

Filipino envoy calls for maid moratorium after Filipina hanged



Bolt loses gold as IOC strips Jamaica of 2008 relay win



REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA

Supplement inside



## ROYAL, TENT ARSONIST, MAIDS AMONG 7 INMATES EXECUTED

PRISONERS HANGED FOR COMMITTING 'HEINOUS CRIMES'



Min 06°  
Max 22°  
High Tide 12:14 & 22:27  
Low Tide 05:46 & 16:55

### TEHRAN, KUWAIT URGE BETTER IRAN-GULF TIES

TEHRAN: Iran's president and Kuwait's foreign minister both appealed yesterday for better relations between the Islamic Republic and Gulf Arab countries, Iranian media reported. According to President Hassan Rouhani's website, he told visiting Kuwaiti top diplomat Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah that Iran's foreign policy is aimed at improving "friendly and brotherly" relations with neighboring Muslim countries. Rouhani also said cooperation was needed to fight terrorism with "unity, integrity and (by) helping" each other.

Iranian state TV reported earlier in the day that Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said Gulf Arab nations hope ties "with Iran will normalize" and that Iran and the Arab countries should be "regional partners". The TV said the foreign minister in a meeting with his Iranian counterpart, Mohammad Javad Zarif, handed over a message from Kuwaiti Amir HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah to Rouhani about the "necessity of improving relations".

"It's necessary that the differing views and misunderstandings between the countries of the region should come to an end in a calm atmosphere and through frank dialogue," Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled said, according to the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA). Zarif commended Kuwait for its role in trying to improve relations. "The role of the Amir of Kuwait in supporting positive neighborly relations between countries in the region is worthy of praise," Zarif said, according to IRNA.

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TEHRAN: Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (right) meets Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah yesterday, where Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled delivered a letter from HH the Amir on the troubled ties between the Islamic republic and its Arab neighbors in the Gulf. — AFP

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti authorities hanged seven prisoners in a mass execution yesterday, including a ruling family member and a woman convicted of killing 58 women and children when she set fire to a wedding tent - the first death sentences carried out in several years in the state. "The central prison carried out death sentences against seven individuals who committed a number of heinous crimes," the public prosecution said in a statement.

Those executed included a Bangladeshi, a Filipina, an Ethiopian, two Kuwaitis and two Egyptians, according to the statement carried on the state-run KUNA news agency. KUNA said that all had been convicted of murder except the Bangladeshi man, who was convicted of rape, kidnapping and theft. HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah authorized the executions, which were carried out in the morning at the prison.

The royal was identified as Sheikh Faisal Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who killed his nephew Basil Al-Sabah, also a member of the ruling family, in 2010 over a dispute. He is the first ruling family member to be executed in Kuwait. Executions of royals in Gulf countries are rare but do happen. In October, Saudi Arabia executed a prince who fatally shot another man in a melee.

The second Kuwaiti national executed yesterday was Nusra Al-Enezi. She was convicted of setting fire to a wedding tent in 2009 after her husband took a second wife. The blaze killed 58 women and children, her lawyer Zaid Al-Khabbaz said. The Bedouin-style tent, put up so women attending could be uncovered for the event, had only one entrance. Dozens of others were injured in a stampede during the fire, which later led Kuwait to ban the tents. The lawyer said he last spoke to his client a month ago. "She sounded very fragile, very shaken, more than any other time," Khabbaz told AP. "It's impossible to say that she intended to kill all those women and children... It was a tragedy."

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### CORRUPTION ON THE RISE IN KUWAIT

STATE SINKS 20 SPOTS IN GLOBAL CORRUPTION INDEX

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait dropped 20 spots in the latest Corruption Perception Index released by Transparency International yesterday, which also saw regression across the board among Arab countries. The Corruption Perception Index 2016 ranks Kuwait 75th out of 176 countries worldwide, with a score of 41 points out

a possible 100. Kuwait had ranked 55th out of 168 countries in the 2015 index with 49 points. Kuwait was tied in the 75th place with Tunisia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Furthermore, Kuwait tied with Tunisia for seventh among Arab countries, falling behind the United Arab Emirates (24th worldwide), Qatar (31), Jordan (57), Saudi Arabia (62) Oman (64) and Bahrain (70).

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### TRAFFICKERS USING GULF TOURIST VISAS TO BEAT INDIA RULES

MUMBAI: Traffickers are bypassing government efforts to protect thousands of Indian housemaids from slave-like conditions in the Gulf by transporting women on tourist visas, according to Indian emigration officials. The officials told Thomson Reuters that women who fly out as tourists were mostly rendered untraceable once overseas. "They fly on a tourist visa so they can skip the emigration check and then we don't know where they go," said M C Luther, Protector General of Emigrants in India. "I have no data of how many women have gone and what happened to them. We are now requesting countries to not convert tourist visas to employment visas."

Government figures show there are an estimated six million Indian migrants in the six Gulf states of Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Oman. One housemaid working in Riyadh alleged in 2015 that her employer had severed her hand - a case that hit international headlines and highlighted the plight of thousands of Indian housemaids working in Gulf countries.

India has since been insisting that employers follow the rules by registering with the Indian Mission and lodging a security deposit of \$2,500, but these

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KUWAIT: The sun sets behind the Kuwait City skyline. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Panelists attend the Petroleum Economist GCC Energy Strategy Forum yesterday. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

### MARZOUQ: OIL MARKET IS STARTING TO REBALANCE

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Oil markets have already begun to rebalance after strong signs that producers are complying with output cuts, Kuwaiti Oil Minister Essam Al-Marzouq said yesterday. "We are confident that rebalancing in the oil markets has already started," Marzouq said. "We expect a positive impact on the market by the end of the first quarter of 2017," he told the Petroleum Economist GCC Strategy Forum organized by Petroleum Intelligence.

Marzouq said that signs indicate that OPEC and non-OPEC producers who

agreed in December to reduce output by a total of 1.8 million barrels per day "are complying with their commitments to cut". Marzouq heads a five-country committee tasked with monitoring the implementation of the landmark deal. The committee met in Vienna on Sunday and said that compliance with the six-month accord, which took effect on Jan 1, had been very encouraging. The aim is to reduce a global glut that has depressed oil prices and blown a huge hole in the public finances of producer nations, despite being good news for consumers.

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RIYADH: Saudi Air Force officers stand at attention in front of an advanced F-15SA fighter jet during a ceremony marking the 50th anniversary of the King Faisal Air Academy at King Salman Airbase yesterday. (Inset) King Salman bin Abdulaziz is seen at the ceremony. — AFP

### SAUDI ARABIA UNVEILS NEXT-GEN F-15 FIGHTER

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia unveiled its next-generation fighter-bomber yesterday, nearly two years after beginning an air war in Yemen. At a ceremony and air show in the Saudi capital, a hangar opened to reveal one of the F-15SA Eagle aircraft made by US manufacturer Boeing. A missile was attached to the belly of the plane displayed against the backdrop of a giant Saudi flag.

Watched by King Salman and his son, Defense Minister and Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the unveiling at the King Faisal Air Academy was part of a ceremony to mark the school's 50th anniversary and the graduation of its latest class. Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir, whose country is part of the Saudi-led coalition fighting rebels in Yemen, also attended.

The coalition began air strikes over Yemen in March 2015 after Iran-backed Houthi rebels and allied troops loyal to ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh overran much of Yemen.

Riyadh feared the Houthis would seize all of Yemen and move it into the orbit of Iran, Saudi Arabia's regional rival.

Saudi Arabia is to add 84 F-15SA warplanes to its air force under a nearly \$30 billion deal signed in 2011 that also included Black Hawk and Apache helicopters. According to IHS Jane's Defense Weekly, the first of the F-15SAs - the most advanced version of the Eagle built so far - arrived in December. Saudi Arabia also has Eurofighter Typhoons and Tornados, which joined several F-15s - including the newest version - in the air show held over the skies of Riyadh.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reported in April that Saudi Arabia was the world's third-largest defense spender. According to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Saudi Arabia had an air force of 20,000 personnel and 313 combat-capable aircraft. Most are versions of the F-15. — AFP





KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with President of Saudi's General Auditing Bureau Hussam bin Abdulmohsen Al-Anqari and bureau members. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Acting President of the State Audit Bureau Adel Al-Sarawi, President of Saudi's General Auditing Bureau Hussam bin Abdulmohsen Al-Anqari and bureau members.

## AMIR RECEIVES SAUDI AUDITING BUREAU CHIEF

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday President of Saudi's General Auditing Bureau Hussam bin Abdulmohsen Al-Anqari and bureau members. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and Acting President of the State Audit Bureau Adel Al-Sarawi. Later, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received Acting President of the State Audit Bureau Adel Al-Sarawi, accompanied by Anqari and the Saudi bureau members. The meeting was attended by head of the protocols department at the Diwan of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mubarak Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Crown Prince as well as His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown Prince received His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Minister of Electricity and Water and Minister of Oil Essam Al-Marzouq.

His Highness the Crown Prince also received Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, as well as Environment Public Authority's Chairman Sheikh Abdullah Ahmad Al-Humoud Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and editor-in-chief of Al-Shahed daily Sheikh Sabah Mohammad Sabah Saud Al-Sabah. — KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Minister of Electricity and Water and Minister of Oil Essam Al-Marzouq.

### News

In brief

#### Amir receives message from Palestinian leader

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received a verbal message from Palestinian President and Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization Mahmoud Abbas yesterday. The message touched on bilateral ties and means of promoting cooperation in all domains. President of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction Dr Mohammad Shtayyeh relayed the message to Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. — KUNA

#### Parliament speaker receives WB official

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem met in his office yesterday with World Bank (WB) Kuwait Office Director Dr Feras Raad and several other officials. The meeting was attended by member of parliament Faisal Al-Kandari. Meanwhile, Ghanem met with visiting Saudi General Auditing Bureau Hussam bin Abdulmohsen Al-Anqari. MP Humoud Al-Khudeir and Acting President of Kuwait's State Audit Bureau Adel Al-Sarawi were present at the meeting. — KUNA

#### MP participates in PUIC meeting

KUWAIT: Kuwait parliament is keen on participating in Islamic parliamentary meetings to boost role of parliamentary diplomacy of Kuwait and exchange of expertise, MP Ouda Al-Ruwaiee said Tuesday. Ruwaiee, Secretary of parliamentary caucus, was speaking after participating in a meeting of Human Rights, Woman and Family Committee of the Parliamentary Union of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states (PUIC). Ruwaiee said the committee members, meeting in capital of Mali, Bamako, discussed human rights, promotion of role of woman in development, family care, protection of children and youth. The members, he added, approved a Kuwaiti proposal over the establishment of centers designed to evaluate needs of children up to six years old. The proposal, he said, aimed at benefiting from growth opportunities among children. They also discussed conditions of women and children in conflict zones, violations committed by terrorist groups in Muslim countries, as well as the state terrorism by Israeli against the Palestinian people, he said. — KUNA

#### Cultural cooperation with Iran 'excellent'

TEHRAN: A Kuwaiti official on Tuesday described as "excellent" the cultural cooperation with Iran. Mohammad Al-Asousi, Assistant Secretary General for the National Council for Culture, Art and Letters (NCCAL), said Iran could offer "wide-ranging services for the Islamic world" because of its "huge capabilities." Asousi was quoted by the official IRNA news agency on sidelines of a ceremony held by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) marking selection of Iranian city of Mashhad as the capital of Islamic Culture for 2017. He said cultural development in the Islamic countries was not restricted on government sector but other sectors as well. "The exceptional cultural activity of the Iranian cultural center, the cultural and media cooperation agreements between Iran and Kuwait reaffirm the two countries' desire to strengthen relations further," he said. — KUNA

## PAY OPENS PAVILION IN SABAH AL-AHMAD HERITAGE VILLAGE

KUWAIT: The Public Authority for Youth (PAY) opened its own pavilion in Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village yesterday as part of the ongoing Gulf Popular Heritage festival, which kicked off on January 15th. The pavilion includes an exhibition for state sectors, currently taking part in the festival, in addition to popular and traditional games, a special stall for youth action, and a youth gathering hall.

The participating bodies at PAY's pavilion include the State Minister for Youth's office, National Fund for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME), the Public Authority for Sport (PAS), the executive authority for Kuwait Students Union, Kuwait Olympic Committee (KOC), Information Ministry's Tourism Sector, and INJAZ Kuwait.

Meanwhile, KOC's Chairman Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah commended

PAY's pavilion and its distinctive sections in boosting the genuine values of Kuwaiti heritage inside youngsters, valuing His Highness the Amir's sponsorship of the festival, which aims at cheering up the spirits of Kuwaitis and Gulf people.

KOC is keen on taking part in PAY's pavilion in order to communicate with the youth and boost noble Olympic values through organizing contests and granting prizes to the participating pub-

lic, particularly during February, which coincides with the country's national festivities, Sheikh Fahad Al-Jaber affirmed to reporters following the pavilion's inauguration.

The event itself is of significance, he indicated, adding that it shows young generations the struggles and difficulties their old ancestors had to face in order to build their country and secure a decent life for them. — KUNA



Kuwait Olympic Committee's Chairman Sheikh Fahad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah.



General Supervisor of Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village, Amiri Diwan Advisor Mohammad Daifullah Sharar.



The Public Authority for Youth's Director Abdurrahman Al-Mutairi.



KUWAIT: Officials attend the inauguration of the Public Authority for Youth's pavilion in Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village yesterday. — KUNA



Children play the 'dama' board game at the Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village.

## ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF MEETS BRITISH GENERAL

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khoder met yesterday with General Thomas Beckett, the advisor to the British Secretary of State for Defense. During the meeting, they discussed several issues that concern both sides, the Kuwaiti Defense's Moral Guidance and Public Relations Directorate said in a statement. They also addressed bilateral cooperation in various aspects, mainly military ties and ways of promoting them, it added. A number of senior generals attended the meeting. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army's Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Khoder meets with General Thomas Beckett, the advisor to the British Secretary of State for Defense. — KUNA





**KUWAIT:** Shuwaikh firemen responded to the scene of a traffic accident reported yesterday in the area. They freed a Kuwaiti who was trapped in one of the vehicles involved in the accident. The man was taken along with another crash victim, an Asian national, to the hospital. —By Hanan Al-Saadoun

## KUWAIT RECORDS KD 5.2 BILLION BUDGET DEFICIT BY 2016'S END

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** The total deficit in Kuwait's budget till the end of Dec 2016 was KD 5.2 billion, said a report by the finance ministry's economic team, expecting the amount to fall a little after some government bodies make the needed settlements. The report also stressed that the deficit is expected to fall starting this month after the launch of the first Government Finance Management Information System. The report explained that the government will need KD 6.1 billion in funding for 2016-2017 after deducting the future generations share, and that an extra KD 3.5 billion would be needed in 2017 and 2018.

### Fuel prices

MP Humoud Al-Khodair urged the government to return fuel prices to previous rates before the price increase was imposed in September 2016, especially since citizens are being overburdened with financial obligations in view of skyrocketing consumer prices. Khodair added that the parliamentary financial affairs committee members called for cancelling the fuel price increase and the law on increasing electricity and water tariffs. "Such repeated parliamentary calls are clear messages from the people to the government calling for recalculations and a response to calls capable of winning a majority vote in parliament," he

underlined. Khodair stressed that the government's excuse that such calls and proposals were unconstitutional were nothing but attempts to avoid confrontation. "I advise the government to yield to these calls," he added, noting that the government's cooperation in this regard would be for the greater good and for that of work within the parliament.

### Mega projects

Ministry of Public Work's (MPW) Undersecretary Awatif Al-Ghunaim said that the ministry was waiting for the finance ministry's approval of MPW's projects budget of KD 1.1 billion needed for all the ministry's mega construction and maintenance projects. Ghunaim added that a meeting would be held with the parliament to discuss the loose gravel on various road and the solution to be used.

### Accreditation

Education Minister Mohammed Al-Fares issued a ministerial decision on regulating the accreditation of school leaving certificates issued by Arab private schools outside Kuwait. The regulations conditioned that a student should file his mark sheets starting from grade 11, prove that he only attended morning classes, be within the maximum age category, be a regular student and that the certificates are attested from relevant authorities.

## COMMERCE MINISTRY BANS POULTRY IMPORTS FROM BIRD FLU-HIT NATIONS

**KUWAIT:** The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has placed a virtual ban on poultry imports from nations with a reported outbreak of bird flu, including Germany, Hungary, Japan and Denmark. The ministry noted in a statement yesterday that meat products that have been heated at 70 degrees are fit for consumption.

Moreover, the statement urged con-

sumers to obtain a receipt for all products purchased in order to preserve their rights, adding that customers are encouraged to dial 135 in case of any infractions. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry monitors all commercial and economic activities in the country, in efforts to protect consumers from widespread deceit in the marketplace. — KUNA

## KUWAITI ROYAL'S JAIL TERM UPHELD FOR INSULTING AMIR

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti appeals court yesterday upheld a three-year prison sentence for a member of the ruling family on charges of insulting His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and other royals in the Gulf state. Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Sabah was handed the jail term in September. Both he and the public prose-

cution appealed. The charges related to video messages he posted on social media in early 2015 in which he strongly criticized the functioning of the government. Dozens of opposition activists have been jailed for similar offences in recent years. Sheikh Abdullah had previously been questioned and detained in similar cases. — AFP

## ENVOY, COSTA RICA PRESIDENT DISCUSS PROMOTING TIES

**NEW YORK:** Means of developing and promoting bilateral relations in several fields were a focus of the meeting between Kuwait's Permanent Delegate to the UN Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi and Costa Rican President Luis Guillermo Solis yesterday.

During the meeting, Otaibi conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Costa Rican leader. Otaibi, who is a non-resident ambassador to Costa Rica, said in a statement that meetings held amongst senior officials of the two governments and visits by Kuwaiti parliamentary delegations to the capital, San Jose, have contributed to enhancing relations with Costa Rica.

He further added that the meeting between Kuwaiti First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah and his Costa Rican counterpart Manuel Gonzalez in New York last September has reflected the desire of the two countries to boost bilateral ties.

Otaibi noted that he told President Solis about Kuwait's hope to finalize and sign the agreement on encouragement and reciprocal protection of investments. He expressed Kuwait's gratitude to Costa Rica for its support to the country's bid to obtain a UNSC membership during the UN General Assembly elections slated for next June.

On visas, he said Solis voiced readiness to sign some agreements, including granting entry visa exemption for the two countries' citizens. Meanwhile, Solis lauded developed relations with Kuwait and several cooperation agreements signed between the two sides.

In a separate meeting during his visit to Costa Rica, Otaibi held talks with minister of foreign trade Alexander Mora on means of promoting commercial ties between Costa Rica and GCC member states. The Kuwaiti envoy also discussed with some officials at the foreign ministry ways of fostering cooperation and coordination on several issues on the agenda of the UN. — KUNA

# ENVOY PUSHES FOR FREEZE ON RECRUITING FILIPINO HELPERS

VILLA EXPRESSES SADNESS ON FILIPINA'S EXECUTION

By Ben Garcia

**KUWAIT:** "We will push harder for a moratorium to be imposed on Filipino domestic helpers," said Philippine Ambassador to Kuwait Renato Pedro Villa as he reacted on the execution yesterday of Jakatia Pawa, a domestic helper who was found guilty in 2010 for killing her employer's daughter.

Speaking to Kuwait Times at the embassy yesterday, Villa said he will push harder for the moratorium that has been lying on the table of the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Labor and Employment for years now. "I think it's about time. We need to protect our workers," he said. Villa said as of last month, the number of Filipinos in Kuwait reached 250,000, of whom 158,000 work as domestic helpers. "The deployment of our workers continues; in fact arrivals per month total 3,500 domestic helpers. This is huge, so we need real and genuine protection for our OFWs, as they are vulnerable to mistreatment and abuse by employers," he said.

### 'Not guilty'

Pawa always maintained she was not guilty of the crime, according to Villa. "Pawa supposedly stabbed her victim several times with a kitchen knife while she was asleep at dawn on May 14, 2007. The murder knife which was found at the crime scene did not match Pawa's DNA, although a glove found at the crime scene had her DNA. The court has its own evaluation of the evidence, and is based on their findings and the record of her case. At the end, we respect Kuwait's court decision," he said.

Villa recalled his last conversation with Pawa at the Central Jail immediately after learning that her name was included in the list of people to be executed yesterday. "I was stunned because we were not informed ahead of time. We were only informed about



Jakatia Pawa

the hanging on Tuesday afternoon. At least we managed to talk to Pawa. In the morning, we went to the Central Jail to look for other possibilities, but we were not allowed to enter the execution area. Only after her death were we informed that Pawa was executed at 10.19 am. After learning about the execution, we went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs so we could arrange and claim her remains. But Pawa's family decided on burying her in Kuwait in the Muslim tradition," he said.

"When I spoke to Pawa yesterday, she was very sad, but she had already accepted her fate. She said she had spoken to her family back home," Villa recalled. "We did our best to save her from the gallows, but the mother of the victim refused to forgive her. His Highness the Amir can only bestow a pardon when the 'tanazul' (waiver) is signed. We asked for a reprieve and hired lawyers to help us on Pawa's case. The idea of the lawyer, since the sentenced was already upheld by the court, was to talk to the family of the victim. The tanazul wasn't signed, so we tried to negotiate in backchannels by talking to an imam, but the mother still refused to grant forgiveness, even though we promised to build a



Philippines' Ambassador Renato Villa

mosque and madrasa in the name of her daughter in Mindanao," he said.

### No avail

In 2010, then vice president Noli de Castro was sent to Kuwait to appeal for Pawa's life, to no avail. Pawa, 44, was a native of Zamboanga Sibugay. She is survived by two children aged 18 and 16. Pawa had a degree in banking and finance from Zamboanga private school, but she worked as a domestic helper in Kuwait. She worked for the same employer for five years till the crime took place in 2007. Pawa was a Muslim by birth and so keeping with her faith's tradition, her body was to be buried before sunset. There are two more Filipinos in Kuwait on death row. "The sentence of one of them has been commuted, while the other is under appeal. I am sad that some of our kababayans are involved in such cases. I urge everyone to follow the local laws here and avoid being involved in such crimes. Also, as we speak, we have 60 more cases of drug related incarcerations of our fellow kababayans in local jails here. Although we are helping them; the best way is to avoid getting in trouble. Follow the laws and rules in Kuwait," he advised.

## TABTABAEI TO JOIN MUTAIR IN GRILLING PREMIER AS MPs STEP UP PRESSURE NEEDED MAJORITY AVAILABLE TO SCRAP PRICE HIKES

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Islamist opposition MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei said yesterday that he has decided to join his fellow MP Mohammad Al-Mutair in grilling the prime minister if the government refuses to cooperate in scrapping the hikes in prices of petrol and electricity and in the citizenship issue.

The lawmaker, who has already filed the first grilling in the current assembly against Information and Youth Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, said on his Twitter account that they plan to file to grill the premier after February. Mutair warned on Tuesday that he plans to file to grill the prime minister after national holidays end of February if the government does not resolve the problem of revoked citizenship and abolish the rises in petrol prices and electricity and water charges.

Many opposition MPs had vowed to stop the increases in petrol prices and the planned rises in electricity and water charges. The issue was one of the most prominent topics during the November election campaign.

### Needed majority

MP Humoud Al-Hajeri meanwhile warned the government that the lawmakers opposed to the increases have the needed majority to scrap the decisions and advised the government to coop-

erate. The lawmaker called on the government to reduce petrol prices to their levels prior to the September 1 hikes especially the decision has formed a major burden on the people directly impacting their standard of living.

Hajeri said the moves and decisions made at the national assembly financial affairs and legal affairs committees are a popular message to the government which should understand it and scrap the increases.

The financial committee on Tuesday gave Finance Minister Anas Al-Saleh two weeks to provide the government's opinion on two draft laws calling for abolishing the increases. The minister reportedly told the panel that the draft laws violated the constitution.

MP Riyadh Al-Sane said yesterday that the government's view that the draft laws violated the constitution is not obligatory to the assembly and lawmakers have already made sure the bills are legal.

### Revoked citizenships

Liberal MP Rakan Al-Nassef meanwhile rejected moves to convince the government to return revoked citizenships before declaring all facts surrounding the sensitive issues, especially the rights of the people whose citizenship were revoked to see the validity of the government decisions.

The lawmaker said that returning the citizen-



MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei

ships without holding to account those responsible from the government is strengthening the image of the so-called "sheikhdom state" under which citizenship is revoked and returned by personal wishes. He said that the people whom the government revoked their citizenship have filed lawsuits at courts and the government has so far refused to provide the judiciary with the reasons for its actions, which means that the government does not respect the judiciary or does not have any reason for its action except political motives.

## BID TO LIST KUWAIT TOWERS AS WORLD HERITAGE SITE

By Meshal Al-Enezi

**KUWAIT:** Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs and the head of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah announced yesterday that a delegation from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) advisory panel was considering listing Kuwait Towers on the World Heritage List. Sheikh Salman added that he had met with the delegation from ICOMOS, a global non-government organization associated with UNESCO. Its mission is to promote the conservation, protection, use and enhancement of monuments, building

complexes and sites. It is currently visiting Kuwait to assess historical Kuwaiti sites nominated for listing on the World Heritage List. He added that the delegation will visit Kuwait six months later to make its final decision before submitting the file to be reviewed by the UNESCO's World heritage Committee members pending final voting. "This first visit will focus on the Kuwait Towers," he explained, noting that besides the towers, other Kuwaiti sites include Failaka Island and Sheikh Abdullah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's palace. Sheikh Salman added that on every visit, the delegation would make a full report about the nominated site's pros and cons so that shortfalls, if any, could be dealt with.

A number of lawmakers yesterday filed their financial disclosure statements to a special team from the Public Anti-Corruption Authority dispatched to the parliament to collect the statements, one day before the 60-day grace ends today. MP Adnan Abdulsamad hailed the anti-corruption initiative but remarked that it should have been done earlier, especially since the forms MPs have to fill need some explanation. "It would have been better if the anti-corruption authority had stationed its team in the parliament throughout the grace period, because it is a new experience and requires some explanations," he underlined.

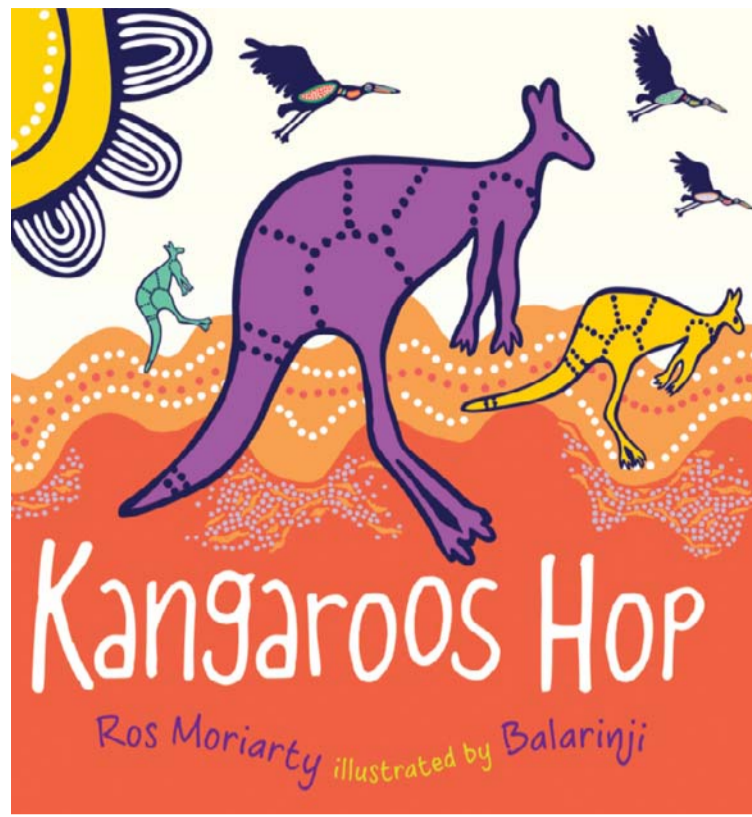
MP Hamdan Al-Azmi said he intends to propose a bill to include officials' wives in the financial disclosure statements as first-degree relatives. He also explained that some officials register the ownership of all their possessions in wives' names to avoid legal accountability.

The anti-corruption verification committee manager Saleh Al-Tunaib said that the team was dispatched to the parliament to facilitate the process for lawmakers as the 60-day grace they had been given since assuming their positions on Nov 27, 2016 ends today. "This step came out of cooperation with the parliament's secretariat general," he stressed, pointing out that several MPs had already checked in with the authority over the past few days. He urged all MPs to file in their statements and called on those who would not be able to do so to check in at the authority headquarters today because nothing would be accepted later.



The Kuwait Towers





## COLOURS OF AUSTRALIA STUDENT ART COMPETITION EXTENDED UNTIL FEB 7

SPONSORED BY VIVA, ACK; HOSTED BY CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL

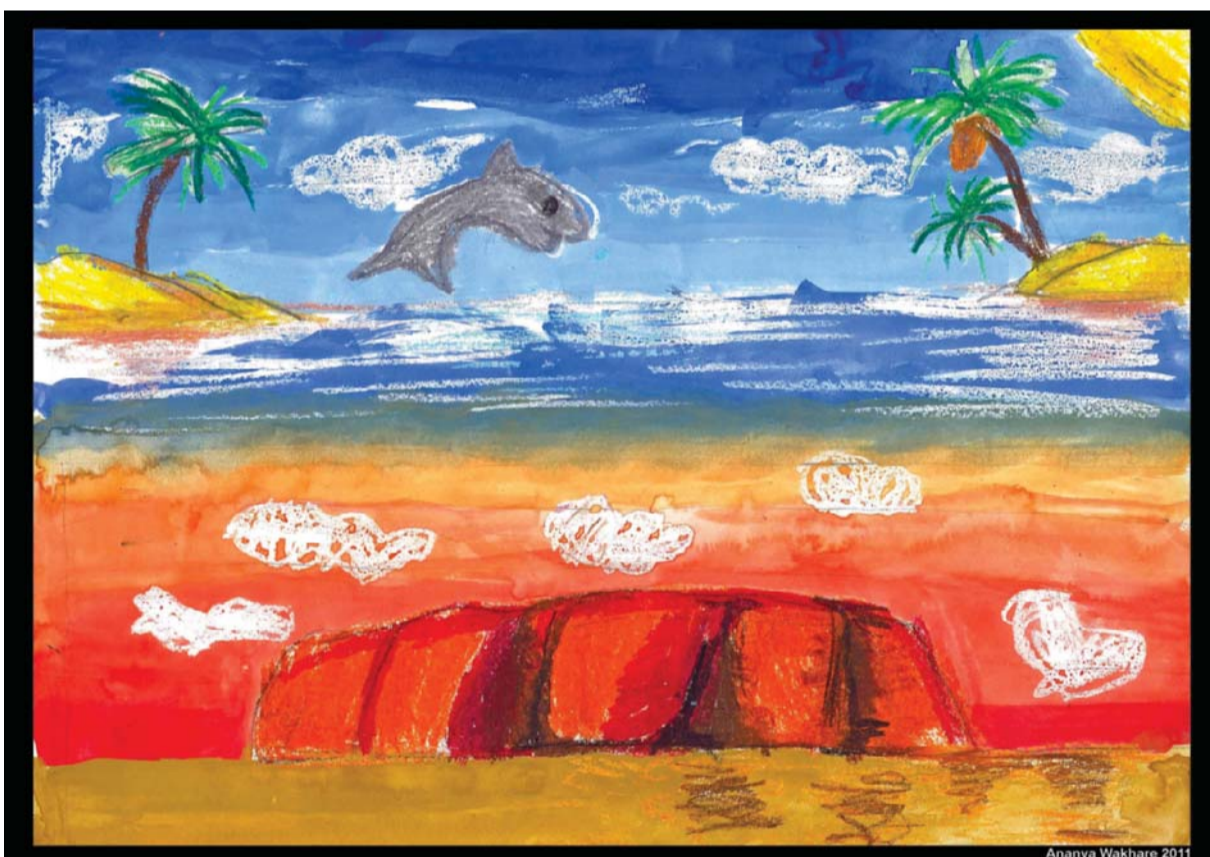


**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Times is pleased to announce that the Colours of Australia painting competition will be extended until February 7, 2017 due to the high volume of responses.

"The response has been phenomenal and we are happy to extend the timing for the competition to allow more schools and students to participate," explained Adnan Saad, Kuwait Times Deputy General Manager and the competition's organizer.

The competition, held in collaboration with the Australian Embassy in Kuwait, aims to encourage students to express their knowledge of Australia by drawing an icon, a landscape, Indigenous or any other expression they would find suitable. The competition is still open for all schools who want to participate.

All schools are requested to deliver students' drawings on or before February 7th at Kuwait Times offices in Industrial Shuwaikh. The competition is sponsored by VIVA and the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK), with a presentation event to be hosted at Crowne Plaza Hotel's 'Al-Thuraya City.'



## OVERWEIGHT MOVIEGOERS NOT ALLOWED AT 4DX HALLS

By Nawara Fattahova

**KUWAIT:** If you weigh over 120 kg, you won't be able to watch movies at the 4DX halls of Kuwait National Cinema Company (KNCC). KNCC issued this regulation at the new 4DX halls due to nature of the seats at these halls at the Avenues and 360 malls.

According to the company's call center, these halls are equipped with moving seats that were designed to work with people weighing up to 120 kg. "If the person is obese, the seat won't be able to move, which is the concept of this hall. The staff won't weigh people at the entrance, but they can figure out if the person will fit in the seat or not, so they won't allow obese people to enter," the customer care staff said. "If a customer bought a ticket online and was not allowed to watch the movie due to being overweight, we won't refund the ticket. The customer will instead be able to watch any other movie screened in the regular halls," she said.

## KUWAITI STUDENTS VISIT SITES IN CUBA, ALBANIA

**HAVANA/TIRANA:** Kuwaiti students, involved in a Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development's (KFAED) students' trip program, visited one of the fund's projects in the Cuban capital Havana. The students went Tuesday to a water plant project in which KFAED provided a loan of KD 7.5 million. The project secured clean water resources to some 550,000 people living in 12 districts of the city.

The students were accompanied by officials from the Cuban National Institute for Water Resources who briefed them on the inner workings of the plant. Students Gazi Al-Azmi, Jassem Yasar and Saad Al-Ajmi reflected their enthusiasm during their current trip.

They affirmed that it was very important to know the history and culture of other nations to widen Kuwaiti students' perspectives about the world. They also said they were proud to know that KFAED had a hand in helping other nations to develop their resources.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti students visited on Tuesday evening the Albanian city of Berat as part of their tour organized by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED). The city, recognized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as one of World Heritage Sites, was established 2,500 years ago.

The city, 120 kilometers from the capital Tirana, is also known for its buildings and the huge amount of windows in houses. The students also went to Berat Castle, which hosts 24 towers and many heritage locations, including what is known as the White Mosque, water bomb area, and more than 100 occupied houses.

Meanwhile, student Taraf Al-Falaji expressed in a statement her admiration for the castle and buildings in the city. Student Manar Al-Adwani, in a similar statement, praised such visits to ancient locations and cultures, expressing admiration as well to all Islamic locations in Berat. On another note, student Asmaa Al-Ali expressed pleasure and satisfaction for the many beautiful natures, including mountains and history that dates back to thousands of years.

The KFAED "be among the outstanding ones" students program began in 2010 as part of a cooperation between the Ministry of Education and KFAED. It involves the annual selection of a number of high achieving 11th grade students who are sent on accompanied trips to see first-hand KFAED and Kuwaiti developmental contributions and efforts. — KUNA



**HAVANA:** Kuwaiti students visit the site of a project funded by KFAED in Havana, Cuba. — KUNA



**TIRANA:** Kuwaiti students pose during a visit to the historic Berat city in Albania. — KUNA



In Brief

COURT ADJOURNS CHALLENGES CASE

**KUWAIT:** The Constitutional Court has delayed electoral challenges against vote results of the Fifth Constituency until February 13th. The court held its first session on electoral challenges on December 27 and has adjourned the session until yesterday to look over the collective vote tallies in the Fifth Constituency. Parliamentary elections were held on November 26th, where ten out of the 50 winners represent each constituency. — KUNA



US DOLLAR STABLE AGAINST KD AT 0.304

**KUWAIT:** The rate of the US Dollar against the Kuwaiti Dinar was stable at KD 0.304, the same case with euro which stood at the KD 0.327, said the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) yesterday. According to the CBK, the Sterling Pound was stable at KD 0.381 while the Swiss Franc went down to KD 0.304. The Japanese Yen stood firm at KD 0.002. — KUNA



KUWAIT OIL PRICE UP

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 47 cents to settle at \$51.26 per barrel Tuesday, compared to \$50.79 pb the previous day, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. Globally, the price increased due to data reports on the decline of US oil reserves and the shrinking gap between supply and demand. The increase was also attributed to reports on OPEC and non-OPEC members executing the production decrease agreement earlier this year despite the increase in US Shale oil activities. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A photo of the Kuwait Museum of Modern Art. — KUNA photo

VIETNAM REFINERY UP AND RUNNING IN JULY: KPI

100 GAS STATIONS POWERED BY SOLAR ENERGY: KNPC

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's Vietnam Refinery will begin operating in July with a capacity of 2,000 barrels per day (BPD), CEO of Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) Bakheet Al-Rashidi said yesterday. In a statement to the press on the sidelines of the third Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Energy Strategy Forum, Rashidi noted that KPI is currently testing the refinery's equipment before activating the main units.

Moreover, he added that the project is part of the company's efforts to look into lucrative investments to boost its revenue and lure the global refining industry to do business with the company. On the status of KPI, Rashidi said that the company is a powerhouse in Europe, where it distributes around 450,000 BPD. The forum will feature discussions over developments in the global market and its effects on Gulf nations, while aiming to promote regional investment in the energy sector.

Solar power

In the meantime, Kuwait National Petroleum Company plans to build 100 gas stations in the next five years to be operated by solar power, a KNPC official said Tuesday. Shukri Al-Mahrous, Deputy Chief Executive Office for Planning and Local Marketing, said



KUWAIT: Shukri Al-Mahrous, Deputy Chief Executive Office for Planning and Local Marketing at KNPC speaks during a seminar on Tuesday. — KUNA

KNPC's five-year plan included construction of these stations and development of new ones to shift them to solar power.

Speaking on sidelines of a seminar, Mahrous said renewable energy projects would honor vision of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah which called for providing 15 percent of Kuwait's electricity needs from renewable energy by the year 2030.

He said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), the parent company of state-owned oil companies, sought to achieve this vision by the year 2020. He said renewable energy was already used in the gas stations in the areas of Riqqa and Zahraa. KNPC has 45 locations in which solar projects were held, including in refineries and head office, he noted. — KUNA

KUWAIT'S TRADE SURPLUS WITH JAPAN DOWN 45 PERCENT

**TOKYO:** Kuwait's trade surplus with Japan plunged 45.0 percent from a year earlier to JPY 28.9 billion (\$254 million) in December, shrinking for the second month as exports declined, the Finance Ministry said yesterday. But Kuwait maintained black ink with Japan for eight years and 11 months, the ministry said in a preliminary report. Kuwaiti overall exports to Japan fell 41.2 percent year-on-year to JPY 44.6 billion (\$393 million) for the second straight monthly drop, and imports from Japan also shrank 32.6 percent to JPY 15.7 billion (\$139 million), down for the fourth month in a row. For the whole of 2016, Kuwait posted a trade surplus of 276.8 billion (\$2.4 billion), down 49.7 percent from the previous year.

Middle East's trade surplus with Japan expanded by 10.6 percent to JPY 453.2 billion (\$4.0 billion) last month, with Japan-bound exports from the region falling 4.2 percent from a year earlier. Crude oil, refined products, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and other natural resources, which accounted for 96.1 percent of the region's total exports to Japan, decreased 3.9 percent. The region's overall imports from Japan tumbled 24.6 percent, chiefly due to weak shipments of automobile, machinery and electric equipment.

The world's third-biggest economy posted a global trade surplus of JPY 641.4 billion (\$5.6 billion) in December, marking a fourth straight month of black, reflecting a steep fall

in LNG import prices. Overall exports rose 5.4 percent from the year before, buoyed by strong shipments of auto parts to the US and auto and electronics parts to China. Imports declined 2.6 percent, with value of LNG falling nearly by a quarter.

In the full year 2016, Japan returned to a trade surplus in six years at JPY 4.074 trillion (\$35.8 billion), thanks to lower energy prices and improved exports. Japan's trade balance slipped into deficit after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster caused by the earthquake-tsunami disaster, which boosted fossil fuel imports for conventional power generators. The trade data are measured on a customs-cleared basis before adjustment for seasonal factors. — KUNA

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Crime

Report

DRUNK MAN ASSAULT EX-BROTHER-IN-LAW

**KUWAIT:** Hawally police arrested a drunk man who assaulted his ex-brother-in-law at his workplace. Meanwhile, Jahra police arrested a citizen wanted over a KD 40,000 claim at Saad Al-Abdullah City. She was sent to concerned authorities.

Bootlegger caught

Mubarak Al-Kabeer police arrested an Asian man who drove in the wrong direction in an attempt to escape from patrol officers. Police found 50 liquor bottles in his car. He was sent to concerned authorities.

Decision overruled

The administrative appeals court overruled a decision by Saad Al-Abdullah Security Science Academy for the academic year 2015/2016 to exclude a student from being accepted at the police college, and to re-register him following a complaint filed on his behalf. Lawyer Sharyan Al-Sharyan said the student meets all admission conditions and was examined by a medical committee that decided the student's condition does not affect him from training and that he is physically fit to carry out his job. Despite this, he was excluded from being accepted at the Saad Al-Abdullah academy. The court said the administration did not give any reasons for its decision although the court gave it an opportunity to explain. But it did not present its defense nor submitted documents to answer the complaint, which worked as evidence in favor of the student.

Child abuse

A citizen took her minor son to Sabah Al-Salem police station and told officers that he was sexually abused by an 18-year-old man. The prosecutor ordered the arrest of the suspect and sent both to the juvenile prosecution.

Vehicle stolen

A Bangladeshi man reported his car was stolen at Waha police station. He said the car was stolen on Jan 15 and that he looked for it at the impounding garage because policemen told him it is a 1999 model car and may have been taken there by the interior ministry or municipality. — Translated from the Arabic press

BAHRAIN MEDITATION CENTRE ANNOUNCES 4TH INT'L SELF DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

**MANAMA:** Under the patronage of Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Bahrain Meditation Centre for Self-Development will host its 4th conference 'Creating Change'. This event will be held at the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and Industry from 7th to 9th February 2017.

The conference aims to empower individuals, organizations and communities to create a better future with confidence, happiness and clarity. This will be achieved through the assistance of renowned international experts in the field of self-development, healing and leadership.

The 'Creating Change' Conference is all about navigating the waves and winds of change, discovering how to remain calm amidst chaos, and learning how to guide our thoughts, feelings and actions towards the most positive outcomes. When we are able, amidst the outer waves of change, to steer the self towards a safe and stable state of mind, then we can effectively innovate and generate positive change.

Throughout the conference, the participants will be using the tool of meditation to help us develop a deeper understanding of the self. People have used meditation as a technique for thousands of years, to develop concentration, regenerate inner power, attain self-mastery, and ultimately initiate change for personal and world benefit.

We invite you to join us for these few days of experiential learning from which you will emerge refreshed, rejuvenated, powerful and ready for change. For more information please visit [www.creatingchangebahrain.org](http://www.creatingchangebahrain.org) or call 00973 17712545.



Sheikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa

HORECA KUWAIT 2017 TAKES STEPS FORWARD IN SUPPORTING YOUTH: ANJERI

**KUWAIT:** Leaders Group's General Manager Nabila Al-Anjeri expressed her satisfaction with the success of the Horeca Kuwait 2017 exhibition, saying that it was successful in nurturing Kuwaiti youth. Leaders Group organized the event on January 16-18, 2017, at the Kuwait International Fairground in Mishref, under the patronage of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah. Over 80 leading companies specializing in hospitality, food industries, catering, hotel equipment, tourism, shipment and energy took part in the event.

Anjeri added that the exhibition's supreme organizing committee was keen on attracting young people to participate in various activities during the event, including international cooking competitions, in addition to allowing them to showcase their small and medium projects and take part in volunteering activities. She added that small projects entrepreneurs had wonderful experiences at the event, as they communicated with experts and company owners.

Further, Anjeri said the cooking competitions and cooking workshops held as part of the exhibition presented great opportunities for the youth. She added that large groups of volunteers who took part in the event also

proved to be skillful and trustworthy through working in media, supervision and security committees. "They were not only energetic, but also creative," she underlined urging all government establishments to provide enough care and support for the youth "who are Kuwait's future."

Moreover, Anjeri underlined that Horeca 2017's activities helped create new job opportunities, played a major role in diversifying sources of income and enhanced inter-companies' cooperation, which would all help boost national economy. "Next year's Horeca Kuwait exhibition will witness more of such activities designed to support the Kuwaiti youth," she concluded.



Favoritism and profiteering

الانباء

Al-Anbaa

INTISAR AL-SHARRAH AND THE GOVERNMENT

By Saad Al-Mo'tesh

All the scientific terms and expressions we use in our daily life such as democracy, dictatorship and bourgeoisie are originally Latin. People have been using them to show off and give the impression that they are well-educated and know things more than others. Yet, if you ask them about what such expressions mean, you would laugh your heart out the way we did while watching Kuwaiti female comedian Intisar Al-Sharrah speak English in the classic comedy 'Bye Bye London!'

One of those expressions people have been using without even understanding its true meaning is 'The Government.' They would even respond when asked about the meaning of that term by saying 'the government is the government.'

In all governmental establishments, one would find a note stuck outside all doors with a warning that reads: 'Assaulting government employees on duty is

punishable by a one-month imprisonment and/or a KD 500 fine.' Since the majority of the state's budget goes to payrolls, you cannot criticize the government and accuse it of being unfair or a failure if you get a governmental salary. This would mean criticizing yourself and your work because you are a government employee and there is no difference between you and any minister or senior official according to the warning placed in various ministries. The only difference would be your career ranks because the law does not differentiate amongst government employees.

So, the government is you, the employee in any ministry who delays doing transactions of another ministry's employee. It is the teacher who is not dedicated enough and does not teach students properly. Well, then. Can you criticize yourself and show more dedication in doing your job's duties before criticizing others?

—Translated by Kuwait Times

This would mean criticizing yourself and your work because you are a government employee

ZAIN AWARDED GOLDEN MEDAL FOR EXCELLENCE IN CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY ON REGIONAL LEVEL AWARDED BY THE ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

**KUWAIT:** Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, was proudly awarded with the Golden Medal for Excellence in Corporate Sustainability on the Arab Region level. The accolade came as part of the Arab Organization for Social Responsibility's 11th awards held recently in Dubai.

The award, attained by Zain for the third time, recognized the company's series of social contributions and programs during the year 2016. The company's long list of initiatives and campaigns, which came in line with its Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility strategy, had a deep positive impact on the many sectors of the community. The Arab Organization for Social Responsibility organizes this annual award to shed light on the leading experiences in the fields of social responsibility across the Middle East region. The event is attended by prominent leaders and experts representing a number of the leading CSR players in the region, from both public and private sectors.

Commenting on the award, Waleed Al-Khashti, Zain's Corporate Communications and Relations Director said: "focusing on sustainability has been and is always a key element of Zain's overall success. This recognition we received today further highlights the steps the company took to focus its efforts on supporting innovation

and committing to being a more sustainable organization".

Khashti added: "we at Zain believe that embracing the youth, supporting entrepreneurship, and harnessing talents are all main foundations of achieving sustainability. Our commitment to supporting projects and programs that cater to such foundations is a testament of our responsibility towards our customers and the community in which we operate".

Khashti further stated that the initiatives and social projects executed by the company mirrors its commitment to achieving higher levels of transparency and accountability to the society as well as its partners, adding that Zain will seize any opportunity to renew its commitment to the most effective social issues.

One of that main social causes Zain recently focused on catered to supporting the relief of Syrian refugees and displaced families. The company launched a humanitarian campaign through which it collected over 10.5 tons of donated clothes in collaboration with Kuwait Society for Relief and the Union of Kuwait University Students. The campaign, launched by Zain for the third consecutive year, aimed at supporting Syrian refugees who are in urgent need of clothes during the harsh winter conditions.

As part of Zain's aid to refugees, the



company also sent a team of volunteering employees to aid Syrian refugees and displaced families in Lebanon as part of its ongoing humanitarian strategic partnership with Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS).

The team visited multiple KRCS-supported destinations to offer aid and support, including the Lebanese Bakeries project, Dar Al Zahra Hospital, Orange Nassau hospital, the water plant project,

the thermal insulation project, as well as visiting and distributing aid relief kits to five different camps.

It is worth mentioning that Zain's social responsibility strategy focuses on conducting and supporting sound environmental practices as well as participating in environmental activities and awareness campaigns that reinforce the company's pioneering position locally and regionally. — KUNA

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

AMERICA COMES FIRST

By Hassan Al-Essa

'America First'; those two words said by US President Donald Trump in his inaugural speech were quoted by many major foreign newspapers. They simply mean prioritizing American interests over those of the rest of the world, as if this was new to American policies and has never been a fact throughout the American history, particularly since US emerged as a major power by the end of World War I. 'America First' was the core of president Theodore Roosevelt's 'Big Stick foreign diplomacy policy' of 'speak softly and carry a big stick'. It was the base of Monroe's Doctrine, in warning ancient European colonial countries; UK and France, that any intervention by external powers in America's politics is potentially a hostile act against the US. Later on, the US intervened and toppled several regimes that showed rebellion against the American control.

'America First' was also the base of Eisenhower's Doctrine for the Middle East, which in itself was an extension of the Truman's doctrine, by toppling the Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, conspiring against Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, the CEN-TO Alliance, endless backup for Israel, disciplining Libya during Ronald Regan's presidency, intervening in Iraq and unlimited indirect support to Arab autocrat regimes against the possibilities of the Arab Spring expanding to include them. I might not have enough space to explain and define the meaning of America First and its impact on the American prevalence and intervention.

What scares European countries and China is that the US might go back to its historic isolation before World War II in terms of international economy, trade, globalization and reviving economic mandate wars through imposing taxes and fees on US imports with the aim of supporting US industries and labor. America First also means spreading the spirit of nostalgia among the American middle class white families, who were the driving power behind Trump's victory and wish to move things counter clockwise to the 1940s and 1950s; to images from the romantic past as seen in old movies despite its irrelevance today, according to Anna Bloom in the Washington Post.

With the 'America First' slogan, president Trump vows to get rid of Islamic extremism, which was overwhelmingly quoted by some of our newspapers. This slogan ignores the ones actually responsible for creating such extremism, as if it was 100 percent made by Arabs and Muslims without endless support from the Carter and Regan administrations to Jihadists' struggle in Afghanistan, where Regan called them 'Freedom Fighters' then. Now, Trump will launch military campaigns against Islamic extremism but will ask Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states to pay the war's bills regardless of their economic situations and the possibility of falling one after another because of the fall in oil prices. There is nothing about this coming war against extremism or policies that nurtured and encouraged it in the first place and got Arab states up to ears in religious sectarian wars.

Reading between the lines and trying to understand what those two words actually mean, it seems that for the Middle East, in addition to rejecting Iran's agreement with Obama and seeking reasons to reactivate sanction against it, American First also means Israel First, and that by supporting more settlements, confiscating more Arab territories and moving the US embassy to Jerusalem, erasing the two-state dream in Palestine as well as putting an end to US nominal opposition to the policy of confiscating lands in Palestine. Nothing calls for rejoicing and pleasure in Trump's reign. Yet, things will, at least, be clearer after perceiving US policies in the region, that is if any of our regimes are capable of such perception.

—Translated by Kuwait Times





**Sexist, vulgar posts on women's marches**

**US FACES STIFF PUSHBACK FROM CHINA IN S CHINA SEA**



**WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump shows off his signature on an executive order about the Dakota Access pipeline in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC. —AP**

**TRUMP ANNOUNCES MAJOR VOTER FRAUD PROBE**  
**TRUMP TO STRENGTHEN VOTING PROCEDURES**

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump tweeted early yesterday that he is ordering a "major investigation" into voter fraud, revisiting unsubstantiated claims he's made repeatedly about a rigged voting system. The investigation, he said, will look at those registered to vote in more than one state, "those who are illegal and even, those registered to vote who are dead (and many for a long time)." Depending on results, Trump tweeted, "we will strengthen up voting procedures!"

Trump has been fixated on his loss of the popular vote in the election and a concern that the legitimacy of his presidency is being challenged by Democrats and the media, aides and associates say. Trump's own attorneys dismissed claims of voter fraud in a legal filing responding to Green Party candidate Jill Stein's demand for a recount in Michigan late last year. "On what basis does Stein seek to disenfranchise Michigan citizens? None really, save for speculation," the attorneys wrote. "All available evidence suggests that the 2016 general election was not tainted by fraud or mistake."

Secretaries of state across the country have dismissed Trump's voter fraud claims as baseless. After the president's morning tweets, Ohio Secretary of State Jon Husted wrote on Twitter, "We conducted a review 4 years ago in Ohio & already have a statewide review of 2016 election underway. Easy to vote, hard to cheat." Trump's exaggerations about inauguration crowds and assertions about illegal balloting have been distractions as advisers' have tried to launch his presidency with a flurry of actions on the economy.

His spokesman, Sean Spicer, has twice stepped into the fray himself, including on Tuesday, when he doubled down on Trump's false claim that he lost the popular vote because 3 million to 5 million people living in the US illegally cast ballots. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have finalized their election results with no reports of the kind of widespread fraud that Trump is alleging. "He believes what he believes based on the information he was provided," said Spicer, who provided no evidence to back up the president's statements.

If the president's claim were true it would mark the most significant election fraud in US history - and ironically, would raise the same questions about Trump's legitimacy that he's trying to avoid. Rep. Elijah Cummings, ranking Democrat on the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, said yesterday his panel has already sent letters to the attorneys general in all 50 states asking for reports of any election irregularities.

"The president can join me and my staff," Cummings said on MSNBC. He also said he wants Congress to restore voting protections, citing a

Supreme Court ruling that "gutted" key sections of the Voting Rights Act, particularly the provision requiring southern states to get clearance in advance from the Justice Department before legislating changes in voting laws and procedures.

Some Trump allies say he is justified in using his platform to defend his standing. They point to Georgia Democratic Rep. John Lewis' pre-inauguration statement that he did not see Trump as a legitimate president, as well as US intelligence agencies' assessment that Russia meddled in the election in order to help Trump win. "Segments of his own government keep driving this narrative," said Roger Stone, a long-time confidant. "I don't think it hurts to point it out." Key advisers in Trump's inner circle concede the focus on crowd claims and alleged voter fraud have been a distraction.

After Friday's inaugural festivities, the new president grew increasingly upset the next day by what he felt was "biased" media coverage of women's marches across the globe protesting his election, according to a person familiar with his thinking. Trump was particularly enraged with CNN, which he thought was "gloating" by continually running photos of the women's march alongside the smaller crowds that attended his inauguration the day before, according to this person, one of several White House aides and associates who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

Tuesday night on Twitter, Trump slammed CNN again, referring to the network as "FAKE NEWS @CNN" while praising rival Fox News Channel. Trump has had a tumultuous relationship with the press, frequently calling the media dishonest and insulting individual reporters by name at his rallies and on Twitter. Still, two people close to Trump said he expected his coverage to turn more favorable once he took office. Instead, he's told people he believes it's gotten worse.

The bad press over the weekend has not allowed Trump to "enjoy" the White House as he feels he deserves, according to one person who has spoken with him. The result has been a full display of Trump's propensity for exaggeration and more. During an appearance at the CIA Saturday, he wrongly said the inaugural crowds gathered on the National Mall stretched to the Washington Monument, despite clear photo evidence to the contrary. And during a reception with lawmakers from both parties Monday night, he repeated his false assertion that millions of illegal immigrants provided Hillary Clinton's margin in the popular vote. —AP

**28 KILLED IN SHABAAB ATTACK ON MOGADISHU HOTEL**

**MOGADISHU:** Twenty-eight people were killed yesterday when Al-Shabaab fighters attacked a popular Mogadishu hotel, setting off two car bombs and opening fire on security guards, according to the city's main ambulance service. The attack, claimed by the Al-Qaeda-aligned Shabaab insurgents, began when a car loaded with explosives rammed the gate of the Dayah Hotel near the Somali parliament and state house. Security sources said at least four gunmen then entered the compound and exchanged fire with security guards, but they were shot dead before reaching the main building where guests were staying. They were not counted among the 28 dead.

A second massive blast went off after ambulances and journalists had already rushed to the scene, leaving seven reporters with minor injuries, according to the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ). They included an AFP photographer who suffered shrapnel wounds to his shoulder and leg, an Associated Press photographer and a reporter working with Al-Jazeera television. "The number of casualties we have recorded today is 28 dead and 43 wounded. This is what we have confirmed with our teams but there were also other ambulances which carried some casualties (but) I don't know how many," said Dr Abukadir Abdirahman Adem, head of the ambulance service.

Somalia's Security Minister Abdirisak Omar Mohamed told reporters there were 10 people killed and 51 wounded in the attack. "We commend the security guards of the hotel who fiercely fought the Shabaab attackers to defend the hotel," he said. AFP images showed security forces and civilians milling about outside the devastated hotel - its windows and doors blown out after the first explosion, when a second car exploded with a massive blast, sending thick plumes of smoke into the air and sending people

fleeing. Gunfire rang out from the hotel as civilians and rescue workers carried away the injured.

The Shabaab group claimed responsibility in a statement distributed on its Telegram messaging account. "The mujahideen fighters have attacked a hotel and have managed to enter the hotel after detonating a car loaded with explosives," it said. The Shabaab is fighting to overthrow the internationally-backed government of Somalia and regularly stages deadly attacks on state, military and civilian targets in the capital and elsewhere in the war-torn country.

**Election date set**

The attack-the deadliest so far in Somalia in 2017 — came shortly before the country's election commission announced that a long-awaited presidential vote would take place on Feb 8. The date has been pushed back numerous times amid delays in a vote for lawmakers, who were finally sworn in in late Dec. Somalia has not had an effective central

government since the 1991 overthrow of president Siad Barre's military regime, which ushered in more than two decades of anarchy and conflict in a country deeply divided along clan lines. The clan rivalries and lawlessness provided fertile ground for the Shabaab to take hold and seize territory, frustrating efforts to set up a central administration.

After a series of transitional governments were formed abroad, a previous parliament was chosen by 135 clan elders and set up in Mogadishu in 2012. Somalis were promised a one-person, one-vote election in 2016. But political infighting and ongoing insecurity due to the presence of Shabaab meant Somalis were handed a "limited" election, in which 14,025 specially picked delegates voted for 275 parliamentary seats distributed according to clan. Another 72 seats in a new upper house were shared out according to region. The 2016 process is seen as taking the country a step closer to a universal suffrage election now planned for 2020. —AFP



**MOGADISHU: Somalis walk near the destroyed hotel and cars in Mogadishu, Somalia, yesterday. —AP**



## S SUDANESE ACTIVIST FACING DEPORTATION FROM KENYA

**NAIROBI:** A South Sudanese activist is being held in Kenya and is facing deportation to his home country where he has received death threats and could be arrested, Human Rights Watch said yesterday. Prominent lawyer Dong Samuel Luak, who fled to Kenya in August 2013 after receiving death threats for defending a high-ranking politician accused of treason, was detained on Monday according to the US-based rights body. HRW said

Luak had been denied access to legal counsel and was subject to a deportation order. Kenyan officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

"Dong Samuel Luak has been a vocal advocate for human rights in South Sudan for many years, and could face serious mistreatment if returned to South Sudan," said Leslie Lefkow, HRW's deputy Africa director, in a statement. The rights group

said Luak—who has publicly criticised human rights abuses and corruption by South Sudanese government officials—was brutally attacked at his home in Nairobi in October 2015. HRW noted that in recent years Kenya had "unlawfully deported several prominent opposition members from neighboring countries to their countries of origin, despite being recognized as refugees under Kenyan law."

These include James Gatdet Dak, the main spokesman for exiled opposition leader Riek Machar, who was deported in November 2016 and arrested upon his arrival in Juba. He has been held without charge ever since, according to HRW. The world's youngest nation, South Sudan descended into war in Dec 2013, two years after achieving independence, leaving tens of thousands dead and more than 3.1 million people displaced. —AFP



**MOSUL:** Hassan al-Abbasi, a friend of the Riyadh family looks at the graves where his friend Abdelrahman Riyadh buried his parents and youngest brother in his grandfather's garden after they were killed in a reported air strike on their house earlier this month in Mosul's eastern Al-Zirai neighborhood. —AFP

## AS DUST OF WAR SETTLES, EAST MOSUL BURIES ITS DEAD ANEW

### 'BODIES BURIED IN GARDENS, MOSQUES'

**MOSUL:** Abdulrahman Riyadh points to three mounds of earth in a garden in eastern Mosul. "That's my father, that one's my mother and next to it is my little brother." "We buried them under the orange trees," said Abdulrahman, 18. Iraqi forces have in recent days completed their reconquest of eastern Mosul, a key step in the battle to retake the country's second city from the Islamic State group. Many of those killed in the fighting had to be hastily buried in improvised plots-like Abdulrahman's family-and now many residents are looking to hold proper burials.

Abdulrahman and his brother Adnan, who is two years older, were the only two survivors of what residents said was an air strike that destroyed their home. At dawn on Jan 6, around 20 people were killed in a strike that leveled three homes in Al-Zirai, an up market neighborhood of eastern Mosul, according to the Riyadh brothers and other residents. "Everything collapsed around me," said Abdulrahman. "I pushed the debris around me, I got up and I asked my brother if he was still alive. He was wounded in the leg." "I told him to come into my bed and I started looking for my little brother, my father and my mother. I screamed but nobody answered."

Because the fighting was ongoing in the area,

the two surviving brothers had to settle on burying their family in their grandfather's garden, a few blocks away. "Can you imagine this? In one day, I bid farewell to three members of my family. I buried a part of my soul that day," said Adnan. Al-Zirai, which lies not far from the Tigris River that divides the city of Mosul, is a leafy neighborhood of wide streets lined by palm trees and large villas. It was relatively spared by the fighting, as were large parts of east Mosul where the continued presence of around half a million civilians limited all the warring parties in their choice of weapons.

#### Buried three times

The improvised burial site the Riyadh brothers found for their family is a peaceful place but they insisted they would re-inter the three bodies on the west bank when it is rid of jihadists. Many of the victims of the offensive are being buried a second time, now that some normalcy is returning to the "liberated" east bank. Faleh Mohammed, the gravedigger at the Gogjali cemetery on the eastern edge of Mosul, said he had recently been witnessing as many as 10 reburials a day. "During the fighting, there are people who were buried in gardens, in mosques.

Then a month or two later, when the neighborhoods have been liberated and cleared, their relatives come here to re-inter them."

He said some victims of the Mosul battle may even get a third burial. "In some cases the family cemetery is on the other side of the city," Mohammed said, referring to the west bank, which IS still fully controls. "That means that when the west side is cleared, they'll move the bodies one more time," said Mohammed. Tombstones stretched behind him as far as the eye could see and his hands were covered in earth from another day of relentless digging. "It used to be simple: when somebody died, you would bury him once. It's weird, now people are buried twice, sometimes three times!"

In one of the cemetery's narrow alleys, a van pulled up in front of two gaping graves. A son extracted the body of his father wrapped in a blood-stained sheet, the acrid stench mixed with the musty smell of wet soil. Relatives said the man was killed together with another civilian three weeks ago when a mortar shell ploughed into their neighborhood. "Burying them once was hard enough, but a second time it's even worse," Raad Hassan, a friend of the family, said as an imam gave the victims their last rites. —AFP



**MOSUL:** Civilians flee their neighborhoods due to fighting between Iraqi security forces and Islamic State militants, in eastern Mosul, Iraq, yesterday. —AP

## HUNDREDS OF FAMILIES LEAVE IRAQ CAMPS FOR MOSUL RETURN

**KHAZIR, Iraq:** Hundreds of families who fled Mosul last year left displacement camps yesterday to head back to their homes, in the biggest wave yet of returns to the city, officials said. Iraqi forces recently completed their recapture of eastern Mosul, which tens of thousands of people had fled since the Oct 17 start of a massive offensive against the Islamic State group. According to the United Nations, more than 180,000 people have been displaced since the start of the offensive but at least 22,000 have since returned to their homes.

The authorities have been organizing returns from Khazir and Hasansham displacement camps twice a week. "We are now taking 500 families, which means 2,700 people, to their liberated houses," local official Mustafa Hamid Sarhan said at the Khazir camp, which lies southeast of Mosul. "This is the biggest wave," he added, as at least 50 buses lined up for families cleaning up their tents and packing their belongings for the journey home.

One of them was Dhabbah Mohammed

Khader, a 45-year-old woman from the neighborhood of Al-Zahraa who was about to return to her home with two of her sons. "I'm so happy we finally got rid of Daesh," she said, using an Arabic acronym for IS. "We can go back home now," said the woman, tears running down her wrinkled face. The continued presence in east Mosul of hundreds of civilians as Iraqi forces advanced through the streets has restricted all sides in their choice of weapons and the city has suffered relatively limited destruction. —AFP

## SYRIA GIRL BLOGGER, 7, APPEALS TO TRUMP

**ISTANBUL:** Seven-year-old Syrian girl Bana al-Abed, who came to international attention with her tweets giving a tragic account of the war in Aleppo, has written an open letter to new US President Donald Trump. In her letter Bana, who was evacuated from the besieged city to Turkey in December, appealed to Trump to help the children of Syria, the BBC reported Tuesday. "I am part of the Syrian children who suffered from the Syrian war," she wrote, according to a transcript of the letter her mother sent to the BBC.

She told Trump her school in Aleppo was destroyed by the bombing and some of her friends had died. "Right now in Turkey, I can go out and enjoy. I can go to school although I didn't yet. That is why peace is important for everyone including you. "However, millions of Syrian children are not like me right now and suffering in different parts of Syria," she wrote. "You must do something for the children of Syria because they are like your children and deserve peace like you."

At least 15,000 children are among the more than 300,000 people who have been killed in Syria's six-year war between President Bashar al-Assad's regime and rebel forces. Through her tragic descriptions of life in besieged Aleppo on her @AlabedBana Twitter account, Bana became a symbol of the tragedy unfolding in Syria, although the government had slammed her and her mother's nearly daily tweets as propaganda.

Turkey, which backs the Syrian rebels, is hosting some 2.7 million refugees from the conflict. Syrian rebels and Assad's government are holding peace talks in Kazakhstan but there have been no signs of a breakthrough. Trump's administration was invited to participate in the talks organized by key players Russia, Turkey and Iran but did not send a delegation. Trump's spokesman Sean Spicer said Monday that the new US president was open to conducting joint operations with Russia to combat the Islamic State group, who control significant territory in northern Syria. —AFP

## SIX YEARS AFTER UPRISING, SISI SAYS EGYPT ON RIGHT TRACK

**CAIRO:** Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi said yesterday that Egypt was "on the right track" six years after the uprising that overthrew Hosni Mubarak. Speaking in televised address commemorating the revolution, Sisi called on young activists who took part in mass protests in 2011 to work for the country's future. "An objective assessment of developments in Egypt in recent years makes clear that we are moving on the right track," Sisi said. Addressing young people who took part in the uprising, Sisi said Egypt needed their "efforts" to continue on the "road of reform, construction and development."

Jan 25 marks the anniversary of the day in 2011 when protesters began to gather in Cairo's Tahrir Square demanding an end to longtime president Mubarak's 30-year rule. For 18 days hundreds of thousands demonstrated in a makeshift tent camp, denouncing social inequalities, government corruption and police abuse, and calling for democratic reforms. Under increasing pressure, Mubarak resigned on February 11 and

continues to be held at a military hospital on the outskirts of Cairo.

As on previous anniversaries, police were out in Cairo yesterday to prevent any gatherings during the national holiday, which before the revolution was the country's national police day. Critics have accused Sisi of cracking down on freedoms won during the revolt since the former army chief toppled Islamist Mohamed Morsi, who was elected as president following the revolution, in 2013.

Years of political turmoil-and an Islamist insurgency that has killed hundreds of soldiers and police since Morsi's overthrow-have taken a toll on Egypt's economy. Sisi, whose government last year secured a \$12 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), on Wednesday promised further efforts to revive the economy. "We will continue to reform the economy, build massive development projects throughout Egypt, support small and medium projects, and improve the domestic and foreign investment climate," Sisi said. —AFP

## NEW TURKEY CONSTITUTION BILL SUBMITTED TO ERDOGAN

**ANKARA:** A bill to expand Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's powers has been submitted to the head of state for his approval ahead of a referendum possibly in April, the prime minister said yesterday. Erdogan's signature would be the final executive step in the adoption of the controversial bill ahead of the referendum, a date for which Prime Minister Binali Yildirim said would be announced this week.

Parliament approved on Saturday a new 18-article constitution, which would create an executive presidency for the first time in Turkey, in the final of two readings. Brawls erupted in parliament during debates over the changes to the constitution, which critics fear will lead to one-man rule. Yildirim told provincial ruling party chiefs in a televised speech in Ankara that Erdogan would sign the bill and the approval would be published in the Official Gazette.

There would be a 60-day period before the referendum. Yildirim did not say when the bill would be signed by Erdogan, who is currently in Africa. Yildirim said the date for the plebiscite was expected to be announced this week by the Supreme

Election Council (YSK). "I think it will be in the first half of April, a suitable date would be up until the 20th of April." The changes would give the head of state the power to appoint and dismiss ministers. There would be no longer a prime minister but instead one or more vice presidents. Turkish officials have dismissed concerns over the legislation, saying the changes are needed to bring in effective government in a system similar to the United States or France.

The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) has only 317 seats in the 550-seat parliament and sought the support of the far-right Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) to pass the bill in two readings earlier this month. But Yildirim insisted there would be no "joint campaign" with the MHP to get a "Yes" vote for the changes. He defended the bill, saying MPs' powers would be "strengthened" and that they would still have the right to bring draft laws to parliament. While Yildirim was speaking the lira plunged to 3.82 against the US dollar, a loss of over one percent on the day, amid fears of continued political instability. —AFP



**ANKARA:** Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim looks on during the 115th enlarged meeting of provincial chairmen of Justice and Development Party (AKP) at the AK Party's headquarters in Ankara, yesterday. —AFP



## TRUMP EYEING THREE JUDGES FOR SUPREME COURT VACANCY

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump is on the verge of nominating a Supreme Court justice who could serve until the middle of the century. Trump said Tuesday he expects to make a decision in the coming days and announce it next week. A person familiar with the process said the president has narrowed his choice to three federal appellate judges ranging in age from 49 to 54. They all were on the list of 21 potential high court picks Trump announced during his presidential campaign.

The leading contenders - who all have met with Trump - are William Pryor, Neil Gorsuch and Thomas Hardiman, the person said, speaking anonymously because he was not authorized to speak publicly about internal decisions. Pryor, 54, is an Alabama-based judge on the 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals. Gorsuch, 49, is on the Denver-based 10th US Circuit Court of Appeals. Hardiman, 51, is based in Pittsburgh for the 3rd US Circuit Court of Appeals. All three were nominated by President George W. Bush for their current posts.

Trump has promised to seek someone in the mold of conservative icon Antonin Scalia, who died nearly a year ago after serving on the Supreme



**WASHINGTON:** In this photo, Judge Thomas Hardiman, federal judge on the US Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit is seen in Washington. — AP

Court for more than 29 years. Senate Republicans prevented President Barack Obama from filling the seat, a political gamble that paid off when Trump was elected. It's hard to know what might persuade

Trump to choose one instead of the others, said John Malcolm, a senior lawyer at the conservative Heritage Foundation. "He's got to feel comfortable with the guy. It's a part of his legacy, a very important part of his legacy," Malcolm said.

Justices often serve for decades after the president has chosen them leaves office. The longest serving justice currently on the bench, Anthony Kennedy, was a Ronald Reagan appointee who joined the court in 1988. Democrats and liberal interest groups, fuming over the Republican refusal to consider Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick Garland to the court, are ready to fight any Trump nominee who is "outside the mainstream," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said after a White House meeting about the court vacancy Tuesday.

### Worst abomination

Conservatives said the contenders all share Scalia's commitment to the text and meaning of the Constitution. "These are not stealth candidates. Their records are there for everyone to see and to understand. Their judicial philosophy is well within the mainstream of American legal thought," said

Leonard Leo, a conservative lawyer who has been advising Trump on the filling the vacancy. Of the three leading candidates, only Pryor faced significant opposition when nominated to the appeals court. Senate Democrats refused to allow a vote on his nomination, leading Bush initially to give Pryor a temporary recess appointment.

In 2005, the Senate confirmed him 53-45, after senators reached an agreement to curtail delaying tactics for appellate judgeships. Gorsuch was approved by a voice vote in 2006. Schumer and Feinstein were among the 95 senators who voted for Hardiman's confirmation in 2007. Hardiman is a colleague of Trump's sister, Judge Maryanne Trump Barry. Pryor has a reputation as staunch conservative with a taste for academic rigor. He once called the landmark 1973 decision legalizing abortion the "worst abomination in the history of constitutional law." As Alabama attorney general, he also angered some conservatives for urging a judicial discipline panel to remove Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore from office after he refused to obey a court order take down a Ten Commandments monument from the lobby of the state judicial building. —AP

## WHEN WILL SOGGY CALIFORNIA DROP WATER RESTRICTIONS

**FRESNO, California:** Much of California has gone from withered to water-logged this winter, but the state's top water regulator is not ready to lift emergency conservation measures enacted during the height of the drought. "It makes the most sense to continue steady as she goes," State Water Resources Control Board chairwoman Felicia Marcus told The Associated Press after the latest in a series of storms brought more snow to the mountains and record-breaking rainfall to parts of Southern California.

Marcus and the other four board members will decide Feb 7 whether to extend measures requiring local water districts to enforce conservation rules, provide monthly reports on water usage and show they have a three-year water supply. January typically is the wettest month in California. Marcus said in interviews this week that she is concerned that subsequent months could turn out dry and that California could again be forced to scramble to save water if the restrictions are not kept in place.

Water districts have been lobbying the board to back down. They say they are committed to conservation and better positioned than the state to ensure residents do not return to old habits. "We do strongly object to doing this under the banner of a drought emergency that everybody sees no longer exists," said Tim Quinn, executive director of the Association of California Water Agencies, a group representing water districts serving 6 million of California's nearly 40 million residents. Local water agencies plan for dry spells, he said, and many have invested many millions of dollars into shoring up reserve water supplies.

California has endured more than five years of drought. In Jan 2014, Gov Jerry Brown declared an emergency, later ordering residents statewide to cut water use by 25 percent - the first mandate of its kind in the state's history. With more normal weath-

er last year, drought conditions eased, prompting regulators to relax restrictions. But Quinn said maintaining the state's emergency declaration gives water regulators extraordinary authority to require cutbacks from districts even if they have ample supplies. Water districts fear losing the public's trust, he said.

### Problem not solved

This year has been wetter than usual for almost all of California. The Sierra Nevada snowpack that supplies much of the state's water contains nearly double its average water content and Los Angeles already received a full year's worth of precipitation in a few rainy weeks. But water experts say what's happening above ground does not provide a full water picture. California's underground supplies remain far below normal. In some areas of California's vast agricultural heartland called the San Joaquin Valley, domestic wells have run dry and the land is sinking at an alarming pace as aquifers collapse.

"Just because we get a bunch of rain today doesn't mean it solved our problem," said Mike Maggiora of Maggiora Bros. Drilling Inc. Firms like his have been drilling wells as deep as 2,000 feet to hit water depending on the region, and Maggiora said it could take many more years to get back to pre-drought drilling levels. Regardless of any action regulators take in February, state officials are moving to permanently ban water wasting habits such as spraying sidewalks with hoses, running sprinklers within 48 hours after measurable rainfall and washing cars using hoses that do not have turn-off nozzles. Fresno residents Joe and Lisa Libby last year did their part to conserve water, tearing out their grassy front lawn and replacing it with drought-friendly Mediterranean plants on layers of bark. —AP



**NORTH CAROLINA:** Protestors march past the Civil Rights Museum during the Triad NC Women's March in Greensboro, North Carolina. —AP

## SEXIST, VULGAR POSTS ON WOMEN'S MARCHES

### OFFICIALS REPRIMANDED OVER SOCIAL MEDIA POSTINGS

**INDIANAPOLIS:** A school board member in Hillary Clinton's hometown resigned after making a derogatory reference on Twitter to the female anatomy in describing women marching against President Donald Trump. An Illinois teacher was pulled from the classroom for a tweet deemed sexist. And a freshman Indiana lawmaker was inundated with criticism over a Facebook post mocking "fat women." These are a handful of examples from across the US of mostly male public officials who have been reprimanded, called out or disciplined over social media postings about the women's marches around the globe last weekend.

The rash of incidents, which range from boorish to downright vulgar, highlight how nasty political discourse has become since the divisive presidential election. But in an era when Trump made lashing out against "political correctness" central to his appeal, the consequences these officials face for unfiltered use of social media once again demonstrate that what you say on the internet still can hurt you. "Very few people in public life, even today, get away with what Trump was able to get away with," said Michael Cornfield, a George Washington University professor who studies politics in the internet age. "I wonder what these gentlemen were thinking."

It's not the first time ranting on social media have sparked backlash. Public officials for years have found themselves in trouble, and even resigned from office, over comments that were impolitic, distasteful and sometimes even racist. It's also not strictly a partisan issue. A writer for "Saturday Night Live" was suspended this week after writing an offensive tweet about Trump's 10-year-old son Barron. The writer, Katie Rich, deleted the tweet, briefly deactivated her account and then apologized after a social media outcry led to calls for a boycott of the show.

Still, the number of incidents following the women's marches, which packed public squares in blue states and some red as well, has put a few elected officials and supervisors in an awkward spot. And it's not clear where to draw the line. In Indiana, Republican House Speaker Brian Bosma says he's conducting social media tutorials after posts from at least two state lawmakers. A weekend Facebook post by Indiana state Rep. Jim Lucas, a Republican, showed a photo of a woman sprayed in the face with pepper spray with a caption that read: "Participation trophies. Now in liquid form."

### No proof

Another post by newly elected Indiana state Sen. Jack Sandlin, also a Republican, credited Donald Trump with getting "more fat women out walking than (former first lady) Michelle Obama did in 8 years." Sandlin, who says he didn't knowingly share the since-deleted post, was inundated with criticism on his Facebook page and has apologized. He says the incident was a powerful lesson on the "unintended consequences" of opening up "your social media to try to get it out as broadly as you can." Bosma partially blamed "the Twitter storm created by our president" which he said "makes people feel this is an appropriate

vehicle to communicate." He added: "We're elected officials, we're held to a higher standard."

On Monday, Dathan Paterno, a school board member in Park Ridge, Illinois, where Hillary Clinton grew up, abruptly resigned after he called the protests a "farce" by "vagina screechers" on Twitter. Paterno, who did not respond to a request for comment, later deleted his social media accounts, said district Superintendent Laurie Heinz. He wrote in his letter of resignation that the tweets were "understandingly misinterpreted." In the Quad Cities, along Illinois' western border, a teacher was "removed from the classroom" for posting a view of women that "does not reflect the values" of the school, district officials said in a statement.

The teacher, Mark Kaczmarek, tweeted a photo of a 1950s housewife, and commented that the protesters "all went home to make dinner." One online petition called his tweet "unacceptable" while a rival petition said there is "no proof" that

he "ever engaged in any kind of sexist, racist or even homophobic hate speeches in his classroom." A person who answered the phone at a number listed to Kaczmarek declined to comment. In Nebraska, a re-tweet of an offensive joke may be the final straw for state Sen. Bill Kintner, who admitted last year to having cybersex on a state computer with a woman who later tried to blackmail him.

The Republican's colleagues yesterday will debate whether to expel him after he re-tweeted a joke implying that three women's march demonstrators were too unattractive to sexually assault. Other incidents were reported in Mississippi, Rhode Island and New Mexico. Cornfield, the political science professor, said that he thought most people learned the lesson about crossing the line in social media posts years ago during the early days of email. "I guess now that we've elected the real Donald Trump some people need reminders," he said. —AP



**CALIFORNIA:** Dennis Rogers stands next to a flooded trail along Los Gatos Creek after a series of storms in Los Gatos, California. —AP

## WHILE TRUMP STRESSES MILITARY, ASIAN ALLIES SEEK TRADE, TOO

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump's "peace through strength" could mean more US military power in Asia, reassuring allies about America's resolve to counter China. That is, if they're still looking to Washington for reassurance. Trump called his speedy withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership a victory for American workers hurt by multilateral trade pacts. But his reversal of years of US-led efforts may mean the loss of Asian nations' trust and support in confronting an increasingly assertive Beijing after many of them, under Washington's pressure, barreled through similar domestic concerns over jobs and competition.

And a weakened partnership with East Asia's key commercial powers could have wide-ranging consequences for Americans, beyond them missing out on the trade pact's potential for lower prices and additional jobs. "It's not as if we can send a bunch of ships and be protectionist at the same time," said Sheila Smith, an expert on Japan at the Council on Foreign Relations. Asians don't see economics and military power as separate, she said, and flexing US muscles with Navy boats and other assets while retrenching on free trade "just won't translate into American influence."

The 12-nation trade agreement was the centerpiece of President Barack Obama's outreach to Asia, cutting tariffs and setting new environmental and labor standards in countries representing about 40 percent of the global economy. While Trump said he wants to pursue bilateral trade deals instead,

he may find US credibility significantly dented after pulling out of a deal that took years to negotiate. "Losing the United States from the TPP is a big loss, there is no question about that," Australian Prime Minister Turnbull told reporters, trying to salvage the deal without Washington. "But we are not about to walk away from our commitment to Australian jobs."

### Priorities

On bilateral deals replacing TPP, New Zealand Prime Minister Bill English said, "there's a pretty low chance of that happening in a form that we'd find satisfactory." Governments' calculus would be different in a one-on-one negotiation. Japan, for example, may have less interest in opening up its agriculture and automobile sectors to American competition. Vietnam may balk at demands to allow independent trade unions. And instead of new deals that better advantage American workers, as Trump has vowed, the result could be a regional shift to an alternative, Chinese-backed trade pact promising more access to the world's biggest consumer market.

"Every country that went through the process of TPP had to do politically difficult things at home," said Vikram Singh at the Center for American Progress. Trump's withdrawal "shows he cares not a whit about what counterparts in the Asia-Pacific have done to push forward with what was a top US political priority," added Singh, a former Obama administration official. —AP

## HAITIANS FACE DEPORTATION AS 2010 QUAKE REPRIEVE EXPIRES

**MIAMI:** Bernedy Prosper is afraid his 23-year-old son Harold will die if he is deported from the United States back to Haiti. Prosper, 52, had hoped Harold could benefit from a special status granted to Haitian immigrants in 2010 after a devastating earthquake struck the impoverished Caribbean nation. Instead, Harold is one of more than 4,000 Haitians awaiting deportation due to a sudden policy reversal late last year as then-president Barack Obama was preparing to leave office.

With President Donald Trump now in power, elected on a vow to build a wall on the Mexican border and halt illegal immigration, Harold's situation looks bleak. "I ran away for my life and now my kid had to do the same," said a despairing Prosper as he stood in an immigration aid center in Little Haiti, the heart of the Haitian diaspora in dilapidated north Miami. Prosper himself arrived in Florida on a boat without immigration documents in 2000 and obtained political asylum.

He tried to bring his son over to join him, but Harold got tired of waiting for the legal process to run its course, and decided to try his luck crossing the Mexican border illegally. Instead he was caught in San Diego, California, just as deportations of Haitians are ramping up dramatically compared to last January when, according to government figures, only 267 Haitians were awaiting deportation. "I believe that if he is put back to Haiti, I have no more son," said Prosper, his head down and voice a low monotone. "I know they will kill him," he said.

### Haiti has improved

Haiti is the poorest country in the western hemisphere, and has not fully recovered from

the earthquake-some 55,000 people still live in temporary housing, most in appalling conditions. But late last year, Obama decided Haitians no longer qualified for Temporary Protection Status (TPS), as the status reserved for victims of natural disasters is known. "The situation in Haiti has improved sufficiently to permit the US government to remove Haitian nationals on a more regular basis, consistent with the practice for nationals from other nations," said then-Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson in announcing the policy change Sept 22.

A few weeks later, on October 4, Hurricane Matthew tore through southwestern Haiti. The powerful Category 4 hurricane killed more than 500 people, left thousands homeless, and triggered a cholera outbreak. US authorities halted deportations for a month, but in early November began to "significantly expand removal operations," Johnson said in a subsequent statement. Randy McGrorty, an attorney with Catholic Legal Services-a group that offers legal aid for immigrants-says it is inhumane to deport Haitians to their storm-ravaged, earthquake-damaged country.

The TPS will remain in effect until July, and Haitians who are already protected do not risk deportation. But since October more than 1,600 other Haitians have been deported. "We get desperate phone calls from people. Unfortunately there's nothing we can do," said Steve Forester, who works for the non-profit Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti. "It is simply wrong, insensitive, immoral, even obscene, to be deporting people now, knowing the suffering of the people there and that the government does not have the ability in Haiti to care for these people," he said. —AFP



## GERMANY RAIDS OVER PLOT TO ATTACK REFUGEES, JEWS

**BERLIN:** German authorities yesterday carried out dawn raids against far-right suspects accused of plotting attacks on refugees, Jews and police, federal prosecutors said. Police swooped on 12 homes and other sites in six states "as part of a federal investigation on suspicion of forming a right-wing extremist organization," the prosecutor's office said in a statement. Six suspects, "connected primarily via social media", are accused of founding the group "and in early 2016 beginning plans for armed attacks against police officers as representatives of the

state, asylum seekers and members of the Jewish community".

Another seven people are believed to have offered assistance to the group including acquiring weapons. "The aim of today's raids is to gather evidence of the formation of a group as well as suspected crimes and potential material for use in those crimes," it said. "There is not as yet any evidence of specific attack plans." Around 200 police officers took part in the coordinated raids. The prosecutor's office in the southwestern city of Karlsruhe declined to provide further details.

But news agency DPA said the group was believed to belong to the "Reichsbuerger" (Citizens of the Reich) movement, a shadowy far-right outfit blamed for shooting dead one police officer and wounding three others during a raid in the southern town of Georgensgmuend in October. And in August, a member of the group-a former Mister Germany pageant winner-opened fire on police carrying out an eviction order at his house in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt. The 41-year-old gunman was seriously wounded and three police officers suffered light injuries.

The Reichsbuerger group does not recognize the legitimacy of the German republic and believes in the continued existence of the German empire or "Reich." As a result, many members refuse to pay taxes and fines owed to the state. Authorities believe the movement has several thousand members. A report yesterday in Berlin's daily Tagesspiegel newspaper citing security sources said that the number of far-right extremists in Germany believed to be violent had increased to 12,100 last year, up from 11,800 the previous year. —AFP



**ALGIERS:** A general view shows the Carriere-Jaubert neighborhood, one of the oldest suburbs on the northern outskirts of the capital Algiers, known for its gang violence. —AFP

## GANG VIOLENCE ON THE RISE ON EDGES OF ALGERIAN CITIES

### TOWNS BUILT WITHOUT TERRITORIAL LOGIC

**ALGIERS:** Tired of living in fear of gang violence, Karima and her children left the drab satellite town of Ali Mendjeli near Constantine in north-east Algeria to seek refuge with in-laws. The 45-year-old mother of three, who asked not to give her surname, said living with in-laws is far from ideal but it beats the anxiety of daily life in her former home where rival gangs battle it out with knives and swords. "I was afraid they would attack my children," she said. "I have two teenagers and I feared it would end badly." Experts say urban violence is on the rise due to social insecurity, traumatic memories of Algeria's civil war in the 1990s and the mushrooming of deprived towns like Ali Mendjeli on the edges of major cities.

Algeria's population has shot up from nine million when it won independence from France in 1962 to more than 40 million in 2016. The demographic boom and rapid migration from the countryside to cities created an acute housing shortage. In 2000, the government launched a program to build two million homes by 2019. But new towns like Ali Mendjeli have been built "without any territorial and environmental logic", said Nadir Djermoune, a professor of architecture at the University of Blida, southwest of Algiers. Rather than becoming urban spaces,

they have become marginalized communities where gang violence is common, he said.

Professor Rachid Belhadj, head of Forensic Medicine at the Mustapha Bacha University Hospital Centre in Algiers, labels them "ghettos" where violence is growing "like a cancer." "Violence was already there, but its use by organized gangs is what worries us," he said. Belhadj, whose centre examines victims of violence to verify their claims before they complain to police, said the number of people using his services has leapt from 2,500 to 6,000 per year in a decade. No official statistics on crime rates are available, but Interior Minister Noureddine Bedoui has said the relocation of slum dwellers to the new towns has "caused friction between young people." As for Karima, she feared her children would end up taking drugs and dropping out of school.

#### Economic woes

Unlike many countries in the region, including its neighbors Libya and Tunisia, Algeria has been relatively stable since the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings. High oil revenues allowed it to massively increase wages and subsidies, helping it weather the unrest that shook other parts of the region. But the 2014 collapse in crude oil prices has hit

its budget, forcing Algiers to raise taxes on basic goods. On top of that, youth unemployment hit 26.7 percent in September 2016, according to official figures, in a country where a quarter of the population is aged between 15 and 29.

Economic woes have pushed many young people into drug trafficking and kidnapping, said sociologist Fatma Oussedik of the University of Algiers. "But the fundamental link that unites them is insecurity... which places them outside of society," pushing them into crime, she said.

"What scares us is that they turn to organized gangs for racketeering and bank robberies," said Belhadj. "For the moment, it is sporadic but it becomes a way of dealing with the crisis." Some experts link the rising violence to the civil war between the government and armed Islamist groups in the 1990s that killed 200,000 people.

Algerians born at the start of the war are now in their mid-20s and many witnessed extreme violence during childhood. That has left "a profound trauma in the population that has not yet been adequately addressed", the UN special rapporteur on the right to health, Dainius Puras, said during a visit to Algiers last year. "While the number of suicides is declining, violence against oneself has turned into violence against others," he said. —AFP

## FRANCE'S FILLON PRESSURED TO EXPLAIN WIFE'S WORK

**PARIS:** French presidential frontrunner Francois Fillon criticized a campaign of "mudslinging" yesterday as he came under pressure over allegations he employed his wife as a parliamentary aide for more than a decade. The Canard Enchaîné newspaper, which mixes satire and serious investigative reporting, alleged Tuesday that British-born Penelope Fillon had been paid from money available to her husband as a longstanding MP for the northern Sarthe region.

The newspaper alleged that she had earned around 500,000 euros (\$538,000) over three periods, but said its reporters had not been able to find witnesses to her work. "I see that the mudslinging season has started," Fillon told reporters during a campaign event in Bordeaux. "I won't comment because there is nothing to comment on and I would like to say that I am outraged by the disdain and misogyny in this article." Fillon's spokesman Thierry Solere confirmed on Tuesday that Penelope had worked for her husband, an arrangement he said was "common" among French MPs.

Hiring family members is not against the rules as long as the person is genuinely employed, but attention is focused on what work Penelope carried out for a salary of sometimes around 7,000 euros a month. Penelope has taken a low-profile in Fillon's nearly four-decade political career, focusing on bringing up the couple's five children at their chateau in the Sarthe region. The 62-year-old candidate, who served as prime minister under former president Nicolas Sarkozy, has run a campaign promising radical economic reforms and the protection of French culture.

"It's up to him to explain himself," Socialist party presidential candidate Manuel Valls told France Inter radio yesterday. "You can't say you're the candidate of honesty and transparency and not be able to respond to these issues." Other opponents highlighted how Fillon frequently rails against the bloated French state and wasteful public spending, which he plans to tackle by cutting 500,000 civil servants if elected.

#### Unpredictable race

The election in April and May is seen as highly unpredictable, with Fillon, the far-right leader Marine Le Pen, 39-year-old centrist independent Emmanuel Macron and others in a large field of candidates. Le Pen, whose party is embroiled in its own scandal about the use of public funds in the European parliament, declined to attack Fillon over the issue when asked on Europe 1 radio yesterday morning. The Socialist party is set to finalize its presidential candidate this Sunday, with former PM Valls up against leftist ex-education minister Benoit Hamon, who is seen as the frontrunner.

The two will go head-to-head in a televised debate later Wednesday during which probity in public life might be a subject in light of the Fillon revelations. Citing pay slips, the Canard Enchaîné said Penelope, nicknamed "Penny", was paid from 1998 to 2002 from funds intended for parliamentary assistants. From 2002 to 2007, when Fillon took up a cabinet post under then president Jacques Chirac, she became an assistant to the man who carried out Fillon's parliamentary duties in his place, earning 6,900-7,900 euros per month.

The paper said Penelope was again paid "for at least six months" in 2012 when Fillon, then prime minister, left government after the defeat of Sarkozy in elections. The paper also says that Penelope Fillon was paid around 5,000 euros a month between May 2012 and December 2013 by a periodical, Revue des Deux Mondes, which is owned by a friend of Fillon. Fillon told a television interviewer in November that Penelope had brought up their first four children while he was in Paris as an MP, but she had helped him with some of his political duties.

"She was very involved in the campaigns, handing out flyers and attending meetings with me," he said. But Penelope also told Britain's Sunday Telegraph after her husband became prime minister in 2007 that she was uneasy in Paris and preferred looking after her children and horses in the countryside. "I'm just a country peasant, this is not my natural habitat," she joked. —AFP



**FRANCE:** Right-wing candidate for the upcoming presidential election Francois Fillon and Bordeaux's mayor Alain Juppe (left) toast in a restaurant, yesterday in Bordeaux, as part of Fillon's campaign visit. —AFP

## MAY MEETS TRUMP WITH EYE ON BREXIT FUTURE

**LONDON:** Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May will this week be the first foreign leader to meet with Donald Trump since his inauguration, aiming to discuss a key post-Brexit trade deal with the US. The visit is being presented as a diplomatic coup in Britain, where the idea of the "special relationship" still holds strong, and is being closely watched in Washington as Trump's foreign policy takes shape. Trump has offered rare support for Brexit among global leaders, seeing parallels with his own election campaign, and saying Britain was "smart" to vote to leave an EU that he believes is now falling apart.

He has also pledged to move quickly on agreeing a trade deal with London-welcome words for May, who last week conceded publicly for the first time that Britain would be leaving Europe's single market. But analysts note that Trump's protectionist, "America First" rhetoric appears at odds with May's promise to turn Britain into a free trade champion. "There is a national sympathy from Trump to this country because of Brexit," said Stephen Burman, professor of American politics at the University of Sussex.

"But to me, 'America First' and a 'Global Britain' are practically contradictory statements." That's not going to change because of a trip, he added. There is also the uncomfortable issue of Trump's comments about women, some of which he has apologized for, which May has branded "unacceptable." "Whenever there is something that I find unacceptable, I will say that to Donald Trump," May, Britain's

second female prime minister after Margaret Thatcher, told the BBC.

#### Early trade talks?

May flies to the United States today, meeting Republican leaders in Philadelphia before heading to Washington for talks at the White House tomorrow. She will then fly straight to Turkey for talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday, where she will also discuss possible post-Brexit trade ties. Turkey has been part of a customs union with the EU for some goods since 1996 and May has said she wants to strike a tailor-made customs deal with Brussels. On her trip to Washington, May has said she will highlight her support for free trade, but also the concerns of those who feel they have lost out-a factor in the votes for Brexit and for Trump.

May told the BBC this week that she was hoping for "early" talks on a US-UK trade deal-although the European Commission pointed out that Britain cannot start formal trade negotiations until it leaves the bloc. Experts have also warned that any deal is far from imminent as agreements take years to negotiate. The premier has promised to launch the two-year divorce proceedings in March, but has already had tentative trade talks with India, Australia and New Zealand. There are numerous obstacles to overcome, however, not least whether the US automotive industry will agree to lower tariffs on incoming British cars, and different standards on agriculture. —AFP

## POPE AXES KNIGHTS CHIEF IN CONDOMS ROW

**VATICAN CITY:** Pope Francis has ended a bitter dispute with the Knights of Malta by obtaining the resignation of the ancient order's top official in a saga linked to a row over condoms. The resignation of Grand Master Matthew Festing, confirmed by the order yesterday, follows a month-long stand-off that had become a test of the reforming pope's authority over rebellious Church conservatives. "The Grand Master was received on Tuesday by Pope Francis who requested his resignation, which the Grand Master agreed to," a spokesman for the Order said.

In theory, Briton Festing was in the job for life. His resignation will have to be approved by the Order's sovereign council. The unprecedented and very public dispute between the Vatican and the Knights was seen by Holy See watchers as a proxy war between Church liberals and conservatives, led by American cardinal Raymond Burke. The row erupted last month when Francis appointed a five-strong team to examine the circumstances in which the Order's number three was forced out of his job. The Knights, a Church-linked charity body descended from the crusaders of the Middle Ages, refused to cooperate. They said the December dismissal of Grand Chancellor Albrecht von Boeselager was an internal affair.

#### Myanmar prostitutes

Festing subsequently claimed in a leaked letter that three of the Vatican's appointees had a conflict of interest because of links to a Geneva-based fund in which the Order also had a stake. That blatant defiance of papal authority appears to have been the last straw. Von Boeselager's dismissal had been seen by some as being the result of him being too liberal for Burke, who has acted as the Vatican's liaison with the Order since

being sidelined from more important roles by Francis. Others said the issue was whether the Vatican was properly kept in the loop and whether Von Boeselager, who has a brother who is said to be close to Francis, was wrongly informed the pope had approved his sacking.

Burke is a prominent conservative figure who has been outspoken in his criticism of Francis's efforts to reform Church teaching on questions related to the family, marriage and divorce. Reports in the specialist Catholic press suggested Boeselager was targeted because Order charities he oversaw had taken part in a program distributing free condoms to prostitutes and others in Myanmar to prevent the spread of AIDS. Boeselager had claimed that he stopped the

Order's involvement as soon as he became aware of it and refused to resign. Burke reportedly insisted he had to go.

#### Rebel cardinal

Conservatives say any use of condoms violates Church teaching that considers all forms of contraception to be an unacceptable barrier to life. Francis and his predecessor Benedict XVI have both adopted a more flexible stance, signaling that the use of condoms can be acceptable in circumstances where their use preserves life, such as in AIDS-ravaged communities. The Order of Malta was founded in Jerusalem in 1048 as a community of hospitals caring for the sick. —AFP



**VATICAN CITY:** In this file photo, Pope Francis delivers his blessing during his meeting with Grand Master of the Knights of Malta Matthew Festing, left, at the Vatican. —AP



## MODI, TRUMP SHARE WARM PHONE CONVERSATION

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged yesterday to work closely with Donald Trump after the new US president invited him to Washington, looking to ensure an upturn in ties survives a change at the White House. After their first phone call since Trump's inauguration, the leaders of the world's two largest democracies both indicated they had had a warm conversation and extended mutual invitations to their respective capitals.

Modi was effectively barred from the United States for many years as punishment for deadly communal riots in the western state of Gujarat during his time as chief minister. But after his landslide election victory, Modi built a strong rapport with Barack Obama who

became the first sitting US president to pay a second visit to India during the 2015 Republic Day celebrations. A surprisingly warm conversation in Nov between Trump and Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif caused alarm in New Delhi which is trying to portray its rival regime in Islamabad as the "motherland of terrorism."

But official statements issued after Tuesday's night phone call indicated that both men are keen to build on the recent improvement in ties. Writing on Twitter, Modi said he "had a warm conversation" with the new US president and that they had both "agreed to work closely in the coming days to further strengthen our bilateral ties." "I have also invited President Trump to visit India,"

Modi added after the White House revealed Washington had extended a similar invite.

### True friend

During the call, Trump emphasized that the United States "considers India a true friend and partner in addressing challenges around the world," according to a White House readout of the call. "The two discussed opportunities to strengthen the partnership between the United States and India in broad areas such as the economy and defense." "President Trump looked forward to hosting Prime Minister Modi in the United States later this year." During his election campaign, Trump courted Indian-American voters and even

released a campaign advertisement in Hindi for Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights-albeit in a thick US accent.

Several commentators have argued that Modi and Trump should have a natural affinity as two political outsiders who have risen to power in part by castigating the traditional ruling elite on a nationalist platform. Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon described Modi's victory in India's 2014 general election as the first phase in a "global revolt" against the existing order that culminated with the outcome of November's US polls. The new president's hard line rhetoric towards Muslims during his campaign found favor in some quarters in India, which has had its fair share of tensions

between the majority Hindu population and its Muslim minority.

There are an estimated four million Indian Americans living in the United States according to 2015 census figures. While Trump's decision to pull the United States out of a trade pact known as Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) caused some consternation in other Asian countries such as China and Japan, India was not part of the agreement. A report in yesterday's Hindustan Times said Trump's reservations over an existing visa scheme allowing high-skilled foreign workers into the US could cause some friction but it quoted an Indian official as saying that "there is no other area of potential dispute" with the new administration.—AFP

## PAKISTANI FEMALE LAWMAKER HARASSED IN PARLIAMENT

### WOMEN PROTECTION LAWS NOT ENFORCED

**KARACHI:** A Pakistani female lawmaker threatened to self-immolate after she was harassed by male colleagues in parliament, said that the widely-publicized incident shows how laws to

protect women are not being enforced. Nusrat Sahar Abbasi, an MP in Sindh province, spoke of her fury after provincial minister Imdad Pitafi invited her to his private chambers on the floor

of the assembly Friday in comments seen as sexual harassment in conservative Pakistan. She said she protested strongly but the deputy speaker of the assembly, also a woman, refused to take any action.

A frustrated Abbasi was then pictured Saturday holding a small bottle said to be of petrol and threatening to self-immolate if action was not taken. Federal party chiefs were forced to intervene as the incident exploded on social media, with Pitafi finally caving to the pressure and apologizing in the assembly while offering Abbasi a chador, or veil, as a mark of his respect. Abbasi said Tuesday that the incident was now "over," but that it poses a question on the implementation of laws protecting women from such sexual harassment. "Their implementation is still a dream," Abbasi said. "Even us, the parliamentarians are not safe from gender biases and harassment," she said.

Pakistani women have spent decades fighting for their rights in a deeply conservative country where so-called honor killings and acid attacks remain commonplace. Pakistan has passed several laws to increase protections available to women in recent years, some at the provincial level, but critics have warned that without proper enforcement they will have little impact. Last year a bill passed in Punjab province redefined "violence" to include "any offense committed against a woman," prompting an Islamic religious body to protest that men should be allowed to "lightly beat" their wives.—AFP



**KARACHI:** In this photo, Nusrat Sahar Abbasi, a Member of Parliament in Pakistan's Sindh province speaks during an interview in Karachi. —AFP

## BLASPHEMY LAW EXALTS KILLER; THREATENS MISSING BLOGGERS

**BARAKHAO, Pakistan:** Two ornate minarets pierce the evening sky. They frame the emerald green colored dome of an ornate shrine erected to honor Mumtaz Qadri, an assassin hanged for gunning down a politician who criticized Pakistan's controversial blasphemy law and defended a Christian woman sentenced to death for allegedly insulting Islam. Qadri's body lies in a marble-encased tomb inside the shrine. He had been a member of an elite police unit charged with protecting Punjab provincial governor Salman Taseer.

Instead, he turned his AK-47 assault rifle on the politician killing him in a hail of bullets. With an eerie smile on his face he then laid down his weapon and was arrested, tried and later hanged. The shrine, which is being built on the outskirts of the federal capital, is worrisome for those in Pakistan who fear a growing tide of extremism in the country marked by brutal sectarian killings, violent protests by clerics in favor of the blasphemy law, and frightening threats to anyone who would dare to challenge it.

Five liberal-leaning bloggers who disappeared earlier this month, and the Pakistanis who are protesting their disappearance, have become the latest target of radical clerics and their followers. The clerics have accused the missing writers of blasphemy after a social media campaign linked them to allegations of blasphemy without any evidence. A simple accusation of blasphemy in Pakistan can be tantamount to a death sentence. The government has tried to quell the allegations, saying there is no evidence that the bloggers said or did anything that could be considered blasphemous and no suggestion of any of them being charged with blasphemy once they are found.

The bloggers, whose disappearances have been decried nationally and internationally, have been critical of the military and have bemoaned the presence of radical religious militant groups in their country. No one has taken responsibility for their disappearances. Supporters of the bloggers say that Qadri's shrine exalts those who kill in the name of religion and makes even amending the blasphemy law to make it more difficult to abuse, a dangerous proposition.

"This is very, very unfortunate... that a person who has been adjudged by the highest constitutional court of Pakistan, the Supreme Court of Pakistan, as a terrorist (yet) these clerics and the innocent people of this country, they're trying to paint him as a saint," said attorney Saif-ul-Mulk. "I can assure you that in the coming 10 to 20 years, he will be a saint of very high profile and billions of rupees will be coming to his shrine."

### Big ticket

Mulk is defending Asiya Bibi, the Christian woman who has been on death row for the last six years, and has launched a final appeal on her behalf in the Supreme Court. Bibi was charged with blasphemy after a group of women with whom she worked in the field berated her for

drinking the same water as them. They argued and the women accused Bibi of insulting Islam's prophet, a charge she flatly denies. Mulk also prosecuted Qadri, securing a guilty verdict and death sentence that was carried out last year. He travels with security and police are stationed outside his home in the eastern Punjab city of Lahore.

In an interview, Mulk also warned that the financial windfall that has come with Qadri's death risks encouraging would-be "martyrs." "If one person is not able to feed his parents and family, he gives his life, kills somebody big and the whole family becomes richer than they could ever dream," he said. For some in Pakistan, the shrine is seen as yet another tool in the arsenal of radical Sunni Muslim groups seeking to consolidate their hold over Pakistan's 180 million people.

Ayesha Siddiqi, a defense analyst who has written extensively on Pakistan's military complex, warned in a recent column that Qadri's shrine will emerge as a rallying cry for the preservation of the blasphemy law, which some liberal lawmakers would like to see at least amended to make it more difficult to abuse. "The blasphemy law is their big ticket to support amongst the masses which they would like to consolidate further with the symbol they have now erected in the form of Mumtaz Qadri's shrine near the capital city," Siddiqi wrote.



**LAHORE:** In this file photo, activists from Pakistan's civil society demand recovery of the missing persons, in Lahore, Pakistan. — AP



**SRINAGAR:** Indian paramilitary soldiers take shelter from snow inside a tent as they stand guard on the eve of the Republic Day in Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir, yesterday. —AP

## KILLER AVALANCHES HIT INDIAN KASHMIR

**SRINAGAR:** Avalanches killed five people in Indian-administered Kashmir yesterday—four members of a family whose home was buried under snow and a soldier stationed at a military base. The four family members died when an avalanche ripped through the small village of Badugam in the Gurez area, close to the unofficial border with Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, while they were asleep in their home. Police and rescuers managed to pull an 18-year-old from the mounds of snow but he was the sole survivor.

"The avalanche struck the village at 4:00 am, killing four members of a family. One survivor was rescued," inspector general of police for the region, Javid Gillani, said. The victims were a 17-year-old boy, his 19-year-

old sister and both their parents. The soldier was killed when another avalanche hit an army barracks in the northern area of Sonmarg, said a military spokesman. Indian-administered Kashmir has been witnessing one of the severest winters in recent decades, with heavy snow across the territory and temperature dropping to minus seven degrees Celsius.

Meteorologists have forecast more heavy snow across the territory over the next three days. Authorities had already issued avalanche warnings, advising residents in mountainous areas not to venture out. Police last week evacuated 80 villagers from Waleengoo Nar-where dozens were killed after a series of avalanches hit the area in 2005 — in the south of the territory.—AFP

## AUTHORITIES TO CONFISCATE UNUSED MYANMAR FARMLAND

**YANGON:** Authorities in Myanmar's central Mandalay region plan to confiscate some 40,000 acres of unused farmland to use for the nation's interests, an official said yesterday. Land ownership is one of the most contentious issues in Myanmar, where the former junta was accused of rampant confiscation during its 50-year rule. The new civilian government led by Aung San Suu Kyi has said addressing land conflicts is a priority, after anger among the rural poor helped sweep it to power in 2015 elections.

"We will start to confiscate over 40,000 acres of vacant land this April," Soe Than, Mandalay regional minister for agriculture, said. "Nothing has been grown on this land for years. The government will use it for the interests of the country," he said, adding it would be suitable for growing coffee. It was not clear where the land is or who currently lives on it. A law enacted in 2012 under the previous government gave the state the right to confiscate vacant, fallow or virgin

land that was not being used.

Most land seizures in Myanmar date from the 1990s and early 2000s, when the country was undergoing a messy transition from its own brand of junta-controlled socialism to a more market-driven model. Activists say most of the land was grabbed by military officers and their cronies, and large tracts of it were then loaned to private companies to be cultivated. A report by campaign group Land in Our Hands claimed 5,000 acres were confiscated from farmers in the Mandalay region in 2010 alone.

Few farmers have documents to prove land title. Those who do often end up mired in a complex and opaque system with little hope of redress. Yesterday legal rights group Namati said only 15 percent of their cases involving government ministries ever ended up being resolved. A commission set up in 2013 to address land grabs has only dealt with a fraction of the tens of thousands of cases across the country.—AFP

## PHILIPPINES SEEKS REMOVAL OF EXILED COMMUNIST FROM US TERRORIST LIST

**MANILA:** The Philippines wants US President Donald Trump to remove the exiled leader of Philippine communists from a US terrorist list to enable him to come home for peace talks, government negotiators said yesterday. Maoist-led rebels have waged an insurgency against Philippine governments for nearly five decades and at least 40,000 people have been killed.

But talks on ending the war have been revived under President Rodrigo Duterte, who came to power last year calling for peace efforts in the interests of economic development. Jose Maria Sison, the founder and leader of the Communist Party of the Philippines, has lived in the Netherlands for three decades. He was put on a US terrorist list in 2002, which pre-

vents him from travelling. The government's chief peace negotiator, Silvestre Bello, said Trump would be asked to remove Sison from the list. "The government of the Philippines will recommend to the president the de-listing of Communist Party of the Philippines founding chair, Sison from the list of international terrorists to pave the way for his Philippine homecoming without being arrested," Bello and his team said in a statement. Duterte and Sison have agreed to meet in any neutral Asian country once Sison has been removed from the list.

But Bello said the talks could be held in the Philippines. The communists' 3,000-strong armed wing, the New People's Army, operates mainly in the east and south of the Philippines.—Reuters



## US TO SEND MOST SENIOR OFFICER TO THAILAND SINCE 2014 COUP

**BANGKOK:** The highest ranking US officer to visit Thailand since a 2014 coup will attend a military exercise next month in what the Thai army hailed yesterday as a sign of improving relations. The United States scaled down its presence at Cobra Gold, Asia's largest annual multinational military exercise, as one of the former US administration's measures to pressure the Thai government to restore democracy.

Relations have since improved as the junta has taken steps towards

holding elections - and as Thailand has grown closer to dominant regional power China.

The US embassy confirmed that Admiral Harry Harris, the head of Pacific Command, would open Cobra Gold on Feb 14. More junior officers attended the exercise in the past two years. Harris's attendance was planned before the inauguration of US President Donald Trump, whose policy moves on Asia are closely watched after signals of potential confrontation

with China over trade, Taiwan and claims in the South China Sea. The US embassy said Cobra Gold would only return to its original scope and scale once Thailand restores democracy.

"We are eager to see our cooperation fully resume with the restoration of a democratically elected civilian government," Melissa Sweeney, a spokeswoman at the US embassy in Bangkok, said. The United States will send 3,500 personnel to the war games slightly fewer than last year. Thailand's army

said that Harris's attendance at Cobra Gold sent an important signal. "It is not common for an officer of Admiral Harris' rank to attend these sorts of events," said General Thanchaiyan Srisuwan, the head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"It is a good signal for Thai-American relations and shows that the US has given importance to this region and this exercise," he said. Thailand has hosted the war games since they began in 1982. This year's event will be attended by 8,333 personnel from 29 countries.

Thailand's links with China have grown ever stronger since the 2014 coup.

Thai officials said yesterday the government had approved 13.5 billion baht (\$380 million) to buy a submarine from China after putting the purchase on hold last year. It will also buy new tanks and other vehicles from China. The Thai junta held a referendum last year on a constitution to allow a general election. It was originally due to take place this year but it is not widely expected to happen before 2018.—Reuters



BEIJING: This file photo shows China's aircraft carrier Soviet-era Liaoning. —AFP

## US FACES STIFF PUSHBACK FROM CHINA IN S CHINA SEA

### 'US TO SEND CLEAR SIGNAL ABOUT CHINA'S ACCESS'

**BEIJING:** If Donald Trump's hawkish new administration follows through on threats and tries to cut Beijing off from artificial islands in the South China Sea, it could face a stiffer pushback than many imagine, experts say. The US president and his team have made much of their desire to put Beijing in its place, including in the strategically vital waterway, which China claims almost entirely and where it has reclaimed and fortified thousands of acres of land, according to the Pentagon. Trump's nominee for Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, told his confirmation hearing the US needs to send a clear signal that China's access to the islands is "not going to be allowed."

Observers quickly pointed out the full-scale blockade this would require was likely to provoke a military response from Beijing—a response that might be enough to make the US think twice. While Beijing may have a poorer and less well-equipped military, it is stocking its arsenal with submarines, anti-ship missiles and other weapons tailor-made to neutralize Washington's most valuable naval assets, they say. "Beijing knows that it cannot win a conventional frontal conflict with the US," with its vastly superior military, Valerie Niquet of French think tank Foundation of Strategic Research said. Instead, it is developing "capabilities that would restore its freedom to maneuver by pushing Washington to hesitate before a potentially costly intervention in Asia."

#### Flexing muscles

China's island building program in the South China Sea has irked neighbors—many of whom also have claims to parts of the sea—and caused global concern. Beijing has ignored international

condemnation over its construction of airstrips and installation of anti-aircraft batteries on one-time reefs. It has dismissed an international arbitration court that ruled last year there was no basis for its claims over the South China Sea. Former US President Barack Obama occasionally sent warships and planes through the area in so-called "freedom of navigation" exercises, but critics say he did not do enough to prevent China gaining a substantial foothold.

Trump, who threaded anti-China rhetoric throughout his election campaign, has indicated he is going to be a lot firmer. "If those islands are, in fact, in international waters and not part of China proper, yeah, we'll make sure we defend international interests from being taken over by one country," new White House press secretary Sean Spicer said Monday. Beijing is flexing its military muscle in response to the warnings. Three days after Trump's inauguration, China's navy announced the delivery of the CNS Xining destroyer, nicknamed the "carrier killer" for its large load of anti-ship and land attack cruise missiles.

Beijing also possesses DF-21 and DF-26 anti-ship missiles that could secure it "a credible denial of access" against the US Navy, a source with knowledge of Chinese military activities said. While the US has around a dozen aircraft carriers, Beijing has just one: the second-hand, Soviet-built Liaoning. A second is under construction. The Liaoning conducted its first live fire drill in December before heading to the South China Sea. China's naval capacities "might not be enough to decisively destroy hostile modern navies, yet they are enough to

deny or impede their access to some extent," Noboru Yamaguchi of the International University of Japan said.

#### Bring China more respect

While China has made significant progress in developing its military over the past two decades, it remains far behind the US, whose military budget is three times higher, at nearly \$600 billion. "Most analysts agree that it is 20 or 30 years behind the US in terms of military capabilities," said James Char of Singapore's Nanyang Technological University. A major Achilles heel for the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is that it has not fought a real battle since a war with Vietnam in 1979, and has a questionable mastery of modern military techniques, according to some Western experts. And while the West has NATO as a channel through which to share military experiences, China has no similar outlet, despite periodic joint exercises with other countries such as Russia.

As Niquet sees it, "Beijing must play a delicate balancing game so as not to go too far in their threats and provoke an American intervention" with unthinkable consequences. So far, China is playing it cool in the face of Washington's rhetoric, with the foreign ministry largely avoiding any statements that might raise the temperature. But "there certainly exists the worst-case probability of a destructive showdown" over access to China's artificial islands an editorial in the state-run China Daily warned yesterday. And "if there is to be 'war' in the South China Sea it will be because of actions by the US military."—AFP

## US MAN'S 20-YEAR JAIL TERM FOR S KOREA MURDER UPHeld

**SEOUL:** South Korea's top court upheld an US citizen's 20-year murder sentence yesterday, finally drawing a line under a tortuous legal saga two decades after he stabbed a Korean to death in a Burger King toilet. The random killing of Jo Jung-Pil was made into a hit movie in 2009, reviving public anger over the crime and forcing South Korean prosecutors to reopen the case. Arthur Patterson, now 37, was convicted by a Seoul court last year and the Supreme Court of Korea upheld the ruling yesterday, adding in a statement that his sentence was "justified".

Patterson, the son of a US military contractor, was 17 at the time, and 20 years in jail is the maximum penalty in South Korea for an offender under 18. He had denied any involvement in the killing in the

nightlife district of Itaewon, close to the US military base in Seoul. Patterson was tried and convicted in 1997 as an accomplice to Edward Lee, a Korean-American man, who was jailed for 20 years for murder. Each accused the other of killing Jo.

Patterson served 18 months in prison for lesser charges including obstruction of justice, and was released in 1998 as part of an amnesty program, only to find himself a murder suspect again after Lee was acquitted on appeal for lack of evidence. He fled to the United States a year later after investigators failed to renew his travel ban—a mistake that sparked a storm of criticism. Patterson was formally charged in absentia with Jo's murder in 2011 and was extradited from the United States in September 2015 to face trial.—AFP

## N KOREAN ELITE TURNING AGAINST LEADER KIM

**SEOUL:** The North Korean elite are outwardly expressing their discontent towards young leader Kim Jong Un and his government as more outside information trickles into the isolated country, North Korea's former deputy ambassador to London said yesterday. Thae Yong Ho defected to South Korea in August last year and since December 2016 has been speaking to media and appearing on variety television shows to discuss his defection to Seoul and his life as a North Korean envoy.

"When Kim Jong Un first came to power, I was hopeful that he would make reasonable and rational decisions to save North Korea from poverty, but I soon fell into despair watching him purging officials for no proper reasons," Thae said during his first news conference with foreign media yesterday. "Low-level dissent or criticism of the regime, until recently unthinkable, is becoming more frequent," said Thae, who spoke in fluent, British-accented English. "We have to spray gasoline on North Korea, and let the North Korean people set fire to it."

Thae, 54, has said publicly that dissatisfaction with Kim Jong Un prompted him to flee his post. Two university-age sons living with him and his wife in London also defected with him. North and South Korea are technically still at war because their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. The North, which is subject to UN sanctions over its nuclear and mis-

sile programs, regularly threatens to destroy the South and its main ally, the United States.

Thae is the most senior official to have fled North Korea and entered public life in the South since the 1997 defection of Hwang Jang Yop, the brains behind the North's governing ideology, "Juche", which combines Marxism and extreme nationalism. Today's North Korean system had "nothing to do with true communism", Thae said, adding that the elite, like himself, had watched with unease as countries like Cambodia, Vietnam and the former Soviet Union embraced economic and social reforms.

Thae has said that more North Korean diplomats are waiting in Europe to defect to South Korea. North Korea still outwardly professes to maintain a Soviet-style command economy, but for years a thriving network of informal markets and person-to-person trading has become the main source of food and money for ordinary people.

Fully embracing these reforms would end Kim Jong Un's rule, Thae said. Asked if Kim Jong Un's brother, Kim Jong Chol, could run the country instead, Thae remained sceptical. "Kim Jong Chol has no interest in politics. He is only interested in music," Thae said. "He's only interested in Eric Clapton. If he was a normal man, I'm sure he'd be a very good professional guitarist."—Reuters



SEOUL: Former North Korean deputy ambassador to Britain Thae Yong-Ho talks to the media at the Seoul Foreign Correspondents Club in Seoul yesterday. —AFP

## S KOREAN PROSECUTORS PLAN TO SEARCH IMPEACHED LEADER'S OFFICE

**SEOUL:** Prosecutors said yesterday they plan to question impeached South Korean President Park Geun-hye and search her office by early

next month over a huge corruption scandal involving Park and her longtime confidante. In an unusual moment earlier in the day, Park's

confidante, Choi Soon-sil, shouted out to reporters as she was brought to the prosecutors' offices to be questioned. Choi called the investigation unfair and said she had been forced to confess untrue things about her relationship with Park.

"They are not a democratic special prosecution any longer... they are forcing me to make a confession," Choi screamed out as guards led her into the building. "I'm getting a bum rap." Meanwhile, Lee Kyu-chul, a spokesman for the special prosecutors' team, said officials are pushing to interview Park and search her office by early February. Park, who has been stripped of power but not removed from office, cannot be forced to testify at the Constitutional Court holding her impeachment trial. But she has said she's willing to undergo questioning by the special prosecutors investigating the wide-ranging scandal. It's not clear if her office will allow the search of the presidential Blue House.

Park is accused of allowing Choi to meddle in state affairs and colluding with Choi to extort money from businesses. Choi and several presidential aides have been arrested. To remove Park from office permanently, at least six of the Constitutional Court's nine justices must support her impeachment. Several justices will leave office before March 13, but six 'yes' votes are still required even if some seats are vacant. Court head Park Han-chul, one of the departing justices, said the court's ruling should be issued by then, but that opinion is not binding.—AP



SEOUL: Choi Soon-sil, center, the jailed confidante of impeached South Korean President Park Geun-hye, arrives at the office of the independent counsel in Seoul, South Korea, yesterday. —AP

## THREE FOREIGNERS JAILED IN TAIWAN OVER ATM HEIST

**TAIPEI:** Three eastern Europeans were jailed for five years in Taiwan yesterday over a \$2.6 million cyber heist that used malware to hack into a major local bank's ATM network. The attack, the first of its kind in Taiwan, targeted the First Commercial Bank's ATM network in dozens of machines in three cities. The suspects had uncovered a security loophole in a server at the bank's London branch office and used it to plant the malware, according to Taiwanese authorities.

Latvian Andrejs Peregudovs, together with Mihail Colibaba from Romania and Niklae Penkov from Moldova, were convicted of causing damage to the public by breaching computer security, said the Taipei district court. They were also each fined Tw\$600,000 (\$19,000) and will be deported after completing their sentences, the court said.

They can appeal the ruling. Prosecutors had sought 12-year jail terms, saying their multiple actions had "seriously disrupted financial order and caused public panic." But court

spokesman Liao Chien-yu said the judges had considered the illegal bank withdrawals as one case, which carries a maximum five-year sentence.

Prosecutors have said it was the first case of a multinational crime ring hacking into a bank's computer system to plant malware. Thai police said a gang of foreign criminals stole millions of baht by hacking a local bank's ATM network in a theft last year believed to be linked to the one in Taiwan. Taiwan's government has added 19 other suspects, including one Australian, one French national and an unknown number of eastern Europeans, to the wanted list after they fled the island following the heist.

Surveillance images released by the bank showed masked robbers working in two-man teams targeting 41 ATMs in three cities from July 9-11. Within five to 10 minutes, the thieves were seen walking away with bags full of stolen cash. Police arrested the trio in Taipei and northeastern Yilan county several days after the heist and recovered most of the stolen money.—AFP



## CORRUPTION ON THE RISE IN KUWAIT

Continued from Page 1

Transparency International had suspended the membership of the Kuwait Transparency Society (KTS) on June 5, 2015 after the government dissolved its elected board and replaced it with government appointees. "In order to protect the staff and membership of KTS, a fully accredited chapter of Transparency International, Transparency International's board has passed a resolution suspending the organization from the Transparency International movement until further notice," the Berlin-based organization said in a press statement released on June 11, 2015.

Notably, the UAE dropped four points in 2016's index compared to 2015, while Qatar dropped 10 points. Globally, New Zealand moved into a tie with Denmark for the number one spot, after each finished with 90 points. Meanwhile, Finland and Sweden retained their third and fourth ranks respectively, while Switzerland rounded up the top five. On the other hand, the United States dropped two spots and ranked 18th with 74 points. The bottom five include Yemen, Syria, North Korea, South Sudan and Somalia as the country with the worst score (10 points).

More countries declined than improved in the 2016 index compared to a year before. This year's results highlight the connection between corruption and inequality, which feed off each other to create a vicious circle between corruption, unequal distribution of power in society, and unequal distribution of wealth, Transparency International said in a statement yesterday. "In too many countries, people are deprived of their most basic needs and go to bed hungry every night because of corruption, while the powerful and corrupt enjoy lavish lifestyles with impunity," said Jose Ugaz, Chair of Transparency International.

According to the organization, lower-ranked countries are plagued by untrustworthy and badly functioning public institutions like the police and judiciary. "Even where anti-corruption laws are on the books, in practice they are often skirted or ignored. People frequently face situations of bribery and extortion, rely on basic services that have been undermined by the misappropriation of funds, and confront official indifference when seeking redress from authorities that are on the take," the report reads. On the other hand, it says that higher-ranked countries tend to have higher degrees of press freedom, access to information about public expenditure, stronger standards of integrity for public officials, and independent judicial systems.

"But high-scoring countries can't afford to be complacent, either," it noted. "While the most obvious forms of corruption may not scar citizens' daily lives in all these places, the higher-ranked countries are not immune to closed-door deals, conflicts of interest, illicit finance, and patchy law enforcement that can distort public policy and exacerbate corruption at home and abroad."

Reprive, a London-based rights group, also criticized the executions and urged countries to call on Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain to halt executions. Kuwait has executed 74 men and six women since it introduced the death penalty in the mid-1960s. Most of those condemned have been murderers or drug traffickers. Around 50 prisoners are on death row. It's not clear what sparked the timing of the executions. However, it comes 10 days after Bahrain announced it put three men to death in its first executions since 2010. — Agencies

## ROYAL, TENT ARSONIST, MAIDS AMONG 7...

Continued from Page 1

The Filipina and Ethiopian women were domestic helpers convicted of murdering members of their employers' families in two unrelated crimes. The two Egyptians were convicted of premeditated murder while the Bangladeshi was convicted of abduction and rape.

In the Philippines, Department of Foreign Affairs spokesman Charles Jose identified the Filipina hanged as Jakatia Pawa, who was convicted of killing her employer's daughter. Pawa's brother, Air Force Lt Col Gary Pawa, said his sister called early morning yesterday, crying as she informed him of her scheduled execution. "My sister's only request was for us to take care of her two children," he said.

Ernesto Abella, a spokesman for Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, said in a statement that the authorities used "all efforts to preserve her life, including diplomatic means and appeals for compassion." "Execution, however, could no longer be forestalled under Kuwaiti laws," he said. "We pray for her and her bereaved family." Kuwait is home to 250,000 Filipino workers, with about 158,000 of them working as domestic helpers, Philippine ambassador to Kuwait Rene Villa said.

Kuwait resumed executions in 2013 after a moratorium of six years. In April 2013, authorities hanged three men convicted of murder. Two months later, two Egyptians, convicted of murder and abduction, were executed. One of them, Hajjaj Saadi, was convicted of abducting and raping 17 children below the age of 10. He denied the charges in court.

Human rights group Amnesty International condemned the executions as "shocking and deeply regrettable." "By choosing to resume executions now the Kuwaiti authorities have displayed a wanton disregard for the right to life and signaled a willingness to weaken human rights standards," Samah Hadid, Amnesty's deputy campaigns director, said. The group urged Kuwait to review abolishing the death penalty.

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## TRUMP ORDERS BUILDING OF MEXICO BORDER WALL

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday signed directives to build a wall along the US border with Mexico and crack down on US cities that shield illegal immigrants, proceeding quickly on sweeping and divisive plans to curb immigration and boost national security. The Republican president is also expected to take steps in the coming days to limit legal immigration, including executive orders restricting refugees and blocking the issuing of visas to people from several Muslim-majority Middle Eastern and North African countries including Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Iran, Libya and Yemen.

Trump signed two executive orders at the Department of Homeland Security, one ordering construction of a wall along the roughly 2,000-mile (3,200-km) US-Mexico border and the other moving to strip federal grant money from "sanctuary" states and cities, often governed by Democrats, that harbor illegal immigrants. In cities such as San Francisco local officials, often Democrats, refuse to cooperate with federal authorities on actions against illegal immigrants. "The American people are no longer going to have to be forced to subsidize this disregard for our laws," White House spokesman Sean Spicer said.

In an interview with ABC News yesterday, Trump said construction on the wall would start within months, with planning starting immediately, and that Mexico would pay back to the United States "100 percent" of the costs. Mexican officials have said they will not pay for the wall. During a White House briefing, Spicer referred to the wall as "a large physical barrier on the southern border." "Building this barrier is more than just a campaign promise, it's a common sense first step to really securing our porous border," Spicer added. "This will stem the flow of drugs, crime, illegal immigration into the United States," he said.

Trump has long said that he will make Mexico pay for the wall. "We'll be reimbursed at a later date from whatever transaction we make from Mexico," Trump told ABC yesterday. "I'm just telling you there will be a payment. It will be in a form, perhaps a complicated form. What I'm doing is good for the United States. It's also going to be good for Mexico. We want to have a very stable, very solid Mexico." His plans prompted an immediate outcry from immigrant advocates who said Trump was jeopardizing the rights and freedoms of millions of people. — Reuters

## MARZOUC: OIL MARKET IS STARTING...

Continued from Page 1

Marzouq said that compliance with the cuts "represents a guarantee for the price to recover to levels that encourage investments and ensure that crude stocks return to normal levels." The minister said that there have been announcements from several countries including OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia that they have already completed their cuts. Kuwait has also fully complied with the reduction while Russia has cut 100,000 barrels per day in January and plans to extend that to 300,000 bpd soon, Marzouq said. He expected oil prices to range between \$55 and \$60 a barrel throughout 2017.

Marzouq predicted that the market will suffer from a shortage in the supply of crude oil in the future. "Kuwait is keen to invest in the development of cleaner fuels in addition to the development of petrochemical products that meet the requirements of preserving the environment by investing in projects to expand its refining capacity inside and outside Kuwait," he said. "Kuwait is keen to find new sources of energy to meet the growing needs of fuel in power plants with urbanization and population expansion in the state by increasing the exploration and production of free natural gas and importing liquefied natural gas," he added.

Nizar Al-Adsani, Deputy Chairman and chief Executive Officer of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, said the drop in oil prices has become a prominent feature of the market and the decline is expected to last longer. Adsani added that the 2030 strategy of the Kuwaiti oil sector covers a wide variety of functional areas and includes a detailed roadmap to support Kuwait's development plan. "The plan includes a full program to improve the role of the oil sector to support Kuwait's economy while helping to provide jobs and training for Kuwaitis and diversify sources of income," he explained.

Adsani stressed KPC focuses on the petrochemical sector as a way to diversify sources of income, and is expected to spend KD 35 billion over the next five years starting from the fiscal year 2017-2018 on oil projects. He pointed out that the 2030 enterprise strategy includes the launch of major projects, including investment in the field of refining and petrochemicals outside Kuwait, the Zour refinery project, the clean fuel project and increasing oil production capacity to reach 4 million barrels per day by 2020.

## TRAFFICKERS USING GULF TOURIST VISAS...

Continued from Page 1

steps are routinely bypassed, the officials said. Housemaids with work visas undergo emigration checks and their data is recorded. This safeguarding can be skipped if they travel on a tourist visa - hence its appeal to traffickers.


The challenges are mounting with job agencies now flying women from Sri Lanka and Nepal, officials said. Recruitment work has also started in Mumbai, in addition to the earlier hubs of Chennai and Hyderabad, in southern India. "Of the 30 cases of housemaids trapped in various Gulf countries we received last year, most were recruited by agents in Mumbai," said Josephine Valarmathi of the National Domestic Workers' Movement. The number of Indian housemaids in the Gulf is estimated at 500,000, which officials said is difficult to corroborate. The government wants to clamp down on illegal recruitment agencies and said warnings will be issued to local cable television operators that air their tempting advertisements. — Reuters

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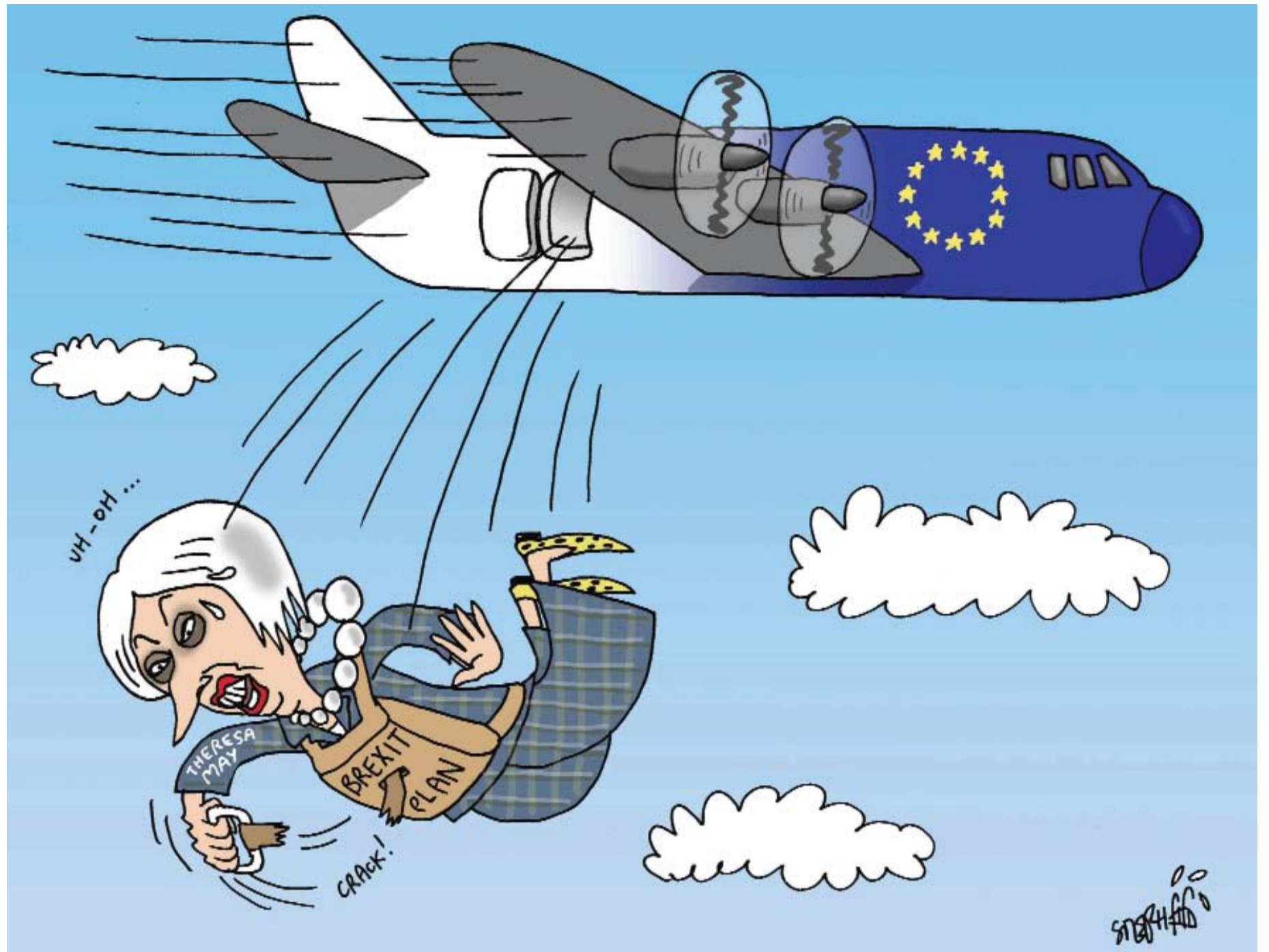
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Focus

## AS TRUMP STRESSES 'US FIRST', CHINA PLAYS WORLD LEADER

China is calmly mapping out global leadership aspirations from trade to climate change, drawing distinctions between President Xi Jinping's steady hand and new US President Donald Trump, whose first days have been marked by media feuds and protests. Just days ahead of Trump taking office, a self-assured Xi was in Switzerland as the keynote speaker at the World Economic Forum in Davos, offering a vigorous defense of globalization and signaling Beijing's desire to play a bigger role on the world stage.

Even on the thorny issue of the South China Sea, Beijing did not rise to the bait of White House remarks this week about "defending international territories" in the disputed waterway. Instead, China stressed its desire for peace and issued a restrained call for Washington to watch what it says. "You have your 'America first', we have our 'community of common destiny for mankind,'" Retired Major-General Luo Yuan, a widely read Chinese military figure best known for his normally hawkish tone, wrote on his blog this week. "You have a 'closed country', we have 'one belt, one road,'" he added, referring to China's multi-billion dollar new Silk Road trade and investment program.

And while China has repeatedly said it does not want the traditional US role of world leadership, a senior Chinese diplomat accepted this week it could be forced upon China. "If anyone were to say China is playing a leadership role in the world I would say it's not China rushing to the front but rather the front runners have stepped back leaving the place to China," said Zhang Jun, director general of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's international economics department.

### Stepping Up

That message was reinforced this week when Trump formally withdrew the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal, distancing America from its Asian allies. Several remaining TPP members said they would now look to include China in a revised pact, or pursue Beijing's alternative free trade agreements. "At many important multilateral forums, China's leader has put forward Chinese proposals, adding positive impetus to world development," Su Xiaohui a senior researcher at the Foreign Ministry-backed China Institute of International Studies, wrote of the US TPP decision in the overseas edition of the People's Daily.

"In the economic integration process of the Asia Pacific, compared to certain countries who constantly bear in mind their leadership role, what China pays even more attention to is 'responsibility' and 'stepping up'," Su said. China's hosting of an international conference on its "One Belt, One Road" initiative in May is one opportunity for Beijing to showcase its leadership of global infrastructure and investment.

A diplomatic source familiar with preparations said China was likely to hold it at the same glitzy convention center used to host the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in 2014, setting the stage for Xi's most high profile diplomatic event of the year. "China's pretty much inviting everyone," the diplomat said. Another area where China is keen to be seen as leading the way is climate change. Trump has in the past dismissed climate change as a "hoax" and vowed during his presidential campaign to pull the United States out of the Paris Climate Agreement.

Li Junhua, head of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Department of International Organisations and Conferences, said world was worried about climate change and whether countries would honour their Paris commitments. "As far as China is concerned, my president has made it extremely clear, crystal clear, China will do its part," Li told reporters.

### Learning Process

It's not always been this way. China has been through a long, tough learning process to become a more responsible power. In 2013, China, angered with Manila over the long dispute on the South China Sea, only stumped up meager aid to the Philippines after it was hit by Super Typhoon Haiyan, prompting rare dissent in the influential Chinese state-run tabloid the Global Times that Beijing's international image would be hit. It also will not be plain sailing. On certain key core issues including the self-ruled island of Taiwan, China will not back down. In its first official reaction to Trump taking office, China's Foreign Minister urged his administration to fully understand the importance of the "one China" principle, which Trump has called into doubt and under which Washington acknowledges China's position of sovereignty over Taiwan. China also expects that under the Trump administration it will be left alone on one issue that has long dogged ties with Washington - human rights. — Reuters

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## HOW RUSSIA SLYLY SOLD ITS OIL JEWEL

More than a month after Russia announced one of its biggest privatizations since the 1990s, selling a 19.5 percent stake in its giant oil company Rosneft, it still isn't possible to determine from public records the full identities of those who bought it. The stake was sold for 10.2 billion euros to a Singapore investment vehicle that Rosneft said was a 50/50 joint venture between Qatar and the Swiss oil trading firm Glencore.

Unveiling the deal at a televised meeting with Rosneft's boss Igor Sechin on Dec 7, President Vladimir Putin called it a sign of international faith in Russia, despite US and EU financial sanctions on Russian firms including Rosneft. "It is the largest privatization deal, the largest sale and acquisition in the global oil and gas sector in 2016," Putin said.

It was also one of the biggest transfers of state property into private hands since the early post-Soviet years, when allies of President Boris Yeltsin took control of state firms and became billionaires overnight. But important facts about the deal either have not been disclosed, cannot be determined solely from public records, or appear to contradict the straightforward official account of the stake being split 50/50 by Glencore and the Qataris.

For one: Glencore contributed only €300 million of equity to the deal, less than 3 percent of the purchase price, which it said in a statement on Dec 10 had bought it an "indirect equity interest" limited to just 0.54 percent of Rosneft. In addition, public records show the ownership structure of the stake ultimately includes a Cayman Islands company whose beneficial owners cannot be traced. And while Italian bank Intesa SanPaolo lent the Singapore vehicle €5.2 billion to fund the deal, and Qatar put in €2.5 billion, the sources of funding for nearly a quarter of the purchase price have not been disclosed by any of the parties.

"The main question in relation to this transaction, as ever, still sounds like this: Who is the real buyer of a 19.5 percent stake in Rosneft?" Sergey Aleksashenko, a former deputy head of Russia's central bank, wrote in a blog last week. Glencore would not comment on the identity of the Cayman Islands firm or give a further explanation of how ownership of the 19.5 percent stake was divided. The Qatari Investment Authority said it would not comment on the deal, beyond confirming that it has participated in it.

Rosneft declined to respond to questions posed by Reuters, including a request for comment on how ownership of the 19.5 percent stake was divided, information about the identity of the Cayman Islands buyer, or details of the source of any undisclosed sources of funds. The Kremlin did not respond to a list of questions about the deal sent by Reuters.

### Matryoshka Doll

Like many large deals, the Rosneft privatization uses a structure of shell companies owning shell companies, com-

monly referred to in Russia as a "matryoshka", after the wooden nesting dolls that open to reveal a smaller doll inside. Following the trail of ownership leads to a Glencore UK subsidiary and a company that shares addresses with the Qatari Investment Authority, but also to a firm registered in the Cayman Islands, which does not require companies to record publicly who owns them.

The Singapore-registered investment vehicle that holds the newly privatized 19.5 percent stake in Rosneft is called QHG Shares. It is owned by a London-registered limited liability partnership, QHG Investments, which in turn lists as one of its two owners another London-registered limited liability partnership, QHG Holding, created on Dec 5. One of the partners in QHG Holding is QHG Cayman Limited, registered at an address of the Cayman Islands office of Walkers, an international law firm.

Jack Boldarin, Walkers managing partner in London, told Reuters the law firm would not be able to confirm whether any company was its client, or comment further. The use of an offshore company is by itself no indication of wrongdoing, but it can make it impossible to determine the true owner of an asset from public records. The Singapore vehicle is also the borrower for Intesa's €5.2 billion loan, and QHG Holdings, the London partnership that includes the Cayman Islands firm, is a guarantor of that debt. Banking experts say Intesa would be required by "know your customer" rules to verify the borrowers' identities. Regulators would exercise heightened scrutiny because of the size of the deal and the need to comply with sanctions on Russia. Reuters asked Intesa whether it knew who the beneficial owners of the Cayman company were. The bank replied with a statement: "Intesa Sanpaolo does not comment on the details of its client operations. But we wish to reiterate that the financing was completed with strict adherence to the regulations applicable to embargoes. Italian authorities found nothing that would prohibit such an operation." The Italian central bank, which serves as Italy's banking regulator, declined to comment.

### Mystery Financing

If the full identity of the new owners of the Rosneft stake is a mystery, so too is the complete source of the funds with which they bought it. Although Qatar has never publicly confirmed how much it has contributed to the deal or the size of the stake that it bought, Glencore and Rosneft say it contributed €2.5 billion. Along with the €300 million from Glencore and the €5.2 billion loaned by Intesa, that still leaves a shortfall of €2.2 billion.

Glencore has said this additional money came from other, undisclosed banks, including Russian banks, but has given no further details. The Qataris and Rosneft have declined to comment on the source of this funding. The

purpose of Russia's privatization program is to attract overseas money to cover a budgetary shortfall caused by low oil prices and Western sanctions. Putin has therefore banned Russian state-owned banks from participating in the financing of privatization deals, which would defeat the aim of bringing in foreign capital.

But public records in Singapore show that Russia's second-largest bank, state-controlled VTB, loaned the Singapore vehicle QHG Shares the full €10.2 billion that it paid to the Russian state last month to buy the stake. VTB held the 19.5 percent Rosneft stake as collateral for that loan for part of December, before relinquishing it back to Rosneft's state-owned parent company Rosneftgaz, which in turn relinquished it back to the Singapore vehicle when Intesa's loan arrived in January.

VTB and Rosneft say VTB's role in the deal was solely to reduce market turbulence which would have arisen if the 10.2 billion euros had arrived abruptly from abroad to be converted to roubles on the open market. Apart from saying that its role was to reduce market volatility, VTB declined to comment further, including when asked if the full 10.2 billion euros was paid back, or by whom.

### Finding a Buyer

Rosneft is the world's biggest listed oil company by output and, along with natural gas export monopoly Gazprom, one of two crown jewels of the Russian state. Even at the best of times without the added risk of Western sanctions, there would only be a few foreign investors with deep enough pockets to buy a big stake. Glencore, one of the main buyers of Rosneft's crude, has Qatar's \$335 billion sovereign wealth fund, the QIA, as its largest shareholder.

Russia and Qatar have backed opposite sides for years in the war in Syria, but as the world's two leading natural gas exporters they have good reason to cooperate on energy issues and bury some of their differences over Middle East policy. "The idea looked appealing to Qatar. They like investing in energy. They saw upside in Rosneft. They saw upside in building relations with Russia, whose role in the Middle East politics is only set to rise," said one source involved in talks among members of the Qatar/Glencore consortium about the purchase.

According to a source close to Rosneft's management board, the deal came as a surprise to Rosneft's shareholders, including Britain's BP, which itself owns 19.75 percent of Rosneft and is represented on its board. The Rosneft board learned about the sale from Sechin himself only on Dec 7, several hours after Sechin recorded his televised meeting with Putin announcing it, the source said. "Matters of the board of directors are confidential." — Reuters

## TRUMP AND PRESS: WAR OVER TRUTH IS ON

With Donald Trump and the news media unable to agree even on the weather, the war over truth is on. In the first few days of his presidency, Trump and his aides have been accused of spreading outright lies. The response: the "dishonest" media is out to get him. Since the weekend, Trump has been embroiled in controversy over the crowd at his swearing-in, with both he and the White House overstating its size - and dismissing conflicting evidence as biased against him.

New York Times fact-checkers called out Trump for claiming the rain stopped and the weather turned "sunny" after his inaugural speech - noting that in reality a light rain fell throughout his remarks. The same day, Trump falsely asserted that his well-documented feud with the US intelligence services was made up by the media. And two days later, on Monday, he told congressional leaders that as many as five million people could have voted illegally in November - a claim backed by no public evidence.

During his campaign, Trump's loose interpretation of truth kept fact-checkers working around the clock - PolitiFact found 70 percent of his statements "mostly" false or worse. His first steps in the White House

have followed a similar pattern: as news organizations called out the several falsehoods uttered over the weekend, his aide Kellyanne Conway defended what she called "alternative facts" - leaving much of America speechless.

Trump spokesman Sean Spicer, in his first official media briefing on Monday, claimed that much of the press is opposed to the new president and itself fudges facts. He cited one report - which turned out to be inaccurate and was later corrected - indicating a bust of Martin Luther King Jr had been removed from its place in the White House. "Over and over again there's this constant attempt to undermine his credibility and the movement that he represents," Spicer said. "And it's frustrating for not just him, but I think so many of us that are trying to work to get this message out." Spicer appeared to soften the tone, calling for an improved relationship with journalists after Trump, on his first day in office, dubbed them "among the most dishonest human beings on Earth."

### 'Full Orwell'

But at next day's briefing, Spicer stood by Trump's unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud, called out as a "lie" by leading media

including the New York Times. Spicer told reporters the president "has believed that for a while based on studies and information he has," without giving evidence. Trump has previously cited two studies documenting voter registration errors, neither of which makes any claims about fraudulent voting.

Summing up the view of many stunned observers, Washington Post media columnist Margaret Sullivan wrote this week that Spicer was sent to "brazenly lie" from the White House podium. "We've gone full Orwell," she wrote, drawing a parallel to the distortion of facts in the dystopian classic "1984" - sales of which have spiked since the weekend. In these tussles over facts, some commentators see a deliberate strategy of delegitimizing the press, in order to curtail future scrutiny of the new administration. "His war isn't with the media. Trump lives off media attention and delights in press coverage. His war is with facts," argued Vox.com editor-in-chief Ezra Klein. "The Trump administration is creating a baseline expectation among its loyalists that they can't trust anything said by the media. The spat over crowd size is a low-stakes, semi-comic dispute, but the groundwork is being laid for much more consequential debates over what is, and isn't, true."

### Credibility at stake

Stony Brook University political scientist John Ryan said the new administration appears to understand that increasingly, "in politics, the facts do not matter". Ryan, in a CNBC column, said many people believed unemployment went up under president Barack Obama when the opposite was true. "The Trump administration knows this and believes it allows them to say whatever they want," Ryan said. "Because the facts will not play much of a role in how the public view his administration."

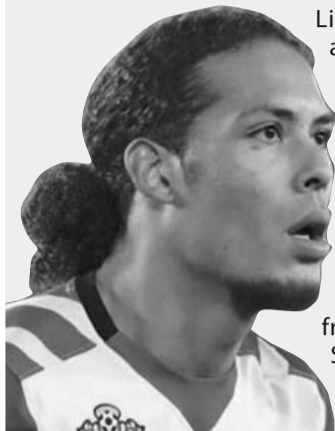
Some analysts warn, however, that Trump's apparent willingness to bend facts is eroding his credibility, and could durably undermine trust in the US government. "While I am much more concerned about policy than I am about crowd-size controversies, White House credibility is of paramount importance," said Andy Wright, a law professor and former White House staffer under Bill Clinton, writing for the Just Security blog.

"The Trump presidency has already ignited a crisis of confidence," he said. "Without a credible White House, our allies cannot rely on our promises and our adversaries doubt our threats. Everything gets more dangerous." — AFP



### SOUTHAMPTON FACE ANXIOUS WAIT OVER VAN DIJK INJURY

**LONDON:** Southampton's Netherlands defender Virgil van Dijk may be set for a lengthy spell on the sidelines after injuring his ankle in Sunday's 3-0 Premier League win over Leicester City. Southampton fear Van Dijk, who will miss Wednesday's League Cup semi-final, second leg at Liverpool, could be out for up to three months, according to British media reports. Asked how long Van Dijk would be ruled out, a club spokesman told Reuters: "Our assessment is still ongoing, we're waiting on completion of the scans before we can say with any certainty". With manager Claude Puel already juggling resources after defender Jose Fonte's switch to West Ham United, a long-term injury to Van Dijk would leave his squad short in defence. Southampton, who head into the tie at Anfield with a 1-0 lead from the first leg, host Arsenal in the FA Cup on Saturday before a Premier League trip to Swansea City three days later. — Reuters

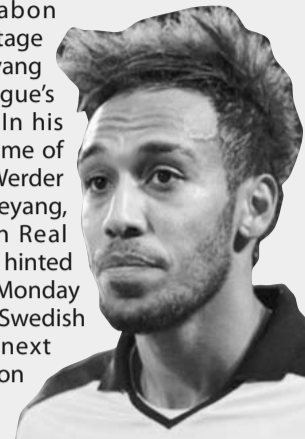


### MCILROY AIMING TO RETURN FROM INJURY

**NEW YORK:** Rory McIlroy is targeting the Mexico Championship in March as his return to tournament action from injury. McIlroy aggravated a rib stress fracture while finishing runner-up at the SA Open in Gauteng two weekends ago. Those injuries typically take about six weeks to heal, and he believes he'll be ready to play again in the first World Golf Championship of the year, from March 2-5. "I feel like I can maybe get back before that, but if I were to play (the) Honda (Classic) and then go straight to Mexico, I'd be playing two weeks in a row. I'd like to ease my way back in gently," he said on Tuesday. He said the Mexico Championship in Mexico City was ideal because there was no cut. "I can see how everything feels, and I have a week off after that," he told The Clubhouse golf podcast. McIlroy, the world No. 2, has already missed the Abu Dhabi Championship, and pulled out of the Dubai Desert Classic next week. The injury means he will also miss the Genesis Open in California and Honda in Florida next month. He put the rib injury down to an extra-busy offseason, when he hit a lot of balls to make a swing change and test drivers. —AP

### HIT-MAN AUBAMEYANG TO RETURN FOR DORTMUND

**BERLIN:** Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, the German league's top scorer, is set to return for Borussia Dortmund at Mainz on Sunday after Gabon's early Africa Cup of Nations exit. "He will be back with us again by Thursday so he will definitely be fit and an option for our coach," Dortmund CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke told Kicker. Hosts Gabon crashed out of the Cup of Nations at the group stage after drawing all three pool games, but Aubameyang still managed two goals. He is the German league's top scorer with 16 goals in 15 league games. In his absence Dortmund won their first Bundesliga game of 2017 on Saturday with a scrappy 2-1 victory at Werder Bremen to climb fourth. The 27-year-old Aubameyang, who has made no secret of his desire to join Real Madrid, has a Dortmund contract until 2020, but hinted last week that he may leave in the summer. On Monday Dortmund signed a potential replacement when Swedish teenage prodigy Alexander Isak-dubbed the next Zlatan Ibrahimovic-joined for a reported 10 million euros (\$10.7m).—AFP



### AMIR'S 6TH INTERNATIONAL SHOOTING GRAND PRIX TO KICK OFF ON SATURDAY

By Abdellatif Sharaa

**KUWAIT:** HH The Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah Sixth International Shooting Grand Prix will kick off on Saturday with the participation of 650 shooters from 47 countries.

President of Arab and Kuwait Shooting Federations Eng Duaj Khalaf Al-Otaibi said the tournament will include the 13th Arab Shooting Tournament that will continue until February 3rd.

Al-Otaibi was speaking at a press conference held Tuesday night at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex along with secretary general of KSF and ASF Obaid Al-Osaimi. He said the tournament is expected to see strong competition by shooters who look forward to win its prestigious cup.

Al-Otaibi highly appreciated the support of HH the Amir to this sport of our heritage, and his patronizing of this tournament that is revered by all shooters. He also appreciated the support of Public Authority for Sport led by Sheikh Ahmad Al-Mansour Al-Sabah. He said we are happy to organize

the tournament which contributes to the development of Kuwait Shooting which has gone to wider horizons and pointed to the achievements Kuwait Shooting made at the International and Olympic levels, especial in Rio, when six Kuwaiti shooters qualified while Fuheid Al-Daihani and Abdallah Al-Rashidi displayed a very strong performance there, despite all the problems Kuwaiti athletes are facing at the present time. He said Kuwait Shooting Sport Club Board of Directors are concentrating on the base youth and juniors, and were able to form teams at these stages, as we absolutely believe in the importance of having links between the generations.

Obaid Al-Osaimi said that preparations for this event started early, as the Higher Organizing Committee has been working for a long time, getting ranges ready, workshops, and training.

He said there were special courses for referees who will officiate the event, for their very important role. He said the tournament coincides with Kuwait's National and Liberation days, adding that all is ready.



## FRANCE INTO SEMIS, QATAR OUT OF WORLDS

**PARIS:** Holders France rallied past Sweden into the semi-finals of the world handball championships on Tuesday as Qatar, finalists two years ago, were dumped out of the tournament. France held off Sweden 33-30 in a thriller which went down to the wire in Lille to set up a meeting with Slovenia, who ended Qatar's run 32-30 in Paris. Croatia edged 2013 champions Spain 30-29 in Montpellier, thanks to nine goals from left back Marko Mamic, as Norway booked their first semi-final at the worlds with a 31-28 win over Hungary in Albertville. French hopes had been boosted by the elimination of Olympic champions Denmark and European holders Germany.

But the French had to battle past a dogged Sweden with Lukas Nilsson powering the Scandinavians with five first-half goals as the hosts trailed 16-15 at the break.

With some key substitutions however and good work by Vincent Gerard, Kentin Mahe and Nedim Remili, the French battled back to keep their bid for a sixth world title on track. They take on Slovenia today. It will be the third meeting between the two teams in less than two weeks with the French winning the previous ties.

The clash will also have a special flavour for Slovenian back Jure Dolenc, voted man of the match against Qatar with five goals, and Vid Kavtincnik, who will be up against many of their teammates from Montpellier. Qatar had shocked Germany in the previous round but were trailing from the outset as Slovenia pulled 9-5 ahead after 11 minutes thanks to Dolenc. Jan Grebenc was also on target as Slovenia entered the last 15 minutes with a nine-goal advantage.

But despite a late fightback and eight goals from French-born Bertrand Roine it was too late for the Qataris to come back. Earlier, Norway broke new ground at the world championships with Espen Lie Hansen, Sander Sagosen and goalkeeper Torbjorn Berglund laying the groundwork for their quarter-final win.

The Norwegians, whose highest world ranking of six was back in 1958, will meet Croatia, the 2003 champions, tomorrow for the other place in Sunday's final. —AFP



PARIS: Qatar's Youssef Ali shoots the ball during the 25th men's Handball World Championship Slovenia against Qatar at the Bercy arena in Paris, Tuesday. — AP



MONTPELLIER: Spain's Alex Dujshbae, centre, attempts a shot on goal past Croatia's Jakov Gojun, left, and Luka Stepancic, during the 25th men's Handball World Championship match between Spain and Croatia, in Montpellier, southern France, Tuesday. — AP

## RED BULL REIGN'S 3-ON-3 BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

**KUWAIT:** In continuation with Red Bull's habit of staging offbeat sports events, Red Bull Reign invites Kuwait's top basketball players to compete in the ultimate 3-on-3 battle, testing teams' endurance, skills, teamwork, and ability to own their court while trying to accumulate the most points possible to outlast their opponents.

Besides other qualifiers happening in 14 other countries this year, the local qualifiers will take place this month, on February 15th

and 16th in Marina Crescent Basketball Courts and concluding with the finals at the same location on February 17th, in partnership with Acqua Eva, GoPro and Marina World.

Unlike most 3-on-3 tournaments, Red Bull Reign will push teams to their utter physical and mental limits. The rules of the high endurance, offense-driven tournament are simple: the teams that score the overall points in each round will advance and continue to compete in the final.

The game will be played on a court with one basket. Each team shall consist of three players and one substitute, with no coach on the playground. The game officials will consist of one or two referees and time/score keepers. Both teams shall warm-up simultaneously prior to the game and a coin flip shall determine which team gets the first possession.

Every shot inside the arc will be awarded one point while every shot behind the arc will count for two points. Accordingly, every suc-

cessful free throw will be awarded one point. The regular playing time during the first round will be eight minutes and 10 during the second round, at which the game will be stopped in the last minute. The clock will be also stop during dead ball situations and free throws and only restarted after the exchange of the ball is completed. However, the first team to score 21 points or more wins the game even if it happens before the end of the time. The Red Bull Reign final champions will

earn the chance to compete in the 303 World Final this held in Washington, USA in September 2017.

Each qualifier will host 24 teams, players 16 and above can submit an application for their team of four players to compete during the qualifying competitions in Kuwait. The qualifiers will be held on two consecutive days at Marina Crescent Basketball courts on 15 and 16 February. For more information, visit: [www.redbull.com/reignkw](http://www.redbull.com/reignkw)





## JAPAN ENDS PAINFUL WAIT FOR LOCAL-BORN 'YOKOZUNA'

**TOKYO:** Japan's excruciating wait for a homegrown yokozuna, or sumo grand champion, ended yesterday when 30-year-old Kisenosato was promoted to the ancient sport's highest rank. A first Emperor's Cup triumph at the weekend was deemed good enough for him to become the first Japan-born wrestler to reach the lofty perch since Wakanohana in 1998, although it took Kisenosato 73 tournaments to get there—longer than anyone since 1926.

"I accept with all humility," the 178-kilo (392-pound) Kisenosato told reporters at a formal ceremony after being approved by the Japan Sumo Association (JSA).

"I will devote myself to the role and try not to disgrace the title of yokozuna. I feel a sense of relief," added the native of Ibaraki prefecture, northeast of Tokyo, before posing for photos while holding up a giant sea bream — a traditional symbol of celebration in Japan.

"I'm overwhelmed with gratitude for all the people who have helped me reach this point." Historians claim sumo dates back more than two millennia but the roly-poly sport been plagued by a series of damaging scandals in recent years. It had been without a Japanese yokozuna since Wakanohana's brother Takanohana retired in 2003 as local wrestlers have been unable to repel a flood of foreigners who have dominated since.

"I would like to celebrate the first yokozuna promotion in 19 years from the bottom of my heart," Japan's Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Koichi Hagiuda told a daily press briefing.

"Kisenosato indeed has the necessary dignity and skill to carve his name in history." The overseas invasion began in earnest with Hawaiian behemoth Konishiki, who was nicknamed 'Dump Truck' and tipped the scales at a whopping 285 kilos (628 pounds), and other hulking Pacific islanders in the 1990s.

### MONGOLIAN RISE

But the subsequent rise of the Mongolians, led by the brilliant but temperamental Asashoryu and latterly Hakuho, who has racked up a record 37 Emperor's Cup victories since 2006, has tormented sumo traditionalists in the absence of a Japanese challenger.

Mongolia, which boasts its own ancient style of traditional wrestling, currently boasts three yokozuna, with Harumafuji having won eight titles and Kakuryu three. Former ozeki (champion) Kotoshogiku last year ended a 10-year wait for a Japanese Emperor's Cup winner, briefly raising local hopes, but failed to build on that momentum, much to the JSA's chagrin. Mongolia's stranglehold over the sport, which retains many Shinto religious overtones, has prompted hand-wringing in sumo's corridors of power, none more so than when Hakuho surpassed the legendary Taiho to win a record 33rd title two years ago.

Japanese sumo officials have been accused of being overly harsh on Mongolian wrestlers, with critics insisting they lack "dignity," but even defenders acknowledge that Asashoryu broke protocol with alarming regularity. The firebrand grappler won 25 Emperor's Cups before retiring in 2010 after being accused of breaking a man's nose in a drunken brawl outside a Tokyo nightclub. Previously he had infamously provoked a soapy bathtub brawl with a rival and was banned for forging a doctor's note for a back injury, only to be caught on camera playing football wearing a Wayne Rooney shirt. Meanwhile, allegations of illegal betting and links with crime syndicates, drugs busts and the bullying death of a young wrestler have shaken the closeted world of sumo to its foundations in recent years. "My behaviour will come under close scrutiny," said a solemn Kisenosato. "The yokozuna rank carries heavy responsibility. The real battle starts now." — AFP



**TORONTO:** Toronto Raptors center Jonas Valanciunas (17) rebounds over San Antonio Spurs guards Danny Green (14), Bryn Forbes (11), Patty Mills (8) and Manu Ginobili (20) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, in Toronto. — AP

## ALDRIDGE SPURS SAN ANTONIO PAST RAPTORS

**TORONTO:** LaMarcus Aldridge scored 21 points while Patty Mills added 18 off the bench as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Toronto Raptors 108-106 on Tuesday night for their fifth straight victory. Without Kawhi Leonard, Tony Parker and Pau Gasol, the Spurs completed a season sweep of the Raptors following a 110-82 home victory earlier this month. Kyle Lowry had 30 points and reserve Terrence Ross added 21 for the Raptors, who have lost four in a row for the first time since March 4-10, 2015.

### 76ERS 121, CLIPPERS 110

Nerlens Noel scored 19 points while Richaun Holmes had 18 as Philadelphia beat Los Angeles. Here was a twist ending not even M. Night Shyamalan could have scripted from his courtside seat: The Sixers rallied without injured center Joel Embiid and still beat Blake Griffin and the 30-win Clippers for their biggest victory of the season. The Sixers rallied from 19 points down and proved yet again they are now a team trying to win games instead of tank seasons. Embiid, out with a left knee contusion, waved his arms from the bench as the crowd shouted "Trust the Process" in the waning minutes of the victory. Griffin scored 12 points on 3-of-11 shooting in his first game since Dec. 18.

### WIZARDS 123, CELTICS 108

Bradley Beal scored 13 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter as Washington extended its home winning streak to 14 games with a victory over Boston. John Wall added 27 points and Markieff Morris had 19 points and 11 rebounds as the Wizards never trailed while scoring their most points this season. It came in a game they openly labeled a grudge match, even arriving at the Verizon Center in funeral-themed black clothing. Isaiah Thomas scored 25 points and had 13 assists, but shot 1 of 7 in the fourth quarter in Boston's third straight loss.

### BULLS 100, MAGIC 92

Dwyane Wade scored 21 points and Jimmy Butler added 20 as Chicago beat Orlando for its second straight victory. Facing an Orlando team that was missing three of its four top guards, Wade and Butler took full advantage with drives to the basket and pull-up jumpers as the Bulls pulled away in the fourth quarter. The turnover-prone Magic simply could not keep pace with a Bulls team that is going through point guard issues of its own with the surprising benching of Michael Carter-Williams. Nikola Vucevic had 20 points for the Magic, who have dropped two straight and 11 of their last 14 games.

### TIMBERWOLVES 112, SUNS 111

Andrew Wiggins sank an 18-foot pull-up jumper at the buzzer to give Minnesota a victory over Phoenix. Wiggins, who scored 31 points, made one of two free throws with 12.1 seconds remaining to put the Timberwolves ahead. P.J. Tucker sank two from the foul line to give Phoenix a 111-110 lead with 6.3 seconds left, just enough time for Wiggins' game-winner. Devin Booker overcame a slow start to make 5 of 6 shots in the fourth quarter, three of them 3 pointers, for 26 points for the Suns. Tyson Chandler had a season-high 22 points and grabbed 17 rebounds for Phoenix. Eric Bledsoe added 18 points, including a three-point play that tied it at 109 with 1:05 remaining.

### NUGGETS 103, JAZZ 93

Nikola Jokic had 23 points and 11 rebounds, Jameer Nelson scored seven of his 17 points in the last four minutes and Denver held on to beat Utah. The Nuggets led by 17 with a minute left in the third quarter before the Jazz made their push. Rudy Gobert scored eight of his 11 in the fourth and Boris Diaw's reverse layup cut the lead to 92-88 with 2:49 remaining. But Denver countered with an 8-0 run and Nelson's 3-pointer pushed the lead back to 100-88 with 1:17 remaining. The Nuggets held on from there for their fifth win in seven games. Darrell Arthur scored 16 points off the bench. Derrick Favors added 18, George Hill had 17 and Diaw added 16 for Utah. — AP

### NBA Results/Standings

Denver 103, Utah 93; Minnesota 112, Phoenix 111; San Antonio 108, Toronto 106; Philadelphia 121, LA Clippers 110; Washington 123, Boston 108; Chicago 100, Orlando 92.

Eastern Conference				Western Conference					
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division					
W	L	PCT	GB						
Toronto	28	17	.622	-	Utah	29	18	.617	-
Boston	26	18	.591	1.5	Oklahoma City	26	19	.578	2
NY Knicks	20	26	.435	8.5	Denver	19	25	.432	8.5
Philadelphia	16	27	.372	11	Portland	19	27	.413	9.5
Brooklyn	9	35	.205	18.5	Minnesota	17	28	.378	11
Central Division				Pacific Division					
Cleveland	30	13	.698	-	Golden State	38	7	.844	-
Chicago	23	23	.500	8.5	LA Clippers	30	17	.638	9
Indiana	22	22	.500	8.5	Sacramento	17	27	.386	20.5
Milwaukee	21	23	.477	9.5	LA Lakers	16	32	.333	23.5
Detroit	21	25	.457	10.5	Phoenix	15	30	.333	23
Southeast Division				Southwest Division					
Atlanta	26	19	.578	-	San Antonio	36	9	.800	-
Washington	25	20	.556	1	Houston	34	14	.708	3.5
Charlotte	23	22	.511	3	Memphis	26	20	.565	10.5
Orlando	18	29	.383	9	New Orleans	18	27	.400	18
Miami	15	30	.333	11	Dallas	15	29	.341	20.5



**TOKYO:** Accompanied by stable master Tagonoura (bottom-r), Tagonoura's wife (bottom-l) and supporters, sumo wrestler Kisenosato (C) holds up a big sea bream to celebrate his promotion to the top rank of "yokozuna" after meeting with representatives from the Japan Sumo Association in Tokyo yesterday. — AFP

## JONES CONFIRMS HARTLEY AS ENGLAND CAPTAIN

**LONDON:** Eddie Jones ended the speculation over the England captaincy yesterday by confirming Dylan Hartley was set to lead the side in their Six Nations opener against France next month.

Northampton hooker Hartley, who last season captained England to a Six Nations Grand Slam, was given a six-week ban after being sent off for striking Sean O'Brien during the Saints' defeat by Leinster on December 3.

But despite not having played a competitive match for some two months, the New Zealand-born front-row is on course to captain England against France at Twickenham on February 4.

With Hartley alongside him at the Six Nations tournament launch in London on Wednesday, England coach Jones said: "Well I haven't actually told him yet. Shall I say now? Okay, I'd like to officially announce Dylan's the captain." Hartley, who has missed more than a year of his career because of a variety of suspensions, insisted he was ready to face France. "I'm confident, I feel fresh, I feel fit, and focused," he said. "I know where I need to be," he added before Jones interjected: "He's had 60 weeks off mate, he's a world expert." Hartley's latest ban came shortly before World Rugby introduced new and stiffer penalties for dangerous, head-high, tackles.

### 'SPEED LIMIT'

Hartley, 30, accepted he would have to change his game. "The much-documented tackle technique, I've been working very hard with Gussie (England

defence coach Paul Gustard) on that," he said. "We always want to tackle low, but there are times when as a second man, low isn't an option," added the 79-times capped Hartley. "It's about for me, my arms, bring them tighter to my body, following through with those, then the shoulder, rather than the arm." Jones compared World Rugby's changes to the introduction of speed cameras on roads. "It's always been illegal to tackle the head of an opposition player, so in that sense nothing's changed," he explained. "You put speed cameras in and what happens—hundreds of thousands of people get fined. A year later the fines decrease. It's the same with high tackles. It will be the same until people learn to 'drive safely', and safely is within the speed limit."

Jones arrived at the launch sporting a black eye, having bruised his face while slipping in a hotel shower earlier yesterday. The Australian, who has won all 13 of his matches in charge of England since taking over following the 2015 World Cup, had a wound dressing around his left eye.

Jones joked about his injuries by referring to England's martial arts-training sessions. "So first we had judo then we had MMA (mixed martial arts). We're just going through all the martial arts and seeing what happened on the body," Jones said. "I just slipped over in the hotel this morning. My mother always told me I had to shave, I walked out of the shower, forgot to shave and this is what happens." — AFP

## O'SHEA URGES ITALY TO END SIX NATIONS DROP DEBATE

**LONDON:** Italy coach Conor O'Shea has urged his side to end the debate over their Six Nations status during this season's tournament. There were renewed calls for promotion and relegation in the Six Nations, which could assist the likes of Georgia and Romania, following Italy's poor showing last year.

Not only did Italy lose all five of their matches, they suffered several thrashings including a 67-14 hammering by Wales—their Rome opponents in the first round of this season's edition on February 5.

But former Ireland fullback O'Shea, installed as Italy coach last year after he left English Premiership side Harlequins, has had an encouraging start to his time in charge of the Azzurri, overseeing their first-ever win over South Africa in November.

"Italy have earned their right to be in the Six Nations," said O'Shea at yesterday's tournament launch in London.

"If ever promotion and relegation were the case, who knows who would be at the bottom by the time that comes? If we get our system right and look after ourselves then we don't have to have those conversations." O'Shea added: "We just want to earn people's respect this year, and see where that takes us."

### 'MASSIVE WIN'

O'Shea said the Azzurri's 20-18 defeat of the Springboks would become an iconic moment for Italian rugby as Munster's celebrated win over the All Blacks in 1978 had been for the game in Ireland.

"To me that win, it's massive," said O'Shea of Italy's tense triumph over South Africa.

"I'm fortunate I'm working in a country steeped in tradition, but we're very aware of its future. With my Irish hat on of Munster beating the All Blacks in 1978 is something that's always spoken about.

"While we know how much we have to learn, we showed the potential the team has if we play with that intensity and passion.

"The win over South Africa could be like that Munster win for us, but only if we make that the case. You give people something to cling on to, you give them hope, a match they can look at and realise it's not mythical.

"But all we want to do now is prepare to try to beat Wales." O'Shea said his long-term goal was to make Italy a side no opponent looked forward to playing.

"We want to get to the World Cup in 2019 and be in a pool where people say 'oh, I don't want to play Italy.' What I want from my players is just an unbelievable work ethic. You should never be afraid of that," who has retained Italy great Sergio Parisse as his captain. "The great Italian football teams were based on incredible defence, but with magic on top. You get that balance. And we need to be unbelievably difficult to play against.

"But then you need the magic on top that people like Sergio Parisse always offer." — AFP



**LONDON:** From left to right, Italy rugby team captain Sergio Parisse, Ireland captain Rory Best, Scotland captain Greig Laidlaw, England captain Dylan Hartley, France captain Guilhem Guirado and Wales captain Alun Wyn Jones pose next to the Six Nations trophy during the 6 Nations media launch at The Hurlingham Club, London yesterday. — AP



## REST OVER AS PATRIOTS BEGIN SUPER BOWL PREP FOR FALCONS

**FOXBOROUGH:** Bill Belichick is on to the Atlanta Falcons. After taking a day to review and recharge following his team's AFC championship game win over Pittsburgh, the New England coach said Tuesday that the coaching staff's preparations are fully underway for the Super Bowl. The Patriots are preparing to make their seventh Super Bowl berth during the Belichick era, making them veterans at this point in handling the various logistics involved with the big game. Belichick said it's helped them turn the page "about as quickly as we could."

"We're on to Atlanta now as a coaching staff. We're deep in the middle of them," he said. New England has fond memories of the Super Bowl played in

Houston, having won in 2004 on Adam Vinatieri's field goal in the closing seconds to beat the Carolina Panthers.

"There was a big matchup against our kind of 'no-name' offensive line and a very good defensive front that the Panthers had," Belichick recalled.

But Belichick says that's the furthest thing from his mind as his team prepares for a Falcons team it hasn't seen much on film this season with just five common opponents (San Francisco, Los Angeles, Seattle, Arizona and Denver).

The Patriots do have some familiarity with Falcons coach Dan Quinn, who was defensive coordinator of the Seattle Seahawks when the teams met in the Super Bowl two years ago.

"They have some of their own characteristics and of course the players are different, so that makes it different," Belichick said. "But schematically there is quite a bit of carryover."

One of the key differences, he said, is that the Falcons seem to bring a little more pressure than Seattle ran. Belichick also sees similarities in the schemes, which rely on players of similar skillsets such as Seattle's Kam Chancellor and Atlanta's Keanu Neal. "Go right down the line - they're similar," Belichick said. This will also be the second straight game that the Patriots defense will have to contend with a dynamic receiver.

Julio Jones had nine receptions for 180 yards and two scores in Atlanta's NFC

championship game win over Green Bay, but will be challenged by a New England secondary that has given up just two passing touchdowns in the playoffs. "He's probably just one of the most dynamic players in the league," Patriots defensive coordinator Matt Patricia said. "I usually don't wind up comparing him to other people; I wind up comparing other people to him just because of his skill set and his ability." The team will have meetings Wednesday and then return to the practice field today.

Patricia is in his fifth season leading the Patriots' defense, but has been a New England assistant since 2004. While he's witnessed the interactions of several different teams in that time, he said this

group has a vibe in the locker room that is unique. It is a dynamic that he's looking forward to seeing grow over these next two weeks. "If you play at this point in the season, you play this late in the season and you're blessed enough to do that, I think the guys just have that kind of special bond," he said.

"They have a good time with each other but they also know when we're in the meetings, we're grinding, we're working, we're studying. "When those guys communicate like that and they have that kind of open dialect back and forth, I think it just kind of enhances everything that goes on, hopefully, when you get out to the practice field and to the field itself." —AP

## ALL EYES ON RISING STAR NOREN AT QATAR MASTERS

**DOHA:** After his stellar finish to 2016, which saw him win four European Tour tournaments, Alex Noren is the man to watch at this week's Qatar Masters.

In-form Noren, the world number 10, is the highest ranked player in a Doha field which also includes former US Open winner Graeme McDowell, Rafa Cabrera Bello and in-form Tommy Fleetwood.

The Swede, who averages almost 290 yards driving, is also well-suited to a course which rewards length off the tee, especially in the windy conditions expected to face players this week.

But despite the extra attention Noren is receiving after winning the Scottish Open, European and British Masters and the Nedbank Golf Challenge in the final five months of last year, the 34-year-old says he is undaunted by the increased expectation. "I feel it (the pressure) as a positive. It gives me a lot of satisfaction," he told reporters on Tuesday.

"I came here, I think 2006 on a wildcard. I got an invite and shot millions. It feels different coming here this time. I feel better than that." Asked to explain his dramatic improvement, Noren said it was mostly down to reducing the errors in his game.

### PUSHED HARD

"The skill level has not increased dramatically. It's more that I, well, I just know my game better. "So I'm not going for

shots that are quite low percentage. "I don't have really the bad shots as often as I did before." Noren's previous best performance in Doha was a tie for fourth place in 2013 and he also finished ninth two years later.

He is likely to be pushed hard for the \$416,660 first prize by Spaniard Cabrera Bello, who has three top-three finishes in Qatar, and has likened conditions in the Gulf to his Canary Islands birthplace.

Fleetwood, straight from winning the Abu Dhabi championship on Sunday, is looking to improve on a top 10 finish last year in Qatar and, naturally, feels confident.

"I actually feel like this course suits me more than last week," he said.

"A lot of the holes sort of set up better to my eye. This one kind of fits my eye a little bit more. "We'll see how we do. My game shouldn't have gone off too much... hopefully we'll carry on."

This is the 20th year of the Qatar Masters and previous winners include Adam Scott, Henrik Stenson and Sergio Garcia.

The past two tournaments have been won by South African Branden Grace, but he is not competing this time round.

This year sees the tournament finishing for the first time on a Sunday, rather than Saturday to coincide with the final day of the weekend in the Gulf. This switch has been made to try and increase global television viewing figures for the event, tournament organisers said. — AFP



**CHICAGO:** Artem Anisimov #15 of the Chicago Blackhawks turns to pass against Nikita Nesterov #89 of the Tampa Bay Lightning at the United Center on Tuesday in Chicago, Illinois. The Lightning defeated the Blackhawks 5-2. — AFP

## BLUES DEFEAT PENGUINS AS LIGHTNING BEAT BLACKHAWKS

**PITTSBURGH:** Carter Hutton stopped 34 shots for his sixth career shutout to lead the St. Louis Blues to a 3-0 victory over the Pittsburgh Penguins on Tuesday. Colton Parayko, Ryan Reaves and Scottie Upshall scored to help the Blues end a goal and an assist while Nikita Nesterov finished with 24 saves for the Penguins, who had their four-game winning streak snapped.

### LIGHTNING 5, BLACKHAWKS 2

Tyler Johnson scored two goals 30 seconds apart early in the third period to lead Tampa Bay past Chicago and end a three-game slide. Brian Boyle had a goal and an assist while Nikita Nesterov and Nikita Kucherov also scored for the Lightning, who broke loose for three goals in a 3:57 span of the third to erase a 2-1 deficit. Jonathan Toews had a goal and an assist while Duncan Keith also scored for the Blackhawks.

### SENATORS 3, CAPITALS 0

Mike Condon stopped 31 shots for his fourth shutout of the season as Ottawa defeated Washington. Chris Kelly, Bobby Ryan and Zack Smith scored for the Senators while Philipp Grubauer made 31 saves.

### WILD 3, STARS 2, SO

Chris Stewart scored in the fifth round of a shootout to lift Minnesota over Dallas. Patrick Eaves and Jamie Benn had scored for the Stars in the shootout, but Jason Pominville and Mikko Koivu matched them. Wild goalie Devan Dubnyk stopped Jason Spezza before Stewart's shot won the game. Pominville and Koivu scored in regulation for Minnesota and Dubnyk had 35 saves through overtime. Eaves and Tyler Seguin scored for Dallas and Kari Lehtonen finished with 31 saves. Spezza had two assists.

### BRUINS 4, RED WINGS 3, OT

David Pastrnak scored with 46.9 seconds left on the clock in overtime as Boston rallied to beat Detroit. Pastrnak beat goalie Jared Coreau with a high slap shot and ended the Bruins' four-game losing streak (0-3-1). Brad Marchand had two goals, Kevan Miller scored and Pastrnak also had an assist for Boston. Tuukka Rask stopped 23 shots. Mike Green had a goal and an assist for the Red Wings. Andreas Athanasiou and Tomas Tatar also scored, and Henrik Zetterberg added two assists.

### ISLANDERS 4, BLUE JACKETS 2

Nikolay Kulemin scored a goal and helped create another as New York chased All-Star goalie Sergei Bobrovsky in a win over Columbus. The Islanders are 3-0-1 under interim coach Doug Weight a week after Jack Capuano was fired. Thomas Greiss made 21 saves. Kulemin put New York ahead late in the second period and created space in front for Josh Bailey's 100th NHL goal earlier in the period. Jason Chimera got his fifth goal in seven games and Brock Nelson also scored for the Islanders. John Tavares had two assists. Nick Foligno had an early score for Columbus and Cam Atkinson got his 24th goal late.

### KINGS 3, DEVILS 1

Anze Kopitar and Tanner Pearson scored in the opening 1:46 as Los Angeles snapped a four-game losing streak with a victory over New Jersey. Kings defenseman Alec Martinez capped the team's three-goal first period and Peter Budaj stopped 24 shots in his 21st win of the season. Jeff Carter had the primary assist on the first two goals. Kyle Quincey scored in the third period for New Jersey, which has lost five straight at home. Los Angeles was outstanding on special teams. Kopitar scored a power-play goal on the Kings' first shot and the Devils failed

NHL results/standings												
Tampa Bay 5, Chicago 2; Minnesota 3, Dallas 2 (SO); Buffalo 5, Nashville 4 (OT); San Jose 4, Winnipeg 3; Montreal 5, Calgary 1; Ottawa 3, Washington 0; Boston 4, Detroit 3 (OT); Los Angeles 3, New Jersey 1; NY Islanders 4, Columbus 2; St. Louis 3, Pittsburgh 0.												
Western Conference					Metropolitan Division							
Central Division												
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	Ottawa	Boston	Toronto	Florida	Buffalo		
Minnesota	31	11	5	155	108	67	26	15	5	125	120	57
Chicago	30	15	5	139	127	65	24	21	6	127	132	54
Nashville	23	17	8	134	127	54	22	14	9	140	131	53
St. Louis	24	19	5	137	147	53	20	19	10	114	136	50
Dallas	19	20	10	131	154	48	20	18	9	115	132	49
Winnipeg	22	25	4	145	158	48	20	19	9	123	140	49
Colorado	13	30	2	91	153	28	22	22	5	135	144	49
Pacific Division												
San Jose	31	16	2	134	112	64	32	10	6	155	104	70
Anaheim	27	14	9	133	125	63	32	11	4	157	110	68
Edmonton	26	15	8	144	131	60	30	12	5	169	137	65
Calgary	24	24	3	131	147	51	31	16	1	167	127	63
Los Angeles	23	21	4	120	121	50	23	19	6	136	154	52
Vancouver	22	20	6	116	135	50	20	17	9	133	135	49
Arizona	15	26	6	105	152	36	21	19	7	126	137	49
Eastern Conference												
Atlantic Division												
Montreal	29	13	7	149	122	65	20	20	9	111	139	49

to capitalize on four power plays, including a two-man advantage for 1:44 midway through the first period.

### CANADIENS 5, FLAMES 1

Alexander Radulov scored twice as Montreal extended Calgary's losing streak to four games. Andrew Shaw, Tomas Plekanec and Daniel Carr also scored for the Canadiens (29-13-7). Carey Price made 30 saves and even had an assist. Sam Bennett scored with a second left for the Flames (24-24-3) while Chad Johnson stopped 15 of 20 shots.

### SABRES 5, PREDATORS 4, OT

Jack Eichel scored two goals, including the game-winner at 2:35 of overtime to give Buffalo a comeback victory over Nashville. Zemgus Girgensons, Brian Gionta and Kyle Okposo also scored for the Sabres. James Neal, Filip Forsberg,

Cody McLeod and Viktor Arvidsson scored for the Predators, while Calle Jarnkrok had two assists. Nashville held a 4-2 lead late in the third period before Gionta scored at 14:10. Then, with Sabres goaltender Robin Lehner pulled for an extra skater, Okposo tipped home a pass from Sam Reinhart with 1:05 remaining to send the game into overtime. Lehner stopped 35 shots.

### SHARKS 4, JETS 3

Patrick Marleau scored the tiebreaking goal with 4:33 left in the third period to lift San Jose over Winnipeg for its sixth straight win. Brent Burns, Logan Couture and Melker Karlsson also scored for the Sharks. Aaron Dell stopped 31 shots. Bryan Little scored twice and Andrew Copp had a goal for the Jets. Winnipeg defensemen Dustin Byfuglien and Josh Morrissey each had two assists, and Ondrej Pavelec made 22 saves. — AP



**SAN DIEGO:** Tiger Woods watches his tee shot on the third hole of the north course during the Pro-Am event of the Farmers Insurance Open golf tournament yesterday, in San Diego. — AP



**DALLAS:** Chris Stewart #7 of the Minnesota Wild scores the game winning goal against Kari Lehtonen #32 of the Dallas Stars in a shootout at American Airlines Center on Tuesday in Dallas, Texas. — AFP



## FROOME EXPECTS PORTE TO OFFER STERN TEST IN GEELONG

**LONDON:** Three-times Tour de France champion Chris Froome expects local favourite Richie Porte to push him all the way to the finish when the Briton kicks off his 2017 season at the UCI's World Tour event in Victoria on Sunday.

Froome will ride in the Towards Zero Race around Melbourne's Formula One circuit on Thursday but

begins his quest for a fourth Tour de France title in earnest at Sunday's 174-km one-day race, which starts in Geelong, south-west of Melbourne.

The 31-year-old Briton did not take part in this year's Tour Down Under, which Porte won ahead of Colombia's Esteban Chaves, and said it was premature to be talking about who the main contenders would be in France

in July. "It's still very early obviously in the season and it's probably too early to be talking favourites for the Tour," Froome was quoted as saying by the Australian Associated Press.

"I've always had a lot of confidence in Richie's abilities and always said he's a Tour de France contender," the Briton added of his former Team Sky team mate. With three Australians—Porte, Jay

McCarthy, and Nathan Haas—in the top four of the Tour Down Under, Froome anticipates a strong challenge from local riders, especially over the steep Chalmra climb that marks the finishing circuit.

"Certainly for Sunday, I'd expect Richie to be up there on that final climb, as I'd expect Esteban, and Nathan to be hanging on for dear life,"

he added.

"Every edition will be different but the organisers have done a great job of putting in a course that is so unpredictable. It is just a very open race."

Froome will head into the five-day Herald Sun tour, which races around northern Victoria and begins in central Melbourne with a prologue on Feb. 1, after Sunday's race. — Reuters

### English Football League Tables

English Football League tables after Tuesday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, goals against, points):

Championship						League One									
Brighton	27	18	6	3	43	18	60	Sheffield Utd	29	17	6	6	53	34	57
Newcastle	27	19	1	7	54	21	58	Scunthorpe	27	16	7	4	53	26	55
Reading	27	15	4	8	39	36	49	Bolton	26	15	5	6	35	19	50
Huddersfield	27	15	4	8	32	30	49	Fleetwood Town	28	14	7	7	42	29	49
Leeds	27	15	3	9	37	27	48	Bradford	28	11	13	4	34	23	46
Sheff Wed	27	13	6	8	31	26	45	Rochdale	27	14	3	10	41	36	45
Derby	27	12	7	8	27	21	43	Southend	27	11	9	7	39	34	42
Barnsley	27	12	5	10	46	41	41	Peterborough	27	11	8	8	40	33	41
Fulham	27	10	10	7	44	32	40	Millwall	27	11	7	9	42	40	40
Norwich	27	12	4	11	45	40	40	Bristol Rovers	28	11	6	11	47	50	39
Preston	27	11	7	9	37	34	40	AFC Wimbledon	27	9	10	8	38	33	37
Birmingham	27	9	10	8	31	36	37	Oxford Utd	27	10	7	10	34	30	37
Aston Villa	27	8	12	7	28	27	36	Walsall	27	9	10	8	33	35	37
Ipswich	27	9	7	11	28	33	34	Charlton	26	8	12	6	33	26	36
Brentford	27	9	6	12	34	35	33	Port Vale	26	8	8	10	29	39	32
Cardiff	27	9	6	12	31	41	33	Milton	26	8	7	11	34	37	31
QPR	27	9	6	12	26	37	33	Gillingham	27	8	7	12	34	43	31
Wolverhampton	27	8	8	11	34	37	32	Northampton	28	8	6	14	39	48	30
Nottm Forest	27	8	6	13	38	45	30	Swindon	28	7	8	13	27	41	29
Bristol City	27	8	3	16	35	39	27	Shrewsbury	28	7	7	14	27	40	28
Wigan	27	6	7	14	24	32	25	Bury	28	7	5	16	43	55	26
Burton Albion	27	6	7	14	26	37	25	Chesterfield	28	7	5	16	28	45	26
Blackburn	27	6	7	14	32	44	25	Oldham	27	5	10	12	15	28	25
Rotherham	27	4	4	19	27	60	16	Coventry	27	4	9	14	23	39	21



**PORT-GENTIL:** Democratic Republic of the Congo's midfielder Paul Jose Mpoku (L) scores a free kick goal during the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations group C football match between Togo and DR Congo in Port-Gentil on Tuesday. — AFP

## COUTINHO PENS 'LONG-TERM' LIVERPOOL DEAL

**LONDON:** Brazilian playmaker Philippe Coutinho has committed his future to Liverpool by signing a new "long-term" contract, the Premier League giants announced yesterday. Liverpool did not reveal details of the deal, but reports suggest Coutinho has signed a five-year contract worth between £150,000 (\$188,800, 175,650 euros) and £200,000 per week.

Coutinho, 24, joined Liverpool from Inter Milan in a £8.5 million move in January 2013 and has since become the team's attacking fulcrum, scoring 34 goals in 163 appearances.

"Ever since my arrival here, I was welcomed with open arms by the supporters and everyone at this football club," Coutinho said in comments published on the Liverpool website.

"This is an important factor that carries weight when you decide to remain here for a longer period and this did have a lot of weight when I thought about the renewal of my contract."

"I can only thank every supporter for their faith in me. I really hope to repay them. I will do my very best on the pitch to create assists for my team-mates and score goals for us to try and win trophies and titles." An

artful attacking midfielder and set-piece specialist with an eye for the spectacular, Coutinho has been capped 23 times by Brazil, scoring six goals. He has been in sparkling form this season, scoring six goals in 18 games, and was badly missed by Liverpool after sustaining an ankle ligament injury in November that kept him out for seven weeks.

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said Coutinho's new contract, which is not thought to include a release clause, represented a "big statement". "He is truly world-class in that very top bracket," Klopp said. "The fact he wants to stay here and be part of what we are looking to build and develop shows his personal commitment to make himself better and be an integral part of something that is very special. "We have total belief in our project, but when a player of Phil's calibre and status commits for this length of time it shows that our faith is shared throughout the game."

"He knows he can fulfil his dreams and ambitions here at Liverpool. This is a big statement. I look forward to seeing Phil create many more great memories and moments for this club." — AFP



**TUKWILA:** Seattle Sounders including forward Clint Dempsey, center, and team captain midfielder Osvaldo Alonso, second from right, jog during the first training session of the 2017 MLS soccer season, Tuesday, in Tukwila, Wash.— AP

## HOLDERS IVORY COAST OUSTED FROM AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS

**OYEM:** Defending champions the Ivory Coast were sent packing from the Africa Cup of Nations on Tuesday after losing 1-0 to a Morocco side coached by their old boss Herve Renard.

A brilliant Rachid Alioui goal gave Morocco the victory in Oyem in northern Gabon as the Atlas Lions marched on to the quarter-finals alongside DR Congo.

An impressive Congolese side eased to a 3-1 win against Togo in the night's other game in Port-Gentil as they sealed top spot in Group C.

But it is the elimination of the Elephants, winners in 2015 after a penalty shoot-out against Ghana, that overshadows all else. Their departure is the latest blow to the tournament following premature exits for hosts Gabon and much-fancied Algeria in the last few days.

And for the fourth consecutive Cup of Nations, the reigning champions will be absent from the quarter-finals, but the winning coach from two years ago will be in the last eight.

The blond, bronzed 48-year-old, wearing his lucky white shirt, hopes to become the first coach to win three Cup of Nations titles with three different countries having also won it with Zambia in 2012.

"Today we beat the Ivory Coast on a bad pitch that proved to be a leveller. Now a new

competition begins with the knockout matches, which will be much like this one, and we will need a winning mentality," Renard said.

Alioui, of French second-tier side Nimes, curled in a sublime long-range effort at the end of a counterattack just past the hour mark to break the deadlock and leave the Ivorians needing to score twice to stay alive. They could not.

"It is an immense disappointment. My thoughts go out to all Ivorians who are going through a difficult time," said their French coach Michel Dussuyer. "I take responsibility. We did not fulfil our objectives. Our ambition was to get past the first round and retain our title. It is going to be a difficult night," he added as he refused to be drawn on his future in the job.

### DRC UNDERLINE CREDENTIALS

As the Ivorians prepare to go home, Morocco will now head to Port-Gentil for a quarter-final while DR Congo make their way back to Oyem.

Florent Ibenge's side needed just a draw to qualify but a 3-1 win over Togo secured top spot and the manner of their performance on a shocking pitch suggests the 2015 semi-finalists must be seen as genuine contenders to win the trophy now.

Junior Kabananga fired past Togo's substitute

goalkeeper Cedric Mensah for the opener just before the half-hour mark and he also headed against the post prior to the interval.

Neeskens Kebano of Fulham lobbed in the second goal nine minutes into the second period after latching onto Marcel Tisserand's punt downfield.

Kodjo Fo-Doh Laba pulled one back for Togo but a Paul-Jose Mpoku free-kick with 10 minutes left that struck the underside of the bar and came down just over the line secured the win.

"Having gone top of the group after two rounds of games we needed to remain vigilant and we did that," said Ibenge.

"They gave us a fright after we had gone 2-0 up and had we not matured as a team thanks to the two years we have spent together we might have panicked." Togo and their captain Emmanuel Adebayor were given a guard of honour at the end by the Congolese players but they go home having failed to register a win.

The group stage concludes later when Ghana and Egypt clash in Port-Gentil and Mali meet already-eliminated Uganda in Oyem in Group D.

Egypt need a draw to secure progress to the last eight along with Ghana, but if they slip up Mali could take advantage by beating the Ugandans.— AFP

## 'DEFINING MOMENT' FOR NEW-LOOK AMERICA'S CUP

**LONDON:** A new framework agreement for the America's Cup, which will see costs slashed and the battle for sport's oldest trophy taking place every two years, was agreed yesterday and described as a "defining moment".

The agreement, supported by all but one of the teams taking part in this year's spectacular, was unveiled at Garrard Jewellers in London—chosen because it was where the impressive trophy was made in 1848.

The accord will see the America's Cup contested every two years instead of four while qualifiers—the America's Cup World Series—will begin by the end of this year for the 2019 edition. It is hoped that there will be 12 stops for the World Series which will encourage more teams and enthrall a new generation of sailors. The boats are also to see changes with just two crafts used in the World Series.

The costs of fielding a team will be between \$30-45 million which the driving force behind the agreement, Martin Whitmarsh—Chief Executive Officer of Ben Ainslie Racing—said is a "significant reduction from current team budgets".

Two-time winner Jimmy Spithill, who aged 29 became the youngest skipper to win the America's Cup when he triumphed for the first time in 2010 with Oracle, will captain Oracle again later this year and he was ecstatic about the agreement. "This is the oldest sporting trophy," he said. "This is a defining moment and we have to ask ourselves why we didn't do this earlier. "The reduction of costs is very important and it makes me very optimistic for the future."

Ainslie said the new-look event heralded a new dawn for the competition. The British sailor was instrumental in the last America's Cup four years ago when he was brought in as strategist at Oracle.

### 'YOUNG SAILORS DREAM'

They were trailing challenger Emirates Team New Zealand by 8-1 but went on to clinch the trophy in the deciding race. "We should see 10 or more teams, 12 events... this has a huge amount of potential," said 37-year-old Ainslie, who is the most successful yachtsman in Olympic history with four golds and a silver.

"Collaboration is the key here to the agreement. If you look at the Cup it has had a complicated history. The key shareholders coming together is great. "The key facts are the agreement on the class of boat and the timetable."

"This is a strong foundation stone and will I hope also encourage young sailors to be able to dream of the possibility of one day competing in an America's Cup." — AFP



Luis Enrique

## ENRIQUE COY ON FUTURE AS CONTRACT RUNS DOWN

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona coach Luis Enrique avoided questions about his future yesterday as speculation grows that he will leave the club at the end of the season when his contract with the Spanish champions expires. The coach refused to comment on whether he felt his players wanted him to remain in charge while speaking at a news conference ahead of Barcelona's King's Cup quarter-final second leg with Real Sociedad.

He also ducked a question asking if his assistant Juan Carlos Unzué, reported by the media to be Luis Enrique's first choice to succeed him, was ready to take the reins at the club, saying: "This question has nothing to do with tomorrow's game."

The former Barcelona and Spain midfielder has won every trophy possible in the two-and-a-half years since succeeding Gerardo Martino in 2014, including successive league titles and King's Cups as well as the 2015 Champions League.

Despite overseeing enormous success on the pitch, the coach has long had a spiky relationship with the Barcelona media and has declared in the past he does not envisage having a long career in the

Barcelona dugout. In March 2016 he said: "I think in the modern era no one has been the Barcelona coach for 20 years, only the chosen few could handle such a long time at this club and I think it's impossible. If I could, I would only sign six-month contracts. If at some point I am not happy, why would I stay?"

Luis Enrique originally signed a two-year deal when he took over in 2014 which he extended by an extra year in 2015 after Barca beat Juventus 3-1 in the Champions League final in Berlin.

Spanish media reports have long cited Unzué, a former Barcelona reserve goalkeeper, as Luis Enrique's favoured choice to take over from him. Unzué was Luis Enrique's assistant at Celta Vigo and is often seen giving instructions from the sidelines, particularly at set pieces.

Other candidates touted by the media as potential successors include Athletic Bilbao coach Ernesto Valverde, who had a brief spell at Barcelona as forward, and Sevilla's Jorge Sampaoli, whose side are second in La Liga, one place above Barcelona, after taking a club record 42 points from their first 19 games. — Reuters



## MENDIETA WANTS LIM TO CHANGE TACK AT VALENCIA

**LONDON:** Former Valencia midfielder Gaizka Mendieta believes owner Peter Lim needs to adopt a more long-term approach to running the club, as they teeter above the La Liga relegation zone.

Valencia have gone through five coaches and three sporting directors in Lim's two-and-a-half-year tenure, with Cesare Prandelli and Jesus Garcia Pitarch the latest figures to give up the respective roles.

Voro Gonzalez is now in his fifth stint as caretaker coach at the Mestalla and with Valencia three places above the bottom three, Mendieta says stability is desperately needed.

"The owners should maybe change the way they're running the club, because it's definitely not working," he

told AFP during an interview in London on Tuesday. "When managers keep coming and going, when people on the football side keep leaving, this is not a good sign. That means the owners are not giving stability to the club."

"It's not a club that in the last two years has had any consistency and football needs that. Players coming and going, all the players on loan, is something that needs to be arranged."

Valencia finished fourth at the end of Lim's first season in 2015, but slipped to 12th last season and could now face a relegation battle, albeit having witnessed an upturn in results under Voro.

Juan Antonio Pizzi, Nuno Espirito Santo, Gary Neville, Pako Ayestaran and former Italy coach Prandelli, who resigned last month, have all passed

through the dug-out since he took over in June 2014. The Singaporean businessman has faced open revolt from fans over Valencia's recent struggles.

Supporters took to the streets to call for his departure after the recent 4-1 Copa del Rey defeat by Celta Vigo and fans on social media have rallied around the hashtag #LimGoHome.

Mendieta, blond-haired star of the Valencia team that reached the Champions League final in 2000 and 2001, thinks there are not enough people at boardroom level with a feel for what the club means.

### KARANKA BACKING

"It seems from outside there's not enough football people in the club, especially now the sporting director has

left," said Mendieta, who spent nine years at Valencia. "Through my experience, I don't see in the club people who know the club and the city and the country and the league well enough to make football decisions. "But Peter Lim is a mega-successful businessman, so I'm not going to tell him what to do."

Mendieta also offered words of support for his compatriot Aitor Karanka, who is managing another of his former clubs, Middlesbrough.

Karanka hit out at fans after Boro's 3-1 loss at home to West Ham United in the Premier League last Saturday, accusing them of creating an "awful" atmosphere by "asking for long balls."

Karanka is reported to have expressed regret over his outburst to club officials, but Mendieta feels he was

within his rights to speak out. "Of course he's allowed to do that," said the 42-year-old, who also played for Barcelona and Lazio. "I think every manager is allowed to say whatever he wants, especially if you feel fans are not really supporting your team when you most need them. "In the same way that fans have the right to express their opinion and maybe say: 'Play in a certain way.'"

"Fans have to understand that the team has been working in a way, not only for that week, (but) for years or for months. If they want to play that way, it's for a reason."

Mendieta will represent Spain at Star Sixes, a six-a-side indoor tournament for former international footballers taking place at London's O2 Arena in July. —AFP

## CARRICK SAYS MAN UTD WILL GO FOR IT AT HULL

**LONDON:** Michael Carrick has pledged that Manchester United will not rest on their laurels when they travel to Hull City looking to close out victory in their League Cup semi-final. United won 2-0 in the first leg at Old Trafford courtesy of second-half strikes from Juan Mata and Marouane Fellaini, putting them within reach of a final showdown with either Liverpool or Southampton. But Hull have shown signs of improvement under new manager Marco Silva, giving Premier League leaders Chelsea a decent game in Sunday's 2-0 defeat at Stamford Bridge, and Carrick says United will take no chances. "It's definitely not over, we all know that," the 35-year-old midfielder told MUTV.

"We are telling ourselves that. I think we'll be pretty much full-strength and will approach the game like it's a 0-0 and starting from scratch. "It's dangerous when you go in there defending a lead to tell yourself this result will do or that result will do, or we can afford to do this or that. "We need to approach it like any other game, keep our focus and intensity and try to win the game." After a run of nine successive wins in all competitions, United's advance towards the Champions League places has been held up by 1-1 draws against Liverpool and Stoke City.

It means they remain sixth in the league table, four points off the top four, but Carrick feels a Wembley final appearance will show Jose Mourinho's men are on the right track.

"Going to Wembley, winning a trophy, how can you not like that?" said Carrick, whose side last reached a League Cup final in 2010, when they beat Aston Villa 2-1 to claim the trophy for a fourth time. "Especially when we feel we are as close as we are to getting there, without taking anything for granted."

"That's what you play for and that's what the fans want to watch. They want to go

and celebrate victories and win things, lift trophies, have a good day out and enjoy it."

### MASON SUPPORT

United captain Wayne Rooney will go into the game with a spring in his step, having scored a record-breaking 250th goal in the club's colours with a stoppage-time free-kick to equalise at Stoke.

Mourinho will be able to recall centre-back Marcos Rojo after he missed the Stoke trip through illness, meaning Eric Bailly, who is at the Africa Cup of Nations with Ivory Coast, is the only expected absentee. Hull's preparations for the game have been overshadowed by the serious head injury suffered at Chelsea by midfielder Ryan Mason. Mason, 25, had to undergo surgery at a London hospital after fracturing his skull in an aerial collision with Gary Cahill, with Hull revealing on Tuesday that he was making "excellent progress."

Hull's players will wear 'MASON 25' T-shirts during the warm-up-a reference both to Mason's age and squad number-and fans have been encouraged to join in with a minute's applause in the 25th minute. Hull have bolstered their ranks with a loan move for Serbian winger Lazar Markovic, who had been on loan at Sporting Lisbon from Liverpool. Markovic, 22, joined Liverpool from Benfica for £20 million (\$25 million, 23.3 million euros) in 2014 and having failed to make an impression in his Anfield career to date, he is eager to prove his worth. "I hope that my actions will speak louder than words and I can prove myself to the club and to everyone in English football," Markovic told the Hull website. "I joined Liverpool when I was very young and have not yet had a long run in the side to show people what I am capable of. "I hope to use this loan spell with Hull City to prove myself in the best league in the world, because I feel there is lots more to come from me." — AFP



**NAPLES:** Napoli's Jose Callejon, center, scores on a header during an Italian Cup, Round of 8 soccer match between Napoli and Fiorentina, at the San Paolo stadium in Naples, Italy, Tuesday. — AP

## CALLEJON STRIKES AS NAPOLI SET UP JUVE OR MILAN CUP SEMI

**MILAN:** A fine second-half header from Jose Callejon fired Napoli into the semi-finals of the Italian Cup and a last four date with either Juventus or AC Milan after a bad-tempered 1-0 win over Fiorentina on Tuesday.

Both sides finished with 10 men at the Artemio Franchi stadium after a fiery finale that saw Napoli defender Elseid Hysaj then Fiorentina's Maximiliano Olivera sent off within minutes of each other. But Napoli were fully deserving of the win in a season which has seen Maurizio Sarri's men keep Juventus on their toes as they bid for a record sixth consecutive Serie A title. Stand-in striker Dries Mertens started on the bench as Sarri gave Leonardo Pavoletti his first start in a Napoli shirt, and the absent Belgian's clinical finishing was perhaps missed in a wasteful first half for the hosts. Pavoletti blazed over the Fiorentina bar and Ciprian Tararusanu was even more alert to the danger when he tipped Lorenzi Insigne's free kick at the near post on to the crossbar.

Insigne, then Callejon spurned further chances before the end of a first half which, after battling to a thrilling 3-3 draw in their last league outing, surprisingly finished scoreless.

Fiorentina's sole chances came on the counter, but the threat was real, Pepe Reina palming Federico Chiesa's shot over from a tight angle before producing a fine one-handed save to parry a Davide Astori header. Fiorentina resumed in determined fashion, Chiesa dribbling his way into the area only to be stopped in his tracks by an onrushing Reina. At the other end, Insigne's angled drive on the left flank that was blocked yards from goal. But Napoli regained command, Pavoletti beating a flailing Tararusanu but seeing his free kick from outside the area hit post and crossbar, prompting Sarri to immediately replace the big front man with the more diminutive, but more successful Mertens.

Mertens has taken his league tally to an impressive 12 league goals after stepping in to replace injured Poland centre-forward Arkadiusz Milik during his lengthy injury absence.

But his thunder was stolen in fine style when Callejon ran in to meet Marek Hamsik's swift delivery from deep on the left with a bullet header that left Tararusanu no chance from six yards. Along with teammate Manolo Gabbiadini, Callejon is now the only other Napoli player to score goals in three competi-

tions this season. Fiorentina pressed in the later stages, Reina forced down quick to collect Josip Ilicic's deflected drive. Hysaj saw red moments later, on 90 minutes, for a second bookable offence but La Viola's chances of a late leveller were hit when Olivera was sent off after earning a second caution. — AFP



**Matches on TV**  
(Local Timings)

### ENGLISH LEAGUE CUP

**Hull City v Man United 22:45**  
beIN SPORTS

### SPAIN COPA DEL REY

**Barcelona v Real Sociedad 23:15**  
beIN SPORTS 3 HD

## CAVANI, DI MARIA FIRE PSG IN LEAGUE CUP FINAL

**PARIS:** Edinson Cavani and Angel Di Maria propelled holders Paris Saint-Germain into a fourth straight French League Cup final with both scoring twice in a 4-1 victory at Bordeaux on Tuesday. Argentine Di Maria's stunning free-kick gave record six-time champions PSG the lead, but Diego Rolan cancelled out the winger's effort just past the half hour.

Cavani put the visitors back on top with a thumping finish on 60 minutes before adding a second, while Di Maria again struck from distance as PSG set up an April 1 showdown with the winner of Wednesday's semi-final between Monaco and Nancy. Paris have dominated this competition in recent years, winning each of the past three editions, and Unai Emery ignored any temptations to rest players ahead of Sunday's pivotal clash with Ligue 1 leaders Monaco by fielding a full-strength side. PSG survived an early scare when Malcom steered straight at PSG goalkeeper

Kevin Trapp after Thomas Meunier misjudged a cross, but the away side struck first when Di Maria drilled a 30-yard free-kick past Jerome Prior. Blaise Matuidi should have doubled the lead but could only shoot tamely at Prior when clean through, and Bordeaux hit back as Rolan stabbed into an empty after an effort from Malcom deflected off Thiago Silva and into his path. But Cavani, who reached 20 league goals in France for the first time at the weekend, applied a clinical finish to restore PSG's lead on the hour as he ran onto a through ball from Lucas.

The Uruguayan demonstrated his predatory instincts to grab his second on 74 minutes after Marquinhos headed back across goal from a corner.

Di Maria, making his first start of 2017, completed his brace nine minutes from time with an angled drive that brushed the fingertips of Prior before nestling inside the far corner. — AFP



**GABON:** Burkina Faso's midfielder Prejuge Nakoulma (C) takes part in a training session in Libreville on Tuesday during the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations football tournament in Gabon. Burkina Faso will face Tunisia in the quarter finals of the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations football tournament. — AFP

## MESSI HAS EVOLVED INTO 'TOTAL FOOTBALLER': ENRIQUE

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona coach Luis Enrique paid tribute to Lionel Messi yesterday for his evolution into a "total footballer" throughout his career, which he believes will help the five-time World Player of the Year maintain his quality long into the future.

The Spanish champions are confident their all-time top scorer Messi will sign a new contract until 2022 in the near future, which would tie him to the club until he is 35, with sporting director Robert Fernandez saying on Tuesday that negotiations on the new deal were "going very well". "Messi's footballing evolution is beyond any doubt, and the process happened because of his maturity. Before he was almost our only goalscorer but he's evolved into a total footballer," Luis Enrique told a news conference on Wednesday ahead of Barca's King's Cup quarter-final second leg with Real Sociedad.

"He's capable of doing anything in attack or defence, as he's a very intelligent player he will compensate for any possible weaknesses he may end up experiencing in a very far away future when his physical condition declines."

Messi has scored more than 30 league goals in five of the 12 full seasons he has played for Barca, hitting a La Liga record of 50 in the 2011/12 season, and despite taking up a deeper role in the last two years to accommodate strike partners Neymar and Luis Suarez, he has netted 15 times this season in the league.

"With the type of player he is he doesn't need much strength because he's able to play with one or two touches, he knows where to run to receive the ball and how to play without the ball

and vary his position," added Luis Enrique. "When you add all that with the technical and physical qualities he has then you get the player we see every day, which is a unique player."

Barca host Sociedad on Thursday with a 1-0 advantage from the first leg after beating the Basques away from home last week for the first time since 2007, although they will be without midfielders Sergio Busquets and Andres Iniesta through injury.

"It would be an error to think we've already got the job done. Against an opponent of this magnitude, it's a very dangerous game," added Luis Enrique, whose side are looking to book their place in the Cup semi-finals for a seventh consecutive year. "The players are aware of that and so are our fans. We've always struggled to beat Real Sociedad, especially away, and they will make things complicated for us. After the first leg they have nothing to lose." — Reuters



**SANT JOAN DESPI:** From (left to right) FC Barcelona's Luis Suarez, Lionel Messi and Neymar exercise during a training session at the Sports Center FC Barcelona Joan Gamper in Sant Joan Despi, Spain, yesterday FC Barcelona will play against Real Sociedad in a Spanish Copa del Rey, quarter final, second leg today. — AP



## Sports

Japan ends painful  
wait for local  
born 'yokozuna'Enrique coy  
on future as  
contract runs down

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MELBOURNE: Spain's Rafael Nadal hits a return against Canada's Milos Raonic during their men's singles quarter-final match on day ten of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

## NADAL CLOSES IN ON FEDERER FINAL

MELBOURNE: Rafael Nadal edged closer to a much-anticipated Australian Open final with his great rival Roger Federer after marching into the semi-finals yesterday. The 14-time Grand Slam champion was too powerful for injury-hit world number three Milos Raonic, winning 6-4, 7-6 (9/7), 6-4 in two hours 44 minutes.

The Spanish superstar will play Bulgaria's 15th seed Grigor Dimitrov in Friday's semi-final. He leads Dimitrov 7-1. Nadal preferred to focus on his next match with Dimitrov rather than contemplating a ninth Grand Slam final showdown with Federer, but he paid tribute to the Swiss legend for his amazing run at this year's Australian Open. "Let me enjoy today, the victory, being in semi-final. For me is great news again. It's a good start of the season," he told reporters.

"Now I have a very tough match against Dimitrov.

"Whatever happens on the other side of the draw, I think it is great for tennis that Roger is there again after

an injury, after a lot of people talked that probably he would never be back. "The real thing is that he's back and he's probably ready to win again, fighting again to win a major. "That's good for the fans because Roger is a legend of our sport. I am happy to be there, too. I am focused on my semi-final."

It was another accomplished performance from the 30-year-old Spaniard who reached his first Grand Slam semi-final since he won the 2014 French Open, and struggled with injury last year.

"Great. It's good news. Especially winning against difficult players: (Gael) Monfils in quarter-finals, (Alexander) Zverev round of 16 and now Raonic," Nadal said. "All of them are top players. So that's very important for me because that means that I am competitive and playing well. "I'm so just excited about being back in final rounds of the most important events."

It was the 30-year-old Spaniard's fifth Australian

Open semi-final and his 24th in Grand Slams.

Nadal is bidding to win his second Australian Open title and become the first man in the Open era-and only the third man in history-to win each of the four Grand Slam titles twice. With his victory Nadal is projected to rise to six in next week's ATP rankings unless Dimitrov goes on to win the Australian title, in which case he would be number seven. Winning the title in Melbourne would lift Nadal to fourth on the world rankings.

Nadal began the night quarter-final better and earned a break point in the fifth game before breaking when the Canadian over-hit a smash at double break point in his next service game.

He safely negotiated the rest of his service games and took the opening set with an overhead smash.

Nadal fought off a break point in a five-deuce service game early in the second set as Raonic began to serve better. The Canadian left the court at 3-2 for treatment

to an adductor injury.

Upon his return, games went with serve until Nadal came under attack in the 10th game, saving three set points with pressure serving. Raonic had three more set points in the tiebreaker and blew them all before Nadal took a two sets lead on his first set point as the match swung decisively the Spaniard's way.

Raonic was wayward with his volleying and made errors on crucial points to take the heat off Nadal. He looked physically in trouble and he was wincing in between points. The end came quickly when Raonic fell three match points down in the 10th game and Nadal won the rally to win which he greeted with his arms raised in the air. "Obviously he put it together more consistently, much more consistently, than I did today," Raonic said. "He's doing a lot of things well. He's fighting well, which has always been his strongest attribute." — AFP

## BOLT LOSES GOLD AS IOC STRIP JAMAICA OF RELAY WIN

LAUSANNE: Usain Bolt lost one of his nine Olympic gold medals yesterday when the International Olympic Committee stripped Jamaica of their 4x100m relay win at the 2008 Beijing Games after a teammate was caught doping.

The decision which follows the re-testing of hundreds of samples from the Beijing Games, means that Bolt loses one of the three gold medals he won at that Olympics.

Bolt's relay teammate Nestor Carter, who ran the first leg of the race, was found to have tested positive for banned substance Methylhexanamine, which was once used in nasal decongestants but now is more commonly found as an ingredient in dietary supplements.

The loss of the relay gold deprives Bolt of one of his 'triple triples'-he won gold in the 100m, 200 and the 4x100m at Beijing and then went on to repeat the feat in London in 2012 and again in Rio last year.

Last year, when he was warned of the doping case targeting Carter which could result in him losing an Olympic gold, Bolt said the circumstances were heartbreaking.

"It's heartbreaking because over the years you've worked hard to accumulate gold medals and work hard to be a champion-but it's just one of those things," he said.

"Things happen in life, so when it's confirmed or whatever, if I need to give back my gold medal I'd have to give it back, it's not a problem for me."

The IOC said in a statement that in the case of Carter, 31, re-analysis of his 2008 samples "resulted in a positive test for the prohibited substance methylhexanamine."

The IOC Disciplinary Commission ruled that Carter "is found to have committed an anti-doping rule violation pursuant to the IOC Anti-Doping Rules applicable to the Games of the XXIX Olympiad in Beijing in 2008."

## CRUSADE AGAINST DRUGS

As such, he "is disqualified from the men's 4x100m relay event" and must return his medal while the team is likewise disqualified and must hand back their medals.

Trinidad and Tobago, who came second, are promoted to gold medal winners, while Japan and Brazil move up to second and third place respectively.

The IOC said that Russia's Tatiana Lebedeva, who won silver in the women's triple jump event and long jump, had also been disqualified following re-analysis of her samples which showed positive for dehydrochloromethyltestosterone (turinabol), a substance on the world body's banned list.



Usain Bolt

The IOC has been retesting samples from previous Games as part of its crusade against drug taking in sport as new technology facilitates bringing to book cases which were previously undetectable.

In the case of relay events, if one member of the team is found to have used illegal substances, the whole team is stripped of their medals, thus reducing Bolt's achievements to a 'mere' Beijing double to go with his triples in London and Rio. —AFP

## SISTER ACT AS SERENA, VENUS EYE FAMILY FINAL

MELBOURNE: America's Williams sisters can write another chapter in their eventful family history as they attempt to set up their ninth Grand Slam final, eight years after the last, at the Australian Open today.

In a plot straight from the 2000s, both sisters have raced into the Melbourne semi-finals without a dropping a set, and they appear equally focused on getting their hands on the title.

At least one American is guaranteed to be in Saturday's decider, with Venus confronting confident compatriot Coco Vandeweghe in their last-four clash on Rod Laver Arena.

Following them on court will be Serena against fellow former teenage prodigy Mirjana Lucic-Baroni, who is into her first Grand Slam semi-final in 18 years.

It has become a tournament of the golden oldies, with Venus 36, Serena 35 and Lucic-Baroni 34. Vandeweghe at 25 is the young pretender. Serena said it was a testament to the Williams' staying power that they were still fighting for titles at their age.

"I've been doing this for many years. The past few years I've been super-consistent," she said. "But yeah, I'm just really happy for Venus, obviously. She's doing amazing."

"I'm really happy for Mirjana, as well. I was there when she first started. To see her be able to never give up actually is super-inspiring to me. It's a wonderful story."

Few would have picked a Serena-Venus

final as the tournament got underway, but it is now a 50-50 chance.

They last met in a major decider at Wimbledon in 2009, which Serena won. The younger Williams has the clear edge, winning six of their eight Grand Slam final encounters stretching back to the US Open in 2001. Venus said she was not interested in the past, only the future and the immediate threat posed by the aggressive Vandeweghe. "Anything that's happened before is just so. I'm ready for the future, if I can be honest," she said.

"I have a lot to give. I have a lot to give to the game. I feel like I have a lot of great tennis in me. I have nothing to lose, literally." Vandeweghe is a major threat to an all-Williams final. She demolished French Open champion Garbine Muguruza in a blitz of big hitting to make her first Australian semi, and she is supremely confident to boot.

"It's amazing to be in a semi-final. But, you know, not satisfying," said Vandeweghe, who also stunned world number one Angelique Kerber in round four. "I want to keep going, keep playing. There's more things to do out on a tennis court that I'm hoping to achieve."

Brave Lucic-Baroni will have crowd support in her showdown with Serena after upsetting fifth seed Karolina Pliskova to make her first Slam last four since Wimbledon in 1999. — AFP



# Kuwait Times 55th Anniversary BUSINESS

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French carmaker PSA eyes India comeback

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KIB records net profit higher by 14% in 2016

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## STOCKS CLIMB AS TRUMP FEARS EASE

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NEW DELHI: The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan (L) shakes hands with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of a meeting.

## INDIA TO FILL STRATEGIC RESERVE WITH UAE OIL

'THIS WILL ENABLE US TO MEET THE NATION'S GROWING DEMAND FOR ENERGY'

**NEW DELHI:** India signed a deal with the United Arab Emirates yesterday that allows the Gulf OPEC country to fill half of an underground crude oil storage facility at Mangalore that is part of New Delhi's strategic reserve system. New Delhi announced a series of pacts with the UAE ranging from defense, trade, maritime cooperation to energy after a meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

UAE's Abu Dhabi National Oil Co will store about 6 million barrels of oil at Mangalore, taking up about half of the site's capacity, said Sunjay Sudhir, joint secretary for international cooperation at the Indian oil ministry. India, hedging against energy security risks as it imports most of its oil needs, is building emergency storage in underground caverns to hold 36.87 million barrels of crude, or about 10 days of its average daily oil demand in 2016. "This will ... help to ensure India's energy security and enable us to meet the nation's growing demand for energy," said Indian oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

As one of the fastest growing economies in the world, India needs massive investments in some key sectors, particularly infrastructure. ADNOC said the Mangalore oil storage facility is the third that it has access to in Asia after Japan and South Korea, enabling the company to become more competitive in meeting market demand across South East Asia.

"India is an important energy market and this storage agreement reinforces ADNOC's role as one of the world's most trusted and reliable suppliers of oil," Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber,

UAE Minister of State and ADNOC Group CEO said in a statement. "We will utilize the Mangalore facility to not only build on our existing business relationships across India but also to explore new downstream opportunities for ADNOC's expanding range of refined and petrochemical products."

During Modi's visit to the UAE in 2015, the two countries announced a \$75 billion joint infrastructure fund that would invest in India's infrastructure development. UAE is India's fifth biggest oil supplier. The crude supplies will begin in the last quarter of this year, Sudhir told Reuters. "We are talking to them (ADNOC) for two-three grades and most likely it will Murban." The two sides had discussed ways to advance their energy ties through specific projects, including long-term supply contracts and joint ventures in energy, Modi said in a speech after his meeting with the crown prince.

India in 2014 began talks to lease part of its strategic storage to ADNOC. Under those discussions, India was to have first rights to the stored crude in case of an emergency, while ADNOC would be able to move cargoes to meet any shift in demand. India has already filled the other half of the Mangalore storage in Karnataka state with 6 million barrels of Iranian oil.

India, the world's third-biggest oil consumer, has also filled a Vizag storage site in southern Andhra Pradesh with 7.55 million barrels of Iraqi oil and has invited bids from suppliers to fill an 18.3 million-barrel facility at Padur in Karnataka. The crown prince of Abu Dhabi will be the guest of honor at India's Republic Day parade today. — Reuters



NEW DELHI: The Crown Prince pays a tribute at Rajghat, the memorial for Mahatma Gandhi. — AFP photos

### SAUDI AND KUWAIT CONTINUE UPTRENDS, UAE PULLS BACK

#### MIDEAST STOCK MARKETS

**DUBAI:** Stock markets in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait continued uptrends yesterday, attracting regional investors' money away from the United Arab Emirates, which pulled back. The Saudi index rose 0.5 percent, climbing for a fifth straight day. It has been buoyed by hopes for better conditions in the non-oil sector this year as government austerity measures slow. Builder Khodari, which has been strong in the past week on expectations for a partial recovery of the Saudi construction market, gained 2.6 percent.

Mouwasat Medical Services, which jumped 3.5 percent on Tuesday after its board recommended a higher cash dividend for 2016, added a further 3.7 percent to 147.50 riyals. HSBC raised its target for the stock to 152 riyals from 144, with a "buy" rating. The petrochemical sector was firm with industry leader Saudi Basic Industries climbing 1.6 percent.

Kuwait's index, which has surged nearly 19 percent this month as idle local and regional funds have poured into the market to catch its momentum, rose 1.1 percent in heavy trade. Activity focused on real estate companies; Abyaar Real Estate jumped 6.9

percent. The fireworks in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait left Dubai and Abu Dhabi neglected. Dubai's index slipped 1.1 percent to 3,679 points, failing a test of technical resistance on its January peak of 3,737 points. Abu Dhabi sank 1.6 percent.

Real estate firm Deyaar dropped 5.0 percent after its fourth-quarter profit more than halved. Builder Drake & Scull was another big loser, falling 4.9 percent in volatile trade. The most heavily traded Dubai stock, speculative favorite GFH Financial, plunged 9.7 percent to 2.43 dirhams after opening sharply higher. The company's Bahrain-listed shares soared 9.5 percent to \$0.695, however, moving to a slight premium to the Dubai-listed shares from a sizeable discount.

Dubai Islamic Bank added 0.5 percent after posting a 58.4 percent increase in fourth-quarter net profit to 1.37 billion dirhams (\$373 million), well above analysts' average forecast of 850.4 million dirhams. In Qatar, the index fell 0.2 percent as Qatar Insurance lost 1.8 percent after reporting a 9 percent fall in fourth-quarter net profit. Egypt's market was closed for a national holiday. — Reuters

## EU ASKS CHINA TO OPEN MARKETS FOLLOWING FREE TRADE SUPPORT

**BEIJING:** The European Union ambassador to China welcomed its endorsement of free trade in the face of US President Donald Trump's promise to restrict imports and appealed to Beijing yesterday to make good on that sentiment by lowering its own market barriers. Hans Dietmar Schweisgut also said it was too early to know how Trump's rejection of an Asian trade pact this week might affect a similar proposed US-European agreement.

Schweisgut's comments reflected the potentially global repercussions of Trump's promises of sweeping change in US trade, climate and foreign policy. That has prompted questions about whether Beijing, which relies on the United States for technology and export markets, might move closer to Europe as a political and commercial partner.

In an implicit criticism of Trump, President Xi Jinping said in a speech last week a "trade war" would harm all sides and called on other governments to reject protectionism. That was despite complaints by trading partners that China is the most closed major economy. "We appreciate this commitment by China not only to open up its own market but also to very much support and champion an open international trading system" said Schweisgut at a news conference.

Xi's gave no details of possible changes in

his speech at the World Economic Forum in Switzerland, but Schweisgut expressed confidence the comments will lead to "concrete progress" in market opening. He said that is necessary because China has "no level playing field" for foreign companies while Europe is "the most open market in the world."

#### Sharp restrictions

US, European and other foreign companies complain they are barred from or sharply restricted in telecoms, information technology, finance and other promising industries in violation of Beijing's free-trading pledges. European companies are frustrated that they are blocked from acquiring Chinese assets at a time when China's companies have bought major global brands including German robot maker Kuka.

US companies express similar frustration. In a report last week, the American Chamber of Commerce in China said 81 percent of companies that responded to a survey feel "less welcome in China" than they did in the past. It said most believe China's business environment "discourages investment." The American chamber said US companies want Trump to take a tougher stance with Beijing on market access but to proceed carefully. Asked what impact Europe expected on its proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership with the

United States following Trump's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership, Schweisgut said, "I cannot give you an answer at this stage. It is too early."

The ambassador gave a similar reply when asked whether European exporters of aircraft, autos and other goods might benefit if Trump raises tariffs on Chinese goods and Beijing retaliates by cutting purchases of Boeing jets and other US imports. Schweisgut said Europe expects to develop closer relations this year with Beijing on trade and climate, but acknowledged they have disagreements, especially on human rights.

Asked about last year's detention of lawyers who handle human rights and other sensitive cases, the ambassador said European envoys planned to raise those and other cases with Chinese authorities. "We have an obligation to speak up and we will do so," he said. Regarding Beijing's move this week to restrict use of virtual private networks that allow users to bypass filters blocking access to many foreign websites, Schweisgut said Europe was "very concerned" about any restrictions that weren't based on "very plausible and concrete security concerns." "We are obviously against restrictions on the internet because we think a free and open internet serves all countries," he said. — AP





## REGION'S FIRST STEM CELL BANK BUILT BY KIPCO TO BE COMPLETED THIS YEAR

**KUWAIT:** The Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - and its Group companies will hand over the Sheikhha Salwa Sabah Al Ahmad Stem Cell and Umbilical Cord Center in mid-September 2017, with 70 percent of the construction of the building now complete. The center, financed through a KD 7 million donation made to the Ministry of Health by Masharee Al Khair Charity Organization on behalf of KIPCO Group, is the Gulf region's first-ever center to be dedicated to stem cell research and the storage of umbilical cords.

The Sheikhha Salwa Sabah Al Ahmad Stem Cell and Umbilical Cord Center is being built over a 12,000 m. sq. plot of land in the Al Sabah Health Zone, opposite the Maternity Hospital. It has a total built up area of 7,800 m. sq. and includes a three-floor main building, a utilities building, in addition to external landscaping and parking. The facility includes testing and research laboratories, blood and cord storage banks, research

and medical libraries, as well as a lecture theater.

### State-of-the-art equipment

In addition to KD 7 million donation, the Advanced Technology Company, a member of the KIPCO Group, has pledged to provide state-of-the-art equipment for the center's specialized laboratories, cooling systems and stem cell storage facilities. ATC's contribution is valued at KD one million. Mr Faisal Al Ayyar, KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive) said:

"At KIPCO, we strongly believe that the private sector must play a pivotal role in supporting the government's development plans, and that an integral part of this is the advancement of medicine and scientific research. The Sheikhha Salwa Sabah Al Ahmad Stem Cell and Umbilical Cord Center, once handed over to the Ministry of Health, will make available resources that will have a direct impact on the quality of people's lives thanks to the many medical breakthroughs

that are being made in the field of stem cell research." Mr Abdulaziz Al Jassar, Board Member and Treasurer of Masharee Al Khair said: "This donation, made by KIPCO Group through Masharee Al Khair, reflects our keen interest to enhance the quality of lives in the societies in which we operate. We place great hopes on this center, which we believe will play an important role in the field of medical research." KIPCO Group companies donate one per cent of their annual profits to Masharee Al Khair Charity Organization. The money is used to support charity projects and social causes.

Stem cells are unspecialized cells that have the potential to develop into different cell types with specialized function, such as muscle cells, red blood cells or brain cells. As such, stem cells can be used to replace damaged cells that do not normally regenerate themselves. Stem cells come from three sources: adults, embryos and umbilical cords.

## WHAT'S NEXT FOR DAKOTA ACCESS AND KEYSTONE XL PIPELINES?

**BISMARCK:** President Donald Trump's executive actions on the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines are aimed at turning the much-protested pipelines into reality. Here's a look at what may be next for the two pipelines:

### WHAT THEY ARE AND WHERE THEY STOOD BEFORE TUESDAY

The \$3.8 billion Dakota Access pipeline to carry North Dakota oil through South Dakota and low to a shipping point in Illinois is nearly complete, except for a stretch underneath Lake Oahe, a Missouri River reservoir in southern North Dakota. Construction is stalled due to a court fight between developer Energy Transfer Partners and the Army Corps of Engineers over permission for the pipeline to cross under the lake amid objections from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, which gets its drinking water from the lake.

The \$8 billion Keystone XL project was to bring oil from Canada's oil sands to Nebraska, where it would join other lines already leading to refineries along the Gulf Coast. Former President Barack Obama halted it in late 2015, declaring it would undercut U.S. efforts to clinch a global climate change deal that was a centerpiece of his environmental agenda.

### WHAT THE ORDERS MEAN

Trump's move on Dakota Access didn't immediately clear the way for construction to resume, but it did order the Corps to quickly consider whether to approve the Lake Oahe crossing. Tribal attorney Jan Hasselman said what happens next will depend on how the Corps interprets the language. He said the tribe will fight in court any reversal of the Corps' recent decision to conduct a full environmental study of the crossing - a process that could take up to two years. Not completing a study "would be a gross violation of the tribe's treaty rights," he said. The Corps' Northwestern Division didn't immediately comment, saying it was still studying Trump's action.

Trump's nominee for Army secretary hasn't yet been confirmed. But U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer, a North Dakota Republican who has advised Trump on energy issues, said he doesn't think that needs to happen for the Army to consider Trump's message.

On Keystone XL, Trump invited TransCanada to reapply to the State Department for a presidential permit to build and operate the pipeline. State Department approval is needed because the pipeline would cross the northern US border. Trump directed the State Department and other agencies to make a decision within 60 days of a final application and declared that a 2014 State Department environmental study satisfies required reviews under environmental and endangered species laws. Environmental groups promised a legal challenge, arguing a new application requires a new review.

### WILL PROTESTERS RETURN?

Opposition to Dakota Access resulted in hundreds and sometimes thousands of people camping on federal land along the pipeline route in North Dakota. The area since August has been the site of numerous, sometimes violent clashes between protesters and police, with nearly 625 arrests. The camp has dwindled to fewer than 300 people after the Tribal Council recently told protesters to leave due to harsh winter weather and the need to get the area cleaned up before spring flooding.

Trump's action could re-ignite protests, but "to what degree, we don't know," said Dallas Goldtooth of the Indigenous Environmental Network, which had been one of the main camp organizers before heading the tribe's call to leave last month. That group and other organizers have since called on Dakota Access opponents to spread out around the country rather than concentrate in southern North Dakota. Aaron Dorn, 32, from Utica, New York, said he has no plans to leave the camp. "I'm glad Trump got elected - it wakes people up to government-controlled capitalism," he said. — AP



## JOYALUKKAS BACK IN VIZAG WITH A BETTER JEWELRY EXPERIENCE

**KUWAIT:** This early in the year, 2017 is already looking like a banner year for Joyalukkas, with new accolades received and the opening of three new showrooms in quick succession. The world's favorite jeweler, Joyalukkas has opened their new showroom in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. The showroom has been inaugurated by Vizag District Collector Praveen Kumar IAS in the Presence of Joy Alukkas (CMD, Joyalukkas Group), John Paul Alukkas (Executive Director, Joyalukkas Group), Baby George (CEO), PD Jose, PD Francis and other dignitaries. The staggering grand opening yesterday, 11:00 am, was met with much fanfare by citizens of Vizag, who had eagerly awaited for

the bigger jewelry shopping experience from the world's favorite jeweler.

The opening of the new Joyalukkas showroom in Vizag is only the third of several new showroom openings planned in 2017 as part of the Group's aggressive expansion drive, following the launch of three USA locations, in Houston, Texas; Edison, New Jersey, and West Devon Avenue, Chicago. It is also the second new showroom to be opened in India, the first being Chromepet, Tamil Nadu earlier this month. Entering new markets and strengthening its presence in the current locations are among the Group's priorities for the year.

"We can't be happier to be back in Vizag, and are very grateful for

the warm reception we received from all the people here," said Joy Alukkas, Chairman and Managing Director of Joyalukkas Group. "Every new showroom opening brings us closer to our goal of being where our supporters are. All this would not have been possible without the trust and loyalty given to us by over 10 million customers around the world. Our plans to open more showrooms and expand to new markets are going as schedule, as well as our never-ending efforts to find the best offerings and give service from the heart in our current 11 countries of operation."

Joyalukkas Vizag features over a million dazzling collections and exquisite designs in gold, diamond, precious stones, platinum and

pearl. The collection is a mix of traditional, ethno contemporary and international designs that have won of hearts and following of customers around the world. Joyalukkas is one of few to be recognized for exceptional standards in jewelry retailing, including being awarded 'Superbrand' status 7 years in a row since 2010. It is currently a 120 plus showroom network spread across the USA, UK, the GCC and India, and will soon open in two new countries. One of the world's largest jewelry retail chains, it is part of the multi-billion dollar global conglomerate Joyalukkas Group, which has varied business interests, including jewelry, money exchange, fashion & silks, luxury air charter, malls and realty.

## CAREEM EXPANSION CONTINUES WITH 50 DESTINATIONS ACROSS MENASA

**KUWAIT:** Considered a popular choice of daily commute among the business community in Kuwait, Careem, the region's leading ride-hailing service, has now expanded to more than 50 cities across the broader MENASA (Middle East, North Africa and South Asia) region, including Turkey and three new cities in Pakistan. Careem currently operates in capital Islamabad and in Pakistan's two most populous cities - Karachi and Lahore and will now include Peshawar, Faisalabad and Hyderabad where Careem will launch the Economy car type in Hyderabad and Peshawar, and Business in Faisalabad.

Mudassir Sheikhha, co-founder and CEO of Careem, said, "Our main focus is to broaden and deepen our presence across the wider region, which comes on the back of Careem's phenomenal growth in the past four years. Testament to our continued expansion and ambitions for further growth is the recent USD 350 million tranche of investment in our company, making Careem one of the few tech unicorns in the Middle East and North Africa. Now operational in more than 50 cities within four years since launching, Careem will harness this milestone achievement as a springboard to further growth in 2017."

In Kuwait, Careem has been operational since 2015 and is now considered a popular choice among the executive population. Locally, the brand is equipped with offering the latest models of the Toyota Camry and Toyota Corolla for Economy based passengers and 2016 Chevrolet models of the Impala, Tahoe and Malibu for its Business commuters. Furthermore, with the Kuwaiti market recorded as having one of the highest user generated ratings in the company, Careem is now offering 25% off on all Economy rides from 9 pm until 2 am daily.

Last month, Careem announced a

landmark funding round of USD 500 million in the company with USD 350 million already secured from new and existing investors. Co-led is by Rakuten, Inc, a global leader in internet services and innovation headquartered in Japan, and Saudi Telecom Company ("STC"), the largest telecom operator in the Middle East, the fundraise, supported by Credit Suisse, is one of the largest for a technology company in the Middle East's history. The investment will scale up Careem's transport services in existing and new markets, accelerate innovation across its platform of high-frequency transactions, and help Careem achieve its goal of creating one million jobs in the region by 2018.



Careem founder Mudassir Sheikhha

## EXCHANGE RATES

### AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

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

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

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

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

Swiss Franc	307.230
Australian Dollar	232.870
US Dollar Buying	304.800

GOLD	
20 Gram	247.740
10 Gram	126.790
5 Gram	64.240

### DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

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

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.870
Thai Bhat	9.625
Turkish Lira	81.470

### BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

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

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

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

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

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002594	0.002774
Kenyan Shilling	0.003003	0.003003
Korean Won	0.000250	0.000265
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065229	0.071229
Nepalese Rupee	0.003146	0.003316
Pakistan Rupee	0.002762	0.003052
Philippine Peso	0.006059	0.006359
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.209238	0.219238
South African Rand	0.016289	0.024789
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001696	0.002276
Taiwan	0.009670	0.009850
Thai Baht	0.008332	0.008882

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



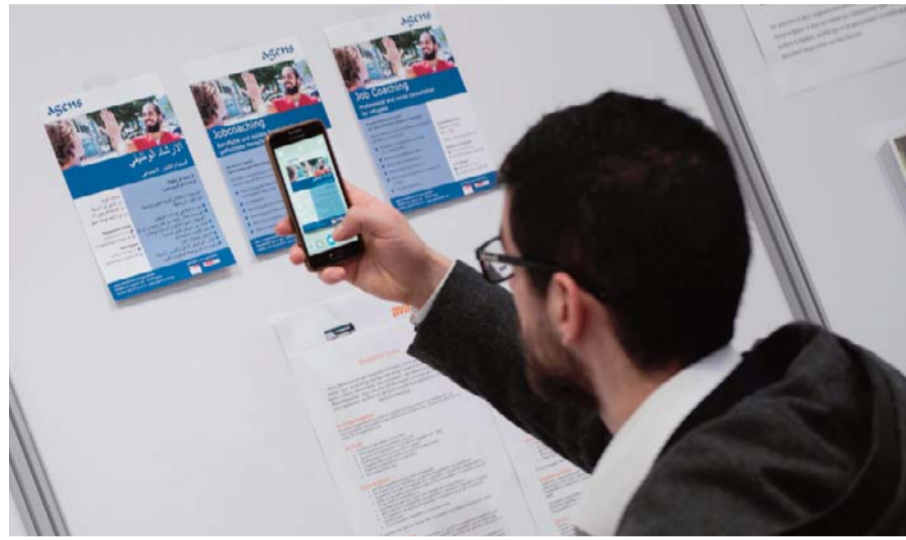
## SCANDAL-HIT KOREA GROWS AT SLOWEST PACE IN Q4

**SEOUL:** South Korea's GDP grew at its slowest pace in more than a year in the final quarter of 2016, its central bank said yesterday, as Asia's fourth-largest economy is rattled by a scandal engulfing impeached President Park Geun-Hye. The Bank of Korea said in a statement that gross domestic product expanded 0.4 percent during the October to December period from the previous three months, when it grew 0.6 percent. But annual growth in 2016 was 2.7 percent,

higher than the previous year's 2.2 percent. The political turmoil that surfaced in October has brought huge numbers onto South Korea's streets for weekly protests to demand Park's immediate departure from office. The scandal centres on Park's secret confidante Choi Soon-Sil, who is accused of using her ties with the president to extract money from conglomerates such as Samsung and meddle in state affairs.

Analysts say the scandal has hampered consumer sentiment, with domestic demand expanding just 0.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 compared to the 0.6 percent growth posted in the previous three months. Domestic political uncertainty and weakening consumer sentiment seem to have acted as a drag on domestic demand, Woo Jae-Joon, an economist for Bank of America Merrill Lynch told Bloomberg.

Kim Doo-Un, an economist for Hana Financial Investment, added: "I expect 2.4 percent expansion for 2017, and an extra budget and rate cut could be deployed within the first half." Earlier this month, the central bank revised down its growth projection for 2017 to 2.5 percent citing "deteriorations in economic sentiment" and kept its key interest rate at a record-low for the seventh consecutive month. — AFP



**BERLIN:** A visitor attends the second edition of a job fair for refugees and migrants. — AFP

## GERMANY CLINGS TO HOPE AS TRUMP CLOUDS GATHER

**FRANKFURT AM MAIN:** The German government yesterday maintained its growth forecast for 2017, even as a monthly survey showed firms increasingly nervous about the future in the face of global uncertainty. Europe's largest economy should expand by 1.4 percent in 2017 after hitting 1.9 percent last year, the economy ministry in Berlin said in a statement. "The German economy is in very good condition," said Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel, adding that "the effect of a lower number of working days" compared with 2016 would account for most of the fall in growth. But he acknowledged that "despite the extremely good economic situation, many people are concerned" about their own and the country's prospects. Earlier in the day, a survey from the Munich-based Ifo institute showed business confidence at its lowest level since September. The Ifo index stood at 109.8 points in January, a fall of 1.2 points after months trending upwards.

Analysts surveyed by Factset had predicted a slight increase to 111.3 points. "Companies expressed greater satisfaction with their current business situation, but are less optimistic about their six-month business outlook," Ifo president Clemens Fuest said in a statement. "Germany is getting increasingly concerned about the possible impact from US president Trump's suggested trade sanctions," wrote analyst Carsten Brzeski of ING Diba bank. The US dislodged France as Germany's biggest export customer for the first time in many years in 2015, he noted. According to the federal statistics office Destatis, Germany sold 174 billion euros (\$187 billion) of goods to the US in 2015, while importing around 60 billion euros of American goods. Combined with the threat to German exports from Britain's decision to quit the EU, Brzeski said "the German economy will continue to be highly dependent on domestic demand" in the year ahead. — AFP

## KIB RECORDS NET PROFIT HIGHER BY 14% IN 2016

**KUWAIT:** Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah, Chairman of Kuwait International Bank (KIB) announced that during 2016, the Bank's profits have increased by 14% to reach KD 18.2 million compared to KD 16.1 million in 2015. This growth is attributable to an increase in revenues accompanied by an effective cost optimization. The financing income increased by 12% reaching KD 71 million compared to KD 63.2 million during 2015. Revenue from fees and commission increased by 5, to reach almost KD 9 million, as compared to KD 8.3 million in the previous year.

Al-Jarrah stated that the Bank's improved performance reflected positively on earnings per share (EPS) for 2016, which increased by 14% reaching 19.50 fils compared to 17.14 fils for the previous year. As for dividends, Al-Jarrah stated, KIB's Board of Directors has recommended to its shareholders' Annual General Assembly, cash dividends of 10% of the share nominal value (10 fils per share) for shareholders registered at the Bank's records on the AGM date and is subject to the approval of the Bank's AGM and regulatory authorities.

### Growth in the financing portfolio

KIB's total assets increased by 3% reaching KD 1.85 billion compared to KD 1.79 billion by the end of 2015. This increase is attributable to a growth in the financing portfolio by KD 95 million reaching KD 1.27 billion compared to KD 1.17 billion last year achieving 8% growth compared to the previous year. Investment portfolio increased by KD 19 million, ie by 17% reaching KD 128 million compared to KD 109 million at 31 December 2015. Depositors' accounts rose to KD 1.12 billion compared to KD 1.02 billion by the end of the previous year, an increase of KD 107 million representing a growth of 10%.

KIB's outstanding performance and collection efficiency throughout 2016 has positively reflected on its asset quality and coverage ratios. NPL ratio has been maintained at 1.4%. Total

provision coverage ratio has also increased to 231% compared to 199% for 2015. Moreover, total provisions and collaterals coverage ratio increased to 368% compared to 327% for the previous year. In this context, Al-Jarrah praised KIB's performance and achievements pertinent to these significant indicators. In full conformity with CBK regulations on Basel III, KIB continued to maintain an excellent capital adequacy ratio (CAR) of 20.5% while the financial leverage ratio was over 10.7% for the year 2016.

Return on Equity (ROE) reached 7.2% in comparison with 6.5% for the previous year due to the enhancement of various performance indicators mentioned above. This resulted in an increase in the distributions to depositors' accounts since the beginning of 2016 whereby the annualized return on Arzaq deposit in Kuwaiti Dinars increased to 2.15%, 2.25% and 2.35% in Q1, Q2 and Q3 respectively. Rates in Q4 2016 reached 2.55% resulting in an average of 2.325% for the year 2016. Al Boushra Kuwaiti Dinar three year deposits were offered 3.0625%. Profits were credited into the depositors' accounts upon declaring the financial results.

### Impressive performance

Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah stated that KIB's impressive performance and robust growth comes as a result of the Bank's implementation of its long term strategic plan. This strategy aims to bring about a comprehensive transformation across all sectors of the Bank in terms of better asset quality, healthy capital buffer, improved performance, increase in profitability, new and innovative products and enhanced service offerings to customers.

Al-Jarrah also mentioned that Al Dawli continues its efforts to bring a complete evolution of its banking services and offerings. In an effort to provide customers with an enhanced digital banking experience, KIB has made major investments in upgrading its IT infrastructure



Sheikh Mohammed Jarrah Al-Sabah

and streamlining its systems and processes. "Much of our continued success can be credited to our successful implementation of the forward-thinking strategy, which have been extremely successful in enhancing our position within the Islamic banking sector, setting us well on our way to achieve our vision of becoming the 'Islamic Bank of Choice in Kuwait'," added Al-Jarrah.

KIB's achievements during the year were recognized by various international agencies. These included "Best Islamic Bank - GCC" from World Finance, "Best Sharia Compliant Bank - MENA" from CFI.co and "Best Banking Vision" from CPI Financial. KIB was also honored for excellence in labor nationalization ratio in the private sector across the GCC. Fitch ratings upgraded KIB's viability rating and re-affirmed Long-term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) at 'A+' with a stable outlook in 2016. Al-Jarrah concluded by expressing his gratitude towards the Central Bank of Kuwait for their guidance, as well as the Board of Directors, executive management, employees and customers for their support in achieving this remarkable performance.



**PARIS:** CK Birla, chairperson of Indian conglomerate CK Birla Group, attends a press conference at the Groupe PSA headquarters. — AFP

## FRENCH CARMAKER PSA EYES INDIA COMEBACK

**PARIS:** French auto giant PSA is heading back to India, a market it withdrew from 20 years ago, where car ownership is still relatively low but is seen as having huge growth potential. PSA yesterday said it had signed an agreement to set up two joint ventures with Indian conglomerate CK Birla, with production capacity initially estimated at 100,000 vehicles per year by 2020.

PSA said it has not yet decided which model it will build in India, but the project represents an initial investment of 100 million euros (\$107 million), of which the French group will put up around two thirds. "If you want to be a global player, you can't be absent" from the world's second most populous country, PSA chief executive Carlos Tavares told a news conference.

The two joint ventures will manufacture engines and vehicles in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. PSA will hold 80 percent in the car-building venture and 50 percent in the engine manufacturing operations. CEO Tavares estimated that the Indian market, which currently represents around three million vehicles per year, could grow to "between eight and 10 million vehicles by 2025." "There are growth opportunities there," he said.

The drive is part of PSA's "Push to pass" strategy aimed at generating "profitable growth" by expanding the group's geographic footprint. It already announced new production sites in Morocco and Iran in 2015 and 2016. French rival Renault moved into the Indian market last year, producing low-cost small car Kwid in the Tamil Nadu capital of Chennai. But PSA would not go down the same road, Tavares said.

"Our sole target is not volumes," he said. In the 1990s, PSA had produced its Peugeot 309 model in partnership with Indian group PAL. But sales fell short of target and PSA eventually threw in the towel in 1997. It abandoned comeback plans in India five years ago at the height of an internal crisis within the firm. Car ownership in India is still very low, with around 22 cars per 1,000 inhabitants in 2014, 30 times lower than in western Europe. But insufficient infrastructure is currently putting the brakes

on more rapid growth. CK Birla is a family-owned industrial conglomerate, with annual revenues of some \$1.6 billion and a workforce of around 20,000. — AFP

## TOYOTA TO ADD 400 US JOBS

**TOKYO:** Toyota said it will invest \$600 million and create 400 jobs at one of its US plants - just weeks after Donald Trump criticized the Japanese auto giant for planning to open a factory in Mexico. The US president has pressured automakers, both American and foreign, into boosting production and hiring in the United States, threatening them with punitive tariffs if they move factories and jobs overseas. "This expansion project is part of Toyota's localization strategy to build vehicles where they are sold," the automaker, which was singled out by Trump in a Twitter broadside, said in a statement Tuesday.

The investment is aimed at boosting SUV production at a factory in Indiana, the home state of Vice President Mike Pence. Toyota currently has 5,000 employees in the plant in the small city of Princeton, part of the approximately 40,000 people it directly employs in the US, a Toyota spokeswoman told AFP. Toyota said its planned investment of \$10 billion in the US over the next five years "shows Toyota's commitment to continued US investment".

The project to modernize the plant and increase its competitiveness is set to begin in 2019, Toyota said. Earlier this month, while still president-elect, Trump threatened Toyota with tariffs over a planned new vehicle plant in Mexico. "NO WAY! Build plant in US or pay big border tax," he tweeted. Toyota has said it will build a new factory in Mexico, which is expected to begin production in 2019. — AFP



**KD 18.2 Million** Net profit for 2016

Summary of financial results for 2016

	2016	2015	%
Net Profit (KD Million)	18.2	16.1	14% ↑
Earning Per Share (EPS) (Fils)	19.50	17.14	14% ↑
Financing Portfolio (KD Billion)	1.27	1.17	8% ↑
Depositors' Accounts (KD Billion)	1.12	1.02	10% ↑

Cash Dividends **10 Fils**

\*(Subject to the approval of General Assembly and concerned authorities)





# STOCKS CLIMB AS TRUMP FEARS EASE

LONDON: Asian and European markets pushed higher yesterday, tracking a record close on Wall Street as investor concerns eased over Donald Trump's lack of domestic policies. After a slack start to the year for global equities, US traders took up the reins Tuesday to press back on with the November-December Trump rally after the tycoon gave the green light to two big oil pipeline deals.

"Following on from a late rally in the US last night, thanks to the second round of Trump executive orders, the markets looked a lot perkier," said Spreadex analyst Connor Campbell. The

new president signed off on the controversial Keystone XL pipeline-which would carry oil from Canadian tar sands to US Gulf Coast refineries-and another crossing in North Dakota.

The move reverses decisions taken recently by Barack Obama and is the latest effort to wipe out the former president's legacy. The announcement weighed on oil prices on fears it will add to a global glut of crude, despite the OPEC exporting cartel's agreement in November to cut output. Also Tuesday it emerged that House Speaker Paul Ryan signalled support for public works spending, while reports surfaced

that Senate Democrats will unveil a \$1 trillion infrastructure plan, offering the president their support if he backs it. The developments soothed anxiety on markets that promised economy-firing spending and tax-cutting measures were being put on the back burner by Trump in favor of reviewing global trade deals.

### Pound rallies

In Europe yesterday, Frankfurt and Paris stocks won more than 1.0 percent, but London gains were tempered as sterling rebounded to multi-week highs against the euro and dollar.

The British pound had slid Tuesday after the UK Supreme Court's verdict that Britain's government must win parliament's approval before launching Brexit negotiations. But sterling recovered lost ground as markets focused on the greater certainty that the ruling delivered.

The court decision "means the uncertainty that has plagued the currency for months is gradually dissipating," said Campbell, as Prime Minister Theresa May readies legislation to push Brexit through parliament. May had wanted to start the

Brexit process-invoking Article 50 of the EU treaty-without a vote in parliament, but she failed to overturn a High Court ruling that said lawmakers must be consulted. In Wall Street action on Tuesday, the S&P 500 and Nasdaq ended at all-time highs, while the Dow got within spitting distance of breaking the 20,000-point barrier for the first time.

In Asia yesterday Hong Kong rose 0.4 percent and Tokyo jumped 1.4 percent as exporters were supported by a weaker yen. — AFP

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report							Global						
Wednesday 25 January 2017													
Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low		Volume	Value (KWD)	Number of Trades				
Price index	▲ 76.74	6,819.09	6,742.35	6,827.18	6,742.06		713,675,649	61,102,005	11,843				
Weighted Index	▲ 3.27	428.81	425.54	429.36	425.37								
KSX 15	▲ 6.75	992.61	985.86	993.93	981.08								

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
MARIN	62	58	502134	30,373	20	62	▲ 5.0
IKARUS	53	49.0	1,093,896	56,861	33	53	▲ 3.0
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	395	— 0.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	890	— 0.0
ENERGYH	55	49.5	4,327,282	222,580	163	53	▲ 1.0
GPI	66	62	7,714,787	489,847	134	63	▼ -1.0
ADAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	— 0.0
<b>Oil &amp; Gas</b>			<b>13,638,099</b>	<b>799,661</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>927.67</b>	<b>▲ 11.52</b>
KFOUC	246	238	256,717	62,720	14	246	▲ 10.0
BPCC	570	550	318,740	178,503	15	570	▲ 10.0
ALKOUT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	670	— 0.0
ALQUARAIN	285	285	2,233,356	646,320	60	285	▼ -10.0
<b>Basic Materials</b>			<b>2,808,813</b>	<b>887,543</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>1175.79</b>	<b>▲ 0.03</b>
KCEM	435	435	380,509	165,521	24	435	— 0.0
REFRI	315	310	30,010	9,453	2	310	▼ -5.0
CABLE	475	460	412,165	193,728	30	475	▲ 5.0
SHIP	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	218	— 0.0
PCEM	1,040	1,000	251,244	254,466	28	1,020	▲ 30.0
PAPER	300	290	35,638	10,347	5	290	▼ -10.0
MRC	60	59	30,000	1,775	4	60	▼ -4.0
ACICO	305	300	265,950	79,932	19	300	▼ -10.0
GGMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300	— 0.0
HCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	120	— 0.0
KBMM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0
NICBM	210	210	3,551	748	1	210	▼ -5.0
EQUIPMENT	74	72	3,950,681	287,796	110	74	▲ 10.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.5	— 0.0
GYPBUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	— 0.0
SALBOOKH	82	79	2,587,992	209,409	101	82	▲ 3.0
AGLTY	720	700	2,079,460	1,476,842	80	710	▲ 3.0
EDU	216	216	50	11	1	216	▲ 10.0
CLEANING	59	58	2,331,979	136,331	55	59	▲ 1.0
KGL	70	69	1,124,800	77,808	29	69	— 0.0
KPC	198	196	6,050	1,192	4	198	▲ 2.0
HUMANSOFT	3,000	2,980	641,192	1,920,741	57	3,000	▲ 20.0
NAFAIS	174	174	2,500	435	1	174	— 0.0
SAFWAN	385	385	14,700	5,660	1	385	— 0.0
GFC	47.5	45.0	199,423	9,189	8	47.5	▲ 2.5
MAYADEEN	39.0	37.5	16,779,305	638,865	217	38.0	▲ 1.0
CGC	500	495	24,000	11,998	10	500	— 0.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	— 0.0
UPAC	820	800	2,600	2,106	3	800	▼ -50.0
ALAFQ	248	244	24,552	6,046	6	248	▲ 4.0
MUBARRAD	85	81	6,890,729	567,352	124	81	▼ -3.0
LOGISTICS	83	81	6,003,941	483,214	92	82	— 0.0
SCEM	88	88	33,988	2,991	2	88	— 0.0
GCEM	86	85	98,850	8,419	10	85	▲ 2.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	— 0.0
RCWM	89	87	508,750	44,703	9	89	▲ 2.0
FCEM	108	100	399,000	40,135	6	100	— 0.0
SPEC	94	92	787,574	73,245	25	93	▼ -1.0
<b>Industrials</b>			<b>45,901,184</b>	<b>6,730,254</b>	<b>1,064</b>	<b>1448.30</b>	<b>▼ -0.28</b>
KSH	160	150	36,000	5,580	9	160	▲ 10.0
NSH	45.5	44.5	30,000	1,355	4	44.5	▼ -2.5
PAFCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	— 0.0
CATTL	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	244	— 0.0
DANAH	110	106	11,065,028	1,190,842	237	106	▼ -2.0
POULT	192	190	75,138	14,279	3	192	▲ 2.0
FOOD	2,620	2,600	14,735	38,374	3	2,620	— 0.0
<b>Consumer Goods</b>			<b>11,220,901</b>	<b>1,250,430</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>1186.03</b>	<b>▲ 6.12</b>
MHC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	275	— 0.0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	— 0.0
YIACO	295	270	30,305	8,566	4	270	▼ -15
<b>Health Care</b>			<b>30,305</b>	<b>8,566</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1218.26</b>	<b>▼ -10.78</b>
KCIN	1,180	1,140	2,355	2,668	3	1,180	— 0.0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	285	— 0.0
SULTAN	90	86	1,308,209	116,506	57	90	▲ 5
CABLETV	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	47.5	— 0.0
IFASH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	— 0.0
EVARS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	— 0.0
QULAFUEL	136	128	128,872	17,180	34	136	— 0.0
MUNTAZAHAT	92	90	2,551,759	232,044	51	92	▲ 2
JAZERA	710	680	790,095	547,526	77	690	▲ 10
SOOR	132	128	187,589	24,235	33	130	▲ 2
FUTUREKID	126	126	5,300	668	1	126	▼ -4
ALRAI	146	138	539,180	76,483	32	146	▲ 4
ZIMAH	69	65	11,160,608	748,890	228	69	▲ 4
Mezzan	1,020	970	689,108	674,348	55	1,000	▲ 20
<b>Consumer Services</b>			<b>17,362,875</b>	<b>2,440,347</b>	<b>571</b>	<b>994.10</b>	<b>▲ 11.47</b>
ZAIN	490	485	3,529,220	1,720,105	95	490	— 0
QOREDOO	1,220	1,220	5,767	7,036	4	1,220	▼ -20
HISTELECOM	70	65	29,781,909	2,010,928	359	68	▲ 2
VIVA	910	890	42,450	38,200	41	910	▲ 20
<b>Telecommunications</b>			<b>33,359,346</b>	<b>3,776,268</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>717.48</b>	<b>▲ 9.55</b>
NBK	740	720	5,289,600	3,862,400	122	740	▲ 20
GBK	280	275	3,173,174	881,427	68	280	▼ -5
CBK	420	420	21,095	8,860	2	420	▼ -5
ABK	335	330	314,500	105,183	10	335	— 0.0
ALMUTAHED	425	420	81,676	34,329	15	425	▲ 5
KIB	230	226	2,248,202	511,777	23	230	▲ 4
BURG	345	340	489,350	168,772	23	345	— 0.0
KFIN	620	610	5,206,867	3,182,312	145	610	▼ -10
BOUBYAN	420	410	1,077,064	447,041	81	420	▲ 6
AUB	230	224	3,762,193	852,578	58	230	▲ 10
ITHMR	74	73	12,960,657	958,752	120	74	▲ 5
WARBANK	244	240	1,728,111	418,106	183	244	— 0.0
<b>Banks</b>			<b>36,350,489</b>	<b>11,431,517</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>994.60</b>	<b>▲ 14.96</b>
KINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300	— 0.0
GINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	720	— 0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	— 0.0
WINS	110	102	36,062	3,842	8	104	▼ -2.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	— 0.0
FTI	50	47.5	390,110	18,984	40	49.5	▼ -0.5
WETHAQ	55	52	206,270	10,948	11	54	▲ 3.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	— 0.0
<b>Insurance</b>			<b>632,442</b>	<b>33,774</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1110.05</b>	<b>▲ 8.29</b>

Security	High	Low	Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change
SOKOUK	64	60	1640054	1,022,971	301	63	▲ 2.0
KRF	82	78	19,406,330	1,563,668	173	82	▲ 4.0
URC	110	104	170,520	17,855	10	110	▲ 4.0
NRE	132	128	2,095,296	272,387	47	132	▲ 2.0
SRE	395	365	177,475	65,976	19	395	▲ 25.0
TAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	— 0.0
AREFC	172	172	9,650	1,660	2	172	— 0.0
MASSALEH	56	50	199,319	10,984	14	54	▲ 2.0
ARABREC	58	51	33,677,027	1,836,626	483	52	▼ -2.0
ERESCO	53	51	5,109,091	265,425	90	52	— 0.0
MABANEE	910	900	486,317	437,786	22	910	▲ 10.0
INJAZZAT	86	84	223,500	18,924	5	85	▲ 1.0
INVESTORS	37.0	35.5	71,990,378	2,616,338	522	36.0	▲ 0.5
IRC	47.0	45.0	6,781,480	313,112	106	45.5	▼ -0.5
ALTIJARIA	87	86	3,790,857	329,158	46	87	— 0.0
SANAM	56	52	2,093,065	109,905	50	56	▲ 4.0
AAYANRE	85	82	698,305	58,444	36	84	▲ 3.0</



# Alghanim Auto fully backs the 2nd Annual Mustang Festival



KUWAIT CITY, Kuwait, January 26, 2017 – Alghanim Auto participated as a platinum sponsor in the 2nd Annual Mustang Festival, which took place on Saturday, January 21, at the Green Island parking on Gulf road. Amongst a rather colorful display of various brand new Mustang models by Alghanim Auto, the highly anticipated event drew more than 180 Mustang enthusiasts and owners who showcased their prized possessions in a wide array of colors; from vintage models all the way to the latest generation Mustang; some featuring a serious range of modifications.

The Mustang Festival is the largest annual Mustang event and gathering for Mustang owners and enthusiasts in Kuwait. Entertainment included live DJ, food stations and several competitions. In its second iteration, the festival attracted more Mustang enthusiasts this time around featuring a wider, more unique range of models and classics, with attendance by several local Mustang fan clubs as well as their counterparts from Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.



The one-day enthusiast gathering, which took place in a spacious parking lot on the Gulf road, attracted more than 180 Mustangs from all different models and colors, ranging from vintage models as old as 1965 all the way to the 2017 models on display by Alghanim Auto. The Mustang enthusiast community showed a high level of ownership pride and love for the Mustang nameplate, evident in the amount of attention given to the finest details in their vehicles. As the platinum sponsor, the Alghanim Auto took center stage with a rather colorful display that highlights the variety of 2017 Mustang models available for sale at its new showroom in Shuwaikh Industrial Area across from SIRBB Circuit.



The star of the show was the legendary 2017 Mustang Shelby GT350 in beautiful race red. The new Shelby GT350 is a world-class performance vehicle, designed to tackle the planet's most challenging roads. The new GT350 takes advantage of a dramatically improved sixth-generation Mustang to create a truly special driving experience. Driving enthusiasts behind the wheel of a Shelby GT350 can expect to be treated to the most balanced, nimble and exhilarating production Mustang yet. Ford engineers took an innovative approach with GT350; rather than develop individual systems to perform well independently, every component and shape is optimized to work in concert; balance is the key. While paying rigorous attention to detail, the team pushed the envelope with cutting-edge materials and technologies. The Shelby GT350's new 5.2-liter V8 engine is considered the most powerful, naturally aspirated production Ford engine ever, at 526 horsepower and the highest-revving V8 in Ford history – with a redline of 8,250 rpm. It is also the most efficient in terms of specific output. Without turbocharging or supercharging, the flat-plane crankshaft V8 produces 102 horsepower per liter of displacement. Ultra-quick responsiveness to changing conditions is provided by the first-ever Ford application of continuously controlled MagneRide dampers. The new Shelby GT350 also features Brembo brakes, the most track-credible brake system ever offered on a Ford vehicle in terms of absolute stopping power, fade resistance and brake pedal feel. GT350 makes use of extra-stiff 19-inch aluminum alloy wheels – 10.5 inches wide in front, 11.0 inches in the rear – clad in state-of-the-

art Michelin Pilot Super Sport tires with GT350-specific sidewall construction, tread face and compound. The custom tires are designed to deliver maximum grip on the road or during week-end track days.

Shelby GT350 has been weight-optimized to balance capability with on-track durability. Light-weight components are engineered to offset added extreme-performance hardware, and, as a result, the standard GT350 tips the scales at 1,705kg only. Alghanim Auto is offering the new 2017 Shelby GT350 Mustang in three new colors: Grabber Blue, Lightning Blue and Ruby Red. Also present was a GT Premium California Special in stunning grabber blue next to a triple



yellow GT Premium, a silver GT 5.0, and a V6 model clad in magnetic grey. Befitting to the occasion, Alghanim Auto also displayed a custom Mustang GT V8 designed by Kromozone with a SEMA-inspired color theme. It is worth noting that, for the first time in Kuwait, the current generation Mustang is now available with a manual transmission at Alghanim Auto.

Stemming from its strong belief in supporting passionate fans and the youth, Alghanim Auto's participation in the 2nd annual Mustang Festival was successful and proved the perfect oppor-



tunity to engage and connect with the Mustang enthusiast crowd; part of its greater mission to build a successful relationship with all Ford customers, especially the youth, who have always aspired to own the legendary Ford Mustang for what it represents in terms of American muscle, craftsmanship, and power. Event goers were also treated to a trivia competition where winners were awarded valuable prizes.

Ford's latest 2017 model range is available at Alghanim Auto, the only importer contractually authorised by Ford to sell new Ford vehicles, genuine Ford and MotorCraft® parts, and provide aftersales support to Ford customers in Kuwait.

All customers interested in Ford vehicles are invited to visit the Ford Alghanim New Vehicle Showroom, Service and Spare Parts Center in the Shuwaikh Industrial Area, opposite from the Classical Car Museum and Sirbb Circuit. The showroom is open Saturday through Thursday from 9am to 10pm and 2pm to 8pm on Fridays; meanwhile, the Service Center is open from 7am to 7pm every day except Fridays. For added convenience, the Express Service welcomes customers till 10pm and 2pm to 7pm on Fridays.

To get in touch with Ford Alghanim, please call the customer care center at 1898900; visit [www.fordalghanim.com](http://www.fordalghanim.com) or contact us via social media on @fordalghanim (Twitter, Instagram and Facebook).



# CAESARS TRAVEL GROUP: SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS

## PART II OF INTERVIEW WITH THE CEO OF CAESARS TRAVEL GROUP

By Jins M Jose

In an industry where biggest is not always the best, Caesars Travel Group incorporated in 1992 started with a small profile. Today, it is heading to become a competitive, innovative company at par with the key players in the aviation industry in Kuwait. We are noticing that they have grown as one of the biggest suppliers now unlike other travel groups, dealing with many diversified activities under one travel platform.

Business in every industry are dealing with increased competition and travel agencies are no exception, therefore, it's always a curiosity to know more about Caesars Travel Group that within the span of these 25 years, how they have managed to grow to the current levels apart from the many turbulences happening in the aviation field at the moment. We had a face to face meeting with the CEO of Caesars Travel Group, PNJ Kumar, who is working with the industry for the last 25 years with a dignified position till now and who is the back-bone of the steady growth of Caesars Travel Group.

**Q: Passengers complain about getting their seat at the end of the aircraft though they have purchased the tickets well in advance, why is this happening?**

**A:** It's the duty of the travel agency dealing officer that when an air ticket is issued to a passenger, he should immediately confirm the seating, meals plan and other special handling messages if any to get it confirmed immediately and the same to be communicated to the passenger when handing over the ticket to them whereas this ethic is not followed by many of the travel agencies as their intentions are only to make sales, not to keep the clients happy by giving them excellent services, thereby making these clients as repeated passengers to that agency.

Many of the passengers realize this only after boarding the aircraft and directed to their seats by the crew. Yes, it's not right from the part of a travel agent as most of the cases, these sorts of mistakes are happening which can be avoided by appointing qualified staff who has the specialized skills in dealing in this field. Exemptions are there, some of the aircrafts are not supporting seating plans and such special handling privileges, which should be communicated to the passenger at the same time when handing over the ticket in order to avoid their last minute disappointment when locating their seats in the aircraft.

**Q: The passengers are confused about the right location for their holidays and come to the travel agent for guidance and information but, very few are competent to handle this, how is your division, Caesars Holidays in dealing with such matters?**

**A:** With so much advertising shoved in our faces these days between print, TV and digital media all vying for our attention, deciding which travel destinations to visit can be overwhelming. Budget and time will undoubtedly play a part in the decision making process but with so many amazing places in the world, how do you whittle it down? When you approach a travel agent, he should spend some time with you patiently, giving several options to you by explaining about the unique features on each location where you are planning to visit.

In most cases, the same ignorance from travel agent may put you in trouble without properly communicating the visa rules, contraband items to carry, currency and value, cultures of the place that you are planning to visit

and many such key points which you should be aware of, before starting your journey. Some of the complaints from passengers after returning from their holidays are that their hotels, ground services and other packages were not at par with their expectations and blaming the travel agents.

At Caesars Holidays, we are trying our level best to satisfy our customers by meeting these key elements and we have a broad spectrum of holiday platforms such as world's leading cruises, Cox & Kings holidays for the NRI Indians, economical way of offering the car rental services through "Flexible Autos" and a department specially made to meet the demands of customers for their tailor-made packages.

**Q: Currently, everything is available through internet such as air tickets, hotels, tour packages, car rental, you name it everything and in this case why you prefer a passenger to approach the travel agent?**

**A:** I understand that this is the age of doing everything online, can working with a travel agent really save you money? Turns out the answers are yes because travel agents usually give them correct information than the machine where there are many hidden rules if the right questions are not asked and upon taking these services through internet you may be stuck with it. In offering more options and amenities, online travel sites have actually made it more confusing to figure out what they are selling, not less so. The explosion of restrictions and fees - many of which are not obvious to the casual travel buyer - further muddies understanding of the bottom line on any itinerary. If you can get a great deal in 30 seconds online, that's preferable to playing phone tag with an agent, but there are times when planning a trip with a travel agent will save you time, money, and frustration. Here's how to tell when you should use an agent and when to go it alone.

**Q: At Caesars, we have noticed that you have many travel offices, many airline representations both in passenger, cargo and holiday offices, don't you think the travel agents may feel conflict of interest in dealing with you when you have many airline representation offices but at the same time, you have enough travel offices to promote them without depending on other travel agents?**

**A:** Though we have many travel offices, the airline representation (passenger and cargo) and holiday franchise offices are always kept as independent entities which has no connection whatsoever with our travel offices, they always used to keep the same level of supports used to give to other travel agents. We are only the sponsors for these represented brands without any interference in their internal activities and according to me, these represented brand offices have proved their independent status among the travel trade, by keeping the same level of supports giving to our travel offices, therefore, I don't think the concern that you have expressed about the conflict of interest is not at all relevant. Once again, let me reiterate my position in this regard that without the support from the other travel agents, these brands represented offices cannot survive and definitely, these offices always give the prime importance to protect the interests of these travel agents being they are the feeders for these offices.

**Q: We have seen that lots of travel agencies are closing down due to the failure in recovering the huge receivables from corporate, how is it happening and**

**how you are trying to overcome this situation?**

**A:** In general, it's a wrong saying that all the travel agents are working against each other but it's not the fact, we are one family and from the same fraternity though our dealings are towards the same product. Many of the travel agents are also not equipped with these ideologies and just spoiling this platform which is an elite and colorful profession than uniting together for better results. Ultimately, who is taking the maximum advantage of such rivalry happening between us, mainly the corporate clients who enjoy getting all privileges from the travel agents by availing credits for long durations with neck-to-neck airline costs against air tickets and other ancillary services.

It's a common practice among the corporate houses that availing credit from a travel agent and when it has become huge amount, switch over to another travel agent by not settling this outstanding amount toward their previous agency and the poor agent is running behind them for their money for months and years, meanwhile, many of them closing down their companies as you asked me, because of this huge outstanding amount whereas they have to settle their airline bills on every week, for that they used to depend on loans from banks, ultimately end up in such disasters that they could not settle these loan to the bank as these corporate never settle their bills.

It's a question, why it is happening? If the travel agents have a common unity and if any corporate is approaching for a credit, before starting the business if these travel agents can insist them to settle their outstanding amounts with their previous handling agents, in other words, to bring a no objection certificate, none of the corporate can misuse the travel agents for their own benefits but unfortunately, it is not happening due to the narrow outlook maintained by the agents and at the end, we are suffering. It's my opinion that let the travel agents themselves work together with an understanding, not as enemies but as a family and it's very easy to protect from this situation provided the agencies should not take any credit contract from corporate.

**Q: What are the future plans of Caesars Travel Group?**

**A:** Caesars mission when founding this travel set-up is to become the true friend of our passengers in supporting the travel needs under one roof, whether it is for airline tickets, leisure, medical, cargo or you name it, everything. We are on the way to achieve this goal and yes, still to go for a long journey which are happening in Caesars Travel Group step by step. Moreover, each and every office of Caesars and the employees working under us should be the true companion of our valued passengers in guiding them to benefit the maximum out of traveling by giving economized options, thereby developing a confidence on us as their trusted partner for the travel industry.

Caesars Travel Group was previously a local player, concentrating in Kuwait only but currently, we have become a Global Player, having offices in India, Dubai and very soon, starting in other countries too. This is to give a supporting hand to our passengers to have more options of buying their travel documents based on the concept of economizing their budget as they have many options to compare their expenses by checking the cost applicable in various countries where we have our business interests which I can say, an indirect online tool to them. We have many leading airline's passenger/cargo representations, leisure representations such as cruise companies, holiday/tours



companies, having a dedicated inbound Tours department which is the one only company in Kuwait for promoting Kuwait Tourism, Shipping Division, Grand Limo for exclusive taxi services in Kuwait and many such new projects are on the way to make this set-up as a one stop umbrella of delivering the diversified travel services to the passengers.

**Q: How do you rate the Caesars Travel Group's publicities, is it by buying the same through spending which many of the business organizations do at the moment?**

**A:** How to get publicity when you have no news to share? Not exaggerating, yes-we have many hot news to share with our passengers on a daily basis regarding the developments happening inside Caesars Travel Group which I can say, not possible without the strong and continuous support that our clients are giving, it needs no pumping of money to get the publicities but automatically, spreads through word of mouth which we believe the true tool for the establishment of a company. In brief, we are not a company to buy the goodwill through publicities whereas striving towards it through the dedicated and unique services extended to our clients but at the same time, I will not forget about the publicities which we have to simultaneously looked upon which is the need of the hour in any industry at this point in time.

To conclude, meeting with the CEO of Caesars Travel Group, PNJ Kumar, we have seen a set-up with lots of future plans in an organized way of chalking out the same which proudly they can say that it has been implemented stage by stage in Kuwait market with 35 offices across the country as of now since their inception in 1992. Kumar with his vast experience in this industry for more than 25 years, proved his business model as one of the unique kinds in travel industry, absolutely elite not comparable with others, made a unique identity of his own and further, we came to understand that still, many diversified expansion activities are under way with Caesars Travel Group related to the travel industry which are mainly targeted to the passengers for giving an array of services which is the prime necessity of the time where the passengers are looking for a true partner whom they can depend on.

# EICHER VEHICLES CELEBRATES 16 AMAZING YEARS IN KUWAIT

An emerging player in the Kuwait, VE Commercial Vehicles is celebrating 16 years of Eicher branded Trucks and Buses in Kuwait. KAICO, the exclusive distributor for Eicher since year 2001, has been supporting the brand with an excellent infrastructure facility and large sales, service, spare parts network coupled with robust relationship. KAICO is headed by Ashish Tandon, General Manager, the distributorship operations are managed by a team of seasoned professionals who have rich knowledge and experience of the commercial vehicles industry.

On this proud occasion and celebrating India's

68th Republic Day, KAICO is coming soon with Eicher's latest product offering. This upcoming truck is a completely new generation range of light & medium duty trucks that is set to change the trucking experience altogether. It is specially designed for emerging premium segment that requires high power and torque combination as well as a greater degree of refinement, sophistication, reliability and performance.

It has a 4 Cylinder 4 Valve E-494 CRS technology engine with Volvo group Engine Management system (EMS) 3.0, which has high processing capability, optimum balance between load demands, fuel

efficiency and emissions control with added advantage of quick and guided diagnostics- all leading to high performance, higher uptime and lower maintenance. This truck will come with 2.1 m wide Pegasus based new generation cab.

### Mass market segment

This truck has undergone very stringent and grueling test protocols to ensure superior up-time. Extensive testing has been done not only in the labs and on the Volvo Group's torture track, but also with some of the customers in real conditions and various applications in Kuwait market. The trucks will look to take on the key segments of food distribution, construction, government tenders and contracting which traditionally dominated by the Japanese brands. In addition, it will also address the mass market segment with value features at low cost of ownership.

Eicher has also enriched its footholds in 58 Seater buses which is a Perfect Transportation Partner in the Labour segment. The demo bus for Test Drive is available at the KAICO's facility in Shuwaikh. The bus comes in many variants like AC/ NAC with double door & HHR seats, AC/ NAC 66 seats with single door & HHR seats

The bus has an aero-dynamic design, attractive looks, ABS, tinted glasses, tubeless tyres & elegant interiors and is powered with a 4.9 litre engine delivering 170 HP and 550 Nm of torque, with an optimized drive-line and clutch boosters ensuring a comfortable drive, low cost of operation and low maintenance. These buses are manufactured in Eicher's own bus body plant in India and offers ideal transportation solution in Staff/Labor segment to Construction, transport, cleaning and manufacturing companies.

VE Commercial Vehicles Limited (VECV) is a 50-50 joint venture between the Volvo Group (Volvo) and Eicher Motors Limited (EML). It is a partnership that brings together Global leadership in technology, quality, safety & environmental care along with the deep knowledge & understanding of the Indian CV market. The vision of the JV is to be recognized as an industry leader driving modernization in commercial transportation in India and the developing world.

VECV has its Eicher commercial vehicle manufacturing unit in Madhya Pradesh, India. The first Eicher branded truck rolled out from its state of the art manufacturing plant in 1986 and over the years, the products have got endorsement from happy customers of over 400,000 vehicles. Eicher today has transformed itself into a complete CV manufacturer with a wide product range from 5t to 40t GVW trucks and 15 to 65 seater buses. The company's products strongly emphasize its customer orientation. Eicher vehicles are well known in the market for their overall low cost of ownership and the reason can be found in the 'Eicher advantages'. At the core of 'Eicher advantages' is the Eicher vehicle's high fuel efficiency.



## NISSAN V MOTION WINS EYES ON DESIGN AWARD AT NORTH AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL AUTO SHOW

**DUBAI:** Vmotion 2.0, a concept vehicle showcasing Nissan's new sedan design direction, is the winner of the 2017 Eyes On Design Award for Best Concept Vehicle. The concept vehicle also received the award for Best Innovative Use of Color, Graphics and Materials. The announcement was made Tuesday at the 2017 North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) Eyes On Design Awards ceremony, just a day after the vehicle's global debut.

One of the premier awards in transportation design, the Eyes On Design Awards - selected by a panel of design leaders from around the globe - honor the best production and concept vehicles making their worldwide auto show debut in Detroit.

"Vmotion 2.0 offers a stunning look into the future of Nissan design - fresh and dynamic, yet cabin-focused," said Mamoru Aoki, executive design director, Nissan Global Design Strategy, Nissan Motor Co., Ltd. "This prestigious award, earned from top design leaders from

around the world, exemplifies the enormous potential of Nissan's newest design direction. We're honored to be here and excited to continue to show the world the limitless capability of Nissan design."

Nissan Vmotion 2.0 is the evolution of the "V-motion" front design signature seen on many of today's Nissan products. The award-winning vehicle color, Silver Copper, is a unique blend of copper and other metals, creating a layered effect with different hues and reflections in different angles. "In our never-ending quest for perfection, over 100 attempts were made to get this color just right," said Nicole Fonseca, senior color and materials designer, Nissan Design America, Inc. "On our 101st try - our magic number, apparently - we discovered the perfect blend of 2 copper, silver and other metals to create this beautiful, multi-layered paint. Thank you to Eyes On Design for this distinguished award - what an excellent testament to the future of Nissan design."

TRUCKS AND BUSES

NON STOP PERFORMER

COMING SOON

EICHER GO PRO



## FIVE TIPS FOR BETTER EMAIL SECURITY

By Chris Brown,  
VP EMEA and APAC, Digital Shadows

While security is everyone's responsibility, it's not always easy to get right. Our "Security Best Practices" blog series will provide simple tips that enable users to improve their online security. These articles aren't for pros, but for those trying to get their basics down.

Even the most sophisticated cyber attacks can begin with a relatively simple email compromise. Only last week, we learned that attackers had crafted fake email invitations to deliver information stealing malware to guests attending a Palo Alto security conference in Indonesia. The attackers cleverly used screenshots of genuine conference invitations sent by Palo Alto to deceive the unsuspecting attendees.

With this in mind, here are some of our simple tips to help make your email more secure, without the need to set up a private email server.

### 1. Check your email sources

Always check who the email came from. Attackers use many techniques to try and appear legitimate,

such as using domain names which look almost identical to a genuine domain in order to trick you into visiting that site. This is known as typo-squatting - for example, www.go0gle[.]com might be used to direct users to malware. If it's an address you've never seen before, try searching online for the email domain to see if it's from a registered company.

### 2. Don't click on links

Don't directly click on links in an email. Instead, hover over the hyperlink and make sure the URL matches the page you actually want to visit. Attackers are becoming savvier, and they often hide fake URLs behind linked image buttons or text links, such as "click here".

### 3. Don't open unsolicited attachments

Files aren't always what they appear to be. Malware or a virus could be masquerading itself as a seemingly benign text or image file. Now these types of emails aren't always that easy to spot, and they won't all be from a Nigerian prince claiming to hold the key to your long-lost second cousin, twice

removed "peanut dust" fortune. Some might try and lure you by claiming to represent a legitimate company, such as a supplier, and will attach documents purporting to be invoices in the hope that you'll take the bait.

When dealing with email attachments, be extra careful if asked to enable macros. Macros are bits of code embedded within documents. Though not always bad, they have historically been used to deliver malware. To help combat this, you should avoid enabling macros in email attachments, and ensure any built-in macro security features are always turned on.

### 4. Use separate accounts and enable two-factor authentication

We know it's tempting to simply use one email account across all the online services you are active on, but in doing so you're playing straight into the hands of an attacker. If someone manages to break into that account, then they can probably gain access to all other services using that address (especially if you use the same password). Consider having sepa-

rate accounts for different activities: such as an account for work emails, one for personal use, and another one for sites which bombard you with marketing material.

To top it all off, make sure you enable two factor authentication to make it harder for anyone trying to compromise these accounts. For more tips on better password security, check out our previous blog in the series.

### 5. Limit how widely you share your email address

Always think twice about what information you're posting online. An exposed email on Facebook or a particular forum might be all the invitation someone needs to target you with phishing emails. As well as this, when you sign up for a service or post your email to a public site, your address can be copied or shared to be used by spammers.

So if you have to share your email address publicly, try and avoid using emails which link to important services - such as Facebook or your online banking.



This computer generated handout image released by the European Space Agency on May 15, 2015 shows the impact of the DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test) projectile on the binary asteroid system (65803) Didymos observed by the AIM (Asteroid Impact Mission) satellite. — AFP

## CASH CRUNCH FOR ASTEROID MISSION

PARIS: A mission to smash a spacecraft into an asteroid moon to alter its trajectory, a possible dry-run for an exercise in saving the Earth from Armageddon, has run into a cash crunch. The proposed joint European-US mission, which sounds like it could form the plot for a sci-fi Hollywood blockbuster, has been dubbed AIDA (Asteroid Impact & Deflection Assessment). In 2022, the idea is to launch a 600-kg NASA spacecraft at Didymos, an asteroid some 13 million km from Earth, after a two-year self-guided journey through space.

The craft will crash into the 800 m-wide Didymos' tiny satellite, Didymoon, at a speed of about six kilometers per second. The aim would be to "redirect" the 160-m moon - the first time humans would have altered the course of a Solar System body. For the European part of the futuristic project, a small craft dubbed AIM (Asteroid Impact Mission), will move in close to the action, observing the crash up close and analysing its impact on the moon's structure and orbit.

AIM will be fitted with a camera to capture images of the impact, which is likely to leave a large crater on Didymoon and unleash a massive cloud of debris. "The goal is to test the technology so that if an asteroid threatens our planet one day, we will have the capability of changing its trajectory," Ian Carnelli, AIM project head at the European Space Agency (ESA), told AFP. The mission suffered a major setback, however, when European space ministers gathered in Switzerland in December for a regular policy and budget meeting, rejected funding for AIM. The ESA had sought 250 million euros (\$269 million).

### Not giving up

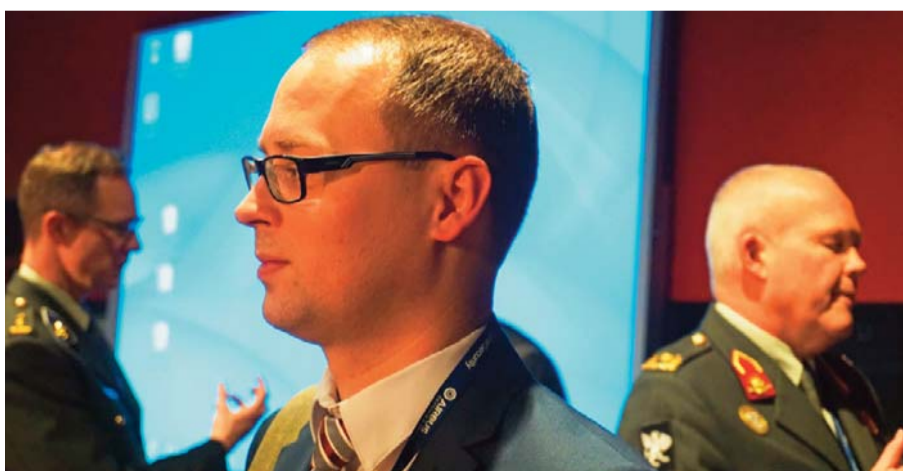
ESA director general Jan Woerner says he remains hopeful and stressed "the mission was not cancelled". "We are still working on it and I am not giving up," he told journalists in Paris

last week. "The member states, the ministers, asked me not to give up." Design of the AIM craft was on track, said Woerner, but several cost-cutting options were being considered - including reducing the number of scientific instruments on board. "By doing this, the budget may be lowered to about 150 million euros, launch excluded," AIM scientific head Patrick Michel told AFP.

The original design for AIM includes a camera, radio equipment, a tiny lander, mini-satellites and radar instruments. For AIM, the clock is ticking. Project development contracts with European companies come up for renewal soon. "We have about two months left to... find the money," Carnelli said. The \$150-million mission can go ahead with or without Europe. Either way, the deep space collision will be observed with instruments on Earth.

Scientists believe more than 1,700 asteroids are on trajectories that may pose a collision danger to Earth. "We have to keep an eye on them," said Michel. While strikes by large asteroids are rare, the fallout can be dire. "If an asteroid of 150 metres falls on Earth, it will be like 10,000 Hiroshima (atomic) bombs in terms of energy released."

In 2013, an asteroid exploded in a blinding fireball over Russia, sending debris plummeting to Earth. The shockwave exploded windows, injuring some 1,600 people, and a burst of ultraviolet light left more than two dozen people with skin burns. The December meeting in Lucerne ended a long period of uncertainty for two key European projects - the ExoMars mission to place a life-seeking rover on the Red Planet, and maintaining a presence on the International Space Station. Last October, a 230-million-euro test lander, designed to lay the groundwork for the planned rover, smashed into Mars, prompting the ESA to seek additional cash to keep the project alive. — AFP



LILLE, France: Estonian defense official Erki Kodar chats with a conference goer as part of a cyber security conference on Tuesday. — AP

## CYBERCONSCRIPTS: BALTIC DRAFTEES CAN CHOOSE IT

LILLE, France: The tiny Baltic nation of Estonia is experimenting with the idea of cyberconscript, a move that gives draftees with tech skills the chance to work shoring up their military's electronic infrastructure, an Estonian defense official said Tuesday. The experiment involves between 10 and 20 draftees, Undersecretary of Defense Erki Kodar told The Associated Press at a cybersecurity conference in Lille, in northern France. The pilot program began last summer and will be evaluated after the conscription cycle ends in June.

Estonia's compulsory military service means teens can serve between eight to 11 months in the military depending on their role on whether they serve as sailors, soldiers or in other roles. Those accepted as

cyberconscripts can expect to pass their time on a help desk or doing programming work, Kodar said. Government agencies and militaries across the world have long struggled to attract and keep cybersecurity professionals in the face of fierce private-sector competition, and Kodar said the plan could be a way of drawing them into the country's military or its reserves.

In any case he said it didn't make sense to waste information technology talent. "Maybe a highly skilled IT specialist, it's not good to get them as drivers," he said. Estonia's cyberconscript plan is unusual, but many militaries - including France, whose cyberdefense reserves had a booth at the conference - have some kind of a call-up force of information security professionals. — AP

## DIVERSITY IN TECH: LOTS OF ATTENTION, LITTLE PROGRESS

NEW YORK: The tech industry brought us self-driving cars, artificial intelligence and 3-D printers. But when it comes to racial and gender diversity, its leading companies are no trailblazers. Despite loudly touted efforts to hire more blacks, Latinos and women, especially in technical and leadership positions, diversity numbers at the largest tech companies are barely budging. In 2014, 2 percent of Googlers were black and 3 percent were Hispanic, numbers that have not changed since. The picture is similar at Facebook and Twitter. Microsoft is slightly more racially diverse (though not when it comes to gender) and Apple even more so, though still not reflective of the US population. Amazon is more racially diverse still, although it counts a large, lower-wage warehouse workforce in its totals.

Women, meanwhile, make up less than a third of the workforce at many companies - even less in engineering and other technical jobs. Tech companies themselves tend to blame a "pipeline problem," meaning a shortage of women and minorities with technical qualifications. But a number of academic experts, industry employees and diversity advocates say there's a bigger problem. Silicon Valley, they argue, has failed to challenge its own unstated assumptions about what makes for great tech employees.

"The people who are doing the hiring are not changing their thinking around what they view as qualified," says Leslie Miley, engineering director at the message-service startup Slack. Hiring managers, he says, spend too much time worrying that applicants who don't fit tech stereotypes aren't "Google-y enough or Facebook-y enough or Apple-y enough or Twitter-y enough." Miley, who is African-American, previously worked as an engineer at Twitter, Apple, Google and Yahoo.

### The Industry is Trying

Companies are spending a lot of time and money on improving diversity. Two years ago, Intel splashily set itself the goal of achieving full representation in its workforce by 2020. Despite committing \$300 million to the effort and making some early progress, Intel acknowledges there is "a great deal of work to be done." Similar programs are in place throughout the industry, from outreach at high schools and historically black colleges to internship and mentoring programs and sponsorships for coding boot camps. So far, a little avail.

Why? Interviews with more than 30 tech workers, executives and diversity advocates suggest the blame lies with subtle biases in hiring, unwelcoming work environments and a paucity of diverse role models in top positions. Aniya Williams, founder and CEO of the start-up Tinsel, says companies should focus on their own culture rather than blaming external factors they can't control, such as limited computer-science education in US schools. It's not enough to release diversity reports and say, "Oh, not a lot has changed, but it's the world, not us that's the problem," she says. Williams, who is African-American, says she has made sure to hire women as well as underrepresented minorities. Tinsel makes tech jewelry targeted at women.

### Why it Matters

Diversity isn't just about fairness. It's about having designers who reflect the diversity of the people they are designing for. For tech companies hoping to reach millions or billions of users, a lack of diversity could mean their products "will not appeal to a large population," says Lillian Cassel, chairwoman of computer sciences at Villanova University. Diverse perspectives can also help prevent grievous errors - such as a problem that arose at Google in 2015, when a photo-recognition feature misidentified black faces as gorillas.

### Some related missteps

- Snapchat released two photo filters that contorted facial features into bucktoothed Asian caricatures or blackface. One was later withdrawn after public outcry. The other "expired," and the company said it won't put it back into circulation.
- Airbnb initially took no steps to prevent hosts from discriminating against guests whose profile photos showed they were black. The practice was corrected after an outcry. Twitter took nearly a decade to tackle the harassment of women and minorities on its service.
- In a New York Times opinion piece, Microsoft researcher Kate Crawford urged companies working on artificial intelligence to address diversity, warning that otherwise "we will see ingrained forms of bias built into the artificial intelligence of the future."



SAN FRANCISCO: In this Jan 3, 2017 photo, Aniya Williams, founder and CEO of Tinsel (right), talks about program placement with Kara Lee at the offices of Galvanize. — AP

### Into the Pipeline

Some 11 percent of computer science graduates were black and 9 percent were Hispanic in the 2013-14 school year, according to the latest data from the US Department of Education. Yet only 4 percent of Google's 2015 hires were black, and 3 percent were Hispanic. At Intel, fewer than 5 percent of hires were black and 8 percent were Hispanic. Numbers at other tech companies are comparable.

Major tech companies have a long tradition of hiring applicants from top-tier universities - and those universities also have a problem with diversity, even if they're doing slightly better than the companies. Some minority applicants, meanwhile, earn their computer-science chops through community colleges or coding boot camps instead - places often overlooked by recruiters.

The few minorities hired into big tech companies can often feel alienated in overwhelmingly white (and sometimes Asian) environments. Unsurprisingly, they are sometimes reluctant to recommend their employer to friends, classmates and former colleagues, furthering the cycle of underrepresentation, Williams and others say.

### When the Culture Doesn't Fit

Silicon Valley startups like to talk about "culture fit" - in theory, the question of whether a job candidate's attitude and behavior meshes well with a company. In practice, though, it can mean that since a lot of people are white and male, they "hire what they know," says Dave McClure, a prominent angel investor in Silicon Valley. Larger companies such as Facebook publicly eschew discussions of "fit" although the notion can unwittingly seep into hiring practices. For example, a 2013 study found that words used in engineering and programming job listings could serve to discourage women from applying. Words like "competitive," "dominant" and "leader," can make a job seem less appealing to women in a field that is already male-dominated.

Some companies, including Facebook, offer training on "unconscious bias" to combat the problem. But they don't make such training mandatory for all employees. And once hired, people can get lost in the shuffle given the lack of role models and mentors in higher ranks - and thus find it difficult to advance. At many places, women and minorities face constant questions about their technical knowledge. They can't help wondering if they would be taken "more seriously" if they were whiter and male, Williams says.

### Making Change Happen

Nancy Lee, the Google official in charge of diversity efforts, says the gorilla face-recognition incident was a "wake-up call" for the company. "We need to include all voices from a multitude of backgrounds and experiences (when it comes to the technology we create)," she says. "We firmly believe that good ideas don't come out of echo chambers." Lee says things are getting better, slowly, but that it can be "demoralizing" to those working on diversity issues to be pressured to do things quickly. "We want to solve this for the long haul," she says.

But Miley, the former Twitter and Google engineer, can't understand why diversifying the industry's workforce "seems to be such an intractable problem." "I wonder if it is coming up against...the deep-seated belief that the people in these organizations are special and they want to keep out people who are not special," he says. "In our country, increasingly the people who are not special are the people who are underprivileged." — AP

## DUTCHMAN ON TRIAL IN CYBERBULLY CASE

AMSTERDAM: A man accused of a worldwide cyberbullying racket that got young girls to pose naked before black-mailing them went on trial yesterday in Amsterdam, saying he is innocent of the charges. The defendant Aydin C is suspected of forcing dozens of young women from as far as Britain, Canada, Norway and the United States into performing sex acts in front of their webcams.

"I deny all charges and will remain silent until my closing statement," a defiant Aydin C - identified only by his first name because of Dutch privacy rules - told judges at a high-security courthouse. The 38-year-old Dutchman faces 72 charges including computer sex crimes such as making and storing of child pornography, blackmail, fraud and hard drug possession, prosecutors said. Aydin C is also wanted for trial in Canada in the case of teen Amanda Todd who committed suicide in Oct 2012 after being tormented by an anonymous cyberbully.

### Sexual acts

"He posed online as a young woman and established trust relationships with 34 young girls, eventually getting them to pose naked in front of a webcam," Dutch public prosecution service spokesman Lars Stempher told reporters outside the courtroom. Once Aydin C obtained the images, his tone changed and he would start to threaten the girls, telling them he would show the images to parents, relatives and school friends if they did not do as told. "This included performing sexual acts and in the end the girls became trapped in his web," Stempher said.

Five gay men - mainly in Australia - were also lured in, when Aydin C allegedly posed as a young boy and "eventually he threatened them that he would expose their sexuality, leading to blackmail". In one case, an amount of 1,000 euros (\$1,100) was then paid into an account, the court heard. Aydin C used dozens of aliases like "Tyler Boo" and "Kelsy Rain" and employed different computer tricks, including a program to fool young girls into thinking they were chatting live to a girl of similar age.

Investigators found some 204,000 images on hard disks belonging to the accused, but prosecutors did not say what the images depicted. Aydin C, who leaned back in his chair during the hearing, his long greying hair slicked back behind his ears, did not respond to questions posed by the judge. He was arrested after Facebook rang alarm bells in 2013, telling Dutch police a "sextortionist" - somebody who uses sex to blackmail others - was at work in The Netherlands.

### Teen suicide

Canada has asked for Aydin C to be extradited in the case of teen Amanda Todd who committed suicide in Oct 2012 after being tormented by an anonymous cyberbully. "The notorious case, that of Amanda Todd regularly pops up in this case docket," Judge Karel Brunner said. "That case is not before the court today. Obviously the Canadian authorities are planning to prosecute," the judge said.

A Dutch court in June last year ruled in favor of Aydin C's extradition to Canada to stand trial in connection with Todd's death. The extradition case is under appeal before the Dutch highest Supreme Court. The 15-year-old's suicide sparked a worldwide debate about appropriate online behavior, and prompted calls for cyberbullying to be criminalized.

In a YouTube video watched by millions worldwide, Todd said before her death that she suffered from anxiety, "major depression" and panic attacks after a photo of her breasts, flashed in an online video chat with a stranger, was distributed in her community. If extradited, Aydin C however will be sent to Canada only after the end of his trial in the Netherlands prosecutors said, meaning it could still take years. Commenting on the Dutch case, Aydin C's lawyer Robert Malewicz told AFP outside the courtroom "we are disputing that there is a proper link between the evidence presented and my client." "We will ask for an acquittal," he said. — AFP



## KENYAN SOLAR FARM POWERS COMPUTERS, PROTECTS GIRLS

**OLSHO-OIBOR:** When the first few residents of this village in the Ngong hills installed solar panels, nearly a decade ago, the only aim was to power their own homes, as their town had no connection to the national power grid. But today the community, south of Nairobi in the Rift Valley, is buzzing with solar and wind energy, which powers everything from the dispensary and church to shops, homes and even a rescue centre for girls fleeing child marriage and the threat of female genital mutilation.

Residents say they banded together to buy the shared energy system themselves, recognising that the substantial upfront cost would create benefits for years to come. Those now include everything from vaccines that can now be kept cold at the dispensary to solar-powered pumping of water. "Before we started this solar farm, people from this village used to travel to Ngong town, which is 17 kilometers away, to get basic services and goods such as a photocopy or a haircut. This used to inconvenience

us greatly since you had to part with a tidy sum," said Simon Parkesian, the manager of the community's solar farm.

In 2009, some residents of Olosho-Oibor, impressed with a first couple of private solar panels installed in the community, decided they wanted panels of their own - but many people could not afford them. So a group of community members began contributing cash - 10 dollars a month - until they had enough to buy a set of larger solar panels that could serve many nearby homes. They then approached the U.N. Industrial Development Organization for technical help in installing their system.

Today the 125-member energy cooperative has raised \$4,900 for panels - installed on poles around the community and on rooftops - and installed two small wind turbines as well. The community also has a 10-kilowatt diesel generator as a backup in periods when both sunshine and wind fall short, but that is used only occasionally, Parkesian said.

### Power to the girls

Lydia Mboyo, one of those receiving power from the community energy farm, said having lights in the evening has helped her children study and allowed her to run her small retail shop at night. She now is making plans to expand her shop and purchase a refrigerator to store perishable food and drinks. "I am also a member of a women's group that makes and sells beaded ornaments abroad, and with lighting we have been able to store our business records in computers. We also listen to the radio for entertainment while beading," Mboyo said.

Parkesian said access to power also has spurred creation of a community information and communications technology (ICT) centre that has trained more than 40 people in basic computer skills, and that now offers photocopying and printing services. The centre also allows people to charge their mobile phones, which once had to be switched off to save power when not being used to make calls. As well, the renewable energy network is

powering a centre for vulnerable girls fleeing early marriage and female genital mutilation - both problems common in the area, Parkesian said.

"The power grid has initiated many projects in the community but the most important project is the girls' rescue center that houses close to 80 vulnerable girls," he said. The centre, opened in 2012, uses renewable energy to light its dormitories and classrooms. Jackline Mwendu, a nurse at Olosho-Oibor dispensary, said her facility has been able to offer vaccine services since it got power to provide refrigeration. The dispensary's water supply has also improved as a result of using solar-powered pumps, she said, though she is still hoping for additional power to light maternal delivery rooms at night.

### A sustainable system?

Parkesian said the cost of maintaining the renewable mini-grid has been significant, and community members have needed to contribute \$5 a month for continuing access to power to help pay those costs.

Members of the energy cooperative have been trained to repair and replace worn-out parts of wind turbines and solar panels, he said. But many repairs require technical knowledge not available in the village, which increases costs and can lead to the system not working for short periods. Running the community's diesel generator to provide back-up lighting at night costs \$10 per day, he said. Leah Kagwara, the Africa director for Energy 4 Impact, a non-governmental organization that supports energy access in off-grid communities, said Olosh-Oibor's model of communities pulling together to invest in renewable energy should be encouraged, in part to overcome the technology's high upfront costs. Access to energy is key to eradicating extreme poverty in areas where people still rely on firewood or kerosene for energy, she said. One key to making community renewable energy systems work, she added, is that people should continue to pay at least a small amount for the power they receive, including to support maintenance costs. — Reuters



**BANGALORE:** This photo taken on January 10, 2017 shows garbage clogging up a storm water drain in Bangalore. — AFP

## HOW INDIA'S 'GARDEN CITY' BECAME ITS GARBAGE CITY

### BANGALORE PAYING A HEAVY PRICE FOR ITS SUCCESS

**BANGALORE:** The stench of rubbish hanging over swathes of Bangalore is so powerful it rouses residents in the middle of the night, the fetid result of a trash crisis that threatens its reputation as one of India's nicest places to live. Hailed first as the country's Garden City and then its Silicon Valley, drawing in multinational IT firms and their monied executives, today Bangalore is paying a heavy price for its success - it's a city overflowing with garbage, its infrastructure and waste collection services unable to keep up with decades of unchecked growth.

"You will wake from your dreams because of the smell," says local Kamesh Rastogi. "You have to close the doors, but even then there is no respite," he adds. The capital of Karnataka state, Bangalore was once a favourite retreat for families seeking respite from the heat of the surrounding southern farming plains and particularly popular with people in retirement.

Located on a plateau and blessed with a relatively cool climate, the city is dotted with public parks and gardens as well as a network of lakes. But since marketing itself as India's tech hub, drawing in a raft of multinationals, Bangalore's population has soared from three million at the start of the 1990s to in excess of eight million. The surge has placed huge pressure on its municipality, which stands accused of inadequate urban planning and, in particular, of failing to cope with the accompanying rise in waste volumes.

When Rastogi, who works for the tech firm Oracle, bought an apartment a decade ago in a

leafy suburb called HSR Layout, he thought he was moving into one of Bangalore's most pristine neighborhoods. But as part of efforts to cope with the 3,500 tonnes of rubbish that are generated in the city every day, the municipality reopened a mothballed waste treatment plant near his apartment in 2013.

At the time of construction, the plant was some distance beyond Bangalore's outskirts but it has since been encircled by the urban sprawl of the last quarter of a century. Furious residents, many of them executives for international tech companies, set up a neighborhood association to campaign for the plant's closure and relocation. Contacted by AFP, management at the plant said an air filter was being installed to clean up emissions but residents are unconvinced. "I feel I have to be reincarnated to see these changes happening," one of them quipped.

### 'Garbage discipline'

Anger is growing throughout the city, with newspapers carrying stories of litter louts being beaten up on the streets by furious residents. And rather than its old nickname as India's Garden City, Bangalore is now simply dubbed garbage city. The municipality's waste management team turned down several requests to speak to AFP. But around a hundred CCTV cameras have been installed to catch fly tippers in two districts that have become regular dumping grounds. The municipality has even installed

GPS devices in dump trucks to ensure crews don't take short cuts and is reportedly considering hiring ex-servicemen with the authority to fine offenders to enforce "garbage discipline". Campaigners say such measures are little more than sticking plasters and the crisis can only be resolved once the municipality increases its capacity to treat rubbish.

"It's mostly what we call trying to douse the fire when it happens, instead of a systemic approach to resolve these issues," said Venkatesh Kannaiah, an activist with the Janaagraha civic organisation. As awareness grows about the environmental impact of India's increasingly consumerist society, more residents are trying to recycle or setting up their own compost heaps.

"Bangalore used to be one of the most beautiful cities in India, and look at it now," said Myriam Shankar, a member of the Solid Waste Management Round Table pressure group. Shankar, an Italian-German, first arrived in India in 2004. Now married to a lawyer, she regards Bangalore as home. She and her fellow activists try to raise awareness at schools and in companies about the advantages of recycling.

Shankar believes things have improved inside gated communities, where residents are beginning to come up with their own solutions, but it's a different situation beyond the city's compounds. "Outside, you have a very diverse society and to get all these people singing to the same tune, it is difficult. You have things like corruption, literacy or illiteracy... It takes time." — AFP

## BIRD FLU FEARS IN CHINA AFTER 9 DEATHS THIS YEAR

**BEIJING:** Nine people have died of bird flu in China this year, state media reported yesterday, after the World Health Organization (WHO) urged all countries to promptly report human infections. Disease control centres in three provinces including northern Henan, central Hunan, and southern Guangdong have reported at least nine deaths from the virus, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

The most recent cases came from Henan, where local health authorities reported deaths of two restaurant workers on Tuesday. China has reported over 1000 cases, with 38.5 percent of them resulting in death, since an outbreak started in March 2013, according to figures from the WHO. The bird flu strain H7N9, which can cause serious respiratory illness, strikes most commonly in winter and spring.

So far this season, infections have been reported across southern China, including in major cities Shanghai and Hong Kong, Xinhua said. Bird flu scares in the past two years have seen mass culls of up to tens of thousands of birds in Hong Kong, including as recently as June. — AFP



**COLOMBO:** In this photograph taken on January 24, 2017, a Sri Lankan health worker sprays a neighborhood with a fog used to ward off mosquitoes in Biyagama on the outskirts of Colombo. Mosquito-related dengue cases have risen sharply in and around the capital despite dry weather conditions, according to local officials, who have stepped up efforts to fog residential areas to tackle mosquito breeding areas. — AFP

## US HEALTH OFFICIALS CANCEL CLIMATE CONFERENCE AND DON'T SAY WHY

**NEW YORK:** The government's top public health agency has canceled a conference next month on climate change and health but isn't saying why publicly. But a co-sponsor said he was told by the CDC that it was worried how the conference would be viewed by the Trump administration. The incoming administration did not ask or order that the meeting be canceled, said Dr Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association.

"They had no idea or not whether the new administration would be supportive," said Benjamin. His group was a co-sponsor of the CDC event and has its own climate-themed conference planned for November. Rather, the decision was "a strategic retreat," intended to head off a possible last minute cancellation or other repercussions from Trump officials who may prove hostile to spending money on climate change science, Benjamin said Monday. "They decided the better part of valor was to stop and regroup" until it could be discussed with Trump's new health leadership, Benjamin said. A new CDC director has not been named.

### Hope still lingers

The Climate and Health Summit, set for Feb 14-16, was canceled last month. After media reports began to appear Monday, the CDC issued a statement saying it was looking at rescheduling the meeting, given budget constraints and potential overlap with the November conference. Benjamin called the CDC's decision understandable but worrisome. He was echoed by Kristie

Ebi, a professor of global health at the University of Washington in Seattle, who was invited to speak at the conference.

"In the long run, climate change is affecting the health of Americans," she said. "At some point, I hope they will go forward with the conference." Most of the planning for the meeting began only in the fall and could probably benefit from more time, said Dr Jonathan Patz, a University of Wisconsin professor of health and the environment who was organizing a conference session. "Personally, I would not try to over-interpret this" cancellation, he said.

Public health experts say climate change is a man-made problem that contributes to a range of health issues and illnesses, including heat stroke and diseases spread by tropical insects. The CDC has a \$10 million program on climate and health, and published guidelines to help local health officials deal with human vulnerability to climate change.

In 2012, Trump tweeted that the concept of global warming was created by the Chinese to make U.S. manufacturing non-competitive. He later said he was joking, but during the presidential campaign referred to global warming as "a hoax." Before he took office, Trump met with former Vice President Al Gore and Leonardo DiCaprio, both prominent climate activists. Trump picked Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, as head of the Environmental Protection Agency. During his confirmation hearing, Pruitt backed away from his own past statements and said climate change is real. — AP



**ATLANTA:** In this Oct 8, 2013, file photo, a sign marks the entrance to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). — AP

## FOR NIGERIAN MOTHERS, BOKO ESCAPE SHAKES UP CHILDBIRTH

**MAIDUGURI:** Nestled among dozens of pregnant women huddled together on benches in the clinic's antenatal ward, their children clad in jumpers, jackets and woolly hats against the morning chill, Fatima Abdulai is glad to have the company. Having fled her home in northeast Nigeria when Boko Haram militants struck in 2015, Abdulai is preparing for the birth of her eighth child - her first since arriving in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state. But this time, she won't be alone.

"I gave birth to the others on the floor at home, alone," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation at the Maimusari health centre in Borno, the heart of Boko Haram's seven-year-long campaign to carve out an Islamic caliphate in the northeast. "There was no hospital in my village, so I had no choice," said Abdulai, who now lives in a rented apartment, rather than a camp for the displaced. "But some women in Maiduguri told me to come here ... now I know the risks of having a baby at home."

In Nigeria, where many women deliver without medical care, around one in 125 die during or just after childbirth, making it the world's fourth most dangerous country in which to give birth, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Many women in the northeast do not have a health facility nearby, cannot afford the transport or healthcare costs, or are compelled to deliver at home by their husbands and families. But the destruction wrought by Boko Haram in the northeast, which has uprooted more than two million people, may eventually improve the sexual and reproductive health of countless women across the region, health workers and experts say. Some 1.4 million of the dis-

placed are now residing in camps and communities in Borno state, where aid agencies are offering free health services in camp clinics and state health centres. For many women uprooted by Boko Haram, like Abdulai, this is the first time they have set foot in a health facility, or heard about antenatal care, birth control and family planning. "We can challenge the norm of giving birth at home ... and have more conversations about women's health," said John Agbor, Nigeria chief of health for the UN children's agency (UNICEF).

### Family planning fears

Many of the women arriving at health centres for the first time are fearful that using contraception may leave them permanently infertile, betray their Muslim faith, or spark a violent reaction from their husbands, several midwives said. "Concerned about a cultural and religious backlash, we chose to raise awareness about the services by using local volunteers in camps and host communities," said Shehu Dasigit, reproductive health manager at the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

Yet the fact that more than two-thirds of the displaced in Borno live among communities rather than in camps makes it harder to reach and encourage women to seek health services, Dasigit said. However, in health centres and camp clinics across Maiduguri, dozens of women queued patiently in the heat, saying that they would happily wait three or four hours to be seen. While some of the women in Bakassi camp had decided to come without telling their husbands, 25-year-old Zuaira Ali could not stop smiling as she attended her latest antenatal check-up. — Reuters









# TAMDEEN GROUP AND MH ALSHAYA COMPANY SIGN MAJOR LEASING DEAL

## 22 STORES TO OPEN IN NEW AL-KOUT MALL

**T**amdeen Group - Kuwait's leading mixed-use property developer - signed a leasing agreement with leading retail franchise operator MH Alshaya Co. to open 22 apparel, pharmacy, optical and restaurant stores in the new Al-Kout Mall which is part of Al-Kout, the largest mixed-use waterfront destination in Kuwait.

The agreement between MH Alshaya and GLA Management - a professional mall-management firm that is part of the Tamdeen Group - will offer mall visitors a selection of current favorites in MH Alshaya's portfolio of stores, cafe and restaurant brands, as well as a number of new brands not yet introduced to the market. Alshaya's 75 leading international brands offer shoppers a wide range of choices across fashion and footwear, food, health and beauty and optics brands.

Christian Wistrom, General Manager - Leasing, GLA Management, said: "We are delighted to partner with MH Alshaya Company who are recognized as retail experts

in the region. The breadth of brands and quality of service they offer appeals to the diverse aspirations of Kuwaiti residents who are among some of the world's most discerning shoppers. Al-Kout Mall will be fully leased ahead of the project completion date by year-end, and having MH Alshaya on board is an expression of investor confidence in the project's potential."

Under the deal, the 22 household name brands that will join Al-Kout Mall's growing list of shops, cafes and restaurants, include: Victoria's Secret, American Eagle Outfitters, Bath and Body Works, Boots, Claire's, HandM, Justice, Mac, Next, PF Chang's, Payless Shoe Source, Starbucks, The Body Shop, Top Shop, VaVaVoom, Vision Express, Mothercare and Foot Locker.

John Hadden, Senior Vice President - Retail Property, MH Alshaya Company, said: "We are very impressed with the vision of Al-Kout Mall and are confident that it will become a popular destination for residents and visitors to

Kuwait. We are pleased to be working with Tamdeen Group once again to introduce some of our most popular brands to the mall and look forward to welcoming customers."

The new Al-Kout Mall was designed according to the highest international standards of modern shopping center design that balances practical design with great experiences. The mall is part of AL-KOUT in the Ahmadi Governorate, the largest mixed-use waterfront development in Kuwait. The project reflects traditional architectural heritage blended with modern design featuring six different experiences across entertainment, shopping and hospitality in a destination spread over 300,000 square meters that visitors can walk through seamlessly between its different components. The Al-Kout Mall project is aligned with Tamdeen Group's strategy of transforming the modern retail sector in the country whilst encouraging high impact retail entrepreneurs to contribute towards innovation in modern retail.



## AUTHOR CELEBRATES AMIR'S ANNIVERSARY

**A**uthor Abdulla Abbas Bowair will hold a special ceremony on Tuesday, January 31, 2017 to commemorate the 11th Anniversary of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's assumption of power. Members of martyrs' families will also be honored during the ceremony, which takes place at Crowne Plaza Hotel starting from 7:00 pm. A special short movie about His Highness the Amir will be shown, while some traditional songs and poetry will be performed. Bowair will also present copies of his book about His Highness the Amir to the audience.



Abdulla Abbas Bowair

## JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL & SPA SCOOPS 20 AWARDS AT HORECA

### A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR FOR THE CULINARY TEAM

**T**alented chefs from Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and 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, as part of the Horeca Kuwait 2017 exhibition.

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 and 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 20 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.



## ACK PARTICIPATES IN 'FIRST CONFERENCE ON STRATEGIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT'

**T**he Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) participated in Kuwait's First Conference on Strategic Financial Management' organized by Infinity International Company and held at The Regency Hotel. ACK was represented by Dr Mohamad Atyeh - Assistant Professor in the School of Business - who delivered a workshop entitled "The Relationship between Risk and Returns and Its Effects on Financial Market".

During his workshop, Dr Atyeh discussed the corporate governance and its importance in various financial institutions. In addition, he recommended reviewing the corporate governance rules and regulations on a continuous basis to avoid any risks that might nega-

tively affect the shareholders and the organizational financial performance, which would lead to breakdown of the financial market and the economy in general.

Commenting on his participation, Dr Mohamad Atyeh said: "I felt so honored to take part in this successful event. It is very necessary for us as educators to share our experience and knowledge with the corporate world to create awareness about all aspects that might harm any organization." ACK's involvement in such industry-related conferences is of great importance to the College as these experiences positively impact the quality of education delivered to its students.

## KOYILANDY KOOTTAM KUWAIT NEW OFFICE BEARERS FOR 2017-18

**K**oyilandy Koottam Kuwait Chapter elected their office bearers for the year 2017-2018 at the general body meeting held in Foke Hall, Abbasiya. The Meeting was presided over by Illyas Bahassan. General Secretary Shahul Beypore presented the annual report and Treasurer Siddeeq Daya presented the financial report of 2015-2016 respectively.

The meeting was inaugurated by Chapter Patron Rajagopal Edavalath. Patron K. Aboobacker gave keynote speech on the occasion. Chairman Shahid Siddiq controlled the election procedure and the general body

meeting unanimously elected the following office bearers:

- Shahul Beypore (President), Dileep Arayadath ( Gen.Secretary), Shahjahan PK (Treasurer).
- Vice Presidents: Musthafa Mythri, Jaji Varghese, Secretaries: Akber Uralloor, Rihab Thondiyl.
- Directors : Siddeeq Daya (Charity), Illyas Bahassan (PR), Sanu Krishnan (Arts), Sadiq Thaivalappil (Sports), Aslam Alavi (Media).
- Area Conveners: Sharaf Chola (Farwaniya), Manjunadh Mathiroy (Fahaheel), Mansoor Muntoth (Abbasiya), Syed Hashim (Salmiya

and Hawally).

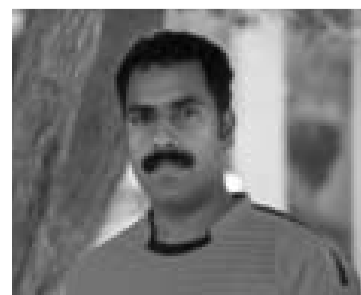
Further an executive of 20 members were also nominated. Chairman (Shahid Siddeeq), Advisory Board Members (Rajagopal Edavalath, Aboobacker K, Saleh Batha, Raof Mashoor) and Admin (Manoj Kumar Kappad) will continue for 2017-18 as well. The Meeting requested Embassy to interfere in the increasing crime rates in Abbasiya against the Indian expats. Rihab Thondiyl welcomed the Audience and Shahjahan P K casted vote of Thanks.



Shahid Siddikh



Shahul Beypore



Dileep Arayadath



Shahjahan P.K





## FREDERIK JASSOGNE OPENS ART EXHIBITION IN KUWAIT

The Ambassador of Belgium to Kuwait Andy Detaille inaugurated an art exhibition for Belgian artist Frederik Jassogne, and that as part of a series of

events for the Belgian Days in Kuwait. The event took place at Al-Hamra Tower in Sharq. Frederik Jassogne (1984) is an upcoming artistic talent and has a signature technique

of embedding digital and interactive technologies in modern art. By embedding childhood drawings in a digital landscape, the art of Jassogne offers us emotional resonance in

times of digital solitude and escapism. Jassogne has mostly been active in the international theatre and opera-scene since 2008, for which he created artistic video-

designs. Artists and art enthusiasts in Kuwait visited the gallery and expressed interest and appreciation for Jassogne's works.  
— Photos by Joseph Shagra



## ROYAL BRITANNIA KINDERGARTEN TO HOLD OPEN DAY ON JAN 28



Royal Britannia Kindergarten (RBK) - a subsidiary of Education Consortium - is a non-profit Kindergarten whose mission is to be the leading, culturally diverse and family-oriented international preschool with English as the principal language of instruction. RBK uses the Early Years Foundation Stage British curriculum (EFYS) with strong focus in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math education. RBK offers wonderful facilities and activities ranging from hydroponics to cooking, baking and even music. RBK will host an Open Day on Saturday, 28th January 2017 from 9 am to 2 pm at its campus located in Al-Sideeq - Block 4, Street 401, Villa 234. The objective of this event is for parents to experience RBK's facilities first-hand in order to aid the decision making process

for the enrollment of their children for the new academic year starting in September 2017. The Open Day will offer a range of complimentary activities for children like face painting, DIY greenhouse making and cupcake decorating to provide a taste of school life at RBK. All activities will be managed by teaching staff - that way parents can get a feel of the ethos within the classrooms. Additionally, the Royal Britannia Academy will be hosting a range of activities for KD 5 per hour. The activities include gymnastics, ballet, parkour, yoga to name a few. The activity of the day is 'Karate', which will be instructed by a highly qualified sensei. For more information, parents can visit: [www.rbk.education](http://www.rbk.education).





OSN MOVIES

ACTION

- 00:00 Zero Tolerance
- 01:30 Jennifer's Body
- 03:30 The Pack
- 05:00 Jurassic Hunters
- 07:00 Ant-Man
- 09:00 The Last Survivors
- 11:00 The Mark: Redemption
- 13:00 Navy Seals: The Battle For New Orleans
- 15:00 Ant-Man
- 17:00 The Last Survivors
- 18:45 Dragon Blade
- 21:00 Taken 3
- 23:00 Cat Run 2

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:00 The Pool Master
- 00:55 Gator Boys
- 01:50 River Monsters: Lair Of Giants
- 02:45 Going Ape
- 03:10 Going Ape
- 03:40 Wild Animal Rescue
- 04:35 Tanked
- 05:25 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 06:15 Gator Boys
- 07:02 River Monsters: Lair Of Giants
- 07:49 The Pool Master
- 08:36 Meet The Orangutans
- 09:00 Meet The Orangutans
- 09:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 10:15 Wild Animal Rescue
- 11:10 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 12:05 Tanked
- 13:00 Pit Bulls & Parolees
- 13:55 Bondi Vet
- 14:20 Bondi Vet
- 14:50 Wild Animal Rescue
- 15:45 Gator Boys
- 16:40 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 17:35 Tanked
- 18:30 River Monsters (Best Of Series 1-5)
- 19:25 The Lion Queen
- 20:20 The Vet Life
- 21:15 Tanked
- 22:10 Weird Creatures With Nick Baker
- 23:05 The Lion Queen

BBC FIRST

- 01:30 Doctors
- 02:05 Eastenders
- 02:40 Ripper Street

- 05:15 Key And Peele
- 05:40 Impractical Jokers
- 06:05 Ridiculousness
- 06:30 Lip Sync Battle
- 06:55 Lip Sync Battle
- 07:20 Frankentood
- 07:50 Frankentood
- 08:15 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol
- 09:05 Impractical Jokers
- 09:30 Ridiculousness
- 09:55 Tosh.0
- 10:20 Key And Peele
- 10:45 Workaholics
- 11:10 The It Crowd
- 11:35 Ridiculousness
- 12:00 Lip Sync Battle
- 12:25 Lip Sync Battle
- 12:50 I Live With Models
- 13:15 Workaholics
- 13:40 The It Crowd
- 14:05 Disorderly Conduct: Video On Patrol

- 14:55 Ridiculousness
- 15:20 Lip Sync Battle
- 15:45 Lip Sync Battle
- 16:10 I Live With Models
- 16:35 Ridiculousness
- 17:00 Impractical Jokers
- 17:30 Workaholics
- 17:55 Tosh.0
- 18:25 Workaholics
- 18:50 Coaching Bad
- 19:39 The It Crowd
- 20:03 Lip Sync Battle
- 20:27 Lip Sync Battle
- 20:50 I Live With Models
- 21:13 Impractical Jokers
- 21:37 Ridiculousness
- 22:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 22:30 Inside Amy Schumer
- 22:54 The Half Hour
- 23:18 Tosh.0
- 23:42 Tosh.0

Discovery Family

- 00:15 What Happened Next?
- 00:40 Ultimate Survival
- 01:30 Nextworld
- 02:20 Wildest Africa
- 03:10 Finding Bigfoot
- 04:00 What Happened Next?
- 04:25 What Happened Next?
- 04:50 Ultimate Survival
- 05:40 How It's Made
- 06:05 How It's Made
- 06:30 Storm Chasers
- 07:20 Mythbusters
- 08:00 Do You Know?

- 13:30 Shake It Up
- 13:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 14:00 Welcome To The Ronks
- 14:15 Gravity Falls
- 14:40 Hank Zipzer
- 15:05 Star Darlings
- 15:10 Austin & Ally
- 15:35 Austin & Ally
- 16:00 Jessie
- 16:25 Jessie
- 16:50 Rolling To The Ronks
- 17:15 Sunny Bunnies
- 17:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 17:45 Elena Of Avalor
- 18:10 Bunk'd
- 18:35 Frozen: Magic Of The Northern Lights
- 18:40 Girl Meets World
- 19:05 Bizaardvark
- 19:30 Liv And Maddie
- 19:55 Best Friends Whenever
- 20:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 20:25 The Next Step
- 20:50 Austin & Ally
- 21:15 Star Darlings
- 21:20 Shake It Up
- 21:45 Backstage
- 22:10 Liv And Maddie
- 22:35 Cracked
- 22:40 The Next Step
- 23:05 Best Friends Whenever
- 23:30 Mako Mermaids
- 23:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts

Disney Junior

- 00:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 00:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 00:55 PJ Masks
- 01:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 01:35 The Hive
- 01:45 Loopedidoo
- 02:00 Henry Hugglemonster
- 02:15 Calimero
- 02:30 Art Attack
- 02:50 Zou
- 03:05 Loopedidoo
- 03:20 Henry Hugglemonster
- 03:35 Calimero
- 03:50 Zou
- 04:05 Art Attack
- 04:30 The Hive
- 04:40 Loopedidoo
- 04:55 Henry Hugglemonster
- 05:10 Art Attack
- 05:35 Loopedidoo
- 05:50 Calimero
- 06:05 Art Attack
- 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster

- 14:05 How Do They Do It?
- 14:30 The Liquidator
- 14:55 The Liquidator
- 15:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
- 16:10 What On Earth?
- 17:00 Deadliest Catch
- 17:50 Fast N' Loud
- 18:40 Wheeler Dealers
- 19:30 How Do They Do It?
- 19:55 How Do They Do It?
- 20:20 What On Earth?
- 21:10 The Liquidator
- 21:35 The Liquidator
- 22:50 So You Think You'd Survive?
- 22:50 Legend Of Croc Gold
- 23:40 Treasure Quest: Snake Island

Disney XD

- 00:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA
- 07:00 Danger Mouse
- 07:25 Gravity Falls
- 07:50 The 7D
- 08:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
- 08:15 Counterfeit Cat
- 08:40 Supa Strikas
- 09:10 K.C. Undercover
- 09:35 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
- 10:00 Lab Rats
- 10:25 Lab Rats
- 10:50 Danger Mouse
- 11:20 Supa Strikas
- 11:45 Supa Strikas
- 12:10 Counterfeit Cat
- 12:35 Pair Of Kings
- 13:00 Pair Of Kings
- 13:30 Future-Worm!
- 13:55 Lab Rats
- 14:20 Lab Rats
- 14:45 Atomic Puppet
- 15:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 15:15 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
- 15:40 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 16:05 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 16:30 Disney Cookabout
- 16:55 Danger Mouse
- 17:25 K.C. Undercover
- 17:50 Future-Worm!
- 18:15 Gravity Falls
- 18:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
- 19:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 19:10 Supa Strikas
- 19:35 Supa Strikas
- 20:00 Atomic Puppet
- 20:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
- 20:55 K.C. Undercover
- 21:20 Counterfeit Cat
- 21:45 Mighty Med
- 22:10 Pickle And Peanut
- 22:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
- 22:45 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
- 23:10 Ultimate Spider-Man
- 23:35 Boyster

EHD

- 00:00 E! News
- 00:15 Botched
- 01:05 Botched
- 01:55 Botched
- 02:50 E! News
- 03:50 LA Clippers Dance Squad
- 04:45 Dash Dolls
- 05:40 Dash Dolls
- 06:30 Celebrity Style Story
- 07:00 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 07:55 E! News
- 08:10 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 09:10 E! News
- 10:10 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 11:10 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 12:05 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 13:00 E! News
- 13:15 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 14:10 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 15:05 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
- 16:00 E! News
- 16:15 Rob & Chyna
- 17:15 Rob & Chyna
- 18:10 Rob & Chyna
- 19:05 Celebrity Style Story
- 20:00 Celebrity Style Story
- 20:30 E! News
- 21:00 Mariah's World
- 22:00 Mariah's World
- 23:00 Celebrity Style Story
- 23:30 Celebrity Style Story

food network

- 00:00 Chopped
- 01:00 Food Network Star
- 02:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives

- 02:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 03:00 Man Fire Food
- 03:30 Man Fire Food
- 04:00 Chopped
- 05:00 Guy's Grocery Games
- 06:00 Barefoot Contessa
- 06:30 Barefoot Contessa
- 07:00 The Kitchen
- 08:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 08:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 09:00 Siba's Table
- 09:30 Siba's Table
- 10:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 10:30 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 11:00 The Kitchen
- 12:00 The Pioneer Woman
- 12:30 The Pioneer Woman
- 13:00 Siba's Table
- 13:30 Siba's Table
- 14:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 14:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
- 15:00 Chopped
- 16:00 The Kitchen
- 17:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 17:30 Valerie's Home Cooking
- 18:00 Chopped
- 19:00 Iron Chef America
- 20:00 Private Chef
- 20:30 Private Chef
- 21:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 21:30 Patricia Heaton Parties
- 22:00 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 22:30 Rev Run's Sunday Suppers
- 23:00 Iron Chef America

itv HD CHOICE

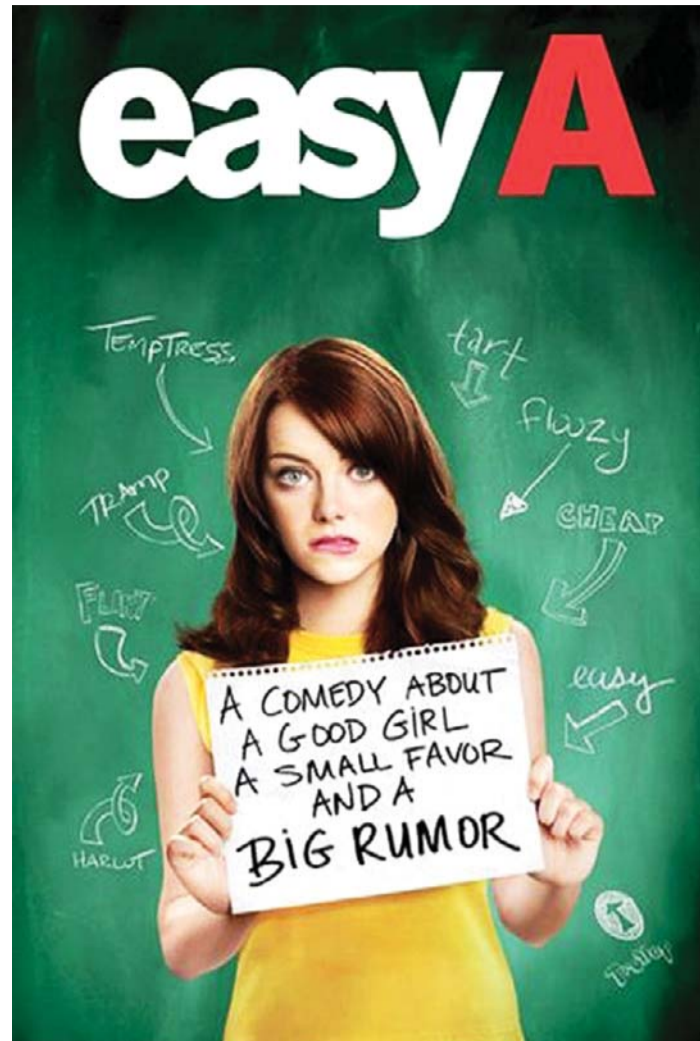
- 00:15 Coronation Street
- 00:40 Coronation Street
- 01:10 The Chase
- 02:00 Emmerdale
- 02:30 Coronation Street
- 03:00 Coronation Street
- 03:30 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 04:25 Court Thorne
- 05:15 Shetland
- 06:15 Arthur & George
- 07:10 Don't Tell The Bride
- 08:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 09:00 Court Thorne
- 10:00 Shetland
- 11:00 Arthur & George
- 11:55 Don't Tell The Bride
- 12:55 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 13:45 Emmerdale
- 14:15 Coronation Street
- 14:45 Coronation Street
- 15:10 Don't Tell The Bride
- 16:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 17:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 17:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 18:50 Arthur & George
- 19:45 Emmerdale
- 20:15 Coronation Street
- 20:45 Coronation Street
- 21:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
- 22:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 22:55 The Jonathan Ross Show
- 23:50 Emmerdale

HQ HD

- 00:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 01:00 The Universe
- 02:00 Patton 360
- 03:00 Mud Men
- 04:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 04:50 Ancient Aliens
- 05:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 06:30 The Universe
- 07:20 Patton 360
- 08:10 The Universe
- 09:00 Mud Men
- 10:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 11:00 Ancient Aliens
- 12:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 13:00 The Universe
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- 17:00 Ancient Aliens
- 18:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 19:00 The Universe
- 20:00 Patton 360
- 21:00 Mud Men
- 22:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 23:00 Ancient Aliens

H HD HISTORY

- 00:30 American Pickers
- 01:20 Time Team
- 02:10 Counting Cars
- 02:35 Car Hunters
- 03:00 Forged In Fire
- 03:50 Storage Wars
- 04:15 American Pickers
- 05:05 Pawn Stars
- 05:30 Pawn Stars
- 06:00 Mountain Men
- 07:00 Ice Road Truckers
- 07:50 Shipping Wars
- 08:15 Shipping Wars
- 08:40 Counting Cars



EASY A ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

- 09:05 Car Hunters
- 09:30 Pawn Stars
- 09:55 Pawn Stars
- 10:20 Storage Wars
- 10:45 Storage Wars
- 11:10 American Pickers
- 12:00 Alone
- 12:50 Time Team
- 13:40 Swamp People
- 14:30 Ax Men
- 15:20 Mountain Men
- 16:10 Ice Road Truckers
- 17:00 Counting Cars
- 17:25 Counting Cars
- 17:50 Pawn Stars
- 18:15 Pawn Stars
- 18:40 Lesep And Pitbull
- 19:30 Counting Cars
- 19:55 Car Hunters
- 20:20 Ax Men
- 21:10 American Pickers
- 22:00 Alcatraz: The Search For The Truth
- 23:40 Hunting Hitler

NAT GEO WILD HD

- 00:30 wnen snarks Attack
- 12:00 Alone
- 02:10 Dangerous Encounters
- 03:00 The Lakeshore Killers
- 03:50 Killer Shots
- 04:45 Ultimate Animals
- 05:40 Sea Of Hope
- 06:35 The Lakeshore Killers
- 07:30 Killer Shots
- 08:25 Ultimate Animals
- 09:20 Sea Of Hope
- 10:15 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 11:10 Rescue Ink
- 12:05 World's Weirdest (2015)
- 13:00 Planet Carnivore
- 13:55 Turf War- Lions And Hippos
- 14:50 Planet Carnivore
- 15:45 Ultimate Animals
- 16:40 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 17:35 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 18:30 Rescue Ink
- 19:25 World's Weirdest (2015)
- 20:20 Ultimate Animals
- 21:10 Unlikely Animal Friends
- 22:00 Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet
- 22:50 Rescue Ink
- 23:40 World's Weirdest (2015)

NAT GEO people HD

- 00:20 Places We Go
- 00:45 Places We Go
- 01:10 My Restaurant In India
- 01:35 Sara's Australia Unveiled
- 02:00 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 02:25 A Is For Apple
- 02:50 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 03:15 Food School
- 03:40 What's For Sale?
- 04:05 What's For Sale?
- 04:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 04:55 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 05:20 My Restaurant In India
- 05:45 Grandma's Boy
- 06:10 Grandma's Boy
- 06:35 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 07:00 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 07:50 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 08:15 A Is For Apple
- 08:40 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 09:05 Food School
- 09:30 What's For Sale?
- 09:55 What's For Sale?
- 10:20 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 10:45 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 11:10 My Restaurant In India
- 11:35 Grandma's Boy
- 12:00 Grandma's Boy
- 12:25 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 12:50 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 13:40 Ariana's Persian Kitchen
- 14:05 A Is For Apple
- 14:35 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
- 15:00 Food School
- 15:30 What's For Sale?
- 15:55 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 16:25 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 16:50 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 17:20 Grandma's Boy
- 17:45 This Is Brazil
- 18:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 19:10 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 20:05 David Rocco's Dolce India
- 20:30 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 21:00 John Torode's Malaysian Adventure
- 21:25 Grandma's Boy
- 21:50 This Is Brazil
- 22:40 Miguel's Tropical Kitchen
- 23:05 Charlie Luxton's Homes By The Sea
- 23:55 Ariana's Persian Kitchen

OSN MOVIES HD DRAMA

- 00:00 The Grief Tourist
- 02:00 Boychour
- 04:00 Lucky Thing
- 06:00 Every Thing Will Be Fine
- 08:00 Red Wing
- 10:00 Jappellou
- 12:15 Boychour
- 14:15 Love Under The Stars
- 16:00 Invasion Day
- 17:45 Jappellou
- 20:00 Posthumous
- 22:00 Siberian Education

OSN MOVIES HD FAMILY

- 00:00 Minions
- 02:00 Clockstoppers
- 04:00 Monsterville: The Cabinet Of Souls
- 06:00 Goosebumps
- 08:00 Bark Ranger
- 10:00 Minions
- 12:00 Goosebumps
- 14:00 The Boxtrolls
- 16:00 The Last Song
- 18:00 Frozen
- 20:00 American Girl: Grace Stirs Up Success
- 22:00 Alone For Christmas

OSN MOVIES HD

- 00:15 By The Sea
- 02:15 Cut Bank
- 04:00 A Kind Of Murder
- 06:00 Love The Coopers
- 08:00 Pan
- 10:00 A Kind Of Murder
- 11:45 Spotlight
- 14:00 Love, Rosie
- 15:45 Alex Of Venice
- 17:15 Bridge Of Spies
- 19:45 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
- 22:00 London Has Fallen
- 23:45 Straight Outta Compton

OSN MOVIES HD COMEDY

- 01:00 Tales Of Halloween
- 03:00 Blue Streak
- 05:00 All About Steve
- 07:00 Angus Thongs And Perfect Snogging
- 09:00 Easy A
- 11:00 All About Steve
- 13:00 Ghostbusters
- 15:00 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
- 17:00 Easy A
- 19:00 Ghostbusters II
- 21:00 Burying The Ex
- 23:00 Hot Tub Time Machine 2

OSN MOVIES HD FESTIVAL

- 01:00 Ex Machina
- 03:00 Belles Families
- 05:00 Changeling
- 07:30 The Express
- 10:00 Escobar: Paradise Lost
- 12:00 Middle Of Nowhere
- 14:00 Wuthering Heights
- 16:00 Love & Mercy
- 18:00 Escobar: Paradise Lost
- 20:00 Erin Brockovich
- 22:15 Boyhood



ANT-MAN ON OSN MOVIES ACTION

- 03:40 Wallander
- 05:25 Eastenders
- 06:00 The Musketeers
- 07:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Doctors
- 08:00 Eastenders
- 08:35 Holby City
- 09:35 Stella
- 10:25 The Musketeers
- 11:30 Doctors
- 12:00 Eastenders
- 12:30 Death In Paradise
- 13:25 Stella
- 14:20 The Musketeers
- 15:15 Doctors
- 15:45 Eastenders
- 16:15 Death In Paradise
- 17:10 Stella
- 18:05 The Musketeers
- 19:00 Doctors
- 19:30 Eastenders
- 20:05 Death In Paradise
- 21:00 Holby City
- 22:00 Benidorm
- 23:00 Stag
- 23:55 Big School

- 08:15 Doki
- 08:35 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 09:00 My Cat From Hell
- 09:45 How It's Made
- 10:05 How It's Made
- 10:30 Nextworld
- 11:20 Mythbusters
- 12:10 Storm Chasers
- 13:00 My Cat From Hell
- 13:50 Ultimate Survival
- 14:40 How It's Made
- 15:05 How It's Made
- 15:30 Storm Chasers
- 16:15 Mythbusters
- 17:00 Doki
- 17:20 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
- 17:45 Do You Know?
- 18:00 Space Voyages
- 18:50 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 19:40 Nextworld
- 20:30 How It's Made
- 20:55 How It's Made
- 21:20 Mythbusters
- 22:10 Space Voyages
- 23:00 NASA's Unexplained Files
- 23:50 What Happened Next?

- 06:45 Zou
- 07:00 Art Attack
- 07:30 Henry Hugglemonster
- 07:45 Loopedidoo
- 08:00 Zou
- 08:15 Calimero
- 08:30 Loopedidoo
- 08:45 Henry Hugglemonster
- 09:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 09:05 PJ Masks
- 09:15 Goldie & Bear
- 09:30 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 09:45 Miles From Tomorrow
- 09:55 The Lion Guard
- 10:20 Doc McStuffins
- 10:35 Goldie & Bear
- 10:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 11:00 PJ Masks
- 11:15 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
- 11:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
- 11:35 Sofia The First
- 12:00 Sofia The First
- 12:30 Doc McStuffins
- 12:55 Doc McStuffins
- 13:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 13:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 14:15 Gummi Bears
- 14:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 15:10 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
- 15:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 16:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 16:30 Little Mermaid
- 16:55 Unbungleable
- 17:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 17:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 17:55 The Lion Guard
- 18:20 Goldie & Bear
- 18:50 PJ Masks
- 19:15 Sofia The First
- 19:40 Doc McStuffins
- 20:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
- 20:30 Little Mermaid
- 21:00 Miles From Tomorrow
- 21:30 Miles From Tomorrow
- 22:00 Unbungleable
- 22:05 Goldie & Bear
- 22:35 Miles From Tomorrow
- 23:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
- 23:25 Gummi Bears
- 23:55 Minnie's Bow-Toons

Disney Channel HD

- 00:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 00:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 00:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 01:10 Hank Zipzer
- 01:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 02:00 Violetta
- 02:45 The Hive
- 02:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:15 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 03:40 Hank Zipzer
- 04:05 Binny And The Ghost
- 04:30 Violetta
- 05:15 The Hive
- 05:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 05:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 06:10 Hank Zipzer
- 06:35 Binny And The Ghost
- 07:00 Violetta
- 07:45 The Hive
- 07:50 Mouk
- 08:00 Jessie
- 08:25 Jessie
- 08:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
- 09:15 Frozen: Magic Of The Northern Lights
- 09:20 Elena Of Avalor
- 09:45 Bunk'd
- 10:10 Gravity Falls
- 10:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 11:00 Wizards Of Waverly Place
- 11:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 11:50 A.N.T. Farm
- 12:15 Good Luck Charlie
- 12:40 Good Luck Charlie
- 13:05 Shake It Up

- 00:00 Fast N' Loud
- 01:20 Wheeler Dealers
- 02:10 Blowing Up History
- 03:00 Mega Shippers
- 03:50 Impossible Engineering
- 04:40 Fast N' Loud
- 05:30 The Liquidator
- 06:00 How Do They Do It?
- 06:30 How Do They Do It?
- 07:00 Deadliest Catch
- 07:50 Wheeler Dealers
- 08:40 Fast N' Loud
- 09:30 What On Earth?
- 10:20 The Liquidator
- 10:45 How Do They Do It?
- 11:10 How Do They Do It?
- 11:35 Blowing Up History
- 12:25 Mega Shippers
- 13:15 Impossible Engineering

Discovery Channel HD

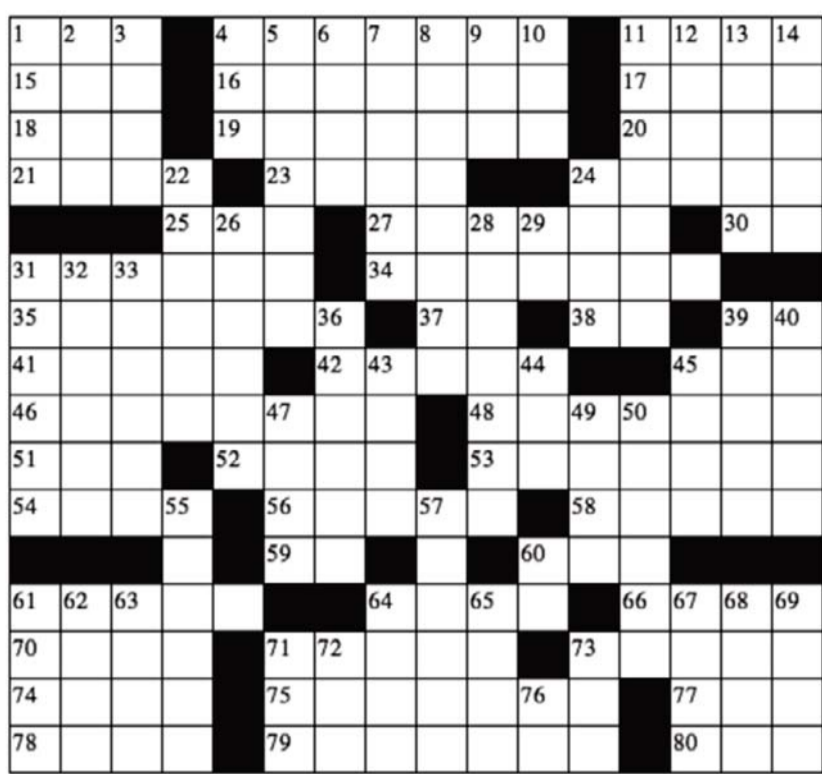
- 00:00 Fast N' Loud
- 01:20 Wheeler Dealers







CROSSWORD 1502



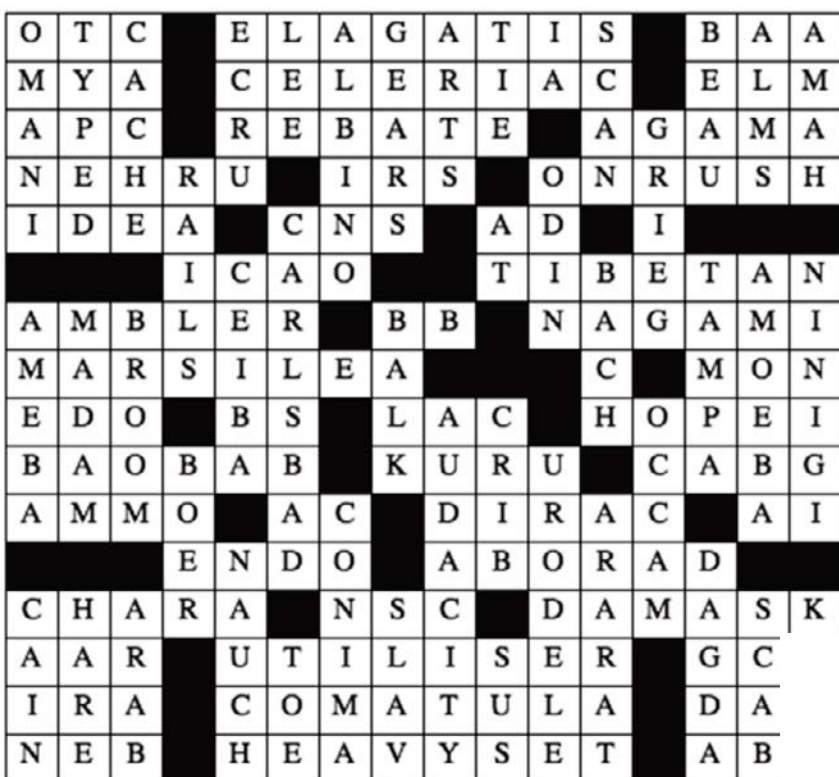
ACROSS

- An ester of adenosine that is converted to ATP for energy storage.
- Having two feet.
- An Indian unit of length having different values in different localities.
- Any of numerous hairy-bodied insects including social and solitary species.
- Oily poisonous liquid amine obtained from nitrobenzene and used to make dyes and plastics and medicines.
- A republic in the Middle East in western Asia.
- A compartment in front of a motor vehicle where driver sits.
- Inability to stand due to muscular incoordination.
- Avatar of Vishnu.
- The second largest city in Tunisia.
- A special way of doing something.
- The capital and largest city of Japan.
- A nettle yielding fiber resembling flax.
- A colorless odorless gaseous element that give a red glow in a vacuum tube.
- A player who makes a score in a game or contest.
- (historically) A member of the nomadic people of the Syrian and Arabian deserts at the time of the Roman Empire.
- A port city in northwestern Germany.
- A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
- Informal terms for a mother.
- Fragrant resin obtain from trees of the family Burseraceae and used as incense.
- Swelling from excessive accumulation of serous fluid in tissue.
- Plants having flowers in umbels.
- Straggling shrub with narrow leaves and conspicuous red flowers in dense globular racemes.
- A unit of absorbed ionizing radiation equal to 100 ergs per gram of irradiated material.
- At or constituting a border or edge.
- Brazilian tree with handsomely marked wood.
- Any of a number of fishes of the family Carangidae.
- An informal term for a father.
- Wood of a pecan tree.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- Young sheep.
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Produced by a manufacturing process.
- Soup cooked in a large pot.
- A federal agency that supervises carriers that transport goods and people between states.
- A primeval personification of air and breath.
- (of tempo) Moderately slow n.
- The longer of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.

DOWN

- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- Lacking or deprive of the sense of hearing wholly or in part.
- Having nine hinged bands of bony plates.
- The cry made by sheep.
- (of winds) Coming from the sea toward the land.
- (Middle East) Usually small round bread that can open into a pocket for filling.
- A genus of small kites of both Old and New Worlds.
- A state of dishonor.
- Black tropical American cuckoo.
- A unit of length of thread or yarn.
- Enchanter's nightshade.
- Using speech rather than writing.
- Large ornamental tropical American tree with bipinnate leaves and globose clusters of flowers with crimson stamens and sweet-pulp seed pods eaten by cattle.
- Sports equipment that is worn on the feet to enable the wearer to glide along on wheels and to be propelled by the alternate actions of the legs.
- Abnormal dryness of the conjunctiva and cornea of the eyes.
- Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
- An instrumentality invented for a particular purpose.
- A conveyance that transports passengers or freight in carriers suspended from cables and supported by a series of towers.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- A member of the Iroquoian people formerly living east of Lake Ontario.
- 40th President of the United States (1911-).
- Jordan's port.
- United States naval officer and historian (1840-1914).
- A notable achievement.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Of or relating to near the ear.
- Tropical starchy tuberous root.
- Deeply moved.
- Small space in a tissue or part such as the area between veins on a leaf or an insect's wing.
- Quieten or silence (a sound) or make (an image) less visible.
- Basic principles of the cosmos.
- A Russian river.
- Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
- A Chadic language spoken in northern Nigeria.
- A United Nations agency created to assist developing nations by loans guaranteed by member governments.
- Most important element.
- Harsh or corrosive in tone.
- Any of various minerals consisting of hydrous silicates of aluminum or potassium etc. that crystallize in forms that allow perfect cleavage into very thin leaves.
- German organist and contrapuntist (1685-1750).
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
- A fixed charge for a privilege or for professional services.
- (astronomy) A measure of time defined by Earth's orbital motion.

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

You may finally see some closure on unfinished business this day. Your current situation may demand some reevaluation or otherwise challenge your ideas. Do not be hesitant in getting a consultation on an ongoing project. Unless something is falling apart, now may not be the best time to begin a new project at work or home. Energy, drive and an expansive display of talent are yours to command. It is an excellent time to take a little break for your favorite sport or hobby this afternoon. You may have to restrain the actions of a young person tonight. This person needs to know his or her limitations and it is important for you to make your meaning clear. If you are married, find something pleasant you and your loved one can do together tonight.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

An authority figure may be making new plans that are confusing to you; you may be a bit restless. Instead of trying to figure out where you fit in the scenario, stop and ask. You are able to cut through the red tape and get at what is beneath and behind. Stability and permanence satisfy a deep emotional need. This is a good day for dealing with the subtle, sublime and complex matters of life-have confidence. Work on a financial plan today. Music is likely to play a more important role for you than usual-perhaps this is your hobby. Good eye-hand coordination and a sustained effort make almost any task run well. This afternoon you may feel like exercising or getting out and breathing a bit of fresh air. Emotions are very present but within control.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You have a feeling of optimism before a contest, competition or some other performance type of activity this morning. There is a lot of activity to improve and encourage you this week. Your colors at this time are coral and buff. This week brings opportunities for you to balance the budget, work on your goals and detect ways to improve the income. Now is the best time to enjoy the moment; take a deep breath and look around. When you feel that you have some doubt about your abilities, create a sense of self-confidence you can do anything, once you set this in your mind. Your appreciation of family and friends is heartwarming. Young children love to have you read to them. Your expression of love brings a wonderful feeling of inner peace.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Good fortune will light up your life today. Do not worry if duties at home are not accomplished just now; you may need to be more attentive to a pending project in the workplace. Tension can work against you, exhausting your vitality. If you are single, you may be thinking of reasons why a support system is so important and how you can begin to create a support system in the future. If you are married, you might consider trading chores with another so as to help you take a break from your own chores. Remember to breathe deeply. Search for a neighborhood service to walk your dog or some other service that may be helpful. This way you will be able to free up some time for more productive expressions of your talents or perhaps merely a break.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Your self-esteem is noticeably improved-adding a glow of confidence to your personal expression. You feel more confident in most matters. This could mean working with others on a project or team sports, expressing your talents, giving criticisms or guiding others. You will get the best benefit from your urge to be competitive by involving yourself in some type of team or sports competition. A big surprise is coming to you in the mail-the check is larger than you expected. Now is the perfect time to ask a loved one for some help or guidance with regard to this money. Applying your imagination and creativity in practical ways works to your advantage this evening as you plan on some important changes around your place.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Meeting yourself in another person is the keynote of a new cycle that begins now. Relationships-romantic, business and social-are the arenas where this drama is played. In coming to know the other person, you grow in strength and knowledge-psychological and otherwise. Try to understand that time is not wasted if you are doing something you really like to do, rather than doing something for which you are paid. The therapeutic result from creative endeavors now cannot be measured. Creative works will help to absorb negative feelings. You will gain a great deal of satisfaction if you find a subject to absorb. Encouragement from others and the interchange of ideas can spark your energy and create an upbeat frame of mind.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Political projects are easy for you and others are in your court, so to speak. Ideas of group cooperation and communion could further your career or status. Perhaps you will be president of some club or organization. Real insight into your own inner workings or psychology could surface today and in a manageable form. You may be in the mood for deep and penetrating conversations or thoughts this afternoon. You are in a mood of self-enjoyment and can appreciate your progress. You may see value in or feel love for an older person or someone in authority this afternoon. Connections with people on a grand scale play a big part of your evening. Education, advertising and travel could play a part in the planning of your near future.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

This is a lucky day for you. Whatever you set out to do will be a positive in your direction. If your concentration, however, is too focused you could overlook some fun activities. Later today, your input is important regarding a meeting with a senior co-worker. Careful, patience now will be what gets your message across in less time than it would if you fell into the temptation of being abrupt. Security, savings, expenses and cost of living are illuminated now. Read the financial pages of your newspaper carefully for hints about what you can expect at this time. Excellent trends exist for travel. You might talk with fellow travelers and enjoy socializing with others-perhaps neighbors-to compare vacations for future development.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

There is a lot of energy at this time to accomplish a great deal in your professional life. People can depend on what you say as wise and truthful. If you are in the design, counseling or financial profession, you will have a large following. You happily squeeze in new clients or customers and give them your complete attention for an allotted amount of time. You have confidence in your own ability to solve problems and may find yourself quite busy this day. Some intuitive thinking on your part may lead you to work on a difficult relationship in or near your own home this evening. This situation may take small increments of time to be solved, perhaps through a period of trial and error. In the end, you will be pleased with the outcome of your struggles.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You may be learning new ways to express yourself today. A seminar or lecture could be open to everyone and you could take a mate or an adult child. Mental discipline should come easily as you work to solve a puzzle or quiz. Problems and obstacles that have been puzzling in the past should now find easy explanations. Habits are in a cycle of change; put yourself on the back for a job well done. The changes you make now could include stopping smoking, or some other vice that is not good for your health. Being on the go and keeping a finger to the winds of change make you feel in touch with the world. Learning and communicating is fun; however, this evening you and your family or friends may deeply enjoy a science fiction or scary movie.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Get your cheerful self motivated to focus toward your work at this time. You might rather stay distracted with someone's update of a love life, but it would be best to stay the course, particularly where your work is concerned. Your friendly good nature shines most of this day and you may forget any plans that might be set up for this evening-careful. Well-wishers stop you many times to wish you a good day. A mentor comes to mind this afternoon as you struggle once again to concentrate and tend to your work. Any doubts about your performance in the workplace can be left aside; your skills are in fine shape and you honor all your responsibilities. Tonight you have the opportunity to just sit back and let others entertain you.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

When you entertain, it is as though someone is creating magic. You may soon want to organize a social event. This brings out your well-developed organizational skills. This social event could be the fundraiser you have been looking to create so that your local community will have a defibrillator in each of the sports arenas and gyms in your city. With your determination and professional abilities, you will exceed your goals. Anything leftover can be put in a teddy bear fund for children. If you run a family business, this is the type of offering your family can do together to help accomplish this for your community. As your career responsibilities increase this year, so does the stress; begin now to make wise choices when it comes to food and exercise.

WORD SEARCH

Songs With Girls' Names

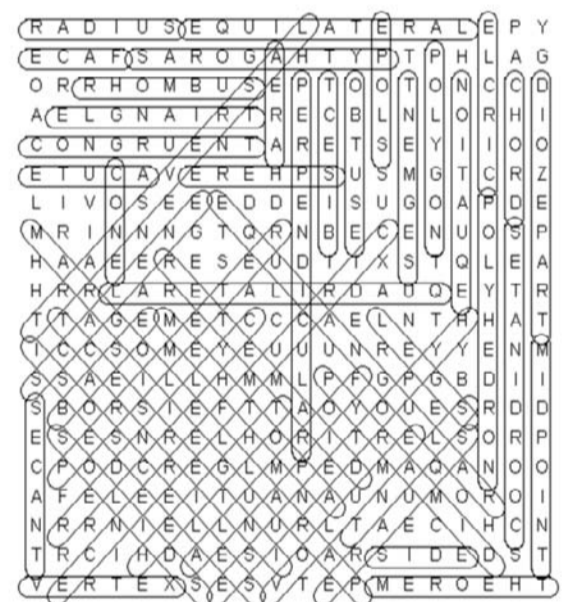
Find and circle all of these songs that have a girls name in the title. The remaining letters spell an additional song title.



- |             |                |                |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| ADIA        | DIANA          | MY SHARONA     |
| ALISON      | ELEANOR RIGBY  | NIKITA         |
| AMANDA      | ELVIRA         | OH SHERRIE     |
| ANGIE       | GLORIA         | PEGGY SUE      |
| BARBARA ANN | JOANNA         | RHIANNON       |
| BETH        | JOLENE         | ROSANNA        |
| BILLIE JEAN | KYRIE          | ROXANNE        |
| BRANDY      | LAYLA          | RUBY TUESDAY   |
| CANDIDA     | LITTLE JEANNIE | SARA           |
| CARRIE ANNE | LUCILLE        | SHERRY         |
| CECILIA     | MAGGIE MAY     | SUSIE Q        |
| CLAIR       | MANDY          | SUZANNE        |
| DELILAH     | MICHELLE       | SWEET CAROLINE |
| DELTA DAWN  |                |                |

Yesterday Solution

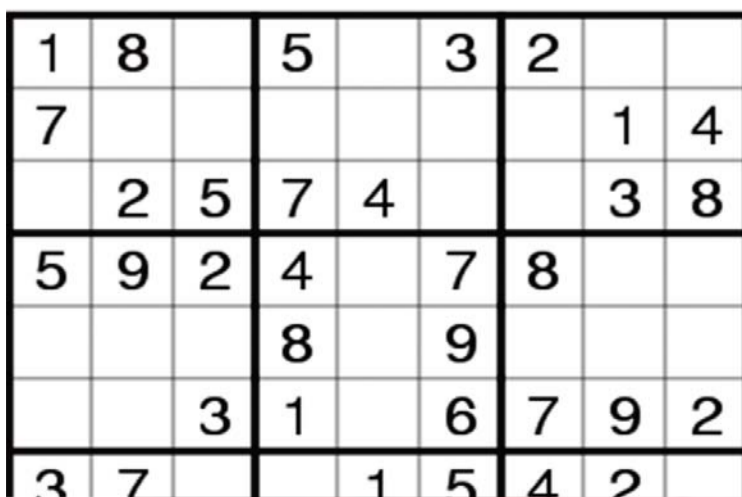
Geometry



- |               |               |               |             |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| ACUTE         | EQUATION      | PERIMETER     | SIDE        |
| APOTHEM       | EQUILATERAL   | PERPENDICULAR | SLANT       |
| AREA          | EQUILATERAL   | POLYGON       | SLOPE       |
| BASE          | FACE          | POLYHEDRON    | SOLIDS      |
| BISECT        | FORMULA       | PYRAMID       | SPHERE      |
| CHORD         | HEIGHT        | PYTHAGORAS    | SQUARE      |
| CIRCLE        | HYPOTENUSE    | QUADRILATERAL | THEOREM     |
| CIRCUMFERENCE | INTERSECT     | RADIUS        | TRANSVERSAL |
| CONE          | ISOSCELES     | RHOMBUS       | TRAPEZOID   |
| CONGRUENT     | LEGS          | SCALENE       | TRIANGLE    |
| COORDINATES   | MIDPOINT      | SECANT        | VERTEX      |
| CYLINDER      | OBTUSE        | SEGMENT       | VOLUME      |
| DIAMETER      | PARALLELOGRAM |               |             |

Hidden sentence: PYTHAGORAS LIVED DURING THE SIXTH CENTURY BEFORE CHRIST

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution





# Sundance turns lens on Syrian civil war, jihadism

In early 2014, the Islamic State group entered the northern Syrian city of Raqa, declaring it their capital and beginning a reign of terror marked by grisly public executions. Armed sharia police patrolled the streets as "enemies" of the regime were crucified or decapitated, their severed heads impaled on spikes in the city square.

Student Abdalaziz Al-Hamza and his friends decided to form Raqa is Being Silently Slaughtered (RBSS), a band of courageous citizen journalists who risk their lives to document IS atrocities. Their work is chronicled in "City of Ghosts," by Oscar-nominated director Matthew Heineman, one of a raft of films on conflict and jihadist terror in the Middle East that premiered this week at the annual Sundance Film Festival. "So often in documentaries, subjects become caricatures of whatever they're doing in life. For me, that's not very interesting," Heineman, 33, told AFP.

"I very much wanted to spend as much time as possible to understand who these guys are, what makes them tick, what are their emotions, feelings and thoughts. "Until I get to that level of intimacy, I don't feel like I have a film." No journalist has been able to enter the region, allowing IS—also referred to as ISIS—to control the message about what is happening in Raqa via increasingly slick videos. While IS paints a picture of a fully-functioning, prosperous city, RBSS has been able to capture the shocking brutality and dysfunction of everyday life in the city of one million. Following a lightning offensive in which IS was accused of numerous atrocities, the group declared its caliphate stretching from northern Syria to parts of eastern Iraq in June 2014.

### 'Amazing footage'

Al-Hamza, 25, first encountered the group when a masked man with a Saudi accent burst into his university and recruited one of his friends, who later turned up dead.



Mohamad Al-Musari, from left, Hamoud Al-Mousa, director Matthew Heineman and Abdalaziz Al-Hamza pose for a portrait to promote the film, "City of Ghosts", at the Music Lodge during the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. — AP

RBSS documents the atrocities committed daily by the extremists on camera phones, smuggling encrypted footage via the internet to Al-Hamza and his fellow exiles, who disseminate it via social media.

Last year, they reported to the outside world on a 20-year-old jihadi who had shot his mother in the head with an assault rifle in front of a crowd, after she was accused of apostasy. Heineman was touring America with his Oscar-nominated 2015 Mexican drug trade documentary "Cartel Land" as the

plight of Syrians was becoming a near-daily part of the news cycle. He began researching the conflict extensively and came across RBSS in the fall of 2015, and was struck by the sacrifices that its members had made. He decided early on that he wanted the core of the story to be deeply personal "verite" footage, captured as the activists escaped Syria after the assassination of several members by IS fighters. Heineman followed them in Turkey and then eventually to Germany as the IS group continued to threaten them.

"I knew I wanted to juxtapose this journey with the amazing footage that they had from inside Raqa to show life under the caliphate, the formation of the capital of ISIS," Heineman said.

### Reluctant heroes

Heineman's story starts in Raqa but evolves into a rare human take on Europe's migrant crisis, as well as a moving chronicle of brotherhood and coping with trauma. Elsewhere at Sundance, "Last Men in Aleppo," a documentary on the Syrian city's "White Helmet" first responders, also got its premiere. A collaboration between Syrian filmmaker Firas Fayyad, Danish filmmaker Steen Johannessen, and the Aleppo Media Center, it follows three reluctant heroes who rush toward bomb sites while others run away.

"Cries from Syria," a third film on the crisis making its debut, tells how the country's people, inspired by events in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, rose up against the dictatorial rule of President Bashar Al-Assad. The Islamic State's influence has spread far beyond the Middle East, and last week the festival screened a startling film about the kidnapping of 276 girls from the Nigerian town of Chibok by IS-affiliated militants Boko Haram. Documentary short "Waiting for Hassana," by first-time director Funa Maduka, tells the story of the abductions from the perspective of one of 57 girls who managed to escape.

"We know the global story, now we hear the personal one," said Maduka, who also worked on 2013 Nigerian civil war picture "Half of a Yellow Sun." "As the director, my aim was to visually and sonically plunge audiences into the psychological and emotional landscape of our subject." — AFP



File photo shows Bruno Mars performs at the 2016 Jingle Ball at Staples Center in Los Angeles. — AP

## Bruno Mars will perform at the Grammy Awards next month

Bruno Mars will bring his upbeat, funky swag to the Grammys stage. The Recording Academy announced yesterday that the singer-songwriter-producer will perform at the Feb 12 show at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Mars, a four-time Grammy winner, is nominated for album of the year as a co-producer on Adele's comeback effort, "25." He worked on the ballad "All I Ask."

Other album of the year nominees include Drake, Justin Bieber, Sturgill Simpson and Beyonce, who is the overall top nominee with nine. Adele, Metallica, Carrie Underwood, John Legend and Keith Urban will also perform at the show, which will air live on CBS. James Corden will host the show. Mars released his third album, "24K Magic," in November. — AP

## James Baldwin 'unfiltered' in Oscar-nominated documentary

Raul Peck's Oscar-nominated documentary "I Am Not Your Negro" presents the raw, "unfiltered" voice of US civil rights stalwart James Baldwin through his own words, the Haitian filmmaker says. "He invented a language of incredible force," Peck told AFP at his Paris office, calling the novelist, essayist and poet the literary "father of everyone" who influenced authors from Beat Generation idol Allen Ginsberg to Nobel literature laureate Toni Morrison. "The title is obviously a provocation," said Peck, president of La Femis, France's most prestigious film school.

He summed up the thinking of Baldwin, who was black and gay, by saying: "You can't park me in the ghettos and lynch me without becoming monsters."

Baldwin escaped American racism and homophobia in 1948, taking refuge in Paris for more than a decade before returning home to lead a nationwide campaign against segregation. It was in Paris that the Harlem-born Baldwin wrote his semi-autobiographical coming-of-age story "Go Tell It on the Mountain". Three years later he authored the frank, homoerotic "Giovanni's Room", one of the first acclaimed literary works to explore the gay experience.

Back in the United States, Baldwin became friends with African American civil rights icons Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr. and Medgar Evers—all three assassinated before they reached their 40th birthday, as Peck notes. In 1963, Baldwin's deeply personal exploration of racial injustice in "The Fire Next Time" fanned the flames of the American civil rights

movement as it was exploding in the segregated South. Peck could not bear the idea of Baldwin falling into oblivion, that history would inherit his ideas "without quoting him".

### Unpublished notes

The filmmaker combed through Baldwin's novels and correspondence on the way to creating what he called a "confrontation" between the man and today's world. Black and white footage from scenes of more recent racial strife such as Ferguson, Missouri—which saw a wave of protests after the police shooting of an unarmed African-American man—remind viewers of the subject's continuing relevance. The work, which Peck said is "high-stakes artistically and politically", aims to challenge the racism of ("US President Donald) Trump and all those like him".

But he said Baldwin's discourse is too politically incorrect for American television, predicting that his documentary would never reach the small screen. Actor Samuel L. Jackson, whose breakthrough role was as a crack addict in Spike Lee's "Jungle Fever" (1991), voices Baldwin in the US version. French rapper JoeyStarr does the French voiceover for the documentary, soon to be released on the German-French cultural channel Arte. "They act from within" Baldwin's black skin, said Peck, who is in his early 60s and whose own family fled Haiti under the Duvalier dictatorship. — AFP



In this, file photo, musician Madonna poses for photographers upon arrival at the World premiere of the film "The Beatles, Eight Days a Week" in London. — AFP

## MADONNA IN MALAWI COURT TO APPLY TO ADOPT 2 MORE KIDS

US pop superstar Madonna appeared in person at a court in the Malawian capital Lilongwe yesterday to apply to adopt two more local children, a court spokesman told AFP. Madonna, who runs a charity called Raising Malawi in the southern African nation, adopted Malawian children David Banda in 2006 and Mercy James in 2009. Local media reports said the singer appeared before Justice Fiona Mwale amid tight security, accompanied by two unidentified children and several other people, before being driven away in an SUV vehicle.

"The court is looking at the application now to determine whether Madonna can adopt these two children," said Mlenga Mvula, spokesman of the Lilongwe High Court. "The... process requires the court to make a ruling on the adoption." The 58-year-old singer last visited Malawi in July, taking her two adopted Malawian children with her.

She also inspected her charity's work, including progress at a surgical unit for children at the Queen Elizabeth hospital in the commercial capital Blantyre. It was Madonna's first visit in nearly two years to Malawi, where she has at times been embroiled in controversy after her earlier adoptions.

### Adoption controversy

She was stripped of VIP status by former president Joyce Banda's government in 2013 and accused of being "uncouth" and wanting eternal gratitude from the impoverished country for adopting the two children. But Banda was ousted in 2014 elections and the new president, Peter Mutharika, moved to repair relations, saying "my government has always been grateful for the passion Madonna has for this country".

Last July, Madonna said she would not revive plans for a \$15 million academy for girls in Malawi, which was cancelled amid allegations of mismanagement-leading to her tiff with Banda. The singer, who divorced film director Guy Ritchie in 2008, reportedly landed in Malawi by private jet and was staying at an exclusive lodge outside Lilongwe. Madonna, who has four children, is reportedly among the biggest individual donors to children's projects such as orphanages in Malawi, which is ranked by the UN Human Development Index as one of the world's 20 least developed countries.

On Saturday, she made an unannounced appearance in Washington at a rally protesting against US President Donald Trump a day after his inauguration. Madonna had campaigned for Hillary Clinton to become America's first woman president, and told Billboard Magazine after the Democrat's loss that women had a "tribal inability" to accept a female president. — AFP



Cake-Baly Marcelo of Guinea-Bissau sits in his tram-cab of No 2 line in Budapest. —AFP photos



Cake-Baly Marcelo of Guinea-Bissau is pictured in the Paris bookstore in Budapest downtown.

## Immigrant tram driver shoots to fame in Hungarian refugee film

On posters around Budapest right now is the determined face of an African-born tram driver with a doctorate, the star of a poignant new Hungarian film about immigration, integration and xenophobia. "A stranger ran up to me one day after I finished my shift and asked if I wanted to be in a movie about refugees," Marcelo Cake-Baly, a former teenage soldier from Guinea-Bissau, told AFP at a tram stop on the outskirts of Budapest. "I said 'yes' on the spot." That stranger was Hungarian film director Roland Vranik, whose well-received "The Citizen" tells the story of an African refugee's quest to obtain Hungarian citizenship and premieres on Wednesday.

Filmed just before Europe's migration crisis hit in 2015, the movie highlights the plight of non-European migrants trying to settle in the predominantly white country. Cake-Baly, 58, came to Hungary in 1976 after the army in Guinea-Bissau offered him the chance to study in neighboring Senegal, where he won a scholarship to study in then-communist Hungary. He only gained Hungarian citizenship in 1994, however, and says the struggles experienced by the film's lead character, Wilson, mirror his own.

Wilson encounters casual racism, grapples with bureaucratic hurdles and helps a fellow refugee in trouble, all the while trying to hold down a security guard job and get by in the Magyar language, one of Europe's trickiest tongues. In the opening scene, he is told by an official to "come back in a year" after failing yet another citizenship exam, which included a grilling on the Hungarian constitution and medieval history. Cake-Baly, who holds a doctorate in economics, lost his job in a bank in

1989 because he did not have citizenship. For years he struggled to find work, in part due to his skin color, he suspects. "I had so much rejection in the job market I threw away my pride. I couldn't tell you where my economist diploma certificate is, at the back of a drawer probably," he said ruefully.

### 'Go home'

Since 2005 he has worked as a tram driver and sometimes gets abuse, with people shouting at him to "go home"—despite having a Hungarian passport and proficiency in the language. The temptation to pull his passport from his coat pocket is strong, he says, but he always resists. "Most people here are friendly, but there's always one who's not. Still there is no point in getting into conflicts," Cake-Baly said. Hungary is home to around 5,000 Africans, a tiny percentage of the foreign-born population of 150,000, itself mostly Europeans and 1.5 percent of the 10-million-strong country. According to surveys, hostility to non-whites in Hungary has grown during Europe's migration crisis, which swept through the country two years ago.

Hungarian polling firm, Tarki, said recently that xenophobic attitudes were at their highest in 25 years. Over 400,000 people trekked through Hungary in 2015 to reach richer countries further west and north. In response, the hardline anti-immigration Prime Minister Viktor Orban built border fences and put up billboards warning foreigners not to take jobs from Hungarians.

These days, "migrant" is used as a term of abuse that Cake-Baly hears more and more. "Someone at a bus stop blew smoke in my face recently, and said it would have been better if I'd

been drowned in the sea like the other migrants," said Cake-Baly, who has three children with his Hungarian wife.

### Critics' praise

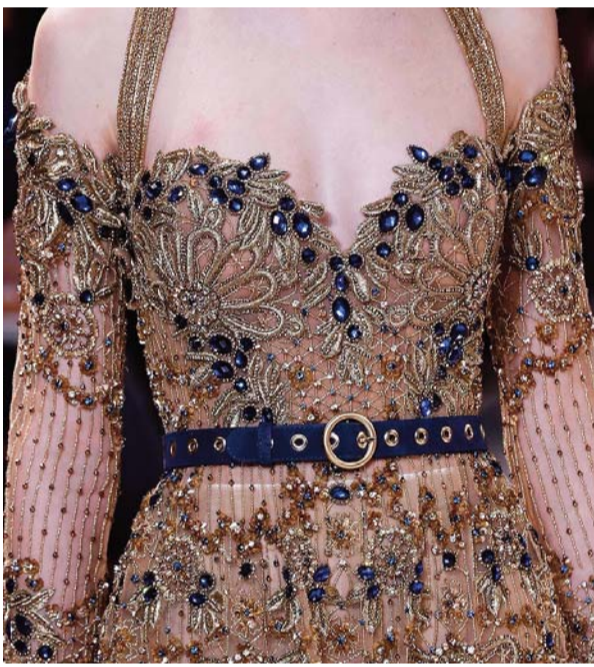
Vranik said he began working on the film's screenplay in 2012, well before the refugee crisis erupted and the government's anti-migrant "propaganda got going". "It wasn't so hard to predict what might happen... I wouldn't change the movie if I started writing it today," the 48-year-old told AFP. "I was just curious about the life of a vulnerable African refugee trying to integrate in Hungary," he added. Vranik approached Cake-Baly on the street after spotting him in a driver's uniform as "it is not easy to find a middle-aged African who speaks Hungarian". Critics have called the movie "one of the best and important Hungarian films" made to date, comparing it to the work of acclaimed British director Mike Leigh.

"It doesn't conform to stereotypes," Adam Kovats, a 22-year-old student, told AFP after an advance screening in Budapest last week. "The refugees and Hungarian characters in the movie come across as real, complex people, not just one-dimensional angelic refugees and racist Europeans". Looking forward to the premiere, Cake-Baly, who still hasn't seen the completed film, told AFP he hopes to do more acting. "I've got a taste for it now," he smiled. — AFP





# LILY-ROSE DEPP EMERGES AS STAR OF DECO-INSPIRED CHANEL SHOW



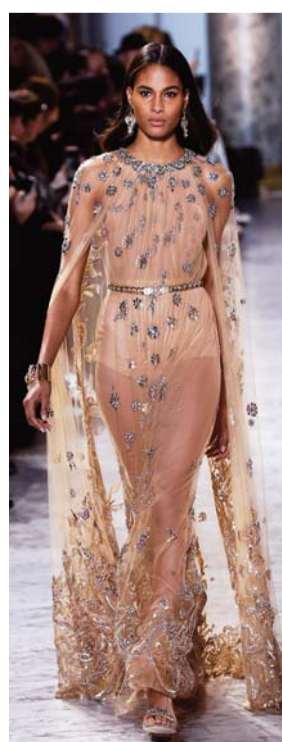
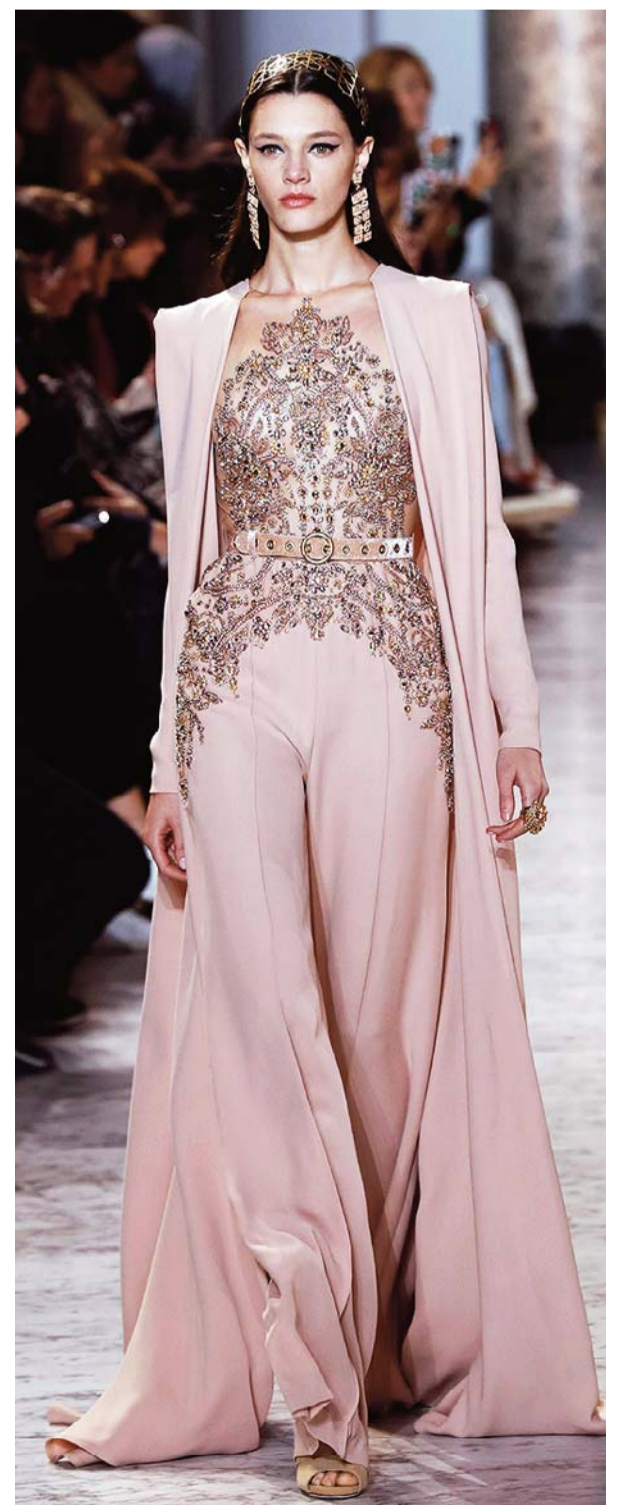
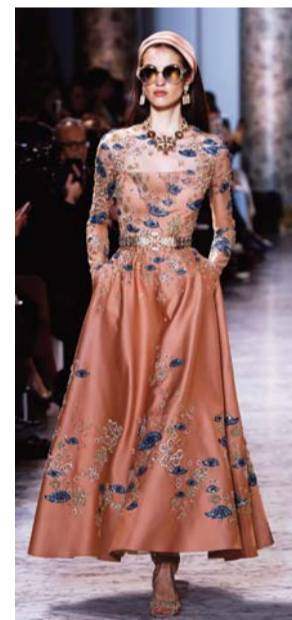
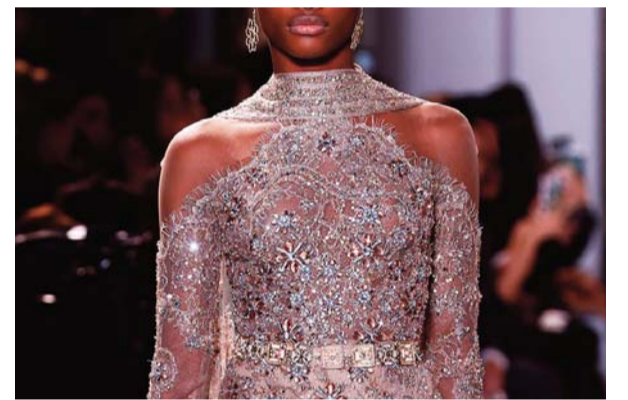
**S**inger-model Vanessa Paradis was the image of the dotting mother at Chanel's Art Deco-inspired spring-summer collection, looking on proudly as daughter Lily-Rose Depp emerged as the star of the show. Here are the highlights from the second day of Paris couture week:

**Chanel's mirrored show**

At Chanel, the sparkling, reflective decor recalled the mirrors of the grand staircase that lead up to the house's famed couture salons on Paris' rue Cambon. Mirrored tiles were engraved with the signature quilted motif. But it was more than just decoration. The set in the Grand Palais presentation also set the theme - turning the time dial chicly to the geometric Art Deco designs of the 1930s. The house characterized the styles as "crazy femininity" on models with slicked-back hair and flattened "boater" hats. But Tuesday's show was more of a low-key couture affair than crazy and channeled a pared-down, pastel palette. There were sumptuous white silk A-line dresses that shimmered against the kaleidoscopic backdrop, and fun moments of effervescence in some froufrou dresses. At times, the silhouettes seemed incongruous, while the designs of maestro Karl Lagerfeld, now 83 years old, seemed to lack some of the exuberance of previous seasons.

**Vanessa Paradis' Family Affair**

Lily-Rose Depp made her runway debut at Chanel's Metiers d'Art show at the Ritz in December, but now the 17-year-old is a seasoned fashion professional. Fashionistas gasped as Vanessa Paradis' daughter with actor Johnny Depp took to the couture runway in a frothy pink tulle bridal gown to cap the heritage house's spring season. Former Chanel model and mom Paradis looked on proudly, passing the baton to the child who suddenly has seem to come of age.





FASHION



**Alexis Mabille color-blocks the princess**

It was a sublime collection for French designer Alexis Mabille, who color-blocked the fairytale princess. Vivacious tulle-rich couture gowns rendered in vivid expanses of peacock blue, purple, cyclamen, flame red and teal green wowed the guests. Crowns gave way to bridal and princess veils midway through the 24-piece display, but the contemporary colors ensured that none of the designs strayed into the saccharine. There were plenty of great fashion ideas. One of the fairytale-esque looks in black tulle looked like the design was channeling a dark, unraveled royal - the couture equivalent of Lucifer.

**Armani goes Asian, 70s**

It was all about peaked shoulders and 1970s glamour for fashion icon Giorgio Armani's Prive couture show. Asian styles and loose, silken silhouettes influenced the collection that warmed frozen guests with its bright color palette. Saturated oranges and golden reds evoked the sun of the Far East. Shimmering sheer silks, plumed boas and fastidious embroideries made this an intricate and archetypally couture display. It's a shame that with such musings, only one Asian model was selected for the catwalk show. — AP



Models present creations by Elie Saab during the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection yesterday in Paris. — AFP photos



Lebanese designer acknowledges the audience at the end of the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection in Paris.

Fashion designer Alexis Mabille (center) acknowledges the audience at the end of the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection in Paris.

German fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld (right) acknowledges the audience next to French and US actress and model Lily-Rose Melody Depp at the end of the Chanel during the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection in Paris.



FASHION



## UK workplace study finds women forced to wear heels

**A** British parliamentary study into workplace dress codes has found that women have been told to wear high heels, dye their hair or wear revealing outfits at the office. The inquiry followed the case of a London receptionist who was asked to go home after protesting that she was forced to wear 2-inch to 4-inch (5-centimeter to 10-centimeter) heels to the office while her male colleagues weren't.

The Petitions Committee and Women and Equalities Committee said yesterday that it became clear during the course of the inquiry that this wasn't an isolated incident. The committee says that it heard from hundreds of women "who told us about the pain and long-term damage caused by wearing high heels for long periods." The committee noted that discriminatory dress codes remain widespread. — AP



Models present creations for Chanel during the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection.



Models present creations by Alexis Mabille.



FASHION

# Longtime British Vogue editor Alexandra Shulman to step down

The top editor at British Vogue plans to step down after a quarter century at the helm of the trendsetting fashion magazine. Vogue said yesterday that Alexandra Shulman will leave the position this summer. No replacement has been named.

Shulman has been an influential figure on the British fashion scene for many years and has helped nurture young British writers and designers. She said the decision to leave was difficult and that she will miss the daily contact with the people at Vogue House in central London. In

June Vogue marked 100 years of publication with a special issue featuring the Duchess of Cambridge on its cover. In the past Shulman has criticized designers for using extremely thin models. — AP



In this file photo, Alexandra Schulman poses for photographers upon her arrival at the Design Museum opening party in London. — AP



Models present creations for Giorgio Armani Prive.



# Lifestyle

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2017

Lily-Rose Depp emerges as star of Deco-inspired Chanel show

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Municipal workers plant flowers around the model of a rooster made of plants in a public park in downtown Hanoi yesterday. Known locally as Tet, the celebration of the Lunar New Year is Vietnam's most important holiday. — AFP



Employees and a customer are seen in the 'Konditorei Damaskus' pastry shop in the Neukoeln neighborhood of Berlin.



Tamem Al-Sakka is seen working in his pastry shop, 'Konditorei Damaskus' in the Neukoeln neighbourhood of Berlin.



The Konditorei Damaskus pastry shop is seen in the Neukoeln neighbourhood of Berlin.

## Berlin now 'home sweet home' for Syrian pastry chefs

'Only music, language and pastry can transport you to these pleasant memories, it's universal'

A Syrian family of pastry chefs, the Sakkas, once delighted the people of Homs with their sugar-soaked Levantine delicacies, until a rain of bombs turned them into refugees. Now, after a four-year odyssey, they have reopened the family's sweet-tooth haven in Berlin, a baklava shop called the "Damaskus Konditorei". In a bittersweet tale of war, loss, exile and rebuilding, the family was granted asylum in Germany and, against the odds, opened their new patisserie last summer. "Even though it's very difficult to find a job in Germany, we said, 'let's go and try!'" said Tamem, 42, the youngest of three brothers.

Four years have passed since the Sakkas fled Homs, Syria's third biggest city, which became a rebel bastion early in the war that started in 2011. Suffocated by a long army siege, the city saw fierce fighting that pushed many of its residents to leave everything behind and run. The family of 16 – the three brothers, Salim, Rami and Tamem Al-Sakka, with their parents, wives and children-first fled to Lebanon, then Egypt. They made it to Berlin over two years ago with hopes for a better life, like more than 600,000 fellow Syrians who have gained safe haven in Germany.

### Master artisans

In their flight, all they could carry was the know-how passed down by their father, Suleiman, 83, who founded the Homs pastry shop more than 40 years ago. The sweet fruits of their labor are on mouth-watering display on large metal trays-pyramids of small green nut cakes, covered with shredded pistachio and moistened with rose water. The aromas of orange blossom and almond waft through the room, the eye lingers on shredded pastry bird nests called esh Al-bulbul, and maamoul shortbread filled with dates, pistachios or walnuts.



Tamem Al-Sakka is seen working in his pastry shop, 'Konditorei Damaskus' in the Neukoeln neighborhood of Berlin.

Before Syria's deluge of fire and death, the country was known throughout the Middle East for the refinement of its sweets. "This is due to the quality of raw materials, such as Aleppo pistachios," explains French-Syrian pastry maker Myriam Sabet, who runs the Maison Aleph patisserie in Paris. "And to the ancestral know-how of the master artisans who jealously guard their manufacturing secrets." In Syria, different cities-whose names now evoke the horrors of war and suffering-have long been associated with their regional specialties.

While the capital Damascus loves barazek honey pistachio and sesame cookies, the commercial center of Aleppo was known to have a weakness for nougats and almond. The jewels of central Homs and Hama are sweet cheese rolls known as halawet El-jibn. "At first my brother said to me, 'Let's not make

this dessert, the Germans won't like it, it's too heavy for a pastry," said Tamem. But he was proved wrong and now says Berliners can't get enough of his sugar treats.

### 'Music, language, pastry'

During a recent visit, most customers were Syrians eager for a taste of home, a cheese pastry called knafeh soaked in sticky syrup. Some who have lost everything say they feel taken back to peacetime Syria, the memory of afternoons in the shade of bougainvillea. "Only music, language and pastry can transport you to these pleasant memories, it's universal," smiled Sabet. Many German customers, who gingerly peek into the shop, go on to take their first steps on a new culinary journey of discovery. "When they come in here, they watch, sometimes they seem afraid!", laughed Tamem.

"What they like is the baklava", he added, pointing to Syria's signature pastry made of layers of filo, stuffed with chopped nuts and held together with honey. The artisan's eyes grow misty when he thinks about Syrian pistachios-"the best in the world"-which he can no longer grate to produce his delicacies. The Sakkas now get their nuts from Turkey, and their cheese from Italy. "In Homs, our shop employed 40 people, the pastry was laid out on 150 square meters (1,614 square feet) on two floors, and on top of that we had a big workshop", Tamem recalled with nostalgia. The more modest Damaskus Konditorei is located on a Berlin avenue nicknamed the capital's "Arab street"-a long way from the 13th century souks of Homs, filled with the scent of spices, perfumes and pastries. For now, home is just a sweet memory for the Sakkas. — AFP



Tamem Al-Sakka is seen working in his pastry shop, "Konditorei Damaskus" in the Neukoeln neighbourhood of Berlin. — AFP photos



An employee drizzles honey onto a Knaffa in the 'Konditorei Damaskus' pastry shop in the Neukoeln neighborhood of Berlin.



An employee is seen working in the 'Konditorei Damaskus' pastry shop in the Neukoeln neighbourhood of Berlin.