

Indian culture
and nostalgia on
Kuwait's streets



Trump to block
refugees, restrict
Muslim visitors



Celta Vigo kick
Real Madrid out
of Copa del Rey



6

10

47

FREE

Kuwait Times Friday Times



Min 13°
Max 23°

www.kuwaittimes.net

NO: 17123- Friday, January 27, 2017



Indians in Kuwait mark Republic Day

SEE PAGE 3

Local Spotlight

SAVE ANIMALS!



By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

I like to believe that most of us are kind to defenseless animals, that our humanity dominates and that we all recognize the great responsibility of being kind and humane to all living things. Yet, what I want to believe and the reality are, sadly, seldom in agreement. Across the globe, there are those who abuse and harm animals, especially domesticated pets like dogs and cats, without remorse.

Recently a short video popping up all over social media showed a western woman furious at the neglect of a small dog that was abandoned in a garbage bin. The pup had been left to die. The woman found the dog thrown in with the trash suffering from extreme cold and diarrhea. In the video she is clearly incensed at the vendors who threw the pet when it became sick, rather than pay for the cost of a vet.

It was a ghastly incident that surely reflects the lack of humanity, awareness and ignorance in dealing with pets. I already know the ready-made answer some people here will give. They argue that harming an animal is nothing, compared with the harm being done to humans and no one cares.... But this is the ugliest of excuses.

I believe that anyone who is considering owning a pet for himself or his family should first consider the work and consequences. Are they are capable of taking care of a pet with the same love and care as a human? If the answer is no, then better to let go of the idea. Because a living organism needs full care the same as a human being. It can easily get sick and tired and will certainly grow older and stop being the adorable puppy or kitten it once was. Anyone who adopts a pet has a responsibility to treat it with care and kindness. Not to mention we all have a moral responsibility in front of Allah for the humane treatment of every living thing.

Another issue is when people buy pets for the sake of image. It is very sad to see some people exploiting animals, buying them just to show off on social media and then dumping them when they realize pets actually require love and work.

There is a law that prohibits the import of exotic animals for private ownership but when an animal is similar to another animal which is legally permitted, some people take the opportunity to sneak banned animals into the country! An animal expert is needed at customs who can examine the animals before accepting what the paperwork says.

In Kuwait we have a Law No. 112 of 2015 regarding animals. The law was approved by the National Assembly and established technical requirements and regulations to protect animals from abuse or mistreatment.

Even so the abuse and mistreatment of animals in Kuwait continues. Why doesn't the environmental police - the authority charged with protecting animal welfare in Kuwait - check the places where animals are sold and where animals are kept like the pet souq at the Friday markets?

Come summer time, we always see a surge in abandoned animals as people leave Kuwait - either for holiday or for good - and dump their responsibilities.

We should support animal rights groups in Kuwait and also report any social media where animals are being abused or sold. Protecting animal welfare starts with each of us in our community.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: Youth from Kuwait take part in an annual pearl diving expedition aimed at re-enacting Kuwait's pearling heritage and preserving the tradition. — File photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Pearl traders

ONCE A PILLAR OF KUWAIT'S ECONOMY

By Sara Al-Mukhayzim

KUWAIT: In old Kuwait, the traditional 'Tawash' (pearl traders) used to play a key role in the economic activity which relied heavily on pearl diving.

The Kuwaiti pearl traders gained success and fame across south Asia, particularly in the Indian subcontinent, due to their sincerity and professionalism. They were known for their expertise in assessing the pearl grading and pricing in the main commercial centers whether in Bahrain - the hub of pearl trade in the Arabian Gulf, and Mumbai, India.

This craft entails a lot of travel and movement between the key pearl diving centers and the main markets, said Saif Marzouq Al-Shamlan, a Kuwaiti historian.

Kuwaiti pearl traders used to tour aboard their private ships the main pearl diving areas in the territorial waters of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and sometimes Oman to buy pearls before setting sail to the commercial markets in Bahrain and India.

Darin, a town in Al-Ahsaa served as a main hub for the pearl trade where traders used to gather to strike deals and discuss the affairs of the market, he said.

In Bahrain and Mumbai, they, as wholesalers, struck deals on selling their precious products to retailers from the Gulf region, India and Europe, Al-Shamlan pointed out.

Dealing with Tawashes' tools, he said they used to have

scales for measuring the exact weight of a pearl, and magnifiers for determining the quality and grade.

These tools were carried in a 'Dasta' - a toolkit which is usually red and one meter long, he said.

A Tawash could become very wealthy if he was able to get 'dana' a big pearl such as the well-known Bin Yaquout's dana which was sold for 110,000 rupees in Bahrain and Sayed Al-Refai's dana which was bought by the Kuwaiti trader Hilal Al-Mutairi for 45,000 rupees. When compared with divers, Tawashes used to lead a more comfortable life, eat better, have larger boats and get higher, sometimes astronomical, wealth, Al-Shamlan went on.

Tawashes used to take sheep on their boats and slaughter them upon arrival at the pearl diving sites to offer their meat to divers as gifts which helped cement the cordial business relationship with them. Tawashes usually had contracts with a number of divers; they visited the diving sites one month after the divers go there in order to give the divers enough time to pick the pearls. They also took some of their children along in order to train them on this business.

In Al-Qafal (the return trip) the Tawashes and their divers come back to Kuwait with the pearls in one flotilla; they take some time to rest before started a farther journey to sell the pearls on the regional markets. This shows that many families depended for livelihood on this business which played an essential role in the economy of old Kuwait.— Kuna



Tawashes' tools box. — KUNA photos



Scales for measuring the exact weight of a pearl.



Ambassador Jain reads out Indian President Pranab Mukherjee's address.



Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain and embassy officials during the flag-hoisting ceremony at the Indian embassy yesterday. — Photos by Sajeev K Peter

Indian embassy celebrates Republic Day



By Sajeev K Peter

KUWAIT: The Indian Embassy in Kuwait yesterday celebrated India's 68th Republic Day, one of the most significant days on India's national calendar. Hundreds of Indian nationals including children and women joined Indian Ambassador Sunil Jain and embassy officials to celebrate the occasion in an atmosphere of joy and patriotic passion. The embassy put on a festive look with its premises adorning tri-color balloons.

At a colorful open-air ceremony held on the embassy premises, Ambassador Jain hoisted the national flag at 9 am commemorating the date and moment when the constitution of India came into effect in 1950. Top diplomats, embassy officials, Indian community members and media attended the flag-hoisting ceremony.

This was followed by the singing of national anthem. Following the flag-hoisting ceremony, Ambassador Jain read out Indian President Pranab Mukherjee's address to the nation.

"It is time to take a stock of the achievements of the Indian

community over the last one year," noted the ambassador in his brief address. He said the strength of the community is steadily growing in Kuwait with the number touching 950,000-mark today. Referring to the government's proposal to reduce the number of expatriate population in the country as part of the demographic balancing, he said, "I have received assurances from the higher authorities that our community will not be harmed in any circumstances." He expressed his gratitude to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Premier and the people of Kuwait for the continuous support and encouragement to the community.

"However, this comes with a responsibility. As a law-abiding community, we have to always respect the law of the land and obey the rules," he reminded.

Regarding the rising incidents of crimes in Abbasiya and Jleeb areas, the ambassador cautioned the people to take precautions. "The officials in the ministry of interior and Farwaniya governorate have given assurances to us that they will take necessary measures

to curb such incidents in the area," he said.

"According to official estimates, approximately 29,000 Indians are in Kuwait without valid documents or residency papers. The embassy is in discussion with the authorities in facilitating the repatriation of these people to India," he said.

The ambassador said his tenure as the ambassador of India to Kuwait has been extended for one more year. The consular services in the embassy have improved over the last three years. However, he admitted that there is still room for improvement. He said the embassy has issued up to 6,000 emergency certificates last year. The non-resident Indians can change their old banknotes of Rs 500 and Rs 1000 in India until June 30, 2017 in the aftermath of demonetization of the Indian banknotes by the government, he informed. Students from Indian schools -- Indian Community School (Amman, Junior and Khaitan branches), Indian Central School and FAIPS — sang patriotic songs on the occasion. Many newspapers in Kuwait, including Kuwait Times, published special supplements to mark the day.



Children from local Indian schools sang patriotic songs as part of the ceremony.



Shots in the desert



Local shooting range open to the public for practice, fun

By Nawara Fattahova

Some children play with toy guns growing up. The euphoria wears off as we grow up, but trying shooting again as a hobby and sport brings back the excitement and the adrenalin rush. So I headed to Mayadeen Shooting Range, located on the Sixth Ring Road near the Hunting and Equestrian Club, to get a taste of the real thing. It's a great feeling to hit the target, especially when competing with other shooters.

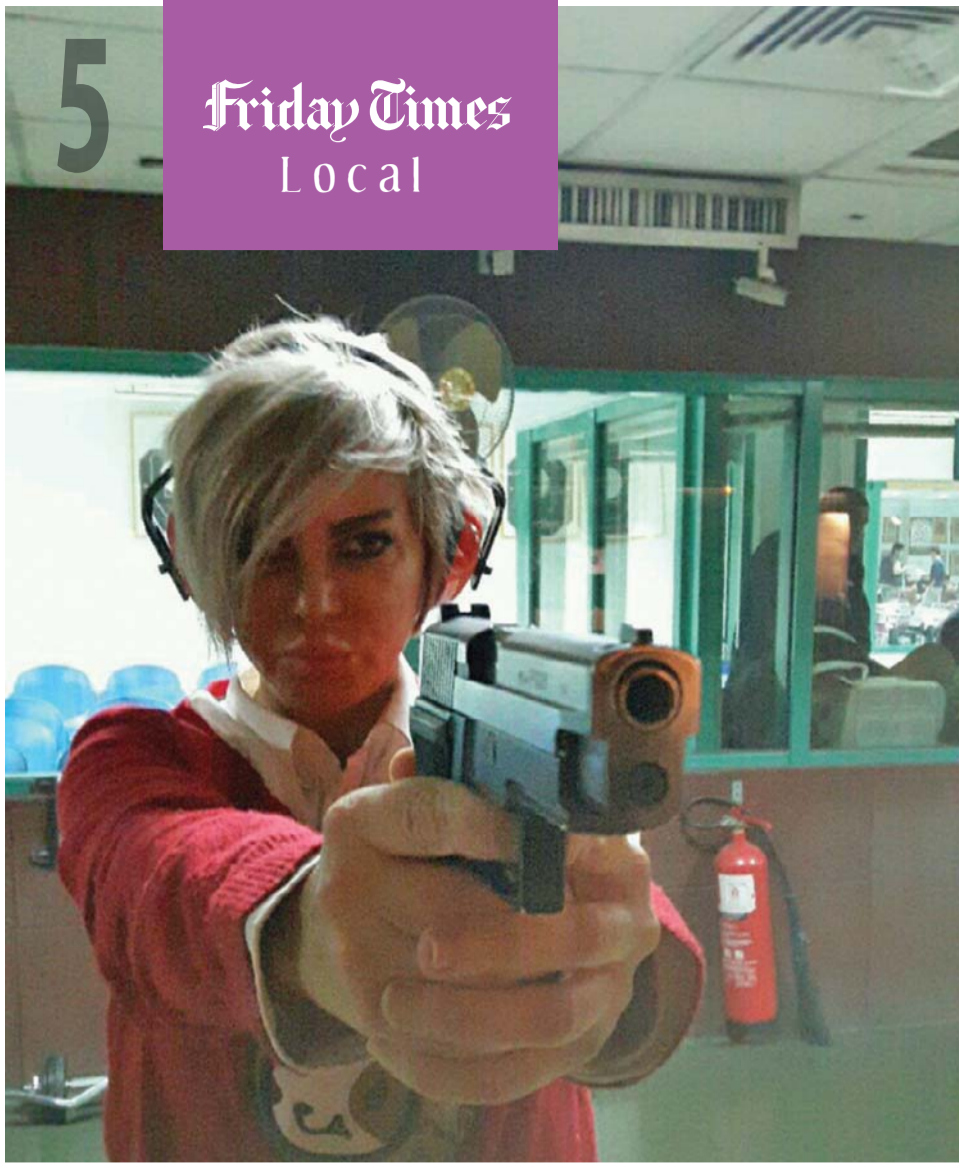
The pistol feels much heavier than it appears. Even after holding the pistol firmly with both hands, according to the instructions given by the trainer, when the trigger is pressed, the recoil makes the whole body move. It needs strong concentration on the target to score well.

The gun is not only heavy, but also very noisy. Before entering the shooting range, headsets have to be worn to muffle the sound. But even with this headset, you can still hear the sound of the shots, but it's not hurtful. When I finished shooting



Omar Al-Ansari, Assistant Director of Mayadeen Shooting Range





and was still at the shooting range, I removed the headsets and was immediately startled by the loud report of guns from nearby shooters.

Possession of hand guns is tightly controlled in Kuwait. But one can practice this as a hobby at a local shooting range. It is also a dangerous activity if not supervised. For this reason, no one can enter the shooting range without a trainer supervising him or her.

"Even if a group comes together, every person will have a trainer, as this is a very dangerous activity. Sometimes, amateurs point pistols at each other for fun or to take photos, and this may cause serious injuries if the guns go off by accident," a trainer told Kuwait Times.

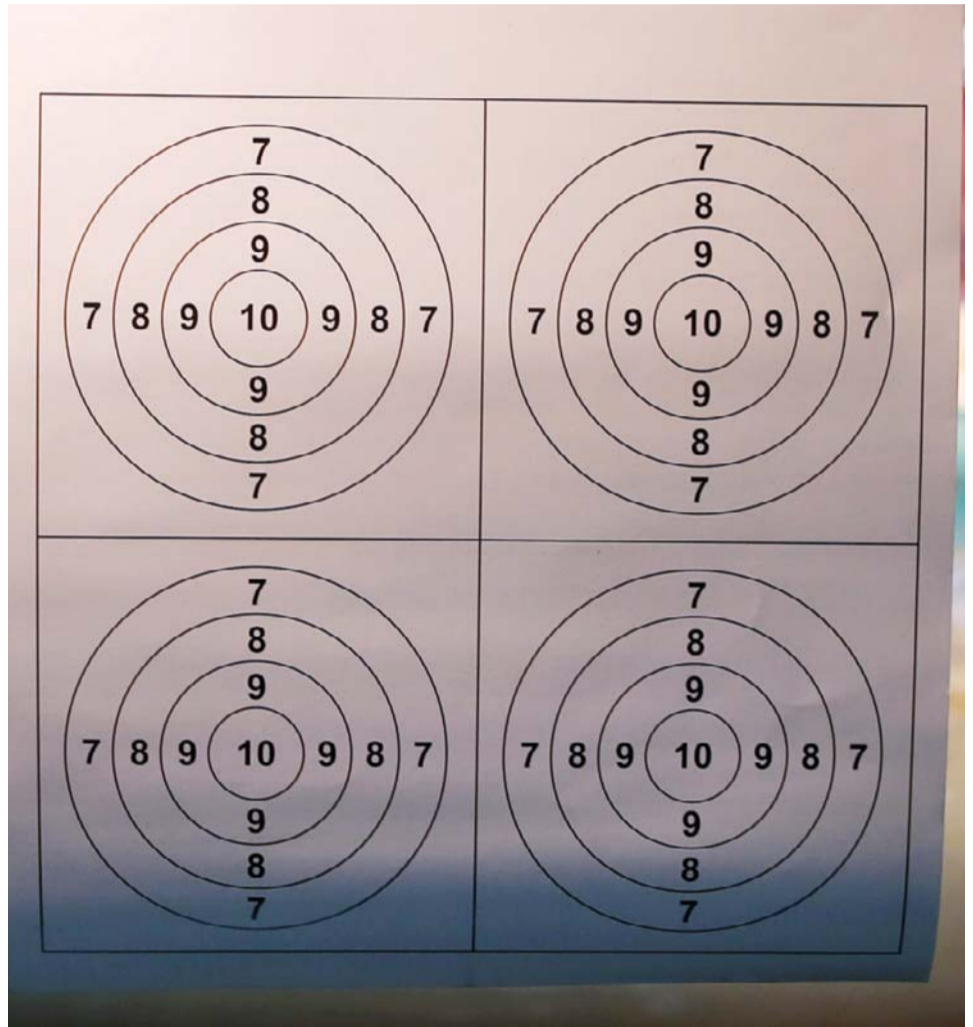
Women and guns

Children from the age of seven can practice shooting at Mayadeen. "Although it sounds strange, the majority of our clients are females. All those who come here are amateurs, and it's rare to have a professional come here for shooting. Kids between ages 7 to 15 years can only shoot with air pistols. Also, there are different sizes of guns and bullets depending on the size of the person. For instance, we advise giving some women lighter pistols so they don't get frightened," Omar Al-Ansari, Assistant Director of Mayadeen Shooting Range, told Kuwait Times.

Currently, Mayadeen is the only shooting range open to the public in Kuwait. It includes four shooting ranges - air rifle and pistol 10 meters, pistol 25 meters, rifle range 50 meters and tactical range 25 meters. All the ranges are open for amateurs, except the tactical one, which is for professionals only. At each range, five people can shoot simultaneously. The range opens daily from 5:00 pm to 8:30 pm all week long. It opened in 2003 and is run by retired general Ahmad Al-Saleem.

Mayadeen also hosts championships. "The Police Sports Championship is always

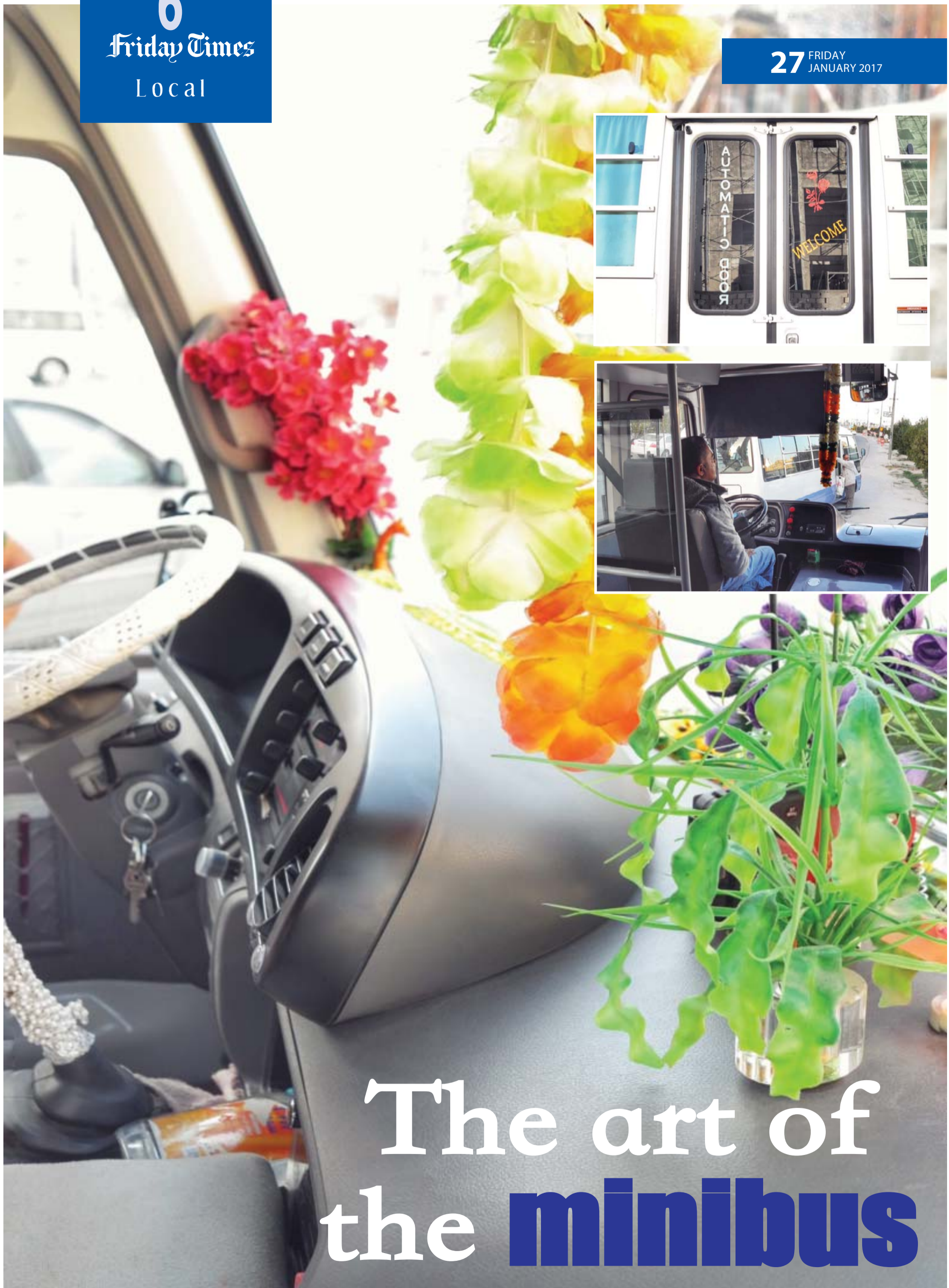
held here, in addition to other individual championships. We also welcome field trips from schools, while some companies book the place to hold open days for their employees. Fortunately we haven't suffered any accidents or injuries at Mayadeen, as we follow strict safety and security measures. We also have facilities for the disabled - in fact we have customers on wheelchairs coming to shoot," stressed Ansari. "This month we just launched a new activity to add more fun and variety for visitors - archery - where five people can participate at the same time. And of course, there is a cafeteria and a waiting hall," he concluded.



Men, women and even children can practice shooting a variety of guns at the local shooting range and strict safety precautions must be adhered to at all times.

— Photos by Yasser Al Zayyat





The art of the **minibus**



Indian culture and nostalgia on Kuwait's streets



Story and photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi

When I look at some minibuses in Kuwait, I recall my last trip to South Asia, where drivers traditionally decorate their transport vehicles. The connection between South Asian heritage and the colorful paintings and ornaments has a nostalgic feeling and evokes a longing for home.

The ornamental decor mostly consists of brightly-colored fake flowers, animals, stickers, calligraphy and symbols of faith.

A driver of a school minibus told Kuwait Times that the decorations are cheery and make passengers happy. Another driver said truck art is part of his culture.

Some drivers add religious symbols representing their beliefs. Maani, a Hindu driver, has placed an idol of Ganesha, the Hindu elephant god, in his bus. At the same time, he has a small image of the Virgin Mary in the mirror flap. He explained that the sole reason why it's there is because he's married to a Christian woman and doesn't want to upset her!

It's a habit of all people to carry a piece of their homeland

when they migrate. No matter how much we mingle with other societies and get influenced by them, our roots remain where we were born. The bus art reflects deep love not only for their motherland, but also for their vehicles. Every minibus was also neat and tidy, which personally made me ashamed of myself when I compared them with my car. You can guess what I did after completing this story!



News

in brief

KPIC inks contract for key projects' designs

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petrochemical Industries Company (KPIC) yesterday signed a contract for studying architectural designs of the third olefins project and the second aromatics venture, integrated with Al-Zor refinery-valued at \$34 million. The KPIC Chief Executive Officer, Mohammad Al-Farhoud, said in a statement that the contract had been signed with Amec Foster Wheeler - forecasting that the venture would be finalized by second quarter of 2022. The statement quoted Hasnia Hashem, the deputy CEO for the olefins and aromatics department in the company, as saying that the venture is one of the important strategic initiatives ever undertaken by the KPIC. The projects aim at enhancing Kuwait's status in the petrochemical industries and implementing the company's expansion strategy. They are also designed to establish a petrochemical complex for producing 940,000 tons of polyethylene per year, 1,400 tons of paraxylene (py), 420,000 tons of benzene (py) and 2,089 tons of fuel (py).

Kuwait parliamentary delegation to examine GCC countries sports laws

KUWAIT: The parliamentary youth and sports committee decided, at a meeting yesterday, to dispatch a delegation to Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar and Bahrain to examine their "adopted sports laws that do not contradict with those of the International Olympic Committee," said the commission rapporteur, Ahmad Al-Fadhil, in a statement to journalists following the committee meeting. The members have entrusted the chairman, Saadoun Hammad, to select members of the delegation that would visit the other GCC countries and meet officials of their Olympic committees, Al-Fadhil added. The committee has decided to meet with officials of the GCC Olympic committees after the IOC refused to meet its members, he said. Al-Fadhil disclosed plans to add some articles, essentially stipulating draft regulations that ensure no contradiction with the laws and rules of the international sports committees and authorities, to the relevant bill that had been presented previously by the Government.

Authorities launch effort to achieve 'green dream'

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti authorities and associations have been pressing ahead with schemes to beautify the country and green as much as possible of the desert land. Latest move in this respect was announced yesterday by Dr Ahmad Al-Athari, the general director of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET), who declared that 100,00 saplings had been distributed for planting in various areas of the country, as part of a project to plant hundreds of thousands of green plants in the country. PAAET's services department is cooperating with the "green dream" team, which comprises volunteers who have been leading the greenery campaign, which had concluded the first phase that lasted for four months. The authority has granted 20,000 saplings to Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Popular Heritage Village.

RARE ROBBERY CASE

KUWAIT: Hawally detectives are investigating a rare robbery case where the suspect stormed into a woman's house and made away with only her smart phone. Security sources said that police are thoroughly looking into the case.

'An act of revenge'

Social media users were stormed by some indecent photos going viral online. Police launched an investigation and tracked the suspect (a Kuwaiti) who used the picture of a bedoon man to post the indecent photos in order to put him in trouble. The suspect claimed that the bedoon man was having an affair with wife, so he wanted a way to get back at him.

Mosque threat

State operatives have launched an investigation over a threat to blow up a mosque at Sabah Al-Nasser area after a Saudi man received a Whatsapp message threatening to attack the mosque. Interior Ministry received a call about a fight in Sulaibiya, and found out that the dispute was between the caller (a Saudi man) and his son over the threatening messages he saw on his son's phone. — Al Rai, Al Anbaa

'NEEDLAB' ORGANIZES WORKSHOP, SEMINAR

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: 'Needlab' - a global educational traveling workshop initiative, organized a lecture on Wednesday at the Al-Shaheed Park Center Hall. The workshop lecturers include Dr Hussein Dashti, Director of Architectural Research at



KUWAIT: Ricardo Camacho is pictured during a lecture at Al-Shaheed Park.

Kuwait University; Ricardo Camacho, Lead Architect; Rafael Portillo, Head Designer; Sulaiman Othman, Rodrigo Rubio and the co-founder of Basic Architect at IAAC among others. Needlab focuses on unveiling new ways and discussing issues about the local materials, social practices, environmental forces and the latest technologies. Needlab lecture series follows the motto 'Act Local, Think Global.' This is its first ever workshop in Kuwait.

In the lecture, Ricardo Camacho talked about his experiences and the projects that help enhanced people's liv-



Cross section of the attendees — Photos by Joseph Shagra

ing conditions - using available materials at hand. The panelists discussed the importance of Kuwait's local architecture and some of the architectural languages. The architectural design was the centerpiece of the lecture as they explored the best way to cope with the effect of global climate change.

Ameena Al-Qabandi, one of the organizer said that the aim is to transfer the knowledge to the people so that the hidden treasures of modern and architectural designs can help transform lives. "In this workshop, we were able to learn many structural issues from the weather to the analysis of particular designs or structure. In Kuwait we studied the bricks as we have abundant of that here. We learn how to use them, how to fabricate them in the lab and how long the bricks can last. We also learned the art of laying the bricks so that even in the absence of electricity, the structure can still be fully utilized, Al-Qabandi said. "We assembled

our first design here in this place (Shaheed Park) and it is now being showcased in the garden. We use technology, modern art and designs to come up with the firm and valuable structure in every country depending on the materials and the weather," she added.

Needlab will also conduct series of workshops in various countries around the world. "Needlab wants to share the expertise so that it can help and save people's lives, especially in countries most vulnerable to natural disaster. We will come up with the designs that can stand disasters and weather conditions of that particular country. The good thing is that, we are committed to using materials available at hand," she said.

The workshop organizers include Kuwait University, National Industries Company and Tarsheed. Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and Zain Telecom were among the workshop sponsors.



SECURITY CAMPAIGN AT BNEID AL-QAR

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Kuwait police yesterday launched a security campaign at Bneid Al-Qar area. The campaign was led by Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt General Suleiman Al-Fahad along side with Assistant Undersecretary for Operations Maj Gen Jamal Al-Sayegh, Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Maj Gen Ibrahim Al-Tarrah and Director General of Residency Detectives Maj Gen Saud Al-Khader. 171 suspects were arrested for various offenses.

Exercise at Oil Complex

The Fire Department carried out an exercise at the Oil Sector Complex and KPC building. The exercise was about evacuating nearly 700 employees. Instructions were given over loud speakers on how to evacuate the building. Fire teams and paramedics were then called in to assist. Managing Director for Planning and Finance Wafaa Al-Zaabi said KPC carried out the exercise in cooperation with civil defense and KFSD to gauge the readiness of the concerned authorities in dealing with emergencies.

News

in brief



Photo shows the graduation ceremony of personnel trained on handling explosives, weapons of mass destruction and chemical ordnance. — KUNA

Kuwait customs vows to foil any hostile act

KUWAIT: The Customs General Directorate affirmed yesterday its keenness on foiling a hostile act intended to undermine Kuwait's security and social stability. Turki Al-Otaibi, the director of supervision and inspection, made the assertion during a ceremony marking graduation of personnel trained on handling explosives, weapons of mass destruction and chemical ordnance. The Customs Department employs state-of-art equipment for foiling trafficking via the country's naval, land and air exits, he said. He expressed deep satisfaction at constructive cooperation with the National Guards for expertise swap and coordination for training young national cadres "and qualify them to be the solid shield in face of any external hazard." Al-Otaibi underlined key role played by the customs and the guards for "confronting any aggressive act intended to jeopardize the national security and the society's stability."

Kuwait 'outstanding student' delegation visit Cuban resort

VARADERO: The "outstanding" Kuwaiti student's delegation, taking part in a trip organized by Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic development (KFAED) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, visited on Wednesday Varadero Resort in Cuba. This resort is a distinguished tourist destination located in the province of Matanzas, east of the capital Havana. It lies in a marvelous spot overlooking the Caribbean Sea and has beautiful shores and moderate weather throughout the whole year. A number of students, including Ahmad Borezg, Abdulaziz Al-Enizi and Abdullah Al-Safar, said in remarks to KUNA that they were enjoying a quality time in this trip which promoted the spirit of group work and increased patriotic values. "Be among the outstanding ones" program, is an initiative launched by KFAED in 2010.

GCC states, Britain discuss Gulf-UK summit outcomes

RIYADH: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states and Britain yesterday concluded their meeting on outcomes of the first Gulf-British summit held last December in Bahrain. The GCC States' leaders and British Prime Minister Theresa May took part in the Bahrain's summit. During the meeting, the conferees reviewed joint cooperation relations and means of promoting them, GCC Secretariat said in a press statement. The meet is held as part of keenness of the two sides on rapidly implementing these outcomes to develop joint cooperation in all fields in a way that reflects the depth of historic ties between both sides, GCC Assistant Secretary General for political affairs and negotiations Dr Abdulaziz Al-Uwaishiq noted in the statement.

Kuwait's Al-Otaibi, Costa Rican leader discuss 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 on Wednesday. During the meeting, Al-Otaibi conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to the Costa Rican leader. In a statement to KUNA, Al-Otaibi, who is a non-resident ambassador to Costa Rica, said 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.

KUWAIT EXECUTIONS 'PART OF ALARMING TREND' IN MIDEAST

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH BLASTS KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Human Rights Watch criticized Kuwait yesterday for ending a moratorium on executions by hanging seven people, saying the action was part of a worrying regional rise in use of the death penalty. "Kuwait's killing of seven people on January 25 highlights the alarming trend in the region for countries to return to or increasingly use the death penalty," said Sarah Leah Whitson, HRW's Middle East director. The executions on Wednesday were the first in Kuwait since mid-2013 when five people were hanged in two months following an earlier moratorium of six years. Those executed this week were two

Kuwaitis and five foreigners—two Egyptian men, a Bangladeshi man, a woman from the Philippines and a woman from Ethiopia. Six of those hanged on Wednesday were convicted of murder, including a member of the ruling family and a woman who burned dozens of people to death at a wedding party. "Executing seven people in one day shows Kuwait is moving in exactly the wrong direction on the death penalty," Whitson said. "The Kuwait government should be reinstating the moratorium on the death penalty instead of hanging seven people," she said. HRW said use of the death penalty

was on the rise across the Middle East. Earlier this month, Bahrain ended a six-year de facto moratorium on the death penalty, executing three people. Jordan in December 2014 executed 11 people for the first time in eight years. Saudi Arabia and Iran consistently have some of the world's highest execution rates, HRW said. Since the beginning of 2014, Saudi Arabia has executed more than 400 people, and human rights groups in Iran report the country may have executed as many as 437 last year alone. Amnesty International also condemned the Kuwaiti executions as "shocking and deeply regrettable." — AFP



KUWAIT: Birds fighting for survival. — KUNA

10 MPs SEEK SPECIAL SESSION ON EXPATS

KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim said yesterday that he received a proposal by 10 members of the parliament to hold a special session for discussing the expatriate workers' status and the question of employment. The National Assembly Speaker Al-Ghanim added in a statement to journalists that the extraordinary parliamentary session would be held on Feb 2.

On another topic, the Speaker revealed that he had received replies by MPs Al-Humaidi Al-Subaiee, Abdulwahab Al-Babtain and Dr Walid Al-

Tabtabaei on clarifications that had been forwarded by Minister of Information, Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah with respect of the three lawmakers' interpellation motion.

He affirmed that the interpellation issue would be in agenda of Tuesday's parliamentary session. The Cabinet at its latest regular session expressed hope that MPs' interpellation of the Minister of Information would be in line with the National Constitution and relevant laws and demonstrated strong confidence in the minister's ability "in facing" the MPs'

queries. The ministers were briefed by Minister Sheikh Salman about "legal and constitutional irregularities included in the motion, clarifying various facts related to the questioning the (forecast) response."

The lawmakers are seeking to grill him about "suspension of sports activities in the State of Kuwait," purported "mishandling of public funds, along with existence of suspicious (illegal) benefits in breach of the National Constitution and relevant laws that regulate public funds' expenditure at the Ministry of youth and affiliate authorities"-among other issues. — KUNA

Friday Times

International

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2017

Democrats, Republicans switch sides on states' rights



Socialist utopia a difficult sell as France swings right



Camels and stuntmen wow crowds at India Republic Day



NEW YORK: Council on American Islamic Relations - New York Executive Director Afaf Nasher prays before a rally and protest against US President Donald Trump in Washington Square Park. — AFP

TRUMP EXPECTED TO RESTRICT MUSLIM VISITORS

IT'S NOT THE MUSLIM BAN, IT'S COUNTRIES THAT HAVE TERROR

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump is reportedly poised to suspend the US refugee program for four months and halt visas for travelers from seven Muslim countries. A draft executive order published in the Washington Post and New York Times said refugees from war-torn Syria will be indefinitely banned, while the broader US refugee admissions program will be suspended for 120 days as officials draw up a list of low risk countries.

Meanwhile, all visa applications from countries deemed a terrorist threat Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen-will be halted for 30 days. Alongside this, the Pentagon will be given 90 days to draw up a plan to set up "safe zones" in or near Syria where refugees from its civil war can shelter. It is unclear whether the published draft is the final version, or when Trump will sign it, but it would make good on his campaign promises.

Trump told ABC News late Wednesday that his plan to limit the entry of people from Muslim countries was necessary because the world is "a total mess." "No it's not the Muslim ban, but it's countries that have tremendous terror," Trump said. "And it's countries that people are going to come in and cause us tremendous problems."

Trump refused to say which countries were on the list, but he did say he believed that Europe "made a tremendous mistake by allowing these millions of people to go into Germany and various other countries," describing it as "a disaster."

Trump was asked if he worried that the limits would anger Muslims around the world. "Anger? There's plenty of anger right now. How can you have more?" he said. "The world is a mess. The world is as angry as it gets. What, you think this is going to cause a little more anger? The world is an angry place. ... We went into Iraq. We shouldn't have gone into Iraq. We shouldn't have gotten out the way we got out. The world is a total mess." Trump vowed to impose "extreme vetting" for people who seek to enter the United States from certain countries. "And I mean extreme. And we're not letting people in if we think there is even some chance of some problem," he said, without defining how that process would differ from current strict entry requirements.

Playing into IS hands?

Trump's hardline attitude towards what he calls "radical Islamic terrorism" was one of the most

controversial themes of his election campaign. Rights groups have accused him of stigmatizing a global faith, and some experts warn that offending America's Muslim allies will hurt the fight against extremism.

"Turning our back on vulnerable refugees doesn't protect the United States," said Michael Olsen, former director of the US National Counterterrorism Center. "In fact, it plays into ISIS's false narrative that we are at war with all Muslims instead of terrorist organizations," he told watchdog Human Rights First. Trump also vowed to "eradicate ISIS from the face of the earth", which proved popular with US voters. Ryan Crocker, former US ambassador to Afghanistan and Iraq, told the group that the executive order would threaten refugees who risked their lives to help US troops. "Banning the admission of Syrian refugees contradicts American values, undermines American leadership and threatens American security by making the ISIS case that we are at war with Islam," he argued.

No 'major negative' in refugee plan

Other former officials, however, were not worried by the pending order-suggesting that while it

has little use as a security measure, anger would blow over. James Jeffrey, who was deputy national security adviser under former president George W. Bush, said: "I don't think there'll be much of a change in anything." Jeffrey argued that even under former president Barack Obama, the United States had allowed in very few Syrian refugees-only 18,000 since the war began in 2011. Meanwhile, allies in the Sunni Muslim world are far more concerned by the immediate threats posed by Iran and the Islamic State group than by US visa law. "So I don't see a major negative in foreign affairs from this," said Jeffrey, now a fellow of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

"We had a bad reputation no matter what we did even when we were being at our very tip-toe best with Barack Obama. It doesn't matter," he told AFP. "In populations there is a great deal of skepticism about the United States. It's hard-wired, regardless of the president, no matter what we do." The possible draft signing would be the latest in a daily series of executive orders rolled out by Trump's administration since he took office on Friday-touching on national security, immigration, and health care. — AFP

VOTER ID LAWSUITS LIVE ON DESPITE POLICY SHIFT

AUSTIN: Federal lawsuits challenging voter ID requirements in Texas and North Carolina won't just disappear even if Justice Department lawyers who once argued against the laws under the Obama administration effectively switch sides to begin advocating for them under Trump's administration, civil rights lawyers say.

What President Donald Trump's Justice Department will do isn't yet known, but his comments on the campaign trail and since taking office suggest the agency will re-examine its strategy and may support the two states' toughest-in-the-nation requirements that voters show picture identification at the polls. The Barack Obama-led Justice Department launched high-profile legal challenges against those laws, arguing that the requirements were unnecessary and unconstitutional.

"The time and resources the federal government has spent on this case have truly been substantial," said Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, which is representing plaintiffs in the Texas voter ID case. "But if the federal government reverses course, we are fully prepared to move forward."

'Great concern'

A court forced Texas to water down its law for the November election, but the case is continuing in US District Court in Corpus Christi, Texas. North Carolina's 2013 voter ID law as struck down in July, but the state has asked the US Supreme Court to review the appeals court's decision. "There is a great concern over what DOJ is going to do and if they are going to retreat in these cases," said Gerry Hebert, a former Justice Department lawyer who represents plaintiffs in the Texas voter ID case. "I suspect a great deal of shenanigans from a Trump Justice Department, but we will bear the burden on our own if we have to."

Supporters say the laws help prevent voter fraud by making sure people who aren't eligible to vote, including people living in the country illegally, don't cast a ballot. Opponents say there is no evidence of massive voter fraud and that such laws disproportionately affect minorities and the poor who may face challenges obtaining a government-issued photo ID.

Trump tweeted Wednesday that he plans to open an investigation into voter fraud that would focus on dead people who remained on the voter rolls, people registered in two or more states and "those who are illegal." Depending on its results, Trump tweeted, "We will strengthen up voting procedures!" That could mean efforts to expand strict voter ID requirements. On the campaign trail, Trump had praised laws requiring ballot box photo identification.

New position

Another signal that the new administration could abandon the voter ID cases came late last week. Just hours after Trump was sworn in as president, the Justice Department asked for a hearing in Texas set for this week to be delayed until next month. Department attorneys said in court filings that they needed more time to brief new leadership, but lawyers in the case say it could be a precursor to a new position from the federal government. If the Justice Department were to align with Texas and North Carolina and defend their voter

ID laws, it would be a setback for the legal challenges but "certainly not fatal," said Rick Hasen, an election law expert and professor at the University of California, Irvine School of Law. "Certainly, it is advantageous for these lawyers to have not only the resources of the federal government, but the opinion of the federal government on their side," he said. — AP



WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump speaks to the staff at the Department of Homeland Security. — AFP



TIJUANA: View of the border fence between Mexico and US taken from Mexico's side. — AFP

TRUMP ORDERS START TO WALL ERECTION, ANGERING MEXICO

MEXICO LEADERS REPEATS - 'I WILL NOT PAY FOR WALL'

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has ordered work to begin on building a wall along the Mexican border, angering his southern neighbor with his hardline stance on immigration. The US leader instructed officials on Wednesday to begin to "plan, design and construct a physical wall along the southern border" and see how it could be funded.

"A nation without borders is not a nation," Trump said, echoing former president Ronald Reagan, as he visited the Department of Homeland Security to sign two executive orders. "Beginning today, the United States of America gets back control of its borders," the Republican president said. Hours later, Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto demanded "respect" for his country in a nationally televised address.

"I regret and condemn the decision of the United States to continue construction of a wall that, for years, has divided us instead of uniting us," Pena Nieto said. "I have said it time and again: Mexico will not pay for any wall." Pena Nieto said he would wait for a report from a high-level Mexican delegation in Washington and consult with governors and lawmakers before deciding on "the next steps to take."

Country divided

Lawmakers are pressuring the Mexican leader to cancel a meeting with Trump in Washington scheduled for next week. Stemming immigration was a central plank of Trump's election campaign. His signature prescription was to build a wall along the 2,000-mile US-Mexico border. Some of the border is already fenced, but Trump says a wall is needed to stop illegal immigrants from Latin America.

A Morning Consult/Politico poll released Wednesday said 47 percent of voters support building a wall, with 45 percent against. Experts have voiced doubts about whether a wall would actually slow illegal immigration, or if it is worth the billions it is expected to cost. "I suspect that a lot of Trump supporters would be just as happy with a big statue of a middle finger pointed south," said Congressman Luis Gutierrez. "Both are about equally effective as national security strategies."

Despite the high-octane rhetoric, Trump's action was piecemeal, looking to identify existing funds that could be diverted toward the project. The Republican-controlled Congress, which has long preached fiscal prudence, would need to approve billions of dollars more if the wall is to be anywhere near completed. Trump also ordered a survey of the border to be completed within 180 days.

Much of the land needed to build the wall would have to be seized from private citizens in Texas, the state of Texas or tribal authorities. That could result in long court battles and hefty expropriation payments. "The only real solution to reform our immigration system is to pass comprehensive immigration reform that provides a path to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented people in the United States, top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer said.

Make Mexico pay?

Trump has promised to make Mexico pay for the wall, something the Mexican government has said will not happen. "Ultimately it will come out of what's happening with Mexico, we're going to be starting those negotiations relatively

soon. And we will be, in a form, reimbursed by Mexico," Trump said in an interview with ABC News.

Trump aides have considered raising border tariffs or border transit costs as one way to "make Mexico pay." Another threat is to finance the wall by tapping into remittances that Mexican migrants send home, which last year amounted to \$25 billion. "There are a lot of different ways of getting Mexico to contribute to doing this, and there are different ways of defining how exactly they pay for it," House leader Paul Ryan said in an interview on MSNBC, while also conceding that the United States is "going to pay for it and front the money up."

'I do have a heart'

Left unresolved is the fate of the "dreamers," the foreign-born, US-raised children of undocumented migrants. The children—many of whom are now adults—were brought to the United States illegally as minors. Some 750,000 of them were granted work permits and temporary residency under a 2009 program known as DACA under former president Barack Obama.

Trump blasted DACA on the campaign trail, but in the ABC News interview he seemed to soften his position. "They shouldn't be very worried," Trump told ABC. "I do have a big heart. We're going to take care of everybody. We're going to have a very strong border. We're gonna have a very solid border. Where you have great people that are here that have done a good job they should be far less worried." Trump promised that his administration will "be coming out with policy on that over the next three to four weeks," but gave no further details. — AFP

SYRIA'S TWITTER GIRL ASKS TRUMP TO HELP CHILDREN

LONDON: The seven-year-old Syrian girl who gained a global following last year with her Twitter updates from Aleppo has written an open letter to US President Donald Trump asking him to help other children her war-torn country.

Bana Alabed drew some 363,000 followers after she joined the micro-blogging site in September where she uploaded messages and pictures of daily life in Aleppo on the @AlabedBana handle, an account managed by her mother Fatemah. Last month, the young girl and

her family were evacuated from the rebel-held eastern part of the city following a government offensive. They arrived in Turkey, where they met President Tayyip Erdogan.

Turkey has supported rebels fighting Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. On her own @FatemahAlabed Twitter account, Fatemah posted a picture of the handwritten letter where the young girl introduces herself to Trump as "part of the Syrian children who suffered from the Syrian war".

"...Can you please save the children and people of Syria? You must do something for the children of Syria because they are like your children and deserve peace like you," the letter reads. "If you promise me you will do something for the children of Syria, I am already your new friend."

Britain's BBC quoted Fatemah as saying Bana penned the letter before Trump's inauguration last Friday. In the letter, Bana also talks about losing friends in the nearly six-year conflict and her new life outside Syria. "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," she said.

"However, millions of Syrian children are not like me right now and suffering in different parts of Syria. They are suffering because of adult people." On Wednesday, Trump said he "will absolutely do safe zones in Syria" for refugees fleeing violence, without giving further details. His comments came after Russia, Turkey and Iran on Tuesday backed a shaky truce between Syria's warring parties. — Reuters

SAUDI WRITER JAILED FOR SEVEN YEARS

DUBAI: A Saudi writer has been sentenced to seven years in prison for offences including having contact with foreign journalists, a rights group said yesterday, part of what activists call "an intensified crackdown". The Gulf Centre for Human Rights said Nadhir Al-Majid, 40, received the sentence last week from the Specialized Criminal Court in Riyadh.

Rights monitors have criticized the practice of trying activists in such courts, which handle "terrorism" cases. "Reports have confirmed that the writer was alone during the hearing and not accompanied by his family or his lawyer," said the Gulf Centre, which has offices in Copenhagen and Beirut. It said the prosecution filed many charges against Majid, including participating in demonstrations and "having contact with correspondents" of foreign media organizations.

Another watchdog, Human Rights Watch, in 2011 identified Majid as one of more than 160 dissidents arrested, mostly in Eastern Province where the Shiite minority had protested for political reforms and the release of prisoners. He was freed in 2012, the Gulf Centre said. In early January London-based Amnesty International said "a string of activists" had been detained or appeared in court over previous weeks in connection with peaceful human rights work.

"Saudi Arabia's authorities have begun the year with an intensified crackdown against human rights activists", it said. On a visit to the kingdom last week, a United Nations independent expert called on Saudi Arabia to "liberalize" its approach to social media, where activists communicate. Philip Alston, the UN special reporter on extreme poverty and human rights, said he received reports of "instances in which it has cracked down on certain people" communicating over the internet.

Saudi vulnerable to 'Shamoon 2' virus

In other news, Saudi computer security systems are vulnerable to the "Shamoon 2" virus, a senior communications official warned Thursday, confirming reports of a fresh cyber-attack on the kingdom.

The virus "has devised a new method that was unexpected by government systems", Abdulaziz Al-Ruwais, governor of the Commission for Communications and Information Technology, told Makkah newspaper.

He said that "some bodies had been affected" by the program, and detailed measures which companies could take to try to protect their computer networks. Local media reported early this week that Shamoon 2 hit the private sector and various government agencies including a division of the labor ministry. Global security firm Symantec on Monday did not mention Saudi Arabia but said it was "currently investigating reports of yet another new attack in the Middle East involving the destructive disk-wiping malware used by the Shamoon group".

The company in December said Shamoon had been used in attacks against targets in Saudi Arabia. Arab News reported at the time that the National Cyber Security Centre "detected destructive electronic strikes against several government agencies and vital establishments".

In August, state media reported cyberattacks against government institutions and vital installations they did not identify. Shamoon was employed in strikes against the Saudi energy sector in 2012. At that time, US intelligence officials said they suspected a link to the kingdom's regional rival Iran. Ties between Riyadh and Tehran have worsened over the past year. — Agencies



LONDON: This Jan 21, 2017, file photo, demonstrators take part in the Women's March in London the day after the inauguration of US President Donald Trump. — AP

DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS SWITCH SIDES ON STATES' RIGHTS EVIDENT ACROSS A RANGE OF ISSUES

SAN FRANCISCO: Five years ago, Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, now President Donald Trump's nominee for administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, sat in the front row as the US Supreme Court debated the contentious Affordable Care Act.

He was part of a coalition of Republican attorneys general fighting President Barack Obama's health law - better known as Obamacare - based on a core party principle: that states' rights trump federal powers, and that programs like Obamacare represent a radical overreach by the federal government. Now, as Trump looks to undo Obama's legacy and begin constructing his own, Pruitt and other administration Republicans are showing little interest in protecting states' rights. Instead, they are embracing sweeping new environmental, healthcare and immigration policies that are to be imposed on all states.

At the same time Democrats, who over the last half-century have zealously defended sacrosanct federal laws - such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that tackled segregation - against arguments that states should be allowed to chart their own way, are now making plans to employ some of those very states' rights positions

to fend off Trump administration policies they disagree with. "If (EPA nominee Pruitt) is going to argue states can go their own way, then certainly we should be allowed to make the exact same argument," Hawaii Attorney General Douglas Chin, a Democrat who opposes Pruitt's nomination, told Reuters. Pruitt's office did not return repeated requests for comment.

Sprawling flip-flop

The two parties' switching of sides is evident across a range of issues, including so-called sanctuary cities, the environment and healthcare. Sanctuary cities - an unofficial description of places where local law enforcement refuses to report undocumented immigrants to federal authorities - could be an early test, as Trump moves to beef up federal immigration policies. Trump threatened to cut federal funds for such cities on Wednesday, as part of an executive order clamping down on immigration.

Lawyers planning to challenge that action told Reuters they will base part of their legal argument on one successful approach Pruitt and his fellow attorneys general took against Obamacare in the Supreme Court in 2012. In that case, the court held that federal authorities could not take away a state's Medicaid funding

for refusing to expand the program. Although they won that part of the case, Pruitt and his group failed to stop the national rollout of Obamacare. Immigration advocates hope the logic employed by the Supreme Court in that case will protect sanctuary cities against threatened funding cuts.

However, Ken Cuccinelli, the former Republican attorney general of Virginia who launched the legal challenge to Obamacare, told Reuters he doubts courts will apply that ruling to protect sanctuary cities. Still, Cuccinelli said the new political dynamic will expose Republican politicians who ran for office on a states' rights platform because it fit their policy agenda, rather than because they were true believers.

"We may find out (which) folks were doing it for legal reasons and purely political reasons," he said. Another early battle highlighting the reversal of positions on states' versus federal rights is likely to be the environment. California, as its governor made clear in a speech on Tuesday, will fight any attempts to rein in the state's sweeping environmental laws, which go far beyond federal mandates. During his confirmation hearings, Pruitt, on the other hand, refused to commit to keeping a decades-old federal waiver that allows California to set stricter

SYRIA SAFE ZONE PLAN SCRUTINIZED

BEIRUT: The Trump administration's expressed interest in setting up safe zones for civilians in Syria was greeted yesterday with caution by Russia and Turkey, who have taken the lead in the latest peace efforts to end the Mideast country's devastating six-year war. Turkey said it had always supported the idea, but both Ankara and

Moscow said such plans would require careful consideration while a senior European Union official said the bloc would consider such plans "when they come."

The idea of safe zones, proposed by both Republican candidate Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton during the US election

campaign, was ruled out by the Obama administration for fear it would bring the United States into direct conflict with Syrian President Bashar Assad and Russia, which has been waging an air campaign to aid Assad's forces since September 2015. In October, the Russian military specifically warned the US against striking Syrian govern-

ment forces, saying its air defense weapons in Syria would fend off any attack.

The recent rapprochement between Russia and Turkey, a key backer of Syrian rebels which now has thousands of troops in northern Syria, in theory makes the creation of safe zones more achievable. — AP



Kuwait Times

Premier Brands

To see your ad here, call:
+965 248 35 616 / 617
 E-MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
 ad@kuwaittimes.net
 Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

Happy
New Deal

Best
Offer

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: left;"> <p>Eurocucina ECFWDF7414W</p> <p>7 Year Warranty 4 Year Driven</p>  <p>149 198 49</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1400 Rpm • 19 Programs • Anti Foam System </div> <div style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">+</div> <div style="text-align: right;"> <p>IGTIS RWN121</p> <p>120 LTR</p>  <p>Single Door Refrigerator 4 Cubic Feet Manual</p> </div> </div>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: left;"> <p>Midea HD-559FW</p> <p>430 LTR</p>  <p>15.2 Cu Ft No Frost</p> </div> <div style="font-size: 24px; font-weight: bold;">+</div> <div style="text-align: right;"> <p>Midea MFS70-ES1203</p> <p>7 Year Warranty</p>  <p>1200 RPM 8 Programs</p> </div> </div>
--	---



best **بست**
AL-YOUSIFI البوسفي

Credit: Start from 500 • Up to 48 month • Instant approval

• Kuwait 1 (The New str.) • Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower) • Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.) • Hawalli 2 (Bin Khalid str.) • Shuwaikh (5th Ring road) • Al-Fal (5th Ring road)
 • Sabriya (Salim Al-Mubarak str.) • Farwaniya (Behind police Station) • Fathheel (Opp. General Parking) • Jafra (Opp. Main Co-op.) • Airport (Departure Hall)

Shop Online www.best.com.kw Free Delivery

1809 809

PEUGEOT PARTNER .. FOR UNEXPECTED PROFITS



From **K.D 95 Monthly**

• Service package • Extended Warranty • 3rd Party Insurance & Registration

MOTION & EMOTION

الوكالة الكويتية لعمليات استيراد السيارات ب.م.س.
Kuwait Automotive Imports Co. W.L.L.

Working Hours
From Saturday - Thursday
From: 9:00 am - 9:00 pm

Call:
5501 5636 - 6902 4472


PEUGEOT

 PeugeotKWT |
  @bestyouSifi |
  www.best.com.kw
 info@best.com.kw |
  bestyouSifi

UK PUBLISHES DRAFT BILL ON TRIGGERING BREXIT

LONDON: Britain's government yesterday published a draft law that would authorize Prime Minister Theresa May to begin the procedure for leaving the European Union in an important milestone towards Brexit. "The British people have made the decision to leave the EU... so today we have introduced a bill in parliament which will allow us to formally trigger Article 50 by the end of March," said Brexit minister David Davis.

The two clause "European Union Notification of Withdrawal Bill" asks parliament to give May authority to start the formal mechanism by which Britain will leave the bloc. The government said MPs would get their first chance to debate and vote on it on Tuesday and Wednesday next week. May's government was forced to go to parliament following a landmark Supreme Court ruling this week that rejected its argument that executive powers allowed it to proceed.

The ruling Conservatives have a small majority in the House of Commons and the bill is expected to get the go-ahead from MPs, although opposition parties have said they plan put forward amendments that could slow it down. Davis said he hoped that parliament would "respect the decision taken by the British people and pass the legislation quickly," arguing that MPs had supported holding the referendum in the first place.

House of Commons leader David Lidington told parliament that the bill's third and final reading in the House of Commons—followed by a final vote by MPs—would be on February 8. The bill will then pass to the upper House of Lords, where progress is less certain as the government has no majority there and no control over the timing.

"The Lords will not block or wreck the bill but they will want to give it proper scrutiny, especially if they think the scrutiny in the Commons has been inadequate," Robert Hazel and Alan Renwick from University College London's Constitution Unit said. If approved by the House of Lords, the bill would then have to be signed off by Queen Elizabeth II before May can trigger Article 50 of the EU's Lisbon Treaty—the formal process for leaving the bloc.

'Disgraceful!'

May has said she is confident she will be able to stick to her timetable of triggering Article 50 by the end of March at the latest and the government has said it hopes to start Brexit talks before the summer. Britain voted to leave the European Union in a referendum on June 23 last year following a bitter campaign and divisions have persisted since then.

A majority of Britain's 11 Supreme Court judges on Tuesday ruled that withdrawing from the EU meant there would have to be changes in Britain's domestic laws and therefore parliament had to be involved. There were shouts of "disgraceful" from MPs as the government outlined its rapid timetable for the bill. The main opposition Labour Party has said it is planning amendments including a clause calling for the protection of workers' rights, while the Scottish National Party wants to put forward dozens of changes.

May's Conservative government currently has a working majority of 16 in the 650-member parliament. The bill came as official data showed Britain's economy grew solidly in the final months of last year, even as it prepares for a difficult departure from the EU. —AFP



LONDON: In a still image taken from video footage broadcast by the UK Parliamentary Recording Unit on January yesterday British Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union (Brexit Minister) David Davis takes a question from MPs on the publication of a White Paper to outline the legislation on exiting the EU in the House of Commons.—AFP



LYON: People walk past a homeless man sitting on the sidewalk as temperatures plunged under 0 degrees Celsius. — AFP

SOCIALIST UTOPIA A DIFFICULT SELL AS FRANCE SWINGS RIGHT

CAMPAIGN RUN ON RISK-TAKING SPIRIT OF GET-UP-AND-GO

TRAPPES: At the "Friz-Lys" styling salon, Jocelyne Gisquet is luxuriating in the freedom of answering emails with a laptop balanced on her knees while having her hair curled. Working where she wants, when she wants, are among the pay-offs of the 45-year-old's bold step last year to quit a stable job as a marketing director at one of France's largest multinationals to set up in business for herself.

That risk-taking spirit of get-up-and-go is what French presidential hopeful Benoit Hamon hopes to unleash on a national scale with his radical proposal that all French adults - rich and poor, working or unemployed - be paid a modest but regular monthly no-strings-attached salary to give them the freedom to try new things without the fear of unpaid bills.

Hamon's campaign for "universal income" has catapulted him from obscurity on the left wing of the ruling Socialist Party to within touching distance of its presidential ticket. With 35 percent of the vote in the Socialist primary's first round, the 49-year-old is in pole position to beat ex-Prime Minister Manuel Valls, who got 31 percent, in the decisive second-round ballot on Sunday.

Another state handout

But in Trappes, the blue-collar town west of Paris where he is the elected lawmaker, Hamon hasn't won over Gisquet or her stylist, Francoise Larcher, weaving bright plastic rollers into the entrepreneur's dark head of hair. Where Hamon sees 750 euros (\$800) per month

for all liberating the French and their creative forces, and cushioning them from an automated future of fewer jobs for humans, Gisquet and Larcher see just another state handout that France neither needs nor can afford.

"That's the problem with the left. They are far too utopian," said Gisquet. "They make promises they can't keep. That's intolerable." That opponents of his signature proposal are so vocal and easy to find even in Hamon's district, where he vacuumed up 55 percent of votes in the primary first round last Sunday and where people warmly describe him as a salt-of-the-earth type who is generous with his time, gives a foretaste of the steep uphill battle the expected Socialist Party candidate will face in France's presidential election in April and May.

In his favor: Quitting Francois Hollande's government (he was education minister) in 2014 put distance between Hamon and the Socialist president whose catastrophic unpopularity killed his own hopes for a second five-year term. Rebelling against the government's pro-business shift spared Hamon the taint that has undermined the candidacy of Valls, who infuriated many as Hollande's prime minister by forcing reforms through parliament without a vote.

But in a country that has shifted to the right since Hollande's victory in 2012, Hamon's firm anchorage on the Socialist left could prove an impossible sell. So, too, could the huge expense of providing a universal income to more than 50 million adults. Hamon himself

has estimated the cost to be at least 300 billion euros (\$320 billion), to be financed by taxing robots and other measures.

Hardening tone

Valls, hardening his tone to try to make up ground on his rival, this week called Hamon "a merchant of illusions." Even in his own campaign team, some worried that Hamon's proposals, which also include the legalization of cannabis, amounted to political suicide, says Ali Rabeh, one of his aides. "The audacity of it scared quite a few people," he said in an interview in Hamon's parliamentary office in Trappes, as campaigners dropped by to restock on thick piles of leaflets and posters.

But even if Hamon doesn't win the primary or the presidency, Rabeh argues that they've already scored a victory by planting the argument that universal income isn't utopian, but rather a necessity that would lift France from the doldrums of diminishing work. "We are one of the most pessimistic countries in the world," he said. "This is a way of boosting our state of mind, our collective spirit." "The debate is no longer whether there will be a universal basic income but when," he said.

Nursing a morning glass of rose wine at the bar of a nearby cafe, 72-year-old retiree Gerard Sierra said the Socialists are on course for "a whipping" at the polls, with fiery far-left presidential candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon and Emmanuel Macron, Hollande's center-left former economy minister, both siphoning off support.—AP

WHO ARE GERMANY'S 'CITIZENS OF THE REICH'?

BERLIN: German security services are increasingly cracking down on "Reichsbuerger" or "Citizens of the Reich", a far-right movement long dismissed as malcontents and crackpots but now seen as a growing threat. A mixed bag of conspiracy theorists, neo-Nazis and gun enthusiasts who reject the modern democratic state, the fragmented movement is growing more radical at a time when right-wing extremism in general is on the rise. Several "Reichsbuerger" have opened fire on police or hoarded weapons and explosives.

On Wednesday, 200 police raided 12 locations nationwide and detained two suspects, accusing them of plotting "armed attacks against police officers as representatives of the state, asylum seekers and members of the Jewish community". What do we know about the Reichsbuerger?

What do they believe?

The Reichsbuerger refuse to recognize the legitimacy of the modern German republic and generally believe in the continued existence of the pre-war German Reich, while some idolize Nazi Germany. Some see modern Germany as a US colony and argue that the Reich's 1919 Weimar Constitution and its former borders which extend far into present-day Poland remain valid.

Several groups have declared their own mini-states, such as the "Exile Government of the German Reich" or the "Free State of Prussia", made flags and issued their own identity papers, currencies and postage stamps. They typically deny the legitimacy of police and other state institutions and refuse to pay taxes, social service contributions and fines, which brings them into conflict with authorities. Their members have often been dismissed as eccentrics, oddballs and trolls known for swamping local municipalities and courts with letters, formal complaints, motions and objections.

Are they neo-Nazis?

The movement is characterized by an extreme right-wing, historically revisionist and often ethno-nationalist ideology. Several groups are known to have direct links to illegal neo-Nazi organizations and are under surveillance by German state and federal intelligence agencies. Berlin's security service describes Reichsbuerger as following an "ideological mix of conspiracy theories, anti-Semitic and anti-democratic views". The anti-fascist Amadeu Antonio Foundation warns that although it may be tempting to dismiss Reichsbuerger as cranks, "behind the masquerade of conspiracy theories, esotericism and government game-playing lies a hardcore right-wing extremism and anti-humanist ideology".

How many are they?

Around since the 1980s, with links to like-minded groups in the United States, the movement was long estimated to number in the hundreds-but it has grown exponentially in the internet age, especially in the past few years. This week domestic intelligence service chief Hans-Georg Maassen said the "Reichsbuerger scene" of activists and sympathizers was now thought to number about 10,000. Of these, 500 to 600 were known right-wing extremists, Maassen told the DPA news agency. Most known followers are middle-aged white males. They exist nationwide, but most high-profile cases have been reported in Germany's formerly communist east and the southern state of Bavaria.

Maassen said his service worried about the movement's "considerable propensity for violence and increased aggressiveness". In an attack last August, a 41-year-old Reichsbuerger and one-time "Mister Germany" pageant winner opened fire on police carrying out an eviction order at his house in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt. The gunman was seriously wounded and three police officers suffered light injuries. — AFP



DAKAR: In this file photo dated Thursday, Jan 19, 2017, Adama Barrow, left, is sworn in as President of Gambia at Gambia's embassy. — AFP

GAMBIA'S NEW PRESIDENT RETURNS, NEW ERA BEGINS

TROOPS TO STAY FOR SIX MONTHS TO PROVIDE SECURITY

BANJUL: Gambia's President Adama Barrow is finally returning home yesterday, solidifying his position as the country's first new commander in chief in two decades after a political crisis that sent the previous ruler into exile. Barrow was scheduled to arrive in Gambia at 4 pm (16:00 GMT), coalition spokesman Halifa Sallah said. A larger ceremony will take place at a later date, he said.

Gambians eagerly await Barrow, who has promised to reverse many of the authoritarian policies of former leader Yahya Jammeh, who was accused of imprisoning, torturing and killing his political opponents. Barrow defeated Jammeh in December elections, but the veteran leader did not want to cede power. Barrow was sworn into office on Jan 19 at the Gambian Embassy in neighboring Senegal because of security threats as Jammeh clung to power.

Jammeh finally left Gambia last weekend, bowing to international pressure that included a regional military force, ending a more than 22-year rule. The West African troops were poised to oust Jammeh if diplomatic talks failed. There are currently 2,500 of the ECOWAS troops still in Gambia - in the capital, Banjul, as well as at key crossing points

between Gambia and Senegal and at the port and airport, according to Sweden's UN Ambassador Olof Skoog, the current UN Security Council president. Gambia's new president has asked the troops to stay for six months to provide security, said Mohamed Ibn Chambas, special representative of the UN secretary-general and head of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel. "Many factors will be taken into account in determining the length of a mission," Chambas told reporters yesterday in Senegal, where Barrow has been staying while awaiting his return.

Striving for stability

Gambia, with a population of nearly 1.9 million people, has become a shining example in West Africa, a region striving to establish stable democratic changes of power. The world watched as Gambians showed they wanted change, supporting a coalition of opposition parties whose aim was to oust Jammeh and put the country on a path toward greater democracy.

Jammeh's supporters wept as he boarded a plane for exile. He went to Equatorial Guinea, taking luxury cars and other riches amassed during his presidency and accom-

panied by trusted family and security guards. When Jammeh left, the streets in Banjul exploded in celebration, with music blaring from speakers, people dancing in front of restaurants, cheering and honking car horns. Barrow's months ahead will be crucial to building a country that can put a climate of fear behind it and work toward reconciliation. He has vowed to work toward greater freedoms and reforms to the security forces and the constitution. Barrow has named a female vice president, Fatoumata Tambajang, who has called for Jammeh's prosecution for human rights abuses. But it emerged that she might be above the constitutional age limit for the position, bringing Barrow to say he will put together a vetting committee for further appointments.

Sallah, the spokesman, said a human rights commission will be set up and the new government will create a freedom of information act. "We expect a lot of things from Barrow," said 26-year-old Modou Fall, who, like many others, wore a #Gambiahasdecided T-shirt to show support for the new president. "We want the forces to stay so that we can reform our army ... and we need development in this country." — AP

11 HELD IN AUSTRIAN ANTI-TERROR RAIDS

VIENNA: Eleven men were arrested in Austria yesterday as some 800 police investigating possible members of the jihadist group Islamic State carried out raids in Vienna and Graz, authorities said. The raids however were not related to the arrest in Vienna last week of a 17-year-old suspected Islamist extremist, and investigators did not believe a terror attack was imminent, reports said.

"As part of an ongoing investigation into suspected membership of a terrorist organization ('IS') a coordinated operation

planned for some time took place involving 800 officers," Graz prosecutors said. Eight men were initially detained, including three Austrians "with a migration background", two Bosnians, a Syrian, a Bulgarian and a Macedonian, all aged between 21 and 49, a spokesman said. Four of the arrests were in Vienna and four in Graz.

A further three suspects from the Balkans were later also arrested in Graz. Media reports said that as well as apartments, police also raided unofficial

mosques, mostly in Graz. They also said the operation targeted individuals from the former Yugoslavia suspected of establishing a jihadist network in Austria. The Kronen Zeitung tabloid reported that the raids focused on the network of a Muslim preacher from Bosnia jailed for 20 years last July in Graz for recruiting young IS fighters.

The accused, known as Ebu Tejma, "brainwashed" dozens of people aged between 14 and 30 and enlisted a number of them to fight for IS in Syria, his trial heard.

Tejma fled from Bosnia to Vienna following the break-up of Yugoslavia and preached in various Austrian and southern German cities, becoming a "key figure" in pushing IS propaganda, according to the prosecution.

He was arrested during a far-reaching crackdown on Austrian jihadist networks in 2014 and denied the charges against him. Austria has so far been spared getting hit by the string of attacks by Islamist extremists in other European countries in the past few years. — AFP

PARK'S CONFIDANT THREATENED DURING PROBE SAYS LAWYER

SEOUL: A lawyer for the jailed woman at the center of the biggest South Korean political scandal in decades said yesterday that prosecutors threatened to "annihilate" her family and used other abusive language during questioning. Prosecutors denied the accusations and expressed strong regret over them. The woman, Choi Soon-sil, a longtime friend of President Park Geun-hye, has been arrested for allegedly interfering in state affairs and extorting money from businesses. Park was impeached last month over the scandal and the Constitutional Court is reviewing whether to formally end her rule.

Choi created a stir Wednesday by shouting

out accusations about prosecutors when she was brought to the office of prosecutors. Choi screamed out to reporters that the investigation was unfair and said she had been forced to confess untrue things about her relationship with Park. There is huge pressure on prosecutors amid widespread fury in South Korea over the charges against Choi and Park. Millions of South Koreans have taken to the streets to protest what prosecutors have described as collusion with Park that allowed Choi to pull government strings from the shadows. But yesterday, her lawyer accused prosecutors of questioning Choi without informing him late on Christmas Eve in what

he called a violation of a law that guarantees the right to counsel.

During questioning that he said lasted until 1 a.m. on Christmas Day, the lawyer, Lee Gyeong-jae, said prosecutors used "very shocking" language that abused Choi's human rights. He said they threatened to "annihilate" Choi's family and make "Choi and even her grandson live (in shame) so that they cannot hold their faces up." Lee said the threats to destroy a person's family was similar to the feudal language used during the Joseon Dynasty, which ruled the Korean Peninsula for 518 years before it was colonized by Japan in 1910.

Lee accused prosecutors of trying to induce Choi to confess to things she had not done. His conference was disrupted at the last minute with a middle-aged woman shouting and urging him not to speak in defense of Choi. "Do you think she should be treated well while being investigated?" the woman shouted. The office of special prosecutors investigating the scandal said later Thursday that one of their senior prosecutors met Choi on Christmas Eve for an informal interview but did not use any of the abusive language cited by Choi's lawyer. Spokesman Lee Kyuchul said prosecutors have not tried to induce Choi into making any false confessions.—AP

WINTER KILLS 27 AFGHAN CHILDREN

MAZAR-I-SHARIF: Heavy snowfall and freezing weather has killed 27 children, all under the age of five, in a remote district in northern Afghanistan, officials said yesterday, with fears the toll could rise. Roads in Darzaab in northern Jawzjan province were blocked by 50 centimeters of snow, cutting off access for villagers in the area to medical care as temperatures plunged to -10 degrees Celsius (14 Fahrenheit).

"Unfortunately we have 27 children killed due to heavy snowfall and freezing weather," district governor Rahmatullah Hashar told AFP, saying the deaths had occurred over the last two or three days. All the children were under the age of five, he said, adding the blocked roads mean the toll could still increase. The deaths were confirmed by the Jawzjan provincial governor's spokesman, Reza Ghafoori, who said aid would be delivered via emergency committees. Heavy snowfall and avalanches kill scores of people in Afghanistan each winter.

In 2015, avalanches killed some 300 people across the country, the bulk of them in the mountainous province of Panjshir, north of Kabul. Rescue efforts after disasters such as avalanches and flash floods, which often hit as snows melt in the spring, are frequently hampered by lack of equipment. Poor infrastructure makes it difficult for rescue teams to reach isolated areas. — AFP



KARACHI: In this photograph taken on July 31, 2013, Pakistani television show host Aamir Liaquat Hussain presents an Islamic quiz show Aman Ramadan. — AFP

PAKISTAN BANS PROMINENT TV PREACHER OVER HATE SPEECH

HIGH-PROFILE HOST SILENCED AFTER YEARS OF CONTROVERSY

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's media watchdog yesterday accused a prominent television preacher of hate speech and banned his hugely popular show, silencing the high-profile host after years of controversy. Aamir Liaquat Hussain, a charismatic star criticized in 2013 for giving out babies to childless couples live on prime-time television, had been accused of inciting hate against supporters of five progressive activists who disappeared earlier this month.

He was told his program on Bol News had been ended "with immediate effect" and prohibited from appearing on the channel "in any manner" even in old footage, with Bol warned it would lose its license if it did not comply. Hussain was also prohibited from delivering "any hate speech" or branding anyone an infidel or a traitor on any other channel, according to the statement from the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA).

It said the decision came after Hussain had been monitored for several weeks, and that it had received "hun-

dreds" of complaints about his repeated violations. Rights activist Jibrin Nasir, who has spearheaded some of the demonstrations over the missing bloggers and is among those maligned by Hussain, tweeted that a police complaint had also been made.

Fears of crackdown

"Pemra did its job & we should be glad about it but our real job is still left. We can rejoice when the missing come back home. Back to work!" he wrote. The five bloggers were reported missing from various cities in Pakistan early this month, raising fears of a crackdown. Human Rights Watch said their near simultaneous disappearances raised concerns of government involvement, which officials and intelligence sources have denied.

A virulent social media campaign painting the missing as blasphemers has triggered a flood of threats despite denials from their worried families. The charge, which carries the death penalty, is hugely sensitive in deeply conserva-

tive Muslim Pakistan, where even unproven allegations have stirred mob lynchings and murder. Hussain, a former lawmaker, is no stranger to controversy. Under military ruler Pervez Musharraf, he was forced to resign as junior religious affairs minister because of his views on the controversial blasphemy laws. He was also unable to authenticate an alleged degree in Islamic Studies from a college in Spain. Known as doctor, he claims to have a diploma from a medical college in Pakistan. In 2008, guests invited onto one of his shows said members of the Ahmadi minority should be killed. Two well-known Ahmadis were subsequently murdered, although there was no evidence linking their killings to the TV show.

In 2013 he was unrepentant about the storm over his Ramadan show, which saw him give babies away to childless couples, denying the move was a ratings stunt. "People love me, that is why they watch me. Through television we spread the message of tolerance," he told AFP at the time. — AFP

AVALANCHES KILL TEN SOLDIERS IN KASHMIR

SRINAGAR: Avalanches killed 10 Indian soldiers in Kashmir after cascading onto an army post and a patrol along the de facto border that divides the disputed territory with Pakistan, the military said yesterday. The separate avalanches buried the soldiers under tons of snow on the Line of Control (LoC) in the remote Gurez area on Wednesday, an army spokesman told AFP.

A total of seven soldiers in the patrol, that was approaching a border post when it was hit, were killed. The avalanche that slammed into the army post left three soldiers dead, but seven have been rescued. A search for the other missing soldiers was continuing, Colonel Rajesh Kalia said. "With the recovery of bodies of four more soldiers from the patrol the toll in the avalanches is now 10," he said after three bodies were recovered on Wednesday. Dozens of Indian and Pakistani soldiers are killed by avalanches almost every winter along the LoC.

Indian-administered Kashmir has been witnessing one of the most severe winters in recent decades, with heavy snow across the territory and temperatures dropping to minus seven degrees Celsius (19 degrees Fahrenheit). Four members of a single family died Wednesday in the same area when the house they were sleeping in was hit by an avalanche. A lone survivor was rescued.

One soldier also died Wednesday in the north of the territory when a camp was hit by an avalanche. Meteorologists have forecast more heavy snow across the region over the next two days. Authorities had already issued avalanche warnings, advising residents in mountainous areas not to venture out. Police last week evacuated 80 villagers from Waltengoo Nar where dozens were killed after a series of avalanches hit the area in 2005 — in the south of the territory. —AFP



NEW DELHI: An Indian Army contingent marches during the 68th Republic Day parade. — AFP photos



NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (l) waves as he leaves with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (c) and India President Pranab Mukherjee after the Republic Day Parade at Rajpath.

CAMELS AND STUNTMEN WOW CROWDS AT INDIA REPUBLIC DAY SHOWCASE OF INDIA'S MILITARY HARDWARE AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

NEW DELHI: Motorbike stunt riders and herds of camels wowed the crowds gathered in New Delhi yesterday to celebrate Republic Day, an annual showcase of India's military hardware and cultural diversity. After the US and French presidents attended the last two events, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, was this year's chief guest as everyone from bagpipe-playing troops to school-children paraded along the landmark Rajpath boulevard.

The day marks the adoption of the country's constitution on January 26, 1950 following independence from Britain in 1947. The nearly 100-minute parade displayed India's latest weaponry, including missiles and Indian-manufactured radar systems, along with elaborate floats representing the country's different states and union territories.



NEW DELHI: Indian Army soldiers march during Republic Day parade. — AP

A contingent of border guards rode into town on camels, wearing colourful caparisons fitted with round mirror pieces, and were greeted with loud cheers from spectators. The arrival of the camels followed a show by stuntmen from military units, some of whom balanced themselves precariously on ladders on the back of moving motorbikes. A military contingent from the UAE led the march down Janpath and the parade concluded with a fly-past by Indian fighter jets.

Eying future

Prime Minister Narendra Modi wore a pink turban and was seen chatting with guests inside a bullet-proof enclosure. Nahyan is the second Arab leader to attend the function after Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud in 2006, as India eyes financial investments and energy security from the region. More than 50,000 security personnel were deployed in the capital to prevent any possible attack.

Suspected separatist militants triggered at least eight bombs in the remote northeastern Assam and Manipur states, but without causing any major damage or casualties. In his televised Republic Day speech on Wednesday night, President Pranab Mukherjee said India's strength lay in its religious and cultural diversity. Critics say India is witnessing an increasingly strident brand of Hindu nationalism since Modi came to power in 2014.

"More than the unison of ideas, a healthy democracy calls for conformity to the values of tolerance, patience and respect for others," said Mukherjee, a member of the main opposition Congress party and whose position is largely ceremonial. "Our tradition has always celebrated the argumentative Indian not the intolerant Indian." — AFP



NEW DELHI: The Indian Military Police's Dare Devil stunt team takes part in a display during the Republic Day Parade.



NEW DELHI: Indian artists from the state of Tamil Nadu surround their state float as they take part in the Republic Day Parade.



CHENNAI: Indian school students perform the 'mayillattam' Peacock Dance during a parade to mark Republic Day. — AFP

HK LEADERSHIP FAVORITE TESTIFIES IN GRAFT TRIAL

HONG KONG: Hong Kong leadership hopeful Carrie Lam testified in a high-profile corruption trial yesterday where she described the accused-a former city leader-as her "role model". Donald Tsang is charged with misconduct and bribery while he was Hong Kong's chief executive and is the highest-ranking official to be taken to court for graft. The trial comes at a time when residents are losing faith in Hong Kong's elites, as a string of corruption cases fuel public suspicions over cosy links between authorities and business leaders.

Lam was made secretary for development in 2007 during Tsang's administration and said

he "had been my role model in my career as a public servant", when she was called as a prosecution witness at the city's High Court. Lam answered "yes" when the defense counsel asked whether Tsang did his "honest best to serve the public". Tsang, 72, was leader from 2005 to 2012 and has pleaded not guilty to three charges of misconduct and bribery, each with a maximum jail sentence of seven years.

He is accused of failing to disclose his plans to lease a luxury penthouse in the neighboring city of Shenzhen from a major investor in a broadcaster-which at the time was seeking a license from the Hong Kong government.

Tsang allegedly approved the company's application for the license, and also failed to declare that an architect he proposed for a government award had been employed as an interior designer for the flat. Lam denied knowledge of the Shenzhen property. She also said she had not come under pressure when she nominated the architect for the award after he was suggested to her department by the chief executive's office. "Of course I made my own judgment," she said.

The prosecution has called Tsang's behavior a betrayal of public trust. In 2012 Tsang apologized for separate allegations that he

accepted inappropriate gifts from business friends in the form of trips on luxury yachts and private jets. Lam was most recently tough deputy to unpopular current chief executive Leung Chun-ying.

She stepped down earlier this month to run for election in March and is widely seen as Beijing's favorite candidate to lead the semi-autonomous city. But since announcing her bid Lam has been accused of being out of touch with ordinary people. She was this week ridiculed for revealing she did not know where to buy toilet paper late at night and appearing hesitant using a subway turnstile. —AFP

CHINESE SEND FAKE TRUMP TWEETS

BEIJING: In China, Twitter is blocked but fake tweets by @realdonaldtrump look set to become the latest internet sensation. Users are flocking to websites that let them generate images of fake tweets that look just like those sent from US President Donald Trump's distinctive personal Twitter account - replete with his avatar and a real-time timestamp.

@realdonaldtrump would like to wish you a Happy Chinese New Year, says one, referencing the holiday that falls this year on Saturday. @realdonaldtrump thinks Shanghai Jiaotong University is better than its crosstown rival. @realdonaldtrump wants to buy a jianbing (typical Chinese street food) and wants Mexico to pay for it. @realdonaldtrump's "favorite boy band" is the South Korean group GOT7: "They are so cute!"

Jike, a Shanghai-based startup running one such website, said yesterday that in just four days, users have created more than a million fake @realdonaldtrump tweets in Chinese and English, often mimicking Trump's tone and fondness for exclamation marks. They are being shared on Chinese social networking sites to crack jokes, tout online goods and send Lunar New Year greetings.

The fake Trump tweets circulating on Chinese social media reflect how Trump's use of Twitter is even seeping into the popular consciousness of a country where Twitter has been blocked by censors for years. Although Trump's comments on trade, Taiwan and the South China Sea have raised concerns in Beijing, there is a certain fascination about Trump among some young Chinese who see him as a symbol of American showmanship but overlook his anti-China rhetoric, at least for now.

'Iconic image'

"For young Chinese people, Trump has an extremely iconic image," said Lin Hang, a co-founder of Jike. "His Twitter content can easily spark conversations in China. His language style is very recognizable. So when netizens put their everyday life musings or roasts in his voice, it provokes a certain reaction, a certain resonance." Jike, founded by Chinese who studied at the University of Michigan business school and worked at Google, rolled out the website on Sunday, Lin said. Employees at the startup, which mainly produces a personalized news app, started sharing it with their friends that night as a joke. It spread quickly from China's highly educated, English-speaking internet circles to other social groups and smaller cities, Lin said.

Despite tight government controls over online discourse, particularly surrounding sensitive domestic news, China's 700 million internet users have a freewheeling web culture that churns out a running stream of commentary, memes and wisecracks about international news. Along with Twitter, other foreign social media sites such as Facebook and YouTube are also inaccessible within China.

Vincent Zhang, a 37-year old employee at Jiayuan, a Chinese online dating site, said many young Chinese had a relatively neutral view of Trump and saw him as a showman. "Now it's a lot of jokes because the trade issues don't feel like they affect our ordinary lives," Zhang said. "If he made it much more difficult to get US visas, then you will see a lot of people insult him." — AP



MANILA: Choi Kyung-Jin (l), wife of late South Korean businessman Jee Ick-Joo who was murdered allegedly by suspected policemen, talks to Marissa Morquicho (r), the househelp of her husband, during a Senate hearing into her husband's death. —AFP

DUTERTE'S DRUG CRACKDOWN FACES NEW COURT CHALLENGE

MORE THAN 7,000 DRUG SUSPECTS HAVE BEEN KILLED

MANILA: A survivor of a Philippine police raid that killed four other drug suspects asked the Supreme Court yesterday to stop such operations and help him obtain police records to prove his innocence in a test case against the president's bloody crackdown. Lawyer Romel Bagares said his client Efren Morillo and other petitioners also asked the court to order police to stop threatening witnesses.

More than 7,000 drug suspects have been killed since President Rodrigo Duterte took office in June and ordered the crackdown, alarming human rights group and Western governments. Four policemen shot Morillo and four other men in impoverished Payatas village in metropolitan Manila in August. Morillo survived and denied police allegations that he and his friends were drug dealers or that they fought back, according to Bagares and the court petition.

Morillo, a 28-year-old vegetable ven-

dor and the four slain men, were garbage collectors who were shot with their hands bound and could not have possibly threatened police, the petition said. Three of the victims were ordered to kneel on the ground at the back of the shanty before they were shot to death. The last to be killed "begged to be spared, hugging the legs of one of the armed men and sobbing. As he would not let go of his hold, the man shot him on the nape," the petition said.

Legal action

If the court grants Morillo's petition to indefinitely stop such drug raids in the Payatas community and help him obtain police surveillance records and other documents, it will encourage relatives of drug raid victims and human rights groups to take legal action against the anti-narcotics police. According to Bagares, police kill drug suspects then make it appear the vic-

tims died while fighting back.

"Because he survived the attack of the perpetrators and identified each and every one of them, his life is in grave danger," Bagares said in his petition, which asked the court to prohibit the police officers from entering an area 5 kilometers (3 miles) from the homes and workplaces of Morillo and other petitioners, who include the other men's relatives. Police officials did not immediately comment on the court petition. National police chief Ronald Dela Rosa told a Senate inquiry yesterday that he opposes suggestions to temporarily stop Duterte's crackdown against illegal drugs due to allegations of extrajudicial killings and other abuses.

While acknowledging that some rogue police may have illegally killed innocent people, Dela Rosa stressed that 33 officers had been killed and more than 100 others wounded in clashes with drug suspects. —AP

Lifestyle

www.kuwaittimes.net

A model presents a creation for Maison Margiela during the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection in Paris. —AFP

Iran actress to boycott Oscars over 'racist' Trump visa ban

Former Baghdad conductor's music is his message for unity

When a bomb tore through a restaurant or business in Baghdad, Karim Wasfi and his cello would often appear with the urgency of a medic to promote his message of healing through music. The former conductor of the Baghdad Symphony often drew a crowd of curious onlookers as he played - others desperate for peace and unity. On Wednesday, Wasfi brought that message to the White House, and drew a similar crowd of onlookers facing their own challenges.

The half-Iraqi, half-Egyptian cellist and founder of the organization Peace Through Arts played serene classical tunes in Lafayette Park in Washington, across the street from the new home of President Donald Trump.

Alongside him, protests swelled, condemning an effort by Trump to suspend the issuance of US visas in countries where adequate screening cannot occur. The president is expected to suspend immigrant and non-immigrant entry for citizens of countries of particular concern for 30 days. That could include Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. Federal law gives Trump broad authority to suspend immigration for groups of people whose entry is deemed



Karim Wasfi, the former conductor of the Baghdad Symphony, plays his cello in Lafayette Park near a protest about President Donald Trump's immigration policies in Washington. — AP

"detrimental to US interests." He is expected to specifically suspend any immigration, including for refugees, from Syria.

Wasfi said that he came to the White House in part to commemorate the sixth anniversary of

the start of the Egyptian Revolution that overthrew President Hosni Mubarak - the "Arab Spring" that sparked a wave of self-determination across the region. "It created lots of change, not only in Egypt but in the Middle East," he recalled, acknowledging that the struggle continues today. "The experience I also have from Iraq is creating calmness, creating tranquility and creating better ways to prevent tension or radicalization, to help people to find better ways to convey and to interact," he said

Wasfi himself immigrated to the US in 1995 and as a dual citizen divides his time between the US and Iraq. He acknowledged the importance of addressing the global refugee crisis and radicalism that has afflicted Iraq and neighboring Syria, but he urged everyone to "calm down and approach the facts" instead of dealing with tensions through rash policies or violence. "There is lots of tension everywhere," he said. "If we disagree on political views and ideologies, we can utilize our energy toward building and improving. So I hope to help create calmness and better ways to interact through music." — AP



This file photo shows Co-founder and President of Tibet House New York, Philip Glass. — AFP

CARNEGIE HALL PLANS SEASON OF GLASS FOR ANNIVERSARY

Leading contemporary composer Philip Glass is celebrating his 80th birthday with a season that will bring a range of his music to Carnegie Hall, the venue announced Wednesday. Unveiling its 2017-18 season, the venerated New York concert hall named Glass to a year-long composer's residency and announced concerts of some of his well-known as well as some more obscure works.

Glass, who turns 80 on Jan 31, will take part personally in a performance of "Music with Changing Parts," one of his most influential pieces. "Music with Changing Parts" premiered in 1970 but has rarely been performed in recent years. It is a key work of musical minimalism that inspired the ambient sound of Brian Eno, the producer and collaborator of David Bowie. Among more recent Glass works, Carnegie Hall will stage 2006's "The Passion of Ramakrishna." The orchestra piece, accompanied by a massive choir, focuses on the 19th-century Indian mystic as he faced death from debilitating throat cancer.

The work will be performed by California's Pacific Symphony, which will also present a piece from "Passages," an album Glass wrote with sitarist Ravi Shankar. The late maestro's daughter Anoushka Shankar, herself a sitarist and composer, will play it at Carnegie Hall. As it increasingly looks to expand beyond traditional classical performances, Carnegie Hall will also mark the season with a series exploring the legacy of the 1960s in the United States.

The series will feature veteran folk/rock singer David Crosby and will include events across New York. The program was devised with Robert A. Caro, the Pulitzer Prize-winning biographer of President Lyndon Johnson. Other highlights will include a seven-concert "Perspectives" series of selected works by a rising star from Russia, 25-year-old pianist Daniil Trifonov. Janine Jansen was chosen to do a separate five-part series for violin. The season will begin on October 4 as the Philadelphia Orchestra-led by Yannick Nezet-Seguin, incoming music director of the Metropolitan Opera-marks the 100th anniversary of Leonard Bernstein's birth. The concert will include the symphonic dances of "West Side Story" and will also feature pianist Lang Lang, who will perform a separate world-famous work, Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue." — AFP

Madonna denies Malawi adoption bid

US pop superstar Madonna on Wednesday denied applying to adopt two more Malawian children while visiting the country where she runs a charity, and where she has previously been embroiled in controversy. An official at the High Court in the capital Lilongwe had earlier told local and international reporters that the court was assessing her application to adopt two local children. Madonna, who set up children's charity Raising Malawi in the poverty-stricken southern African nation in 2006, adopted Malawian children David Banda in 2006 and Mercy James in 2009.

Local media reports said the singer had appeared at the court on Wednesday, accompanied by two unidentified children, before being driven away in an SUV vehicle. "I am in Malawi to check on the children's hospital in Blantyre and my other work with Raising Malawi and then heading home," Madonna told US magazine People in a statement. "The rumors of an adoption process are untrue." Lilongwe High Court spokesman Mlenga Mvula, who had said that Madonna had applied to

adopt two children, was not immediately available to comment after her denial. Madonna's charity is funding a surgical unit for children at the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Blantyre, the commercial hub of Malawi. The 58-year-old singer last visited the hospital in July, taking her two adopted Malawian children with her.

Adoption controversy

The star 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 country for her adoptions. 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 (14 million euro) academy for girls in Malawi, which was cancelled amid allegations of mismanagement-leading to her tiff with Banda.—AFP



This file photo taken on April 2, 2013 shows US Pop Star Madonna (second left) sitting with her biological and adopted children (left to right) David Banda, Lourdes, Mercy James and Rocco at Mkoko Primary School, one of the schools Madonna's Raising Malawi organization has built jointly with US organization BuildOn, during the visit of Madonna in the region of Kasungu, central Malawi. — AFP



In this file photo, Shia LaBeouf arrives at the Los Angeles premiere of "Man Down" at ArcLight Cinemas Hollywood. — AP

Actor Shia LaBeouf arrested outside New York City museum

Actor Shia LaBeouf was arrested early yesterday after he allegedly got into an altercation with another man outside a New York City museum where he has been chanting "He will not divide us" in front of a live camera since Donald Trump's inauguration. Police said LaBeouf pulled the scarf of an unidentified 25-year-old man outside the Museum of the Moving Image in Queens, scratching his face in the process. They said he also pushed the man, who refused medical attention. LaBeouf has spent the first few days of Trump's presidency swaying, dancing and repeating the phrase "He will not divide us" in front of a live camera outside the museum. The livestream is for a participatory public art project LaBeouf and two collaborators intend to have running 24 hours a day for the next four years.

The camera went live the morning of the inauguration, along with a website inviting the public to show up and participate. LaBeouf has been a frequent, though not constant presence. Technically, the project from LaBeouf and his performance art partners isn't about opposition to Trump, LaBeouf told The Associated Press in an interview conducted on Monday in front of the livestream camera.—AP

Iran actress to boycott Oscars over 'racist' Trump visa ban

The Iranian star of Oscar-nominated film "The Salesman" said yesterday she would boycott the awards in protest at President Donald Trump's "racist" ban on Muslim immigrants. "Trump's visa ban for Iranians is racist. Whether this will include a cultural event or not, I won't attend the #AcademyAwards 2017 in protest," tweeted Taraneh Alidoosti, the film's 33-year-old lead actress. Trump is reportedly poised to stop visas for travellers from seven Muslim countries, including Iran, for 30 days.

He told ABC News on Wednesday that his plan was not a "Muslim ban", but targeted countries that "have tremendous terror." "The Salesman", directed by acclaimed Iranian filmmaker Asghar Farhadi is nominated for best

foreign language film at the Academy Awards, which take place next month. Farhadi won an Oscar in 2012 for his film "A Separation". Visa applications from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia and Yemen are all expected to be stopped for a month under a draft executive order published in the Washington Post and New York Times. The draft order also seeks to suspend the US refugee program for four months as officials draw up a list of low risk countries. —AFP

This image released by Cohen Media group shows Shahab Hosseini, left, and Taraneh Alidoosti in a scene from "The Salesman." — AP



US TELEVISION ICON MARY TYLER MOORE DEAD AT 80

Legendary actress Mary Tyler Moore, who delighted a generation of Americans with her energetic comic performances and broke barriers with her iconic portrayal of a single career woman, died

Wednesday after years of ill health. She was 80. Moore's eponymous sitcom-set in Minneapolis-ran for seven seasons in the 1970s and was named by Time Magazine as one of 17 shows that "changed television." She died in hospital in Connecticut, according to media reports, after battling diabetes for years and undergoing brain surgery in 2011.

"Today, beloved icon Mary Tyler Moore passed away at the age of 80 in the company of friends and her loving husband of over 33 years, Dr S Robert Levine," her longtime representative Mara Buxbaum told AFP in a statement. "A groundbreaking actress, producer, and passionate advocate for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, Mary will be remembered as a fearless visionary who turned the world on with her smile." "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" was radical in its time-featuring a single woman, living on her own, and chasing her dream as a television reporter.

It also spawned numerous spin-offs for its popular supporting cast of quirky, slightly neurotic characters, launching Moore's behind-the-scenes career. As top executives of MTM Enterprises, Moore and then-husband Grant Tinker created and produced "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and its spinoffs, and were also responsible for hit shows including "Hill Street Blues," "St. Elsewhere" and "Remington Steele."

'Effortless piece of cake'

"A minute's silence as we remembered one of the true greats of TV comedy," tweeted actor Stephen Fry, who was rehearsing on the Hollywood stage made famous by Moore's show. Michael Keaton described her as "iconic, my boss, castmate and a friend" while filmmaker Kevin Smith said she was a "tireless defender of animals, and scourge of diabetes." "Truly she turned the world on with her smile," he added, referring to the lyrics of her show's theme song. Talk show host and actress Ellen DeGeneres said Moore "changed the world for all women" while Congresswoman Betty McCollum of Minnesota described the actress as one of the state's "favorite honorary daughters."

Moore's first big break came in 1961, when she played spunky stay-at-home wife Laura Petrie on "The Dick Van Dyke Show." In the popular sitcom, the TV couple famously slept in separate twin-size beds, and Moore was limited to wearing capri pants in just one scene per episode. Van Dyke said working with the "beautiful, bright and talented," Moore was "an effortless piece of cake." Speaking at the 2012 Screen Actors Guild awards, where he presented Moore with a lifetime achievement award, Van Dyke said he initially had his doubts about the unknown 20-something, wondering, "Can she do comedy?"

Emmy winner, Oscar nominee

It turns out, he said, she could do "everything." She danced, sang, did slapstick, and was such a perfect onscreen match for him, Van Dyke said, that many viewers wondered whether the couple were

also married in real life. On the big screen, Moore starred opposite Elvis Presley in "Change of Habit," and with Julie Andrews in "Thoroughly Modern Millie." She earned an Oscar nomination for her role in Robert Redford's searing family drama "Ordinary People."

She also took home numerous Emmy awards for her television work and a Tony Award for a Broadway performance in "Whose Life Is It Anyway." Behind the scenes, Moore faced a number of personal difficulties, including an addiction to alcohol. Her only child, Richie, born during her first marriage to Richard Meeker, struggled with emotional issues and drug abuse. He shot and killed himself in 1980, at age 24, in an incident that was officially deemed an accident.

Moore, who was born in New York and moved to California as a child, married her third husband, Robert Levine, in 1983. She was an active spokeswoman for animal rights and for diabetes, which she was diagnosed with in her 30s. "(Diabetes) has taken a toll on her. She's not well at all," Van Dyke told the "Larry King Now" show in October 2015. Gabrielle Carteris, president of the SAG-AFTRA actors' union, described Moore as a "television legend" who was an agent of change at a time when independence for women was not the societal norm. — AFP



A single rose sits by the life-size bronze statue of Mary Tyler Moore at the Minneapolis Visitor Center, Wednesday.



In this file photo, Shia LaBeouf arrives at the Los Angeles premiere of "Man Down" at ArLight Cinemas Hollywood.



This March 31, 1981 file photo shows Mary Tyler Moore at the 53rd Academy Awards in Los Angeles.

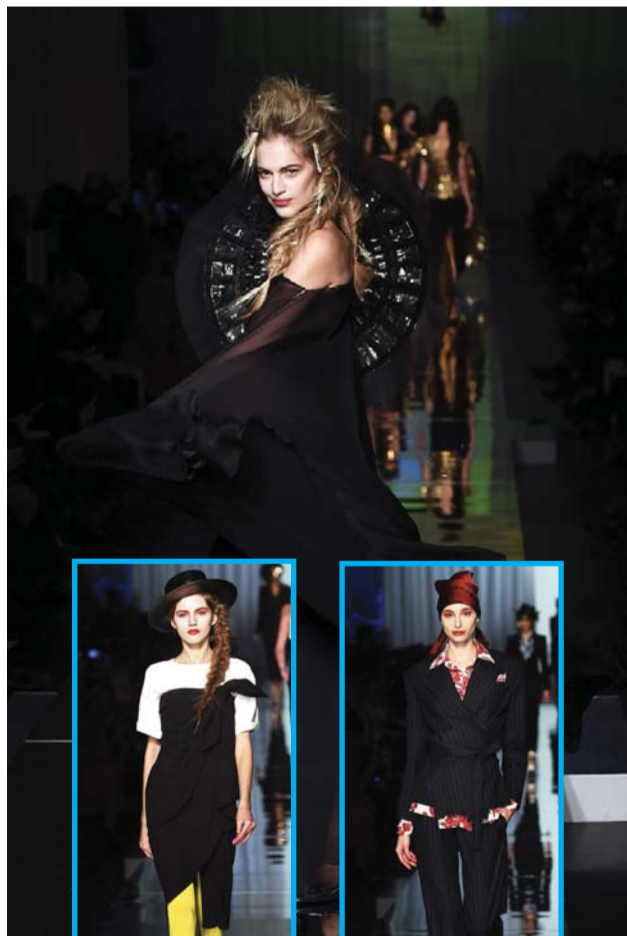


This May 25, 1964 file photo shows Dick Van Dyke, left, and Mary Tyler Moore, co-stars of "The Dick Van Dyke Show" backstage at the Palladium with their Emmys for best actor and actress in a series at the Television Academy's 16th annual awards show, in Los Angeles. — AP photos



Models present creations for Valentino during the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection in Paris . — AP/AFP photos

Valentino designer in solo couture debut; Gaultier goes acid



Models present creations by Jean Paul Gaultier.

All eyes in Paris were on the debut solo couture display from Valentino designer Pierpaolo Piccioli following the move of his design partner to Dior. And if the rousing applause was any indication, his sublime styles of ethereal goddesses were a hit for the guests that included Kristin Scott Thomas, "La Vie en Rose" actress Clotilde Courau and fashion maestro Valentino Garavani himself. Here are the highlights Wednesday of the spring-summer 2017 collections.

Valentino's Grecian goddesses

An unstructured, almost ethereal air entered the room as Piccioli's highly-anticipated couture show began. As the first look floated by in billowing floor-length ivory crepe entitled "Euridice" - after the Greek nymph - it was clear this show would be a study in divine proportions. It was the simplicity, and almost the fragility, of the gowns that made this collection sing. Overly long lengths of chiffon, crepe and silk jersey used in the skirts elongated and narrowed the models' bodies.

But the classical styles - in muted tones with provocative flashes of

bright red - were deceptively simple. Subtle, complex twists included Piccioli's use of sections of penumbra tulle, or slashed shoulders. It was sensual, as opposed to sexual - and all the more powerful for it. The soundtrack by Hollywood movie composer Alexandre Desplat added to the dramatic aura of the 59 looks and left the audience visibly moved.

Art meets couture in Paris

As if the couture designs and the sparkling chandeliers at the Hotel Salomon de Rothschild weren't quite enough, Valentino also treated its guests to a contemporary art show Wednesday. Hanging on the walls of the lavish 19th century Paris manor house were huge canvasses of figurative and abstract art. The private Tiroche DeLeon Collection featured international works by Chinese artists Liu Wei and Zhang Huan. It also had a huge mixed media work called "Unstoppable" that resembled disintegrating fabric by Indonesian artist Gatot Pujiarto. Fashion insiders were snapping their cameras at the walls as well as the clothes.





French fashion designer Franck Sorbier (center) acknowledges the audience at the end of the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection.



Gaultier's acid color

It was all about 1980s' excess for Jean Paul Gaultier - who paid homage to that decade in which he creatively came of age. Bright acid colors, daring contrasts and vivid floral prints spiced up the 57 couture looks modeled on a runway floodlit with colored lighting.

The big hair, oversize scruffy plaits, satin headscarves, strong shoulders, pinstripes, lashings of denim and stockings in acid yellow, blue and red - were all staples of the 80s. They were given a further injection of boldness when the decor faded from light to bright blue and then to warm brown. "I wanted to make it graphic - to use color to make an effect ... the city is gray," Gaultier told The Associated Press. The exuberant designer is never one to be restricted by just one era or style. Brigitte Bardot-like exposed midribs and gypsy sleeves from the 1960s mixed with the signature Breton striped blouse and corseted bustier. His biggest statement was in the dazzling, dizzy mix of stripes and bright prints that screamed "more is more."

Sorbier says it with flowers

The sublime artistry of couture merged with 19th-century organza-laid prints of flowers for French couturier Franck Sorbier's diaphanous spring-summer collection in Paris. Dancer-models emerged in large brown paper wraps for the presentation in an old theater, then dramatically tore them into pieces and threw them to the floor. Beneath, sprightly nymph-like gowns in sepia colors frothed weightlessly as the models performed fairy-like pirouettes and prowled around the space.

Multiple layers - gathered and draped - bounced with movement alongside A-line bodice dresses with square floral print sections in warm, saturated hues. The original display was fitting celebration that marked 30 years since the founding of the independent couture house. It's a rarity in a celebrity-driven industry dominated by corporate groups such as LVMH and Kering.



Models present creations for Maison Margiela.

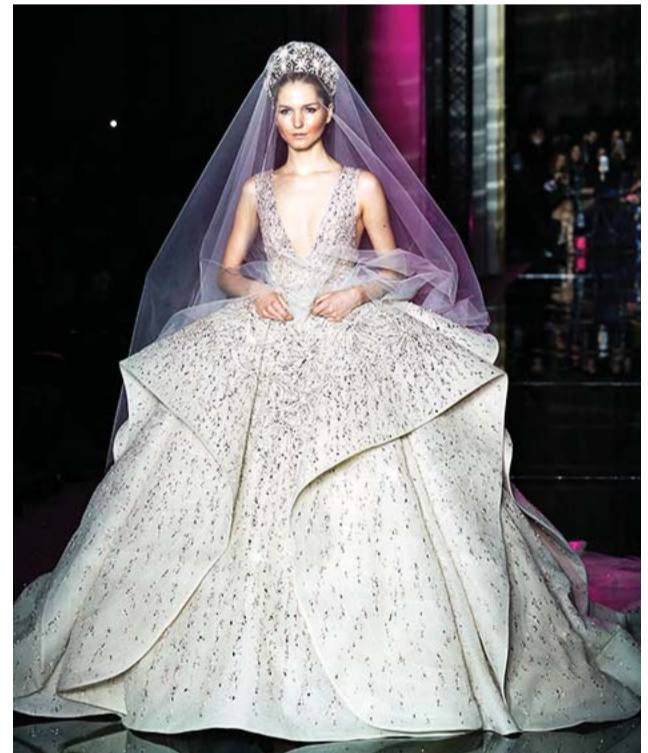


Lebanese fashion designer Zuhair Murad acknowledges the audience at the end of the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection in Paris. — AFP

Saab's regal touch

Elie Saab's accomplished couture display towed the line perfectly between the decorative and subtle, and never wandered into excess. In feminine pastel shades, peach gently contrasted with mid-blue, while plays on sheer sections in see-through full skirts created a feeling of hidden depth in many of the styles. Glamour, of course, was the order of the day for Saab, one of couture week's red-carpet favorites.

Chic silk headbands evoked fashion's golden age of the 1950s. But gold belts - that clasped the Lebanese designer's signature cinched-waist looks - alongside exuberant sparkling earrings and golden crowns gave this spring-summer show a regal quality. — AP





Models present creations for Zuhair Murad during the 2017 spring/summer Haute Couture collection in Paris.



COOKING ON DEADLINE:

Filet Mignon with Pistou, Green Salad

By Katie Workman

Wow, does this dish look classy, right? But look at the ingredient list - not too long. And look at the steps - pretty darn simple. My boys love all kinds of steaks, though a perfect, tender filet distinctively communicates "special occasion." They are no harder to cook than any other steaks; just make sure to have the temperature high enough in the pan that the outside gets nicely seared while the middle remains pink, and be careful not to overcook it. A medium rare filet will have an internal temperature of 130 F.

Pistou is similar to pesto, though often made with a looser consistency, and sometimes the pine nuts and/or Parmesan cheese are omitted, resulting in a simpler basil, garlic and olive oil sauce. That's the drizzle you're going for here, just a pop of herb-infused green olive oil to brighten up that perfect little filet. Then all you need is a handful of lightly dressed baby greens on the side and you are in business. There are so many appealing combinations of greens available either by the pound or in 5-ounce plastic containers in the produce aisle, some with herbs or other add-ins, and it's an awfully easy way to keep changing up your green salad. Of course, you are welcome to round out the meal with the starch of your choice, anything from mashed potatoes to buttered noodles. But there's no question that the star of the plate is the steak.

FILET MIGNON WITH PISTOU AND GREEN SALAD

Ingredients

Serves 4
Start to finish: 25 minutes
2 garlic cloves
1/2 cup fresh basil leaves
1/3 cup plus 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
4 5-ounce filet mignon steaks, about 1-inch thick
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
5 ounces mixed baby lettuces

Preparation

Make the pistou: Place the garlic cloves in a small food processor and mince. Add the basil and process again to chop, then add 1/3 cup of the olive oil, some salt and pepper, and blend until it becomes a bright green sauce.

Season the steak generously with salt and pepper. Heat a large heavy skillet, such as cast iron, over medium-high heat. Add 1 table-

spoon olive oil, and when the oil is hot, sear the steak for 3 to 4 minutes on each side for medium rare. Remove the steaks to a cutting board and let them rest for 5 minutes before serving.

While the meat is resting, in a large bowl combine the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil, the vinegar, and salt and pepper. Stir to combine, add the lettuce and toss. Serve the filets with a drizzle of the pistou on top, and a couple of handfuls of the dressed mixed greens. Pass the rest of the pistou on the side for extra drizzling. — AP

Nutrition information per serving

542 calories; 356 calories from fat; 40 g fat (8 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 116 mg cholesterol; 231 mg sodium; 2 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 0 g sugar; 42 g protein.



For pizza crust with a big dose of vitamins, try cauliflower

By Melissa D'arabian

Cauliflower is a wonder-veggie. No longer relegated to boiling and covering with a bright orange cheese sauce (sorry, Mom), cauliflower is stepping out in the place of starch like rice in stir-fries or instead of wheat flour in pizza dough.

Cauliflower is mild, so it takes on whatever flavors you throw at it, which helps it be the convincing chameleon that it is. Cauliflower is as healthy as our moms told us, providing a hefty dose of vitamins, including C, K, B6 and folate, as well as smaller doses of other vitamins and minerals, plus filling protein and fiber. All in about 25 calories per cup.

So, it's a worthy vegetable, and now that it is available in "riced" form in mainstream grocery stores across the country, it's time to take a look if you haven't already. Let's start with pizza crust. Steamed, riced cauliflower is mixed with a binder (usually egg and cheese), and then shaped into a pizza crust shape, baked and then topped with traditional pizza toppings. Bake up a few of these crusts and keep in the freezer for last minute pizza night that is healthier than takeout.

Since my daughter is gluten-intolerant, I've been making pizza crust for years with cauliflower, resulting in a few key pieces of advice from the trenches. The biggest challenge with cauliflower crust is keeping it together, since there is no stretchy gluten working for you. But, no problem, if you follow my tips: First, once you cook the cauliflower, make sure to squeeze out as much moisture as possible. Excess water will keep the crust from staying together. In fact, I like to go a tiny step further and add just a little bit of absorbent flour - just a tablespoon or two of coconut or oat flour make a big difference.

Next tip: bake the crust and flip it over before adding any toppings. If you aren't flipping it, you can't get the firm crusty texture to form, and that really helps the crust taste and feel pizza-like.

Final tip: make smaller pizza crusts instead of one big huge one. They are just easier to manage and keep intact. Top your pizza crust with whatever toppings you like - lots of cheese and meat if you simply eating low-carb, or load up with roasted veggies and a light sprinkling of part-skim mozzarella if you want to stay low-cal. But for the crust, follow my recipe for the no-fail step-by-step.



FOOLPROOF CAULIFLOWER PIZZA CRUST

Ingredients

Start to finish: 40 minutes
 Servings: 4 small pizza crusts, 1 per serving
 4-5 cups "riced" cauliflower (buy it riced, or pulse in food processor until rice-sized)
 1 egg
 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
 1/2 cup grated part-skim mozzarella cheese
 1 1/2 teaspoons granulated garlic
 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
 2 tablespoons of coconut flour
 Fine cornmeal for sprinkling, optional
 Salt and pepper

Preparation

Heat oven to 400 F. Place the riced cauliflower in a microwave-safe dish with 2 tablespoons of water, cover and cook in microwave for 4-5 minutes, or until tender but not mushy. Remove from microwave, drain off water, gently pressing out excess moisture with a spoon, and cool.

Meanwhile, in a large bowl, whisk the egg with the cheeses, garlic and Italian seasoning. Place the cooled cauliflower in several paper towels, or in a thin clean dish towel, and gently but firmly squeeze out excess moisture. (You may be surprised by how much liquid you can squeeze out.) Add the squeeze cauliflower to the egg and cheese mixture. Sprinkle in the coconut flour, salt and pepper and mix well. Mixture will not stick together like regu-

lar dough. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and spray with nonstick spray. Divide the dough into 3 or 4 mounds, and gently shape them into pizza crusts, doing your best to push the dough together to make clean edges. Bake until dark golden brown, about 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool for 5-10 minutes. Flip with a spatula. If using, sprinkle the bottom of the sheet with a little cornmeal when you flip the crusts. Top the crusts with any sauce, cheese, toppings and bake until melted, about 10 more minutes.

Tip: You can bake extra crusts without toppings and freeze them for future use.



Friday Times Travel



From Hogwarts to Christ Church: Britain's best Harry Potter experiences

It's hard to believe the boy wizard is no longer young, but it's 20 years since the publication of the first in JK Rowling's beloved series, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Over 500 million book sales and a record-breaking film franchise later, and Pottermania is a world-wide phenomenon, driven by fans eager to connect with the wizard's wonderful world. In 2017 the UK is celebrating in style, with recreations, readings, exhibitions and homages galore. That's on top of permanent attractions including Oxford colleges, Victorian shopping arcades and a Highland viaduct.

See artworks, props and plays in the West End

A free exhibition at the House of MinaLima in London's Soho is showcasing the fantastical designs of the creative duo responsible for the artwork in the Potter films: Miraphora Mina and Eduardo Lima. Get to this free exhibition before it closes (4 February 2017) to see original artworks and props including issues of the *Daily Prophet*, a Hogwarts Express ticket, wanted posters and Harry's original acceptance letter from Hogwarts.

The nearby Palace Theatre is the venue for the wildly-popular *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child - Parts I & II*, which

takes up the wizard's later life as an 'overworked employee of the Ministry of Magic, a husband and father of three school-age children'. Tickets aren't easy to come by but it's worth checking the website (harrypottertheplay.com) for future releases, and returned and cancelled tickets also frequently come back up for sale.

Exploring the Potterverse with Bloomsbury

Rowling's publishers Bloomsbury is celebrating with several epic events. First up is the 'Harry Potter Book Night' (2 February



The Palace Theatre, in the West End, is the stage for Harry Potter and the Cursed Child.

2017), in which fan-run quizzes, treasure hunts, recreations and events kick off across the length and breadth of the UK. Fans can visit harrypotter.bloomsbury.com to register their events, download kits and quizzes and see a map of the hundreds of activities planned across the nation and beyond.

Not to be missed is a special exhibition at London's British Library, running from 20 October 2017 to 28 February 2018. Exploring the Potterverse from many angles - from medieval manuscripts on griffins and manticores to rare treatises on wizardry and treasures straight from JK Rowling's own archive - this is sure to be huge. Tickets go on sale in spring 2017.

Hunting out Hogwarts in London

Not only is London home to the biggest events of Harry's 20th, it's base camp when it comes to Potter film locations. The King's Cross area alone boasts two mandatory stops on any Potter pilgrimage. King's Cross Station, an atmospheric wrought-iron grand dame of Victorian architecture, is the site of platform 9 3/4, mythical departure point of the Hogwart's Express. A luggage trolley 'disappearing' into the brick wall beneath the platform sign makes for perfect photo opportunities. Be warned, the queue to take this shot can be long: things are quieter later in the evening. And there's no need to bring your own wand or Gryffindor house scarf, the adjacent Harry Potter Shop - a wood-paneled cornucopia of wizarding necessities modeled on Ollivander's Wand Emporium - has you covered.

Step out from King's Cross onto Euston Rd, walk a few steps west, look up and you'll find yourself gawping at the looming Neo-Gothic façade of St Pancras International Station, another Victorian masterpiece, and the immediately-recognizable exterior of 'King's Cross' in the film versions of *The Philosopher's Stone* and *The Chamber of Secrets*. A hotel (the St Pancras Renaissance) now occupies the front of the station, but you'll probably spot some Potterheads trying to get selfies against the ornate red-brick backdrop, or find the exact spot Harry and Ron parked their Ford Anglia in *The Chamber of Secrets*.

Where the magic comes to life

Every Harry Potter film was shot at Warner Bros' vast Leavesden studio complex, which sits on a former airfield near

Watford - accessible by train from Euston, a short walk from St Pancras. In 2012, part of the complex was turned into The Making of Harry Potter, five warehouses packed with sets and props used in the making of the films, and one of the UK's biggest attractions. You'll find everything from the Great Hall to Dumbledore's office here, alongside Dobby, sickly-sweet

butterbeer and a gasp-inducing scale model of Hogwarts that was used for exterior shots. Unsurprisingly, it's regularly booked out for weeks in advance so plan your dates early.

A wizarding bank and a secret well

The grand Edwardian interior of Australia House on the



Platform 9 3/4 at King's Cross is a popular stop for pics.



Alnwick Castle reflected in the River Aln.

Strand is equally recognizable as the interior of the goblin-run Gringotts Wizarding Bank. Adding real interest to the site was the discovery of a 900-year old sacred well in the basement, still drawing potable water from an underground river. As it's the office of the Australian High Commission in the UK, you're more likely to find no-nonsense security guards than goblins attending to your needs, but you can duck your head in during business hours if you have identification on you.

Diagon Alley and Leadenhall Market

Like most London Potter locations, Diagon Alley is a composite: while its fictional location is off Charing Cross Rd, the filmic equivalent is set in the elaborate wrought-iron interior of Leadenhall Market, a covered Victorian market towards the eastern end of the City, London's historic heart and now its financial district. Once inside, hunt for the blue door in Bull's Head Passage, used in the films as the entrance to wizards' watering hole The Leaky Cauldron.

Books, ferrets and 13 prime ministers in Oxford

Perhaps the one most appreciated by Potterheads is venerable Christ Church college, founded in the time of Henry VIII and alma mater to no fewer than 13 British Prime Ministers. The college's grand staircase features in both *The Philosopher's Stone* and *The Chamber of Secrets*, while its



The 1:25 scale model of Hogwarts at Leavesden features in every Harry Potter film.



Christ Church's Great Hall, the centre of college life and the inspiration for Hogwarts' own Great Hall.

cloisters also pop up in *The Philosopher's Stone*, and the magnificent Great Hall directly inspired the Great Hall of Hogwarts.

More rich associations can be found in the 17th-century Bodleian Library, home to the second-largest book collection in the country (after the British Library). The delicately-vaulted interior of its Divinity School, the oldest extant teaching room in the world, crops up as the Hogwarts infirmary in four separate films, while Duke Humfrey's Library proved the ideal double for the School of Wizardry's own library in *The Philosopher's Stone*. Lastly, there are the Cloisters of New College, where Harry turns Malfoy into a ferret in *The Goblet of Fire*. Its name is misleading - it was founded in 1379.

Visiting the real Hogwarts

But no single place can so proudly claim to 'be' Hogwarts as Alnwick Castle, in the Northumbrian town of the same name. This splendid and much-filmed pile first dates from the late 11th century and has been repeatedly extended over the years. The ancestral home of the dukes of Northumberland, it plays a starring role in both *The Philosopher's Stone* and *The Chamber of Secrets*. Knowledgeable Potterheads can point out the place where Harry took his first Quidditch lesson, or where he and Ron crash-landed their flying Ford Anglia. Alnwick makes much of its credentials, with behind-the-scenes tours, Potter-inspired characters in full costume and broom-flying lessons, as well as occasional special events that you can plan your visit around. (www.lonelyplanet.com)



Aries (March 21-April 19)

It's a busy day at work and your optimism brings about successful endings before they are even started. You may be working within a regular routine today but you will make a discovery or become enamored with a fantastic idea. Whatever the case, this idea can be quite beneficial for a multitude of people. It may be your job to bring out the best in others and to spot what works best. You should see results from your own work quickly. Someone else will gain notice if you hold back, so keep your momentum. Fun company at dinner this evening spurs you into doing something different from your usual evening meal, perhaps a special wine. There is never a dull moment at your work or at home-you enjoy expressing yourself at this time of your life.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You have a great deal of compassion for others and you are appreciated or valued for your feelings or your ability to act and get things done. If you are not in the healing business, you will often be the healer without even realizing it. Gentle and honest, people know just where you stand with most any issue. Although your comments are not usually made until you are asked, you can be frank in a matter-of-fact sort of way. This is a time when you can expect a little boost-some extra support or recognition from those around you. You may feel your wishes come true when a loved one or friends reach agreements. Harmony is easy to find. Leave work early, if possible, and enjoy the time in a pet store, flower shop or nearby park.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may receive some recognition or special attention regarding your particular skills and abilities. You might be so elated that you forget some of the responsibilities; however, in time, reality demands that you tend to business. The type of work you do may change-or at the very least, your attitude toward it could change. The internet, computers, communications and related sciences may figure more notably into your career future. Your resourceful capabilities gain the attention of many, and most companies would be happy to have you on their team! This evening you are motivated by happy, harmonious times with friends or family-perhaps both. A card game or other fun sort of group entertainment brings much laughter to the ears.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

You will not want to waste a minute of this supercharged day. New solutions and inventions are easy for you now. You have co-workers or friends that you trust to help or support you with your ideas. Your abilities in guiding groups may find you interested in helping a youth group. If this does not fit your definition of a fun volunteer program-find one. It is important to share your knowledge in a volunteer program-now is a good time to begin. Start slowly and add more volunteer days when you can. You will find that whatever seems difficult now, may take on little importance in the future. Albert Schweitzer once said, "the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You are looking great. Perhaps you have acquired a new hairstyle or dropped a few pounds because you will find yourself feeling much improved physically today. At any rate, people notice and compliment your changes. The desire for you to achieve success is what sets you apart from others and you will work to be most presentable to your potential clients. Your vitality is strong-you will see results from any health program you may have. Domestic matters gain your attention this afternoon. What you need, your freedom and independence, shattering old molds: these are the things that energize you and take priority in your life. Uniqueness and originality set you apart. You may experiment with a new recipe this evening.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may find a co-worker is supportive of your efforts today. There is optimism and faith and a tendency to take chances and agree to new work opportunities as they become available. If you are relying on others for support, this can be a difficult time. However, if you are actively working by your own instincts, you will see some positive results in many different areas of your life. Keep in mind that you may not be able to stay with an old routine. Invest in yourself and review your skills from time to time. You may want to take a class or two each year that will keep you as the most popular employee, employer, teacher or advisor in town. Preparations you have been making for your future are about to pay off with much power. Observe people tonight.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

This is not a time to force issues. There could be undercurrents of negative activity in business today-you may have noticed this earlier-patience. The afternoon is much more pleasant and although the negative undercurrents have nothing to do with you, the ripple effect is far reaching. Do not become involved in any negative conversations or gossip. Surprise information regarding a business venture may have you thinking along the lines of change. This is a better time for planning than for actually taking the plunge into a change. Overall timing could be a bit off just now. You will enjoy a sense of support and harmony later this evening. Phone conversations, letters and e-mail communications increase. Good news from a distance encourages travel.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Nothing much happens at work until the noon hour. Then you may need to deal with a few proud individuals. An instinctive imperative to be needed in the workplace will get you where you need to go. Because you think you can-you will succeed. Keep those positive thoughts flowing. Going home is a relief. There are mechanical problems at home but you have time to give them the attention that is needed for repairing. Someone will probably pitch in and help you. Some of the left-over parts are perfect to add to an ongoing hobby of yours. Through artistic work, there is insight. There is good news about a family member's health this evening. A timely chat with your sweetheart this evening has you in a terrific mood.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Intuition hits again today and you can log your thoughts into that notebook of yours. Your talents or the way in which you perform your work will pay off soon. You will have authority figures watching as you successfully deal with problems in the workplace. An urge for social interactions with your friends may have to be placed on hold. You are much more intensely focused on accomplishing your job quickly, which may mean you cancel a noon lunch date. You may find yourself working into the evening hours. You certainly will not be bored with any part of the day; the evening is full of opportunities to use your mind, your creativity, your emotions and your desires. A nice change of pace of music becomes a big part of your evening.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

It is time to review and rework some story or hobby that has taken up your spare time lately. Advice in the area of your hobby would be helpful-if that is what you need. Probably, you would most enjoy showing others what you have done. Have some fun with the unveiling of your masterpiece and encourage others to be creative. There could be some plans toward lessening some of the income responsibilities today. You may need to let go of a relationship at this time. There is never a good time to let go of someone that is, perhaps-leaving the nest. You can always see this as an expansion of the family. Romance and creative ideas are a focus for this evening. There is optimism, faith and a tendency to take chances.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You will feel support when it counts but advice in the workplace may be hard to find just now. You are able to handle your own advice. If you are in advertising, there could be some huge demand for packaging improvement with some special product. Product packaging will give you some indication of what is going on inside the package-that is your hint. You will be extremely diligent today. No stranger to hard work-you are successful in your profession. A practical and conscientious attitude takes on a special importance. Taking care of the necessary underpinnings of life, health, work and such, becomes a greater preoccupation. Sorting things out and getting them organized keeps you busy. A niece or nephew gains your attention this evening.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You are the one to catch any mistakes at work; there may be a few. You could be most convincing with others at this time. You may find yourself in a teaching position with regard to co-workers, especially the new ones. Later today, you decide to involve yourself in some neighborhood meeting. Your ideas prove successful and you may decide to head up a committee to help improve your community relations with the young people in your area. You are good at allocating duties to get this project started. Good for you! An emphasis on close relationships and a preoccupation with ideas of fairness and harmony are part of the period you have just begun. You take a special interest in those close to you. Listening is the secret to closeness.

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Kuwait	00965
Albania	00355	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Algeria	00213	Laos	00856
Andorra	00376	Latvia	00371
Angola	00244	Lebanon	00961
Anguilla	001264	Liberia	00231
Antigua	001268	Libya	00218
Argentina	0054	Lithuania	00370
Armenia	00374	Luxembourg	00352
Australia	0061	Macau	00853
Austria	0043	Macedonia	00389
Bahamas	001242	Madagascar	00261
Bahrain	00973	Majorca	0034
Bangladesh	00880	Malawi	00265
Barbados	001246	Malaysia	0060
Belarus	00375	Maldives	00960
Belgium	0032	Mali	00223
Belize	00501	Malta	00356
Benin	00229	Marshall Islands	00692
Bermuda	001441	Martinique	00596
Bhutan	00975	Mauritania	00222
Bolivia	00591	Mauritius	00230
Bosnia	00387	Mayotte	00269
Botswana	00267	Mexico	0052
Brazil	0055	Micronesia	00691
Brunei	00673	Moldova	00373
Bulgaria	00359	Monaco	00377
Burkina	00226	Mongolia	00976
Burundi	00257	Montserrat	001664
Cambodia	00855	Morocco	00212
Cameroon	00237	Mozambique	00258
Canada	001	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Cape Verde	00238	Namibia	00264
Cayman Islands	001345	Nepal	00977
Central African Republic	00236	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Chad	00235	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Chile	0056	New Caledonia	00687
China	0086	New Zealand	0064
Colombia	0057	Nicaragua	00505
Comoros	00269	Niger	00227
Congo	00242	Nigeria	00234
Cook Islands	00682	Niue	00683
Costa Rica	00506	Norfolk Island	00672
Croatia	00385	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Cuba	0053	North Korea	00850
Cyprus	00357	Norway	0047
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Oman	00968
Czech Republic	00420	Pakistan	0092
Denmark	0045	Palau	00680
Diego Garcia	00246	Panama	00507
Djibouti	00253	Papua New Guinea	00675
Dominica	001767	Paraguay	00595
Dominican Republic	001809	Peru	0051
Ecuador	00593	Philippines	0063
Egypt	0020	Poland	0048
El Salvador	00503	Portugal	00351
England (UK)	0044	Puerto Rico	001787
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Qatar	00974
Eritrea	00291	Romania	0040
Estonia	00372	Russian Federation	007
Ethiopia	00251	Rwanda	00250
Falkland Islands	00500	Saint Helena	00290
Faroe Islands	00298	Saint Kitts	001869
Fiji	00679	Saint Lucia	001758
Finland	00358	Saint Pierre	00508
France	0033	Saint Vincent	001784
French Guiana	00594	Samoa US	00684
French Polynesia	00689	Samoa West	00685
Gabon	00241	San Marino	00378
Gambia	00220	Sao Tome	00239
Georgia	00995	Saudi Arabia	00966
Germany	0049	Scotland (UK)	0044
Ghana	00233	Senegal	00221
Gibraltar	00350	Seychelles	00284
Greece	0030	Sierra Leone	00232
Greenland	00299	Singapore	0065
Grenada	001473	Slovakia	00421
Guadeloupe	00590	Slovenia	00386
Guam	001671	Solomon Islands	00677
Guatemala	00502	Somalia	00252
Guinea	00224	South Africa	0027
Guyana	00592	South Korea	0082
Haiti	00509	Spain	0034
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Sri Lanka	0094
Honduras	00504	Sudan	00249
Hong Kong	00852	Suriname	00597
Hungary	0036	Swaziland	00268
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sweden	0046
Iceland	00354	Switzerland	0041
India	0091	Syria	00963
Indian Ocean	00873	Taiwan	00886
Indonesia	0062	Tanzania	00255
Iran	0098	Thailand	0066
Iraq	00964	Toga	00228
Ireland	00353	Tonga	00676
Italy	0039	Tokelau	00690
Ivory Coast	00225	Trinidad	001868
Jamaica	001876	Tunisia	00216
Japan	0081	Turkey	0090
Jordan	00962	Tuvalu	00688
Kazakhstan	007	Uganda	00256
Kenya	00254	Ukraine	00380
Kiribati	00686	United Arab Emirates	00976



00:20 Wheeler Dealers
 01:10 So You Think You'd Survive?
 02:00 Legend Of Croc Gold
 02:50 Treasure Quest: Snake Island
 03:40 Fast N' Loud
 04:30 The Liquidator
 05:00 How Do They Do It?
 05:30 How Do They Do It?
 06:00 Blowing Up History
 06:50 Mega Shippers
 07:40 Impossible Engineering
 08:30 Deadliest Catch
 10:10 Bear Grylls: Mission Survive
 11:00 Venom Hunters
 11:50 Mega Trains
 12:40 Curiosity: X-Ray: Yellowstone
 13:30 Fast N' Loud
 14:20 Misfit Garage
 15:10 Street Outlaws
 16:00 Street Outlaws (Season 3B Special)
 16:50 Street Outlaws
 17:40 Street Outlaws
 18:30 Street Outlaws
 19:20 Street Outlaws
 20:10 Street Outlaws
 21:00 Fast N' Loud
 21:50 Misfit Garage
 22:40 Street Outlaws
 23:30 Curiosity: X-Ray: Yellowstone



00:00 The Killing Season
 01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
 02:00 Gangsters: America's Most Evil
 03:00 Homicide Hunter
 04:00 The Killing Season
 05:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
 06:00 Gangsters: America's Most Evil
 07:00 Gangs Of Britain...
 08:00 Evil Up Close
 09:00 Gangs Of Britain...
 10:00 Homicide Hunter
 11:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
 12:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
 13:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
 15:00 Evil Up Close
 16:00 The First 48
 17:00 Homicide Hunter
 18:00 Gangs Of Britain...
 19:00 Gangs Of Britain...
 20:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
 21:00 The First 48
 22:00 Evil Up Close
 23:00 The First 48



00:30 Nextworld
 01:20 Space Voyages
 02:10 NASA's Unexplained Files
 03:00 What Happened Next?
 03:25 What Happened Next?
 03:50 Ultimate Survival
 04:40 How It's Made
 05:05 How It's Made
 05:30 Storm Chasers
 06:20 Mythbusters
 07:00 Do You Know?
 07:15 Doki
 07:35 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
 08:00 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
 08:45 How It's Made
 09:05 How It's Made
 09:30 Nextworld
 10:20 Mythbusters
 11:10 Storm Chasers
 12:00 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
 12:50 Ultimate Survival
 13:40 How It's Made
 14:05 How It's Made
 14:30 Storm Chasers
 15:15 Mythbusters
 16:00 Doki
 16:20 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
 16:45 Do You Know?
 17:00 Man v Expert
 17:50 The Carbonaro Effect
 18:15 The Carbonaro Effect
 18:40 Nextworld
 19:30 How It's Made
 19:55 How It's Made
 20:20 Mythbusters
 21:10 Man v Expert
 22:00 The Carbonaro Effect
 22:25 The Carbonaro Effect
 22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
 23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
 23:40 Ultimate Survival



00:10 Hank Zipzer
 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
 01:00 Violetta
 01:45 The Hive
 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 02:40 Hank Zipzer
 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
 03:30 Violetta
 04:15 The Hive
 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 05:10 Hank Zipzer
 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
 06:00 Violetta
 06:45 The Hive
 06:50 Mouk
 07:00 Jessie
 07:25 Jessie
 07:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
 08:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
 08:20 Elena Of Avalor
 08:45 Bunk'd
 09:10 Gravity Falls
 09:35 Wizards Of Waverly Place
 10:25 A.N.T. Farm
 11:15 Good Luck Charlie
 12:05 Shake It Up
 12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
 13:00 Welcome To The Ronks
 13:15 Gravity Falls
 13:40 Hank Zipzer
 14:05 Star Darlings
 14:10 Austin & Ally
 14:35 Austin & Ally
 15:00 Jessie
 15:25 Jessie
 15:50 Rolling To The Ronks

16:15 Sunny Bunnies
 16:20 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
 16:45 Elena Of Avalor
 17:10 Bunk'd
 17:35 Zapped
 19:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
 19:25 The Next Step
 19:50 Austin & Ally
 20:15 Star Darlings
 20:20 Shake It Up
 20:45 Backstage
 21:10 Liv And Maddie
 21:35 Cracked
 21:40 The Next Step
 22:05 Best Friends Whenever
 22:30 Mako Mermaids
 22:55 Tsum Tsum Shorts
 23:00 Binny And The Ghost
 23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



00:20 Henry Hugglemonster
 00:35 The Hive
 00:45 Loopdidoo
 01:00 Henry Hugglemonster
 01:15 Calimero
 01:30 Art Attack
 01:50 Zou
 02:05 Loopdidoo
 02:20 Henry Hugglemonster
 02:35 Calimero
 02:50 Zou
 03:05 Art Attack
 03:30 The Hive
 03:40 Loopdidoo
 03:55 Henry Hugglemonster
 04:10 Art Attack
 04:35 Loopdidoo
 04:50 Calimero
 05:05 Art Attack
 05:30 Henry Hugglemonster

05:45 Zou
 06:00 Art Attack
 06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
 06:45 Loopdidoo
 07:00 Zou
 07:15 Calimero
 07:30 Loopdidoo
 07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
 08:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
 08:05 PJ Masks
 08:15 Goldie & Bear
 08:30 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
 08:45 Miles From Tomorrow
 08:55 The Lion Guard
 09:20 Doc McStuffins
 09:35 Goldie & Bear
 09:50 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
 10:00 PJ Masks
 10:15 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
 10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
 10:35 Sofia The First
 11:30 Doc McStuffins
 12:20 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
 13:15 Gummi Bears
 13:40 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 14:35 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 15:30 Little Mermaid
 15:55 Unbungalievable
 16:00 Miles From Tomorrow
 16:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 16:55 The Lion Guard
 17:20 Goldie & Bear
 17:50 PJ Masks
 18:15 Sofia The First
 18:40 Doc McStuffins
 19:05 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 19:30 Little Mermaid
 20:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 21:00 Unbungalievable
 21:05 Goldie & Bear



06:00 Danger Mouse
 06:25 Gravity Falls
 06:50 The 7D
 07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 07:15 Counterfeit Cat
 07:40 Supa Strikas
 08:10 K.C. Undercover
 08:35 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
 09:00 Lab Rats
 09:25 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
 09:50 Danger Mouse
 10:20 Supa Strikas
 11:10 Counterfeit Cat
 11:35 Pair Of Kings
 12:30 Future-Worm!
 12:55 Lab Rats
 13:20 Lab Rats
 13:45 Atomic Puppet
 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
 14:15 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
 14:40 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
 15:05 Lab Rats
 15:30 Disney Cookabout
 15:55 Danger Mouse
 16:25 K.C. Undercover
 16:50 Future-Worm!
 17:15 Gravity Falls
 17:40 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
 18:05 Disney Mickey Mouse
 18:10 Supa Strikas
 19:00 Atomic Puppet
 19:25 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
 19:55 K.C. Undercover
 20:20 Counterfeit Cat
 20:45 Mighty Med
 21:10 Pickle And Peanut
 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
 21:45 Marvel's Avengers: Ultron Revolution
 22:10 Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors
 22:35 Boyster
 23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 00:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 01:50 E! News
 02:50 Just Jillian
 05:30 Celebrity Style Story
 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 06:55 E! News
 07:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 08:10 E! News
 09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 14:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 15:00 E! News
 15:15 Hollywood & Football
 17:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 19:00 E! News
 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 22:00 Revenge Body With Khloe Kardashian
 23:00 E! News
 23:15 Famously Single



00:10 The Chase
 01:00 Emmerdale
 01:30 Coronation Street
 02:00 Coronation Street
 02:30 Come Dine With Me Couples
 03:25 The Jonathan Ross Show
 04:20 The Jonathan Ross Show
 05:15 Arthur & George
 06:10 Don't Tell The Bride
 07:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
 08:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
 09:00 The Jonathan Ross Show
 10:00 Arthur & George
 10:55 Don't Tell The Bride
 11:55 Come Dine With Me Couples
 12:45 Emmerdale
 13:15 Emmerdale
 13:45 Coronation Street
 14:10 Don't Tell The Bride
 15:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
 16:00 The Royal Variety Performance

2016
 18:00 Arthur & George
 18:50 Emmerdale
 19:15 Emmerdale
 19:45 Coronation Street
 20:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
 21:00 The Royal Variety Performance
 2016
 23:15 Emmerdale
 23:40 Emmerdale



00:10 Food School
 00:35 What's For Sale?
 01:00 Tom's Istanbul Delight
 01:25 A Is For Apple
 01:50 The Peninsula: The Making Of A Gala
 02:40 The Food Files
 03:05 Eat Street
 03:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
 04:20 Places We Go
 05:10 Street Food Around The World
 06:00 The Wine Show
 06:50 Tom's Istanbul Delight
 07:15 A Is For Apple
 07:40 The Wine Show
 08:30 The Food Files
 08:55 Eat Street
 09:20 Sara's Australia Unveiled
 10:10 Places We Go
 11:00 Street Food Around The World
 11:25 Street Food Around The World
 11:50 The Peninsula: The Making Of A Gala
 12:40 Tom's Istanbul Delight
 13:05 A Is For Apple
 13:35 George Clarke's Amazing Spaces
 14:30 Confucius Was A Foodie
 15:25 Sara's Australia Unveiled
 16:20 Places We Go
 17:15 Street Food Around The World
 17:40 Street Food Around The World
 18:10 The Wine Show
 19:05 Valentine Warner Eats Scandinavia
 19:30 Sara's Australia Unveiled
 20:00 Sara's Australia Unveiled
 20:25 Places We Go
 20:50 Places We Go
 21:15 Street Food Around The World
 21:40 Street Food Around The World
 22:05 The Wine Show
 22:55 Tom's Istanbul Delight
 23:20 A Is For Apple
 23:45 George Clarke's Amazing



00:20 Turf War- Lions And Hippos
 01:10 Planet Carnivore
 02:00 Snow Leopard Of Afghanistan
 02:50 World's Deadliest
 03:45 Swamp Men
 04:40 Natural Born Monsters
 05:35 Snow Leopard Of Afghanistan
 06:30 World's Deadliest
 07:25 Swamp Men
 08:20 Natural Born Monsters
 09:15 Urban Jungle
 10:10 Borneo's Secret Kingdom
 11:05 Lion Ranger
 12:00 Kingdom Of The Oceans
 12:55 Valley Of The Wolves
 13:50 Urban Jungle
 14:45 Swamp Men
 15:40 Natural Born Monsters
 16:35 Wild Galapagos
 17:30 Borneo's Secret Kingdom
 18:25 Badass Animals
 19:20 Swamp Men
 20:10 Natural Born Monsters
 21:00 Wild Galapagos
 21:50 Borneo's Secret Kingdom
 22:40 Badass Animals
 23:30 Kingdom Of The Oceans



00:10 Final Days Of Anne Frank
 02:00 Locked Up Abroad
 02:55 Air Crash Investigation
 03:50 Beyond Magic With DMC
 04:45 The Numbers Game
 05:10 The Numbers Game
 05:40 Car SOS
 06:35 Inside Cocaine Wars
 07:30 WW2 Hell Under The Sea
 08:25 Lords Of War
 08:50 Lords Of War
 09:20 The Numbers Game
 09:45 The Numbers Game



VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN ON OSN MOVIES HD

10:15 Locked Up Abroad
 11:10 The Border
 12:05 Ancient Secrets: China's Lost Pyramids
 13:00 Lords Of War
 13:30 Lords Of War
 14:00 Breakout
 15:00 Inside
 16:00 Locked Up Abroad
 17:00 The Border
 18:00 Taboo USA
 19:00 Inside
 20:00 Locked Up Abroad
 20:50 The Border
 21:40 Taboo USA
 22:30 Inside



00:15 Team Umizoomi
 00:38 Louie
 00:45 Louie
 00:53 Olive The Ostrich
 00:58 Olive The Ostrich
 01:03 Max & Ruby
 01:26 Wanda And The Alien
 01:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 01:48 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 02:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 02:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 02:45 Zack & Quack
 03:05 Team Umizoomi
 03:28 Louie
 03:35 Louie
 03:40 Olive The Ostrich
 03:44 Olive The Ostrich
 03:49 Paw Patrol
 04:01 Paw Patrol
 04:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 04:35 Dora The Explorer
 04:59 Max & Ruby
 05:07 Bubble Guppies
 05:29 Little Charmers
 05:41 Shimmer And Shine
 06:05 Dora And Friends
 06:27 Zack & Quack
 06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 07:00 Paw Patrol
 07:13 Paw Patrol
 07:36 Dora The Explorer
 08:00 Wanda And The Alien
 08:11 Zack & Quack
 08:22 Dora And Friends
 08:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 09:10 Paw Patrol
 09:35 Shimmer And Shine
 09:58 Dora The Explorer
 10:21 Paw Patrol
 10:45 Little Charmers
 10:57 Bubble Guppies
 11:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
 11:40 Zack & Quack
 11:52 Team Umizoomi
 12:15 Team Umizoomi
 12:38 Louie
 12:45 Louie
 12:53 Olive The Ostrich
 12:58 Olive The Ostrich
 13:03 Max & Ruby
 13:26 Wanda And The Alien
 13:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 13:48 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 14:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 14:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 14:45 Zack & Quack
 15:05 Team Umizoomi
 15:28 Louie
 15:35 Louie
 15:40 Olive The Ostrich
 15:44 Olive The Ostrich
 15:49 Paw Patrol
 16:01 Paw Patrol
 16:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
 16:35 Dora The Explorer
 16:59 Max & Ruby
 17:07 Bubble Guppies
 17:29 Little Charmers
 17:41 Shimmer And Shine
 18:05 Dora And Friends
 18:27 Zack & Quack
 18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 19:00 Paw Patrol
 19:13 Paw Patrol
 19:36 Dora The Explorer
 20:00 Wanda And The Alien
 20:11 Zack & Quack
 20:22 Dora And Friends
 20:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
 21:10 Paw Patrol
 21:35 Shimmer And Shine
 21:58 Dora The Explorer
 22:21 Paw Patrol
 22:45 Little Charmers
 22:57 Bubble Guppies



20:00 Mud Men
 21:00 America's Book Of Secrets
 22:00 Ancient Aliens
 23:00 Engineering Disasters



00:20 Time Team
 01:10 Alcatraz: The Search For The Truth
 02:50 Storage Wars
 03:15 American Pickers
 04:05 Pawn Stars
 05:00 Mountain Men
 06:00 Mankind The Story Of All Of Us
 06:50 Gold Hunters: Legend Of The Superstition...
 07:40 Billion Dollar Wreck
 08:30 Shark Wranglers
 09:20 Mountain Men
 10:10 Mountain Men - Closest Calls
 11:00 American Pickers
 11:50 Counting Cars
 12:15 Car Hunters
 12:40 Pawn Stars
 13:05 Storage Wars: Best Of
 13:30 Ice Road Truckers
 18:30 Shipping Wars
 18:55 Shipping Wars
 19:20 Alaska Off-Road Warriors
 20:10 Ice Road Truckers
 21:00 American Pickers
 21:50 Pirate Treasure Of The Knights Templar
 22:40 Forged In Fire
 23:30 The Curse Of Oak Island



00:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
 01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 02:00 Man Fire Food
 03:00 Chopped
 04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
 05:00 Barefoot Contessa
 06:00 The Kitchen
 07:00 The Pioneer Woman
 08:00 Siba's Table
 09:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
 10:00 The Kitchen
 11:00 The Pioneer Woman
 12:00 Siba's Table
 13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
 14:00 Chopped
 15:00 The Kitchen
 16:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
 17:00 Chopped
 18:00 Iron Chef America
 19:00 Man Finds Food
 20:00 Follow Donal... To Europe
 21:00 Bite This With Nadia G
 21:30 Bite This With Nadia G
 22:00 Iron Chef America
 23:00 Man Finds Food



00:00 The Universe
 01:00 Patton 360
 02:00 Mud Men
 03:00 America's Book Of Secrets
 03:50 Ancient Aliens
 04:40 How 2 Win
 05:30 The Universe
 06:20 Patton 360
 07:10 The Universe
 08:00 Mud Men
 09:00 America's Book Of Secrets
 10:00 Ancient Aliens
 11:00 How 2 Win
 12:00 The Universe
 13:00 Patton 360
 14:00 Mud Men
 15:00 America's Book Of Secrets
 16:00 Ancient Aliens
 17:00 How 2 Win
 18:00 The Universe
 19:00 Patton 360

I AM NUMBER FOUR ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



00:00 Let The Bullets Fly
 02:15 13 Sins
 04:00 Navy Seals: The Battle For New Orleans
 06:00 Taken 3
 08:00 I Am Number Four
 10:00 Blackhat
 12:15 Surrogates
 14:00 Taken 3
 16:00 I Am Number Four
 18:00 Blackhat
 20:15 War Of The Worlds
 22:15 Death Race



01:00 American Girl: Grace Stirs Up Success
 03:00 Alone For Christmas
 05:00 Frozen
 07:00 The Boxrolls
 09:00 The Last Song
 11:00 Frozen
 13:00 The Good Dinosaur
 15:00 Hotel For Dogs
 17:00 Ghost Squad
 19:00 American Girl: Isabelle Dances Into The Spotlight
 21:00 Snow Day
 23:00 Hotel For Dogs



01:15 Victor Frankenstein
 03:15 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
 05:30 Love, Rosie
 07:15 Alex Of Venice
 09:00 Bridge Of Spies
 11:30 Mission: Impossible - Rogue Nation
 13:45 Barbershop: The Next Cut
 15:45 The 5th Wave
 18:45 Creed
 21:00 Hail, Caesar!
 23:00 Vacation



00:00 Dance Flick
 02:00 Ghostbusters II
 04:00 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
 06:00 Easy A
 08:00 Kicking And Screaming
 10:00 Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey
 12:00 Ghostbusters II
 14:00 National Security

16:00 Kicking And Screaming
 18:00 Pixels
 20:00 Absolutely Anything
 22:00 Cyrus



00:00 The Gambler
 02:00 Wuthering Heights
 04:00 Erin Brockovich
 06:30 Escobar: Paradise Lost
 09:00 I Believe In Miracles
 11:00 Love & Mercy
 13:30 War Horse
 16:00 The Rainmaker
 18:30 Big Fish
 21:00 The Imitation Game
 23:00 Hustle And Flow



01:15 Miffy The Movie
 02:45 Mamma Moo And Crow
 04:30 Moomins And The Comet Chase
 06:00 Baby Geniuses And The Treasures Of Egypt
 07:45 When Marnie Was There
 09:30 Yellowbird
 11:15 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
 13:00 Mamma Moo And Crow
 14:30 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
 16:00 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
 18:00 Yellowbird
 20:00 Rugrats Go Wild
 22:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
 23:30 True Story Of Puss'n Boots

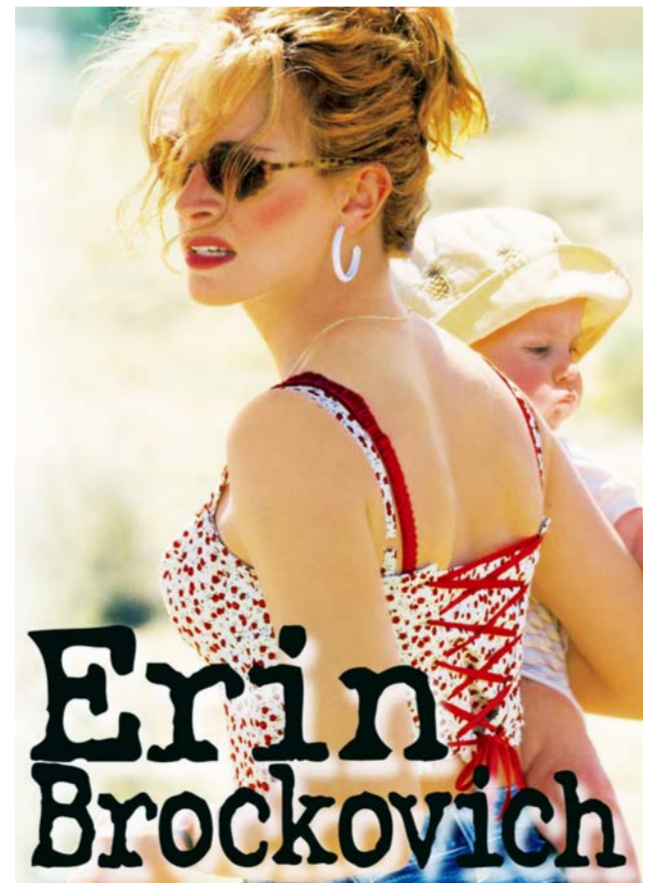


00:40 Mythbusters
 01:30 How Do They Do It?
 01:55 Food Factory
 02:20 The Quick And The Curious
 02:45 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
 03:10 Weird Or What?
 04:00 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
 04:48 Mythbusters
 05:36 The Quick And The Curious
 06:00 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
 06:24 Weird Or What?
 07:12 How Do They Do It?
 07:36 Food Factory
 08:00 How Do They Do It?

08:26 Weird Or What?
 09:14 Mythbusters
 10:02 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
 10:50 How Do They Do It?
 11:14 Food Factory
 11:38 The Quick And The Curious
 12:02 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
 12:26 Mythbusters
 13:14 Weird Or What?
 14:02 How Do They Do It?
 14:26 Food Factory
 14:50 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
 15:38 The Quick And The Curious
 16:02 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
 16:26 Weird Or What?
 17:14 Mythbusters
 18:02 The Gamechangers: Inventing The World
 18:50 Weird Or What?
 19:40 Mythbusters
 20:30 Mythbusters
 21:20 How Do They Do It?
 21:45 Food Factory
 22:10 Powering The Future
 23:00 Mythbusters
 23:50 Weird Or What?



00:20 Belief
 01:10 Single Dad Seeking...
 02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
 02:25 Say Yes To The Dress
 02:50 Love At First Swipe
 03:15 Cake Boss
 03:35 Belief
 04:20 Little People, Big World
 04:45 Little People, Big World
 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
 06:00 Little People, Big World
 08:30 My Kid's Obsession
 09:20 Sister Wives
 10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
 11:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
 11:50 Love At First Swipe
 12:15 Love At First Swipe
 13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
 14:45 Belief
 15:35 Cake Boss
 16:00 Cake Boss
 16:25 Cake Boss
 16:50 Cake Boss
 17:15 Cake Boss
 17:40 Ugly House To Lovely House
 18:30 Suddenly Rich
 19:20 My Kid's Obsession
 20:10 Sister Wives
 21:00 Kid Tycoons
 21:50 Sister Wives
 22:40 Weighing Up The Enemy
 23:30 Breaking Amish



Erin Brockovich

ERIN BROCKOVICH ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL HD

WORD SEARCH

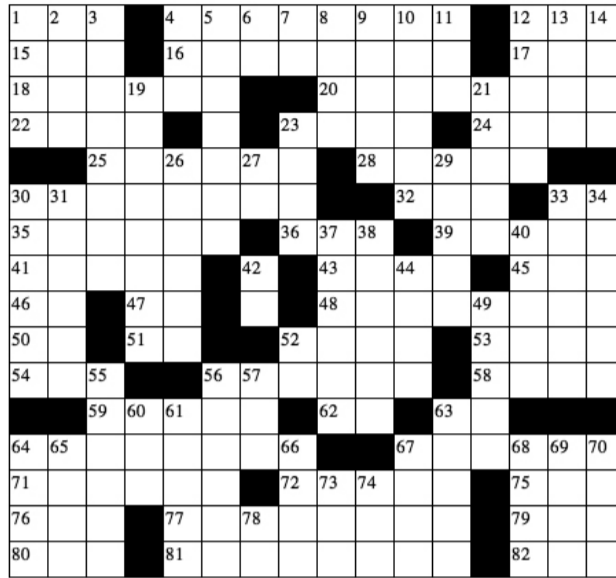
Golf

Find and circle all of the golf words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a Mark Twain quotation.

Y D S E E R T P G R E E N G E E B
E E R H O L E S A O T H L R K R A
F C G A S E L U R C C R A C O O L
H D I O Z C H I P A I P A E R C L
F O A L B A T R O S S D S C T S C
L O L I S O H R P B D U N R S S O
A W E E H R P R A I O T O A R S U
G S R S I P E C E H R D E O H O R
S S O S A N K K B T N G U E K R S
T B C W N N O U N O A G B A O G E
I U S I I O L N C U H W I G O F A
C L T N G C R O E O B D R L H F F
K C E G W F A I R W A Y D E A O L
K S N P O E G N A R G N I V I R D
I N I P S K C A B E G D E W L E E
D R E T T U P T O V I D R I V E R

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------|-------------|--------------|
| ALBATROSS | CLUBHOUSE | GREEN | ROUGH |
| APPROACH | CLUBS | GRIP | RULES |
| BACK NINE | CONDOR | GROSS SCORE | SHOT |
| BACKSPIN | COURSE | HANDICAP | SLICE |
| BALL | DIVOT | HOLE IN ONE | STROKE |
| BIRDIE | DRIVER | HOLES | SWING |
| BOGEY | DRIVING RANGE | HOOK | TEE OFF |
| BUNKER | EAGLE | IRON | TREES |
| CADDIE | FAIRWAY | NET SCORE | WATER HAZARD |
| CART | FLAGSTICK | PAR | WEDGE |
| CHIP | FORE | PUTTER | WOOD |

CROSSWORD 1503



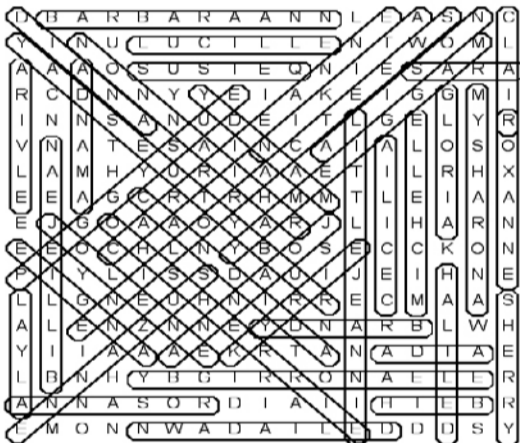
ACROSS

- East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
- A powerful light with reflector.
- Large brownish-green New Zealand parrot.
- An overwhelming feeling of wonder or admiration.
- A unit of atmospheric pressure equal to one thousandth of a bar.
- The month following March and preceding May.
- A military officer appointed from enlisted personnel.
- A disorder in the sense of smell.
- The inner and longer of the two bones of the human forearm.
- The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
- A city in northwestern Turkey.
- A particular environment or walk of life.
- Freetail bats.
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- Bristlelike process near the tip of the antenna of certain flies.
- A master's degree in business.
- Usually paved outdoor area adjoining a residence.
- Omnivorous mammal of Central and South America.
- Lie adjacent to another.
- The compass point that is one point north of due east.
- A radioactive transuranic element which has been synthesized.
- A radioactive transuranic element produced by bombarding plutonium with neutrons.
- Type genus of the Dasyatidae.
- A chronic inflammatory collagen disease affecting connective tissue (skin or joints).
- A blood group antigen possessed by Rh-positive people.
- The chief solid component of mammalian urine.
- The 7th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- An Iranian language spoken in Afghanistan.
- Relating to or caused by a virus.
- An associate degree in nursing.
- Any plant of the genus Phacelia.
- Read anew.
- A small Asian country high in the Himalayas between India and Tibet.
- An agency of the United Nations affiliated with the World Bank.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- Red breed of domestic rabbits.
- (informal) 'johnny' was applied as a nickname for Confederate soldiers by the Federal soldiers in the American Civil War.
- A crystalline rock that can be cut and polished for jewelry.
- A great raja.
- (Babylonian) The sky god.

- Genus of Australian woody vines having showy red or purplish flowers.
- Group insurance that entitles members to services of participating hospitals and clinics and physicians.
- Parasitic on the digestive epithelium of vertebrates and higher invertebrates.
- A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
- A metric unit of volume equal to one tenth of a liter.
- (British) A recreational facility including a swimming pool for water sports.
- A promontory in northern Morocco opposite the Rock of Gibraltar.
- The capital of Lesotho.
- In favor of (an action or proposal etc.).
- A Bantu language spoken by the Kamba people in Kenya.
- Surpassing the ordinary especially in size or scale.
- A river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea.
- A public register showing the details of ownership and value of land.
- The capital and largest city of Yemen.
- A signal transmitted along a narrow path.
- An Asian river.
- A yellow trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- Holding or containing nothing.
- French writer who was the embodiment of 18th century Enlightenment (1694-1778).
- Dark reddish-purple table grape of California.
- A dwarfed ornamental tree or shrub grown in a tray or shallow pot.
- A member of an agricultural people of southern India.
- A port city in southwestern Iran.
- Brightly colored tropical freshwater fishes.
- Date used in reckoning dates before the supposed year Christ was born.
- A person who makes use of a thing.
- Wild sheep of northern Africa.
- A hard brittle gray polyvalent metallic element that resembles iron but is not magnetic.
- Evergreen Indian shrub with vivid yellow flowers whose bark is used in tanning.
- Ground snakes.
- American prizefighter who won the world heavyweight championship three times (born in 1942).
- Water frozen in the solid state.
- A domain in which something is dominant.
- Indigo bush.
- (Greek mythology) The goddess of youth and spring.
- Small buffalo of the Celebes having small straight horns.
- A pilgrimage to Mecca.
- A genus of Mustelidae.
- Chief port of Yemen.
- (Babylonian) God of wisdom and agriculture and patron of scribes and schools.
- To make a mistake or be incorrect.
- Perennial herb of East India to Polynesia and Australia cultivated for its large edible root yielding Otaheite arrowroot starch.
- (chemistry) P(otential of) H(ydrogen).

Yesterday's Solution

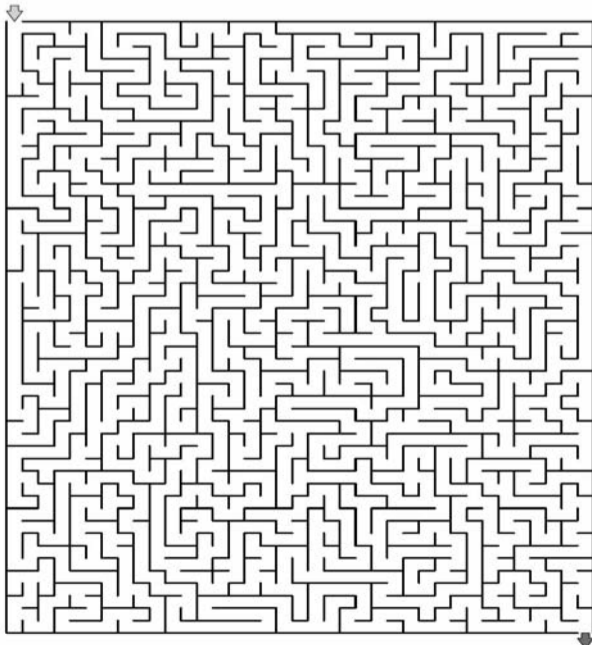
Songs With Girls' Names



- | | | |
|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| 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 | | |

The hidden song title is: LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS

CHALLENGING MAZE



DOWN

- (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
- Absent without permission.

Yesterday's Solution

A	D	P	B	I	P	E	D	A	L	C	O	S	S	
B	E	E	A	N	I	L	I	N	E	I	R	A	K	
C	A	B	A	S	T	A	S	I	A	R	A	M	A	
S	F	A	X	H	A	N	G	E	C	L	A	T		
E	D	O	U	R	T	I	C	A	N	E				
S	C	O	R	E	R	S	A	R	A	C	E	N		
H	A	N	O	V	E	R	C	A	M	A	A	M		
E	L	E	M	I	E	D	E	M	A	O	K	A		
A	P	I	A	C	E	A	E	W	A	R	A	T	A	H
R	A	D	E	D	G	E	A	R	A	R	I	B	A	
S	C	A	D	D	A	D	D	Y	P	E	C	A	N	
E	A	N	H	O	T	O								
K	E	B	A	B	I	A	M	B	L	A	M	B		
A	D	A	D	U	M	B	R	A	F	A	C	I	A	
M	A	D	E	M	A	R	M	I	T	E	I	C	C	
A	M	E	N	A	N	D	A	N	T	E	D	A	H	

Daily SuDoku

1	8		5		3	2		
7							1	4
	2	5	7	4			3	8
5	9	2	4		7	8		
			8		9			
		3	1		6	7	9	2
3	7			1	5	4	2	
4	6							7
		1	6		4		8	3

Yesterday's Solution

8	5	1	2	9	6	7	3	4
9	7	4	8	3	1	5	2	6
2	6	3	5	4	7	1	9	8
5	9	8	3	1	2	4	6	7
3	4	6	9	7	8	2	5	1
7	1	2	4	6	5	9	8	3
1	8	9	6	2	4	3	7	5
4	3	5	7	8	9	6	1	2
6	2	7	1	5	3	8	4	9

CANCER, HEPATITIS TREATMENTS SET FOR BOOST AS CHINA OVERHAULS DRUGS LIST

CHINA'S DRUG REIMBURSEMENT LIST LAST UPDATED IN 2009

SHANGHAI: China is set to add more than 300 new and traditional drugs to its list of medicines the state will help patients pay for, the first change in more than seven years that will boost treatments for cancer, kidney disease, hepatitis and haemophilia. Blockbuster drugs such as GlaxoSmithKline's hepatitis drug Viread, AstraZeneca's heart drug Brilinta and Sanofi's chronic kidney disease drug Renvela were up for inclusion over the coming weeks, industry executives said, virtually guaranteeing an uplift in sales.

Industry insiders and analysts said oncology drugs were also likely to be added to national and regional lists. Poor access to targeted cancer drugs is a hot-button issue in China, where patients often take on crippling debts or turn to grey markets to get treatment. Changes to the National Reimbursement Drug List (NRDL), which determines which drugs are part-sponsored by the government, will be a welcome shot in the arm for global drug companies, most of whom saw sales growth slow or contract last year in the world's number two pharmaceutical market.

"It's pretty much the most important list to get on. Being added can really mean sales of a drug skyrocket," said a Shanghai-based executive at a large British drugmaker. Inclusion on the NRDL means a drug is accessible through state insurance schemes, making it affordable to mass market consumers. Any new drug approved for sale since the last update of the list in 2009 was until now largely paid for out-of-pocket by patients. Most additions to the list, currently just over 2,000 strong, will be traditional Chinese medicines, but roughly

130 are expected to be modern drugs.

"Inclusion on the list reduces the burden of self-pay, as drugs on the list can be reimbursed up to 80 percent depending on local implementation," said Jordan Liu, Shanghai-based associate principal at healthcare research and services company QuintilesIMS. An executive at another global drugmaker said the list was expected to be published in the "first few months of 2017", though some analysts said it could be as early as the Lunar New Year holiday that starts later this week. There could be a further negotiation period for high-priced drugs.

Drug companies have spent months lobbying government advisory committees to get their drugs on the NRDL, executives said. The experts on these committees vote for which drugs to include. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) and the finance ministry are then involved in a final decision, based on factors including clinical need and cost - though several industry insiders said the process was opaque and the measures used to judge criteria such as clinical effectiveness were unclear.

Even once on the NRDL, drug makers negotiate pricing and access for their drug on separate provincial lists. Access to the country's main lists - which includes the NRDL along with the Essential Drug List (EDL) for the most critical drugs - also comes with strings attached. Drugmakers often have to cut prices steeply to be included, helping China's drive to lower drug prices and rein in a healthcare bill McKinsey estimates hitting \$1 trillion by 2020.—Reuters

KENYAN DOCTORS SAY WILL STRIKE UNTIL PAY DEMANDS MET, IGNORE COURT

NAIROBI: Kenya's doctors union said on yesterday a seven-week strike would continue as long as needed to secure demands for better pay and conditions, ignoring a court ruling ordering a return to work in five days or jail for union leaders. The strike, which began on Dec 5, has emptied hospital beds as relatives take patients to care for them at home and poses a challenge for the government in an election year, as it seeks to prevent other state workers taking action for higher pay. Justice Hellen Wasilwa had initially handed union leaders a suspended one-month sentence on Jan 12 after they defied a December ruling declaring the strike illegal. But she gave them a two-week period for negotiations to avoid jail.

Yesterday, she extended the period for doctors to call off the strike for five days. "The role of this court is to bring a solution, and an amicable solution," she said when announcing the extension. Several thousand doctors and their supporters marched from the court to the center of Nairobi where leaders of the Kenya Medical Practitioners Pharmacists and Dentists' Union (KMPDU) refused the time limit imposed by the court.

"The doctors are on strike and the

strike will continue until that day their demands placed before the government are met," Ouma Oluga, KMPDU secretary general, told reporters. Local newspapers have reported critically ill patients left unattended and published images of abandoned hospital beds after 5,000 members of the KMPDU—the only union representing doctors in government hospitals—began their walkout. The union is demanding the fulfillment of a 2013 agreement which it says awarded doctors a 150-180 percent pay rise on basic salaries, a review of working conditions and promotions criteria, as well as hiring of more staff in state hospitals.

The East African state's government says it can only afford a 40 percent pay rise but would work to meet other conditions. "We are not refusing to pay doctors. But if they ask ridiculous amounts, you have to (explain) why we cannot afford that," Finance Minister Henry Rotich told Citizen TV on Wednesday, saying conceding would encourage more worker strikes. Lecturers at public universities launched a strike last week, a further headache to the government in the approach to presidential and parliamentary elections in August when President Uhuru Kenyatta will seek a second and final term.—Reuters

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم
Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (26/01/2017 TO 01/02/2017)

SHARQIA-1 xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film KAABIL- HINDI xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE WEAPONIZED WEAPONIZED	11:45 AM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 8:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:30 AM	MARINA-1 RAEES- HINDI xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE RAEES- HINDI xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:00 PM 2:45 PM 4:45 PM 7:30 PM 9:30 PM 11:30 PM
SHARQIA-2 MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS FRI MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	1:00 PM 1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM	MARINA-2 xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	11:30 AM 1:30 PM 3:45 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM
SHARQIA-3 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RAEES- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RAEES- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	11:30 AM 1:45 PM 4:30 PM 6:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM	MARINA-3 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM
MUHALAB-1 RAEES- HINDI BALLERINA FRI BALLERINA RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:45 PM 1:45 PM 3:45 PM 5:45 PM 8:45 PM 11:45 PM	AVENUES-1 KAABIL- HINDI DANGAL -Hindi KAABIL- HINDI DANGAL -Hindi KAABIL- HINDI	12:00 PM 3:00 PM 6:15 PM 9:15 PM 12:30 AM
MUHALAB-2 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter KAABIL- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter KAABIL- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:15 PM 2:30 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 10:15 PM 12:30 AM	AVENUES-2 MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 10:00 PM 12:15 AM
MUHALAB-3 MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	11:45 AM 2:00 PM 4:15 PM 6:30 PM 8:45 PM 10:45 PM 12:45 AM	AVENUES-3 RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI	11:30 AM 2:30 PM 5:30 PM 8:30 PM 11:30 PM
FANAR-1 MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM	360°- 1 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter -3D RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	11:30 AM 1:45 PM 4:00 PM 6:15 PM 8:30 PM 10:45 PM 1:00 AM
FANAR-2 RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	11:45 AM 2:00 PM 4:45 PM 6:45 PM 9:00 PM 11:15 PM	360°- 2 DANGAL -Hindi MOANA FRI DANGAL -Hindi DANGAL -Hindi DANGAL -Hindi	1:15 PM 1:45 PM 4:30 PM 7:45 PM 11:00 PM
FANAR-3 DANGAL -Hindi KAABIL- HINDI DANGAL -Hindi KAABIL- HINDI RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter	12:00 PM 3:15 PM 6:15 PM 9:30 PM 12:30 AM	360°- 3 AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film SING SING AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film AL ATR -Kuwaiti Film	1:30 PM 3:30 PM 5:45 PM 8:00 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM
FANAR-4 xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:15 PM 10:15 PM 12:15 AM	AL-KOUT.1 xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE	12:30 PM 2:30 PM 4:30 PM 6:30 PM 8:30 PM 10:30 PM 12:45 AM
FANAR-5 RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI RAEES- HINDI	11:30 AM 2:30 PM 5:30 PM 8:30 PM 11:30 PM	AL-KOUT.2 RESIDENT EVIL: he Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: he Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: he Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: he Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: he Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: he Final Chapter	12:45 PM 3:00 PM 5:15 PM 7:30 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM
		AL-KOUT.3 MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS MONSTER TRUCKS	12:15 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

A leading Automotive Co. requires

- Sales Executive – Commercial Vehicles
- Spare Parts Outdoor Salesman
- ◆ Minimum 5 years' experience
- ◆ Automotive Experience in commercial vehicles (Truck & Bus)
- ◆ Experience in GCC Countries, Kuwait is an advantage
- ◆ Valid Kuwait Driving License
- ◆ Languages known English, Arabic
- ◆ Transferable Visa
- ◆ Maximum Age Limit 45 years

Please forward your CVs to
2017jobrecruitment@gmail.com

REQUIRED

We are looking for a

Young Male Secretary

for a newly established Company

- Excellent in Microsoft Office especially word and excel
- Bilingual Arabic and English

Please send your CV to
info@lamande.com

CHANGE OF NAME

I, **Joseph** Lourito Michael Fernandes, holder of Indian Passport No. K-4651486 and Civil ID 251011600403, issued at Kuwait on 16-03-2012, hereby confirm that I am also known by the following names Lawrie Fernandes, Joseph L M Fernandes, Joseph Laurito Michael Fernandes.
(C 5261)
26-1-2017

I, **Iddin** Kunhi Pallibali Abbas S/o Abbas Pallibali, Passport No. L1458495 & Civil ID No. 281060107647. have changed my name as Aboobakkar Siddiq vide affidavit dated 14.12.2016 before notary Sirajuddin, Mangalore **(C 5259)**

I, **Jamil** Lobo wife of Patrick Lobo holder of Indian Passport No. G3196491 and Civil ID No. 282062803579 has changed my name to Jamil Avelino Fernandes hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Jamil Avelino Fernandes. **(C 5260)**
23-1-2017

Automated enquiry about the Civil ID card is
1889988

FOR SALE

For sell new white faux fur (artificial) coat size M And pre owned like new black leather coat size M made in Turkey, Tel. No: 55020291

ACCOMMODATION

Sharing accommodation for Filipino Bachelor ONLY near Big Jamiya Farwaniya. Available already, Contact 66826412 or 97512782

SITUATION VACANT

Lady maid is needed to work in the capacity of part timer for two or three days a week in a house located in Salmiya. Time and salary are negotiable. Call 66417504. **(C 5262)**
26-1-2017

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr: 05:18
Shorook 06:40
Duhr: 12:01
Asr: 15:01
Maghrib: 17:22
Isha: 18:41

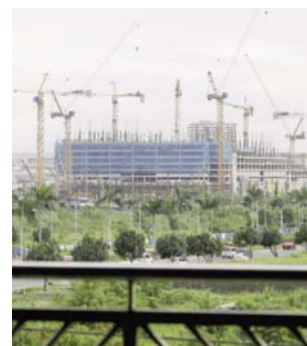
Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2017

INDIA PLANS AN EXPANSIVE BUDGET DESPITE WORRIES

Page 38

Page 40



Philippine economy surging despite uncertainties



BEIJING: People enjoy riding on the ice of the Houhai frozen lake ahead of the Lunar New Year in Beijing. — AFP

CHINA BANKING CRUSADE RISKS BOND CRASH DANGER OF VICIOUS CYCLE OF ASSET PRICE DECLINES

SHANGHAI: China's campaign to cut high debt levels in its economy is aiming this year to shrink the \$3 trillion shadow banking sector, which could drain a critical source of income for the country's banks and of funding for its fragile bond market. Shadow banking, a term for financial agents that perform bank-like activity but are not regulated as banks, has boomed in China, the world's second-largest economy, as a way of circumventing government's tight controls on lending.

It has been a key driver of the breakneck growth in debt in the economy, which UBS says rose to 277 percent of GDP from 254 percent in 2016, and is now a target as Beijing tries to reduce that figure before it destabilizes the economy. But with banks' shadow banking business accounting for about a fifth of total outstanding loans, analysts fear that the unintended consequences of government efforts could trigger the fate it seeks to avoid.

"We see a policy-induced drastic deleveraging in shadow banking as a policy miscalculation that could trigger unexpected tail risks for the banking sector," said Liao Qiang, credit analyst at S&P Global Ratings. Investors' concerns stem from new rules this month that put lenders' wealth management products (WMPs), the biggest component of shadow banking, under the scrutiny of the People's Bank of China (PBOC) for the first time and into its calculations on prudence, capital adequacy and loan growth guidelines. According to the latest official data, WMPs jumped 42 percent year-on-year

to 26 trillion yuan (\$3.8 trillion) at the end of June, doubling in just two years.

WMPs are typically kept off banks' balance sheets, making it difficult for regulators to assess the stability of a banking sector reliant upon them for growth. And just as in the global financial crisis of 2008, banks' interconnectedness amplifies the risks. Banks are increasingly buying into each other's WMPs, such that interbank WMPs hit 4 trillion yuan in June, a doubling from two years ago. Banking regulators are also seeking new rules that will require lenders to set aside adequate capital to absorb potential losses from WMPs. The PBOC and China Banking Regulatory Commission have yet to respond to requests for comment.

Vicious cycle

Banks lure investors to WMPs with the promise of much higher returns than on bank deposits, then channel the cash into high-yielding bonds or other forms of disguised lending to sectors such as property on which there are official lending limits. The spectre of tighter monetary policy has already halted a three-year long rally in China bonds, and investors worry that the new WMP regulations could tip the bond market into crisis.

"Financial institutions, via WMPs, have invested a lot of money into credit products," said Gu Weiyong, chief investment officer at Ucom Investment Co, a bond-focused fund house in Shanghai, and he said they don't necessarily have suf-

ficient capital to support those investments. "It's very possible that another scandal could erupt, maybe in the first half," he said. It is barely a month since Beijing tightened the rules on WMPs as part of a broader policy thrust at preventing price bubbles and reducing industrial overcapacity.

Bond prices have since fallen, sales of WMPs have slowed and money market mutual funds, also used by WMPs, are losing cash. At the end of June, 41 percent of China's 26 trillion yuan of WMPs was in bonds, with 16 percent in money market instruments. Data from consultancy CNBenefit showed that Chinese banks sold 24,460 WMPs last quarter, compared with 25,980 the previous quarter, while money market funds shrank to 3.9 trillion yuan at end-November, the lowest in a year, from 4.2 trillion yuan in October, according to data from the Asset Management Association of China.

In addition, a year-end bond market rout wiped out all the gains this year in bond mutual funds, resulting in a combined loss of 21.6 billion yuan, according to the official Xinhua agency, raising the spectre of losses in bond-linked WMPs. "The big issue for financial stability in China is a combination of very high asset prices and also extremely high leverage," said David Cui, analyst at Bank of America Merrill Lynch. "The problem of this combination is that any drop in asset prices can quickly develop into a vicious selling circle," Cui said, with falling bond prices leading to WMP losses, then to lower WMP sales, and back to more pressure on bonds. — Reuters

CHINA TO TARGET AROUND 6.5% GROWTH

BEIJING: China will lower its 2017 economic growth target to around 6.5 percent from last year's 6.5-7 percent, policy sources said, reinforcing a policy shift from supporting growth to pushing reforms to contain debt and housing risks. The proposed target was endorsed by top leaders at the closed-door Central Economic Work Conference in mid-December, according to four sources with knowledge of the meeting outcome. "The target will be around 6.5 percent, which indicates that slightly slower growth is acceptable," said one of the sources, a policy adviser. The State Council Information Office, the public relations arm of the government, declined to comment.

The world's second-largest economy likely grew around 6.7 percent last year - roughly in the middle of the government's target range - but it faces increasing uncertainties in 2017, the head of China's state planning agency said on Jan 10.

Policy stimulus measures - evident in record lending from mostly state-owned banks and increased government spending - have fuelled worries among top leaders about high debt levels and an overheating housing market that could threaten financial stability if not addressed, the sources said.

Under the central bank's recently announced "prudent and neutral" stance, it is expected to guide market interest rates higher to help put the brakes on flush credit conditions, which should also support the weakening yuan, the sources said. "They've put more emphasis on controlling risks, and monetary policy could be a bit tighter," said a second policy source, though he characterized the change as 'fine-tuning' ahead of a key party meeting in the autumn at which there will be a change in the top leadership.

"They are keen to keep economic growth stable before the 19th party congress," the source

said. Top leaders have pledged to stem the growth of asset bubbles in 2017 and place greater importance on the prevention of financial risk, while keeping the economy on a path of stable and healthy growth. China's banks doled out a record 12.65 trillion yuan (\$1.84 trillion) of loans in 2016 as the government encouraged more credit-fuelled stimulus to meet its economic growth target, despite worries about the risks of an explosive jump in debt.

Reform vs growth

The economy needs to grow at least 6.5 percent between 2016 and 2020 to meet Beijing's goals of doubling GDP and per capita income by 2020 from 2010 levels. But they have also pledged "decisive results" by 2020 on a wide range of reforms to let market forces play a bigger role in driving the economy away from inefficient state-

owned enterprises, which in the short term could slow output. Last year's expected growth of 6.7 percent, though the slowest in 26 years, will have given the government a little more room to maneuver, but Beijing will not tolerate a sharp slowdown ahead of the leadership transition, the policy sources said.

The 2017 growth target will be announced at the annual meeting of the National People's Congress, the country's parliament, in early March. The sources said government was set to maintain a 3 percent inflation target this year, suggesting policymakers are less worried about a sharp surge in consumer prices, despite surging factory-gate costs in recent months. December consumer prices rose 2.1 percent from a year earlier, easing from a 2.3 percent rise in November, while producer prices jumped 5.5 percent in December year-on-year, the most since September 2011.—Reuters

RBS ALMOST DOUBLES CHARGES FOR THE US MIS-SELLING CLAIMS

LONDON: Britain's state-rescued Royal Bank of Scotland yesterday set aside another £3.1 billion (\$3.9 billion, 3.6 billion euros) for US fines over alleged mis-selling of mortgage securities before the 2008 financial crisis. The lender added in a statement that this took the total provision to £6.7 billion, but it remains in talks with the US Department of Justice (DOJ) over a settlement.

Edinburgh-based RBS added that the charges were "in relation to various investigations and litigation matters relating to RBS's issuance and underwriting of US residential mortgage-backed securities (RMBS)". The enormous provisions, which will be included in the bank's fourth-quarter results, will push RBS deeper into the red when it posts annual numbers next month. The lender, which is 73-percent owned by the British government after a vast bailout during the financial crisis, warned that "further substantial additional provisions and costs may be recognized", depending on the outcome of DOJ talks.

"Putting our legacy litigation issues behind us, including those relating to RMBS, remains a key part of our strategy," added Chief Executive Ross McEwan in the statement. "It is our priority to seek the best outcome for our shareholders, customers and employees." RBS will publish its annual earnings statement on February 24. German banking titan Deutsche Bank and Swiss peer Credit Suisse had already agreed to settle similar claims for their role in the sale of the kind of toxic securities that led to the global financial crisis of 2008. Deutsche and Credit Suisse agreed with US authorities to pay a combined \$12.5 billion (11.6 billion euros) earlier this month.

The system-wide failure in 2008 of complex securities derived from residential mortgages caused a cascading wave of bankruptcies and crises that sparked a global recession, which cost tens of millions of jobs around the world. News of the settlements contrasted sharply with the DOJ's decision to take legal action against Barclays, accusing the British bank of massive fraud in the sale of mortgage-backed securities. Barclays has rejected the claim and has said it will vigorously defend itself.— AFP



KASHMIR: Kashmiri men sell their produce at the floating vegetable market on the Dal Lake in Srinagar, Indian controlled Kashmir. — AP

INDIA PLANS AN EXPANSIVE BUDGET DESPITE WORRIES

JAITLEY EYES TAX GIVEAWAYS, STATE INVESTMENT

NEW DELHI: India's finance minister is likely to borrow more than originally planned when he presents the budget on Feb 1, senior aides and officials said, despite counting on revenues from a national sales tax whose launch date is still unknown. Arun Jaitley is looking at how to fund giveaways to taxpayers and higher public investment to help nurse Asia's third-largest economy back to health after the government's shock decision in November to abolish high-value banknotes.

That is raising concern among some economists and investors that the government will take too many fiscal risks. Yet officials say that, given the choice, they would choose growth sustained by state investment over a fiscal straitjacket. "Some degree of flexibility on fiscal discipline should not be seen as irresponsible fiscal management," one senior government official told Reuters, requesting anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

A fiscal advisory panel, which includes central bank head Urjit Patel, has advocated widening the budget deficit to "slightly over" 3 percent of gross domestic product to free up funds for road, railway and irrigation projects. "It is not possible to keep up the pace of capital expenditure without increasing the fiscal deficit beyond 3 percent of GDP," another official, briefed on the committee's findings, added.

New Delhi earlier aimed to cut the federal deficit to 3 percent of GDP over the next two fiscal years, compared with 3.5 percent in the year now drawing to a close. Independent economists are also penciling in a higher federal deficit in the coming fiscal year, at 3.3-3.4 percent of GDP, creating room for the government to invest an extra \$6 billion. That has drawn a warning from ratings agency Standard & Poor's, which says that slowing the pace of fiscal consolidation could delay India's chances of an upgrade due to its high and rising debt levels.

Heroic assumptions

Jaitley's team forecasts a recovery in nominal GDP growth, the key driver of tax revenues, to around 12 percent in 2017/18. Yet that assumes oil prices of \$55-60 per barrel and a long-delayed Goods and Services Tax being implemented in July. And the economy is still getting over the shock of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision in November to scrap 86 percent of cash in circulation in a bid to purge the economy of illicit "black money". The International Monetary Fund has chopped a percentage point off India's forecast of real economic growth to 6.6 percent in the current fiscal year to March, meaning China regains the crown as the world's fastest-growing large economy.

The Washington-based lender has also shaved 0.4 of a percentage point off its forecast for the coming fiscal year. Finance ministry officials remain tight-lipped about how quickly they expect growth to bounce back after it slowed following so-called demonetization.—Reuters

WORLD STOCKS INDEX NEAR RECORD HIGH

STOCKS BASK IN AFTERGLOW OF DOW BREAK PAST 20,000

LONDON: World stock markets climbed strongly yesterday, with investors basking in the afterglow of a break past 20,000 points for Wall Street's record high Dow Jones index. MSCI's 46-country All World index was within touching distance of its lifetime high as European stocks rose 0.5 percent to their highest since Dec 2015, completing a global loop after Asia's main bourses also saw a bumper session. The 'Trump trade', based on hopes of US stimulus reflation growth, would appear to be back on - egged on by some impressive corporate earnings, higher commodity prices and signals that global growth is finally finding some traction.

A curious outlier was the dollar which was wallowing near a seven-week low after losing its momentum this year and taking a dislike to Trump's more controversial plans such as building a wall on the border with Mexico. There were no such concerns in bond markets. Ten-year US Treasury yields were back above 2.5 percent to their highest of 2017 so far and the equivalent German and French yields jumped to their highest levels in over a year. "The reflation trades are being driven by two main things," said Neil Williams, chief economist at fund manager Hermes.

"Countries more willing to open the fiscal box and we are awaiting Mr Trump's long-awaited tax cuts in mid-year. And second is the prospect of ultra-loose monetary policy." In commodities, crude oil prices also bounced as global sentiment lifted and the dollar weakened, which helps non-US buyers of dollar-denominated raw materials. US crude was up 0.8 percent at \$53.18 a barrel after losing the same amount the previous day. Brent added 0.8 percent to \$55.53 a barrel, while copper hit a two month high as a strike loomed at the world's biggest mine in Chile.

Don't stop me Dow

The Dow had been flirting with 20,000 points for weeks so it brought widespread cheer when it broke through. It only topped 19,000 in November and this was the second-shortest time on record for the index to jump 1,000 points. Europe's cross-country European STOXX 600 index was trading 0.6 percent higher by 0945 GMT at its highest since Dec 2015. Germany's DAX hit its highest since May 2015 and London's FTSE was near an all-time record.

Milan also showed little sign of nerves after Italy's constitutional court on Wednesday opened the way for fresh elections in the country this year, potentially in the summer. Asian shares had a good day too. Japan's Nikkei brushed aside a stronger yen to rise 1.7 percent, Hong Kong's Hang Seng climbed 1.3 percent and Shanghai edged up ahead of a week-long Lunar New Year holiday. "Today's excitement mainly comes from strong US stocks overnight, but people are also positive about Japanese companies' earnings, especially machinery manufacturers," said Takuya Takahashi, a strategist at Daiwa Securities in Tokyo.

Back in the currency markets, sterling hit a six-week high after solid GDP data but then turned jumpy. The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against six other top currencies, clawed back from its overnight lows to stand flat on the day. "The problem that the greenback is having right now is two-fold - first Trump has been talking down the currency and second, his policies make foreign investors nervous," wrote Kathy Lien, managing director of FX strategy for BK Asset Management.— Reuters



MIAMI: A restaurant posts a sign indicating they are hiring, in Miami. Yesterday, the Labor Department released its weekly report on applications for unemployment benefits.— AP

EMERGING STOCKS AT 3-MONTH HIGH

ROUBLE IN SECOND DAY OF LOSSES

LONDON: Emerging stocks hit three-month highs yesterday, boosted by US shares roaring higher, but currencies weakened led by a fall in the rouble after Russian authorities announced steps to increase central bank reserves. MSCI's emerging market index rose 0.7 percent in its fourth day of gains, after solid US earnings and expectations of a large fiscal spending package hoisted the Dow Jones Industrial Average over the 20,000 level for the first time and gave a fresh impetus to global equity markets.

Bourses in Hong Kong, India and Moscow jumped more than 1 percent while stocks in Turkey and much of emerging Europe also posted strong gains. Emerging currencies, however, failed to advance as the dollar inched off six-week lows. The rouble weakened 0.7 percent against the greenback, extending losses from Wednesday, when Moscow announced it would start buying foreign currency in February in line with a budget rule designed to shield the economy from swings in oil prices.

Analysts said the decision reflected concern over the rouble's appreciation after it rose almost 20 percent last year. "(The rouble) does reflect these various announcements about FX intervention," said Paul Fage, senior emerging markets strategist at TD Securities. "It will make the rouble less sensitive to oil price moves." Turkey's lira fell 0.75 percent for its third day in

the red, lurching closer towards a record low hit earlier in January.

The falls reflect investor fear that the central bank will not adequately tighten policy to defend the currency after a rate hike earlier in the week seen as insufficient. Separately, Deputy Prime Minister Nurettin Canikli urged banks to lend to firms showing the "slightest sign of life" and said the economic recovery had begun. South Africa's rand weakened 0.5 percent while Ukraine's hryvnia slipped 0.2 percent ahead of a central bank meeting where policymakers are expected to sit tight.

Meanwhile, the Mexican peso held steady against the dollar after recording its biggest daily gains in more than two months on Wednesday, when Trump said the country's economic future was important to the United States even as he forged ahead with plans for a new border wall. "(The Mexican peso) has been surprisingly resilient but there is no question that the country will be facing the biggest challenges from the shift in US policy," Simon Quijano-Evans, a strategist at Legal & General Investment Management, wrote in a note to clients.— Reuters

CASH-STRAPPED ZIMBABWE OFFERING WORKERS LAND INSTEAD OF BONUSES

HARARE: Zimbabwe authorities offered residential land to government employees in lieu of annual bonuses, unions said yesterday, rejecting a proposal that suggests the cash squeeze gripping the country is unlikely to ease this year. The southern African nation's economy stagnated last year, fanning anti-government protests and compounding President Robert Mugabe's problems ahead of national elections due in 2018.

Public sector workers are paid an annual bonus equivalent to a month's salary every

November and December, but the government - which spends more than \$250 million monthly on salaries - has not said when it will make the 2016 payment. Owning residential land is seen as unattractive as most plots lack basic amenities such as roads, electricity and sewerage, making them difficult to settle on or sell. Raymond Majongwe, secretary general of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, described the government's offer as "madness" and said unions rejected it at a meeting on Wednesday.—Reuters

PHILIPPINE ECONOMY SURGING DESPITE UNCERTAINTIES

MANILA: The Philippine economy expanded at one of the fastest rates in Asia last year, data showed yesterday, with an acceleration expected despite many uncertainties surrounding President Rodrigo Duterte's leadership. Billions of dollars in Chinese investments and the dawn of a "golden age" of infrastructure spending will be among the key drivers of the Philippine economy, the government said as it unveiled 6.8 percent growth in 2016.

That compares with 5.9 percent in 2015. "This is clear proof that no amount of counterproductive political chatter from certain quarters could undermine the upward trajectory of a domestic economy that is in pretty good shape under a Duterte presidency," Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said. Duterte has become one of the world's more controversial leaders since taking office in the middle of last year, launching a war on drugs that has claimed more than 6,000 lives and repeatedly threatening to impose martial law.

He has also loosened the Philippines' decades-long alliance with the United States—using foul language against former president Barack Obama for criticizing the drug war—while seeking closer ties with China and Russia. Still, the Philippine economy grew by 6.6 percent year-on-year in the final quarter of 2016, a slight slowdown from the previous three months but still one of the fastest rates in Asia. This reflected many of the strong fundamentals put in place by Duterte's predecessors, as well as the continued importance of remittances sent home by the roughly 10 million Filipinos working overseas.

"Actually the strategies have been there before. We just now need to accelerate," Socioeconomic Planning Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon told reporters. The government said it planned to more than double infrastructure spending from \$17 billion this year to \$36.8 billion in 2022 - with the

Philippines looking to China and Japan rather than the United States to finance the plans. "In terms of funding, we are not going to depend much on the US, we are going to get it from the (Asian) neighborhood," Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia said.

The Philippines also expects to open up

important new export markets in China and Russia, and see a huge influx of tourists from those countries, according to Pernia. He expressed confidence the economy would grow this year at the upper end of the government's target of 6.5-7.5 percent, then between seven and eight percent for the rest of Duterte's six-year term. UK-based research

firm Capital Economics cited the "uncertain political situation" in the Philippines as a downside risk to its economy, along with a potential loss of trade from the United States due to President Donald Trump's protectionist policies. But it maintained its forecast that the Philippine economy would grow 6.5 percent this year.— AFP



MANILA: Construction workers stand on the scaffolding around metal rods of a new pillar as they build more floors at a reclamation site in suburban Paranaque city, south of Manila, Philippines yesterday. — AP

JAPAN INFLATION GIVES BOJ BUYER'S REMORSE

TOKYO: Just when the Bank of Japan might have been expected to crow that price rises are finally heading towards its elusive target, insiders are fretting that it's not the kind of inflation they ordered. With oil prices slowly recovering from a crash in 2015 and the yen weak after plunging from mid-November, a growing number of analysts agree that inflation will reach around 1 percent or more later this year.

That should be good news for the BOJ, which in an effort to end decades of deflation has spent four years printing trillions of yen in new money and a year ago set negative interest rates, only to see inflation stick stubbornly around zero. Far from it, say sources familiar with the central bank's thinking. "The key is whether price rises will accelerate backed by strength in the economy. That's not clear," said one of the sources. The central bank would much prefer that inflation was a product of improving economic activity or consumer sentiment, rather than external factors like oil and currency moves.

"Prices will rise, but not for the right reasons," said Yoshiaki Shinke, chief economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute. And if inflation is to encourage consumers to spend sooner rather than later, it would help if their capacity to spend grows, too, but employers are showing no inclination to raise wages. "There's uncertainty on the outlook, particularly for wages," said another of the sources. BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda, in concert with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, has been urging firms to boost wages for years, with little success.

In a Reuters poll of 531 companies this month, nearly two-thirds said they had no plans to raise workers' wages this year.—Reuters

CONSUMERS DRIVE BRITAIN ECONOMY, REPULSING EXPECTED BREXIT VOTE HIT ECONOMISTS STILL EXPECT BREXIT SLOWDOWN

LONDON: Britain's free-spending consumers again wrong-footed broad prognostications of a slowdown after June's Brexit vote, driving a robust pace of economic growth in the final three months of 2016, data showed yesterday. Gross domestic product rose at a quarterly rate of 0.6 percent between October and December, keeping the above-average pace seen in the first three months after June's referendum decision to leave the European Union. Services, most susceptible to consumers, were the biggest gainers, while industry and construction lagged.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast a slight slowdown to growth of 0.5 percent. Some predictions ranged as low as 0.3 percent. "Clearly, life goes on, despite the Brexit vote," Scotiabank economist Alan Clarke said. Sterling hit a three-week high against the euro after the data and British 10-year government bond yields rose to their highest since mid-December. Many economists had expected Britain to flirt with recession after it voted to leave the EU.

But the Office for National Statistics said that growth in 2016 as a whole slowed only slightly to 2.0 percent from 2.2 percent in 2015, and this was mostly

due to weak growth in the first quarter, before the referendum. The outlook for 2017 is murkier, however, in part because of the reliance on consumers. Sterling's near 20 percent fall against the dollar is already pushing up costs for businesses, and consumers are likely to share the pain soon. The Bank of England forecast in November that growth would slow to 1.4 percent in 2017, but it may well raise forecasts for growth and inflation in a quarterly update next week.

Leading the pack, for now

Britain was probably one of 2016's fastest-growing major advanced economies, and there are some signs this will continue into early 2017. Year-on-year growth, for example, exceeded that of Germany, where the economy grew 1.9 percent last year. The Confederation of British Industry on Wednesday also reported strong orders for manufacturers in January. However, the central bank is uneasy about the composition of British growth, with Governor Mark Carney warning that it relies heavily on consumers who will be vulnerable to higher prices.

British carmakers cut investment by

a third last year due to Brexit worries, their lobby group said yesterday. "The near-term momentum in GDP likely will not compel the Monetary Policy Committee to abandon its view that the economy will slow this year as a result of the Brexit vote," Pantheon Macroeconomics's Samuel Tombs wrote in a note to clients. Services output - which is most sensitive to consumer spending - grew by 0.8 percent. By contrast, industrial output was flat - partly reflecting a slump in oil production due to maintenance work in October - while construction inched up by 0.1 percent.

British companies are also facing a highly uncertain outlook in the years ahead. Prime Minister Theresa May has said she plans to launch formal divorce talks between Britain and the EU before the end of March. Her finance minister Philip Hammond has said the resilience of the economy means Britain will enter the Brexit negotiations from a position of strength. "There may be uncertainty ahead as we adjust to a new relationship with Europe, but we are ready to seize the opportunities to create a competitive economy that works for all," he said yesterday.— Reuters

SPAIN JOBLESS RATE LOWEST IN 7 YEARS

MADRID: Spain's unemployment rate hit its lowest level in seven years at the end of 2016, official data showed yesterday, as a booming tourism sector fuelled job creation. The jobless rate fell to 18.6 percent in the final quarter of 2016, its lowest level since the last three months of 2009, according to figures released by national statistics institute INE. While Spain's jobless rate remains the second highest in the euro-zone after Greece's, the figures are further evidence that the Spanish economy is enjoying a steady recovery.

Tourism has played a big part in the improving unemployment figures. Spain hosted a record 75.3 million foreign visitors last year with the rise attributed to holidaymakers shying away from resorts in north Africa and Turkey over terrorism fears. Spain emerged from five years of on-and-off recession at the end of 2013, which was caused by the burst of a property bubble in 2008. During those years, millions of Spaniards lost their jobs, with unemployment reaching close to 27 percent in 2013. "There is still much to do," Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy said during an interview with radio Onda Cero.

"But I insist we had five years of negative economic growth, which destroyed 10 percent of Spain's gross domestic product. You can't fix that in 15 minutes," he added. Rajoy's conservative government credits a labor law reform that reduced severance pay and introduced a new permanent contract with a one-year trial period for the drop in joblessness. The total number of Spaniards out of work stood at 4.24 million people for the final quarter of last year compared with a record high of six million at the height of the economic crisis in 2013.—AFP

DOLLAR TOUCHES 7-WEEK LOW ON WORRY OVER US PROTECTIONISM

STERLING HITS 6-WEEK HIGH ON HOPES FOR US TRADE DEAL

TOKYO: The dollar slumped to seven-week lows yesterday, pressured by investors' concerns about US protectionism after President Donald Trump gave the go-ahead to construction of a US-Mexican border wall and prepared to impose some immigration curbs. The dollar index, which tracks the greenback against a basket of major currencies, was last down 0.1 percent at 99.886. It dipped to 99.793 earlier in the day, its lowest level since Dec. 8.

The dollar was generally weaker despite a rally on Wall Street, where the Dow Jones Industrial Average closed atop the 20,000 mark for the first time. Trump has made several business-friendly decisions since taking office on Friday, including signing executive orders to reduce regulatory burdens on domestic manufacturers and clearing the way for the construction of two oil pipelines. However, the president's broad but divisive plans to reshape US immigration and national security policy rattled some investors, partly because the US needs foreign capital to finance its large current account deficit.

Trump on Wednesday ordered construction of a US-Mexican border wall and punishment for cities shielding illegal immigrants, and he also mulled restoring a CIA secret detention program. "Amid concerns over Trump's protectionism, the correlation between

US Treasury yields and the dollar has gotten weaker," said Junya Tanase, chief currency strategist at JPMorgan Chase Bank. The dollar last stood at 113.38 yen against the yen, nearly flat on the day and not far from a two-month low of 112.52 yen touched on Tuesday, even as US Treasuries yields stayed near four-week highs.

The US benchmark 10-year Treasury yield last stood at 2.523 percent, close to a 4-week high of 2.538 percent hit on Wednesday. "It's similar to the US-Japan trade conflicts in 1990s. Back then, the dollar was weak despite the high US interest rates. The dollar would remain weak if Trump pushes his protectionist rhetoric," said JPMorgan Chase's Tanase. On immigration policy, Trump is expected to sign an executive order in the coming days to block the entry of refugees from war-torn Syria and suspend the entry of any immigrants from Muslim-majority Middle Eastern and African countries while permanent rules are studied.

However, some analysts are sceptical as to what extent Trump would back up his protectionist remarks with action. "It is highly doubtful whether Trump would go ahead with a large-scale immigration ban to an extent that would affect the markets in a long term," said Masashi Murata, senior currency strategist at Brown Brothers

Harriman. "Trump would keep his strong rhetoric from his candidate days to assure his followers, but he has not detailed the actual action plans. His policy won't be a straight-forward protectionism, considering his positive comments on the strong Mexican economy," added Murata.

Mexico's peso strengthened to a three-week high of 20.9300 peso on Wednesday as Trump said the country's economic future was important to the United States. The currency last stood at 21.0835 pesos per dollar. Sterling was last up 0.1 percent at \$1.2648, its highest peak in six weeks. The pound was helped by expectations for a rapid trade deal between Britain and the United States, which Prime Minister Theresa May said on Wednesday would "put UK interests and UK values first."

May will be the first foreign leader to meet the new US president, and trade is expected to dominate their first talks on Friday. Hopes for a clarity over the Brexit plan also pushed the pound. Britain said it would publish draft legislation yesterday seeking parliament's approval to begin formal divorce talks with the European Union as May agreed to lawmakers' demands to publish her Brexit plan. The euro was last up 0.1 percent at \$1.0762 against the dollar, slightly below Tuesday's seven-week high of \$1.0775.—Reuters

GERMAN CONSUMERS' MOOD UNCLOUDED BY UNCERTAINTY

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Confidence among consumers in Germany swelled in January, a monthly survey showed yesterday, with expectations for the future untroubled by political uncertainty in Europe and across the Atlantic. Market research firm GfK's forward-looking index edged up to 9.9 points in January, from 9.8 the month before. But sub-indexes covering feelings about the future economic situation, income expectations and readiness to spend money all jumped, the survey of around 2,000 people showed, and the company predicted a level of 10.2 points for February.

"Consumers' mood made a sparkling start to the year," the pollsters commented, continuing an upwards trend visible since the autumn. Germans' expectations for the economy reached their highest level since June 2015, hitting 21.6 points after a 16.4-point reading in December. The public was "countering the headwinds unleashed by uncertainty over the future course of the new US President and Brexit," GfK said.

Growing wages, the lowest level of unemployment since German reunification in 1990 and low interest rates all favor a sunny outlook among consumers. GfK's results "suggest that this year too private consumption will remain the main pillar of the economic upturn in Germany," analyst Stefan Kipar of BayernLB bank commented. "That will make the economy more resilient against the disruption coming from outside." Positive hopes for the

months ahead put the public at odds with business, which saw confidence eroded to its lowest level since September in a monthly Ifo institute survey released earlier this week.

With the US Germany's largest export customer, businesses are concerned about

the impact newly-installed President Donald Trump's policies could have on trade. At home, consumers may have more to fear from European problems in the short term, GfK suggested. "Growing inflation" could trouble the mood of the man on the street alongside upcoming elec-

tions in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and possibly Italy, as well as the imminent start of Brexit talks between London and Brussels. Inflation in the 19-nation eurozone hit 1.1 percent in December, but Germany-its largest economy-saw prices increase 1.7 percent.—Reuters



BERLIN: (From left) German Foreign Minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, Minister for Economy, Sigmar Gabriel, and German chancellor Angela Merkel, attend a session of the German parliament, Bundestag, in Berlin yesterday.—AP

F1 MUST TREAD CAREFULLY ON RULE CHANGES: WOLFF

LONDON: Formula One has a huge opportunity to grow under new owners Liberty Media but it must also tread carefully in making changes to the rules, according to Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff.

Responding to the departure of the sport's 86-year-old supremo Bernie Ecclestone after 40 years in charge and his replacement by American Chase Carey, Wolff said the future looked bright.

"The Ecclestone era ending is a pretty big thing," he told the team website (www.mercedesamgf1.com).

"We need to embrace the future and we shouldn't be too nostalgic about the past. This sport has a huge opportunity for growing bigger and bigger and we could all benefit from this. We need to push in that direction."

Former Mercedes team principal Ross Brawn has been drafted in as a managing director to oversee the sporting side under Carey.

While there has been talk of radical changes to the race weekend, and appealing to new audiences, Brawn has said he wants a full analysis of the sport's strengths and weaknesses without the knee-jerk reactions that have been evident in past seasons.

The rules are undergoing a major change this season, with bigger tyres and revised aerodynamics designed to make the cars faster and more aggressive but there are already fears overtaking could suffer.

Wolff said Brawn would give the "right guidance, together with the teams and the FIA (governing body), to develop the sport in the right direction".

The Austrian, whose dominant team have won both titles for the past three years and are again the pre-season favourites, warned, however, that changes needed to be properly evaluated.

"We shouldn't mess with our loyal fans and our audiences by implementing rules and regulations that we haven't assessed properly.

"We should use data in a scientific approach and see what works in other sports and other entertainment platforms, then combine that with the great strengths and assets of Formula One," he added.

Last season started with a new "instant elimination" qualifying system, rushed through after a unanimous vote by teams, that proved a flop and was derided by fans. — Reuters



File photo shows two-time rugby union world champions South Africa in action against New Zealand.

SPRINGBOKS AT THEIR LOWEST BUT WILL RISE AGAIN: MALLETT

LONDON: Two-time rugby union world champions South Africa are at their lowest ebb but former coach Nick Mallett told AFP they can return to being a power in the sport.

The 60-year-old, who guided the Springboks to a record 17-match unbeaten streak in 1997-98 including sweeping the then Tri-Nations title, advocated a new set of assistant coaches were required to instil belief in the battered squad.

The Springbok tour of the northern hemisphere last year saw them lose to England, Wales and humiliatingly to Italy—a far cry from Mallett's tour in 1998 when they racked up huge wins against Wales (96-13), France (52-10), Scotland (68-10) and Ireland (33-0).

"Yeah it is heartbreaking but I think this is probably as low as it can go, winning just 33% of your games internationally," Mallett told AFP on the sidelines of the launch of this year's Six Nations.

"I would never have thought they'd lose to Ireland at home or lose to Argentina ever. I didn't think they'd ever lose to Italy, against Wales it was an unusual event (only the Principality's third win in 110 years), so those are four losses right there that shouldn't have been." The record defeat to New Zealand (57-15 in Durban) and capitulating at home is very very disappointing. Starting at this base it can't get worse." Mallett, who took South Africa to the 1999 World Cup semi-finals but left the post a year later after falling out with the South African Rugby Football Union, said Eddie Jones had shown the way by taking over a group of dejected players following England's humbling first round exit at the 2015 World Cup and turning them into Six Nations Grand Slam winners months later. "Just get the enthusiasm and energy back and for that maybe you need a different set of assistant coaches as replacing the head coach (Allister Coetzee) would be expensive," said Mallett, who was speaking as part of the Accenture Analysis Unit.

"Eddie Jones has the same players but instead of coming second they're coming first."

WEAK RAND

"That's what a coach does. He goes there and makes them believe they're not a second placed guy but a first placed bloke. South Africa needs coaches to get in there and make the players believe they can compete against anyone in the world."

"At the end of the tour they didn't look like they could compete against anyone." Mallett added that the

Springboks could not fall back on the tactics used by their predecessors who won the 2007 World Cup. "World Rugby laws reward attacking rugby," said Mallett. "We won the 2007 World Cup playing without the ball. We kicked it away and relied on driving mauls and kicking penalties to win but you can't win the World Cup like that any more."

England-born Mallett, whose family emigrated to what was then Rhodesia when he was a few weeks old, places his faith in a return to the good old days because of one crucial resource. "South Africa is in a really low spot at the moment but I think they will get back, though, it will be gradual," he said.

"We have too many good rugby players to stay down there." However, even that resource is under threat because he says of the weak state of national currency, the rand. "The real worry is they are attracted by the euro, pound and yen," he said. "After all it is the future for these guys and if they haven't got a Springbok contract they'd rather play for Toulon or Montpellier and earn five times more than in South Africa."

"The rand really struggled over the past two years. I was told by Jacques Fourie he was being paid the equivalent of 11 million rand (773,000 euros; \$832,000) for playing 12 games a year in Japan. — AFP

FLAGGING CROWDS DAMPEN WELLINGTON SEVENS PARTY

WELLINGTON: The Wellington leg of the World Sevens Series kicks off tomorrow with poor crowds again dominating the build-up to the two-day event.

The sevens was once the hottest ticket in the New Zealand capital and tickets for both days at the 35,000-capacity Westpac Stadium sold out within minutes.

But the party atmosphere that used to attract tens of thousands of fans in fancy dress has dissipated and organizers expect only 15,000 a day this year. Martin Snedden, the sports administrator in charge when New Zealand hosted the 2011 Rugby World Cup, said it was time for a change of venue after 18 years in Wellington.

"History will judge the Wellington Sevens down the track as being an amazing success story, but what's really apparent now is that it's probably run its course," Snedden told Fairfax New Zealand this week. "That's not a negative comment. That's really a reflection of the fact that an event has a life cycle... and this one seems to have reached the end." The tournament gained a reputation for drunken revelry during its heyday, with police and the local council demanding an end to the booze-fuelled antics. But it has struggled to reinvent itself as a family-friendly event, despite lowering ticket prices and offering more off-field entertainment. There has also been competition in recent years from the Auckland Nines rugby league competition and critics say there is a perception the Wellington Sevens feels tired.

What is undeniable is that fans are staying away in droves. The once packed-out stadium attracted only 18,000 a day in 2015, falling to 12,000 a day last year.

FLOGGING A DEAD HORSE?

Organizers may struggle to reach their 15,000-a-day goal this year as gale-force winds and heavy rains have lashed Wellington for most of the week, killing any summertime buzz in the city. While the sevens is contracted to remain in the capital until 2019, Snedden said World Rugby and New Zealand Rugby had some tough decisions to consider. "Is it best to keep trying to re-energise it? Or is it 'maybe we're flogging a dead horse?' That's a judgment call they've got to make." On the field, reigning Olympics and World Sevens Series champions Fiji (32) will seek to close the gap on South Africa (41) and England (39), who have a win apiece in the two opening rounds.

But local interest will be focused on the Pool C grudge match between New Zealand and Gordon Tietjens' Samoa.

Tietjens coached New Zealand for 22 years before announcing his departure in the wake of last year's failure at the Rio Olympics, and then accepted a role with the Pacific islanders. However, he was still officially contracted to NZR, which made him sit out the opening rounds, making Wellington his first tournament in charge of Samoa. Tietjens, who has described his treatment as "hurtful", said his former charges would be fired up.

"(They) won it the last three years in a row in Wellington and they'll be motivated to do it again," he said. "They would have been disappointed in their first two tournaments and they'll look to redeem themselves."

The Wellington event is also likely to mark the debut of English cricket legend Ian Botham's grandson James, who has been named in the Wales squad. James, or Jimbo to his granddad, was born in Cardiff and has represented

Wales at under-18 level, playing as a flanker. — AFP

RAISED AT THIRD HOLE, NEPAL'S FIRST FEMALE STAR

KATHMANDU: Pratima Sherpa grew up in a small hut behind the third hole of the Royal Nepal Golf Course - now she is tipped to be the country's first female golf professional.

The petite 18-year-old is the daughter of labourers who work on the nine-hole golf course, which lies at the end of the runway of Kathmandu's international airport. Golf is a sport usually associated with privilege, while Nepal is a country better known for its jagged Himalayan peaks than smooth golf greens. But those who have watched Sherpa play say she has what it takes to compete and win internationally, and make it to the hallowed US-based Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour.

"In two to three years if she can go out of the coun-

try she has the opportunity to reach the Europe Tour, America," said Tashi Ghale, general secretary of the Nepal Golf Association. "Hopefully she will be the first Nepalese lady to compete with the LGPA." Sherpa was raised in a hut shared with lawn mowers, maintenance equipment and a few goats, and first started playing with a stick, copying the golfers she saw around her on the course.

"I would play with kids of other workers. We used to watch people play golf and mimic them with wooden sticks. We would ask for balls and hit them," Sherpa told AFP. At the age of 11, coach Sachin Prasad Bhattarai spotted her during a juniors programme run by the club. Recognising what he describes as a natural talent, Bhattarai offered to start

coaching her for free and persuaded a club member to give Sherpa an old set of clubs.

'SHE HAS THAT ART'

"She strikes with her feel. She can do it. Not many people have that in golf," said Bhattarai. "People have technique, and we guarantee that a person with a good golf swing will hit well... but not everyone has the art. She has that art." Her parents were initially reluctant to let her play, thinking she'd be out of place as a girl and from a humble background. "Only rich people's kids would come to play so I didn't want to send her. Her studies would suffer," said her father Pasang Tsering Sherpa, who met Pratima's mother working at the golf course. — AFP

ARGENTINA'S TEENAGE JOCKEYS DREAM OF RIDING TO RICHES

BUENOS AIRES: With its tree-lined lawns and palatial buildings, Buenos Aires Jockey Club is one of the world's poshest riding venues: a world away from the homes of its future star jockeys.

Penniless, skinny teenagers from poor country families sign up as apprentices at the club's jockey training school. It regime has turned riders like Lucas Berticelli, 23, into competitors. He has already won dozens of races.

"This is how I have earned money to live," he says. "Before, I didn't have a penny. My mum hardly gave me enough for my bus fare."

HUMILITY

The young jockeys can receive prize money of up to \$300 for winning a race, plus a share of winnings from bets. But they dream of winning millions by finishing first in the Gran Premio Carlos Pelligrini, one of the world's most prestigious races. But first they face up to 18 months of tough training designed to tame their egos-and keep their weight under 50 kilos (110 pounds).

They are paid the equivalent of about \$2 a day to tend and exercise the racehorses at the club's whitewashed stables. A sign hanging in the training center puts the lads in their place. "Horses win races," it reads-not jockeys. "The boy who loses his humility is condemned to failure," says the school's director, 67-year-old former jockey Hector Libre. He says jockeys he has trained have won 8,600 races in the past 12 years.

JOCKEY SINCE AGE 10

Though some of them are as young as 15 when they enter the school, the trainee jockeys are no strangers to the saddle.

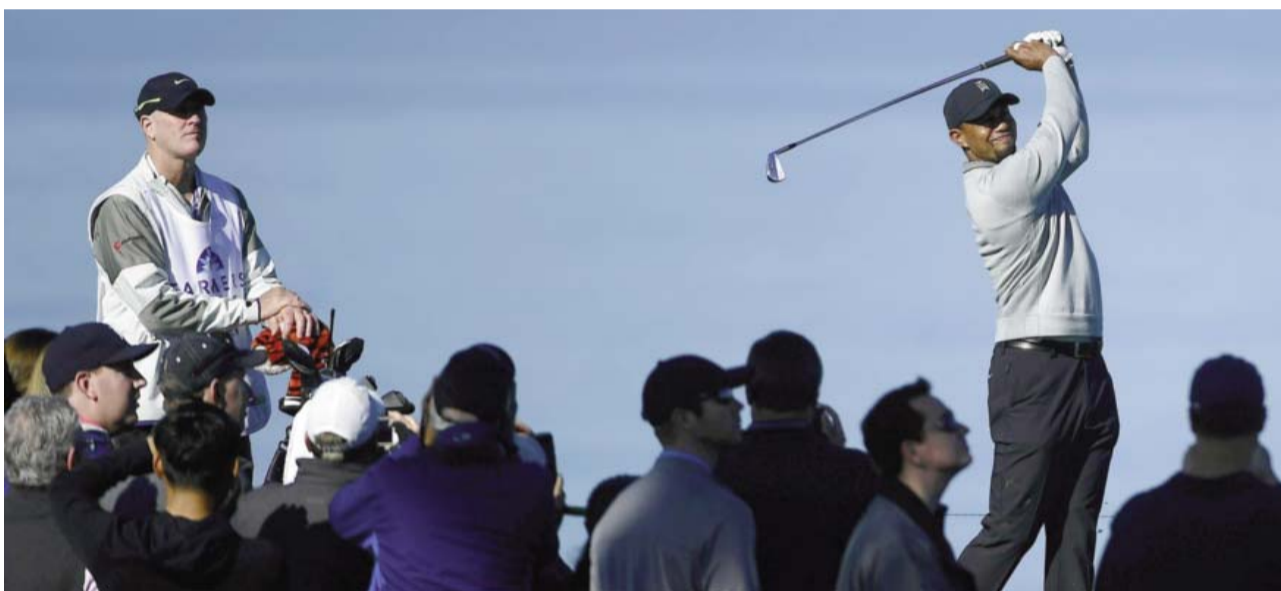
Despite the dangers of high-speed horseracing, adults have been making money from betting on these riders since they were young boys. "At the age of 10 I was already riding in 'cuadreras'," says Kevin Banegas, now 16.

Cuadreras are an Argentine rural tradition: fast, short races through the dirt roads of villages. Now an apprentice at the Jockey Club, Kevin gets up at dawn, puts on his riding jacket and helmet and jumps on a chestnut steed to exercise it.

Elsewhere, trainees practice indoors, riding on a wooden mechanical horse while Libre calls out instructions. —AFP



BUENOS AIRES: Jockey students Lucas Berticelli (l) and Kevin Banegas ride racehorses on the training track at the San Isidro Jockey Club on the outskirts of Buenos Aires, on December 5, 2016. —AFP



LA JOLLA: Tiger Woods tees off the 11th hole during the Zurich Pro-Am, Farmers Insurance Open Preview Day 3 at Torrey Pines Golf Course on Wednesday in La Jolla, California. — AFP

TIGER WOODS AT TORREY, NO LONGER THE FAVORITE

SAN DIEGO: Tiger Woods was walking up the middle of the 18th fairway when he noticed someone walking briskly toward him, causing Woods to stop suddenly. And then he smiled.

It was Billy Horschel, arms outstretched to embrace Woods. "It's good to have you back," Horschel said. Oddly enough, they were together at the Farmers Insurance Open the last time Woods was at Torrey Pines, under much different circumstances. Woods' game was a mess in early 2015, and on the practice range before the first round, Horschel appeared to be showing Woods different positions in the swing. Woods withdrew later that morning with tightness in his back and walked away from competition for 10 weeks to work on his game until returning at the Masters.

His game never really improved until a tie for 10th in the Wyndham Championship. And then he had two more back surgeries and was gone again. Now he's returned, no instruction necessary. Woods makes his latest PGA Tour comeback on Thursday when he tees it up at Torrey Pines alongside Jason Day and Dustin Johnson, who bring the kind of credentials that for so long only belonged to Woods.

Day is No. 1 in the world (Woods occupied the top spot for a record 683 weeks). Johnson is the PGA Tour player of the year (Woods won the award a record 11 times). And now the question is whether Woods can keep up with them.

"You always want to play against and with the best players," Woods said. "I'm trying to remind myself: 'Hey, I haven't played in a while. Hey, it's just the first two days and get yourself in contention, build your way up.' It's not Sunday. I've got a long way to go to get to that point where I have a chance to win this event."

SURGERIES

Winning might be a surprise, even given his track record at Torrey Pines. Woods has eight victories at Torrey Pines, includ-

ing a major when he won the US Open in 2008 on a shattered left leg. Think about that. What he has done at Torrey Pines alone is more than all but four players in the 156-man field at Torrey Pines have done in their entire PGA Tour careers.

But that was then, before his three back surgeries. The now is a bit more clouded, and even Woods can't provide much clarity. He was asked Wednesday if he thought he could return to his level of play from 2013, when his five victories included a four-shot victory at Torrey Pines.

"I don't know," he said. "We all know I haven't played a full schedule in a very long time, so this is an unknown. I've been away from it for so long. I've played one tournament in that 15-month span and I haven't played a full-field event. I haven't got into the rhythm of playing weeks on end in a season." Woods has returned nine times from a long layoff over the last 14 years. The first time was in 2003 at Torrey Pines, when he was coming off arthroscopic knee surgery. Back then, the attention wasn't on his knee. It was on Phil Mickelson's magazine interview in which Lefty said Woods was using "inferior equipment."

PLAY HIS BEST AGAIN

Woods got in the final word. He won by four shots. Equipment was an issue again in this return, for different reasons. Woods announced Wednesday morning that he has signed a deal with TaylorMade to use its driver, fairway metals, irons and wedges. He already has a Bridgestone Golf deal to play its ball. He still has a Nike contract to wear the apparel. He's not getting paid to use his old Scotty Cameron putter, the one he used to win 13 of his majors.

There's nothing inferior about that putter. Starting today, Woods finds out how his game stacks up against the best in the world. His swing looks just as good as it did in the Bahamas the first week of December when he played for the first time in 15 months against an 18-man field with no cut and no stress. — AP

KINGS DOWN LEBRON, SLUMPING CAVALIERS 116-112 IN OT

CLEVELAND: Arron Afflalo dropped a 3-pointer with 17.3 seconds left in overtime, lifting the Sacramento Kings to a 116-112 win Wednesday night over the slumping Cleveland Cavaliers, who lost for the sixth time in eight games amid criticism by LeBron James. DeMarcus Cousins had 28 points and 10 rebounds for the Kings, who trailed by five in overtime before battling back. Darren Collison added 23 points for Sacramento.

After Afflalo's 3, James missed a deep 3-point attempt for the Cavs, who were then forced to foul Cousins. Sacramento's big man dropped one of two to put away the reeling NBA champions. James finished with 24 points, 13 rebounds and 11 assists, and Kevin Love had 21 points and 16 rebounds, but it wasn't enough. This was the Cavs' first game since James called the team's roster "top heavy" and questioned whether the organization was fully committed to winning a second title.

WARRIORS 113, HORNETS 103

Kevin Durant scored 16 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter, Stephen Curry added 28 points on six 3-pointers in his annual homecoming game and the Golden State Warriors rallied to beat the Charlotte Hornets. Klay Thompson had 19 points for the Warriors, who avenged a 105-102 loss to the Miami Heat on Monday. Curry capped a memorable trip home to Charlotte in which he had his high school jersey retired and was honored at Davidson College with the naming of "Section 30" at Belk Arena where the Wildcats play their home games. Curry's return following his second MVP award drew a crowd of 19,639, the largest crowd to see a game at the Spectrum Center. Kemba Walker led Charlotte with 26 points while battling through an illness.

THUNDER 114, PELICANS 105

Russell Westbrook had 27 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists, passing Larry Bird with his 60th career triple-double, and the Oklahoma City Thunder beat the New Orleans Pelicans. Pelicans All-Star Anthony Davis left late in the second quarter after re-aggravating a right thigh injury that kept him out of New Orleans' upset of Cleveland on Monday night. The Pelicans trailed by 12 when Davis left and went down by as many as 22 early in the third before rallying to as close as five points. Steven Adams had 20 points and 11 rebounds, and Enes Kanter 17 points and 11 boards for the Thunder, who outscored New Orleans 62-54 inside.

GRIZZLIES 101, RAPTORS 99

Marc Gasol scored a career-high 42 points, including the deciding two free throws with 36 seconds left, as the Memphis Grizzlies sent Toronto to its fifth straight loss. Gasol's final free throws ended a 12-0 run by the Raptors that tied the game at 99. Kyle Lowry's fade-away 28-footer from the left wing bounced off the rim as time expired, saving Memphis from wasting Gasol's career effort. Zach Randolph finished with 16 points for Memphis, while Tony Allen had 15 points and 11 rebounds. Mike Conley had 11 points. Gasol converted 14 of 25 shots, including going 5 of 10 from 3-point range. Lowry led the Raptors with 29 points, including 14 points in the fourth quarter, to lead Toronto's final charge. Norman Powell had 21 points and Cory Joseph finished with 15 points.

76ERS 114, BUCKS 109

Despite playing without leading scorer Joel Embiid for the second consecutive game, the Philadelphia 76ers held off the Milwaukee



CLEVELAND: Sacramento Kings' DeMarcus Cousins, left, and Kosta Koufos, right, put pressure on Cleveland Cavaliers' Tristan Thompson during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, in Cleveland. The Kings won 116-112 in overtime. —AP

Bucks to win for the fifth time in six games. Gerald Henderson led the 76ers with 20 points, Ersan Ilyasova and Dario Saric added 17 apiece, and the 76ers scored a season-high 72 points in the first half. Greg Monroe's season-high 28 points led the Bucks, Jabari Parker added 20 and Giannis Antetokounmpo had 17 points and 12 rebounds. Milwaukee led by three when Parker stole a cross-court pass, but was called for a foul after inadvertently hitting Robert Covington in the face. Covington made both free throws to cut Milwaukee's lead to one with 45 seconds left. After a backcourt violation, Nerlens Noel drew a foul and converted two free throws to give Philadelphia the lead. Noel hit a jumper and Ilyasova made two free throws to seal the win.

CELTICS 120, ROCKETS 109

Isaiah Thomas had 38 points and nine assists, Jae Crowder scored 23 and the Boston Celtics beat the Houston Rockets. It was Thomas' 15th game this season with at least 30 points and his 29th consecutive outing with 20 or more. Crowder grabbed 10 rebounds and Al Horford totaled 20 points and nine assists for Boston (27-18), which had lost three straight games. James Harden finished with 30 points and 12 assists, Ryan Anderson scored 19 and Sam Dekker had 15 off the bench as the Rockets (34-15) lost for the sixth time in nine games.

HEAT 109, NETS 106

Dion Waiters scored 14 of his 24 points in the fourth quarter, including the clinching 3 with 6.8 seconds left, and the Miami Heat overcame an 18-point deficit in the final period to beat the beleaguered Brooklyn Nets.

Wayne Ellington had 22 points and Goran Dragic added 17 for the streaking Heat, who have won a season-best five straight games. Brook Lopez scored 33 for the Nets, including a career-high seven 3-pointers. Brooklyn (9-36) has lost 14 of 15 and owns the worst record in the NBA. The Heat trailed 89-71 entering the fourth, but outscored the Nets 38-17 the rest of the way.

HAWKS 119, BULLS 114

Dennis Schroder scored 24 points, Paul Millsap added 21 and the Atlanta Hawks ended the game on a 19-4 run to beat the Chicago Bulls. Thabo Sefolosha scored 18 and Tim Hardaway Jr. added 17, hitting four of his team's 17 3-pointers as the Hawks pulled out their seventh straight win against Chicago. Jimmy Butler led the Bulls with 40 points. Dwyane Wade scored 33, but Chicago let a 10-point lead slip away down the stretch.

It was 110-100 with less than three minutes remaining when Millsap, Schroder and Hardaway nailed 3s on consecutive possessions to start the game-ending run.

MAVERICKS 103, KNICKS 95

Harrison Barnes scored 23 points and Seth Curry had 20 as the Dallas Mavericks beat the New York Knicks. Dirk Nowitzki added 19 points for Dallas, which was coming off a 49-point blowout of the Los Angeles Lakers. The last-place Mavericks (16-29) have won five of seven. Carmelo Anthony, the subject

of trade talk, scored 30 points to lead the Knicks. Courtney Lee had 23 for New York, which has lost 14 of 18. Dallas led by as many as 10 points in the third quarter, but the Knicks rallied to get within one twice in the fourth quarter.

TRAIL BLAZERS 105, LAKERS 98

Damian Lillard scored 24 points and the Trail Blazers beat the Los Angeles Lakers, capping Portland's celebration of the 40th anniversary of the team's 1977 NBA championship. CJ McCollum added 24 points for the Blazers, who have won 11 straight regular-season games against the Lakers. Los Angeles was led by Lou Williams with 31 points, including six 3-pointers. The Lakers were coming off a 122-73 loss at Dallas on Sunday, the most lopsided loss in franchise history. Portland was without Ed Davis for the second straight game because of a left wrist injury, and Maurice Harkless, who has a calf injury. The Lakers didn't have D'Angelo Russell for the second straight game because of a sprained right knee and calf. —AP

NBA results/standings

Portland 105, LA Lakers 98; Dallas 103, NY Knicks 95; Atlanta 119, Chicago 114; Philadelphia 114, Milwaukee 109; Memphis 101, Toronto 99; Oklahoma City 114, New Orleans 105; Golden State 113, Charlotte 103; Boston 120, Houston 109; Miami 109, Brooklyn 106; Sacramento 116, Cleveland 112 (OT).

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Toronto	28	18	.609	-	Utah	29	18	.617	-
Boston	27	18	.600	0.5	Oklahoma City	27	19	.587	1.5
NY Knicks	20	27	.426	8.5	Denver	19	25	.432	8.5
Philadelphia	17	27	.386	10	Portland	20	27	.426	9
Brooklyn	9	36	.200	18.5	Minnesota	17	28	.378	11
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	30	14	.682	-	Golden State	39	7	.848	-
Indiana	22	22	.500	8	LA Clippers	30	17	.638	9.5
Chicago	23	24	.489	8.5	Sacramento	18	27	.400	20.5
Milwaukee	21	24	.467	9.5	Phoenix	15	30	.333	23.5
Detroit	21	25	.457	10	LA Lakers	16	33	.327	24.5
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Atlanta	27	19	.587	-	San Antonio	36	9	.800	-
Washington	25	20	.556	1.5	Houston	34	15	.694	4
Charlotte	23	23	.500	4	Memphis	27	20	.574	10
Orlando	18	29	.383	9.5	New Orleans	18	28	.391	18.5
Miami	16	30	.348	11	Dallas	16	29	.356	20

AUSTRALIA WIN ODI SERIES 4-1 AGAINST PAKISTAN

ADELAIDE: Australia cruised to a 57-run victory over Pakistan in the fifth and final one-day international at the Adelaide Oval yesterday. After setting an imposing total of 369-7, thanks to a record opening partnership of 284 between David Warner and Travis Head, the Australians bowled Pakistan out for 312. Pakistan's Babar Azam scored 100 and Sharjeel Khan a quickfire 79, but the home side were always in control and celebrated Australia Day in style with a convincing win.

Warner and Head earlier got Australia away to a superb start, with Warner particularly damaging as he smashed the Pakistan attack to all parts of the ground.

Warner blasted 179 and Head 128 on their way to an opening stand of 284, a new Australian record for any wicket in ODIs. Both batsmen made their highest scores in one-day internationals, with Head also recording his maiden international century. After losing the toss and being asked to bowl first, the Pakistanis almost got the perfect start when Mohammad Amir enticed an edge from Warner with his first ball. But a diving Azhar Ali at first slip couldn't hold onto a difficult chance and Warner was soon in full flight. He brought up his 50 from 34 balls and his 100 from 78 including 11 fours and two massive sixes. His 150 came from only 107 deliveries with 17 boundaries and three sixes.

Head was far more circumspect but once the ball stopped swinging after just four overs, he began to look more and more comfortable. On a flat pitch that offered nothing to the bowlers, the Australians were untroubled until Warner began to cramp, restricting his movements. Warner eventually fell when he swatted a short ball from Junaid Khan to Babar at point with the score on 284. Australia were headed for a score well over 400 when Warner and Head were in full flight but Pakistan fought back with some late wickets to restrict them to 369. Pakistan's chase started badly when Azhar fell leg before to Mitchell Starc for 10, but Sharjeel and Babar took up the attack and moved the score to 140 before the big hitting Sharjeel mistimed a pull shot and skied a catch to wicketkeeper Matthew Wade. Babar began to pick up the pace and reached 100 from 107 balls, however, soon after bringing up his fourth ODI century he holed out to Head at mid-on. Shoaib Malik retired hurt when he was hit on the arm by a Pat Cummins short ball and despite a defiant 46 from Umar Akmal which took the visitors past 300 runs, Pakistan ultimately fell short. — AFP



KANPUR: England batsman Eoin Morgan (r) plays a shot during the first T20 match between India and England at Green Park Stadium in Kanpur yesterday. — AFP

MORGAN'S FIFTY GIVES ENGLAND WIN IN 1ST T20

KANPUR: Skipper Eoin Morgan's sublime half-century and a disciplined bowling effort powered England to a seven-wicket win against India in the first Twenty20 international in Kanpur yesterday. Chasing a modest 148 for victory, England rode on the third-wicket 83-run stand between Morgan (51) and Joe Root (46 not out) to romp home with 11 balls to spare.

But it was Moeen Ali's career best 2-21 that set up the opening win in the three match series as the visitors restricted the Virat Kohli-led side to 147-7. In reply, Billings, who hit a 10-ball 22, showed his intent in the second over of the innings as he smashed paceman Jasprit Bumrah for 3 fours and a six to set the pace. Billings shared a 42-run opening stand with Jason Roy (19) before leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal removed the openers in the space of four deliveries to leave England at 43 for two. But Morgan and Root, who returned to the side after missing the third ODI in Kolkata with a niggler, kept the chase on track with their attacking brand of cricket. Morgan, who recorded his eight T20 fifty, struck a four and 4 sixes during his 38-ball knock as he carted the Indian bowlers to all parts of the ground. Debutant Kashmiri off-spinner Parvez Rasool removed Morgan to claim his first T20 wicket but not after the left-handed batsman had taken the game away from the hosts.

Root, whose run-a-ball knock was studded with 4 boundaries, survived a

scare after Bumrah got the batsman bowled in the 17th over but it was a no ball. Earlier put into bat India suffered from lack of partnerships with former captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni top-scoring with an unbeaten 36 to give some respectability to the score.

Kohli, who led the T20 side for the first time since taking over from Dhoni as India's permanent limited overs captain, opened the innings along with Lokesh Rahul (8).

The star batsman attacked from the word go with a few boundaries against

the England pacers but ran out steam after falling to off-spinner Ali for 29. The hosts continued to lose wickets as batsmen Suresh Raina (34) and Yuvraj Singh (12) let go of their respective starts to hand the visitors an early advantage at Kanpur's Green Park Stadium.

Dhoni piloted the innings with his calculated 27-ball knock with three boundaries, two of which came in the final over but his effort was not enough to give India a competitive total.

The second match is slated for Sunday in Nagpur. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

ADELAIDE: Scoreboard from the fifth one-day international between Australia and Pakistan at the Adelaide Oval yesterday:

Australia	
D. Warner c Babar b Junaid	179
T. Head c Azhar b Hasan	128
S. Smith c Wahab b Junaid	4
G. Maxwell c Hafeez b Amir	13
M. Wade c Malik b Hasan	8
P. Handscomb c Hafeez b Wahab	1
J. Faulkner not out	18
M. Starc run out	6
P. Cummins not out	1
Extras (b1, lb 4, w6)	11
Total (for 7 wickets, 50 overs)	369
Fall of wickets: 1-284 (Warner), 2-288 (Smith), 3-323 (Maxwell), 4-336 (Wade), 5-342 (Head), 6-351 (Handscomb), 7-367 (Starc)	
Did not bat: A. Zampa, J. Hazlewood	
Bowling: Amir 10-0-71-1 (1w), Junaid 10-0-61-2 (2w), Hasan 9-0-100-2 (1w), Hafeez 7-0-43-0, Wahab 10-0-62-1 (2w), Malik 4-0-27-0	
Pakistan	
Azhar Ali lbw Starc	6
Sharjeel Khan c Wade b Starc	79
Babar Azam c Head b Hazlewood	100
Mohammad Hafeez c Smith b Starc	3
Shoaib Malik retired hurt	10
Umar Akmal c Wade b Cummins	46
Mohammad Rizwan c Starc b Cummins	6
Mohammad Amir c Maxwell b Faulkner	17
Wahab Riaz b Starc	17
Hasan Ali st Wade b Zampa	13
Junaid Khan not out	0
Extras (lb2, w13)	15
Total (for 9 wickets, 49.1 overs)	312
Fall of wickets: 1-10 (Azhar), 2-140 (Sharjeel), 3-145 (Hafeez), 3-181* (Malik, retired hurt), 4-220 (Babar), 5-246 (Rizwan), 6-276 (Akmal), 7-282 (Amir), 8-312 (Hasan), 9-312 (Wahab)	
Bowling: Starc 9.1-1-42-4 (3w), Hazlewood 10-0-74-1 (5w), Cummins 10-0-60-2 (2w), Faulkner 9-0-60-1 (1w), Zampa 9-0-61-1 (1w), Head 2-0-13-0. Australia win series 4-1.	

SCOREBOARD

KANPUR, India: Final scoreboard of the first Twenty20 international between India and England in Kanpur yesterday:

India		Did not bat: A. Nehra, Y. Chahal	
V. Kohli c Morgan b Ali	29		
L. Rahul c Rashid b Jordan	8		
S. Raina b Stokes	34	England	
Y. Singh c Rashid b Plunkett	12	J. Roy b Chahal	19
M.S. Dhoni not out	36	S. Billings b Chahal	22
M. Pandey lbw b Ali	3	J. Root not out	46
H. Pandya c Billings b Mills	9	E. Morgan c Raina b Rasool	51
P. Rasool run out (Morgan)	5	B. Stokes not out	2
J. Bumrah not out	0	Extras (b1, lb2, w4, nb1)	8
Extras (lb3, w7, nb1)	11	Total (3 wickets: 18.1 overs)	148
Total (7 wickets; 20 overs)	147	Fall of wickets: 1-42 (Roy), 2-43 (Billings), 3-126 (Morgan)	
Fall of wickets: 1-34 (Rahul), 2-55 (Kohli), 3-75 (Yuvraj), 4-95 (Raina), 5-98 (Pandey), 6-118 (Pandya), 7-145 (Rasool)		Bowling: Nehra 3-0-31-0 (2w), Bumrah 3.1-0-26-0 (1nb), Chahal 4-0-27-2, Rasool 4-0-32-1, Raina 2-0-17-0, Pandya 2-0-12-0 (1w)	
Bowling: Mills 4-0-27-1 (1w), Jordan 4-0-27-1 (1nb, 1w), Plunkett 4-0-32-1, Stokes 4-0-37-1 (5w), Ali 4-0-21-2		Did not bat: J. Buttler, M. Ali, L. Plunkett, A. Ashid, C. Jordan, T. Mills	
		Result: England won by 7 wickets.	

EGYPT BACK IN AFRICAN CUP QUARTERFINALS

PORT-GENTIL: Seven years of soccer gloom might be slowly lifting for Egypt.

The African Cup of Nations' most successful team made it back to the quarterfinals on Wednesday, beating one of the title contenders along the way. A 1-0 win over Ghana ensured its long-awaited return to the championship will continue for at least a little while longer. Mohamed Salah blasted home an 11th-minute free kick on the final day of the group stage in Gabon, and Egypt clinched the last quarterfinal place with the victory. Salah's goal, a thunderous left-foot free-kick that gave Ghana's goalkeeper no chance,

sparked celebrations back home in Egypt, and for a small group of Egyptian fans who made it all the way to the Gabonese city of Port-Gentil on the other side of Africa. Those fans, for years used to success at the African championship, have been starved of any joy lately with Egypt, the record seven-time champion, failing to even qualify for the last three tournaments.

Egyptian soccer has been held back by the major political upheavals back home. "Our ambition is very high," Egypt's Argentinian coach Hector Cuper said after Wednesday's win. "We're so enthusiastic and we're so motivated. My message to the Egyptian peo-

ple is: We are going to fight in the coming games, we are going to play our best."

Egypt needed to win to make sure it progressed, while Ghana had already qualified. But the victory also gave Egypt renewed hope that it can compete with the best again at the Cup of Nations, a tournament it won for the third straight time in 2010, breaking all records, before the collapse came.

Salah's strike at Stade de Port-Gentil was one of the goals of the tournament, too, as he stepped up and smashed his free kick into the top left corner with eye-opening power and accuracy. — AP



MELBOURNE: Switzerland's Roger Federer hits a return against Switzerland's Stanislas Wawrinka during their men's singles semi-final match on day 11 of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne yesterday. — AFP

WILLIAMS SISTERS, FEDERER IN AUSTRALIAN OPEN FINALS

MELBOURNE: It was one, two and three for the ages as Venus and Serena Williams set up another all-sisters final and Roger Federer ensured he'll contend for another Australian Open title.

They're calling it Throwback Thursday at Melbourne Park: three players with a combined 46 Grand Slam titles and a combined age of 106 advanced to the finals.

Six-time Australian Open winner Serena Williams overwhelmed Mirjana Lucic-Baroni 6-2, 6-1 in just 50 minutes in the second of women's semifinals, after Venus Williams beat fellow American CoCo Vandeweghe 6-7 (3), 6-2, 6-3.

The only person standing between 35-year-old Serena Williams and an Open-era record 23rd Grand Slam title is 36-year-old Venus Williams, the oldest player to reach an Australian Open women's final in the modern era. She is the oldest player since Martina Navratilova at Wimbledon in 1994 to reach a women's major final anywhere. "It felt really good because I felt like it was in my hands to force this Williams final," Serena Williams said. "Believe it or not, I was feeling a little pressure about that, but it felt really good to get that win."

At 35, Federer is the oldest man to reach a Grand Slam final since Ken Rosewall made the 1974 US Open final at the age of 39. He had a 7-5, 6-3, 1-6, 4-6, 6-3 win in an all-Swiss semifinal against Stan Wawrinka, who has won three majors - the Australian in 2014, the French in 2015 and the US Open last year - in the time since Federer captured the last of his record 17, at Wimbledon in 2012.

Wawrinka broke his racket over his knee in the second set. He needed a medical timeout before the third, came out with his right knee taped, and rallied to force Federer to five for the

first time before double-faulting to give up the vital break in the sixth game. Federer, coming back from six months on the sidelines to rest his injured left knee, made no mistake in closing out. He will next play Sunday against the winner of Friday's semifinal between 14-time major winner Rafael Nadal and Grigor Dimitrov.

"I felt like everything happened so quickly," Federer said. "It feels amazing. I never, ever in my wildest dreams thought I was going to be coming this far here in Australia. It's beautiful." The women's final tomorrow night will be the first all-Williams final here since 2003, when Serena won what Venus has described as a "battle royale."

Returning to her first final since then in Melbourne was a momentous occasion for Venus Williams, given her struggles to overcome an energy-sapping illness since being diagnosed with Sjogren's syndrome in 2011. She hasn't been in a Grand Slam final since losing 2009 Wimbledon to Serena.

"Everyone has their moment in the sun," she said. "Maybe mine has gone on a while. I'd like to keep that going. I've got nothing else to do so let's keep it going." She was exuberant after clinching her win Vandeweghe on her fourth match point, putting hands up to her face, almost in disbelief, before crossing her arms over her heart. She then did a stylish pirouette on the court, smiling broadly, as the crowd gave her a standing ovation.

Serena Williams' celebration was more subdued after her lopsided win over 34-year-old Lucic-Baroni, who was playing her first semifinal at a major since Wimbledon in 1999. There was a warm embrace for the woman she'd played only twice before - both times in 1998. — AP

OILERS' ROUT DUCKS

ANAHEIM: Leon Draisaitl scored two goals and Cam Talbot made 26 saves in his 15th career shutout, leading the Edmonton Oilers to a 4-0 victory over the Anaheim Ducks on Wednesday night. Draisaitl, Ryan Nugent-Hopkins and Zack Kassian scored during the second period for the Oilers in a meeting of Pacific Division contenders. Draisaitl scored early in the second and third periods, giving the German four goals in three games against Anaheim this season. NHL scoring leader Connor McDavid had an assist for his 57th point, and Talbot was rarely tested in his fourth shutout of the season. John Gibson stopped 19 shots for the Ducks, who stumbled into the All-Star break with their first shutout loss in 35 games since Nov 12.

MAPLE LEAFS 4, RED WINGS 0

Auston Matthews scored early in the first period and Frederik Andersen made 22 saves for his third shutout of the season, leading Toronto over Detroit. Roman Polak scored late in the second period and James van Riemsdyk and Nikita Soshnikov had goals in the third to give Toronto a comfortable cushion. The Maple Leafs moved a point ahead of Boston in the Atlantic standings and into third place for the division's third guaranteed spot in the playoffs. Toronto has played five fewer games than the Bruins, putting it in a relatively favorable position to make the playoffs for the first time since 2013 and just the second time in 12 seasons. Petr Mrazek stopped 24 shots for the Red Wings.

FLYERS 2, RANGERS 0

Steve Mason stopped 34 shots for his 31st career shutout and Philadelphia beat New York. Wayne Simmonds and Jakub Voracek scored 2:36 apart in the third period for the Flyers, who had lost five straight to the Rangers. Henrik Lundqvist finished with 24 saves for the Rangers, who ended a three-game winning streak. The Flyers took the lead at 6:09 of the third, just 34 seconds after the Rangers' Matt Puempel was sent off for tripping. Voracek fired a shot from the right slot that was stopped by Lundqvist, but Brayden Schenn jabbed at the puck, it went to Simmonds and he backhanded it in for his 20th.

CANUCKS 3, AVALANCHE 2

Sven Baertschi got his second goal of the game with 8:14 left, Markus Granlund also had a goal and the Vancouver Canucks beat the Colorado Avalanche 3-2 on Wednesday night. Jacob Markstrom stopped 30 shots for the Canucks. Vancouver has 52 points and sits in the second wild card in the Western Conference, one point ahead of Calgary. The Canucks have played two fewer games than the Flames. — AP



ANAHEIM: Cam Talbot #33 of the Edmonton Oilers makes the second period save on Nick Ritchie #37 of the Anaheim Ducks at the Honda Center on Wednesday in Anaheim, California. — AFP

HOLDER JUVENTUS BEAT MILAN TO REACH ITALIAN CUP SEMIS

TURIN: In a rematch of last year's final, Italian Cup holder Juventus beat 10-man AC Milan 2-1 in the quarterfinals on Wednesday to avenge its more recent defeats to Vincenzo Montella's side.

Paulo Dybala and Miralem Pjanic scored for Juventus in the first half to leave Massimiliano Allegri's side on course for a third successive league and cup double.

Juventus used the same 4-2-3-1 formation which had beaten Lazio 2-0 on Sunday, with all its stellar attackers. "It's not a given that we'll always play like this," Allegri said. "We could change. What's important is our attitude. The team had a good match for 65 minutes, then we had a bit of difficulty and gave Milan a good chance."

Carlos Bacca reduced the deficit shortly after half-time but Manuel Locatelli was sent off moments later following a second booking. Despite its numerical

disadvantage, Milan - as it has often done this season - played better in the second half but couldn't find the equalizer.

"Credit to Juventus who scored with two great moves, they were very good in the first half and we weren't very fast because we couldn't find the space," Montella said. "But great credit to the lads for always believing in the comeback. We were very close, even with 10 men."

Juventus, which leads Serie A by four points, will face Napoli in the semifinals over two legs after the southern side beat Fiorentina 1-0 on Tuesday.

Milan had beaten Juventus 1-0 in the league this season and also defeated it on penalties to win the Italian Super Cup last month. "All the three matches were very equal, that is already a source of pride," Montella added.

"That should give us extra conviction to believe in

ourselves and go forward like this." There is an Italian proverb "non c'e due senza tre" - things happen in threes - and Milan were hoping to prove it right.

However, Juventus, which beat Milan 1-0 in the final last year, was aggressive from the outset and took the lead in the 10th minute, with its first attempt on goal. Kwadwo Asamoah's cross was flicked on by Juan Cuadrado for an unmarked Dybala to volley in from 10 yards (meters).

Juventus was dominating and doubled its lead 11 minutes later when Asamoah was tripped by Juraj Kucka just outside the area and Pjanic curled the resulting free kick into the top left corner.

Juventus had the ball in the back of the net a third time shortly before the half hour, but Sami Khedira was offside when he tapped in the rebound after Milan goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma had parried Gonzalo Higuain's effort. — AP



ANFIELD: Liverpool's Belgian striker Divock Origi (C) is tackled by Southampton's English defender Jack Stephens during the EFL (English Football League) Cup semi-final second-leg football match between Liverpool and Southampton at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England on Wednesday. — AFP

SOUTHAMPTON STUN LIVERPOOL TO REACH LEAGUE CUP FINAL

LONDON: Shane Long struck a stoppage-time winner as Southampton upset Liverpool 1-0 at Anfield on Wednesday to become the first side to reach the League Cup final without conceding after expertly manning the barricades in their last-four second leg clash.

Liverpool laid siege to Southampton's goal in the second half having been outplayed in the opening 45 minutes, but the visitors were doggedly determined to keep the hosts at bay and poached a winner at the death to seal a 2-0 aggregate victory. Southampton had chances to put the tie to bed in the first half, with Dusan Tadic and Steven Davis guilty of poor finishing, but after the break it was all Liverpool and Daniel Sturridge wasted two superb chances.

With the seconds ticking away, Liverpool felt they should have had a penalty when Divock Origi appeared to be tripped in the area, but Southampton broke swiftly and substitute Long blasted a shot past Loris Karius.

Southampton, who have sold millions of pounds worth of players to Liverpool in recent seasons, will face either Manchester United or Hull City in the final. United will take a 2-0 lead into the semi-final second leg at Hull later.

Southampton's victory continued a remarkable run that has seen them shut out Crystal Palace, Sunderland, Arsenal and now Liverpool, the Premier League's top scorers.

The Saints, who have not won a major trophy since lifting the FA Cup in 1976, arrived at Anfield with a gameplan that worked to perfection as the visitors sat back and let Liverpool have the ball, while looking to spring fast, incisive counter attacks at every opportunity. Nathan Redmond, who scored the only goal of the first leg when he also missed a bagful of chances, was a persistent nuisance for Liverpool's defenders, who were frequently exposed by the winger's pace and trickery. Redmond's slalom runs from deep created the first half's best two chances as he first teed up Tadic, who could not beat Karius from close range, and then laid on a superb opportunity for Davis, who blasted over from 10 metres. — Reuters

CELTA OUSTS REAL FROM COPA QUARTERFINALS

MADRID: Celta Vigo pulled off another major upset in the Copa del Rey, eliminating Real Madrid with a 2-2 home draw on Wednesday to reach the semifinals for the second straight season. A year after ousting Atletico Madrid in the quarterfinals, Celta knocked Real Madrid out at the same stage with a 4-3 aggregate victory. It had stunned the Spanish powerhouse with 2-1 win in the first leg at Santiago Bernabeu Stadium last week.

The result dashed Madrid's hopes of winning five titles this season. It had already won the European Super Cup and the Club World Cup, and remains in contention in the Champions League and the Spanish league.

"We played a good match but in the end it wasn't possible to advance," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "We are disappointed, but we have to keep working and focus on the competitions we can still win."

Celta broke the deadlock just before halftime at a packed Balaidos Stadium in Vigo with an own goal by Madrid defender Danilo, who had already been loudly criticized by fans because of a string of poor performances. The ball ricocheted off the legs of the Brazilian right back after a save by goalkeeper Kiko Casilla.

Cristiano Ronaldo, who twice hit the woodwork when the game was scoreless in the first half, equalized with a free kick from about 30 meters (yards) out in the 62nd minute. But Danish midfielder Daniel Wass restored Celta's lead with a low shot from the edge of the area in the 85th.

Lucas Vazquez equalized again amid heavy rain with a header in the 90th, but Madrid failed to find a third goal to advance. Madrid, seeking its first Copa title since 2014, had been disqualified in the opening round of last season's competition after fielding an ineligible player.

Zidane's team was without defender Marcelo and midfielder Luka Modric because of injuries sustained in a Spanish league match tomorrow.

Celta has never won the Copa del

Rey and hasn't made it to the final since 2001, when it lost to Real Zaragoza. Two-time defending champion Barcelona will try to reach the semifinals for the seventh straight season on Thursday when it hosts Real Sociedad. The Catalan club won the first leg 1-0.

EIBAR 2, ATLETICO MADRID 2

Atletico Madrid is back in the semifinals after being eliminated in the quarterfinals for the last two seasons, holding on for a draw at Eibar to advance 5-2 on aggregate. Atletico took the lead with a header by Uruguay defender Jose Gimenez in the 49th minute, but the hosts rallied with goals by Sergi Enrich in the 73rd and Pedro Leon in the 80th. Enrich's neat

volley from inside the area was set up by Leon only a few seconds after both players had entered the match as second-half substitutes.

Juanfran Torres scoring Atletico's second goal in the Basque Country with a lob over the goalkeeper in the 85th. Atletico, which is trying to win the Copa del Rey for the first time since 2013, was eliminated by Celta Vigo in the quarterfinals last season, and by Barcelona at the same stage in the previous year.

Eibar was playing in the Copa quarterfinals for the first time. On Tuesday, Alaves advanced 2-0 on aggregate by drawing second-division club Alcorcon at home, reaching the semifinals for the first time in 13 years. — AP



VIGO: Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos, left, and RC Celta's Jonny Castro in action during a Copa del Rey, quarter final, 2nd leg soccer match between Celta and Real Madrid at the Balaidos stadium in Vigo, Spain, Wednesday. — AP

FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2017

Friday Times
Sports

www.kuwaittimes.net



OSTRAVA: Laurence Fournier Beaudry and Nikolaj Sorensen of Denmark compete during the Ice Dance / Short Dance program of the European Figure Skating Championships in Ostrava, Czech Republic yesterday. — AFP