



**Cabinet examines DNA law modification**



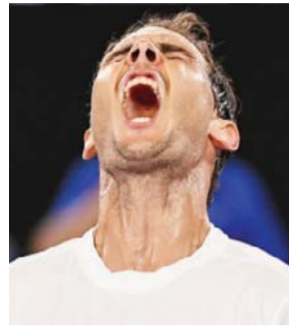
**For India's typewriters, ribbon may have finally run out**



**Man of the hour Affleck goes back to indie roots**



**Breathless Nadal, Serena into last eight**



150 FILLS  
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## MP SAYS AMIR PROMISES TO RESOLVE CITIZENSHIP ISSUE

INFO MINISTER ASKS FOR CLARIFICATIONS OVER GRILLING



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Low Tide 04:12 & 15:54

## TRUMP PULLS US OUT OF PACIFIC TRADE DEAL

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump moved yesterday to pull the United States out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, making good on a pledge to scrap a deal he denounced as a "job killer" and a "rape" of US interests. Embarking on his first full week in office, the 45th US president began rolling out his policy agenda after a tumultuous first weekend for his administration by signing a series of executive orders. Among the first was a memo on withdrawing from the vast TPP trade pact, which aimed to set trade rules for the 21st century and bind US allies against growing Chinese economic clout.

"We've been talking about this for a long time," Trump said as he signed the executive order in the Oval Office. "Great thing for the American worker what we just did." Promoted by Washington and signed by 12 countries in 2015, the TPP had yet to go into effect and US withdrawal is likely to sound its death knell. Trump also signed two other orders, on freezing the hiring of federal workers and hitting foreign NGOs that help with abortion.

The Republican leader is looking to shift attention firmly back onto his policy agenda after a first few days that put his incoming administration on the back foot. "Busy week planned with a heavy focus on jobs and national security," he tweeted early yesterday. Since he was sworn in on Friday, Trump's White House has been pilloried for lying to the public about inaugural crowds and over a campaign-style speech by the president before a memorial to fallen CIA officers.

Continued on Page 13



WASHINGTON: US Vice President Mike Pence (left) and White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus watch as President Donald Trump shows an executive order yesterday to withdraw the US from the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact agreed to under the Obama administration in the Oval Office of the White House. — AP

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem and around 10 lawmakers yesterday met HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and discussed a number of current political issues, while the Amir promised he will resolve the issue of revoked citizenships soon. Ghanem said on his Twitter account that the meeting was fruitful and was held at the request of the lawmakers. He provided no further details.

But MP Mohammad Al-Huwailah said the revoked citizenships were among the issues discussed at the meeting and HH the Amir promised to resolve it soon. "We spoke with the Amir about the issue of the (revoked) citizenships and the people who were harmed. He promised a solution for this issue soon," Huwailah said without elaborating. Among other MPs who were in the meeting were Nayef Al-Merdas, Khaled Al-Otaibi and Talal Al-Jallal.

Over two years ago, the government revoked the citizenship of several Kuwaiti opposition activists and their family members and relatives, making the total number several dozens. Those affected include former Islamist opposition MP Abdullah Al-Barghash and his brothers along with their families, owner of Al-Youm television channel and Alam Al-Youm newspaper Ahmad Jabr Al-Shimmar, Islamist preacher Nabeel Al-Awadhi and opposition activist Saad Al-Ajmi, who was deported to Saudi Arabia.

Their cases are being looked in courts, which have issued rulings favorable to the activists, but no final court verdict has been issued so far. The government has insisted that courts are not competent to look into citizenship issues because they are sovereign matters that must be handled by the state. But the good showing made by the opposition in the November parliamentary election reignited the citizenship issue, with direct threats by a large number of lawmakers to grill the prime minister and the interior minister.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: A man arrives at the new NATO-Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Regional Center in Mishref yesterday. The center will be officially opened today. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

## GLAD TO SEE OBAMA GO, GULF EXPECTS TRUMP TO CURB IRAN

DUBAI: Gulf Arab states are quietly applauding the arrival in the White House of a hawkish leader opposed to their adversary Iran, even if they suspect Donald Trump's short temper and abrasive Tweets may at times heighten tensions in the combustible Middle East. While many countries around the world listened with concern to his protectionist inaugural address, Gulf Arab officials appear optimistic. They see in Trump a strong president who will shore up Washington's role as their main strategic partner in a region central to US security and energy interests.

In Gulf Arab eyes, that involves above all checking what they see as a surge of Iranian support for paramilitary allies in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Lebanon and for fellow Shiites in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia's oil-producing Eastern Province. It also means overlooking for now rhetoric about uniting "the civilized world against radical Islamic terrorism" in an address that critics said echoed George W Bush's "crusade" against terrorism, a phrase which, for Muslims, evokes barbarous campaigns by medieval Christians against Islam. "The worst part about the speech is that he will target Islam as a religion in the name of fighting what he called radical Islamic terrorism, a blank label that is meaningless," Tweeted Daham Al-Qahani, a Kuwaiti political analyst.

Saudi Arabia in particular appears

relieved at the departure of Barack Obama, who it felt considered Riyadh's alliance with Washington less important than negotiating a deal in 2015 to neutralize Iran's nuclear program. The relationship is a pillar of the Middle East's security balance. But it has suffered since Riyadh took issue with what it saw as Obama's withdrawal from the region, and a perceived inclination towards Iran since the 2011 Arab uprisings.

There have been tensions over Syria, where Obama dismissed Gulf Arab urgings to give more aid to rebels fighting President Bashar Al-Assad, who has survived thanks to Iranian and Russian backing. "Perception is important: Trump does not look like the kind of guy who will bend towards Iran or anyone else," said Abdulrahman Al-Rashed, a veteran Saudi commentator. "If he behaves as he says, then we will see another Ronald Reagan, someone all the forces in the region will take seriously. That's what we have missed in the past eight years, unfortunately."

Some worry that Trump's Twitter habit - his rapid, unbridled messages of praise or blame - mean he is unsuited to handling the volatility of the Middle East. Faisal Al-Yafai, a columnist with The National newspaper of Abu Dhabi, said that while his use of social media could be a problem, Trump was unlikely to change. "At some point down the line something

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SAMSUNG: BATTERIES CAUSED NOTE 7 FIRES

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ASIAN CUP DRAW PITS INDIA VS KYRGYZSTAN

PAGE 19

## SYRIA TALKS OFF TO ROCKY START

News

in brief

### Kuwait reports H5N8 bird flu outbreak: OIE

PARIS: Kuwait reported an outbreak of the highly contagious H5N8 bird flu virus in ducks, geese and pheasants, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) said yesterday, citing an official Kuwaiti report. Some 144 birds were found dead in the area of Jahra, according to the report posted by the Paris-based OIE. The World Health Organization called on all countries yesterday to monitor closely outbreaks of the deadly virus in birds and poultry and to report promptly any human cases that could signal the start of a flu pandemic. The H5N8 virus is highly deadly for poultry but has never been found in humans.

### KOC says onshore oil leak contained

KUWAIT: Kuwait Oil Company yesterday said it has contained an oil leak at one of its southwestern oilfields. It had earlier declared a state of emergency over the leak. The statement by KOC did not identify the onshore oilfield affected by the leak, which began Sunday, but the Kuwait News Agency said the leak hit the Maqwa field. It offered no details about how many barrels of oil had been spilled. Kuwait produces some 2.7 million barrels of crude oil a day and holds the world's sixth-largest oil reserves. In August, Kuwait announced a spill at

ASTANA, Kazakhstan: Syrian rebels vowed yesterday to keep fighting if peace negotiations with the government of President Bashar Al-Assad fail, as talks between the two sides in Kazakhstan got off to a rocky start. The meeting in Astana, backed by key players Russia, Turkey and Iran, had been billed as the first time armed rebel groups would negotiate directly with the Assad regime since the conflict erupted in 2011.

But the rebels backed out of the first round of direct talks because of the

regime's continued bombardment and attacks on a flashpoint area near Damascus. However, they took part in indirect talks with the government and held a three-way meeting with Russia, Turkey and the United Nations. "If the negotiations succeed, then we are with the negotiations," rebel spokesman Osama Abu Zeid told AFP. "If they don't succeed, unfortunately we'll have no choice but to continue fighting."

Continued on Page 13



ASTANA: Chief opposition negotiator Mohammad Alloush (right) of the Jaish al-Islam (Army of Islam) rebel group listens to UN envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura prior to the first session of the Syria peace talks at the Rixos President Hotel yesterday. — AFP

## TRUMP PROPERTIES FACE GLOBAL TERROR RISK

DUBAI: Businesses around the world bearing US President Donald Trump's name face an increased risk now that he is in the White House, security experts warn, especially as several are in areas previously targeted by violence. As Trump remains a brand overseas, criminal gangs or militants could target buildings bearing his name in gold, abduct workers associated with his enterprises for ransom or worse, they say.

"They may kidnap a Trump worker and not even want to negotiate," aiming for publicity instead, said Colin P Clarke, a political scientist with the RAND Corporation who studies terrorism and international criminal networks. Predicting an attack keeps police, intelligence

agencies and security experts awake at night around the world - and, by its very nature, it remains speculative. US brands have been targeted in overseas violence before, but they never belonged to a president. That's the difference. Trump becoming America's 45th president presents a unique challenge given the range of his international business interests.

Asked about security issues, the Trump Organization said in a statement it has "extensive protocols in place at our Trump-owned and -managed properties" in the United States and abroad. "Our team continues to work very closely with local law enforcement," the statement said. "We are also working in tandem with the local developers at Trump-branded

properties worldwide to ensure that all residents, guests and associates remain safe and secure." The organization did not elaborate.

While Trump has said he will put his business assets in a trust and hand over management control of his company to his two adult sons and a longtime Trump Organization executive, it's still his name on the projects. That hasn't worried Kim Ok Kyu, who lives in a Trump-branded apartment tower in Seoul, South Korea. She said security at her building is quite good, with many guards and strict restrictions on outsiders entering the building. "Terror? I don't think about it. I just hope my home prices go up," Kim said.

Continued on Page 13



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Ibrahim Al-Fayez. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh.

## SAUDI KING INVITES AMIR TO 'JENADRIYAH FESTIVAL'

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Dr Abdulaziz Ibrahim Al-Fayez, who presented to him an invitation from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud

to attend the annual camel race that is set to take place as part of the 31st annual 'Jenadriyah Festival,' which is set to be held next month in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The meeting took place at Bayan Palace yesterday.

His Highness the Amir also received Kuwaiti businessman Jawad Ahmad Bukhamseen and Editor-in-Chief of Annahar Daily Emas Jawad Bukhamseen, who presented a painting to him as a gift in commemora-

tion of the 11th anniversary of His Highness' ascension to power.

In other news, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Deputy Prime Minister and

Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh at Bayan Palace yesterday. His Highness the Crown Prince also received Abdulatif Al-Ibrahim, as well as Nawaf Al-Hamlee who presented a book to him. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (center) meets with Kuwaiti businessman Jawad Ahmad Bukhamseen (left) and Editor-in-Chief of Annahar Daily Emas Jawad Bukhamseen.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Nawaf Al-Hamlee.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Abdulaziz Abdulatif Al-Ibrahim.

## HEARTS OPEN BEFORE DOORS WHEN IT COMES TO SOLVING PROBLEMS OF KUWAITIS: MINISTER



Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh attends the dialogue session.



MP Riyadh Al-Adasani speaks during the dialogue session.



Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah attends a dialogue session held at the National Assembly Sunday evening. — KUNA

KUWAIT: "Hearts are open before doors" when it comes to solving problems of the Kuwaiti people, said Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs. "Let us think of how to turn negativity aspects into positive ones. If each and every one of us doubled efforts at work, rest assure that we would have a doubled qualitative leap," Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah told a dialogue session held at the National Assembly on Sunday. The session combined youth and their representatives from both branches; legislative and executive.

"We are human beings after all, not immune from making mistakes. But, on the other hand,



Minister of State for Housing Affairs Yasser Abul attends the dialogue session.



A general view of people in attendance of the dialogue session held at the National Assembly Sunday evening.

we had many achievements and we are very open for any criticism." On her part, Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh told the young audience that there were many ideas-turned-projects by young Kuwaitis under the umbrella of bodies supervised by the ministry. "We are in a democratic country and any matter that takes place at the minister's office would immediately be on social media," she said, urging for such gatherings to be listed on cabinet meetings' agenda on a periodic manner. Meanwhile, Yasser Abul, minister of state for housing affairs

and minister of state for services' affairs, said the government "deals with the public in a transparent way."

Acknowledging the many challenges facing the government, Abul then reflected back saying "But should reform be asked from the government only? We work within a constitutional system, where both cabinet and parliament members complete each other." In this context, a number of MPs extolled the initiative due the benefit it would have on the relationship between the youth and older generations in public offices. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Services Yasser Abul (left) arrives to attend a ceremony to mark the opening of a Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB) practice center. — KUNA

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT LEADS TO OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCE: MINISTER

KUWAIT: Human development is crucial to ensure efficiency and adaptiveness in the workplace, Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Services Yasser Abul said yesterday. Speaking to journalists on the sidelines of a ceremony to mark the opening of a Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB) practice center, Abul noted that the banking workforce is the cornerstone of the financial sector, adding that the new KCB center will allow employees the chance to hone their skills.

Deputy Chairman and CEO of KCB Salah Al-Mudhaf touted the center as a focal point of KCB's strategy to seek increased human development, noting that the launch of the center is part of efforts to cater to the needs of the nation's youth. On the edifice, he said it contains sprawling halls equipped with cutting-edge technology, adding that KCB has been conducting a study that aims to enhance the bank's financial prowess.

On a related note, Mudhaf spoke of the spike in residential demand, which behooves KCB to be fully prepared to



Deputy Chairman and CEO of KCB Salah Al-Mudhaf.

finance such a sharp increase in requests for residences. KCB is a public institution that operates independently and is monitored by the Minister of State for Housing Affairs. — KUNA





KUWAIT: Students of the sixth batch of 'The Proteges' program pose for a group photo with US Ambassador to Kuwait Lawrence Silverman and his wife.



Officials of The Proteges program pose for a group photo. —Photos by Joseph Shagra

## KIPCO CELEBRATES GRADUATION OF 'THE PROTEGES' STUDENTS

### HELPING YOUNG TALENT PLAY ROLE IN KUWAIT'S DEVELOPMENT

By Faten Omar

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Projects Company Holding (KIPCO) organized the graduation ceremony of the sixth batch of 'The Proteges' program's students on Sunday at Yarmouk cultural center. "The Proteges has proved its success through its great projects, and we are proud to partner with this program that seeks to help talented young Kuwaitis play a role in the development of Kuwait's economy," said Abeer Al-Omar, corporate communications manager at KIPCO, the main sponsor of the sixth generation of Proteges.

Omar pointed out that investing in people is what KIPCO is keen to do. "KIPCO is always making sure to improve Kuwaiti youth's talents and develop their skills, as young people are the means to uplift any community," she said. "Their project 'Waseelah' is a wonderful platform that aims to raise awareness that all talents are influential and to motivate the general public to express themselves. We look forward to see what this generation can achieve," she added.

The Arabic word 'waseelah' means 'path'. The Proteges' students aspire to provide a path and a bridge that people can cross to reach their full potential, fulfilling their dreams and



Abeer Al-Omar, corporate communications manager at KIPCO speaks during the ceremony.

Waseelah begins its steps of achieving the mentioned goals with the cooperation of the general public. In order to gain their attention and support, the team had to brainstorm the methods of promoting Waseelah's message. Due to Kuwait's richness in plays and annual expeditions and fairs, the final decision was to create a play that shows the vitality of self-expression, and an exhibit which shows

the potential of talents.

At the end of the ceremony, the Proteges' teachers of arts and letters Ghanam Al-Dikan, Bader Borsely, Jasem Al-Nabhan, Jasem Al-Yaqoub and Saher were honored for their efforts. The event was attended by a number of ambassadors and Kuwaiti singer Nabil Shaeef. The Proteges program, established in 2010, is a part of a social enterprise that is designed to



Students perform on stage during the ceremony.

positively influence the youth of Kuwait through an inclusive program that combines travel, lectures, group activities, challenges, games and fun, guided by a team of mentors. The main idea of the program is based on training youth led by a group of counselors in innovative ways, encouraging them to discover their passion and providing tools to help them face the challenges of working through work-

shops aimed at self-development, creative thinking and communication skills.

It aims to discover extraordinary potential in the youth and develop it. The Proteges' students are selected based on a thorough screening process ensuring that they meet high standards of excellence, where they accept 25 students for each generation aged 16 to 24.



HAVANA: Kuwaiti students pose for a group photo during their visit to Cuba's National Museum of Arts. —KUNA

## KUWAITI STUDENTS TOUR VARIOUS TOURISTIC SITES IN CUBA, ALBANIA

**HAVANA/TIRANA:** Kuwaiti students on a trip financed by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) toured various touristic sites in Cuba. The students were taken to Cuba National Museum of arts, one of the most touristic beautiful sites in the Caribbean, which included more than 5,000 arts pieces. Later, the students visited Morro Castle in Havana which shares its name with structures in Santiago de Cuba and the Castillo

de San Felipe del Morro in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In this case, the Spanish "morro" means a rock which is very visible from the sea and therefore serves as a navigational landmark. Inside the gates is an exhibition on the lighthouses of Cuba, El Morro once housed a school for lighthouse keepers.

There was actually a watchtower until the British blew it up during their successful siege in 1762. The Faro Castillo del Morro lighthouse

was added in 1846. Afterward, the students visited popular Feira Shop in central Havana, and were briefed on the historic and heritage of the area there.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti female students, currently on a visit to Albania organized by KFAED in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, have visited the two cities of Kruje and Shkodra. Sunday's tour included the Kruje Bazaar that dates back to the Middle Ages. Located inside the fortified walls of the Kruje castle, the Bazaar is both a historic attraction and a shopping opportunity for those hunting for authentic Albanian souvenirs. The delegation also visited the George Castriot Castle, located on 600 metres from the sea level, in Kruje, 32 kilometers from the capital Tirana. During their visit to the National Museum built close to the castle, the Kuwaiti top Thanawya Amma (secondary school) students were briefed on the history of the renowned military commander George Castriot (Skanderbeg) (1405-1468). The students also toured the city of Shkodra, northwest, one of the oldest and most historic places in Albania and the Balkans. It is also an important cultural and economic center. In ancient times, Shkodra was known under the name Scodra and was the capital of the Labeates, an old Illyrian tribe. The Rozafa Castle and the Abu-Bakr Mosque are two main landmark sites in the city. — KUNA



TIRANA: Kuwaiti female students pose for a photo during their visit to the two Albanian cities of Kruje and Shkodra.

## OOREDOO PARTICIPATES IN PROTEGES GRADUATION

**Kuwait:** Ooredoo, the fastest network in Kuwait, participated in the graduation of the 6th generation of the Proteges on Sunday evening in Yarmouk Cultural Center, an establishment of Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah.

The graduation ceremony was attended by Ooredoo Kuwait General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani, COO Frederic Debord, and Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alalayoub.

Commenting on this, Ooredoo Corporate Communications Senior Director Mijbil Alalayoub said, "We are very proud of the Proteges graduates today, who proved their excellence and creativity. We also take great pride in our sponsorship of Proteges, an effective and life changing program that allows youth to gain essential and practical skills and knowledge that will allow them to grow with a stronger sense

of direction. This sponsorship comes to reiterate our position as a leader in youth development in Kuwait."

The 6th generation of the Proteges titled their project 'Waseelah', an Arabic word that means 'path' or 'way'. Waseelah is a platform that strives to raise awareness that all talents are influential, and motivate the general public to express themselves through various forms of art. It has culminated in the musical production entitled the Key of Life, which uses music and acting to demonstrate the types of classical Arabic music.

Ooredoo Kuwait has also played an active role in supporting Proteges activities, which include the lecture presented by Professor Fathi Al-Khamisi's on the revolutionary work of the Egyptian musician Sayed Darwish, and the introductory session that was held with the main mentors for this season of Proteges.



Mijbil Alalayoub

The Proteges program was launched in 2010, with the objective to mentor youth between the age of 16 and 24 by local iconic figures in different fields. The program aims to reinforce the social and personal skills of youth, develop their self-awareness and improve their critical and creative thinking. The program includes workshops, projects and open discussion circles.



Ooredoo Kuwait General Manager and CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdullah Al Thani (center) attends the ceremony.



Ooredoo officials pose for a group photo during the event.

In Brief

AMIR OFFERS CONDOLENCES TO IRAN

TEHRAN: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah sent a cable of condolences yesterday to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, expressing his deep sorrow for the collapse of a commercial building in central Tehran, which resulted in killing and injuring dozens. His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah sent of similar cables, while National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem sent a cable of condolences to Iran's Parliament Speaker Dr Ali Larjani —KUNA



SPEAKER TO PARTAKE IN PUIC CONFERENCE

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem will lead a parliamentary delegation to the African Republic of Mali tomorrow, to take part in the 12th Conference of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC member states (PUIC). Ghanem is expected to deliver a speech at the conference, which runs until January 28th and will bring together Parliament Speakers of OIC member nations, a statement by the National Assembly noted. Ghanem will also participate in meetings that aim to align the Arab world's positions over a number of pressing issues due to be discussed. —KUNA



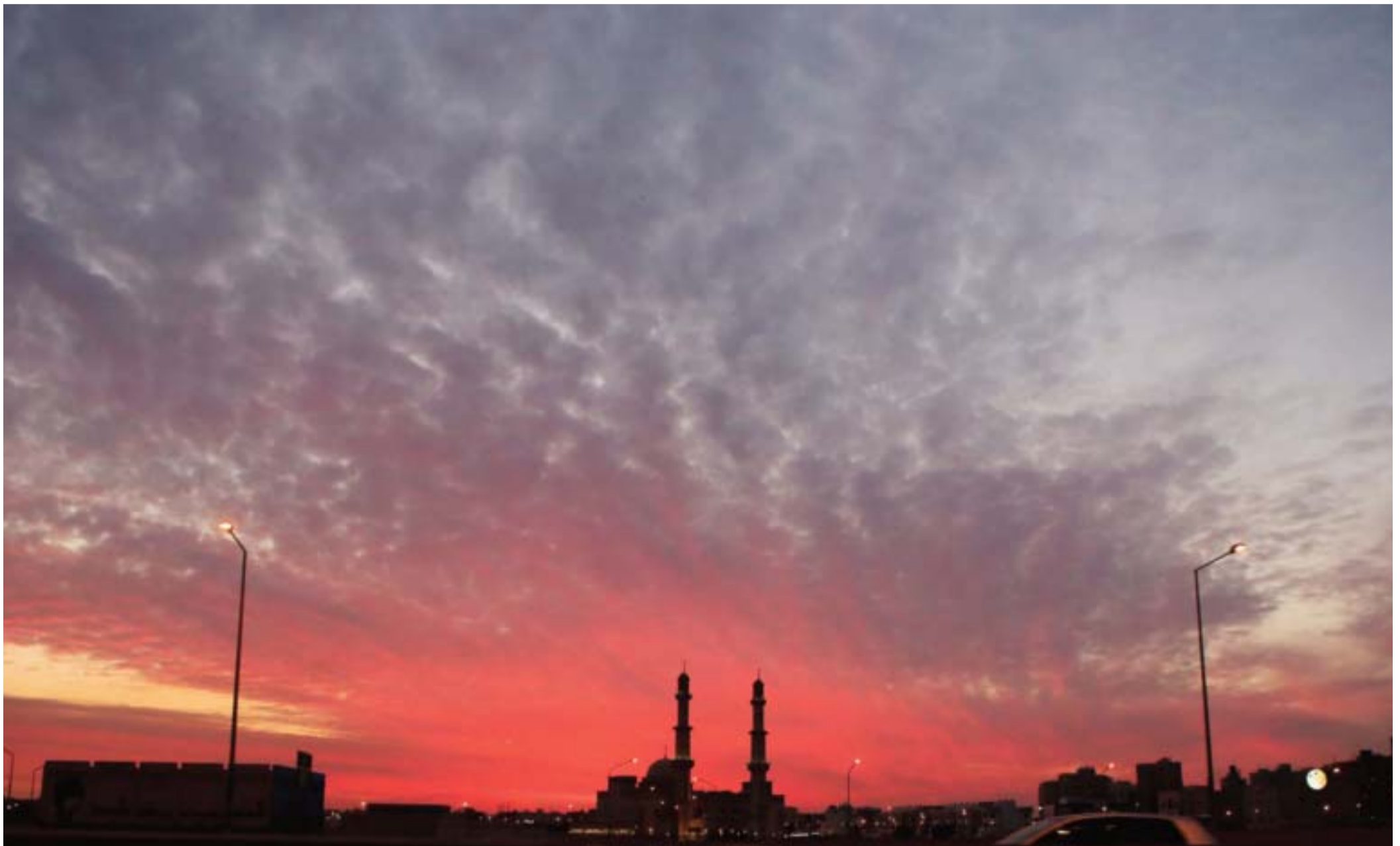
MINISTER RECEIVES BHUTAN AMBASSADOR

KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received yesterday Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bhutan to Kuwait Tshering Gyaltsen Penjor on the occasion of assuming his new post as a credited ambassador in the country. During the meeting, Sheikh Nasser praised bilateral relations between the two countries, and asserting keenness to bolster them in all areas.—KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A panoramic view of the sunset near Sabah Al-Salem yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT IN WHO MEETING ON REGIONAL, INT'L HEALTH ISSUES

GENEVA: The visiting Kuwaiti Minister of Health, who took part in yesterday's opening session of the World Health Organization Executive Board meeting, said participants tackled a host of regional and international issues in the sector. Dr Jamal Al-Harbi said in a statement that the board examined annual report of WHO Director General Dr Margaret Chan about the general assembly, reports related to health dimension of sustainable development till 2030 and other topics related to the organization's regional works.



Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi

They have also tackled combating tobacco, efforts against communicable diseases and committees' reports. The Kuwaiti representatives at the gathering focus on regional issues and problems, such as plight of the refugees and practical plans for dealing with humanitarian crises.

Harbi said Kuwait is fully coordinating with the other GCC countries regarding nomination for holding the WHO General Directorate post. The meetings address other diverse issues such as regulating usage of antibiotics, polio vaccine campaigns and providing healthcare for Syrian refugees. Kuwait is also showcasing its experience in dealing with some diseases such as obesity, diabetes, blood, heart and cancer illnesses. The meeting runs until February 1st.

Key participation

On Sunday, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to UN Office and international organizations in Geneva Jamal Al-Ghunaim affirmed the importance of his country's participation in the World Health Organization Executive Board meeting. He described the meeting as "significant" as it discusses a number of health topics across the globe.

The State of Kuwait is proud of being an Executive Board member and this reflects the confidence of both Arab and Muslim groups in the country's capabilities in dealing with health issues that interest the two groups, he noted in a statement made after receiving Minister Harbi at Geneva airport.

The meeting's agenda this year includes electing new director general of WHO and discussing some health issues on means of combating antibiotics, continued polio vaccine campaigns and providing healthcare for Syrian refugees, as well as others, he said. He referred to Kuwait's new experience in dealing with some diseases like obesity, diabetes, blood, heart and cancer sickness. — KUNA

SOCIETY OFFERS MORE AID TO DISPLACED IRAQIS

BAGHDAD: The Kuwaiti Society for Relief provided medical supplies and medications to a host of Iraqi health centers offering services to displaced Iraqis, as part of a campaign launched by Kuwaiti organizations to help civilians in Iraq. The medical aid has been already distributed to the health directorates in the provinces of Salah-Eddin and Al-Anbar, then will be extended to Nineveh, the United Iraqi Medical Society (UIMS), the local partnership of the Kuwaiti Society for Relief, said yesterday. Aid has also been to the UIMS-affiliated clinics. Medications were offered for various diseases, mainly chronic ones, UIMS chairman Ahmad Mushraf said yesterday. The distribution started in Al-Anbar on December 31 2016, then in Salah-Eddin on January 10, he added. Today, the aid will be offered to Nineveh. The State of Kuwait has recently opened two fully-equipped health centers in two camps for the displaced in Nineveh. — KUNA



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Crime

Report

## DRUNK MEN SLEEP OUTSIDE VEHICLE

**KUWAIT:** Two young men under the influence of liquor and drugs did not realize they were involved in a car accident and fell asleep outside the car. Police received a call about a collision near Jahra roundabout, where they found the car had hit the roundabout, and the two men sound asleep outside.

**Unconscious**

A Gulf national was taken to Mubarak Hospital when he lost consciousness during interrogation at Maidan Hawally police station after being charged of insulting a criminal detective. An officer earlier told police he had stopped two persons on suspicion of being drunk, but they insulted and attacked him.

**Drug dealer caught**

A drug dealer told police that he used the pistol they found at his home whenever he went to deliver drugs, and also kept it to use it should he get arrested. The Drugs Control General Department received tips about a citizen trading in drugs, so a warrant was obtained and his Jabriya home was raided, where hashish weighing more than one kilogram and a loaded pistol were found. The suspect confessed to possessing the drugs for trade and the firearm for self-defense.

**Theft**

A citizen accused several of his son's friends of theft after he hosted them in his diwaniya. His son and one of his friends had gone out to buy snacks and drinks, but when they returned, they discovered the guests had stolen a PlayStation, seven controllers, and a bag that had medicine, the house keys and a smartphone in it.

**Store front destroyed**

A woman destroyed an ATV and smashed the glass facade of a store. A security source said the woman had parked her car in front of a store in the Qurain markets area, and instead of putting her car's transmission in reverse, she placed it in drive and drove through the shop front.

**Search for 'bleeding' man**

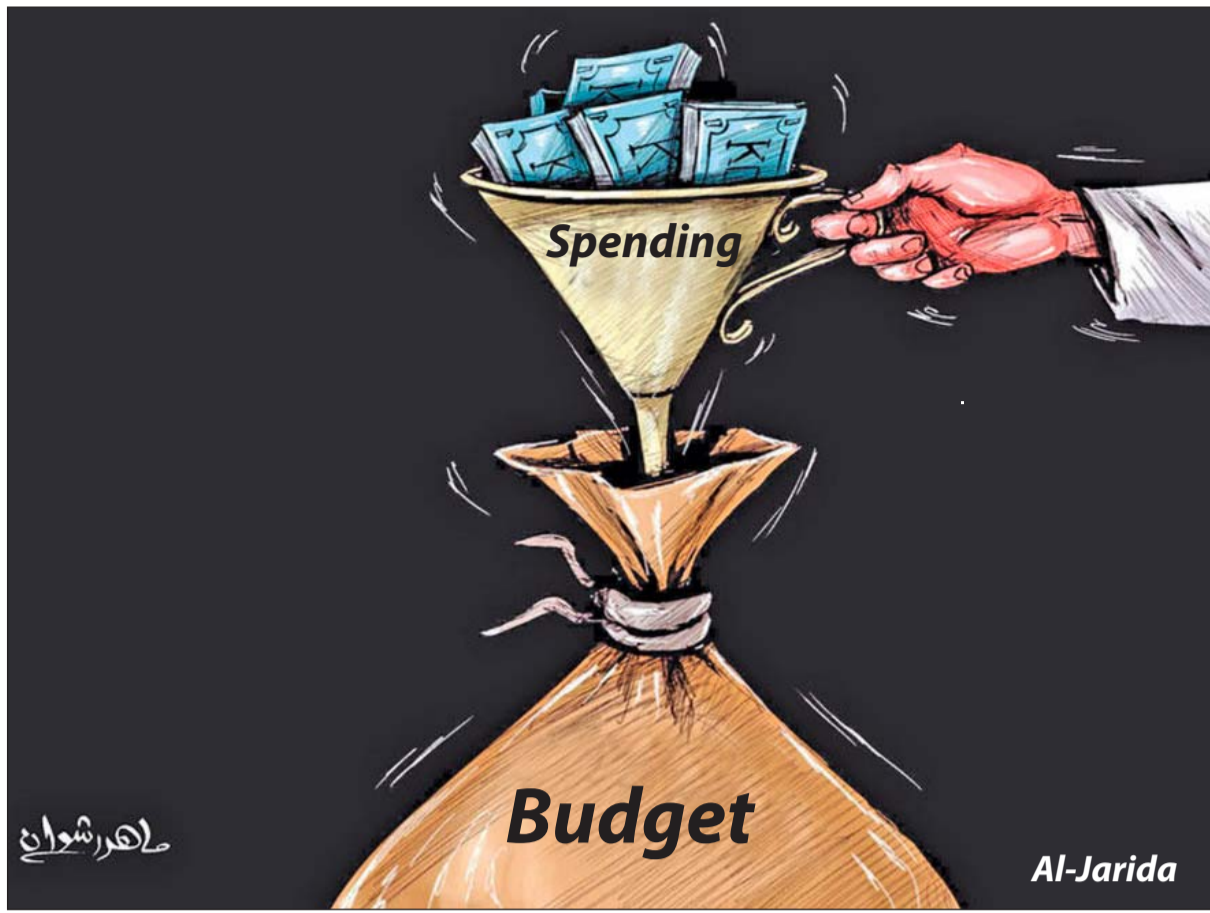
A security source said a policeman at Taima police station was surprised by a bleeding man in a hysterical state storming the police station with an axe in his hand, who kept asking about a man who caused his injuries during a fight. The man escaped when other officers arrived. Police are looking for him.

**Physical assault**

A Syrian woman accused her two Kuwaiti neighbors of beating her in front of her Abu Halifa flat and filed a complaint against them. The Syrian said she had previous differences with the attackers, and both are being summoned for questioning.

**Grenades found**

Military engineers dealt with hand grenades found in the Mutlaa desert. —Translated from the Arabic press



## DID OBAMA FOUND IS?

By Saleh Al-Qallab

**A**lthough the statements of the new US President Donald Trump call for laughter and would knock everyone on their backs with it, his accusations that his predecessor Obama and his administration were behind founding the Islamic State (IS) call for real investigations to be done by relevant American authorities including the Congress and other security apparatuses. It also calls us here in the region that has been suffering because of this terrorist organization to take the matter more seriously and not as a mere slip

*Trump's words of accusation have been said over the past six years as political analyses*

of tongue or a silly joke. Trump might be making such accusations against Obama, who spent eight years in the White House and had access to a lot of what can and cannot be discussed in public, because he has enough information about what his predecessor did, not as a normal person but as the president of the US, the world's most important country. If such accusations prove right and Obama did found IS, all relevant US authorities and other countries that have suffered the consequences should investigate the matter.

The new president should not be just saying things at random. He should be sure of every word coming out of his mouth. He should be responsible for such statements. Otherwise, the Republican Party should not have nominated him for the presidency and would now have to reconsider Trump's competence for a position that is not only significant for Americans, but for all mankind around the globe.

Even if Trump meant that the Obama administration was behind founding IS through its actions and policies and how it handled the situations in Syria or the entire Middle East, and not in the literal meaning of the word, the matter should still be taken seriously. It should be investigated and those responsible should be held accountable, because this terrorist organization had and is still committing terrible crimes in the Arab region, Europe, US and the entire world.

Trump's words of accusation have been said over the past six years as political analyses and deductions that could prove right or wrong, but to be directly made by a man in Trump's new position, this should not be taken lightly or as mere slander or joke.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

## ALAS, ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITY!

By Ghanem Al-Najjar

**I**n Nov 2015, I participated in our student union's US conference, where I happened to sit next to the chief of the Public Anti-Corruption Authority. I asked him about being assigned to the most dangerous position in the country, telling him that if he succeeded, even symbolically, this would mean the start of our country's getting out of depression and frustration. The man confirmed moving in that direction and promised that we would see something good soon.

Of course, we were not lucky enough to see that good thing because the authority was dissolved by a court order, and its formation went through many problems. Even after it was reactivated, its efforts are muddled by internal and external disputes, until things went as far as erroneously referring its officials to retirement by the government.

The question here is: Why is the Public Anti-Corruption Authority so important? Why more important than others? Because people in general, not all of them, have lost faith in the government and the parliament. The authority's success in its mission, which is more than some ads and press conferences, lies in managing to put major cor-

rupt people where they belong and deserve - prison. Only then will the society regain self-trust or trust in the government and the parliament as a base for building societies. The corruption we have is humiliating to wise minds. Everybody criticizes corruption and declares fighting it, and this includes major corrupt people, as we have become a corruption-stricken country.

I do not think our country's problem lies only in the prevailing corruption. We have a long list of problems preventing the society from moving forward, but whether we like it or not, corruption keeps attracting people's attention. However, the authority, its law and powers seem to have gone with the

wind. It seems that certain necessary and important authorities needed to reform the country's administrative situation have been scaled down into mere buildings and incentives, and sometimes get dismantled because we absurdly care more about form than content. We have so many examples of this, such as the Competitiveness Apparatus, the Human Rights Authority, the Elections Authority and the Public Anti-Corruption Authority.

— Translated by Kuwait Times

*Why is the Public Anti-Corruption Authority so important? Why more important than others?*

## 90% OF OFFICIALS' WORK TIME WASTED

**KUWAIT:** President of Kuwait's National Competitiveness Committee Dr Fahd Al-Rashid said 90 percent of senior officials' time at ministries and government agencies is wasted on jobs others can perform, while they can concentrate on their duties to improve governmental performance. Rashid said during a workshop that included many top officials, "we asked them to show us how they spend their working hours, estimated to be eight hours a day, only to reach a conclusion that 90 percent of the time is wasted on signing papers and meet-

ing people who are not necessary to meet, in addition to meetings that are not part of their work".

Rashid added that due to this, many problems appear in the government departments' performance, especially since the time of these officials is wasted on activities that are away from their duties, and this reflects on the rest of workers, leading to a drop in results for Kuwait on many economic indicators on the competitiveness scale.

Rashid said the true duties of senior officials are concentrated in several

major aspects that revolve around giving instructions, incentives and supervision in order to reach better performance, and not to participate in executive matters that take them away from practicing in the true job duties required from senior officials. He said that directing by planning and follow-up to enhance services presented to the public and raising work performance at government bodies are within the priority list of senior officials besides their duties, which must take up the lion's share of their time. — Al-Rai



## MERAKI DISPLAYED EXCLUSIVE PRODUCTS AT HORECA KUWAIT

**KUWAIT:** Meraki General Trading Company displayed its exclusive organic products at Horeca Kuwait 2017, which was recently held under auspices of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. The event was organized by the Leaders Group Company for Consulting and Development in collaboration with the Hospitality Services Company at Kuwait International Fairgrounds in Mishref in the period of January 16-18, 2017.

Meraki's booth at the exhibition

attracted a great number of visitors, Operations Manager Sheikha Munira Suhail Al-Sabah said, explaining that the secret behind this success is "our constant search for products that guarantee skin health without using harmful chemicals."

There is growing awareness among the public against the use of cosmetics and skincare products that contain harmful chemicals, and instead replace them with environment-friendly ones, Sheikh Munira noted. "On that regard, Meraki started

importing carefully selected organic cosmetics that include skin and hair care products for all ages," she explained.

"Meraki provides its exclusive products in various malls and through its 11 branches throughout Kuwait," Sabah added, noting that the company's products could also be purchased online and delivered to customers. "Our next step is to provide hotels with special packages as an addition to Kuwait's and GCC's hospitality business," she concluded.

## INT'L INVENTION FAIR HONORS ZAIN

**KUWAIT:** The organizational committee of the International Invention Fair Middle East honored Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, in recognition of the company's strategic partnership of the event's 9th edition. The event was held under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

His Highness the Amir's representative, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Al-Homoud Al-Sabah, and Vice Chairman of the Kuwait Science Club Talal Al-Kharafi honored Zain Kuwait's Corporate Communications and Relations Director Waleed Al-Khashti for the company's strategic partnership of the event since its inception during the closing ceremony.

Zain's support of this major event is part of the company's Corporate Sustainability and social Responsibility strategy, which aims at supporting the scientific arena and contributes to the further development of the scientific field in Kuwait and the region. The Invention Fair Middle East

brought together a large number of local, regional, and international inventors who jointly exchanged knowledge and experiences across three days.

The International Invention Fair is one of the most significant and largest specialized exhibitions of inventions in the Middle East, and is considered as the second largest exhibition of its kind in the world. The event is part of the International Exhibition of Geneva, and offered an opportunity for inventions from different cultures to be exhibited and the strengthening of relationships among inventors and investors. Zain is keen on encouraging Kuwaiti and Arab talents, especially Kuwaiti inventors, in the fields of science and innovation side by side with international experts. Zain supports such areas as it believes it offers a valuable opportunity for young inventors to benefit from the expertise and knowledge of international inventors. The company will continue to foster young talents, believing that the current generation of youngsters holds to the keys to the future development of Kuwait.



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**Ex-PM fights leftist outsider for French presidential nod**

## DUTERTE TAMES WORDS FOR MISS UNIVERSE HOPEFULS

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**ALEPPO:** In this Thursday, Jan 19, 2017 photo, people visit the courtyard of the heavily damaged Great Mosque of Aleppo, overshadowed by a 13th century citadel, in the Old City of Aleppo. — AP

# ALEPPO'S GREAT MOSQUE BEARS SCARS OF WAR

### MINARET WHERE THE CALL TO PRAYER SOUNDED FOR 900 YEARS SHATTERED

**ALEPPO:** The Great Mosque of Aleppo, a centuries-old treasure at the heart of one of the world's oldest cities, is today a grim testament to the ravages of Syria's war. The doors have been blasted away, the walls have been shredded by gunfire and shrapnel, and the minaret where the Muslim call to prayer sounded for 900 years has been toppled and shattered. The wooden pulpit, along with ancient manuscripts from a nearby library, has been carted off by looters.

Syrians are only now able to survey the damage wrought by more than four years of

war. Rebels from the countryside poured into Aleppo in the summer of 2012, capturing eastern districts and transforming the Old City into the front lines of a war of attrition with forces loyal to President Bashar Assad. The rebels surrendered last month after a massive government offensive and were evacuated to other areas, allowing Assad to regain control of the country's largest city.

The red carpets inside the mosque are covered in debris, while damaged copper chandeliers are still hanging from the ceiling. An extensive network of sandbags used by the

rebels snakes throughout the compound. Also known as the Umayyad Mosque, the site was reopened in 2006 after a 20-year renovation project. Aleppo's Old City, a UNESCO world heritage site, also boasts a 13th century citadel, a sprawling bazaar and several other monuments, nearly all of which have been damaged or destroyed.

**Remains of the Prophet Zakariah**

Before the rebels stormed the city, the state built a cement wall to secure a tomb inside the mosque believed to hold the remains of the

Prophet Zakariah. But an ornate wooden pulpit modeled on the one inside Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque was pillaged. Sheikh Abdul-Qader Shehaby, a senior Muslim cleric who spent years studying and working in the Umayyad Mosque, said 70,000 books were stolen from a nearby library, including copy of the Quran transcribed in the Middle Ages, which he says was smuggled out and sold in Turkey for \$250,000.

Khaled Al-Masri, director of museums and antiquities in Aleppo, downplayed the extent of the destruction, saying the mosque could

be repaired within a year and the minaret could be rebuilt in three. "The damage is simple and we can return the Umayyad Mosque to how it was," he said. But the war is still raging elsewhere in the country, and even if the cash-strapped government prevails it will confront a massive reconstruction challenge, not only in Aleppo but in other cities and towns. "This mosque used to be a jewel," said Fateh Abdullah Nahhal, a grocer who brought his children to the site for the first time in five years. "All we can say is for God to help us punish those who did this." — AP

## DEAL TO REMOVE ISRAELI OUTPOST IN WEST BANK NOW IN JEOPARDY

**JERUSALEM:** A deal to evacuate a hardline Jewish outpost that has become a symbol of Israel's occupation of the West Bank was in jeopardy yesterday ahead of a February 8 deadline to remove it. Settlers in the Amona outpost of some 40 families and which was built on Palestinian land accused the government of not living up to the terms of a deal reached in December that would see them moved nearby.

Palestinian landowners also filed a petition to the Israeli high court yesterday with further objections to the government's relocation plans, said rights group Yesh Din, which is representing them. Beyond that, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's chief of staff Yoav Horowitz reportedly told ministers from his Likud party on Sunday that the deal could not be implemented because of legal complications.

The lack of a clear solution has once again raised the possibility of a forced evacuation of the Amona settlers by the Israeli government and fears that violence could result. "Right now we're dealing with the fact that the government and officials lied," said Eli Greenberg, an Amona resident and spokesman for the outpost. "They promised all kinds of lies to us." The Israeli defence ministry unit that oversees civilian affairs in the West Bank did not respond to a request for comment.

The long-running saga has centred on a 2014 high court ruling ordering the outpost northeast of the town of Ramallah to be evacuated because it was built on private Palestinian land. An initial deadline of December 25, 2016 was given for the outpost to be removed.

**Deadline extended**

But with the deadline approaching, Israeli right-wing politicians rushed to Amona's defence while also promoting a bill to legalise thousands of other settler homes in the West Bank.

Hundreds of hardline Jewish youths also flooded into the outpost in a bid to prevent the evacuation. Negotiations resulted in a deal on December 18 under which Amona residents agreed to relocate peacefully to nearby land considered abandoned.

The court then granted an extension of the deadline to February 8 when the settlers promised to relocate peacefully. But Palestinian landowners objected to the plans, resulting in further legal maneuverings. They filed a new petition yesterday objecting to a government plan to divide certain plots and calling for the deal to be cancelled.

"Ever since the notion of using abandoned property was suggested, we have claimed that one injustice cannot be corrected with another, and that additional land cannot be taken over just to appease Amona residents," Yesh Din executive director Neta Patrick said in a statement.

Israeli settlements are seen as major stumbling blocks to peace efforts as they are built on land the Palestinians see as part of a future state of their own. All are considered illegal under international law, but Israel differentiates between those it has approved and those it has not. Settlements such as Amona are called outposts—those that Israel has not approved. Some 400,000 Israelis live in the West Bank among around 2.6 million Palestinians. — AFP

## EGYPT SINCE ITS REVOLUTION

**CAIRO:** Key developments in Egypt since its January 2011 uprising that brought down President Hosni Mubarak who ruled for three decades.

**The revolution**

On January 25, 2011, massive anti-Mubarak protests erupt after a revolt topples Tunisia's ruler in what becomes known as the Arab Spring. On February 1, more than one million demonstrators take to the streets of Egypt, with a great flood of people congregating in Cairo's Tahrir Square. On February 11, Mubarak resigns and hands power to the army, which suspends the constitution and dissolves parliament. About 850 people die in clashes with security forces during 18 days of revolt.

**Islamist victory**

From November 2011 to January 2012, Egypt holds post-revolt parliamentary elections. Islamists win about two-thirds of the seats, half of which go to the Muslim Brotherhood.

In June, parliament is dissolved when a court rules it is illegal. On June 30, 2012, Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi is elected president with 51.7 percent of the vote. He becomes Egypt's first freely-elected civilian and Islamist leader. In August, Morsi replaces Defense Minister Hussein Tantawi with military intelligence chief Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi.

**Morsi ousted, Sisi in power**

On July 3, 2013, Sisi ousts Morsi after massive protests against his one-year rule and freezes the Islamist-drafted constitution. Morsi denounces a "coup" as authorities launch a crackdown against his supporters. On August 14, security forces move against two pro-Morsi protest camps in Cairo, killing at least 700 people. Since Morsi's removal, at least 1,400 people have been killed in a police crackdown on protests, mostly

Islamists. Tens of thousands of Morsi's supporters have been arrested and hundreds, including Morsi himself, sentenced to death. In December, the government declares the Brotherhood a "terrorist" organization. On June 8, Sisi is sworn in as president having won 96.9 percent of a vote boycotted by the Brotherhood and secular dissidents. In late 2015, a new parliament dominated by supporters of Sisi is elected.

**Jihadist unrest, IMF loan**

On February 10, 2015, during a visit to Cairo by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Cairo and Moscow agree to jointly build Egypt's first nuclear power plant. On February 16, Cairo carries out air strikes against the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group in neighboring Libya after a graphic video is released showing the beheading there of 21 Christians, almost all Egyptian Copts. On October 31, a Russian passenger plane blows up in the Sinai, killing all 224 people on board. IS says it smuggled a bomb on board, while Moscow says an investigation has found that the plane was brought down by a bomb.

The jihadist group's Egyptian affiliate, which operates mostly in the north of the Sinai Peninsula, has killed hundreds of policemen and soldiers. On December 16, Saudi Arabia pledges a total of \$8 billion in investment and aid to Egypt, along with petrol supplies, over the next five years. On January 10, 2016, Egypt's new parliament convenes in its first session since the legislature was dissolved in 2012, after a legislative election dominated by pro-government candidates in the absence of any opposition. On November 3, Egypt's central bank floats the currency, leading to a sharp devaluation of the pound against the US dollar. The move comes amid economic reforms to meet conditions for Egypt to obtain a \$12-billion loan from the International Monetary Fund. On November 12, the IMF approves the loan. — AFP

**BAHRAIN COURT HEARS TWITTER 'EVIDENCE' AGAINST ACTIVIST**

**DUBAI:** The prosecution in a Bahraini court yesterday presented what it said was evidence against prominent rights activist Nabeel Rajab, accused of spreading "false information" about the kingdom, a judicial source said. They submitted an "expert report" that they said confirmed Rajab was in charge of his Twitter account where allegedly offensive tweets were posted, the source said.

The defense, for its part, reiterated its case that Rajab was not in control of his account at the time the tweets were posted. The court had ordered the appointment of an expert from the interior ministry's cyber crimes unit to determine who was operating Rajab's Twitter account. The hearing was adjourned to February 21.

Rajab is accused of "spreading false news and rumors and inciting propaganda during wartime which could undermine the war operations by the Bahraini armed forces and weaken the nation", according to state media. Sunni-ruled Bahrain is part of a Saudi-led coalition battling Shiite Houthi rebels in Yemen. — AFP



# TRUMP GETS OBAMA'S HOUSE, TITLE AND TWITTER HANDLE

**WASHINGTON:** Donald Trump built his campaign on early morning tweet storms and hashtag-worthy slogans. Now president, he's in control of the White House's powerful social media arsenal, including the official @POTUS Twitter account that has nearly 14 million followers. The technological transition came just as Trump took the oath of office Friday, giving him a clean digital slate while preserving hundreds of tweets and posts made during President Barack Obama's time in office.

The White House's official Twitter and Facebook accounts were quickly purged and rebranded for the new administration - the first time social media accounts have

been a part of the transition. Trump didn't rush to use the @POTUS account. Trump sent his first tweets as president from @realDonaldTrump, the personal account where his thousands of candid on everything from immigration to golf course conditions helped propel him into a political force.

"We will bring back our jobs. We will bring back our borders. We will bring back our wealth - and we will bring back our dreams!" Trump told his 21 million followers about an hour into his presidency. A few hours later, the @POTUS account sprung to life with a photo of Trump being introduced at the swearing-in cere-

mony and a link to a Facebook post on the occasion. The same image appeared on the White House's newly scrubbed Instagram account.

### Turning over social media

Tweets generated during the Obama administration have been archived and moved to separate accounts such as @FLOTUS44, @VP44 and @ObamaWhiteHouse. The same went for official White House accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Medium, Tumblr and YouTube. Turning over social media accounts is a modern twist on the complex presidential transition - the 21st cen-

tury version of handing over nuclear codes and the keys to the Oval Office.

The White House's digital transition plans, announced a week before the election, stressed that the National Archives would preserve social media content in a similar fashion as paper records. Twitter, which helped transition White House accounts on its platform, said anyone who started following POTUS during Obama's presidency would automatically start following POTUS44, too.

"Citizens and their elected leaders around the world have come to rely on Twitter as an instantaneous, direct means of communication," Twitter's Colin Crowell

said. "The transparency and accountability that this global, open Twitter conversation fosters are a benefit to all, and we're glad to see today's smooth @POTUS transition."

Obama presided over the White House's push into social media. The first official White House account, @whitehouse, was created in April 2009, his third month in office. The @POTUS account didn't come around until June 2013. Obama sent a farewell tweet from @POTUS on Friday morning and followed up a few hours later with one from his @BarackObama account. "Hi everybody! Back to the original handle," Obama wrote. "Is this thing still on?" — AP



**MOLCAXAC:** This Dec 23, 2016 photo shows Tamara Alcalá Dominguez reuniting with her grandmother Petra Bello Suarez in their home town of Molcaxac, Puebla state, Mexico, during Alcalá's first return home since she left Mexico for the US as a toddler. — AP

## TRUMP OVERSHADOWS YOUNG MIGRANTS' EMOTIONAL TRIP

### FINDING THEMSELVES IN THE JOURNEY HOME

**MOLCAXAC:** Tamara Alcalá Dominguez sobbed, barely able to speak, as she buried her face in the sweater of the woman who cared for her when she was a toddler. "My little girl, I hugged you so much," Petra Bello Suarez tearfully told her now 23-year-old granddaughter. "I have you in my arms, my girl. ... You found me still alive."

Alcalá's mother left her with Bello at age 2 when she went to seek a better life in the United States. A year later, the little girl joined her mother - and for two decades Alcalá's undocumented status prevented her from returning to Mexico. Then she became one of the hundreds of thousands protected from deportation under an Obama administration program known as DACA, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, which gave work permits to immigrants brought to the US as children and living in the country illegally.

Alcalá burst out of the shadows. In her American home in Everett, Washington, she got an officially sanctioned job and pursued an education with dreams of becoming a doctor. And last year she enrolled in a special program that allowed her to make this, her first journey back to Mexico, and then return safely again to the United States.

Grandmother and grandchild spent nearly two weeks catching up on 20 years, a reunion made bittersweet by the uncertainty ahead: They said their goodbyes just before Donald Trump took office amid vows to undo the protections his predecessor put in place, promises that leave immigrants worried about what comes next. For Alcalá, the trip may have been either a last opportunity to see her grandmother, or a chance to reacquire herself with her native land in case she winds up deported. "It brings a lot of peace of mind to know that I was able to interact with her at least once," she said, "before whatever happens in the future."

### The DREAM act

In the weeks just before Trump was sworn in, more than two dozen young immigrants made the same journey as Alcalá back to Mexico under a provision of DACA that lets recipients apply to leave the US for academic reasons or family emergencies and then legally return. The Associated Press traveled with them. More than 100 former child migrants have made five such trips sponsored by California State.

University, Long Beach - emotional journeys to what is often a barely remembered homeland, to reunite with family seen only in photos or on Skype. The students on this trip joined long-lost relatives for Christmas, then gathered after the new year for an academic course in Cuernavaca before flying home to America.

About 750,000 immigrants have enrolled in DACA. Legislation that would have included similar protections, called the DREAM Act, failed to get through Congress, prompting President Barack Obama to create the program with an executive action in 2012. Trump, as part of his tough talk on immigration, has vowed to end DACA, which he calls illegal

amnesty. Moderate Republicans are keenly aware of the political dangers of deporting college students and breaking up families. At a town hall Jan. 12, House Speaker Paul Ryan said Republicans had been working with the Trump team on a solution and vowed there would be no "deportation force" to round up people living in the country illegally.

Soft-spoken and shy, Alcalá's demeanor reflects an upbringing living with fear of deportation. Growing up, her family mostly kept to themselves and a few friends. Alcalá's mother encouraged her not to speak Spanish outside the home to avoid attracting attention. She wasn't to let on that she was Mexican, and never to tell people where her mother worked. "I always felt like I always had to hide everything," Alcalá said. Through high school, Alcalá was content with her under-the-table restaurant job.

But as college neared, the limitations of her legal status became increasingly clear. Her job was never going to be enough to pay for tuition. She began to question why her mother brought her to the US. Then at age 19 her life changed. News popped up on her phone one day about Obama's executive action. She arrived at her restaurant job with puffy eyes, determined to immediately apply for DACA. Once accepted, she quit the restaurant job and pursued a student position in a lab at the University of Washington. She recently graduated, and is working while studying for medical school entry exams.

### Rediscovering roots

Last year, Alcalá stumbled on a blog that talked about how some people with protection under DACA could travel, and that led her to the CSU Long Beach program to help migrants rediscover their roots. With her grandmother 75 years old and suffering from hypertension, diabetes and other ailments, Alcalá was determined not to repeat the anguish she felt when her grandfather died of prostate cancer before she could see him.

Alcalá arrived in Mexico City just before Christmas, and soon was on the road to her birthplace of Molcaxac. There, she dined on salty carne asada and the rich mole sauce for which Puebla state is famous. She leaned her head on her grandmother's shoulder while flipping through cellphone photos. She played hide-and-seek with cousins.

Alcalá followed Bello everywhere - to the store, to meet neighbors, to the town holiday party. They said goodbye just after the new year, with Alcalá's grandmother promising to teach her more the next time they reunite. "I told her this still wasn't the last goodbye," Alcalá said. "I told her I'd find a way to go visit her." On Inauguration Day, Alcalá was back in Washington state as all eyes were on Trump and the new immigration policies to come. Alcalá doesn't know what she'll do if her DACA protection ends under Trump; because her younger sister was born in the US, Alcalá could apply for a family reunification visa. — AP

## AUTHORS SLAM BOOKS SEIZURE IN EAST LIBYA

**TRIPOLI:** Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho joined more than 100 Libyan writers and intellectuals yesterday in condemning security forces for seizing books deemed "erotic" or anti-Islamic. Coelho's books were among those seized by authorities in the eastern Libyan town of Marj over the weekend. Security forces there published a video on Facebook over the weekend showing dozens of books imported from Egypt that were seized from a truck heading from Tobruk to Benghazi.

"Contacting the Brazilian embassy," Coelho tweeted yesterday. "There's little they can do but I can't just sit and watch my books being burned." Brazil's diplomatic mission to Libya is based in neighboring Tunisia. The books also included works by Egyptian Nobel Prize-winning novelist Naguib Mahfouz and Arabic translations of books by German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and American writer Dan Brown.

In the video, a security official and religious leaders in the town denounced a "cultural invasion," claiming the books contained information on Shiism, Christianity and

sorcery, as well as erotic material that conflicts with the Sunni Islam followed by most Libyans. It was unclear what would be done with the confiscated books. Marj, like most of eastern Libya, is under the control of the self-declared Libyan National Army commanded by military strongman Khalifa Haftar. Lawyer and activist Azza Maghur, novelist and painter Radhouane Bouchwaha and writer Idriss Al-Tayyib were among those denouncing the confiscation.

In an open letter, they called it "intellectual terrorism" and "an attempt to muzzle voices and confiscate opinion and thought". The seizure of the books triggered an outcry on social media. Libyans condemned it with the hashtag "books are read, not confiscated". Since a 2011 revolution that toppled and killed long-time dictator Moamer Kadhafi, a constellation of militias of various political and religious backgrounds have been struggling for control of Libya. Kadhafi's regime heavily censored political and ideological books he saw as threatening his authority. — AP

## TORNADOES LEAVE 19 DEAD

**ALBANY:** Chuck Stafford was watching the Atlanta Falcons rout the Green Bay Packers for the NFC title when bad weather suddenly began to pound his mobile home in southern Georgia. Stafford, 74, had just gotten to head to the bathroom during Sunday's football game when the wind started whipping the mobile home park in Albany where he has lived for 31 years. His home started shaking violently.

The gusts blew the windows out of Stafford's trailer, spraying shattered glass everywhere. But he was lucky. "I grabbed hold of my washer and dryer, got my legs spread apart and hunched over," Stafford said. "I guess I picked a good time to go to the bathroom." Stafford was among residents in Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina who were trying to pick up the pieces left behind by a powerful storm system that tore across the Deep South over the weekend, killing 19 people, including 15 in south Georgia. Rescuers were going through stricken areas yesterday, searching for possible survivors.

Dougherty County Coroner Michael Fowler said that a total of four people died Sunday in the county that includes Albany. Some 60 miles away, Coroner Tim Purvis in South Georgia's Cook County confirmed seven people died at the mobile home park in the rural community of Adel, where about half of the 40 homes were leveled.

The 15 killed in South Georgia included two deaths each in the counties of Berrien and Brooks. In South Carolina, the National Weather Service has confirmed that two tornadoes struck over the weekend, injuring one woman who was trapped in a mobile home that was damaged near Blackville. The weather service says a tornado touched down about 3:45 pm Saturday in Barnwell County and moved into Bamberg County. The other occurred in



**ALBANY:** A rescue worker enters a hole in the back of a mobile home in Big Pine Estates that was damaged by a tornado. — AP

Orangeburg County a few minutes later.

Weather experts say tornadoes can hit any time of year in the South - including in the dead of winter. Even north Florida was under the weekend weather threat. While the central US has a fairly defined tornado season - the spring - the risk of tornadoes "never really goes to zero" for most of the year in the Southeast, explained Patrick Marsh of the Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

He said 39 possible tornadoes were reported across the Southeast from early Saturday into Sunday evening - none immediately confirmed. Of that, 30 were reported in Georgia, four in Mississippi, and one each in Louisiana and South Carolina. January tornado outbreaks are rare but not unprecedented, particularly in the South.

Data from the Storm Prediction Center shows that, over the past decade, the nation has seen an average of 38 tornadoes in January, ranging

from a high of 84 in 2008 to just four in 2014. Jenny Bullard, 19, said she and her parents, Jeff and Carla, are glad to have escaped without major injury after an apparent tornado battered their home in Cook County, causing walls to collapse. They are a farming family dating back generations, living not far from where the mobile homes were destroyed. The middle section of their brick house was ripped off the slab. A piano was blown out of the house.

She recalled waking up to the sound of hail and then heard her father, calling her name. "There was a bunch of stuff on top of him and I just started throwing everything I could until I got to him," she said. Then she and her parents fled. The young woman went back through the debris for family photos and other belongings. Bricks lay scattered about, alongside their possessions and furniture. Across the street, where the Bullards kept farm equipment in sheds, one shed was blown apart. — AP



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For any further information and details please contact Mr. Fadel للإستفسار يرجى التواصل مع السيد فاضل المسلماني تلفون رقم

# 96969001

## CYPRUS COFFEE SHOP PROVIDES COMMON GROUND FOR PEACE

**NICOSIA:** Between two checkpoints in Europe's last divided capital a coffee shop provides a venue for Greek and Turkish Cypriots to overcome their differences and dream of a shared future. To sip coffee at the Home Cafe, visitors must first show their identity papers to border police to enter the UN-patrolled buffer zone that runs across Nicosia and the rest of the island.

The idea was to create a space in the buffer zone that is part of Cypriot civilian life, says Hayriye Ruzgar, communications officer for Home for Cooperation, a community centre where the coffee shop is located. The venue's location in no man's land makes it accessible to Cypriots from both sides, says the 25-year-old Turkish Cypriot. Cyprus has been divided since Turkish troops invaded in 1974 in response

to an Athens-inspired coup seeking union with Greece. Thousands of Cypriots fled their homes both ways across the dividing line. Nine years later, Turkish Cypriot leaders declared a breakaway state in the north that is only recognized by Ankara.

As Cypriot leaders press peace talks this week in Geneva toward reunifying the island, Home for Cooperation is a concrete example of both communities coming together, says Home Cafe manager Lefkia Heracleous. "It's a good way to show that practically we can work together," says the 37-year-old Greek Cypriot.

### 'Same sun, same rain'

The bicomunal centre-a project inspired by teachers from both sides-opened in 2011, eight years after the opening of the border allowed residents to cross

over. Jazz plays in the background at the cafe, whose calm interior of wooden tables, large prints of photographs and endless shelves of books provide an atmosphere conducive to dialogue. In the rest of the building, students flock to lessons including in Greek language, Turkish, English, salsa and tai chi. In the evenings, the coffee shop hosts concerts and debates organised by local associations. "We have the same food... the same sun, the same rain here in Cyprus. It's very important to speak the same language" too, says Marina Payiatsou, a Greek Cypriot sociologist learning Turkish.

When the centre opened, its teachers only had a few students, says Heracleous, but now they offer five classes of Turkish and three of Greek a week. Home for Cooperation is just one of several initiatives bringing the two communities together.

Beyond groups organizing cycling excursions and tango parties, one association brings youth from both sides together to shoot basketball hoops. For more than a decade, Peace Players has coached Greek and Turkish Cypriots aged 12 to 20 in the art of dribbling.

### 'Too late?'

"In the beginning we saw a lot of kids who were shy" and "didn't want to talk together", says Jessica Walton, a Peace Players member from the United States. "But then they see that they have more in common than what they thought. It doesn't take very long" even if they do not speak the same language, she says. But such initiatives remain limited in Cyprus, where those born after the 1974 invasion have never known a united island.

Sultan Cavusoglu, a 40-year-old Turkish Cypriot, says she enjoys meeting her southern neighbors when she studies English at Home for Cooperation. "It's easy to come here and it's a good way to meet Greek Cypriots," she says. But "it's too late to reconnect people," she says of the wider political process towards a united island.

In a 2004 referendum, Turkish Cypriots largely approved a UN peace plan but their Greek neighbors rejected it, putting a damper on hopes for reunification. Ruzgar, however, remains optimistic. "These communities have become strangers to each other," she says. But "people ask more questions every day". They have started "to realize that we cannot go on like this forever". Sustainable peace will only come when both communities work together, she says. "Achieving peace is more than a signature." — AFP



A handout picture released yesterday by the Corpo Nazionale Soccorso Alpino e Speleologico (CNSAS) shows a rescue team carrying puppies found at the avalanche-hit Hotel Rigopiano. — AFP

## QUESTIONS ARISE OVER ITALY'S RESPONSE TO SNOW-HIT HOTEL

**FARINDOLA:** Questions intensified yesterday into whether Italian authorities underestimated the risks facing a snowbound mountain hotel hours before an avalanche hit, as rescue crews weighed using heavy equipment to try to reach 23 people in the hotel who are still buried under the snow.

Five days after up to 60,000 tons of snow, rocks and uprooted trees plowed into the Hotel Rigopiano in central Italy, rescue crews were still digging by hand and with shovels and chainsaws to try to find more survivors. Firefighter spokesman Luca Cari said emergency crews were working with an "operational hypothesis" that the snow might not have reached all parts of the hotel, and that air pockets might still be keeping people alive. But he said: "We are fighting against time."

"We know we need to work fast, but in relation to an environment that doesn't allow for fast intervention," he said on Sky TG24. Heavy machinery, including an excavator, has reached the disaster site northeast of Rome but crews hadn't decided whether to use it, yet given the risk that it could collapse snow and walls on top of the 23 people still underneath. So far nine people have been pulled out alive from the snow-crust hotel debris, and the first were released yesterday from the Pescara hospital, officials said. Six people are confirmed dead, although one of them remained trapped inside the rubble.

### Underestimated threat

Meanwhile, the investigation intensified into whether local government officials underestimated the threat facing the hotel, which was already covered with two meters (six feet) of snow, had no phone

service and had dwindling gas supplies when a series of earthquakes rocked central Italy on the morning of Jan 18.

Italian newspapers yesterday reproduced what they said was an email sent by the hotel owner to local and provincial authorities that afternoon asking for help because "the situation has become worrisome." "The hotel guests are terrorized by the earthquakes and have decided to stay out in the open," Bruno Di Tommaso wrote. "We've tried to do everything to keep them calm, but since they can't leave due to the blocked roads, they're prepared to spend the night in their cars." Already, the Pescara prefect's office has faced criticism after a local restaurant owner said his calls reporting the avalanche were ignored. Quintino Marcella said he called the office after receiving word from one of his chefs who was vacationing at the Hotel Rigopiano and escaped the avalanche by chance.

The ANSA news agency reported yesterday that the prefect's office had called Di Tommaso after receiving the avalanche alarm, but that the hotel owner - who was in coastal Pescara at the time, not in the hotel - hadn't heard anything himself, possibly leading officials to underestimate Marcella's report.

The president of the province, Antonio Di Marco, has confirmed he saw an email from Di Tommaso and had arranged for a snowplow to clear the road that night, the ANSA news agency reported. The avalanche, however, hit sometime before 5:40 p.m., when Marcella received the call from his chef. One aspect of the criminal investigation into the disaster involves discovering where the province's snowplows were being used, news reports said. — AP

## MUTILATED BODIES FOUND IN MEXICAN TOURIST PORT

**GUADALAJARA:** Seven headless, mutilated bodies have been found in a taxi abandoned near the seaside resort of Manzanillo in western Mexico, apparent victims of the country's epidemic of drug violence, local officials said Sunday. "They were mutilated, apparently decapitated, and one of the victims was a woman," the port city's police chief Carlos Heredia told AFP.

He said a message left on the vehicle, which was found early Saturday on the road from Manzanillo to the town of Cihuatlan, was signed by the increasingly powerful Jalisco New Generation drug cartel. That cartel is blamed for a surge in murders in the tiny Pacific state of Colima, where Manzanillo is located. The Colima prosecutor's office said the seven bodies had yet to be identified.

The past six months have seen an increase in killings linked to disputes within the Jalisco cartel, police records show. On January 16 and 17, six people were shot to death in three separate incidents in Manzanillo.

Authorities believe all were linked to organized crime. With drug baron Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's recent extradition to the United States, his powerful Sinaloa cartel is expected to face a rising challenge from the Jalisco gang, a

onetime ally now estimated to be worth \$50 billion.

The Jalisco group's incursions into Sinaloa territory have turned Colima state into the Mexican region with the highest homicide rate, with 72 killings per 100,000 inhabitants last year. The gang, also known by its Spanish initials CJNG, has also launched bold attacks on the police and military. In March and April 2015, the cartel killed 20 police officers in two separate ambushes in western Jalisco state. In May of that year, the gang used a rocket-propelled grenade to down a military helicopter, killing seven soldiers and a policewoman.

The latest killings in Manzanillo came less than a week after a mass shooting in another normally peaceful Mexican resort, this one on the Caribbean coast.

A shooting erupted early yesterday at a music festival in Playa del Carmen, south of Cancun, leaving at least five people dead and 15 injured, the mayor said. Three of the dead were foreigners. Authorities attributed the attack to a turf war between drug cartels. The region, popular among American and European tourists, had been largely spared from the drug violence plaguing other parts of Mexico. — AFP

## EX-PM FIGHTS LEFTIST OUTSIDER FOR FRENCH PRESIDENTIAL NOD

### A BATTLE FOR THE PARTY'S SOUL

**PARIS:** Leftist outsider Benoit Hamon will fight ex-prime minister Manuel Valls for the French Socialist presidential nomination next Sunday after winning the first round of a primary seen as a battle for the party's soul. Dismissed as a serious contender when the campaign began in December, the 49-year-old former education minister placed himself in the driving seat with what he called a "message of hope and renewal".

With Europe apparently shifting rightwards and the deeply unpopular President Francois Hollande ruling himself out, the Socialist primary has been billed as a fight-a left-leaning faction represented by Hamon versus Valls' centrist, pro-business camp. The leftist Liberation daily on Monday billed the second round as a battle between "a left that takes charge versus a left that dreams."

Hamon scored 36.3 percent with Valls trailing on 31.1 percent, according to results published late Sunday. Between 1.6 million and 1.7 million voted, the head of the primary organising committee, Christophe Borgel, told RTL radio-less than half the four million who took part in the first round of the rightwing primary. Maverick former economy minister Arnaud Montebourg was eliminated with 17 percent and immediately threw his support behind Hamon. But whoever wins the Socialist nomination faces long odds.

### 'Clear choice'

Polls show the presidential election coming down to a contest between conservative ex-premier Francois Fillon, far-right leader Marine Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron, the 39-year-old former economy minister. A defiant Valls, 54, told his supporters the Socialist primary runoff would be "a clear choice between unachievable promises and a credible left".

Choosing Hamon, he said, would mean "certain defeat" in the presidential election whereas he offered a "possible victory". Some Socialist supporters said Hamon was a breath of fresh air. The mild-mannered ex-minister said he offered hope to a party ailing after five years under Hollande-with Valls by his side until December-beset by economic sluggishness, labour protests and infighting among the Socialists.

His supporters had voted "through conviction and not out of resignation", Hamon said. Hamon



PARIS: Former prime minister and candidate for the left-wing primaries, Manuel Valls gestures before speaking following the first round of the left-wing primary for the 2017 French presidential election. — AFP

performed strongly in three TV debates crammed into a short campaign, attracting attention with a proposal to give the poor and people aged 18-25 a "universal income" rising from 600 euros to 750 euros (\$640 to \$800) a month. He also campaigned heavily on the environment. Valls poured scorn on the universal income proposal, saying it would ruin France.

The two men face off in a TV debate on Wednesday. The photogenic Macron has stolen the limelight from his former Socialist government colleagues in recent weeks, with his campaign speeches packed to overflowing. But with rightwing ideas apparently taking root across Europe, most opinion polls show a Fillon-Le Pen presidential showdown as the most likely scenario in May.

Spanish-born Valls appears to have been punished for his association with Hollande, struggling at times in a contest he had been expected to dominate. He set out to modernize his party but has struggled to unite his camp, with his rivals accusing him of betraying leftist

ideals by forcing through labour market reforms.

### Tactical voting?

Some Socialist heavyweights have hinted they could abandon their party's nominee and back Macron instead if he looks to have a better chance of reaching the second round of the presidential election against Le Pen. Macron himself has ruled out a pact with the Socialists, promising that his En Marche (On the Move) party will field hundreds of candidates in parliamentary elections in June.

Communist-backed firebrand Jean-Luc Melenchon, who like Macron is standing as an independent, also threatens to split the leftwing vote. The influence of Le Pen, who leads the anti-immigration National Front (FN), has overshadowed the entire presidential campaign so far. She 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. — AFP

## POPULIST WHO CALLED TO END NAZI GUILT CAN STAY, SAYS GERMAN PARTY

**BERLIN:** German rightwing Populist Party AfD decided yesterday not to expel a leading member over a speech criticizing Berlin's Holocaust memorial and urging the country to stop atoning for its Nazi past. The AfD (Alternative for Germany) executive board held a three-hour telephone conference in which it voted to instead impose unspecified "disciplinary measures" against Bjoern Hoecke, party chairman in the central state of Thuringia.

"The board concludes that the statements made by Bjoern Hoecke in his Dresden speech on January 17 hurt the image of the party," it said in a statement. The AfD leadership said it would review "all legal and political aspects that are relevant" in determining what action to take against Hoecke but ruled out removing him from the party.

The measure passed 10-3 after a heated debate, sources told German media. Amid an internal power struggle ahead of a September general election, AfD leader Frauke Petry had called Hoecke a "burden on the party" last week after his address in which he condemned the Holocaust memorial as a "monument of shame in the heart of the capital". "We need nothing less than a 180-degree shift in the politics of remembrance," Hoecke added in the remarks to chants of "Germany, Germany".

The comments triggered an uproar, with Social Democrat vice chief Ralf Stegner accusing him of making a "hate incitement speech"-which is illegal in Germany-that called for history to be rewritten. Germany's Central Council of Jews also expressed outrage, saying Hoecke was trampling on the memory of six million Jewish Holocaust victims murdered by the Nazis. But AfD deputy chief Alexander Gauland, who like Hoecke belongs to the hard nationalist wing of the party, defended the politician, telling national news agency DPA that he had "in no manner criticised the remembrance of the Holocaust".

Hoecke himself yesterday blasted the board's conclusions as well as the critical media coverage of his comments, which he called a "malicious and deliberately slanderous interpretation". A poll Sunday in the Bild am Sonntag newspaper showed that 61 percent of Germans believed the party should kick Hoecke out for his speech. The AfD started out in 2013 as an anti-euro party but has since morphed into an anti-immigration group attacking Chancellor Angela Merkel's liberal refugee policy, which brought some 890,000 refugees to Germany in 2015 alone. — AFP



BERLIN: This file photo taken on September 15, 2014 shows the then Alternative fuer Deutschland (AfD) party's main candidate in Thuringia Bjoern Hoecke (C) speaking at a press conference in Berlin, following regional elections in the German states of Brandenburg and Thuringia. — AFP

## GERMAN POLICE ARREST MAN ON SUSPICION OF PLANNING ATTACK

**BERLIN/VIENNA:** A 21-year-old man arrested in Germany on suspicion of planning an Islamist militant attack has admitted links with a second suspect in Vienna who had been in touch with jihadists in Albania, German investigators said yesterday. German security police arrested the man and a woman during a raid on a flat in the western city of Neuss on Saturday, the regional Criminal Investigation Office (LKA) said. The woman, identified by local media as the man's wife, was later released.

German authorities have been on high alert since a Tunisian man whose bid for asylum had been rejected rammed a truck into a Christmas market in Berlin on Dec 19, killing 12 people. A spokesman for the Duesseldorf prosecutor's office said the 21-year-old suspect admitted during questioning that a 17-year Austrian with Albanian roots who was arrested in Vienna had

visited him for two weeks at the end of last year, though the purpose of the visit was not immediately clear. Austrian officials initially said the Vienna suspect was 18. A search of the suspect's apartment in Neuss did not turn up any evidence of an imminent attack and no weapons or explosives were found, a prosecutor's spokesman said. Germany's Focus magazine said the man was planning a bomb attack on police and soldiers. Both he and the suspect detained in Austria had experimented with materials to create explosives in the Neuss apartment, it said.

The Neuss arrest followed a tip-off from Austrian authorities, according to Frank Scheulen, spokesman for the LKA in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The man, whose nationality was not given, was arrested on suspicion of planning to carry out a "serious act of violent subversion", Scheulen said. — Reuters

## MELBOURNE VIGIL FOR SHOPPING MALL DEAD AS SUSPECT CHARGED

**SYDNEY:** Thousands of people attended a vigil yesterday in memory of the five victims mown down by a car at Melbourne's busiest mall last week as police charged the suspected driver with murder. The 26-year-old man, charged with five counts of murder, sustained gunshot wounds when police arrested him after the incident on Friday.

Mourners gathered at Melbourne's Federation Square for a minute's silence to remember those killed in the tragedy. Henry Dow, who witnessed the carnage, made a stirring speech, recalling a taxi driver who went to the aid of

those struck by the vehicle. "Many images and sounds will stay with me much longer than I might like, but I'm glad I've seen, and hope I never forget just how brave and loving strangers can be. I love this city," Dow said.

Other witnesses had earlier described "bodies flying through the air" as the vehicle sped through the shopping strip, leaving a trail of injured and a pram upturned on the sidewalk. A man in his 30s, a man and woman both in their 20s, a ten-year-old girl, along with the baby thrown from the pram were all killed. Fifteen people

remain in hospital, with two still in a critical condition.

"It's been a tragic time... but the people of Melbourne have pulled together and the spirit of the city was very evident there just as it was on the day of that shocking attack," Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said on Australian radio. The accused killer - who had been pursued by police earlier on Friday for allegedly stabbing his brother - has a history of family violence, mental illness and drug abuse.

He failed to appear in court on Monday because he was unwell, his

lawyer told Fairfax media. A police statement said he was remanded to appear in court in August. Footage circulating on social media showed the man half-hanging out of the side of the vehicle and driving erratically at one of Melbourne's busiest intersections moments before the tragedy. "A very, very large percentage of the cases police deal with, on the streets, involve people who have that combination of mental illness exacerbated - made worse - by drugs and alcohol," Turnbull said, adding "this is a big and growing problem".

Victoria state premier Daniel Andrews announced a review of the state's bail system, after police said the suspect had been bailed on unspecified but serious charges just days before the rampage. "Each of the families and those victims are owed nothing less than the hard work required and our singular focus to make the (bail) change necessary to make Victoria safer," Andrews told reporters. Additional magistrates will be made available after hours to determine bail conditions, rather than the lesser qualified bail justices often used today, he said. — AFP



MANILA: Miss Universe contestants walk past Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte during a courtesy call at Malacanang Palace. — AFP

## PHILIPPINE PREZ TAMES WORDS FOR MISS UNIVERSE HOPEFULS

### DELIVERS SPEECH WITHOUT SEX JOKES, EXPLETIVES

**MANILA:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte delivered a speech without sex jokes and expletives yesterday, telling a gathering of Miss Universe contestants that he was told to be careful with his language. Duterte told pageant contestants at the Malacanang presidential palace he had never been in a "roomful of beautiful women," adding "I hope that this day will never end."

Eighty-six women will vie for the Miss Universe crown on Jan 30 in Manila. The president known for his expletives-laden impromptu speeches said he read prepared remarks for the beauty pageant contestants "because they told me that I must behave in my language, in the adjectives that I would be using to characterize or define your beauty, all of you."

Duterte, 71, has been criticized for a number of his remarks on women, including a comment

in November about the length of Vice President Leni Robredo's skirt in a Cabinet meeting and a rape joke about an Australian murder victim during the presidential campaign last year. His speech departed from routine also by not mentioning his deadly crackdown on illegal drugs. Duterte instead heaped praise on the Miss Universe aspirants and later smiled as they had several pictures taken with him.

"I must say that God is really good," he said. "Aside from the worries of governance, with all the troubles in the world, when we look at you, we forget the universe but only you." He thanked Miss Universe officials for allowing the Philippines to host the international pageant, which he said has brought enormous pride and joy for countries of winning candidates, including the Philippines, where three winners have come from. "More than presenting beauty and

brains, the Miss Universe competition or any beauty contestant for that matter is an opportunity for you to represent your country, to promote your advocacies, and to advance women empowerment to a greater audience," Duterte said. Left-wing activists, however, said the pageant couldn't be used to gloss over exploitation of women. "Despite the pomp and supposed celebration of women power surrounding the 65th Miss Universe pageant, women here and abroad remain in their unglamorous and exploited state," the left-wing Rep.

Emmi De Jesus said of the Gabriela party-list group. "In the Philippines, 22 women and children are raped every day. Women workers remain concentrated in low-paying, contractual jobs. And mothers face rising budget pressure amid looming price hikes in basic commodities, power and water," she said. —AP

## INDONESIA POLICE QUESTION CLERIC OVER COMMUNIST SYMBOLS LECTURE

**JAKARTA:** Indonesian police yesterday questioned a hardline Muslim cleric over a hate speech complaint by a civil group following a lecture in which he said new banknotes carried the communist hammer-and-sickle symbol. Communism remains a highly sensitive issue in Indonesia after bloody anti-communist purges in the country in 1965 and symbols and some literature remain outlawed.

Habib Rizieq, head of the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), is being investigated over two separate complaints, as authorities take a tougher stance against fundamentalist groups in the world's largest Muslim-majority nation. Rizieq made the comments about the banknotes in a videotaped lecture last month.

"This is already a formal investigation," said Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono. "We are looking looking further into his comments on whether the money has the hammer-and-sickle symbol." The central bank has denied the new banknotes carry any communist symbols. "What's being seen by some people as a hammer and sickle symbol is actually the Bank Indonesia logo...and it is part of the security elements in the notes to prevent counterfeiting," Bank Indonesia said in a statement this month.

Last week, Rizieq was questioned by police over claims that he made defamatory comments in 2014 about one of Indonesia's founding fathers, Sukarno, and had questioned the legitimacy of the state ideology, Pancasila.

If found guilty, he could face up to four years in prison. The cleric has denied wrongdoing in both cases. Rizieq's supporters condemned the investigation of the complaints as indicating the "criminalization" of their leader.

"This is systematic tyranny against Habib Rizieq, which destroys the pillars of justice," said the FPI's Jakarta chief, Novel Bamukmin. "It's a form of criminalizing the clerics." Rizieq and the FPI were key drivers behind recent rallies against the Christian governor of Jakarta, whom they accused of insulting the Muslim holy book, the Quran. The rallies were the biggest Indonesia has seen in nearly 20 years.

Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama is in on trial for blasphemy, but remains one of the frontrunners in next month's governor election. Purnama has denied blasphemy. There are concerns he has been unfairly targeted and that the government has not done enough to protect the rights of religious and ethnic minorities. — Reuters

## MALAYSIA ARRESTS FOUR LINKED TO ISLAMIC STATE CELL IN PHILIPPINES

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian police said yesterday they had arrested four people, among them three foreigners, with links to an Islamic State cell based out of the southern Philippines. Muslim-majority Malaysia has been on high alert since an attack last January by Islamic State-linked militants in Jakarta, the capital of neighbouring Indonesia.

The cell, operating out of the province of Mindanao, was led by a former university lecturer, Mahmud Ahmad, who is known to be a Malaysian member of Islamic State, Malaysian Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar said in a statement. The cell had planned to use the east Malaysian state of Sabah as a transit point for South Asian and Southeast Asian militant recruits looking to join Islamic State in the Philippines, Khalid said.

He said one of the arrested suspects, a Philippine man, had been instructed to recruit new followers from Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar, and arrange for their travel to Mindanao. The

suspect, a watch-seller, was arrested in Sabah along with a Malaysian woman who was planning to marry and travel with him to the Philippines, Khalid said.

Police also arrested two Bangladeshi men in the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, who had allegedly been recruited by the Philippine militant group, Abu Sayyaf, and pledged its allegiance to the group's leader and the country's most-wanted man, Isnilon Hapilon.

Last June, militants who claimed to be fighting for Islamic State said in a video they had chosen Isnilon to lead the group's Southeast Asian faction. The video, posted on social media, marked Islamic State's acceptance of allegiance by Southeast Asian supporters and called for them to launch attacks in the region. Malaysia has arrested more than 250 people between 2013 and 2016 over militant activities linked to Islamic State. —Agencies

## PANEL'S REPORT IN FAVOR OF JAPAN'S EMPEROR ABDICATE

**TOKYO:** A government panel studying a possible abdication of Japanese Emperor Akihito released an interim report yesterday in favor of enacting special legislation that would apply to him but not to future monarchs. The panel is looking at how to accommodate Akihito's apparent abdication wish, which he expressed last August when he cited concerns that his age and health may start limiting his ability to fulfill his duties. Akihito turned 83 last month.

The report paves the way for a parliamentary discussion. The panel's final report is expected in the spring, while the government is reportedly eyeing an abdication bill adopted in several

months. The six-member panel, after interviewing constitutional and monarchy experts, compiled the report suggesting that an abdication under a one-time law would provide flexibility in adapting to each emperor and social environment in the future, while setting a permanent system covering all future emperors would be difficult.

Some experts have said the Imperial House Law, the supreme law overseeing Japan's monarchy, needs to be revised. The report provided pluses and minuses on all options, urging further discussion among lawmakers and the public. It said the emperor's title, role and other details of his post-abdication life would be

addressed later. The panel deliberately avoided spelling out a conclusion because "we wanted the people to think and discuss what would be best to relieve concerns of the Emperor," panel chief Takashi Imai, honorary chairman of a powerful Japanese business lobby Keidanren, told reporters after handing the report to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

### 'Long history'

An abdication of the emperor is "an extremely important issue involving the foundation of our country, its long history and the future and needs to be discussed thoroughly," Abe said. If legislation is enacted, Emperor Akihito would be the first to abdicate since Emperor Kokaku 200 years ago. Media reports have said officials were eyeing an abdication at the end of 2018, when Akihito turns 85 after and his reign marks the 30th year.

The current law, established in 1947, is largely inherited from a 19th century constitution that banned abdication as a risk to stability. But the experts say there is no such risk as far as Akihito's abdication is concerned, the risks can be eliminated with additional legal procedures in the future. Throughout much of its history, Japan's monarchy served more of a ceremonial and religious function than a governing one. But late 19th century modernizers elevated the throne to use as a rallying point for the nation.

Akihito's father was worshipped as a living god during Japan's wartime aggression in Asia before renouncing his divinity and become redefined as a symbolic figure under the post-war constitution. Akihito devoted himself to being a symbolic figure, while trying to soothe the wounds from his father's era.

Many Japanese ultra-conservatives want greater status for the emperor and oppose abdication as a potential risk to a stable monarchy. The government panel in its report avoids some of the most heated issues, such as whether females should be allowed in the current male-only succession and concerns about a shortage of successors to the Chrysanthemum throne.

Akihito has two sons but only one of his four grandchildren is male. Some experts say Akihito's possible abdication is a wakeup call to the larger issues of aging and a shortage of successors in Japan's 2,000-year-old monarchy - issues that reflect overall concerns about the country's aging society and declining population. — AP



TOKYO: In this Friday, Jan 20, 2017 file photo, Japan's Emperor Akihito reads a statement to formally open the ordinary Diet session at the upper house of parliament. — AFP



TAIPEI: Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen (R) speaks in front of a "Year of the Rooster" decoration as Defence Minister Kent Feng (L) looks on while attending a lunch at the Defence Ministry. — AFP

## CHINA URGES TRUMP TO GRASP IMPORTANCE OF 'ONE CHINA'

**BEIJING:** The new US administration must fully understand the importance of the "one China" policy and appreciate that the issue of Taiwan is highly sensitive for the Beijing government, China said yesterday. US President Donald Trump, who was inaugurated on Friday, said in December the United States did not necessarily have to stick to its long-standing position that Taiwan is part of "one China".

Earlier, Trump broke with decades of precedent by taking a telephone call from Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen. According to Beijing's one China principle, Taiwan and mainland China are inalienable parts of a single "China". Beijing views Taiwan as a wayward province, to be brought under its control by force if necessary. However, proudly democratic Taiwan shows not interest in being ruled by Beijing.

"We urge the new administration to fully understand the high sensitivity of the Taiwan issue and to continue pursuing the one China policy," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular

briefing in Beijing. Hua called the policy the "political foundation" of future relations between the United States and China. She said any US government had the obligation to stand by the promises made by both main US political parties and "strictly" maintain non-diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

Hua also reiterated China's position on the South China Sea, saying the United States should not meddle in issues of China's sovereign territory. Both "history and reality" prove good relations between China and the United States were positive for the Asia-Pacific region, she said. China claims most of the energy-rich South China Sea through which about \$5 trillion in shipborne trade passes every year. Neighbors Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims. US Secretary of State nominee Rex Tillerson has previously suggested that China would not be allowed access to islands in the region, prompting Chinese state media to say the United States would need to "wage war" to cut off China's access. — Reuters

## TRUMP PROPERTIES FACE GLOBAL TERROR RISK

Continued from Page 1

But other properties are in areas that have seen violence, like Trump Towers Istanbul, the Turkish city hit hard by a string of bomb and gun attacks carried out by the Islamic State group. Flags and banners around the site bear the president's name, while private security guards man X-ray machines and metal detectors at its entrances, a standard practice in the city.

In Bali, where bombs planted by the Islamic extremist group Jemaah Islamiyah targeting bar-goers killed 202 people in 2002, Trump's organization has licensed the president's name to a planned luxury resort. Bali police spokesman Hengky Widjaja said no one had requested extra security for the property and authorities had no plans to increase their presence there.

A Trump-named residential tower is under construction in the Indian city of Mumbai, which was hit by a 2008 terror attack blamed on the Pakistani militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba that killed 166 people. Mumbai police spokesman Ashok Dudge said he had no knowledge of any additional security around the tower.

Another tower is being built in Manila in the Philippines, a nation where Abu Sayyaf militants conduct frequent kidnappings for ransom and where President Rodrigo Duterte wages a brutal crackdown on drug deal-

ers that has killed thousands. Philippine police say they haven't monitored any specific threat toward Trump properties, though the tower rising in Manila sits in an area under an intensified security watch after Duterte declared a "state of lawlessness" following a September bombing.

Even Trump's soon-to-open golf course in Dubai in the United Arab Emirates could be a target, despite the fact the Gulf Arab nation has largely escaped the violence gripping its Mideast neighbors. In the UAE's capital of Abu Dhabi, an American school teacher was stabbed to death in a mall bathroom by an extremist in Dec 2014. Authorities also have imprisoned others over disrupted terror plots in the country, which hosts some 5,000 members of the US military. Dubai police have declined to discuss safety on the golf course while the developer says it plans no additional security there. The US Embassy in Abu Dhabi did not respond to questions about the golf course, which Trump's children are expected to soon visit.

All of the Trump properties should be looked at by outside security consultants, said Christopher A Hagon, a managing partner of The Incident Management Group and a former London police officer with experience in diplomatic security. However, he acknowledged such commercial properties can't be surrounded by concrete blast walls and controlled like a US Embassy. — AP

## SYRIA TALKS OFF TO ROCKY START

Continued from Page 1

The rebels' announcement came as Russia's defense ministry said its warplanes had bombed the Islamic State group in the area around Deir Ezzor in eastern Syria, where regime forces have been fighting the militants. A member of the rebel delegation told AFP that the group would agree to seeing Russia as a guarantor of the truce but not Iran, another Assad backer. The negotiations in the Kazakh capital come amid a rapprochement between regime ally Russia and rebel backer Turkey, who together brokered the current truce in December after months of US disengagement in the conflict.

Several rounds of failed talks in Geneva saw political opposition figures take the lead in negotiating with the regime. But in Astana, the 14-member opposition delegation is composed solely of rebels leading the armed uprising, with members of the political opposition serving as advisors. The initiative has been widely welcomed, but the two sides arrived in Astana with apparently divergent ideas on their aim.

Chief rebel negotiator Mohammad Alloush said in his opening statement that the opposition was focused on bolstering the nationwide truce, while Assad has insisted rebels lay down their arms in exchange for an amnesty

deal. "We came here to reinforce the ceasefire as the first phase of this process," Alloush said in comments broadcast online. "We will not proceed to the next phases until this actually happens on the ground."

Damascus has also called for a "comprehensive" political solution to a conflict that has killed more than 310,000 and displaced more than half of Syria's population. The head of the regime delegation, Syria's UN ambassador Bashar Al-Jaafari, said in his opening comments carried by the country's SANA state news agency that he hoped the talks "will reinforce the cessation of hostilities". He added the government was keen to separate the rebels from the Islamic State group and former Al-Qaeda affiliate Fateh al-Sham Front.

Delegation spokesman Abu Zeid said the rebels were concerned with "more than just a ceasefire". "The issue is putting monitoring, investigation and accountability mechanisms in place," he told AFP. "We want these mechanisms so that this doesn't play out over and over." Southern Front spokesman Issam Al-Rayyes, whose faction is represented in the rebel delegation, dismissed the possibility of a political solution to the conflict without the truce being observed. "There's no way to implement a political solution or go for a transitional period without implementing a ceasefire," he told reporters. "This is the reason we are here." — AFP

## GLAD TO SEE OBAMA GO, GULF EXPECTS TRUMP...

Continued from Page 1

will happen in the world that will require a careful response, a careful policy, and Trump will react emotionally. That is always going to be the worry. But that's his attitude. That's who he is. Those who like Trump like that aspect of his personality," he said.

Some Arab commentators see a political resemblance between Trump and Reagan, who also campaigned on the slogan of making America great again. Reagan was also a strong backer of the military, although in the Middle East his 1981-89 presidency was marked by extended crises involving Iran, Lebanon and Libya. While few in the Gulf expect Trump to repudiate the Iran nuclear deal despite his threats to do so, most want Tehran pressured to roll back what Gulf Arabs see as subversion in fellow Arab states by a revolutionary theocracy. "I think he is going to be very, very tough on Iran. He will be decisive," said a Gulf Arab businessman, noting he expected the deal-maker Trump would demand something in return.

Moments after his speech, the White House website said the Trump administration would make defeating "radical Islamic terror groups" its top foreign policy goal and would develop a "state of the art" missile defense system to protect against attacks from Iran and North Korea. That will be the job in particular of Secretary of Defense James Mattis, Secretary of State nominee Rex Tillerson, and CIA chief nominee Mike Pompeo, all well known to Saudi officials.

In particular Mattis, a retired Marine general known for distrust of Iran, is a familiar figure to Gulf Arab rulers. A former leader of Central Command, which oversees US military operations in the Middle East and South Asia, Mattis said in Senate confirmation hearings this month that Iran was "the biggest destabilizing force in the Middle East and its policies are contrary to our interests". Such views play

well with Gulf Arabs. "We hope Trump can correct (Obama's) policy, and while we are not sure of that yet, his choices to run the administration all sound experienced," said Rashed.

On Syria, Yemen, Iraq and Bahrain, arenas for a tussle for influence between Riyadh and Tehran, Obama's preference for dialogue appeared weak to some Gulf Arabs. Trump's own vision of "peace through strength" may change that perception of a passive Washington, and encourage Gulf Arabs to press on with a military build-up that relies heavily on US and European defense companies. Any number of issues could yet disturb ties - Jerusalem, oil policy, perceived anti-Muslim prejudice, and a US law allowing lawsuits against Riyadh over the Sept 11 attacks.

One of the most explosive appears to be Trump's vow to move the US Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which would upend decades of US policy, and his appointment as ambassador a lawyer who raised money for a major Jewish settlement. Israel and the Palestinians, who are seeking a state of their own, both claim Jerusalem as their capital. "It would create a lot of chaos, a new intifada maybe," a Gulf source with knowledge of official thinking said, adding Trump would think long and hard about a move that would be "a huge burden on the peace process".

Another issue is Trump's policy of seeking to destroy Islamic State. Gulf Arab states agree with him on the goal, but use of polarizing language seen as demonizing Muslims, and reliance solely on military force, would raise objections. Such language could also inflame militancy by hindering the hearts and minds effort needed to counter the thinking behind the violence. "If he goes back to the era of Bush, and you are either with us or with the terrorists; this polarized idea, and then also the idea that military forces can solve it, then I think we will find ourselves in a very difficult situation, with a war that is going to be unwinnable," Yafai said. — Reuters

## MP SAYS AMIR PROMISES TO RESOLVE...

Continued from Page 1

MPs are preparing for an overhaul of the citizenship law that would bar the government from revoking citizenships without a final court ruling.

In another development, Ghanem said yesterday he had received a letter from Information and Youth Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah asking for clarification over a number of points included in a grilling filed by MPs Waleed Al-Tabtabaei, Al-Humaidi Al-Subaei and Abdulwahab Al-Babtain.

The three lawmakers filed to grill the minister for failing to lift international sanctions on Kuwaiti sports and allegations of financial and administrative violations. The grilling is scheduled to be debated in the Assembly on Jan 31 and it could end in a no-confidence motion,

which if passed, will mean an automatic dismissal of the minister. Ghanem gave no details about the contents of the clarifications sought but parliamentary sources explained that the minister cast constitutional doubts over certain points in the grilling. He also demanded to know names of some assistant undersecretaries that were allegedly involved in violations.

Meanwhile, the constitutional court yesterday delayed its ruling on election petitions in the first, second and third constituencies until Feb 13 amid demands by defense lawyers for scrapping the National Assembly and calling for fresh elections. One lawyer said the results of the election as listed by the election authorities contained several "scandals", adding there were 880 votes in a booth where only 500 voters are allowed to vote.

## TRUMP PULLS US OUT OF PACIFIC TRADE DEAL

Continued from Page 1

Yesterday, Trump was hosting separate meetings with business leaders, unions and members of both houses of Congress. He also met the speaker of the House of Representatives, Paul Ryan. Tax reform was likely to be high on the agenda. "What we're doing is we are going to be cutting taxes massively for both the middle class and for companies, and that's massively," he said. "A bigger thing, and that surprised me, is the fact that we're going to be cutting regulation massively."

Reform of Obama's healthcare laws is also likely to be on the menu. Trump has publicly promised that none of the tens of millions of Americans who obtained health insurance under Obama will lose it. That makes any meaningful changes difficult to pay for. But the more

urgent task for Trump may be to keep always skeptical establishment Republicans on board the "Trump train".

Trump's approval rating is around 40 percent, according to the RealClearPolitics average, low for a president just starting out. That could make legislators think twice about toeing the line with an unpopular leader. But Trump's bareknuckle style has also kept dissent in check, with some terrified they will become the object of a presidential tweet that sets off a world of political pain. Senator Ben Sasse was among the few who had mild criticism for Trump's decision on the trans-Pacific trade deal. "It's clear that those of us who believe trade is good for American families have done a terrible job defending trade's historic successes and celebrating its future potential," he said. "We have to make the arguments and we have to start now." — AFP



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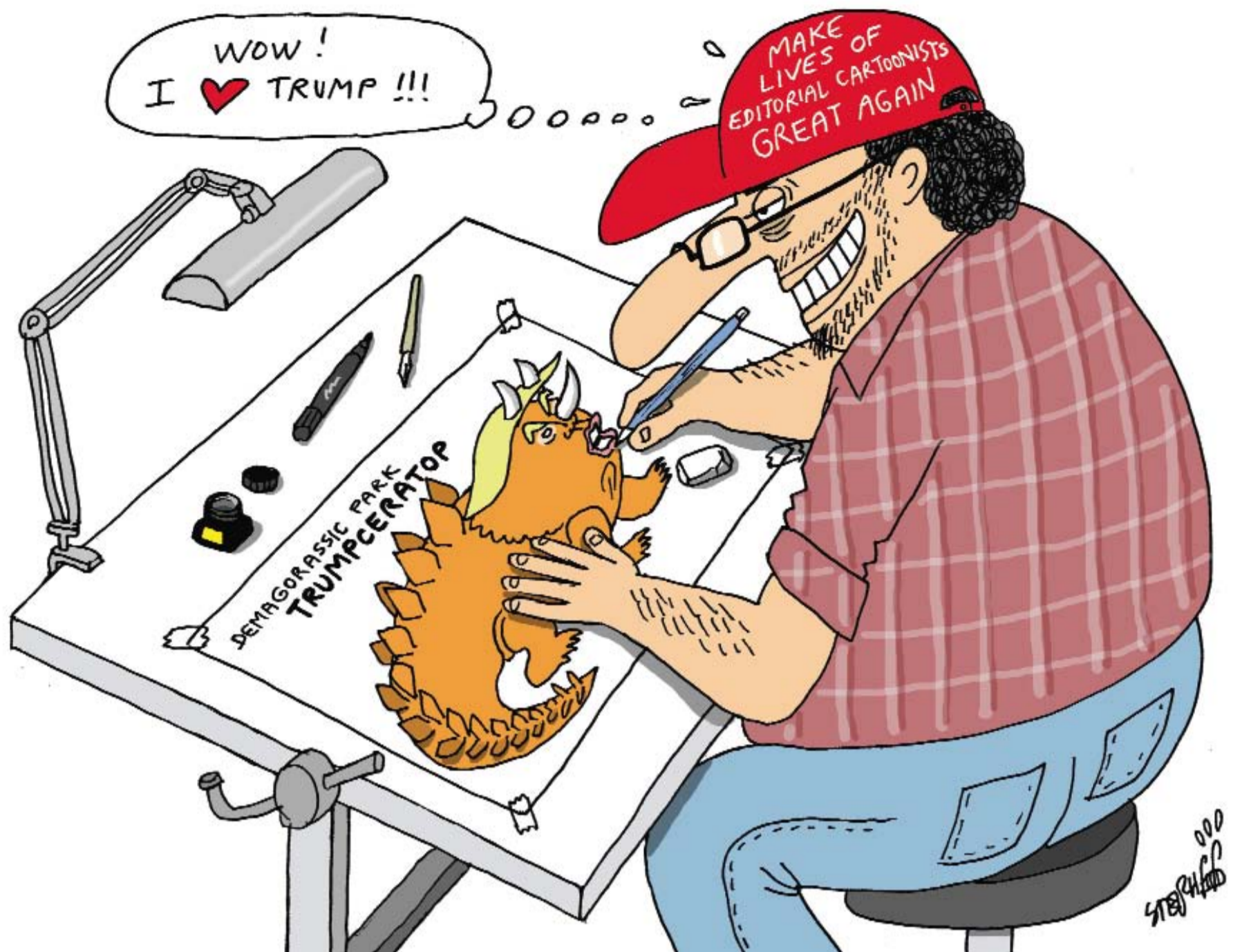
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## FIRST DAYS OF TRUMP SIGNAL DEEPENING DIVIDE

In the blocks surrounding the White House, signs reading "Love Trumps Hate" and "Build Bridges Not Walls" littered the sidewalks on Sunday, the detritus of the Women's March protesting the policies of President Donald Trump. Both Trump's supporters and women and men who took part in the massive march against him in Washington on Saturday contemplated the vestiges of protest and ruminated about the convulsive first 48 hours under the Republican president.

For Mary Forster, who joined her first political demonstration on Saturday, the weekend only reinforced her worries that the country was splitting further apart after a bitter election. "I feel like we're getting driven farther apart," said Forster, a 42-year-old environmental regulation specialist from Ithaca, New York. "There really is no middle any more. We seem to be losing the middle ground."

She has voted both Democratic and Republican in the past but was motivated to march by concerns over the comments and policies of businessman-turned-politician Trump, many of which are seen by the left as harmful to women and minorities. Like Forster, millions of women, buttressed by male family members and friends, joined marches throughout US cities in a much larger-than-expected challenge to Trump. "There used to be more things that unified us and now I feel like we are more divided than we used to be," Forster said.

It is a view widely held by Americans. A Pew Research Center poll released on Thursday showed that 86 percent of Americans believed the country was more politically divided than it had been in the past, sharply higher than the 46 percent who held that view eight years ago, just before former President Barack Obama's inauguration. Democrats and Republicans concurred in their view of the division, a marked change from 2009 when more than half of Republicans thought the country was becoming more divided, compared to about four in ten Democrats.

For many observers, the split is likely to be exacerbated by Trump, who stunned both parties with his Nov 8 victory and has made his mark in world politics with blunt, often offensive speech. "Watched protests yesterday but was under the impression that we just had an

election! Why didn't these people vote?" Trump said on Twitter on Sunday morning. He added a conciliatory note: "Even if I don't always agree, I recognize the rights of people to express their views." Most of the dozens of march participants interviewed by Reuters said they had voted for his

fying messages. He appealed directly to his supporters, painting a bleak picture of "American carnage" - a country filled with rusted factories and plagued by crime and vowed, "from this day forward it's going to be only America First." The grim vision of America the 70-year-old president often evokes is belied by statistics showing low levels of unemployment and crime nationally. But Trump won many votes in parts of the nation where manufacturing industry has been badly hit and people feel left behind in the recovery.

### 'Congress Makes it Worse'

Republican domination in Washington suggests partisan divisions will only grow deeper, at least over the next two years until the next congressional elections. "There is no question that Trump has exacerbated the divisions that already existed in the United States, on important issues from national security to civil rights to climate change," said Wendy Schiller, a professor of political science at Brown University. "Dividing the country is a recipe for winning elections but it is not a recipe for successful government."

With Republicans controlling both chambers of Congress they will have little to no need to reach across the aisle. Democrats also may prefer to simply rail against Republican proposals rather than compromise, to better rile up their base supporters for the mid-term elections, political observers said. "The ideology of congressmen in the Democratic party is to the left of rank-and-file Democrats and the same is true on the Republican side, they are to the right," said Jeffrey Berry, a professor of political science at Tufts University outside Boston. "Congress makes it worse. It is not a moderating force."

Trump supporters questioned the rationale of launching such large protests on his first full day in office, before he had much time to take policy actions. "They are not giving him any time. They are just presuming that he is going to do a bad job," said Kimberley Morgan, a 54-year-old laid-off teacher from Alabama. Morgan had supported Ben Carson in the Republican primaries but voted for Trump after the retired neurosurgeon dropped out.

She resolved to wear her Trump baseball cap as she rode the subway into downtown Washington on Sunday morning with her family, a gesture she had decided against on Saturday due to the march. "People presume all these things about you because you voted for Trump. People presume that you are racist. We are not racist," said Morgan. "It's hard to listen to people when they are screaming at you." — Reuters



Democratic rival, former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. The largest marches were in states that had voted for Clinton, like California, New York, Illinois, Massachusetts and the District of Columbia. Trump's inaugural speech on Friday offered little in the way of uni-

## EARLY KNIGHT PUTS FEDERER IN DREAMLAND

It seemed unthinkable just a few days ago, but Roger Federer's chances of winning an age-defying 18th Grand Slam title are looking better all the time after an astonishing turn of events at the Australian Open. As top-ranked Andy Murray followed defending champion Novak Djokovic to the exit, 35-year-old Federer gritted his teeth to reach the quarter-finals - and was promptly installed as the surprise bookies' favorite.

There was no doubt what it meant to Federer, who leapt around the court in celebration as he completed a hard-fought, 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-1, 4-6, 6-3 win over Japan's Kei Nishikori late on Sunday. "This is a huge moment for me in my career," said the grinning Swiss, who could write a new chapter following his return from six months out with a knee injury.

Federer hasn't won a Grand Slam title in five years, and he could also become the oldest player since 37-year-old Ken Rosewall in 1972 to win one of the sport's major trophies. Playing with his old panache, he remains a huge favorite of the Australian crowds who have seen him victorious on four occasions at Melbourne Park. However, it is still early to talk of a record-extending 18th major title for Federer, with much tennis to be played over the next week starting with his quarter-final against Mischa Zverev.

Victory today would put him into a semi-final against his fellow Swiss, the redoubtable Stan Wawrinka, or France's Jo-Wilfried Tsonga. On the other side of the draw lurk third seed Milos Raonic and Grigor 'Baby Fed' Dimitrov - and Federer's old nemesis, Rafael Nadal.

### Rocket's man

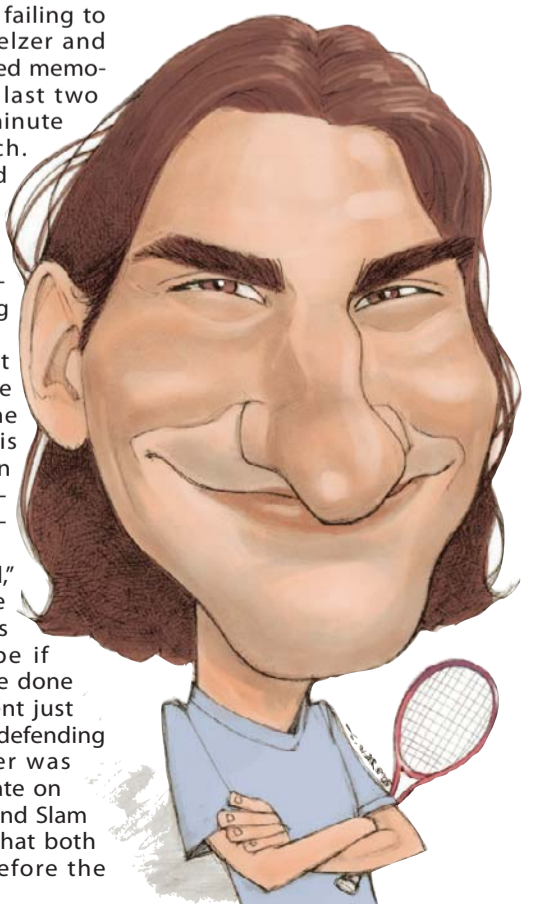
Australian legend Rod 'Rocket' Laver, whose name adorns the Melbourne center court, was one observer hoping for a ninth Grand Slam final between the long-time rivals. "Yeah, it would be nice to see (Federer and Nadal) in the final," he said, according to the Sydney Morning Herald. "They've been battling each other for probably the last 11 years and now they're here with a good chance to go through. But again, any of these younger players coming through can be troublesome."

Laver, who called Federer his "favorite" modern-day player, added: "It is amazing to think that Roger Federer is playing as well as he is at this moment. He had a knee operation which took him back, he's been out of the game for six months. He's been working awfully hard and I think that's probably been the best thing; he probably never had this much time to prepare for specific people. I have not seen him play a backhand this good, as consistently as it has been the

last three or four days." After failing to catch fire against Jurgen Melzer and Noah Rubin, Federer has evoked memories of his glory days in his last two matches, especially his 90-minute beating of Tomas Berdych. Meanwhile the newly knighted Murray, who had climbed to the top of the pecking order after a brilliant 2016, was left to ponder his defeat to serve-volleyer Zverev on the long flight home.

"Early knight", and "Night Knight, Andy", headlined the Aussie media, as the five-time losing finalist picked over his earliest Melbourne departure in eight years. "I was full of confidence coming into the beginning of this year."

I prepared as best as I could," Murray said. "But maybe have to have a look back and assess some things and see maybe if there's some stuff I could have done differently, or did my opponent just play a great match?" Women's defending champion Angelique Kerber was upset by Coco Vandeweghe late on Sunday, making it the first Grand Slam since the 2004 French Open that both top seeds have departed before the quarter-finals. — AFP



## 6 YRS ON, ACTIVISTS WORRY UPRISING 'GONE TO WASTE'

Six years after Hosni Mubarak was forced from power, the activists behind Egypt's 2011 uprising are facing a new crackdown and struggling to see much reason for hope. Rights groups accuse President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi of cracking down on freedoms won during the revolt, with many activists now facing prison, asset freezes and travel bans. Critics of the former army chief - who was elected after he toppled Islamist president Mohamed Morsi in 2013 - say Sisi does not tolerate any dissent.

"The situation is miserable," said Esraa Abdel Fattah, a 38-year-old activist now banned from travel, as she passed by Cairo's Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the Jan 2011 uprising. Hundreds of thousands of Egyptians protested in the square for 18 days, setting up tents and makeshift hospitals, and demanding an end to Mubarak's 30-year rule. "I'm sad for the blood that has gone to waste," Abdel Fattah said, remembering the hundreds killed in the streets as security forces tried to suppress the protests.

Ahmad, a 32-year-old pharmacist who only gave his first name, also took part in the 2011 demonstrations. "Before, I was ready to die for this country, now I just want to leave," he said. "I have transitioned from struggling for democracy and human rights to fighting a daily battle to provide for my family's basic needs," Ahmad said. "It's a daily struggle for survival," he said.

### 'Latent anger'

Egyptians have faced shortages of basic goods such as medicine and sugar in past months, with prices soaring after the government floated the currency and slashed fuel subsidies in November. Those measures were part of economic reforms to meet conditions for a \$12 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund, which was approved later the same month. "There is latent anger" because of the economic situation, political scientist Mai Mogib said. "But despite this, nobody wants another revolution. Egyptians are exhausted after a revolt that didn't produce the results they were hoping for," she said.

In the months after the ouster of Morsi, Egypt's first democratically elected civilian president, hundreds of his Islamist supporters were killed and thousands more jailed. The crackdown then expanded to leftist and secular activists, with scores in jail on accusation of participating in unauthorized street protests. Egypt has also been investigating civil society groups on suspicion of receiving illegal foreign funding in a controversial probe criticized by the United Nations.

This month, a court ordered a freeze on the assets of Nazra for Feminist Studies and its founder Mozn Hassan, as well as of Mohamed Zaree and his Arab Penal Reform Organization. It came after the assets of five other human rights defenders and three non-governmental organizations were frozen in September over similar accusations.

### 'Back to square one'

"The revolution is back to square one," said Hassan, who was also issued a travel ban a few months ago. "We have to defend ourselves in court against accusations (of crimes) we didn't commit," the 37-year-old said. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have described the travel bans as "part of a larger campaign to suppress independent, critical voices inside the country". The secular April 6 movement, one of the groups that called for the Jan 25 protests in 2011 and helped ignite the uprising, has been banned by the authorities.

Ahmed Maher, 36, one of its founders and a leading figure in the 2011 revolt, was released earlier this month after spending three years in prison on accusations he organized an unauthorized protest. But for the next three years, he must spend 12 hours each night at a police station near his home. "I'm a half-prisoner," Maher said. Journalist Ahmad Gamal Ziada, a photojournalist who spent two years in jail after his arrest at a protest he was covering, is just as disillusioned. "We're exhausted," he said. — AFP

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## INJURED BUSQUETS TO MISS TWO GAMES



**BARCELONA:** Influential Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets, who was stretchered off in Sunday's 4-0 win at Eibar, looks set to miss at least the next two games after spraining an ankle. "Results on Monday confirm that Busquets has a sprained external lateral ligament in his right ankle," the Spanish champions said in a statement, without indicating how long he would be out for. Spanish media said he would miss the next 10-15 days, which would definitely rule him out of Thursday's Copa del Rey clash with Real Sociedad and the game with Real Betis on Sunday. The Spanish international's ankle was trapped under the weight of Eibar's Gonzalo Escalante's studs and the Argentine was fortunate to escape without even being shown a yellow card. — AFP

## TOGO FANS ATTACK KEEPER AGASSA'S HOME AFTER CUP LOSS

**PORT-GENTIL:** Angry fans attacked the home of Togo's Kossi Agassa and the "scarred" goalkeeper is now a major doubt for the decisive Africa Cup of Nations clash against DR Congo tomorrow. The 38-year-old was blamed by Togolese fans for his role in the 3-1 defeat to Morocco last Friday and some took their fury out by targeting his home in the capital Lome at the weekend, forcing police to intervene. "Agassa is very upset and it has had an impact on the morale of the whole team," said Togo coach Claude Le Roy at a press conference ahead of the DR Congo game in the Gabonese port city of Port-Gentil. "I think it has scared him too much psychologically. His mum has so far found it difficult to talk about it, it was so stressful and a cause of panic for her. I really doubt he will be able to play a third match." Le Roy added: "The solidarity of the team is such that we will find calmer waters and not let ourselves be affected by a small minority in what is a country of peace." Togo, who have one point from two matches, have to win the game against DR Congo—a side formerly coached by Le Roy—if they are to stand a chance of going through to the quarter-finals from Group C. — AFP

## SAMPAOLI SETS NEW STANDARD AT SEVILLA

**MADRID:** Sevilla coach Jorge Sampaoli has taken less than seven months to make his mark at the Spanish team after steering them to a club-record 42 La Liga points at the halfway stage of the season. Sampaoli's side came from behind to win 4-3 at Osasuna on Sunday, beating their 39-point haul from 19 league games in the 2014-15 campaign under former coach Unai Emery. Emery, now in charge of Paris St Germain, led Sevilla to 76 points that season, the most in the 126 year-history of the Andalusian club and Sampaoli now has that total in his sights. "It's going to be difficult but we will try to do it," Sampaoli told reporters. Sevilla's lone La Liga title came in 1945-46 and they have been runners-up four times, the last 60 years ago. They have, however, captured nine trophies since 2000, including a record five Europa League titles and three in a row under Emery. Sampaoli, who guided Chile to Copa America glory in 2015, beating a Lionel Messi-led Argentina in the final, is in his first coaching job in Europe. — Reuters



## CHEN LANDS FIVE QUADS TO WIN US FIGURE SKATING TITLE WITH EASE

**KANSAS CITY:** Nathan Chen stood on the top step of the podium and stifled a smile as US Figure Skating president Samuel Auzier, preparing to drape a gold medal around his neck, bowed down before him.

Indeed, all hail the new king of American skating. Chen followed a record-setting short program with a near-flawless free skate featuring five quadruple jumps Sunday to become the youngest men's US figure skating champion in more than five decades.

The 17-year-old Chen, performing to "The Polovtsian Dances," became the first skater in the world to land five clean quads in competition. The result was a free skate score of 212.08 - more than the composite of several rivals - and finished with a 318.47 total that put him well clear of the competition. "That was an amazing performance. I'm really happy with what I did," Chen said.

"Component-wise, I kind of faltered a little bit. That stuff happens when you're pushing these secondary elements to the max. It's definitely something that I'm looking forward to working on improve for worlds." Hard to imagine things getting a whole lot better.

Chen's aerial showcase began with a quad lutz-triple toe combination and never slowed down, his only bobble coming on a triple flip-triple toe as his sprightly program was coming to an end.

By that point, his coach Rafael Arutunian was already shaking his fists in celebration.

Sixteen-year-old Vincent Zhou missed on his first quad but was clean the rest of the way, even if the youngster lacked some of the polish of his peers. His total of 263.03 earned him the silver medal.

Jason Brown skated a smooth, stylish routine to move into the bronze medal position. One of the threats to Chen's new throne was unable to compete in Kansas City. Reigning champion Adam Rippon was warming up for practice two weeks ago when he landed on his left foot and heard a crunch. X-rays and an MRI exam revealed a sprain and a broken bone, which will keep him off the ice for up to three months and effectively end his season.

That also means Rippon will be forced to play cheerleader during the world champi-

onships, hoping his fellow Americans do well enough to secure the US three spots at the Pyeongchang Olympics.

Former champ Max Aaron, the silver medalist a year ago, took himself out of the running at nationals with a poor short program. He also struggled in the free skate and wound up ninth.

The crowd favorite, Brown showed how far he's come since a stress fracture in his right fibula with a performance to "The Scent of Love" that showcased his trademark elegance. He also proved that his injury is no longer an issue, landing a series of triples that brought stuffed animals raining to the ice.

He skated off with a teddy bear just smaller than a Volvo. "What's so different is, every single practice that I've done here, I've gained more strength."

"I've continued to learn and grow," Brown said. "We knew I wasn't going to be 100 percent." Chen followed a few minutes later with a performance that not only stamped him as one of the favorites heading into the world championships in March, but perhaps next year's Winter Olympics.

Sidelined five months by a hip injury, Chen landed four quads during a clean short program to score a US record 106.39 points. But that merely served as an appetizer to his free skate, where he

added another quad to the four he was planning to attempt. And he landed them with such ease that he was hardly breathing heavily by the time he skated to the center of the ice to soak in a standing ovation. While the performance was stunning, his spot on the podium was hardly surprising. Chen has been considered the future of American skating for years, and his performance at the Grand Prix Final in France last month appeared to validate it. He topped Olympic and world champion Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan in the free skate and finished the competition second overall. He topped his own performance by literal leaps and bounds on Sunday.

"The US is back on the map, on the world stage," Chen said, looking at Zhou and Brown alongside him on a dais. "With us three, we'll push the US back to where they should be." — AP



**MANCHESTER:** Nicola Adams, left, shakes hands with boxing promoter, Frank Warren, during a press announcement in central London, yesterday. Two-time Olympic women's boxing champion Nicola Adams has turned professional. The 34-year-old flyweight from Britain has joined promoter Frank Warren and will make her professional debut in Manchester on April 8. — AP

# BRITAIN'S HISTORY-MAKER NICOLA ADAMS TURNS PRO

**LONDON:** Britain's double Olympic champion Nicola Adams will make her professional boxing debut on April 8, becoming just the latest high-profile women's fighter to quit the amateur ranks. The 34-year-old was one of the faces of the London 2012 Games when she made history as the first woman to win Games boxing gold—but her decision to go pro all but means she will not pursue a third Games gold at Tokyo 2020, having retained her title in Rio last year.

"I want to take women's boxing to the next level, become a world champion and do great things," the bubbly flyweight said yesterday, announcing she was turning professional.

"It's going to be quite different: no headgear for one. I have to create my own team now, but I'm really excited about doing that." Adams, a hugely popular figure in Britain who has won pretty much every major title open to her as an amateur, signed a long-term promotional deal with Frank Warren and will make her professional debut at Manchester Arena against an as-yet-unnamed opponent.

She is also scheduled for a "homecoming" fight at Leeds on May 13. Warren, who sat alongside Adams as the announcement was made at BT Tower in London, said: "I've not been the greatest advocate of women's boxing. My head's been turned. 'I've had to eat humble pie, and thought, 'Are you a dinosaur?'"

Rob McCracken, performance director of GB Boxing, said Adams left Britain's successful Olympic boxing programme with his blessing. "Nicola has made a huge contribution to both the Olympic programme and the sport of boxing," he said.

"She has won everything there is to win and her place in history is secured as the first woman to ever win a gold medal for boxing and then top it by winning a second one in Rio."

Adams follows fellow London gold medallists Ireland's Katie Taylor and Claressa Shields of the United States in spending the rest of her career as a purely professional boxer.

Although professionals are now allowed to compete at the Olympics, Adams has likely ended her hopes of winning a third gold medal because GB Boxing have made it clear they will favour fighters who are members of their programme.

Adams was the first female fighter to represent England in 2007 and, after overcoming a career-threatening back injury, became boxing's first Olympic women's gold medallist when she defeated China's Ren Cancan in the flyweight final at London 2012.

Adams became the first female boxer to retain an Olympic title when she did so at last summer's Rio Games.

Having previously won European and Commonwealth gold medals, 2016 also saw Adams complete a clean sweep of major titles when she won her first world championship by defeating Thailand's Peamwilai Laopeam in Kazakhstan. — AFP

## SWAFFORD CLAIMS FIRST PGA WIN IN 93RD START

**LOS ANGELES:** Hudson Swafford finally joined the winner's circle Sunday, firing a five-under-par 67 for a one-stroke victory at the PGA Tour's CareerBuilder Challenge.

The 29-year-old American birdied three of his last four holes to claim his maiden USPGA Tour win in his 93rd Tour start.

"This is a dream come true," Swafford said. "I really didn't get ahead of myself, didn't really look at leaderboards, didn't really know where I was." He compiled a 20-under 268 total to finish one stroke ahead of Canada's Adam Hadwin, who closed with a 70, one day after storming to a 13-under 59 in the third round at the La Quinta Country Club near Palm Springs, California.

Bud Cauley and Brian Harman both shot 69s and finished in a tie for third at 18-under 270. Swafford is in his fourth year on the Tour and had never finished higher than a tie for eighth. In five previous starts this season his best finish was a tie for 13th at last week's Sony Open. Beginning the day two shots off the lead, Swafford got off to a rocky start with a bogey at the par-four No. 1 before stringing together five straight pars. Swafford then caught fire with a burst of three straight birdies to close out his front nine.

On the par-four seventh, he hit his approach to five feet from the hole then easily made the short birdie putt. After making birdie on the par-five eighth, he drained a 14-foot putt for birdie on the par-four ninth. "I felt like my posture was good all day, and it just allowed the club to be in a perfect slot," Swafford said.

"That's all we focused on this week. I had really good rhythm, was standing tall and was hitting it beautifully. I didn't make every putt I looked at, but I felt like I was hitting some pretty good putts, and to make three of the last four, and I felt like I actually made the one on the last hole, it was pretty special."

### NICE PERKS

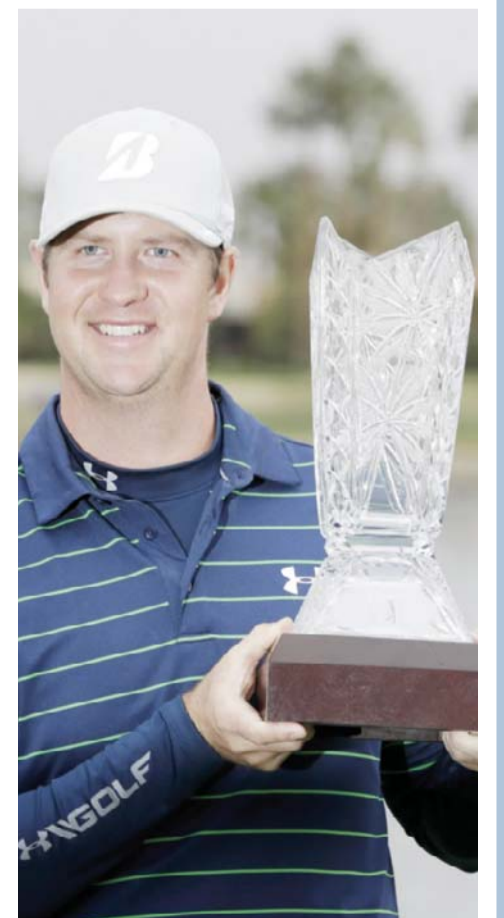
The win comes with some nice perks, as Swafford is now qualified for the Masters, the Players Championship, the Dean and DeLuca Invitational, the Memorial, the PGA Championship and the 2018 SBS Tournament of Champions.

Third round leader Hadwin was also in search of his first PGA Tour win but his two-under 70 left him just shy of victory. On Saturday, the 29-year-old from suburban Vancouver became the first Canadian to shoot a 59, leaving him one stroke off the Tour record 58 fired last year by American Jim Furyk at

the Travelers Championship.

He birdied two of his final three holes Sunday to finish at 19-under 269. Of the nine players to card a 59 (or better) on tour, Hadwin is the fourth who failed to win the event. "I can't help but be slightly disappointed," Hadwin said. "I really wanted to come out here and kind of prove that yesterday was just kind of a continuation of some good play and kind of get it done today, but I got beat."

Dominic Bozzelli, who grabbed the first-round lead with a 64, finished in fifth place at 271, closing with a 71. Brendan Steele (70) and Chad Campbell (71) tied for sixth place at 272. Scott Stallings (66) took eighth at 273, and Sean O'Hair (69), Richey Werenski (70) and Scotland's Martin Laird (69) all came in at 274, tied for ninth. — AP



**LA QUINTA:** Hudson Swafford poses with the trophy after winning the CareerBuilder Challenge golf tournament at 20-under par on the Stadium Course at PGA West, Sunday, 2017, in La Quinta, Calif. — AP



**KANSAS CITY:** Nathan Chen waits for his scores alongside his coaches Marina Zoueva and Rafael Arutunyan after competing in the Men's Free Skate program during the 2017 US Figure Skating Championships at the Sprint Center on Sunday in Kansas City, Missouri. — AFP

## BELARUSIAN CANOEISTS HAVE DRUGS BAN OVERTURNED BY CAS

**LONDON:** The Belarusian men's canoe and kayak team was wrongly banned from last year's Olympics for drug offences and has had its suspension from all competition lifted, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) said yesterday.

A CAS Panel ruled that there was "insufficient evidence" to uphold several alleged anti-doping offences at a training camp in April, 2016.

"Accordingly, in the absence of multiple anti-doping rule violations, the Panel found that there was no justification to uphold the imposition of a one-year ban on the Belarus senior men's Canoe and Kayak teams and decided to set aside the deci-

sion taken by the ICF Executive Committee," CAS said in a statement.

The Belarus Canoe Association (BCA) and team members appealed against the ban, imposed by the International Canoe Federation in July 2016 after a raid by French police and customs on their training camp in Temple-sur-Lot in France when various substances were confiscated.

The banned drug meldonium was found in samples of five of 17 athletes who took a drugs test. Although CAS has ruled in the athletes' favour, it has not released the reasons behind the decision which it said would be published on its website in due course. — Reuters

# MANNY PACQUIAO WILLING TO FIGHT MCGREGOR

**MANILA:** WBO welterweight world champion Manny Pacquiao is willing to square up with mixed martial arts star Conor McGregor if his potential super-fight with Floyd Mayweather fails to materialise, a spokesman said Sunday.

But the Filipino boxing hero-turned-senator stressed that any fight with McGregor would have to be a boxing bout, not an MMA contest.

"If McGregor will fight me in boxing, why not? But not in MMA. MMA is much different than boxing," a spokesman

quoted Pacquiao as saying a few days ago. "The fight can be at the 140-pound weight division. My normal weight when I'm not on training is just 141 or 142 pounds," he said.

Both Pacquiao, 38, and McGregor, 28, have been trying to lure the retired Mayweather back into the boxing ring. For Pacquiao, it would be a chance to avenge his defeat to Mayweather at their long-awaited showdown in 2015.

Meanwhile Ireland's McGregor, the first man to simultaneously hold

Ultimate Fighting Championship titles in two weight divisions, has floated the idea of taking on the undefeated Mayweather, 39.

In late November McGregor was issued a boxing license in the state of California in a development that fuelled speculation about a future showdown with Mayweather.

Mayweather told ESPN's First Take programme that a McGregor bout was the only thing that could tempt him back into the ring.

UFC boss Dana White also added further fuel to the fire this month when he offered to pay each \$25 million, along with a cut of pay-per-view proceeds, to fight an offer that Mayweather later batted down.

Pacquiao has previously parlayed his sporting fame into a career in politics, getting elected to the influential Philippine Senate last year while still continuing to box professionally.

The Filipino southpaw had briefly retired from the ring after beating

American Tim Bradley in Las Vegas in April but soon made a comeback, saying he still felt like a youngster.

In his last fight in November, Pacquiao reclaimed the World Boxing Organization welterweight title for the third time with a unanimous-decision victory over former champion Jesse Vargas in Las Vegas.

Pacquiao has been engaged in ongoing talks with his American promoter about a possible fight with Australian Jeff Horn later this year. — AFP

# VETTEL WINS NATIONS CUP FOR GERMANY

**MIAMI:** After a disappointing showing on the first day of the Race of Champions, Sebastian Vettel bounced back in a big way. Vettel single-handedly won the Nations Cup for Germany, winning all eight of his races while beating United States NASCAR drivers and brothers Kurt and Kyle Busch in the final.

"We didn't get to race against each other, so we still don't know who the better



Sebastian Vettel

'Busch' is," Kurt Busch said, "but we know Vettel can whack two Busches in one day."

Vettel, a four-time Formula 1 world champion, was knocked out in the group stage in Saturday's individual event as Juan Pablo Montoya won the Champion of Champions. "The bigger trophy was there yesterday for grabs, but (I didn't win), so I wanted to make sure I didn't leave empty-handed," Vettel said.

There were supposed to be 10 two-driver teams in the Nations Cup, but Pascal Wehrlein was unable to compete with Vettel after getting into a crash Saturday and being held out as a precautionary on doctor's advice, leaving Vettel to handle the

responsibility of driving each race for Germany. "Maybe it helped after yesterday to take it a bit more serious," Vettel said. "I started off on the wrong foot, so the day was very short for me. Today, I just wanted to get some time on the track and it obviously worked out very well, but it would have been nicer to share it with Pascal."

Vettel edged Montoya in the first semi-final race ending Montoya's run of winning nine consecutive races over two days.

Kurt and Kyle Busch beat Team USA IndyCar drivers Alexander Rossi and Ryan Hunter-Reay in the semifinals. Kurt Busch slipped by Rossi in the deciding race.

"It was an honor to go out there and race for the United States along with my little brother Kyle," Kurt Busch said. "To advance out of the group as the NASCAR group, we definitely wanted to do that ahead of the IndyCar guys and the Rally Car guys." It was a unique experience for the Busch brothers who race for different teams on the NASCAR circuit.

"I had a super time, a lot of fun, to be teamed up with Kurt there, but also yesterday to beat some of these guys from around the world in all different kinds of cars was exciting for me," Kyle Busch said.

Petter Solberg gave the World Team a win over America in the final race of a 10-race event to conclude the day. Solberg was aggressive on the track driving the RX Supercar Lite to beat Scott Speed.

"Scott Speed came to me and said, 'I'm going to beat you,'" Solberg said. "I was thinking, 'OK, you can try.' So I was really focused and went out proper around the start. I felt really good and was really happy." The Polaris Slingshot SLR was involved in its second crash in as many days when Gabriel Glusman lost control on the final turn and bounced into two barriers before coming to a stop ending his day.

Wehrlein flipped over a barrier and landed upside down on a concrete wall in the Slingshot on Saturday. — AP

# CHRIS ASHTON SAYS ENGLAND EXILE SPARKED TOULON MOVE

**LONDON:** Chris Ashton has said the combination of his ongoing England exile and his treatment by rugby's disciplinary authorities prompted his decision to leave Saracens for Toulon.

The wing scored the only try of the match as Saracens beat the French side 10-3 in the pool phase of the European Champions Cup on Saturday. Victory at their Allianz Park ground in north London saw reigning European champions Saracens book a home quarter-final, although a star-studded Toulon will still join them in the last eight despite this defeat. Ashton's score was the 29-year-old's fourth try in three starts since he completed a 13-week ban for biting, his second major suspension of 2016.

It was also a reminder of what the English game—and indeed England—will miss when Ashton joins Toulon for a reported £420,000 (\$520,000, 485,546 euros) a year in June. With England coach Eddie Jones upholding the Rugby Football Union's longstanding policy of refusing to select overseas-based players for international duty save in "exceptional circumstances", Ashton has effectively called time on a 39-Test career that has yielded 19 tries by moving to France.

The Australian boss did select Ashton, whose last Red Rose appearance was in 2014, in his first England squad.

But he was omitted after being banned for making contact with the eye area of Ulster's Luke Marshall and Ashton has been in the Test wilderness ever since.

## UNDERSTANDING

"I was sick of leaving my international career in other people's hands," said Ashton, speaking publicly for the first time since completing his latest ban.

"The decision is always made by a coach and like any player who does not get in dis-

agreed with that decision. "I hope I will play again (for England) one day, but for the time being I chose to go to play rugby abroad. I will never give up hope, but it makes it harder moving abroad.

"Saracens would rather I stayed, but they are very understanding people. "You look at it from both sides and they understand my situation with England and how I felt towards being banned again."

Ashton ensured Saracens, who defended superbly in the closing stages, established a decisive lead over Toulon when he picked a line between New Zealand's Ma'a Nonu and Australia's Matt Giteau for a 60th-minute try. "I tried not think about the fact I was playing Toulon. We were at home in a big game and I tried to concentrate on that," Ashton said.

Toulon were crowned champions of Europe for three successive seasons until Saracens dethroned them last term during a campaign where they also won the English title to complete a notable double.

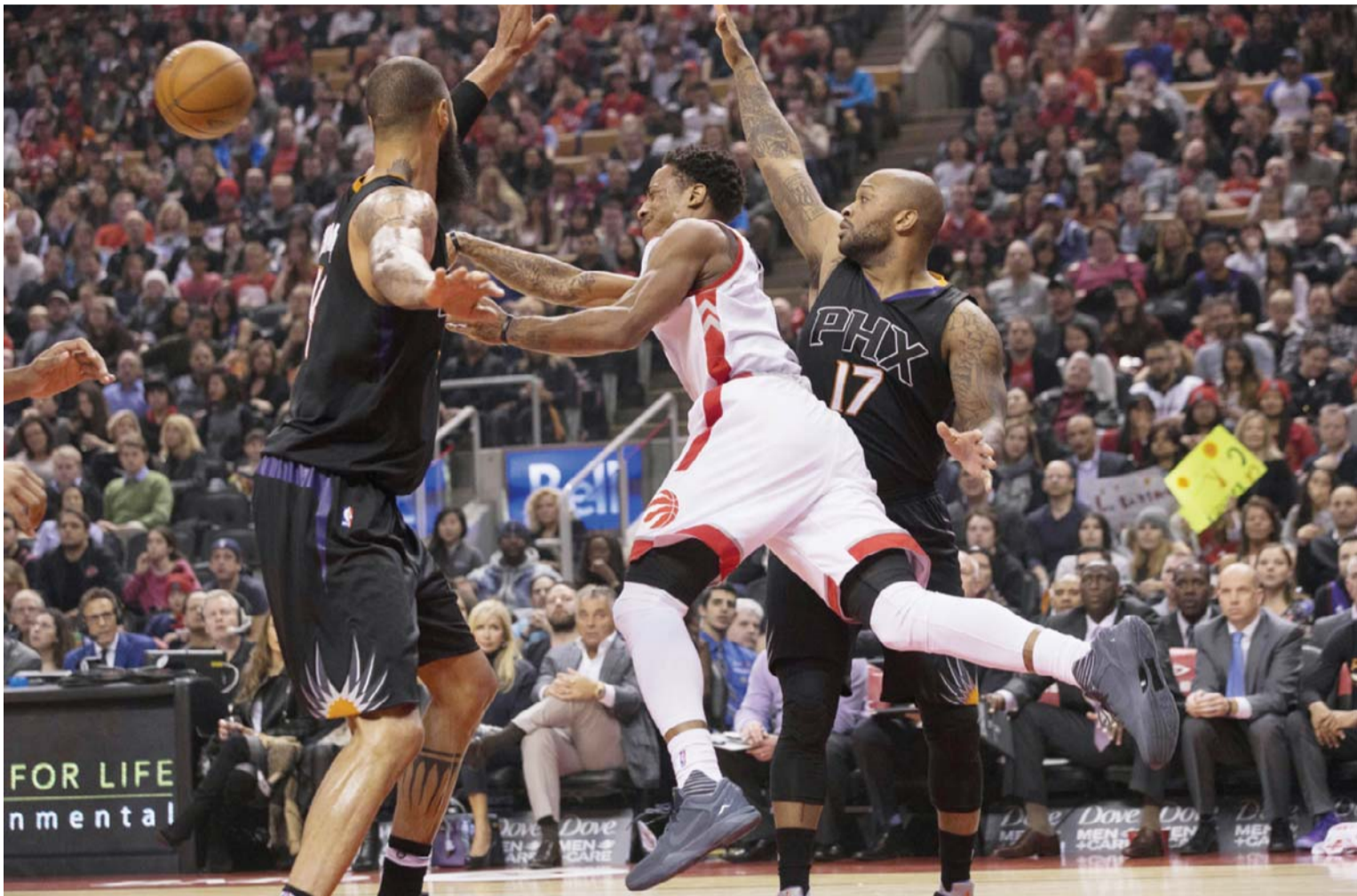
The Cote d'Azur club, owned by wealthy comic publisher Mourad Boudjellal, enjoyed a poor season by their own standards in 2015/16 and that led them to dismiss coach Diego Dominguez.

The former Italy fly-half was replaced by Mike Ford, who was previously in charge of English Premiership side Bath.

Ford said a defeat by French rivals Clermont had proved a turning point for Toulon, who enjoyed many of their most successful days when retired England great Jonny Wilkinson and former France coach Bernard Laporte were together at the Stade Mayol. "We pretty much lost to Clermont and then we drew a line in the sand and said: 'Look, Jonny's (Wilkinson) not here any more, Bernard Laporte's not here any more and we can't keep living off the three cups we won,'" Ford said. — AFP



**TOULOUSE:** Toulouse's Samoan lock Iosefa Tekori scores a try during the European Champions Cup rugby union match Toulouse against Connacht on Sunday at the Ernest Wallon Stadium in Toulouse, southern France. — AFP



**TORONTO:** Toronto Raptors' DeMar DeRozan (centre) passes between Phoenix Suns' Tyson Chandler (left) and P.J. Tucker during first half NBA basketball action in Toronto on Sunday. — AP

# SLEEPY WARRIORS WAKE UP IN TIME TO STOP MAGIC

**ORLANDO:** Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson each hit seven 3-pointers and the Golden State Warriors won their seventh straight game, beating the Orlando Magic 118-98 on Sunday. Tied at the half, the Warriors woke up from West Coast time in the second half to pull away. This was the first Eastern time zone noon tip for them since 1995, when they lost by 34 points in Orlando. Curry went 7 for 13 on 3s and scored 27 points while Thompson as 7 for 9 from behind the arc and had 21 points. The Warriors shot 19 of 42 overall from 3-point range while the Magic went 7 for 28.

## SUNS 115, RAPTORS 103

Eric Bledsoe scored a career-high 40 points and had 13 assists and Phoenix handed Toronto its third straight loss. Bledsoe was 11 of 17 from the floor, including 4 of 7 from 3-point range, and Devin Booker added 20 points as the Suns won their second straight road game following Saturday's win at New York. The victory also completed a season sweep of the Raptors for the first time since 2013-14 and improved Phoenix to 11-6 against Eastern Conference teams this season. DeMar DeRozan had 22 points for Toronto and Jonas Valanciunas added 16 points and 12 rebounds for his 17th double-double of the season. It's the first time the Raptors have lost three straight since Nov. 6-10, 2015.

## MAVERICKS 122, LAKERS 73

Justin Anderson scored 19 points and Dirk Nowitzki added 13 to help Dallas give Los Angeles its worst defeat ever. It was the Mavericks' 13th straight win over the Lakers, who have lost six of their last seven games this season. The 49-point defeat just edged Los Angeles' two previous worst losses at 48 points, most recently 123-75 at Utah on March 28, 2016. The game was close for 10 minutes, with Dallas leading 23-22 before the Mavericks scored the next 15 straight to blow the game open. Nowitzki had seven during the run. The Mavericks led 67-33 at the half and never looked back.

## TIMBERWOLVES 111, NUGGETS 108

Karl-Anthony Towns had 32 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists and hit the go-ahead shot with 42.5 seconds to play to lead Minnesota over Denver. Towns hit 13 of 19 shots and also had four blocks and Andrew Wiggins scored 24 points in Minnesota's fourth straight home win. Shabazz Muhammad scored 20 points off the bench and the Wolves rallied from nine points down midway through the fourth quarter for the win. Gary Harris scored 22 points and Nikola Jokic had 18 points and eight rebounds for the Nuggets on the second night of a back-to-back. Wilson Chandler and Jamal Murray added 17 points each for Denver, which played without Emmanuel Mudiay because of a sore back.

Kris Dunn had 10 points and nine assists for the Wolves while starting for Ricky Rubio, who missed the game to attend his grandmother's funeral. — AP

NBA Results/Standings									
Minnesota 111, Denver 108; Phoenix 115, Toronto 103; Dallas 122, LA Lakers 73; Golden State 118, Orlando 98.									
Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	Utah	Oklahoma City	Denver	Portland	Minnesota	Pacific Division
Toronto	28	16	.636	-	29	16	.644	-	Golden State
Boston	26	17	.605	1.5	25	19	.568	3.5	LA Clippers
NY Knicks	19	26	.422	9.5	18	25	.419	10	Sacramento
Philadelphia	15	27	.357	12	19	27	.413	10.5	Phoenix
Brooklyn	9	34	.209	18.5	16	28	.364	12.5	LA Lakers
Central Division					Southwest Division				
Cleveland	30	12	.714	-	38	6	.864	-	San Antonio
Indiana	22	21	.512	8.5	29	16	.644	9.5	Houston
Chicago	22	23	.489	9.5	16	27	.372	21.5	Memphis
Detroit	21	24	.467	10.5	15	29	.341	23	New Orleans
Milwaukee	20	23	.465	10.5	16	32	.333	24	Dallas
Atlanta	26	18	.591	-	34	9	.791	-	
Washington	23	20	.535	2.5	34	13	.723	2	
Charlotte	23	21	.523	3	26	20	.565	9.5	
Orlando	18	28	.391	9	17	27	.386	17.5	
Miami	14	30	.318	12	15	29	.341	19.5	



**MINNEAPOLIS:** Minnesota Timberwolves guard Zach LaVine (8) gets a hand on the ball against Denver Nuggets guard Gary Harris, right, in the first half of an NBA basketball game, in Minneapolis. — AP

## AUSTRALIA REST WARNER, RECALL FINCH FOR NZ ZEALAND

**SYDNEY:** Australia have recalled opening batsman Aaron Finch and decided to rest in-form David Warner in a 14-man squad for the one-day series in New Zealand starting next week.

"David has had a very big summer and will benefit from a break in cricket, both mentally and physically," interim national selector Trevor Hohns said yesterday. Vice-captain Warner was man-of-the-match against Pakistan in Sydney on

Sunday when he hit 130 off 98 balls, his 12th one-day century. Hohns praised Finch's return to form in the Twenty20 format. "His form in the Big Bash League (BBL) has been very good and he has earned his recall," the selector said.

Finch said he had made some "slight technical changes" to his game and sharpened his mental approach which had led to him amassing 354 runs, including four fifties, in the BBL.

"I'm pretty comfortable with the changes that I've made. I'm also mentally in a better spot for the changes, and probably for being dropped. "It gives you time to reflect and analyse your game a little bit more in-depth than if you just roll from series to series," Finch said. Western Australian batsman Shaun Marsh is the only other change to the one-day side that have already won the current one-day series against Pakistan

3-1 with a match left to play in Adelaide on Thursday. Marsh comes in for Usman Khawaja who is heading to Dubai early to prepare for the tour of India next month. "This provides Shaun with a chance to get back into international cricket following his injury earlier in the summer," Hohns added in a statement.

The squad will depart for New Zealand on Friday with Australia currently holding the one-day Chappell-Hadlee

trophy after beating New Zealand 3-0 at home late last year. The matches are in Auckland on January 30, Napier on February 2 and Hamilton on February 5.

Australia squad: Steve Smith (capt), Pat Cummins, Aaron Finch, James Faulkner, Peter Handscomb, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Shaun Marsh, Glenn Maxwell, Mitchell Starc, Billy Stanlake, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, Adam Zampa. —AFP

## DE VILLIERS RETURNS TO LEAD SA ONE-DAY SIDE

**CAPE TOWN:** South Africa have recalled fit-again batsman AB de Villiers to captain their one-day international side in the five-match home series against Sri Lanka.

The selectors also handed a first call-up in this format to 20-year-old fast bowler Lungi Ngidi and all-rounder Chris Morris returns after an injury layoff for the series starting in Port Elizabeth on Saturday.

De Villiers has not played international cricket since June last year after an elbow injury, but is in line to return for the final match of the Twenty20 series against the Sri Lankans in Cape Town on Wednesday.

He will then skipper the one-day side having admitted last week that his top priority at this stage of his career was to lead the team at the 2019 World Cup. A more immediate aim, however, is this year's Champions Trophy in England.

"It is wonderful to have AB back available both as player and leader," Cricket South Africa selection convener Linda Zondi said in a statement yesterday.

"We are entering a very important phase of our preparation for the Champions Trophy in England as we only have 10 games left - the five here against Sri Lanka and another five in New Zealand - before we head for another major ICC event." Ngidi took six wickets in as many overs in the first two matches of the Twenty20 series against Sri Lanka. "He has not only impressed with the wickets he has taken and the skills he has displayed, but with the energy and intensity he has brought to his game as well," Zondi said. South Africa are in action in the 50-over format for the first time since they whitewashed Australia 5-0 on home soil last October.

### Squad:

AB de Villiers (captain), Hashim Amla, Farhaan Behardien, Quinton de Kock, JP Duminy, Faf du Plessis, Imran Tahir, David Miller, Chris Morris, Wayne Parnell, Lungi Ngidi, Andile Phehlukwayo, Dwaine Pretorius, Kagiso Rabada, Tabraiz Shamsi. —Reuters



AB de Villiers

## INDIA REST ASHWIN AND JADEJA FOR ENGLAND T20s

**NEW DELHI:** India's premier spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja have been rested for the three-match Twenty20 series against England starting this week. The selectors have recalled veteran leg-spinner Amit Mishra and off-spinner Parvez Rasool in the 15-man squad, according to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). The Virat Kohli-led side, which won the three-match one-day international series 2-1, moves into the shortest format with the first game scheduled in Kanpur on January 26.

Ashwin and Jadeja shared seven wickets between them in the three 50-over matches, bowling tighter lines than the fast bowlers

on run-filled pitches. The 34-year-old Mishra was in the ODI squad against England but failed to make it to the starting lineup. He finished with figures of 5-18 in his last outing for his country, an ODI against New Zealand in October.

Meanwhile Rasool, 27, who represented India in just one ODI in 2014, joins the squad riding on his excellent domestic showing in the Ranji Trophy competition. India squad: Virat Kohli (capt), Mahendra Singh Dhoni, Lokesh Rahul, Suresh Raina, Rishabh Pant, Manish Pandey, Yuvraj Singh, Hardik Pandya, Amit Mishra, Parvez Rasool, Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Ashish Nehra, Yuzvendra Chahal, Mandeep Singh. —AFP



Amit Mishra



CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand's Jeet Raval (C) bats as Bangladesh wicketkeeper Nurul Hasan (L) and Taijul Islam (R) looks on, during day four of the second international Test cricket match between New Zealand and Bangladesh at Hagley Park Oval in Christchurch yesterday. — AFP

# NEW ZEALAND SWEEP BANGLADESH SERIES

**CHRISTCHURCH:** A Bangladesh batting implosion saw New Zealand cruise to a comfortable nine wicket win in the second Test at Hagley Oval in Christchurch yesterday.

Bangladesh were all out for 173 in their second innings, with the damage done when they lost five for 23 in the middle of the innings. New Zealand were left with a 109-run target which they knocked off in 18.4 overs to complete a rout of Bangladesh, winning all eight matches-three Twenty20s, three one-day internationals and two Tests-during the tour. The Test sweep means New Zealand will overtake Pakistan and move to fifth on the world rankings. On a day of 14 dismissals on an easy wicket, New Zealand coasted home with Tom Latham unbeaten on 41 and Colin de Grandhomme on 33, effectively ending the Test in three days after Sunday's third day was washed out. Bangladesh were 65 in arrears and in need of patience when they started their second innings before lunch.

Instead, they showed their inexperience with the short ball and tried to hook and drive their way out of trouble.

After 10 overs they went to lunch at 20 for one, by tea they were 100 for five and the end came 17 overs into the final session, boosted by a late slog from Taskin Ahmed and Kamrul Islam who put on 51 in 48 balls. There had been a question mark over the Bangladesh line-up after Imrul Kayes, Mushfiqur Rahim and Mominul Haque, with 98 Tests between them, were kept out by injury.

They cobbled together a makeshift side with seven players having three or fewer Tests to their name, and although the game was evenly poised after the first two days, the greenness of the wicket came to the fore after that. After the third day washout the sun returned on Monday and New Zealand took command.

They resumed at 260 for seven and aided by sloppy fielding, their last three partnerships put on 94 with Henry Nicholls leading the way with a career best 98.

### SOUTHEE MILESTONE

The innings was halted at 354 with an unusual run out of Neil Wagner for 26 after he had initially grounded his bat behind the crease. In the fleeting moment when wicketkeeper Nurul Hasan deflected the ball on to the stumps, Wagner was mid-stride with neither foot on the ground and he had momentarily lifted his bat.

A bewildered Wagner took out his frustrations when Bangladesh went into bat taking three wickets for 44. Tim Southee took three for 48 and Trent Boult three for 52. Bangladesh may have denied Nicholls a maiden century but they could not deny Southee becoming the fifth New Zealander to take 200 wickets on a list headed by Richard Hadlee with 417. Southee ignited the Bangladesh collapse with the early wicket of Tamim Iqbal when the stand-in captain hooked to Mitchell Santner waiting on the boundary.

He reached the milestone with a short ball to Shakib Al Hasan that was steered to Colin de Grandhomme at point and wrapped up the innings with a short ball to Rubel Hossain that was edged to the wicketkeeper. Soumya Sarkar and Mahmudullah attempted to put backbone into the innings adding 41 for the second wicket until Soumya (36) smacked a wide de Grandhomme delivery to Raval at gully.

Mahmudullah, on 38, dragged a wide Wagner delivery on to his stumps to start a slide in which Bangladesh fell from 92 for three to 115 for eight before the late burst from Taskin (33) and Kamrul who was 25 not out. — AFP

### SCOREBOARD

**CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand:** Scoreboard at the end of second Test between New Zealand and Bangladesh at Hagley Oval in Christchurch yesterday:

<b>Bangladesh first innings</b> 289 (Soumya Sarkar 86, Shakib Al Hasan 59; Southee 5-94, Boult 4-87)	Shakib Al Hasan c de Grandhomme b Southee 8
<b>New Zealand first innings</b> (overnight 260-7)	Nazmul Hossain b Boult 12
J. Raval b Kamrul Islam 16	Sabbir Rahman c Watling b Wagner 0
T. Latham c Nurul Hasan b Taskin Ahmed 68	Nurul Hasan c Watling b Wagner 0
K. Williamson c Nurul Hasan b Kamrul Islam 2	Mehedi Hasan c Latham b Boult 4
R. Taylor c sub (Taijul Islam) b Mehedi Hasan 77	Taskin Ahmed b Boult 33
H. Nicholls b Mehedi 98	Kamrul Islam not out 25
M. Santner lbw b Shakib Al Hasan 29	Rubel Hossain c Watling b Southee 7
B. Watling b Shakib Al Hasan 1	Extras (lb2) 2
C de Grandhomme b Shakib Al Hasan 0	Total (all out, 52.5 overs) 173
T. Southee c Mehedi Hasan b Shakib Al Hasan 17	Fall of wickets: 1-17 (Tamim), 2-58 (Soumya), 3-73 (Shakib), 4-92 (Mahmudullah), 5-100 (Sabbir), 6-100 (Nurul), 7-106 (Nazmul), 8-115 (Mehedi), 9-166 (Taskin), 10-173 (Rubel)
N. Wagner run out (Nurul) 26	Bowling: Boult 17-3-52-3, Southee 12.5-2-48-3, de Grandhomme 11-3-27-1, Wagner 12-3-44-3
T. Boult not out 7	
Extras (lb6, w4, nb 3) 13	<b>New Zealand second innings</b>
Total (all out, 92.4 overs) 354	J. Raval b Kamrul Islam 33
Fall of wickets: 1-45 (Raval), 2-47 (Williamson), 3-153 (Latham), 4-177 (Taylor), 5-252 (Santner), 6-256 (Watling), 7-256 (Grandhomme), 8-286 (Southee), 9-343 (Nicholls), 10-354 (Wagner)	T. Latham not out 41
Bowling: Taskin Ahmed 22-2-86-1 (2w), Mehedi Hasan 19-3-59-2, Rubel Hossain 17-2-65-0 (2nb), Kamrul Islam 19-4-78-2 (2w, 1nb), Shakib Al Hasan 12-4-1-50-4, Soumya Sarkar 3-0-10-0	C. de Grandhomme not out 33
	Extras (b1, wd1, nb2) 4
	Total (one wicket, 18.4 overs) 111
<b>Bangladesh second innings</b>	Fall of wicket: 1-56 (Raval)
Tamim Iqbal c Santner b Southee 8	Bowling: Taskin 5-0-21-0 (2nb), Mehedi 6-0-27-0 (1w), Kamrul 3-0-21-1, Shakib 4-0-28-0, Nazmul 0-4-0-13-0
Soumya Sarkar c Raval b de Grandhomme 36	Result: New Zealand won by nine wickets.
Mahmudullah b Wagner 38	



CHRISTCHURCH: New Zealand's Neil Wagner celebrates after Bangladesh's Sabbir Rahman was caught during day four of the second international Test cricket match between New Zealand and Bangladesh at Hagley Park Oval in Christchurch yesterday. — AFP



## PLISKOVA BEATS 'DASHA' TO DASH AUSSIE HOPES

**MELBOURNE:** Karolina Pliskova dashed home hopes when she thrashed Daria Gavrilova to move into an Australian Open quarter-final against comeback queen Mirjana Lucic-Baroni yesterday.

The fifth-seeded Czech shut out a partisan crowd on Rod Laver Arena to easily beat Australia's Gavrilova, nicknamed 'Dasha', 6-3, 6-3 and reach the last eight for the first time.

It sets her up for a showdown against Lucic-Baroni, the feel-good story of the tournament who is into her first Grand Slam quarter-final since Wimbledon in 1999. The Croat, who dropped out of top-level tennis for most of the 2003-2010 period following heartbreaking personal problems, swept past American qualifier Jennifer Brady 6-4, 6-2.

"I'm so excited to be in my first quarter-final. It's tough to play an Aussie girl, and I'm happy to fight to the last point," said Pliskova.

"I'm feeling confident, much better than I did in the Grand Slams before the US Open. Everything is going my way now." After making the US Open final last year Pliskova has been tipped as a potential champion in Melbourne, although she was pushed all the way by Latvian teen Jelena Ostapenko in round three. It was a fright for the tall Czech who,

with her left thigh strapped, was aggressive from the start against Gavrilova, breaking the nervous Australian straight away. The power-hitting Czech sent down some big serves in the next game, with Gavrilova's forehead letting her down as she struggled to get into the match.

Pliskova was proving unplayable, dropping just two points in her opening two service games, before breaking Gavrilova, seeded 22, again to go 4-1 in front. The crowd had something to cheer about when the 22-year-old broke back with Pliskova serving for the set, but the Czech still closed it out 6-3 in the next game. Gavrilova, bidding to become the first Australian to reach the last eight since Jelena Dokic in 2009, refused to lie down and went 1-0 up with a break in the second set. But the Moscow-born 22-year-old, who also made the fourth round last year, didn't have the firepower to match her opponent and errors crept in as she was swept aside in 73 minutes.

Looking ahead, Pliskova said facing Lucic-Baroni would not be easy. "She is hitting big. It's going to be quick. I'll have to play aggressive, we'll see," she said of the 34-year-old, who stunned third seed Agnieszka Radwanska in round two. — AFP



**MELBOURNE:** Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a return against France's Gael Monfils during their men's singles fourth round match on day eight of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday.—AFP

# BREATHLESS NADAL, SERENA IN Q-FINALS

**MELBOURNE:** Rafael Nadal struggled into his first Grand Slam quarter-final since 2015 at the Australian Open yesterday, as Serena Williams accelerated towards a record title and the number one ranking.

Nadal, searching for a revival after injuries wrecked last season, was tested by France's Gael Monfils before winning 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 to book a last-eight clash with Milos Raonic.

Nadal, 30, was also pushed to five sets by Alexander Zverev, 19, in round three, but he has survived to reach his first major quarter-final since the 2015 French Open.

The Spanish world number nine now has an excellent chance to add to his 14 Grand Slam titles after world number one Andy Murray and title-holder Novak Djokovic were both knocked out. "I'm very happy being in the quarter-finals of a Grand Slam after a couple of years without being there," he said. "It's very special for me, especially here in Australia where I feel (it's) a little bit like home."

A day after defending women's champion and top seed Angelique Kerber also fell by the wayside, Williams beat Barbora Strycova 7-5, 6-4 to set up a last-eight meeting with Johanna Konta. The American great would gain much from winning in Melbourne, as she would overtake Steffi Graf's Open-era record of 22 Grand Slam titles and end Kerber's short reign as world number one.

In hot afternoon conditions, she fought off the Czech Republic's Strycova in two tight sets, following her sister Venus into the quarter-finals without dropping a set.

"I have absolutely nothing to lose in this tournament," said Williams, 35. "Everything here is a bonus for me. Obviously I'm here to win. Hopefully I can play better, I can only go better."

Britain's Konta, the ninth seed, also reached the last eight with a perfect record in sets after a convincing 6-1, 6-4 victory over Russia's Ekaterina Makarova.

### 'TOUGH LITTLE COOKIE'

Despite the task facing her, Konta was delighted to be playing Williams, a childhood idol, for what would be her second straight Australian Open semi-final.

"I'm really looking forward to the challenge and I'm looking forward to being on court, out on court with her and competing against her," said the 25-year-old.

Mirjana Lucic-Baroni wrote another chapter in her fairytale career revival when she beat American qualifier Jennifer Brady 6-4, 6-2 to reach her first Grand Slam quarter-final in 18 years. The former teen prodigy, now 34, won the 1998 Australian Open women's doubles with Martina Hingis but she fled her abusive father and suffered a series of injuries to put her career on hold. Her joy was unbridled at beating Brady as she reached the last eight at a major for the first time since 1999, when she lost to Graf at Wimbledon aged 17.

"I hope no one is going to pinch me and wake me up because this is just incredible," said Lucic-Baroni, who screamed with joy and jumped up and down to celebrate the win.

"I am a tough little cookie and really stubborn: when I want something I will work hard and do anything I need to get it. What a satisfaction." Lucic-Baroni will play her quarter-final against US Open finalist Karolina Pliskova, who ended home hopes with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Australia's Daria Gavrilova.

In the men's draw, David Goffin put away Austria's Dominic Thiem 5-7, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2, 6-2 to become the first Belgian man to reach the Australian quarter-finals.

Goffin will next play Grigor Dimitrov, who halted the fairytale run of Denis Istomin, the 117th-ranked Uzbek wildcard who shocked defending champion Novak Djokovic in round two. The bespectacled Istomin won the first set but injury problems set in and he went down 2-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-2, 6-1 to the in-form Bulgarian.

Canadian third seed Raonic, still suffering from the effects of flu, beat Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut 7-6 (8/6), 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 to earn his quarter-final against Nadal. —AFP



**MELBOURNE:** Serena Williams of the US celebrates her victory against Czech Republic's Barbora Strycova during their women's singles fourth round match on day eight of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday.—AFP

## FEDERER READY TO RESTORE ORDER AGAINST ZVEREV

**MELBOURNE:** Seeing world number 50 Mischa Zverev and wildcard Denis Istomin upset the top two players in the world at Melbourne Park shows more players believe they can take shake up the established order and that can only be good for tennis, says Roger Federer.

Zverev's win over world number one Andy Murray on Sunday came on the heels of Istomin's second round victory over six-times champion Novak Djokovic, results which not only surprised Federer but saw the odds of him winning the title shortened.

"I never thought that Mischa Zverev and Denis Istomin would beat those two big guys," said 17-times grand slam champion Federer, who will play Zverev on Rod Laver Arena today. "I guess it's good for tennis that a lot of guys believe stronger now that the top guys are beatable, are vulnerable, especially on a faster court."

"But two huge surprises. No doubt about that." Federer added that he would practice against a left-hander before the clash with Zverev, who charged Murray at the net and put the Scot off his rhythm from the baseline in their fourth-round encounter.

"Obviously he's on a high right now. He's feeling great," the Swiss said of Zverev.

"Probably feels the best he's ever felt on a tennis court."

"It's going to be tough and different and tricky." Things will not get any easier for Federer should he get past the 29-year-old German, with compatriot Stan Wawrinka or Jo-Wilfried Tsonga waiting for him in the last four. Tsonga said he was taking it one match at a time. "It's going to be a tough match," he said of Wawrinka. "I know he's playing really good."

"If I win, another opponent, and if I win, another one, so ... the most important thing for me is to be focused on the next opponent."

In the women's quarters, Venus Williams has the chance to send a positive message to all the veterans at the tournament when the 36-year-old takes on Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, 11 years her junior, in the first match on Rod Laver Arena. Williams could meet her younger sister Serena in a ninth grand slam final if they both get through the draw but she is refusing to think about that scenario just yet. She would first have to get past Coco Vandeweghe or French Open champion Garbine Muguruza in the last four. "She's a tricky player," Muguruza said of the 25-year-old Vandeweghe. "She has a lot of power, full shots, serve, everything. She can play very well." — Reuters



**MELBOURNE:** Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic serves to Australia's Daria Gavrilova during their fourth round match at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday.—AP

## ATKINSON'S 2ND GOAL LIFTS BLUE JACKETS PAST SENATORS

**OTTAWA:** Cam Atkinson's second goal of the game 1:09 into overtime gave the Columbus Blue Jackets a wild 7-6 victory over the Ottawa Senators at Canadian Tire Place on Sunday. The goal was Atkinson's 23rd of the season. Nick Foligno, Scott Harrington, Zach Werenski, Lukas Sedlak, Matt Calvert also scored for Columbus. Alexander Wennberg had three assists. Zack Smith scored twice and added an assist for the Senators, while Mike Hoffman also notched a pair of goals and Mark Stone and Kyle Turris had the others. Making his 22nd consecutive appearance and 13th straight start, Mike Condon stopped 22 shots. Joonas Korpisalo made 28 saves in the Blue Jackets net.

### RANGERS 1, RED WINGS 0 (OT)

Henrik Lundqvist maintained his mastery over Detroit, leading New York to victory. J.T. Miller converted Mats Zuccarello's feed on a two-on-none breakaway at 1:56 of overtime for his 15th goal of the season. Lundqvist, who made 21 saves in posting his second shutout of the season and his second straight win since ending a personal three-game losing streak, is now 6-1-1 with four shutouts in his last eight games against the Red Wings.

### PENGUINS 5, BRUINS 1

Collecting two goals for the third time in four games, Conor Sheary sparked Pittsburgh past Boston at PPG Paints Arena. Sidney Crosby, Bryan Rust and Patric Hornqvist also scored for the Penguins

while Matt Murray made 44 saves. David Krejci scored the lone goal for the Bruins.

### FLYERS 3, ISLANDERS 2 (OT)

Claude Giroux scored with 1:40 left in overtime as Philadelphia topped New York at Barclays Center. Wayne Simmonds and Ivan Provorov also scored for the Flyers and Steve Mason stopped 36 of 38 shots. Nick Leddy and Alan Quine scored for the Islanders, who had a three-game winning streak snapped as they lost for the first time under interim head coach Doug Weight. Thomas Greiss recorded 44 saves.

### BLACKHAWKS 4, CANUCKS 2

Jonathan Toews scored a goal and had three assists and scored with 1:18 remaining to lift Chicago over Vancouver at the United Center. Marian Hossa, Richard Panik and Patrick Kane also scored and Corey Crawford made 26 saves for the Blackhawks. Troy Stecher and Bo Horvat scored and Ryan Miller finished with 31 saves for the Canucks.

### PREDATORS 4, WILD 2

Filip Forsberg scored twice in the third period as Nashville rallied from an early deficit to cap their long road trip with a win over Minnesota. James Neal and Ryan Johansen also scored and Pekka Rinne overcame a rough start to stop 21 shots as the Predators won four out of five on their road swing. Mikael Granlund and Jason Pominville scored for the Wild. — Reuters

## NHL results/standings

Nashville 4, Minnesota 2; Chicago 4, Vancouver 2; Philadelphia 3, NY Islanders 2 (OT); Columbus 7, Ottawa 6 (OT); Pittsburgh 5, Boston 1; NY Rangers 1, Detroit 0 (OT).

Western Conference						Central Division							
	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS
Minnesota	30	11	5	152	106	65	Ottawa	25	15	5	122	120	55
Chicago	30	14	5	137	122	65	Boston	23	21	6	123	129	52
Nashville	23	17	7	130	122	53	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	Detroit	20	19	8	120	136	48
Dallas	19	20	9	129	151	47	Buffalo	19	18	9	110	128	47
Colorado	13	29	2	89	148	28	Tampa Bay	21	22	5	130	142	47
Pacific Division						Metropolitan Division							
Anaheim	26	14	9	130	123	61	Washington	31	9	6	149	100	68
San Jose	29	16	2	125	107	60	Columbus	32	10	4	155	106	68
Edmonton	26	15	8	144	131	60	Pittsburgh	30	11	5	169	134	65
Calgary	24	22	3	130	138	51	NY Rangers	30	16	1	164	125	61
Vancouver	22	20	6	116	135	50	Philadelphia	23	19	6	136	154	52
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
Eastern Conference						Atlantic Division							
Montreal	28	13	7	144	121	63	NY Islanders	19	17	9	129	133	47

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

## DISAPPOINTING EXIT FOR NATIONS CUP HOSTS GABON

**LIBREVILLE:** Hosts Gabon made a disappointing exit from the African Nations Cup on Sunday, foiled by the woodwork in the final minute as they missed out on the win over Cameroon which would have allowed them to grab a dramatic place in the quarter-finals.

Instead Burkina Faso and Cameroon advance from Group A, leaving Gabon with the ignominy of becoming the first home nation to be eliminated in the first round since Tunisia in 1994.

Burkina Faso topped the group on

goal difference after a 2-0 victory over Guinea Bissau in Franceville on Sunday with a fortuitous own goal from Rudinilson Silva and a second-half strike from Bertrand Traore, the Chelsea striker on loan at Ajax Amsterdam.

Cameroon also finished on five points after the goalless draw with Gabon, whose three games were all drawn. "It is very sad for all of us but each player gave 100 percent," said Gabon captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who missed a glorious chance in the opening

five minutes at Stade L'Amitie in Libreville. The hosts started furiously and finished with a late flourish that saw Denis Bouanga strike the upright deep in stoppage time and the rebound from Didier Ndong saved by Cameroon's 21-year-old goalkeeper Fabrice Ondoa, who burst into tears at the end of the game as his team mates enveloped him in celebrations. Cameroon now play Senegal in the quarter-finals but Burkina Faso's opponents will be decided when the standings in Group B are settled.

Senegal, already guaranteed top place, play Algeria in Franceville in a quarter-final on Saturday while Tunisia need just one point from their match with Zimbabwe in Libreville to set up a weekend meeting with Burkina Faso.

Burkina Faso went ahead early against Guinea Bissau as centre back Rudinilson put the ball in his own net in the 11th minute and Traore scored on the counter early in the second. But Guinea Bissau again proved competitive as they concluded their maiden appear-

ance on the Nations Cup stage.

It is the first time that four-times winners Cameroon have progressed to the quarter-finals since 2010. Their success comes despite eight players turning down a call-up last month, leaving coach Hugo Broos with what he called a B-team for the tournament.

"It is a young team that wants to play for the country, not just come because they have been called up by the coach. Now anything is possible," he said after Sunday's game. — Reuters

## DZEKO TO THE RESCUE AS ROMA STAY IN TITLE HUNT

**MILAN:** Edin Dzeko's second-half strike kept Serie A title challengers Roma in the hunt with a 1-0 win at home to Cagliari that cut the gap on leaders Juventus to one point on Sunday.

Fresh life was breathed into the race for the scudetto last week, especially for Roma and Napoli, when Juventus suffered a 2-1 defeat at Fiorentina.

But the Turin giants, aiming for a record sixth consecutive title, fired a warning to their chasers with a classy, first-half performance in a 2-0 home win over Lazio that saw Paulo Dybala and Gonzalo Higuain strike shortly after the quarter hour.

Defender Andrea Barzagli started on the bench, midfielder Claudio Marchisio was sidelined and although wingback Dani Alves returned from injury, the former Barcelona star was only fit enough for a place on the bench.

Lazio 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 hit a volley with the outside of his boot past Federico Marchetti and into the far bottom corner. Lazio were stunned again barely 10 minutes later, although the visitors' defence allowed Higuain to run in unchecked to meet Juan Cuadrado's delivery from the right flank on 17 minutes.

It was Higuain's 14th goal in 19 appearances and left the Argentine only one behind league leader Mauro Icardi of Inter Milan, who, along with Atalanta, capitalised on AC Milan's 2-1 San Siro to Napoli on Saturday to push the Rossoneri down to seventh at 11 points adrift.

Back in Champions League action at Porto next month, coach Massimiliano Allegri said: "I asked the lads for a big team performance because that's what we need in Europe, and they pulled through."

A 65th minute winner from Portugal midfielder Joao Mario rescued Inter's blushes in a 1-0 win at Palermo that moved Stefano Pioli's Champions League chasers up to fifth place at just nine points off the pace. Palermo's third defeat on the trot dropped the crisis-hit Sicilians to second from bottom, 11 points from safety.

"That was a crucial win for us, we'd worked really hard in training this week for this," said Mario, who believes the 2010 Champions League winners can realistically target a top three finish.

"We believe in our chances, there are still a lot of games to play."

Atalanta are still punching above their weight, although it took Alejandro Gomez's 55th-minute spot kick to secure the points from a 1-0 win over Sampdoria that saw the Bergamo side move up to sixth, just a point behind Inter.

Roma welcomed Cagliari with the chance equal a club record of 13 consecutive home victories, last achieved in 1930.

A wasteful first half at the Stadio Olimpico saw Diego Perotti, Dzeko (twice) and Bruno Peres all spurn solid chances.

But the increasingly frustrated home support were back on song on 55 minutes, Dzeko muscling his way past Nicola Murru to meet Antonio Rudiger's pacy delivery to volley in off the underside of the crossbar from eight yards.

It took the Bosnian's league goals tally to 14, just one behind Icardi and level with Higuain and Torino striker Andrea Belotti.

Roma coach Luciano Spalletti piled the pressure on Dzeko to take more of his chances a fortnight ago, calling the Bosnian "too soft" in front of goal.

Asked if he was still too soft, Dzeko said: "Yes, you all saw that today didn't you!" He added: "Joking aside, it wasn't easy (against Cagliari). We had a few chances, I missed one in the opening half and then I made up for it in the second. I was more clinical. "It was an important win for us, but we have to keep it going."

Cagliari finished the match with 10 men, substitute Joao Pedro given his marching orders for a blatant kick on Kevin Strootman. — AFP



**EIBAR:** FC Barcelona's Neymar Jr., tries to control the ball beside goalkeeper Yoel Rodriguez during the Spanish La Liga soccer match between FC Barcelona and Eibar, at Ipurua stadium in Eibar, northern Spain, Sunday. FC Barcelona won the match 4-0. — AP

## MESSI, SUAREZ HELP BARCA TO DOWN EIBAR

**BARCELONA:** Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez scored their 15th league goals of the season as Barcelona stayed on the heels of La Liga leaders Real Madrid by winning 4-0 at Eibar on Sunday although the win was marred by an injury to key midfielder Sergio Busquets.

Substitute Denis Suarez scored his first goal for Barca, firing the visitors into the lead from the edge of the area in the 31st minute after replacing Busquets, who had been carried off on a stretcher with strained ankle ligaments following a crunching tackle by Eibar's Gonzalo Escalante. Messi stretched Barca's lead by finishing off a brilliant move with Luis Suarez in the 50th minute and the Uruguayan joined his close friend and strike partner on 15 league goals by robbing an Eibar defender and finishing inside the near post in the 68th. Neymar added an extra shine to the victory by netting in the 91st minute, scoring his first goal for Barca from open play since October.

"We leave here with one piece of bad news which is Busquets's injury although it's not as serious as we thought," Barca coach Luis Enrique told reporters after a fourth straight win in all competitions. "We have very good players in midfield who we can rely on. After everything I feel satisfied with what I saw on the pitch. "We said we needed to get better results and that's what we're doing, and that's giving us more confidence, but we're still far from the level we want to be at."

Barca are third on 41 points, two behind Real, who beat Malaga 2-1 on Saturday and have a game in hand.

Sevilla are second on 42 points after following last week's recovery against Real by staging another stirring comeback to win 4-3 at Osasuna earlier on Sunday, while Atletico Madrid faltered again 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. Substitute Sarabia sealed a fifth straight league win by scoring a fourth Sevilla goal from the edge of the area in the 92nd minute to put his side on 42 points from 19 games, their biggest ever total for the first half of a season, although Kenan Kodro scored a consolation goal for the hosts in the 93rd.

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 42nd with a thumping strike from Inigo Lekue. Oscar de Marcos headed Athletic in front in the 56th minute, but Griezmann had other ideas, delivering a low finish off the far post with 10 minutes remaining after having a goal ruled out for offside. Atletico remain fourth in the standings but are level on 35 points with Real Sociedad, who beat Celta Vigo 1-0 on Sunday with a solitary header by striker Juanmi in the 71st minute. — Reuters

### Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

**SPAIN COPA DEL REY**  
Deportivo Alaves v Alcorcon 21:15  
BeIN SPORTS

**ITALIAN CUP**  
Napoli v Fiorentina 22:45  
BeIN SPORTS

**AFRICAN NATIONS CUP 2017**  
Morocco v Ivory Coast 22:00  
BeIN SPORTS  
Togo v Congo 22:00  
BeIN SPORTS



**ROME:** Roma's Radja Nainggolan, left, vies for the ball with Cagliari's Marco Borriello during a Serie A soccer match between Roma and Cagliari, at the Olympic stadium, in Rome, Sunday. — AP

## ASIAN CUP 2019 DRAW PITS INDIA AGAINST KYRGYZSTAN

**ABU DHABI:** India was pitted against Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Macau when the draw for the final round of qualifying for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup took place yesterday.

India, which like other Asian nations has invested heavily in football in recent years, is hoping to reach its first Asian Cup finals since 2011. The final qualifying round sees six groups of four battling it out for the remaining 12 spots available.

The winner and runner-up from each group will qualify for the finals, which are held every four years. Australia are the current holders. The 2019 tournament, which takes place in the UAE, will be contested for the first time by 24 teams. The current format features only 16 nations.

Qualifiers begin later this year on March 28. The official logo for the tournament was also unveiled prior to yesterday's draw.

**Group A:** Kyrgyzstan, India, Myanmar, Macau.

**Group B:** North Korea, Hong Kong, Lebanon, Malaysia.

**Group C:** Jordan, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Cambodia

**Group D:** Oman, Palestine, Maldives, Bhutan.

**Group E:** Bahrain, Turkmenistan, Taiwan, Singapore

**Group F:** Philippines, Tajikistan, Yemen, Nepal. — AFP



**ABU DHABI:** Shin Man Gil, Executive Director AFC Competitions Division, draws India during the draw in Abu Dhabi for the final round of qualifying for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup yesterday. — AFP

## PLAYERS RALLY AROUND SKULL-FRACTURE MASON

**LONDON:** Hull City midfielder Ryan Mason has been talking in hospital about the incident which left him with a fractured skull, the Premier League club said yesterday.

The 25-year-old Mason suffered the injury when he accidentally clashed heads with Chelsea's Gary Cahill in the 14th minute of Hull's eventual 2-0 loss away to the Premier League leaders at Stamford Bridge on Sunday.

Mason was subsequently taken to the nearby St Mary's Hospital in west London and underwent surgery. He was visited by Hull captain Michael Dawson and several club officials yesterday.

Afterwards, a Hull statement said: "Ryan has been visited this morning at St Mary's Hospital by club captain Michael Dawson, club doctor Mark Waller, head of medical Rob Price and club secretary Matt Wild.

"Ryan has been speaking of the incident yesterday and will continue to be monitored at the hospital over the coming days where the club will remain in close contact with Ryan, his family and the staff at St Mary's."

The statement added: "Ryan and his family have also been extremely touched by the overwhelming support they have received and would very much like to thank all of those who have posted such positive comments both on social media and in the press over the last 24 hours."

Cahill, Chelsea captain John Terry and assistant manager Steve Holland all reportedly visited Mason on Sunday.

Following the collision between Cahill and Mason, medical staff from both clubs sprinted out to attend to the two players, with referee Neil Swarbrick halting play for close to 10 minutes as they each received on-field treatment.

Central Defender Cahill returned to his feet and scored Chelsea's second goal, a header, in the 2-0 victory but Mason left the field on a stretcher while receiving oxygen treatment.

Several hours after the final whistle, a Hull statement confirmed that Mason had sustained a skull fracture.

Clubs and players from across England and beyond sent messages of support for Mason, among them former Manchester United and Chelsea striker Radamel Falcao, who tweeted: "My thoughts and pray for Ryan Mason. Get well soon!" Gareth Bale, who played with Mason at Tottenham Hotspur, tweeted: "Get well soon Mase!! Thoughts are with you and your family, stay strong!!!"

The England team's Twitter account posted a message reading: "Stay strong, Ryan" alongside a picture of Mason earning his sole England cap to date. Immediately after the match Chelsea head coach Antonio Conte said all those connected with the London club hoped Mason would enjoy a speedy recovery.

"It was a bad accident with Gary and, I must be honest, after the first half also Gary wasn't really good. He decided to continue the game," said Conte. "It was very bad this accident. Everyone at Chelsea, we hope to see him very soon on the pitch and to recover very soon." — AFP



**LONDON:** In this Sunday photo, Hull City's Ryan Mason, right, is injured during a header with Chelsea's Gary Cahill, left, during their English Premier League soccer match at Stamford Bridge stadium in London. Hull midfielder Mason underwent surgery after fracturing his skull during a clash of heads during a Premier League match at Chelsea on Sunday. — AP

## Sports

Britain's  
Nicola Adams  
turns proBreathless  
Nadal, Serena  
in q-finals

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2017

DISAPPOINTING EXIT FOR NATIONS CUP HOSTS GABON

Page 19



FOXBOROUGH: New England Patriots wide receiver Chris Hogan (15) makes a touchdown reception during the first half of the AFC championship NFL football game against the Pittsburgh Steelers, Sunday in Foxborough, Mass. — AP

## FALCONS, PATRIOTS TO CLASH IN SUPER BOWL

LOS ANGELES: Tom Brady led the New England Patriots into the seventh Super Bowl of his career on Sunday with a clinical 36-17 defeat of the Pittsburgh Steelers after the Atlanta Falcons routed the Green Bay Packers to reach the NFL showpiece.

Brady, 39, will now be chasing a record-equalling fifth Super Bowl crown in Houston on February 5 after throwing three touchdowns for 384 yards in a convincing defeat of the Steelers at Foxborough's Gillette Stadium.

Brady's latest Super Bowl appearances comes a fully 15 years after he led the Patriots to victory over the St. Louis Rams in the 2002 championship game.

"It's incredible. The team showed a lot of mental toughness over the course of the year," added Brady, who was suspended for the first four games of the season over for his role in the long-running 'Deflategate' saga.

"I'm just happy for the team," Brady added. "I know we're playing a great team in a couple of weeks, but it'd be great to finish it off."

Brady was at his deadly best on Sunday as the Bill Belichick-coached Pats outsmarted the Steelers with a

series of clever plays which often left Pittsburgh's defense chasing shadows. After a field goal from Stephen Gostkowski opened the scoring for New England, Brady picked out wide open receiver Chris Hogan for the first touchdown with a 16-yard pass.

The Steelers responded with a five-yard touchdown run from DeAngelo Williams which reduced the deficit but Brady found Hogan once again with a clever play-fake that left the Patriots defender in acres of space to make it 17-6.

Chris Boswell and Gostkowski traded field goals to keep the score respectable but New England took full control with two quick touchdowns in the third quarter from running back LeGarrette Blount and receiver Julian Edelman which propelled the hosts into a 33-9 lead.

Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger endured a frustrating evening, unable to get any change out of a dominant Patriots defense until finding Cobi Hamilton with a 30-yard pass for a consolation score late in the fourth quarter.

Earlier Sunday, Matt Ryan led a dominant offensive display as Atlanta crushed Green Bay 44-21 in their last ever game at the Georgia Dome.

The Falcons surged into a 24-0 half-time lead after overwhelming the Packers defense with their varied running and passing game as Green Bay quarterback Aaron Rodgers was never able to get going.

"We've got some more business at Houston in two weeks," Ryan said after the Falcons were presented the NFC Championship trophy.

"We showed up. We did exactly what we've been doing all year. It feels really good," added Ryan, who completed 27 out of 38 pass attempts for 392 yards and four touchdowns.

Green Bay star Rodgers said Atlanta had just been too good. "We played a hot team. You've got to give them credit," Rodgers said.

"Matt is playing incredible right now, and that's a very good offense." Rodgers was left frustrated as the Packers squandered vital early scoring opportunities through a missed Mason Crosby field goal and a fumble from Aaron Ripkowski near the Atlanta line with a touchdown begging.

"I feel like we hurt ourselves in the first half more than they really stopped us," Rodgers said. The Falcons meanwhile looked threatening whenever they ventured

into Green Bay territory.

Mohamed Sanu scored the opening touchdown from a flipped shovel pass from Ryan before the Atlanta quarterback grabbed his team's second six-pointer with a 14-yard run into the end zone.

Ryan punished a Rodgers interception with a pass to find Julio Jones from five yards, leaving the Falcons 24-0 ahead at the break.

Jones then galloped away for a 73-yard touchdown in the opening minutes of the third quarter to put Atlanta 31-0 ahead.

Further Atlanta touchdowns came from Devonta Freeman and Tevin Coleman and although Green Bay attempted to give the scoreboard some respectability with touchdowns from Jordy Nelson, Davante Adams, and Jared Cook, the result was never in doubt.

Ryan said the Falcons had been determined not to let up on Green Bay despite building their massive first half lead.

"We knew going in against Green Bay and going against Aaron (Rodgers) it's never over," Ryan said. "He's such a great player. We just kept at them the entire four quarters. I'm proud of the way we competed." — AFP

## WENGER HIT WITH MISCONDUCT CHARGE

LONDON: Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger was charged with misconduct by England's governing Football Association yesterday after an alleged altercation with the fourth official during Sunday's 2-1 Premier League win over Burnley.

The veteran French boss was dismissed from his technical area by referee Jon Moss after being angered by the award of a stoppage-time penalty to Burnley, having allegedly verbally abused fourth official Anthony Taylor. Wenger, 67, then tried to watch the closing minutes of the match in the tunnel at north London club Arsenal's Emirates Stadium and television pictures then showed him pushing Taylor when asked to move back. Arsenal eventually won the match 2-1 after Alexis Sanchez scored an even later stoppage-time penalty following Andre Gray's spot-kick equaliser that cancelled out Shkodran Mustafi's opening goal for the title-chasing Gunners. Wenger, Arsenal's manager since 1996, apologised for his behaviour after the match but that did not prevent him being

charged by the FA on Monday. "Arsene Wenger has been charged for misconduct following Arsenal's game against Burnley on Sunday (22 January 2017)," said a statement issued by the FA. "It is alleged that in or around the 92nd minute, he used abusive and/or insulting words towards the fourth official. It is further alleged that following his dismissal from the technical area, his behaviour in remaining in the tunnel area and making physical contact with the fourth official amounted to improper conduct. "He has until 6:00pm (1800 GMT) on 26 January 2017 to respond to the charge."

## 'NOTHING BAD'

Following the victory, which saw Arsenal move up into second place in the Premier League, Wenger expressed "regret" for his behaviour. Asked in particular about television pictures that showed him pushing Taylor, Wenger replied: "I regret everything. I should have shut up, gone in and go home. I apologise for that. "I was sent to the stands. I didn't

know if I was sent to the stands but I was sent out. I thought I could watch it from the corridor, you know. I went inside and watched it on television.

"Look, it was nothing bad. I said something that you hear every day in football. Overall nine times out of 10 you are not sent to the stand for that. "If I am, I am (suspended), and I should have shut up completely. I was quite calm the whole game, more than usual, but just (not) in the last two or three minutes."

Wenger, who faces the prospect of a fine and a touchline ban, was not the only member of the Arsenal set-up in disciplinary trouble on Sunday. Gunners midfielder Granit Xhaka was sent off for a reckless lunge on Steven Defour that left Arsenal a man down for the final 25 minutes against Burnley. It was the ninth time the Swiss international has been sent off for club and country since 2014.

Xhaka, having already been shown a red card while on Arsenal duty against Swansea earlier this season, will now miss the Gunners' next four games through suspension. — AFP



LONDON: Referee Jonathan Moss, centre left, sends Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger, centre right, to the stands during their game against Burnley, during their English Premier League soccer match at The Emirates Stadium in London, Sunday. — AP



## NBK REPORTS NET PROFITS OF KD 295.2M FOR 2016

TOTAL ASSETS GREW BY 2.6% YOY TO KD 24.2BN • NET PROFITS GREW 4.6% YOY

**KUWAIT:** National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) reported net profits of KD 295.2 million (\$964.5 million) for the year 2016 compared with KD 282.2 million (\$921.9 million) in 2015, growing 4.6 percent year-on-year. The net profit in 2015 included an accounting gain in respect of the Group exiting its investment in International Bank of Qatar (IBQ). When compared to adjusted net profit for the year 2015, net profits in 2016 grew by 11.2 percent.

Total assets as of year-end 2016 reached KD 24.2 billion (\$79.1 billion) up 2.6 percent compared to year-end 2015, while total shareholders' equity increased by 4.3 percent to KD 2.7 billion (\$8.9 billion). Customer loans and advances reached KD 13.6 billion (\$44.5 billion) as of year-end 2016, marginally up last year's levels mainly due to larger-than-usual loan settlements as well as currency devaluation in Egypt. Customer deposits grew by 4.6 percent year-on-year to reach KD 12.6 billion (\$41.2 billion) as of year-end 2016. It is noteworthy that the free floatation of the Egyptian currency in November 2016 resulted in a decline in the value of assets and liabilities of NBK Egypt (NBKE) when converted to Kuwaiti dinars for Group consolidation purposes.

NBK continued to improve its asset quality ratios with NPL/Gross Loans ratio dropping to 1.28 percent as of year-end 2016 down from 1.34 percent a year earlier, and NPL coverage ratio increasing to 365 percent, up from 322 percent at year-end 2015.

Total impairment charges amounted to KD 152.3 million (\$497.7 million) during the year, down from KD 164.4 million (\$537.2 million) in 2015. NBK Board of Directors has proposed the distribution of 30 fils per share cash dividend, representing 30 percent of the nominal share value. The board has also proposed the distribution of a 5 percent bonus shares (5 shares for every 100 shares) for the year 2016.

Nasser Al-Sayer, NBK Group Chairman said "NBK continued delivering solid growth and healthy performance in 2016. Net profits in 2016 reached KD 295.2 million, 4.6 percent year-on-year growth. Adjusting for the exceptional gains from exiting the Group's investment in IBQ, net profits grew by 11.2 percent year-on-year. This is a testimony to NBK's strong financial position, its market leadership and the successful conservative strategy that the Bank has adopted since its founding in 1952".

"On similarly adjusted basis, the Group's net operating income grew by 5.4 percent year-on-year to KD 745.3 million (\$2,435.3 million), primarily driven by higher net interest income and thus confirming NBK's strong domestic and regional market positions and focus on core banking income," Al Sayer added.

NBK has always held a leading position in the Kuwaiti market across all business segments. In 2016, in parallel with the pickup in business activity as the Government continues to award and execute mega projects, NBK played a major role in financing such transactions. "With the size of our balance sheet, regional & international presence and relationships, we proved to be the largest beneficiary of the growing government expenditure, leveraging the high growth opportunity in the project finance business," Al-Sayer highlighted.

Al-Sayer also added that "The government has declared several times its intent to continue with its development plan despite declining oil prices. The ability of the government to finance projects is not in question, thanks to the sizeable reserves and ample liquidity which keeps Kuwait in a better position than neighboring countries."

Isam Al-Sager, NBK's Group Chief Executive Officer said; the solid results of NBK confirm the Bank's resilience and its ability to continue to grow and progress. "We continue to emphasize on the Group's strategy focusing on market leadership domestically and strong positioning regional-



NBK Group Chairman Nasser Al-Sayer



NBK's Group CEO Isam Al-Sager

ly, all serving our efforts for better diversification and balancing of our sources of income".

"Domestically, NBK continues to defend its market share in Kuwait, leveraging growth opportunities in all business segments. The acquisition of a 58.4 percent stake in Boubyan Bank in 2012 was a long term strategic move by NBK to strengthen its domestic market position. The Group continued to foresee very positive momentum at Boubyan Bank, with the subsidiary delivering around 13 percent of the

Group's profits in 2016."

Al-Sager also added that in 2016, International operations delivered a solid and sound financial performance, increased its contribution to NBK Group's total profits, and continued to support the diversification of income sources and the funding base of the Group. NBK Group generated 32 percent of the year's profits from its branches, associates and subsidiaries outside Kuwait affirming the bank's successful strategy of regional and international diversification.

Al-Sager also highlighted that the Egyptian market remains a key market for the growth of NBK on the back of improving business sentiment and political stability. "NBK Egypt (NBKE) in 2016 achieved remarkable growth following the transformation strategy implemented since the beginning of 2015. This growth helped the bank offset the drop in the value of the Egyptian pound following the recent currency free floatation. NBKE is expected to continue to grow positively benefiting from the country's economic reform program. Nonetheless, the group will continue to closely monitor the dynamic economic situation until the recovery is more anchored".

During 2016, NBK increased its capital base through a 6.5 percent rights issue. The issuance is in line with the bank's plans to maintain healthy capitalization ratios following the implementation of Basel III and the regulations of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in this regards. Also, this increase will allow the bank to continue capturing growth opportunities, especially in Kuwait as the government's capital spending plan remains intact and as NBK continues to be the market leader in the project finance segment. As of end-December 2016, NBK's capital adequacy ratio (CAR) reached 17.7 percent comfortably exceeding regulatory requirements.

NBK continues to enjoy collectively one of the highest ratings among all banks in the Middle East from the three international rating agencies Moody's, Fitch Ratings and Standard and Poor's. The Bank's ratings are supported by its high capitalization, prudent lending policies, and its disciplined approach to risk management, in addition to its highly recognized and very stable management team. NBK was also named among Global Finance's list of the 50 safest banks in the world for the eleventh consecutive time and was awarded as the Best Bank in Kuwait in 2016 by the Banker, Euromoney and Global Finance.

NBK enjoys the widest banking presence with a local and international network reaching 4 continents. NBK's international presence spans many of the world's leading financial centers including New York, Europe, GCC, Middle East, Singapore as well as China (Shanghai).

### Highlights

- Al-Sayer: NBK continues delivering strong performance reflecting the strength of its financial position, its strong asset quality and conservative strategy
- FY 2016 profits primarily reflect strong core banking activity
- NBK led the financing of several mega projects affirming the Bank's capabilities and expertise in arranging such large transactions
- Al-Sager: NBK continues strengthening its market leadership position and affirming its strategy of income diversification both domestically and regionally
- Customer loans and advances reached KD 13.6 billion marginally up from last year while customer deposits reached KD 12.6 billion, up 4.6% YoY
- NPL ratio declined to 1.28% and NPL coverage reached 365%
- The Board has proposed cash dividends of 30 fils per share and 5% bonus shares

# 295.2

## Million KD Net Profit for the Year 2016

31/12/2016

Net Profit

**295.2**  
Million KD

Net Operating Income

**745.3**  
Million KD

Shareholders' Equity

**2.7**  
Billion KD

Total Assets

**24.2**  
Billion KD

Moody's Aa3 FitchRatings AA- Standard & Poor's A+





**BANJUL:** A man counts Dalasi, currency of The Gambia, in Banjul yesterday. The Gambia yesterday awaited the arrival of President Adama Barrow as his team said former strongman Yahya Jammeh plundered the nation's coffers before going into exile. — AFP

## KUWAIT BULL RUN SLOWS, SAUDI SHINES IN REGION

### MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

**DUBAI:** Saudi Arabia outperformed other Gulf stock markets yesterday as several major stocks bounced after poor earnings earlier this week, while a bull run in Kuwait slowed and Egypt rebounded sharply from a slide triggered by tax fears.

The Saudi index rose 1.7 percent in the highest trading volume since Jan. 2. Food maker Savola, which had dropped 2.0 percent on Sunday after reporting a shock fourth-quarter loss, jumped 5.4 percent. The company's earnings were squeezed in part by tough price competition in a slowing Saudi economy, but the stock's rebound suggested many investors were looking forward to a stronger non-oil economy this year as Riyadh delays new austerity steps. Banks also gained after some dropped this week on disappointing fourth-quarter earnings. Saudi British Bank surged 6.5 percent.

The Kuwaiti index, which rose 15.6 percent between the end of last year and Sunday, added a further 0.6 percent yesterday in the highest trading volume since mid-2013.

National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), the biggest bank, climbed 2.9 percent; it extended its gains in the final minutes of trade after posting a 40 percent rise in fourth-quarter net profit to KD75.9 million (\$248.9 million). EFG Hermes had forecast a

profit of KD69.2 million. Logistics giant Agility, which has yet to report quarterly earnings, surged 5.8 percent.

Eight of the 10 most heavily traded Kuwaiti stocks fell and none rose, however, a sign of increasing profit-taking pressure that could conceivably bring the bull run to an end.

In Dubai, the index fell 0.3 percent as Shuaa Capital pulled back 9.8 percent after a two-week rally. Trading volume in the stock was the highest since last September. Abu Dhabi dropped 0.9 percent as banks slipped. Qatar edged down 0.1 percent but Doha Bank rose 2.5 percent.

The bank reported an 84.8 percent decline in fourth-quarter net profit to 35 million riyals (\$9.6 million); three analysts polled by Reuters had forecast on average the bank would make a quarterly net profit of 215.58 million riyals. But Doha Bank also said its board was recommending a cash dividend of 3 riyals per share for 2016, the same level as in 2015.

Egypt's share market index rebounded 2.2 percent after dropping 4.6 percent in the two previous days, after Reuters reported authorities were considering temporarily reintroducing a stamp duty charge on stock market transactions. Commercial International Bank, the largest bank, climbed 3.5 percent. — Reuters

# SAUDI INFLATION PLUNGE AIDS GOVT IN FIGHT TO TAME DEFICIT

## KINGDOM ANNOUNCES THREE INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

**DUBAI:** A plunge in Saudi Arabia's inflation rate, to its lowest level in more than 10 years, is good news for the kingdom's efforts to reduce a huge state budget deficit without stifling economic growth.

Annual consumer price inflation slowed to 1.7 percent in December from 2.3 percent in November, the Central Department of Statistics reported yesterday. On a month-on-month basis inflation was negative, with prices dropping 0.5 percent. Much of the decline was due to lower food prices, which fell 4.3 percent from a year earlier. The desert kingdom imports many basic foods; its costs were reduced by soft global food prices and the Saudi riyal's peg to the US dollar, which has been strong globally.

Riyadh hiked domestic fuel and utility prices in December 2015 to cut a \$98 billion budget deficit produced by low oil prices. That caused inflation to almost double in the following month to 4.3 percent, its highest level since 2012, squeezing the incomes of Saudi consumers and slowing the economy further. The leap in inflation threatened a political backlash which could have made the government more cautious about introducing additional austerity measures. The latest data suggests that threat has largely subsided.

"In the first half of last year, inflation caused a considerable erosion of household incomes and people's ability to pay for things - the data shows this has eased," said Jason Tuvey, Middle East analyst at London-based Capital Economics.

The data is also positive because it shows the economy has been flexible enough to absorb the fuel and utility price hikes of December 2015 without a self-sustaining spiral of higher inflation spreading into other sectors. That is positive for the government because Riyadh plans another round of fuel and utility price rises around the middle of this year, after it has introduced a program to compensate poorer Saudis for the impact on their living standards.

The data does contain some areas of concern for Saudi policy makers, however. Tuvey said it appeared inflation fell so sharply partly because Saudi companies were forced to slash their prices to compete as the economy weakened. A cash-strapped private sector may not be able to afford the new investments which the government wants to see creating jobs outside the oil sector. Also, Riyadh plans to introduce a 5 percent value-added tax (VAT) next year to shrink its deficit further. While inflation could fall a little further early this year, it is likely to bounce back above 4.0 percent in response to VAT, Tuvey said.

### Infrastructure projects

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabian authorities have announced three public transport projects in the port city of Jeddah, a sign that a freeze on new

infrastructure work in the kingdom may be easing as the government slows its austerity drive.

The projects are a tram line along Jeddah's northern corniche, a marine taxi service and a bridge linking two of the city's neighborhoods, the Saudi Gazette reported yesterday quoting an official statement.

The projects are open to participation of the private sector, the statement said, reflecting a new effort by the government to save money by persuading private investors to share the financial burden of building infrastructure. The statement did not give a value for the projects or reveal other details.

Few new projects were announced in the kingdom last year as the government, its finances strained by low oil prices, clamped down on spending. This year, oil prices are about \$10 a barrel higher than last year's average and with the government's deficit projected to narrow, the 2017 state budget is slightly less austere.

Spending on infrastructure and transport is slated to rise 39 percent from last year's actual level.

Prince Khaled Al-Faisal, governor of the Makkah region, stressed in the statement that public transport projects in the area were crucial to meet the government's goal of sharply increasing the number of foreign pilgrims visiting Makkah. A study by consultants Faithful+Gould, released last week, estimated project awards by the government would total \$27 billion this year, compared with about \$20 billion last year and \$35.5 billion in 2015. This year's total could hit \$32 billion if a project to build a metro system in the city of Makkah, which was originally expected to be awarded in 2016, goes through this year, the consultants said.

At the same time, at least \$13.3 billion of other Saudi state projects are at risk of being cancelled this year as the government responds to financial pressures and changing priorities, the study added. — Reuters

## MCDONALD'S SALES DIP IN US, UNDERSCORING CHALLENGES

**NEW YORK:** McDonald's is trying stage a comeback, but still has plenty of work to do in its flagship US market. The world's biggest burger chain said US sales dipped 1.3 percent at established locations for the final three months of 2016. Its performance was better overseas, and the sales figure rose globally.

The Oak Brook, Illinois company attributed the sales decline at home to a tough comparison from the year-ago period, when it introduced an all-day breakfast menu. The results nevertheless underscore the hurdles McDonald's faces in its push to revitalize its image while facing broader industry challenges, including supermarkets and convenience stores selling more prepared foods and cheaper groceries encouraging people to eat at home. Earlier this month, The NPD Group said it expects customer traffic for the restaurant industry to remain "stalled" this year, as it was in 2016.

McDonald's isn't alone in struggling to attract more customers. Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz has said the retail landscape would undergo a "seismic" change as people do more of their shopping online, leading to less foot traffic in general. The coffee chain's transactions at established US locations slipped by 1 percent in the previous quarter. McDonald's, meanwhile, has conceded that it failed to keep up with changing tastes and that it's speeding up efforts to transform into a

"modern, progressive burger company." It recently introduced its Big Mac in different sizes, for instance, and has been testing fresh beef for some of its burgers.

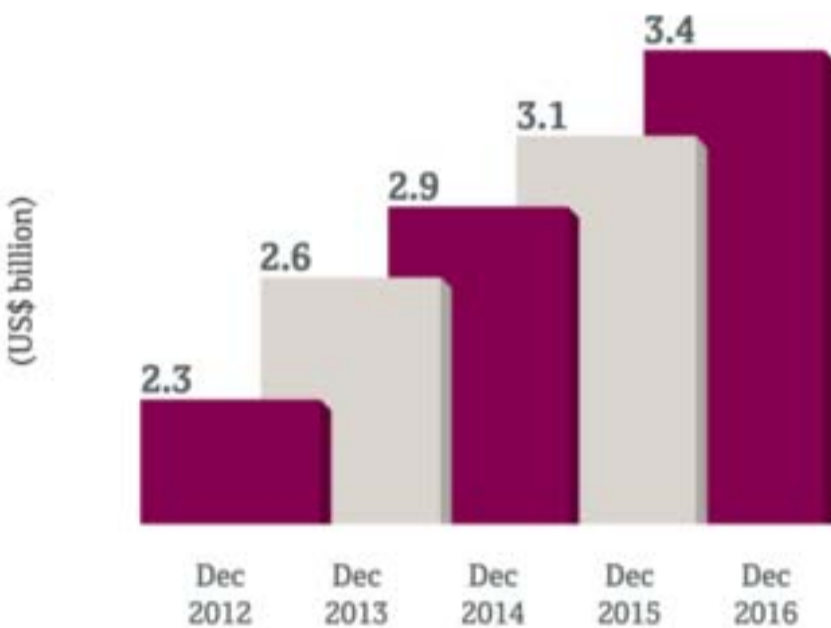
Heading into 2017, McDonald's said it would focus on growing customer traffic. The US sales decline for the end of 2016 snaps a streak of five quarters of increases. But those increases could have been the result of higher prices or people ordering different menu items. For all of 2016, McDonald's saw guest counts decline 2.1 percent at established locations, according to a regulatory filing.

That marks the fourth straight year of declining guest counts at home. The company also trimmed its US store base for the second year in a row after decades of expansion, ending the year with 14,155 locations. David Palmer, an RBC Capital Markets analyst, said US sales trends may improve for McDonald's this year as it rolls out more changes like the different Big Mac sizes and value deals that can help draw customers.

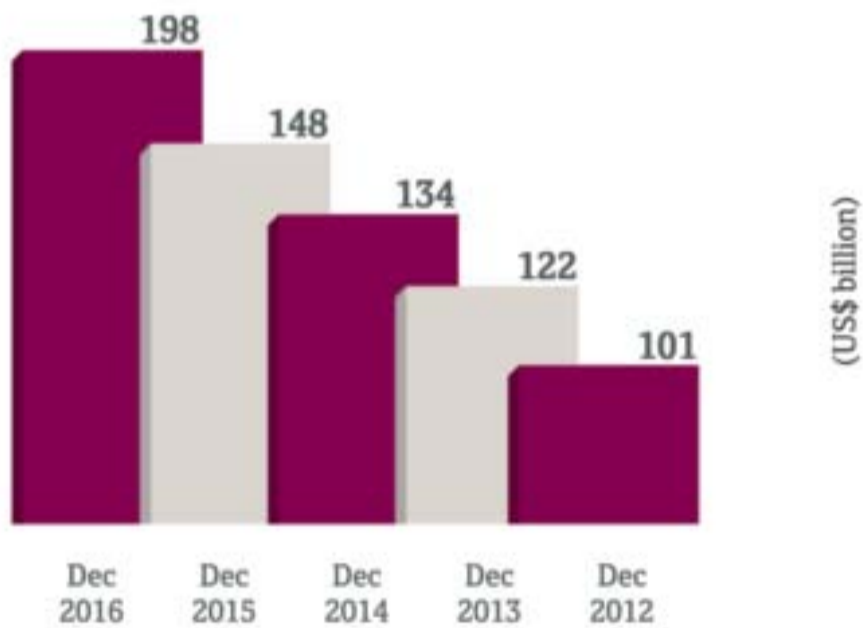
Globally, McDonald's expanded its footprint and had 36,899 locations at year's end. The company said its International Lead unit, which includes the United Kingdom, saw sales rise 2.8 percent at established locations. The High Growth unit, which includes China, saw sales increase 4.7 percent. Sales at established locations for the Foundational segment, which includes Japan, rose 11.1 percent. — AP

## QNB Group strengthens its position as the largest financial institution in the MEA region

Net Profit US\$3.4 billion, up 10% on 2015



Total Assets US\$198 billion, up 34% on 2015



QNB Group achieves record financial results for the year ended 31 December 2016

- QNB Group, the largest financial institution in the MEA region, is currently present in more than 30 countries across three continents
- QNB Group staff exceeds 28,000 serving more than 20 million customers through 1,200 locations and 4,300 ATMs
- QNB Group enjoys one of the highest credit ratings: Capital Intelligence AA-, Fitch AA-, Moody's Aa3, Standard & Poor's A+

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DOLLAR DROPS AS TRUMP TAKES OVER, STOCKS FALL

LONDON: The dollar fell to a 1-1/2 month low yesterday against an index of the world's other top currencies...

his (Trump's) victory speech in November, but it was a bit confrontational and has sparked some concerns in the markets that he is going to play hard ball...

"It was quite straight forward: buy American, hire American... so it's clear what route he is taking." Trump confirmed that he would begin renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement...

That, and the declaration of a "running war" with parts of the media, all fed uncertainty about the direction policy will take and pointed

to a bumpy few months ahead as the president settles into day-to-day office. The dollar index rose around 4.2 percent between Trump's election in November and the end of last year, but it has given back over 2.5 percent of that gain since then...

Against the yen the fall so far in January has been 3 percent, though trader positioning data on Friday showed large short positions against the yen remain. European stocks and bond yields edged lower yesterday and the dollar briefly hit a six-week low after US President Donald Trump began his term in office with a protectionist speech that drove a nervous market into safe-haven assets.

Earlier, Japan's Nikkei dropped 1.1 percent while shares in Australia fell 0.8 percent after Trump's administration also declared its intention to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)...

\$1.0740 against the dollar though, as a 0.4 percent rise set it on course for its seventh daily rise in the last nine. A vote in France at the weekend meant former Socialist government rebel Benoit Hamon will go up against ex-prime minister Manuel Valls to be the presidential candidate of the country's beleaguered left.

It was another result that upset the pre-vote polls and analysts said it could boost the hopes of centrist Emmanuel Macron, who some surveys suggest may do better against nationalist Marine Le Pen.

SUPREME COURT

Sterling was the other big gainer among developed-market currencies, hitting a five-week high as investors bet Britain's Supreme Court would rule that the government needs parliamentary approval to trigger formal Brexit talks.

The euro was also back up above

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Monday 23 January 2017

Table with 6 columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low. Rows include Price index, Weighted Index, KXS 15.

Table with 2 columns: Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include MARIN, IKARUS, IPG, NAPESCO, ENERGYH, GPI, ABAR, Oil & Gas.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include SOKOUK, KRF, URC, NRE, SRE, TAM, AREFC, MASSALEH, ARABREC, ERESKO, MABANEE, INJAZZAT, INVESTORS, IRC, ALTIJARIA, SANAM, AAYANRE, AQAR, ALAQARIA, MAZAYA, ADNC, THEMAR, TIJARA, TAAMEER, ARKAN, ARGAN, ABYAAH, MUNSHAAT, FIRSTDUBAI, KBT, REAM, MENA, ALMUDON, MARAKEZ, REMAL, AWJ, Real Estate.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include KFOUC, BPCC, ALKOUT, ALQURAIN, Basic Materials.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include ALTJARIA, SANAM, AAYANRE, AQAR, ALAQARIA, MAZAYA, ADNC, THEMAR, TIJARA, TAAMEER, ARKAN, ARGAN, ABYAAH, MUNSHAAT, FIRSTDUBAI, KBT, REAM, MENA, ALMUDON, MARAKEZ, REMAL, AWJ, Real Estate.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include KCEM, RFRRI, CABLE, SHIP, PCEM, PAPER, MRC, ACICO, GGMG, HCC, KBMMG, NICBM, EQUIPMENT, NCCI, GYPSUM, SALBOOKH, AGLTY, EDU, CLEANING, KGL, KCPC, HUMANSOFT, NAFAS, SAFWAN, GFC, MAYADEEN, CGC, MTCC, UPAC, ALAFU, MUBARRAD, LOGISTICS, SCEM, GCEM, QIC, FCEM, RKWC, SFEPC, Industrials.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include KINV, FACIL, IFA, NINV, KPROJ, COAST, SECH, SGC, ARZAN, MARKAZ, KMEFIC, ALAMAN, ALOLA, ALMAL, GIH, AAYAN, BAYANINV, OSOUL, KFIC, KAMCO, NIH, UNICAP, MADAR, ALDEERA, ALSALAM, EKTTITAB, ALMADINA, NOOR, TAMINV, EXCH, TAIBA, KSHC, ASIYA, GNAHC, AMWAL, ALMUTIAZ, MANAZEL, NIND, BIHC, SENERGY, AGCH, KPCC, TAHSILAT, JEERANH, EKHOLDING, GFH, INOVEST, Financial Services, Investment Instruments.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include KSH, NSH, PAFCO, CATT, DANAH, POULT, FOOD, Consumer Goods, MHC, ATC, YIACO, Health Care.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include KSHC, ASIYA, GNAHC, AMWAL, ALMUTIAZ, MANAZEL, NIND, BIHC, SENERGY, AGCH, KPCC, TAHSILAT, JEERANH, EKHOLDING, GFH, INOVEST, Financial Services, Investment Instruments.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include KCIN, KHOT, SULTAN, CABLETV, EYAS, IFAHR, OULAFUEL, MUNTAZAHAT, JAZERA, SOOR, FUTUREKID, ALRAI, ZIMAH, Mezzan, Consumer Services.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include KSHC, ASIYA, GNAHC, AMWAL, ALMUTIAZ, MANAZEL, NIND, BIHC, SENERGY, AGCH, KPCC, TAHSILAT, JEERANH, EKHOLDING, GFH, INOVEST, Financial Services, Investment Instruments.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include ZAIN, QOREDOO, HITSTELEC, VIVA, Telecommunications.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include ZAIN, QOREDOO, HITSTELEC, VIVA, Telecommunications.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include NBK, GBK, CBK, ABK, ALMUTAHED, KIB, BURG, KFIN, BOUBYAN, AUB, ITIMR, WARBABANK, Banks.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include NBK, GBK, CBK, ABK, ALMUTAHED, KIB, BURG, KFIN, BOUBYAN, AUB, ITIMR, WARBABANK, Banks.

Table with 8 columns: Security, High, Low, Volume, Value (KD), Trades, Last, Change. Rows include KINS, GINS, AINS, WINS, KUWAITRE, FTI, WETHAQ, BKIKWT, Insurance.

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



TOKYO: A man looks at an electronic stock board of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. Japanese stocks tumbled yesterday after Donald Trump took office as US president and promised "American first" policies, prompting concern about possible protectionism. —AP

National Bank of Kuwait Financial Markets Daily Report

Table with 6 columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance %, Yearly Performance %. Rows include Dow Jones, NASDAQ, S&P 500, Financial Times, DAX, CAC 40, Swiss, Nikkei 225, Topix, Hang Seng, Straits Times.

Table with 6 columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance %, Yearly Performance %. Rows include Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia.

Table with 8 columns: Currency, Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal, US Dollar, Euro, Sterling Pound, Swiss Franc, Japanese Yen, Australian Dollar.

Table with 8 columns: Currency, US Dollar, Kuwaiti Dinar, Saudi Riyal, Bahraini Dinar, Qatari Riyal, Omani Riyal, Emirates Dirham, Egyptian Pound.

Table with 6 columns: Currency, 1-Week, 1-Month, 3-Month, 6-Month, 1-Year.

Table with 5 columns: Country, 2-Year, 5-Year, 10-Year, 30-Year.

Table with 6 columns: Index, Previous Close, Last Price, Change, Daily Performance %, Yearly Performance %. Rows include Kuwait Oil, Brent, West Texas, Gold, Silver.



## 2017 NISSAN GT-R MAKES MIDDLE EAST DEBUT

NISSAN'S FLAGSHIP VEHICLE BOASTS A REVISED LOOK AND MORE POWER

**DUBAI:** Nissan yesterday launched the new 2017 GT-R across the Middle East, the latest iteration of Nissan's flagship performance vehicle, boasting a revised look both inside and out as well as major driving performance enhancements and more power. The 2017 models represent the most significant changes made to the GT-R since it was introduced in 2007, with Nissan also announcing the immediate availability of its GT-R NISMO in the region.

Samir Cherfan, Managing Director of Nissan Middle East, said: "The Nissan GT-R is one of the world's most iconic supercars, and the Middle East is a key market for it. Motorists in this region love high-performance vehicles and the GT-R embodies every aspect of the word. Its multi-performance character allows the driver to be completely immersed in the GT-R's capabilities, whether navigating corners on a twisting mountain road or simply running weekend errands in the neighborhood. We are very excited to be introducing the new 2017 model to its fans and customers in the region."

The new GT-R's exterior gets a complete makeover across the front end. The new chrome matte finish "V-motion" grille represents one of Nissan's latest design signatures. It has been enlarged to provide better engine cooling and features an updated mesh pattern. A new hood, which flows flawlessly from the grille, has been significantly reinforced, contributing to stability during high-speed driving. A freshly-designed front spoiler lip and front bumpers with finishers situated immediately below the headlamps give the new GT-R the look of a pure-bred racecar, while generating high levels of front downforce.

The GT-R's familiar wind-cutting shape defines its profile, but the side sills have been pushed out to improve air flow. The rear of the car also received a thorough makeover. While the GT-R's hallmark four-tailights remain, look closely and you'll notice new bodywork to help improve air flow, as well as side air vents next to the quad exhaust tips. Also, the



belt line that separates the lower black section from the body panel has been heightened to give the car a wider and more aggressive look from the rear. These exterior changes don't result just in a sportier-looking car, they create an aerodynamically efficient vehicle, with less drag but retaining the same amount of downforce as the current GT-R to keep the car stable at high speeds.

Step into the cabin, and you're greeted by a premium interior that is befitting a high-performance sports car of this caliber. The entire dashboard and instrument panel are new and covered with high-quality leather artfully stitched together with TAKUMI precision. The shape of the dashboard adopts a "horizontal flow" that delivers a sense of increased stability for the car's front-seat occupants, while the line from the instrument cluster to the center con-

sole provides a distinct driver-oriented environment for those behind the steering wheel.

The center dashboard layout has also been improved and simplified. Integrated navigation and audio controls reduce the number of switches from 27 in the previous model to only 11 in the 2017 model. An enlarged 8-inch touch-panel monitor features large icons on the display screen to make it easy to operate. A new Display command control on the carbon-fiber center console allows easy operation.

The shift paddles are now mounted to the new steering wheel, allowing drivers to change gears in mid-turn without having to take their hands off the wheel. The paddles themselves, along with the ventilation controls, have improved feel and better sound when engaged or adjusted.

The GT-R's award-winning 3.8-liter V6 24-valve

twin-turbocharged engine—each unit handcrafted by its own TAKUMI technician—now delivers 565 HP (EUR 570 PS) at 6800 rpm and 467 lb-ft of torque. The engines are the definition of TAKUMI expertise. The improved output, which are the result of individual ignition-timing control of the cylinders and extra boost from the turbochargers, allow the new GT-R to possess superior acceleration in the mid- to high-ranges (3200 rpm and above).

It comes mated to a thoroughly refined 6-speed dual-clutch transmission that features smoother shifts and less noise. That familiar GT-R tone also has been upgraded with an engine that has never sounded better. The resonance of the new titanium mufflers and Active Sound Enhancement (ASE) enhance the driving experience.

The GT-R has always been regarded as one of the world's best handling machines, and for 2017, its cornering abilities have become even better. A more rigid body structure and new suspension result in better stability through quick lateral transitions and higher overall cornering speed. Providing the grip are sticky 20 inch tires, wrapped around new "Y-spoke" machine-finished forged aluminum wheels.

Despite all the performance enhancements, the 2017 GT-R is the most comfortable model to date, with a new sense of elegance and civility that one would rarely find in such a high-performance supercar. The new GT-R exhibits a smoother ride quality than the outgoing model, and its cabin remains much quieter at all speeds and new sound absorption materials.

New for the 2017 GT-R are fresh colors inside and out that complement the car's sophisticated character. A "Blaze Metallic" with multi-layered painting has been added to the exterior paint palette, which the interior of the Premium Edition, which features semi-aniline leather, offers customers four different options: the newly added Black/Rakuda and Samurai Black, as well as the always popular Black/Amber Red and Black/Ivory.

## INDIA'S TOP COURT DISMISSES PLEA TO DELAY ANNUAL BUDGET

**NEW DELHI:** India's Supreme Court yesterday rejected a petition to delay the annual federal budget, which Finance Minister Arun Jaitley is scheduled to deliver on Feb. 1, dismissing concerns about potential giveaways ahead of critical state polls.

A panel headed by Chief Justice J S Khehar found no merit in a public interest litigation by lawyer M L Sharma, who had called for the budget to be delayed until after a round of five regional elections. The case was motivated by fears that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government could offer budget giveaways to attract votes in state assembly elections to be held in February and March.

The most important poll is being held in Uttar Pradesh, a northern battleground state with a population of more than 200 million. The election is expected

to be the biggest democratic exercise anywhere in the world this year.

A good showing is critical for Modi, and his Bharatiya Janata Party, if he is to stand a good chance of winning re-election in the 2019 general election. Separately, the election commission was due to rule on a similar call for the budget to be delayed. Its Model Code of Conduct bans governments from using administrative resources to solicit votes.

Voting kicks off in the western breadbasket state of Punjab and the western resort state of Goa on Feb. 4. It will be held in seven states across Uttar Pradesh from Feb. 11; and will wrap up in the northeastern states of Uttarakhand and Manipur. Results of all the elections, which will eventually be reflected in parliament's upper house, are due in mid-March. — Reuters

## UK LAUNCHES INDUSTRY STRATEGY TO COUNTER ANY BREXIT STORM

MAY SEEKS CLOSER COLLABORATION WITH KEY INDUSTRIES

**LONDON:** Britain published the outline of its industrial strategy yesterday, putting forward proposals for a more hands-on approach to developing key industries as a way to protect the economy from any turbulence caused by leaving the European Union. Unveiling her long-awaited "Modern Industrial Strategy" yesterday, Prime Minister Theresa May demanded closer collaboration within key industries in exchange for government support on regulation, trade and research.

The focus on industry and the shift to a governmental hands-on approach challenges the traditional Conservative laissez-faire ideology championed by former prime minister Margaret Thatcher. May will ask businesses to work together to tackle industry-specific challenges, citing examples of successful collaboration that have helped attract overseas investment from the likes of carmaker Nissan, and enabled aerospace firms such as BAE Systems to develop a competitive edge.

In return she will pledge to reciprocate with 'Sector Deals' that address regulatory barriers, look at how trade and investment deals can be used to increase exports, and support the creation of new institutions to provide leadership, drive innovation or boost skills.

"The modern industrial strategy will back Britain for the long term: creating the conditions where successful businesses can emerge and grow, and backing them to invest in the long-term future of our country," May said in an emailed statement prior to the announcement. The outline of the strategy - expected to range across economic, regional, education transport and digital policy - will be set out in a 'Green Paper' consultation document due to be published later on Monday, seeking input from industry. "Today's Green Paper signals a more ambitious approach to securing growth and preparing for the inevitable pressures that will accompany Brexit," said Paul Everitt CEO of the aerospace trade body ADS. The government also listed 10 strategic pillars behind its strategy such as skills development and improved procurement.

### BACK IN FASHION

Since coming to office weeks after Britain's vote to leave the EU last year, May has pushed the once-unfashionable concept of industrial strategy to the top of her agenda, creating a new government department to lead the project, and chairing a top-level cabinet committee on the subject.

It comes as Britain's impending exit from the EU threatens to undermine the financial services sector, with several banks planning to shift thousands of jobs abroad because they fear they will lose access to the EU market.

May said last week that Britain would be withdrawing from the single market, and seeking a free trade agreement with the EU instead -



**LONDON:** British Prime Minister Theresa May (center) holds a regional Cabinet meeting in Runcorn, north west England yesterday. May launched proposals for a modern Industrial Strategy to build on Britain's strengths and tackle its underlying weaknesses to secure a future as a competitive, global nation". — AFP

a path critics have described as 'Hard Brexit'.

"The idea that the government can have any reasonable strategy for British industry while recklessly withdrawing from the single market is laughable," said Don Foster, business spokesman for the rival and pro-EU Liberal Democrat party.

"It's like the manager tying their team's bootlaces together while telling them they have a plan to win the match." Under the banner of building an economy that distributes wealth more evenly, following decades of industrial

decay in parts of Britain, the plan seeks to protect the economy from the risk of leaving the EU and address a mood of disenfranchisement that drove many voters to back Brexit.

The government said early work had been done on sector deals for a number of industries: life sciences, ultra-low emission vehicles, nuclear and creative industries. But it said it would work with any sector that could "organize behind strong leadership to address shared challenges and opportunities." — Reuters

## 'BREXIT, SO WHAT?' GERMAN FIRMS EXPECT LITTLE FALLOUT

**BERLIN:** A large majority of German companies expect Britain's divorce from the European Union to cause little if any damage to their business, according to a poll published by the Cologne Institute for Economic Research (IW) yesterday. Germany, the EU's largest economy, has stressed the importance of maintaining open trade ties with Britain after it leaves the bloc. Finance Minister Wolfgang Schauble said last week the German government would try to minimize any damage to both the EU and Britain during the Brexit negotiations. However, the IW survey, entitled "Brexit, so what?" found that more than 90 percent of the 2,900 companies surveyed either said they expected no damage at all or very little harm.

Only two to three percent - mainly companies in the industrial sector - said they expected

Brexit to have a major impact on their investments and workforce. About a fourth of those polled said they expect Brexit to have a positive effect, some saying that it could for example lead to a rise in foreign investment in Germany.

The findings contrasted with expressions of concern from German car makers and farmers, among others, about the possible negative impact of a "hard Brexit" - in which Britain would also lose the EU's single market - on bilateral trade. Britain is Germany's third-largest export market after the United States and France. Exports to Britain stood at 80 billion euros in the first 11 months of last year. British Prime Minister Theresa May made clear last week that Britain would indeed quit the single market in order to regain full control of its laws and its borders. — Reuters

## CHINA, PHILIPPINES TO COOPERATE ON 30 PROJECTS WORTH \$3.7 BN

**BEIJING:** China has agreed to cooperate with the Philippines on 30 projects worth \$3.7 billion focusing on poverty reduction, the two countries said after a meeting in Beijing yesterday.

Chinese Commerce Minister Gao Hucheng announced the deals without giving details, saying it was an "initial batch" of projects that still needed to be finalized and paperwork still needed to be processed by the banks involved. Philippine Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said he had a "very productive" meeting with Gao and they had discussed large projects in rural areas, as well as some smaller projects.

The deal is the first announcement from a two-day visit by a Philippine cabinet delegation to China that comes three months after President Rodrigo Duterte visited Beijing to pave the way for new commercial alliances.

China has welcomed Duterte's foreign policy shift away from traditional ally the United States and towards doing more regional deals for loans and business under his "pro-Filipino" policy.

Relations between the Philippines and China "fully recovered" after Duterte's visit, and "China supports president Duterte to lead the Philippines people in developing their economy," Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a regular news briefing yesterday. Chinese Vice Premier Wang Yang told the Philippines' delegation that the two countries were

friends and there was enormous potential to develop trade and business ties, state news agency Xinhua said.

Both countries should continue to push for the healthy development of relations, Wang added.

Chinese officials pledged \$15 billion of investment to the Philippines during Duterte's visit in October, according to the Philippine finance department. Asked whether US President Donald Trump's economic policies would affect commercial ties between China and the Philippines, Dominguez said: "It's better to be with good friends."

"I'm not sure at this moment exactly what the new US policies, but I believe that the reorientation of our president to our neighbors really was very smart," Dominguez told reporters.

The Philippine delegation is due to meet Vice Premier Wang Yang at Zhongnanhai, the Beijing complex that houses China's central government.

The Philippine team on the trip includes Duterte's finance, budget, economic, public works and transport secretaries. The two sides will also discuss the Philippines' chairmanship of the 10-member Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) this year.

Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay said on Jan 11 he was confident a code of conduct in the South China Sea between ASEAN and China could be finished by mid-2017. — Reuters





New SKODA Superb enjoys starring role on display at Marina Mall

## A SUPERB REASON TO HIT THE ROAD

FOUAD ALGHANIM AND SONS AUTOMOTIVE COMPANY LAUNCHES NEW SKODA SUPERB

**KUWAIT:** There was something superb on display at Marina Mall last weekend, as the new SKODA Superb enjoyed its first public appearance. A superb fit for car buyers looking for a classy mid-class vehicle, the new SKODA model's creativity, comfort and connectivity make it the perfect choice for drivers in Kuwait.

The third-generation Superb is now powerful than ever, yet it is up to 30 percent more economical. It benefits from the company's

MQB technology, meaning designers have made the car more spacious, lighter, safer and more fuel-efficient.

Connectivity also attains a new quality: the new Superb has a new-generation infotainment system that automatically connects to the driver's smartphone via SmartLink. It features Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, which provide easy access to several apps from your phone on the car's display, while high-speed

internet connection has turned the Superb into the first SKODA hotspot on wheels.

"SKODA has made significant design and technology improvements to the popular Superb. The new Superb is more spacious and more powerful, yet also more fuel-efficient," said Tarek Al Shafie, General Manager of Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company, the exclusive dealer of SKODA in Kuwait.

"We are confident that the third-generation model of the SKODA Superb will appeal to our customers in Kuwait and continue to serve their needs."

The Superb has been at the top of SKODA's model range since 2001. To date, the car manufacturer has delivered more than 700,000 SKODA Superbs, making the model one of the most popular vehicles in the automotive mid-class segment.

The vehicle's overall package: extremely generous space, a timeless elegant design, modern, tried-and-tested technology, top comfort, maximum safety, optimum functionality and very good value for money, make Superb a big draw for customers.

Following its starring role, the newly designed SKODA Superb is now available at Fouad Alghanim & Sons Automotive Company showroom in Shuwaikh.

## DELIVERY OF JAPAN PASSENGER JET PUSHED BACK BY 2 YEARS

**TOKYO:** Mitsubishi Heavy Industries said yesterday it would postpone delivery of its long-awaited regional jet by two years, and warned over soaring development costs for the problem-plagued plane.

This is the fifth time that the company has pushed back the commercial rollout of its Mitsubishi Regional Jet (MRJ), Japan's first domestically produced passenger plane for over half a century.

The decision to move back the first customer delivery to mid-2020 from mid-2018 comes after local media reports said the plane needed more design changes to ensure it was safe. The problem was linked to the location of certain electronic equipment, the Nikkei business daily and other Japanese media reported.

The company said it was modifying the design of "electrical configurations" to meet the latest safety standards, which have become more and more strict given the threat of terrorism. "We now have to think of risks that are unthinkable in the normal course of things, such as a massive flood of water damaging electrical systems or a bomb explosion destroying those systems," Nobuo Kishi, vice president of the firm's aviation unit, told a press briefing in Tokyo. Development costs could come in as much as 40

percent higher than an original range of between 150-180 billion yen (\$1.3-1.6 billion), the firm said, citing stricter safety standards.

The development of the MRJ has suffered a series of delays, largely owing to software upgrades and other design changes. The original plan when the program started in 2008 was for the first customer delivery to begin in 2013. The twin-engine MRJ marks a new chapter in the country's aviation sector, which last built a commercial airliner in 1962 — the YS-11 turboprop that was discontinued about a decade later. After initially being barred from developing aircraft following World War II, Japan-and its MRJ jet-is competing with other passenger jet manufacturers such as Brazil's Embraer and Canada's Bombardier. Mitsubishi unveiled the jet-which is about 35 metres (115 feet) long and seats about 80 passengers-in October 2014 and has received more than 400 orders.

The short-to-medium-haul plane was backed by the Japanese government and a consortium of major firms including Toyota. Last year, the new passenger jet completed a flight to the United States for testing, after aborting two earlier attempts. The company's Tokyo-listed shares slipped 1.59 percent to close at 524.1 yen (\$4.60). — AFP



DAVOS: (L-R) Amitabh Kant, Ajay Khanna, Srivatsan Rajan, Adeeb Ahamed and Gita Gopinath - some of the key members of the South Asia Regional Strategy Group.

## WEF LAUNCHES NEW SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD FOR SOUTH ASIA AT DAVOS

**DAVOS:** With the theme of "Responsive and Responsible Leadership", the annual meet of World Economic Forum (WEF) got underway at Davos last Tuesday. The annual meeting in Davos remains a global platform unmatched in engaging leaders from across business, government, international organizations, academia and civil society in peer-to-peer working sessions.

In line with growing influence of South Asian countries in global affairs and on account of having some of the fastest growing economies in the world, the Forum had this year formulated a senior advisory board called the South Asia Regional Strategy Group (RSG) consisted of senior government officials, business leaders, academics and experts.

The invitation only flagship group and its members are committed to the shared mission of accelerating the regional transformation of

South Asia through public-private cooperation. The RSG provides strategic guidance on the Forum's regional agenda, and is the highest-level decision making body for the Forum's activities in South Asia.

The South Asia RSG is chaired by Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog who will be supported by two Vice-Chairs, Ajay Khanna, Chief, Strategic and Public Affairs, Jubilant Bhartia Group and Srivatsan Rajan, Chairman, Bain & Company. The multi-stakeholder group also comprises big names in government, business and academics including Harin Fernando, Minister of Telecommunications and Digital Infrastructure, Sri Lanka, Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director, Lulu Financial Group, Gita Gopinath, Professor of Economics, Harvard University, Nikhil Meswani, Executive Director, Reliance Industries and Shamina Singh,

President, Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, among others.

"The World Economic Forum has been at the helm of creating a better tomorrow, through its engagement with local and global leaders across continents. I believe that the new South Asia Regional Strategy Group will be able to create changes on ground in key areas across the region and will allow greater private and public co-operation that enhances community development," said Adeeb Ahamed.

The RSG is expected to identify critical issues, challenges and opportunities in South Asia and debate on how to address them. They would also be engaged in ongoing initiatives, provide guidance and advice to develop regional projects while helping mobilize action. The projects will be constantly monitored by the group and ensure value delivery and impact in the region.



**TOKYO:** Shunichi Miyayaga, president and CEO of Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, speaks during a press conference at the headquarters in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

## AHLI UNITED BANK OPENS ITS LATEST BRANCH AT SALMIYA BOULEVARD



**KUWAIT:** Ahli United Bank (AUB) announced yesterday that it has opened its latest branch located at Salmiya Boulevard, Kuwait's newest shopping and leisure destination. The new opening is in line with the Bank's strategic objective of developing a highly advanced network of branches that are located across the main business and residential districts in Kuwait, providing a host of modern banking and financial services that accommodate customers' various requirements.

With the latest opening at Salmiya Boulevard, AUB's branches have increased to 38 across Kuwait. The Bank's branches have been developed to offer an integrated range of services that are Shari'a compliant. AUB's new branch has been designed using a modern design and equipped with the latest technology to enhance customer service.

Moataz ElRafie, Ahli United Bank's Senior Deputy Chief Executive Officer - Banking Group said, "Choosing Salmiya Boulevard as a prime location to set up our latest branch in Kuwait reflects the location's prime importance, being located at the heart of Salmiya. It is also considered one of the largest

entertainment destinations, spanning 353 thousand square meters to include an extensive array of indoor and outdoor entertainment activities. Our presence will help serve a large segment of the society."

ElRafie also noted, "The Bank's newest branch operates on two shifts - morning as well as an evening shift, to ensure a systematic flow of services provided to the Bank's customers. The branch also includes the latest systems and processes that are managed by a qualified team of well trained staff."

ElRafie revealed that AUB is preparing to launch a number of innovative products and services across its network of branches and ATMs across Kuwait, in an effort to maintain its leadership position across the banking industry in the region, which has been significantly attributed to customers' trust.

The Salmiya Boulevard is already considered one of the new prime destinations in Kuwait that is attracting thousands of visitors to its broad range of shops, restaurants and outdoor activities. Its location is second to none and is in close proximity to the Arabian Gulf Road.

## GULF BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-DANAH DAILY DRAWS

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank held its Al-Danah daily draws on 22 January 2017 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 15 January - 19 January 2017. The Al-Danah daily draws include draws each and every working day for two prizes of KD 1,000 per winner.



**The winners are:**  
 Sunday 15/1: Laila Barfai, Farhan Dayan Al-Enezy  
 Monday 16/1: Eissa Fadel Abdullah Mahmoud, Moneera Khaled Yousef Al-Mutawa  
 Tuesday 17/1: Mohammed Abdullah Jassem Al-Smeeti, Hamad Ali Sultan Bourisli  
 Wednesday 18/1: Abdulmohsen Abdullah Gholoum Hussain, Zouheer Ahmed Habib Al-Alh  
 Thursday 19/1: Abdulmohsen Ahmad Saleh Al-Saleh, Rozbeh Zarei

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah 2017 draw lineup includes daily draws (2 winners per working day each receive KD1000). Al-Danah's 1st Quarterly draw for the prize of KD200,000 will be held on 30 March, the 2nd quarterly draw for the prize of KD250,000 will be held on 29 June and the 3rd quarterly draw for the prize of KD500,000 will be

held on 28 September. The final Al-Danah draw for KD1 million will be held on 11 January, 2018 whereby the Al-Danah millionaire will be announced.

### Five reasons why the Al-Danah account is the best:

- 1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million
  - 2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD500,000
  - 3) Two winners of KD1,000 every working day
  - 4) The most chances to win
  - 5) Only Bank that transfers your chances to win from year to year
- Only Al-Danah makes millionaires.

Al-Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al-Danah Deposit Only ATM card which helps account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al-Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al-Danah winner.

Gulf Bank's Al-Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers who open an account and/or deposit more will enter the draw within two days. To take part in the Al-Danah 2017 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must have an Al-Danah account containing at least KD 200; customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, transfer on line, or call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance.

## VENEZUELA'S MADURO NAMES NEW CENTRAL BANK CHIEF

**CARACAS:** Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro on Sunday named a lawmaker as the country's new central bank chief, after reportedly pushing out the former head as the country struggles through a deep economic crisis. Speaking on his weekly television program, Maduro announced he was nominating Ricardo Sanguino to take over from Nelson Merentes, who had handed in his resignation.

"I would like to thank Nelson Merentes for all the effort he has made at various battlefronts, but I want us to initiate a new stage in the development of the Central Bank of Venezuela," the left-wing leader declared. Merentes had been under intense pressure after the central bank bungled the recent release of bigger denomination banknotes.

According to local press, Maduro himself had asked Merentes to resign. He said he has great confidence in Sanguino, 73, a longtime political player who has headed the budget committee in Venezuela's National Assembly among other key posts. Maduro did not directly mention the currency

crisis, but speculation has been rife in recent days that the botched notes release could be the final straw, costing Merentes his job.

Venezuela is considered to have the highest inflation rate in the world, making its smaller banknotes virtually worthless. The 100-bolivar note had been the highest denomination until recently, but was worth only a few US cents. Caracas released new, bigger denomination banknotes last week to aid citizens struggling with unwieldy wads of cash to pay for everyday purchases. The notes were meant to be released in December but got delayed, causing chaos as Venezuelans queued up anxiously to change their bills.

### 'Catastrophic'

Automatic cash machines, in another snafu, were not yet dispensing the new money because they had not been programmed to handle the bigger notes. Inflation in Venezuela is projected to soar to a mind-boggling 1,660 percent this year,

according to the International Monetary Fund. The socialist president has admitted that the situation is "catastrophic," and ruled all of 2016 under an emergency economic decree-renewed last week that grants him discretion to manage state resources. It also removed the legislature's power to approve the appointment of central bank directors as well as the national budget.

At the same time, it gave the central bank authority to grant or finance loans to the state and to public or private entities when the president considers that an emergency situation exists. Maduro said signing the decree was necessary after a Venezuelan investigation found that billions of bolivars, in bills of 100, were stashed away by international mafias, mainly in Colombian cities but also in Brazil. Asked to explain his views on the role of the central bank, Sanguino said Sunday that they "were the creation of the global capitalist system, which were created with a concept of autonomy that is even above the role of the head of state." — AFP

# BATTERIES CAUSED NOTE 7 FIRES: SAMSUNG COMPANY FINDS NO OTHER PROBLEMS, SIGNALS DELAY OF GALAXY S8 UNVEILING

**SEOUL:** Samsung Electronics Co Ltd indicated yesterday that its latest flagship Galaxy S smartphone could be delayed as it pledged to enhance product safety following an investigation into the cause of fires in its premium Note 7 devices. Wrapping up its months-long probe, the world's top smartphone maker said faulty batteries from two suppliers were to blame for a product failure that wiped \$5.3 billion off its operating profit.

Samsung mobile chief Koh Dong-jin said procedures had been put in place to avoid a repeat of the fires as the South Korean firm prepares to launch the Galaxy S8, its first premium handset since the Note 7's demise. "The lessons of this incident are deeply reflected in our culture and process," Koh told reporters at a press briefing. "Samsung Electronics will be working hard to regain consumer trust."

Koh said the Galaxy S8 would not be unveiled at the Mobile World Congress trade show in Barcelona beginning Feb 27, the traditional forum for Galaxy S series launches. He did not comment on when the company planned to launch the handset, though analysts expect it to start selling by April.

Investors have said Samsung needs to reassure consumers that it is on top of the Note 7 problem and can be trusted to fix it. Samsung's reputation took a hammering after it announced a recall of fire-prone Note 7s, only for reports to emerge that replacement devices also caught fire. Images of melted Samsung devices spreading on social media and airlines banned travellers from carrying them on flights.

The handset, Samsung's answer to Apple Inc's iPhones, was

withdrawn from sale in October less than two months after its launch, in one of the biggest failures in tech history.

Samsung said later yesterday it has not decided whether to reuse parts in the recovered Note 7s or resell any recalled phones. A person familiar with the matter told Reuters reselling some Note 7s as refurbished phones was an option. The firm said it has recovered 96 percent of the 3.06 million Note 7s sold to consumers.

## SHORT CIRCUITS

Investigations by internal and independent experts ruled out problems with the Note 7's hardware and software. Instead, they said the batteries, which came from two suppliers, featured different manufacturing defects or design flaws that caused them to short-circuit.

"The odds that two different suppliers had issue with the same phone is an extremely low likelihood and may signal we have reached an inflection point in smartphone battery technology," said Patrick Moorhead, president of technology analyst and advisory firm Moor Insights & Strategy.

Samsung did not name the suppliers on Monday but previously identified them as affiliate Samsung SDI Co Ltd and China's Amperex Technology Ltd (ATL). SDI said separately it would invest 150 billion won (\$129 million) to improve product safety and expected to continue supplying batteries for Samsung phones. ATL declined to comment. Samsung said it accepted responsibility and would not take legal action against suppliers. The company touted longer battery life and

fast charging as major improvements when it launched the Note 7.

"The current situation is not largely different from that of the first recall, when Samsung pointed the finger at battery defects," said Park Chul-wan, a former director of the Center for Advanced Batteries at the Korea Electronics Technology Institute.

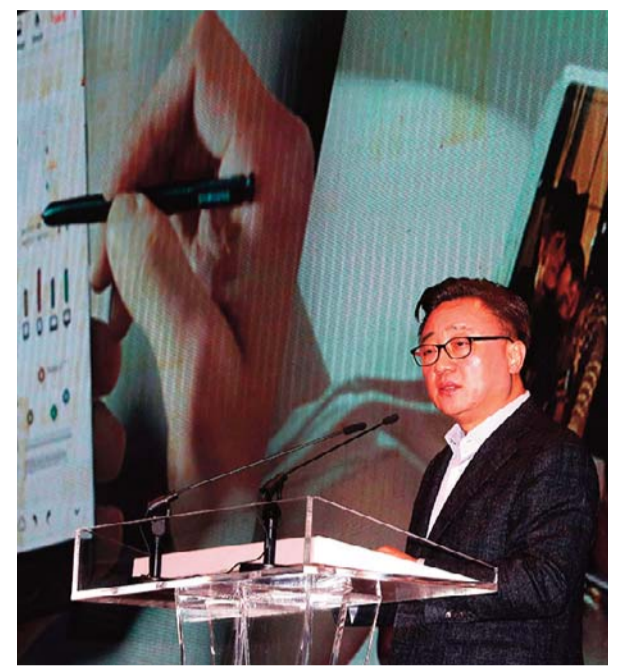
## BATTERY CHECKS

Among other measures to boost safety, Samsung said it had implemented an eight-point battery check system to avoid any such problems going unnoticed again. While Samsung's mobile division is widely expected to have bounced back from the Note 7 failure during the fourth quarter, experts remained cautious about the outlook for sales of future flagship devices.

"Consumers will accept the results (of the probe) only if there are no problems with the S8," said Park. Moorhead, however, said he thought Samsung had done enough to convince consumers that it can prevent future issues.

Samsung Electronics shares ended up 2.3 percent in a flat wider market. Analysts said the rise was mainly due to a healthy outlook for makers of tech components such as memory chips but also boosted by hopes the firm will be able to put the Note 7 fiasco behind it.

The firm expects fourth-quarter operating profit to hit a more than three-year high when it reports earnings on Tuesday, driven by booming chip sales. — Reuters



**SEOUL:** Koh Dong-jin, president of Samsung Electronics' Mobile Communications Business, speaks during a press conference in Seoul yesterday. — AFP



**NEW DELHI:** In this Jan 18, 2017 photo, professional typewriters work on a roadside near Delhi's stock exchange market in New Delhi. India is one of the last places in the world where the typewriter continues to cling to life. — AP

## FOR INDIA'S TYPEWRITERS, THE RIBBON MAY HAVE RUN OUT

**NEW DELHI:** The end is coming, though admittedly it may not look that way at 10 am on a Tuesday morning, when dozens of young Indians have arrived for morning classes at Anand Type, Shorthand and Keypunch College, and every battered Remington is clattering away.

Looking around the cramped classrooms, you might think that the typewriter still has a future in India. But in one of the last places in the world where it remains a part of everyday life, twilight is at hand.

Even Sunil Chawla will tell you that, and he's kept Chawla Typewriter going long after the profits disappeared. "We thought this business would go on forever and ever," said Chawla, a courtly man whose father founded the family company nearly 60 years ago, but whose own sons chose to avoid the typewriter business. "I'll keep it alive as long as possible. But after me, I don't know what's going to happen. There's no future in this business."

For now, only one thing keeps him in the business: "I'm a typewriter man," he said. "I still have a soft spot for them, and I don't want to let it go." Plus, people do continue to send him typewriters to fix, though most of his work these days is selling supplies for copiers and laminating machines.

India still has a few thousand remaining professional typists. There are a handful of typewriter repairmen and stores selling spare parts. There are typing schools that, at least occasionally, are jammed with students. There are long-outdated government regulations that, for now, help the typewriter cling to life.

### But for how long?

"I come here only to pass the time," Satinder Kumar said on a recent afternoon at Tis Haziri, New Delhi's main court complex, where 50 or so typists earn a few dollars a day preparing rent agreements, sales contracts and other legal documents.

Kumar worked for 41 years at Tis Haziri, raising two children on his pay. "It was such a good job. We were working from morning until night," he said, slouching in front of his manual Remington, a purple beret pulled down over his head to keep out the winter chill. "S K Kumar (typist)" it says on a hand-painted sign hanging above what counts as his office, a rusted metal desk in the complex's yard.

Now, there are just 10-15 pages a day for the hundreds of lawyers scurrying through the maze of buildings and corridors. At 15 rupees a page, or about 20 cents, that barely pays for transportation to work, typewriter ribbons and an occasional tuneup from the complex's last typewriter repairman. For the typists, things only get busy when all the computers are in use, or there's an electricity outage.

More than 20 years ago, Kumar realized that everything in the typing world would soon change dramatically. "The first time I saw the computer, I knew the typewriter would be finished one day," he said. On a computer, letters and legal forms can be re-used endlessly, requiring only changes in dates and names. Often, typists aren't needed at all. He laughs, but the bitterness is barely hidden: "Now the time has come!" In hindsight, he says he probably should have learned how to use a computer. But the typing business remained pretty good until about 10 years ago, as computers grew cheaper and more widely available, so he never bothered. Now, at age 65, he thinks it's probably too late. "I think it's time I left all this behind," he said.

Then he looked directly at me and squinted suspiciously: "Why are you asking all these questions about typewriters?" It's a valid question. Technology changes constantly. Jobs die out regularly. Did journalists write about the decline of the video store rental clerk? Did we mourn the end of the LED watch?

### Not just an office equipment

But there's something different about the typewriter, which for more than a century was so important to how the world communicated. It was how presidents issued orders, how Hemingway wrote books, how reporters filed stories. Everything from painfully dull memos to deeply erotic love letters were crafted on typewriters.

In India, the typewriter was never just a piece of office equipment. It was a sign of education, of professional achievement, of women's growing independence as they slowly entered the workforce. It's been a Bollywood plot line and a symbol of nationalism ("The all-Indian Typewriter embodies the latest advances," read a 1950s advertisement for Bombay-based Godrej typewriters).

Even today it can be a path to success. In a country where government jobs have long been tickets to the middle class, thousands of Indians will sometimes apply for a single clerical position. And while most government offices have shifted to computers for typing tests, some still require a typewriter.

For Suresh Bansal, who for 40 years has managed and taught at Anand Type, Shorthand and Keypunch College, that's welcome news. "You cannot look down at the keys while you type! This is the most important thing on the tests," Bansal said.

The school is little more than a few rooms in an old stone and brick building. Twenty years ago, every typewriter in the school would be in use almost constantly.

"One person would stand up and someone else would sit down," said Bansal, sitting beneath fluorescent tube lights in one of the two classrooms, his graying hair combed across his scalp.

Back then there were hundreds of little typing schools in New Delhi, crowded with university students, aspiring clerks and young women hoping for jobs as secretaries.

Around 2000, things started to slow down. India's economy was started to grow then, and computers no longer seemed impossibly expensive. First the foreign companies - Facit, Remington - closed their Indian operations. Then in 2009, the Indian firm Godrej and Boyce shut down the country's last typewriter production line. The world's few remaining typewriter manufacturers focus mostly on specialty lines, like clear plastic typewriters used in prisons to avoid smuggling.

Chawla's office, like his business, seems stuck in another time. There's a list of approved holidays on the bulletin board for 1983, a calendar from 1988. The rooms are piled high - sometimes higher than you can see - with old typewriters and metal keyboards and mysterious dusty boxes. He keeps it all, since spare parts are almost impossible to find anymore, and old typewriters are often cannibalized for their parts. There's no computer in the office. Chawla has one at home, but feels there would be something disloyal about bringing it to the office.

He does all his work on a portable Godrej Prima. It's more than a decade old. It's in perfect condition - AP



**Mike Weston, Vice-president for Cisco Middle East.**

## HOW IOT AND INTERNET WILL MERGE

By Bruce Zhou

A snapshot of two principal areas where convergence between IoT technologies and Internet technologies is rapidly taking place.



change it one stroke and with one magic wand is unrealistic, challenging and cause for chaos in the short term. For business decision makers and technology providers, some measure of clarity and progress can be made by understanding the challenges of applying IoT to business. We look at two principal challenges in making this happen.

### Technology protocols

The challenges of IoT are resident in the ability to connect sensors and devices directly to the Internet. To connect to the Internet any device and application must use Internet Protocol stacks. It is for this reason that devices called Internet Gateways have been created that connect to non-Internet Protocol devices and networks on one side and the Internet driven applications, devices and networks, on the other side.

By doing so, Internet Gateways need to be designed for the type of local networks and local applications that they manage on one side and how they connect to the Internet on the other side.

Over the years, countless Internet Protocol driven applications, software tools and diagnostic kits, have been developed and exist, that can be applied to IoT devices and sensors, with or without much adaptation. This will help to get the IoT environment up and running in a short period of time, relatively speaking. That is provided they are in the same Internet Protocol environment.

The basis for the development of Internet Protocol applications till now has been growing availability of large computing power and significant memory capacity to manage complexity of the Internet Protocol based applications. And all this within localized high cost nodes like desktops, notebooks, smartphones, tablets, amongst others.

This is the exact antithesis of the IoT environment

customers faster, or accelerated ability to sell into new markets.

The study also reveals that 95 percent of those leading organizations with optimized cloud strategies have built a hybrid IT environment that uses multiple private and public clouds based on economics, location and governance policies.

"Our customers are dealing with increasingly diverse and complex environments as their hybrid and multicloud deployments grow. These customers want the freedom to choose the best environments and consumption models for their traditional and cloud native applications, which all drive a variety of business benefits. Yet, as this research bears out, while many customers are embracing cloud, most are still in the early stages of their journey to an optimized cloud model. That is where our new and enhanced Cisco Professional Services can help. Working with our partners, our joint services offerings are designed to help customers achieve a highly secure and optimized cloud environment specific to their unique business needs," said Mike Weston, Vice President, Cisco Middle East.

The Cisco-sponsored InfoBrief "Cloud Going Mainstream: All Are Trying, Some Are Benefiting; Few Are Maximizing Value" was developed by International Data Corporation (IDC). The study is based on primary market research conducted with executives responsible for IT decisions in over 6,100 organizations across 31 countries that are successfully implementing private, public and hybrid clouds in their IT environments. This marks the second year of the study, nearly doubling last year's sample size.

In the study, IDC identifies five levels of cloud maturity: ad hoc, opportunistic, repeatable,

## Cloud Maturity Is Increasing



managed and optimized.

According to the study, organizations face a number of obstacles to achieving greater cloud maturity, including capabilities and skills gaps, lack of a well-defined strategy and roadmap, legacy siloed organizational structures, and Information Technology/Line of Business (IT/LOB) misalignment.

New Cloud Professional Services In addition, Cisco is launching a new set of Cloud Professional Services to help businesses navigate the multicloud maze and optimize their cloud environments. These services will help customers bridge the skill-set gaps they may be facing as they accelerate their digital transformation strategies and cloud native initiatives.

## CHINA'S ONLINE POPULATION REACHES 731 MILLION IN DEC

**BEIJING:** The number of internet users in China already the world's highest-reached 731 million in December, authorities said, as e-commerce drives consumer demand across the Asian giant.

Total internet users rose 6.2 percent from the end of December 2015 and equals the entire population of Europe, the government-linked China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) said in a statement Sunday on its website. E-commerce is a vital part of the government's efforts to China into a consumer demand-driven economy, although Beijing also imposes strict controls on online content, barring citizens from accessing major websites including Facebook and Google.

The government is pushing a so-called "internet plus" project that aims to expand the role of online technology in the economy. The number of people who go online through cellphones has reached 695 million, or 95.1 percent, as computers lose their appeal, according to the CNNIC.

Online consumption has become an increasingly important part of the economy, the statement said, adding that its contribution to GDP growth is gradually increasing.

As of December 12, the number of people in China who used online payments had reached 475 million, up 14.0 percent year on year, according to the CNNIC. In one example of the growing power of China's online shoppers, consumers spent \$17.8 billion in e-commerce giant Alibaba's biggest online shopping promotion on November 11 last year, more than twice the five-day desktop sales from Thanksgiving through Cyber Monday in the US last year. — AFP

## SEX TOYS 'SAFER' THAN KIDS TOYS: SWEDISH STUDY

**STOCKHOLM:** Fewer sex toys contain dangerous chemicals than children's toys, a Swedish inspection authority said in a report yesterday. In 2015, the agency found dangerous chemical substances, including lead, in 15 percent of children's toys in Sweden. The proportion of surveyed sex toys that contained banned

chemicals was two percent, making these products safer than children's toys in terms of exposure to chemicals. "This was a bit surprising," Frida Ramstrom, an inspector for the agency, told AFP. "This was the first time we did such a study." Among the 44 products investigated, one plastic dildo was found to contain

chlorinated paraffins, which is suspected of causing cancer, the Swedish Chemicals Agency said.

Ramstrom said tough European regulations over chemical substances in products was a reason behind the safety of the sex toys. "These products are used close to the body and one (therefore)

chooses better chemicals," Ramstrom said. It is difficult to determine exactly why more children's toys contain dangerous chemicals, according to Ramstrom.

But she said many kids toys are imported from Asia, making it more difficult to toughen demands over safety of the products. Three of the 44 examined

sex toys, made of leather and bondage tape, contained phthalates, used as a plasticizer, at levels above 0.1 percent, the agency said. Phthalates are not banned in sex toys but are on the EU list of chemicals that are of "very high concern". It can affect the hormonal balance and cause infertility. —AFP

## US EGGS CRACK KOREAN MARKET AS SEOUL FIGHTS WORST BIRD FLU OUTBREAK

### NEW HENS WON'T START PRODUCING TILL H2 2017

**SEOUL:** US white-shelled eggs landed on South Korean supermarket shelves beside local brown-shelled eggs yesterday as the country scrambled to boost imports to relieve a shortage amid its worst-ever bird flu outbreak. Some 6 million eggs, mainly from the United States, are set to hit the shelves this week as South Korea launched emergency import measures after egg prices shot up 70 percent ahead of the Lunar New Year holiday this weekend. Thirty US eggs cost 8,470 won (\$7.27) at Lotte Mart, one of South Korea's major discount stores, which began selling the imports yesterday.

That was down from the average retail price for local eggs of 9,285 won as of Jan. 20. Prices stood at around 5,438 won when the first bird flu case was confirmed in November, according to state-run Korea Agro-Fisheries & Food Corp. "US-origin eggs are good, but I prefer to use

Korean eggs because the Lunar New Year holiday is a Korean traditional holiday. Even if local eggs are more expensive, I would buy them," said Park Hee-kil, a 64-year-old lady who was shopping at a Lotte Mart store in Seoul.

In the wake of the bird flu epidemic, Asia's fourth-largest economy culled more than 32 million farm birds, or nearly a fifth of its poultry population, mostly egg-laying hens. The country's egg production is expected to decline 12.7 percent to 559,000 tons in 2017 from a year earlier, according to the state-run Korea Rural Economics Institute (KREI). "Egg imports may be needed through the first half of this year," said Ji Seon-U, a researcher at the state-run think tank, adding that the volume would depend on how soon egg prices and output stabilized.

The Korean government expected a total of 1,500 tons, or roughly 25 million eggs, to be

imported mainly from the United States before the holiday season. That compared with a total of 1,856 tons of egg products worth about \$12 million imported last year, according to customs office data. As of Sunday, 444 tons of shell eggs and 217 tons of egg products had been shipped to Korea since Jan 5, according to the agriculture ministry.

The ministry also plans to import a total of 200,000 baby chickens and parent stock for egg-laying hens from five bird flu-free countries, including the United States, Australia and Spain, to rebuild flocks. "However we can't start it right away because farms have to be virus-free for three months," Ji said. Given it takes at least six months for the offspring of parent stock birds to start laying eggs, the new hens would only start producing in the second half of this year, he said. —Reuters



**LONDON:** This file photo shows a man posing for a photograph whilst eating a portion of chips in east London. —AFP

## BRITONS SIZZLE OVER CHIPS AND TOAST CANCER WARNINGS

**LONDON:** A government health warning over the potential dangers of toast, roast potatoes and chips—all traditional staples of the British diet—had the country's tabloids hitting out yesterday. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) said acrylamide—a chemical substance formed when foods with high starch content are cooked at very high temperatures "has the potential to cause cancer in humans". "It would be prudent to reduce exposure," it said. The agency urged British consumers to "#GoForGold" by opting for a gold color rather than a darker brown when frying, roasting, baking, grilling or toasting.

It also said potatoes should not be stored in the fridge, which can increase acrylamide levels, and potatoes cut into larger wedges to reduce their surface area when cooked to limit levels. "You've Had Your Chips", roared a front-page headline in Britain's best-selling newspaper, The Sun. "Health officials say burning starchy foods such as spuds, bread and pizza dough may

increase the risks—despite no study proving the link," it said. Several reports pointed out that tests cited by the government had only confirmed that acrylamide in the diet causes cancer in animals, not in humans.

Britons consume an estimated 382 million portions of fish and chips every year and there some 10,500 around "chippies" around the country. Toast is Britain's favorite breakfast and teatime food, while roast potatoes are a Sunday lunch staple. "Should we give up toast?" BBC News tweeted, while the middle market Daily Mail tabloid assured readers: "Burnt toast isn't dangerous—unless you have 320 slices each day."

There have been similar health alerts in other countries since Sweden first warned about the dangers of acrylamide in 2002, including in the United States. The World Health Organization and the European Food Safety Authority have also suggested that acrylamide may be a human carcinogen, the FSA said. —AFP



**GENEVA, Switzerland:** China's Margaret Chan, General Director of the World Health Organization, WHO, addresses her statement, during the 140th session Executive Board of the WHO, at the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters.

## WORLD MUST NOT MISS EARLY SIGNALS OF ANY FLU PANDEMIC

**GENEVA:** The World Health Organization called on all countries to monitor closely outbreaks of deadly avian influenza in birds and poultry and to report promptly any human cases that could

signal the start of a flu pandemic. Different strains of bird flu have been spreading across Europe and Asia since late last year, leading to large-scale slaughtering of poultry in certain

countries and some human deaths in China. Nearly 40 countries have reported new outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in poultry or wild birds since November, according to the WHO. "The rapidly expanding geographical distribution of these outbreaks and the number of virus strains currently co-circulating have put WHO on high alert," Margaret Chan told the start of the UN agency's 10-day executive board. The new H5N6 strain causing severe outbreaks in Asia was created by gene-swapping among four different viruses, she said. The world is better prepared for the next influenza pandemic following the H1N1 pandemic that circled the world in 2009-2010 - "but not at all well enough", Chan said.

In China, there has been a "sudden and steep increase" in human cases of H7N9 since December and the WHO has not been able to rule out limited human-to-human spread in two clusters of human cases although no sustained spread has been detected thus far, she said. Under the International Health Regulations, a binding legal instrument, WHO's 194 member states are required to detect and report human cases promptly, Chan said, adding: "We cannot afford to miss the early signals."

China's delegation, led by Zhang Yang of the National Health and Family Planning Commission, told the Geneva meeting China would carry out its obligations on communicating and responding to any outbreaks. "Currently H7N9 overall statistics remains the same," Zhang said. "China will continue to strengthen its cooperation and exchange with WHO in this regard." —Reuters



**GENEVA, Switzerland:** China's Margaret Chan, General Director of the World Health Organization (WHO), arrives for the 140th session of the Executive Board of the WHO, at the World Health Organization headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, yesterday. —AP

## INDIA COURT ORDERS DAILY TB TREATMENT FOR MILLIONS

**NEW DELHI:** Millions of tuberculosis patients in India will receive daily treatment after the Supreme Court yesterday ordered the government to change the current dosing practice amid activist claims it was endangering lives. Around 2.5 million new cases of TB were reported in India in 2015, according to the World Health Organization, the latest figures available for a country accounting for one in four global cases of the disease. Around 200,000 people die in

India every year from TB, according to various estimates.

From October those with TB will get free daily tablets instead of three times a week. Raman Kakkar, an activist who petitioned the country's top court, said the government was fixated with the intermittent treatment even though the WHO has approved daily drugs. The government's reluctance to shift to the new dosage was causing a relapse of the disease in many patients

and was even responsible for the development of drug-resistant infections, Kakkar said. The government said it would switch to the new dosage after nine months, when the existing stock of medicines had finished. It runs a national TB eradication program and provides free medicines for nearly two million infected people at government-run dispensaries. Last year The Lancet journal said more than a million TB cases remain missing from official statistics in India. —AFP

## FOG IN LONDON FORCES FLIGHT CANCELLATIONS

**LONDON:** A thick fog in London forced the cancellation of around 100 flights at Heathrow Airport yesterday and revived concern about air quality in the capital. "Foggy weather across the South East has reduced visibility at Heathrow," the airport said in a statement, adding that the cancellations amounted to around eight percent of scheduled flights. There were also dozens of cancellations at London City

Airport and road users were warned about driving conditions after freezing temperatures overnight.

A map from Britain's environment ministry showed "very high" pollution across southeastern England yesterday. "Reduce physical exertion, particularly outdoors, especially if you experience symptoms such as cough or sore throat," the ministry's advice read. —AFP



**LONDON:** Pedestrians walk through fog as they cross the Millennium Bridge, back-dropped by St Paul's Cathedral. —AFP photo

## IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN WITH CONGENITAL HEART DISEASE

**C**ongenital heart disease (CHD) is a general term used for a range of birth defects that affect the normal workings of the heart. The term congenital means the condition is present at birth. CHD is one of the most common types of birth defects affecting up to 8 in every 1000 babies born. In an interview held with DR John Selvan, consultant Paediatric Cardiologist, Chest diseases hospital, Kuwait, Selvan explains in details about the subject. Some excerpts.

**Q: Is congenital heart disease (CHD) common in Kuwait?**

**A:** Yes it is. The incidence of CHD is about 1% in the world while it is almost 2% in Kuwait. In addition, the complexity of CHD is also much higher in Kuwait.

**Q: What are the precautions a family can do to take care of such babies?**

**A:** Precaution starts in early pregnancy. Mothers should undergo foetal echocardiograms in the second trimester onwards to see whether the hearts of the unborn babies are normal.

**Q: How does that help?**

**A:** If one knows that the baby has an important CHD, then the baby can be delivered in a facility where immediate expert paediatric cardiologist consultation is available.

**Q: How important is immunization in these children?**

**A:** Immunization is very important in all infants and children to protect them from vaccine preventable diseases. It is even more important to protect the children with CHD, because of their increased risk of morbidity and mortality.

**Q: Does the immunization schedule differ for the children with CHD?**

**A:** If they have simple CHD and are clinically normal, then there will be no change in the immunization schedule. However if they have complex CHD with compromised clinical status i.e. heart failure or severe cyanosis or if they are awaiting cardiac surgeries, parents have to get a clearance from their paediatric cardiologist prior to vaccination. Children who underwent cardiac surgeries are not given vaccinations in the first month after surgery.

**Q: What are the common viral infections in children that cause respiratory disease?**

**A:** Common viral respiratory tract infections include common cold and influenza while respiratory syncytial virus is particularly common in the winter months.

**Q: What is Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)?**

**A:** RSV is a common viral infection affecting most of the children in the winter season all over the world. It is notorious because it can cause a serious form of lower respiratory tract infection with wheezing called Bronchiolitis. It is often a devastating disease in infants less than two years with CHD, chronic lung disease, in preterm babies and in children with poor immunity.

**Q: How does one protect children from RSV infection?**

**A:** There is a prophylactic or preventive medication, a monoclonal antibody, which is given as five monthly doses during winter months all over the world or during rainy season in the tropics.

**Q: Why is it highly recommended in children with CHD?**

**A:** The common viral lung infection can become a severe wheezy respiratory dis-



**DR John Selvan, consultant Paediatric Cardiologist, Chest diseases hospital, Kuwait.**

ease in small children with CHD, preterm babies, children with chronic lung disease and with immune compromised status. In these children the severity of illness leads to more hospitalization, assisted ventilation, intensive care and even death.

RSV prophylaxis when given as monthly intramuscular injection over 5 months maintains IgG antibody level in body, which protects these children from falling ill and also from developing severe wheezy respiratory infection.

**Q: What is your experience in Kuwait?**

**A:** We have been implementing the RSV prevention program against RSV infections over the last 9 years. About 200 infants per year less than 2 years of age with important CHD receive this protection. The results are excellent.

In the past, 30 to 40% of our beds in the wards and ICU during winter months were occupied with small children with severe lung infections. There were a few deaths every year as well in these children. Since we started this RSV prevention program admission of CHD children with severe respiratory infection has been declining and seldom occurs now.

This has resulted in the use of the limited hospital resources better for the children with heart disease and surgeries.

**Q: What is your advice to parents of children with CHD regarding immunization?**

**A: 1** Parents should get an antenatal foetal echocardiogram by a paediatric cardiologist to plan the delivery of the baby in a set up with paediatric cardiologist guidance.

**2** In most of the infants with CHD normal immunization schedule can be followed.

**3** If the baby has an important CHD, then the parents should follow the paediatric cardiologist advise regarding immunization.

**4** Children under 2 years of age with important CHD should be given RSV prophylaxis during winter months to protect these babies from RSV infection because Synagis protection significantly decreases the morbidity and mortality from this disease.

**Q: Are there any side effects with this medicine?**

**A:** RSV prophylactic medication is a monoclonal antibody, which targets specifically against the RSV virus. Side effects are uncommon. If at all any, they are mostly mild symptoms of common viral illness. Anaphylaxis can seldom occur and we have not seen one in our experience over last nine years.

## WHAT CAN MACKEREL AND A VOLCANO SAY ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

'WE CAN LEARN FROM THE PAST HOW PEOPLE DEALT WITH THE UNANTICIPATED'

**PORTLAND, Maine:** What could an Indonesian volcanic eruption, a 200-year-old climate disaster and a surge in the consumption of mackerel tell us about today's era of global warming? Quite a bit, researchers say. A group of scientists and academics with the University of Massachusetts and other institutions made that assessment while conducting research about a long-ago calamity in New England that was caused by the eruption of Mount Tambora half a world away in 1815.

A cooled climate led to deaths of livestock and changed fish patterns in New England, leaving many people dependent on the mackerel, an edible fish that was less affected than many animals. The researchers assert that bit of history gives clues about what food security could be like in the modern era of climate change. "How we respond to these events is going to be critically important for how we come out of this in the long term," said Karen Alexander, the lead author of the study and a research fellow in environmental conservation. "We can learn from the past how people dealt with the unanticipated."

### Global cooling

The research group's findings were published this month in the journal Science Advances. They looked at what the catastrophic Tambora eruption meant for the Gulf of Maine and nearby human food systems. The eruption was one of the most powerful in recorded history and was followed by a short time of climate change - specifically, global cooling - and severe weather. Its impact on weather, food availability and human and animals deaths worldwide has been studied extensively. The year that followed the eruption, 1816, is often described as the "Year Without a Summer." The researchers behind the Science Advances article found that alewives, a fish used for everything from fertilizer to food by 19th-century New Englanders, did not fare well. But mackerel had better survival rates and became a critical source of protein and jobs, Alexander said.

As crops failed and famine began to spread, the little fish emerged as a staff of life, the report states. The shift marked the beginning of the mackerel fishery as a critical piece of New England's marine economy, and it remains active today; Maine and Massachusetts fishermen caught more than 8 million pounds of Atlantic mackerel in 2015. It's a scenario similar to what parts of the developing world are experiencing today as climate change affects food security.

### Pakistan and Syria

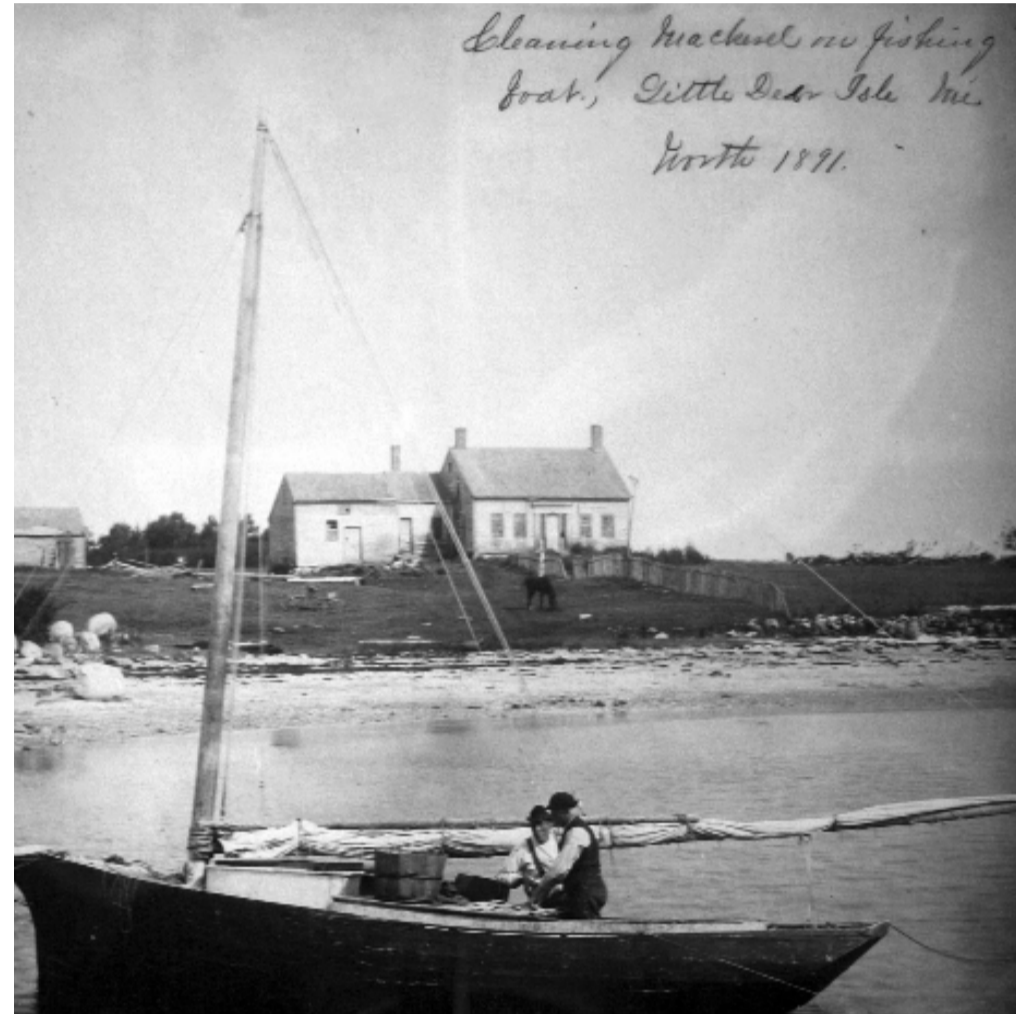
The study states there is a parallel between the need for immediate adaptation after

Tambora and the challenges in coping with the climate-driven devastation caused by storms, floods and droughts today. It notes that the loss of food staples due to climate change caused people in the northeastern states to move - something seen today in places such as Pakistan and Syria. "Understanding how adaptive responses to extreme events can trigger unintended consequences may advance long-term planning for resilience in an uncertain future," the report states.

How fisheries in the developing world will adapt to future climate change is an important contemporary food security issue, because fish are a vitally important protein resource worldwide. More than a billion of the world's poor

obtain most of their animal protein from fish, and 800 million depend on fisheries and aquaculture for livelihoods, according to the nonprofit research group WorldFish.

The report illustrates how abrupt changes in climate can have unexpected consequences long after conditions moderate, said Andy Pershing, chief scientific officer and ecosystem modeler for the Gulf of Maine Research Institute in Portland. "Good stewardship of our natural resources can help buffer against some climate impacts. Unlike the people in 1815, we have an idea of what's coming, and we need to make sure we are prepared," he said. —AP



**PORTLAND, Maine:** In this 1891 photo released by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Penobscot Bay fishermen clean mackerel near their saltwater farm off the Maine coast. —AP

## FOSSILS OF UTTERLY HUGE OTTER UNEARTHED IN CHINA

**WASHINGTON:** Scientists have unearthed fossils of an intriguingly large otter as big as a wolf that frolicked in rivers and lakes in a lush, warm and humid wetlands region in southwestern China about 6.2 million years ago. The outsized otter, called *Siamogale melilutra*, weighed about 110 pounds (50 kg) and measured up to 6-1/2 feet (2 meters) long, making it bigger than any of its cousins alive today, the researchers said yesterday.

"*Siamogale melilutra* reminds us, I think, of the diversity of life in the past and how many more questions there are still to answer. Who would have imagined a wolf-size otter?" said Denise Su, Cleveland Museum of Natural History curator of paleobotany and paleoecology. It had enlarged cheek teeth and strong jaws that appear to have been used for crunching hard objects, perhaps large shellfish and

freshwater mollusks, and was capable of swimming in shallow, swampy waters.

"I think it used its powerful jaws to crush hard clams for food, somewhat like modern sea otters, although the latter use stone tools to smash shells," said Xiaoming Wang, head of vertebrate paleontology at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. "If *Siamogale melilutra* was not smart enough to figure out tools, perhaps the only option left was to develop more powerful jaws by increasing body size," Wang added.

The fossils, found at a site in China's Yunnan Province, include a largely complete cranium and lower jaw, various teeth, and limb bones. The skull was crushed eons ago during the fossilization process. The researchers used sophisticated scanning to digitally reconstruct it, discovering it boasted a mix of otter-like and

badger-like skull and dental traits. There was intense interest in the fossil site because an important prehistoric ape skull previously had been unearthed there. Others fossils found include elephants, rhinos, tapirs, deer, beavers, crocodiles and water birds including ducks, swans and cranes. The largest otter alive today is the South American giant river otter, weighing up to about 70 pounds (32 kg). Otters belong to a mammalian family including the weasel, badger, marten and mink. The earliest-known otter lived about 18 million years ago. But otter evolution is not well understood, with fossils rare and scattered around the world. *Siamogale melilutra* may not be the largest otter ever, with fossils of another one that may be the biggest previously found in Africa. The research was published in the Journal of Systematic Palaeontology. —Reuters

# CLINIC PAGE

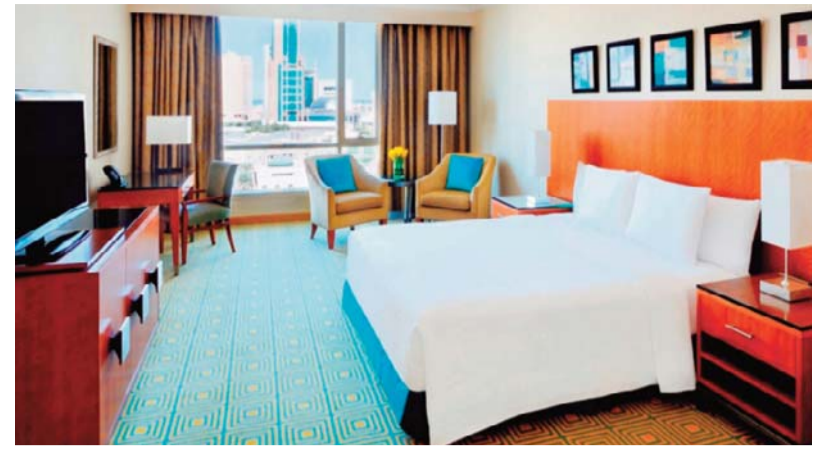


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## THE PERFECT WEEKEND GETAWAY AT KUWAIT MARRIOTT HOTELS

**K**uwait Marriott Hotels have launched exclusive weekend deals on rooms and restaurants. The special weekend promotion offers GCC nationals and residents special discounts on rooms and suites at JW Marriott Kuwait City, Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait and Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait City. In addition, the package also includes complimentary buffet breakfast, free WIFI and free meals for children under 6 years old.

To add to the exclusive benefits, guests can enjoy free access to the swimming pool and health club. Free valet parking and shared airport transfers will also be available along with early check-in and late check-out, subject to availability. It is also worthy to note that JW Marriott Hotel Kuwait and Courtyard by Marriott Kuwait have a direct exclusive entrance to "Salhia" and "Arraya" Shopping Malls, where guests can shop between an array of world-class retail brands.

A superb dining experience can be enjoyed at The Terrace Grill restaurant at JW Marriott Kuwait, known to be one of the best steakhouses in Kuwait. The restaurant offers an extensive menu of the finest meat cuts and seafood. Other interesting cuisines can be tried at the Japanese Kei restaurant offering sushi

and Teppanyaki. The much-celebrated Indian restaurant Soul and Spice in Courtyard by Marriott is well known for serving flavorful Indian dishes, in addition to Sushi restaurant which offers a wide array of mouth-watering Japanese delicacies.

In addition, JW Marriott Kuwait has recently opened a new restaurant "Crossroads". The new restaurant features a wide range of distinctive cuisines, including Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Indian and Mediterranean. The culinary delicacies of these cuisines have dominated the world for many centuries and still proving to be the most popular. This concept is the first of its kind in Kuwait, offering a world of authentic cuisines under one roof.

Moreover, Blendz restaurant, located at the lobby of Residence Inn by Marriott Kuwait City, offers its guests a unique flavor of modern recipes in a very relaxed ambiance making it a perfect place to spend time with family and friends. George Aoun, Cluster General Manager at Kuwait Marriott Hotels said, "With everything from the finest dining to value-oriented hotels and ultimate shopping experiences, our goal is to offer great value for money deals and the highest level of customer service to our guests."



## LUXURY PRIVATE BEACHSIDE DINING AT PALM COURT TERRACE

**H**ilton Kuwait Resort invites you to experience a unique dining experience at the Palm Court terrace. Situated right by the beach, and offering unparalleled views across the Arabian Gulf, the Palm Court terrace is truly the place to be in 2017, providing an exceptional experience for its guests.

Enjoy a meal in a private tent and sample authentic Arabic fare accompanied by a delicious cocktail. All tents are air conditioned, ensuring the perfect temperature year round, with cooling during the summer, and heating in the winter months. Furthermore, each tent is equipped with its own private television so you can keep your family and friends entertained throughout the experience - if they can keep their eyes away from the stunning ocean views. To complete your evening, relax after your meal with a traditional shisha while enjoying the spectacular views across the sparkling Arabian Gulf.

### Romance packages

The Palm Court terrace is the perfect location for those seeking an exclusive, romantic experience with private dining packages on offer, to include sparkling or still water, a choice of juices, soft drinks, tea and coffee, served along with a bottle of sparkling grape juice and delicious chocolate cake, all topped with a stunning flower arrangement.



## 14TH ICSK MEGA CARNIVAL

**T**he Indian Community School, Kuwait conducted the 14th mega carnival on Friday 20th January, 2017 at Senior branch in Salmiya. Undoubtedly the ICSK 14th Mega carnival was a magnificent day for the Indian Community as the day was filled with unlimited entertainment for the entire family. In fact the ICSK campus witnessed an incredible flow of thousands of general public. Highly methodological strategies were implemented to manage the sustaining crowd from the beginning up to the end.

The day began invoking the blessings of God Almighty followed by the National Anthems of Kuwait and India. The ICSK carnival was inaugurated by His Excellency Sunil Jain, The Ambassador of India to Kuwait who was the Chief Guest on the occasion. The ambassador appreciated the objective of the carnival as it is regarded as a passage from darkness to light, from winter to summer: the first spring festival of the New Year. Gleaming and glittering with gold and wondrous surprises for young and old ICSK carnival, is for a noble cause. It is highly appreciated that the hundreds of underprivileged children get opportunity for the free education in ICSK.

Dr V Binumon principal and Senior Administrator welcomed the august gathering. Swarnjali, the ICSK choir mesmer-

ized the audience with their soulful rendering of 'Atithi Devo Bhava'. Shaikh Abdul Rahman, Chairman, Board of Trustees ICSK honored the guests. Amer Mohammed, Secretary BOT released the Carnival Souvenir on the occasion. ICSK Junior showcased their talents to enrich the inaugural function as well as the carnival. Sheryl Dennis, Principal In-charge, ICSK Junior delivered the Vote of Thanks.

The ICSK Senior campus was completely transformed with games -stalls, offering a vast assortment of interesting games for all age -groups. The variety of food stalls brought the nostalgia of traditional food treats for the expatriates. The food stalls generated a feel among the people 'a home away from home'. There were many rounds of Bingo throughout the day which kept the day power packed. The ICSK children from all the branches were given a wonderful opportunity to showcase their talents throughout the day.

The toddler fashion show undoubtedly generated an amazing impact. It was absolutely a rare opportunity for the community to enjoy the varieties of cultural events such as Jhankar dance, Open air magic show, Flash mob, DG dance group, Karate demonstration, Dance performed by Zero Gravity, FWG dance group, Fashion show and Bhangra dance.

## FREE CRICKET COACHING COURSE FOR BEGINNERS

**K**uwait Cricket Coaches Panel is conducting a free Level 0 Cricket Coaching Course targeted at beginner coaches interested in development of this skill for training junior cricketers. The 3-day evening course will be held at the KC Sulabiya cricket ground SCG from 29 Jan - 31 Jan 2017. The aim of this course is threefold. One is to introduce you to the various techniques applied in coaching

cricket correctly, second is to build your interest and confidence in coaching and third is to prepare you for the more advanced course which is Level 1 Cricket Coach that will be offered soon after by Kuwait Cricket Coaches Panel. For enrollment please send your request via email to KC Director Coaching sameer.desai@kuwait-cricket.com. Further details will be informed following your enrollment.



## JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL & SPA SCOOPS 20 AWARDS AT HORECA

**T**alented chefs from Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa competed in a series of live culinary shows and won a total of 20 medals at the sixth edition of Kuwait's leading food and beverage competition, the annual Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Awards (HORECA) in Kuwait.

Spearheaded by the hotel's new Executive Chef Serkan Yelkenbasan, the culinary team exceeded the number of medals this year with five gold awards in the wedding cake display competition, three plated desserts, live pasta contest and live meat team competition. Another six silver medals were won for the

themed celebration cake, live sushi contest, cold platter display, cold mezzah live and mystery basket competition.

The team was also awarded a further seven bronze medals in the categories of live sandwich, mystery basket, six-course set menu display, Asian cuisine live, live pasta, cold mezzah live and three plated dessert display in addition to two Boecker Hygiene Awards in the categories of live sandwich and Asian cuisine live.

General Manager, Hakan Petek, said: "I am incredibly proud of our culinary team at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel & Spa and continuous

participation in the country's highly awaited hospitality exhibition. Our chefs have demonstrated their commitment to culinary excellence and dedication to deliver the most memorable dining experiences to our guests. I wish to congratulate them for the outstanding level of creativity and passion in their performances". More than chefs participated in the exhibition's various categories and were judged by a panel of international chefs from the Middle East and Europe, along with members from the World Association of Chefs Society.



# AIS GRADE 3 BEACH CLEAN-UP



Grade 3 students from the American International School spent time yesterday morning cleaning up a beach in Sharq as part of the school's Environmental Awareness activities. The students aim to help protect Kuwait's local environment and encourage others to do so by modeling positive, community behavior and taking responsibility for the protection and awareness of their environment. —Phoros by Yasser Al-Zayyat



## CANADIAN DIRECT INVESTMENT INTO KUWAIT: STRENGTHENING BOND

The Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait Martine Moreau visited Sheikh Dr Meshaal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Director General of KDIPA at KDIPA Headquarters to acknowledge the Authority's recent approval of an investment license to Canadian healthcare consulting firm MMI Montreal Medical International Inc. (MMI). The meeting served to acknowledge KDIPA's central role in rendering this achievement possible. Ambassador Moreau was accompanied by Senior Trade Commissioner Tammy

Ames, and Trade Commissioner Raed Bishara. Under the Foreign Direct Investment Law No 116 regarding the Promotion of Direct Investment into Kuwait by foreign firms, MMI is now considered a local company with 100 percent foreign ownership. It is also the first Canadian healthcare company to achieve such a milestone under the laws of the State of Kuwait. MMI's core activities will be dedicated to the training of healthcare professionals in both the public and private sectors in the State. This will include the transfer of

knowledge and international best practices and standards in medicine, nursing and the allied health disciplines, as well as consulting, advisory and project management services.

Ambassador Moreau expressed her enthusiasm and support for value added Canadian direct investment into Kuwait, exemplified in the approval of MMI as well as the establishment of an increasing number of Canadian companies in the state. As Canadian entities begin to establish themselves and expand their client base by securing new projects, hundreds of jobs and new positions for Kuwaitis will be created, which will help to simulate the local economy.

Canadian-Kuwaiti bilateral relations, dating back many decades, are strengthened by institutions such as KDIPA, whose dedicated personnel, under the leadership of Sheikh Dr Meshaal, are playing a historic role in the creation of a more sustainable - and competitive - business environment in Kuwait by facilitating the transfer of talent, know-how and technology from G7 nations such as Canada, into the local market.

Meanwhile, MMI enlisted the support of advisory firm Pricewaterhouse Cooper's Al Shatti and Company under the leadership of the Tax Partner Sherif Shawki Abdel Fattah and his team, for facilitation of the application process.

## STATEMENTS FROM THE INDIAN EMBASSY IN KUWAIT

The Indian Embassy in Kuwait released the following statement announcing that the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has offered some relief to NRIs for exchanging old currency notes. All NRIs, who have been abroad during November 9, 2016 to December 30, 2016 can avail this facility till 30 June 2017. The limit for NRIs is Rs 25,000/- per person. Indians living abroad can avail of this facility on submission of ID proof like "Aadhaar" Card and Permanent Account Number (PAN). No representations for depositing old notes on behalf of any third

party will be accepted. This facility is at the RBI branches of Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Nagpur.

Meanwhile, the embassy also announced that the 68th Republic Day of India will be celebrated at its premises with the hoisting of tricolor National Flag at 9:00 am by the Ambassador. This will be followed by reading of the President's message on this occasion. Thereafter, a few patriotic songs and an Open House reception will follow. All Indian nationals in Kuwait are most cordially invited to attend the function.

## SAFIR HOTEL AND RESIDENCES CULINARY TEAM WINS SEVEN MEDALS AT HORECA KUWAIT 2017

Safir Hotel and Residences Kuwait Fintas participated in HORECA Kuwait for the third consecutive year. The annual exhibition has become a hallmark across the hospitality, catering and food industry in Kuwait and the region.

Safir Hotel and Residences Kuwait - Fintas was recognized as a winner in seven categories, bagging two Silver, five Bronze medals and 10 Merit Certificates. The winners of the competition walked away with several prizes and accolades. Chef Shreeni Paramban won a Silver Medal in the "Themed Cake Celebration" and Negmeldin Ahmed won the second Silver Medal in the "Best Burger Competition" categories.

Abdul Hameed Abdul Kadher won a Bronze Medal in the "Pasta Competition", Shinoj Othayoth won a Bronze Medal in the "Cold Sandwich-Making Competition", Pubudu Samarasooriyage won a Bronze Medal in the "Bread Creation" category and both Hazem Mohamed and Ramu Naidu won each a Bronze Medal in the "Hot and Cold Arabic Appetizers (Mezze)" category.

The hotel's participants also won nine merit certificates; each of Rohan

Sameera, Abdul Hameed Abdul Kadhar, Sasi Ravi, Manikandan Srinivasan, Gobinda Biswas and Brenda Geraldizo won the "Mystery Basket" category. Eshara Ishara won the "Bread Creation" category, Rafa Bou Hamdan won the "Best Burger" category, Shreeni Paramban won the "Fruits and Vegetables Carving" category and finally again Abdul Hameed Abdul Kadhar won the "Meat Dish" category.

The event, which was held from the 16th - 18th January 2017, included a culinary art show and cooking competition. More than 15 different and innovative categories were listed for the competitors to participate and compete in. Throughout the exhibition, more than 300 chefs participated in the competition that was judged by a distinguished panel of 10 international judges.

In an invitation initiated by Saif Eddin Mohammed - General Manager, the culinary team of Safir Hotel and Residences Kuwait - Fintas headed by the Executive Sous Chef - Wissam Kasdallah celebrated their achievements with appreciation certificates and gift vouchers during a luncheon get-together.







### KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (19/01/2017 TO 25/01/2017)

Time	Programme	Time	Programme
12:30 PM	SHARQIA-1 AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	11:30 AM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film BALLERINA
2:30 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	1:30 PM	BALLERINA
4:30 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	3:30 PM	BALLERINA
6:30 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	5:30 PM	BALLERINA A MONSTER CALLS
8:30 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	7:30 PM	PATRIOTS DAY
10:30 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	9:45 PM	PATRIOTS DAY
12:30 AM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:30 AM	PATRIOTS DAY
1:00 PM	SHARQIA-2 xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:45 PM	FANAR-2 AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
3:00 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	2:45 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
5:00 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	4:45 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
7:00 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	6:45 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
9:00 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	8:45 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
11:00 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	10:45 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
1:00 AM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:45 AM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
12:00 PM	SHARQIA-3 BALLERINA	12:30 PM	FANAR-3 DANGAL -Hindi
2:00 PM	DANGAL -Hindi	4:00 PM	THE GREAT WALL
5:15 PM	BALLERINA	6:15 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
7:15 PM	THE GREAT WALL	9:30 PM	DANGAL -Hindi
9:30 PM	PATRIOTS DAY	12:45 AM	THE GREAT WALL
12:15 AM	PATRIOTS DAY	12:15 PM	FANAR-4 xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
11:45 AM	MUHALAB-1 DANGAL -Hindi	2:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
3:00 PM	BALLERINA	4:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
5:00 PM	BALLERINA	6:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
7:00 PM	BALLERINA	8:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
9:45 PM	KHAIDI NO. 150 -Telugu	10:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
1:00 AM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:15 AM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
12:00 PM	MUHALAB-2 AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	11:45 AM	MARINA-1 THE GREAT WALL
2:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	2:30 PM	BALLERINA
4:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	4:45 PM	MOANA
6:00 PM	BALLERINA	7:00 PM	THE GREAT WALL
8:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	9:15 PM	PATRIOTS DAY
10:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:05 AM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
12:05 AM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	12:00 PM	MARINA-2 AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
12:15 PM	MUHALAB-3 xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	2:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
2:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	4:00 PM	BALLERINA
4:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	6:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
6:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	8:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
8:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	10:00 PM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
10:15 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:05 AM	AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film
12:15 AM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:45 PM	MARINA-3 xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
		2:45 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
		4:45 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
		6:45 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE
		8:45 PM	xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE

### CHANGE OF NAME

I, Iddin Kunhi Pallibali  
Abbas S/o Abbas Pallibali,  
Passport No. L1458495 &  
Civil ID No. 281060107647,  
have changed my name as  
Aboobakar 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 deal-  
ings and documents, I will  
be known by name of Jamil  
Avelino Fernandes. (C 5260)  
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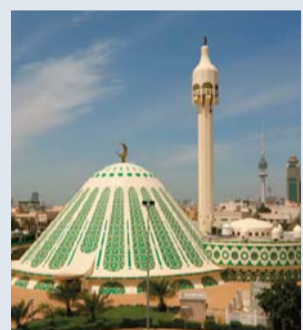
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Duh: 12:00  
Asr: 14:59  
Maghrib: 17:19  
Isha: 18:39



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- ◆ Maximum Age Limit 45 years

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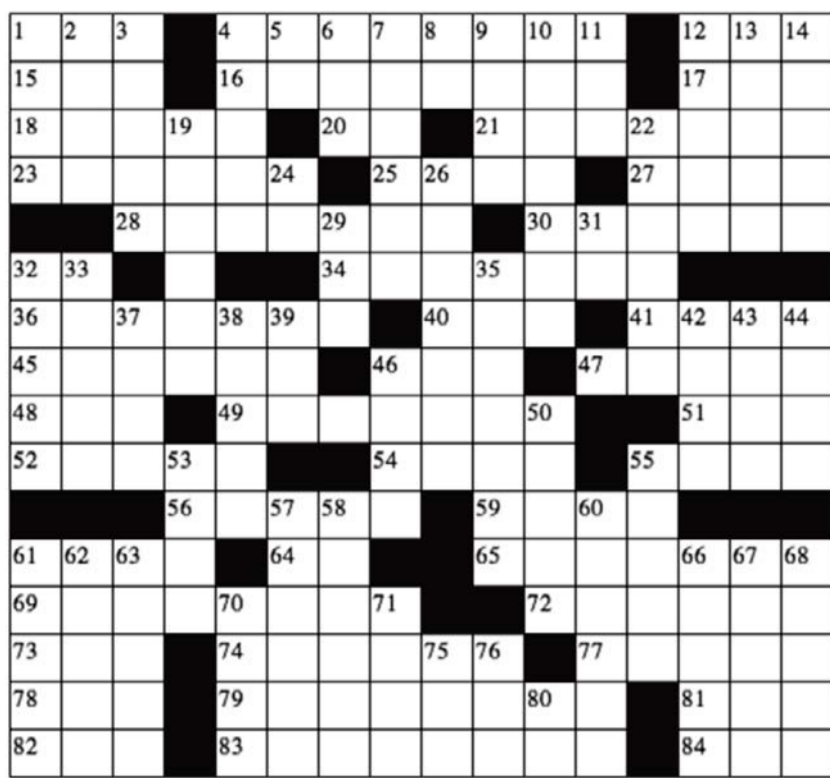
Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

**DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION**

Arrival Flights on Tuesday 24/1/2017				Departure Flights on Tuesday 24/1/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
MSC	405	Sohag	00:05	MSC	406	Sohag	01:00
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20	BBC	144	Chittagong/Dhaka	01:30
KLM	411	Amsterdam/Dammam	00:20	KLM	411	Amsterdam	01:35
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	MSC	412	Asyut	01:55
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	KAC	417	Doha	02:00
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	KAC	285	Dhaka	02:25
MSC	411	Asyut	01:00	THY	773	Istanbul	02:25
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:55
KAC	102	London	01:25	AXB	396	Kozhikode	02:55
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	ETH	621	Addis Ababa	03:05
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:35
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
AXB	395	Kozhikode	02:00	KKK	6505	Istanbul	03:55
ETH	620	Addis Ababa	02:05	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
OMA	643	Dubai	02:55	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	KAC	167	Paris	04:25
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	QTR	1077	Doha	04:40
RJA	644	Amman	03:05	LMU	5511	Cairo	05:00
ETD	305	Abu Dhabi	03:10	QTR	1087	Doha	05:50
MSR	612	Cairo	03:10	JZR	560	Sohag	06:05
QTR	1076	Doha	03:30	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
KAC	358	Kochi	03:30	THY	6376	Dubai/Istanbul	06:35
KAC	206	Islamabad	03:45	KAC	153	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	1544	Cairo	03:55	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
LMU	5510	Cairo	04:00	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	418	Manila	04:25	RJA	645	Amman	07:05
THY	6376	Istanbul	05:05	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
JZR	529	Asyut	05:15	KAC	541	Cairo	07:15
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20	KAC	787	Jeddah	07:45
KAC	354	BLR	05:20	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:55
KAC	344	Chennai	05:35	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:55
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45	KAC	563	Amman	08:00
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55	KAC	679	Dubai	08:10
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05	BAW	156	London	08:40
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05	FDB	054	Dubai	08:55
KAC	346	Ahmedabad	06:25	KAC	791	Madinah	09:00
BAW	157	London	06:40	KAC	691	Muscat	09:00
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00	KAC	117	SNN/New York	09:00
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50	KAC	101	London	09:35
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	KAC	856	Dubai	09:55
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	SVA	513	Riyadh	11:00
SVA	512	Riyadh	10:00	AVV	652	Sohag	11:10
AVV	651	Asyut	10:10	KAC	617	Doha	11:10
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	KAC	501	Beirut	11:15
IRA	675	Lar	10:40	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
SYR	341	Damascus	11:00	IRA	674	Lar	11:40
MSC	403	Asyut	11:15	SYR	342	Damascus	12:00
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	12:05
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
QTR	8511	Doha	12:00	MSC	404	Asyut	12:15
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	QTR	8512	Doha	13:30
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
KAC	680	Dubai	12:55	AAG	143	IQA	14:00
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00				
AXB	393	Kozhikode	13:10				
BON	101	Sarajevo	13:30				
KAC	564	Amman	13:40				



CROSSWORD 1500



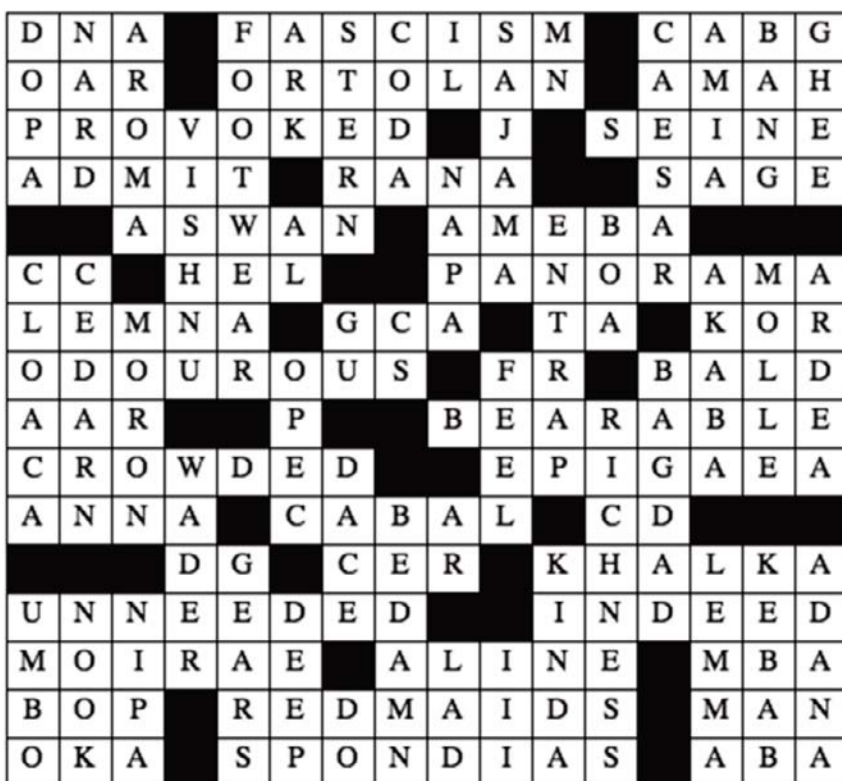
ACROSS

1. A drug combination found in some over-the-counter headache remedies (Aspirin and Phenacetin and Caffeine).
4. Raspberry native to eastern North America having black thimble-shaped fruit.
12. Any high mountain.
15. The syllable naming the sixth (submediant) note of a major or minor scale in solmization.
16. In a linear manner.
17. United States liquid unit equal to 4 quarts or 3.785 liters.
18. With rapid movements.
20. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
21. Proceed or issue forth, as from a source.
23. A deep bow.
25. The United Nations agency concerned with atomic energy.
27. An ancient Hebrew unit of dry measure equal to about a bushel.
28. United States writer who was a leading figure of the beat generation (1922-1969).
30. (Greek mythology) Any of the 50 sea nymphs who were daughters of the sea god Nereus.
32. A Russian river.
34. German physiologist and histologist who in 1839 identified the cell as the basic structure of plant and animal tissue (1810-1882).
36. Stem of the rattan palm used for making canes and umbrella handles.
40. A former agency (from 1946 to 1974) that was responsible for research into atomic energy and its peacetime uses in the United States.
41. A rare chronic progressive encephalitis caused by the measles virus and occurring primarily in children and young adults.
45. Any of numerous ornamental shrubs grown for their showy flowers of various colors.
47. A colorless volatile highly inflammable liquid used as an inhalation anesthetic.
48. Imperial dynasty that ruled China (most of the time) from 206 BC to 221 and expanded its boundaries and developed its bureaucracy.
49. Tending to reserve or introspection.
51. The bureau of the Treasury Department responsible for tax collections.
52. A unit of dry measure used in Egypt.
54. Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
56. Out of fashion.
59. The basic unit of money in Iran.
61. Belonging to some prior time.
64. Being or moving higher in position or greater in some value.
65. A Powhatan Indian woman (the daughter of Powhatan) who befriended the English at Jamestown and is said to have saved Captain John Smith's life (1595-1617).
69. A final crushing defeat.
72. Deliberately arranged for effect.
73. The compass point midway between east and southeast.
74. Surveying instrument consisting of the upper movable part of a theodolite including the telescope and its attachments.
77. Jordan's port.
78. (British) Your grandmother.
79. Grown for its thickened edible aromatic root.
81. An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
82. An inflammatory disease of connective tissue with variable features including fever and weakness and fatigability and joint pains and skin lesions on the face or neck or arms.
83. Fix firmly or securely.
84. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.

DOWN

1. By bad luck.
2. An informal term for a father.
3. A soft whitish calcite.
4. Tired to the point of exhaustion.
5. Being one more than fifty.
6. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
7. Belonging to or prescribed for celiac disease.
8. Unknown god.
9. A member of an Algonquian people living in central Canada.
10. An annual publication including weather forecasts and other miscellaneous information arranged according to the calendar of a given year.
11. 100 pyas equal 1 kyat.
12. With the mouth wide open as in wonder or awe.
13. Club consisting of a heavy stick (often bamboo) bound with iron.
14. Appeal or request earnestly.
19. Of or like a cecum.
22. German physicist and chemist who formulated the third law of thermodynamics (1864-1941).
24. A polyvalent metallic element that resembles chromium and tungsten in its properties.
26. A member of one of the four divisions of the prehistoric Greeks.
29. North American republic containing 50 states - 48 conterminous states in North America plus Alaska in northwest North America and the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean.
31. Half the width of an em.
33. A street of small shops (especially in Orient).
35. Several gregarious moth larvae that spin webs over foliage on which they feed.
37. Relating to or characteristic of or occurring on land.
38. Tropical American trees with palmately compound leaves and showy bell-shaped flowers.
39. Airtight sealed metal container for food or drink or paint etc.
42. One of the two main branches of orthodox Islam.
43. An incidental benefit awarded for certain types of employment (especially if it is regarded as a right).
44. Any of several related languages of the Celts in Ireland and Scotland.
46. (Scotland) A slope or hillside.
50. Sole genus of the family Naiadaceae.
53. A fencing sword similar to a foil but with a heavier blade.
55. Anything that covers or conceals.
57. Showing a brooding ill humor.
58. Having the character or disposition harmed by pampering or oversolicitous attention.
60. Cause to be attached.
62. Of or in or relating to the nose.
63. Comb-plate or locomotor organ consisting of a row of strong cilia whose bases are fused.
66. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
67. Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
68. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
70. Any competition.
71. A European river.
75. A unit of surface area equal to 100 square meters.
76. A loud harsh or strident noise.
80. A radioactive element of the actinide series.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Think through decisions today and you will do very well. Work, achievement and ambition mean a lot to you. You know, however, that if you stay serious for too long you could miss the funny side of life. Consider a shopping trip after work. Perhaps a friend would like to accompany you. Compare prices and you will be pleased with the outcome. Progressive people and idealistic groups or concepts play a more important role in your life, as a new phase of your life begins. There is a concern for something bigger than any one person-the good of the many outweighs the needs of the few. You are coming into a time of experimenting with new concepts. Perhaps, in the process of shedding the old we find the original. Consider trying out for a play.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You may be extremely eloquent or forceful in talking or communicating. People will have no problem in knowing exactly what you mean when you speak. You have a deep appreciation for feelings and movement just now. You may just want to get out and about and walk or exercise. You should be clearing away old debts, resentments and paperwork at this time. Anything that slows you from your goals may need adjusting. Clear thoughts about the past may take up your time. This afternoon you will be clear in thought and communication. You will have support from your family or loved one for some project this afternoon. Show others your lighter side. Laugh and make it a point to get others to laugh. Your energies are very good today.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You have the ability to create a positive from a negative and can have a constructive influence within group meetings or with authority figures. Your emotional strength today may come from your constant positive outlook as well as the positive people you enjoy having around you. Compose your thoughts and then keep moving forward. When loved ones come to you with a problem later today, ask them first what they consider is the smart thing to do. You will be preventing an emotional overload and they will talk and find their own answer. You may find that your creative side is at a high this evening. This, along with the ability to put your thoughts into words, allows you to bewitch and transport. Good news is nearby.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Today you keep your positive frame of mind-consistent. You proceed through the workday with great vigor and enthusiasm. You look forward to the upcoming time when you will be able to enjoy a retreat or a weekend fling. This may be a real break away from one type of surrounding to another. You are witty, logical and reasonable and people love to gather around you. Perhaps a camping or a fishing trip can be planned soon. You look forward to listening to the birds, building a campfire and just generally hanging out. If you are married, your mate will enjoy some quiet time as well and may even come with you. Identify some common goals that you and your mate would enjoy this year and start making your plans for future trips.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You look forward to a lecture today; however, you may not stay too long. The program teaches how to learn a new organizing system along with some time management discussions. You get some good ideas-later, you are off to meet a friend, perhaps have a late night dinner. New foods, new stores, you never saw the town this way before. All it takes is someone very charming to open those beautiful eyes of yours. There is talk of how one would survive if lost and away from civilization. Each of you has special ideas of how you would manage and much laughter, as well as thought, will go into your conversation. This is kind of like the conversation of what you would like to have with you if you were stranded on an island.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You have a great deal of understanding and sensitivity to the needs of others. Your communication abilities are understood and accurate. You are on the mark when it comes to solving problems. The only negative part about today is that sometime in the afternoon you may feel blocked or frustrated by someone. Give the situation some thought and then let it go. Where you have been and what you have acquired comes into play as you think about your future and where it may lead. Your thoughts are clear and you may even have some psychic insights for yourself and your loved ones. Stay in the moment and avoid the traps of worry, especially about things you cannot control. Make plans with your sweetheart to spend some fun time together.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Taking care of business is a major theme where your emotional orientation is concerned this morning. You crave organization and expediency and you want to get things accomplished. There just does not seem to be enough time in the day to do everything you set out to accomplish. You feel a love of order and law and you have an appreciation for responsibilities and duty. When there is an imbalance in the daily work, you tend to become a bit frustrated. Not to worry, these powers seem to have created just enough time for you to do your fair share of the work. Any extra work and you will need to put in for overtime. When you are not busy with your nose to the grindstone you are most pleasant, grateful and you love to praise others.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

If you know that your job will lead to the success you had planned for yourself, you will work long and hard. You are a smart businessperson and others look to you for answers. Today, however, you may find some sort of delay in production. An interruption could be a communication concern. With your help, work will be productive once again. This afternoon you may want to set aside some time to find a weak link so that you can adjust, change or perform whatever duties are needed to eradicate any problems. Later you will find time to relax a bit. You could be running a newspaper or a paint shop or any other type of business where lots of people depend on your evaluation results. Energies are building for some positive changes soon.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Secondary jobs are as much a part of your life as a regular job routine. You will find some extra monetary reward or a loosening of the budget where this second job is concerned. Taking chances with your creativeness can bring big rewards for you now. You could be lecturing or writing today and you will find it easy to be creative with your words. Young people play a big part in today's agenda. You are appreciated and admired for your thoughtful ways. You will be rewarded for your volunteer work and you may want to volunteer to help run errands or do chores for the handicapped or nursing homes. This work is satisfying and a real boost to the self-esteem. New ways to communicate will bring a lift to your physical energies. Listen to suggestions.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

If you work for a large company, you may want to influence the executives to put in an exercise room for employees. Perhaps the employees could make part of the contribution. You will be thinking along improvements in your health as much as you would be thinking about how exercise can be invigorating and a good stress relief. This is a good workday with lots of problem-solving successes. Insights and ideas come easily but may not find expression just yet. Writing out your ideas is a good way to gain a focus. There is a need to complete a task that has been long overdue for completion. After some research, you will find the answers you need. A science fiction movie could prove enjoyable tonight.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Mountain climbing, parachuting or deep-sea diving may have been in your past but now you are looking for new challenges. Your friends could be asking about your next challenge and you have subjects to ponder. You enjoy sports as well as olympic style competition and you have ideas of what might be next but only a few of your friends will want to join you. You love life and embrace the experiences that come with it. A spelunking or science-discovery group may be what keeps you busy in your free time this birth year. Don't forget to take a camera with you for whatever new adventure you want to experience. Coming back to this day and tending to business, you look forward to being with your friends later this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Business partnerships need work; conferences, reviews, encouraging news and plans are on the agenda now. You may wonder about the motives of someone today-you, however, could be on the right track with your thinking. Long-range and long-distance matters will be in focus. Any plans can be calibrated now. This afternoon you have time to update some personal business. You may have been thinking about the purchase of a new painting, perhaps for an investment. The cost of an appraisal is a wise choice before making a valuable and important purchase. You will have an occasion to show off your living quarters later this evening and you set aside a little time to straighten up a little and perhaps add a few candles into the mix for good smells.

WORD SEARCH

Gardening

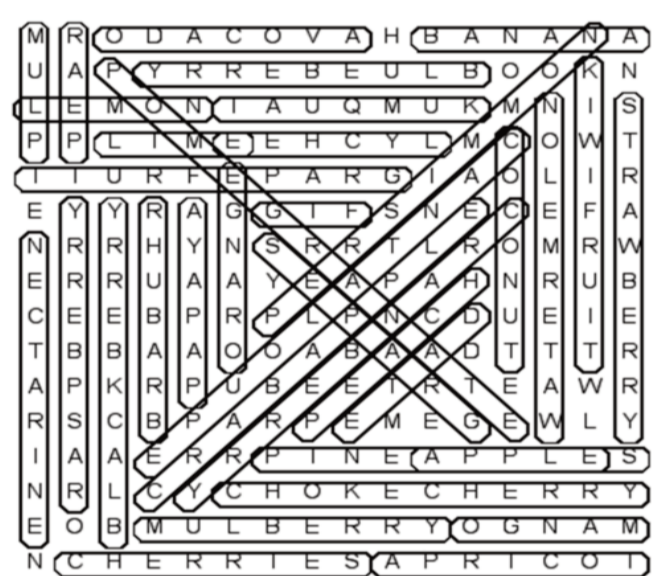
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 27 letters spell a Lady Bird Johnson quote.



- |            |              |            |             |
|------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| ANNUALS    | GARDEN       | ORGANIC    | SEEDS       |
| BEANS      | GERANIUMS    | PEAS       | SHOVEL      |
| BEETS      | GLOVES       | PERENNIAL  | SOIL        |
| BIENNIAL   | GNOME        | PETUNIAS   | SPADE       |
| BROCCOLI   | GREENHOUSE   | PINWHEEL   | SUNSHINE    |
| CARROTS    | GROW         | PITCH FORK | TOMATOES    |
| COMPOST    | HOES         | PLANTING   | TROWEL      |
| CULTIVATE  | HORTICULTURE | RAIN       | TULIPS      |
| DAISIES    | HOSE         | RAKE       | VEGETABLES  |
| DIGGING    | HYDRANGEA    | RELAXING   | WATER       |
| FERTILIZER | LILACS       | ROSES      | WEEDS       |
| FLOWERS    | LILIES       | ROWS       | WHEELBARROW |
| FUCHSIA    | MARIGOLDS    |            |             |

Yesterday Solution

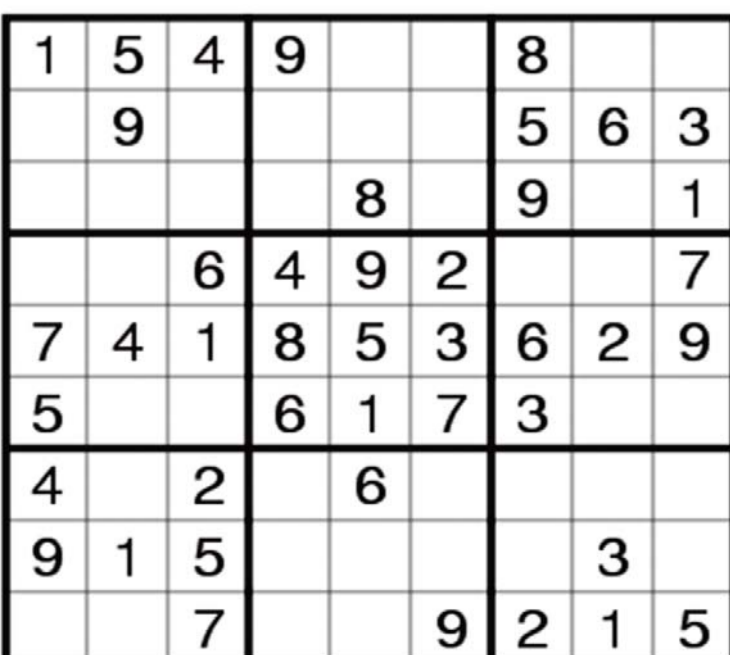
Fruit



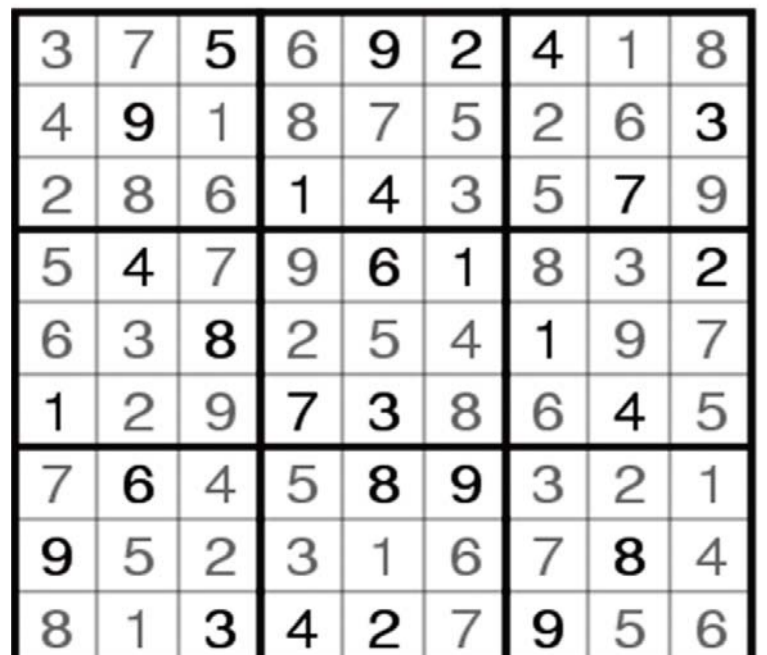
- |             |            |             |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| APPLES      | DATE       | ORANGE      |
| APRICOT     | FIG        | PAPAYA      |
| AVOCADO     | GRAPEFRUIT | PEACH       |
| BANANA      | GRAPES     | PEAR        |
| BLACKBERRY  | KIWIFRUIT  | PERSIMMON   |
| BLUEBERRY   | KUMQUAT    | PINEAPPLE   |
| CANTALOUPE  | LEMON      | PLUM        |
| CHERRIES    | LIME       | POMEGRANATE |
| CHOKECHERRY | LYCHEE     | RASPBERRY   |
| COCONUT     | MANGO      | RHUBARB     |
| CRABAPPLE   | MULBERRY   | STRAWBERRY  |
| CRANBERRY   | NECTARINE  | WATERMELON  |

The hidden message is: HONEYDEW MELON

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



For labor-related inquiries and complaints: Call MSAL hotline 128



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

Table listing Pharmacies by Governorate, Pharmacy Name, Address, and Phone Number. Includes locations like Ahmadi, Jahra, Capital, Farwaniya, and Hawally.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Table listing International Calls with columns for Country and Phone Number. Lists countries from Afghanistan to Lesotho.

Hospitals

Table listing Hospitals with columns for Hospital Name and Phone Number. Includes Sabah, Amiri, Maternity, Mubarak Al-Kabir, Chest, Farwaniya, Adan, Ibn Sina, Al-Razi, and Physiotherapy Hospital.

Clinics

Table listing Clinics with columns for Clinic Name and Phone Number. Includes Kaizen center, Rawda, Adaliya, Khaldiya, Kaifan, Shamiya, Shuwaikh, Abdullah Salem, Nuzha, Industrial Shuwaikh, Qadsiya, Dasmah, Bneid Al-Gar, Shaab, Qibla, Ayoun Al-Qibla, Mirqab, Sharq, Salmiya, Jabriya, Maidan Hawally, Bayan, Mishref, W Hawally, Sabah, Jahra, New Jahra, West Jahra, South Jahra, North Jahra, North Jleeb, Ardhiya, Firdous, Omariya, N Khaitan, and Fintas.

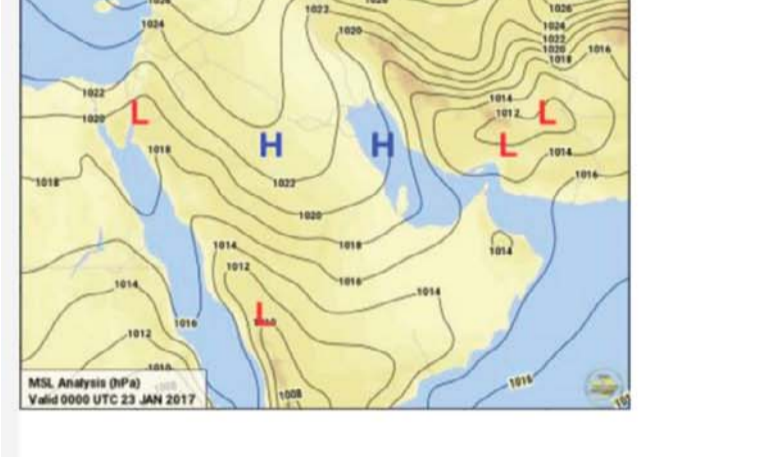
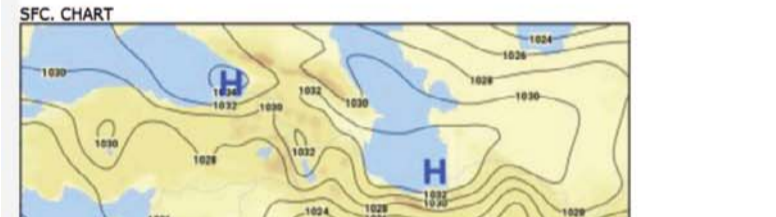
STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



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Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 23/01/2017-07:00 LT UTC +3hr Max Temperature 19 °C



Warnings & Weather Watches, Kuwait Forecast, Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport, Sunrise/Sunset, and Prayer Times.

PRIVATE CLINICS

Large table listing Private Clinics by specialty: Ophthalmologists, Plastic Surgeons, Paediatricians, Endocrinologist, Family Doctor, Psychiatrists, Gynaecologists & Obstetricians, Dermatologists, Dentists, Physiotherapists & VD, Rheumatologists, Internist, Chest & Heart, Consultant Cardiologist, Neurologists, Gastrologists, Urologists, and Psychologists.



Picture taken on December 1, 1971 shows members of the band "Can" (from left) Irmin Schmidt, Jaki Liebezeit, Michael Karoli, Ulli Gerlach, Holger Szukay and Damo Suzuki (foreground) posing in Hamburg, northern Germany. — AFP photos



Picture shows German musicians Jaki Liebezeit (left, drums) and Marcus Schmickler performing during a festival in Moers, western Germany.

## Drum innovator **Liebezeit** of Krautrock band Can dies

Jaki Liebezeit, the percussionist for German band Can who became an icon in avant-garde circles for a machine-like style that rejected standard drumsets, died Sunday. He was 78. His bandmates in Can, which he co-founded in Cologne in 1968, said Liebezeit died suddenly from pneumonia. He died "asleep peacefully, surrounded by his loved ones. We will miss him hugely," Can said on its Facebook page. Can was one of the pioneering bands in Krautrock, the broadly defined genre of artists from West Germany who took rock in a more psychedelic and experimental direction by bringing in jazz improvisation

and early electronics. Liebezeit had his start in free jazz, moving after his early studies to Barcelona where he notably played with visiting trumpeting great Chet Baker. But Liebezeit grew disenchanted with the jazz circuit. He sought to learn percussion from around the world and, with Can, developed a tight, metronome-like method that to listeners became increasingly indistinguishable from machines. In fact, Liebezeit-unlike so many purists—was fully comfortable exploring the possibilities of drum machines.

He eventually scrapped the drumkit entirely. He preferred

the power of striking all drums with his arms rather than kicking with his feet and only sparingly used cymbals, while embracing electronics and percussion instruments that are less common in rock such as gongs. Liebezeit would explain that the standardization of drumsets, contrary to popular imagination, was a recent phenomenon and was meant for jazz rather than rock or other forms.

By the 1990s he said he "tried to get rid of all American influences, because I discovered the whole world." "I'd discovered it a long time before, but American music is so dominant—I don't

want to say imperialistic, but it makes it so that you cannot think in another way," he told the British cultural magazine The Quietus in 2015. Can was nonetheless influenced by US avant-garde music including rockers The Velvet Underground and minimalist composer Steve Reich. In addition to work with Can, which periodically reunited after the 1970s, Liebezeit played with artists ranging from synthpop chart-toppers Depeche Mode to ambient producer Brian Eno. — AFP



US actor Matt Damon smiles as he takes part in a meeting on the opening day of the World Economic Forum in Davos-AFP

### Matt Damon says he'll pitch clean water to **Trump**

Matt Damon took the cause of clean water to the Sundance Film Festival, where he said he's hoping to pitch Donald Trump on the issue. Damon told The Associated Press on Saturday that clean water accessibility isn't a partisan issue and demands "an all-hands-on-deck approach to solve this." The actor has publically supported Democrats, including Hillary Clinton.

When asked his response to the election, Damon demurred and said hopes Trump will be open to backing clean water programs like his nonprofit Water.org. Said Damon: "Hopefully we'll get our turn." Damon in 2009 founded Water.org with civil engineer Gary White. It uses micro-finance loans to bring hygienic connections to water and toilets to impoverished communities. Damon also spoke about the issue at the Davos Forum last week. — AP

### ACTOR KILLED WHILE FILMING SCENE FOR AUSTRALIAN MUSIC VIDEO

An actor was killed while filming a scene for an Australian band's music video yesterday, police said. The man died at a bar in the Queensland city of Brisbane while filming a scene that involved several firearms, Queensland Police Detective Inspector Tom Armitt said. He declined to release the name of the band, though confirmed it was Australian. During the scene, several actors fired their guns and the actor somehow received wounds to his chest, Armitt said. No one else was injured.

It was not immediately clear whether the guns were loaded with live ammunition or blanks, Armitt said. Blank cartridges can still cause injuries if fired at close range. "I can't tell you whether they are live or real firearms," Armitt told reporters. "I can't tell you the type of ammunition that were being used. That will be a subject of the investigation." Police did not release the actor's name. — AP

### Man of the hour **Casey Affleck** goes back to indie roots

Casey Affleck's stock is at an all-time high after his acclaimed performance in Kenneth Lonergan's "Manchester by the Sea" made him one of Hollywood's most recognizable faces. Yet the enigmatic 41-year-old—a best actor Golden Globe winner and a frontrunner for the Oscars in February—can next be seen in an obscure indie role, shrouded in a bedsheet and largely silent. "He and I have been friends for so long at this point that it's just fun to watch him get all the acclaim," director David Lowery told AFP Sunday ahead of the world premiere of "A Ghost Story."

"Working with him is just like hanging out with a good friend, and this is not a typical movie for an actor of his caliber to do." Affleck may have been given his air fare to Texas to shoot "A Ghost Story," but it's unlikely it would have been his biggest pay day. Filmed mostly in one house, it cost almost nothing to make and was shot secretly over two months last summer in Dallas, Texas.

Lowery began working on the movie just days after wrapping the big budget Disney remake of "Pete's Dragon" and found what little cash was required himself. A languid, hypnotic meditation on time, legacy and belonging, "A Ghost Story" sees Affleck and Rooney Mara together for the first time since Lowery's last indie hit, the 2013 crime romance "Ain't Them Bodies Saints."

#### 'Low-charisma mumbler'

They play an unnamed couple who appear to be enjoying the trappings of domesticity in a secure relationship which is ripped apart when his character is killed in car crash near the start of the movie. He spends the rest of the film as a ghost, compelled to inhabit his rural Texan home, even after his grieving partner moves on and leaves. Draped playfully in the archetypal white bedsheet, Affleck is the kind of comic specter you might find in "Scooby Doo," his sorrowful but inscrutable expression defined by two black eyeholes.

It is an odd role for a big star, but perhaps one uniquely suited to an actor whose sensibilities have always been somewhat left of the mainstream. Variety's

chief film critic Peter Debruge, who describes Affleck as a "low-charisma mumbler who tends to keep his characters' emotions bottled up," points out that he is one of the few actors who can convey as much with a sheet over his head as without. "I know him so well at this point that I can just call him up and say 'can you come to Texas for two weeks and do something kind of crazy?' and he's totally down to do it," Lowery said.

#### Auteur

"He, like myself, has so many different interests as a filmmaker. It's exciting to see him not only be incredibly successful with 'Manchester' but to not rest on those laurels and to go off and... make a small art film like this."

Affleck was not at Sunday's screening at the Sundance Film Festival as he is having another go at directing after making the unloved mockumentary "I'm Still Here." But his performance earned warm applause from the audience in Park City, Utah and critics have been generous in their early reviews for the movie.

IndieWire described "A Ghost Story" as Lowery's best film to date, while the Hollywood Reporter predicted that it would find an admiring, if niche, audience. "A Ghost Story," also written and edited by 36-year-old Lowery, was inspired by an argument the director had with his wife, actress Augustine Frizzell, about where they should live.

An indie auteur at heart, he has adopted the common indie kid strategy of paying for the labors of love with the big studio movies, and he is lined up for another Disney remake, "Peter Pan." "It's just me following my creative instincts. I have all sorts of interests as a filmmaker and it would be a shame to not indulge all of them," Lowery told AFP. "I do want to make giant blockbuster studio movies—that's really fun—but I also love making really small, for lack of a better term, art films." — AFP



Writer and director David Lowery, left, and actress Rooney Mara, right, pose at the premiere of "A Ghost Story" during the 2017 Sundance Film Festival on Sunday in Park City, Utah. — AP



Left to right, Laura Dern, Judy Greer, Woody Harrelson and Isabella Amara, cast members in "Wilson," pose together at the premiere of the film at the Eccles Theatre during the 2017 Sundance Film Festival on Sunday in Park City, Utah. — AP

### Sundance film review: **'Wilson'**

Graphic novels, and the movies based on them, work better with certain topics than others. Sixteen years ago, Terry Zwigoff's "Ghost World," based on the graphic novel by Daniel Clowes, centered on a pair of more-blaise-than-thou teenage girls who walked, and talked, outside the loop of everything they deemed boring and conventional; it was the perfect movie about the perfect pomo hipsters at the perfect "Whatever" moment. "Wilson," directed by Craig Johnson ("The Skeleton Twins"), is also based on a graphic novel by Clowes, who wrote the film's screenplay, and it's driven by the same spirit of reflexive adolescent alienation—only this movie isn't about kids. It's about a lonely middle-aged bachelor curmudgeon misanthrope, named Wilson (we never learn if it's his first or last name), who has let the entire culture pass him by, like a train he decided to jump off, only in his mind it's the train's fault.

The character is played, with a jaunty lack of self-pity, by Woody Harrelson, who wears horn-rims, a graying beard, and a nerd's practical wardrobe (plaid shirt, Dockers). Wilson lives with his dog in a cruddy apartment stacked with old paperbacks, and when he's out on the street, he'll go up to a stranger and commence an eager-beaver "conversation," paying no heed to how little his company is desired. He'll subject them to one of his critiques of everything that's wrong with society, which he spins out with a kind of brash autodidactic literacy. If his observations were actually interesting, then maybe the people he was talking to wouldn't look like they were being assaulted. But Wilson tends to say things like "Aren't you a little old to be doing all that computer stuff?" or "Why the hell do people move to the suburbs? It's like a living death."

#### Streak of vulnerability

If suburb-bashing sounds a little...I don't know, 1985 to you, then welcome to Wilson's world. He's not dim, but he's stuck in a soggy bubble of fraying boomer insights: technology is bad, hanging out is good, corporate homogenization is bad, saying whatever comes into your head with no filter is good. The hook of Wilson's personality is that he's an oddball-outsider who cuts through the bull. In truth, though, he sounds like an aging cranky white male whose arbitrary complaints boil down to the world no longer being the one that he grew up in. (If this were 100 years ago, he's be griping about cars and telephones.) All of which is to say that in "Wilson," Daniel Clowes' voice, which was once acerbically hip, sounds dated.

Movies based on graphic novels don't need to be superficial; just look at "American

Splendor," in which Harvey Pekar was a bohemian grouch with attitudes a lot like Wilson's, but Paul Giamatti endowed him with a streak of vulnerability. Watching "Wilson," you have to accept that the movie is a kind of a cartoon character study (Harrelson is good, but he never drops his guard). Once you do, though, it strings you along in its pleasant absurdist way. It's a sign of the movie's stylized goofy lightness that we never hear even two words about how Wilson survives (he has no job, but seems to feed himself and his dog and pay his rent with no problem). But then, as the movie goes on, it's all too willing to leave plausibility behind.

#### Sundance staple

When Wilson's father dies, and his one and only friend moves away, the isolation begins to close in on him, so he hunts down his ex-wife, Pippi (Laura Dern), a former drug addict and prostitute who left him 17 years ago. She now works as a waitress in a steak house and is trying to walk the straight and narrow, and as they rekindle their bond, Wilson learns that the child he thought she'd aborted was, in fact, given up for adoption. Just like that, he looks the kid up! And she's living right there in town! And she's an alienated heavy-set teenage loser (Isabella Amara) who dresses in black and drops bitter penseses, just like the heroines of "Ghost World"! The three form a gently deranged ersatz clan, turning "Wilson," for a while, into a flaky version of that Sundance staple, the dysfunctional-family comedy, complete with glib scenes that mock the "normalcy" of the girl's adoptive parents (Cheryl Hines and Bruce Bohne). But that doesn't last long.

Harrelson brings his wide-awake edge to this performance, yet "Wilson" is a soft-headed comedy. Even when our hero lands in a maximum-security prison, he winds up turning the violent psychopaths around him into puppies. And the always charming Judy Greer is on hand as the perfect mate for him: endlessly pliant and forgiving, the kind of woman whose very presence seals "Wilson" as a fairy tale. It's the sort of movie that's been known to do business, and this one could (moderately). Yet how much better it would have been if the director, Craig Johnson, had grounded the laughs the way he did in his breakthrough movie, "The Skeleton Twins," which was both funnier and more realistic. Watching "Wilson," I wondered what Wilson himself would make of a cookie-cutter graphic-novel adaptation like this one. He'd probably call it (rightly) so bourgeois multiplex. — Reuters



# Male, female styles mix with stars to cap Paris menswear



Male and female styles mixed with US television and music stars at Paris Fashion Week on Sunday for the final installment of fall-winter menswear shows as the City of Light prepares to notch up a gear for Monday's couture week. Here are the highlights:

**Lanvin stays edgy**

Grey's Anatomy star Jesse Williams in a woolen coat and stylish calfskin shoes led the front row at the Palais de Tokyo morning show alongside "The OA" actor Patrick Gibson in a suede print Lanvin bomber jacket. The storied, yet edgy house, has hoped for renewed direction since last year's 10-year anniversary of men's designer Lucas Ossendrijver and the new creative director Bouchra Jarrar. Oversized, slouchy and elongated silhouettes defined the aesthetic - towing a fashion-forward line between shabby and chic. Double-breasted jackets came alongside baggy pants and student-like check sweaters with scruffily long sleeves. And there was more than a hint of irony in the air as models with blank expressions sported tight scarves with the word "NOTHING" written on.

Yet the fall-winter collection packed no huge surprises. If Lanvin was looking for a creative overhaul, this was not it. As ever, the looks were among the most perfectly executed on the Paris Fashion Week calendar. A golden brown coat sported delicate androgynous curved shoulders, and the merging of eclectic pieces in the same look was further proof of Ossendrijver's fashion mastery.

**Kenzo channels harsh environments**

As if apologizing to the fashion press for forcing it to trek to a far-flung warehouse on the outskirts of Paris on a freezing Sunday night, Kenzo served up mulled cider. Thawing fashionistas clutched their Kenzo paper cups and marveled at the fascinating atelier decor, as did US singer and front-row attendee Kelela. In the center of the in-the-round runway, the backstage of the show was exposed in full view - seamstresses, models getting dressed, rails of coat hangers and make-up artists buzzing around. The theme was clear - rawness and exposure. The creative collection merged men's and women's designs and channeled clothes that would be worn in harsh environments and raw conditions. Two-piece hybrid skiing outfits - in raincoat yellow and winter blue - with hardy rubber boots opened the dizzying collection that comprised nearly 90 looks. Despite the long length, there were plenty of reasons to not get bored. Huge fluorescent bubbles jackets fused with multi-colored blown-up Argyle check and were combined with beautifully incongruous tiger-print skirts. To try to make sense of it all, the program notes coined it "Hawaiian meets arctic." But too many looks, at times, spoiled the broth.



Models present creations by Lanvin during Men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2017/2018 collection in Paris. — AP/AFP photos



FASHION



**Men's and women's styles merge**  
 Paul Smith's fashion show entitled "WO MAN" set the tone for his gender-fusing designs at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris' chic Left Bank. The British fashion icon's decision to show both men's and women's styles together like Kenzo forms part of a much bigger trend at Paris Fashion Week.  
 Top houses like Givenchy have increasingly taken to merging men's and women's resort designs on the catwalk - celebrating androgyny and shunning sexual difference. It's as political a statement as fashion can get.

**Paul Smith's gender-fused checks**

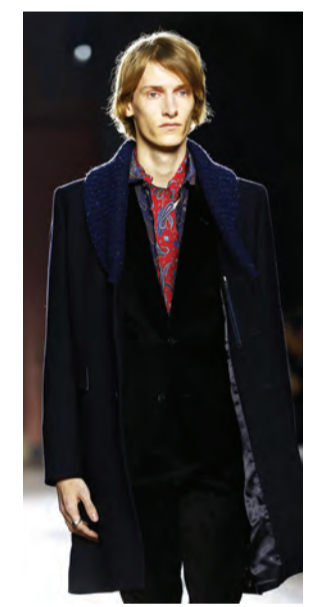
Check, patterns and lashings of androgyny were the ingredients of the day from Smith. The classical tailored gray jacket was worn by a female model, and men sported soft velvet suits in warm vivid shades of violet and blue. Quirkiness peppered proceedings via eccentric contrasts - the bread-and-butter sartorial styles and trench coats mixed with quirky pointed snake skin boots, sneakers and loose sweaters with ethnic motifs.

Smith is one menswear designer totally unafraid of color. Cerulean blue, vermillion, olive mixed with blacks and beiges - with gray, monochrome or check, also a key touchstone.

**AGNES B**

Stripes, checks and graffiti prints defined Agnes B's classical fall-winter show. But the element that made the French designer's display stand out was its virility (barring the inclusion of the odd female model in menswear) in a Fashion Week more and more defined by the androgynous aesthetic. Men of different ages, ethnicities and body shapes sported varying facial hair - in a clear anti-fashion statement in which the designer seemed to scream "being normal is ok."

Luxuriant marl gray overcoats mixed with masculine patterned foulards - while graffiti and pixelated prints on tops gave the collection a hint of aggression. But no Agnes B fashion display would be complete without the necessary fashion contradictions - seen here in the street versus the classical - sweatpants, caps, hoodies contrasted with chic black thick leather coats and suits in warm autumnal hues. — AP



Models present creations by Kenzo during men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2017/2018 collection in Paris.

Models present creations by Paul Smith during men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2017/2018 collection in Paris.



Models present creations by Thom Browne, during men's Fashion Week for the Fall/Winter 2017/2018 collection in Paris.

## Max goes digital and transforms the customer experience

Max, the largest value fashion brand in the region, has recently undergone a digital transformation to simplify and enhance the shopping experience for its customers. Based on customer feedback around their shopping preferences, Max launched a number of innovative services that continue to build on its regional success. Starting with a single store in the UAE in 2004, Max now serves customers in over 350 stores across 16 countries.

Max's digital transformation is underpinned by the launch of its new online shopping website (www.maxfashion.com) and cutting-edge applications for iOS and Android devices. Max also launched a way to shop directly from their Instagram account - maxfashionmena. Max has transformed the shopping experience of its customers by offering a wide variety of women, kids and men's apparel and accessories including footwear and household products, all at the click of a button. Response to the new site has been phenomenal with over 2.5 million page views since it went

live on 24th November 2016. The site also offers free delivery on orders above 200 AED for all online purchases.

"The world is going through a major transformation thanks to the availability of smartphones and improved mobile connectivity, making retailers rethink their approach to delivering on their customers' needs and expectations," said Tanya Todd, CEO at Max Fashion. "By listening to our customers and understanding their shopping preferences, we are able to maintain market leadership by providing great fashion products, coupled with world-class customer experiences. Whether its innovation in product or in design at the retail level, or in the way we interact with our customers through our digital channels, our goal is to offer customers the most rewarding experience in value fashion."

Max also recently launched #MyMaxStyle, to inspire the youth today to share their looks using the hashtag and stand a chance to get featured on www.maxfashion.com. Through this initiative, Max wants to target and inspire their

growing customer base of millennials across the region.

Max will soon become one of the first retailers in the region to launch its own 'Click and Collect' service, allowing customers to make online purchases at their convenience and choose to collect their items at their preferred Max store. Preliminary research on the service provided positive insights as customers in the region are always on the move with many preferring to collect their online purchases in store, thanks to Max's extensive retail footprint.

Max also introduced its 'in-store kiosk' concept at its flagship stores, providing customers with easy access to the entire range of Max products, if a customer couldn't find her size or colour she could order them online from the store and get them delivered to their doorstep. Customers can also continue to enjoy other great online and offline services such as next day delivery, cash on delivery, easy and fast one touch pay and check out, a 30-day returns policy, allowing customers to return products via courier or via

Max stores, thus making returns convenient even while shopping at maxfashion.com.

For the award winning Landmark Group loyalty program members of 'Shukran', Max has now linked online purchases to memberships, making it easy to earn and redeem Shukran points across online and offline platforms, thereby providing an Omni-Channel shopping experience.

Max today is the leading and most trusted value fashion retailer in the Middle East and aims to have a network of over 500 stores across the MENA region and new markets by 2020. Max serves the mid-market section of the population consisting of Arab Nationals, Asians and Western expats, and employs over 8,000 people from multiple nationalities across its network.

# Lifestyle

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Male, female styles mix with stars to cap Paris menswear

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## The fire of flamenco!



Photos show dancers from Spanish Aida Gomez dancing group as they perform Spanish flamenco dance at the Abdul-Hussein Abdul Redha Theater, as part of the ongoing 23rd Al-Qurain Cultural Festival organized by Kuwaiti National Council for Culture, Arts and Letter in Salmiya district, Kuwait on Sunday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

