steps we must all do to stop it. Her message seems to be that there are no innocent bystanders when it comes to causing others pain, and if the universe has thrown Sam into this peculiar loop-the-loop, it's because it wants to teach her that lesson. — Reuters



Channel look, embracing a cooler, steely-blue aesthetic that's more in line with such bygone cult faves as "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and "Veronica Mars"-plus, it unfolds in that post-Judy Blume space where it's OK to broach such touchy issues as teen suicide and contraception.

Sam and her friends are "b**ches" and they're not afraid to say so-they use the term affectionately between themselves, and they're identified as such by the various wallflowers they harass at school. As leader of their mean-girl pack, Lindsay (Halston Sage) is the worst of them, but Sam's no angel either: She's rude to her sister, mean to her mother, dismissive of her secret admirer, and downright cruel to Juliet (Elena Kampouris) the haggard social outcast that she and her friends ridicule on a daily basis.

Ninety percent of the people on this earth would probably kill to spend a day in Sam's shoes, but it's kind of a chore to sit through the first time, watching her and the vapid girls she hangs out with plan how great it's going to be for Sam to lose her virginity that

It's unusual, at the Sundance Film Festival, to see a drama about a subject like the Iraq War. The economics of scale required to stage an authentic combat scene don't tend to mesh with indie-film budgets-and besides, there are enough towering war films in our time that the bar for them has been set extraordinarily high. So say this much for "The Yellow Birds": When it plunks the audience down into a crumbling urban war zone, where every dirt road and alleyway could be a path to oblivion, the movie, if nothing else, creates a physically convincing atmosphere of instability and tension. The movie opens with US soldiers walking across a dark field, past palm trees (one of which is on fire), in a grimly patterned death march that evokes-ironically-the final moments of "Full Metal Jacket." And, indeed, Stanley Kubrick's great Vietnam film seems to have been a key model for Alexandre Moors, the director of "The Yellow Birds," at least when it comes to imagining the random, bullet-strafing, enemy-without-a-face logistics of contemporary combat.

Moors, who hails from France but has lived in the US since 1998, is known for "Blue Caprice" (2013), his attempt to dramatize the genesis of the 2002 Beltway sniper attacks. In "The Yellow Birds," he stages the Iraq scenes with scale and verve and confidence, though with nothing that approaches the sustained anxiety and suspense audiences now want and expect from a war movie. (It may sound a bit unseemly to observe that movies like "Hacksaw Ridge" or "The Hurt Locker" render the horrors of war unbearably exciting, but that's part of what they do.) "The Yellow Birds" follows a platoon of US Army soldiers who wind up on rooftops, engaging in shootouts with figures they can hardly see, or firing up at giant battered buildings, or being ambushed by an IED at the rare moment they feel invincible.

Self-importance

"The Yellow Birds," however, is not just a combat film. It's a somber, guilt-ridden meditation on the price of war, one that examines the intertwined fates of two soldiers: Brandon Bartle (Alden Ehrenreich), 20 years old, lost in the murk of what happened over there, and Daniel Murphy (Tye Sheridan), the 18-year-old recruit he took under his wing. The film keeps acting like it has something big to tell us; it plods and broods with self-importance. Yet in almost every crucial way, "The Yellow Birds" is a flat and listless piece of moviemaking, a monotonous indie dirge that will end up fighting to win even a tiny audience.

The closest thing the film has to a commercial draw is Alden Ehrenreich, who is of course a hot property now that he's going to be playing the young Han Solo. Yet in "The Yellow Birds," where it's impos-

The Yellow Birds



sible not to scan his presence to see if he has a bit of the cocky surliness of the young Harrison Ford, he comes off more like Montgomery Clift: a delicate '50s brooder, elegantly handsome and a touch effete, his fine sculpted features resolved into a scowl of concern that almost never leaves his face. He's supposed to be an aimless drifter from Virginia who falls into enlistment because he's got no other plans; when he's fooling around with his girlfriend in the back of a car, and she asks him (playfully) to go college with her, he acts like it's an absurd request. But the truth is that Ehrenreich comes off just like a college boy. He's hard to buy as a soldier, because he doesn't seem tough enough; we never glimpse his inner badass.

Endless scenes

During the war, Brandon looks out for Murphy (played by Tye Sheridan, from Jeff Nichols' "Mud," as a sweet dim kid in way over his head), but he returns along, because Murphy has gone missing. What happened to him? That mystery is the heart of the movie, and Moors, as a director, drags it out. The script is credited to David Lowery and R.F.J. Porto, but the movie has a patchwork structure-it seems to have been pieced together in the editing room-and, what's worse, most of the scenes are rudderless, because they're barely burdened with dialogue. The pain the film is supposed to be about is portrayed as being "beyond words."

This means that we get endless scenes

of Brandon lying around in bed, skulking over to the liquor store, or warring with his mother (a convincingly emotionally bedaggléd Toni Collette). He's got his Big Secret about what happened over there, and he's going to take forever to tell it, even as he's stalked by a dour CID officer (Jason Patric) and by Murphy's mother, Maureen, played by Jennifer Aniston, who conveys a truth-at-all-costs desperation, though she's a shade too punchy and telegraphed about it. The one other main character is the two soldiers' officer, Sergeant Sterling, who Jack Huston portrays as a cliché Texas bad-boy varmint, though the movie snaps to life whenever he's on screen.

So what happened over there? I won't reveal it, but we're led to suspect that Murphy is no longer alive, and when the revelation of his fate finally arrives, you may find yourself seriously questioning the basic moral decision made by a key character. It seems not just wrong but, frankly, unbelievable-a contrived way for the film to convert its tragedy into a "metaphor." Most of the powerful war movies of our time were made by directors, from Steven Spielberg to Kathryn Bigelow and Mel Gibson, who have not known combat themselves. But they make you feel like they know it in their bones. In "The Yellow Birds," Alexandre Moors gets through the battle scenes, but when it comes to the true stakes of war and what it is that makes soldiers tick, he can barely fake it. — Reuters



Actor Jeremy Renner, from left, Director Taylor Sheridan, actress Elizabeth Olsen and actress Kelsey Asbille pose for a portrait to promote the film, "Wind River", at the Music Lodge during the Sundance Film Festival on Saturday in Park City, Utah. — AP

Wind River

Not every great screenwriter has what it takes to step behind the camera and direct a movie (most of them, in fact, probably don't have it). Yet every once in a while, a gifted screenwriter comes along who seems destined to take that leap. There was a lot of anticipation at Sundance before the premiere showing of "Wind River," the first movie directed by Taylor Sheridan, who wrote the brilliant screenplays for "Hell or High Water" (2016) and "Sicario" (2015). I suspect that's because Sheridan thinks like a director even in his scripts, which don't just have crackling dialogue—they have pace, structure, dimension. (That, of course, is what all screenplays are supposed to have, but how many of them do?) Sheridan also possesses a fully scaled vision of our society, and of what's gone wrong in it. He's drawn to men of violence on both sides of the law, and to the intricacies of crime, but what he's really drawn to is depicting those things as an expression of our inner hunger. He's a bristling entertainer with the soul of a noir poet.

"Wind River," a murder mystery set on a Native American reservation that's nestled in the wintry desolation of Wyoming, continues those obsessions. If you think that in the last few decades, the humanity has been leaking out of Hollywood filmmaking—some would say that it's been hemorrhaging; others would say "Who cares?"—then it's possible that no genre incarnates that decline quite like the thriller. Just say the word—thriller—and you think: Action! Guns, fights, heists, car chases. But in "Sicario" and, especially, "Hell or High Water," Sheridan caught something debased and valiant, desperate and mournfully compelling in the sight of recognizable people caught up in the larger-than-life world of crime. In "Wind River," he pushes that further, so that the scraggly human side of the drama is now far more potent and tangible than the underworld drive.

Pest control

The movie opens in the middle of the night, with a Native American woman running barefoot, like a wounded animal, across the snowy tundra. A day or two later, her body is discovered by Cory Lambert (Jeremy Renner), a wildlife officer whose job is to hunt and kill predators, like coyotes and wolves, that prey on local farm animals. It's like the frontier version of pest control, but in his one-clean-shot way Cory is a cowboy. On this particular trek into the blizzard slopes, he's hunting down a family of mountain lions, but their tracks lead him to the frozen-solid corpse of Natalie (Kelsey Asbille), an 18-year-old Native American who was once friends with his daughter. An autopsy reveals that she was raped, and that she died because her winded lungs burst from inhaling the sub-zero air. She was that desperate to get away from someone.

Sheridan, from the opening shots, is in full command as a director, though not because he's built the movie around another of his elegantly barbed and perfectly centered screenplays. "Wind River," if anything, tells a looser, scragglier, more organi-

cally simple story than "Hell or High Water" or "Sicario." Sheridan wants us to know these people, this terrain, to feel the bite of the cold and the lonely sting of their lives. He immerses us in a place ruled by "snow and silence," and uses the revelation of that atmosphere as the ultimate explanation of the crimes he's unraveling.

In "Wind River" (the title comes from the name of the reservation), I think Sheridan succeeds in making the drama he set out to make. Every shot is in place (though many of them are handheld), every bit of dialogue is delivered with the right sly spirit (though some of it is mumbled), and Jeremy Renner plays the taciturn hero with a strong-and-silent yet vulnerable elan. Working on his own, Sheridan, more than before, has fashioned a true neo-1970s movie, a thriller that's willing to lope and dawdle to shed light upon the world it shows you. "Wind River" adds up, and skillfully, but in the end it's not all that exciting. It's a vision of the new American despair—not an inner-city movie, but an inner-wilderness movie—and it could have used another twist or two.

Lead investigator

When Natalie's death starts to look like a homicide, the FBI is called in, in the person of Jane Banner (Elizabeth Olsen), a no-nonsense agent from Las Vegas. She's the movie's lead investigator, but she calls on Cory to act as her guide through tiny-town Wyoming and the slightly gnarly people who inhabit it. The whole place is blanketed in loss and dashed expectations, and that extends to Cory, who's divorced, with a son, and who lost his teenage daughter three years ago.

Her death haunts him, and the movie as well; when we learn how it happened, it becomes a precursor to the solving of the crime. Cory and Jane start off as oil and water, but they're forced to protect each other, as when they raid a singularly scuzzy meth den where Natalie's brother has been holed up. Why is he there? He says there's nothing else to do.

Sheridan's filmmaking is spiky and alive, but perhaps to make that possible, he wrote a script that's less layered than the ones that brought him to this moment. There aren't too many links to the mystery; the movie leads you from point A to point B to point C, and then boom! — you know what happened. There's a crazy Mexican standoff that features 10 characters standing in the snow pointing guns at each other, and frankly, I found it hard to sort out who was getting paranoid about whom. There's a major flashback that reveals the crime, and it's intensely violent and a little ugly. There is also a final act of vengeance that takes place on a snowy mountaintop—and it seems a bit reductive, as if "Jeremiah Johnson" had merged with "Walking Tall."

"Wind River" isn't, in the end, as enthralling a movie as "Hell or High Water" or "Sicario" (and it probably won't come close to matching either one of them commercially), yet it's skillful and compelling enough to prove that Taylor Sheridan, as a director, has the goods. Now he needs to figure out what to do with them. — Reuters

Sundance Film Review

Mudbound



Director Dee Rees, from left, actors Garrett Hedlund, Rob Morgan, Mary J. Blige, Carey Mulligan, center, and Jason Mitchell, bottom pose for a portrait to promote the film, "Mudbound", at the Music Lodge during the Sundance Film Festival on Saturday in Park City, Utah. — AP

Some folks look out on the world, and all they see are the differences between people, the things that set us apart. "Mudbound" is a hymn to what we all share—the human struggle, the mutual desire to succeed and create a better world for our children—and it is a damning indictment of those who stand in the way of such progress. Set deep in the Mississippi Delta, it's the epic story of two families, one white, the other black, who've each sown hope among fields too sodden to be much use—and though the sheer scope of the material overwhelms "Pariah" director Dee Rees at times, she finds shoots of optimism among the mire that couldn't be more welcome at a moment when the country seems more divided than ever.

Adapted by Rees and co-writer Virgil Williams from Hillary Jordan's remarkable debut novel, "Mudbound" captures more than the usual amount of detail from its source material, including much of the language itself. Rees preserves Jordan's strategy of spreading the narration between six different characters, three from each family. It's a powerful equalizing device that puts everyone on roughly the same level, despite the fact that the Jacksons are not only tenant farmers on the McAllans' land, but African-American to boot, locking them into a lower social position in 1940s Mississippi.

Enforce additional restrictions

"Mudbound" takes place at a particular time in American history, when poor white men felt their standing threatened by their hard-working black neighbors, when laws were passed to keep blacks down—or mudbound, if you will—and the Ku Klux Klan arose to enforce additional restrictions that never found their way into the books. So many of the contemporary stories set during that more shameful chapter of America's past invent white role models who seem downright progressive by the standards of the day, and enlightened even by ours (a la Atticus Finch). But Jordan doesn't let her characters off so easily.

No, the white characters in "Mudbound" are products of their time, and there's an honesty to that which sometimes supersedes choices that might otherwise have been more satisfying or dramatic—much as the casting favors actors whose weathered faces and strained expressions look as if they might have been lifted from Richard Avedon's "In the American West" series. And yet, there's

an earthy beauty to Carey Mulligan's Laura McAllan, the most relatable character in the ensemble, despite the fact Laura herself accepts her domestic servitude with the same unquestioning devotion as the local sharecroppers do their work arrangements. Whereas everyone else is clawing their way up, Laura was raised with the comforts of the city, but marries Henry (Jason Clarke) on faith and follows her husband to a run-down house without electricity or running water, where baths are a once-a-week luxury. There's a glimmer of potential passion between Laura and Henry's flirtatious younger brother, Jamie (Garrett Hedlund), who builds his under-loved sister-in-law a shower in a caring gesture that never would have occurred to her husband, but that possibility is choked as surely a seed fallen among weeds. Jamie is by far the most charismatic of the McAllan clan, and the movie suffers when he ships off to war—though it

omous racism comes through loud and clear all the same), but avoids the Terrence Malick technique of pairing that narration with footage that might give the film its texture—which is not to say that such shots aren't there. As Tamar-kali's Dolby-mixed score swells all around, cinematographer Rachel Morrison supplies widescreen views of dramatic Mississippi sunsets, rain-drenched fields, and makeshift wooden houses that look ready to collapse in on themselves. But editor Mako Kamitsuna has so much material to wrestle in the film's first hour that the priority must remain on the characters—plus, Rees is right not to romanticize the story's setting or circumstances. Farm life is hard, and not terribly compelling to depict, which makes it a challenge to dramatize the two families' day-to-day trials. That might explain one of Rees' more interesting structural choices, when she cross-cuts between Ronsel dismount-

idea of what its main characters want from their struggle—apart from the chance to succeed and put down roots in soil they can call their own. Somehow, the movie seems to be missing a romance, or even a more developed sense of the impossibility of Jamie and Ronsel's friendship, forged by a mutual respect among veterans but not allowed in the still-segregated American South.

Wartime experience

When Jamie offers Ronsel a lift from town one afternoon, Ronsel climbs into the back of the pickup truck, and later, when Jamie insists that he ride up front, Ronsel must duck anytime a car passes. Jamie may treat Ronsel like an equal, but you can hear vestiges of his father's racism in the way he asks Ronsel about his wartime conquests—he wants to know whether Ronsel ever slept with a white woman and you can sense the fear in the deferential way that the Jacksons tread lightly whenever white men are present, making apologies even when they're in the right.

Once awards season rolls around, it will be somebody's job to identify which are the lead performances and which are supporting, but in the meantime, "Mudbound" presents a canvas on which all six of its narrators loom large. The male actors are strong, especially Mitchell and Hedlund, who wrestle the traumas of their wartime experience with a fresh set of battles on the home front, but it's the two women who leave the strongest impression.

Blige so disappears into her role that audiences might never suspect they're watching a pop star, were it not for the stylish pair of rimless sunglasses she wears when asked to help bury the man who all but murdered her son. Otherwise, she's thoroughly convincing as a concerned mother, one who wants Ronsel to leave town and create his own opportunities, knowing full well it will make things more difficult for her and Hap.

Mulligan shares Florence's instinct for putting others' good before her own, but takes a stand when Henry tries to throw out her piano, refusing to sacrifice the only shred of civilization they have left in Mississippi. As such scenes make clear, "Mudbound" is a story about fighters, whether defending the country from Hitler or simply trying to put food and milk on the table. That's something anyone can relate to, though Rees' achievement comes in looking past what separates her characters and celebrating what they have in common. — Reuters



This image released by the Sundance Institute shows Garrett Hedlund, left, and Jason Mitchell in a scene from "Mudbound," by Dee Rees.

gives the family's venomous grandfather (Jonathan Banks) a chance to not-so-subtly establish himself as the ensemble's resident bigot. Living a short ways down the road, the Jackson family also sends one of its sons off to war, as Ronsel

(Jason Mitchell) joins the all-black 761st Tank Battalion, leaving long-suffering Hap (Rob Morgan) and his wife Florence (Mary J. Blige) to tend the cotton crop in his absence. On the front lines, Ronsel feels as if the color of his skin isn't a factor for the first time, even sparking a romance with a nice white German lady that will come back to haunt him later.

Compelling to depict

Rees allows each of these characters to voice their innermost thoughts (all but Pappy, that is, though his ven-

ing from his tank in Europe and Hap falling off a ladder back in Mississippi, causing a gory injury that forces him to borrow a donkey, erasing any hope the Jacksons may have had of rising above their debts that season. Considering how important agriculture is to both families' fates, however, "Mudbound" conspicuously lacks the hardy fight against the elements so brilliantly captured in films such as "The River" and "Places in the Heart," where determined characters take a stand to save their crop.

The latter example actually delivers a more traditional dramatic treatment of many of "Mudbound's" themes, right down to the stomach-churning appearance of a lynch mob in Klan robes at the end. Jordan's novel provides a rich tapestry of events, but it doesn't provide the clear-cut

Step

Documentaries aren't often discussed in terms of their ability to entertain, but "Step" might be the most infectiously entertaining doc since Chris Rock's "Good Hair." This ebullient chronicle of a Baltimore girls' step team's senior year matches a fascinating, worthy subject with unabashedly joyful filmmaking. It's a crowd-pleasing winner from Broadway producer and first-time feature helmer Amanda Lipitz that has what it takes to appeal across generations and emerge as one of the year's prime doc attractions.

Call it "Hoop Dreams" for the social media generation. At a breezy 83 minutes, "Step" isn't going for a deep dive into every aspect of its subjects' lives, but it weaves multiple narrative strands together in a flashy package that opens a very specific window into life in 2016 America. Given where we're at, it's not an overstatement to say what's revealed is essential viewing. Lipitz focuses on three step team participants in particular: captain Blessin Giraldo, a step prodigy who shines during performances but struggles both at school and at home; Cori Grainger, an ace student hoping for a scholarship to the school of her dreams; and Tayla Solomon, a straight-talker whose vivacious single mom acts as the team's unofficial den mother.

Along with the rest of the step team seniors, they're on a mission to accomplish two significant goals in their final year at the Baltimore Leadership School for Young Women: get accepted into college, in keeping with the school's mission of sending every graduate on to higher education, and win the Bowie State step competition, which draws on schools from Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, DC.

What Lipitz didn't know when she initially embarked on the project (and, full disclosure, she and her mother, Brenda Brown Rever, were involved in the charter school's founding in 2009), was that filming would begin in earnest after Baltimore resident



Director Amanda Lipitz, second from left, poses for a portrait with dancers Cori Grainger, left, Tayla Solomon and Blessin Giraldo, right, to promote the film, "Step", at the Music Lodge during the Sundance Film Festival on Friday in Park City, Utah. — AP

Freddie Gray died while in police custody, leading to protests and riots. Without becoming expressly political, "Step" stands as a firm rebuttal to rampant misunderstandings about both the Black Lives Matter movement and life in poor urban areas. There's no need to

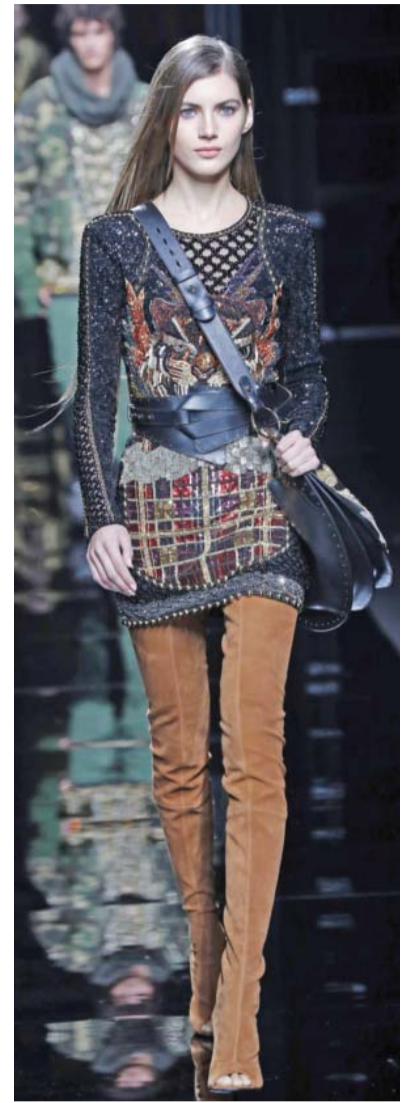
shoehorn any of that material into the story; it's all seamlessly a part of the time Lipitz has captured.

These girls are each looking for their own way out of tough circumstances, but their family and social situations are notably diverse. Blessin has the roughest

road living with a mother, Geneva, who suffers from depression and anger issues and checks in and out of her daughter's life with alarming unpredictability. Cori's mother, Triana, recently married a longtime boyfriend, and the couple do everything they can to provide for their blended family. And Tayla is perpetually embarrassed by her helicopter mother, Maisha, a proud correctional officer whose boundless love for her daughter provides some of the film's most amusing and affectionate moments.

Without any fuss, Lipitz has made a film deeply rooted in intergenerational relationships between women, which extends to the team's no-nonsense coach Gari McIntyre (a newcomer to the school who introduces herself by saying she lives on the street where Gray passed away) and devoted college counselor Paula Dofat. When Blessin looks in danger of slipping through the cracks, both women push her to bring the same enthusiasm she applies to step to her academic future. And then there are the step routines. Every bit as energetically depicted as they were in last year's Sundance mini-breakout "The Fits," we're treated to glimpses of every stage in the process, from rehearsals to competition. That's where Casey Regan's deft camerawork and Penelope Falk's sharp-eyed cutting really shine. As Blessin notes early on, "We make music with our bodies. That's some sick stuff."

"Step" is so much fun, it could cause some doc purists to gripe at the glossy touches (you won't find a montage set to Fifth Harmony's "Worth It" in a Frederick Wiseman film), but that's where the film may ultimately prove most powerful. By offering some of society's most marginalized members—young black women—their time in the spotlight without any inkling of condescension or exploitation, Lipitz does more than just entertain or enlighten. She's breaking down barriers in nonfiction cinema. — Reuters



Boy George talks politics at Paris menswear, Dior goes dark



Music maestro Boy George got political at Paris Fashion Week as Dior Homme went to the dark side, creating a hard, brooding fall-winter collection. Here are the highlights of Saturday's menswear shows.

A demure and relaxed Paris Jackson dodged journalists as she arrived at the Dior Homme show in a black Dior perfecto jacket and stylish white pleated skirt. The daughter of pop icon Michael Jackson vied for attention with music legend Bono, who dominated the front row in his customary shades next to LVMH fashion tycoon Bernard Arnault, owner of the fashion house. But it was Boy George that did all the talking. The former "Culture Club" front man got political, defending new US first lady Melania Trump against negative press about her former modeling career.



"You know what - as somebody who has a past - I think it's really wrong and mean-spirited of women to be so abusive," Boy George told The Associated Press from beneath an exuberant embellished hat. The fashion icon added that, in the Herve Pierre-designed inauguration gown, Melania Trump "looked amazing." The singer, who is gay, said people should "remain positive" about the next four years in the United States. Still, he lamented - with a hint of humor - that President Donald Trump didn't mention the LGBT community - "or me" - in his inauguration speech.

Models present creations by Balmain, during men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2017/2018 collection in Paris. — AP/AFP photos



Dior Homme goes dark and edgy

Designer Kris Van Assche went against the grain of Dior codes with resounding success, producing a hard-edged fall-winter menswear display that explored the darker side of fashion. The decor of metal scaffolding, sinister booming music and interlocking planks of raw wood that served as a catwalk set the unusual mood. This was a stomping celebration of hardcore rave, rebellion and the street. Glistening black leather gloves opened the Grand Palais collection, a signature of Monsieur Dior given a threatening twist. Dark sneakers sported banding that was crisscrossed to look like bondage and plunging, dark capes completely enveloped the body.

Fur coats came in unnatural hues of flaming russet and cobalt blue and mixed with urban prints. But the key to the collection might have been a sky blue ribbed knit sweater, worn on top of and almost imprisoning the Dior Homme bread-and-butter suit beneath. Was this Assche's way to signal his creative rebellion away from the sometimes-constricting house codes? It was a strong and effective contrast with the peppered sartorial elements of the show, on which the house has made its name.



Models present creations by Dior, during men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2017/2018 collection in Paris.

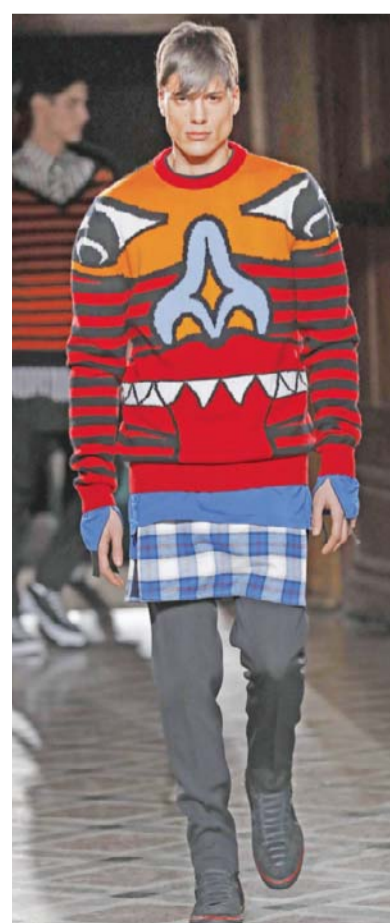
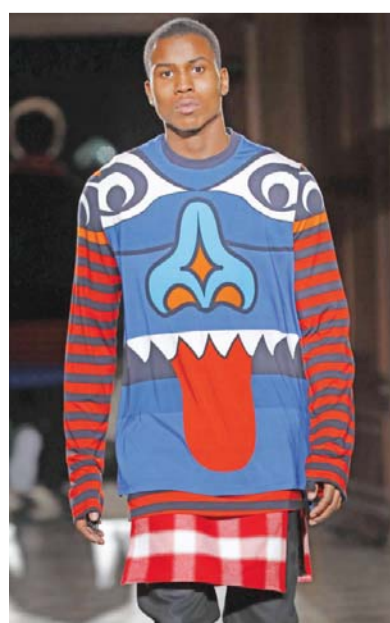




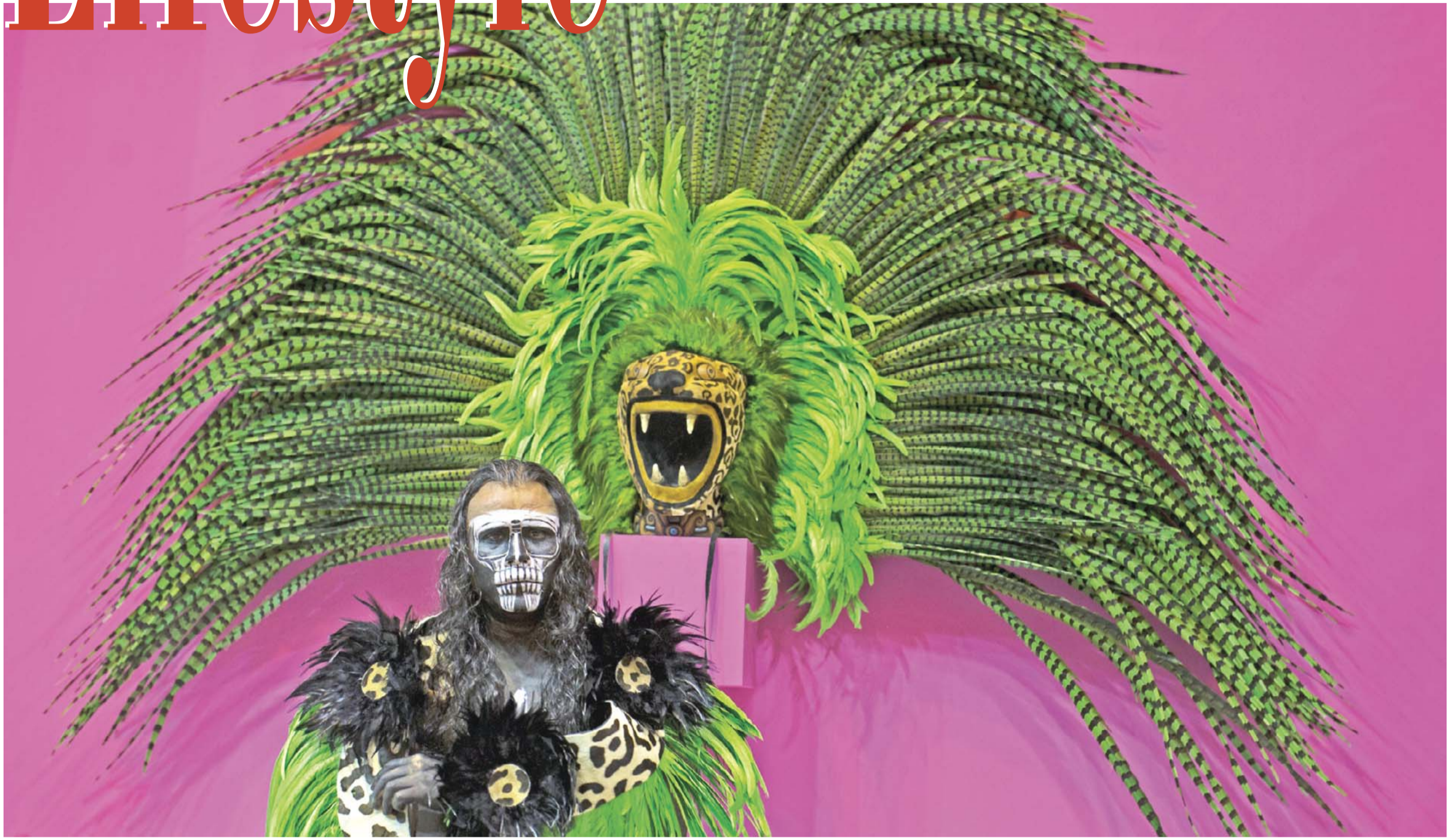
Models present creations by Hermes, during men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2017/2018 collection in Paris.

Designer debut at Berluti
 All eyes were on a highly-anticipated debut from edgy designer Haider Ackermann at Paris Fashion Week Friday night. The artistic direction of Berluti - a bootmaker since 1895 that branched out into ready-to-wear only in 2011 - has been closely watched by parent company LVMH. Company chief Bernard Arnault's powerful son, Antoine, is CEO. Ackermann's new direction was a drastic make-over. Gone was the classicism of predecessor Alessandro Sartori and the trademark shoe wear. In its place, pointed boots and a fresh feeling.
 Velvet suits, exaggerated layering and long soft color-infused coats - one in shimmering dry mustard - set the tone for the 37-piece-collection. Under Ackermann, Berluti just got funky.

Hermes channels blue
 There were no surprises at Veronique Nichanian's typically luxuriant menswear show for Hermes that this season channeled tones of blue and gray. There is always a softness to the French stylist's designs. But in Saturday's display Nichanian really flew with this idea - transforming a gray leather coat into something almost melted and malleable in the way it was softly gathered at the waist. Black pants and black leather shoes served to put the clothes on the upper body on a pedestal. Looks were loose but not bulky, with velvet and leather sections spicing up Hermes' go-to classical designs. — AP

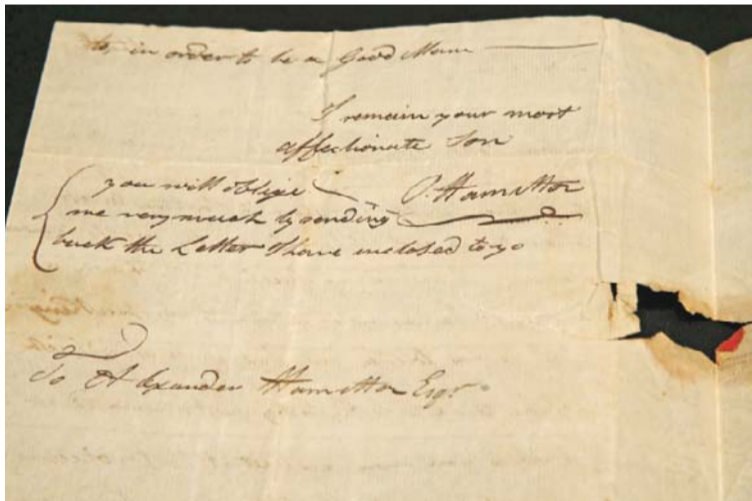


Models present creations by Givenchy during men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2017/2018 collection in Paris.

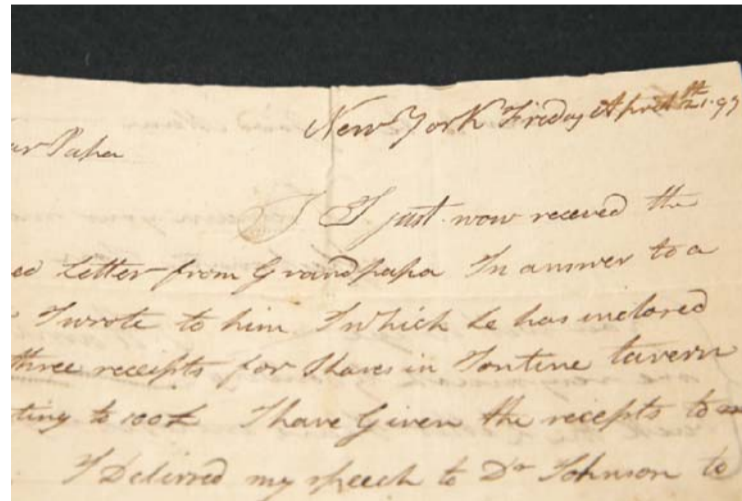


A man dressed as a Mexican Maya native poses for photographs at the Mexico stand during the 'FITUR' International Tourism Fair in Madrid. — AP

ALEXANDER HAMILTON'S LETTERS TO BE AUCTIONED IN NYC



The flip side of a letter from Alexander Hamilton's son Philip to his father is displayed at Sotheby's in New York.



A letter written by Alexander Hamilton's son Philip to his father begins with 'Dear Papa,' as displayed at Sotheby.

The hottest Broadway show is shining its spotlight on a collection of historic American documents: Alexander Hamilton's letters, being auctioned at Sotheby's. Javier Munoz, who plays him in the Broadway musical, got teary-eyed as he held the only known letter from Hamilton's son Philip to the man addressed as "Papa." The son asks his father for advice on a written presentation, noting that his mentor had deleted a sentence Hamilton liked best.

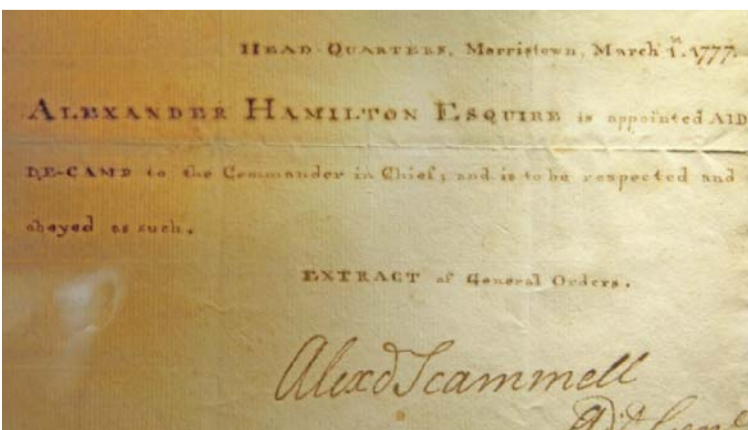
"I'm overwhelmed," said Munoz, who held the delicate old piece of paper unprotected, asking permission to flip it over. "It's sort of like walking



Javier Munoz, left, who plays Alexander Hamilton in the enormously popular Broadway hip-hop musical 'Hamilton,' laughs with the show's set designer David Korins as they read a letter from Hamilton to an unnamed recipient, possibly Jeremiah Wadsworth, about the 1796 presidential election.



A lock of Alexander Hamilton's hair displayed with an autographed letter written by Elizabeth (Eliza) Schuyler Hamilton presenting the hair from her late husband to sister-in-law Mary Ann Sawyer Schuyler is displayed, Tuesday, at Sotheby's in New York. —AP photos



A detail of a document of Alexander Hamilton's appointment as aide-camp to General George Washington is displayed.

into someone's apartment and looking at the desk where they work. And that's so revealing about how their mind works." Dozens of the letters penned by one of the nation's founding fathers will go on the block Jan 18, with an estimated worth starting at \$1.4 million and topping \$2 million. But Sotheby's expects the feverish interest in the megahit "Hamilton" likely will drive prices up.

The most valuable item of the auction, estimated at \$300,000 to \$500,000, is one of Hamilton's "Pacificus" essays probing a contentious issue - George Washington's declaration of his nation's neutrality in the conflict between France and Great Britain. "This is a unique conjunction of historical material with the popular zeitgeist," said Selby Kiffer, the auction house's expert on books and manuscripts. "I have not experienced anything like this before."

The designer of the show's sets, David Korins, also created parts of Sotheby's Americana exhibit space that includes the kind of furniture and art that surrounded Hamilton in his daily life. Above the displays, Korins strung bunjee-like tension cords in red, white and blue as links leading visitors around, reflecting the threads of an American flag. Munoz said that reading Hamilton's private thoughts on everything from his love life and political career to war and even gardening will have a deep effect on his performance, especially details that don't appear on Broadway. "Part of the awe for me is how casual so much of this is," said Munoz, who with Korins giggled as they pored over one letter in which Hamilton writes flirtatious words to his sister-in-law, Angelica Church. — AP

Spanish village hurls turnips to drive away evil

Residents of a Spanish town pelted a devil-like character portrayed by a young man with thousands of rock-hard turnips Thursday in a tradition that aims to drive away evil. The centuries-old festival of Jarramplas is celebrated every January 19 and 20 in the western village of Piornal, home to around 1,500 people. Portraying the "Jarramplas"—especially on the second day of the festival—is considered such an honor that there is a waiting list of 21 years.

Each year, several young men are selected to take turns to dress up as the devil-like character by wearing a costume made from colorful strips of fabric with body armor underneath, and a mask with great horns. As they walk the streets and beat a drum, hundreds of villagers repeatedly hurl turnips at them from close range. The exact origin of the festival is not known, although various theories exist. One widely accepted one is that the "Jarramplas" represents a cattle thief who was once punished by local residents. The tradition has come to symbolize the expulsion of everything bad. Piornal mayor Ernesto Agudiez said the purpose of the festival is to "drive away bad spirits in 2017, so that we have a good year and a good cherry harvest". About 70 percent of Piornal's residents earn a living from cherry farming.

'Hit him hard'

David Amado was one of 23 men, aged

18-30, who portrayed the "Jarramplas" on Thursday and wore the costume which weighs over 40 kilos (88 pounds). "If I can do it again, I will," he said delighted, just after he took his turn playing the "Jarramplas" for about 20 minutes. "It does not hurt. The armour is well prepared, so you don't feel the impact much. It is more the fatigue of wearing so many kilos," said Sergio Calle Alonso, who portrayed the character shortly after Amado.

Piornal bought a total of 21.4 tons of turnips, which are left at strategic places across the village to be hurled at the "Jarramplas". Portraying the creature on January 20, the second day of the festival, is considered a great honour, for it is the day of Saint Sebastian, whom the village honors.

As such, only one or two men get to be pelted by turnips on Friday and face the wrath of his turnip-throwing neighbors. Sergio Diaz Prieto, an insurance salesman who portrayed the character in 2004 after an 11-year wait, said there was an art to being a good "Jarramplas". It "means playing the drum a lot, and walking with a swagger, not like a statue," he said. "But above all, a good Jarramplas is one who exposes himself and gives the opportunity for people to hit him hard." — AFP



People throw turnips at a man representing the Jarrampla, beating his drum and sporting a costume covered in multicolored ribbons and his face hidden behind a conical mask with a huge nose, horns and a horse's mane, in Piorna on January 19, 2017 during the annual San Sebastian festivities. — AFP