



MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2017

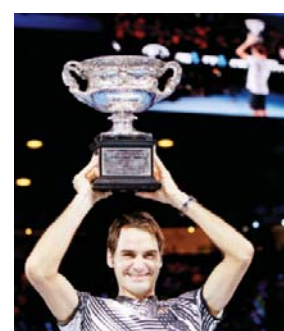
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**Kuwait awaiting
instructions to
implement US
ban at airport**

**In one week,
Trump shakes
up Washington
and the world**

**Expert advises
investors facing
global rise in
populist politics**

**Federer wins
Nadal thriller
to clinch
18th Slam**


150 FILS

NO: 17126

40 PAGES

AMBASSADORS OF GLOBALIZATION: A NEW CHALLENGE FOR KUWAITIS

POPULISM, NATIONALISM, PROTECTIONISM RISING


 Min 04°
 Max 16°
 High Tide
 00:31 & 14:20
 Low Tide
 07:55 & 19:48

AMIR ATTENDS FLAG CEREMONY



KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah kisses the Kuwaiti flag yesterday at Bayan Palace during a flag hoisting ceremony marking the 11th year since he assumed power and the start of Kuwait's 56th National Day and 26th Liberation Day anniversaries. HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah is seen at left. — KUNA (See Page 2)

By Bader N Al-Kharafi and Omar K Alghanim

DAVOS: Every year, world leaders, global business elite and some of the world's brightest academics attend the World Economic Forum's (WEF) annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland. Attendees this year included Microsoft founder Bill Gates, JP Morgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon, Chinese President Xi Jinping and many others. Kuwait is well represented at this event through ministers, businessmen, and of course, the Kuwait Investment Authority. We participate in open and closed door discussions on topics ranging from the 'Youth Imperative' (ie addressing the 13 percent of the world's youth that is unemployed - 30 percent in our region) to 'Smart Cities as Innovation Hubs'; from 'Climate Change' to the 'Future of the Digital Economy'.

As business leaders of our organizations, we've had the privilege of attending and participating in the WEF annual meeting, as well as the regional meeting for many years. It's safe to say - this year was unlike any other. The overarching theme of populism and radical nationalism loomed over every discussion. President Donald Trump's inauguration in the United States, Prime Minister Theresa May's defiant speech (cementing Britain's plan to leave the single market) and Marine Le Pen making traction in France were all topics of conversation.

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DAVOS: (From left) Abdullatif Al-Shareakh, Bader Al-Kharafi, Omar Alghanim and Malik Marafie attend a session at the World Economic Forum's annual meeting.

News

in brief

Kuwait bourse at 26-mth high

KUWAIT: Kuwait Stock Exchange yesterday added 1.3 percent to touch a fresh 26-month high in a broad-based climb and heavy volumes, bringing its rise this month to nearly 21 percent. Kuwait stocks, the world's best performers this year, extended a rally to an 18th day, the longest winning streak in over a decade, as the country moved a step closer to a debut sale of dollar bonds. Today, the government is to announce details of its long-term economic development plan, which could help the stock market if it gives more impetus to big infrastructure projects. The Kuwait Stock Exchange Index advanced 1.3 percent to 6,943.24 yesterday, the highest level since Nov 2014.

Bahrain policeman killed in 'terror act'

DUBAI: An off-duty policeman was shot dead in Bahrain yesterday in what the interior ministry called a "terrorist act", state news agency BNA reported. "The Interior Ministry mourns with great sadness and sorrow the martyr Lieutenant Hisham Hassan Mohammed Al-Hammadi, who was shot and killed in the Bilad Al-Qadeem area," southwest of the capital Manama, the interior ministry said. "Initial indications suggest that it was a terrorist act and that he was not on duty."

UAE to grant Russian visitors arrival visas

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates will offer Russian visitors visas on arrival in the country in a bid to boost tourism and trade, state news agency WAM reported yesterday. Prime Minister and ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum has approved a cabinet decree recommending Russians be granted visas as soon as they arrive. The UAE, home to global tourism hub Dubai, is keen to bolster trade and tourism as visitor numbers from once core markets, including Russia, have declined due to economic slowdowns and a strong dollar. Last September, the UAE granted visas on arrival to holders of Chinese passports. Over 600,000 Russian tourists visited the UAE over the past two years, according to WAM.

Top Muslim lawyer killed in Myanmar

YANGON: A prominent Muslim lawyer and member of Myanmar's ruling party was shot dead along with a taxi driver outside Yangon's international airport yesterday, officials said. Ko Ni, a legal advisor to Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party, was gunned down as he got into a taxi outside arrivals around 5 pm (1030 GMT) by an assassin who also killed the driver. The gunman was arrested. Zaw Htay, a spokesman at the president's office, said Ko Ni had just returned from a government delegation trip to Indonesia. There were no reports on possible motives behind the murder but the daylight slaying will do little to calm already heightened nerves within Myanmar's Muslim community.

TRUMP UNREPENTANT ON TRAVEL BAN

ORDER LOSES FIRST LEGAL BATTLE AMID PROTESTS



NEW YORK: Protesters are surrounded by police officers and travelers as they pass through an exit of Terminal 4 at John F Kennedy International Airport on Saturday. — AP

NEW YORK: The United States braced yesterday for more furious protests against Donald Trump's ban on travelers from seven Muslim countries as the White House doubled down despite a partial stay from a federal judge. Protests were scheduled outside the White House and in New York's Battery Park, which looks across to the Statue of Liberty - America's famed beacon of freedom and immigration - and expected at airports nationwide.

Trump signed the temporary ban as an executive order on Friday afternoon, suspending the arrival of all refugees for at least 120 days and barring visa holders from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Also affected were foreign dual nationals, who may not have needed a visa to enter the United States, for example British citizens, and at least initially green card holders already on the path to US citizenship.

The inclusion of green card holders sparked particular outrage, leading White House chief of staff Reince Priebus to

backpedal yesterday, telling CBS television that the ban "didn't affect them". Nevertheless they are still liable to face "extreme vetting" at US borders upon arrival. The travel ban triggered shock and confusion, as well as a wave of anger at home and abroad, sparking demonstrations Saturday at airports in Washington, Chicago, Minneapolis, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Dallas.

Travelers were detained at US borders, splitting families - such as a father unable to reach his son's wedding, and a grandmother unable to meet her grandchildren - and officials warned it was a "gift to extremists". On Saturday night, a federal judge in New York partially blocked the order, saying that US authorities could not to deport refugees or other people detained on arrival. But Trump - the New York real estate billionaire turned Republican commander-in-chief - was unrepentant yesterday, defending his policy in the face of growing outrage across

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MP URGES QUICK SOLUTION IN HEALTH INSURANCE ROW

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: MP Faisal Al-Kandari yesterday urged Health Minister Jamal Al-Harbi to find a quick solution to the health insurance problem after he cancelled the private company's contract. The cancellation has resulted in massive crowds at health insurance centers and long delays for stamping or renewing residence permits, because health insurance is a precondition for residence processing.

Two weeks ago, the health minister said the ministry plans to not renew its contract with the private company that has been entrusted with issuing the health insurance, citing delays in issuing the documents. After that, the company started to delay issuing health insurance, apparently deliberately in protest against the planned cancellation of the contract. This has resulted in long queues of expatriates lining at health insurance centers, with some people starting to line up as early as dawn. Delays in residence processing could end up in fines.

MP Kandari said obtaining health insurance documents currently takes several days against only a few minutes in the past, because there is no alternative company to replace the existing one. The lawmaker urged the authorities to immediately sign a contract with another company and called on officials to visit the health insurance centers to see the large number of people there.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly's legal and legislative committee yesterday approved a key amendment to the nationality law under which children of Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis will be entitled to get Kuwaiti citizenship on par with children of Kuwaiti men. The amendment will now go to the interior and defense

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US FORCES IN YEMEN RAID

ADEN: Elite US forces launched a dawn raid against Al-Qaeda in Yemen yesterday, killing at least 14 suspected militants in an operation in which an American soldier also died. The assault marked Washington's first major military action in Yemen under President Donald Trump, who has vowed to step up the US fight against "Islamic extremism". The US military said the raid in the Yakla region of Baida province killed 14 members of Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which Washington views as the global network's most dangerous branch.

A Yemeni provincial official gave a higher toll of 41 presumed militants and 16 civilians killed in the raid, including eight women and eight children. Washington did not specify how the US soldier died. It said three more American servicemen were injured in the raid along with a fourth who was hurt in a "hard landing". "We are deeply saddened by the loss of one of our elite service members," said General Joseph Votel, commander of US Central Command in Tampa, Florida. "The sacrifices are very profound in our fight against terrorists who threaten innocent peoples across the globe," Votel said.

A statement from US Central Command said that an aircraft used in the raid had to be "intentionally destroyed".

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VICTORIA, Texas: The burning Islamic Center of Victoria is seen on Saturday. — AP

BLAZE DESTROYS TEXAS MOSQUE

VICTORIA, Texas: An early-morning fire Saturday destroyed a Texas mosque that was a target of hatred several years ago and experienced a burglary just a week ago. A clerk at a convenience store spotted smoke and flames billowing from the Islamic Center of Victoria at around 2 am and called the fire department. "It's sad to stand there and watch it collapse down, and the fire was so huge," Shahid Hashmi, the Islamic center's president, said. "It looks completely destroyed."

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KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah waves as he arrives to the flag hoisting ceremony at Bayan Palace yesterday.



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and other state officials attend the ceremony.



Cabinet ministers and other top state officials attend the ceremony. — Amiri Diwan and KUNA photos

OFFICIALS CONGRATULATE AMIR ON 'VERSARY OF HIS REIGN

CROWN PRINCE SAYS NATIONAL UNITY IS WAY TO SECURE FUTURE

KUWAIT: Marking the 11th year anniversary since he assumed power, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a cable of congratulation from His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. In his cable, Sheikh Nawaf expressed his blessings and congratulations on the occasion, expressing best wishes, good health, and prosperity to His Highness the Amir. In turn, His Highness the Amir sent a cable thanking His Highness the Crown Prince for his kindness and sentiments.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir received a cable from National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, congratulating him on the anniversary. In his cable, Ghanem underscored the joyous occasion as an opportunity to cherish the sage leadership of His Highness the Amir, citing achievements that have propelled Kuwait to global prominence, as he wished His Highness the Amir and the nation continued prosperity.

In a cable forwarded to the Parliament Speaker, His Highness the Amir thanked Ghanem and the National Assembly for the well wishes, expressing hope that the country will continue to navigate a path towards

success and development.

Also, His Highness the Amir received a cable from His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, who said that the nation is proud of achievements made with His Highness the Amir at the helm, adding that His Highness the Amir's words of wisdom have reinforced such virtues as forgiveness and unity, as he wished Kuwait continued stability and development. In return, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to His Highness the Prime Minister, in which he expressed gratitude for the well wishes, and hope for persistent peace and prosperity in the country.

Furthermore, His Highness the Amir received a cable from Chief of the National Guard His Highness Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah, in which he conveyed his heartiest congratulations to His Highness the Amir on the joyous occasion, thanking him for his diligent efforts that have resulted in numerous outstanding achievements. In response, His Highness the Amir sent a cable to the Chief of the National Guard, thanking him for his words and wishing Kuwait persistent security, prosperity and development.

In the meantime, His Highness the Amir received a cable from His Highness Sheikh

Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, congratulating him on the anniversary, and saying that he is very proud of achievements made under the leadership of His Highness the Amir, wishing His Highness the Amir and the nation continued prosperity. In response, His Highness the Amir sent His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad a cable, thanking him for his words and wishing Kuwait persistent development and success.

National unity

Earlier, His Highness the Crown Prince urged Kuwaiti people to maintain national unity and stand united in the face of anyone who wants to tamper with the national fabric, security and stability. His Highness the Crown Prince said in an interview with Kuwaiti daily Al-Seyassah newspaper published yesterday, that Kuwait's foreign policy is based on the principle of respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the affairs of others as it refuses anyone to interfere in its internal affairs.

He congratulated His Highness the Amir in particular and the people of Kuwait in general on the 11th anniversary of His Highness the Amir's assumption to power,



A traditional 'Ardha' dance is performed during the ceremony. which is observed today, coinciding with national holidays as well, pointing out that "our national unity is key to a secure future." He also called on everyone to "line up behind His Highness the Amir, our leader of wisdom and humanity for the safety of our homeland especially in light of the ongoing circumstances prevailing in the region and their repercussions on the various countries of the region." His Highness the Crown Prince also called on the youth to work individually and collectively for the advancement of the country and raise its name high among nations. — KUNA

AMIR MEETS SENIOR OFFICIALS

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday at Bayan Palace His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir also received National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem. Later, His Highness the Amir received His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. His Highness the Amir received First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Crown

Prince received Ghanem, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Sheikh Mohammad Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah.

Sheikh Nawaf also received Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Sabah. — KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with top state officials. — Amiri Diwan photo



KUWAIT: Governorates around Kuwait hosted their own flag hoisting ceremonies yesterday marking the 11th year anniversary since His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah assumed power and the start of Kuwait's 56th independent day anniversary, and 26th Liberation day anniversary. — Photos by Fouad Al-Shaikh and KUNA

Legalese

VISA, RESIDENCY
QUESTIONS

By Attorney Fajer Ahmed

It is no secret that Kuwait has changed immensely in the past few years. Last week I was in Dubai for a business meeting and met a lovely expat lawyer who used to work in Kuwait for seven years between, 2000 and 2007. She told me that she got an offer to return in 2011 but refused. Although she loved Kuwait and enjoyed her time here, she didn't want to come back because her colleagues told her that Kuwait has changed for expats, and although some might see it positively and some might see it negatively, it was different and she should keep that in mind.

One difference she said many people are seeing is stricter regulations regarding visas and visa issues. Stricter, more organized laws are expected as the country grows and creates ties with international countries. Because of these major changes, visa bylaws for expats have become so confusing that even lawyers are confused. One major reason is they are bylaws and not laws. What is the difference between a bylaw and a law? I will explain this in simple terms that everyone can understand and that may not be legally correct. Unlike a law, a bylaw doesn't go through parliament to be changed, no one votes and there are no official procedures. Instead, the ministry can issue them. Bylaws are therefore easy to change, and are usually used for issues that need to be changed often, like traffic violation fees, and administrative issues. So today I will answer common questions I get about visa.

Temporary visa

Question: If my visa/residency expired and I have a case in shoon (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor) against my employer because of visa-related issues, what can I do? I am really worried about moving around in Kuwait without a visa.

Fajer: If your working visa/residency has expired and you have a case against your employer then you need to get a temporary visa issued from shoon. You need to ask shoon for this and although the process may be very complicated, it is important to take this step. Temporary visas can last between one and three months, giving you enough time to find a lawyer in Kuwait to represent you so you can go home, or for you to find a new sponsor.

Time frame

Question: I don't want to work for my employer anymore and I want to transfer. Can I get release from them even though I haven't found a new job?

Fajer: I would always suggest to my clients that they find another job before they ask for a transfer. This is because it is smart to always have a plan before you make a decision. Unless your work environment is not safe, I would wait it out and take all the right steps. With that said, you can get a release and some companies will give you a time frame for you to find another job. Most companies give around two weeks.

'Wrong' visa

Question: Can I work in Kuwait on the wrong visa?

Fajer: No. I receive this question very often and it does not make sense to me. In every country you will need the proper paperwork to work as an employee. The law being confusing is not an excuse. I see people all the time coming to me working as tourists or on dependent visas and it is wrong. As a lawyer I cannot, and will not, encourage this behavior. Just because you think everyone is getting away with it, it doesn't mean that people will continue getting away with it. This kind of behavior will encourage the government rightfully to enforce deportation.

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

MINISTRY DENIES
SOCIAL MEDIA
MONITORING DECREE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and Agencies

KUWAIT: The Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior yesterday dismissed as 'baseless' reports on a decree authorizing the tapping of personal phone calls and monitoring of social media and relevant applications.

Social media reports on the launching of the so-called "new communication system" is totally "divorced from reality and based on inaccurate and unreliable information," the ministry said in a statement quoted by Kuwait News Agency (KUNA).

However, the ministry stressed commitment to doing its security duties by means of taking measures in line with law without having to restrict personal freedoms of citizens and residents. It added that it only enforces the cybercrime law by receiving and investigating complaints and then referring them to involved agencies.

Mystery resolved

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior's Relation and Security Media Department said that they managed to identify people who appeared in a video broadcast that went viral on social media networks that appeared to show two people carrying someone into his house. The person who was being carried is a Kuwaiti man who had died in a local restaurant and was carried home by a citizen and a restaurant staff member, the ministry said, adding that the two persons were arrested. The department added that investigations are underway to determine the cause of death. The department also denied various reports that were posted as comments on the video.

KUWAIT WAITING FOR INSTRUCTIONS TO
IMPLEMENT TRUMP BAN AT AIRPORT

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: A diplomatic source stressed that Kuwait had not received any correspondence from US authorities concerning banning the entry of Iraqis, Syrians, Sudanese, Libyans, Yemenis, Iranians and Somalis, and that as soon as such regulations arrive, they will be implemented on travelers to the US at Kuwait International Airport. The sources added that the US Department of State has not yet instructed its embassies worldwide on how to deal with the holders of entry visas and green cards from the aforementioned countries.

Social allowances

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL) has asked for the Fatwa and Legislation Department's opinion on the legality of adjusting and cutting social aid as stipulated in decree number 23/2013, which suggested cutting social aid allowance from KD 559 to KD 302, cutting wife and eldest child allowances from KD

121 to KD 100, cutting children's allowances from KD 65 to KD 50 for a maximum of seven kids, halting pre-university students' allowances of KD 65 and increasing the definition of senior age from 60 to 65. MSAL also expressed its wish to amend some of the texts and definitions used in the decree. On that regard, MP Saadoun Hammad Al-Otaibi stressed that a proposal will be filed in the parliament session due to be held tomorrow to discuss MSAL's decision to halt social aid allowances for some categories of recipients. He added a considerable number of MPs have already signed the request.

Zour shares

Offering citizens' shares in the First Northern Zour Power Company for public bidding still awaits a bid to be made by a local financial company, said informed sources, noting that the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) is currently working on offering 50 percent of the shares for public bidding within a few months to determine the

maximum number of shares per citizen. KAPP asked the Finance Ministry to pay the bidding cost of KD 1 million in order to avoid making citizens pay it, which is already under study by the ministry.

London investments

Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) is currently considering increasing its investments in the London stock market as part of managing a new portion of the national investment portfolio. Notably, a large number of investment companies had contacted KIA requesting re-investing parts of their capital in local markets, especially in view of the current positive activity at the Kuwait bourse since the beginning of the year.

Sulaibikhat's seafront

A report by Kuwait Municipality on developing the seafront in Sulaibikhat as part of the 2018-2019 plan will start in 2019 and last until Jan 2022. The report explained that the project aims at developing all areas overlooking Kuwait Bay as part

of Kuwait's general development plan.

Union approved

The National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) - UK branch announced that the British government has approved its proclamation to act as a legal official body representing Kuwaiti students in UK in accordance with UK laws and the union's and Kuwait's education ministry regulations. In a statement made by the union, it stressed that the aim of the proclamation was to support Kuwaiti students studying in Britain. The statement added that the idea came up in 2005, until the 2016-2017 elected union board managed to achieve it after a meticulous legal study made on the fatherly advice by the dean of the diplomatic corps in London and Kuwait's ambassador Khaled Al-Dowaisan. Further, the union set Feb 25 to hold its administration elections at the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge Hotel and stressed that membership registration can be only done online on the union's website.



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem meets with German Parliament Member Dr Peter Ramzaor. — KUNA

PARLIAMENT SPEAKER
RECEIVES GERMAN MPs

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem met in his office yesterday with visiting German Parliament Member Dr Peter Ramzaor and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, they dis-

cussed the ongoing cooperation between both nations and ways to enhance it, in addition to a number of issues with mutual concern and the latest regional and international developments. The meeting was

attended by the Rapporteur of the National Assembly's Economic and Financial Affairs Committee Safaa Al-Hashem and the Rapporteur of the Foreign Affairs Committee Yousef Al-Fadallah. — KUNA

KIB HOLDS TRAINING COURSE FOR
'MY BUSINESS' STUDENT PROGRAM

KUWAIT: Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently hosted a training course on the banking sector and the inner workings of Islamic banks for a group of middle school students, as part of the Bank's partnership with the 'My Business' entrepreneurial program for students. This training course comes as the latest in a series of community initiatives spearheaded by KIB focusing on supporting the education sector in Kuwait.

"This on-site training program enabled students to learn about the

different departments of the Bank, and understand the role and function of each. It was also a great opportunity for them to learn more about the basics of Islamic banking, introducing them to the different sharia compliant offerings that we have to offer," said Nawaf Najia, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB. Najia further added: "KIB's ongoing collaboration with the My Business program is just one of our many initiatives targeting students in Kuwait. One of our key goals is to introduce students to the

different components and functions of the banking sector. We also seek to show students how Islamic and conventional banks operate differently."

As part of its social responsibility program, KIB devotes special attention to the country's youth and student populations, supporting a diverse range of youth-focused initiatives and programs. The Bank also actively seeks to encourage students in Kuwait to pursue careers in the Banking sector, in order to help drive development and innovation in the industry.

MINISTER ENCOURAGES
KUWAITIS TO WORK AS
IMAMS, MUEZZINS

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammad Al-Jabri stressed his keenness on executing the Awqaf ministry's strategy on professional performance development. Jabri added that he also instructed his undersecretary to report on all the ministry committees pending their reformation and adjusting the duties of some of them in the new fiscal year. He also recommended not forming committees again that had no positive and tangible results. Jabri said the ministry is also keen on encouraging Kuwaitis to work as imams and muezzins and that it is currently working on filling vacancies for senior positions in accordance with Civil Service Commission (CSC) and ministry conditions.



**Awqaf Minister
Mohammad Al-Jabri**

Urgent meeting

Municipal Council member and head of the reform and development committee Osama Humoud Al-Otaibi called for holding an urgent council meeting of all members. In a request he filed to Chairman Muhamel Al-Khaled, Otaibi said that in view of withholding some information from members, a meeting was necessary to discuss developments. The council has yet to meet since six members resigned last November to contest for parliamentary elections.

Fishermen's village

Chairman of Kuwait Fishermen Union Thaher Al-Sowayyan stressed the significance of building the new fishermen's village they had been promised since 2000 when the old village's land in Doha was appropriated. Sowayyan added that fishermen have been suffering for a month now because of blackouts at their dormitories without having any alternative accommodation, and warned that such a situation would eventually affect the volume of the daily catch and thus impact food security in local markets in terms of fish availability.



KUWAIT: Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah received yesterday Vatican's Apostolic Nuncio to Kuwait, Archbishop Francisco Montecillo Padilla. During the meeting, Sheikh Nasser and Archbishop Francisco discussed several issues of mutual concern. — KUNA

GULF INSURANCE GROUP CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THE PROTEGES

KUWAIT: Gulf Insurance Group, the leading insurance services provider in Kuwait and the Middle East, has announced its continuous support to 'The Proteges Program' for the fourth consecutive year under KIPCO's umbrella. The support is in line with our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program, which is aimed at the continuous support of initiatives that benefit society for a social cause that makes Gulf Insurance a constant and active member of the society.

Since the Program has been designed to positively influence and to discover extraordinary potential in Kuwait's youth community, it reflects our social commitment to support and sustain the development of future generations while contributing to the advancements in the country. Gulf Insurance Group is always ahead to seize every opportunity to motivate and master young Kuwaiti talents to mold future leaders of our country.

It is worth to mention that we have

developed our own semi academic program as leaders of our industry some time ago called Management Development Program (MDP). The program is aimed at discovering the tremendous potential amongst Kuwaiti youth who possess professional educational qualifications attained locally or overseas in order to equip them with both the knowledge and skills required to become successful managers in the insurance field and in the company. The program is structured through a selection process, in-house classroom training and on-the-job learning programs at life and non-life business departments. Three modules of the program are complete so far and 66 enthusiastic Kuwaiti participants have joined the program as of today. The fourth module is currently running. Gulf Insurance believes collaborating the program along with our parent company KIPCO and other group companies, will bring a strategic edge to the company's stand in supporting the society.





KUWAIT: The 23rd Al-Qurain Cultural Festival concluded Saturday evening with a concert by the Albanian Symphony Orchestra at the Abdulhussein Abdulredha Theater in Salmiya. Officials from the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), diplomats and other dignitaries attended the event. — Photos by Joseph Shagra

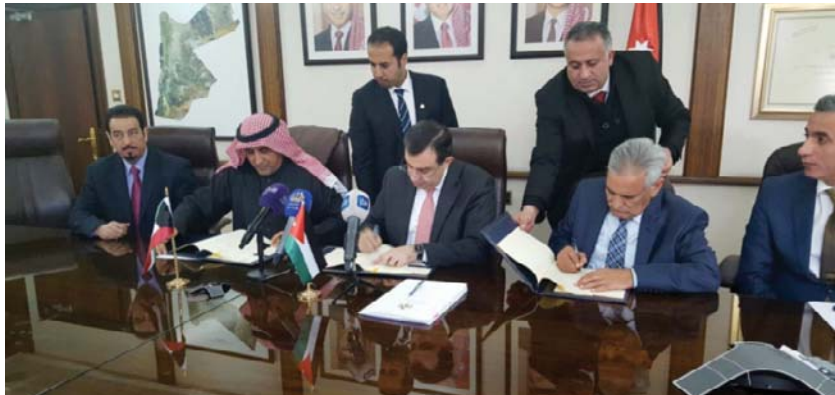
KFAED SIGNS \$14.1M GRANT DEAL WITH JORDAN

AMMAN: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has inked a grant agreement worth \$14.1 million with the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. The deal was signed by KFAED Director-General Abdelwahab Al-Bader and Jordanian Minister of Planning Emad Al-Fakhouri, in presence of Kuwaiti Ambassador in Amman Hamad Al-Duaij. The grant will be used in bankrolling the operations of Jordan's Cities and Villages Development Bank (CVDB).

Speaking on the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Bader said the fresh agreement is part of Kuwait's five-year \$1.2-billion grant allocated to the Jordanian government. The financed project mainly aims at cutting joblessness, revamping

public services and improving the living conditions of the residents of Jordanian municipalities, he added. The grant will also help the bank provide loans for the bankrolling of 26 development projects, he noted.

Meanwhile, Jordanian Minister of Planning Emad Al-Fakhouri appreciated Kuwait's relentless support to his country over years of firm and distinguished relations. He said Kuwaiti aid to Jordan also covers Syrian refugees through three grants to the value of \$58 million. Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has provided Jordan with a total of 26 loans worth \$580 million for financing development projects in various sectors, in addition to six technical aid worth KD 10.4 million. — KUNA



AMMAN: KFAED Director-General Abdelwahab Al-Bader and Jordanian Minister of Planning Emad Al-Fakhouri sign the agreement. — KUNA



TIRANA: The Kuwaiti students pose for a photo at the airport before flying back to Kuwait. — KUNA

TRIP OF TALENTED KUWAITI FEMALE STUDENTS TO ALBANIA WRAPS UP

TIRANA: Kuwaiti talented female students concluded their visit to Albania yesterday which was organized by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The students visited the two cities of Kruje and Shkodra. The group's tour also included the Kruje Bazaar that dates back to the Middle Ages. Located inside the fortified walls of the Kruje castle, the Bazaar is both a historic attraction and a shopping opportunity for those hunting for authentic Albanian souvenirs. The "Be Excellent" delegation also visited the George Castriot Castle, located on 600 meters above the Sea level, in Kruje, 32 kilometers from the capital Tirana.

During their visit to the National

Museum built close to the castle, the Kuwaiti top Thanawya Amma (secondary school) students were briefed on the history of the renowned military commander George Castriot (Skanderbeg) (1405-1468). The students also toured the city of Shkodra, northwest, one of the oldest and most historic places in Albania and the Balkans. It is also an important cultural and economic center. In ancient times, Shkodra was known under the name Scodra and was the capital of the Labeates, an old Illyrian tribe. The Rozafa Castle and the Abu-Bakr Mosque are two main landmark sites in the city. The students said that they have really benefited from this tour and became acquainted with the various projects carried out by KFAED in Albania. — KUNA

KUWAITI LAWYERS VISIT HOLLAND

BRUSSELS: A 35-member delegation from the Kuwait Lawyers Association begins today a trip to the Netherlands in order to visit the judicial and international legal organizations based in the country. Tarek Yousuf Al-Shumaimri, Counselor at Embassy of the State of Kuwait and chairman of the Financial and Administrative Committee of Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, announced that the delegation will attend a number of hearings at the international court of justice in The Hague.

They will also visit the International Criminal Court and meet with their counterparts in the International Bar Association to gain advantage of international experience in trials and mechanism of action of the lawyers in those courts. Shumaimri said that this visit is the second from the Kuwait Lawyers Association in coordination with the Kuwait Embassy in The Hague after their first successful visit in 2015.

He noted that the 5-day program of the visit includes a tour of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security, the International Kuwait Petroleum (Q8) Europe head office and the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in The Hague. He expressed his thanks to the role played by Kuwait's ambassador in The Hague Abdulaziz Al-Roumi in facilitating all matters relating to the visit of the Kuwait lawyers. — KUNA



Counselor at Embassy of Kuwait Tarek Al-Shumaimri

MOH KEEN ON BACKING KUWAIT HEALTH OFFICE IN GERMANY: MINISTER

FRANKFURT: Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi affirmed Saturday the ministry's keenness on supporting the Kuwait Health Office in Germany, to overcome all obstacles. Harbi made his remarks while visiting the Kuwait Health Office in downtown Frankfurt, where he was received by the Office's director Dr Mubarak Al-Qabandi and staff.

The minister also pointed out the discussions he has held with Qabandi regarding the office's efforts, indicating that he has also inspected the office workflow and listened to a comprehensive explanation on its recent activities and development plans.

He also expressed his admiration toward the office's website and e-system, which contribute to facilitating all procedures for Kuwaiti patients in German hospitals, reiterating the

ministry's keenness on meeting the office needs. Meanwhile, the Kuwaiti minister, accompanied by Al-Qabandi and the health office's staff, visited Kuwaiti patients in Median Kaiserberg Clinic, located in south-central Frankfurt, during which they checked on the patients' condition and the hospital's facilities, in addition to conducting consultations with the medical team in charge of treating the Kuwaiti patients.

Harbi also talked with the Kuwaiti patients and listened to their requests, pledging to meet all their needs, cooperate, and communicate with them closely. He also expressed his gratitude to the director and staff of the Kuwait Health Office in Frankfurt, valuing their efforts in providing all forms of assistances for the Kuwaiti patients in German hospitals. — KUNA



FRANKFURT: Kuwait's Health Minister Dr Jamal Al-Harbi visits the Kuwait Health Office in downtown Frankfurt. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Officials and graduates pose for a group photo at the ceremony.

DUNDEE UNIVERSITY, DIABETES INSTITUTE CELEBRATE 'POSTGRADUATE' ANNIVERSARY

KUWAIT: Diabetes is a significant problem in Kuwait where it has been estimated that up to one in four of the adult population suffers from the disease. Since 2011, the University of Dundee, a world leader in clinical diabetes care and diabetes research, in partnership with the Dasman Diabetes Institute (which was established by Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences "KFAS"), with its mission to prevent, control and mitigate the impact of diabetes in Kuwait have created and delivered a Postgraduate Master's program in Diabetes Care, Education and Management. This program is available to a wide range of Kuwait based healthcare professionals who study part time while in work.

blended, interactive teaching, the program enables healthcare professionals to provide more effective care for their patients. They gain specialized knowledge of diabetes along with educational and management training that supports them in effective communication with colleagues and patients.

Throughout their studies students undertake multiple work-based development projects as assignments with the aim of immediately improving and developing diabetes healthcare provision and reflective practice throughout healthcare practices in Kuwait. So far, over 300 students have enrolled on the program and collectively they have achieved over 1000 work-based projects, directly impacting diabetes care in Kuwait.

The fourth Graduation Ceremony held yesterday marks the successful achievement of 48 new graduates who join a group of 139 total graduates across Kuwait. The program still aims to deliver transformational change within the Kuwaiti healthcare system, with a specific focus on diabetes. Students continue to encourage change through their workplace based projects, publishing dissertation outcomes through journals.

For all students the Graduation at the Dasman Diabetes Institute is the pinnacle of three years of hard work and dedication and Sunday's celebration brings together dignitaries from across Kuwait and Scotland to celebrate their considerable achievements.



KUWAIT UNIVERSITY'S FORENSIC SCIENCE CONFERENCE OPENS

KUWAIT: Kuwait University's (KU) Faculty of Medicine has put together its first conference on forensic medicine and criminal science, which runs until January 31. In a speech to open the conference, KU's Dean of the Faculty of Medicine Dr Adel Ayid said that forensic medicine is an integral branch of human medicine, as a growing number of physicians have delved into this significant field. Moreover, he noted that a degree in forensic medicine will prove valuable to a number of government institutions, including the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Ministry of Health (MoH) and KU, adding that this branch of medical

science is used to unravel the cause of death and disease.

On the conference, Ayid said that it will showcase how Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) is employed to uncover causes of death, with participation of a number of foreign scientists. Meanwhile, Assistant Director of KU's Forensic Medicine Department Dr Noura Al-Omair underscored Kuwait's vast knowledge in that field, which proves instrumental in upholding justice. She also pointed out that the department has dealt with a myriad of pivotal issues over the years, chief amongst them is the case of missing Kuwaiti persons in Iraq. — KUNA

**FSRI LAUNCHES INTERNATIONAL MASTER'S
PROGRAM FOR LOCAL GRADUATES, CLINICIANS
FIRST OF ITS KIND IN KUWAIT**

KUWAIT: Under the umbrella of its continuing education program, Fawzia Sultan Rehabilitation Institute (FSRI), the non-profit multidisciplinary healthcare organization, is hosting a Certificate and Master's degree program in International Counseling Psychology in partnership with Lehigh University, one of the United States' premier research universities.

The program is the first of its kind in Kuwait, and affords people in Kuwait who work in social services or have an interest in earning an advanced degree, the opportunity to obtain a degree from a prestigious, top-ranked psychology program. Select courses will be taught in Kuwait by Lehigh University's renowned professors, while other courses will be taught using state-of-the-art online

technology. Upon completion of the four-course certificate program, students may apply for the 10-course International Counseling Master's degree program. The International Counseling Psychology program is specifically geared towards training people in general counseling skills and methods. It would benefit teachers, counselors, psychologists, school administrators, physicians, social workers, human resources, and others seeking to expand their knowledge of counseling within a multi-cultural environment.

Education remains one of the main pillars of FSRI's mission and philosophy, according to its President and Medical Director, Dr Elham Al-Hamdan. "As a healthcare organization operating under a non-profit model, we have always believed

in working towards improving the well-being of our community - first by delivering premier quality healthcare to all segments of society, and then by helping develop the local healthcare sector. We are heavily invested in building local capacity, offering training and professional opportunities to both our staff and clinicians from across the Kuwaiti healthcare community," said Hamdan.

She further added: "As a Kuwaiti institution, we are extremely proud to be recognized internationally as a center for healthcare education and training. Our commitment to offering world-class educational opportunities to local talents is only strengthened by our extensive network of international partners, and our collaborations with leading educational and healthcare institutes from around the globe."

KRCS EFFORTS IN IRAQ HELP EASE PAINS

IRBIL: While millions of Iraqis sought refuge away from areas of conflict in the country, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) continued to play an integral role in providing necessary assistance to help ease their pain and suffering.

Speaking on the society's efforts in Iraq, KRCS's executive Yousef Al-Meraj affirmed that they were amongst the first to respond to the needs of displaced Iraqis fleeing from the ongoing operation to liberate Mosul from the so-called Islamic State (IS). The act of providing a helping hand had reassured KRCS operatives of the necessity of their humanitarian mission in Iraq, said Al-Meraj who noted that the situations in northern Iraq and the Kurdistan region made it paramount

for regional and international organizations to lend assistance to Iraq.

Volunteers Adnan Abdullah Ahmad, Thamer Al-Sawag, and Ahmad Al-Mutairi said in the meantime that they were very glad to have took part in the relief aid operations in Iraqi, saying that they believed their mission was of utmost importance. Since 2015, KRCS have been distributing relief aid materials to thousands of Iraqis who were fleeing from areas controlled by IS. With the launch of the security operation to free Mosul from IS in late 2016, the numbers of displaced Iraqis doubled, leading to an alarming humanitarian situation in the country.

Meanwhile, Kuwait Society for Relief (KSR) distributed yesterday 170 tons of food parcels to 33,000 dis-

places Iraqis from Nineveh to Kirkuk. General Council of Kuwait in Irbil Dr Omar Al-Kandiri said that the society has set a relief plan to offer the humanitarian aid to displaced Iraqis in various parts of the country, a total of 5,630 food parcels will be distributed to in four camps in Kirkuk, northern Iraq in cooperation with the Barzani Charity.

Coordinator of humanitarian aid in Barzani Charity Ismail Abdulaziz said that they delivered 170 tons of food to displaced Iraqis. The official thanked Kuwait for their efforts and humanitarian aid to the displaced. Kuwait sent thousands of relief food parcels to the freed areas since the beginning of the liberation operation in Mosul from the grips of IS since October 17. — KUNA



AND THE OFFERS KEEP SWINGING IN

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209.9^{ED}

7th Generation Kaby Lake New Arrival

Intel CORE i7

606075/6
Inspiron 15 3000 S

Lenovo



0% Cash
6-109.9^{ED} + 6
99.9^{ED}

7th Generation Kaby Lake

Intel CORE i5

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IP110

hp



0% Cash
6-169.9^{ED}

7th Generation Kaby Lake

Intel CORE i5

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LINKSYS



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Range Extender

Single Band

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Photo of the day



KUWAIT: A goldsmith working at his shop in Kuwait City. — KUNA

Crime

Report

MISSING MAN FOUND DEAD

KUWAIT: Following up the case of an Egyptian man who went missing in Hasawi, security sources said that the man was found dead at Jahra hospital after he was admitted there after he was run over by a half lorry in Amghara five days earlier. The accident happened while the man was working at a construction site, according to investigations. Hospital records showed that the man was rushed to the medical facility by a passerby, who said that the truck's driver fled the scene immediately after the accident. The man spent five days inside the intensive care unit before he succumbed to his injuries. Investigations are underway in search for the truck's driver.

Fatal crash

Two Indians were killed and eight others were injured when a vehicle collided into a bus along King Fahd highway, said security sources. A case was filed to investigate the cause of the accident.

Cable theft

The owner of a private company reported the robbery of 14 electric cable rolls from his company's warehouses in Amghara, said security sources. A case was filed and investigations are ongoing to identify and arrest the robbers.

Drug possession

Two citizens were arrested in Salmiya with possession of meth and hashish-stuffed joints, said security sources, noting that patrol officers had suspected a vehicle when the driver failed to keep it on a steady course. Both men on board were nervous, prompting police to search the car and find the drugs. A case was filed.

Salon robbed

The owner of a ladies' beauty salon in Abu Halifa reported that a Syrian hairdresser working for her stole KD 700 as well as some of the salon's tools then vanished. A case was filed and further investigations are in progress.

Hoax call

A Kuwaiti woman was charged with making a hoax emergency call after she called police to report that her mother-in-law stabbed her during the fight. Detectives later found out that the woman suffered only bruises, and had no other injuries.

Ingrate son

Neighbors of an elderly Kuwaiti mother reported that the woman's sixteen-year-old son had slapped her several times and threw her out of their house. A case was filed and the son is being summoned. —Al-Rai

Riding the wave



Al-Anbaa

القبس

Al-Qabas

A PROFESSIONAL POLITICIAN

Joe Biden is considered an example of a professional politician in the Western political world today. Biden began his political life early, elected a senator from Delaware, near Washington DC, when he was only 29. Throughout his years in the Senate, he commuted via train. When his tenure as Vice-President of the world's most powerful country ended, he used the same train to return home one last time.

Barack Obama chose Joe Biden as his Vice-President in 2008 during his presidential campaign, before the American people re-elected the pair in 2012. Biden lost his wife and daughter in a horrific car accident, before his son died from cancer in 2015, aged 45. Biden allegedly did not have enough to pay for his son's treatment.

It might sound unbelievable, but the truth is that the now former vice president's wealth is currently estimated to be less than \$300,000. It is a humble amount for a politician who has spent more than 40 years, more than two-thirds of his life, as an influential member of multiple committees and administrations. Biden returned home with peace of mind after serving his duty without

scandals or embezzlements, and without squandering state funds.

Despite all the failures of the Obama administration abroad, it succeeded domestically in setting ethical rules that many countries, especially us, can learn from. Compared to America, Kuwait is humble in everything. Its Prime Minister relieved one minister, before returning him to the same portfolio two or three years later without stating the reason behind the re-appointment.

This minister, whose career in politics is no more than four or five years, left the country in chaos during his second tenure, the effects of which have not yet ended. He threatened the state budget, squandered over \$2 billion, and caused corruption among some MPs and many citizens as well. He created envy among those who did not benefit from his decisions, and heartbreak amongst those who love their country and worry for its fate. The cabinet then resigned. Former ministers - including said minister - go home to sleep comfortably, sure that no one will hold them accountable because they know this is Kuwait! — Translated by Kuwait Times

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

NOT ONLY SENIOR OFFICIALS' TIME

By Hassan Al-Essa

In a recent statement made by Dr Fahad Al-Rashid, Chairman of the Kuwait National Competitiveness Committee, said that 90 percent of the senior officials' time is wasted and consumed in signing papers and documents and receiving people for insignificant reasons.

Rashid stressed that senior officials' time is wasted in activities that are not part of their job's duties, which is consequently reflected on the employees working under them. He called for guidance, planning and follow up to improve the services provided to the public as well as competence in government bodies, and making these priorities for senior officials.

What an important statement. I do hope that all senior officials and those who selected them will read it. Rashid says that most of the officials are busy signing transactions and meeting officials, which is very meaningless and lumpish and can be done by others. This situation continues to happen though because of the widespread centralization and lack of trust, rules, laws and the prevalence of bureaucracy in the public sector. Why is it mandatory to have the senior official's signature on most transactions? Why cannot senior officials stay long enough in their offices? Why are they always busy meeting peers or the minister? The result of all of this is not only wasting the official's time, but also wasting the public dignity and rights along such corrupt and unproductive administrations' corridors, especially when they are asked to 'come again the next day to have the director sign the transaction or exempt you from one of the conditions needed because he is not available at his office.'

Rashid's statements call us to ask how did such senior officials, who have wasted 90 percent of their time, reach such high positions? How were they selected? On what conditions? Do they match state specification? Have they informed their seniors, such as ministers, about the statistics that Rashid mentioned? Who is the person responsible for such wasted time?

To try and answer the previous questions, we can use guide words such as random selection, empty laws and regulations, lack of the rule of law and fairness on selecting officials and overlapping jurisdictions. Finally, I would like to highlight that it is not officials' time that is being wasted, it is our lives that are being wasted with your administration, though I know all this is in vain.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

NBK SHARES STORY TELLING SESSION AT DASMAN BILINGUAL SCHOOL

KUWAIT: National Bank of Kuwait's (NBK) family paid a visit to Dasman Bilingual School to share a story telling session with the kindergarten students for its healing book 'Abdullah Wins'. The visit to the school was emotional and overwhelming for the children and NBK family, where they enjoyed an interactive reading of the book. Interactive questions and answers occurred between the children and the storytellers to make them engage in the story and be familiar with cases. Free copies of the book were distributed, in addition to branded book marks in English and Arabic. Jammoul character was present to greet and interact with the kids.

Commenting on the visit, NBK Public Relations Officer Joanne Al-Abdul Jaleel said, "This visit is part of our continuous and generous CSR initiatives. We are delighted to be the first bank to come out with this initiative to support children in their battle against cancer and give them

hopes. "Every time we arrange a story telling session, we look at the eyes of the children participating and feel happy to see all of this passion and belief in the strong will and confidence to overcome such a threatening disease," Al-Abdul Jaleel added.

'Abdullah Wins' gives cancer patients a voice to show the whole world that they can. This healing book is part of NBK's long standing support for sick children, from NBK's children hospital and many other related initiatives toward education, health, sports and social responsibilities. In addition to NBK Hospital to support cancer children, the establishment of NBK's Children Hospital for Oncology and Hematology at Al-Sabah Medical Area come in sequence to stand as one of many ongoing corporate social initiatives towards health and children, addressing their needs as much as possible to transform the hospital to the best specialized center in the region for children with severe illnesses.





US faces growing Iraqi backlash to travel ban



WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump smiles after signing three executive actions in the Oval Office. — AP

TRUMP SHAKES UP WASHINGTON AND THE WORLD

FIRST WEEK IN POWER LEADS TO SERIOUS CASE OF POLITICAL WHIPLASH

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump hurtled through his first week in power, punching out at critics, dishing up “alternative facts,” polarizing public opinion and making good on an electoral promise to shake up Washington. One week into the Trump era and there is a serious case of political whiplash in America’s capital.

Just a week ago, an outsider who never before held elected office rode into town. Seven days later, norms and doctrine that have guided the United States for decades are being re-examined. Trump’s down-to-the-studs gut job began with a feisty inaugural address: a call to arms that tested old distinctions between left and right.

“Today, we are not merely transferring power from one administration to another or from one party to another,” he said. “We are transferring power from Washington, DC, and giving it back to you, the people.” The establishment “elites” in big cities, in politics and the media were no longer the technocrats in charge of the world’s only superpower, they were the enemy. The new president also put the rest of the world on notice.

For the last 75 years, America had been what Barack Obama described as the “indispensable nation”—the glue that bound the global order. The era of Trump would be the era of “America first,” he said, of naked self-interest and zero-sum diplomacy. Old alliances would be reassessed, new alliances would be explored. Before his inauguration, many asked if the presidency would change Donald Trump, or whether Donald Trump would change the presidency. Barely 20 minutes into his four-year term, anyone who was listening had their answer.

Rolling thunder

Before arriving to the Oval Office, Trump’s strategists had decided to use the first few weeks to unleash a daily wave of executive orders. The aim was to unbalance opponents, define Trump as a man of action and slake his supporters’ thirst for change. For much of middle America, globalization, automation and the Great Recession had been apocalyptic.

Politics had passed them over and worse, they felt steamrollered by “coastal elites” in America’s “culture wars” over abortion, gay rights, immigration, global warming and religion. Trump had won the election by promising to be their champion, and he was going to—as Ronald Reagan said—“dance with the one that brung ya.” For the most part, the CEO-in-chief put forward actions that could have come from any Republican in the country: defunding abortion, preening the military and approving oil pipelines.

But it was coated with a thick veneer of nationalist and populist rhetoric, and accompanying policies championed by top aide Steve Bannon. Trump ripped up a trans-Pacific trade deal designed to counterbalance China’s regional economic power,

imposed a ban on refugees from Syria and migrants from seven other Muslim countries.

He ordered planning to begin to build a wall on America’s southern border and picked a very public fight with Mexico’s president Enrique Peña Nieto, who canceled a trip to Washington. The United States, a nation founded by migrants, was now willing to shut its doors. Not since Obama’s election or perhaps the Iraq War has America’s image around the world changed so dramatically and so quickly. But Trump supporters saw an outsider sticking up for them and sticking it to the elites. “Get used to it,” said Trump aide Kellyanne Conway, boasting that Trump had delivered a “shock to the system.” “And he’s just getting started,” she said.

Rocky start

But it was not all positive for Trump. The White House is far from purring. Key positions have yet to be filled and the decision making process is haphazard. Trump aides were forced to publicly row back suggestions of a 20 percent border tax on Mexican goods and defend a chaotic rollout of the refugee and migrant ban.

Throughout the week, Trump engaged in intemperate outbursts about the size of his inaugural crowd, alleged election fraud and perceived media persecution. Privately, in call after call, he complained to top aides about press coverage. The impression was of a man focused on his image more than running the country. Trump also seemed like a man for whom becoming US president was not adulation enough. Spokesman Sean Spicer-between tirades and missteps-offered a window onto the soul of the White House.

“There’s this constant theme to undercut the enormous support he has,” Spicer said. “It’s unbelievably frustrating when you’re continually told it’s not big enough; it’s not good enough. You can’t win.” According to a Quinnipiac poll, Trump’s approval rating at the end of his first week stood at 36 percent. But critics saw a more sinister motive for the outbursts, particularly Trump’s unsubstantiated claim that three million people voted illegally in the election.

Brian Klaas, an expert on global democracy at the London School of Economics, sees Trump “casting aspersions (without evidence) on electoral integrity is a key way to restrict voting rights and erode confidence in elections.” “Attacking the media and blurring the lines of truth with state narratives not grounded in fact is important to sowing public doubt,” he said. Mindy Finn, who ran as a independent vice presidential candidate, summed up Trump’s strategy as “sow chaos, deepen division and consolidate power.” For his harshest critics, the question is now whether Donald Trump breaks the presidency, or whether the presidency breaks Donald Trump. —AFP

TRAVELERS SO FAR BLOCKED BY TRUMP TRAVEL CLAMPDOWN

THE HAGUE: Fresh protests were expected at US airports yesterday, following President Donald Trump’s order to suspend refugee arrivals and impose tough controls on travelers from seven mostly Muslim countries. The visa-restricted countries are Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Here are some of the cases known about so far, of people stopped either before boarding flights to the United States or on arrival there.

Iran

Two travel agencies told AFP they had been instructed by Etihad Airways, Emirates and Turkish Airlines not to sell US tickets or allow Iranians holding American visas to board US-bound flights. An Iranian woman blocked from boarding at Tehran airport yesterday said she had waited 14 years for her green card, which was recently approved only for her hopes to be dashed. “Even during the hostage crisis at the US embassy (in 1980), the US government didn’t issue such an order. They say the US is the cradle of liberty. I don’t see freedom in that country,” she said, asking not to be named. “I have sold everything, my house, my furniture. I am totally ruined.”

Hamaseh Tayari, an Iranian postgraduate veterinary student, was due to fly back to university in Glasgow, Scotland from a holiday in Costa Rica, via a connecting flight in New York. But she was refused boarding. “It’s a crazy thing that I really didn’t expect to happen to me,” she told the BBC in an interview. She and her boyfriend had to pay for a new flight from San Jose to Madrid, costing them almost £2,600 (\$3,260).

Egypt

An Iraqi family was barred from flying from Cairo to New York on Saturday. Egyptian officials said the family had visas and were in transit when they were prevented from boarding the EgyptAir plane to New York’s JFK airport. Fuad Sharaf, 51, his wife and three children were instead forced to board a flight back to Arbil in Iraq’s autonomous region of Kurdistan, he

told AFP. “I had sold my house, my car, my furniture. I resigned from work and so did my wife. I took my children out of school,” said Sharaf of the family’s preparations to resettle in Nashville, Tennessee, under a special immigrant visa. “Donald Trump destroyed my life. My family’s life. I used to think America was a state of institutions but it’s as though it’s a dictatorship,” he said.

Austria

At least three Iranian nationals were stopped at Vienna airport on Saturday as they sought to travel to the US, a spokesman for Austrian Airlines said. The trio, an elderly couple and a young woman who all came from the central city of Isfahan, had valid US visas, Peter Thier told the Austria Press Agency. The couple remained stranded in the Austrian capital for the night while the woman had flown back to Iran, he added. Vienna is an important transit hub for Iranians travelling to the US so there could be more cases.

United States

The New York Times reported that authorities detained two Iraqi refugees

who landed at John F. Kennedy airport late Friday, hours after Trump signed the tough new measures. The American Civil Liberties Union and other advocacy groups filed a legal challenge to Trump’s order. Lawyers representing the pair also filed a court appeal for their release, saying they were being unlawfully detained.

Shortly after midday Saturday one of them was released, the newspaper said, naming him as Hameed Khalid Darweesh, an interpreter who worked on behalf of the US government in Iraq. The paper said he cried as he spoke to reporters, miming being handcuffed behind his back. “What I do for this country? They put the cuffs on,” it quoted him as saying. The other Iraqi remained in custody.

France

Air France said Sunday it had refused to embark around 15 people who were nationals of the seven predominantly Muslim countries affected by Trump’s decree coming into force. “Nobody is blocked in Paris and we have made the necessary arrangements to redirect them to their point of origin,” a spokesman said. —AFP



DALLAS: Iranian green card holder Shima Behgooy, right, cries on the shoulders of her father-in-law Ahmad Behgooy, a native of Iran who is now a naturalized US citizen, after she was released from being held at Dallas Fort Worth International Airport. — AP

NETANYAHU IN HOT WATER OVER TRUMP WALL PRAISE

JERUSALEM: When Benjamin Netanyahu sent a tweet in support of US President Donald Trump's plan for a wall along the Mexican border, the Israeli prime minister can barely have expected it would be retweeted 40,000 times and cause a backlash at home and abroad. Already under arguably the greatest pressure he has faced in his 11 years as prime minister, with police questioning him in two criminal probes into abuse of office, aligning himself with Trump may further undermine his standing.

The tweet, sent from his personal account shortly before the Jewish sabbath officially ended on Saturday, was very clear: "President Trump is right. I built a wall along Israel's southern border. It stopped all illegal immigration. Great Success. Great idea," Netanyahu wrote, appending pictures of the Israeli and US flags alongside each other.

Netanyahu was referring to a steel fence Israel has built along its border with Egypt, mainly to keep out migrants fleeing conflicts in Africa, including Somalis, Sudanese and Eritreans. Israel has also built

a steel-and-concrete barrier along its border with the occupied West Bank, which it says is to prevent militants crossing into Israel. Palestinians see the barrier, which has drawn international condemnation, as a land grab.

On the one hand, Trump's election as president was seen as a godsend for Netanyahu, the first time in four terms as prime minister that he would have a Republican in the White House. As well as the Republicans being more ideologically aligned with Netanyahu's right-wing coalition, Trump has already shown a willingness to turn a blind eye to Israel's settlement building in the West Bank, which Barack Obama's administration frequently criticized, casting a pall over US-Israeli ties.

Unpredictable actor

On the other hand, Trump is an unpredictable actor who in just nine days in office has sewn division across the United States and shocked capitals around the world with a series of executive actions

that are overturning decades of US policy. The adverse reaction to Netanyahu's tweet, which was retweeted by Trump and drew far more attention than Netanyahu's tweets usually do as a result, appeared to be an early sign of the danger Netanyahu faces with aligning himself with Trump.

The Mexican government was outraged that he would involve himself in what it regards as a bilateral issue. "The foreign ministry expressed to the government of Israel, via its ambassador in Mexico, its profound astonishment, rejection and disappointment over Prime Minister Netanyahu's message," the foreign ministry said in a statement. "Mexico is a friend of Israel and should be treated as such by its Prime Minister."

Dan Shapiro, who served as ambassador to Israel under Obama until nine days ago and still lives in the country, ditched diplomacy to question Netanyahu's motives in sending the tweet. "Hard to explain this intervention on a hotly debated issue in domestic US politics. Unless this endorsement is Trump's demand

of Netanyahu for something Netanyahu wants," he wrote on Twitter, suggesting it may be linked to Trump's promise to move the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. "To me, it looks like Trump is already squeezing Netanyahu hard." Opposition politician Yair Lapid, who is ahead of Netanyahu in recent opinion polls, was also scathing. Whereas Lapid has shied away from criticizing Netanyahu over the police investigations into him, this time he didn't hold back: "A serious mistake by Netanyahu," Lapid tweeted in Hebrew.

"It is a needless declaration of war on Mexico and Hispanics and a rupture with the Democrats (including the majority of US Jews). It doesn't matter what we think of the wall, don't we have enough troubles of our own?" Though Netanyahu has not deleted the tweet, Israel's foreign ministry immediately sought to nuance its content. The prime minister was referring to Israel's "specific security experience", the foreign ministry spokesman said, adding: "We do not express a position on US-Mexico relations." —Reuters



BAGHDAD: Employees wait for customers at a travel agency in the Iraqi capital Baghdad yesterday, after the US President passed an executive order earlier in the week, suspending refugee arrivals and imposing tough controls on travelers from seven mainly-Muslim countries, including Iraq. — AFP

US FACES GROWING IRAQI BACKLASH TO TRAVEL BAN

CALLS FOR A RECIPROCAL BAN ON US CITIZENS

BAGHDAD: Washington faced a growing backlash in Baghdad yesterday to its decision to bar citizens of Iraq, a key partner in the war against jihadists, from entering the United States. President Donald Trump signed an executive order barring citizens of Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Somalia, Libya and Yemen from entering the US for at least 90 days, a move he billed as an effort to make America safe from "radical Islamic terrorists".

The move has sparked anger in Iraq, whose forces have been fighting against the Islamic State group with American assistance for more than two years, and led to calls for a reciprocal ban on US citizens. "We clearly demanded that the Iraqi government deal reciprocally in all issues... with the United States of America," Hassan Shwairid, the deputy head of the Iraqi parliament's foreign affairs committee, told AFP.

Because of its role in fighting IS, Iraq is worthy of special treatment rather than restrictions, Shwairid said. "It is not possible for Iraq to fight (IS) today on behalf of all countries of the world (and) be dealt with like other countries," the lawmaker said. Shwairid said that the call did not apply to the thousands of American military per-

sonnel in the country as part of the US-led coalition against IS. It "is not related to the soldiers because they are present in the framework of the forces of the international coalition," he said. A foreign ministry official said that meetings were ongoing to determine Iraq's response. "Intensive meetings are taking place now and a crisis cell was formed in the foreign ministry to discuss the stance of the American administration," the official said on condition of anonymity.

'Get your nationals out'

Earlier yesterday, the Hashed Al-Shaabi, a powerful paramilitary umbrella organization that includes Iran-backed Shiite militias that fought against American forces in past years, called for US citizens to be banned from the country. "After the decision of the American president to prohibit the entry of Iraqi citizens to the United States of America, we demand Americans be prevented from entering Iraq, and the removal of those of them who are present," the Hashed said in a statement.

The statement did not specify if the call applied to American military personnel in Iraq, and the Hashed Al-Shaabi's spokesman was not

immediately reachable for comment. Both units from the Hashed and American troops are deployed in the Mosul area as part of the operation to retake the city from IS, and heightened anti-US sentiment among militiamen could increase the danger to Washington's forces.

The Hashed Al-Shaabi has played a significant role in halting IS's sweeping 2014 offensive that overran large areas north and west of Baghdad, and later in pushing the jihadists back. But it has also faced repeated accusations of abuses including summary executions, kidnappings and destruction of property in the course of the war against IS. Trump's travel restrictions also drew condemnation from populist Shiite cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr, America's bete noir for much of its 2003-2011 war in Iraq.

"You enter Iraq and other countries with all freedom and prevent their entry into your country," Sadr, the scion of a powerful clerical family who rose to widespread fame due to his condemnation of and violent resistance to the US invasion and occupation of Iraq, said in a statement. Sadr condemned this as "arrogance" and told the US to "get your nationals out before removing expatriates." — AFP

SOCIAL MEDIA BATTLE LINES DRAWN BEFORE TURK VOTE

ANKARA/ISTANBUL: Campaigning has not officially started, but a string of video "selfies" by the likes of sports stars, actors and cabinet ministers has already launched a divisive debate on plans that would hand Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan sweeping new powers. His supporters see the move to replace Turkey's parliamentary democracy with an all-powerful presidency as a guarantee of stability at a time of turmoil. Opponents fear a lurch toward authoritarianism if an April referendum approves the change.

In a country where mainstream news channels are saturated by Erdogan's appearances and speeches by government ministers, and where political demonstrations are tightly restricted, the battle for votes is increasingly being waged online. "Unfortunately the 'No' supporters don't have much opportunity to get their message across on television channels or other media," said actor Baris Atay, who was castigated by pro-government newspapers for a social media video in which he says "no to one-man rule, fascism and dictatorship".

"Saying 'Yes', siding with Erdogan, and being a nationalist is thinking of the country's future, but saying 'No' is being a provocateur, a traitor and a terrorist - this is the perception they're trying to establish," he told Reuters. Atay's video was re-tweeted 23,000 times. Against a backdrop of bombings by Islamic State and Kurdish militants, a failed coup last July, and the sharpest economic slowdown in almost a decade, Erdogan has cast Turkey as under attack and in need of stronger leadership.

The reform would enable the president to issue decrees, declare emergency rule, appoint ministers and senior state officials and dissolve parliament - powers that the two main opposition parties say strip away balances to Erdogan's power. His supporters dismiss such claims and see the issue as a test of patriotism. "Our homeland, our country is passing through a very tough period. A veritable war of independence. We want a strong Turkey. For a strong Turkey, yes, I am in," Ridvan Dilmen, the country's best-known soccer pundit, said in a video message on Twitter, triggering a chain of celebrity reactions. "Coach Ridvan, I got your call. I'm in for a strong Turkey too," said soccer star Arda Turan, who plays for Barcelona, in a similar post, drawing 10,000 re-tweets in the soccer-mad nation.

Nationalists key

Erdogan assumed the presidency, a largely ceremonial position, in 2014 after more than a decade as prime minister with the ruling AK Party, which he co-founded. Since then, pushing his powers to the limit, he has dominated politics by dint of his personal popularity. Opponents accuse him of increasing authoritarianism with the arrests and dismissal of tens of thousands of judges, police officers, soldiers, journal-

ists and academics since the failed coup.

Erdogan is expected in the coming days to officially approve the constitutional reform bill passed by parliament this month that will pave the way for the referendum, likely to be held on one of the first two Sundays in April. He was quoted on Friday as saying campaigning would officially start on Feb 7. But Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu and Energy Minister Berat Albayrak, Erdogan's son-in-law, have already posted selfie videos.

"We're in too for a powerful Turkey," Prime Minister Binali Yildirim chanted with members of the women's wing of the AK Party in another video on Twitter. Pollsters are divided on how the referendum will play out, though many agree the stance of the nationalist MHP opposition will be key. The AKP has been drumming up nationalist support while the MHP has been divided by a bitter leadership row.

"According to our latest polls, two thirds of MHP voters are in the 'Yes' camp," said Mehmet Ali Kulat, head of pollster Mak Danismanlik, which is seen as close to Erdogan. Hakan Bayrakci of polling firm SONAR disagreed, forecasting a strong majority of MHP supporters would vote 'No'. The MHP last year expelled three of its members who attempted to oust veteran leader Devlet Bahceli. They oppose the constitutional reform, while Bahceli backs it.

'Like a rainbow'

The secularist opposition CHP strongly opposes the changes. So does the pro-Kurdish HDP, the second largest opposition party. But a 'No' campaign by the HDP could help Erdogan by rallying nationalist support behind him. Nationalists view the HDP as deeply tied to the Kurdish PKK militant group and have championed the prosecution under Erdogan of thousands of its members for suspected militant links.

That has made the CHP reluctant to campaign on a shared platform with the pro-Kurdish opposition, Ozgur Ozel, a deputy chairman for the CHP, told Reuters, fearing it could undermine support. "The 'No' side is like a rainbow hosting all colours. There shouldn't be too many party symbols, just slogans, emblems, phrases and symbols that have been agreed upon," he said. The last time Turkey's disparate opposition groups tried to forge such unity was during anti-government protests in 2013. Those demonstrations ultimately strengthened Erdogan, who used them to rally supporters and expose opposition splits.

For now, the 'No' campaign is largely fighting back online, with soccer fans particularly vocal. "For a free, equal and secular country we say NO," said the Twitter account of Sol Acik, a group of leftist supporters of Istanbul's Fenerbahce soccer club. Similar messages followed from fans of its Istanbul rivals Galatasaray and Besiktas. — Reuters

SYRIAN IT EXPERT EXTENDS WEB LIFELINE TO FELLOW MIGRANTS

BERLIN: Migrants navigating a new language, unfamiliar cultural conventions and Germany's multitude of rules and regulations are finding help online in their adoptive country courtesy of one of their own. The website arabalmany.com - which translates to "Arabs in Germany" - was founded a year ago by Syrian IT expert Talal Mando. The site contains a range of information, including news about Germany, feature stories explaining German culture and crucial job offers for newcomers.

"No one came to Germany to sit around," Mando, who was part of the flood of 890,000 migrants who came to Germany in 2015, said of the site's success. "The people want to work and learn new things." The idea for the site came to Mando shortly after the soft-spoken 28-year-old arrived in Germany and started looking for guidance about how to apply for asylum, learn German, and find work.

He quickly realized that most written information was available only in German or English - not a problem for him as a fluent English speaker, but a major barrier for many fellow Syrians and other migrants who spoke only Arabic. "That's when I got this idea to make a website for Arab people that are in Germany," Mando said in the living room of his Berlin apartment, which doubles as headquarters for

the free website.

Since the website's launch in December 2015, it has received more than 1.1 million visits and more than 4 million page clicks, nearly all from users inside Germany, according to Google analytics. Many German organizations have reached out to help migrants get settled and some television networks offer Arabic language programming. Mando said he thinks arabalmany.com has resonated particularly well with newly arrived Syrians because he and others working on the site have shared their experience.

He now has five people writing for the website, all Syrian migrants working for free after a small startup grant from a local organization ran out. Mando, who works as a freelance web designer, estimates he has put about 5,500 euros (\$5,800) of his own money into the project. The volunteer staff has written more than 1,400 posts, many of them job listings they've translated into Arabic. They also answer about 50 emails a day seeking advice on where to find a doctor, where to learn German, how to register for school, and what documents to bring and clothing to wear to job interviews. "I do it because people need it. It's that simple," he said. "People need information and jobs here in Germany, and we provide it." — AP

TRUMP GIVES GENERALS 30 DAYS FOR ANTI-IS STRATEGY

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump signed an executive order Saturday giving the US military 30 days to devise a plan to "defeat" the Islamic State group. The plan makes good on a key campaign pledge of Trump, who mocked and criticized the slow pace of his predecessor Barack Obama's progress in the fight against the extremist fighters. The text, which calls for a "comprehensive strategy and plans for the defeat of ISIS," is seen as meaning more US forces and military hardware moving into Iraq and Syria.

Pentagon chief James Mattis is also tasked with recommending changes to US rules of engagement and policy restrictions to eliminate those that "exceed the requirements of international law regarding the use of force against ISIS" under the order, which also seeks to cut the group's financial support. Trump and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin agreed in a telephone call to establish "real coordination" against the Islamic State group in Syria, according to the Kremlin.

Yet many in the US military are suspicious of Russia's role in Syria, with Moscow seen as seeking first and foremost to support and defend President Bashar Al-Assad's regime. "We have to get rid of ISIS. We have no choice," Trump told Fox News in an interview broadcast Thursday, using another acronym for the jihadist group. "This is evil. This is a level of evil that we haven't seen."

Seeking 'quicker results'

Barack Obama took a longer-term view of the anti-IS fight, with a more cautious commitment of US forces and instead ramping up an air

war against the violent extremists. "President Trump might be looking for something with quicker results, that could put some more options on the table," retired lieutenant general David Barno, who led coalition forces in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005, told National Public Radio on Friday.

The United States currently has 5,000 troops in Iraq and 500 in Syria as "advisers"-but also US artillery and aircraft to help in the fight. They have provided substantial support to the assault led by Iraqi forces on Islamic State's hold on the key city of Mosul. The slow, steady assault has

driven IS fighters out of part of the city on the east bank of the Tigris River, and forces are now preparing an assault on IS-held Mosul neighborhoods on the river's west bank.

According to reports, an escalation of the US role could involve more US armor and helicopters engaging in the assaults on IS positions together with Iraqi, Turkish and Kurdish forces. Trump "could elect to put American boots on the ground in larger numbers," Barno said. "That all entails new uses of military power... and that opens the prospect of a deeper involvement with more casualties." — AFP



MOSUL: Iraq's Special Forces troops hold a flag of the Islamic State group during a parade to celebrate the fully liberation of the eastern side of Mosul. — AP

PM TRUDEAU: CANADA WELCOMES REFUGEES



TORONTO: In this Dec 11, 2015 file photo, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, left, greets Georgina Zires, center, Madeleine Jamkossian, second right, and her father Kevork Jamkossian, refugees fleeing from Syria, as they arrive at Pearson International airport. — AP

TORONTO: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has a message for refugees rejected by US President Donald Trump: Canada will welcome you. He says he also intends to talk to Trump about the success of Canada's refugee policy. Trudeau reacted to Trump's visa ban for people from certain Muslim-majority countries by tweeting Saturday: "To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength #WelcomeToCanada."

Trudeau also posted a picture of him greeting a Syrian child at Toronto's airport in late 2015. Trudeau oversaw the arrival of more than 39,000 Syrian refugees soon after he was elected. A spokeswoman for Trudeau said he has a message for Trump. "The Prime Minister is looking forward to discussing the successes of Canada's immigration and refugee policy with the President when they next speak," spokeswoman Kate Purchase told The Associated Press.

Trudeau is expected to visit the White House soon. The prime minister has refrained from criticizing Trump to avoid offending the new president. Canada wants to avoid becoming a target like Mexico has. More than 75 percent of Canada's exports go to the US. Brad Wall, the conservative premier of the Canadian province of Saskatchewan, offered his support to Trudeau.

Open approach

"Sask has welcomed approx 2000 refugees this past year," Wall posted on Twitter. "We stand ready to assist fed gov't re: anyone stranded by the US ban." Toronto Mayor John Tory also weighed in, noting that the city is the most diverse in the world. "We understand that as Canadians we are almost all immigrants, and that no one should be excluded on the basis of their ethnicity or nationality," Tory said in a statement.

Trump signed a sweeping executive order Friday that he billed as a necessary step to stop "radical Islamic terrorists" from coming to the US. Included is a 90-day ban on travel to the US by citizens of Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia or Yemen and a 120-day suspension of the US refugee program. Trump's order singled out Syrians for the most aggressive ban, ordering that anyone from that country, including those fleeing civil war, are indefinitely blocked from coming to the United States.

White House National Security adviser Michael Flynn told Canada's national security adviser that holders of Canadian passports, including dual citizens, will not be affected by the ban, Purchase said. "We have been assured that Canadian citizens traveling on Canadian passports will be dealt with in the usual process," Purchase said. Trudeau later posted the statement on Twitter with the hashtag "ACanadianIsACanadian." — AFP

TRUMP VOWS BETTER RUSSIA TIES, REASSURES NATO ALLIES

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump vowed Saturday to improve floundering ties with Russia, while also reassuring close US allies he supports NATO. Trump faced a first legal defeat amid growing international alarm over his halt to refugees and travelers from certain Muslim majority countries, with a federal judge blocking part of the ban.

The temporary stay orders authorities to stop deporting dozens of refugees and other travelers who had been detained at US airports since Trump signed his measure Friday afternoon. British Prime Minister Theresa May indicated she does "not agree" with the restrictions, and will intervene if they affect UK nationals.

French President Francois Hollande warned of the "economic and political consequences" of the American leader's protectionist stance. Trump's sweeping executive order suspends the arrival of refugees for at least 120 days and bars visas for travelers from seven Muslim majority countries for the next three months. The move sparked large protests at major airports across the country. At New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport, some of the 2,000 demonstrators chanted "Let them in, let them in!"

Better US-Russia ties?

Trump's friendly stance toward Putin, whom France and Germany accuse of seeking to undermine Western unity, is being scrutinized since he won the US election in November. The White House hailed the call with Putin as a "significant start" to better US-Russia ties, while the Kremlin said the pair agreed to develop relations "as equals" and to establish "real coordination" against the Islamic State group.

Trump took office last week with US-Russia relations at new Cold War-level lows amid accusations by American intelligence agencies that the Kremlin hacked Democratic Party emails as part of a pro-Trump campaign to influence November's election. The president who has raised the prospect of easing sanctions imposed against Russia after its annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 — has cast doubt on whether Russia meddled in the election.

In a flurry of calls that began early in the morning and rounded out an already frantically paced week, Trump spoke with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Putin, Hollande and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull.

The conversations gave the US president an early opportunity to explain new policies that have baffled and unnerved much of the rest of the world — particularly his order to temporarily halt all refugee arrivals and those of travelers from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen.

European leaders are also concerned

about Trump's virulent criticism of NATO — he has dubbed the transatlantic military alliance "obsolete" — at a time when it stands as the main defense against Putin. But in his call with Merkel, Trump agreed on NATO's "fundamental importance," the White House said. The United States provides significant funding to NATO, and Trump has urged other member nations to step up their contributions.

'Extreme vetting'

Trump's pronouncement on Muslim immigration makes good on one of his most controversial campaign promises to subject travelers from Islamic countries to "extreme vetting," which he declared would make America safe from "radical Islamic terrorists." "It's not a Muslim ban," Trump insisted. "It's working out very nicely. You see it at the airports, you see it all over," he told reporters. The new protocols specifically bar Syrian refugees from the United States indefinitely, or until the president himself decides that they no longer pose a threat. The legal challenge, which won a first battle in US District Court in New York, was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and other advocacy groups after two Iraqi men were detained late Friday at JFK.

'Greatest nation'

One of the men, Hameed Khalid Darweesh, had worked for the US government in Iraq for 10 years. "America is the greatest nation, the greatest people in the world," Darweesh said after his release. Mark Doss, a supervising attorney at the International Refugee Project at the Urban Justice Center, said Darweesh's detention and release showed the new policy was being implemented "with no guidance."

The ban has also triggered a political backlash. "To my colleagues: don't ever again lecture me on American moral leadership if you chose to be silent today," Connecticut Senator Chris Murphy, a Democrat, tweeted late Friday. His tweet was accompanied by the now iconic photograph of Aylan Kurdi, a three-year-old Syrian boy whose body washed up on a beach in Turkey in 2015 after a failed attempt to flee Syria's brutal war to join relatives in Canada.

International groups and civil liberties organizations have roundly condemned Trump's orders. "Extreme vetting" is just a euphemism for discriminating against Muslims," said ACLU executive director Anthony Romero. Romero said Trump's order breached the US constitution's ban on religious discrimination by choosing countries with Muslim majorities for tougher treatment. Iran answered in kind by saying it would ban Americans from entering the country, calling Trump's action insulting. But the US leader did get backing from Czech President Milos Zeman, who praised him for being "concerned with the safety of his citizens." — AFP



CHICAGO: Demonstrators protest against President Trump's executive immigration ban at Chicago O'Hare International Airport. — AFP

PROTESTS ERUPT AT AIRPORTS FOLLOWING PRESIDENT'S BAN

A LOOK AT THE MASS PROTESTS SWEEPING THE NATION

NEW YORK: President Donald Trump's travel ban barring citizens of seven predominantly Muslim nations entry into the US has sparked protests around the country Saturday night and early Sunday morning. A look at what is happening:

Seattle

At Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, about 3,000 protesters holding signs and chanting "no hatred, no fear, immigrants are welcome here" and "let them in" gathered Saturday evening and continued demonstrating into early Sunday morning. Aayah Khalaf, a Muslim American, was sitting at home watching the protest on television when she and her friend studying from Egypt decided to join the rally. It was her second time joining a protest. The first one was the Women's March.

"It's not just against Muslims. It's against environmental rights and human rights overall. I think everybody has to stand up against this," said Khalaf, 29. The Port of Seattle Commissioners, which oversees the airport, issued a statement criticizing the executive order. "The Port of Seattle Commissioners, Tom Albrow, Courtney Gregoire, Stephanie Bowman, Fred Felleman and John Creighton are here today to express our concerns over the immigration ban executive order that was issued late last night. As the government that operates this airport, this executive order runs counter to our values. America is great because we are a land of immigrants and that is what

made us great to begin with," the statement said.

New York

Cries of "Let them in!" rose up from a crowd of more than 2,000 people protesting at John F. Kennedy Airport, where 12 refugees were detained Saturday. Celebrities including "Sex and the City" actress Cynthia Nixon joined the demonstration. "What Donald Trump did in the last 24 hours is disgusting, disgraceful and completely un-American and I'm here in protest," said protester Pamela French. The agency that runs the airport tried to restore order by shutting down the train that runs to airport terminals. Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, reversed that decision, saying people had a right to protest. "The people of New York will have their voices heard," he said in a statement.

Newark, New Jersey

More than 120 people clutching signs denouncing the Trump immigration orders gathered at Newark Liberty International Airport. NorthJersey.com reports that they joined lawyers who'd rushed to the airport to defend the rights of refugees and immigrants who were being detained and denied entry.

Fairfax, Virginia

Dozens of protesters inside Washington Dulles International Airport chanted "Love, Not Hate, Make America Great" and "Say It Loud, Say it

Clear, Muslims Are Welcome Here," as travelers walked through a terminal to a baggage claim area to collect luggage and greet their loved ones. There was a heavy police presence during the peaceful protest. Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe said during a press conference at Dulles that he has asked Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring to look into "all legal remedies" available to help individuals who may be detained in Virginia.

Denver

Dozens of people converged on Denver International to show their support for refugees. Standing in the main terminal Saturday, they sang "Refugees are welcome here." Some held signs declaring their identity, such as Jew or Christian, and the phrase "I come in peace." Denver has some direct international flights but it wasn't clear whether anyone has been detained under the president's executive order.

Chicago

A crowd of demonstrators held a rally at O'Hare International Airport. The Chicago Sun-Times reports protesters blocked vehicle traffic to O'Hare's international terminal for a time. The newspaper says some arriving travelers joined the protest, while others were upset by the demonstrations. Lawyers working with the International Refugee Assistance Project tell the Chicago Tribune that 17 people who had been detained at O'Hare all released by late Saturday. — AP

TRUMP TO DECIDE ON FATE OF OBAMA'S YOUNG IMMIGRANTS

WASHINGTON: Missing from President Donald Trump's blitz of immigration orders was any mention of the fate of hundreds of thousands of young immigrants protected from deportation by former President Barack Obama. That omission has left immigration advocates hopeful Trump has softened his opposition to what he once derided as "illegal amnesty," while others say he has quickly abandoned a core campaign pledge.

Trump and Republican leaders in Congress have said they are working on a plan that will address the status of the roughly 750,000 immigrants currently protected by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA. The program allows young people who were brought into the country illegally as children to stay and obtain work permits.

Neither the president nor GOP leaders have disclosed details on their discussions, although both have suggested those currently protected under the program won't face immediate deportation. Whether they will be allowed to continue to work remains unclear.

Trump said this past week he intends to reveal a proposal within a month.

Striking shift

"They shouldn't be very worried," Trump told ABC News. "I do have a big heart. We're going to take care of everybody. ... Where you have great people that are here that have done a good job, they should be far less worried." Trump's delay and the tone of his remarks were a striking shift from the campaign, when he promised to quickly end the program and labeled it amnesty.

"We will immediately terminate President Obama's two illegal executive amnesties, in which he defied federal law and the constitution to give amnesty to approximately 5 million illegal immigrants," Trump said in August. His current approach appears to be a concession to Republican leaders in Congress who have called for a less aggressive stand on an issue that has pushed some Latino voters away from the party.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., has argued for a more compassionate approach in

dealing with these young immigrants. He has discussed the issue privately with the president and recently said congressional Republicans had been working with his team on a solution. DACA was arguably the most significant and high-profile change Obama made to immigration policy, one he said he made only after Congress failed to enact a broader immigration overhaul. The status of the immigrants, some of whom have little or no connection to the country where they were born, has been a focus of advocates' anxiety and activism since Trump's election.

The program would be relatively simple for Trump to reverse. The policy does not require an executive order. As of Friday afternoon, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services said it was still processing DACA-related work permits. Trump's White House is thought to be divided on the how to handle the issue.

Those who have pushed Trump to embrace more restrictive immigration policies, including policy guru Stephen Miller, are said to prefer a harder line. On the other side are those in the White House considered more moderate,



WASHINGTON: In this Jan 14, 2017 file photo, immigrant rights advocates demonstrate against President-elect Donald Trump's immigration policies. — AP

including chief of staff Reince Priebus, who said recently that the White House is planning to work with House and Senate leadership "to get a long-term solution on that issue."

Work permits

Under a draft executive order first pub-

lished by the news site Vox, the government would immediately halt processing new DACA applications, but would allow those who already have work permits to retain them until they expire sometime over the next two years. Trump faces pressure from GOP hard-liners, including Iowa Rep. — AP

PHILIPPINE TROOPS KILL 15 ISLAMIC STATE SUPPORTERS

MANILA: Philippine soldiers killed 15 militants and seriously wounded their leader, believed to be the Islamic State's representative in the country, following air and artillery strikes in a southern province, a senior military official said yesterday.

Isnilon Hapilon, also known as Abu Abdullah and a leader of the Philippine militant group Abu Sayyaf, might die as he needed immediate medical treat-

ment, military chief General Eduardo Ano told reporters, citing intelligence and communications intercepts. "He needs blood transfusion. Without proper medical treatment, he may die," Ano said.

Philippine forces on Thursday dropped bombs and fired shells at rebel positions in the mountains of Lanao del Sur in a bid to flush out Hapilon. The province is a stronghold of the Maute rebel group, which has also pledged

allegiance to Islamic State. Hapilon is on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's most wanted list for his role in the kidnapping of 17 Filipinos and three Americans in 2001 and carries a bounty of \$5 million.

One of those killed is an Indonesian but Ano said they were still "digging and doing more investigation" about the foreigner's background. Hapilon was with two other foreigners whose nationality

was uncertain, he said. President Rodrigo Duterte appealed on Friday to the country's Muslim separatist groups to deny sanctuary to militants with links to Islamic State, warning a war would ensue that would put civilians in danger.

A day before he made the appeal, the defense minister said foreign intelligence reports showed Hapilon was getting instructions from Islamic State to expand in the Philippines, in the

strongest sign yet of links to the Middle Eastern militants.

Duterte has said he could no longer contain the extremist "contamination" and urged two Muslim separatist rebels groups - the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Moro National Liberation Front - to rebuff Islamic State's advances. Ano said a firefight could be expected between soldiers and Hapilon's group following the strikes. — Reuters



WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Theresa May gesture during their joint news conference in the East Room of the White House. — AP

BRITISH PM MAY DOES 'NOT AGREE' WITH TRUMP IMMIGRATION POLICY

NEWLY MINTED FRIENDSHIP ALREADY SHOWING CRACKS

LONDON: Two days after a friendship-forging meeting with Donald Trump, British Prime Minister Theresa May yesterday discreetly distanced herself from the US president as anger over his immigration restrictions mounted. Downing Street said May does "not agree" with the restrictions and would intervene if they affected British nationals.

May had sparked controversy on Saturday after refusing to condemn Trump's executive order as she was being pressed by journalists during a trip to Turkey. "Immigration policy in the United States is a matter for the government of the United States, just the same as immigration policy for this country should be set by our government," a spokesman from her office said yesterday. "But we do not agree with this kind of approach and it is not one we will be taking. If there is any impact on UK nationals then clearly we will make representations to the US government about that."

Divisive and wrong

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson went further, saying it was "divisive and wrong to stigmatize because of nationality." The first foreign leader to meet Trump since his arrival in the White House, May discussed with the new president the possibility of quickly putting in place a trade agree-

ment between the two countries after Britain's exit from the EU.

Shortly after their talks, Trump signed an executive order to suspend refugee arrivals and impose tough new controls on travelers from seven Muslim countries-Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria, Yemen and Sudan. As resistance to the curbs mounted, a US federal judge on Saturday ordered authorities to suspend the deportation of refugees and other travelers stuck at US airports.

Meanwhile, an MP from May's Conservative Party on Saturday revealed he would be barred from entering the US under Trump's clampdown. Iraqi-born MP Nadhim Zahawi tweeted that he had had "confirmation that the order does apply to myself and my wife as we were both born in Iraq," even though the pair have British passports.

"A sad sad day to feel like a second class citizen! Sad day for the USA," he added. Double-double Olympic champion Mo Farah, who represents Britain but was born in Somalia, yesterday slammed the clampdown, calling it a policy of "ignorance and prejudice" that could keep him apart from his family, who are based in the US. "On 1st January this year, Her Majesty The Queen made me a Knight of the Realm. On 27th January, President Donald Trump seems to have

made me an alien," he wrote on Facebook.

'Too late, too weak'

The implications of the restrictions for British citizens led to increasingly loud calls from lawmakers that May distance herself from Trump. Opposition Labor party leader Jeremy Corbyn called on the government to put off the president's scheduled state visit until the ban was rescinded. May "would be failing the British people if she does not postpone the state visit & condemn Trump's actions in the clearest terms," he wrote on Twitter.

Former Labour leader Ed Miliband called May's response "far too late and far too weak" while First Minister of Scotland Nicola Sturgeon tweeted: "The PM should have said this the first time she was asked, not hours later and only under pressure." Tory MP Sarah Wollaston called Trump "a sickening piece of work" while colleague Heidi Allen tweeted that "strong leadership means not being afraid to tell someone powerful when they're wrong."

An online petition calling for Trump "not be invited to make an official State Visit because it would cause embarrassment to Her Majesty the Queen" has already received 60,000 signatures, and will be considered for debate in parliament if it reaches 100,000. — AFP

FRENCH SOCIALISTS VOTE, TURMOIL ENGULFS FILLON

PARIS: France's Socialists voted yesterday to pick their candidate for this year's presidential polls as a fresh scandal engulfed the election's conservative frontrunner Francois Fillon. Socialist voters headed to polling stations from yesterday morning for the primary run-off vote between leftwinger Benoit Hamon and centrist ex-prime minister Manuel Valls. Hamon, a 49-year-old former education minister, won the first round last weekend and has dominated the race with his radical proposals on work, state aid and the environment.

"Hamon brings principles on citizenship, solidarity and the sharing of wealth that are more the principles of the left," 60-year-old architect Annick Descamps told AFP as she voted in northwest Paris. But Valls, 54, says his experience makes him a more credible choice and claims his rival's tax-and-spend programme would condemn the party to inevitable defeat.

Whoever wins is expected to face an uphill task with polls showing the Socialist candidate being eliminated in the first round of the election in April after five years of unpopular rule by Socialist President Francois Hollande. The contest is being watched closely after Britain's vote to leave the EU and Donald Trump's victory in the United States. Polls currently suggest Fillon is most likely to win, ahead of far-right leader Marine Le Pen and independent centrist Emmanuel Macron. The top two candidates from the April 23 first round will go through to the final vote on May 7.

Fillon on defensive

But Fillon's campaign was embroiled in new controversy yesterday, only days after reports his wife had been paid as a parliamentary aide without working. The Mediapart website and the Journal du Dimanche newspaper claimed he had also paid himself from public funds intended for assistants in the French upper house.

The allegations date from 2005-2007 from his time in the senate where he is alleged to have written himself cheques of up to 25,000 euros (\$27,000), the reports said. "How can we not consider that there are forces at work to silence me and to weaken my candidacy, or even try to prevent me from appearing?" Fillon told the Journal du Dimanche newspaper yesterday.

day. He called it a "plot" and vowed to fight "with all my strength and to the end." Yesterday, he will address a Paris rally to try to shore up support, after an Odoxa poll Friday which showed his approval ratings falling four points to 38 percent.

Last week, French authorities opened a preliminary inquiry into allegations that Fillon's Welsh-born wife Penelope collected half a million euros (\$534,000) as a parliamentary aide-for little to no work. Investigators are also looking into payments she allegedly received from a magazine owned by a friend of Fillon. Fillon, who won the conservative Republicans' nomination last year with promises to slash public spending and restore morality in politics, insists that his wife's role was real.

Socialist result later

The Socialist primary has confirmed a chasm within the ruling party, between a pragmatic, centre-left camp led by Valls and a staunchly leftist faction around Hamon. Hamon won a first round of voting last week that whittled the candidates down from seven to two, taking 36 percent to Valls's 31.5 percent. Around 7,500 polling stations opened at 0800 GMT, with voters able to cast their ballots until around 1800 GMT after paying one euro to participate.

One of the biggest potential winners of the primary could be former economy minister Macron. The 39-year-old former investment banker, who quit the Socialist government last year to run for president as an independent, has been drawing large crowds at his rallies and is creeping up on Fillon and Le Pen in polls.

He is tipped for further gains if, as expected, Hamon beats Valls. Valls, a pro-business centrist who takes a tough line on law and order as well as Islam, has said he will not support Hamon's program if the latter wins. Hamon's ideas include a proposal to introduce a universal basic income to offset dwindling work opportunities in an age of automation. It would entail paying everyone, irrespective of income, a monthly stipend that would eventually reach 750 euros, Valls argues that would be the "ruin" of France. Valls also said Friday that Fillon's woes showed the election "was not over" despite widespread pessimism in the Socialist party. — AFP



LYON: A woman holding a dog on a leash casts her ballot during the second round of the left-wing primary for the 2017 French presidential election. — AFP

EU VETERAN SCHULZ TO LAY BATTLE PLANS FOR MERKEL

BERLIN: Former European Parliament chief Martin Schulz yesterday will unveil his battle plan to challenge Chancellor Angela Merkel in Germany's general election in September, hoping a wave of popularity will help him shake up the race. The former bookseller, who has spent the past two decades in Brussels, was catapulted to the frontline of German politics this week after the little-loved leader of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Sigmar Gabriel, announced he was standing aside to make way for Schulz.

Schulz's surprise entry into the race provided the party with an immediate boost. An ARD poll showed support for the SPD climbing from 20 to 23 percent, while Merkel's conservative CDU/CSU block lost two points, to 35 percent. A separate poll by the same public broadcaster found that if

voters could elect their chancellor directly, Schulz and Merkel would be neck-and-neck.

Merkel ultimately remains the favourite, but Schulz's candidacy turns up the heat in an election where she is under pressure from the rightwing populist AfD party, polling at around 14 percent. Schulz, 61, is scheduled to be confirmed as the SPD's new leader in a party vote yesterday. He is also set to spell out his strategy in a speech that will be scrutinised for his domestic vision after years on the European stage.

In an interview with news weekly Der Spiegel on Saturday, Schulz said he was not running just so the SPD could stay on as junior partner in another Merkel-run coalition government. "I want to be chancellor," he told the magazine. "I have worked with Angela Merkel longer than almost anyone outside her party," he said. "I have

studied her, got to know her."

Even before Schulz's candidacy Merkel had predicted that the coming election, in which she is seeking a fourth term, would be "more difficult than any before it". Merkel's conservatives suffered a string of embarrassing defeats in regional polls last year, as the anti-immigrant AfD gained ground by railing against her liberal refugee policy that has seen over a million migrants arrive in the country since 2015. But Merkel's approval ratings have bounced back more recently thanks to a slowdown in new arrivals.

'Blank page'

At a time when anti-establishment, eurosceptic sentiment seems to be on the rise in Europe, Schulz is likely to make the case for a strong EU, while painting himself as an outsider who can bring a breath of fresh air to German politics. Observers say his popularity is partly due to the fact that he is known as a heavyweight politician, while not being too closely associated with the SPD's lackluster years governing in Merkel's shadow.

His modest background is also likely to appeal to voters in a climate of growing resentment against the political "elite". An autodidact who speaks six languages but never went to university, Schulz wanted to be a footballer, a dream he had to give up because of a knee injury. He became mayor of the western German city of Wuerselen at 31, the youngest official to hold such a role in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, and was elected to the European Parliament in 1994. He stepped down as its president two months ago, saying he wanted to re-enter German politics but without specifying his ambitions. The far-left Die Linke party has already urged Schulz to state whether he would be open to forming a three-party coalition also involving the Green party, hoping to force Merkel's conservatives into opposition. — AFP



BERLIN: Martin Schulz (c) receives applause after his speech during a party event of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD). — AFP

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23 MISSING CHINESE TOURISTS IN MALAYSIA BOAT SINKING SURVIVE

RESCUE OPERATION TO CONTINUE FOR MISSING FEW

KUALA LUMPUR: Twenty-three Chinese tourists and two crew members have survived after their boat sank in rough seas off eastern Malaysia but six people are still missing, a minister said yesterday. The sinking of the catamaran on Saturday, the first day of the Lunar New Year holiday, sparked a major air and sea search covering some 400 nautical square miles. The operation would continue overnight to try to save five missing Chinese and one crew member, said Shahidan Kassim, minister in the

Prime Minister's Department.

"We will deploy search assets that can operate at night, and continue our rescue operations to locate those who are still missing," he told a press conference in Malaysia's eastern state of Sabah on Borneo island. All three crew members are Malaysians. The boat had left Saturday morning from the Sabah state capital Kota Kinabalu en route for Pulau Mengalum, an island known for its pristine beaches and dive sites.

The boat owner reported it missing on

Saturday evening. The skipper and one of the two crew members were found alive earlier yesterday off a nearby island, before the discovery of the other survivors. "According to the skipper, the boat was 'broken' after being hit by waves and sank," said Ahmad Puzi Kahar, head of the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, in a statement.

Search and rescue

The tourists were tied together and were

carried away by the current, Puzi said, without specifying whether they were wearing life jackets. The search and rescue involved officers from the maritime agency, the police, the navy and the air force. Malaysian navy chief Ahmad Kamarulzaman Ahmad Badaruddin said navy ships and a C130 aircraft were on site for the search.

It was "so sad as it happened on CNY (Chinese New Year)", he tweeted. Rough seas and strong winds hampered the search on Saturday night and yesterday, authorities said. Prime Minister Najib Razak said he was closely monitoring developments. Chinese President Xi Jinping "demanded all-out search and rescue efforts" by Malaysia, his country's official Xinhua news agency reported.

It added that an emergency team, led by an official from Beijing's national tourism administration, had been set up to handle the incident. China's foreign ministry said its consulate in Kota Kinabalu had contacted Malaysian authorities and urged them to do everything they could to rescue the tourists. "Yesterday was the first day of the Chinese Lunar New Year and it should have been a happy day. Unfortunately, such a bad thing happened," China's consul-general in Sabah, Chen Peijie, was quoted as saying by state news agency Bernama.

An earlier disaster involving Chinese visitors to Malaysia-the unexplained disappearance of a Malaysia Airlines plane in March 2014 while en route from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing-soured relations between the two nations for a time. Most of the 239 people on board were Chinese, and Malaysian authorities were fiercely criticized for allegedly giving scanty or inaccurate information.

The latest incident came about a week after a boat tragedy off the southern Malaysian state of Johor. Several bodies washed ashore at a beach near the east coast town of Mersing in Johor on Monday after a boat believed to be carrying some 40 Indonesian illegal immigrants capsized in rough seas. — AFP



SABAH: Chen Peijie (2nd L), China's consul-general in Sabah, checks her mobile phone at a jetty in Kota Kinabalu in the Malaysian Borneo state of Sabah as she awaits developments after a tourist boat carrying 28 Chinese nationals was reported missing on January 28. — AFP

THAILAND SEPARATES LGBT INMATES, CONSIDERS SEGREGATED PRISON USE

PATTAYA: Theerayut Charoenpakdee was terrified when police stopped her outside a mall in Pattaya, a Thai resort famous for its sordid nightlife. A urine test on the spot revealed meth coursing through her veins. "I thought I was going to be thrown in prison with all the men because I still have the title of Mr.," the transgender woman said. "I was afraid. News and TV tells us that being sent to prison is scary."

It turned out not to be the ordeal she expected. The prison she was destined for - Pattaya Remand - separates lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender prisoners from other inmates, a little-known policy despite being in place nationwide since 1993, according to the Department of Corrections. Thailand, often described as a haven for gay people, has around 300,000 prisoners, of which more than 6,000 are registered as sexual minorities.

And that's not all. The Thai government is also considering what could be the world's first prison facility exclusively for LGBT inmates. While the plans are still being discussed, in Pattaya and other prisons across Thailand LGBT prisoners are kept apart to prevent violence, officials say. "If we didn't separate them, people could start fighting over partners to sleep with," said Pattaya Remand Warden Watcharavit Vachiralerphum. "It could lead to rape, sexual assault, and the spread of disease."

By day, Pattaya LGBT inmates eat together and do their morning exercises in uniform. At night, they sleep in their own quarters, apart from the other inmates. But most of the time, they mingle freely with the others, though they tend to stick together for daytime activities like sewing or football. Transgender women spike volleyballs next to men pressing barbells and sparing with punching bags; gay men train together in first-aid at the jail clinic, sanitizing and bandaging the wounds of straight men.

'What if they hurt me one day'

Many LGBT inmates agree the limited separation is a decent compromise between safety and segregation. "There are people that discriminate against gays," said Chawalit Chankiew, one of the gay clinic workers, sentenced to nine years for document forgery. "If I happen to sleep next to someone who hates gay people, I wouldn't know it unless they show it. What if they hurt me one day?"

Theerayut says the prison's segregation makes her 1 1/2-year sentence more bearable. "If we behave like others, if we aren't stubborn and don't break rules, this place actually isn't so vicious," she said, sitting in a prison yard fenced with barbed wire, her long hair bobbing up and down as she spoke. But the system isn't without problems. "Transgender women who have not gone through gender reassignment surgery, they have to shave their head and live with the men, and there's going to be problems," says Wannapong.

Yodmuang, an LGBT advocate with the Rainbow Sky Association. "Some of them are going to be OK living with the men, but there are some transgender women who might have a bad experience with men and won't want to live with them." There are also concerns that the system does not adequately tend to the specialized health needs of transgender inmates. Hormone therapy, for example, is written off as a luxury by some. But LGBT advocates say it is essential. Plans for a separate facility for LGBT inmates on the outskirts of Bangkok could improve their treatment inside prison. The idea was first proposed as a measure to keep LGBT people safe, but it stalled over concern is that it would keep inmates far from their families. "It'd be easier to control, easier to take care of, easier to develop and improve their habits and behavior," said Watcharavit. "But they have to mix with other inmates because once they're released, they'll have to rejoin a diverse society."

Some activists worry it could stigmatize them. "Building and reallocating an entire prison facility for LGBT prisoners is as a matter of fact a measure of segregation," said Jean-Sebastian Blanc, an expert on prisons at the Switzerland-based Association for the Prevention of Torture. "There is a significant difference between a public health policy aiming at preventing transmissible diseases and segregating a segment of the population on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity." — AP



PATTAYA: In this Jan 6, 2017 photo, transgender inmates take a hair salon lesson at Pattaya Remand Prison. — AP

PATROLS CHECK SEX TRAFFICKING IN KOLKATA'S RED LIGHT DISTRICT

KOLKATA: A sex workers' committee meeting is underway on the first floor of a shabby building at the entrance of Sonagachi, South Asia's largest red light district in the Indian city of Kolkata. The proceedings are brisk. A detailed form, complete with family history, address, educational qualifications and previous employment, is completed and the "new girl in town" is escorted to a nearby clinic for an x-ray to analyze her bones and establish her age.

"She has to be over 18 to even think of working here," said Gita Ghosh, a member of the sex workers' self regulatory board, reading from the rule book.

"And we have to be certain there was no coercion or force. If any of these are suspected, we will send her right back home." Ghosh is a new member of this self-help board, the first to be set up a decade ago in Sonagachi to stop the trafficking of girls from Nepal, Bangladesh and rural pockets of the East Indian state of West Bengal.

Started in 2007 by non-profit group Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, there are now 33 such boards across the state today. Their efforts to screen girls new to sex work has led to the detection of thousands of trafficked girls and women. Between 1992 and 2011 the proportion of minors in sex work in Sonagachi declined from 25 to two percent, campaigners say.

"It will be very difficult to find a minor or an unwilling sex worker in Sonagachi or any other red light area in the state today," said police officer Sarbari Bhattacharya, head of the anti-trafficking unit in Kolkata. "Girls are being trafficked but not to the brothels under the watch of sex workers. Our operations have now moved to residential areas and hotels."

Brothel patrol

Campaigners estimate there are between three and nine million victims of sex trafficking in India, adding that many do not come forward for fear of being ostracized by society, abused by their traffickers or not taken seriously by the police. Many victims, often from poor backgrounds, are duped with the promise of a job before being sold into the sex trade. "I was brought here as a teenager with the promise of a housemaid's job," board member Mamta Nandi told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "I can spot a reluctant entrant in these bylanes. I know what it feels like to be trapped here. No one talked to me when I was brought here against my will but I talk to people to make sure a 14-year-old is not exploited here." Ghosh and Nandi are also part of vigilante groups that live and work in the brothels. Their patrols take place around the clock, with each member responsible for visits to a dozen or so brothels operating from multi-storeyed buildings every

day to identify new girls. On a bright winter morning in January, some women of Sonagachi sit on the steps of their brothels, sunning themselves. Inside the damp corridors, utensils are being cleaned, heaps of clothes are washed and food cooked.

This is when Ghosh and Nandi have friendly chats with the brothel madams. There are quick exchange of jokes, gossip shared and as they leave, the vigilante group members remind them to send new girls to be checked by the board.

As the sun sets, the streets come to life. There is no time to talk now, as women darken their lipsticks and dress up for their first clients - groups of college boys, migrant workers, the odd businessman or an out-of-place gentleman in a tie. The women on patrol change tack now, and walk along the narrow alleys quietly, keeping an eye out for newcomers, stopping only for a quick word with pimps to ensure they are following the rules of Sonagachi.

Up to 35 new girls come into Sonagachi every month, according to the regulatory board's data. Each girl is kept in a short-stay home for three days until her credentials and reasons for being in the brothel are verified. X-rays of her wrist, elbow and pelvis are taken to estimate her age, Ghosh said, adding that many carried forged documents to show they were 18 or older. "This model of anti-trafficking has shown

results which we can measure now, a decade after it was started," said Smarajit Jana, advisor to the All India Network of Sex Workers told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "Board interventions have assisted almost three times as many women and girls than other anti-trafficking efforts combined."

Building trust

The success of the boards, made up of 10 members including a doctor, counselor and elected representative, resonates in India's southern city of Mysuru as well. Ashodaya Samithi, a collective of over 8,000 women, men and transgender sex workers, started self regulatory boards here despite "mistrust and ridicule".

"Many questioned the intention of the sex workers, accusing them of being traffickers themselves," said Sushena Reza-Paul, an assistant professor and advisor to Ashodaya Samithi. "And in Mysuru, there is no defined red light district. So the boards use their extensive social network to identify trafficking victims." But board members say they still face challenges when they send young trafficked girls back home, with many parents refusing to accept them back. "We keep following up through our members," said Ghosh. "We keep trying and we know we are making a small difference." — Reuters



TEHRAN: In this Wednesday, Oct 3, 2001 file photo, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of Afghanistan's Hezb-E-Islami speaks at the Tehran University. —

FORMER WARLORD'S RETURN COULD SHAKE UP POLITICS IN AFGHANISTAN

KABUL: The only insurgent leader to sign a peace pact with Afghanistan's government will return to the country within weeks, his chief negotiator says, in a move that could shake up Afghan politics and complicate the much wider war against the Taliban. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former warlord who battled US forces after the 2001 invasion and nursed a bitter rivalry with other Afghan factions, agreed to lay down arms last year. Amin Karim, his chief negotiator, told The Associated Press earlier this week that he would return to the capital in "a matter of weeks, not months."

Hekmatyar is seen as a potential rival to President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, who have governed the country through a shaky, US-brokered power-sharing agreement since the disputed elections of 2014. His return could inject new political uncertainty as the government struggles to confront a reinvigorated Taliban that has been advancing on several fronts.

The former warlord battled the Soviets in the 1980s and then took part in the civil war that erupted after their withdrawal, clashing with the so-called Northern Alliance, in which Abdullah was a leading figure. Hekmatyar was driven out when the Taliban seized power in 1996, but returned after the American invasion, vowing to resist the foreign "occupation."

His forces were largely confined to just two provinces, however, and have carried out few attacks in recent years. Last year he became the only insurgent leader to sign a peace agreement with the Afghan government, in what many hoped would provide a model for a wider reconciliation with the Taliban. But he has yet to return to the fold.

His Hezb-e-Islami party wants his name taken off the UN and the US Treasury lists of wanted terrorists. Karim declined to say whether Hekmatyar would return to Afghanistan without first being removed from the lists, and there has been no indication that the UN or Washington is considering his removal. Both Canada and Britain consider Hezb-E-Islami to be a terrorist group. Hekmatyar, like Ghani, hails from Afghanistan's ethnic Pashtun majority, and a revitalized Hezb-e-Islami could become a powerful player in the 2019 parliamentary elections, says Andrew Wilder, vice president of the Asia Program at the US Institute of Peace.

Fractured party

"Hekmatyar's return to Kabul would certainly be significant," he said. "But the significance of his return, if it happens, will have a lot more to do with the impact of an influential Pashtun political figure who had been sidelined re-entering the political fray, and much less to do with moving the peace process forward."

The prospect of his return has already caused Abdullah's fractured Jamiat-e-Islami Party to try to unify its ranks in order to better compete, Wilder said in an email interview. Abdullah and Ghani are also political rivals, and traded accusations of fraud after the hard-fought election three years ago. No one expects Hekmatyar's return to end the 15-year-old war with the Taliban, who control large swathes of rural territory in the south and east, and rule eight districts outright. A three-way struggle for power among Ghani, Abdullah and Hekmatyar could further divide the government at a critical time.

"The Taliban has ample momentum on the battlefield and is gaining territory, while Hezb-i-Islami is a shadow of its former self and not particularly active," said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Washington-based Wilson Center's South Asia program. "I simply don't think the Taliban will pay much mind to Hekmatyar and his peace deal with Kabul." Karim, who negotiated the peace pact, lives behind two cordons of security in a heavily guarded Kabul villa. He accused unnamed Afghan rivals and regional countries of trying to sabotage Hekmatyar's return, saying several Hezb-E-Islami commanders who ventured into the capital have been arrested. — AP

US FORCES IN YEMEN RAID

Continued from Page 1

A US defense official later told AFP that "no prisoners had been taken" during the operation. A civil war in Yemen between Iran-backed rebels and pro-government forces has killed more than 7,000 people since March 2015 and allowed extremists including AQAP and the Islamic State group to gain ground in the impoverished nation.

Fierce clashes between Yemeni loyalists and the

Shiite rebels have killed more than 100 fighters in the past 24 hours on Yemen's west coast, officials said yesterday. Yesterday's US raid was said to have targeted the houses of three tribal chiefs linked to Al-Qaeda. The provincial official said Apache helicopters also hit a school, a mosque and a medical facility which were all used by Al-Qaeda militants. The three prominent tribal figures with known Al-Qaeda links killed in the attack were identified as brothers Abduraouf and Sultan Al-Zahab and Saif Alawai Al-Jawfi. — AFP

MP URGES QUICK SOLUTION IN HEALTH...

Continued from Page 1

committee to study the amendment and prepare its report to the Assembly. Thousands of Kuwaiti women are married to foreigners, but their children are not allowed to obtain Kuwaiti citizenship like children of Kuwaiti men. The clause has been repeatedly criticized as discriminatory by human rights activists and societies.

The committee also approved a proposal stipulating that the ministry cannot stop electricity and water supplies to private homes - a reference normally used to describe homes owned by Kuwaiti citizens - before a final court order. Rapporteur of the committee MP Mohammad Al-Dallal said the proposal applies only to private homes owned by citizens. It does not apply to apartments rented by expatriates. Dallal said the committee plans to discuss a number of important issues at its next meeting like the election commission, reducing the duration of preventive detention and others.

The Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee yesterday discussed a proposal calling on the state-owned Public Institution for Social Security to stop charging interest on loans it offers to pensioners. Rapporteur of the committee MP Safaa Al-Hashem said the committee found that the institution was charging huge interest on such loans without any reason. She said that no decision has been taken as the panel awaits a technical report on the issue.

The Assembly resumes its ordinary meetings tomorrow after a three-week break, with a number of important issues on its agenda topped by the grilling of Information and Youth Minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah over the sports suspension and alleged financial and administrative violations. The Assembly is also due to debate the government's economic reforms and is finally scheduled to hold a lengthy debate on amending the demographic structure of the state by reducing the number of expatriates.

AMBASSADORS OF GLOBALIZATION: A NEW CHALLENGE...

Continued from Page 1

During our many sessions, meetings and hallway conversations - a stark reality came to light: we didn't meet a single person who believed Brexit is a good idea. We couldn't find anyone who believed that a more protectionist America is good for the world - or even good for the American people. Not one person that thought populism would pave the way to a more prosperous future. Not one.

This represents quite a departure from what we've seen in the past - after all, when you gather leaders from around the world with varying perspectives, consensus is rare, let alone complete. Sure enough, the world - or at least those who represented the world at Davos - agree that this represents a massive paradigm shift on the global arena, and not for the better.

As Kuwaitis first and foremost, and global citizens secondly, it's incumbent on us to recognize the value of globalism, and yes, the threat posed by populism and the associated rhetoric. Over the past decades, the creation of value has, in many cases, become exponential due to a more global world. Open markets create efficiency and opportu-

nities; encourage competition and customer-centricity; and allow countries to specialize in ways that give them relevance and unity of purpose not afforded in the past.

The stakes for Kuwait are higher than most. We are traders, travelers and global citizens - a legacy that is recognized and celebrated. We have a seafaring heritage that goes back to the inception of our great nation, having traveled across the Middle East, Africa and the Indian sub-continent. We are also a proud nation of immigrants, hailing from all locations of the Arabian Gulf. Yes, as a nation, Kuwait has been globalized far before the term was coined. That is who we are.

So what do we do in the face of this challenge? How do we go against the tide of populism, radical nationalism and protectionist ideologies? That's the big question, asked time and time again during this year's WEF annual meeting at Davos - and there is no clear answer. But what we can do, as Kuwaitis, is become ambassadors for globalization. Equip ourselves with the knowledge of how globalization has affected us as a force for sustainability and an unprecedented source of value creation. We can be who we've always been - the seafaring traders and travelers that welcomed the world in, with open arms.

BLAZE DESTROYS TEXAS MOSQUE

Continued from Page 1

Victoria Fire Marshal Tom Legler asked for help from the Texas Fire Marshal's Office and federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to determine what caused the blaze. Hashmi said authorities have told him it was too early to speculate. "None whatsoever right now," the center director said. "We don't have any lead or information as to what started the fire and what happened. So I'm sure it's going to be a few days, they told us, before they can come up with any answers for us."

The congregation's pastor, known as an imam, was awake in the early morning hours and checked online surveillance of the mosque and found no alarm active and the doors unlocked, Hashmi said. On Jan. 21, someone broke in and stole some electronics, including laptops. "He was worried about it and drove over there," Hashmi said. "By that time, fire engines were already there pouring water on the fire." The structure was built in 2000. No injuries were reported. It took about four hours to extinguish the blaze.

Hashmi, who's lived in Victoria 32 years, said the con-

gregation of about 140 has had few other problems and has enjoyed support from the city of about 115 miles southwest of Houston. He already has received offers of temporary quarters for the congregation to worship. "When 9/11 happened, Muslims and non-Muslims, we all got together," he said. "Of course, we will rebuild."

The Victoria Advocate on Saturday reported that in July 2013, a man admitted to painting "H8", a computer shorthand for "hate", on the outside of the building. On Jan 7, a mosque under construction near Lake Travis in Austin was burned to the ground. The Texas office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations said like that blaze, it would monitor the investigation of the Victoria fire.

"Because of growing anti-Muslim bigotry in our nation, and because of the recent spike in hate incidents targeting Islamic institutions and individuals, we urge investigators to keep the possibility of a bias motive for this fire in mind," CAIR-Houston Executive Director Mustafaa Carroll said. There's been no determination yet for the Austin blaze, Diane Kanawati, with CAIR-Austin, said Saturday. — AP

TRUMP UNREPENTANT ON TRAVEL BAN

Continued from Page 1

the globe and from Americans at home. "Our country needs strong borders and extreme vetting, NOW. Look what is happening all over Europe and, indeed, the world - a horrible mess!" he tweeted to his nearly 23 million followers.

The Department of Homeland Security said it would comply with court orders not to deport those already detained, but said it would otherwise continue to enforce the order. "Prohibited travel will remain prohibited, and the US government retains its right to revoke visas at any time if required for national security or public safety," it said in a statement.

Trump fanned further disquiet by giving controversial adviser Steve Bannon, a founding member of far-right website Breitbart News, a permanent seat on the National Security Council at the expense of other security chiefs. While Bannon was promoted, the Director of National Intelligence and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will now be present only when "their responsibilities and expertise" are required, said an executive memorandum.

The exact number of those affected by the travel ban is unclear, but Judge Ann Donnelly ordered the government to provide lists of all those detained at US airports since the measure went into effect. She issued the emergency stay late Saturday night but did not broach the constitutionality of Trump's order to the anger of protesters at New York's John F Kennedy Airport, where thousands had gathered. "People are prepared to stand against this" said David Gaddis, 43. "Every day he's in office, it's a national emergency."

Deporting those travelers following Trump's order exposes them to "substantial and irreparable injury," Donnelly wrote in her decision. The American Civil

Liberties Union went to court after two Iraqi men, one of whom had worked as an interpreter for the US military after the 2003 US-led invasion, were detained on arrival at JFK. A second federal judge in Virginia issued a temporary order restricting authorities for seven days from deporting legal permanent residents detained at Dulles Airport just outside Washington.

The order follows through on one of his most controversial campaign promises, to subject travelers from Muslim-majority countries to "extreme vetting" - which he declared would make America safe from "radical Islamic terrorists". The State Department has said that only people holding a dual citizenship with the US will be allowed to enter. The plan triggered a fierce political backlash, but was endorsed by Republican Speaker of the House Paul Ryan.

Democratic lawmakers have also been up in arms, seeing the ban as an opportunity to galvanize outrage to the new president. "This is not who we are," wrote former Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton on Twitter. German Chancellor Angela Merkel slammed the restrictions, saying it was "not justified" to target people based on their background or religion and a spokesman said Berlin will examine the consequences for German citizens.

British Prime Minister Theresa May, who met Trump in Washington on a charm offensive last week, said she did "not agree" with the restrictions. British athletics legend Mo Farah, who was born in Somalia, called it a policy of "ignorance and prejudice" that could keep him apart from his family, based in Oregon, while he is currently training in Ethiopia. And in Iraq, a key partner in the war against militants for more than two years, there were calls for a reciprocal ban on US citizens. — AFP



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Focus

TRUMP, IMMIGRANT ADVOCATES: A LONG BATTLE IS BEGINNING

Resistance to US President Donald Trump's crackdown on Muslim immigration mounted quickly Saturday, with protests spreading across the country and the first legal challenge filed to an order branded as blatantly discriminatory. Around 2,000 angry protesters flocked to New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport after a dozen travelers were detained there, including two Iraqi men late Friday, shortly after Trump signed the travel ban.

Large protests also took place at the main airports for Washington, Chicago, Minneapolis, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Dallas, where USA Today said about 50 people were detained. "We knew that was coming - we were prepared," said Camille Mackler, a lawyer who heads legal initiatives at the New York Immigration Coalition, one of the groups that quickly mounted the demonstration there. "But we didn't know when, and we couldn't believe it would be immediate, that there'd be people in an airplane the moment the order was taking effect."

The List Project, which helps Iraqis whose personal safety is threatened because they have worked for the United States, expressed outrage over the move, warning it put American lives at risk too. "I can't say this in blunt-enough terms: you can't screw over the people that risked their lives and bled for this country without consequences," wrote the project's founder and director Kirk Johnson. "But here is President Trump, in his first week, suspending the refugee program through an executive order that creates no exceptions for the tens of thousands of Iraqis and Afghans who worked alongside our Marines, soldiers, diplomats and aid workers."

He noted that of the approximately 800,000 refugees who have come to the United States since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, none have been charged with domestic terror attacks. The first lawsuit against Trump's order was filed in a federal court by the American Civil Liberties Union and other advocacy groups after the two Iraqi men were detained. The filing seeks class-action status in order to represent all refugees and travelers held up because of the presidential action. An emergency hearing took place late Saturday in Brooklyn.

The legal challenge sought the release of the two Iraqi men on grounds of unlawful detention. One of them - Hameed Khalid Darweesh, who has worked as interpreter and in other roles for the US in Iraq - was in fact released on Saturday. But 11 others remain detained at JFK, according to Democratic Representative Jerrold Nadler, who went there to press for their release.

'We must fight'

Nadler posted on Twitter from the airport that he was trying to obtain the release of another Iraqi, who came to rejoin his wife and child already living in the United States as legal refugees, and the other 10 people. "We shouldn't have to demand the release of refugees one by one," Nadler said. "We must fight this executive order in the streets, in the courts, anywhere, anytime. We must resist. We must fight!" In the early afternoon, Darweesh left the airport to the welcoming shouts of demonstrators. "Welcome home! Muslims are welcome here!" they yelled. "No hate, no fear!"

Trump says his crackdown is necessary to prevent “radical Islamic terrorists” from entering the US. The new Republican president’s sweeping order, signed Friday, bars the issuance of visas for 90 days to migrants or visitors from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. The order also suspended the US refugee resettlement program for at least 120 days while tough vetting rules are established. Syrian refugees were barred indefinitely, or until Trump decides they no longer pose a threat.

"It's really disappointing to see our country fighting against its own ideals of being a country that is supposed to be welcoming to everyone," said Ilhan Omar, a former refugee who is also the first Somali-American lawmaker in the United States. "It is important for us to remember that extremism and terrorism doesn't have a nation. It doesn't have a religion," she told CNN, noting that some of the 9/11 perpetrators' home countries were not included in the ban. "We are exploiting the ignorance of some parts of our communities and fears they have of a faith they don't understand and neighbors they haven't taken a chance to learn the struggles and processes they have gone through to get here."

A long battle

The rapid mobilization against the order suggests a protracted battle is shaping up between migrant advocates and Trump and his administration. "This is the opening salvo of a long battle that will go on in the courts," said Michael Kagan, a law professor at the University of Nevada Las Vegas who specializes in immigration issues. He said the outcome of the legal battle is unclear because "we are in uncharted territory in modern America" — AFP

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A TALE OF CHIVALRY AND SOVEREIGNTY

On the afternoon of Jan 24, a black BMW pulled out of a 16th century palace in Rome, crossed the Tiber River and headed for the Vatican, a short trip to end a brazen challenge to the authority of Pope Francis. Inside the car was 67-year-old Englishman Matthew Festing, the head of an ancient Catholic order of knights which is now a worldwide charity with a unique diplomatic status. Festing was about to resign, the first leader in several centuries of the Order of Malta, which was founded in 1048 to provide medical aid for pilgrims in the Holy Land, to step down instead of ruling for life.

The move was aimed at ending a highly-public spat between Festing and the reformist pope over the running of the chivalric institution. The weeks-long conflict had become one of the biggest internal challenges yet to Francis' efforts to modernize the 1.2 billion member Roman Catholic Church. At issue was the Order's reaction to the discovery that condoms had been distributed by one of its aid projects in Myanmar. The Order had fired its Grand Chancellor, Albrecht Freiherr von Boeselager, whom it held responsible for the condom distribution. Von Boeselager declined to comment for this article.

Though canon law use goes against Catholic teaching, the Vatican had ordered an investigation into the firing of von Boeselager. It subsequently publicly castigated Festing, who had refused to cooperate with the investigation. Backing down, Festing, a former Sotheby's art auctioneer, gave a hand-written resignation letter to Francis in the pope's private residence, according to a senior Vatican source. Festing, who has the title of prince, declined an interview request.

Instead of quelling the conflict, however, Festing's resignation was followed by yet another challenge to Francis's authority — led by vocal pope critic American Cardinal Raymond Leo Burke, according to Vatican and Knights sources. In particular Burke tried to convince Festing to withdraw his resignation and keep fighting the pope, these sources say. On Saturday, the Knight's Sovereign Council accepted Festing's resignation and re-instated von Borselager, a clear defeat for Burke. Burke declined to comment for this article. The tussle suggested Francis is still battling to consolidate his power over the Church almost four years into his tenure, Vatican insiders say. Beyond a fight over condoms, the clash pointed to lingering divisions between the Church's conservatives and more progressive factions who support the pope's reformist agenda, they add. Francis is trying to make the Church less dogmatic and more welcoming to those who have felt excluded, such as homosexuals and the divorced. "While this whole saga was an internal matter that probably should have stayed that

way, it metamorphosed into a clash that showed the divide between conservatives and progressives," said Andrea Tornielli, author of several books on Pope Francis. The Vatican declined to comment on the clash and on Pope Francis' efforts to consolidate his power. It directed Reuters to two public statements. One, on Dec. 22, relates to the Vatican order to investigate the firing of von Boeselerager. The second, on Jan 17, followed a pledge by Festing on the Knights' webpage not to cooperate with the Vatican. It decried his resistance and ordered members of the order to cooperate.

German Aristocrat

The all-male top leaders of the Knights of Malta are not clerics, but they take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience to the pope. A German aristocrat whose father participated in a failed plot to kill Hitler in World War Two, von Boeselager was fired by Hitler in December, and accused of having allowed the use of condoms while he was head of the Knights' global humanitarian projects. Festing fired him in Burke's presence, arguing that the German had hidden the condom use from the order's leaders when he was named Grand Chancellor, according to Knights and Vatican sources. Immediately, the firing set off the conflict between the Knights' hierarchy and the Vatican. Von Boeselager, a devout Catholic, said in a statement on Dec 23 that he was fully behind Church teachings. He closed two projects in the developing world when he discovered condoms were being distributed but kept a third running in Myanmar for a while because closing it would have abruptly ended all basic medical services to poor people. The Church does not allow condoms as a means of birth control and says abstinence and monogamy in heterosexual marriage is the best way to stop the spread of AIDS.

In the same statement, von Boeselager said Festing and Burke told him the Vatican wanted him to resign and that there would be "severe consequences" for the Order if he did not. The Vatican denied, in a letter from its secretary of state to the Order and seen by Reuters, that it had mandated the resignation, saying it had told the Knights the pope wanted a solution through dialogue. The German said his sacking was against the Knights' constitution and appealed to the pope, who ordered the investigation.

Festing refused to cooperate, issuing a series of increasingly strident public statements. In one, he called the papal commission that was investigating the firing “legally irrelevant”. In a Jan 14 confidential letter to the top echelons of the Order and seen by Reuters, Festing wrote: “In refusing to acknowledge this group of people’s jurisdiction, I am

trying to protect the order's sovereignty". The institution has the status of a sovereign entity, maintaining diplomatic relations with over 100 states and the European Union and permanent observer status at the United Nations. The pope was irritated by Festing's defiant stand, a senior Vatican source said, and the Vatican shot back with a public statement ordering the Knights to obey. After that public order, Festing changed his tune and resigned in the pope's residence a week later.

Festing's resignation came as a shock for many inside the Knights: some of them told Reuters it was akin to the resignation of Pope Benedict in 2013. Four sources said that for many others in the order, it came as a relief. They feared the clash was damaging the image of the institution whose 13,000 members, 80,000 volunteers and 20,000 paid medical staff help the neediest around the world.

The day after Festing handed his resignation to the pope, Cardinal Burke drove to the order's headquarters from his apartment near the Vatican and sought to persuade Festing to withdraw his resignation, a source from the Vatican and one from the Knights said. Burke declined to comment on his meeting with Festing. Burke has long been leading challenges against the pope. Pope Francis demoted him from a top Vatican job in 2014 with no official explanation and assigned him to be the "patron" of the Order of Malta.

Such "patron" positions are usually given to older cardinals after they retire at 75. Burke was only 66 then and the demotion was widely seen as a sign of the pope's irritation with the cardinal's constant sniping over Francis' reforms. In particular, Burke has contested moves by the pope that would allow Catholics who have divorced and remarried outside the Church without an annulment to return to the sacrament of communion. Burke declined to comment on his demotion.

Since the demolition, Burke has become even more of a rallying point for conservatives, flying around the world to give lectures to conservative groups and often giving interviews criticizing the pope's decisions. In November, he led a rare public challenge to the pope with three other cardinals who accused the pontiff of sowing confusion on important moral issues such as that of communion for the divorced. Burke later said in an interview that if the pope did not respond to their letter, the cardinals might need to "correct" the pope themselves for the good of the Church. The Vatican did not comment on the uprising at the time but many of the pope's supporters publicly criticized the four cardinals. — Reuters

TRUMP SHUTS DOOR, BUT WILL US BE SAFER?

President Donald Trump says his halt to immigration from seven Muslim-majority nations and ban on refugees is being done in the name of national security. But it's not clear the measures will help prevent attacks on American soil, and they could wind up emboldening extremists who already view the US as at war with Islam.

Recent acts of deadly extremist violence have been carried out either by US citizens or by individuals whose families were from the nations singled out. And the list of countries in Trump's order doesn't include Saudi Arabia, where most of the Sept 11 hijackers were from, or other places with a more direct link to terrorism in America. The admissions ban announced Friday also does not directly address a more urgent law enforcement concern: homegrown violent extremists already in the United States who plot their attacks without any overseas connections or contacts.

"The primary terrorism-related threat facing the US today comes from individuals living here who become inspired by what they see on the internet, who carry out attacks independent of any terrorist organization," said John Cohen, a former Department of Homeland Security counterterrorism official who worked in government under Democratic and Republican administrations and who has been involved in refugee vetting policy.

The FBI has for years been concerned by the prospect of airplane bomb plots and terrorists dispatched from overseas to commit violence in America. But the ascendancy of the Islamic State, and the group's ability through slick and easily accessible propa-

da to reach susceptible young Americans in all corners of the country, has been a more immediate challenge - and a more realistic danger - for counterterrorism officials than any threat posed by refugees from abroad. "Dealing with that threat should be a top priority for this administration," Cohen said.

The executive order suspends refugee admissions for 120 days and bars all immigration for 90 days from Muslim-majority countries with terrorism concerns: Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. It indefinitely bars the processing of refugees from Syria, a country that's been of particular concern to the FBI even though the number of Americans who have looked to travel there to fight with the

Islamic State has been dwindling.

But the culprits of recent deadly terror attacks aren't linked to the countries singled out by Trump's order. Omar Mateen, the man responsible for the Orlando nightclub shooting, the deadliest terror attack in the US since the Sept 11 attacks, was born in New York to Afghan parents. Syed Rizwan Farook, who took part in the Dec 2015 San Bernardino attack, was born in Chicago. His wife, Tashfeen Malik, had been living in Pakistan and visiting family in Saudi Arabia before she passed the background check and entered the US.

The brothers who bombed the Boston Marathon were ethnic Chechens who had been living in the US. In general, Islamic

extremists have accounted for a minuscule amount of the roughly 240,000 murders since Sept 11, 2001, said Charles Kurzman, a sociology professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Kurzman said his research identified zero fatalities since Sept 11 caused by extremists from the seven nations in Trump's order. He said people with ancestry from those countries have accounted for only a small fraction of extremist-related arrests and disrupted plots during the same time period. "I can only conclude that this is whipping up fear and hostility toward Americans who have family background from these countries," Kurzman said.

Vetting

Still, while refugees are subject to screening - including in-person interviews, checks with law enforcement databases and collection of biometric data, when available - the process is not perfect. FBI counterterrorism officials have long expressed concern about the lack of background information about refugees from Syria, a home base of the Islamic State, and Director James Comey has said that he could not guarantee a mistake-free vetting process. There have been isolated incidents of refugees later accused in terror-related plots. An Iraqi refugee who entered the US in 2009, for instance, pleaded guilty in Houston in October to attempting to provide material support to the Islamic State. Two Iraqi refugees who lived in Kentucky are now in prison after having been convicted in a plot to send sniper rifles, Stinger missiles and money to Al-Qaeda operatives waging an insurgency back home. — AP



Protesters are surrounded by police officers and travelers as they pass through an exit of Terminal 4 at John F Kennedy International Airport in New York on Saturday. — AP

PAYET GETS HIS DREAM MOVE BACK TO MARSEILLE

LONDON: France international Dimitri Payet's long drawn out transfer saga ended yesterday as Premier League side West Ham agreed to sell him to Ligue 1 outfit Marseille for a reported £25million (29.3m euros, \$31.3m). The 29-year-old-who starred for the Hammers last season scoring 12 goals had effectively gone on strike at the beginning of the month. He said he would not play for the club again and his and his wife's priority was a return to France and his former club. However, having turned down two earlier bids-reported to be £19m and £20m-West Ham changed their tune with the higher offer and also having signed Scotland international Robert Snodgrass from Hull. "West Ham United can confirm that a £25m fee has today been agreed for the transfer of Dimitri Payet to Olympique de Marseille," tweeted the club on their Twitter page. Payet, who also starred for France in last year's Euro 2016 championships where they lost to Portugal in the final, had been demoted to train with the Under-23 side as he was frozen out by Hammers manager Slaven Bilic and his team-mates after his refusal to play.—AFP



GRETZKY TO COACH OVECHKIN, CROSBY IN ALL-STAR GAME

LOS ANGELES: Wayne Gretzky, the NHL's all-time scoring leader, was named Saturday as a fill-in coach for the Metropolitan division team in NHL All-Star Game, uniting three of the league's greatest players. Gretzky, nicknamed "The Great One," will guide a squad featuring Russian star Alex Ovechkin of the Washington Capitals and Pittsburgh's Sidney Crosby, who netted the 2010 Vancouver Olympic gold medal-winning goal for Canada. All three were named among the NHL's 100 Greatest Players on Friday as part of festivities for the contest in Los Angeles. Gretzky, who scored 894 goals and set up 1,963 more in a historic 20-season career that ended in 1999, was called in to replace Columbus Blue Jackets coach John Tortorella, who cited personal reasons for pulling out of the job. Tortorella withdrew because his son Nick, a US Army soldier stationed overseas, has a gravely ill 10-year-old pit bull. The coach owns five dogs and his charity foundation finds homes for dogs. Crosby leads the NHL with 28 goals this season while Ovechkin ranks fourth with 23. Gretzky coached the Phoenix Coyotes from 2005-2009. —AFP

MORAES EAGER TO REBUILD SHATTERED CHAPECOENSE

LISBON: Former Benfica and Roma goalkeeper Artur Moraes says he did not think twice when he was invited to return to Brazil to play for Chapecoense after most of its squad was wiped out in a plane crash. "Practically everyone in the world is rooting for Chapecoense at the moment. I am one of them, I could not say no," the 36-year-old Brazilian said in an interview published yesterday in Portuguese daily Diario de Noticias. "I didn't doubt embracing this cause. When they called me I did not delay in replying and wanted to take the first plane to come help. Playing for Chapecoense at this moment is not just a job, it is a life choice. "To be able to lift this club up, be part of this story, is also why I accepted this challenge," he added. Moraes, who earlier this month penned a one-year contract with Chapecoense, is one of club's most high-profile signings since the tragic plane disaster. Chapecoense rose from obscurity to make it to the final of the Copa Sudamericana regional tournament. But the plane disaster on November 28 cut short their dream as they flew to Colombia to play. The crash in the Colombian mountains killed 71 people, including 19 of the team's players and numerous staff. —AFP



AMIR'S SHOOTING GRAND PRIX BEGINS WITH 600 SHOOTERS

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah International Shooting Grand Prix opened at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex on Saturday night with over 600 shooters from 47 countries in a competition that will last for six days.

Information Minister, State Minister for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah who represented HH the Amir said the political leadership is keen on supporting athletes to have Kuwait's name in prominence everywhere, adding he was honored to represent HH the Amir in such an event.

Sheikh Salman said "What Kuwait Shooting Sport Club was able to achieve for Kuwait sports especially at the Olympic and international level makes us proud". He wished such achievements to continue in this and upcoming events.

He also welcomed those participating from brotherly and friendly countries and expressed confidence in the success of the Higher Organizing Committee under the Chairmanship of President of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federations Eng Duaij Al-Otaibi both at the technical and administrative levels.

Meanwhile, Eng Al-Otaibi said the large participation by brotherly and friendly countries reflect the importance of this Grand Prix for those countries and hoped Kuwait shooters achieve outstanding



results. He added that the tournament that includes several Gulf, Arab and Asian championships in weapons and archery became a distinguished mark in Kuwait, Arab and Asian sport and that HOC worked hard for the preparations and organization of this tournament as it bears a dear name to all.

He said all members of HOC are honored to organize this grand Prix as it coincides with Kuwait's celebrations of the National and Liberation days as well as the 11th anniversary of HH the Amir ascension to power, he also thanked Sheikh Salman for his continued support of Kuwait Shooting sport.

Meanwhile Director General of Public Authority for Youth Abdelrahman Al-Mutairi said the patronage of HH the Amir of the tournament reflects his support of athletic youth to utilize their energy and project their excellence particularly in shooting in



most important arenas around the world. Al-Mutairi who attended the opening ceremony said the authority cooperates with KSSC to organize shooting sport activities in Sabahiya Youth center which will be established soon to attract skilled youth who want to practice the sport and occupy their free time.

On his part President of the Asian Shooting Confederation Sheikh Ali Al-Khalifa said HH the Amir Grand Prix became one of the most important at the continental level, and expressed thanks to the organizing committee for its outstanding performance at all levels.

Al-Khalifa appreciated the support KSSF gives to the Asian shooting and congratulated Kuwait shooting for the achievements made, adding that this is something familiar and expected due to the care the sport receives from officials at all levels.



STACY, LEXI THOMPSON SHARE LPGA TOUR LEAD

PARADISE ISLAND: Stacy Lewis had two back-nine eagles Saturday in the LPGA Tour's season-opening Pure Silk Bahamas Classic to put herself in position again to end a long winless streak. Lewis shot a 10-under 63 at Ocean Club to match Lexi Thompson atop the leaderboard at 23 under 196, one off the tour 54-hole record for relation to par set by Annika Sorenstam in the 2003 Mizuno Classic.

"That was probably the best round I think I've ever shot on tour in relation to par, so just a cool day," Lewis said. "I didn't exactly hit it perfect, got away with a few shots, but just took advantage of it. I didn't even know

what I shot there at the end of the day."

Lewis was second in the event in 2014 and tied for second last year, one of her 11 runner-up finishes since her last victory in June 2014. She has 11 tour victories, including two majors.

Lewis holed out from the fairway for eagle on the par-5 11th, birdied the next two, and dropped a stroke on the par-4 14th. She birdied the par-3 17th and made a 12-foot eagle putt on the par-5 18th.

She had four birdies on the front nine. "I knew I needed to be aggressive out there today, and it wasn't pretty at times, wasn't perfect, but the scorecard

turned out great," Lewis said. "You've just got to take advantage. When those miss-hits work out good, you take advantage of it, and that's what I did today."

Thompson followed her tournament-record 61 on Friday with a 66. She birdied the final four holes on the front nine and added two more on 14 and 15.

"Coming out here with no wind, it's just you have to make a lot of birdies to make a move on anybody," Thompson said. "I shot 7 under and I'm tied, so it's crazy, but we will see what tomorrow will bring."

Gerina Pillier was a stroke back, birdieing the final two holes for her second straight 65. Brittany Lincicome, the leader after each of the first two round, had a 69 fall two shots behind. "Really just keeping it in the fairway and keeping it close, and I have had several tap-in birdies, which always helps," Pillier said. "The greens are in great condition and that helps when you hit the ball on line."

Lewis will join US Solheim Cup teammates Thompson and Pillier in the final group later. "That's where I wanted to be," Lewis said. "When I walked up on 18, kind of said I needed that putt to make sure I was in that last group. I think it's important just to kind of know what's going on. I did a good job of not looking at leaderboard today, and I want to continue doing that so you get a feel for what's going on. It's definitely the goal. The goal coming in this week was to have a chance yesterday, and I did that, so now it's just go out there and play golf."

Israel's Laetitia Beck ended the run of US players on the leaderboard, shooting a 66 to get to 16 under. Nelly Korda matched Lewis for the round of the day with a 63 to jump from tie for 32nd to a tie for sixth at 15 under in her first event as a tour member. The 18-year-old Korda is the sister of tour player Jessica Korda and daughter of former tennis player Petr Korda.

"I'm so happy to be out here. It's been my dream," Korda said. "I was definitely nervous my first day and my first nine holes, and I'm glad I kind of got those nerves out of way, and now I can play some golf."

Canadian Brooke Henderson was tied for 23rd at 10 under after a 73. US Solheim Cup captain Juli Inkster was 7 under after a 70. She's starting her 35th tour season. Second-ranked Ariya Jutanugarn had a 72 to get to 3 under. She won five times last season and took the LPGA Tour player of the year award.— AP



Lexi Thompson

RODGERS, SNEDEKER SHARE LEAD AT TORREY PINES

SAN DIEGO: Patrick Rodgers had a clean scorecard to match a picture-perfect Saturday at Torrey Pines and shot a 5-under 67 to share the lead with defending champion Brandt Snedeker in the Farmers Insurance Open.

Snedeker, trying to become only the fourth player to win back-to-back at Torrey Pines, didn't get much out of his round of 70. His three birdies were all inside 6 feet, and the longest putt he made was for par. Even so, being tied for the lead is a better spot than his last two victories. He rallied from seven shots behind in 2012 and won in a playoff against Kyle Stanley, who made triple bogey on the final hole. Last year, he made the cut on the number and was six shots behind going into the final round.

Snedeker and Rodgers were at 9-under 207, and 15 players were within three shots of the lead. Rodgers is the latest player from the high school class of '11 with a chance to shine, an athletic and powerful player who has been patiently waiting his turn. He picked up a little extra motivation from watching one of his best friends, former roommate Justin Thomas, sweep the Hawaii swing. Before Thomas, it was Jordan Spieth who picking up big trophies at an alarming rate.

Also in range of a victory Sunday are two others from that class of 2011. C.T. Pan of Taiwan, who played at Washington, birdied three of his last five holes for a 69 and was one shot behind. Ollie Schniederjans struggled on the back nine but still managed a 71 and was two shots behind.

Also in the mix was Pat Perez, who grew up at Torrey Pines and whose father, Mike, is the starter on the first tee. Perez shot a 67 and goes into the final round just two shots behind. Not to be forgotten was Phil Mickelson, who played on the opposite end of the course as the leaders and shot 68 to get within four shots. Mickelson is a three-time winner of the tournament. Justin Rose, who started the third round with a one-shot lead, fell behind on the second hole and never caught up. He shot 73 and was in the large group at 7-under 209.

QATAR MASTERS

South Korea's Jeunghun Wang broke out of a crowded pack with a 7-under 65 to take a three-stroke lead in the Qatar Masters.

The 21-year-old Wang had a 15-under 201 total at Doha Golf Club. Spain's Nacho Elvira and South African Jaco van Zyl each shot 68 to reach 12 under. — AP



2017 RED BULL AIR RACE SEASON KICKS OFF IN ABU DHABI WITH 75TH RACE

ABU DHABI: The first race of the 2017 Red Bull Air Race calendar in February will be a celebration of milestones for the official World Championship: the tenth season of competition, the tenth consecutive opener in Abu Dhabi and the diamond 75th race for the coveted title.

As a first-time world champion from Germany begins the campaign to defend his crown title, the Red Bull Air Race World Championship will celebrate a trio of landmarks above the shimmering waters of the Arabian Gulf in Abu Dhabi, 10-11 February

2017. The full Red Bull Air Race calendar announcement will follow in January.

Matthias Dolderer will be the man everyone wants to beat in Abu Dhabi. The German soared into the 2016 season with a podium finish in the Emirates and never looked back, clinching his first World Championship at the seventh stop on the calendar - the first pilot ever to secure the title before the season finale. However, after two consecutive years of being the runner-up on the overall podium, Australia's Matt Hall will be looking to make history of his own in 2017, and in all 13 top

teams from five continents will be out to dethrone Dolderer.

"It's thrilling to launch our tenth season with this milestone 75th race, and I can't image a better setting than Abu Dhabi, a city renowned for its appreciation of top-level motorsport that has warmly welcomed us for a decade now," said Erich Wolf, General Manager of Red Bull Air Race GmbH. "After Dolderer's dominance in 2016, every team wants to put its stamp on this season from the outset, and the strategic and technical preparations have been intense. Even for the knowl-

edgeable fans in the Emirates, this race is sure to be special."

"Abu Dhabi's 10-year partnership with the Red Bull Air Race is one of the strongest in our sports portfolio. This new 4-year agreement to be the season-opening race reinforces our vision to align ourselves with the world's best sports organizations and deliver high-quality media content to an international audience, as well as a major economic impact spike to the capital city. The sight of the Red Bull Air Race planes above Abu Dhabi's stunning Corniche backdrop is one of the best in the

UAE sporting calendar - we're looking forward to welcoming the pilots and fans back in February," said His Excellency Aref Al Awani, General Secretary of Abu Dhabi Sports Council.

Boosting the excitement will be new Master Class and Challenger Class pilots looking to shake up the standings.

Join the celebration: Tickets for the opening race of the 2017 Red Bull Air Race World Championship season in Abu Dhabi are on sale now. For all the latest news and information, visit www.redbullairrace.com.

BERCHELT DETHRONES VARGAS, JAPAN'S MIURA WINS BY KO

LOS ANGELES: Miguel Berchelt dethroned previously unbeaten Francisco Vargas on Saturday, stopping him in the 11th round to seize the World Boxing Council super featherweight title in a showdown of Mexican rivals.

Referee Raul Caiz halted the bout 2:19 into the 11th round after a bloody cut over the left eye of Vargas left the champion unable to see or stop the triumphant challenger. "Francisco Vargas is a great champion. When he's hurt he throws a lot more punches. He's got a lot of heart," Berchelt said. "But I came here to win. I came here to show I have heart. I came here to be the champion." Berchelt, 25, improved to 31-1 with his 28th early stoppage and 10th consecutive victory while Vargas, 32, fell to 23-1 with two drawn. "This is what I always wanted," Berchelt said. "I'm young. I'm hungry. I wanted to be a world champion. Now I have the belt on my waist and it feels the best." Japan's Takashi Miura, who lost the title to Vargas 14 months ago, knocked out Mexico's Miguel Roman 53 seconds into the 12th round on the undercard at Indio, California, to become Berchelt's mandatory title challenger. Berchelt, fighting outside Mexico for only the second time, repeatedly connected with punishing left hooks in the second and third rounds. His hard rights to the head in the fourth again slowed Vargas, opening cuts over both eyes in the exchanges.

Going past the sixth round for the first

time in his career, Berchelt kept up the intensity. Caiz and ringside doctor Paul Wallace checked Vargas in the ninth and 10th rounds and allowed him to continue. Blood began flowing freely from the gash over Vargas's swollen left eye in the ninth and by the 11th was more than the champion could overcome. "The cut was a big problem. It wouldn't let me do what I wanted," Vargas said. "I was never going to stop. I was always going to fight. I'm a warrior. I fight 'til the end."

"But it was just the blood. I couldn't see. I wasn't able to fight." Miura's latest-round KO - Miura improved to 31-3 with two drawn by taking his 24th career knockout, his first knockout beyond the ninth round, while Roman fell to 56-12 with his 18-fight win streak snapped.

Miura, 32, and Roman, 31, had fast-paced, hard-punching early rounds. Miura's left eye began swelling in the fourth round and both fighters landed punishing body blows.

Roman connected with a punishing right to Miura's jaw in the sixth, setting up a flurry by the Mexican that weakened the former champion. The Asian southpaw suffered a bloody lip but fired back in the seventh with renewed vigor, trading powerful punches. Roman suffered a cut over his left eye in the eighth on an accidental headbutt from Miura, who exchanged hard punches in the ninth and buckled the Mexican momentarily in the 10th.—AFP



LAS VEGAS: Leo Santa Cruz celebrates his majority decision win over Carl Frampton after their WBA featherweight title fight at the MGM Grand Arena in Las Vegas on Saturday. — AFP

SANTA CRUZ BEATS FRAMPTON FOR WBA FEATHERWEIGHT BELT

LAS VEGAS: Leo Santa Cruz reclaimed the WBA featherweight title Saturday night with a majority decision over Carl Frampton. In their second fight in six months, the 125-pound fighters thrilled the crowd with furious exchanges over a grueling 12 rounds, with Santa Cruz (33-1-1) avenging his only loss.

Using a punishing jab that often left Frampton (23-1) out of position, Santa Cruz landed more punches even as Frampton often effectively eluded blows. Santa Cruz delivered another flurry in the 11th round and withstood Frampton's aggression in the 12th.

Judge Burt Clemens scored the fight 114-114, while Dave Moretti and Glenn Feldman had it 115-113. In the co-main event, Mikey Garcia (36-0) stopped Dejan Zlatikanin (22-1) in the third round to take the WBC lightweight crown and make him a three-division champion.

The 5-foot-7 Santa Cruz, who was born in Mexico but lives in Los Angeles, had a 7-inch reach advantage over the 5-5 Frampton. But that mattered little in the first fight July 30 in New York, a thriller in which an overly aggressive Santa Cruz threw more than a thousand punches but lost a majority decision in what was considered one of the top bouts of 2016.

Santa Cruz, distracted some by his father and trainer's bone cancer battle, thought the pro-Frampton crowd may have influenced the judges. He wanted the rematch on the West Coast and granted his wish as Jose Santa Cruz's cancer went into remission.

But an estimated 5,000 Irish and British fans made the trip to the Las Vegas Strip, chanting and singing long before the fight began. There appeared to be an even split of fans waving Mexican and Northern Ireland flags in the crowd of 10,085 at the MGM Grand Garden Arena.

Santa Cruz changed his tactics from the first time, using the jab more to leave Frampton off-balance in the early rounds. Frampton, who slipped at the end of the fourth round, absorbed a series of punches to end of the fifth.

Frampton went more to the body in the later

rounds as the fighters continued with compelling exchanges that left many ringside observers with conflicting scorecards. In the earlier fight, Garcia staggered Zlatikanin, the first world champion from Montenegro, with a left uppercut. Garcia then sent him to the canvas with an overhand right that appeared to leave him unconscious. Zlatikanin stayed down for several minutes and was administered oxygen before getting to his feet.

"I got between the ropes and then he hit me with a good, hard punch," Zlatikanin said. It was the 30th career knockout for Garcia in his second fight following 2 1/2-year layoff due to a promotional dispute with Top Rank. The four-time, three-division champ fought as a junior welterweight in July.

"The layoff allowed me to relight that fire, that passion," Garcia said before adding, "Now that I'm back, I'm available for any other of the champions that want to unify titles." The card was supposed to feature a third title fight that would perhaps lead to an all-United Kingdom unification bout later this summer.

But Lee Selby's IBF featherweight title defense against Jonathan Victor Barros was canceled Friday after Barros failed a physical and was denied clearance by the Nevada Athletic Commission.

Selby, of Wales, wanted to face the Frampton-Santa Cruz winner and had floated the idea of a potential matchup with Frampton in Belfast. But Santa Cruz's victory could set up a trilogy fight with Frampton. — AP

ALL THE EXCITEMENT OF UFC, NOW ONLY ON OSN

DUBAI: OSN, the leading pay-TV network in MENA, has entered an exclusive long-term agreement with UFC, the world's premier mixed martial arts organisation, making OSN the one-stop destination for UFC fans in the region.

Reflecting OSN's commitment to deliver relevant, exclusive and sought-after entertainment for its subscribers, the new partnership ensures all UFC content including live events, pre and post-event shows, and The Ultimate Fighter reality series, available exclusively for OSN subscribers.

Andy Warkman, SVP, Sport & Sports Production, OSN, said: "We are very excited about bringing UFC back to OSN viewers and entering into this long term partnership. We are listening to our customers, and delivering exclusive content and great value to our new sports channel packages. UFC has seen massive growth and we look forward to working with them and WME|IMG to build on that growth in our region. UFC will be one of our standout offerings in the new sports line up for 2017.

"UFC on OSN will be industry-defining, as for the first time, we will produce localised Arabic content 'for the region, from the region' to give UFC fans an unrivalled viewing experience," continued Warkman.

James Elliott, UFC Vice President, EMEA, added: "We are pleased to be partnering with OSN once again to bring even more exciting, new and localised content to viewers across the Middle East and Africa. UFC has previously held two very successful events in the UAE and witnessed first hand the passion of the fans across the region. Together we will bring athlete sto-

ries and events to fans like never before, ensuring they don't miss a minute of the action."

Also in partnership with UFC, OSN is launching UFC FIGHT PASS within the region. This digital subscription service features the world's largest combat sports library, including all past UFC events, exclusive programming, access to UFC archives, UFC FIGHT PASS exclusive prelims and select live events.

For OSN sports fans, 2017 means the chance to exclusively watch every live UFC events across multiple devices, including UFC 208: HOLM vs. DE RANDAMIE in February and UFC 209: WOODLEY vs. THOMPSON 2 in March.



AUSTRALIA ENTERS RING FOR PACQUIAO-HORN FIGHT

SYDNEY: WBO welterweight world champion Manny Pacquiao could fight Australian Jeff Horn in Queensland state after officials confirmed yesterday they were in negotiations to host the bout.

There has been weeks of speculation that the 38-year-old Filipino dubbed "Pac-Man" will get into the ring with Horn in April, possibly in Australia. "We now are getting the pieces together to deliver this major fight," Queensland's tourism minister Kate Jones told reporters in Brisbane.

"We are working very closely with Duco Events, (venue manager) AEG Ogden and as well as the (Brisbane City) Council to secure this fight here in Brisbane. "We're hoping to lock this down as soon as possible." Describing it as the "largest boxing event in Australia", Jones said her government was keen to secure the fight at the 52,500-capacity Suncorp

Stadium. Suncorp Stadium general manager Alan Graham said 28-year-old Horn was keen to fight at the Brisbane venue. "He's personally said that he couldn't think of anything more exhilarating than walking out in the middle of Suncorp Stadium with a full house and people backing him... for a fight," Graham told reporters. Horn's promoter Duco Events was not immediately available for comment. Brisbane's Courier Mail newspaper said yesterday the fight had been pencilled in for April 23. Pacquiao, who has parlayed his sporting fame into a career in politics, is a veteran of 67 fights with 59 victories. His record easily dwarfs that of Horn, who hails from Queensland, who has notched up only 17 fights with 16 wins.

Pacquiao said last week that negotiations for the fight, including the date and opponent, were still ongoing. —AFP

OLYMPIC CHAMPS CENTROWITZ, STEFANIDI WIN IN BOSTON

NEW YORK: Reigning Olympic 1,500-meter champion Matthew Centrowitz of the United States and Rio women's pole vault gold medalist Ekaterini Stefanidi of Greece were among Saturday's winners at the Boston Indoor Grand Prix athletics meet. British sprinter Harry Aikines-Aryeetey, Australian long jumper Fabrice Lapierre and Rio 5,000m runners-up Hellen Obiri of Kenya and Paul Chelimo of the United States were also winners at the first event in the five-city IAAF World Indoor Tour.

Centrowitz, also reigning world indoor champion, won the mile in 3:55.78, edging Kenya's Vincent Kibet by .31 of a second.

"Definitely enjoyed my off-season a little bit more after the Olympics but happy to get back out there racing," Centrowitz said. "I was pretty happy. Could have gone a little bit quicker. I was

feeling it out until I made my move."

Stefanidi cleared 4.63m to win but an expected battle with 2012 Olympic champion Jenn Suhr never materialized after the American took one failed attempt at 4.53m and withdrew with muscle tightness.

Aikines-Aryeetey, third at 100m in the 2014 European Championships, edged China's Xie Zhenye at the tape to win the men's 60 meters, his time of 6.654 seconds taking the victory by .003 of a second. "I just kept pushing to the line," said Aikines-Aryeetey. "I'm a strong guy, lot of muscles. I just thought, 'I've got to keep going to the finish.'"

Lapierre, a 33-year-old Mauritian-born former Commonwealth Games and world indoor champion, was level with Swede Michel Torneus at 7.80m but Lapierre's second-best effort of 7.75 broke the deadlock in his favor.

Obiri, the 2012 world indoor 3,000m crown, won the women's 3,000 in 8:39.08 with Dutch reigning world 1,500m indoor champion Sifan Hassan second, 1.91 seconds back.

Chelimo won the men's 3,000 in 7:42.39, edging Britain's Andrew Butchart, sixth in the Rio 5,000 final, by .58 of a second.

"Training has been great. Now it's all about confidence," Chelimo said. "I've got the confidence. I'm ready now. I'm learning every day. It's great."

GARDNER STUMBLES BUT WINS

English Gardner, on the US gold medal 4x100 relay at Rio, won the 60 in 7.17 seconds, edging compatriot Dezerea Bryant by .02 in her lone planned indoor start of the season.

"I stumbled about three or four steps out of the blocks," Gardner said. "But I'm

kind of a vet now. I'm able to do stuff like that and keep my composure. I was able to get back up and stand tall and run to the line."

Donavan Brazier won the 600 in 1:16.57 after the disqualification of fellow American Duane Solomon, who crossed the line .21 in front but only after illegally cutting across the track from outside to inside after the first turn.

"I was thinking, 'You've got to cut in now,' then I was thinking, 'Damn, I wasn't supposed to cut in there,'" Solomon said. "Outdoors is where it's at. Indoors, it gets kind of confusing."

American Charlene Lipsey won the women's 800 in 2:02.01 with Ethiopia's Habitam Alemu second in 2:02.38 and Britain's Lynsey Sharp, the 2012 European champion who was sixth at Rio, taking third, another half-second adrift. Reigning world champion Marina

Arzamasova of Belarus was fifth in 2:04.85. Russian doping whistleblower Yulia Stepanova, competing as a neutral athlete representing no nation, finished seventh in 2:05.14.

Portugal's Patricia Mamona won the women's triple jump, leaping 14.01m, while Donald Thomas of the Bahamas won the men's high jump by clearing 2.28m.

Americans Emma Coburn, Sydney McLaughlin, Brenda Martinez and Jenny Simpson set a women's distance medley relay world indoor record of 10:40.31, breaking the old mark of 10:42.57 set at the same meet in 2015 by Americans Sarah Brown, Mahogany Jones, Megan Krumpoch and Martinez. "Being on the mountain top is so much better when you're there with friends," Simpson said. "This is a night I will remember the rest of my career." — AFP

FIVE-IN-ROW FERNANDEZ EQUALS 44-YR EURO RECORD

OSTRAVA: Reigning world champion Javier Fernandez won his fifth successive European figure skating title on Saturday, equalling a 44-year-old record.

Fernandez scored 294.84 points to see off Russian duo Maxim Kovtun (266.80) and Mikhail Kolyada (250.18). The 25-year-old equalled the record of five in a row set by Czech skater Ondrej Nepela between

1969 and 1973. Despite falling during his free programme, performed to an Elvis Presley soundtrack, the Madrid skater had plenty to spare having built up a 10-point lead after his short programme on Friday.

"To win five times in a row, to go down in the history of figure skating, it's incredible," said Fernandez. "Sometimes, even I can't believe it."

For 21-year-old Kovtun, it was a second silver medal after finishing runner-up in 2015 before taking a bronze last year.

Kolyada, also 21, made the podium for the first time after placing fifth in 2016. Earlier Saturday, French pair Gabriella Papadakis and Guillaume Cizeron won their third straight ice dance crown, thrilling the judges and the fans in Ostrava.

The champions, who are also double reigning world champions, completed their hat-trick of triumphs with a score of 189.67 points to see off Italians Anna Cappellini and Luca Lanotte, who garnered 186.64, with Russian couple Yekaterina Bobrova and Dmitri Soloviev third on 186.56. Papadakis, 21, and Cizeron, 22, stood third after the short programme. But they landed the win after a thrilling showing in the free dance which sets them up perfectly for the worlds in Helsinki from March 29 as they also target Olympic glory in Pyeongchang next year.

The French pair had appeared to be losing their lustre after failing to capture Grand Prix titles in Japan and then Marseille.

Cappellini and Lanotte, world and European champions in 2014, had to do with a runners-up finish for the third time in a row at the Euros. Bobrova and Soloviev took the gold in 2013 but had to settle for a repeat of bronze obtained last year. — AFP



OSTRAVA: Javier Fernandez of Spain competes during the Men's Short program skating competition of the European Figure Skating Championship in Ostrava, Czech Republic on Saturday. — AFP

GUT CRASHES, SHIFFRIN ECSTATIC IN 4TH AND VONN CONTENT IN 12TH

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO: Lara Gut crashed. Mikaela Shiffrin was ecstatic after finishing fourth. Lindsey Vonn, meanwhile, was just happy to make it down safely in 12th.

It was an up and down day for the biggest names in women's ski racing yesterday as Ilka Stuehec of Slovenia took advantage of bib No. 1 to win the first World Cup super-G of her career.

Stuehec finished 0.31 seconds ahead of Sofia Goggia of Italy and 0.70 in front of two-time overall champion Anna Veith of Austria. Gut, the defending overall champion, was fastest through the first two checkpoints when she lost control and twisted around in the air. She was fortunate to land with her skis facing downhill and came away with only bruises on her right leg and arm, according to the Swiss team.

"That's not the way I expected to end my weekend," Gut, who won Saturday's downhill, wrote on Facebook. "I'm OK. Ice will be my best friend for the next few days." Shiffrin missed the podium by just 0.03 seconds and extended her overall lead to 80 points ahead of Gut after the best speed result of her career.

The American's previous best speed result was 13th. "That was really fun," said Shiffrin, the Olympic and two-time world champion in slalom. "It felt like solid skiing and I was taking the line that we inspected and maybe even more aggressive in some spots. "Sometimes in speed if you feel good you're slow so when I came to the bottom I was like, 'That can't be good.' Then I saw I was in fourth and I was like, 'What? No

way,'" added Shiffrin, who was racing in Cortina for the first time. "So that was kind of cool and I'm going to really look at the video and figure out what sort of things I can take from today."

PERFECT DAY

It was another perfect day in the resort known as the "Queen" of the Dolomites Range, with the Olympia delle Tofane course bathed in sunshine and uninhibited 360-degree views all across the valley.

While her coach, Chris Knight, set the course, Vonn took it easy after crashing the previous two days. Vonn, who has won a record 11 races in Cortina, is also still regaining her form in super-G after returning recently from nearly a year out with knee and arm injuries.

It was the first time Vonn left Cortina without a win since 2009. "It definitely wasn't the weekend that I was hoping for but I think all things considered it's good that I'm still in one piece," Vonn said. "It was definitely really conservative skiing but I got to the finish and that was the most important part. "I really didn't want to risk everything today and not finish again and then have no confidence for the world championships," Vonn added. "So I executed my plan and now I just need a couple of days off. I'm definitely stiff from hitting the fence so hard two times in a row. Get a couple good days of super-G training in and I think I'll be ready to go." Stuehec won the opening three downhill of this season but had never finished better than fourth in super-G.—AP



CORTINA D'AMPEZZO: Slovenia's Ilka Stuehec, center, winner of an alpine ski, women's World Cup super-G, poses on the podium with second placed Italy's Sofia Goggia, left, and third placed Austria's Anna Veith, in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy, yesterday. —AP



NAGPUR: England's Ben Stokes (l) bowls out during the second T20 cricket match between India and England at the Vidarbha Cricket Association's Jamtha stadium in Nagpur yesterday. — AFP

NEHRA, BUMRAH HELP INDIA LEVEL T20 SERIES

NAGPUR: Fast bowler Ashish Nehra claimed three wickets as he combined with Jasprit Bumrah to choke the England batting and set up India's series levelling five-run win in the second Twenty20 international in Nagpur yesterday.

Chasing 145 for victory, England needed eight off the final over but Bumrah claimed two wickets and gave away just two runs to help the hosts even out the three-match series at 1-1. Joe Root, who looked like anchoring the chase with a run-a-ball 38, was given out lbw off Bumrah on the first ball of the 20th over as replays suggested the batsman got an inside edge before the ball hit his pads. Bumrah (2-20) bowled Jos Buttler (15) on the fourth delivery and never allowed Chris Jordan and Moeen Ali to score the remaining runs on the final two balls as England ended on 139 for 6.

Earlier Lokesh Rahul hit a 47-ball 71 to help India post 144-8 despite England seamer Chris Jordan's three wickets after the visitors elected to field first.

Nehra hurt the England chase with early strikes after getting openers Sam Billings (12) and Jason Roy (10) on consecutive deliveries of his second over. England's most trusted batting pair in skipper Eoin Morgan and Root then got down to resurrect the innings against a persistent Indian spin attack. Leg-spinner Amit Mishra broke the dangerous-looking stand — 43 runs after getting Morgan caught at deep mid-wicket for 17 to claim his 200th T20 wicket. Mishra would have got another wicket in the same over after getting Ben Stokes bowled, but the spinner was found to have overstepped the popping crease and the delivery was judged a no ball. Stokes, who hit a 27-ball 38, capitalised on Mishra's blunder to play a calculative knock, putting on 52 runs with Root.

Nehra got Stokes trapped lbw in the 17th over to raise India's hopes and Bumrah, who bowled the 18th and the final over, made no mistakes. In the Indian innings, skipper Virat Kohli, who opened the innings for the second successive time in the series, made a quickfire 21 before falling to Jordan. Rahul kept his composure and his end busy with runs despite England spinners, Adil Rashid and Moeen Ali, getting a wicket each to reduce the hosts to 69 for three.

Rahul, who hit 6 fours and 2 sixes during his knock, got to his fifty and more before Jordan got the prized wicket in the 18th over as the Indian batting slipped further. The third match is slated in Bangalore on February 1. — AFP

SCOREBOARD

NAGPUR, India: Scoreboard yesterday at the end of the second Twenty20 international between India and England at the Vidarbha Cricket Association stadium.

India		England	
Virat Kohli c Dawson b Jordan	21	Jason Roy c Raina b Nehra	10
Lokesh Rahul c Stokes b Jordan	71	Sam Billings c Bumrah b Nehra	12
Suresh Raina c Jordan b Rashid	7	Joe Root lbw b Bumrah	38
Yuvraj Singh lbw b Ali	4	Eoin Morgan c Pandya b Mishra	17
Manish Pandey b Mills	30	Ben Stokes lbw Nehra	38
Mahendra Singh Dhoni b Jordan	5	Jos Buttler b Bumrah	15
Hardik Pandya run out Jordan	2	Moeen Ali not out	1
Amit Mishra run out Ali/Jordan	0	Chris Jordan not out	0
Jasprit Bumrah not out	0	Extras: (1lb, 2lb, 4w, 1nb)	8
Extras: (1lb, 3w)	4	TOTAL: (for 6 wickets)	139
TOTAL: (for 8 wickets)	144	Overs: 20	
Overs: 20		Did not bat: Liam Dawson, Tymal Mills, Adil Rashid.	
Did not bat: Ashish Nehra, Yuzvendra Chahal.		Fall of wickets: 1-22, 2-22, 3-65, 4-117, 5-137, 6-138.	
Fall of wickets: 1-30, 2-56, 3-69, 4-125, 5-139, 6-143, 7-144, 8-144.		Bowling: Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-33-0, Ashish Nehra 4-0-28-3, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-20-2, Amit Mishra 4-0-25-1 (1nb), Suresh Raina 4-0-30-0 (2w).	
Bowling: Liam Dawson 2-0-20-0, Tymal Mills 4-0-36-1, Chris Jordan 4-0-22-3 (1w), Ben Stokes 3-0-21-0 (1w), Moeen Ali 4-0-20-1 (1w), Adil Rashid 3-0-24-1.		Result: India won by 5 runs.	
		Series: 1-1 in three-match series.	

AUSTRALIA'S BIG BASH SMASHES RECORDS

SYDNEY: Records have tumbled for the Twenty20 Big Bash League, with Cricket Australia saying yesterday the enormous crowds and viewership for the fast-paced format this season has surpassed expectations.

The Big Bash is in its sixth season and has used a blend of sport and entertainment to draw families and younger spectators to games. The high-octane format has proved popular, with more than one million people attending this season's games at an average of 30,114 per match, CA said.

"Once again, fans have well and truly spoken and we couldn't be happier with how this year's competition has progressed on all levels," Big Bash chief Anthony Everard said in a statement.

"The season has well and truly exceeded our expectations". The league concluded on Saturday, with a sold-out crowd at the WACA Ground in Perth watching as the Perth Scorchers thrashed the Sydney Sixers by nine wickets to win the final.

Twenty matches of the 35 BBL games

this season sold out. The highest turnout was the derby between Melbourne Stars and Melbourne Renegades at the MCG on January 1, that attracted 71,162 spectators. The host broadcaster, Network Ten, had an average viewership of 1,021,750 per match for the season.

The women's BBL, in its second season, also drew an "unprecedented level" of crowds and television viewers and encouraged more women and girls to play cricket, CA said. More than 100,000 people watched the women's games this season, with the highest attendance of 24,000 recorded for the Melbourne derby on New Year's Day.

Cricket Australia has sought to capitalise on the league's popularity by adding eight matches to the men's competition next season. The venues have yet to be announced, although Cricket NSW chief has said holding the opening round in Hong Kong could be one option. There were no plans at this stage to increase the number of teams in the league, CA said on Friday. — AFP

KUWAIT TIMES NBA POWER RANKINGS

By Ahmad Jabr

KUWAIT: In addition to its usual coverage of the NBA, Kuwait Times introduces a new feature this year: the NBA Power Rankings. It is a weekly list ranking each team based on its performance during the week. The actual record for each team (put between brackets, for games played as of Sunday morning in Kuwait's local time) is taken into consideration in the assessment process but is not the main factor for deciding each team's ranking, thus making it different from traditional league standings. This week's edition features a new Eastern Conference team in the top five. (For any comments or suggestions, e-mail the writer at: a.jabr@kuwaittimes.net)



1- Golden State Warriors (40 - 7) Last week: 1 - With their win over the Clippers on Saturday, the Warriors are the first team in NBA history to have 40 wins before their 50th game in each of three straight seasons (per the Elias Sports Bureau).



2- San Antonio Spurs (36 - 10) Last week: 2 - After beating Toronto on Tuesday, the Spurs are the eighth team in NBA history to win at least 20 of their first 24 road games in one season (according to the Elias Sports Bureau).



3- Houston Rockets (35 - 15) Last week: 3 - James Harden led Houston to victory over Philadelphia on Friday, finishing with a triple-double of 51 points, 13 rebounds and 13 assists. It was his fifth 50-point game with Houston; a new record for a franchise where multiple Hall of Famers such as Hakeem Olajuwon, Clyde Drexler and Yao Ming have played.



4- Cleveland Cavaliers (31 - 14) Last week: 4 - LeBron James helped his team snap a three-game losing streak by beating the Nets on Friday, finishing with 31 points and 11 assists; and advancing to the 14th spot in all-time assists list in the process.



5- Boston Celtics (29 - 18) Last week: 7 - Isaiah Thomas is putting the numbers to back up his All-Star selection. He has scored at least 20 points in 31 straight games, which passes Kevin McHale for the second-longest streak in team history (per ESPN Stats and Information).



6- Utah Jazz (30 - 19) Last week: 5 - Both Gordon Hayward and Rudy Gobert have put up the numbers to earn them an All-Star selection, but only the former made it to the Western Conference's team. The last time Utah had two All-Stars was when Mehmet Okur and Carlos Boozer made the team in 2006-07; the year in which the Jazz made it to the conference finals too.



7- Oklahoma City Thunder (28 - 19) Last week: 11 - Russell Westbrook recorded his 60th career triple-double on Wednesday, passing the legendary Larry Bird for fifth in the all-time list. Meanwhile, he has a chance to become the first NBA player ever with three straight All-Star MVP awards.



8- Washington Wizards (26 - 20) Last week: 13 - The Wizards' victory over the Hawks put them within half a game of the Southeast Division's lead. They won seven of their last eight games; a stretch in which they ranked fourth in the league in offense and second in defense.



9- Toronto Raptors (29 - 18) Last week: 6 - All-Star Kyle Lowry helped the Raptors beat the Bucks on Friday and end a five-game losing skid. Meanwhile, second-year guard Norman Powell has stepped up in the absence of DeMar DeRozan, averaging 19 points and five rebounds filling in for the injured All-Star.



10- Memphis Grizzlies (28 - 21) Last week: 10 - Marc Gasol made his third All-Star appearance, while Mike Conley failed to receive his first invitation after signing the NBA's richest contract ever this past summer. The main story meanwhile has been Vince Carter who remains a key contributor off the bench despite becoming the NBA's oldest player (40 years) last Thursday.



11- Atlanta Hawks (27 - 20) Last week: 9 - Paul Millsap is playing like someone who is not bothered by constant trade rumors. He is averaging 17.6 points and eight rebounds this season, and will make his fourth straight All-Star appearance on Feb 19.



12- Los Angeles Clippers (30 - 18) Last week: 8 - DeAndre Jordan will make his first All-Star appearance this season, while injured guard Chris Paul will miss the annual extravaganza for the first time in nine years. More worrying for the Clippers is this: they are 3-9 without Paul this season and 27-9 with him.



13- Indiana Pacers (24 - 22) Last week: 16 - Paul George is not the only Pacer to represent his team in the All-Star Weekend; Glenn Robinson III will also compete in the slam dunk contest. He has 11 dunks this season in less than 1,000 minutes of play.



14- Denver Nuggets (21 - 25) Last week: 18 - Everyone in Denver breathed a sigh of relief after an MRI showed that the injury Nikola Jokic suffered on Thursday was just a 'Left Hip Flexor Strain.' He has been instrumental in Denver's rise; he is one of five players averaging 20 points and 10 rebounds in January (the others being Russell Westbrook, DeMarcus Cousins, Karl-Anthony Towns and Anthony Davis).



15- Portland Trail Blazers (21 - 27) Last week: 17 - Damian Lillard seemed more understanding of the decision to leave him out of the All-Star Game this year compared to his attitude in previous seasons, but the real question was whether he or CJ McCollum being left out was the biggest snub.



16- Detroit Pistons (21 - 26) Last week: 14 - The Pistons' defensive woes continue. After winning three straight games, they lost two in a row after failing to contain DeMarcus Cousins and the Kings on Monday, and being unable to stop the Heat's guards on Saturday.



17- Charlotte Hornets (23 - 25) Last week: 12 - Kimba Walker deservedly made it to the All-Star Game for the first time in his career, but otherwise there is little for the Hornets to celebrate as they enter Monday on a four-game losing streak, including disappointing losses to the Kings and Knicks.



18- Chicago Bulls (23 - 25) Last week: 15 - The 'dysfunctional mess' that is the Bulls' roster seems to have become divided between the younger crop who want to see more effort from their star players, and between Dwyane Wade and Jimmy Butler who have voiced their criticism to their teammates' efforts.



19- Miami Heat (18 - 30) Last week: 27 - Dion Waiters and Goran Dragic are averaging 22.1 and 19.7 points per game respectively during the Heat's current seven-game winning streak, in which they beat quality teams such as the Rockets and Warriors. They hope to keep on winning and perhaps reviving their playoffs hopes.



20- Milwaukee Bucks (21 - 26) Last week: 19 - The Bucks have only won one game of their last nine, and enter Monday in ninth place in the Eastern Conference standings. They have shown positive signs earlier this season, but lack of consistency has been their main issue overall.



21- Minnesota Timberwolves (18 - 29) Last week: 20 - Karl-Anthony Towns being left out of the All-Star Game was one of the most talked about stories in the NBA this past week. He enters Monday averaging 22.7 points, 11.9 rebounds and 1.5 blocks per game.



22- New Orleans Pelicans (19 - 28) Last week: 23 - Donatas Motiejunas' arrival gave the Pelicans more scoring options and extra ways to keep their ball movement fluid. They managed impressive wins over the Cavaliers and Spurs this past week.



23- Philadelphia 76ers (17 - 28) Last week: 22 - Speaking of All-Star snubs, everyone but the coaches seem to agree that Joel Embiid deserved to represent the East in the game, especially with the team's lack of frontcourt depth. They could certainly use the services of Embiid, who enters Monday averaging an admirable stat-line of 20.2 points, 7.8 rebounds and 2.5 blocks per game.



24- New York Knicks (21 - 27) Last week: 21 - The Knicks continue to keep their postseason hopes alive as the beat fellow Eastern Conference playoff contenders the Pacers and Hornets last week - a 'mentally draining' one according to Carmelo Anthony amidst all the media attention he has garnered this season.



25- Sacramento Kings (19 - 28) Last week: 26 - DeMarcus Cousins exploded with 35 points and 18 rebounds to help his team beat the Hornets on Saturday; the Kings' third win in four games.



26- Dallas Mavericks (16 - 30) Last week: 28 - The Mavs do well when they receive solid contributions from their role players such as Seth Curry and Justin Anderson, but their overall success hinges on their veterans' performance, especially that of Deron Williams.



27- Orlando Magic (18 - 30) Last week: 25 - Aaron Gordon has a bigger chance to win the slam dunk contest this year after two-time champion Zach LaVine opted against defending his title. On the other hand, the Magic have been struggling to beat anybody, including a Celtics squad playing without Al Horford or Avery Bradley on Friday.



28- Phoenix Suns (15 - 32) Last week: 24 - With less than a month to go before the Feb 23 trade deadline, the Suns remain one of the most likely teams to make a trade involving one of their stars as they shift their attention towards rebuilding.



29- Los Angeles Lakers (16 - 34) Last week: 29 - Despite some flashes shown earlier this season, the Lakers' offense has been underwhelming for the most part, averaging 98.9 points per game in losses, compared to 113.8 in wins.



30- Brooklyn Nets (9 - 38) Last week: 30 - Wins against the Hornets on Dec 27 and Pelicans on Jan 21 were the only victories the Nets have mustered in their past twenty games. They finish the month with a visit to the red-hot Heat tonight.

CURRY SIZZLES FOR 43 PTS AS WARRIORS SLICE UP CLIPPERS

OAKLAND: Stephen Curry scored 25 of his 43 points in the third quarter following his first buzzer-beater of the season at the end of the first half to lead the Golden State Warriors to their ninth win in 10 games, 144-98 over the Los Angeles Clippers on Saturday night. Curry's 51-foot shot was the spark on a night that began with his playing status in doubt because of a sore left quadriceps muscle. After testing his leg in warmups, Curry was cleared to play and showed no signs of being slowed by the injury, hitting nine 3-pointers. Kevin Durant added 23 points, and Klay Thompson had 16 to give Golden State its eighth straight win over its Southern California rival. Blake Griffin scored 20 points for the struggling Clippers. They have lost four of five since star point guard Chris Paul went down with a torn ligament in left thumb.

CELTICS 112, BUCKS 108, OT
Isaiah Thomas had 37 points, and Jae Crowder scored four of his 20 points on free throws in the final 28 seconds of overtime to help Boston beat Milwaukee. Boston won its third straight after squandering a 16-point second half lead and a 42-point first quarter, its best of the season. Giannis Antetokounmpo led Milwaukee with 21 points, and Greg Monroe had 14 points and 13 rebounds. The Bucks have lost three in a row and eight of nine.

HEAT 116, PISTONS 103
Goran Dragic scored 23 points and Miami beat Detroit to push the NBA's longest current winning streak to seven games. Wayne Ellington added 19 points, James Johnson had 18, and Dion Waiters 17 for the Heat. They tied a season high with 14 3-pointers, with Ellington making three in less than two minutes in the final quarter. The Heat outscored Detroit 26-12 in the fourth. Miami was 11-30 at the midway point of its season - and hasn't lost since. Reggie Jackson scored 24 points for Detroit. Andre Drummond had 17 points and 20 rebounds.

TIMBERWOLVES 129, NETS 109
Karl-Anthony Towns had 37 points and 13 rebounds to lead Minnesota past Brooklyn. Andrew Wiggins added 23 points and four assists, and Zach LaVine scored 20 points for the



OAKLAND: Los Angeles Clippers' Brandon Bass, left, shoots against Golden State Warriors' Draymond Green (23) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, in Oakland, Calif. — AP

Timberwolves. They have won seven of their last 10 games. Brook Lopez had 25 points and seven rebounds and hit 3 of 6 3-pointers for the Nets. They have lost five straight and 21 of their last 23 games.

KINGS 109, HORNETS 106
DeMarcus Cousins had 35 points and 18 rebounds, and Sacramento handed Charlotte Hornets its fourth straight loss. Cousins scored the go-ahead basket with 14.3 seconds left on a driving layup. The Hornets had a chance to take the lead in the closing seconds, but Frank Kaminsky shot an airball on a 3-pointer. Cousins grabbed the rebound and was fouled, making one free throw. Darren Collison added 17 points for the Kings. Kemba Walker had 20 points of his 26 points in the third quarter for Charlotte.

NBA results/standings

Minnesota 129, Brooklyn 109; Memphis 102, Utah 95; Denver 123, Phoenix 112; Golden State 144, LA Clippers 98; Boston 112, Milwaukee 108 (OT); Miami 116, Detroit 103; Sacramento 109, Charlotte 106.									
Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Toronto	29	18	.617	-	Utah	30	19	.612	-
Boston	29	18	.617	-	Oklahoma City	28	19	.596	1
NY Knicks	21	27	.438	8.5	Denver	21	25	.457	7.5
Philadelphia	17	28	.378	11	Portland	21	27	.438	8.5
Brooklyn	9	38	.191	20	Minnesota	18	29	.383	11
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	31	14	.689	-	Golden State	40	7	.851	-
Indiana	24	22	.522	7.5	LA Clippers	30	18	.625	10.5
Chicago	23	25	.479	9.5	Sacramento	19	28	.404	21
Milwaukee	21	26	.447	11	LA Lakers	16	34	.320	25.5
Detroit	21	26	.447	11	Phoenix	15	32	.319	25
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Atlanta	27	20	.574	-	San Antonio	36	10	.783	-
Washington	26	20	.565	0.5	Houston	35	15	.700	3
Charlotte	23	25	.479	4.5	Memphis	28	21	.571	9.5
Orlando	18	30	.375	9.5	New Orleans	19	28	.404	17.5
Miami	18	30	.375	9.5	Dallas	16	30	.348	20

NHL STILL LEANING AGAINST OLYMPIC SHUTDOWN IN 2018

LOS ANGELES: The NHL is likely to skip the Pyeongchang Olympics unless something big changes in the next few months. The league's owners are still leaning against allowing the world's top hockey players to participate in the Olympics next year, NHL deputy commissioner Bill Daly said Saturday.

In the league's most strident comments yet on this quadrennial issue, Daly flatly said the NHL's Board of Governors doesn't want to shut down the league to allow its players to participate in South Korea. The owners' minds would have to be changed by something dramatic, but Daly doesn't know what that new ingredient would be.

"If the status quo remains, I don't expect us to be in the Olympics," Daly said. The league and the International Ice Hockey Federation have no firm deadline to decide whether NHL players will participate in their sixth consecutive Olympics, but the final decision has already been left for later than in previous years.

The parties waited until June 2013 to execute their agreement for the Sochi Games, but the decision was made several months earlier. The NHL prefers to release its yearly schedule in June, which means a final decision might not be made until summer.

While the IIHF has found the mon-

ey to cover the costs of a Pyeongchang trip after some initial reluctance, the NHL has numerous concerns that aren't overwhelmed by the excitement of nurturing the game overseas and exposing its biggest investments to injury. Commissioner Gary Bettman drove the NHL's decision to participate in its first Olympics in 1998, but the league sees fewer reasons to shut down for three weeks while playing a compressed schedule. Bettman said the issue "got about 10 seconds of discussion" at the board meeting Saturday because nothing has changed.

"I think the realities of Olympic participation are more apparent to our board now, and I think it just leads to less enthusiasm about the disruption," Daly said. "Quite frankly, we don't see what the benefit is from ... the league standpoint anyway with respect to league participation, so that's the challenge. As Gary said numerous times, if there was a compelling reason that we could bring to the board that this is something we should do again in Korea, then we present it to the board and see what they would have to say."

Daly acknowledged that geography plays a role in the board's position: Pyeongchang is 14 hours ahead of New York, which will mean difficult game times for viewers in North

America. The league also doesn't anticipate major growth in its game from playing in South Korea.

"I think on occasion in the past, it has" produced growth in the game to play in the Olympics, Daly said. "I'm not sure it necessarily would in South Korea. Time and exposure, all those issues related to (being) a long way away."

The IOC and the IIHF benefit enormously in exposure with the NHL's participation. Bettman and IIHF President Rene Fasel are expected to meet up this weekend. The players gathered in Los Angeles for All-Star weekend are unanimously hopeful they'll be allowed to play, but they're aware of the increasingly strident tone against the games being taken by their owners.

"I don't think you should be able to pick and choose what Olympics you go to," said New Jersey forward Taylor Hall, who has been to world championships for Canada, but not the Olympics.

"That's not what the Olympics stand for. If you ever talk to anyone that has participated in the Olympics, whether it is a hockey player or a javelin thrower, it's a special place. It's something that I would love to be a part of, and I wouldn't want to see it taken away because the NHL didn't want to go to South Korea. —AP

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE STARS TACKLE WEAK POUND

LONDON: The Premier League's star imports are demanding huge pay rises as clubs' TV revenues rocket, Chinese teams entice them with mega wages and the pound slumps ahead of Brexit.

Some players have secured bumper increases before Tuesday's transfer window deadline. Liverpool's Brazilian playmaker Philippe Coutinho has signed a five-year contract worth between £150,000 (\$189,000, 176,000 euros) and £200,000 per week.

But Arsenal have yet to meet the demands of Mesut Ozil and Alexis Sanchez. Reports suggest World Cup winner Ozil and Sanchez, twice winner of the Copa America, each want around £250,000 per week as they also factor in the cost of converting pounds into their native currencies.

This is significantly higher than their current weekly wages of about £135,000

and above Arsenal's improved offer said to be in the region of £200,000.

"While fans tend to associate player costs with transfer fees, it's important to note that transfer fees only account for around one-third of overall player costs," said Jake Cohen, a sports lawyer at Mills & Reeve.

"The majority of player costs go to wages," he said in an interview with AFP, adding that some players from abroad do in fact sign deals to be paid in currencies other than the pound.

To help offset the impact of currency fluctuations, Premier League clubs have sponsorship and other deals with foreign exchange trading groups that offer them preferential rates.

"Any company engaging in multinational transactions should be considering forex options, and football clubs are particularly exposed," said Cohen.

"Clubs often enter into contracts with international companies in foreign currencies, such as sponsorship deals and service contracts," he added.

Since Britain last year voted to exit the European Union, sterling has plunged by around 18 percent against the dollar and some 14 percent versus the euro. "The weaker pound is rapidly chipping away at players' already staggering wages and... agents are clearly seeking to capitalise on this new opportunity to draw more out of the clubs," said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at Oanda trading group.

"They will also be very aware of the fact that (Premier League) clubs can afford to meet the higher terms due to the new TV deals," Erlam told AFP.

"I don't think it's a coincidence that some footballers who clearly came to England to chase the television money

are now using China to try and broker a better deal," he added.

China has shot into the world's top five buyers of international football talent, a FIFA report said Friday, while British media is frequently linking Premier League players with potential moves to the country.

POWER OF TV

Cohen meanwhile pointed out that the falling pound would do little to help bridge a widening gap between TV incomes earned by England's top 20 clubs and the broadcasting revenues made by Europe's other top leagues, including in Spain.

"The falling pound may aid La Liga in principle, but it will take a lot more than a 10 or 15 percent improvement in the value of the euro compared to the pound, and which may or may not be

permanent, to come close to matching, let alone supplanting the Premier League, at least with regards to revenue," he said. Despite Manchester United's relative failure on the pitch last season, the club has topped Deloitte's Football Money League in terms of overall revenue for the first time in more than a decade. United—who were last on top in the 2003/04 campaign—earned record total revenue of 689 million euros (\$737 million) — and dislodged Champions League holders Real Madrid who have ruled the roost for 11 years.

The Premier League's clubs are currently enjoying the proceeds of a £5.14-billion UK television rights deal for three years up to 2019 — up a staggering 70 percent on the previous agreement. Including overseas rights, the present Premier League broadcasting deal is worth £8.3 billion. —AFP

SUAREZ SAVES BARCA IN BETIS DRAW, SEVILLA BEATEN

MADRID: Barcelona's La Liga title challenge suffered a huge blow as the Spanish champions were controversially held 1-1 at Real Betis despite Luis Suarez's last minute equaliser yesterday.

A point is enough to move Barca above Sevilla into second on goal difference after Sevilla also missed the chance to go top of the table as they were reduced to 10 men after just two minutes in a 3-1 defeat at Espanyol. Real Madrid lead both by a point and have two games in hand on their title rivals, the first of which comes at home to Real Sociedad later yesterday.

Alexis Alegria gave Betis the lead their dominance deserved 15 minutes from time when he bundled home from close range after Marc-Andre ter Stegen flapped at a corner. However, Barca were rightly infuriated seconds later as the ball clearly crossed the Betis goalline, but no goal was given by referee Alejandro Jose Hernandez.

Suarez did at least rescue a point in the dying seconds, though, as he slotted home Lionel Messi's through ball for his 21st goal of the season.

"We have to help the referees," Barca boss Luis Enrique told BeIN Sports Spain. "The technology can help them. I say that for all situations not just ones that go for me, but against me too."

Suarez was less understanding as he claimed the ball "was a metre over the line." Ultimately Enrique paid the price for again heavily rotating his side with Wednesday's Copa del Rey semi-final, first leg at Atletico Madrid in mind. "The feeling I have is that we have won one point (not lost two)," he added. Enrique made six changes in all, including three of the back four and Betis took advantage with a bright start. Ter Stegen was forced into saves from Ruben Castro and Dani Ceballos early on.

However, Barca arguably had the best chance of the first-half when Antonio Adan flew off his line to deny Neymar from another scintillating Messi pass.

Ceballos saw a dipping long-range effort come back off the bar before Castro

struck the post with Ter Stegen beaten at his near post.

Sevilla beaten

The German goalkeeper had a moment to forget for the opening goal as he failed to get a good connection on an attempted punch under pressure from two Betis players and the ball fell kindly for Alegria to tap home. Conceding appeared to wake Barca from their slumber and they were doubly denied by Hernandez seconds later as Neymar went down inside the area and the ball ricocheted towards the Betis goal off Riza Durmisi.

Replays showed the ball clearly went over the line before Alissa Mandi cleared, but La Liga's refusal to implement goal line technology due to pricing fears cost Barca dearly as no goal was given.

Betis should have sealed the three points when Castro broke clear on goal eight minutes from time, but Ter Stegen redeemed himself with a fine save.

And that miss proved crucial as Messi finally found the space to slip a pass through the Betis defence and Suarez dispatched the ball into the far corner.

There was also refereeing controversy at Espanyol as Sevilla's shot at moving top lasted barely two minutes when Nico Pareja was very harshly sent-off on top of conceding a penalty for a trip on Pablo Piatti. Former Sevilla favourite Jose Antonio Reyes showed no mercy to his former club as he converted from the spot, although Reyes did hold his hands up in apology at the travelling support.

The 10 men reacted brilliantly, though, and were level when Stefan Jovetic continued his hot streak since joining on-loan from Inter Milan to sweep home Samir Nasri's pass after 19 minutes.

Reyes haunted Sevilla once more as his free-kick was headed home by Marc Navarro in first-half stoppage time. And Gerard Moreno sealed the three points for Espanyol as this time Navarro was the supplier for his headed finish. —AFP



OLD TRAFFORD: Manchester United's Chris Smalling, second right, scores during the English FA Cup Fourth Round soccer match between Manchester United and Wigan Athletic at Old Trafford in Manchester, England, yesterday. —AP

WATFORD, HULL AND LEEDS SUFFER CUP UPSETS, MAN UTD THROUGH

LONDON: Premier League clubs Watford and Hull City, and Championship side Leeds United paid the penalty for fielding weakened teams when they were all knocked out of the FA Cup in the fourth round yesterday—but holders Manchester United won comfortably.

Like Liverpool, beaten at home by Wolverhampton Wanderers on Saturday, the three beaten sides miscalculated in resting so many players ahead of league games in mid-week and could have no complaints at going out of the competition. Yet United went through, winning 4-0 despite making nine changes at home to Wigan Athletic, who are in the bottom three of the Championship.

Watford lost 1-0 to League One (third tier) side Millwall and Hull, FA Cup finalists three years ago, were humbled 4-1 by Championship (second tier) side Fulham after missing two late penalties. Leeds, fourth in the Championship and giving greater priority to returning to the Premier League after a 13-year absence, lost 1-0 to Sutton United, who joined fellow fifth-tier National League club Lincoln City in the last 16. It is the first time two non-League clubs have progressed that far since the competition was reorganised more than 90 years ago. At Old Trafford, Marouane Felliani broke Wigan's dogged resistance in the 43rd minute by heading in a cross from former German international Bastian Schweinsteiger, making a rare appearance. Anthony Martial, criticised by manager Jose Mourinho last week, then set up goals for Chris Smalling and Henrikh Mkhitaryan before Schweinsteiger added United's fourth. "The first half was not very, very good but we managed to be 1-0 in front," Mourinho said. "The second half was much better and the job was done."

SIX CHANGES

Millwall, who beat another understrength Premier League team, Bournemouth, in the previous round, fully deserved the win earned for them with a goal by Steve Morison in the 85th minute. Watford's manager Walter Mazzarri had made seven changes, leaving experienced players like captain Troy Deeney and midfielders Etienne Capoue and Tom Cleverley among the substitutes. They also lost goalkeeper Costel Pantilimon to injury just before halftime.

Manager Neil Harris felt his mid-table League One team fully deserved their victory over a side 40 places above them. "We could easily have been three or four up by halftime," he said. "This club and this team epitomise what the FA Cup is all about." At Craven Cottage on the bank of the River Thames, Hull, who had made six changes, fell behind to a goal by their former forward Sone Aluko after 16 minutes.

Evandro headed an equaliser four minutes into the second half, but Chris Martin, on loan from Derby County, soon restored the lead.

Promising youngster Ryan Seeseagon added a third goal and with 12 minutes left Stefan Johansen scored a fourth. Hull's Abel Hernandez then had two penalties saved by goalkeeper Marcus Bettinelli in the space of a minute to round off a bad day.

"We have to do many, many things before the transfer window closes on Tuesday," their manager Marco Silva said. Former European Cup finalists Leeds, out of the top flight of English football since 2004, fielded almost a complete reserve team on the artificial pitch at Sutton and found the non-League's, 84 places below them,

too strong. Captain Jamie Collins scored the only goal from a penalty after 53 minutes and Leeds finished with only 10 men when their own captain, Liam Cooper, was sent off near the end. Leeds manager Garry Monk admitted he had

made too many changes to the regular team.

His opposite number, Paul Doswell, said the result and financial benefits from live television coverage were a "life-changer" for the 118-year-old club. — Reuters

AYEW BROTHERS TAKE GHANA INTO SEMI-FINALS

OYEM: Brothers Jordan and Andre Ayew scored for Ghana as they reached the Africa Cup of Nations semi-finals yesterday with a 2-1 win over the Democratic Republic of Congo in Oyem. Jordan opened the scoring after 63 minutes of a tight, bruising quarter-final in northern Gabon and Andre put Ghana ahead again from a 78th-minute penalty.

They are sons of Ghana football legend Abedi 'Pele' Ayew, ranked among the greatest African footballers of all time. Between the Ayew goals, Paul-Jose Mpoku levelled for DR Congo on 68 minutes.

Ghana, seeking a first Cup of Nations title since 1982, will play Cameroon next Thursday in Franceville for a final place. It will be a sixth consecutive semi-finals appearance for four-time champions Ghana, who were runners-up in 2010 to Egypt and in 2015 to the Ivory Coast. They overcame DR Congo without captain and striker Asamoah Gyan, who failed to recover from a thigh injury sustained in a group loss to Egypt four days ago.

"We corrected some mistakes at half-time and were a totally different team in the second half," Ghana coach Avram Grant told SuperSport. "Both our goals were fantastic, as was the one scored by Congo, who were a well organised team."

Although Ghana had more possession during a goalless first half, it was DR Congo who came closest to scoring in a stadium surrounded by dense rainforest.

Giant Hull City striker Dieumerci Mbokani featured prominently for the Congolese Leopards, and one of his attempts was foiled by the woodwork.

A suicidal back pass from Ghanaian Harrison Afful was intercepted by Mbokani, who rounded goalkeeper Razak Brimah, but his scuffed, angled tap hit the post.

Midway through the half, Mbokani retained possession under pressure from three Ghanaian Black Stars and passed back for Junior Kabananga to blaze over.

A superb pass over the defence from Mpoku gave Mbokani a half-chance on 37 minutes only for his hurried shot to fly well off target. As half-time approached, Brimah got lucky twice as DR Congo continued to look the likelier side to break the deadlock.

He dribbled across a Congolese attacker inside his box when a booted clearance would have been more advisable, and gentler on the nerves of Grant.

The Spain-based goalkeeper then failed to grasp a Mbokani shot from outside the penalty area, but smothered the loose ball as a Leopard darted toward it. Ghana, who did not have a shot on target in the opening half, threatened as the second half progressed and it was no surprise when they took the lead. A misplaced Congolese pass was intercepted by Mubarak Wakaso, who set up Jordan Ayew to hold off one tackle and fire past Ley Matampai.

But the advantage for the Ghanaians did not last long as Mpoku took aim outside the box and his swerving drive flew past Brimah into the right-hand corner.

A rollercoaster game took another turn when Joyce Lomalisa fouled Christian Atsu and Andre Ayew sent Matampai the wrong way with his penalty kick. —AFP



SEVILLE: Barcelona's Messi, second right, and Betis' Aissa Mandi, right, challenge for the ball during La Liga soccer match between Barcelona and Betis at the Benito Villamarin stadium, in Seville, Spain yesterday. — AP

HIGUAIN STRIKES FOR JUVE, ROMA STUNNED AT SAMP

MILAN: Gonzalo Higuain scored his eighth goal in the last six league games to inspire Serie A leaders Juventus to a 2-0 win at Sassuolo yesterday while second-placed AS Roma lost 3-2 at Sampdoria.

Roma led twice before two goals in three minutes sent them to a defeat which left them four points behind Juve, who also have a game in hand.

Juventus, aiming for a 21st consecutive title, have 51 points from 21 games, with Roma on 47 from 22. Napoli (44) were at home to Palermo in the late game.

Higuain set Juventus on their way to a comfortable win by getting ahead of his marker to head in Alex Sandro's cross after nine minutes, taking his tally for the season to fifteen. The Argentine set up Juve's second when he dispossessed Paolo Cannavaro and provided a low cross which was turned in by Sami Khedira after 25 minutes. Edin Dzeko's 66th minute goal appeared to put Roma on course for a win as they led 2-1 at Sampdoria but Patrik Schick levelled five minutes later with his first touch of the game, having come on as a substitute little more than a minute earlier. There was more drama two minutes later when Luis Muriel scored the winner with a deflected free kick. Francesco Totti's free kick was turned away by Christian Puggioni

and Roma also had a penalty appeal turned down as they threw themselves forward Bruno Peres had given Roma a fifth-minute lead but his goal was cancelled out by Dennis Praet before halftime. Giovanni Simeone scored twice, the second a late penalty, as Genoa fought back from 2-0 and 3-2 behind to draw 3-3 at Fiorentina.

Josip Illicic and Federico Chiesa had put Fiorentina 2-0 ahead but Genoa hit back with two goals in three minutes just before the hour, from Simeone and Oscar Hiljemark. Nikola Kalinic put Fiorentina back in front almost immediately but the Violets blew it when Federico Bernardeschi handled on the line, was sent off and Simeone converted the penalty. Diego Falcinelli's hat-trick gave struggling Crotone a glimmer of hope with a 4-1 win over Empoli. Crotone remain mired in the relegation zone but their win cut the gap between themselves and Empoli, the team immediately above the bottom three, to eight points. Rodrigo de Paul gave Udinese a controversial 2-1 win over AC Milan, scoring the winner after having escaped a red card for a dangerous challenge on Mattia De Sciglio moments earlier. De Sciglio was still receiving treatment when De Paul burst down the right and beat Gianluigi Donnarumma with an angled drive. — Reuters



OYEM: Ghana's goalkeeper Brimah Razak (C) saves a shot on goal during the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations quarter-final football match between DR Congo and Ghana in Oyem yesterday. — AFP

Santa Cruz beats Frampton for WBA featherweight belt



Watford, Hull and Leeds suffer Cup upsets, Man Utd through



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NEHRA, BUMRAH HELP INDIA LEVEL SERIES

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MELBOURNE: Switzerland's Roger Federer, right, Spain's Rafael Nadal, left, and Rod Laver pose for photographers after Federer won the men's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday. — AP

FEDERER OUTLASTS NADAL FOR 18TH GRAND SLAM

MELBOURNE: Roger Federer came out on top after a rollercoaster ride in the 35th chapter of his rivalry with Rafa Nadal to win his fifth Australian Open 6-4 3-6 6-1 3-6 6-3 and clinch a first grand slam title in four and a half years yesterday.

The 35-year-old capped his triumphant return from knee surgery with a record-extending 18th major title after a vintage battle with his Spanish rival, who had won all three of their previous meetings at Melbourne Park.

Lefthander Nadal, also returning from injury this year, showed sustained periods of his brutal best from the baseline but was just unable to stay with his rival in the gut-wrenching drama of the deciding set.

Federer was forced to endure a nervous wait for his victory after Nadal unsuccessfully challenged the line call on the second championship point before becoming the first man to win five or more titles at three different grand slams. The Swiss, for many the greatest player of all time, celebrated with tears in his eyes but his first words were for his old friend and rival.

"Tennis is a tough sport, there are no draws in tennis

but I would have been happy to accept one tonight and share it with Rafa," he said.

"I would have been happy to lose to be honest, the comeback was as good as it was. I hope to see you next year but if not, then it was a wonderful year here and I couldn't be happier tonight."

Nadal, the 2009 champion, was also typically gracious after losing his third Melbourne final and coming up short in his bid for a 15th grand slam title.

"It was a great match and I think Roger probably deserved it a little more than me," the 30-year-old said. "I played a great quality of tennis. That's great news for me. I believe that if I have my body in the right condition, I can have a great year."

FIRST BREAKTHROUGH

Federer made the slower start to the contest but it was the Swiss who made the first breakthrough, converting the first break point of the match with a forehand winner to go 5-4 up. That was enough to take the opening set but this was never going to be a straightforward win for either player and Nadal was all over his

opponent's serve at the start of the second and grabbed a 2-0 lead.

Federer had two break points in the next game but Nadal fought them off and then broke again as his rival struggled for accuracy under the Spaniard's onslaught. Four big forehands gave the Swiss a break back but Nadal held firm to serve out the set and Federer needed three aces to save three break points at the start of the third. The momentum had swung, though, and Federer stepped up a gear and rattled off the next two games with Nadal left scrambling to fend off a second break in a marathon fourth game. He was unable to repeat the feat in the sixth game and Federer, his crosscourt backhand causing Nadal all sorts of problems, secured a two sets to one lead with a drop volley. The pendulum had not finished swinging yet, however, and Nadal broke for 3-1 in the fourth and held under huge pressure in the next game with a brilliant crosscourt forehand winner at full stretch.

Nadal again closed out the set and Federer took a medical timeout before the start of the decider, returning to court only to give up his first service game.

Federer was not prepared to give up easily on a first grand slam title since Wimbledon in 2012, though, and upped his aggression to put the set back on serve at 3-3 when Nadal sent a rasping forehand wide.

He needed another five break points on Nadal's next service game before the Spaniard finally cracked as Federer sealed the title with a forehand winner that Hawk-Eye confirmed hit the line.

"In the fifth set, I didn't win one serve easily. Even if I played great in the break points, I was suffering a lot," said Nadal.

"He probably remained a little bit more free on points on my serve. That's what I needed in that moment, and I didn't have." With Federer's contemporary Serena Williams having won the women's title for the seventh time on Saturday, the 2017 Australian Open is destined be remembered as the retro slam. Federer gave a reminder that no one is immune to the ravages of time, however.

"Now it's time to celebrate in a massive way," he said. "(But) at 35 years old, I don't like to say it, but I'm so old and so the body hurts, it aches." — Reuters

SPEARS AND CABAL WIN MIXED DOUBLES

MELBOURNE: Abigail Spears played her part at the Australian Open "30-fun" party by winning the mixed doubles title. The 35-year-old Spears teamed with Colombia's Juan Sebastian Cabal to beat second-seeded Sania Mirza and Ivan Dodig 6-2 6-4 in the final yesterday on Rod Laver Arena.

Spears was striving to win her first Grand Slam title in her farewell year. She plans to retire at the end of this season after a career in which she was twice runner-up in mixed doubles finals with Mexican Santiago Gonzalez at the US Open in 2013 and 2014.

"Yeah, I think it's my last, but I guess everybody says that and then they reconsider at some point," Spears said. "I hope it's my last. But if not, then I think I would finish here next year. This is my favorite tournament. I have so many friends here. I might finish in Australia, then that would be the end."

The victory by Spears and the 30-year-old Cabal continued the veteran's theme of the championships with all players in the men's and women's singles finals aged 30 or older. Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal were playing for the men's championship Sunday night.

The 35-year-old Serena Williams coined the term "30-fun" after beating her 36-year-old old sister, Venus, in the oldest women's final - in terms of combined ages -

in the Open era. This was only the second Grand Slam event at a team for Spears and Cabal, who lost in the first-round at the French Open last year.

Cabal also celebrated his Grand Slam breakthrough, having been runner-up with Argentine Eduardo Schwank in the 2011 French Open men's doubles.

He had never advanced beyond the quarterfinals in previous mixed doubles at Melbourne Park. Spears and Cabal built on a brilliant 4-0 start to grab the opening set and continued to apply pressure with their consistency through the second.

At 4-4 Dodig double-faulted to lose his serve and Cabal stepped up to close out the victory. It was the fifth Grand Slam event for Mirza and Dodig and their second final as a team.

They were runner-up in the French Open mixed doubles last year and Dodig won the men's doubles title with Brazil's Marcelo Melo in Paris in 2015.

Mirza has three mixed doubles majors, including the 2009 Australian Open and 2012 French

Open with fellow Indian Mahesh Bhupathi and the 2014 US Open mixed title with Brazil's Bruno Soares. She also has won three Grand Slam women's doubles titles, including Wimbledon and the U.S. Open in 2015 and last year's Australian Open with Martina Hingis. — AP



MELBOURNE: Abigail Speers of the US and Juan Sebastian Cabal, left, of Colombia hold their trophy after defeating India's Sania Mirza, second right, and Ivan Dodig, right, in the mixed doubles' final at the Australian Open tennis championships in Melbourne, Australia, yesterday. — AP



WASHINGTON: This file photo taken on April 2, 2009 shows a view of the US Federal Reserve building in Washington, DC. — AFP

FOR FED, ‘TRUMP-ONOMICS’ NOT YET IN EFFECT

ODDS OF ANOTHER RATE HIKE REMAIN 40% AMID POLICY OBSCURITY

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump’s plans to upend US trade policy with import tariffs and new negotiations, slash taxes, and spend on infrastructure makes the Federal Reserve’s work more challenging this week. Since his election in November, Trump’s pronouncements have left US central bankers guessing and citing the “considerable uncertainty” for monetary policy until they turn into specific policies.

Fed members have raised the possibility they may have to increase interest rates faster than they had planned before Trump’s surprise election victory, and have said they will be watching for the new administration’s policies. But meanwhile, economists say that when the policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee gathers in Washington Tuesday and Wednesday to review monetary policy, it is likely to stand pat, as the outcome of any new Trump fiscal and trade moves remains far off.

“My guess is there won’t be any action,” said Edwin Truman, a former FOMC staff economist now at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington.

“The outlook looks a bit stronger, both in the United States and the world,” he told AFP. “But as for the shape of fiscal policy ... we don’t really know a lot more than we did in December.” The Fed in December raised rates for only the second time in a decade, increas-

ing the target range by a quarter point to 0.5-0.75 percent to help head off inflation as the somewhat sluggish recovery from the Great Recession continues.

The odds of another increase remain below 40 percent until the third meeting of the year in May, according to Fed fund futures markets.

US central bankers have made clear that despite the fairly tepid recovery, the economy appears to be on track to achieve its primary goals of full employment and two percent inflation. The unemployment rate has remained under five percent and job creation has been steady at an average of 165,000 new positions a month. Despite years of low inflation, the Fed’s favored price measure, the personal consumption expenditures index, has been trending up slowly. However, economic growth slowed sharply in the final quarter of last year, pulling 2016 growth down to 1.6 percent, the lowest since 2011.

New FOMC voters

Adding another wrinkle to the attempts to gauge how the Fed will react, the composition of the Federal Open Market Committee will change as it always does at the first meeting of the year, and this time will include three first-time voters. The change might mean the committee could become less hawkish than it was in 2016, when Esther George of the Kansas City



WASHINGTON: Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen speaking during a press conference. — AFP

Fed dissented at six of last year’s eight Fed meetings to vote in favor of rate hikes. The Boston Fed’s Eric Rosengren dissented in September, while Cleveland’s Loretta Mester dissented in September and November.

Those three will be replaced by some of the newest Fed officials: Patrick Harker, head of the Philadelphia Fed bank, Neel Kashkari of Minneapolis, and Robert Kaplan of Dallas.

Fed Chair Janet Yellen has said the economy is on course to meet the Fed’s targets for inflation and full employment, but the central bank will be watching to see what policies the administration pursues. She has said spending

to increase productivity would be welcome, since that would increase growth without driving inflation. Trump’s new policies could affect the Fed’s path but “at this point, however, the size, timing and composition of such changes remain uncertain,” she said in a recent speech.

Trump’s big ‘meh’

Jared Bernstein of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities said that while Wall Street had rallied since the election, Americans were beginning to understand that any direct influence from Trump on the economy was most likely to occur further down the road. “Market participants continue to take Donald Trump way too seriously in terms of fiscal policy,” he said. “Yes, there’s going to be a tax cut. The earliest it’s going to kick in is 2018,” Bernstein told AFP. “An infrastructure plan is a big question mark. House Republicans see it as a big ‘meh.’”

“The Fed has understood this, maybe because they’re here in DC and they’re not quite as excitable,” Tim Duy, an economist at the University of Oregon and close observer of the Fed, said the uncertainty that Trump had created was still weighing on policymakers and could fuel inflation.

“I get the sense they think the administration’s policies are leading to an environment that is weighted to the upside with inflation risks,” Duy said. — AFP



BULANDSHAHR, India: In this photograph taken on November 16, 2016, Indian villagers wait inside the bank to make the transactions in Basendua village in Bulandshahr, in northern Uttar Pradesh state. India’s government is expected to ramp up spending in its latest budget, seeking to ease the pain from a ban on high-value banknotes that slammed the brakes on the world’s fastest-growing major economy. — AFP

INDIA BUDGET MAY EASE PAIN FROM CASH CRUNCH

NEW DELHI: India’s government is expected to ramp up spending in its latest budget this week, seeking to ease the pain from a ban on high-value banknotes that slammed the brakes on the world’s fastest-growing major economy. Ahead of a series of elections, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley will unveil a budget on Wednesday that analysts say will aim to offset the impact from the so-called demonetization program with stimulus measures.

“The overarching focus of the budget will somehow indicate a gain from pain mentality—how the pain of demonetization helped the government get some extra resources that it can now spread around,” Rajeev Malik, senior economist at brokerage CLSA, told AFP. “It’s going to be a budget that is meant to soothe the pain.” Before Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s shock decision in November to pull all 500 and 1,000 rupee notes from circulation, the International Monetary Fund had forecast

India’s economy would grow 7.6 percent in 2016, faster than any other major country.

But as authorities struggled to print replacement notes fast enough, causing consumer spending to plunge, the IMF knocked a percentage point off its forecast. The government’s prediction is 7.1 percent growth. By painting demonetization as a blitz on corruption and cash-hoarding that will ultimately boost tax revenues, Modi has so far escaped a major backlash. While there were massive queues outside banks in the weeks afterwards, they have now subsided while limits on withdrawals have eased.

Electoral test

But voters in four states—including the key battlegrounds of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab—will have a chance to deliver their verdict when they begin going to the polls in multi-phase elections from February 4. Analysts say the polls are another reason why the government will be

tempted to increase spending on health, education and a rural employment scheme.

There are also expectations of a support package for small and medium-sized businesses which have been particularly hard hit as they are heavily cash-dependent. “We 100 percent expect a social focused budget,” said Malik as he considered the calculations for Modi half way through his five-year term.

“The focus in the first two-and-a-half years was on reviving growth... We’re at the half way point now and there are some elections ahead so the shift is toward the social sector.” Big business, hit by a drop in manufacturing and construction activity after the cash crunch, also wants help. Pankaj Patel, president of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, said his members hoped for a cut in corporate tax from 30 percent to 25 percent and increased infrastructure spending. “We’re in an uncertain world and we need the support of the government,” Patel told AFP. — AFP

SUN SETS ON ANGOLAN DREAM FOR PORTUGUESE EXPATRIATES

PLUNGE IN OIL PRICES HIT SOUTHWEST AFRICAN COUNTRY’S ECONOMY

LISBON: When Portugal was suffering in the depths of the global financial crisis, Marina Pereira followed thousands of her compatriots and took a job in Angola as it rode the wave of an oil boom.

But now the collapse in global crude prices has hampered the southwest African country's economy and sent Pereira and many others like her heading back to Europe. "At the start I was earning 4,200 euros (\$4,500) a month working in a spa. I was housed and fed, it was paradise," the 33-year-old osteopath said. In 2012 she had moved to Luanda, capital of the former Portuguese colony, rich in oil and diamonds. But after a dream start, euphoria began to give way to disillusion.

"I started to be paid in kwanzas, the local currency, and my monthly income dropped to 1,000 euros. You can only change money on the black market, at a really bad rate," she said, eventually leaving as the cost of living got too high. Her return in 2015 to Portugal, then barely out of a deep recession, was a brutal experience. On a wage of 650 euros a month for working in a gym, she said that "it's not enough to have a decent quality of life".

Some 300,000 Portuguese colonists fled Angola as violence flared in the run-up to independence in 1975. Forty years later, Portugal is witnessing a new wave of "retornados"—returnees-leaving the African nation as it wrestles with its own economic woes.



LISBON: Marina Pereira, who worked in a spa in Angola, in her Lisbon home in preparation for a new employment opportunity in Sao Tome and Principe. —AFP

Salary delays

The exodus began in 2015 and is still going on, according to Paulo Vieira, president of the Portuguese-Angolan chamber of commerce. The end of Angola's bloody 27-year civil war in 2002, combined with high global oil prices, unleashed rapid development, with Luanda often compared to a new Dubai. GDP growth peaked at over 20 percent in 2007, but the decline in oil prices, poor governance and lack of investment have seen growth collapse to less than two percent last year.

Although Angola remains Africa's biggest oil producer alongside Nigeria, revenues have halved. The Angolan government, reliant on oil for 70 percent of its budget, has put the brakes on public spending, stopping thousands of building projects and imposed currency restrictions, hitting the construction industry. "Several Portuguese companies in Angola can no longer pay their staff because they are having problems repatriating profits," said Ricardo Pedro Gomes, president of Portugal's construction industry association.

"Of the 100,000 Portuguese construction workers in Angola before the economic crisis, there are only a few thousand left. And there are salary delays going back up to a year," construction union leader Albano Ribeiro said. Pedro Dias, 42, a salesman for an Angolan electronics company, saw his friends leave, one by one, before returning to Portugal himself as well.

In Luanda, he was paid up to 3,000 euros a month and the company paid for his accommodation, car and food—a good income to support his wife and three children back home. But with the currency restrictions, bank transfers to Portugal have stopped. "I had to leave, my family have to eat," he said, his eyes hidden behind dark sunglasses.

'Love-hate'

Dias says he still misses Angola. "If the situation improves, I'll go back," he says, recalling "the smell of Africa and the savannah". Expat life in Luanda is full of pitfalls and politics is off-limits in a country ruled by President Jose Eduardo dos Santos for some 37 years.

"You never talk about the Angolan regime in public," Dias says. "If you want to avoid problems you must not get involved in politics." And Pereira tells of being attacked in broad daylight "with a gun pointed at my head by 10 or 11 year-old children" and almost dying after catching malaria and yellow fever.

Despite these hair-raising experiences, Pereira says she misses her old life, and is already planning to move to another former Portuguese colony, Sao Tome and Principe. "It's a love-hate relationship. I have always been fascinated by Africa," she says, remembering the "wonderful beaches" and "the smell of damp earth". — AFP

News

in brief

Saudi's PIF denies plans to buy stake in Utico

ABU DHABI: Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund (PIF), its top sovereign wealth fund, denied that it was buying a stake in United Arab Emirates utility Utico. "An official at the fund said that the news about entering into a binding agreement with Utico is baseless and unfounded," the official Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported. On Wednesday, Utico Chief Executive Richard Menezes told Reuters that the PIF had entered into a binding agreement with his company to buy a "significant minority stake". On Thursday, Menezes told Reuters that the PIF was investing in Utico through the IDB Infrastructure Fund, whose anchor investors include the PIF as well as institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank.

US dollar up against KD at 0.305, euro down

KUWAIT: The price rate of the US Dollar against the Kuwaiti Dinar went up to KD 0.305, while the euro declined at the KD 0.326, compared to last Thursday prices, the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) said yesterday. According to the CBK, the pound sterling declined to KD 0.383 while the Swiss franc was stable KD 0.305. The Japanese yen stood firm at KD 0.002.



BURGAN BANK ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF YAWMI ACCOUNT

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank announced yesterday the names of the lucky winners of its Yawmi account draw, each taking home a prize of KD 5,000. The lucky winners for the daily draws took home a cash-prize of KD 5,000 each, and they are:

1. Anthony Bernard Jones
2. Ingo Herbert Amenda
3. Salem Jbr Laftah Mousa
4. Sanaa Abdulaziz Mubarak Bin Naser
5. Talal Jafar Ramadan Mola Ali

In addition to the daily draw, Burgan Bank also offers a quarterly draw with more chances to win higher rewards, entitling one lucky customer to win KD 125,000 every three months. The Yawmi Account offers daily and quarterly draws, the quarterly draw requires customers to maintain a minimum amount of KD 500 in their account for 2 months prior to draw date. Additionally, every KD 10 in the account, will entitle customers to one chance of winning. If the account balance is KD 500 and above, the account holder will be qualified for both the quarterly and daily draws.

Burgan Bank encourages everyone to open a Yawmi account and/or increase their deposit to maximize their chances to becoming a winner. The more customers deposit, the higher the chances they receive of winning.

For more information on opening a Yawmi account or about the new quarterly draw, customers are urged to visit their nearest Burgan Bank branch and receive all the details, or simply call the bank's Call Center at 1804080 where customer service representatives will be delighted to assist with any questions on the Yawmi account or any of the bank's products and services. Established in 1977, Burgan Bank is the youngest commercial bank and second largest by assets in Kuwait, with a significant focus on the corporate and financial institutions sectors, as well as having a growing retail, and private bank customer base. Burgan Bank has majority owned subsidiaries in the MENAT region supported by one of the largest regional branch networks.

The Bank has continuously improved its performance over the years through an expanded revenue structure, diversified funding sources, and a strong capital base. The adoption of state-of-the-art services and technology has positioned it as a trendsetter in the domestic market and within the MENA region. Burgan Bank's brand has been created on a foundation of real values - of trust, commitment, excellence and progression, to remind us of the high standards to which we aspire. "People come first" is the foundation on which its products and services are developed. The bank was re-certified with the prestigious ISO 9001:2008, making it the first bank in the GCC, and the only bank in Kuwait to receive such accreditation for the third consecutive year. The Bank also has to its credit the distinction of being the only Bank in Kuwait to have won the JP Morgan Chase Quality Recognition Award for twelve consecutive years.

WHAT'S AT STAKE IN TRUMP'S PUSH TO ABANDON NAFTA

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump, engaged in a diplomatic row with Mexico, plans to shake up trade across North America. Trump is vowing to rewrite the North American Free Trade Agreement - or pull out of it altogether. His efforts are injecting worrisome doubts about the future of business among the United States, Canada and Mexico. Here's what's at stake:

WHAT IS NAFTA?

Negotiated by President George H W Bush and signed into law by President Bill Clinton, NAFTA took effect on Jan 1, 1994. The trade pact eliminated tariffs - taxes on imports - and other trade barriers among the United States, Canada and Mexico. The impact on some vulnerable US industries was delayed. Tariffs on textiles and clothing, for instance, were phased out only gradually. So were many trade barriers in the auto industry.

Supporters said the agreement would promote trade and create jobs across a North American single market. It would be, in other words, a victory for everyone. Critics countered that low-wage competition from Mexico would wipe out American factory jobs. In 1992, US presidential candidate Ross Perot famously predicted "a giant sucking sound" as American jobs migrated south across the border.

SO WHAT ACTUALLY DID HAPPEN?

Trade among NAFTA countries exploded. But so did America's trade deficit with Mexico. In 1993, the year before NAFTA took effect, the United States had sold Mexico \$41.6 billion in goods and bought \$39.9 billion for a trade surplus of \$1.7 bil-

lion. By 2015, the US had exported \$235.7 billion in goods to Mexico (a 467 percent increase) and imported \$296.4 billion (up 643 percent). That created a trade deficit in goods of \$60.7 billion.

It's a figure Trump has invoked to argue that naive American policymakers had been out-negotiated by their Mexican counterparts. But the trade gap has widened partly because American consumers are eager to buy relatively low-priced cars and other goods from Mexico.

NAFTA's impact on the economy was more modest than partisans on either side

of the debate had expected. In part, that's because trade represents a surprisingly small portion of the U.S. economy - 28 percent in 2015, according to the World Bank, one of the lowest shares in the world. And trade with Mexico is a smaller still portion.

The Congressional Research Service has concluded that the impact of NAFTA on the US economy "has been relatively small." The Peterson Institute for International Economics, a pro-free trade think tank in Washington, estimates that the U.S. loses about 203,000 jobs and gains 188,000 annually" on account of two-way trade with

Mexico." That's a net loss of 15,000 jobs a year - a mere rounding error in a country with 145 million jobs.

WHAT DOES TRUMP WANT TO DO?

The president has vowed to negotiate a better NAFTA - or to walk away from the agreement if he can't get one. Adam Posen, president of the Peterson Institute, says he thinks the agreement should be updated to reflect, for instance, the rise of the internet businesses over the past 23 years ago. Trump hasn't spelled out how he wants to change the deal. But he clearly seeks to shrink the trade gap with Mexico by reducing imports, increasing exports or both. One likely target: US, Japanese and other automakers, which shipped more than \$100 billion in autos and auto parts from Mexico to the United States in 2015.

After NAFTA, automakers began producing small cars in Mexico and shipping them across the border to the United States. Mexican auto workers still earn less than \$10 an hour, allowing manufacturers to keep small car prices low - and affordable to US families on a budget.

But U.S. and other companies have built complicated supply chains that span the US-Mexico border. Pulling out of NAFTA would throw their operations into disarray. Although they build cars in Mexico, US companies also do a big business (\$30 billion worth in 2015) shipping auto parts to Mexico.

The nonprofit Center for Automotive Research estimates that the US would lose at least 31,000 jobs if Trump went ahead with his threat to impose a 35 percent tax on Mexican auto imports. —AP



SAN LUIS POTOSI: In this Jan 4, 2017 file photo, Alfredo Martinez (left), a 22-year-old robot technician at General Motors, and Angel Rodriguez, 19, who had hoped to find work at the now-cancelled Ford plant, get their hair cut at the barbershop of Omar Rojas, right, in Villa de Reyes, outside San Luis Potosi, Mexico. — AP

EXCHANGE RATES

AL-MUZAINI EXCHANGE CO.

ASIAN COUNTRIES

Japanese Yen	2.656
Indian Rupees	4.491
Pakistani Rupees	2.913
Srilankan Rupees	2.036
Nepali Rupees	2.808
Singapore Dollar	214.460
Hongkong Dollar	39.392
Bangladesh Taka	3.846
Philippine Peso	6.136
Thai Baht	8.678

GCC COUNTRIES

Saudi Riyal	81.548
Qatari Riyal	83.991
ani Riyal	794.179
Bahraini Dinar	812.010
UAE Dirham	83.258

ARAB COUNTRIES

Egyptian Pound - Cash	19.700
Egyptian Pound - Transfer	16.180
Yemen Riyal/for 1000	1.227
Tunisian Dinar	133.450
Jordanian Dinar	430.630
Lebanese Lira/for 1000	2.037
Syrian Lira	2.179
Morocco Dirham	30.900

EUROPEAN & AMERICAN COUNTRIES

US Dollar Transfer	305.600
Euro	328.980
Sterling Pound	385.820
Canadian dollar	233.730
Turkish lira	79.330

Swiss Franc	307.600
Australian Dollar	232.870
US Dollar Buying	304.400

GOLD

20 Gram	243.78
10 Gram	124.81
5 Gram	63.25

DOLLARCO EXCHANGE CO. LTD

Rate for Transfer

	Selling Rate
US Dollar	305.400
Canadian Dolla	233.205
Sterling Pound	383.710
Euro	329.235
Swiss Frank	306.545
Bahrain Dinar	809.590
UAE Dirhams	83.540
Qatari Riyals	84.760
Saudi Riyals	82.365
Jordanian Dinar	431.915
Egyptian Pound	16.428
Sri Lankan Rupees	2.035
Indian Rupees	4.486
Pakistani Rupees	2.912
Bangladesh Taka	3.865
Philippines Peso	6.126
Cyprus pound	167.714
Japanese Yen	3.685
Syrian Pound	2.425
Nepalese Rupees	3.800
Malaysian Ringgit	69.695

Chinese Yuan Renminbi	44.835
Thai Bhat	9.655
Turkish Lira	81.190

BAHRAIN EXCHANGE COMPANY WLL

CURRENCY	BUY Europe	SELL
British Pound	0.378518	0.388516
Czech Korune	0.004120	0.016120
Danish Krone	0.039998	0.044998
Euro	0.322471	0.331471
Norwegian Krone	0.032760	0.037960
Romanian Leu	0.084738	0.084736
Slovakia	0.009162	0.019162
Swedish Krona	0.030616	0.035616
Swiss Franc	0.299968	0.310968
Turkish Lira	0.075330	0.085630
	Australasia	
Australian Dollar	0.223228	0.235228
New Zealand Dollar	0.216534	0.2260334
	America	
Canadian Dollar	0.227419	0.236419
Georgina Lari	0.138094	0.138094
US Dollars	0.301650	0.306050
US Dollars Mint	0.302150	0.306050
	Asia	
Bangladesh Taka	0.003649	0.004233
Chinese Yuan	0.043098	0.046598
Hong Kong Dollar	0.037336	0.040086
Indian Rupee	0.002737	0.004960

Indonesian Rupiah	0.000018	0.000024
Japanese Yen	0.002587	0.002767
Kenyan Shilling	0.002996	0.002996
Korean Won	0.000251	0.000266
Malaysian Ringgit	0.065487	0.071487
Nepalese Rupee	0.003082	0.003252
Pakistan Rupee	0.002714	0.003004
Philippine Peso	0.006069	0.006369
Sierra Leone	0.000068	0.000074
Singapore Dollar	0.209236	0.219236
South African Rand	0.016799	0.025299
Sri Lankan Rupee	0.001679	0.002259
Taiwan	0.009575	0.009755
Thai Baht	0.008324	0.008874

	Arab	
Bahraini Dinar	0.804437	0.812937
Egyptian Pound	0.013180	0.022433
Iranian Riyal	0.000085	0.000086
Iraqi Dinar	0.000186	0.000246
Jordanian Dinar	0.425578	0.434578
Kuwaiti Dinar	1.000000	1.000000
Lebanese Pound	0.000148	0.000248
Moroccan Dirhams	0.020111	0.044111
Nigerian Naira	0.001287	0.001902
Omani Riyal	0.787735	0.793415
Qatar Riyal	0.083170	0.084620
Saudi Riyal	0.080447	0.081747
Syrian Pound	0.001297	0.001517
Tunisian Dinar	0.129978	0.137978
Turkish Lira	0.075330	0.085630
UAE Dirhams	0.081820	0.083520
Yemeni Riyal	0.000994	0.001074



KUWAIT: Chief Investment Strategist James D McDonald delivers his lecture on 'Investment Outlook: 2017 and Beyond.' — Photos by Joseph Shagra



KUWAIT: Participants during the lecture titled "The Rise of Populist Politics: Considerations for Investors" yesterday at KIPCO Tower.

EXPERT PRESENTS INVESTMENT OUTLOOK FOR 2017 AND BEYOND

COMBINE LONG-TERM DISCIPLINE WITH SHORT-TERM FLEXIBILITY: MCDONALD

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: The Investment Studies Center (ISC) of the Union of Investment Companies (UIC), in cooperation with Northern Trust Company, held a lecture for investors titled "The Rise of Populist Politics: Considerations for Investors" yesterday at KIPCO Tower. Chief Investment Strategist James D McDonald presented the first part of the lecture on 'Investment Outlook: 2017 and Beyond.' He spoke about combining long-term discipline with short-term flexibility aimed to provide downside

protection and upside participation, which included both strategic and tactical outlooks. He presented a review of the results. "Global equity returns are expected to make slow progress in choppy market waters while global interest rates remain anchored at low levels over the next five years," stressed McDonald. He explained that anger over stagnant-to-falling real incomes has manifested into populist political movements globally. "Concerns over what populist political candidates would do in office adds further uncertainty to the slow growth environment. Italy

has the highest risk of populist politics, while the US and Germany are at medium risk. Japan is at low risk with its stable government," added McDonald. He also spoke about stagflation and declining return expectations, adding to the tactical risk after the US election. He spoke about global manufacturing, which is stable and improving, Chinese growth, deficit spending, European growth that has been resilient, stocks and bonds, in which it is rare to lose money, OECD oil and product inventories are bloated, oil rig count vs oil price, crude oil pro-

duction vs oil price and depletion that will pressure production. McDonald reviewed risk scenarios including inflation, Fed translation troubles and policy letdown. He explained that geopolitical events tend to fade and concluded with market corrections. The second part of the lecture was presented by Geeta Sharma, Head of Fixed Income, Strategies EMEA and APAC. She spoke about the risk in fixed income and seeking protection when rates are rising. She spoke about hiking cycle, bond yields, risk assets, high yield market outlook, credit quality matters, market

comparisons, emerging markets outlook and focus on real yields. The last part of the lecture was presented by Benjamin D Goetsch, CFA, Investment Strategist, Global Equity, who spoke about "Generating Alpha in an Evolving World". He explained the sources of equity strategy performance, factor impact of potential policy changes, factor performance after recent political events, performance of factors, US equity dispersion, monetary policy dependent returns, factor returns during rate increases and design matters.

BAYT.COM LAUNCHES SOURCE2HIRE

DUBAI: Bayt.com, the leading job site in the Middle East, has launched Source2Hire, a hiring service designed to save employers time, cost, and effort during the hiring process. Source2Hire uses a dedicated team of experienced talent-sourcing executives to provide recruiters and companies with a shortlist of candidates who are qualified, interested, and available for the vacant position and, as a result, maximize recruitment success and minimize hiring costs for employers. "The recruitment sector has become increasingly digitized, and today much of the hiring process is taking place online," said Nauman Asif Mian, CFO, Bayt.com. "But with the abundance of information that is available online about different types of talent and candidate qualifications, recruiters and employers may require extra assistance to go through the data and pare it down in a timely and cost effective manner. With the launch of Source2Hire, we aim to expedite this process for all recruiters, employers, and HR professionals in the MENA region. Source2Hire empowers

companies to make use of our team of experienced talent sourcing executives, who find and shortlist candidates for vacant positions on a timely basis." Under the umbrella of Bayt.com, the #1 Job Site in the Middle East, Source2Hire accesses the region's largest database of over 26 million CVs across the Middle East and North Africa, and then curates a filtered, verified shortlist of top talent that the employer can easily use for interviewing and hiring. Mian adds: "Using Source2Hire is a highly cost-effective and efficient hiring strategy. The employer or recruiter will no longer have to spend time on talent sourcing, screening, and verification. Source2Hire's dedicated team of professionals will only enlist verified applicants and offer a shortlist of the most qualified candidates to fill the vacancy. This is done based on the requirements that the recruiter or employer have indicated. Indeed, employers will maintain full control over the shortlist and will decide which candidates to proceed with and hire, according to their own requirements and timeline."



MOSCOW: This file photo taken on December 12, 2014 shows a woman walking past a currency exchange board showing rates in Moscow. While at first glance the reinvigorated ruble might appear positive for the authorities, for the number crunchers at the finance ministry it's not all good news, because of fears it could hurt Russia's newfound competitiveness. —AFP

NO REASON FOR ALARM OVER GREEK DEBT: EU OFFICIAL

BRUSSELS: There's no need for alarm over Greece's debt levels, a spokesman for the EU's rescue fund body told AFP Saturday, the day after a leaked IMF report described the problem as "explosive". "We see no reason for an alarmist assessment of Greece's debt situation," said the spokesman for the Luxembourg-based European Stability Mechanism, or ESM. "We believe that Greece's debt burden can be manageable, if the agreed reforms are fully implemented," he added. His words were in contrast to the tone of a confidential International Monetary Fund (IMF) report obtained by AFP on Friday. According to that report Greece's government debt remains highly unsustainable and will be "explosive" in the long run, requiring a more credible debt relief plan from Europe. Even with full implementation of the economic reforms the country has agreed to, the Greek government will have to replace highly subsidised official financing with market financing at much higher rates, the IMF said. The pessimistic report, although in keep-

ing with the fund's repeated statements on the topic, makes it less likely the IMF will participate in any new European loan deal for Greece. Without measures to ease the debt burden it will reach 275 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 2060, against 160 per cent now, according to the IMF report which is due to be discussed by member states on February 6. Months of bickering have delayed progress on Greece's 86-billion-euro (\$92.4 billion) bailout program agreed in 2015 and officials are increasingly worried that elections this year in the Netherlands, France and Germany could further poison the efforts. The ESM spokesman on Saturday refused to comment directly on the IMF report but stressed that Greece been granted "exceptionally favorable loan conditions over the long term" and had recently adopted short-term debt relief measures. "Greece and the Europeans agreed on an ambitious fiscal path during the program, which is credible and backed by contingency measures in case of unforeseen events," he said. —AFP

RUBLE'S REVIVAL GIVES RUSSIA AN UNEXPECTED HEADACHE

STRONG CURRENCY COULD HURT RUSSIA'S COMPETITIVENESS

MOSCOW: It was a step that seemed unimaginable a year ago: the Russian authorities stepping in to stop the country's currency from getting too strong. Back in January 2016 the ruble hit a record low of 85 to the dollar as a combination of plunging oil prices and Western sanctions over Moscow's actions in Ukraine pounded the Russian economy. Since then the ruble has gained some 40 percent as oil has rebounded and the first shoots of economic recovery have begun to appear. Hopes in Moscow for better ties with the West after the election of US President Donald Trump have only added to the gains. While at first glance the reinvigorated ruble might appear positive for the authorities, for the number crunchers at the finance ministry it's not all good news, because of fears it could hurt Russia's newfound competitiveness. Rather than scrambling to prop up the ruble, they announced Wednesday a plan to buy foreign currencies with the excess income from oil revenues-the price has shot up some \$15 over the \$40-per-barrel forecast used to build the federal budget. Officially, the explanation for the move is to build up a buffer to help decouple the energy-reliant economy from the volatile oil market, since the ruble often rises and falls in tandem with the price of black gold. But while the central bank insists it is not seeking to curb the free float of the ruble, economists say the message from the move is clear. "The central bank's return to the market would be an important psychological factor and indicate a strong state willingness to keep a weak ruble exchange rate," Alfa Bank analysts said in a note. And even though the plan is meant to come into effect only from February, the impact of the announcement is already being felt. After strengthening so far this year, the ruble fell back to about 60 to the dollar on Thursday,

moving for once in the opposite direction of the price of oil. **Message for investors?** Russian officials have faced a difficult balancing act as they battled the longest recession during President Vladimir Putin's time in power. When the ruble plummeted at the start of the crisis in 2014, the authorities quickly gave up costly interventions to prop up the currency. This meant widespread pain for average Russians as the ruble's plunge spurred inflation and sent borrowing rates soaring. But experts said the currency's slide helped absorb some of the shock, by propping up budget revenues from oil and helping to spur competitiveness of Russian goods. That has been a traditional weak point for Russia, and the lower ruble dovetailed with government calls for companies to step up production inside the country, instead of relying on imports. In a sign that Wednesday's announcement was aimed at enticing foreign investors, the move was first signalled by deputy prime minister Igor Shuvalov in an interview at the Davos forum in Switzerland this month. Oleg Kuzmin from Renaissance Capital, who estimates that the operations will amount to about \$80 million a day, called the decision from the authorities "rational". —AFP

SWITZERLAND EYEING PRO-BREXIT TRADE DEAL WITH BRITAIN

GENEVA: Switzerland's economy minister said yesterday he wants to have "background" talks with Britain so that a trade deal can be in place as soon as the UK leaves the European Union. "My objective is clear. Not one day should pass after Britain's exit (from the EU) without new regulations in place," Johann Schneider-Ammann told Blick daily. "It should be at least as good" as the present deal, he said. The paper said Britain's international trade minister, Liam Fox, showed strong interest in a deal with Switzerland at this month's World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos. British Prime Minister Theresa May has promised to start the two-year process of leaving the EU by the end of March. The European Commission has warned London against negotiating any new third-party trade deals as long as it remains an EU member. But

Schneider-Ammann suggested negotiations with Britain could take place "in the background and in parallel with the exit discussions" with the EU. "I would be personally very happy if we were one of the first countries to conclude a free-trade deal with Britain post-Brexit", he said. Switzerland is a founder member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), created in 1960 as a counterpart to the European Economic Community, as the precursor of the European Union was known. Britain too was a founding EFTA member but left the group when it joined the EEC in 1973. The three EFTA members-Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein-are also members of the European Economic Area (EEA) which gives them access to the EU's single market, but Switzerland is not an EEA member. —AFP



MUMBAI: Indian workers stand on the construction site of a high-rise building in Mumbai on Saturday. India's government is expected to ramp up spending in its latest budget, seeking to ease the pain from a ban on high-value banknotes that slammed the brakes on the world's fastest-growing major economy. —AFP

INVESTORS UPBEAT ON FED; WARY OF TRUMP

WALL STREET WEEK AHEAD

NEW YORK: In an ordinary world, a US Federal Reserve meeting, jobs data and a hefty number of earnings reports next week should provide investors with welcome distraction from speculation about the US President's policy plans.

But the current world is less than ordinary and in the second week after his inauguration as US president, the likelihood is that Donald Trump's voice will still ring louder in investors' ears than economic data and the words of Fed chair Janet Yellen. Wall Street has already bet on

solid economic data, strong earnings and the pace of Fed interest rate hikes, but investors are still uncertain how to bet on the President.

"Wall Street's already figured out that the recovery is in place, that the Fed is going to start getting aggressive. What they haven't figured out yet is, exactly who is Donald Trump," said Robert Phipps, a director at Per Stirling Capital Management in Austin. While stocks have risen since the Nov. 8 election on hopes for tax cuts, lighter regulation and fiscal stimulus, investors

are still waiting for evidence Trump has the willingness and ability to follow through on his pro-business campaign promises.

On top of this, add to the uncertainty, fear of his threats to slap massive tariffs on imports and his comments on China's currency policy. Fed fund futures show bets on a 96-percent chance the Fed leaves rates unchanged when it ends its two-day meeting on Wednesday, according to Reuters data. Investors will watch for hints of policymakers' plans for the rest of 2017. If their lan-

guage indicates faster-than-expected hikes, "the equity rally could pause as investors recalibrate," said Paul Christopher, head global market strategist at Wells Fargo Investment Institute in St. Louis.

But investors don't see the Fed rocking the boat next week, at least until it has some clarity on Trump's policies. "Like many of us, the Fed is probably waiting to see what is going to come of all the new policies and changes that can be expected out of the new administration," said Tim Dreiling, senior portfolio manager at the Private Client Reserve at US Bank in Kansas City.

Strong fourth-quarter earnings reports and forecasts have been part of the driver for the S&P 500's 10-percent increase since Nov. 4 and many big companies are due to report next week.

A few weeks into reporting season, analysts now expect quarterly earnings to have risen 6.8 percent, up from an expectation of a 6.1 percent gain on Jan. 1, according to Reuters data. This growth rate would be the fastest in two years.

JOBS DATA

On Friday, the US is expected to report 171,000 new non-farm jobs were created in

January, up from 156,000 in December. Unless the number is below 100,000 or above 300,000, stocks will likely not move sharply, according to Wells Fargo's Christopher.

"If the data coming in are unremarkable, it would tend to turn attention back to Washington," he said. Aside from seeking clarity on Trump's pro-business policies, the market will also watch for signs of whether the President will help or hurt foreign trade. For example, the administration has said it would tax imports from Mexico to help pay for a new wall to secure the border. But such a tax would push inflation higher, nudging the Fed closer to tightening policy.

Investors are also nervous of the implications if Trump officially declares China a currency manipulator, as he has implied he might do. The best-case scenario would be that he instead sits down to negotiate trade concessions with the world's second-biggest economy, said Wells Fargo's Christopher. "I think Trump is serious about getting things done, but he does have to reckon with the fact that even as the most powerful person in the world he does have to work with others," he said. — Reuters

Global

طويل

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report

Sunday 29 January 2017

Index	Change	Closing	Last Closing	High	Low
Price index	▲ 90.94	6,943.24	6,852.30	6,946.05	6,850.02
Weighted Index	▲ 5.97	434.40	428.43	434.70	428.43
KSX 15	▲ 18.47	1,006.17	987.70	1,006.87	985.93

Volume	787,124,179
Value (KWD)	75,409,075
Number of Trades	12,904

Security	High	Low	Trades					
			Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change	
MARIN	72	67	1399235	97,502	62	67	—	0.0
IKARIUS	53	52	1,770,500	93,449	47	53	—	0.0
IPG	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	370	—	0.0
NAPESCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	890	—	0.0
ENERGYH	58	53	2,711,143	152,567	101	58	▲	5.0
GPI	64	61	8,502,045	528,273	157	62	—	0.0
ABAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	99	—	0.0
Oil & Gas			14,382,923	871,791	367	941.56	▲	9.35
KFOUC	290	285	304,000	87,680	8	290	▲	25.0
BPCC	590	570	1,792,949	1,041,624	52	580	▲	20.0
ALKOUT	700	680	12,501	8,634	2	700	▲	30.0
ALQURAIN	305	290	721,719	214,463	49	305	▲	20.0
Basic Materials			2,831,169	1,352,381	111	1259.71	▲	72.05

KCEM	450	440	110,598	48,810	6	450	▲	15.0
REFRI	330	325	99,545	32,425	5	330	▲	15.0
CABLE	550	550	542,907	298,599	48	550	▲	50.0
SHIP	236	228	249,638	58,253	18	236	▲	10.0
PCEM	1,100	1,080	84,395	91,564	20	1,080	—	0.0
PAPER	320	310	30,000	9,301	5	310	—	0.0
MRC	70	68	130,000	8,900	5	70	▲	5.0
ACICO	305	300	575,600	173,320	24	300	—	0.0
GGMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	300	—	0.0
HCC	120	120	30,767	3,692	3	120	▲	6.0
KBMMC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	—	0.0
NICBM	214	210	8,048	1,700	4	214	▲	2.0
EQUIPMENT	80	76	5,025,751	391,145	131	78	▲	2.0
NCCI	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	42.5	—	0.0
GYPGUM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	95	—	0.0
SALBOOKH	87	84	2,701,570	232,419	93	87	▲	5.0
AGLTY	760	710	6,888,478	4,923,748	159	750	▲	40.0
EDU	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	206	—	0.0
CLEANING	60	59	2,125,210	125,681	48	59	—	0.0
KGL	70	69	1,382,356	96,645	24	70	▲	1.0
KCPK	198	190	20,017	3,963	5	198	—	0.0
HUMANSOFT	3,000	3,000	47,014	141,042	12	3,000	—	0.0
NAFAIS	194	194	8,500	1,649	1	194	▲	20.0
SAFWAN	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	—	0.0
GFC	49.5	47.0	201,423	9,695	14	48.0	▼	-1.5
MAYADEEN	39.5	37.5	14,815,241	571,095	156	38.0	—	0.0
CGC	500	500	2,500	1,250	2	500	▼	-10.0
MTCC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	56	—	0.0
UPAC	810	800	16,500	15,765	8	800	—	0.0
ALAFQ	246	242	42,000	10,200	3	242	▼	-6.0
MUGARRAD	81	79	855,280	68,571	28	79	▼	-1.0
LOGISTICS	81	80	5,614,056	450,130	110	81	—	0.0
SCEM	90	89	336,600	30,057	11	89	—	0.0
GOEM	87	84	315,000	26,795	12	87	▲	2.0
QIC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	83	—	0.0
FCEM	91	89	1,126,036	101,041	36	89	▼	-2.0
RKWC	104	102	31,300	3,253	6	104	▼	-2.0
SPEC	100	95	2,157,343	212,777	75	100	▲	5.0
Industrials			45,376,653	8,143,485	1,072	1475.37	▲	18.36

KSH	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	170	—	0.0
NSH	39.5	39.5	54,943	2,170	2	39.5	▼	-2.5
PAPCO	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	100	—	0.0
CATTL	244	224	5,531	1,243	4	244	—	0.0
DANAH	104	100	2,671,578	272,486	105	104	—	0.0
POULT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	—	0.0
FOOD	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2,620	—	0.0
Consumer Goods			2,732,052	275,899	111	1183.73	▼	-3.65
MHC	275	275	10,250	2,819	2	275	—	0
ATC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	920	—	0
YIACO	295	275	26,000	7,720	4	295	▲	15
Health Care			36,250	10,089	6	1236.22	▲	10.78

KCIN	1,180	1,180	7,204	8,501	3	1,180	—	0
KHOT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	265	—	0
SULTAN	96	92	1,550,095	146,863	60	96	▲	5
CABLETV	47.5	47.5	2,800	124	1	47.5	—	0
EYAS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	385	—	0
IFAHR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	192	—	0
OULAFUEL	136	132	138,579	18,557	17	136	—	0
MUNTZAHAT	102	97	8,891,341	858,140	210	98	▲	1
JAZEERA	710	680	590,875	414,352	50	700	▲	10
SOOR	132	128	235,954	30,493	28	132	▲	4
FUTUREKID	126	124	42,150	5,231	3	126	▼	-2
ALRAI	154	154	211,523	32,575	16	154	▲	0
ZIMAH	67	64	2,808,988	184,238	76	64	▼	-2
Mezzan	1,020	990	99,800	96,659	14	990	▼	-10
Consumer Services			14,379,109	1,798,771	478	1010.24	▲	11.24

ZAIN	510	485	14,758,574	7,334,906	264	510	▲	25
OOREDOO	1,200	1,180	22,129	25,912	7	1,200	▼	-40
HITSTELEC	69	64	26,527,884	1,765,367	322	66	▼	-2
VIVA	900	880	88,554	78,858	46	900	▼	-20
Telecommunications			41,397,141	9,205,042	639	713.43	▼	-7.74
NBK	750	740	2,721,034	2,013,888	71	750	▲	10
GBK	275	270	566,300	155,651	12	275	▲	5
CBK	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	410	—	0
ABK	335	325	128,500	42,190	12	325	▼	-10
ALMUTAHED	440	425	373,465	162,077	24	440	▲	0
KIB	230	226	1,503,262	342,857	53	228	▼	-2
BURG	340	335	1,051,964	356,958	22	340	—	0
KFIN	630	610	7,553,799	4,686,110	149	630	▲	20
BOUBRYAN	420	410	1,096,628	454,033	56	410	▼	-5
AUB	234	228	2,217,882	514,747	41	230	▼	-2
ITHMR	80	75	44,302,311	3,436,005	591	78	▲	1
WARBABANK	242	240	1,940,017	468,263	118	242	—	0
Banks			63,455,162	12,632,778	1,149	999.96	▲	4.26

KINS	300	300	28,336	8,501	3	300	—	0
GIN5	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	720	—	0.0
AINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	450	—	0.0
WINS	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	102	—	0.0
KUWAITRE	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	180	—	0.0
FTI	50	48.0	393,500	19,568	13	48.0	▼	-0.5
WETHAQ	63	60	576,946	35,686	13	63	▲	4.0
BKIKWT	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	355	—	0.0
Insurance			998,782	63,754	29	1141.37	▲	14.38

Security	High	Low	Trades					
			Volume	Value (KD)	Trades	Last	Change	
SOKOUK	65	61	13479238	847,435	193	62	—	0.0
KRE	85	82	16,017,686	1,341,719	156	85	▲	3.0
URC	112	104	51,871	5,613	8	112	▲	6.0
NRE	138	132	13,869,341	1,880,286	159	134	▲	2.0
SRE	410	405	25,672	10,521	5	405	—	0.0
TAM	450	440	70,024	31,026	3	450	—	0.0
AREEC	180	172	948,438	169,242	18	180	▲	10.0
MASSALEH	59	56	583,882	33,303	23	59	▲	2.0
ARABREC	62	55	32,989,796	1,925,827	568	57	—	0.0
ERESCO	53	51	4,134,872	215,032	91	52	—	0.0
MABANEE	910	890	635,723	571,516	29	900	—	0.0
INJAZZAT	85	84	594,000	50,006	9	84	—	0.0
INVESTORS	36.0	34.5	14,972,724	526,635	221	34.5	▼	-1.0
IRC	45.0	43.5	2,789,080	123,406	51	43.5	▼	-1.0
ALTJARIA	93	89	16,090,380	1,470,126	162	91	▲	2.0
SANAM	62	55	89,051	4,988	7	62	▲	2.0
AAYANRE	87	84	779,000	66,592	30	87	▲	3.0
AQAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	69	—	0.0
ALAQARIA	50	47.0	941,900	46,651	32	49.5	▲	1.0
MAZAYA	134	126	18,695,616	2,458,778	247	134	▲	10.0
ADNC	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	11.0	—	0.0
THEMAR	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	106	—	0.0
TJARA	67	64	3,537,357	234,804	72	67	▲	5.0
TAAMEER	45.5	41.5	8,342,449	375,336	167	43.0	—	0.0
ARKAN	89	88	548,360	48,346	26	88	▼	-5.0
ARGAN	200	198	4,200,000	833,100	14	200	▲	2.0
ABYAR	40.0	39.0	27,961,585	1,102,536	310	39.0	▼	-0.5
MUNSHAAT	85	79	12,295,450	1,020,886	228	81	▲	1.0
FIRSTDUBAI	83	78	6,516,837	531,993	171	83	▲	5.0
KBT	66	63	8,166,943	524,579	114	65	—	0.0
REAM	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	216	—	0.0
MENA	40.5	38.5	11,791,967	465,281	198	38.5	▼	

US ECONOMY FACES A REALITY CHECK

NBK MONEY MARKETS REPORT

KUWAIT: After a big surge in US and macro data on the back of strong sentiment and survey readings post-election, economic data have been declining since the beginning of the month and is now back down to neutral territory. Is it a reality check or disappointments resulting from rising forecasts rather than weak readings?

Now that US equity markets are in new uncharted territories, with the Dow Jones over the 20,000 threshold, markets are likely to start to question this theory and the pressure on the new US administration is likely to step up for immediate results and strong growth.

In this whole puzzle and delivering on his elections promises, President Trump signed the official withdrawal document of the US from 12-nation Trans-Pacific partnership and promised to renegotiate the North America Free Trade Agreement. Although the Trans-Pacific Partnership had not been approved by Congress, Trump's decision to withdraw carries broad geopolitical implications. Trump's action towards global trade and local protectionism is starting to weigh on markets and become the focal point of traders and investors.

Another election promise has also started to materialize this week after the white house proposed for a 20 percent tax on Mexican imports to "pay for the wall". The US imported 21 billion dollar of food and beverages from the southern borders in 2015, only second after Canada. The implications of such proposition could result in inflation in a wide range of agricultural products which ultimately could negatively impact the US population disposable income.

In another chain of events around the never ending "Brexit" story, the UK Prime Minister Theresa May was the first foreign leader to rush to try and gain the clemency of the new US administration this week in the hope of discussing one major subject of a potential free trade deal between the UK and US. As the US makes up 20 percent of UK exports, but the UK is only 5 percent of the US export market, these actual facts are likely to affect such negotiations and give the US a much stronger hand in any potential trade deal. Moreover, as tariffs between the US and UK are already relatively small, the UK is unlikely to benefit from a reduction in tariffs with its counterpart. This benefit would also be outweighed by the costs imposed on UK exporters by the EU's external tariffs.

Last but not least, with the Trump administration's potential funds repatriation scheme, the UK is likely to lose some of the funds which have been parked outside the US banking system. This is why, the hype over May's being the first leader to visit the new US administration could be short lived as the market is likely to come back to re-scrutinize the potential dam-

age that would be inflicted on the UK economy from the loss to the single market access. The near-term economic outlook is likely to be dominated by initial discussions between the UK and EU after the trigger of article 50. On the foreign exchange side, the US dollar ended the week holding onto its broad-based gains registered on Thursday and Friday against the majors having even strengthened further against the Sterling Pound and the Japanese Yen.

The euro opened the week at 1.0683 and reached as high as 1.0774 on the back of positive manufacturing data. The stable yield spreads between the US and the major euro area sovereigns have not given the pair any particular direction, while a thin news flow has also favored range trading during the week. The currency closed the week at 1.0694.

The Sterling Pound started the week at 1.2358 and reached as high as 1.2673 as investors showed optimism over May's first US visit and a potential trade deal agreement with its US counterpart. Moreover, as the Supreme Court denied the government's appeal obliging the prime minister to obtain the parliament's approval before invoking article 50, the Sterling pound had a positive week closing Friday at 1.2546.

The Japanese Yen opened the week at 114.35 and the currency rallied to a two month low of 112.49 against the dollar. However, the yen retracted after the Bank of Japan announced an increase in its five to ten year Japanese Government bonds purchases and helped bring down yields from 11-month highs. The currency closed the week at 115.06.

On the commodities side, oil is still trading in a relatively narrow range well above \$50 per barrel fairly close to an eighteen months high. On the other hand, gold prices retracted amid a boom in the equity markets across the globe. Dow Jones reached a 130 year high after break the 20,000 level. Gold prices fell from 1,219 to 1,190 markets remain in the honeymoon phase of the new president.

In summary, despite volatility being very low until now, the new US administration ability to be confrontational on the global stage is starting to show with the first showdown taking place with the US Mexican trade relations. Even with a higher eventual growth in the US, volatility is likely to be a permanent feature of 2017.

GDP estimates

Gross domestic product rose at a 1.9 percent annualized rate following the prior quarter's 3.5 percent gain. The median forecast called for a 2.2 percent increase. The strong job market and optimism among consumers and companies for President Donald Trump's policies are likely to keep growth humming along in 2017, though tensions over trade could temper these gains.

This marks the first of three estimates for this quarter, with the other releases scheduled for February and March when more information becomes available with growth projected at 2.3 percent in 2017 and 2018.

Moreover, sales of newly constructed homes dropped in December as the housing market's recovery seems faltering. New-home sales declined to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 536,000 10.4 percent lower than an upwardly adjusted November pace of 598,000 and 0.4 percent lower than a year earlier. The stumble in December may reflect inventory that's too tight to accommodate all new buy-

order to meet greater production requirements. Positive expectations around the demand outlook were highlighted by further increases in stocks of purchased items and finished goods, with the latter increasing at the quickest pace since the series began in early 2007. Optimism around the 12-month outlook for production also improved at the start of the year, and reached its highest level since March 2016.

Europe's low confidence

This week, Europe saw various confidence indicators out of France, of which the January business confidence number disappointed 104



ers. Builders have been reluctant to ramp up construction even as demand remains strong. Supply is only just creeping back to levels considered healthy by analysts.

US manufacturing starts

On the more positive side, US manufacturing sector had a solid start to 2017, with overall operating conditions improving at the quickest pace for nearly two years. This was shown by the Flash Manufacturing PMI figure of 55.1 in January, up from 54.3 in December, signaling a marked upturn in the health of the sector that was the strongest since March 2015. The solid improvement in business conditions was largely driven by sharper increases in output and new orders, which rose at the fastest rates in 22-and 28-months respectively.

At the same time, companies raised their purchasing activity at the steepest rate since early 2015 and increased their payrolls further in

against expectations of 105 while manufacturing confidence was in line with expectations.

The IFO survey out of Germany saw broadly soft numbers, as both business sentiment at 109.8 against expectations of 111.3 and business expectations coming at 103.2 against 105.8 expected. The current assessment number moved higher but was still below expectations at 116.9 against expectations of 117.

Despite the low confidence, manufacturing data out of the eurozone remains strong with the overall economy continuing to expand at a robust pace at the start of 2017. According to PMI survey data, employment continues to rise at the fastest rate since 2008. Inflationary pressures meanwhile intensified further. The eurozone PMI registered 54.3 in January according to the preliminary 'flash' estimates. The latest reading of manufacturing PMI was the second highest figure since December 2015, although down marginally from 54.4 in December.

Services PMI came just slightly below expectation of 53.9 at 53.6, however still in an expansionary mode.

In summary, growth edged slightly lower in both manufacturing and services, but in both sectors the rate of expansion remained robust by recent standards, especially in the goods-producing sector. The latter continued to be boosted by rising exports, which once again showed a rate of increase not seen since the start of 2014, linked in many cases to the recent weakening of the Euro.

UK supreme court

The Supreme Court in the UK ruled that the government would have to get parliament's approval before triggering Article 50. A simple resolution would not be sufficient, the Supreme Court ruled, and the government would need to put forward a formal piece of legislation, to be approved by both houses. However, no approval is required from the parliaments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Prime Minister May had indicated that she wanted to trigger Article 50 by the end of March.

China's economy growing

In China, the economy grew 6.8 percent on a yearly basis in the fourth quarter of 2016, above market expectations and driving 2016 growth to 6.7 percent, within the 6.5 to 7.0 percent range targeted by the government. Growth was mostly helped by internal consumption growing close to 10 percent on a yearly basis, whereas industrial production remained stable around 6 percent. Fixed-asset investment continued to be a negative component of growth and further decelerated over the course of the year. Meanwhile, retail sales rose 10.9 percent against 10.7 percent expected for December and industrial production grew 6.0 percent against expectations of 6.1 percent. Nevertheless, the Chinese data released failed to give a significant boost to commodity prices in the beginning of 2017.

Japan manufacturing PMI

The flash manufacturing purchasing managers index for Japan jumped to 52.8 in January, up from 52.4 in December, leaving it at the highest level seen since March 2014 at 52.8. It suggests that activity levels improved steadily, rather than rapidly, at the start of 2017. Output levels continued to expand at a slightly slower pace, while new orders and new export orders also increased at a faster pace. Not only is the lift in orders a good sign for future activity levels given they are lead indicators, it also helps bolster the view that global demand is improving.

Kuwait

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

US DOLLAR INTEREST RATES ARE EDGING UP

By Hayder Tawfik

President Donald Trump prefers a competitive US dollar against US's biggest trading partners ie China, Japan and the eurozone. He is right to ask for a fair value for his beloved currency. However, what he promised to deliver on the economic front is very much dollar positive and risks higher interest at least in the US. Yields on US Treasury and interest rates have already started moving higher and there is more room to go higher throughout this year and next.

It is the global inflation outlook that is causing the sudden changes in economic growth and interest rates outlook. However, to be fair to those who have pushed up the expectation, we should look closely at what is happening to commodity and energy prices. These have moved up sharply over the past few months. The US Commodity Index moved up by nearly 10% over the past few months. This price increase is purely based on demand expectation but if the demand increases then ultimately producers will pass their cost of materials to consumers, hence increase in inflation expectation.

Any increase in inflation will push US 10-year note yields closer to the 3 percent level for soon. If this accompanied by Federal Reserve tightening rates, then we should see stronger dollar in the months

ahead. I expect the Federal Reserve to start moving ahead of the curve and preempt any increase in inflation outlook. Federal Reserve chairwomen Janet Yellen has backed a strategy for gradually raising rates, arguing in remarks a day before Trump's inauguration last week the bank wasn't behind the curve in containing inflation pressures but nevertheless can't afford to allow the economy to run too hot. Yellen said wages had risen "only modestly" and manufacturing was operating well below capacity.

US dollar had biggest rally against most foreign exchange currencies since Donald Trump was elected. Although the president elect has been saying that the US\$ is too strong. The President-elect had campaigned on promises of "massive" tax cuts and spending of as much as \$1 trillion to rebuild infrastructure, while his "America first" stance produced pledges to tear up trade deals and punish companies that send jobs overseas. These kind of promises and remarks will most likely push dollar higher and his wish of weaker dollar will not be achieved.

Global deflation is over and we are now entering a new regime of inflation and easy fiscal policy. This marks the end of the 35-year bull market in bonds. Investors have started shifting money out of fixed income and into equities on a large scale. Some of these investors such as Sovereign Wealth Funds will find it difficult to shift big money quickly so they need long time to do so. Equity investors should be reassured that equity money flow will continue in the months ahead. @Rasameel



COTONOU: An employee of a car park outside Cotonou waits for customers. Benin's car market began its free fall last year, while the Nigerian neighbor entered a recession. —AFP

BENIN HIT BY NEIGHBORING NIGERIA'S CAR IMPORT BAN

COTONOU: Surveying his sprawling car dealership on the fringes of Benin's commercial hub Cotonou, Kassem Hijazi alternates between chainsmoking Marlboro cigarettes and puffing on a hookah.

He and his colleagues don't have much else to do. There hasn't been a single customer since December, when neighboring Nigeria banned car imports by land as part of a wave of protectionist policies that are strangling Benin's economy.

"We spend our days smoking, it's our life now," Hijazi sighs, sitting in a gazebo beside his stock of thousands of cars steadily accumulating the dry winter dust. This afternoon, Hijazi—who, like the vast majority of car dealers in Benin, is Lebanese-called in his Beninese accountant to help close up shop.

Debts are accumulating and the stress is becoming too much. "I lost in one year what I have earned in 16," Ali Assi, another car dealer, said. Of the 2,500 Lebanese dealers in Cotonou, 1,600 have packed up and left in the last six months, shutting down businesses that employed dozens of drivers, cleaners and security staff.

"Unemployed people used to come here to find work," said Vincent Gouton, who represents a group of car dealership managers in Cotonou.

The Benin car market began its free fall last year when neighboring Nigeria entered its first recession since 1994. Nigeria, an economic behemo-

moth of 190 million people, gobbles up "99 percent of car exports" in Benin, according to Gouton. Benin, a tiny country with scarce natural resources, relies on its port business to survive. From the port city of Cotonou, imported cars, fabrics, and food from all over the world get distributed across west Africa.

But since the Nigerian economy crashed following the collapse in global oil prices, Benin has been suffering knock-on effects. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari's protectionist policies his government has banned a slew of items including cars imported by land—has only aggravated the situation.

'Encourage smuggling'

"This decision will encourage smuggling, it's back to square one," Gouton said. Several agreements were signed in the past between Benin and Nigeria to facilitate legal trade. But Nigeria accuses Beninese customs of failing to monitor the exported goods and collect taxes.

Buhari hopes that closing land borders will revitalize Nigerian industries and attract business to the port at Lagos, Nigeria's economic capital and largest city. Today over 20 products the list has never been officially published—are banned from being imported overland.

"For the past 18 months, we have seen a lot of policies that are not market friendly," said

Nigerian economist Nonso Obikili. "The self-sufficiency policy has led the government to create all sorts of hostile environments around import," Obikili said.

"The government wants to ban palm oil (imports) but our plantations are not ready to meet local demand, and it takes two years to get oil from trees. It's a mess," Obikili said. "And this will encourage illegal trade."

'Killing business'

It isn't just Benin which is hurting. Nigerian car dealer Olabanji Akinola said he had to fire half of his employees last week as a result of the ban. Business used to be brisk at Akinola's car dealership, located on the outskirts of Lagos. Yet now he can't pay any wages. "In Cotonou, they tax 35 percent of the value of an imported car. In Lagos, it's 70 percent," Akinola said. "It's killing the business."

"The price of cars will go up, and the smuggling will increase. There are 200 roads through the bush to come to Nigeria, the borders are porous," Akinola said. "This morning, customers begged me on my knees to lower my prices, but I cannot," Akinola said. Ultimately, it may only be the Nigerian government who benefits from the import ban. In 2016, customs seized 307 contraband vehicles, worth nearly 5 billion naira (about 15 million euros). The figure is expected to rise in 2017. — AFP

EU SCRAPES A WIN IN WTO ROW OVER RUSSIAN DUTIES

GENEVA: The European Union scored a few legal hits against Russia in a World Trade Organization ruling, having launched a challenge in May 2014 against Russian anti-dumping duties on German and Italian light commercial vehicles. But the panel of WTO adjudicators, threw out many of the EU's arguments. Russia had imposed duties of 29.6 percent on German van imports and 23 percent on imports from Italy in 2013, claiming they were unfairly priced to undermine Russian producers.

The case was one of a string of apparently tit-for-tat legal moves between the EU and Russia soon after Russia joined the WTO in 2012, 19 years after it started negotiating its membership.

Friday's ruling, which can be appealed by either side, may help shape Russia's use of anti-dumping duties or EU attempts to counter them, actions that show no sign of slowing down.

European Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmstrom said the WTO had made a very clear ruling against an unfair, protectionist and anti-competitive measure. "The duties on light commercial vehicles are not in line with commitments by Russia at the time it joined the WTO. Those measures now have to be removed," she said in a statement.

WTO members are allowed to impose duties on imports they think are being "dumped", or unfairly priced to compete with their own production, but they have to be able to prove it.

The WTO panel upheld the EU's argument that Russia had not correctly assessed its own market for vans, having defined its domestic industry as consisting of one producer, Sollers, and excluding another, GAZ. But other EU arguments, such as a claim that Russia had mixed up data expressed in dollars and roubles, failed to convince the arbitrators. — Reuters

MARKAZ SPONSORS 5TH PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ACCOUNTING & AUDITING

KUWAIT: Kuwait Financial Center "Markaz" announced its sponsorship for the fifth professional conference for accounting and auditing under the slogan of "Towards an Efficient Profession". The conference will be held under the patronage of the HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah from 15-16 February 2017 at the Conference Hall of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce, with the supervision and organization of Kuwait's Association of Accounts and Auditors. The conference will witness the participation of professionals and those related to this profession such as financial

reports creators, financial controllers, academics and related government sectors.

Alrazi Y Albudaiwi, Vice President and Head of Media & Communications at Markaz said: "This sponsorship reflects our commitment to support the activities of civil society organizations and professional associations that aim to contribute in leveraging the professional, scientific and cultural levels in the Kuwaiti society. We view these organizations as partners in Markaz's integrated strategy for social and economic responsibility, which is based on three main pillars: 1) building human capacity 2) aligning our business

environment with the principles of sustainable development 3) Promoting good governance in the business environment. In order to achieve these objectives, Markaz collaborates with several reputable civil society organizations, especially the ones concerned with the financial and economic sector, such as accounting, which have vital roles in achieving sustainable economy."

Albudaiwi added: "We would like to thank Kuwait's Association of Accounts & Auditors for organizing this conference, which will provide an excellent opportunity to exchange views and experiences on

many of the accounting topics, as well as define the obstacles that face the accountants today and provide suggestions to overcome them. The conference will also provide an opportunity to learn the latest developments in the accounting field and benefit from the international participants' experiences, which will help raise the level of professionals in Kuwait and enrich their knowledge, as well as develop the profession based to keep up with international developments and reach the economic and social objectives." With the participation of the Arab Federation of Accountants and

Auditors, GCC Accounting and Auditing Organization and The International Arab Society of Certified Accountants (IASCA), the conference will focus on many topics such as: The role of audit institutions in maintaining the countries' economies, the government accounting on an accrual basis and its role in raising the financial system efficiency in the state, accounting disclosure and international standards of financial reporting and its impact on investment decisions, recent trends in the audit profession, and promoting social responsibility and sustainability.



KUWAIT: KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), Faisal Al-Ayyar (second from right) receives the recognition plaque from Tmkeen CEO, Ali Al-Ibrahim.

KIPCO CONTINUES TO SUPPORT YOUNG KUWAITI ENTREPRENEURS

KUWAIT: KIPCO - the Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) - has continued to support young Kuwaiti entrepreneurs through collaborating for the second year with the Youth Empowerment Symposium (Tmkeen) on the KIPCO Tmkeen Award for Young Entrepreneurs. The award, worth \$ 100,000 in services from the KIPCO Group, was won by Moqawalat.com.

KIPCO's Vice Chairman (Executive), Faisal Al-Ayyar, received the Tmkeen representatives to discuss ways in which more mentorship and guidance can be provided by KIPCO and its Group companies to Kuwait's young entrepreneurial community.

Commenting on this occasion, KIPCO's Group Communications Director, Eman Al-Awadhi, said: "Through setting up their own businesses, young entrepreneurs have an opportunity to express their creativity and to be innovative. At KIPCO, we strongly believe in the great contribution that these young people can make to the economy. Our collaboration with Tmkeen has allowed us to mentor people with small businesses

and to guide them toward becoming more sustainable. Through our Group companies, we will continue to fulfill what we believe is the duty of the private sector by making our collective expertise available to support this important business sector."

KIPCO Group companies - including Burgan Bank, OSN, Gulf Insurance Group, KAMCO Investment Company, United Real Estate, Qurain Petrochemical Industries, AUK, AUS, United Networks and Marina FM - are supporters of the KIPCO Tmkeen Award for Young Entrepreneurs.

The KIPCO Group is one of the biggest holding companies in the Middle East and North Africa, with consolidated assets of US\$ 33 billion as at 30 September 2016. The Group has significant ownership interests in over 60 companies operating across 24 countries. The group's main business sectors are financial services, media, real estate and manufacturing. Through its core companies, subsidiaries and affiliates, KIPCO also has interests in the education and medical sectors.

VIVA WINS 'BEST TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMPANY OF YEAR, KUWAIT 2016' AWARD

RECOGNITION BY INTERNATIONAL FINANCE MAGAZINE

KUWAIT: "International Finance", the preeminent international magazine, awarded VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, in recognition of the telecom firm's exceptional performance and leadership role through innovative solutions and technology, which serve all the segments in the Kuwaiti market. At the publication's annual Middle East Awards Summit, which was held in Dubai on January 26, 2017, VIVA received "Best Telecommunications Company of the year, Kuwait 2016" award. VIVA gained this prestigious award based on a series of criteria judged by Global Investors' editorial panel and a selection of industry experts.

Commenting on this occasion, Eng Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Badran said: "Reaping such accolade "Best Telecommunications Company of the Year, Kuwait 2016" proves our exceptional performance and the high quality standards our professionals are providing to our customers. We endeavor at VIVA to foster our leadership in the telecom market with our innovative products and services that meet customers' aspirations."

International Finance Magazine (IFM) aims to be a source of information, analysis and insights for the global finance community. Headquartered in London, IFM was established



with a mission to convey credible financial news and articles to the global financial community in a concise, simple and easy-to-understand manner. The audience for IFM is the financial community worldwide, and includes top decision makers and influencers in the financial industry.

It is noteworthy to mention that VIVA has been awarded recently as "Best Contact Centre Experience" and "Best Network Experience" by INSIGHTS Middle East, "Leading Corporate for Investor Relations in Kuwait", and "Business Innovation in Risk Management" for the year 2016 during the Annual Excellence Awards for Revenue Assurance and Fraud Management (RAFM) sponsored by Subex Ltd.

VIVA is the fastest-growing telecom operator in Kuwait. Launched in December 2008, VIVA makes things Possible for its customers by transforming communication, information and entertainment experiences. The company has rapidly established an unrivalled position in the market through its customer centric approach. VIVA's quest is to be the mobile brand of choice in Kuwait by being transparent, engaging, energetic and fulfilling. VIVA continues to take a considerable share of the market by offering an innovative range of best value products, services and content propositions; a state of the art, nationwide network and world-class service. VIVA offers internet speeds of more than 100 Mbps, due to the implementation of the most advanced fourth generation (4G LTE) network in Kuwait resulting in superior coverage, performance and reliability.

INTENTIONALLY OR NOT, BIG US BRANDS HELP FUND FAKE NEWS

NEW YORK: Wittingly or not, major global corporations are helping fund sites that traffic in fake news by advertising on them. Take, for instance, a story that falsely claimed former President Barack Obama had banned Christmas cards to overseas military personnel. Despite debunking by The Associated Press and other fact-checking outlets, that article lives on at "Fox News The FB Page," which has no connection to the news channel although its bears a replica of its logo.

And until recently, the story was often flanked by ads from big brands such as the insurer Geico, the business-news outlet Financial Times, and the beauty-products maker Revlon.

This situation isn't remotely an isolated case, although major companies generally say they have no intention of bankrolling purveyors of fake news with their ad dollars. Because many of their ads are placed on websites by computer algorithms, it's not always easy for these companies to steer them away from sites they find objectionable.

Google, the biggest player in the digital ad market, places many of these ads. The company says it bars ads on its network from appearing against "misrepresentative content" - its term for fake news - yet Google spokeswoman Andrea Faville acknowledged that the company had sold ads on the site with the Christmas-card story. Those ads vanished after The Associated Press inquired about them. Faville declined to comment on their disappearance.

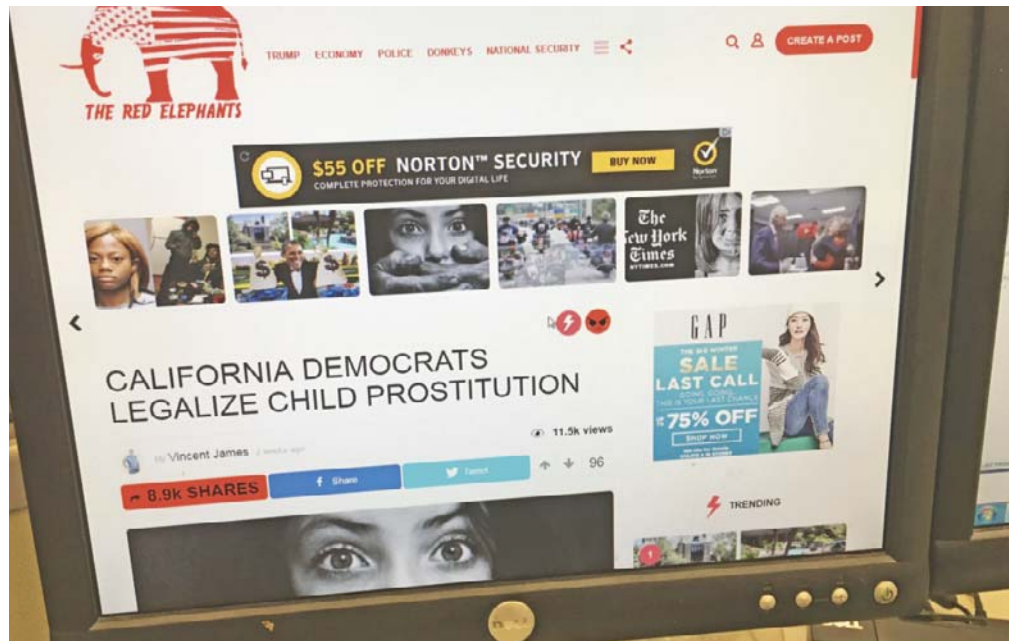
ADS THAT GO WHERE THEY WILL

Media advertising was much simpler when companies had only to buy ad space in newspapers or magazines to reach readers in a particular demographic category. Digital ads, by contrast, can wind up in unexpected places because they're placed by automated systems, not sales teams, and targeted at individuals rather than entire demographics. In effect, these ads follow potential customers around the web, where a tangle of networks and exchanges place them into ad slots at online publications. These middlemen have varying standards and levels of interest in helping advertisers ensure that their ads avoid controversy.

"A brand wouldn't have a real foolproof way of not getting on sites that have issues like this," said Joseph Galarneau, CEO of the New York City startup Mezzobit, which helps publishers and marketers manage advertising technology.

AUTOMATIC FAKE-NEWS FUNDING

Such automated ads are a major income source for fake news stories, which may have influenced voters in the U.S. presidential election. False stories can undermine trust in real news - and they can be dangerous. A widely shared but untrue story that pegged a Washington, D.C., pizzeria as part of a Hillary Clinton-run child sex trafficking ring led a man



In this Jan 19, 2017 photo, a fake news story is positioned near ads from major global corporations on The Red Elephants website. It may not be intentional, but major corporations are helping prop up sites that publish false news stories. Experts say it's not so easy for brands to make sure they don't end up on websites that publish false stories. — AP

BRANDS IN A BIND

When the AP pointed out that a Chrysler Ram truck ad popped up on a story saying that the United Nations was making the U.S. pay reparations to African-Americans - it's not - Fiat Chrysler said it works with ad companies to scour individual sites and block them from loading its ads if it finds them "harmful."

An ad for would-be Amazon rival Jet.com, owned by Walmart, showed up on a misleading story claiming California had legalized child prostitution. The company said in an emailed statement that it has filters that stop its ads from loading "on these kinds of sites," but wouldn't provide more detail or explain its criteria. Walgreens ads also popped up next to the child prostitution story on the site The Red Elephants, but the drugstore chain has since prevented its ads from appearing there, a company spokesman said. A person who responded to an email sent to The Red Elephants declined to discuss the site's advertising, but insisted that the child-prostitution story was true. The person declined to provide their name.

A Financial Times spokeswoman said in an emailed statement that the media company was "frustrated" to learn that its ads appeared next to fake news like the Christmas-card story, saying the situation underscored the "very real risk" of using automated ads. "We think the ad technology ecosystem could, and should, do more to improve brand safety," she said. Revlon declined to comment. A Geico spokeswoman said the company didn't know about its ad that ran on the spoof Fox News site. — AP

GULF BANK HOLDS FIRST 2017 RED ACCOUNT DRAW FOR STUDENTS!

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank held its first monthly red account draw for year 2017 and three winners won valuable prizes on Monday 23 January 2017. The red account draw resulted in the announcement of three students who won prizes ranging from an iPhone 7 to an iWatch and they are:

- * Yousef Ahmad Edrees - iPhone 7
- * Mohammed Saleh Hussain - iPad Pro
- * Abeer Khalil Salem Al-Rashed - iWatch

Gulf Bank's red is an account for high school students, college and university students aged between 15 and 25. Eligible customers will get the chance to enter the draw automatically and on a monthly basis, upon transferring their student allowances.

Each month, an iPhone 7, an iPad Pro, and an iWatch will be gifted to three lucky winners until December 31, 2017. The next draw dates are announced as follows:

- * February 20, 2017
- * March 30, 2017
- * April 24, 2017
- * May 22, 2017
- * June 29, 2017
- * July 24, 2017



KUWAIT: Gulf Bank team with the representative from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

AL-TIJARI ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF AL-NAJMA ACCOUNT DRAW

KUWAIT: Commercial Bank of Kuwait held the Al-Najma Account daily draw yesterday. The draw was held under the supervision of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry represented by Abdulaziz Ashkanani.

The winners of the Al-Najma daily draw are: Qaise Abaas Al-Shaty — KD 7000, Saleh Salem Hashem Salem — KD 7000, Akhtar Gul Painda Gul — KD 7000, Pierre Yousef Kraymaty — KD 7000, Saleh Ali Mohammed Bu Olyyan — KD 7000. Al-Najma awards are now brighter and bigger than ever

With the revamped Al-Najma account, all your

dreams will be turned to reality. On top of offering the highest daily prize in Kuwait for KD 7,000, now our Mega prize draws got bigger to reach KD 250,000. The new prizes scheme for Al-Najma account Daily draw to win KD 7000 Quarterly draws to win great prizes that would start from KD 100,000 to KD 250,000

1ST QUARTER — KD 100 000, 2ND QUARTER — KD 150 000, 3RD QUARTER — KD 200 000, 4TH QUARTER — KD 250 000.

With Al-Najma you have more chances to win greater prizes

Amazing news from Al-Tijari...

Al-Najma account gives you the biggest daily prize in Kuwait!



* Each KD 25 kept in your account gives you one chance to win

* Each KD 25 kept in your account for one week will give you a chance to enter the daily draw.

* Each KD 25 kept in your account for 3 months will give you chance to enter the quarterly draw.

Additional features

* ATM card

* Issue a credit card against your account

* Obtain all CBK banking services

You deserve to win! Open an account now with just KD 500 and you will enter all draws.



Prabu Balasubramanyan, Executive Director TransSys Solutions with the Oracle CX Award

TRANSSYS WINS ‘ORACLE CX CLOUD PARTNER OF THE YEAR’ AWARD

TransSys Solutions, a leading regional IT services and solution provider, announced that it has won the ‘Oracle CX Cloud Partner of the Year’ award for 2016 at the recently held Oracle Partner Day Event in Dubai. TransSys was recognized for its commitment to delivering a variety of innovative client cloud transformations solutions using Oracle’s CX Cloud in the GCC region. ‘Cloud and digital transformation are at the center of any business’ corporate strategy to jump start from where they are today.

TransSys has been helping customers embark on their digital transformation journey using Oracle’s cloud solutions. We are delighted to win the ‘Oracle CX Cloud Partner of the Year - 2016’ award, which is an achievement and an honor. This award is a testament to our team’s dedication towards excellence and in providing solutions that drive real business value and results for our cus-

tomers,” said Prabu Balasubramanyan, Executive Director, TransSys Solutions.

As an Oracle Platinum Cloud Select partner for the Middle East and Africa region, TransSys has been offering customers innovative solutions around its Oracle Cloud solutions portfolio.

The company offers cloud solutions on Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) and Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) across various functional areas viz. ERP, HCM, SCM, CX. The company has also built PaaS for SaaS extensions across industry verticals to help clients quickly adopt to Oracle’s Cloud platform, in addition to offering specific solution accelerators.

TransSys has significant experience in deploying CRM/CX solutions across the Middle East and Africa. The ‘Oracle CX Cloud Partner of the Year’ award is the fourth major award the company won for 2016.

MAKING A SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT WITH YOUR HOSTING SERVICES PROVIDER

With the increasing adoption of Managed and Cloud services, where either an entire or a part of IT function is outsourced to a third-party services provider, the need for unambiguous, easy to apply and easy to follow service agreements are becoming more important. The level of effort that goes into preparation of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between a services provider and the end-customer, is usually proportionate to the duration of the engagement. Typically, a longer term contractual engagement will have more detailed and rigorous descriptions.

A Service Level Agreement is defined as an official undertaking between a Hosting Services Provider and an end-customer. This agreement describes various aspects of the

end-customer having a prepared SLA allows the services of one provider to be objectively compared with another.

A well written and legally comprehensive SLA may include as many as two dozen different heads. This covers Definitions and Interpretation, Term of Agreement, Service Provider’s Obligations, Client’s Obligations, Fees and Payment, Provision of the Hosting Services, Service Levels, Scheduled Downtime, Service and Performance Monitoring, Confidentiality, Intellectual Property Rights, Termination, Post-Termination, Liability and Indemnity, Nature of the Agreement, Severance, Relationship of the Parties, Notices, Law and Jurisdiction, etc.

Notwithstanding the above, a few of the more important clauses used in a Hosting Services Provider agreement appear below:

Services - This is a detailed description of the services that will be provided and the end-customer groups that will receive specific services.

Availability - This is a description of the uptime limits of a service. The service may also be described in terms of performance, business expectations and outcomes. The higher the availability requirement, the more expensive the service.

Downtime - This is a description of the situation when the service is not available, exclusions for responsibility and force majeure, and the process of rebate linked to established failure.

Response time - This is a description of the time to respond and rectify based on the nature of the failure or complaint.

Escalation - For an externally hosted service, especially when there are time zone differences, this description is the most important for rectification of a fault. Going through a help desk or call centre repeatedly may not ensure timely rectification of the fault.

Schedules for notification - This describes the lead time required to be provided when there are any planned shutdowns or disruptions in the service. Planned maintenance cycles are usually known well in advance and can be built into business outcomes.

Benchmarks - This is a description of the parameters used to gauge the upkeep of the SLA and the point of responsibility for producing, monitoring and escalating these benchmarks.

Help desk - This is a description of how the help desk will respond based on the nature of the complaint or fault and the end-customer flagging the complaint.

In conclusion, just because a Service Level Agreement exists, it does not mean that the service provider and the end-customer will meet each other’s expectations. Leveraging the terms in the Service Level Agreement must be the means of last resort. There is much that can also be accomplished without resorting to it.



Sachin Bhardwaj, eHosting DataFort, Director of Marketing and Business Development

service including quality, availability, and responsibilities. The SLA converts the Hosting Provider’s services into a known function. This is particularly important where continuity and consistency of services from the Hosting Provider is important for the end-customer. In fact, SLAs are now widely used in a range of IT related services. These include IT administration services, managed application services, Cloud Computing, amongst others.

Another spin off is the use of SLAs by IT teams within an organization to manage the expectations of in-house stakeholders and customers. This helps the IT team of the organization to have its services justified, measured and benchmarked with other external IT service providers. Hosting Service Providers need such agreements in order to manage customer expectations. They also need to define the situations under which they are liable and not liable for deviations from the expected performance. For the

NEW WAVE OF ROBOTS SET TO DELIVER THE GOODS ‘AUTONOMOUS ROBOTS TO TRAVEL ON SIDEWALKS’

WASHINGTON: The robots of the future will be coming soon, rolling along at a lumbering pace with those goods you just ordered. The six-wheeled, knee-high robots from startup Starship Technologies are part of a new wave of automated systems taking aim at the “last mile” delivery of goods to consumers. Starship is launching a pilot project of robotic deliveries of parcels, groceries and prepared foods in early Feb in the US capital Washington, with a similar test taking place in Redwood City, California.

The startup, created by two of the founders of Skype, Ahti Heinla and Janus Friis, has already begun testing in several European cities as part of an effort to bring new efficiencies to local delivery. The goal is to enable delivery within a radius of two miles within 15-30 minutes of an order, for \$1 or less, with the autonomous robots traveling on sidewalks and alerting consumers of their arrival via smartphone app. Starship spokesman Henry Harris-Burland said the founders were looking to “disrupt” an industry which had seen little efficiency improvement from new technology.

“We’re trying to solve real social and economic problems,” Harris-Burland said during a demonstration of the delivery bots in Washington. “This will take cars and vans off the road. We can also provide deliveries to the elderly and handicapped who have difficulty getting around.” The company, which has its business office in London, engineering in Estonia and some 90 employees, announced in January it had raised \$17.2 million, led by Daimler AG with other investors as it moves to expand its testing and partnerships.

While the Starship robots roll at a modest pace of around four miles per hour, Harris-Burland said they offer a more efficient and economical delivery model than drones, which are being tested by online retail giant Amazon and others. The rolling robots are far less expensive to build and operate than drones and face fewer regulatory issues. He said drones might be better-suited to remote and rural areas, while the Starship bots are designed for cities and suburbs, where they can roll along on sidewalks.

“We don’t see these as competing with drones, we see it as complementary,” Harris-Burland said. The Starship robots, which look like high-tech plastic picnic coolers, can carry about 20 pounds of goods, suited to three to four grocery bags. They do not offer heating or chilled compartments because rapid deliveries would not need them, according to Harris-Burland. They will not have the capacity to leave items on doorsteps, he said, because “customers will get delivery within 30 minutes, when they



are home” and collect the goods at the door.

Mapping sidewalks

Starship has agreements for testing with the delivery firm Postmates in Washington and DoorDash in California, as it works toward a commercial model with other partners and retailers. When the pilot begins in February, consumers will be able to order pizza, toothpaste, milk or eggs through the services which may use humans or robots. Starship is not the only robotic delivery startup looking to disrupt the sector. California-based startup Dispatch has raised \$2 million in venture funding to begin testing of its rolling robots. Another California firm, Savioke, has agreed to provide delivery bots to hotels and apartment complexes.

Starship says one of its strong points is its “visual localization” technology that allows for

real-time mapping using nine cameras on each robot to help navigate along sidewalks and circumvent obstacles, people and pets. “We can see every crosswalk, every traffic light, every pothole,” Harris-Burland said. “A lot of companies have mapped roads but no one has mapped sidewalks.” The navigation is done by artificial intelligence, and the bots are “99 percent autonomous,” according to the spokesman.

“We want a human being able to oversee the robot’s journey and to intervene whenever there is a problem,” he said. Harris-Burland said the company’s tests so far in Europe have shown the system works, with no problems related to theft or vandalism. The lids of the devices are locked until the customer opens it with a smartphone. If anyone tries to steal it, an alarm will sound, and if it is hijacked the company can track it “to the nearest inch,” he said. —AFP

TECH COMPANIES PROTEST TRUMP IMMIGRATION ORDER

NEW YORK: Google, Apple and other tech giants expressed dismay over an executive order on immigration from President Donald Trump that bars nationals of seven Muslim-majority countries from entering the US. The US tech industry relies on foreign engineers and other technical experts for a sizeable percentage of its workforce. The order bars entry to the US for anyone from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days.

The move, ostensibly intended to prevent extremists from carrying out attacks in the US, could now also heighten tensions between the new Trump administration and one of the nation’s most economically and culturally important industries. That’s especially true if Trump goes on to revamp the industry’s temporary worker permits known as H-1B visas, as some fear.

Biting back

“I share your concerns” about Trump’s immigration order, Apple CEO Tim Cook wrote in a memo to employees obtained by The Associated Press. “It is not a policy we support.” “We have reached out to the White House to explain the negative effect on our coworkers and our company,” he added. Cook didn’t say how many Apple employees are directly affected by the order, but said the company’s HR, legal and security teams are in contact to support them. “Apple would not exist without immigration, let alone thrive and innovate the way we do,” Cook wrote - an apparent reference not only to the company’s foreign-born employees, but to Apple co-founder Steve Jobs, the son of a Syrian immigrant.

Netflix CEO Reed Hastings was forcefully blunt. “Trump’s actions are hurting Netflix employees around the world, and are so un-American it pains us all,” he wrote on Facebook. “Worse, these actions will make America less safe (through hatred and loss of allies) rather than more safe.” “It

is time to link arms together to protect American values of freedom and opportunity,” he continued. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg criticized the order in similar, though more carefully couched, terms on Friday.

Technology investor Chris Sacca, an early backer of Uber and Instagram, said on Twitter that he would match ACLU donations up to \$75,000 after the organization sued over the ban - and then decided to donate another \$75,000, for a total of \$150,000. EBay founder Pierre Omidyar, the child of Iranians, complained that the order was “simple bigotry.” Tesla Motors and SpaceX founder Elon Musk, who has recently appeared to

be cultivating a relationship with Trump, tweeted that “many people negatively affected by this policy are strong supporters of the US” who don’t “deserve to be rejected.” Musk is an immigrant from South Africa.

Google grumbles

Google told its employees from those countries to cancel any travel plans outside the US and to consult with the company’s human resources department if they’re not currently in the US, according to a company-wide note described to The Associated Press. That memo was first reported by Bloomberg and the Wall Street Journal. —AP



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo, the Apple logo is shown on a screen at the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference in the Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, in San Francisco. —AP

AN IPHONE MADE IN AMERICA? NOT THAT SIMPLE

SAN FRANCISCO: As US President Donald Trump pushes hard for goods to be “made in America,” how realistic is it to expect Apple to stop manufacturing its iconic devices in China? The freshly installed president vowed while campaigning that he would force Apple to bring production to US soil. Yet, as other big companies have sought to appease the new administration with promises of jobs or investments in the United States, Apple has stayed low-profile. Major Apple contractor Foxconn this month confirmed that it is considering a \$7 billion investment to make flat panels in the US in a joint project with Japan’s SoftBank.

“I have discussed with my major clients about going to (the US) and they are also willing to invest, including Apple,” Foxconn founder Terry Gou told reporters in Taipei. Taiwan-based Foxconn has given no details, and Apple declined to comment. Global Equities Research analyst Trip Chowdhry believed that moving manufacturing to the US, where many customers are, was more of a commonsense move than a political one. “You need to manufacture local products in local markets,” Chowdhry reasoned. Making things locally gives better control of distribution networks and lets manufacturers customize goods for local markets, the analyst noted.

Logistics puzzle

Whether politically motivated or not, Apple is not in the same position as automakers which relocated US factories overseas to cut costs, according to IHS

manufacturing processes chief analyst Dan Panzica. Apple never moved jobs offshore, it created them there. “The Apple jobs were never here,” Panzica said. “The entire supply chain grew in China.” Apple benefits in Asia from a network that goes beyond subcontractors assembling smartphones, tablets or laptops. The California-based firm relies on a dense ecosystem of companies that make components and spare parts for its devices as well.

China also offers sources of important raw materials, along with cheap, flexible and abundant labor to keep iPhone assembly lines cranking along. It would be “very hard to replicate” that situation with US workers without using “more robotics and less workforce,” undermining the political aim of creating jobs here, according to Endpoint Technologies analyst Roger Kay. Exacerbating the challenge, “it makes no sense to make phones here if you have to ship all the components from China,” said technology analyst Jack Gold of J Gold Associates.

Sacrifice profit or price

The MIT Technology Review in June considered several scenarios, from simply bringing assembly to the US to simultaneously shifting the manufacture of parts here. The Review estimated the extra manufacturing cost of an iPhone 6S Plus at \$30 to \$100 as a result of those moves. It is difficult to imagine that Apple would risk its status as the world’s most profitable company to absorb such a hike in manufacturing costs. —AP



MACEDONIA: This file photo shows a man jumping from the rock in the Ohrid Lake in Ohrid, Macedonia, at sunset. —AFP photos

MACEDONIANS SEND OUT SOS FROM EUROPE'S OLDEST LAKE

'HUGE INFRASTRUCTURE PLANS CAUSE ALARMS'

OHRID, Macedonia: A fishing boat glides across the shimmering surface of Europe's oldest lake, a haven of biodiversity and a UNESCO World Heritage Site—one that conservationists warn faces multiple development threats. Lake Ohrid, which straddles the mountainous border of Macedonia and Albania, has been in existence for up to three million years and is home to more than 200 species of flora and fauna found nowhere else in the world.

But huge infrastructure plans on the Macedonian side have alarmed environmentalists and the United Nation's cultural agency UNESCO, which has called on the country's authorities for an urgent assessment of the potential cumulative damage. The proposals include a large ski complex and an expressway through the lakeside Galicica National Park, itself a protected area home to thousands of plant and animal species. Local activists are also incensed by proposed "touristic development zones" and other urbanization plans on Ohrid's shores, including a marina and apartment buildings.

They fear the destruction of a 50-hectare wet-

land in the Balkan country.

Bujaroska is part of the citizens' association Front 21/42, which is campaigning for a moratorium on all of the "destructive" plans. "The big issue with all of these procedures... is the constant breach of public participation," said the 30-year-old lawyer, who grew up in Ohrid and is based in the capital Skopje.

Byzantine beauty

UNESCO has assigned World Heritage status to more than 1,000 sites in the world, but fewer than three dozen are listed as both "natural" and "cultural" sites. The Ohrid region is one of them. On the lake's Macedonian shores, the city of Ohrid is one of Europe's oldest human settlements with a wealth of Byzantine-style icons, frescoes and churches, which together with the lake's natural beauty drew more than 200,000 tourists last year. "It's amazing. The beautiful thing is it's so close to nature," said visiting Polish student Aleksandra Walerych by the 13th century Church of St John at Kaneo, which overlooks the lake and is thought to be the most pho-

find itself on the "List of World Heritage in Danger" if threats to the site were confirmed, suggesting alternative routes and locations should be identified for major projects.

Sites can lose their heritage status if they are deemed to be improperly protected. Alexandra Fiebig, project officer for Europe and North America at UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, told AFP there had been "a lot of close contact with the (Macedonian) authorities" and a UNESCO "reactive monitoring mission" was due to start work in Ohrid soon.

Political agendas

Of the raft of controversial proposals, expected to involve both private and public investment, some fall under the remit of central government ministries while others are part of municipal plans. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a potential investor in the expressway, says it is "assessing the feasibility" of the project. Macedonia's conservative VMRO-DPMNE party, in power nationally since 2006, has been accused by critics of authoritarianism and corruption but narrowly won a general election in December.

Ohrid's mayor Nikola Bakraceski, from VMRO-DPMNE, insists environmental regulations have been followed and the public sufficiently consulted in city planning. He accuses activists of having "political agendas" and lacking expertise. He said that one of his priorities is finding resources for a 54 million euro (\$57.6-million) upgrade of the Ohrid area's antiquated and damaged waste collection system, in order to protect the lake.

On a national level, the government has prepared an "action plan" to implement the requests of the Istanbul meeting, said Lidija Topuzovska, the top Macedonian official for UNESCO matters, without giving specific details. "The general intentions are that all standards for preserving the cultural and natural values of the Ohrid region are respected," she said. But campaigners are not reassured. Another citizens' group, Ohrid SOS, is campaigning to protect Studenchishte Marsh, the last remaining wetland by the lake. One of its members, Macedonian scientist Nadezda Apostolova, has written in depth about the importance of the marsh—both for its own biodiversity and its role in cleaning pollution flowing into the lake. A professor at Spain's University of Valencia, she says the wetland is already under "severe attack" from construction as trees are gradually replaced by concrete. Activists say they are not against all types of development, but want to see transparent plans that protect the "jewel" of the landlocked nation and keep it attractive to visitors. "Everything is at risk with these developments," Apostolova said.—AFP



MACEDONIA: This file photo shows swans taking off from the Ohrid lake near the city of Struga.

land serving as a crucial natural filter to the lake, pointing to a draft impact assessment, commissioned by the local government, that warns of unavoidable damage. Officials insist they will protect Ohrid's heritage, but campaigners accuse them of manipulation and violating laws to allow such developments to go ahead. The "tsunami" of planned infrastructure projects, if implemented, "means that you can just say goodbye to the UNESCO World Heritage Site," said Aleksandra Bujaroska, an environmental

tographed spot in the country.

The lake covers an area of 358 square kilometers, two-thirds of which lie in Macedonia and are covered by the World Heritage status and work is under way to try to extend this to the third lying in Albanian territory too. But at its annual meeting in Istanbul in July last year, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee said it "notes with concern that a number of large-scale infrastructure projects have been proposed" on the Macedonian side. It warned that Ohrid could

IN AFRICA, CONSERVATIONISTS OFFER FAKE LEOPARD HIDES

DURBAN: Many worshippers at a large religious gathering in South Africa this weekend will wear leopard skins, seen as symbols of status and power. But some of the pelts are fake, reflecting an effort by an international conservation group to reduce poaching of the threatened animals. The Shembe church of southern Africa, which mixes Christian and traditional Zulu beliefs, is expected to draw many thousands of people yesterday near the city of Durban. Followers will

come from across South Africa, as well as neighboring Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

The Panthera conservation group says it has donated more than 14,000 fake leopard skins to Shembe followers and that another 4,000 will be distributed. Demand for real leopard pelts in the Shembe community in South Africa has dropped by 50 percent because of the campaign, according to the group, which launched its "Furs for Life" project in 2013.

Africa's leopard population has dropped over decades because of habitat loss, the loss of prey killed by poachers for meat, illegal hunting of leopards for their skins and attacks by people who want to protect their livestock.

While there is limited data on leopard numbers across the continent, one study estimates the population in sub-Saharan Africa has dropped more than 30 percent over the past two decades or so. Leopards are listed as vulnerable on

an international "red list" of threatened species. Southern Africa is considered a relative stronghold for leopards compared to other parts of Africa, though Panthera estimates that as many as 2,500 leopards are killed annually for their skins in the region. The group says fewer than 5,000 leopards remain in South Africa. Concerned about threats to the leopard population, South Africa in January 2016 banned the regulated "trophy" hunting of leopards.—AP



DURBAN: In this file photo a man and his son, members of the Shembe Church, dressed in tribal leopard skins at the end of a pilgrimage on the holy Nlangakazi Mountain north of Durban, South Africa. —AP

ENVIRONMENTALISTS PREPARING TO BATTLE TRUMP, GOP IN COURT

CHICAGO: The night before Donald Trump's inauguration, five environmental lawyers filed a federal court brief defending an Obama administration clean-water rule that the new president and his Republican allies have targeted for elimination, considering it burdensome to landowners. The move served as a warning that environmentalists, facing a hostile administration and a Republican-dominated Congress, are prepared to battle in court against what they fear will be a wave of unfavorable policies concerning climate change, wildlife protection, federal lands and pollution. Advocacy groups nationwide are hiring more staff lawyers.

They're coordinating with private attorneys and firms that have volunteered to help. They're reviewing statutes, setting priorities and seeking donations. "It's going to be all-out war," said Vermont Law School Professor Patrick Parenteau. "If you're an environmentalist or conservationist, this is indeed a scary time." Trump's first week in office only heightened their anxieties. He moved to resume construction of the Keystone XL and Dakota Access pipelines that the Obama administration had halted, while signaling intentions to abandon his predecessor's fight against global warming, vastly expand oil and gas drilling on public lands and slash the Environmental Protection Agency's budget.

GOP lawmakers, meanwhile, introduced measures to overturn a new Interior Department rule barring coal mining companies from damaging streams and to remove some wolves from the endangered species list. "They've wasted no time in doing bad things," said Pat Gallagher, director of the Sierra Club's 50-member legal team, which he said is likely to grow as environmentalists increasingly regard the courts as their best option, even though success there is far from certain. The Department of Justice, which represents the federal government in environmental lawsuits, declined to comment, while the White House did not respond to emails seeking comment.

Doug Ericksen, communications director for Trump's transition team at EPA, said of the environmentalists that he's "not sure what they think they're preparing for" but suspects they are stoking fear of Trump as a fundraising tool. "They're more concerned

about raising money than protecting the environment," Ericksen said. Jim Burling, litigation director for the Pacific Legal Foundation, a nonprofit property rights group that sues regulators on behalf of businesses and landowners, also contended environmental groups were exaggerating the Trump administration's threat for political and financial gain.

Unnecessary policies

The government bureaucracy is entrenched, Burling said, and, "who happens to occupy the White House hasn't made that much difference." Environmentalists say their fears are justified by the new administration's antagonism toward government's role in keeping air and water clean and the planet from overheating. Donations began increasing after Trump's election, "even before the fundraising letters were sent" asking for support to fight the administration's actions, said David Goldston, government affairs director at the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Earthjustice, which has represented the Standing Rock Sioux tribe in its fight against the Dakota Access Pipeline, has about 100 staff attorneys and plans to bring more aboard, said Tim Preso, who manages the group's Northern Rockies office. The Chicago-based Environmental Law & Policy Center is adding four attorneys to its pre-election staff of 18 and is coordinating with more than a dozen outside attorneys who would file citizen suits against polluters for free if agencies fail to enforce existing rules, said Executive Director Howard Learner.

"We cannot fully substitute and replace the EPA doing its job," Learner said. "But on the other hand, we're not going to default to zero if the EPA steps backward when it comes to clean air and clean water enforcement." On inauguration eve, five law professors filed a brief in support of a 2015 regulation giving EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers discretion to regulate tributaries and wetlands far upstream from navigable lakes and rivers to protect water quality. Dozens of states have sued to block the rule - including Oklahoma, led by state Attorney General Scott Pruitt, now Trump's choice for EPA administrator - saying it gives government too much power over private property. — AP

BULGARIAN STRAY CATS GET BIONIC LEGS

SOFIA: Two stray Bulgarian cats who lost their hind legs in accidents have been given bionic paws, in what vets say is the first such operation in Europe outside ground-breaking Britain. One-year-old Pooh, whose name means "fluff" in Bulgarian, scurries around Sofia's Central Vet Clinic, chasing a toy mouse and curiously sniffing at medicine bottles inside an open cupboard—just like any other cat would. The only difference is a gentle tapping sound as his two tiny polymer-and-rubber paws mounted on titanium stems touch the floor.

Pooh, who is thought to have lost his legs in a car or train accident last April, is back on the prowl thanks to Bulgarian veterinary surgeon Vladislav Zlatinov. He is the first vet in Europe to successfully apply the pioneering method of Irish neuro-orthopaedic surgeon Noel Fitzpatrick, who shot to fame in 2009 when making Oscar the first bionic cat by fitting him with new hind legs in Britain. A month after the black-and-white feline took his first steps after a final graft in December, Zlatinov said this week the procedure could now be con-

sidered a success.

"Pooh's condition is more than satisfactory. There might be some clumsiness but he can walk, jump and run," the 35-year-old said. If all goes well, Pooh's skin will eventually grow over the bone and stem tightly enough to prevent infections, Zlatinov said. "Cats who lost one leg do pretty well. But what happens if they lose both their hind legs? Yes, they move somehow, but what quality of life are we talking about?" he said. Zlatinov recently performed a graft on another cat, eight-month-old Steven who also lost both hind legs last year.

"(The operations) give hope that even in a country like Bulgaria innovative things can be done," Zlatinov said. Pooh and Steven were brought to the clinic by animal charity Let's Adopt Bulgaria, which paid for the operations. "We went to Zlatinov looking for a solution because he had solved other hopeless cases of injured animals before," Vyara Mladenova of Let's Adopt said Friday. "But we didn't expect him to offer this solution and for it to be successful."—AFP



SOFIA: Pooh the cat, who has bionic back paws, plays with a toy in Sofia, Bulgaria. —AFP

ETHIOPIA FACES NEW DROUGHT, SEEKS URGENT AID FOR 5 MILLION

WARDER, Ethiopia: The carcasses of goats and sheep litter the ground near the airstrip in this remote eastern region of Ethiopia, which is struggling to counter a new drought that authorities say has left 5.6 million people in urgent need of assistance.

UN humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien visited a local camp for displaced persons on Saturday, saying that "these people are really struggling to survive." He cautioned, however, against "dramatizing by saying this may degenerate into famine."

Last year's drought, exacerbated by the El Nino climate phenomenon that affected seasonal rains, left 10.2 million people hungry and killed several hundred thousand of the animals that the local pastoralists depend on for their livelihood.

Sarah Aliso came to the Garlogube displaced persons camp from a village

70 kilometers away three weeks ago after all 50 of her family's cattle perished. "I have nothing to eat, so I came here with my 40-day-old baby. All of us are hungry and are praying for the rains to come soon," she said, cleaning her child's face.

For this drought, Ethiopia's government is appealing for \$948 million from the international community. The country's disaster prevention chief, Mitiku Kassa, said the government has had to combat this new drought with little outside support, allocating than \$47 million for the response.

The charity Save the Children warns that malnourished refugees are arriving from neighboring Somalia as well, compounding the crisis. "Children are being hit particularly hard," the aid group said in a statement, adding that a number of disease outbreaks affecting livestock have been reported.—AP



GE SHOWCASES ITS LATEST TECHNOLOGIES

A NEW INVASIVE CARP FOUND IN GREAT LAKES

MONTREAL: A new species of invasive Asian carp has appeared in three of North America's Great Lakes, threatening the ecosystem, Canada's fisheries and oceans ministry said Friday. Grass carp, one of four Asian carp species, were captured between 2013 and 2016 in Lakes Michigan, Erie and Ontario, the ministry said, citing a joint Canada-US study. The voracious fish, which can reach a weight of 45 kilograms and 1.5 meters in length, could cause "extreme" ecological damage within the next 50 years as it supplants native species, the study concluded, noting a lack of natural predators to keep its numbers in check.

The species can consume nearly 40 percent of its weight in aquatic vegetation per day. Originally from eastern Asia, the grass carp was introduced in the United States in the early 1960s to help control aquatic vegetation. After escaping into the Mississippi River, where it is now bountiful, it is believed to have reached first Lake Michigan through Chicago's canals. Canada and the United States will use the report to guide their efforts to stop its spread, the ministry said. Four of the five Great Lakes (Superior, Huron, Erie and Ontario) straddle the Canada-US border. Lake Michigan is the only one located exclusively in US territory.—AFP

POACHERS POISON, MUTILATE LIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

JOHANNESBURG: South African police on Saturday said they had launched an investigation after several lions were found poisoned and beheaded in northern Limpopo province in recent months. In the latest incident police on Friday discovered three lion carcasses, two of them without their heads and paws. "The lions were found killed on a farm outside Polokwane—two males had their heads and paws cut off and taken away," provincial police spokesman Motlafela Mojapelo said. Police suspect the big cats were killed on Thursday.

"It would seem there is a trend unfolding in the province," he said pointing to three other incidents in recent months involving the killing of at least eight lions. The poachers "are feeding the lions with poisoned chickens, and that kills them and they start dismembering them." No arrests have been made yet in connection with the string of killings and the motive so far remains unclear. Local media speculate the killings could be for the cats' body parts which are used in so-called traditional medicine.—AFP

GE Healthcare is unveiling its latest technologies to support the transformation of the Middle East region's healthcare sector at Arab Health. At a time of increasing pressure on healthcare systems, these innovations aim to support both ministries of health and private providers in the region to address some of the sector's most pressing challenges and priorities. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) healthcare market is projected to grow from US \$40.3 billion in 2015 to US \$71.3 billion in 2020, driven by an increase in the population and the rising cost of treatment. As part of measures to address this, investments in new hospitals and clinics, and the introduction of mandatory health insurance, are expected to improve healthcare delivery.

While government investments will principally improve access to health services, a growing appetite for strategic public private partnerships is also emerging as the industry embraces new business models to drive sustainable healthcare development.

"While private sector investments can help reduce the burden of costs on governments, a sustainable model of healthcare delivery that can assure better patient outcomes, must consider the entire healthcare ecosystem including the development of a superior and modern healthcare infrastructure," said David Mezher, General Manager, GE Healthcare Middle East.

He continued: "In delivering healthcare, hospitals must be quick to diagnose and treat; efficient in disease management and patient pathways, and rely on a digital information management system to support patient care. That is the opportunity that the region's healthcare sector has today. Through our focus on partnerships in the region, GE is bringing its global capabilities, technological innovations and risk-sharing approaches to support the ongoing transformation



of healthcare in the region." Some of GE's advanced suite of solutions that are being presented at Arab Health 2017 include: Senographe Pristina The number one reason women don't schedule a mammogram is because it is uncomfortable.

However, we know that annual screening can help find cancer at an early stage when treatment is most likely to be successful and therefore reduces a patient's risk of dying from the disease by 25-30 percent or more.

GE Healthcare wanted to completely redesign the experience to help women overcome these fears and make the exam comfortable. Senographe Pristina is designed to help reduce discomfort, pain and anxiety of a mammogram. It features the first-in-industry self-compression tool. This is a major advancement for

mammography to make the exam comfortable for the patient. The patient uses a remote control to adjust the amount of pressure, with the help of a technologist, so she can set what feels right for her.

SIGNA Architect and SIGNAWorks

Within the field of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), GE Healthcare is showcasing an entire line-up of systems built on the SIGNA platform and focused on improving productivity and outcomes. For customers SIGNA Architect, a 3.0T MRI system, premium wide bore scanner features the eXpress detachable table that delivers feet-first or head-first imaging for all, with a more pleasant, quicker, targeted exam for patients. This new MRI system features the new SIGNAWorks, GE Healthcare's new productivity



platform. The SIGNAWorks standard applications portfolio is an extensive set of high-quality and efficient imaging capabilities that enables clinicians to achieve desired outcomes across their entire practice area such as brain, spine, cardiac, musculoskeletal imaging, oncology assessment, and pediatrics.

OEC Elite MiniView C-arm

GE Healthcare's new OEC Elite MiniView C-arm is designed to help remove frustrations and distractions in the operating room. Its flat detector technology focuses on enhancing the user experience and increasing imaging confidence. With fluidity, balance and smooth movements, the mini C-arm enables surgeons to maneuver the system single-handedly with speed and ease to position the C-arm

around a patient's anatomy.

LOGIQ E9 XDclear 2.0

GE Healthcare will also highlight its ultrasound system, LOGIQ E9 XDclear 2.0, which delivers high-quality images across a wide variety of cases, from the routine to the technically challenging, including from head to toe, obese to thin, neonate to geriatric patients. It makes ultrasound for everyone, everywhere a reality by enabling new uses, new users, and new geographies.

GE's technologies are being showcased under the theme of 'Partners for Better Health,' at Arab Health Exhibition and Congress 2017 to be held from Jan 30 to Feb 2, 2017, at the Dubai International Convention Center. Visit GE Healthcare's booth at Sheikh Saeed Hall, Booth No: S3B10.

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CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, BELGIAN EMBASSY ORGANIZE BELGI YUMM FOOD FESTIVAL

Crowne Plaza Hotel in collaboration with Belgian Embassy organized the Belgi Yumm food festival that had the flavors and tunes of Belgium at Silk restaurant on Wednesday. "The Belgi Yumm food festival is a three days event. We brought the chef from Belgium chef Jeroen Vanandroye who dazzled the senses with plate-pleasing creations during the festival," Andy Detaille, Ambassador of Belgium to Kuwait, said. Detaille noted "This is the third event in the series events for the Belgian Days in Kuwait. We had a concert by popular Belgian band Ansatz Der Maschine, which performed at the Abdulhussain Abdulredha Theater in Salmiya, and an art exhibition for Belgian artist Frederik Jassogne, took place Al-Hamra Tower in Sharq."

About the upcoming events, Detaille said "In two weeks on Feb 7 at AUK, there will be a video conference about 'The Libyan crisis and its Implications on the broader Arab Spring' by Professor Dirk Vandewalle, from Dartmouth College (USA); he is a specialist on Libya, and the world's number one professor who tes-

tified in the US Congress and the Italian sonnet of Libya." Detaille added that on March 22, at the Kuwait Writers' Association (KWA), the Embassy will invite two Moroccan writers that will talk about women in Arab world and what it means to be an immigrant in west and express his feelings throw poems about the terrorist attacks in Brussels.

On March 26, with a Belgian novelist who has her second novel turn into a movie that speak about her own life as an Arab women in a western city. Meanwhile, a cooking class in cooperation with International Women Group (IWG) was held by the Belgian Chefs Jeroen Vanandroye and Steve Mancino, who came to Kuwait from Belgium, showed an enthusiast group of women how to prepare some typical dishes: Flemish asparagus and Mussels with fries and homemade mayonnaise. The event was attended by a number of ambassadors with their wives. The Pianist Katrina casted her spell for music lovers at the Belgi Yumm food festival.



BEE'AH AND EPAA LAUNCH DESERT PROTECTION CAMPAIGN

Bee'ah, the Middle East's leading and award-winning environmental management company in collaboration with the Sharjah Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA), launched Bee'ah's new electric desert cleaning vehicles (Polaris Rangers). The vehicles were part of Bee'ah's and EPAA's first joint-campaign to raise public awareness on the responsibility to conserve and protect desert areas in the Emirate of Sharjah under the tagline, "Our desert. Our heritage."

The new desert-cleaning electric vehicle is the first of its kind in the UAE and the latest addition to Bee'ah's existing line of electric vehicles, which include public cleansers, sweepers, washers, leaf collectors and litter pickers. Bee'ah plans for their entire fleet of vehicles to be electrically powered in the coming years while collaborating with leading environmental partners in the region to provide innovative solutions across the UAE.

Through the launch of the state-of-the-art cleaning vehicles, Bee'ah aims to remain on the forefront of the latest industry trends and adopt a holistic approach that is composed of initiatives that promote sustainability, advanced environmental solutions and innovative technologies. The new Polaris Ranger Vehicles, which was showcased during a desert cleaning campaign at the end of Jan, efficiently maintains the cleanli-

ness of the city and desert areas.

With the electric advantage it has, Polaris Ranger is a quieter machine for operation within city limits. Setting the standard for sustainably, the electric vehicle does not require gas and is easily maintained. It also features a powerful 30 HP/48V AC electric motor that gives the Polaris Ranger off-road capability. The vehicle's 4WD advantage for more forward traction can revert back to 2WD when it is not required.

Commenting on the campaign, Khaled Al-Huraimel, Group CEO of Bee'ah, said: "The launch of the new vehicles exemplified our innovative approach as well as our dedication to achieving the highest standards of sustainability. Bee'ah supports revolutionary ideas and technologies in the environmental and waste management sector to ensure a healthy environment for the community."

"Innovation is central to Bee'ah's mission for Sharjah to become the environmental capital of the Middle East. To this end, Bee'ah and EPAA have co-launched these innovative vehicles to stay ahead of the latest environmental developments in the world. Through Bee'ah's joint efforts with EPAA, we provide awareness and environmental services that combine efficiency and utility to enhance the quality of life in Sharjah as well as the nation as a whole," he concluded.

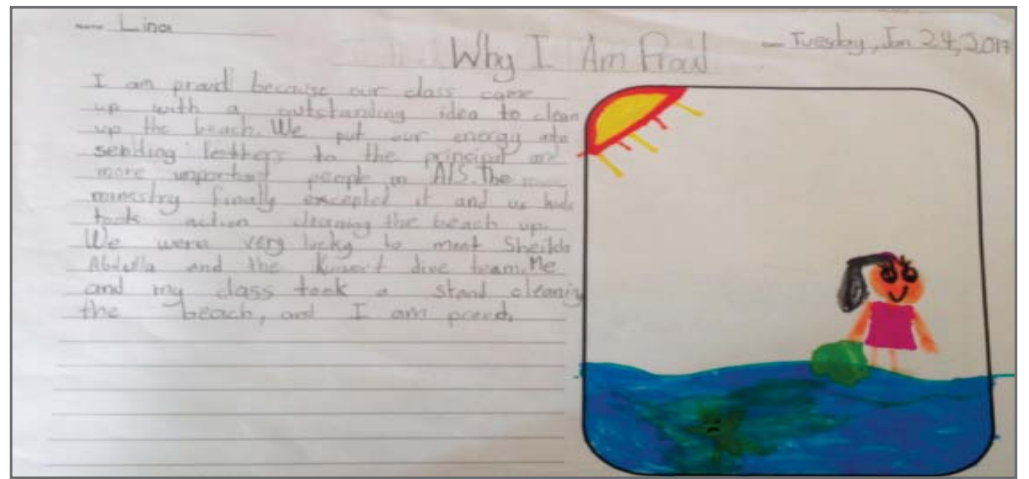
HE Hana said Al Suwaidi, Chairperson of EPAA, said: "It is EPAA's top priority to protect the natural environment and this collaboration furthered our objectives. Bee'ah has become one of the premier environmental companies, offering the world's latest innovations and technologies to reduce pollution. Together, EPAA and Bee'ah support the principles of sustainable development to protect the environment for present and future generations." EPAA encouraged volunteers to join the awareness campaign under their initiative, "Don't Leave a Trace." The campaign took place at Al-Kahaif 8, located in Sharjah near Kalba road where the volunteers were divided into groups under EPAA's supervision. The groups then raised environmental awareness to the farm families that reside near the main road. They have also distributed biodegradable bags and copies of the environmental degradation prevention act. As part of the joint-campaign, Bee'ah's initiative provided green and blue waste disposal and recycling bags of different sizes to encourage the public to be eco-friendly. The partnership to maintain the cleanliness of the desert was the first of its kind in the Emirate and significantly contributes to achieving a balance between sustainable development and environmental protection.



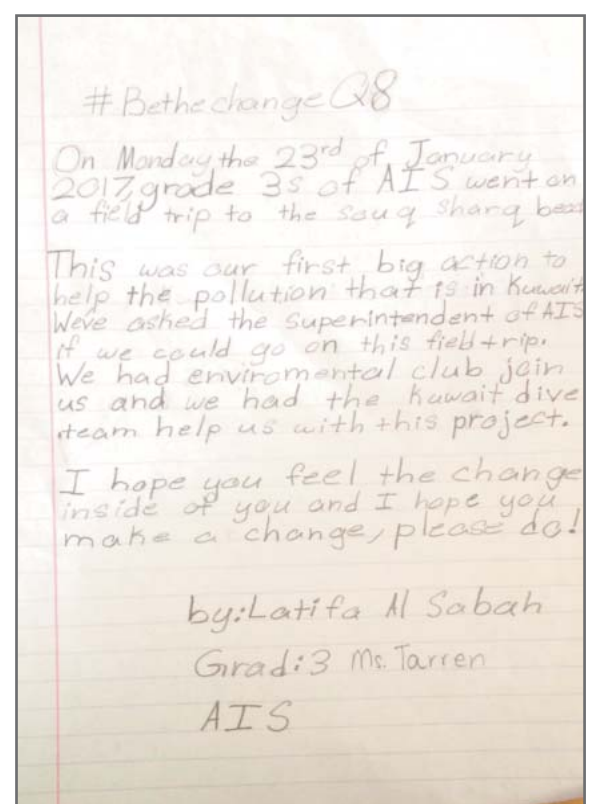
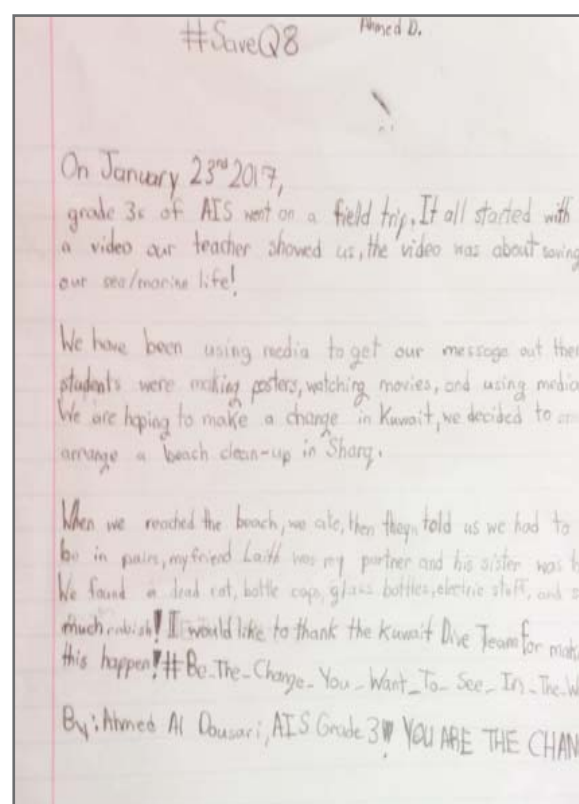
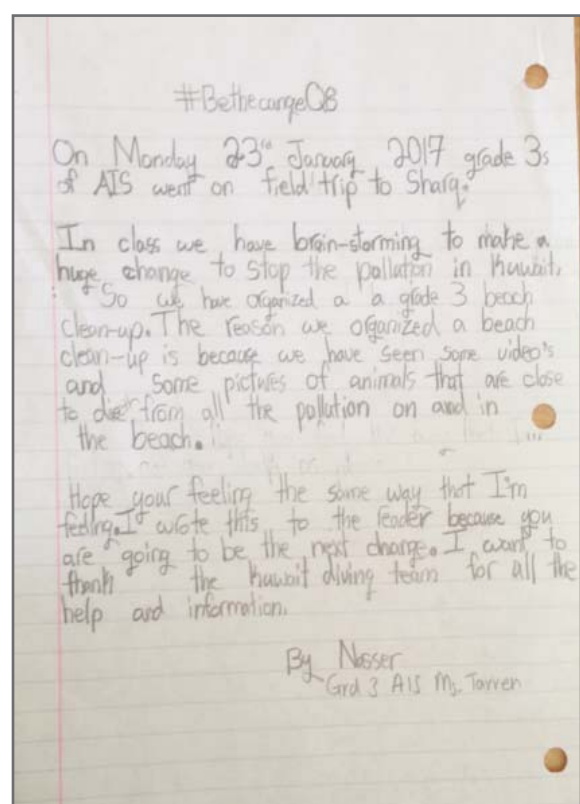
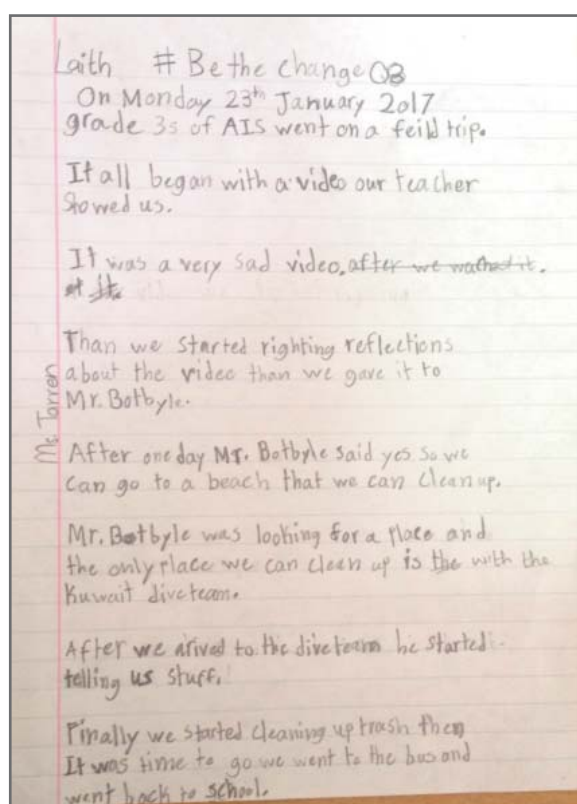
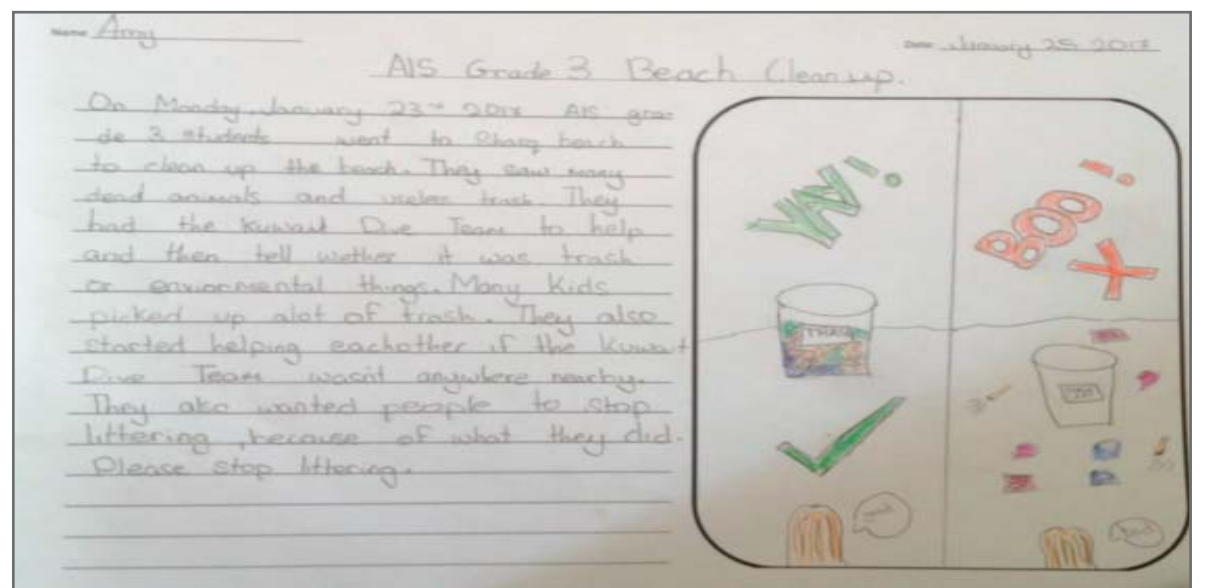
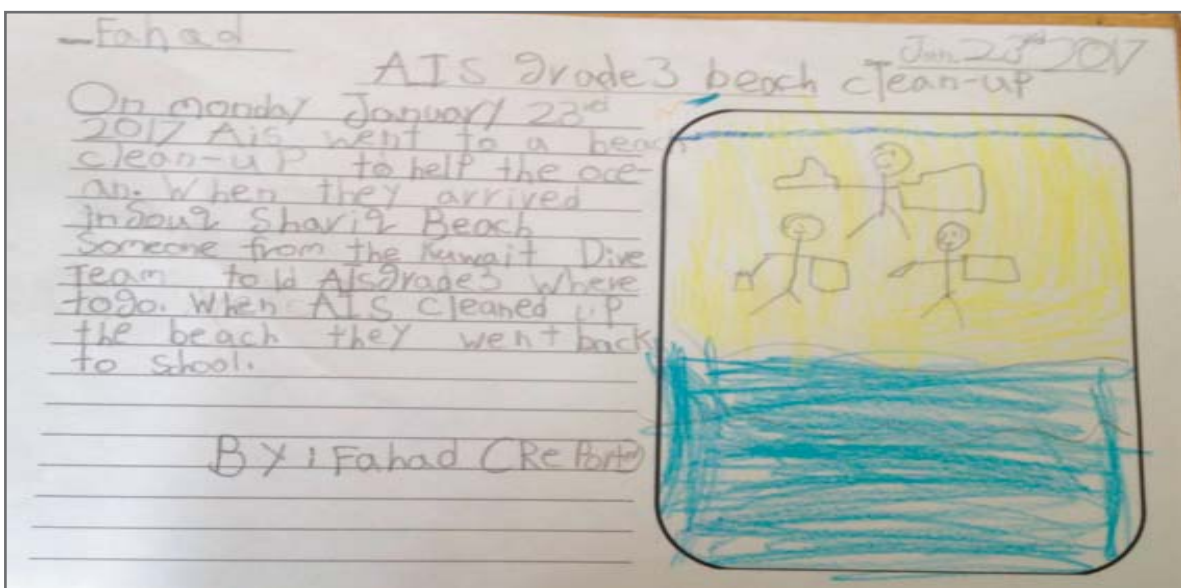
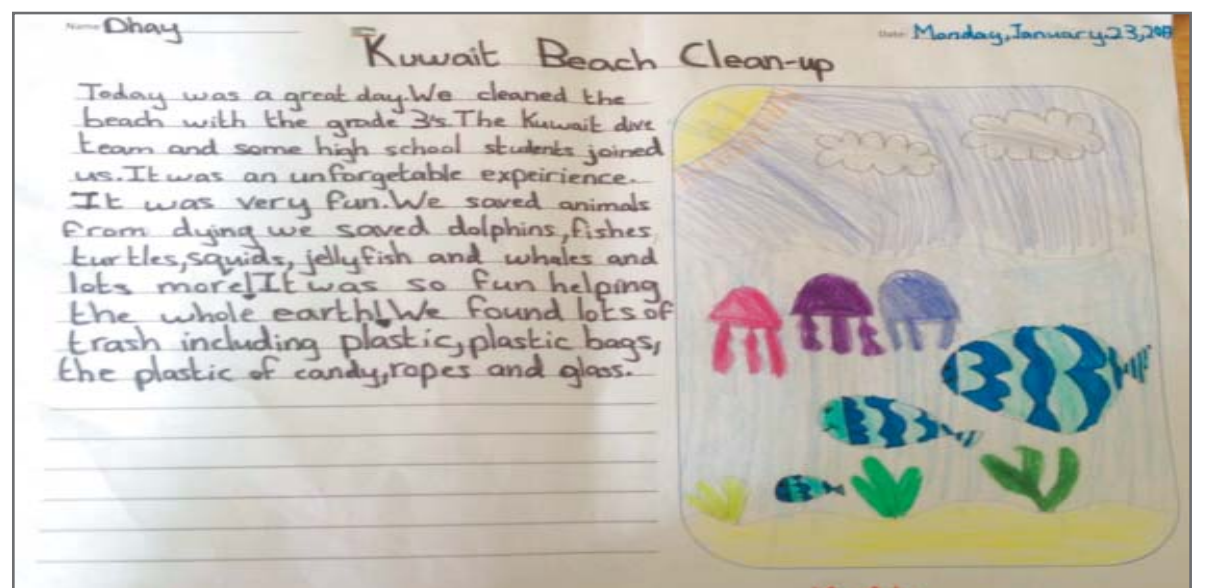
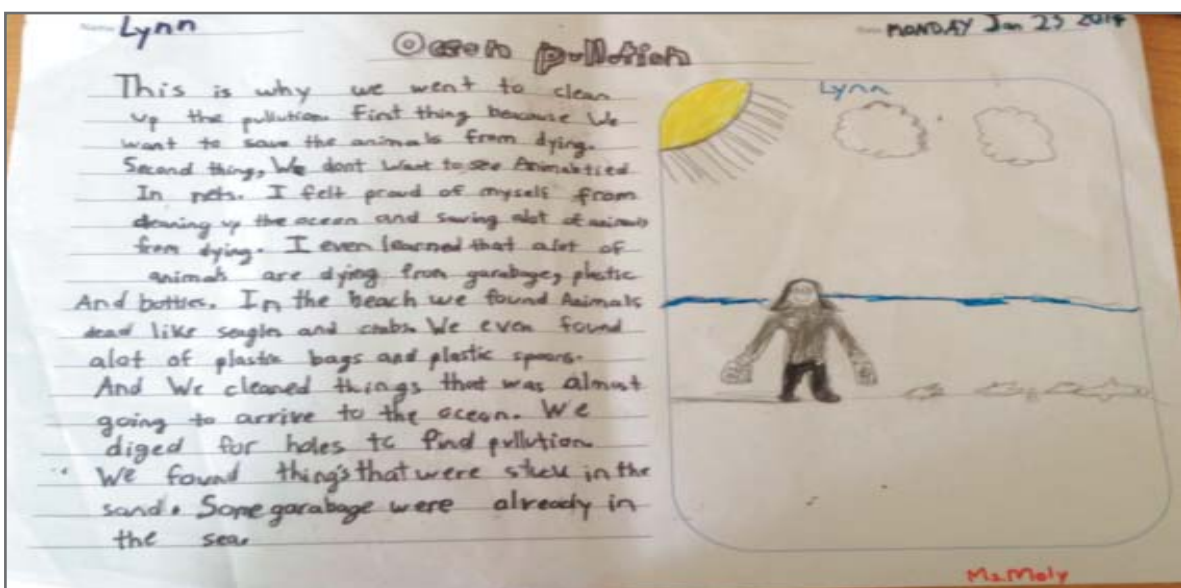
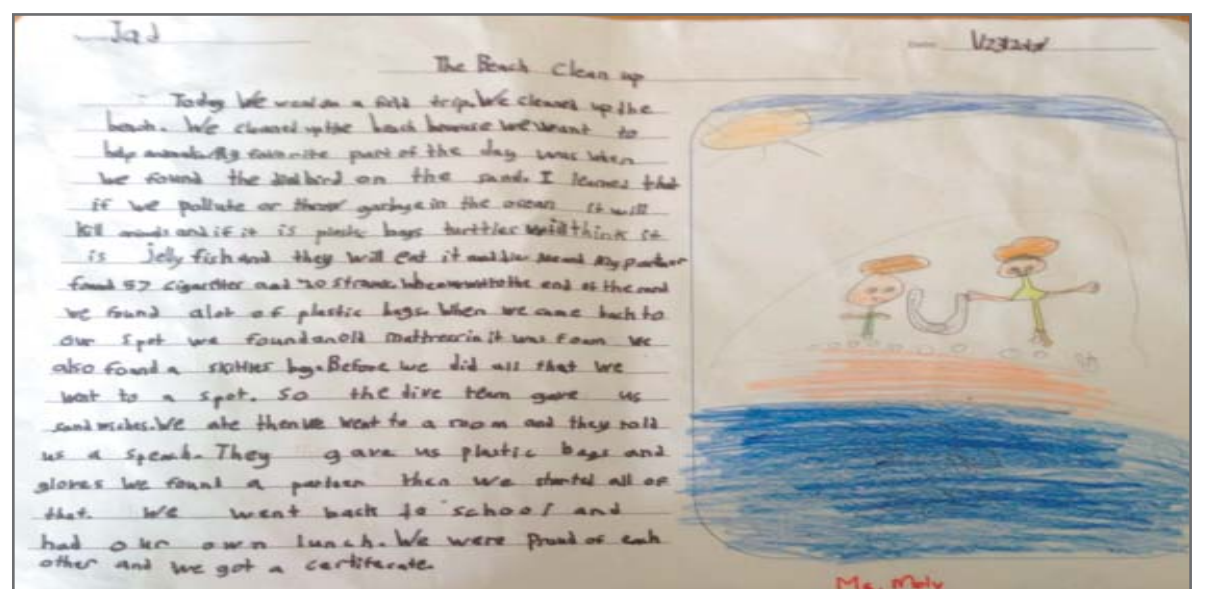
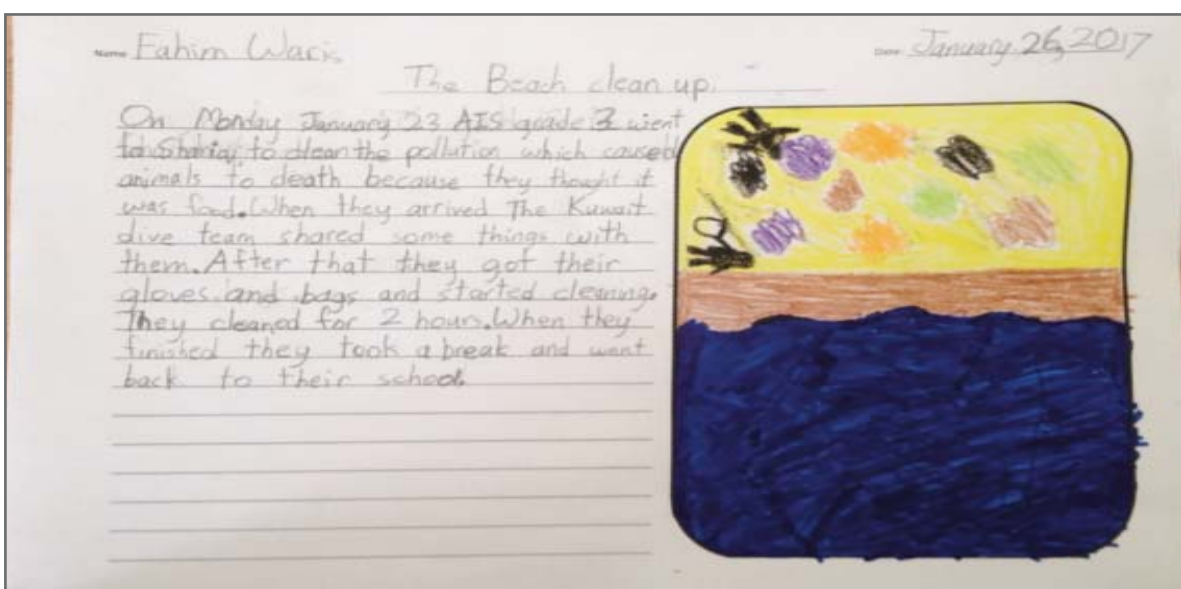
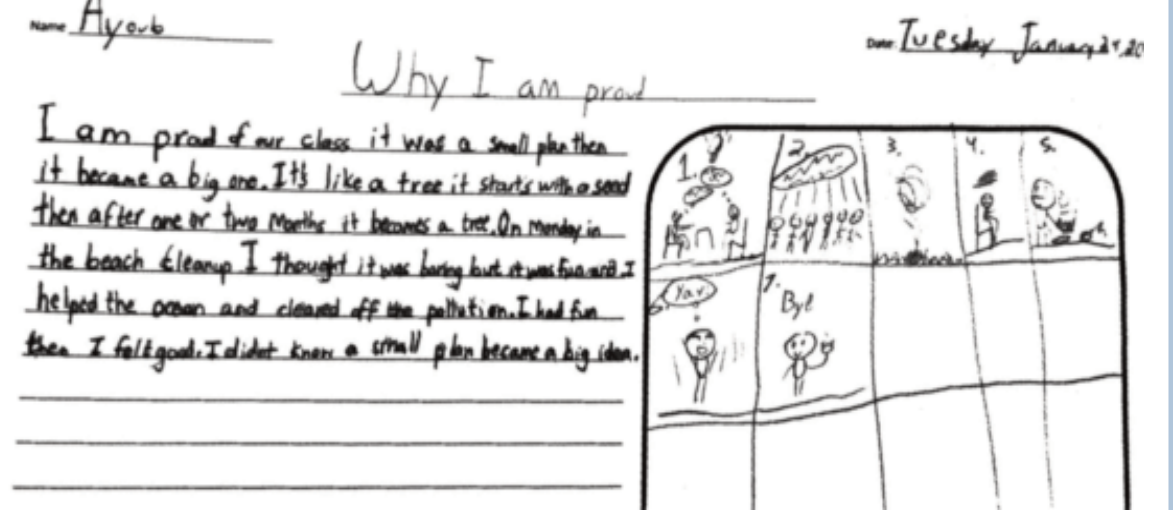
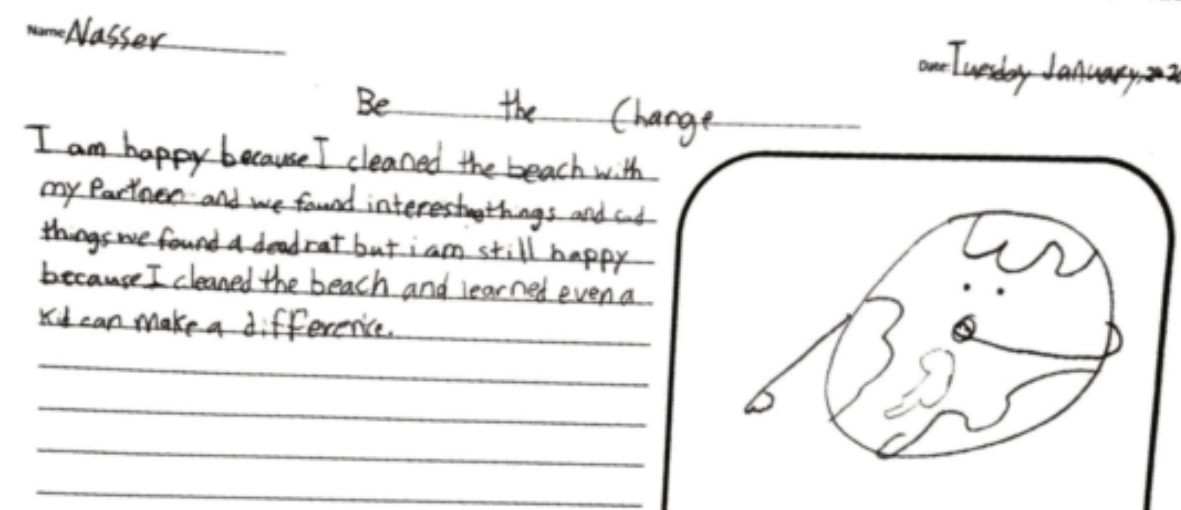
AIS students write about their beach clean-up



On Jan 23, 2016, AIS 3rd grade students organized a two hour clean-up at the Souq Sharq beach along with the environmental club and Kuwait Dive Team. In the below essays, students wrote about the experience and why taking care of Kuwait's environment is so important.



AIS students at the beach clean-up in Sharq last week.—Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



ANIMAL
PLANET HD

00:50 Gator Boys
01:45 Man, Cheetah, Wild
02:40 Weird Creatures With Nick
06:49 River Monsters: Lair Of
Giants
07:36 Gorilla School
08:25 Pit Bulls & Parolees
09:15 Deadliest Snakes Of South
Africa
10:10 Weird Creatures With Nick
Baker
11:05 Tanked
12:00 Pit Bulls & Parolees
12:55 Bondi Vet
13:50 Deadliest Snakes Of South
Africa
14:45 Gator Boys
15:40 Weird Creatures With Nick
Baker
16:35 Tanked
17:30 River Monsters (Best Of
Series 1-5)
18:25 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
19:20 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
20:15 Tanked
21:10 O'Shea's Big Adventure
22:05 Dr. Jeff: Rocky Mountain Vet
23:00 Dr. Dee: Alaska Vet
23:55 Gator Boys

crime
& investigation
network

00:00 I Escaped My Killer
01:00 The Haunting Of...
02:00 My Haunted House
03:00 Diabolical Women
04:00 I Escaped My Killer
05:00 The Haunting Of...
06:00 My Haunted House
07:00 The First 48
08:00 Evil Up Close
09:00 Gangs Of Britain...
10:00 Homicide Hunter
11:00 My Crazy Ex
12:00 Evil Up Close
13:00 The First 48
14:00 Homicide Hunter
15:00 Gangs Of Britain...
16:00 Gangs Of Britain...
19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
21:00 The First 48
22:00 Evil Up Close
23:00 Homicide Hunter

Discovery
Family

00:05 Destroyed In Seconds
00:30 Nextworld
01:20 Nextworld
02:10 Storm Chasers
03:00 Storm Chasers
03:50 Ultimate Survival
06:20 How It's Made
06:40 How It's Made
07:00 Do You Know?
07:15 Doki
07:35 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
08:00 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

17:40 Wheeler Dealers
18:30 How Do They Do It?
18:55 How Do They Do It?
19:20 Boy To Man
20:10 The Liquidator
21:00 Gold Rush
21:50 Deadliest Catch
23:30 Fast N' Loud

HD

00:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
01:00 Monster Quest
02:00 Ancient Impossible
03:00 How 2 Win
03:50 Ancient Aliens
04:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain
05:30 Monster Quest
06:20 Ancient Aliens: The Ultimate
Evidence
07:10 The Universe
08:00 Monster Quest
09:00 Ancient Impossible
10:00 How 2 Win
11:00 Ancient Aliens
12:00 Engineering Disasters
13:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
14:00 Monster Quest
15:00 Ancient Impossible
16:00 How 2 Win
17:00 Ancient Aliens
18:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
19:00 Ultimate Guide To The
Presidents
20:00 Cities Of The Underworld
21:00 America's Book Of Secrets
22:00 Ancient Aliens
23:00 Ultimate Guide To The
Presidents

HD
HISTORY

00:20 Time Team
01:10 Pawn Stars
01:35 Storage Wars: Best Of
02:00 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Ice Road Truckers
06:50 Shipping Wars
07:40 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Billion Dollar Wreck
11:50 Time Team
12:40 Swamp People
13:30 Ax Men
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Ice Road Truckers
16:00 Counting Cars
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:40 Storage Wars
18:30 Pawn Stars
18:55 Storage Wars: Best Of
19:20 Ax Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 The Curse Of Oak Island

food
network

00:00 Private Chef
01:00 Patricia Heaton Parties
02:00 Chopped
03:00 Food Network Star
04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
05:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
06:00 The Kitchen
07:00 The Pioneer Woman
08:00 Siba's Table
09:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
10:00 The Kitchen
11:00 The Pioneer Woman

Disney
CHANNEL HD

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 Rolling To The Ronks
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
12:30 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 Descendants Wicked World
17:40 Girl Meets World
18:05 Bizaardvark
18:30 Liv And Maddie
18:55 Best Friends Whenever
19:20 Disney Mickey Mouse
19:25 The Next Step
19:50 Austin & Ally
20:15 Star Darlings
20:20 Shake It Up
20:45 Backstage
21:10 Liv And Maddie
21:35 Crackle
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

Disney
JUNIOR

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



COMEDOWN ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

21:05 Goldie & Bear
21:35 Miles From Tomorrow
22:00 Sheriff Calie's Wild West
22:25 Gummi Bears

Disney
XD

06:00 Danger Mouse
06:25 Gravity Falls
06:50 The 7D
07:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
07:15 Counterfeit Cat
08:10 K.C. Undercover
08:35 Star Wars Freemaker
Adventures
09:00 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
09:50 Danger Mouse
10:20 Supa Strikas
10:45 Supa Strikas
11:10 Counterfeit Cat

07:15 Shipping Wars
07:40 Counting Cars
08:30 Pawn Stars
09:20 Storage Wars
09:45 Storage Wars
10:10 American Pickers
11:00 Billion Dollar Wreck
11:50 Time Team
12:40 Swamp People
13:30 Ax Men
14:20 Mountain Men
15:10 Ice Road Truckers
16:00 Counting Cars
16:25 Counting Cars
16:50 Pawn Stars
17:15 Pawn Stars
17:40 Storage Wars
18:05 K.C. Undercover
18:35 Star Wars Freemaker
Adventures
18:55 Storage Wars: Best Of
19:20 Ax Men
20:10 American Pickers
21:00 The Curse Of Oak Island
21:50 Hunting Hiller
22:40 Gold Hunters: Legend Of
The Superstition...
23:30 American Pickers

itv
CHOICE HD

00:10 The Chase
01:00 Emmerdale
01:30 Emmerdale
02:00 Coronation Street
02:30 Come Dine With Me Couples
Performances 2016
05:20 Arthur & George
06:10 Don't Tell The Bride
07:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
Performances 2016
08:00 The Royal Variety
Performances 2016
10:00 Arthur & George
10:55 Don't Tell The Bride
11:55 Come Dine With Me Couples
Performances 2016
12:45 Emmerdale
13:15 Coronation Street
13:45 Coronation Street
14:15 The Chase
15:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
Performances 2016
16:00 Endeavour
17:50 Grantchester
18:45 Emmerdale
19:15 Coronation Street
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 Come Dine With Me Couples
Performances 2016
21:00 Endeavour
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Coronation Street
23:40 Coronation Street

NAT GEO
people HD

00:10 John Torode's Malaysian
Adventure
00:35 Great Escapes
01:00 My Sri Lanka With Peter
Kuruvila
01:25 Rustic Adventures Italy
02:15 Home Strange Home
03:05 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
03:30 My Restaurant In India
03:55 The Wine Show
04:45 Eat Street
05:10 Valentine Warner Eats
Scandinavia
05:35 Poh & Co
06:00 The Food Files
06:25 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
06:50 My Sri Lanka With Peter
Kuruvila
07:15 Rustic Adventures Italy
08:05 Home Strange Home
08:55 Lee Chan's World Food Tour
09:20 My Restaurant In India
09:45 The Wine Show
10:35 Eat Street
11:00 Valentine Warner Eats
Scandinavia
11:25 Poh & Co
11:50 The Food Files
12:15 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
12:40 My Sri Lanka With Peter
Kuruvila
13:05 Carnival Eats
14:00 Home Strange Home
14:55 Confucius Was A Foodie
15:50 The Wine Show
16:45 Eat Street
17:15 Valentine Warner Eats
Scandinavia
17:40 Poh & Co
18:10 David Rocco's Dolce Vita
19:05 Confucius Was A Foodie
20:00 The Wine Show
20:50 Eat Street
21:15 Valentine Warner Eats
Scandinavia

HD
HISTORY

00:20 Time Team
01:10 Pawn Stars
01:35 Storage Wars: Best Of
02:00 Storage Wars
02:25 Storage Wars
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Ice Road Truckers
06:50 Shipping Wars

09:20 Big, Bigger, Biggest
10:15 The Border
11:10 Highway Thru Hell
12:05 Dirty Rotten Survival
13:00 Nazi Underworld
14:00 Rise Up: The Legacy Of Nat
Turner
15:00 Startalk
16:00 The Border
17:00 Highway Thru Hell
18:00 Dirty Rotten Survival
19:00 Mega Factories
20:00 The Border
20:50 Highway Thru Hell
21:40 Dirty Rotten Survival
22:30 Mega Factories
23:20 Megacities

OSN FIRST HD

00:00 Roadies
01:10 Scandal
02:05 How To Get Away With
Murder
03:00 Mistresses
04:00 The Fosters
05:00 Royal Pains
06:00 Good Morning America -
Weekend
07:00 Pitch
08:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
09:00 Devious Maids
10:00 The Family
11:00 Pitch
12:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
13:00 The Fosters
14:00 Devious Maids
15:00 Live Good Morning America
17:00 The Ellen DeGeneres Show
18:00 This Is Us
19:00 The Fosters
20:00 Criminal Minds
21:00 Homeland
22:00 Tyrant
23:00 Tyrant

OSN FIRST HD
COMEDY

00:00 The Goldbergs
01:30 The Simpsons
02:00 The Simpsons
01:30 Girls
02:00 Girls
02:30 The Big C
03:00 New Girl
03:30 Cooper Barrett's Guide To
Surviving
04:00 The Bill Engvall Show
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring
Jimmy Fallon
05:30 Trophy Wife
06:00 \$#! My Dad Says
06:30 The Bernie Mac Show
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
08:00 The Bill Engvall Show
08:30 Trophy Wife
09:00 New Girl
09:30 The Last Man On Earth
10:00 The Mindy Project
10:30 The Bernie Mac Show
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring
Jimmy Fallon
12:00 \$#! My Dad Says
12:30 The Bill Engvall Show
13:00 Trophy Wife
13:30 The Bernie Mac Show
14:00 Cooper Barrett's Guide To
Surviving
14:30 The Last Man On Earth
15:00 The Mindy Project
15:30 The Simpsons
16:00 The Simpsons
16:30 \$#! My Dad Says
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 New Girl
18:30 Cooper Barrett's Guide To
Surviving
19:00 Dr. Ken
19:30 The Mindy Project
20:00 The Goldbergs
20:30 The Goldbergs
21:00 The Simpsons
21:30 The Simpsons
22:00 You're The Worst
22:30 You're The Worst
23:00 The Big C

OSN MOVIES HD
DRAMA

01:00 The Reckoning
03:00 Falsely Accused
05:00 Rosewater
07:00 No God No Master
09:00 Selma
11:15 Rosewater
13:00 Before I Disappear
15:00 Don't Wake Mommy
16:45 Selma
19:00 Cake
21:00 Two-Bit Waltz
23:00 God's Pocket

OSN MOVIES HD
ACTION

00:00 Montana
02:00 Comedown
03:45 Blown Away
06:00 Con Air
08:00 Double Team
10:00 Panic Room
12:00 Heatstroke
13:45 Con Air
15:45 Double Team
17:45 Panic Room
19:45 Jupiter Ascending
22:00 No Tears For The Dead

OSN MOVIES HD
COMEDY

00:00 Joe Dirt 2: Beautiful Loser
02:00 Shanghai Noon
04:00 Big Ass Spider!
06:00 10 Things I Hate About You
08:00 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
10:00 Big Ass Spider!
12:00 Shanghai Noon
14:00 Forces Of Nature
16:00 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
18:00 Hot Rod
20:00 Talladega Nights
22:00 Turbo Kid

OSN MOVIES
FESTIVAL

02:00 The Last Tycoon
04:30 The Blind Side
07:00 Days Of Heaven
09:00 Instinct
11:00 Gone With The Bullets
13:00 I'll Follow You Down
14:30 Interstellar
17:30 Instinct
19:30 The Keeping Room
21:15 Unbroken
23:30 Maps To The Stars

OSN MOVIES HD

01:00 Tracers
03:00 The Finest Hours
05:00 My Old Lady
06:45 McFarland, USA
09:00 The Finest Hours
11:00 Brooklyn
13:00 The Two Faces Of January
14:45 The Duff
16:30 Home
18:30 The Martian
21:00 Terminator Genisys
23:15 London Has Fallen

OSN MOVIES HD
KIDS

01:00 Blue Elephant 2
02:45 Cher Ami
04:30 Columbus In The Last
Journey
06:00 Jetsons: The Movie
07:45 Bamse And The City Of
Thieves
09:15 Pim And Pom: The Big
Adventure
10:45 Looney Tunes: Rabbit's Run
12:30 Cher Ami
14:15 Virus Attack The First
Antivirus
16:00 Egon And Donci
18:00 Pim And Pom: The Big
Adventure
20:00 Jungle Book: Mowgli's
Adventure
21:45 Virus Attack The First
Antivirus
23:30 Egon And Donci

OSN MOVIES HD

FAMILY

01:00 Alpha Dogz: Pups United
03:00 Doctor Proctor's Fast Powder
05:00 Charlotte's Web
07:00 Get Santa
09:00 Pirates Who Don't Do
Anything
11:00 Charlotte's Web
13:00 Capture The Flag
15:00 One Christmas Eve
17:00 Step Dogs
19:00 Houbal On The Trail Of
Marsupilami
21:00 The Tale Of The Princess
Kaguya
23:00 One Christmas Eve



THE FINEST HOURS ON OSN MOVIES HD

16:00 Doki
16:20 Dick 'n' Dom Go Wild
16:45 Do You Know?
17:00 Baby Animals
17:50 World's Toughest
Expeditions With James Cracknell
18:40 Nextworld
19:30 How It's Made
19:55 How It's Made
20:20 Mythbusters
21:10 Baby Animals
21:35 Baby Animals
22:00 World's Toughest
Expeditions With James Cracknell
22:50 Destroyed In Seconds
23:15 Destroyed In Seconds
23:40 Ultimate Survival

Discovery
CHANNEL HD

00:20 Wheeler Dealers
01:10 Storage Hunters UK
01:35 Storage Hunters UK
02:00 Sonic Sea
02:50 Legend Of Croc Gold
03:40 Fast N' Loud
04:30 The Liquidator
05:00 How Do They Do It?
05:30 How Do They Do It?
06:00 Deadliest Catch
06:50 Wheeler Dealers
07:40 Fast N' Loud
08:30 What On Earth?
09:20 The Liquidator
09:45 How Do They Do It?
10:10 How Do They Do It?
10:35 Fast N' Loud
11:25 Misfit Garage
12:15 Street Outlaws
13:05 How Do They Do It?
13:30 The Liquidator
13:55 The Liquidator
14:20 Alaska: The Last Frontier
15:10 Boy To Man
16:00 Deadliest Catch
16:50 Fast N' Loud

12:00 Siba's Table
13:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
14:00 Chopped
15:00 The Kitchen
16:00 Valerie's Home Cooking
17:00 Chopped
18:00 Iron Chef America
19:00 Restaurant Stakeout
20:00 Mystery Diners
21:00 Restaurant Takeover
22:00 Iron Chef America
23:00 Restaurant Stakeout

Discovery
SCIENCE

00:15 Origins
00:40 Prototype This
01:30 The Gamechangers:
Inventing The World
02:20 Powering The Future
03:10 Mythbusters
04:00 Mythbusters
08:00 How Do They Do It?
08:26 Weird Or What?
09:14 Mythbusters
10:02 Powering The Future
10:50 How Do They Do It?
11:14 Food Factory
11:38 Mythbusters
12:26 Mythbusters
13:14 Weird Or What?
14:02 How Do They Do It?
14:26 Food Factory
14:50 Powering The Future
15:38 Mythbusters
16:26 Weird Or What?
17:14 Mythbusters
18:02 Powering The Future
18:50 Weird Or What?
19:40 Mythbusters
20:30 Space Voyages
21:20 How Do They Do It?
21:45 Food Factory
22:10 Nextworld
23:00 Space Voyages
23:50 Weird Or What?

04:50 Calimero
05:05 Art Attack
05:30 Henry Hugglemonster
05:45 Zou
06:00 Art Attack
06:30 Henry Hugglemonster
06:45 Loopidoo
07:00 Zou
07:15 Calimero
07:30 Loopidoo
07:45 Henry Hugglemonster
08:00 Minnie's Bow-Toons
08:05 PJ Masks
08:15 Goldie & Bear
08:30 Jake And The Neverland
Pirates
08:45 Miles From Tomorrow
08:55 The Lion Guard
09:20 Doc McStuffins
09:35 Goldie & Bear
09:50 Sheriff Calie's Wild West
10:00 PJ Masks
10:15 Jake And The Neverland
Pirates
10:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
10:35 Sofia The First
11:30 Doc McStuffins
11:55 Doc McStuffins
12:20 Sheriff Calie'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 Unbungleable
16:00 Miles From Tomorrow
16:30 Jake And The Never Land
Pirates
16:55 The Lion Guard
17:20 Goldie & Bear
17:50 PJ Masks
18:15 Sofia The First
18:40 Doc McStuffins
19:05 Jake And The Never Land
Pirates
19:30 Little Mermaid
20:00 PJ Masks
20:30 PJ Masks
21:00 Unbungleable

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 Supa Strikas
15:05 Lab Rats
15:30 Gamer's Guide To Pretty
Much Everything
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

HD
HISTORY

00:20 Time Team
01:10 Pawn Stars
01:35 Storage Wars: Best Of
02:00 Storage Wars
02:25 Storage Wars
02:50 Storage Wars
03:15 American Pickers
04:05 Pawn Stars
04:30 Pawn Stars
05:00 Mountain Men
06:00 Ice Road Truckers
06:50 Shipping Wars



PIRATES WHO DON'T DO ANYTHING ON OSN MOVIES FAMILY HD

CLASSIFIEDS



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

SHARQIA-1
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 11:45 AM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 1:45 PM
AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film 3:45 PM
KAABIL- HINDI 5:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 8:30 PM
WEAPONIZED 10:30 PM
WEAPONIZED 12:30 AM

SHARQIA-2
MONSTER TRUCKS 1:00 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 1:30 PM
FRI
MONSTER TRUCKS 3:30 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 5:45 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 8:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 10:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 12:15 AM

SHARQIA-3
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RAEES- HINDI 11:30 AM
RAEES- HINDI 1:45 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RAEES- HINDI 4:30 PM
RAEES- HINDI 6:45 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RAEES- HINDI 9:45 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 12:05 AM

MUHALAB-1
RAEES- HINDI 12:45 PM
BALLERINA 1:45 PM
FRI
BALLERINA 3:45 PM
RAEES- HINDI 5:45 PM
RAEES- HINDI 8:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 11:45 PM

MUHALAB-2
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter KAABIL- HINDI 12:15 PM
KAABIL- HINDI 2:30 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter KAABIL- HINDI 5:15 PM
KAABIL- HINDI 7:30 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter KAABIL- HINDI 10:15 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 12:30 AM

MUHALAB-3
MONSTER TRUCKS 11:45 AM
MONSTER TRUCKS 2:00 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 4:15 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 6:30 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 8:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 10:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 12:45 AM

FANAR-1
MONSTER TRUCKS 12:45 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 3:00 PM

MONSTER TRUCKS 5:15 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 7:30 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 9:45 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 12:05 AM

FANAR-2
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film 11:45 AM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 2:00 PM
AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film 4:45 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 6:45 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 9:00 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 11:15 PM

FANAR-3
DANGAL - Hindi 12:00 PM
KAABIL- HINDI 3:15 PM
DANGAL - Hindi 6:15 PM
KAABIL- HINDI 9:30 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 12:30 AM

FANAR-4
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 12:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 2:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 4:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 6:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 8:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 10:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 12:15 AM

FANAR-5
RAEES- HINDI 11:30 AM
RAEES- HINDI 2:30 PM
RAEES- HINDI 5:30 PM
RAEES- HINDI 8:30 PM
RAEES- HINDI 11:30 PM

MARINA-1
RAEES- HINDI 12:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 2:45 PM
RAEES- HINDI 4:45 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 7:30 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 9:30 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 11:30 PM

MARINA-2
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 11:30 AM
MONSTER TRUCKS 1:30 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 3:45 PM
AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film 6:00 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 8:00 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS 10:15 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 12:30 AM

MARINA-3
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 12:45 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 3:00 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 5:15 PM

RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 7:30 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 9:45 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter 12:05 AM

AVENUES-1
KAABIL- HINDI 12:00 PM
DANGAL - Hindi 3:00 PM
KAABIL- HINDI 6:15 PM
DANGAL - Hindi 9:15 PM
KAABIL- HINDI 12:30 AM

AVENUES-2
MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX 12:45 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX 3:00 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX 5:15 PM
MONSTER TRUCKS -3D -4DX 7:30 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX 10:00 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE -3D -4DX 12:15 AM

AVENUES-3
RAEES- HINDI 11:30 AM
RAEES- HINDI 2:30 PM
RAEES- HINDI 5:30 PM
RAEES- HINDI 8:30 PM
RAEES- HINDI 11:30 PM

360°- 1
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter -3D 11:30 AM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter -3D 1:45 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter -3D 4:00 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter -3D 6:15 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter -3D 8:30 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter -3D 10:45 PM
RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter RESIDENT EVIL: The Final Chapter -3D 1:00 AM

360°- 2
DANGAL - Hindi 1:15 PM
MOANA 1:45 PM
FRI
DANGAL - Hindi 4:30 PM
DANGAL - Hindi 7:45 PM
DANGAL - Hindi 11:00 PM

360°- 3
AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film 1:30 PM
SING 3:30 PM
SING 5:45 PM
AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film 8:00 PM
AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film 10:00 PM
AL ATR - Kuwaiti Film 12:05 AM

AL-KOUT:1
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 12:30 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 2:30 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 4:30 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 6:30 PM
xXc: RETURN OF XANDER CAGE 8:30 PM

URGENTLY REQUIERD

Leading Electro-Mechanical Contracting Company is currently looking for candidates to fill the following full time positions:

1) HVAC Site Engineer:
8 - 10 Years Site Experience in Chilled Water System

2) Plumbing & Fire Fighting Site Engineer:
8 - 10 Years Site Experience

3) QC/QA Engineer
8 - 10 Years Experience

Kindly E-mail your CVs to:
rasco_kmc@yahoo.com

REQUIRED

WEB APPLICATION DEVELOPERS

- Transferable residency
- Minimum 2 - 3 years of experiene
- Experience in developing web application using VB.NET, ASP.NET, C#, MVC
- Experience in MS SQL Server
- Experience in developing web services

Send your CV to
info@microsysctc.com

ACCOMMODATION

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

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)



Flight Schedule

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

DIAL161 FOR AIRPORT INFORMATION

Arrival Flights on Monday 30/1/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
KAC	776	Riyadh	00:20
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40
KAC	102	London	00:55
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55
KAC	742	Dammam	01:00
FDK	803	Damascus	01:00
RJA	642	Amman	01:05
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50
DLH	635	Doha	01:55
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55
DHX	170	Bahrain	05:20
KAC	332	Trivandrum	05:45
THY	770	Istanbul	05:55
KAC	384	Delhi	06:05
KAC	364	Colombo	06:05
BAW	157	London	06:40
PAL	668	Manila/Dubai	07:00
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15
FDB	053	Dubai	07:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40
IRA	667	Esfahan	10:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30
FDK	801	Damascus	11:45
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10
MSC	401	Alexandria	12:30
FEG	953	Asyut	12:35
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30
KAC	564	Amman	13:40
KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55
FEG	931	Alexandria	13:55
KAC	672	Dubai	14:00
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:30
KAC	414	Bangkok	14:35
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55
ETD	303	Abu Dhabi	15:15

KAC	286	Dhaka	15:20
OMA	645	Muscat	15:35
UAE	857	Dubai	15:45
ABY	127	Sharjah	15:50
KAC	154	Istanbul	15:55
SAW	705	Damascus	16:00
QTR	1072	Doha	16:10
JZR	535	Cairo	16:10
FDB	051	Dubai	16:25
KAC	788	Jeddah	16:30
KAC	662	Abu Dhabi	16:35
RJA	640	Amman	16:55
KAC	118	New York	17:00
SVA	510	Riyadh	17:15
GFA	215	Bahrain	17:30
JZR	777	Jeddah	17:45
UAE	875	Dubai	18:00
FDB	063	Dubai	18:10
JZR	177	Dubai	18:20
KAC	502	Beirut	18:45
QTR	1080	Doha	18:50
ABY	123	Sharjah	19:25
GFA	217	Bahrain	19:30
KAC	674	Dubai	19:45
FDB	057	Dubai	19:50
KAC	620	Doha	19:50
KAC	166	Rome	19:55
KNE	381	Taif	19:55
KAC	694	Muscat	20:00
OMA	647	Muscat	20:10
QTR	1088	Doha	20:35
DLH	634	Frankfurt	20:45
KAC	174	Munich	20:45
FDB	5053	Dubai	21:00
KAC	786	Jeddah	21:15
ETD	307	Abu Dhabi	21:20
MEA	402	Beirut	21:20
ALK	229	Colombo	21:25
UAE	859	Dubai	21:40
GFA	219	Bahrain	21:45
QTR	1082	Doha	22:00
ETD	309	Abu Dhabi	22:15
AIC	975	Chennai/Goa	22:25
ETD	919	Abu Dhabi/Bahrain	22:45
JZR	241	Amman	22:45
KAC	164	Paris	22:55
JAI	574	Mumbai	23:00
JZR	185	Dubai	23:15
FDB	071	Dubai	23:45
KAC	162	Geneva	23:50
BBC	143	Dhaka	23:55

Departure Flights on Monday 30/1/2017

Airlines	Flt	Route	Time
AIC	982	Ahmedabad/Chennai	00:05
JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
PIA	206	Lahore	00:40
FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
BBC	044	Dhaka	01:30

FDK	804	Damascus	01:55
KAC	417	Manila	02:00
THY	773	Istanbul	02:25
KAC	285	Dhaka	02:25
DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:55
PGT	859	Istanbul	03:35
UAE	854	Doha	03:45
OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
KKK	6505	Istanbul	03:55
THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
QTR	1077	Doha	04:40
MSC	502	Alexandria	05:05
CEB	0019	Manila	05:20
QTR	1087	Doha	05:50
FEG	954	Asyut	06:00
FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
UAE	874	Dubai	06:50
THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	153	Istanbul	06:50
KAC	165	Rome	06:55
JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
RJA	643	Amman	07:05
GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
KAC	541	Cairo	07:15
KAC	163	Paris	07:25
KAC	173	Munich	07:35
FDB	5062	Dubai	07:55
KAC	563	Amman	08:00
BAW	156	London	08:40
FDB	054	Dubai	08:55
KAC	743	Dammam	09:00
KAC	117	New York	09:00
KAC	671	Dubai	09:15
JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
KAC	101	London	09:35
ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
KAC	613	Bahrain	10:10
FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
KAC	161	Geneva	10:35
QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
KAC	787	Jeddah	10:40
KAC	501	Beirut	10:45
IRA	666	Esfahan	11:00
GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	12:05
JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
AXB	890	Mangalore	12:10
FDK	802	Damascus	12:45
MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
MSC	402	Alexandria	13:30
FEG	934	Sohag	13:35
JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
MSR	611	Cairo	14:00
FDB	076	Dubai	14:05
UAE	872	Dubai	14:15

	693	Muscat	14:30
KNE	382	Taif	14:50
FEG	932	Alexandria	14:55
KAC	673	Dubai	15:00
FDB	060	Dubai	15:10
KAC	785	Jeddah	15:15
PAL	669	Dubai/Manila	15:20
GFA	222	Bahrain	15:25
QTR	1079	Doha	15:40
SVA	501	Jeddah	15:45
KNE	530	Jeddah	15:55
KAC	619	Doha	16:00
ETD	304	Abu Dhabi	16:20
KAC	357	Kochi	16:20
ABY	128	Sharjah	16:30
OMA	646	Muscat	16:35
SAW	706	Damascus	16:55
JZR	266	Beirut	17:05
JZR	240	Amman	17:15
FDB	052	Dubai	17:25
QTR	1073	Doha	17:40
KAC	343	Chennai	17:40
KAC	363	Colombo	17:40
UAE	858	Dubai	17:45
JZR	538	Cairo	17:45
RJA	641	Amman	17:55
KAC	331	Trivandrum	18:00
SVA	511	Riyadh	18:15
KAC	353	BLR	18:15
GFA	216	Bahrain	18:20
KAC	205	Islamabad	18:25
JZR	184	Dubai	18:40
FDB	064	Dubai	19:05
UAE	876	Dubai	19:30
QTR	1081	Doha	19:50
ABY	124	Sharjah	20:05
GFA	218	Bahrain	20:15
KAC	383	Delhi	20:30
FDB	058	Dubai	20:35
KAC	775	Riyadh	20:45
KNE	232	Riyadh	20:55
KAC	1543	Cairo	21:00
OMA	648	Muscat	21:10
KAC	345	Ahmedabad	21:30
QTR	1089	Doha	21:35
DLH	634	Doha	21:35
DHX	171	Bahrain	21:50
ETD	308	Abu Dhabi	22:15
MEA	403	Beirut	22:20
ALK	230	Colombo	22:25
JZR	528	Asyut	22:25
FDB	5054	Dubai	22:30
GFA	220	Bahrain	22:30
KAC	301	Mumbai	22:45
KAC	381	Delhi	22:45
UAE	860	Dubai	22:55
ETD	310	Abu Dhabi	23:05
QTR	1083	Doha	23:20

CROSSWORD 1506

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78					79	80							81		
82					83								84		

- ACROSS**
1. A bachelor's degree in naval science.
4. Someone with a compulsive desire to expose the genitals.
11. An anxiety disorder associated with serious traumatic events and characterized by such symptoms as guilt about surviving or reliving the trauma in dreams or numbness and lack of involvement with reality or recurrent thoughts and images.
15. A workplace for the conduct of scientific research.
16. Webbing clothes moths.
17. A network of intersecting blood vessels or intersecting nerves or intersecting lymph vessels.
18. An organization of countries formed in 1961 to agree on a common policy for the sale of petroleum.
20. A studio especially for an artist or designer.
22. An enclosed space.
23. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
24. The largest continent with 60% of the earth's population.
26. Glyptic art consisting of a sunken or depressed engraving or carving on a stone or gem (as opposed to cameo).
28. Derive or receive pleasure from.
29. Of or relating to or suitable for statues n.
30. Pretentious or silly talk or writing.
33. Japanese ornamental tree with fragrant white or pink blossoms and small yellow fruits.
34. Small terrestrial lizard of warm regions of the Old World.
35. The capital of Western Samoa.
38. The first of three divisions of the Hebrew Scriptures comprising the first five books of the Old Testament considered as a unit.
42. In the Arabian Nights a hero who tells of the fantastic adventures he had in his voyages.
44. (informal) Very bad.
46. East Indian tree bearing a profusion of intense vermilion velvet-textured blooms and yielding a yellow dye.
47. Type genus of the Alcidae comprising solely the razorbill.
48. The elementary stages of any subject (usually plural).
50. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
52. The organ of sight ('peeper' is an informal term for 'eye').
53. Towards the side away from the wind.
55. A native or inhabitant of Bhutan.
58. A river of southwestern Africa that rises in central Angola and flows east and then north (forming part of the border between Angola and Congo) and continuing northwest through Congo to empty into the Congo River on the border between Congo and Republic of the Congo.
60. Chief port of Yemen.
61. An Oscan-speaking member of an ancient people of Campania.
64. (informal) Being satisfactory or in satisfactory condition.
65. Thorny shrub or small tree common in central Argentina having small orange or yellow flowers followed by edible berries.
69. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
73. An esoteric or occult matter that is traditionally secret.
74. 100 agorot equal 1 shekel.
77. An associate degree in applied science.
78. A Kwa language spoken in Ghana and the Ivory Coast.
79. A tricycle (usually propelled by pedalling).
81. A United Nations agency that invest directly in companies and guarantees loans to private investors.
- DOWN**
1. A group of countries in special alliance.
2. Plant with an elongated head of broad stalked leaves resembling celery.
3. The compass point that is one point east of due south.
4. A linear unit of length equal to 12 inches or a third of a yard.
5. act between parties with a view to reconciling differences.
6. A town in southern Turkey.
7. The seat within a bishop's diocese where his cathedral is located adv.
8. Emphasizing the organic or functional relation between parts and the whole.
9. Intelligence derived from non-communications electromagnetic radiations from foreign sources (other than radioactive sources).
10. Desert shrub of Syria and Arabia having small white flowers.
11. A soft yellowish-white trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
12. A unit of magnetic flux density equal to one weber per square meter.
13. Support consisting of a place to rest the foot while ascending or descending a stairway.
14. A beguiler who leads someone into danger (usually as part of a plot).
19. Alternatively, a member of the family Nymphaeaceae.
21. Amount of a charge or payment relative to some basis.
25. The capital and largest city of Yemen.
27. A formal association of people with similar interests.
31. Moving quickly and lightly.
32. A long pointed rod used as a weapon.
36. A genus of temperate and arctic evergreen trees (see spruce).
37. Jordan's port.
39. Having the leading position or higher score in a contest.
40. United States film actor who played tough heroes (1907-1979).
41. Coils of worsted yarn.
43. A metric unit of volume or capacity equal to 10 liters.
45. A member of an extinct North American Indian people who lived in the Pit river valley in northern California.
49. Cook and make edible by putting in a hot oven.
51. A rare polyvalent metallic element of the platinum group.
54. Obvious and dull.
56. The basic unit of money in Bangladesh.
57. Any of several tropical and subtropical treelike herbs of the genus Musa having a terminal crown of large entire leaves and usually bearing hanging clusters of elongated fruits.
59. A member of the Salish people in northwestern Washington.
62. Tall hat.
63. A clique that seeks power usually through intrigue.
66. An inhabitant of Lapland.
67. An informal term for a father.
68. (Scotland) A slope or hillside.
70. A quantity that is added.
71. The handle of a weapon or tool.
72. United States writer (born in Poland) who wrote in Yiddish (1880-1957).
75. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
76. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
80. Angular distance above the horizon (especially of a celestial object).

Yesterday's Solution

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

STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

Your intuitive powers are at their best today and you can come up with many answers to important questions. You need the respect of others and you will work well with others if you can be allowed to give advice or to guide and be helpful. Travel is possible in the next few weeks and money should soon be available for a trip. You will be pleased at the air miles you have accumulated as well as a special discount to travel. Be aware of what you promise today, especially to a young person; keep your promises. You are to be commended for your actions-you are what you preach. You tend to push yourself too far at times and this can take its toll. Think about establishing new routines that will improve your overall health.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

If you can be open to suggestions as well as a logical technique, you will see some improvements in your finances. It is time now to review contracts or business agreements for any loopholes. Being slavish to established ideals could result in a loss of freedom and insight. Be aware that lofty ideals do not automatically guarantee honesty. If there has been a personal disagreement, it can be smoothed out now. Be careful to keep a lid on that heady feeling that comes with being self-assured. A friendship could easily turn to love at this time. Your creative side is showing tonight. The evening provides opportunities for the refurbishing of your spirit through some fun activity that involves a loved one and perhaps a few friends.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Good luck and charm surround you wherever you go. You will be successful with all the projects you begin. You perform best when you compete with yourself. You are able to prove your proficiency when you come up with the perfect design or technique for solving mysteries or quandaries. Creativity is in full swing. Have you taken a writing courseyou might enjoy a writing course through your community college. Your routine has been so tough lately you will probably be feeling like breaking away from the predictable. An alternative healing therapy like acupuncture or a massage may be just what is needed to help you bring a balance into your life at this time. Break away from your routine and start planning a very special vacation.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Taking care of business is a major theme where your emotional orientation is concerned. This may mean family business but you could be tending to a bit of paperwork from the office. A problem encountered today may actually become an opportunity. You crave organization and common sense and you want to get things accomplished. Set this work aside for the afternoon and enjoy some sort of exercise with a friend. You plan to be at an early evening dinner with neighbors and do not want to miss the get-together. A good conversation with people you enjoy is possible this evening. The situation is a natural for self-expression and lends itself to your particular ideas and thoughts.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Today you have insight into a difficult situation that you are determined to turn into a positive end. You see what is wrong and you know what to do. This means cooperation and organization, authority and discipline, responsibility-and all these things are what it takes to get you where you know you must go. Careful-if your vision is only for yourself, what you create cannot last: it must be for some greater good. Your career takes top priority and your drive to accomplish your aims can be quite strong. Ambition, practicality and achievement are admirable, but they are means to an end-not ends in themselves. At the end of this day you can dismiss thinking about work and stick with the home and friends. Call some friends or visit a bookstore.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

You may try and make time to do a little writing for a project that will be coming up at work next week. A minor amount of preparation work could make the difference toward moving in a positive direction with as few hang-ups as possible. Later today, you may be helping someone move or work on his or her special project. Be sure to take protein breaks to keep up your energy. Playful antics can get out of control so use good judgment. On the home front, check all the appliances, smoke detectors, food supply, automobile upkeep, batteries for flashlights. There is nothing like feeling secure if the weather turns bad. You are very intuitive when it comes to understanding what foods your body needs; be prepared.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

Your image is highlighted today and it increases your self-confidence. Many people value you for your independence and the way you handle difficulties as well as difficult people. This is a great time to be with friends. The opportunity comes up today for you to decide on how you want to help in your religious or community surroundings. You are good with people and may be asked to volunteer some time in organizing groups of people. If you were wondering whether you should involve yourself in this project, find a partner that will share the work and go for it. A good, trouble-free relationship is important to you and while this is not always possible, you will certainly come close to this goal. You have good insight and a positive attitude.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Subjects concerning money can be set aside for another time. You really do not have time to spend money today. Most of today, your head is down and the wheels in your brain are turning. You achieve better communication today between relatives. Figuring out how to help someone may become a topic of special interest-and a challenge. Opinions are not enough; they must be backed by practical worth. Perhaps someone wants to move to a smaller place or there is some other scenario. This evening may be the time you and your mate have set aside to talk about those messy financial matters-patience. You may have to agree to talk again-tackling one thing at a time. You have something special cooking so that your evening is sure to end pleasantly.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Much knowledge can be made available through other people this year. Romance and sexual attraction comes into play now through the first week of february. You can be in charge with regard to love. Now through the twenty-fifth of next month, travel will also have a green light. You may, however, have to make confirmations and possibly adjust your plans from time to time. This could mean travel that is short-range rather than long-range and possibly involves working conditions that include filming, research or testing. Your interest in the occult may intensify and you could find yourself really looking forward to the place you will be visiting because of its history and surroundings. Good luck follows you around today.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

Take time to enjoy nature this day-perhaps a little walk or bicycle ride around the neighborhood. Relaxation is important and sometime this afternoon you might find yourself falling asleep in the warm surroundings of your home. Later today, grocery shop for those healthy, crispy vegetables and fruits to put in your lunches or add to your meals. Keep that lazy attitude for now and stretch like a cat, perhaps a little yoga. All forms of escape could prove very enjoyable this afternoon. There is a bit of luck that surrounds you for the next few days and may be the key that opens new and positive things in your life. A balanced life is not easy to achieve but very important for your peace of mind. You teach everyone you know to embrace each moment.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You wake up this morning to beautiful music. This may be instrumental music, but more than likely it will be the music that comes from the usual sounds of your family or your community as the day begins to move forward. There may also be the sounds of birds, other animals, people and machines that bring you into the present with a sense of appreciation for where you live in the world. Your wonderful and fertile imagination will help you to create what you want today. This may be as simple as what you are having for brunch or a revamp of your wardrobe or perhaps some new recipes for your new diet. You will find lots of phone calls and visits to distract you from your plans, but the distractions are most welcomed.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

There are times that your nerves can feel on edge. This may be an indication that you are frustrated from not completing a task fast enough; or perhaps someone else is not responding as you think is appropriate. You must learn now to accept the human part of you and practice patience. Worry does not help to speed things up; action is a sequence of activity that brings about result. Walking for exercise is a way to focus your thoughts as well as work off anxiety, and practice action. If the weather is appropriate, try walking. You had many opportunities for a social life in december and it seems those opportunities will be coming up again. Your financial concerns are warranted; however, you will see ways for improvement.

Wordsearch Puzzle

Happy New Year

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of a popular location for celebrating New Years Eve.

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

- APPETIZERS**
BABIES
BALLOONS
BANNERS
BUFFET
CELEBRATE
CHAMPAGNE
CONFETTI
DANCE
DAY ONE
- DECORATIONS**
END OF DECEMBER
EVENTS
FAMILY
FATHER TIME
FEAST
FESTIVITIES
FIREWORKS
FIRST OF JANUARY
FRIENDS
- HATS**
HOLIDAY
HORNS
KISS
MIDNIGHT
MUSIC
NEW YEARS DAY
NEW YEARS EVE
NOISEMAKERS
OCCASION
- PARADES**
PARTY
PUNCH
RESOLUTIONS
SINGING
STREAMERS
THIRTY FIRST
TIARAS
WINE
YEAR IN REVIEW

Yesterday's Solution

Hanukkah

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

- BIMUELOS**
BLESSINGS
CANDLES
CHANUKIAH
CHARITY
CUSTOMS
DAIRY FOODS
DREIDEL
EIGHT DAYS
FAMILY
FEAST
- FESTIVAL**
GAMES
GELT
GIFTS
HALLEL
HANEROT HALALU
HEBREW
HOLIDAY
HOLY TEMPLE
JERUSALEM
KISLEV
- LATKE**
LEVIVOT
LIGHTS
MA'OZ TZUR
MACCABEES
MATISYAHU
MENORAH
MIRACLE
OLIVE OIL
PONTSHKES
PRAYERS
- PSALMS**
SEVIVON
SHAMASH
SONGS
SUGGANIYOT
TALMUD
TORAH
TRADITION
YEARELY
YEHUDIT

The hidden message is: HANUKKAH IS A JEWISH HOLIDAY THAT LASTS EIGHT DAYS

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

For labor-related inquiries
and complaints:
Call MSAL hotline 128

Hospitals

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144
Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401
Jabriya	25316254
Maidan Hawally	25623444
Bayan	25388462
Mishref	25381200
W Hawally	22630786
Sabah	24810221
Jahra	24770319
New Jahra	24575755
West Jahra	24772608
South Jahra	24775066
North Jahra	24775992
North Jleeb	24311795
Ardhiya	24884079
Firdous	24892674
Omariya	24719048
N Khaitan	24710044
Fintas	23900322



PHARMACIES ON 24 HRS DUTY

GOVERNORATE	PHARMACY	ADDRESS	PHONE
Ahmadi	Sama Safwan Abu Halaifa Danat Al-Sultan	Fahaeel Makka St Abu Halaifa-Coastal Rd Mahboula Block 1, Coastal Rd	23915883 23715414 23726558
Jahra	Modern Jahra Madina Munawara	Jahra-Block 3 Lot 1 Jahra-Block 92	24575518 24566622
Capital	Ahlam Khalidiya Coop	Fahad Al-Salem St Khalidiya Coop	22436184 24833967
Farwaniya	New Shifa Ferdous Coop Modern Safwan	Farwaniya Block 40 Ferdous Coop Old Kheitan Block 11	24734000 24881201 24726638
Hawally	Tariq Hana Ikhlās Hawally & Rawdha Ghadeer Kindy Ibn Al-Nafis Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Salmiya-Amman St Hawally-Beirut St Hawally & Rawdha Coop Jabriya-Block 1A Jabriya-Block 3B Salmiya-Hamad Mubarak St Mishrif Coop Salwa Coop	25726265 25647075 22625999 22564549 25340559 25326554 25721264 25380581 25628241

STATE OF KUWAIT DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT



Tel: (+965) 161 Ext: 2627 - 2630
Fax: (+965) 24348714
www.met.gov.kw



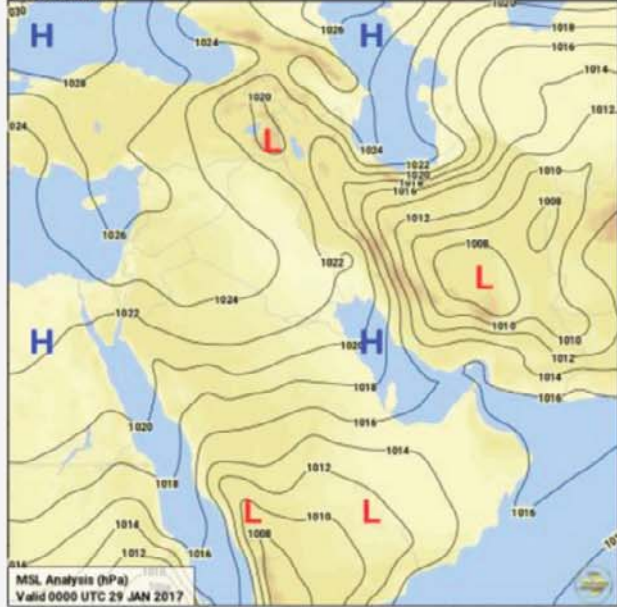
Expected Weather for the Next 24 Hours

Issued 29/01/2017-10:00 LT UTC +3hr

Max Temperature 19 °C

By Day : Sunny with light variable wind changing to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 08 - 30 km/h with a chance for haze
By Night : Cold with light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 12 - 32 km/h

SFC. CHART



Four-Day Forecast

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Expected Weather	cool	sunny	partly cloudy	cool + raising dust
Min Temp °C	03	07	05	02
Max Temp °C	16	19	20	13
Wind Direction	north westerly	south easterly	north westerly	north westerly
Wind Speed km/h	10 - 30	12 - 35	15 - 40	22 - 42

All times are local time (GMT+3) unless otherwise stated

Warnings & Weather Watches

no warnings or weather watches

Kuwait Forecast

Station	MIN °C REC	Max °C EXP
KUWAIT CITY	11	21
KUWAIT AIRPORT	06	19
ABDALY	05	19
BUBYAN	08	21
JAHRRA	08	21
FAILAKA ISLAND	09	21
SALMIYAH	12	19
AHMADI	13	19
JAL ALIYAH	05	19
QAROH ISLAND	15	19
UMM AL-MARADEM	14	19
NUWAISIB	08	21
WAFRA	07	24
MANAGISH	06	20
SALMY	04	17
MUTRIBA	05	20

Recorded Yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max Temp (°C)	22
Min Temp (°C)	08
Max Rel Hum (%)	80
Min Rel Hum (%)	20
Max Wind Speed (km/h) and Direction	36 N
TOTAL RAINFALL IN 24 HR	0 mm

	Sunrise	06:39
	Sunset	17:23

Prayer Times

Fajr	05:17
Sunrise	06:39
Zuhr	12:01
Asr	15:02
Sunset	17:23
Isha	18:43

INTERNATIONAL CALLS



Afghanistan	0093	Lithuania	00370
Albania	00355	Luxembourg	00352
Algeria	00213	Macau	00853
Andorra	00376	Macedonia	00389
Angola	00244	Madagascar	00261
Anguilla	001264	Majorca	0034
Antiga	001268	Malawi	00265
Argentina	0054	Malaysia	0060
Armenia	00374	Maldives	00960
Australia	0061	Mali	00223
Austria	0043	Malta	00356
Azerbaijan	00994	Marshall Islands	00692
Bahamas	001242	Martinique	00596
Bahrain	00973	Mauritania	00222
Bangladesh	00880	Mauritius	00230
Barbados	001246	Mayotte	00269
Belarus	00375	Mexico	0052
Belgium	0032	Micronesia	00691
Belize	00501	Moldova	00373
Benin	00229	Monaco	00377
Bermuda	001441	Mongolia	00976
Bhutan	00975	Montserrat	001664
Bolivia	00591	Morocco	00212
Bosnia	00387	Mozambique	00258
Botswana	00267	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Brazil	0055	Namibia	00264
Brunei	00673	Nepal	00977
Bulgaria	00359	Netherlands	0031
Burkina	00226	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Burundi	00257	New Caledonia	00687
Cambodia	00855	New Zealand	0064
Cameroon	00237	Nicaragua	00505
Canada	001	Niger	00227
Cape Verde	00238	Nigeria	00234
Cayman Islands	001345	Niue	00683
Central African	00236	Norfolk Island	00672
Chad	00235	N. Ireland (UK)	0044
Chile	0056	North Korea	00850
China	0086	Norway	0047
Colombia	0057	Oman	00968
Comoros	00269	Pakistan	0092
Congo	00242	Palau	00680
Cook Islands	00682	Panama	00507
Costa Rica	00506	Papua New Guinea	00675
Croatia	00385	Paraguay	00595
Cuba	0053	Peru	0051
Cyprus	00357	Philippines	0063
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Poland	0048
Czech Republic	00420	Portugal	00351
Denmark	0045	Puerto Rico	001787
Diego Garcia	00246	Qatar	00974
Djibouti	00253	Romania	0040
Dominica	001767	Russian Federation	007
Dominican Republic	001809	Rwanda	00250
Ecuador	00593	Saint Helena	00290
Egypt	0020	Saint Kitts	001869
El Salvador	00503	Saint Lucia	001758
England (UK)	0044	Saint Pierre	00508
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Saint Vincent	001784
Eritrea	00291	Samoa US	00684
Estonia	00372	Samoa West	00685
Ethiopia	00251	San Marino	00378
Falkland Islands	00500	Sao Tome	00239
Faroe Islands	00298	Saudi Arabia	00966
Fiji	00679	Scotland (UK)	0044
Finland	00358	Senegal	00221
France	0033	Seychelles	00284
French Guiana	00594	Sierra Leone	00232
French Polynesia	00689	Singapore	0065
Gabon	00241	Slovakia	00421
Gambia	00220	Slovenia	00386
Georgia	00995	Solomon Islands	00677
Germany	0049	Somalia	00252
Ghana	00233	South Africa	0027
Gibraltar	00350	South Korea	0082
Greece	0030	Spain	0034
Greenland	00299	Sri Lanka	0094
Grenada	001473	Sudan	00249
Guadeloupe	00590	Suriname	00597
Guam	001671	Swaziland	00268
Guatemala	00502	Sweden	0046
Guinea	00224	Switzerland	0041
Guyana	00592	Syria	00963
Haiti	00509	Serbia	00381
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Taiwan	00886
Honduras	00504	Tanzania	00255
Hong Kong	00852	Thailand	0066
Hungary	0036	Togo	00228
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Tonga	00676
Iceland	00354	Tokelau	00690
India	0091	Trinidad	001868
Indian Ocean	00873	Tunisia	00216
Indonesia	0062	Turkey	0090
Iran	0098	Tuvalu	00688
Iraq	00964	Uganda	00256
Ireland	00353	Ukraine	00380
Italy	0039	United Arab Emirates	00976
Ivory Coast	00225	United Kingdom	0044
Jamaica	001876	Uruguay	00598
Japan	0081	USA	001
Jordan	00962	Uzbekistan	00998
Kazakhstan	007	Vanuatu	00678
Kenya	00254	Venezuela	00582
Kiribati	00686	Vietnam	0084
Kuwait	00965	Virgin Islands UK	001284
Kyrgyzstan	00996	Virgin Islands US	001340
Laos	00856	Wales (UK)	0044
Latvia	00371	Yemen	00967
Lebanon	00961	Yugoslavia	00381
Liberia	00231	Zambia	00260
Libya	00218	Zimbabwe	00263
Lesotho	00266		



PRIVATE CLINICS

Ophthalmologists	
Dr. Abidallah Al-Mansoor	25622444
Dr. Samy Al-Rabeea	25752222
Dr. Masoma Habeeb	25321171
Dr. Mubarak Al-Ajmy	25739999
Dr. Mohsen Abel	25757700
Dr. Adnan Hasan Alwayl	25732223
Dr. Abdallah Al-Baghly	25732223
Ear, Nose & Throat (ENT)	
Dr. Ahmed Fouad Mouner	24555050 Ext 510
Dr. Abdallah Al-Ali	25644660
Dr. Abd Al-Hameed Al-Taweel	25646478
Dr. Sanad Al-Fathalah	25311996
Dr. Mohammad Al-Daaoory	25731988
Dr. Ismail Al-Fodary	22620166
Dr. Mahmoud Al-Booz	25651426
General Practitioners	
Dr. Mohammed Y Majidi	24555050 Ext 123
Dr. Yousef Al-Omar	24719312
Dr. Tarek Al-Mikhaazem	22636920
Dr. Kathem Maarafi	25730465
Dr. Abdallah Ahmad Eyadad	25655528
Dr. Nabeel Al-Ayoobi	24577781
Dr. Dina Abidallah Al-Refae	25333501
Urologists	
Dr. Ali Naser Al-Serfy	22641534
Dr. Fawzi Taher Abul	22639955
Dr. Khaleel Abidallah Al-Awadi	22616660
Dr. Adel Al-Hunayan FRCS (C)	25313120
Dr. Leons Joseph	66703427

Plastic Surgeons	
Dr. Mohammad Al-Khalaf	22547272
Dr. Abdal-Redha Lari	22617700
Dr. Abdel Quttainah	25625030/60
Family Doctor	
Dr Divya Damodar	23729596/23729581
Psychiatrists	
Dr. Esam Al-Ansari	22635047
Dr. Eisa M. Al-Balhan	22613623/0
Gynaecologists & Obstetricians	
DrAdrian arbe	23729596/23729581
Dr. Verginia s.Marin	2572-6666 ext 8321
Dr. Fozeya Ali Al-Qatan	22655539
Dr. Majeda Khalefa Aliytami	25343406
Dr. Ahmad Al-Khooly	25739272
Dr. Salem soso	22618787
General Surgeons	
Dr. Amer Zawaz Al-Amer	22610044
Dr. Mohammad Yousef Basher	25327148
Internists, Chest & Heart	
Dr. Adnan Ebil	22639939
Dr. Mousa Khadada	22666300
Dr. Latefa Al-Duweisan	25728004
Dr. Nadem Al-Ghabra	25355515
Dr. Mobarak Aldoub	24726446
Dr Nasser Behbehani	25654300/3

Paediatricians	
Dr. Khaled Hamadi	25665898
Dr. Abd Al-Aziz Al-Rashed	25340300
Dr. Zahra Qabazard	25710444
Dr. Sohail Qamar	22621099
Dr. Snaa Maarroof	25713514
Dr. Pradip Gujare	23713100
Dr. Zacharias Mathew	24334282
Dermatology	
Dr. Mohammed Salam Bern University	23845955
Dentists	
Dr Anil Thomas	3729596/3729581
Dr. Shamah Al-Matar	22641071/2
Dr. Anesah Al-Rasheed	22562226
Dr. Abidallah Al-Amer	22561444
Dr. Faysal Al-Fozan	22619557
Dr. Abdallateef Al-Katrash	22525888
Dr. Abidallah Al-Duweisan	25653755
Dr. Bader Al-Ansari	25620111
Neurologists	
Dr. Sohal Najem Al-Shemeri	25633324
Dr. Jasem Mola Hassan	25345875
Gastrologists	
Dr. Sami Aman	22636464
Dr. Mohammad Al-Shamaly	25322030
Dr. Foad Abidallah Al-Ali	22633135

Endocrinologist	
Dr. Abd Al-Naser Al-Othman	25339330
Dr. Ahmad Al-Ansari	25658888
Dr. Kamal Al-Shomr	25329924
Physiotherapists & VD	
Dr. Deyaa Shehab	25722291
Dr. Mused Faraj Khamees	22666288
Rheumatologists:	
Dr. Adel Al-Awadi	25330060
Dr. Khaled Al-Jarallah	25722290
Internist, Chest & Heart	
DR.Mohammes Akkad	24555050 Ext 210
Dr. Mohammad Zubaid MB, ChB, FRCP, PACC Assistant Professor Of Medicine Head, Division of Cardiology Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital	25339667
Consultant Cardiologist	
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Vogue Williams doesn't want to get married again

The 31-year-old TV presenter split from Brian McFadden in July 2015 after three years of marriage and admitted she is not interested in tying the knot again. She said: "My mum



will kill me for saying this, but I don't think I would. Marriage isn't as important to me as it was before. But if I met someone and getting married was on their agenda, then I'd think about it." However, she admitted she definitely wants children and is

already getting broody. Vogue told Fabulous magazine: "About a year ago I felt the pressure of being 30 and thought: 'Oh, what am I going to do?' I really want to have kids! But now there are so many ways to have children. I can have them on my own if I want!" Vogue briefly dated Billie Piper's ex-husband Laurence Fox earlier this year but revealed that the romance did not work out and they are currently just very close friends. She said: "We're definitely not more than friends. I'm currently single and very happy. Me and Laurence became close over the last few months. But yeah, we're just friends." Although she has had some high-profile romances, Vogue insists she would happily date a man who is not in the public eye. She said: "They have to be funny and easy-going. I definitely go for personality over looks, and they need to like doing fun things because I don't enjoy sitting at home doing nothing. "I dated someone for six years who wasn't famous. There are some things that they find weird, like when I was modeling and whipping all my clothes off backstage! But if you avoid celeb hotspots, you can have a normal relationship with anyone."

Geri Horner says it is a 'miracle' she conceived naturally



The 44-year-old singer recently welcomed son Montague George Hector Horner with her husband Christian Horner and Geri admitted she feels "incredibly lucky" that she didn't need any medical help in order to get pregnant. She told The Sunday Times: "I feel incredibly lucky to have conceived naturally at my age, 44. I see it as a miracle. Trust me, I can still moan like the rest of them but, equally, I remind myself every day that this is an absolute gift." And Geri, who battled bulimia when she was younger, insisted that she will not be a "fanatic" about losing the baby weight. She said: "When it comes to losing my baby weight I am not going to be a fanatic about it. At the moment the stairs in my house are exercise enough. Trust me, I have been there, done it, with all that perfect clean eating, but sometimes it is not sustainable or manageable." "For a long time now I have tried to have a balanced attitude towards food and dieting. I am like any other

woman, I'll scoff a few chocolates and then I'll think, 'Ooh, I'd better keep an eye on that.' But the important thing to me is trying to give yourself a break and say, 'It's OK to have the chocolate and eat the cake, just find a balance.'" "I think that restriction tends to lead you in the opposite direction and you just want more. I used to have so much restriction around food. Now I find if I allow myself to have a bit, I am less likely to overindulge. Geri also has a 10-year-old daughter Bluebell with her ex Sacha Gervasi and revealed that the youngster keeps her so busy she didn't have time to worry about getting everything ready for the new baby. She explained: "Only as my birth began to get close did I start to think about the reality of it, the preparation, the practical things, getting a nursery ready, and the things that one needs. But to be honest, as a mother to a 10-year-old already, I was thinking more about things like, 'Has my daughter done her homework?'"



David and Victoria Beckham renew wedding vows

David and Victoria Beckham have renewed their wedding vows. The couple tied the knot in a lavish ceremony in Ireland in 1999 and David admitted that their renewal ceremony was a much more tasteful affair. Speaking to Kirsty Young for a special 75th anniversary edition of Radio 4's 'Desert Island Discs', he said: "We did throw a lot at it. We have renewed our vows since then and it was a lot more private, there was about six people there in our house." Referring to the thrones they sat on at the wedding and their eye-catching outfits, he added: "That was pretty bold. Victoria's was pretty nice. "Mine, I'm like what was I thinking? I even had a top hat in purple. What was I thinking?" David, 41 and Victoria, 42 - who have four children together - have had a number of ups and downs during their marriage but he insisted that they are still deeply in

love. He said: "Of course you make mistakes over the years, we all know marriage is difficult at times and it's about working through it. "Whenever we've come up against tough times, we know each other better than anybody knows us so we talk. "Do we stay together because it's a brand? Of course not. We stay together because we love each other. "We stay together because we have four amazing children. Of course we go through tough times. When we go through tough times we work through it as a unit, as a family." David also praised his parents Ted and Sandra for providing him with a strong work ethic. He said: "The only time my dad said you know what son you've done really well was when I got my 100th cap. "From time to time he'd say great game. It makes me emotional. Probably, everybody wants to make their parents proud."

Conrad Murray wants to help Paris Jackson

Conrad Murray wants to help Paris Jackson solve her father's alleged "murder". Paris recently revealed her belief that her dad, Michael Jackson - who died in June 2009, from an overdose due to acute Propofol intoxication - was murdered, and disgraced medic Conrad wants to help her get "justice" for Michael. However, as Conrad administered the drug and was convicted in 2011 of involuntary manslaughter for his part in the star's death, Paris wants nothing to do with him. A source told the New York Daily News: "He wants to meet Paris to tell her that he will back her in any plans she has to get justice for Michael. They all hold him responsible for Michael's death and have nothing but disdain for him. "Murray has been out for number one since day one of meeting Michael - nothing has changed. Paris sees right through him." Speaking to Rolling Stone magazine recently about her theory, Paris, 18, said: "It's obvious. "All arrows point to that. It sounds like a total conspiracy theory and it sounds like bull****, but all real fans and everybody in the family knows it. It was a setup. It was bull****." Paris also shared how the 'Bad' singer once felt paranoid that someone was trying to kill



him. She said: "And at some point he was like, 'They're gonna kill me one day.'" Meanwhile, Conrad recently said he felt Michael's children were "brainwashed" and "trained" to hate him. The 63-year-old physician penned a book called 'This Is It! The Secret lives of Dr Conrad Murray and Michael Jackson', which was slammed by Paris, who tweeted when it was released: "The fact that people are actually listening to and believing a cold blooded murderer is honestly beyond me." And speaking about Paris, he said at the time: "[Paris] is a child. She's a young adult. She's been tainted. They've trained her to be dishonest. I'm not responsible for that."

Octavia Spencer sent letters to idol Michael Jackson



Octavia Spencer used to send fan mail to Michael Jackson. The 46-year-old actress enjoyed writing letters to various celebrities when she was younger and she was thrilled when she received a poster in response to a note she'd sent her 'Thriller' hitmaker idol. She said: "When I was a kid I would write to lots of people. "I remember I wrote to Michael Jackson. I think I got back one of the posters that was on my wall." Despite her own fame, the 'Hidden Figures' actress still gets star struck and believes the day she stops being in awe of other people is the day she should change careers. She said: "I'm still star struck all the time. I met Steven Spielberg, who I've idolized since I was a 13-year-old kid. And

Oprah Winfrey. She told Empire magazine "I think when I stop being star struck it's time to get out of this business." When Octavia goes to the cinema, she refuses to leave until the end of the movie, even if she isn't enjoying it. She said: "I don't [walk out]. If I've spent my money and bought my popcorn, you've got me. "If people took the time to make it, then I'll stick with it to the end." And the actress will drop everything if one of her favorite movies is on TV, even if it affects her other commitments. She said: "There are three I've seen more than any other, 'The Color Purple', 'The Shawshank Redemption' and 'Driving Miss Daisy'. "No matter when they're on, I'm going to have to watch them and I'm going to be late."

Jennifer Hudson wants to move to the UK



The 35-year-old singer - who has four-year-old son David Jr with fiancée David Otunga - is enjoying spending time in Britain while filming talent show 'The Voice UK' and would seriously consider relocating for a longer period of time. Asked if a move to the UK is on the cards, she said: "Yes, I would love that - no, seriously. I love it. It's so peaceful and everyone is so sweet." The 'Spotlight' singer has "banned" herself from

using Twitter as she thinks it is important to move herself from the negative comments she gets on social media sites. She told LOOK magazine: "I remember starting out, they used to tell us, 'Don't read this, don't look at that' and every once in a while I remind myself of that. "I've banned myself from twitter - I don't even go on there anymore. "You know what to avoid, how to handle yourself." Though Jennifer is enjoying working on 'The Voice', she thinks 'American Idol' - on which she found fame in 2004 - gave the contestants better preparation for life in the music industry. She said: "This process [on The Voice] is so much quicker - it leaps from phase to phase so quickly. I used to call it the 'American Idol' rollercoaster that I could never get off because it was just going around and around. "I agree [The Voice] is more positive] but I feel like what Simon Cowell brings to the table is he's preparing you for the industry. "I feel like that could be necessary to have a taste of hat contestants are really trying to get into and that's when you learn if you have a tough enough skin for it. "I thought, 'It's either gonna make me or break me."

Kim Kardashian West's stolen jewels melted and sold

Almost all of Kim Kardashian West's stolen jewels have been melted down. The reality TV star was robbed at gunpoint in her Paris hotel by a gang last year and

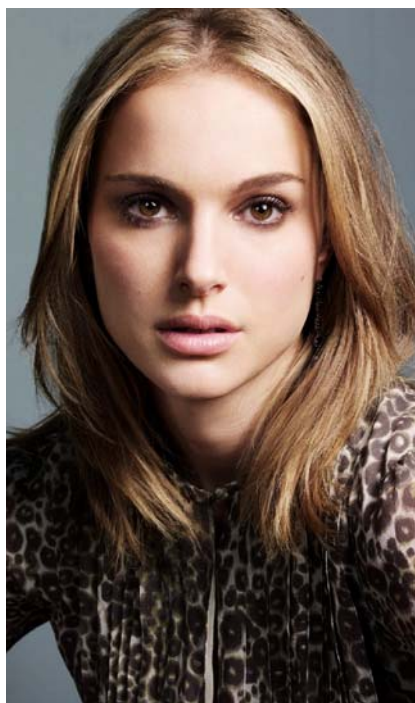


after they made off with millions worth of jewels, the gang decided to get them melted down so that they could not be traced, with only Kim's diamond engagement ring still intact. According to Le Monde news-

paper, Aomar Ait Khedache, 60, whose nickname is Omar le Vieux (Old Omar), told police: "So that the jewels wouldn't be recognized, we took a joint decision to melt them down. "One of us took care of that. He came back with bars. Altogether there must have been a bit more than 800 grams." Although Kim admitted she feared for her life during the ordeal, Khedache insisted they treated her well, despite tying her up. He said: "We didn't take our weapons out in front of a woman. The person with me tied her up on the bed. I placed her in the bath." And Khedache admitted planning the robbery was easy, because Kim was so open about her movements and jewels on social media and he also claimed they had insider information. He said: "The jewels were shown on the internet, and (she said) that she didn't wear fakes, the time she would arrive in France, you just had to look at the internet and you knew everything, absolutely everything. "We had very precise information about her movements that we got from someone who was very close to her."

Natalie Portman has paid tribute to Sir John Hurt

The 35-year-old actress co-starred with John, 77, in 'V for Vendetta' and 'Jackie' and paid an emotional tribute to him following his death after a battle with pancreatic cancer. She said: "I'm so extremely sad to hear of John's passing. I was lucky enough to make two films with him - both of which were taken to the next level because of his performances. He was the most talented actor, and also a deeply good and funny and poetic and smart and warm human being. I send my love to his family at this terrible time, and join his fans in watching his films that we are lucky enough to have forever." Unflinching. Eternal." A number of other stars have also paid tribute to the star, with Mel Brooks tweeting: "I was terribly sad to learn of John Hurt's passing. He was truly a magnificent talent ... No one could have played The Elephant Man more memorably. He carried that film into cinematic immortality. He will be sorely missed. (sic) Bonnie Wright, who played Ginny Weasley alongside Hurt's wand-making alter-ego Garrick Ollivander in 'Harry Potter', simply wrote: "John Hurt. What an acting legend. Rest in peace dear Sir. Wand shopping won't be the same without you. (sic) David Schneider starred alongside Hurt in 1999's 'You're Dead' and said he was so taken by him he forgot his lines. He wrote: "Sad re John Hurt. I was in a film with him and he was so mesmerizing I kept forgetting to act and just watching him. A genius & lovely



man (sic) 'Lost Boys' star Kiefer Sutherland said: "My deepest sympathies to John Hurt's family friends and fans. He was a dear friend. (sic) Sharon Stone said: "God speed to John Hurt, a legendary and good human being (sic) And 59-year-old screenwriter Richard E. Grant wrote: "So sad to have lost such an extraordinary talent and friend. Sir John Hurt R.I.P. (sic) — Bang Showbiz

‘I Don’t Feel at Home’ wins top prize at Sundance



Macon Blair accepts the award for US Grand Jury Prize: Dramatic, “I Don’t Feel at Home in This World Anymore,” at the 2017 Sundance Film Festival’s Awards Ceremony, Saturday. — www.sltrib.com photo

I Don’t Feel at Home in This World Anymore, a movie long on ambition and longer in title, came away with the top prize as the Sundance Film Festival wrapped Saturday. Starring Elijah Wood, it was announced at its world premiere in the Utah mountains last week as the only festival entrant with a grammatical sentence as its title. “Green Room” actor Macon Blair’s directorial debut is a bloody crime comedy with an escalating body count in the best traditions of Quentin Tarantino, Guy Ritchie, the Coen brothers and Paul Thomas Anderson. The Netflix financed movie co-stars Melanie Lynskey (“Heavenly Creatures”) as a nursing assistant worn down by people’s unkindness who eventually snaps when her house is burglarized.

It won the grand jury prize in Sundance’s “US dramatic competition” section. Dan Sickles and Antonio Santini’s “Dina,” described by critics as a “non-fiction rom-com” won best US documentary. The film follows an eccentric suburban woman and a Walmart door-greeter as they navigate their evolving relationship in an unconventional love story. Many critics have pointed out that this year’s festival was more overtly political than in previous years. Fittingly, Sundance’s awards show opened with a sideways dig at President Donald Trump’s order suspending the arrival of refugees and tough new controls on travelers from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen. Sundance Institute head Keri Putnam told the audience she wanted to “acknowledge the artists from Muslim majority countries who joined us at the festival this year.”

The US dramatic audience award-the second prize to the grand jury award went to Matt Ruskin’s “Crown Heights,” the story of a man fighting to clear his name after being wrongly convicted of a crime. The US documentary directing prize went to Peter Nicks for “The Force”-a portrait of the Oakland police department-while the US documentary audience award went to “Chasing Coral,” which sounds the alarm on the decline of coral reefs. Tarik Saleh’s Swedish thriller “The Nile Hilton Incident” came away with the grand jury prize for world drama while Feras Fayyad’s “Last Men in Aleppo,” about the Syrian conflict, won the world cinema documentary competition.

The Sundance Film Festival founded by actor Robert Redford is considered a showcase for independent and documentary films and festival winners often go on to receive critical acclaim and Hollywood awards season glory. Last year, the crop of movies shown at the festival yielded “Manchester by the Sea,” which is up for six Oscars next month, including best picture and best actor for its star Casey Affleck. “This has been one of the wildest, wackiest and most rewarding festivals in recent memory,” said Sundance director John Cooper. “From a new government to the independently organized Women’s March on Main, to power outages, a cyberattack and snow at record levels, the work of our artists rose above it all and challenged and changed us these last 10 days.” Here is a full list of prizewinners from Saturday’s awards:

US Drama

Grand Jury Prize: “I Don’t Feel at Home in This World Anymore.”
Audience Award: “Crown Heights”
Directing: Eliza Hittman, “Beach Rats”
Waldo Salt Screenwriting Award: Matt Spicer and David Branson Smith, “Ingrid Goes West”
Special Jury Award for Breakthrough Performance: Chante Adams, “Roxanne Roxanne”
Special Jury Award for Breakthrough Director: Maggie Betts, “Novitiate”
Special Jury Award for Cinematography: Daniel Landin, “Yellow Birds”

US Documentary

Grand Jury Prize: “Dina”
Directing: Peter Nicks, “The Force”
Orwell Award: “Icarus”
Audience Award: “Chasing Coral”
Special Jury Award for Editing: Kim Roberts and Emiliano Battista, “Unrest”
Special Jury Award for Editing: Kim Roberts and Emiliano Battista, “Unrest”
Special Jury Award for Storytelling: Yance Ford, “Strong Island”
Special Jury Award for Inspirational Filmmaking: Amanda Lipitz, “Step”
World Cinema Drama
Grand Jury Prize: “The Nile Hilton Incident”
Audience Award: “I Dream in Another Language”
Directing Award: Francis Lee, “God’s Own Country”
Screenwriting: Kirsten Tan, “Pop Aye”
Special Jury Award for Cinematic Visions: Jun Geng, “Free and Easy”
Special Jury Award for Cinematography: Manu Dacosse, “Axolotl Overkill”

World Cinema Documentary

Grand Jury Prize: “Last Men in Aleppo”
Audience Award: “Joshua: Teenager vs Superpower”
Directing Award: Pascale Lamche, “Winnie”
Special Jury Award for Masterful Storytelling: Catherine Bainbridge, Alfonso Maïorana, “Rumble: The Indians Who Rocked the World”
Special Jury Award for Editing: Ramona S Diaz, “Motherland”
Special Jury Award for Cinematography: Rodrigo Trejo Villanueva, “Machines”. — AFP

‘La La Land’ wins PGA best film ahead of Oscars

Dreamy musical “La La Land” took home best movie at the Producers Guild Awards on Saturday, putting it in the box seat for the much-anticipated Oscars next month. The movie beat industry favorites and leading Academy Awards contenders including coming-of-age tale “Moonlight”, stylish alien thriller “Arrival” and visceral family drama “Manchester by the Sea.” Damien Chazelle’s whimsical tribute to Hollywood’s Golden Age of musicals has 14 nominations going into February’s Academy awards, including for best picture, best director and for its two stars, Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone.

Earlier in January it scooped seven awards at the Golden Globes, also considered a dry-run for the Oscars, the climax of Hollywood’s awards season. One of its supporting actors, singer-songwriter John Legend, used the spotlight to call on Americans to stand against President Donald Trump’s immigration policies. “We are the voice, the face of America. Our America is big, it is free and it is open to dreamers of all races, all countries, all religions,” said Legend, 38, who has an Oscar and a collection of Grammys for his song-writing. “Our vision of America is directly antithetical to that of President Trump and I want specifically tonight to reject his vision and affirm that America has to be better than that.”

Legend’s condemnation came after Trump signed a sweeping executive order to suspend the arrival of refugees for at least 120 days and impose tough new controls on travelers from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. Hollywood heavyweights including Robert De Niro, Martin Scorsese, Dustin Hoffman, Casey Affleck, Amy Adams, Justin Timberlake, and Jeff Bridges were at the gala in Beverly Hills. “Zootopia” won best animated picture, while ESPN’s “O.J. Simpson: Made in America” won best documentary.

Consolation

In the TV section, Nicole Kidman gave the first trophy of the night to widely acclaimed “The People v O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story” for its best long-form show. FX’s series, a fictionalized account of the O.J. Simpson 1994 murder case, builds on the nine Emmys it picked up in September. Netflix sensation “Stranger Things” won best episodic drama, a consolation after being shut out at the Golden Globes. “Making a Murderer,” the 10-part story of a man serving a life sentence for murdering a 25-year-old woman, was named best non-fiction show. It became a word-of-mouth sensation for Netflix at the end of 2015, earning the network six Emmy nominations. “Atlanta” followed its two Golden Globe wins with a PGA for best comedy, while “The Voice” took home the award for best competition series.

“Last Week Tonight with John Oliver” bagged best talk or live entertainment show for the second year in a row. The PGA has a solid record of giving top honors to movies that go on to earn best picture honors at the Oscars-although last year’s winner, “The Big Short,” was beaten out by “Spotlight.” “I was asked to define what a producer does recently at a college and I

said, ‘a producer is impervious to rejection,’” “Hacksaw Ridge” producer David Permut, a veteran of some 40 movies, told AFP. “You get ‘no’s all the time, a million ‘no’s, a sea of ‘no’s. All you need is one ‘yes’,-one ‘yes’ from Mel Gibson to direct the movie, one ‘yes’ from Andrew Garfield, one ‘yes’ from Robert Schenkkan to say I love that true story and I want to write it, one ‘yes’ from a financier.” The Oscars ceremony is staged on February 26, hosted by late night funnyman Jimmy Kimmel. — AP



Sarah Paulson



Chrissy Teigen and John Legend



Pharrell Williams and wife Helen Lasichanh



Justin Timberlake attends the 28th Annual Producers Guild Awards at The Beverly Hilton Hotel. — AFP photos



Amanda Peet attends the 28th Annual Producers Guild Awards.

John Legend: America has to be ‘better’ than Trump



John Legend attends the 28th Annual Producers Guild Awards at The Beverly Hilton Hotel on January 28, 2017 in Beverly Hills, California. — AFP

Oscar-winning singer-songwriter John Legend implored Hollywood Saturday to stand against Donald Trump, telling the Producers Guild Awards the Republican president’s political outlook was anti-American. Legend, 38, was at the glitzy ceremony in Beverly Hills to represent the musical “La La Land,” in which he stars opposite Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone. “We are the voice, the face of America. Our America is big, it is free and it is open to dreamers of all races, all countries, all religions,” Legend said as he introduced a clip to Damien Chazelle’s acclaimed movie.

“Our vision of America is directly antithetical to that of President Trump and I want specifically tonight reject his vision and affirm that America has to be better than that.” Legend’s speech came after Trump signed a sweeping executive order to suspend the arrival of refugees for at least 120 days and impose tough new controls on travelers from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen for the next three months. Since then, travelers from those countries have been stopped from boarding US-bound planes, triggering angry protests and detentions at airports.

“This is a film about love, about dreams and about this lovely city we call home, Los Angeles, California,” continued Legend, who has ten Grammys and an Oscar for penning the song “Glory” for the 2014 civil rights movie “Selma.” “Los Angeles is the home of so many immigrants, so many creative people, so many dreamers, and those of us who work in this business have the privilege of shaping how the world perceives this country we love.” Legend said he and his wife were considering not turning up to the awards in solidarity with protesters who have taken to streets and airports against the measure. Instead, he said, he decided to make a donation to the American Civil Liberties Union. “There’s a lot of money and power in this room and I hope you will use it for something good,” Legend added. “Let’s all continue to stand up together for what is right.” — AFP



Nicole Kidman and husband Keith Urban



Dev Patel



Actor Jeff Bridges



Actor/singer Janelle Mon'e

A Paris haute couture collection from conception to catwalk



French fashion designer Franck Sorbier works on a dress.



Models wear creations during Franck Sorbier's Spring-Summer 2017 Haute Couture fashion collection.



French fashion designer Franck Sorbier sews with his sewing machine as he prepares his Spring-Summer 2017 Haute Couture fashion collection, in Paris, Friday, Jan 6, 2017. — AP photos

From the earliest ink sketches to the final touches on this season's stunning floral gowns, Franck Sorbier is one of the last Parisian couturiers to do it all himself. In a celebrity-driven industry dominated by luxury corporations, Sorbier is an eccentric independent, working with his beloved parakeet "Lady" on his shoulder or perched perilously near the electric sewing machine needle. He funds his artistry-driven shows by selling seats to his collections to the general public instead of issuing exclusive invites.

For the diaphanous spring-summer haute couture collection he showed in Paris this week, Sorbier burned the midnight oil with his small atelier team starting in October, as Associated Press photographers followed his creative process from conception to catwalk. To mark the house's 30th birthday, Sorbier was approached by the Mulhouse Museum of Fabric Printing for a collaboration that inspired themes of paper and flowers. "All the flowers here come from real 19th-century photographs and drawings on paper I found in the museum archives," Sorbier told the AP. "These gowns are both historic and utterly modern. The source material is over 100 years old, but the motifs were printed onto organza by a state-of-the-art printing jet. Sorbier began by hand-drawing ideas for the collection's silhouette. Four months of painstaking work snipping, sewing, coffee-drinking, smoking and dressing then culminated in the blink-and-you'll-miss-it 10-minute show.

On Wednesday, the sublime artistry of couture merged with 19th-century organza-laid prints of flowers in Sorbier's diaphanous spring-summer collection in Paris. Onstage, dancer-models in an old theater emerged in large brown paper wraps that were then dramatically torn up into pieces and thrown to the floor. Underneath, sprightly nymph-like gowns in sepia colors appeared and 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 audience marveled and applauded. — AP



Isabelle Tartiere Sorbier, right, and Jin, a seamstress, work on a mannequin.



French fashion designer Franck Sorbier draws his Spring-Summer 2017 Haute Couture fashion collection, in his studio.



French fashion designer Franck Sorbier holds a mannequin with a dress.



Models wear creations by French designer Franck Sorbier as part of his Spring-Summer 2017 Haute Couture fashion collection, in Paris.



French fashion designer Franck Sorbier draws his Spring-Summer 2017 Haute Couture fashion collection.



Drawings of dresses are displayed on a board at the Franck Sorbier's office, during the manufacturing of his Spring-Summer 2017 Haute Couture fashion collection.



A seamstress sews at Franck Sorbier fashion house for his Spring-Summer 2017 Haute Couture collection.



A model is made up the backstage prior to Franck Sorbier's Spring-Summer 2017 Haute Couture fashion collection.



begins flights from Bahrain to Colombo



By Nawara Fattahova

Greenery, warm weather during winter and beautiful beaches can only be found in Sri Lanka, which is becoming a popular tourist destination, especially for tourists from Kuwait. Nature lovers will also find what they desire in this tropical country. Gulf Air launched its maiden flight from Bahrain to Colombo on Jan 19, 2017 with a media delegation onboard. The travel time is four and a half hours from Manama. Gulf Air will operate five weekly flights between Bahrain and Colombo.

As a journalist, I had the opportunity to witness new aircraft landing in Kuwait that were showered with water in a traditional water cannon welcome by fire trucks. But for the first time, I was inside an airplane that was being showered! The delegation was welcomed with flowers by Sri Lankan officials at Colombo airport. There are numerous luxury hotels in the Sri Lankan capital, which is also the biggest city. Our delegation stayed at Cinnamon Lakeside Hotel, which is one of the newest hotels in Colombo. The hotel is not far from the sea, and has a view of a lake.

The trip included sightseeing, dinner and a tour of Mount Lavinia Hotel, which is one of the oldest and most important surviving colonial building in Sri Lanka.

It is one of the few remaining buildings that bear testimony to the legacy left behind by the British during their rule. Unfortunately, the trip was not long enough to experience all that Sri Lanka has to offer, so we couldn't visit the zoo or go on a safari. But we did have a chance to visit Galle, which is one of the major cities of Sri Lanka about 110 km from Colombo. Galle has much more to offer - from history to shopping.



Destination Feature: Colombo

Sri Lanka offers an inquisitive traveler everything from great natural beauty, a treasure trove of cultural artifacts to architectural masterpieces to explore and a diverse and eclectic cuisine to partake in. This small island packs a dazzling array of sights and attractions within its modest boundaries and Gulf Air's flights to the commercial capital and largest city in Sri Lanka, Colombo, provides easy access to "The pearl of the Indian Ocean".

Colombo is home to one of the world's busiest seaports and boasts many attractions, including the Sri Ponnambala Kaneswaram Kovil, one of the city's most important Hindu temples, and the Gangaramaya Temple and museum, one of the city's most famous and iconic Buddhist

centers. Only a few minutes from the center of Colombo is the Pettah market, the city's biggest market space.

Adventurous travelers keen to explore beyond the capital can take one of many available tours (which can be booked on gulfair.com) to obtain further insights into Sri Lanka's history and culture and see its captivating natural beauty. You might fall short of time to visit the country's 800 miles long coastline and golden beaches, its 15 national parks, jungles and abundant wildlife. That's not all, with no fewer than eight UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the Dambulla Cave Temple and the Sigiriya Rock Fortress there's much more historical and cultural interest to be discovered. Below is just an example of what Sri Lanka has to offer:

Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka's first Sinhalese capital. Built in the 3rd century B.C, it contains many ancient palaces, temples and Buddhist monuments.

Mihintale, is a mountain peak that is known as the birthplace of Sri Lankan Buddhism. Here you will find many monasteries, religious caves and a sequence of beautiful shrines.

Sigiriya, a citadel constructed in 471 AD, is perched on the summit of the immense lion rock. Although a challenging climb, those who reach the summit can enjoy a breathtaking view from atop.

Minneriya national park is a home to more than 300 Asian elephants.

Kandy, the last capital of the ancient kings' era of Sri Lanka - this city lies in the midst of hills in

the Kandy plateau, across the tropical tea plantations. It was declared as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988 and is much visited by tourists wanting to experience Sri Lanka's famous tea plantations, witness a manufacturing process that has remained unchanged for over a hundred years, and can enjoy an incredible range of brews.

Cuisine

For Gulf Air's Falcon Gold travelers who enjoyed meals prepared for them by the airline's renowned Sky Chefs onboard, the Sri Lankan capital affords a unique opportunity to feast on a rich, melting-pot cuisine, influenced by its geography by delivering an abundance of flavors.

Kottu roti: The ultimate Sri Lankan street food, kottu roti is a stir-fry featuring pieces of roti (bread) mixed together with finely shredded vegetables or pieces of meat, soya sauce, spices, ginger and garlic.

Lamprais: Originating from a Dutch word that translates as 'a packet of food', this dish is made by the Burgher community, who are descendants of colonial Europeans. It consists of boiled eggs, eggplant, frikkadels (Dutch-style beef balls), mixed meat (soya for vegetarians) and sambol. Infused with cardamom, cloves, cinnamon and rice, the mix is served wrapped in a banana leaf.

Egg hoppers with sambol (appa): Hoppers are the Sri Lankan version of thin pancakes with crispy edges. These crepe-like bowls are made from fermented rice flour, coconut milk, coconut water and sugar. Traditionally, hoppers were cooked at home over coconut-shell embers.



Lifestyle

MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2017

'La La Land' wins
PGA best film
ahead of Oscars

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Members of the Chinese community perform a 'lion dance' in front of a crowd backed by the National Gallery as they celebrate the Chinese Lunar New Year in Trafalgar Square in central London yesterday. The Chinese Lunar New Year on January 28 ushered in the beginning of the Year of Rooster and the beginning of spring. — AFP

Convenience stores become one-stop shop in Taiwan



This picture shows a staff member sorting products at a 7-Eleven convenience store in Taipei. — AFP photos



A customer choosing a box of noodles at a 7-Eleven convenience store in Taipei.



A staff member sorting products at a 7-Eleven convenience store in Taipei.

Borrow library books, buy train tickets, pick up online orders or even eat dinner with friends—Taiwan's expansive network of convenience stores takes the concept to a whole new level. The island of 23 million people is home to the highest density of convenience stores in the world, with more than 10,000 in total—one per 2,300 people. But as the number of physical shops plateaus, the retail chains are turning to alternative ways to keep money rolling in.

As well as selling standard snacks and toiletries, Taiwan's plethora of 7-Elevens and FamilyMarts then moved to serve up hot meals, from steamed buns to soups and stews, day and night. Now they are revamping their dining areas and adding fancier meals to the menu—Japanese ramen, Korean kimchi stew, pesto pasta—complete with calorie labels. FamilyMart, a Japanese chain, has even introduced crossover stores with Taiwanese organic produce vendor Tanhou, selling frozen fish and naturally yeasted breads. But it is by tapping into the island's thriving online retail culture that the ubiquitous stores hope to become the ultimate one-stop shop.

Taiwan's e-commerce market is worth Tw\$1.1 trillion (\$35 billion) and is set to grow another 11 percent this year. However, cash is still most online customers' preferred form of payment and many choose to have their internet orders delivered to convenience stores where they then pay for them. Morning Shop, a popular new online vendor of imported breakfast cereals and granola bars says 85 percent of its sales are settled at convenience stores rather than paid for online. "Doubts over the safety of online payments are still quite high and seen as more troublesome," said the firm's product manager Chris Chen.

The firm has seen its monthly sales surge from Tw\$620,000 (\$19,739) in 2015 to an expected Tw\$30 million within the first quarter this year. Convenience stores are also reaping benefits from the arrangement. They make a slim profit from each transaction and are hoping volume will turn it into a moneyspinner. FamilyMart aims to up e-commerce to 10 percent of its revenue in five years. President Chain Store Corp (PCSC) which owns the Taiwan franchise of US chain 7-

Eleven, says cash payments for online purchases "abolish the non-trust issue". "Taiwan can do this while other countries can't because we're a relatively small island," it said in a statement to AFP.

Plugged in

Convenience stores are also finding a place in the logistics of daily life. The shop chains double as a delivery network, enabling residents to send belongings from one part of the island to the other. Student Lee Yun-hsuan uses them as a postal service when she needs to haul books to and from university. Lee, 20, sends a box of books from a convenience store near her university on Taiwan's east coast to the closest outlet near her home in Taipei.

"Post offices aren't everywhere and they're not always open," she told AFP. They have even linked up with libraries in Taipei so readers can pick up borrowed books at a convenience store of their choice.

Now they want to take things to the next level so shop-

pers can access their services on smartphones. 7-Eleven has introduced the 'iBon' system, with machines installed in most of its shops performing a myriad of functions, including photo printing, purchasing train and concert tickets, or paying parking fines. Taiwanese franchise owner PCSC is working on expanding iBon's reach by turning it into a mobile application. "We want to get to the point where everyone can have an iBon in their pocket," it said. As they ratchet up their tech credentials, residents are increasingly using convenience stores as a catch-all.

Taipei resident Serena Chen, 40, says she goes to a local store at least twice a week, paying her bills over the counter and using photocopying and scanning services. She also has books and magazines ordered online delivered to the stores for pick-up and payment.

But Chen says the shops' more basic offerings—from sugary treats to potato chips—still play their part. "When I was stressed out at my last job I went every day," Chen told AFP. "I needed snacks!" — AFP



A customer operating an iBon machine at a 7-Eleven convenience store in Taipei.



Customers lining up at a 7-Eleven convenience store in Taipei.



A customer checking her smartphone at a 7-Eleven convenience store in Taipei.