

Terminating expat teachers serves greater good: Official



Conway slammed for kneeling on White House sofa



Saudi Aramco inks \$7bn deal for Malaysian oil venture



Durant back as Warriors beat 76ers; James leads Cavs over Bucks



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MPS INSIST ON SCRAPPING POWER, FUEL PRICE HIKES

ASSEMBLY TO STUDY NATIONALITY LAW AMENDMENTS



Min 08°
Max 26°
High Tide 01:14 & 14:05
Low Tide 08:05 & 20:12

MOI STARTS ISSUING NEW E-PASSPORTS

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: Coinciding with the national celebrations, the Ministry of Interior began issuing new electronic passports to Kuwaiti citizens yesterday. This was announced during a press conference held yesterday at the General Department for Residency Affairs. Undersecretary for Passport Affairs Maj Gen Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah said issuance of the new electronic passports is one of the ministry's projects to keep pace with technological developments. "This project aims to provide electronic services to citizens and an electronic passport according to international technical standards," he said.

The new passport has been designed according to the highest safety standards after studying offers from major companies. "The final design of the electronic passport includes a smart chip, the same as the one used in other international passports. A local team from the interior ministry is responsible for programming the smart chip that includes the personal data of the holder including fingerprints and electronic signature, in order to protect the passport. The airport is already equipped with readers for this passport, while the ministry is still placing readers at land ports," added Sheikh Mazen.

The electronic signature and fingerprints are required for those older than 12.

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KUWAIT: (From left) Director of the General Department for Nationality and Passports Brig Yousef Al-Snayin, Undersecretary for Passport Affairs Maj Gen Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah, Director of the General Department of Information Systems Maj Gen Ali Al-Muaiili and Director of the Security Media and Public Relations Department Brig Adel Al-Hashash are seen during a press conference yesterday. — Photo by Joseph Shagra

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MPs said yesterday they will press ahead in passing legislation to scrap recent increases in fuel prices and the planned rise in electricity and water charges despite the government's rejection. MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said the next phase is very critical and there is an urgent need to pass a law to scrap all the increases, especially the hike in petrol prices and the law increasing power and water tariffs.

The Assembly's financial and economic affairs committee approved two weeks ago legislation calling to revert petrol prices to the pre-September increase and nullify the power and water price increase law due to come in force in May this year. The draft law stipulates that the government cannot increase petrol prices without a law from the National Assembly. Power charges are due to increase several-fold if the law passed by the previous pro-government Assembly is allowed to be implemented.

The new comments by Adasani came after reports that the government plans to send a letter to the Assembly stating that its planned action against price hikes is unconstitutional. Adasani said the government must be prevented from financing the budget deficit from the pockets of citizens, and the government must stop squandering public funds first. He said that applying the power and water price hike will sharply increase the prices of most commodities and services, especially in the medical field, local products and many consumer and construction products.

MP Abdulkarim Al-Kandari said a majority of proposals and draft laws sent to the legislative committee by lawmakers are in line with the constitution, adding that the

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SEA PROS
YACHTS

DUBAI INTERNATIONAL BOAT SHOW 2017

28TH FEBRUARY - 4TH MARCH 2017

Dubai International Marine Club - Mina Seyahi - Stand: MD85





KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with Bahraini Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.— KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah receives Bahraini Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.

AMIR MEETS BAHRAINI CROWN PRINCE

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received at Bayan Palace yesterday, in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Bahraini Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa and his accompanying delegation. During the meeting, His Highness the Amir and Bahraini Crown Prince discussed issues pertaining to bilateral relations and means to develop them on all possible domains. Topics of regional and international concerns were also on the table of discussions.

The meeting was attended by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Minister for Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Head of the honorary delegation and Crown Prince Diwan Advisor Nasser Abdullah Al-Roudhan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh, and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs and Acting Minister of Information Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. Later, His Highness the Crown Prince hosted a luncheon banquet in honor of Prince Salman and his delegation.

Upon his arrival to Kuwait, Prince Salman was received at the airport by His Highness Sheikh Nawaf, National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem, Kuwait National Guard (KNG) Deputy Chief Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah, Deputy Prime Minister and defense Minister Sheikh Mohammad Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah, Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah, Anas Al-Saleh and advisor to His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan, Dr Hamoud Mohammad Al-Otaibi. The reception was also attended by Chairman of His Highness the Crown Prince Diwan Sheikh Mubarak Al-Faisal Al-Saud Al-Sabah, Bahraini Ambassador to Kuwait Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Sheikh Azzam Mubarak Al-Sabah. Prince Salman's delegation includes senior officials of the Kingdom of Bahrain. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Children welcome His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Bahraini Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah welcomes Bahraini Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.



KUWAIT: Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Planning and Development Hind Al-Sabeeh welcomes Bahraini Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.



KUWAIT: National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem welcomes Bahraini Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa.



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem along with Malaysia's Speaker of Parliament Pandikar Amin bin Haji. — KUNA

AMIR MEETS MALAYSIAN PARLIAMENT SPEAKER

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received early yesterday at Bayan Palace Speaker of the National Assembly Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem, along with Malaysia's Speaker of Parliament Pandikar Amin bin Haji and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. Earlier yesterday, His Highness the Amir received His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.—KUNA



KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets with His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

KUWAIT EMBASSIES ABROAD CONTINUE TO CELEBRATE NATIONAL OCCASIONS

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti embassies, consulates, and diplomatic missions abroad continued yesterday to celebrate Kuwait's 56th National Day and 26th Liberation Anniversary. Kuwait Embassy in Turkey held a reception to celebrate the occasion, with the attendance of senior officials.

Kuwaiti Ambassador to Ankara Ghassan Al-Zuwawi congratulated His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti leadership, and people on the occasion, wishing further development and prosperity for Kuwait. Meanwhile, Kuwaiti Ambassador in Moscow Abdulaziz Al-Adwani also held a reception attended by Russian officials, Arab and Western diplomats, journalists, religious figures and businesspersons.

Adwani congratulated the Kuwaiti leadership and people on the national days. He noted that Kuwait and Russia enjoyed good relations at the political, economic, trade and investment levels, adding that the two countries have cultural and academic potentials in common. In Nairobi, the Kuwaiti Embassy in Kenya hosted a reception where a number of Kenyan senior officials and Arab, Gulf, and foreign diplomatic missions gathered. Ambassador

Qusay Rashid Al-Farhan conveyed, on behalf of the diplomatic staff, the best wishes to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince and His Highness the Prime Minister as well as all the Kuwaiti people and government on this occasion. He praised the level of bilateral relations between the two countries, hoping that they would witness further promotion and progress.

In Slovakia, Kuwait's Ambassador to the Central European nation Essa Al-Shimali conveyed heartiest congratulations to the people of Kuwait on the joyous occasion. Moreover, the Kuwaiti envoy said that the festivities are an "opportunity to relive acts of valor and solidarity exhibited by the Kuwaiti people during a tumultuous time." He also pointed out that ties between Kuwait and Slovakia have made palpable headway in recent times, citing an impending agreement for economic cooperation to be signed by both nations. Meanwhile, in Lebanon, Kuwait's embassy ushered in the country's national celebrations with a lavish ceremony, where Kuwait's Ambassador to Beirut Abdulal Al-Qanai described bilateral ties as "deep-rooted." The Kuwaiti diplomat spoke of the country's eagerness to support Arab nations, including needy and

impooverished countries, adding that His Highness the Amir rightfully deserves his moniker of 'Humanitarian Leader.' Similarly, Lebanese Minister of Defense Yaqoub Al-Sarraf congratulated Kuwait on its national celebrations, saying that Kuwait has never failed to stand by Lebanon's side, especially, during crises. On ties between Lebanon and Kuwait, Lebanese Interior Minister Nihad Al-Mashnouq said that Kuwait's national celebrations are "near and dear to the hearts of the Lebanese people, who are very thankful for and fond of Kuwait." In Greece, a celebration was held to mark the occasion, where Greek Minister of Economy and Development Dimitrios Papadimitriou was in attendance, along with other senior officials in the Greek Foreign Ministry.

Kuwait's Ambassador to Athens Saud Al-Duwaihi congratulated the Kuwaiti leadership and people on the joyous occasion, wishing Kuwait continued peace, development and prosperity. He underscored that the people of Kuwait are proud of the country's monumental achievements that have resulted in a vibrant democracy, saying that these accomplishments have turned Kuwait into a bastion of peace and security.—KUNA



ANKARA: Officials attend the Kuwaiti embassy's celebration in Turkey.

In Brief

MILITARY COOPERATION

KUWAIT: Kuwaiti Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Khaled Al-Khuder discussed with visiting Major-General Saber Taha Al-Mahayra, Chief of Jordan's manpower and logistics authority, bilateral military cooperation. The two sides also reviewed key subjects of joint interest and ways to enhance relations on all levels, defense ministry said in a press statement. The discussions were attended by Major General Khaled Al-Shemmari, Assistant Chief of Staff for administration and manpower authority, Major General Lafi Al-Azmi, chief of moral guidance and public relations authority, and Jordanian military attache Lieutenant General Mohammad Al-Saheem. — KUN



HEALTH OFFICIALS MEET

CAIRO: The Executive Office of the Arab Health Ministers Council convened yesterday for a meeting chaired by the Kuwaiti Ministry of Health's Assistant Undersecretary for Public Health Dr Majda Al-Qattan. The meeting came a day before the 47th session of the Arab Health Ministers Council, which is set to examine some of the most perennial health challenges. The session's agenda also features a range of health issues that run the gamut from psychological ailments and addiction to efforts to combat AIDS and children's healthcare. — KUNA



SMART GOVT AWARDS

CAIRO: Kuwait's Ministry of Public Works and the Central Agency for Public Tenders won three prizes at the Eighth Smart Government Awards held in Cairo yesterday. The ministry won an award for a smart application providing a geographical map of Kuwait's development projects, and a second one for its 150 emergency application, said ministry engineer Awatef Al-Ghunaim. Meanwhile, undersecretary at the Central Agency for Public Tenders Ayman Al-Sarhan said that the agency won an award for its smartphone application displaying all tenders in a transparent way. — KUNA



Photo

of the day



KUWAIT: A photo taken on February 11, 2017 in Kuwait City shows a general view of a construction site of the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah causeway, one of the largest infrastructure projects to be constructed. Kuwait is building a large causeway to connect the capital city, Kuwait City, with areas located north of Kuwait Bay where mega projects are planned in the future. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat - KUNA

'KFH - SAUDI' PARTICIPATES IN LAUNCH OF SAUDI PARALLEL MARKET

RIYADH: Kuwait Finance House - Saudi Arabia participated in the golden sponsorship of the launch ceremony of the parallel market 'Nomu' at Faisaliya Hotel - Riyadh. Several companies were listed in the parallel market. KFH- Saudi has participated in managing the subscription process in one of the Saudi companies 'Omran Industrial Company'. Several officials were present at KFH - Saudi pavilion including Chairman, Yousuf Al-Saqer and CEO Tariq Al-Rukhaimi in addition to Head of Product Development and Head of Wealth Management Sami Abul-Ruzz and Head of Investment Banking Mohammed Taker Al-Lawzi. Saudi Money Market 'Tadawul' announced the launch of the Parallel Stock Market under the name 'Nomu' on 26th February as part of the money market development plans to achieve the kingdom's vision for the year 2030. The plans reiterated the need to establish an advanced and highly developed and open market worldwide. The market is intended to provide several diversified and highly developed tools, instruments and investment opportunities for all participants and dealers in the money market. KFH- Saudi is considered today as

the fastest growing financial institution in Saudi Arabia. The bank was established as a closed shareholding company with a fully paid up capital SR 500 Million. The bank is registered in the commercial register in Riyadh city. The bank practices its activities as principal undertaking hedging, management, arrangement, consultancy services and a book keeper in the Saudi money market as per a license issued by the Money Market Authority on 5th November 2008. The company commenced its activities on January 23rd, 2010 with a vision to become a leader in the field of Sharia compliant wealth management activities in Saudi Arabia, achieve a significant change in the investment banking sector on both local and regional levels through the adoption of a sharia compliant investment methodology and compliance with the highest integrity, professionalism and distinction standards, thus aiming to establish Sharia compliant financial consultancy services and wealth management services for individual and corporate customers in the area. KFH-Saudi provides high distinctive investment opportunities, remarkable returns and enhanced value for customers.



RIYADH: KFH - Saudi's pavilion at the ceremony.



SERVICE HERO ANNOUNCES KUWAIT'S TOP PERFORMING SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR 2016

KUWAIT: Service Hero, the region's only consumer powered customer satisfaction index, which is also based in Kuwait, revealed the winners of its Customer Satisfaction Index (CSI) for the year 2016, in which Boubyan Bank, Cheesecake Factory and Emirates Airlines snatched the country's top three spots as the best service providers in Kuwait. The winners were announced during a special gala dinner award ceremony at the Address Hotel Dubai Mall, in Dubai, the UAE, in the presence of Majid Saif Al-Ghurair, Chairman of Dubai Chamber of Commerce, and Ron Kaufman, International speaker and bestselling author. The event also saw the announcements of the first ever winners in the same category in the UAE, which completed its first year index with the end of 2016. Kuwait scored a total of 75.4 satisfaction rate across all categories, whereas UAE scored 75.8. The categories the Kuwaiti Index included for this year's index were: CafEs, Casual Dining, Car Service, Clothes, Electronics, Fast Food, Fine Dining, Home Furniture, Islamic Banks, Retail Banks, ISP, Mobile Operators, New Car Sale, Private Hospitals, Health Clubs, Regional Arab Airlines and Supermarkets. Each industry's service providers were measured by more than 350 Kuwait consumers on a 10 point scale across eight service dimensions, namely reliability, speed, product quality, staff quality, value for money, location, call center and website quality. Others winners from within the top ranking within their categories include: Zain in the Mobile Operators and ISP categories,

Chevrolet in Car Sales, Infiniti in Car Services, National Bank of Kuwait in Retail Banks, Home Centre in Furniture, Saveco in Supermarkets, and X-Cite in Electronics. Local brands are seen to be performing as strong as international franchises, as they lead in sectors such as Banking, Healthcare, Supermarkets and Mobile Operators, something which once again emphasizes the importance at which Kuwait companies deal with customer service and the overall customer experience. **Prioritizing efforts** The findings of the customer satisfaction index CSI are crucial in helping businesses prioritize their efforts. Data gathered from customer satisfaction studies provide valuable and accurate information that can help them in assessing the level of service delivered, focus on the dimensions that are more important to customers, and address gaps accordingly. Across all dimensions, reliability and product quality are the most important, having scored more than 25 percent each based on correlation analysis in driving the overall satisfaction. From over 300 brands assessed, only 50 brands scored above 80 on a 100 point scale which suggests exceptional focus on service excellence in these brands. Three companies are winning for the seventh time; these are: Caribou Coffee, The Royale Hayat Hospital and Boubyan Bank. Whereas three brands are awarded first place in their category for the first time in 2017 and these are: Next in the Clothes category, The Cheesecake Factory in the Casual Dining and

Domino's Pizza in the Fast Food category. **Key pillar** Talking at the ceremony, Faten Abu Ghazaleh, President of Service Hero, said: "It is not a surprise that customer service is one of the key pillars to a successful business, however, what I would like to highlight today, is that, with the rise of the social media, and us being online 24/7, we are venturing into a new era, businesses need to multiply their efforts in customer satisfaction, to ensure their customers are happy." "Just think how many people would have heard that someone had a bad experience at X shop in the course of ten minutes. People are snapping, tweeting, and facebooking their experiences all the time. Which means that business in their turn need to be ultra alert, and customer focused. As audience, our opinions and purchasing decisions are highly influenced by what we hear and read both good and bad." Commenting on the significance of the index, Ghurair said: "This consumer-powered index is an important tool for measuring and improving performance and standards within the private sector. By reviewing its findings, we can identify where service gaps and challenges remain and develop the right solutions to address them." Ghurair lauded Service Hero's efforts in launching an initiative that promotes and encourages customer service excellence in the GCC, adding that it serves as a catalyst for boosting the performance and competitiveness of business communities across the region.



Ooredoo staff pose for a group photo.

OOREDOO NAMED ONE OF WORLD'S TOP 50 TELECOMS BRANDS

BRAND VALUE NEARLY QUADRUPLED IN FOUR YEARS

DOHA: Ooredoo is the fastest-growing of any of the major telecoms brands in the region, rising in value 48 percent from 2016-2017 and featuring in the top 50 telecoms brands in the world, according to a new report by leading valuation and strategy consultancy Brand Finance. The news comes as Ooredoo hosts one of its largest and most technologically-advanced product demonstrations at Mobile World Congress 2017 taking place in Barcelona this week.

The report, Telecoms 500 2017, values the brands of operators and infrastructure companies around the world. Brands are first evaluated to determine their strength, based on factors such as marketing investment, familiarity, loyalty, staff satisfaction and corporate reputation, and this is used to determine what proportion of a business's revenue is contributed by the brand. This information is then used to rank the world's 500 most valuable telecoms brands. Ooredoo has risen to become the 47th biggest telecoms brand in 2017, appearing in the top 50 for the first time in its history.

Since beginning the rebranding process in 2013 with a special ceremony at the Mobile World Congress, Ooredoo has rolled the Ooredoo brand out in eight markets in the Middle East, North Africa and Southeast Asia. During that time, its total brand value has grown from less than \$1 billion to more than \$3 billion, propelling it into the top 50.

According to the report, Ooredoo's brand value has consistently increased since the



Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Saud Al Thani, Chairman of Ooredoo

company began its global brand roll-out, which the report calculates as \$ 3.1 billion in 2017. With more than 138 million customers, the Ooredoo brand is becoming one of the most widely-recognised communications brands in the world today.

Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al Thani, Group CEO, Ooredoo, said: "Ooredoo continues to evolve and reach new customers and new markets around the world. We have set our operations



Waleed Al-Sayed, Deputy Group CEO of Ooredoo

the target of becoming data experience leaders across our global footprint, and to enable everyone to enjoy the internet on Ooredoo networks. This report demonstrates the progress we have made to date, and also the incredible momentum of our brand." As part of the Ooredoo brand roll-out, the company executed a major modernization process which has included network investment, customer service revamps and digital content boosts across its markets.

In its pursuit of data experience leadership, Ooredoo has invested in building world-class networks, offering 4G services in eight out of 10 markets and launching 4G+ services in a number of key markets. The company is also testing 5G solutions to sustain Ooredoo's leadership in this area. As a reflection of the success of this strategy, revenue from data increased to 40 per-

cent of Group Revenues in 2016, a new record for the company. Other highlights from the Telecoms 500 2017 report include AT&T overtaking Verizon as the most valuable telecoms brand in the world, and Huawei retaining the top spot in the infrastructure table. The Mobile World Congress 2017 runs until March 2nd in Barcelona, Spain.



A man snaps a photo for Ooredoo's stand.

SEVEN IN 10 PROFESSIONALS IN THE MIDDLE EAST ENJOY WORKING WITH THEIR MANAGERS

DUBAI: A new poll by Bayt.com titled 'Relationships Between Employees and Managers in the Middle East,' revealed what professionals feel about their managers and how much they value their relationships. Nearly seven in 10 (67.9 percent) respondents said that they 'enjoy working with their managers' and that the relationship with their managers has 'improved' (66.5 percent), compared to when they first started their job.

Employee - manager relationship

In the Middle East, professionals generally hold their managers in high regards. Over two thirds (68.8 percent) of employees say their managers are 'one of the main reasons they are loyal to their job'. 44.9 percent of respondents describe their relationship with their manager as 'friendly and productive', 22.2 percent describe it as 'formal and work-centered', and 30 percent describe it as 'balanced and professional'. Only 2.9 percent describe their relationship with their managers as 'unproductive and/or unprofessional'. A key point that was highlighted from the poll was that almost all respondents (93.6 percent) value having a productive and professional relationship with their manager. When it comes to work performance, Bayt.com asked about the importance of having strong relationships with managers. More

than half of respondents (54.5 percent) cited that their work performance highly depends on their direct managers, and almost three quarters of respondents (71.4 percent) said that their direct managers are 'extremely important to their overall career success'. Further, over 8 in 10 respondents (82.1 percent) said that their relationship with their managers affects their happiness at work.

"Employees spend the majority of the working day in the office, so having a healthy relationship with coworkers and managers is essential for optimal performance," said Suhail Masri, Vice President of Employer Solutions, Bayt.com. "Without these relationships employees can feel stressed and neglected and their performance is likely to suffer as a result. At Bayt.com, what we do internally to ensure healthy relationships between employees and their managers is hold monthly mini-appraisals that ensure that the conversation remains open and frank. At the end of every year, we also ask all employees at Bayt.com to rate their managers in an anonymous, 90-questions survey. Our HR team then shares feedback with managers to ensure that they are constantly improving."

What makes a good manager?

According to the Bayt.com poll, over eight



in 10 respondents (82.7 percent) say that their direct managers always encourage them to work on challenging tasks. A similar proportion (83.6 percent) say that their managers care about having a productive and professional relationship with them. When it comes to an open communication policy with managers, three quarters (74.6 percent)

of respondents cited that they have this approach with their current managers.

In order to improve employee relationship with their manager, respondents cited 'taking initiative and providing assistance' (67.5 percent) and 'asking questions and seeking support frequently' (22.9 percent) as the most important areas to improve on. When asked

what managers should avoid that could damage their relationships, respondents cited 'lack of respect' towards employees (27.6 percent) and a 'lack of open and honest communication' (26.7 percent) as the main areas to avoid.

Masri adds: "Managers in the Middle East and North Africa should be aware that employee loyalty is largely affected by the type of relationships they form with employees. As the poll shows, employees value a manager who communicates openly, who encourages employees to work on challenging tasks, and shows care towards their work. Building healthy relationships with employees is an essential task to make organizations more successful and hold stronger employee retention. At Bayt.com, we recommend employers and managers to maintain close contact with their employees and enhance their work dynamics to ensure growth and success."

Data for the 2017 Bayt.com 'Relationships Between Employees and Manager in the Middle East' Poll was collected online from January 13, 2017 to February 20, 2017. Results are based on a sample of 7,932 respondents. Countries that participated are the UAE, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Tunisia, Qatar, KSA, Yemen, and Others.

TERMINATING EXPAT TEACHERS SERVES GREATER GOOD: OFFICIAL PROPOSAL AT PARLIAMENT TO DISCUSS TRAFFIC JAMS

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: The Ministry of Education's Undersecretary Dr Haitham Al-Athari stressed that terminating expatriate teachers from public schools was being done for the greater good and only includes teachers of certain subjects who can be substituted with Kuwaitis already available and awaiting recruitment. Athari added that expatriate teachers who are the children of Kuwaiti mothers and husbands of Kuwaiti women would be exempted from the decision. He also noted that teachers who have children studying in grade 11 would be exempted for one more year until their children finish high school. In addition, responding to pleas made to change specialties to sub-majors so that the teachers could teach other subjects, Athari stressed

that the ministry is only committed to the main specialty.

Aptitude tests

MP Khalil Abul rejected Kuwait University's decision to restrict access to aptitude tests to grade 12 students only, with the excuse of a lack of budget. Abul urged Minister of Education and Minister of Higher Education Dr Mohammad Al-Faris to intervene and undo the decision.

Traffic congestions

MP Osama Al-Shaheen said along with MPs Mohammed Al-Dallal, Jamaan Al-Harbash, Abdullah Fahhad and Abdulwahab Al-Babtain, he filed a proposal to be discussed on March 7 session concerning traffic congestions. Shaheen added that the proposal urged the public facilities'

committee to discuss the issue and come up with both short and long term solutions and to report with recommendations that will be discussed in May. Speaking at a press conference held at the parliament, Shaheen said that Kuwait is ranked fourth worldwide in the number of vehicles per kilometer. "Kuwait is experiencing a real dilemma, and over 85 percent of the road capacity is already used up," he underlined, pointing out that Kuwait's roads capacity is only for 600,000 vehicles, while the actual number is currently 1.6 million.

Priorities

Head of the parliament's priorities committee MP Thamer Al-Sowait said the committee prioritized amending the citizenship and election laws to be discussed on March 7. Sowait added that the committee met three

government bodies to discuss the delay in issuing executive charters of five laws.

Internal auditors

The Cabinet's Secretary General Abdullah Al-Roudhan said reports made by internal auditors at various ministries and government establishments for the fiscal year 2015-2016 showed that prior monitoring had been followed in 51 out of 65 government bodies. Roudhan explained that internal auditors made 451,395 transactions during the same year. He also said that the auditors' body chairman made some recommendations to limit financial violations and mandate government bodies to get Central Tenders Committee, State Audit Bureau, consultant houses committee or any other relevant bodies' prior approval before signing, extending or renewing any contracts.

Kuwait Digest

NOT THE CABINET AND PRIME MINISTER

By Labeed Abdal



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Many columnists have harshly criticized the government and His Highness the Prime Minister as of late. Members of Britain's parliament, the world's oldest, recently criticized the Prime Minister for visiting the new US president, and inviting him to visit Britain. Most of those members criticized Donald Trump's policy towards immigrants and Muslims in general.

Such criticism is staged and both the British and Kuwaiti people know better. Britain has had hundreds of years of democracy, while Kuwait faces challenges with neighbors who still know nothing about democracy.

Generation after generation, people have been calling cabinet members to show more patriotism, but many of them only acted according to the old saying that says 'finders keepers'. This has been the base of endless public fund violations inside and outside Kuwait.

Those violations were innumerable because the looters either had blue jackets, thought they have or even never had any jacket of any color. They just want to join the club. So, they picked their bags and started shopping in a yard of blackmail and biddings to end up taking a first class ticket to the front seats in a state where all acquaintances and loved ones who knew on which side bread is buttered are relaxing, sharing goodies and drinking coffee.

Those columnists seem to have forgotten, or to be pretending to have forgotten, large and small countries that caused both the World Wars. They have no objection to driving us a third, so that they can sell spare parts for the planes and fighters they sell during proxy wars they meticulously planned for. Dear readers, you do know all the sides of these wars and you do have the answers!

MAN SHOTS WIFE DEAD IN TAIMA

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A Saudi national shot his Kuwaiti wife dead at their Taima house yesterday. The woman arrived at Jahra Hospital with fatal gunshot wounds on the head and chest areas. She was already dead when she arrived to the hospital. Police were able to put the man under control, as he was taken in custody and sent to public prosecution for investigations to reveal his motives.

Blood samples

Residency detectives arrested an Asian male nurse for mishandling patients' blood samples. Detectives were approached by an Asian worker who reported that a nurse took a blood sample from him and registered it in the name of a suspect in a criminal case in exchange for money. Based on these information, the nurse was arrested and he confessed to the crime. He further indicated that he committed similar acts in the past. He was sent to concerned authorities to face charges.

Passports terminated

The Interior Ministry's Relations and Security Information Department said unidentified thieves broke into Doha service center and took documents and old passports, nationality certificates and an ATM card, along with other materials. The statement said that validity of the documents was terminated, and there are no new electronic passports among the stolen material. Investigations are underway.



KUWAIT: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri attends the press conference. — KUNA

ELECTRONIC SYSTEM SPEEDS UP ISSUING CONSTRUCTION LICENSES

By Meshaal Al-Enezi

KUWAIT: Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs Mohammed Al-Jabri said yesterday that the electronic system of issuing construction licenses will end the bureaucracy and problems faced while issuing licenses. Speaking to reporters after launching the new service at Mubarak Al-Kabeer municipality branch, Jabri said issuing a construction license used to take a whole month before, but now it will only take an hour through the new system. "This new service will change the bad image people had about the municipality; that it is delaying transactions because of too much bureaucracy," he stressed, adding that the service would be available in other governorates by the end of the year. Jabri said the system was already linked with the Public Authority of Civil Information (PACI) and the ministries of justice and of electricity and water, and will be linked with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry within a month. Kuwait Municipality's Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi also



Kuwait Municipality's Director Ahmed Al-Manfouhi spoke during the visual presentation made to launch the service, noting that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's praise of the municipality has doubled the responsibility on municipality officials.

KUWAIT STRESSES IMPORTANCE OF UNDERMINING IS CYBERSPACE USE

LONDON: Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Development and International Cooperation affairs Ambassador Nasser Al-Sabeeh stressed yesterday the importance of increasing pressure on the so-called Islamic State (IS) and undermining its use of cyberspace.

Sabeeh made his remarks on the sidelines of his participation at the meeting of the Coalition's Communications Working Group to Counter IS in London. It is also important to prevent the terrorist group from gaining new supporters, recruiting fighters, and sending encoded e-messages to conduct terrorist acts, said the Kuwaiti official, who heads Kuwait's delegation at the meeting. Closer cooperation with the international community is essential to blocking IS and other terrorist groups from using the cyberspace entirely, Sabeeh noted.

The increasing danger of terrorism around the world, as well as simplicity



LONDON: Ambassador Nasser Al-Sabeeh attends the meeting of the Coalition's Communications Working Group to Counter IS in London. — KUNA

and easiness of misusing the cyberspace to conduct criminal operations, compel everyone to bear their responsibilities, and reflect the importance of opening communication channels continuously to eliminate terrorism. — KUNA

QATARI, KUWAITI GENERALS MULL OVER JOINT TOPICS

DOHA: Qatari Amiri Guard Commander Major General Hazza bin Khalil Al Shahwani met yesterday with visiting Kuwaiti Amiri Guard Commander Brigadier Fahad Abdulrahman Al Zaid and his accompanying delegation. The meeting came on the sidelines of the joint exercise Gulf Falcon 2 between the Qatari Amiri Guard and the Kuwaiti Amiri Guard, Qatar News Agency (QNA) reported. The exercise will come to close on Wednesday morning. During the meeting, both generals reviewed a set of issues of mutual interest within the framework of promoting bilateral cooperation and exchanging military experience between the two countries, it added. — KUNA

KUWAIT PARTICIPANTS IN INT'L SEMINAR ON VIOLENT EXTREMISM

BRUSSELS: An official at Kuwait Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs participated yesterday in an international seminar about countering cyber violent extremism, held at the European Commission in Brussels.



Khulaf Al-Ohtaina

Khulaf Al-Ohtaina, Assistant Undersecretary for Coordination and International Relations and Hajj, said the seminar discussed European legislations and countering violent extremism via social media. He added that the participants also discussed importance of boosting security coupled with protection of individuals in acquiring information. They also discussed experience of the Arab countries attending the seminar in countering violent extremism, he said. Ohtaina said the objective of

the seminar was to strengthen cooperation between the Arab countries and the European Union in countering violent extremism. He underlined the importance of similar seminars "specially that Islam is a religion of moderation and rejects all forms of extremism.

Ohtaina said the Ministry of Awqaf has been highlighting principle of moderation. The seminar, organized by the European Commission, European Parliament and European Islamic Conference, was attended by officials from France, Germany, Britain, Belgium, Sweden, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, the UAE and Egypt. — KUNA



KUWAIT: The Commercial Bank of Kuwait (CBK) sponsored a campaign organized recently by Kuwait Society for the Protection of Animals and their Habitat (K'S PATH). The campaign was held to spread awareness about environment protection and the importance of plantation projects in Kuwait's desert.

OMAN, KUWAIT EYE CLOSER DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

KUWAIT: Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), Dhofar governorate Abdullah Al-Rawas has stressed the importance of boosting cooperation ties with Kuwait in the field of joint development programs. Rawas made his remarks yesterday on the sidelines of his visit to the country, adding that his visit is part of completing the joint cooperation program between OCCI and the Kuwaiti-based Arab Planning Institute (API), which was signed between the two sides in September 2014.

He called for strengthening the aspects of cooperation and building a long-lasting strategic relation between OCCI and API in the field of human resources training and development, in addition to taking advantage of the Kuwaiti institute's services in capability-building. API has organized a number of training courses and workshops for OCCI in the past period, in addition to offering courses on investment studies, the Omani official noted.

He also pointed out the Omani chamber's ambition for enhancing its human resources, increasing their efficiencies, and boosting their competitive abilities in a way that contributes to creating occupational stability for the Omani citizen. Furthermore, API has long experiences and expertise in the field of human resources training, development, and institutional support, making it an ideal partner for attaining OCCI's vision, Rawas added.

He indicated that such a vision is in line with API's main goals, including enhancing Arab workers' level and quality in public and private sectors through providing them with various training courses. Meanwhile, Rawas commended Kuwait's role in hosting joint Arab institutes, including API, and keenness on bolstering Arab-Arab ties under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. — KUNA

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Crime

Report

UNIONIST BEATEN, BUILDING RAIDED

KUWAIT: Seven people stormed the building of Kuwait Trade Union Federation and beat up its administrative director, then destroyed the contents of his office and stole seals and union papers before escaping. The union's President Nasser Al-Otaibi said that he received a call from the director saying that the thieves forced him to hand over the keys to the offices and drawers at the building after assaulting him physically. The suspects stole documents related to the union's upcoming elections. Police were informed about the incident.



Home robbery

A thief broke into a house in Fahaheel and stole jewelry worth KD 6,200. The family members discovered the robbery after returning home from their chalet. A complaint was filed at the area's police station, and investigations are ongoing.

Fight under control

Thirteen juveniles got into a fight on the national day, using knives and batons to attack each other. Police arrested eight of them and sent them to the juvenile prosecution department. Meanwhile, detectives are looking for the rest.

Smuggling attempt

Airport customs officers arrested an Ethiopian woman for attempting to smuggle one kilogram of qat in a plastic container. She was sent to concerned authorities.

Fugitives at large

The Interior Ministry issued a circular containing the descriptions of two men, Kuwaiti and Syrian, who escaped from a police station located in an Ahmadi governorate area. Meanwhile, Assistant Undersecretary for General Security Major General Ibrahim Al-Tarrah ordered negligence charges to be pressed against a policeman who was assigned to guard the suspects. Ahmadi detectives were given instructions to arrest the two as soon as possible. — Translated from the Arabic press



الجريدة

Al-Jarida

MINISTERS' RESPONSIBILITY

By Mudaffar Abdullah

Many Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states built artificial islands in project that earned them millions of dollars in returns. Meanwhile, we neglect investing in seven natural islands, and waste thousands of job opportunities that could have been provided for Kuwaitis in such investments. The Amiri Diwan recently announced its supervision of building the new Justice Palace (Courts Complex). It had previously supervised other projects like Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center and the Shaheed Park.

This in fact is phenomenally new and a negative indicator about the performance of ministers and ministries that have been devouring much of the state's budget without achieving much. Some undersecretaries are even fighting for more media exposure and to demonstrate achievements that could be done by a director. MP Rakan Al-Nisf was right in inquiring about the supervision on the Amiri Diwan projects after the partial fire at Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center. Constitutionally, ministers can be questioned, and the fire brought about accountability in any future incidents. This phenomena means so much, including the fact

that ministers have become a financial burden to the state budget. They are merely senior officials, but ones who have no real productivity. It also means that ministries have become worthless in terms of development. The best proof to this is the suffocating traffic congestions. Ministers responsible for construction would be extremely embarrassed if asked about their ineffective roles in the process. The people are absolutely right in such inquiries because ministers failed to execute the state's vital projects in time and according to the said cost. The best examples of this are the Jaber Hospital and Shadadiya University.

We often hear about dismissing ministers who fail to do their jobs in neighboring GCC states while our dismissed ministers step down leaving the problems in their ministries unsolved. What can be more hilarious than this? I am talking about the results of the grilling against former information minister Sheikh Salman Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, which talked the issues of sports and media. The cost of reforming ministries is huge and socio-politically painful.

—Translated by Kuwait Times

الجريدة

Al-Jarida

OUR GOVT AND LACK OF COMMITMENT TO LAW

By Abdullah Al-Naibari

The most common topic currently discussed in Kuwaiti diwanias is that of corruption spreading throughout the country, its different forms, subpar performance in government departments and delay in executing various transactions regardless of the amount, registration of documents, construction license, commercial license or even recruitment.

People have been meeting and discussing such topics regularly though it is turning out to be more disgusting than provocative. People have been complaining but nobody is listening. Officials seem to have skins that cannot be pierced. The reason behind this is the government's weakness, its bad selection of cabinet members and being not completely committed to law enforcement.

Before issuing the constitution in 1962, we used to have norms and traditions governing and regulating relations with the people. Those who violated them used to be cast off and punished, like when supplies were stolen during World War II by some employees. They were arrested and led hand-cuffed in a parade through the market to be disgraced. It is even said that when they walked past the late Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah, he stood up and chased after them with his shoe in hand.

Now, after issuing the 1962 constitution, we have turned into a state governed by laws regulating the relation among individuals and among public authorities. The main authority responsible for law enforcement is the executive authority; that is the cabinet under the supervision and monitoring of the legislative authority. It is also the responsibility of the civil community institutions such as the free press and various publications and social media networks.

Unfortunately, due to submission and yielding interests, the government has become a basic player in terms of disrespecting the law. Very few ministers were brave enough to show commitment to the law, such as my colleague Meshari Al-Anjari on phrasing the ministers court law, Adel Al-Sabeeh on the oil tankers' issue, Abdul Aziz Al-Ibrahim in not yielding to MPs' unlawful demands, Abdul Momen Al-Med'ej in rejecting the Capital Markets Authority law's amendments, Ahmad Baqer on referring the wholesale bullies to court and Abdul Rahman Al-Houti on Al-Khairan Project as the largest acquisition process in Kuwait's history.

There might be other names but rarely any minister places their resignation due to violating laws and making the right decisions. Kuwait's real dilemma is the government's lack of respect to the law.

—Translated by Kuwait Times



KUWAIT AIRWAYS CELEBRATES NATIONAL, LIBERATION DAYS WITH TV COMMERCIAL

'SAMANA KUWAITIYA' CELEBRATES NATION'S INDIVIDUAL, COLLECTIVE SPIRIT

KUWAIT: To mark the occasion of both Kuwait's National Day and Liberation Day, falling on 25th and 26th February respectively, Kuwait Airways, the official national carrier of the State of Kuwait, has paid tribute to the nation with a two-minute long TV commercial (TVC) highlighting the source of national pride and inspiration - the indomitable spirit of the Kuwaiti people. The two-minute long TV spot was previewed on Kuwait Airways' YouTube channel (15th February), before debuting on local and regional TV channels the following day.

With a twist on the inspirational maxim that "the sky is the limit", the Kuwait Airways ad has, somewhat understandably, adopted an aviation-related twist with 'Samana Kuwaitiya,' loosely translating as 'the sky is ours!'

Commenting on reasons for the ad, Haneen Al-Fulaij, Head of Strategic Planning, Kuwait Airways, said: "The inspiration for the ad was drawn from the Kuwaiti people themselves. As such, the concept was to take a snapshot of the daily life of four genuine, individual success stories. That is to say, the four Kuwaitis who appear in the ad are not actors; they are four individual Kuwaitis who repre-

sent a cross-section of the nation's individual and collective brilliance and their journey towards success."

Following the storylines of the four Kuwaitis, all of whom have achieved success in their chosen field of work or vocation, the TVC's producers say that by highlighting individuals who demonstrate what is possible, this translates into inspiration for others - the nation as a whole - to feel inspired to achieve further success. This is symbolized nicely, at the end of the TVC, with all of the individuals meeting together at the Kuwait "Opera House" or the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre (JACC) - a proud architectural monument and modern symbol of Kuwait.

The four individuals in the TVC are: Maha Beidoun, a trainee First Officer and the second female commercial pilot to work for Kuwait Airways; Capt. Mohammed Al-Ghareeb, a tennis player who holds the record for the number of times representing Kuwait, in the Davis Cup; Dr Nasser Abulhassan, an architect with a PhD from Harvard, who set up AGI Architecture 10 years ago, with offices in both Kuwait and Madrid, and employs many other Kuwaitis in this field; and Faisal Al-Nashmi, Chef and Restaurateur of 'St. (Street) Al-

Makkan' and 'Table Otto'. Not content to produce a stunningly impactful homage to the Kuwaiti nation, which was filmed on location and courtesy of both JACC and Al-Shaheed Park, Kuwait Airways sought out the prestigious talents of Kuwaiti poet, Bader Boursely, to write the voice over. This, in turn, was delivered in the inimitable tones of Suad Abdullah.

In addition to the two-minute TVC, a shorter, one-minute version was created for social media audiences. Additional material that also can be seen online includes one-on-one interviews with the four individuals who star in the ad; each explaining their own individual journey and how their love for Kuwait was a part of the inspiration that drove their success. With Kuwait Airways enjoying a revival of fortunes, in 2016, it is also clear that the new Kuwait Airways TVC takes on its own view of the success of a nation rising out of the sum of its parts.

The TVC ran from February 15th, continued over the National Day and Liberation days weekend, up until the end of February. The online versions can still be accessed on any of Kuwait Airways' social media platforms, including: YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.





Mosul caught in strange and bloody battle

PHILIPPINES LEADER TO BRING POLICE BACK INTO DRUGS WAR

Page 12

Page 8



ZAWIYAH, Libya: Workers help to recover bodies of some of the 74 migrants who drowned in the Mediterranean trying to reach Europe, after they washed up on a beach near Zawiyah on Libya's northern coast, west of the capital Tripoli. — AFP

MIGRANTS RAPED, BEATEN IN LIBYA 'LIVING HELLHOLES'

MIGRANTS LANGUISH IN UNSANITARY, DISEASE-RIDDEN DETENTION CENTERS

LONDON: Women and children making the dangerous journey to Europe to flee poverty and conflicts in Africa are being beaten, raped and starved in "living hellholes" in Libya, the United Nations children's agency (UNICEF) said yesterday. The Mediterranean Sea between Libya and Italy has become the main crossing point for asylum seekers and economic migrants seeking a better life in Europe, after a clampdown on sea crossings from Turkey.

There were a quarter of a million migrants in Libya as of last September, most of whom languish in unsanitary, disease-ridden detention centers which UNICEF described in its report as "no more than forced labor camps ... and makeshift prisons". Armed groups have taken effective control of official detention centers for migrants amid the political chaos that now reigns in Libya and they also run their own centers, competing and cooperating with criminal gangs and smugglers, according to the United Nations.

"For the thousands of migrant women and children incarcerated, (the centers) were living hellholes where people were held for months," the

UNICEF report said yesterday. In interviews with more than 100 women and children, nearly half said they had been raped or abused several times during their journey, it said. Most of the children said they were beaten by adults along the way, with girls suffering more abuse than boys. "Here (in the detention centre) they treat us like chickens. They beat us, they do not give us good water and good food," said Jon, a 14-year-old boy who travelled alone from Nigeria to escape the militant group Boko Haram. "So many people are dying here, dying from disease, freezing to death," he was quoted as saying in the report.

'Pay as you go'

UNICEF said women and unaccompanied child migrants rely on people smugglers to get to Europe, often under a "pay as you go system", leaving them vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking and violence, including prostitution and rape. Smugglers typically demand thousands of dollars from migrants for a risky journey across the desert before cramming them onto ill-equipped boats for a perilous crossing of the Mediterranean. "The route

is mostly controlled by smugglers, traffickers and other people seeking to prey upon desperate children and women who are simply seeking refuge or a better life," said Afshan Khan, head of UNICEF's refugee operations in Europe. Having largely closed off sea crossings between Turkey and Greece last year, the European Union is searching for ways to stem the flow of migrants from Libya.

This month European leaders offered Libya money and other assistance to try to reduce the numbers departing across the Mediterranean. Aid groups criticized the move, saying such plans exposed migrants to further risks and abuses within Libya. Last year, a record 181,000 migrants crossed between Libya and Italy, the UN's migration agency reports. More than 4,500 people drowned, and at least 700 were children, UNICEF said. "Children should not be forced to put their lives in the hands of smugglers because there are simply no alternatives," said Khan in a statement. "We need to address globally the drivers of migration and work together toward a robust system of safe and legal passage for children on the move, whether refugees or migrants." — Reuters

ALLEGATIONS OF RAMPANT SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT TWO US JEWELERS

WASHINGTON: Hundreds of female employees at two well-known US jewelers are alleging that company leaders fostered a culture of discrimination and frequent sexual harassment, The Washington Post reported Monday. Employees at Kay Jewelers and Jared The Galleria of Jewelry—whose 1,500-some stores dot malls and shopping centers across the United States—say that even the highest level of corporate management, including the CEO of the multibillion-dollar conglomerate that owns the two stores, contributed to the atmosphere.

Around 250 women and men who worked at the conglomerate, called Sterling, are alleging in a private, class-action arbitration case that women were groped, demeaned and urged to sexually cater to their office superiors in return for continued employment or promotions during the late 1990s and 2000s, the Post said. Kay's motto, which accompanies all of its television advertisements, is "Every kiss begins with Kay." Since the arbitration was filed in 2008 by a handful of women, it has swollen to include some 69,000 current and former female employees, many of whom allege they were paid less than male counterparts and passed over for promotions that went to less-experienced men.

Sterling disputes the allegations, but

because the matter is being settled by arbitration rather than in the US court system, little transparency exists as to the details of the still unresolved case. On Sunday, some 1,300 pages of sworn statements—with the names of the accused redacted—were released. However, a 2013 memorandum in which employees' attorneys pushed for class certification reveals that Mark Light, now the chief executive of Sterling's parent company Signet Jewelers, is accused of having sex with employees and promoting of women based on their acquiescence. Light, 54, earned about \$7.4 million in salary, stock and bonuses in fiscal year 2016, the Post reported.

Some of the biggest complaints stemmed from yearly managers meetings, described as a mandatory "sex-fest" where women were aggressively chased down, groped and harassed. One woman described how in 2005 a district manager told her he would transfer her to a better store if she had sex with him, and she complied. "Looking back, I can't believe I did some of the things I had to do," Heather Ballou, 41, told the paper. "You suck it up and do what you have to do for your family. You need this job." Many employees who reported abuse on an internal hotline soon found themselves without jobs, the Post said. — AFP

TRUMP'S WHITE HOUSE TAKES ON ENTRENCHED PRACTICE OF 'LEAKS'

NEW YORK: When White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer wanted to crack down on leaks last week, he collected his aides' cell phones to check for communication with reporters. The crack-down quickly leaked. President Donald Trump now says he probably would have handled the situation differently, meeting with staff one-on-one instead - but perhaps still demanding to look

at their phones. "I mean, you know, there are things you can do that are a hell of a lot worse than that, I'll be honest with you," Trump told "Fox & Friends" in an interview aired yesterday.

Trump denied that there was a "major leak process" at the White House. So who did it? "We have sort of ideas," Trump said. "But don't forget, we have people from other campaigns, we have

people from other governments. We've got a lot of people here." Spicer's losing round in Washington's perpetual game of information Whack-a-mole was hardly a surprise.

In trying to plug leaks from anonymous sources, President Donald Trump and his aides are going after one of the most entrenched practices in Washington politics and journalism, an exercise that has exposed corruption, fueled scandals and spread gossip for decades. But the practice has created several headaches for the new president, leading Trump, just weeks into his presidency, to publicly vow to try to punish "low-life leakers" in his own administration. "Let their name be put out there," Trump said before the Conservative Political Action Conference on Friday, accusing reporters of making up anonymous sources and stories.

Horrible human being

He declared reporters shouldn't be allowed to use sources "unless they use somebody's name." "A source says that Donald Trump is a horrible, horrible human being! Let 'em say it to my face." But Trump's administration has not been practicing what the boss preached. Despite the president's anger about unnamed sources, White House budget officials insisted on anonymity Monday as they outlined details of Trump's spending plans to reporters on a conference call. The budget officials ignored requests to put the briefing on the record. — AP



WASHINGTON: Photo shows the J. Edgar Hoover Building, headquarters for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), in Washington, DC. — AFP

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TO SECURE MOSUL, TROOPS MAKE DESERT PUSH WITH US HELP

TALUL AL-ATSHANA: Much of the fighting for west Mosul will be at close quarters, but Iraq's battle against the Islamic State group is also being waged in the open desert. On a dusty ridge west of Iraq's second city, the army's 9th Division is advancing through exposed territory in a push to sever the road between west Mosul and the IS-held town of Tal Afar.

The main route from Tal Afar to IS-held territory in Syria has already been cut, but severing the road from the town to Mosul will prevent the jihadists from resupplying or retreating as they come under pressure from Iraqi forces advancing from the south. The fight is not an easy one, says the division's commander, Staff Lieutenant General Qassem Al-Maliki. "The progress is slow, honestly," he said. "The problem is one of terrain, not the enemy. It seems easy, but it's exposed and there are no roads. Everywhere we move the bulldozers have to go ahead to make a path for us."

As he spoke, army forces illustrated his point as they moved across the plain below. The seemingly endless convoy of tank and armored vehicles crawled slowly across the open desert behind a bulldozer, throwing up a massive plume of dust. The 9th Division's position in Talul al-Atshan is one of the highest points in Nineveh province,

and would ordinarily provide them with a view across Mosul and the plain around it. But on Monday, the view gradually disappeared behind a thick haze of grey-black smoke rising from fires set by IS to stymie attack helicopters and warplanes.

Post-apocalyptic scene

The tactic rendered the landscape post-apocalyptic, with only the highest points in Mosul—a white water tank, the tip of an electricity pylon—still visible above the smog. "They want to hide from us by burning oil and creating this smoke," said Maliki. On a red plastic chair perched on the ridge edge sat Brigadier General Abdulrazzaq, working two walkie-talkies to coordinate strikes from helicopters overhead. Sporting a blue baseball cap and aviator sunglasses, he smiled mischievously as he received calls and offered encouragement to pilots.

"Get on with it you hero, give me a good result," he urged one pilot after calling in coordinates for a strike on a group of suspected IS fighters. He declined to give his family name, concerned like many in the Iraqi security forces about the safety of relatives. A call came in on the smaller of his walkie-talkies: "There's a group of fighters behind the convoy, we need them dealt with," the voice says. "Okay, okay," he replied,



MOSUL: A convoy of tanks and armored vehicles of the Iraqi army's 34th brigade advances near Talul Al-Atshana, on the southwestern outskirts of Mosul, during an offensive to retake the city from Islamic State (IS) group fighters. — AFP

picking up his second device and relaying coordinates before watching to observe the attack helicopter fire. "Give me the result, you hero," he said. "Seven dead, all fighters," came the reply.

Maliki said his forces had advanced

some 13 kilometers in the past six days, capturing 10 villages and a power plant from IS as they moved. He estimated it would take another few days to reach and secure the Tal Afar-Mosul road. Close at hand were a team of US troops, part of the

"advice and assist" unit operating alongside the 9th Division. "Wherever I go they're with me, there's continuous coordination," said Maliki, adding Iraqi personnel were also embedded with the US-led coalition against IS to guide strikes.

US Lieutenant Colonel James Browning said his forces had been assisting Iraqi troops for nearly two months, including during the earlier phase of the operation to capture east Mosul. "Our job here is to ensure that the 9th Division commander has the full capability of the coalition at his side," he said. "Everything from intelligence to a lethal capability as well as an observation platform, that way he can see the battlefield a little bit better... understanding where his forces are at and understanding where the battlefield is at."

The Pentagon says around 450 US military advisers are currently assisting Iraqi partners in the fight for Mosul, performing roles including providing guidance and calling in air strikes. But US forces have been involved in firefights with the jihadists, a spokesman acknowledged this month. Browning said the operation faced challenges including "gaps in intelligence" but praised the Iraqi army's "vigor and... willingness to fight." "The steel that they have within them... it's incredible," he said. — AFP

News

in brief

Burkina jihadists claim attack on police posts

OUAGADOUGOU: A night attack on two police posts in Burkina Faso was claimed by jihadists who killed 12 soldiers in the area in December, a senior official said yesterday. There were no deaths in the raids, which happened late on Monday, but a woman police officer was injured, Mohamed Dah, the top official of the Soum region near Mali said. The attack coincided with Africa's biggest film festival Fespaco, which is being held in the capital Ouagadougou with tight security in place. Dah said the assailants, who were travelling by motorbike, attacked police posts in two villages. In Tongomayel, they "torched the police station" leaving a poster in Arabic in the name of the Ansarul Islam jihadist group. In Baraboule, they sprayed the police station with bullets and stole two computers from an adjoining government office, he said. Ansarul Islam claimed the December 16 attack on an army squad near the Malian border in what was the deadliest-ever assault on the military.

Municipal elections in West Bank 'only'

RAMALLAH: Palestinian local elections scheduled for May will take place in the West Bank only and not in Gaza, the government announced yesterday, scuppering hopes of the first vote in both territories in a decade. The Palestinian Authority, run by President Mahmud Abbas's Fatah party, sits in Ramallah in the occupied West Bank, while the Islamist Hamas movement controls Gaza. The rival parties have not competed in an election since parliamentary polls in 2006, which Hamas won—sparking a conflict that led to near civil war in Gaza the following year. "We will hold the municipal elections in the West Bank on May 13 and postpone them in the Gaza Strip," Tarek Rishmawi, spokesman for the government in Ramallah said. He did not give a date for elections in Gaza. Civil society organizations had attempted to find a way to hold the elections in both territories simultaneously.



OFRA: Israeli police forces arrive to evacuate Israeli supporters of settlements in the settlement of Ofra in the occupied West Bank. — AFP

Israel removes settlers from homes on Palestinian land

OFRA: Israeli police began removing settlers and hundreds of supporters yesterday from nine houses built illegally on privately owned Palestinian land in the occupied West Bank. Police carried some of the settlers and protesters out of the red-roofed structures in the settlement of Ofra, while others walked out, escorted by officers. Israel's Supreme Court has ordered the demolition of nine buildings in the settlement of more than 3,000 people after finding that those homes were constructed on land where Palestinians proved ownership. Such judicial rulings upholding Palestinian property rights have riled Israel's right-wing, as it promotes plans to expand construction in settlements built on occupied territory. Palestinians seek for a state. In one home in Ofra, police and protesters, mainly youths, linked arms and swayed in prayer before the youngsters, offering passive resistance, were taken outside.

Bangladesh starts census for Rohingya's relocation

DHAKA: Bangladesh authorities have begun a census of Rohingya refugees living in the country's southeast as part of a controversial move to relocate them to an uninhabited island, officials said yesterday. The government statistics officers fanned out in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar district to count the number of refugees who have fled persecution in Rakhine state in neighboring Myanmar. "Initially we'll make a list of families of Myanmar nationals who are living in the camps and outside, then we'll do the head count," said Wahidur Rahman, an official of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics. He said the government's plan to relocate the Rohingya population to Thengar Char island in the Bay of Bengal "is one of the key reasons for the census". Ali Hossain, the chief administrator of Cox's Bazar, said the census would take at least three months and "will benefit the government's (relocation) initiative".



MOSUL: Members of the Iraqi army's 9th Division fire a multiple rocket launcher from a hill in Talul Al-Atshana, on the southwestern outskirts of Mosul. — AFP

MOSUL CAUGHT IN STRANGE, TERRIFYING, BLOODY BATTLE

IS SNIPERS SET HOMES ABLAZE TO CREATE SMOKESCREENS

MOSUL: The families cowered in basements, huddling in the dark as war raged overhead between Iraqi forces and Islamic State militants fighting for control of the streets of Mosul. Above ground, soldiers from Iraq's Rapid Response division move from house to house through the same openings Islamic State militants smashed through the walls in preparation to defend their last remaining stronghold in the city's west.

The passageway led them through living rooms and gardens, into a kitchen with a pot of lentil soup on the counter — the scenes of domesticity highlighting the chaos of war that is intensifying as Iraqi forces advance. "It's strange and terrifying," said a young woman who was barely visible in the gloom of a basement under her house in the Josaq district, where she went into hiding after giving birth to a baby girl 72 days ago. "I rarely go upstairs."

Iraqi forces advanced quickly in the early stages of the offensive to recapture Mosul's western half, retaking the airport and piercing Islamic State defenses around the city within days. Now they are encountering tougher resistance as they push into residential districts where as many as 750,000 civilians are essentially trapped. If they defeat Islamic State in Mosul that would crush the Iraq wing of the caliphate its leader Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi declared in 2014 over parts of Iraq and neighboring Syria.

Fighters battle to the end

The Iraqi soldiers climbed through a hole in the wall of a garden strewn with ripe oranges and shattered glass, and emerged to find an Islamic State fighter lying flat on his back where he had been killed by Iraqi forces. Lt Colonel Abdel Amir Al-Mohammadawi went through the dead man's pockets after making sure he was not wearing a suicide belt, and pulled out a small address book containing telephone numbers of other fighters, and a contact for "Islamic Police". "He's not Iraqi. He's probably not an Arab," said Mohammadawi, judging the man by his appearance and imperfect spelling. "The closer we get to the centre, the more we come up against the foreigners."

Unlike Iraqi militants who can blend in with civilians and possibly slip through the net of security forces, foreign fighters have no escape and will therefore fight to the end. Mohammadawi said: "They don't flee like the locals". There are noticeably more foreign militants in the western half of the city than the east, which Iraqi forces cleared one month ago after 100 days of fighting, Mohammadawi added. After losing the east, Islamic State militants prepared for battle in the west, knocking holes through the walls and expelling residents whose homes offered a vantage from which to fire at advancing Iraqi forces.

At one point, the passage led into an empty hall where a motorcycle was parked. Evidently it had been used by the militants because there was a prayer mat in the plastic crate attached to the back, the soldiers said. "Search upstairs!," Mohammadawi ordered, sending two men up the stairs, gun barrels first, to make sure no militants were hiding there. Also found were paper slips granting Islamic State members leave for short periods of no longer than a day, which one officer said indicated they had no time or manpower to spare.

Civilians hide in basements

The densely populated terrain is already proving a challenge. Mohammadawi said Rapid Response forces had been forced to pause their advance in Josaq on Sunday because five Islamic State snipers were hiding among civilians. A tactical unit had then killed the militants in an overnight raid, Mohammadawi said, clearing the way for Rapid Response forces to reach the first of five bridges that straddle the River Tigris bisecting Mosul. As the sounds of artillery and small arms fire reverberated, a group of civilians came running across the street towards Iraqi forces, the

women weeping in fear. The soldiers corralled them into a house where the women went down to the basement.

The women described how the militants had set the upper floors of their homes ablaze to create a smokescreen against coalition aircraft. Mahmoud, who was amongst the group, escaped after secretly contacting the commander in the area, keeping his phone on silent so the ring tone would not give him away to Islamic State militants. But his brother stayed behind. "Brother, get out," Mahmoud said urgently over the phone to his brother. "It's better. Get your stuff together. Protect your children. No inch is safe." — Reuters

JEWISH CENTERS REPORT WAVE OF BOMB THREATS

NEW YORK: Jewish community centers and schools in at least 13 US states reported receiving bomb threats on Monday, the fifth wave of such threats this year that have stoked fears of a resurgence of anti-Semitism. The threats, all of which appeared to be hoaxes, were received in Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Virginia, the JCC Association of North America said. For some centers, it was the second or third time this year they had been targeted.

Police in Mercer Island, Washington, also reported a community center was targeted by a bomb threat. "Members of our community must see swift and concerted action from federal officials to identify and capture the perpetrator or perpetrators who are trying to instill anxiety and fear in our communities," David Posner, a director at the JCC Association, said in a statement. The San Francisco office of the Anti-Defamation League, a watchdog group that monitors hate groups, received a bomb threat and was evacuated while police investigated, the Anti-Defamation League said in a statement.

Jewish groups, President Donald Trump and Israeli officials have condemned the surge in disruptive intimidation, as well as the vandalism of Jewish cemeteries. Police said on Sunday about 100 headstones had been toppled at a Jewish cemetery in Philadelphia, about a week after a Jewish cemetery in St Louis was vandalized. White House spokesman Sean Spicer raised the subject at a news briefing on Monday. "The president continues to condemn these and any other forms of anti-Semitic and hateful acts in the strongest terms," he told reporters, saying they were in breach of the country's founding principles. The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Justice Department's civil rights division have said they are investigating the threats alongside police, but little information has been made public about any perpetrators.

The Charles E Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville, Maryland, and the Gasher Jewish Day School in Fairfax, Virginia, also received telephoned bomb threats, the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington said. Police later gave the



LAS VEGAS: Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department K-9 officers search the Jewish Community Center of Southern Nevada after an employee received a suspicious phone call that led about 10 people to evacuate the building. — AFP

all clear. The JCC Association said there were 21 incidents of bomb threats called in to 13 JCCs and eight Jewish day schools on Monday. Some Jewish groups see the vandalism and threats as a sign that anti-Semitic groups have been emboldened by Trump's election. His campaign last year drew the support of white supremacists and other right-wing groups, despite his disavowals of them. — Reuters

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HIDING IN SWAMPS, SUDANESE EAT LITTLE MORE THAN LILIES

LEER: Thousands of people at the epicenter of a man-made famine in South Sudan emerged from the safety of the swamps this past weekend hoping to receive emergency deliveries of food. For months now Bol Mol, a 45-year-old former oil field security officer, has struggled to keep his family alive, spearfishing in nearby rivers and marshes while his three wives gather water lilies for food. They eat once a day if they are lucky, but at least in the swamps they are safe from marauding soldiers. "Life here is useless," Mol said, his hand clutching his walking stick as he waited with thousands of others beneath the baking-hot sun at Thonyor in Leer County.

Aid agencies have negotiated with the government and rebel forces to establish a registration centre in the village ahead of food deliveries. The UN declared a famine in parts of South Sudan a week ago, but the hunger affecting an estimated 100,000 people is not being caused by adverse climate conditions. More than three years of conflict have disrupted farming, destroyed food stores and forced people to flee recurring attacks. Food shipments have been deliberately blocked and aid workers have been targeted.

'It is not enough'

It is no coincidence that soaring levels of malnutrition have been found in Leer, a rebel stronghold and the birthplace of opposition leader Riek Machar, whose falling out with President Salva Kiir in December 2013 led to the civil war. Evidence of the devastating conflict is everywhere: in the burnt walls of schools and clinics, in the ruins of razed homes and public buildings, and in the desolation of the once-thriving market. A peace deal signed in August 2015



AL-ELIGAT: South Sudanese refugees are seen at a 'Refugee Waiting Centre' in Al-Eligat area along the border in Sudan's White Nile state. — AFP

was never fully implemented. As recently as December the members of yet another 56,000 households were forced to flee to the safety of the swamps when yet another government offensive reached the area. The constant need to escape the war means people are unable to plant or harvest crops, and their livestock is often looted by armed men.

With their livelihoods destroyed, people are

reduced to gathering wild plants, hunting and waiting for emergency food supplies that come too rarely and are frequently inadequate. "It is not enough," Mol said as he waited to register for the next food delivery. The fighting and the fleeing have interrupted all aspects of life: Mol said his children had not gone to school for the last three years. "Right now the majority of the people are living in the swamps. If you go

there and see the children you can even cry, the situation is too bad," he said.

Nyangan Chuol, 30, keeps her five children alive with aid agency rations of sorghum supplemented with lilies, coconuts and sometimes fish. "Before the conflict I lived here in Thonyor but had to move far away to the islands in the swamp for safety," she said. This weekend's registration for food deliveries had drawn her back. Outside the famine's epicenter in the northern Unity State, there are nearly five million people who also need food handouts, mostly in areas where the fighting has been fiercest. "The biggest issue has been insecurity in some of these areas which makes it very difficult to access," said George Fominien of the World Food Program (WFP).

Too late for some

Aid workers warn that by the time a famine is declared it is already too late for some, but the declaration has put pressure on the government to open up access, at least for now, and international aid agencies are ratcheting up their efforts. Ray Ngwen Chek, a 32-year-old waiting for food, said the situation had steadily worsened over the years. "Since 2013 we have planted no crops, nothing, we just stay like this. You don't know what you will survive on tomorrow," he said. Hospitals and schools are shut, Chek said, and children, surrounded by conflict and with no other options, "are practicing how to carry guns" instead of learning for the future. Betrayed and neglected by the country's leaders, the people of Leer struggle to hold out hope for a political solution that would end the conflict. But Chek is certain of one thing: "Fighting is not a solution." — AFP



AL-ELIGAT: South Sudanese refugees are seen at a 'Refugee Waiting Centre' in Al-Eligat area along the border in Sudan's White Nile state. The centre hosts refugees fleeing famine and fighting in South Sudan and later transports them to permanent camps in several areas of Sudan. — AFP

DYING OF HUNGER: WHAT IS FAMINE?

NAIROBI: From ancient Rome to modern times, mankind has suffered devastating periods of hunger caused by drought, war or misguided politics. Last week South Sudan was declared the site of the world's first famine in six years, affecting about 100,000 people. Here is an exploration of a term that evokes the very worst of human suffering.

What is a famine?

"Famine is not a word that we use lightly," said Erminio Sacco, a food security expert with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO). Since 2007 the term has been employed according to a scientific system agreed upon by global agencies, as the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) scale. According to the IPC scale, famine exists when at least 20 percent of the population in a specific area has extremely limited access to basic food; acute malnutrition exceeds 30 percent; and the death rate exceeds two per 10,000 people per day for the entire population. "This scientific methodology helps to avoid famine becoming a term misused for political reasons," Sacco said.

Where have famines occurred?

Over the last century, famines hit China, the Soviet Union, Iran and Cambodia, often the result of human actions. Europe suffered several famines in the Middle Ages, but its most recent were during World War I and II, where parts of Germany, Poland and The Netherlands were left starving under military blockades. In Africa there have been several famines in recent decades, from Biafra in Nigeria in the 1970s to the 1983-1985 Ethiopian famine, which ushered in a new form of celebrity fundraising and unprecedented media attention on the suffering. The last famine in the world was in Somalia in 2011, which killed an estimated 260,000 people.

Why are there still famines?

While South Sudan is officially experiencing famine, the UN has warned that Nigeria, Somalia and Yemen are all on the verge of the classification, which could affect more than 20 million

people. "The common denominator is protracted armed conflict and its negative impact on access to food, farming and livestock production... livelihoods, trade and, not least, humanitarian delivery," Sacco said. Of the four famine alerts, only one—Somalia—is caused by drought, while the other three stem from conflicts.

Life under famine

In South Sudan, people have gone through cycles of displacement over the past three years which have driven many of them to hide in swamps, having lost their homes, crops and livestock. With nothing else available, they spend days foraging for wild foods such as water lily roots, fruit or fish, Sacco said. They also spend days walking in search of food aid through areas controlled by armed groups. "They are extremely weak, hungry, and drink unsafe water from ponds and rivers," he said. Cholera is a constant threat.

Dying of hunger

When lack of food has led to an 18 percent loss of weight, the body starts undergoing physiological disturbances, according to a 1997 study of hunger strikes published in the British Medical Journal. "The body metabolism gets increasingly dysfunctional, impacting the brain and other vital organs. At that point, therapeutic feeding treatment is necessary to save their lives, as the body has lost the ability to process normal foods," Sacco said. When people have insufficient food over several weeks, it leads to organ failure and eventually death.

Long-term impacts

Even without reaching famine, parts of the Sahel, Somalia and Ethiopia go through regular cycles of hunger that have long-term social consequences. "The biological damage erodes the physical well-being of entire generations of children and their development potential, possibly resulting in a weak workforce and retarded students," Sacco said. Hunger leads to stunted growth and impacts cognitive development, and can lead to poor health throughout a person's life. — AFP

UKIP ROWS DEEPEN

FARAGE CALLS FOR ONLY MP TO LEAVE

LONDON: Bitter tensions in Britain's anti-EU UK Independence Party (UKIP) turned into open war yesterday as founder Nigel Farage called for its only member of parliament to quit. Farage said Douglas Carswell "actively and transparently seeks to damage us", writing in the rightwing Daily Telegraph: "The time for him to go is now." A key force behind Britain's vote to leave the EU last year, the party has been struggling for months with infighting and has failed to find a winning platform beyond its core message of euroscepticism and opposition to mass immigration. A long-standing feud between Farage and Carswell came to a head following UKIP's defeat last week in a by-election that had been viewed as the party's best hope to win a second MP.

Tensions increased over Farage's failed bid to obtain a knighthood for his role in the June referendum vote to leave the European Union. Emails leaked to the Telegraph show Carswell mocked Farage's chances of receiving the honor, saying he should get an award for "services to headline writers". Farage told the paper that the former Conservative MP had not been supportive, adding: "He is consumed by jealousy and a desire to hurt both UKIP and me." The row comes after UKIP donor Arron Banks accused the party at the weekend of being run "like a jumble sale" under new leader Paul Nuttall and threatened to set up a rival movement if it did not shape up.

'Make it electable'

The Brexit vote was a success for UKIP but raised questions about the party's relevance after Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May promised a clean break with the EU. Farage resigned as UKIP leader after the referendum and went to the United States to campaign for Donald Trump, but was forced to return as the party descended into chaos. His successor Diane James quit after 18 days, and the favorite to follow her, Steven Woolfe, left the party after an altercation with a



LONDON: Former UK Independence Party leader Nigel Farage speaks during a press conference in central London on the impact of Brexit on the fisheries industry yesterday. — AP

new leader Nuttall saw a chance to revive UKIP's fortunes by standing in last week's by-election in Stoke-on-Trent in northern England, where 69 percent of locals had voted for Brexit. But his campaign was dogged by claims he lied about losing close friends in the 1989 Hillsborough football stadium disaster, and the opposition Labor party held the seat. In an interview with the conservative Sunday Express newspaper, Banks demanded to be made chairman of the party so he could "make it electable, or I am out of there". He called for Carswell to be ejected, saying "these dullards aren't bringing in Tory votes, Stoke proved that. So what are they for?"

Farage suggested last week that UKIP lost in Stoke because it was not tough enough on immigration, an issue that dominated the EU referendum campaign. Yesterday, the MEP accused Carswell of being soft on the subject, adding: "I think there is little future for UKIP with him staying inside this party." Carswell responded saying: "If he wants to come and talk to the UKIP parliamentary party about any concerns he has, (it is) very happy to respond. It won't take long, it's just me." UKIP secured 12.5 percent of the vote in the 2015 election, but under Britain's electoral system, Carswell was its only candidate to win a place in the 650-seat House of Commons. — AFP

GAMBIANS SEEK JUSTICE FOR 'THE DISAPPEARED'

POLICE OPEN NEW PROBES AFTER JAMMEH'S EXIT

BANJUL: When Gambian intelligence officers arrested journalist Ebrima Manneh at his newspaper, he asked an office guard to save some tea. "I'm coming right back," he said, according to colleague Alhagie Jobe, who was present in the newsroom. That was on the afternoon of July 11, 2006; since then, neither his colleagues at the Daily Observer nor his family have seen him again. Rights groups say Manneh is one of dozens of Gambians who disappeared without trace during the 22-year-rule of president Yahya Jammeh, which ended last month when he fled the country.

Relatives have tried in vain for a decade to find the journalist, nicknamed "Chief" although he held no traditional title. Now they believe he is dead and, like a growing number of Gambians, say they are seeking justice. "I want the new government to take action and prosecute whosoever had a hand in my brother's disappearance," said his sister Adama Manneh, a police officer, wearing a T-shirt bearing her brother's face that read: "Where is Chief Manneh?" Ebrima's brother Lamin said he hoped at least to recover the body.

Some families hope to gather evidence for a case against Jammeh - who quit under international pressure after losing an election in December - for human rights abuses, including unlawful detention, torture and murder of perceived opponents, charges his supporters deny. Attempts by Reuters to reach Jammeh for comment in Equatorial Guinea, where he fled, were unsuccessful. Rights officials say building a case could be tough. Another African ex-leader, former Chadian president Hissene Habre, was jailed for life last year for crimes against humanity, more than a quarter century after his overthrow.

Habre was convicted by a court in Senegal with the help of incriminating documents, but rights officials say any hard evidence against Jammeh is lacking so far. Another complication is that Equatorial Guinea has no extradition treaty with

Gambia. Many Gambians dream of bringing Jammeh before the International Criminal Court, which has put former Ivory Coast president Laurent Gbagbo on trial.

While Jammeh fled before fulfilling a pledge to withdraw Gambia from the ICC, Equatorial Guinea has never been a member of the Hague-based court and would be unlikely to hand him over. Still, police in Gambia have promised to investigate cases of at least 30 people so far reported as missing or killed since Jammeh seized power in 1994, among them journalists, businessmen and soldiers. Several senior officials have been arrested including the former prison boss, interior minister and spy chief who was charged with murder last week. Gambia's new President Adama Barrow has promised a UN-backed truth and reconciliation commission into past crimes which also include alleged torture.

Chronicle of the disappeared

Manneh was 28 when the intelligence officers came to call at the Daily Observer's offices in the capital, Banjul. On various occasions, Jammeh and his officials told reporters he was dead, had fled the country and had "stage-managed" his disappearance, according to an annual human rights report published in 2012 by the US State Department. The family still do not know the reason for his arrest, though colleagues suspect it may have been related to comments he wrote about the former president.

Adding to the mystery, Manneh called his mother immediately after his arrest, asking her to fetch his bag from the office. Manneh had said he was planning a trip abroad and would not be able to get it himself, his mother Sulay Ceesay said. Three days later, on July 14, Manneh's sister discovered his passport in the bag.

"I said to myself: 'Chief did not travel, he is in town,'" said Adama. The search began but family members were unable to find out where he was taken after the local police station. Two witnesses

said they spotted him on separate occasions in hospital in 2007 looking sickly, but Adama said officials prevented her from visiting him at the time.

When Adama made inquiries within the police force, her superiors warned that she too risked arrest. In 2007, the Media Foundation for West Africa, an NGO, brought a legal action against the Gambian government at the Community Court of Justice, a body set up by the ECOWAS group of West African states.

The government lodged no defence and failed to show up for the case. The Nigerian-based regional court ruled in 2008 that Gambia had violated Manneh's human rights. It ordered the government to free him and pay the family \$100,000. The compensation was never handed over, the family said.

The court heard Manneh had been shuttled between at least six different detention sites between 2006 and 2008, and was never charged or given access to a lawyer. One witness, a journalist from a different newspaper, told the court he had seen Manneh being led back to a police cell in December, 2006. Edward Gomez, who was justice minister and attorney general in 2010-2012 and later acted as Jammeh's lawyer, expressed ignorance of the journalist's fate. "I know what happened is very painful but quite frankly I don't know what happened to him," Gomez told Reuters.

Every year Adama went to Banjul's main prison to attend the annual release of pardoned prisoners to see if her brother was among them. Hope finally deserted her only in the past month when the new president released more than 100 political prisoners from some of the country's many detention centers. Manneh was not among them. "I was thinking that my brother would be released but he never showed up there and I knew he had been killed," Adama said in the courtyard of her home near Banjul with her mother and sister, their cheeks glistening with tears. — Reuters

US CHALLENGES KREMLIN WITH A NEW RUSSIAN TV

PRAGUE: Nearly three decades after it helped topple communist totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe, US-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty is challenging Moscow again, this time with a new 24-hour TV news channel in Russian. Officially launched in Prague this month, the "Current Time" channel targets an audience of more than 270 million people, mostly in the former Soviet area, with news and views that provide an alternative to the Kremlin's version of reality as channelled through state-controlled media.

The new channel's launch comes as relations between Moscow and the West have hit their lowest point since the Cold War, triggered by Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and its military campaign in Syria a year later. Suspicions also linger in the West about the extent to which

the Kremlin may be using the internet and other means to spread fake news that could boost the popularity of pro-Russian politicians, thereby destabilizing NATO and the European Union.

Moscow has been quick to denounce the new channel, with prominent Kremlin-appointed talk show host Dmitry Kiselyov-known as Russia's chief spin doctor-labelling it a scam. It's "mostly money laundering under the guise of fighting Russian propaganda," he said on Russian state TV last week, without elaborating or offering any proof of fraud. RFE/RL, which reaches 23 countries in 26 languages, has launched the venture jointly with the Washington-based Voice of America. As the official US international broadcaster, VOA targets more than 236 million people a week in more than 45 languages. — AFP

11 AFGHAN POLICE KILLED IN AN 'INSIDER ATTACK'

KANDAHAR: An Afghan policeman linked to the Taliban shot dead 11 of his colleagues at a checkpoint in the southern province of Helmand, officials said yesterday, in the latest so-called "insider attack".

The incident occurred late Monday while the policemen were sleeping in their barracks in the provincial capital Lashkar Gah, as the Taliban escalate a deadly winter campaign of violence. Bloodied corpses of the policemen were strewn around the checkpoint, many of them shot from close range, witnesses said, in a setback for Afghan forces before what is expected to be another fierce

spring fighting season. "A policeman affiliated to the Taliban shot 11 of his colleagues, killing all of them," a provincial official said, declining to be named. "He then fled the area, taking all the ammunition and firearms with him," he said, adding that police had launched a search for the Taliban infiltrator. The Boost government hospital in Lashkar Gah had received the bodies of the 11 policemen, a health official said.

Taliban insurgents, who control vast swathes of the opium-ravaged province, claimed responsibility for the killings. So-called insider attacks—when Afghan soldiers

and police turn their guns on their colleagues or on international troops—have been a major problem during the more than 15-year-long war. Such attacks have sapped morale and caused deep mistrust within security ranks. In a similar incident last September, two Afghan soldiers with suspected Taliban links killed at least 12 of their comrades as they slept in the volatile northern province of Kunduz.

Afghan security forces are battling a resurgent Taliban amid record casualties and mass desertions. For years Helmand was the centerpiece of the Western military

intervention in Afghanistan, only for it to slip deeper into a quagmire of instability. The Taliban effectively control or contest 10 of the 14 districts in Helmand, the deadliest province for British and US troops over the past decade and blighted by a huge opium harvest that helps fund the insurgency. Lashkar Gah—one of the last government-held enclaves in Helmand—also risks falling to the Taliban's repeated ferocious assaults. The intensified fighting in the province last year forced thousands to flee to the city from outlying districts.

Repeated bids to launch peace negotia-

tions with the Taliban have failed and an intense new fighting season is expected to kick off in the spring.

The Pentagon this year said it will deploy some 300 US Marines this spring to Helmand. NATO officially ended its combat mission in December 2014, but US forces were granted greater powers last June to strike at the insurgents as Washington vowed a more aggressive campaign. The US Marines will assist a NATO-led mission to train Afghan forces, in the latest sign that foreign forces are increasingly being drawn back into the worsening conflict. — AFP



HANOI: Japan's Emperor Akihito (center) and Empress Michiko (right) carry flower bouquets as they arrive at a hotel in Hanoi yesterday. — AFP

JAPANESE EMPEROR KICKS OFF LANDMARK VISIT TO VIETNAM

HANOI: Japan's emperor arrived in Vietnam yesterday for a whirlwind tour that will include a meeting with families of Japanese soldiers who stayed there after World War II. The emperor and empress were received by Vice President Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh and guards of honor at the Hanoi airport, where national flags were displayed. The 83-year-old Akihito and his wife, Michiko, are on their first visit to the country, the latest in a series of trips to former battlegrounds.

"It is our hope that our visit to Vietnam will contribute to the further development of the mutual understanding and friendly relations between our two countries," Akihito said earlier at Tokyo's Haneda airport. Akihito and Michiko are scheduled to visit Hue, according to the official program. Tomorrow they are set to meet family members of some of the Japanese soldiers who stayed in Vietnam after the end of Japan's five-year occupation in 1945.

Many of the 700 soldiers joined forces with Vietnamese revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh in his fight for independence from colonial ruler France. They were ordered to return home by Japanese authorities after France was defeated in 1954, but the first wave was not allowed to bring their Vietnamese wives or children. Their families were often left in poverty and

faceted accusations of treachery for setting up house with the former enemy.

"This is a very meaningful visit for both Japan and Vietnam as the emperor, who is expected to retire soon, shows his deep sympathy towards people who suffered from history, even if he can't apologize," Yuji Otake, professor at Shizuoka University of Welfare and expert on Japanese modern history said. Japan is a leading investor in rapidly industrializing Vietnam and its top aid donor. The countries have grown cosy in recent years as they wage separate maritime disputes with China.

The alliance is even more important since the election of US President Donald Trump which has thrown regional relations into question, according to Netherlands-based Vietnam analyst Jonathan London. "The election of Trump and all the chaos that has and continues to generate has produced a profound destabilizing element in the region," he said.

"Vietnam and Japan are keen to promote or project greater strength and certainty about their relationship." The pair fly on to Thailand on Sunday to pay respects to King Vajiralongkorn, who came to the throne after the death of his father Bhumibol Adulyadej in October. The tour comes after Akihito suggested last year he is ready to step down, citing his age and increasing frailty. — AFP

'LARGEST COUP TRIAL' OPENS IN TURKEY; 330 SUSPECTS ON TRIAL

SINCAN: The biggest trial of suspects accused of involvement in last year's failed July coup opened in Turkey yesterday in a courtroom specially built to hold more than 1,500 people. Some 330 suspects are being put on trial in Sincan outside the capital Ankara, and if convicted, they face multiple life sentences over their alleged links to the attempted overthrow of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Over 240 of those named in the indictment are in custody, state-run news agency Anadolu reported.

The suspects, many of them from the Polatli artillery and missile school command in Ankara, have been charged with murder or attempted murder. They also stand accused of attempting to remove the government and parliament of the Turkish republic or trying to prevent those institutions from conducting their work. The case is being heard at Sincan prison where there was heavy security in place, with a water cannon truck on site and a drone flying overhead as families arrived for the hearing. The courtroom—which has space for 1,558 people—was packed with security forces surrounding the suspects as they testified.

'Be prepared'

The first suspect, a military cadet called Abdulkadir Kahraman, told the court that on

the night of the coup, troops had been informed by their commander that there had been a terror attack and were given ammunition. Other suspects gave similar statements, including Arif Ozan Demir who told the court the commander told them there had been an attack and that they should "be prepared". Ankara has blamed the failed putsch on Islamic preacher Fethullah Gulen—who lives in self-imposed exile in the United States—and his movement. Turkey has denounced the movement as a terrorist organization and the suspects on trial at Sincan are also accused of belonging to an armed terror group.

The hearing is one of several cases that opened across the country this month, with 47 people going on trial in the western city of Mugla on charges of attempting to assassinate Erdogan.

Until now, the largest had been in the Aegean city of Izmir where 270 suspects went on trial late last month, among them Gulen who was being tried in absentia. Following the failed putsch, Ankara declared a state of emergency and began a widespread crackdown, placing more than 43,000 people in pre-trial detention. The state of emergency remains in place as the trials get under way in the biggest legal process in the country's history. — AFP



ANKARA: Turkish soldiers guard at the Sincan Prison in Ankara yesterday during the trial of suspects accused of involvement in last year's failed July coup. — AFP

MALAYSIA TO CHARGE TWO WOMEN WITH KIM MURDER

NORTH KOREA DIPLOMAT IN MALAYSIA FOR KIM'S BODY

KUALA LUMPUR: Two women arrested for the nerve agent assassination of Kim Jong-Nam are to be charged with his murder, Malaysia said yesterday, as North Korea sent a senior diplomat to seek the return of the body. The spectacular killing of Kim Jong-Un's half-brother with VX, a fast-acting poison developed for warfare, sparked an international probe and lurid stories of Pyongyang's Cold War-style tradecraft. South Korea says its isolated neighbor was behind the assassination and claims the North's agents engaged two outsiders to carry out the murder. "They will be charged in court under Section 302 (murder) of the penal code," Attorney General Mohamed Apandi Ali told AFP by text message, referring to the two suspects. The women, from Indonesia and Vietnam, will appear in court today. If convicted, they could face death by hanging. Kim, a well-travelled polyglot who fell out of favour at home after a botched 2001 attempt to get into Japan on a false passport, died less than 20 minutes after he was set upon at Kuala Lumpur International Airport on February 13.

CCTV footage shows two women approaching him and seemingly pushing something in his face. Investigators say this was VX, a deadly poison classed as a weapon of mass destruction and banned around the world. Both women have claimed they thought they were taking part in a practical joke. Indonesian Siti Aisyah, 25, report-

edly told a senior diplomat Saturday she had been paid just 400 ringgit (\$90) for her role, adding she believed she was handling a liquid like "baby oil". Her alleged accomplice, Doan Thi Huong, 28, from Vietnam, told Hanoi officials she had been tricked into killing Kim and thought she was taking part in a prank for a comedy video.

Speaking from the Vietnamese village of Quan Phuong, Huong's stepmother appealed for a fair trial. "I think she was set up," Nguyen Thi Vy said. "I don't believe she was brave enough to do such a thing." Police have said one of the women arrested after the attack fell ill in custody, adding she had been vomiting. However, both suspects have since been reported to be healthy. A third suspect, 46-year-old North Korean man Ri Jong-Chol, is also being held. Apandi said whether Ri was charged in the coming days "depends on the outcome of the police investigation, which is still ongoing."

Row over corpse

North Korea has not acknowledged the identity of the dead man but has insisted Malaysia hand over the corpse, and says it does not accept the findings of an autopsy. Pyongyang has repeatedly lashed out at Kuala Lumpur over the investigation into the killing, claiming the Malaysians are playing politics. Veteran North Korean diplomat Ri Tong-II, deputy envoy to the United Nations, told reporters outside the embassy he was there to discuss "the question of

the return of the body of the deceased DPRK (North Korean) citizen". He added the North Korean delegation would also raise "the question of the release of the DPRK citizen arrested by Malaysian police".

Malaysia has refused to release the body, with police saying they are waiting for next-of-kin to come forward to identify the remains and provide a DNA sample. Health Minister S Subramaniam yesterday brushed off suggestions the body would be handed over. "We need to have the definite identity of the person," he said. "And the body will be given to the next of kin." Malaysia's previously warm relations with North Korea have worsened sharply since the killing, with Kuala Lumpur warning Pyongyang's outspoken ambassador on Friday he would be thrown out of the country if he continues to "spew lies" over the police investigation.

Earlier yesterday Malaysia said it was shutting down firms linked to a North Korean front company which the UN says was selling military equipment. International Global System and International Golden Services have been connected to a firm called Glocom, which a United Nations report said was based in Malaysia and operated by Pyongyang's intelligence agency. The UN report said Glocom was selling North Korean-made military communications equipment to Eritrea, with suppliers in China and an office in Singapore. — AFP

BANGLADESH ISLAMISTS TO HANG FOR JAPANESE FARMER'S MURDER

RANGPUR: Five Islamist extremists who murdered a Japanese farmer in a drive-by shooting in 2015 were sentenced to death by a Bangladeshi court yesterday. The sentence on the five members of the Jamayetul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) was handed down by a judge who found them guilty of murdering Kunio Hoshi in October 2015.

He was one of a number of foreigners to be murdered in recent years in a campaign which has battered Bangladesh's international image. Judge Naresh Sarker said the five had killed Hoshi as part of a "campaign to destabilize the country and smear its image".

"It was a premeditated murder," the judge told the court in the northern city of Rangpur. Four of the men were in the court amid heavy security but one of was sentenced in absentia. A defense lawyer said they were disappointed with the verdict and would appeal to a higher court. The 66-year-old Hoshi was shot dead by a gunman riding on the back of a motorbike on a dirt road where he was working on a project to grow grass for cattle. Among those sentenced was Masud Rana, the JMB's 24-year-old area chief.

Prosecutors say he fired the fatal shot at Hoshi near his farm near Rangpur. Chief prosecutor Abdul Malek said two other people who had helped plan the attack, including the alleged mastermind Saddam Hossain, had already been killed in shootouts with police. "They reced Hoshi's home and his movements for days," Malek said. "It was a targeted killing aimed at launching an Islamic movement in the country."

Muslim convert

Friends of Hoshi revealed after his death that he had converted to Islam but Malek said the attackers were not aware that he was Muslim. Hoshi was later buried in a Muslim graveyard in Rangpur. His killing came just days after the murder of an Italian air worker in the capital Dhaka, one of a string of attacks to be claimed by the Islamic State group. Although both IS and a branch of Al-Qaeda have claimed responsibility for many of the attacks, the government insists the JMB are to blame for most of them and denies that international jihadist networks have a presence in Bangladesh.

Authorities have also blamed the JMB for the killing of 20 hostages, including seven Japanese nationals, during a siege at an upscale cafe in Dhaka in July last year. The killings of foreigners such as Hoshi have been a major blow to the international reputation of Bangladesh, which has been trying to attract foreign investment to fuel its economic growth. Work on Japanese-funded infrastructure projects such as coal-fired power plants and a metro system in Dhaka were temporarily halted after the attack on the cafe last year.

Analysts say Islamist militants pose a growing danger in conservative Bangladesh, and a long-running political crisis has radicalized opponents of the government. There was no immediate reaction from the Japanese embassy to yesterday's judgment, but the prosecutor said embassy officials have been following the case closely. Bangladesh prides itself on being a mainly moderate Muslim country. But the gruesome killings of a series of atheist bloggers, foreigners and religious minorities have rocked the nation. Since the cafe attack security forces have launched a nationwide crackdown on Islamist extremist groups, killing around 50 suspected militants including the founders of a new JMB faction. — AFP



RANGPUR: A convicted Islamist militant is escorted by Bangladesh police outside a court in Rangpur yesterday, after being handed a death sentence over the 2015 murder of a Japanese citizen. — AFP

INDIAN HOMETOWN GRIEVES FOR ENGINEER KILLED IN KANSAS BAR

HYDERABAD: Hundreds of grieving family and friends tearfully mourned a 32-year-old engineer in his southern Indian hometown yesterday after he was killed in an apparently racially motivated shooting in a crowded Kansas bar. Tears rolled down the cheeks of Srinivas Kuchibhotla's parents, Madhusudhan Rao and Parvatha Vardhini, as his body was cremated in Hyderabad, the capital of Telangana state. Losing a young family member is an unbearable pain, said P L Narayana, his uncle. "It is so cruel. He was such a kind soul, very friendly. He was so excited that he and his wife were going to start a family soon. Now this has happened," Narayana said.

Kuchibhotla's mother wailed as the body was taken for cremation. "I had asked him to return to India if he was feeling insecure there. But he used to say he was safe and secure," she said. "Now I want my younger son Sai Kiran and his family to come back for good. I will not allow them to go back," she said. "My son had gone there in search of a better future. What crime did he commit?" His father Madhusudhan Rao was more philosophical. "I believe in destiny. Whatever was destined has happened," He added, "Now I want the US government to take care of the security of our Indians who are working there."

An Indian External Affairs Ministry statement said yesterday that the US government and senior authorities in Kansas "have proactively responded to the unfortunate death of Srinivas Kuchibhotla." "It is important to

note that the US authorities are engaged with us on the larger concern regarding safety of Indians in the US, a matter which continues to receive the government's top priority," the statement said. Kuchibhotla's body reached Hyderabad from Newark, NJ, on Monday night. His widow, Sunaina Dumala, looking dazed, and his brother, Sai Kiran, who studies in the United States, came by the same flight.

Hours later, the flower-laden body was taken in an open carriage from his home to the crematorium in Jubilee Hills area where it was placed on a wooden pyre and lit as part of Hindu last rites.

According to witnesses, the gunman yelled "get out of my country" at Kuchibhotla and Alok Madasani before he opened fire at Austin's Bar and Grill in Olathe, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City, on Wednesday evening. Both men had come to the US from India to study and worked as engineers at GPS-maker Garmin.

Madasani and another bar patron were injured. Adam Purinton of Olathe was arrested at a bar in Missouri and remains jailed on murder and attempted murder charges. The bartender there told an emergency dispatcher that the suspect admitted he shot two people but described them as Iranian. India's Information and Broadcasting Minister M Venkaiah Naidu, who visited the bereaved family over the weekend, strongly condemned the attack. "Such incidents should not happen in one of the oldest democracies of the world," he said. — AP

AUSTRALIAN ARRESTED OVER IS MISSILE-DESIGN PLOT

SYDNEY: An Australian was charged yesterday with helping the Islamic State group develop high-tech weapons, including long-range guided missile capabilities. Haisem Zahab, a 42-year-old electrician, was working alone and there was no domestic-related terror threat, said Australian Federal Police Commissioner Andrew Colvin. "We will allege he has utilized the internet to perform services for ISIL," Colvin said, using

an acronym for the jihadist group.

"Firstly, by researching and designing a laser warning device to help warn against incoming guiding munitions used by coalition forces in Syria and Iraq. Secondly, we will also allege that he has been researching, designing and modeling systems to assist ISIL's efforts to develop their own long-range guided missile capabilities."

Zahab, from the town of Young 165

kilometers (102 miles) from the Australian capital Canberra, appeared in court on two foreign incursion charges punishable by life imprisonment.

He was refused bail and will reappear on March 8. Zahab, who was born in Australia, was allegedly in contact with networks linked to the terrorist group. "We believe he has networks and contacts in ISIL-not necessarily just in the conflict zones, but in other parts of the

world as well and he has been relying on them to pass this information," said Colvin, adding that his research was "fairly sophisticated". Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said the arrest after an 18-month operation was "yet another reminder of the enduring threat we face from Islamist terrorism".

"This highlights that terrorism, support for terrorist groups, and Islamist extremism is not limited to our major

cities," he said. "It once again shows that we all need to be very vigilant." Canberra has become increasingly worried about homegrown extremism and the terror threat level was raised in September 2014. Australian officials say they have prevented 12 terror attacks on home soil since then with 61 people charged. But four attacks have gone ahead, including the murder of a Sydney police employee in 2015 by a 15-year-old boy. — AFP

CANADIAN TOWN ON FRONT LINE OF TRUMP MIGRANT CRACKDOWN

'DOOR KNOCKS IN THE DARK'

EMERSON: Jaime French was jarred out of bed in Emerson, Manitoba early one morning this month by pounding at her front door, just yards from the US border. A face peered in through the window, flanked in the darkness by others. Outside were 16 asylum seekers, arriving at one of the first houses they saw after crossing a lightly monitored border between Canada and the United States. "They banged pretty hard, then 'ring ring ring' the doorbell," said French, a mother of two young girls. "It was scary. That really woke me up."

The town has become the front line of an emerging political crisis that is testing Canada's will to welcome asylum seekers. Hundreds of people, mainly from Africa but also the Middle East, are fleeing US President Donald Trump's crackdown on illegal immigrants, migrants and refugee agencies say. Many asylum seekers say Trump's election and subsequent crackdown on illegal migrants spurred their plans to head north. Those arriving in Emerson come on foot in the dead of night, unnerving its 650 residents. Some fear the influx of unscreened migrants while others are frustrated by the cost and effort forced on the community.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is under increased pressure from the left, which wants him to let more in, and from the right, which is fearful of an increased security risk. Trudeau must tread carefully to ensure the issue does not complicate relations with Trump. The cooling welcome in Emerson is a microcosm of growing discontent over Canada's open door policy for refugees. Last week, an Angus Reid poll found that while 47 percent of respondents said Canada is taking in the right number of refugees, 41 percent said the number is already too high. "It could become a real political liability for the government," said Christian Leuprecht, a politics professor at the Royal Military College of Canada, noting that spring will lead to more crossings as travel gets easier.

Thawing out in the kitchen

After the 16 migrants left French's home, without being admitted, they found truck driver Brad Renout two doors down leaving for work. "I was going to leave them all outside," Renout said. "I figured, to hell with (them) for coming over the border in winter." When he saw children among the group, Renout allowed three women, three toddlers and two teenagers into his kitchen. Early Sunday, Reuters witnessed at least seven migrants bundled in new parkas and bulging backpacks walking into Canada from Minnesota, following railway tracks in the icy dark.

Ismail, a 25-year-old Somali man, said they had walked for 22 hours without sleep across North Dakota. As police lights flashed distantly, Ismail said he was afraid to walk toward them. He thought the group was still on US soil. Canadian police caught up with them shortly afterward and arrested them for illegally entering Canada. The group squeezed, uncuffed, into a police minivan and headed to a government office for questioning. "We feel sorry for the people," said retired grain farmer Ken Schwark. "I just wish they would come through the legal way."

A 2004 agreement between Canada and the United States means asylum seekers must submit applications in the United States if they arrive there first. But if they find a way into Canada, they can apply for refugee status there. It's an avenue that has spurred north illegal migrants in the United States, especially Somalis settled in Minnesota, which



MANITOBA: Eight migrants from Somalia cross into Canada illegally from the United States by walking down a train track into the town of Emerson, Manitoba, where they will seek asylum at Canada Border Services Agency. —AP

shares a land border with Manitoba. After pricey taxi rides to North Dakota, many like Ismail walk for hours in darkness and -20 C (-4°F) temperatures to dimly lit Emerson, in the shadow of the bright glare of the international border crossing. The lucky migrants get rides dropping them off less than a mile from Noyes, Minnesota, within sight of Emerson's southern edge. From there they duck under a metal crossing-arm gate, walk across the border and often use their own cellphones to dial police. Others are dropped 30 or more kilometers (19 miles) from the border, and follow rail lines into Emerson, crossing a border marked in most areas only by scattered concrete boundary markers.

Faye Suderman, a four-decade Emerson resident, said she is sympathetic but draws a line between those fleeing persecution and those who have simply run out of chances in the United States: "How difficult is it to get rid of those people and give help to those truly in need?" Emerson Cafe manager Jacquelyn Reimer, who has fed shivering asylum seekers for free, wondered why the Canadian government is helping refugees when the country has its own homeless problem. "We can't even take care of our own," she said.

Makeshift beds

Due to its border-hugging location, Emerson's encounters with migrants are not new, but the scale of their arrivals is. In the first two months of 2017, 143 mainly Somali people walked illegally over the border into Emerson, representing 40 percent of Manitoba's full-year total in 2015/16. Quebec

and British Columbia are the two other major illegal crossing points, but police there refused to provide data. Emerson residents don't encounter the migrants for long before police arrive and whisk them to the local Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) office for questioning. From there, they are ferried to Winnipeg, Manitoba's capital, to file asylum claims. Despite some residents' fears, asylum-seekers have not caused any trouble, said Bill Spanjer, Emerson's emergency coordinator. "They're going to be on their best behavior because otherwise their refugee claim is certainly going to be affected," he said.

When police receive a call, they summon the town's volunteer firefighters to treat any health concerns, as the nearest ambulance is 25 minutes away. In December, two men from Ghana lost all of their fingers to frostbite. Firefighter callouts cost Emerson about C\$500 each time. The costs may add up to C\$30,000 since last spring, representing 10 percent of its firefighting budget, said Emerson-Franklin's elected leader Greg Janzen. The provincial government directed more resources to Emerson last week, including paramedics and paralegal and transportation services.

Since the influx sped up in January, the strain on Emerson has grown. In early February, police intercepted 18 migrants from Somalia and Djibouti and CBSA asked Emerson to temporarily house them in the town's ice rink. Brenda Piatt and other volunteers laid folding banquet tables on the concrete floor, and layered them with blankets for makeshift mattresses. — Reuters

News

in brief

Lake trip tragedy; seven Cambodian girls drown

PHNOM PENH: Seven Cambodian girls, aged between six and 13-years-old, drowned yesterday morning when their small wooden boat capsized in a lake in the seaside town of Sihanoukville, police said. The girls were among nine local children enjoying a rowing excursion. Chuon Narin, police chief of Kampong Som province said. "They often played at the lake and this time they boarded a small wooden boat. But it was unsteady and capsized," he said. Another girl and a boy were saved and sent to hospital, Chuon Narin said. "It is tragedy, this is very sad," he added. Local media ran pictures of desperate, tearful relatives mourning over the bodies of the little girls. Cambodian children who live near water usually learn how to swim from an early age. It was not clear whether the victims were strong swimmers.

Thailand's palace fires 'extremely evil' official

BANGKOK: A top official in Thailand's palace has been fired for "extremely evil" misconduct and political interests which threatened national security, the government said yesterday. Police General Jumphol Manmai, who had served as intelligence chief under ousted former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, had until recently been one of the most senior figures in new King Maha Vajiralongkorn's household. The government said in a statement Jumphol had "committed misconduct considered extremely evil behavior" which did not befit a civil servant with a position close to the king. "He has wrongly used his official position for personal gain. He had political interests which were detrimental to national security and not trusted by the king," said the statement signed by Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha. A police spokesman said he could not comment on whether Jumphol would be prosecuted over the accusations in the statement. Jumphol faces a separate investigation for building private property on protected land.

Packed Thai prisons need urgent reform

BANGKOK: Thai prisons are massively overcrowded with some inmates forced to sleep sideways, a rights group said yesterday, urging reform in a country with the world's sixth largest jail population. The kingdom's worst facilities are five times over their capacity, with inmates forced to sleep on their sides or lay their legs over one another, according to the report by the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH). Successive governments have done "very little" to tackle the overcrowding, said FIDH's Southeast Asia director Andrea Giorgetta, adding that food, sanitation and medical care are also woefully inadequate. With 425 prisoners for every 100,000 people, Thailand has the tenth highest incarceration rate in the world and the highest in Southeast Asia. The booming prison population is largely a result of harsh anti-drug laws from a war on narcotics launched more than a decade ago. Possession of a few methamphetamine pills-known on the street as yaba-can earn a suspect a decade in jail.

Shark takes dog at Sydney beach

SYDNEY: A shark has taken a dog at a popular Sydney beach as it was fetching a stick thrown by its owner, prompting warnings for swimmers and pets to stay out of the water. The dog, an American Staffordshire Terrier, was in the ocean at Bonna Point Reserve in Sydney's south on Sunday evening when the shark attacked. "We were just throwing the stick in the water. The tide was really far out and there was a bit of a drop off (where the water became deeper)," its owner, who only wanted to be known as Nigel, told the Sydney Morning Herald. "It was very quick. It just took her under the water." The dog, Molly, was about five meters offshore at the time and has not been seen since. "The shark was around 3.5 meters long, which is easily big enough to take a human," Nigel added. The local Sutherland Shire Council confirmed the incident. "Council lifeguards are at the Kurnell beaches advising swimmers and pet owners to keep out of the water and they have installed signs to alert the public to the shark sighting," it said.

Thai soldiers agree 'safety zone' for unrest-hit south

KUALA LUMPUR: Thai army and Muslim rebel peace negotiators agreed yesterday to create a "safety zone" in Thailand's insurgency-hit south, a small but significant step in talks to end a bloody 13-year conflict. More than 6,800 people have died in a rebellion waged by ethnic Malay militants in Buddhist-majority Thailand's three southernmost provinces, a region known as the "Deep South". Talks held in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur have staggered on for years, undercut by near-daily bombs, ambushes and assassinations in the Deep South and a decade of political instability in Bangkok. The army has been talking with Mara Patani, an umbrella group that says it is a political wing representing the shadowy network of fighters. The Thai side doubts the Mara's ability to prod rebel footsoldiers into putting down their guns in an area where resentment against more than a century of Thai colonization runs high. For their part, the rebels are not convinced Thailand's junta will reduce its massive security presence across the south or devolve significant political power.

S Korea urges 'collective measures' against North

GENEVA: South Korea called yesterday for "collective measures" against North Korea, including possible suspension of its United Nations membership, saying the use of chemical weapons to assassinate the half-brother of North Korea's leader was a "wake-up call". Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se was addressing the UN-backed Conference on Disarmament (CD) after Malaysia's attorney general said two women will be charged with the murder of Kim Jong Nam. US and South Korean officials believe he was the victim of an assassination orchestrated by North Korea.

PHILIPPINES LEADER TO BRING POLICE BACK INTO DRUGS WAR

MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said yesterday he would recall some police to fight his controversial war on drugs, nearly a month after suspending the entire force from all operations in the bloody narcotics crackdown. In an about-face on his decision to remove the 160,000-member Philippine National Police (PNP) from his signature campaign, Duterte said the country was beset by security and law enforcement challenges and he needed more manpower to sustain the crackdown on drugs.

"So, I need more men. I have to call back the police again to do the job most of the time on drugs, not everyone," he told reporters. Duterte has been scathing in his criticism of a police force he declared "corrupt to the core" after it was discovered that rogue drugs squad officers had kidnapped and killed a South Korean businessman at the PNP headquarters. His decision to bring some police back into the campaign comes after a month of uncertainty about whether he would maintain the momentum of a merciless campaign that has defined his

eight-month-old presidency, and has earned him international notoriety.

More than 7,700 people have been killed since his first day in office, some 2,555 in operations in which police said drug suspects resisted arrest. Activists believe that extrajudicial killings have taken place during sting operations, and that many of the other killings were carried out secretly by police, or assassins working for them. Authorities vigorously reject the allegations. Since the Jan. 30 police suspension, the drug trade has come back out of the shadows, more than half a dozen drug users and dealers in some of Manila's toughest areas said.

PNP chief Ronald dela Rosa on Monday warned that gains in the drug war would be lost with police on the sidelines and "the sooner we return, the better". The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), which has only 1,800 members, would lead the anti-drugs campaign, with the support of the military and PNP. Duterte said police would no longer conduct their own operations under his revised strategy. — Reuters



TAIPEI: Pro-Taiwan unification with China activists display national flags in front of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall during the 70th anniversary of the 228 incident in Taipei yesterday. — AFP

TAIWAN URGES RECONCILIATION, CHINA BUTTS IN ON MEMORIAL

TAIPEI: Taiwan's president urged truthful reconciliation yesterday on the 70th anniversary of an uprising against Nationalist troops that has galvanized independence supporters, an event China is seeking to co-opt to oppose independence. The "228 Incident", as it is known in Taiwan, has in recent years become a rallying point for the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), which favors formal independence for the democratic, self-ruled island China claims as its own.

Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist troops put down rioting sparked on Feb 28, 1947, by a dispute between tobacco agents and a cigarette vendor in Taipei. That led to island-wide protests against the Nationalists, who two years later took refuge on Taiwan after losing a civil war to the Communists and imposed martial law on Taiwan until 1987, ruling with an iron fist and locking up dissidents.

"Reconciliation must be built on truth," President Tsai Ing-wen said at an annual ceremony commemorating the incident with families of victims. "I must say that without the truth, the past will not stay in

the past. "When that day comes, we will metamorphose into another kind of nation. Taiwan's democracy will also take a further step forward," she said. The incident ushered in a period where tens of thousands of Taiwanese were killed or went missing and stirred the beginnings of Taiwan's democratic movement. Communist China, which had nothing to do with the 1947 incident, has been marking the anniversary too, with seminars and state media commentaries.

The Chinese government last week called the protests part of China's liberation struggle Taiwan independence forces were trying to hijack. Yesterday, the overseas edition of the ruling Communist Party's official People's Daily said the day should be marked by people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait joining hands to oppose Taiwan independence. "This is the best way to commemorate the 70th anniversary of 228, and the greatest comfort that can be offered to the valiant heroes of the 228 uprising," it said in a front page commentary.

Beijing has previously weighed in on the anniversary, but this year is the first since Tsai took office in May. — Reuters



MANILA: Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (second from left) stands beside (from left) Executive Secretary Salvador Campo Medialdea, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr, Interior and Local Government Undersecretary Catalino Cuy, Police Chief Ronald dela Rosa and Philippine National Police Director for Operations Alex Monteagudo during the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police joint command conference at the Malacanang Palace in Manila. — AP



Counselor to the president Kellyanne Conway takes a photo as US President Donald Trump and leaders of historically black universities and colleges talk before a group photo in the Oval Office of the White House before a meeting with US Vice President Mike Pence on Monday. — AFP

TRUMP AIDE CONWAY DRAWS IRE FOR KNEELING ON WHITE HOUSE SOFA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's senior adviser Kellyanne Conway has come under fire after a picture of her casually kneeling on a couch in the Oval Office was widely shared on social media.

that called for a suit jacket and a tie.

The image of Conway trended widely on social media, with several Twitter users berating her for what they described as a lack of respect in the Oval Office.

"If Rice or Jarrett had sat like this in Oval Office, conservatives would have screamed themselves hoarse for weeks. Now we own trashy," he wrote, referring to previous presidential aides.

She also famously coined the term "alternative facts" and referred to a "Bowling Green massacre" - which never happened - during an interview.

SPACE X TO SEND TWO TOURISTS AROUND MOON

MIAMI: SpaceX said Monday two private citizens have paid money to be sent around the Moon in what would mark the farthest humans have ever traveled to deep space.

the next largest launch vehicle currently flying."

Commercial space race

Musk - who co-founded PayPal and also heads Tesla Motors - is seen as the emerging leader of the modern commercial space industry, after becoming the first to send a private cargo carrier to the International Space Station in 2010.

The tourists, who were not named, "have already paid a significant deposit," Musk's statement added. Health tests and training are to begin this year.

In the same month Blue Origin, founded by Amazon chief Jeff Bezos, unveiled plans to build a massive rocket called New Glenn to launch people to space, but the company's president said going to Mars could take decades.

The tourists will ride aboard the California-based company's Crew Dragon capsule, which is scheduled for its first unmanned test flight later this year.

Despite the hefty \$250,000 price tag, more than 600 would-be astronauts have already signed up, including actors Leonardo DiCaprio and Ashton Kutcher.

RUSSIA, CHINA VETO SYRIA SANCTIONS UN RESOLUTION

UNITED NATIONS: Russia and China yesterday vetoed a Western-backed UN resolution that would have imposed sanctions on Syria over chemical weapons use, as peace talks in Geneva showed no signs of progress on ending the nearly six-year war.

(OPCW) also found that Islamic State militants used mustard gas in an attack in 2015.

US joins Britain, France at UN

The vote marked the first major council action by the new US administration of President Donald Trump, who is seeking warmer ties with Russia.

The Syrian government has repeatedly denied using chemical weapons in the war that has killed 310,000 people since March 2011.

'Moment of truth'

The resolution would have put 11 Syrians, mainly military commanders, and 10 entities linked to chemical attacks in 2014 and 2015 on a UN sanctions blacklist.

French Ambassador Francois Delattre said the vote was a "moment of truth" for the council, arguing that chemical weapons use was a "negation of all civilization".

Britain, France and the United States are the other veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council.

Russia used its veto power twice to block demands for a ceasefire in Aleppo, the Syrian city that was seized by government forces in December.

MPS INSIST ON SCRAPPING POWER, FUEL PRICE...

Continued from Page 1

government's opinion that these contradict the constitution is incorrect. Kandari said that if the government feels that such draft laws violate the constitution, it should seek the help of the constitutional court.

there is a suspicion about its legality, since the chamber law was issued before the constitution. Head of the interior and defense committee MP Askar Al-Enezi said the panel approved the amendments and sent it to the Assembly.

The issue of price hikes is expected to be debated in the Assembly next Tuesday.

Member of the Assembly's human rights committee MP Mohammad Hayef said the committee discussed the attack on former opposition MP Musallam Al-Barak at the central prison.

MOI STARTS ISSUING NEW E-PASSPORTS

Continued from Page 1

"Every person has to receive the passport personally, so for instance the husband can't collect his wife's passport. Only children under 12 can have their passports collected by their guardians.

holder that are transferred from the Information Systems Department to the Passports Department in safe way," he assured.

Exchanging the old passports with the new electronic ones should be done within a year and a half.

Brig Yousef Al-Snayin, Director of the General Department for Nationality and Passports, noted that people can book an appointment to receive the new passport through the official website of the Ministry of Information, which will save them time and effort.

Director of the General Department of Information Systems Maj Gen Ali Al-Muaili explained the ministry's passport centers are all connected by fiber-optic internet.

Brig Adel Al-Hashash, Director General of the Security Media and Public Relations Department, said elderly people will be given priority.

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Factbox

FACEBOOK VIRTUAL REALITY AMBITIONS ARE THREATENED

Facebook Inc's big ambitions in the nascent virtual reality industry could be threatened by a court order that would prevent it from using critical software code another company claims to own, according to legal and industry experts. Last Thursday, video game publisher ZeniMax Media Inc asked a Dallas federal judge to issue an order barring Facebook unit Oculus from using or distributing the disputed code, part of the software development kit that Oculus provides to outside companies creating games for its Rift VR headset.

A decision is likely a few months away, but intellectual property lawyers said ZeniMax has a decent chance of getting the order, which would mean Facebook faces a tough choice between paying a possibly hefty settlement or fighting on at risk of jeopardizing its position in the sector. For now, Facebook is fighting on. Oculus spokeswoman Tera Randall said last Thursday the company would challenge a \$500 million jury verdict on Feb. 1 against Oculus and its co-founders Palmer Luckey and Brendan Iribe for infringing ZeniMax's copyrighted code and violating a non-disclosure agreement. Randall said Oculus would possibly file an appeal that would "allow us to put this litigation behind us". She did not respond to a request for comment for this article.

An injunction would require Oculus, which Facebook acquired for \$3 billion in 2014, to stop distributing the code to developers or selling those games that use it. Such a court order "would put a huge stumbling block in front" of Oculus, said Stephanie Llamas, an analyst with gaming market research firm SuperData. It would offer the company's rivals in the new market, which include HTC, Sony Corp., Alphabet Inc and others an "important opportunity for them to become first movers."

Sales of the Rift itself would not be barred, but Llamas, said a lack of available titles could hinder Facebook's offering relative to HTC's Vive headset and Sony's Playstation VR. That market is relatively small at the moment - sales of VR hardware and software totaled \$2.7 billion in 2016 - and mainly limited to gaming. But Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg has predicted the technology "will become a part of daily life for billions of people," revolutionizing social media, entertainment and medicine.

SuperData says the VR market will be worth \$37 billion by 2020. Likewise, investment firm Cantor Fitzgerald last year issued a report predicting VR would account for 10 percent of Facebook revenue in four years' time. ZeniMax's lawsuit arose from 2012 correspondence between Luckey and famed video game developer John Carmack, creator of the Doom and Quake series and then a ZeniMax employee. Luckey signed a non-disclosure agreement with ZeniMax covering his communications with Carmack.

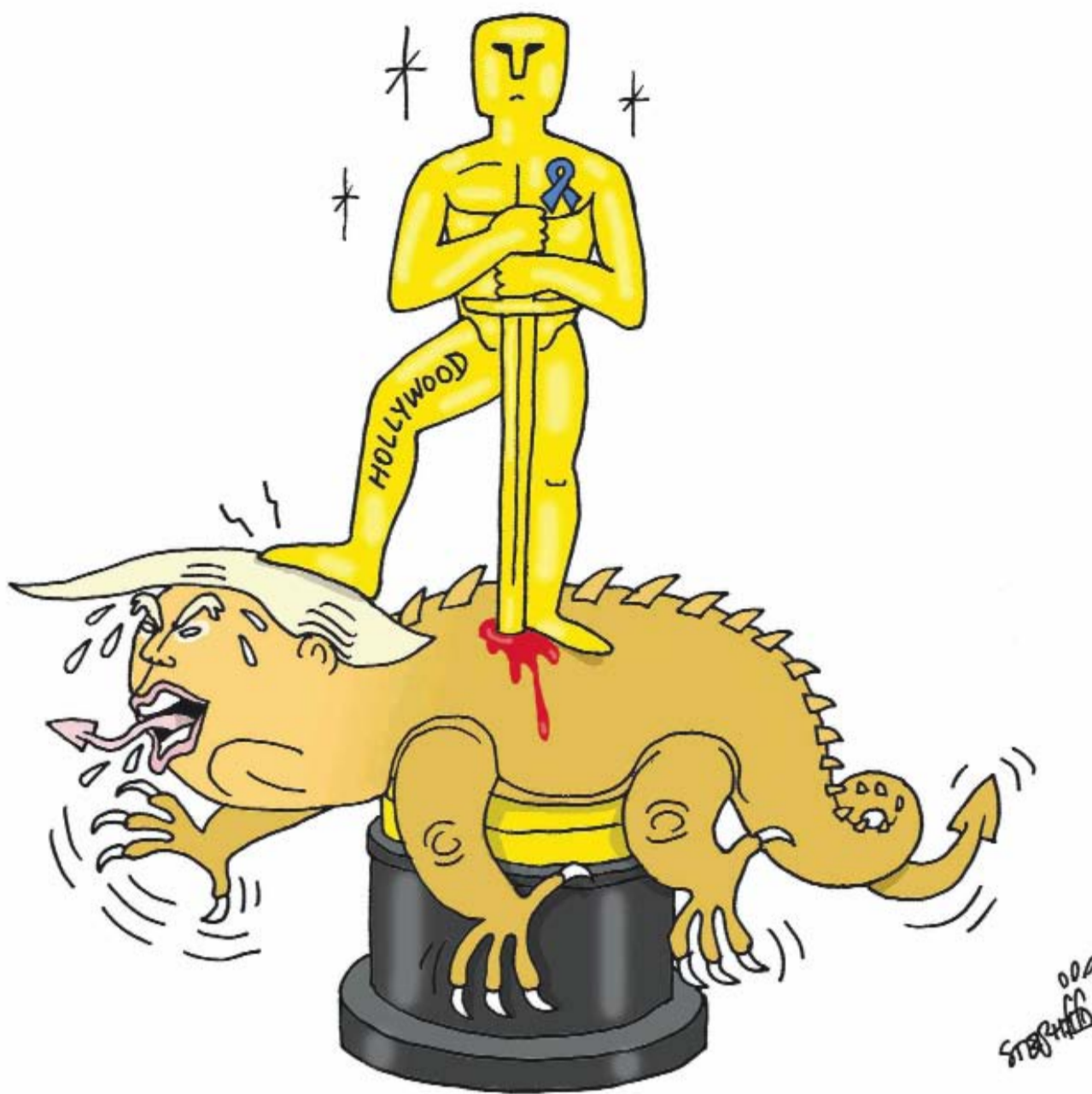
Carmack joined Oculus in 2013 as chief technology officer. ZeniMax sued in 2014, claiming Carmack's work while its employee was crucial to the Rift. At trial, Facebook said ZeniMax concocted its claims because of "sour grapes" over missing the VR trend. Zuckerberg testified that "the idea that Oculus products are based on someone else's technology is just wrong".

The jury decided Oculus had not stolen trade secrets but had infringed ZeniMax's intellectual property. It also said Oculus breached the non-disclosure agreement. IP lawyers said the judge would consider factors such as whether ZeniMax continues to be harmed and whether money is sufficient compensation. Edward Naughton, a Boston-based copyright lawyer with Brown Rudnick, said ZeniMax has a strong argument because its technology continues to be used without its permission and the jury's verdict does not compensate for that. "I think they have a pretty good shot here," Naughton said.

Mitchell Shelowitz, a copyright lawyer in New York, noted that the non-disclosure agreement explicitly stated ZeniMax would be entitled to an injunction in the event its terms were violated. Not all lawyers agree ZeniMax has the stronger position. Chicago-based IP lawyer Joshua Rich said he thinks Facebook has a good chance to repel the injunction by arguing that ZeniMax is not being harmed by the sale of the Oculus products because it is not direct competitor.

If Facebook can get past the injunction fight, the calculus could change, said Naughton. Facebook may believe it has strong arguments on appeal or, because it has so much cash on hand, it may hope to wear ZeniMax down to the point where it settles on favorable terms. "Facebook has deep pockets," said Naughton. — Reuters

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US TEENS DISILLUSIONED, DIVIDED BY POLITICS

In the days after US President Donald Trump's election, thousands of teenagers across the nation walked out of class in protest. Others rallied to his defense. It was an unusual show of political engagement from future voters who may alter America's political landscape in 2020 - or even in next year's midterm elections. Now, a new survey of children ages 13 to 17 conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research with the permission of their parents finds that America's teens are almost as politically disillusioned and pessimistic about the nation's divisions as their parents. The difference? They aren't quite as quick to write off the future.

Eight in 10 feel that Americans are divided when it comes to the nation's most important values and 6 in 10 say the country is headed in the wrong direction. Nyles Adams, a 14-year-old from New York City, was in kindergarten when Barack Obama was sworn in as the nation's first black president. Adams, the grandson of Trinidadian immigrants, remembers watching the inauguration on TV and talking with his mother about the particular significance of Obama's election for his black, immigrant family.

Now, with Trump as president, he feels America's best days are behind it, and the nation will be worse off in 40 years. Yet like 57 percent of his peers, he is still optimistic about the opportunity to achieve the American Dream. "Sometimes it does get you down, but I try not to focus on it too much because I see myself as someone who despite all the odds that are against me, I'm still going to prevail," he said.

That youthful optimism is hard to crush. While rates vary by race, 56 percent of all teens surveyed believe America's best days are ahead, compared with the 52 percent of adults in an AP-NORC poll conducted in June 2016 who said the nation's best days are behind it. But like adults, the poll reveals deep divisions along familiar lines. Just a quarter of teens say they have a lot in common with people of different political views. Three in four already have a party preference, including 29 percent who say

they'll be Democrats, 23 percent Republicans and 24 percent independent or another party. Less than one-third have a favorable impression of Trump, but only slightly more think well of Hillary Clinton. Elijah Arredondo, a second-generation Mexican-American from La Habra, California, disliked both major party candidates but is now worried about his family under Trump. His mother signed up for the Affordable Care Act, which Trump has promised to dismantle and replace. "I feel like anyone can achieve the American Dream, but for some people it's a lot harder for them to do, so these things help people," he said.

Caroline Millsaps, of Garner, North Carolina, describes herself as a liberal Democrat and says climate change and women's rights are her top political concerns. Last year, she took time away from her busy competitive dance schedule to attend two Bernie Sanders rallies with her mother. Like 40 percent of teens surveyed, she feels she has a "moderate" amount in common with people of different political views.

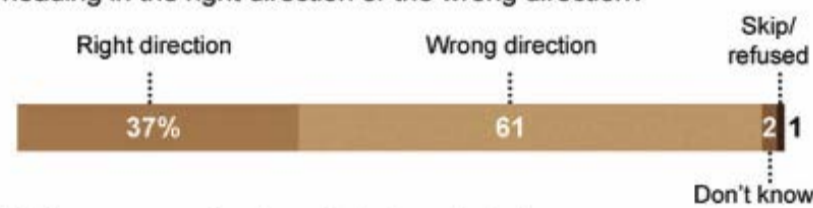
"I always watch Fox News to get a different perspective, and I have some friends who support Trump and so I'll ask them, 'What is your opinion on this?'" she said. "I try to see both sides of the situation and see which side fits my view best." Millsaps, 16, talks about politics daily with her parents and that has strongly influenced her views. Nearly 40 percent of teens surveyed said they did the same at least weekly and, like Millsaps, those talks seem to sway them. A majority of respondents said they agree with their parents' political views most of the time. Only 3 percent disagree most of the time.

Sophie Svigel, 17, attends a private Christian school in Dallas and identifies herself as a conservative Republican. She talks to her Republican parents about politics and almost always agrees with them, but is also heavily influenced by her faith-based school, she said. "I feel like a lot of the bad things that are going on are not really spoken of and are hidden," she said. "I feel like the politicians and people in poli-

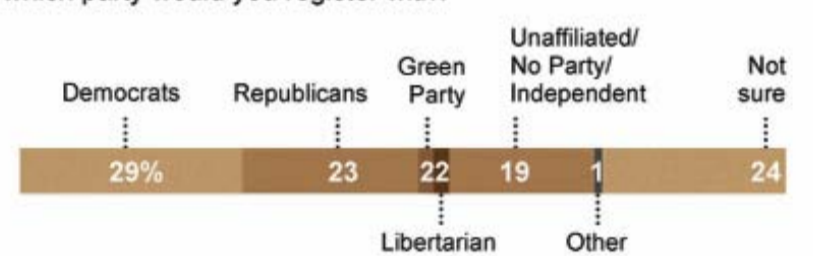
Teens also divided by politics

Strongly influenced by their elders, teens are almost as politically polarized and pessimistic about the nation's divisions, according to a new AP-NORC Center poll.

Q: Generally speaking, would you say things in this country are heading in the right direction or the wrong direction?



Q: If you were going to register to vote today, which party would you register with?



Results based on interviews with 790 U.S. teens ages 13-17 years, conducted Dec. 7-31, 2016. Margin of error for the full sample is 4.6 percentagepoints, higher for subgroups.

SOURCE: Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research AP

ticians speak very vaguely about the problems that we're facing." That cynicism echoes in the AP-NORC poll. Just 16 percent of teens feel the federal government is doing a good job promoting the well-being of all Americans, and not just special interests. Fewer than 2 in 10 teens surveyed feel the federal government is doing a good job representing most Americans' views.

Jessi Balcom, from Bend, Oregon, has tried to fight that cynicism by pouring her energy into delivering food to homeless people and engaging in open-minded

debate with those whose politics are different from hers. Nine in 10 teens say they have participated in civic activities like volunteering or raising money for a cause. "It's not you versus me, it's us versus the problem and the problem isn't other people," said Balcom, 17, a Green Party supporter. "There are a lot of really big problems that we need to solve, but I think that getting angry is the worst thing that we can do," she said. "It doesn't matter what side of politics they're on, conservative or liberal. I don't want to hate anyone." — AFP

IN VENEZUELA, SHORT ON FOOD, SHORT OF HOPE

Venezuela is so short on food that tens of thousands are going hungry or even starving. Its murder rate is among the highest in the world. Its economy is so crippled that the average shopper spends 35 hours a month waiting in line - three times more than in 2014. Yet even as the country becomes increasingly unlivable, the socialist government is more entrenched than it has been in years. A sense of hopelessness has settled over what was once among the richest nations in South America, a belief that nothing will really change.

To understand why people have given up, look at Jhorman Valero and his family. Three years ago, Valero dragged his 24-year-old cousin, Bassil da Costa, to join thousands of others in a nationwide protest against the administration of President Nicolas Maduro. Hours later, Bassil was bleeding in his arms, the first of more than 40 people to be killed during weeks of unrest. Staring numbly at the floor, Jhorman recounts how he watched his cousin's skull come apart under his baseball cap from a bullet shot by security forces.

Now Valero and Bassil's sister, Yenicir da Costa, no longer bother to protest, even on the anniversary of the 2014 protest. "What's the point of protesting if they just kill you in the streets and, three years later, everything is even worse?" she said. The fear inspired by the 2014 crackdown weighs heavily on the present, with a government that is selectively repressive. Many of more than 100 political prisoners were arrested that year and remain in jail, according to human rights groups. Most are being held incommunicado in the dungeons of El Helicoide, a spiral-shaped modernist landmark built as a shopping mall during the 1950s oil boom, which is now the headquarters of the all-powerful Sebin intelligence police.

The creation last month of an "anti-coup commando unit" headed by the vice president has stoked fears of more

roundups. The unit already has arrested three members of the party of Leopoldo Lopez, the highest-profile prisoner, who led the protest at which Bassil was killed. As the price of oil has fallen and laid bare years of mismanagement, Maduro's administration has responded by becoming more repressive. It has purged state institutions of potential traitors, kept out foreign reporters, detained prominent busi-

nessmen and declared null all decisions by the opposition-controlled congress.

As a result, the young people who would be the natural fuel for any street protest movement are not turning out. At demonstrations these days, there are more grandparents than youths. One reason is that so many young people have simply fled the country. — AP



In this Feb 12, 2017 photo, students hold an anti-government protest to mark the third anniversary since the killing of student protester Bassil da Costa by security forces during weeks of unrest in Caracas. — AP

GYMNAST OLGA KORBUT SELLS MUNICH MEDAL COLLECTION

LOS ANGELES: Legendary gymnast Olga Korbut has sold her collection of medals won at the 1972 Munich Olympic games among a sale of memorabilia at an auction in the United States, auctioneers said Monday. Korbut, 61, captured the imagination of the sporting world with her spellbinding displays in Munich before competing at the Montreal Games four years later. The Arizona-based former Soviet gymnast sold her medals through Heritage Auctions after falling on hard times, according to reports in Russia. The sale of seven lots—which included two golds and a silver from Munich raised around \$230,000 (217,000 euros), the auction house said. Her team gold raised \$66,000. The other gold sold was her individual floor exercise medal. Korbut's other individual gold medal, for the balance beam in Munich, was not part of the sale because it was stolen previously. Korbut's groundbreaking displays in Munich were credited with widening the appeal of gymnastics around the world, with the diminutive Belarusian star known as the "Sparrow of Minsk" also changing the way athletes from behind the Iron Curtain were viewed. —AFP



PAS SHOOTING TOURNAMENT

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: Public Authority for Sports Shooting Tournament, organized by Kuwait Shooting Sport Club will start on Friday the 10 meter pistol and air rifle, 50 meter rifle and Olympic archery. Shooters from Sheikh Saad Shooting Academy along with junior shooters will participate in the tournament.

Secretary General of Kuwait and Arab Shooting Federation Obaid Mnahi Al-Osaimi noted the great interest the Public Authority for Sports pays to the sport of shooting under the leadership of its Director General Sheikh Ahmad Mansour Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and his deputies, through providing all support to the club in order to guarantee success and encouragement of shooters to continue their achievements at all levels and arenas.

Al-Osaimi said the KSSC board of directors work hard on providing all what provides the shooters with the atmosphere of clean competition in order to reach



Obaid Al-Osaimi

high technical levels. He said ranges to be used during the tournament have been prepared, as well as technical plans are set by the referees in waiting for the competition to start. The closing ceremony will be held Sunday, March 3, at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Olympic Shooting Complex at 7 pm.

ATHLETICS

FELIX TARGETING 2020 OLYMPICS

LOS ANGELES: US track queen Allyson Felix said Monday she has set her sights on the 2020 Olympics after winning a record sixth gold medal at last year's Rio games.

The 31-year-old 400m and 200m star revealed she plans to compete in at least one more Olympics after being honored as female athlete of the year at the Los Angeles Sports Awards.

Felix became the only female track and field athlete in history to win six Olympic gold medals last year when she added the 4x100m and 4x400m titles to the four golds she accumulated at the 2008 and 2012 Games. The Los Angeles native stands tied with Jamaican great Merlene Ottey as the most decorated female Olympian in track and field history with a total of nine Olympic medals.

Felix said Monday she planned to scale back her commitments in order to compete in Tokyo—in what would be her fifth Olympics. "Yes, I think I want to do it," Felix said when asked if she planned to race in Japan. "I am still excited about the sport.

"The biggest thing I have learned (in 2016) is that now I have all this experience, I know that I can train smarter and need to compete less." Felix started 2016 targeting an Olympic 400m-200m double but saw her season derailed by a freak gym accident when she stepped on a medicine ball and injured her ankle.

She struggled to regain full fitness in time for the US Olympic trials, where she booked her ticket to Rio with a battling win in the 400m but failed to qualify in the 200m. In Rio she came within a whisker of winning gold in the 400m, taking silver after being beaten by just 0.07sec after Shaunae Miller of the Bahamas dived for the finish line.

Felix said after her injury-disrupted 2016 she had regained fitness as she looks ahead to this year's World Championships in London. "I'm feeling like myself again and it feels good," Felix said, adding that she will focus on the 200m, what she described as "my favorite event." "I don't think I will ever be done with it until the end," she said. —AFP



Allyson Felix

NOTORIOUS PASSAGE START FOR 2018 TOUR DE FRANCE

MOULLERON-LE-CAPTIF: Next year's Tour de France will begin on a notorious, slippery passageway linking an island off the west coast to the mainland, organizers ASO revealed yesterday. The Grand Depart of the 105th edition of the world's most prestigious cycle race will start on June 30, 2018 on the 4km Passage du Gois—a natural periodically flooded land-bridge from the island of Noirmoutier to the Vendee department in the Loire region—with a 195km flat stage. The passage has an infamous place in Tour history as it proved decisive in helping Lance Armstrong win the first of his seven titles—he was later stripped of all of them for doping-in 1999. Many of the favorites, including Switzerland's Alex Zülle, crashed on the slippery cobbles and ended up losing six minutes to the American, who would eventually win the Tour by seven minutes. The passage last featured at the Tour in 2011, when it also hosted the Grand Depart. After a second flat stage of 185km, the third stage on July 2, 2018 will be a 35km team time trial around Cholet. —AFP

LEGENDARY SOVIET CENTRE FORWARD PETROV DIES

MOSCOW: Legendary CSKA Moscow and Soviet international centre forward Vladimir Petrov, a member of the all-conquering Red Machine team, has died at 69, Russia's ice hockey federation reported yesterday. "Russia's ice hockey federation presents its condolences to Petrov's family and friends, his colleagues and everyone who knew him," said a statement on the federation's official website. Two-time Olympic champion Petrov, who also won nine world championship gold medals and 11 Soviet league titles during his career, died from cancer after a short illness. Petrov, together with wingers Valery Kharlamov and Boris Mikhailov, formed the attacking line that caused a furore in 1972 in the legendary eight-match Super Series with a Canadian professional NHL all-star team—leading by three wins to one before eventually losing 4-3 with one game tied. The trio had made its debut at the world championships-amateur at that time—in 1969 in Stockholm, where the Soviet Union managed to retain its title despite two defeats to Czechoslovakia, seven months after Soviet troops had invaded Czechoslovakia to crush a pro-democratic drive. —AFP



Fans cheer for Rickie Fowler after his putt.

GOLF

FOUR PLAYERS COULD MISS MATCH PLAY IN DETOUR TO THE MASTERS

PALM BEACH GARDENS: The road to the Masters isn't what it used to be.

For the last three years, Adam Scott has played at least three tournaments in Florida before heading to the Masters. Upon leaving the Honda Classic this year, he will log more than 19,000 miles before he arrives at Augusta National. That journey includes a trip home to Australia. It does not include an appearance at the Dell Match Play in Austin, Texas. Scott is not alone. Henrik Stenson, who plans to play three times in the month leading to the Masters, has chosen to sit out Match Play for the second straight year. Justin Rose wants to play the Arnold Palmer Invitational, and because he wants to play the week before the Masters, he is likely to skip the Match Play for the first time.

It's like that for all the top players, courtesy of a PGA Tour schedule that is jam-packed with tournaments that are hard to skip because of the prestige, the money, the golf course or the timing. It's golf's version of March Madness.

Gary Woodland would love nothing more than to be at Bay Hill, but Match Play suits him. He was runner-up two years ago in San Francisco. And he is a past champion at Innisbrook, his first PGA Tour victory.

And then there's Rickie Fowler. "I don't know yet," he said when asked if he was playing Match Play. Moving the World Golf Championships event from Doral to Mexico City is not an issue. Fowler said he'd be playing it either way.

"The biggest thing is you want to make sure you're ready to go at Augusta," he said. "Whether that's taking a couple of weeks off ... I like playing the week before the majors. I feel like I've seen that works." He has played the Shell Houston Open each of the last three years, so presumably he'll be back this year. Fowler smiled. "That's what we're trying to figure out," he said. Fowler drove to Bay Hill last year to tell Arnold Palmer in person that he would not be playing his tournament. He said a big part of that reason was Match Play moving right into the middle of the Florida swing, just two weeks before the Masters.

"One of the hardest things I've ever done," Fowler said of his conversation with the King.

It's clear that Fowler will be playing two of the three weeks leading into the Masters. But which one does he leave out? He said he would be at the Arnold Palmer Invitational this year, the first one without the beloved tournament host. That leaves the choice between Houston ("I like playing the week before the majors") or the Match Play ("I don't know yet").

"I like the golf course. The tribute to Arnie would be awesome," Woodland said. "But unfortunately, it's the schedule. With Augusta that close and Match Play around the corner, it just doesn't work out." Jordan Spieth is another past champion of the Valspar Championship at Innisbrook, only he has decided not to go this year to avoid playing five times in six weeks

through the Masters. He finished the West Coast with three straight tournaments, and the Texan has two Lone Star events ahead of Augusta.

Everyone is mixing-and-matching, trying to find the right formula to be ready for the first major of the year.

Dustin Johnson has Mexico, Match Play and Houston. Rory McIlroy and Hideki Matsuyama are playing Mexico, Bay Hill and Match Play. Sergio Garcia is only playing the two World Golf Championships.

Scott has one of the lightest schedules, anyway, and this year there are additional circumstances. His wife is pregnant with their second child, and she is in Australia to avoid areas where the Zika virus is prevalent, such as the Bahamas. So after the Mexico Championship, he'll head

home to Queensland for a few weeks before returning to the Houston Open and then the Masters. That means he will not be at Bay Hill or the Match Play, and he isn't about to apologize. Scott has long felt the schedule was too crowded, and not just in March.

"Look, I got to the point where I will not keep everyone happy all the time," Scott said. "There are 42 events. I play not even half that many. I'll have my favorites like everyone else. Things change all the time."

Scott is a leading proponent of a shorter schedule, but he could only smile when he contemplated what March could look like in a couple of years.

"What do you do if you throw The Players Championship back in there?" he said. —AP

RIGHTS GROUPS PRAISE IOC'S REVISED GAMES CONTRACT

BERLIN: A new contract for future Olympic Games hosts that makes the protection of human rights a core requirement earned praise from rights groups yesterday who say preparations of major sports events lead to rights violations.

The International Olympic Committee has now made a specific reference to the protection of human rights in its revised host city contract, sent out to the 2024 summer Olympic bid cities.

Paris and Los Angeles are the only two candidates left in the race, with the IOC to elect the winner in September. "Time after time, Olympic hosts have gotten away with abusing workers building stadiums, and with crushing critics and media who try to report about abuses," Minky Worden, director of global initiatives at Human Rights Watch (HRW), said in a statement.

"The right to host the Olympics needs to come with the responsibility not to abuse basic human rights." With the cost, disruption and domestic politics deterring some Western cities from even bidding, as well as a desire by sports bosses to leverage interest in developing countries, the focus on rights is only likely to become more intense.

The IOC move is aimed at cities dealing with any human rights or labour issues before they are elected as hosts. A Russian city and Qatar's Doha are seen as potential early candidates for the 2028 Summer Games. Both countries have been accused of human rights violations for the Sochi 2014 Winter Games and the 2022 soccer World Cup respectively.

The IOC said in its new contract the "the host city ... (must) protect and respect human rights and ensure any violation of human rights is remedied in a manner consistent with international agreements, laws and regulations applicable in the host country." Sharan Burrow, general secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, which is part of the Sports and Rights Alliance (SRA) along with HRW, said the move could help "break the cycle of human rights abuses, and this example from the IOC should be applied to all such events".

Preparations for the Beijing 2008 Olympics saw forced evictions to make way for venues while China's human rights record remained a topic throughout the seven-year process to the start of the Games.

Contractors building projects for Sochi 2014, which cost \$51 billion, were accused of abusing the migrant workers, withholding pay and threatening them while the overall budget ballooned into the biggest in the history of the Games.

Qatar, hosts of the 2022 soccer World Cup, has been also accused of human and labour rights violations over for the past years as thousands of foreign workers are brought in to build the country's stadiums for the tournament.

The Gulf Arab kingdom denies exploiting workers and says it is implementing labour reforms. "We are pleased that the SRA has welcomed the changes to the host city contract as 'an important step by the IOC'" an IOC spokesman said. —Reuters

CRICKET

AUSTRALIA'S STARC READY FOR HEAVIER WORKLOAD IN BENGALURU

NEW DELHI: Australia paceman Mitchell Starc is bracing for a heavier workload in the second test against India having hardly broken a sweat in his team's romp in the series opener in Pune.

With spin twins Steve O'Keefe and Nathan Lyon claiming 17 of the 20 Indian wickets, Starc and pace colleague Josh Hazlewood bowled a combined 20 overs as Australia triumphed by 333 runs inside three days to go 1-0 up in the four-test series. "It's amazing. I think it's making up for the summer Josh and I had," Starc told reporters on Tuesday.

"The spinners bowled really well and the pitch didn't have much in it for Josh and me. There was very minimal natural swing because it was so abrasive and it didn't really go too much reverse.

"But when Steve's taking that many wickets and Nathan's bowling really well there's not really much need for us on that wicket." World number one India were all out for 105 in the first innings and managed only two more in the second before succumbing to a crushing defeat that

snapped their 19-test unbeaten streak.

With the smarting hosts unlikely to repeat the mistake of rolling out another turning track at Bengaluru, Starc reckoned he and Hazlewood would have to shoulder more responsibility in the match starting on Saturday. "I'm sure it will be a pretty dry wicket again, so that'll probably help reverse swing there and it's something we'll be working hard at all the time in the nets," said the 27-year-old.

"It's about looking after that shine on an abrasive square. And if it's not going to spin as much in Bangalore, we're going to have to make sure we're using that reverse swing to make up for not as much spin as we've seen here in Pune."

Starc did not hide his glee at having silenced those who had predicted a 4-0 whitewash for his team though he refused to get totally carried away.

"To shut a few people up and really show that this young team is here to play has been great for the group. But it's one test win, it's not a series win yet so we'll be doing all we can," he added. — Reuters



PORT ST LUCIE: Former NFL quarterback and New York Mets outfielder Tim Tebow (15), center, works during a spring training baseball practice Monday, in Port St. Lucie, Fla. —AP

BASEBALL

METS MINOR LEAGUER TEBOW HITS NINE HOMERS IN BATTING PRACTICE

PORT ST LUCIE: Tim Tebow quickly got into the swing of spring training, hitting nine home runs in batting practice Monday during his first workout with the New York Mets.

The former Heisman Trophy winner and NFL quarterback is hoping to make to the majors as an outfielder. He signed a minor league contract last September. The 29-year-old Tebow played in the Arizona Fall League, struggling against top prospects from other teams. He hit .194 and struck out 20 times in 62 at-bats for the Scottsdale Scorpions. "It's so much about how you're able to handle things mentally, and that's not just the highs, it's also the lows," the lefty hitter said.

"Baseball can really exploit that if you're not ready for it - to be ready for the droughts and be able to handle the highs and lows. I think I was 0 for my first 13 (in Arizona), so I was like, 'OK, that's going to happen.' But I'm going to bounce back, and I think I was able to do that," he said.

Tebow said similar poor results as a member of the New York Jets in 2012 also were part of a learning process. "I'm grateful for the highs there - which weren't really many - but for a lot of the lows," said Tebow, who was released after one season with the Jets in which he threw just eight passes and ran 32 times. "It was not necessarily the most fun situation, but there were so many things I learned. Everything happens for a reason; that situation happened for a reason. I learned from it. I'm grateful for it. I can honestly say that," he said.

AROUND THE CACTUS AND GRAPEFRUIT LEAGUES

TIGERS 10, BRAVES 7
Miguel Cabrera doubled, singled and drove in a run for Detroit. Tigers starter Jordan Zimmermann gave up a run in two innings. R.A. Dickey, in his Braves debut, allowed two runs on two hits over two innings. The former NL Cy Young winner pitched for Toronto last year, then signed with Atlanta. Dansby Swanson got three hits and scored three times for Atlanta. Freddie Freeman had two hits and drove in three runs.

CARDINALS (ss) 5, NATIONALS 4
Lance Lynn, out of the majors last year after Tommy John surgery, pitched two innings in his spring debut for St. Louis, allowing four hits and one earned run. Trea Turner homered for Washington. He's beginning what's expected to be his first full season in the big leagues as a full-time shortstop after spending last year in

center field and at second base.

YANKEES 4, ORIOLES 1

All-Star third baseman Manny Machado started at shortstop for Baltimore in place of J.J. Hardy, who's expected to be out until mid-March with back trouble. Vidal Nuno, acquired this month from the Dodgers, pitched two scoreless innings in relief for the Orioles. Aaron Judge tripled and reached base three times for New York.

TWINS 9, MARLINS 6

Byung-ho Park hit a two-run homer, his second shot since Minnesota dropped him from its 40 man roster earlier this month. Twins starter Ervin Santana struck out two in two scoreless innings. He was suspended 80 games last season for violating Major League Baseball's drug policy. Tyler Moore homered for Miami. Marlins starter Jose Urena gave up two runs in an inning.

RAYS 7, PHILLIES 2

Makiel Franco hit his third home run this spring for Philadelphia and added an RBI single. Corey Dickerson hit a two-run homer for Tampa Bay and scored twice.

CARDINALS (ss) 7, RED SOX 2

St Louis starter Michael Wacha allowed four hits and an unearned run in two innings. Jose Martinez hit two home runs and drove in four. Xander Bogaerts and Mitch Moreland each got two hits for Boston.

PIRATES 2, BLUE JAYS 1

Toronto starter Marcus Stroman worked two perfect innings, striking out three. Jose Bautista singled home the Blue Jays' run. Pirates catcher Jacob Stallings, son of Pitt basketball coach Kevin Stallings, had two hits.

ASTROS 5, METS 2

Asdrubal Cabrera and Wilmer Flores homered for the Mets. Houston scored four times in the ninth off veteran Tom Gorzelanny on four hits and three walks.

ROYALS 14, MARINERS 3, 7 INNINGS

All-Star catcher Salvador Perez homered, doubled and drove in four runs for Kansas City in a rain-shortened game. Eric Hosmer hit an RBI double and scored twice, and Royals newcomer Brandon Moss had two hits and an RBI. Jean Segura, acquired by

Seattle in a trade with Arizona, hit a two-run homer, double and single. Yovani Gallardo, another Mariners offseason addition, struggled through an inning of work, allowing four runs on three hits.

ROCKIES 7, DODGERS 1

Young ace Jon Gray threw two scoreless innings for Colorado, striking out two while allowing two hits. Tony Wolters hit a three-run homer for the Rockies. Dodgers starter Kenta Maeda walked two and gave up a run in two innings.

CUBS 4, WHITE SOX 4

White Sox slugger Jose Abreu hit a two-run homer, his first of the spring, as part of a two-hit day. Abreu left for Miami after the game to attend to a personal matter. He is expected back today. Addison Russell and Wilson Contreras each hit their first homers of the spring for the Cubs in a game called after nine innings. Brett Anderson, who signed in January with the Cubs on a one-year deal, threw a scoreless inning.

ATHLETICS 5, GIANTS 4

Athletics free-agent addition Matt Joyce homered and Rajai Davis and Stephen Vogt each had two hits. Brandon Belt hit a solo homer for San Francisco. Starter Jeff Samardzija went one inning, allowing two runs and three hits.

INDIANS 3, RANGERS (ss) 2

Indians starter Carlos Carrasco gave up three hits and two runs in two innings. Carlos Santana doubled and singled for Cleveland. Juremi Profar, younger brother of Texas infielder Jurickson Profar, hit a first-inning triple and scored on a home run by Nomar Mazara.

BREWERS 5, RANGERS (ss) 0

Lewis Brinson got three hits for Milwaukee and Scooter Gennett added two hits with a walk. Shin-Soo Choo and Rougned Odor had two of the Rangers' three hits.

ANGELS 5, PADRES 3

Two-time MVP Mike Trout walked both times up in his spring debut for the Angels. Padres All-Star first baseman Wil Myers hit an RBI single.

DIAMONDBACKS 6, REDS 1

Patrick Corbin struck out three in two hitless innings for Arizona. Scott Feldman gave up two runs in 1 2/3 innings for Cincinnati. — AP

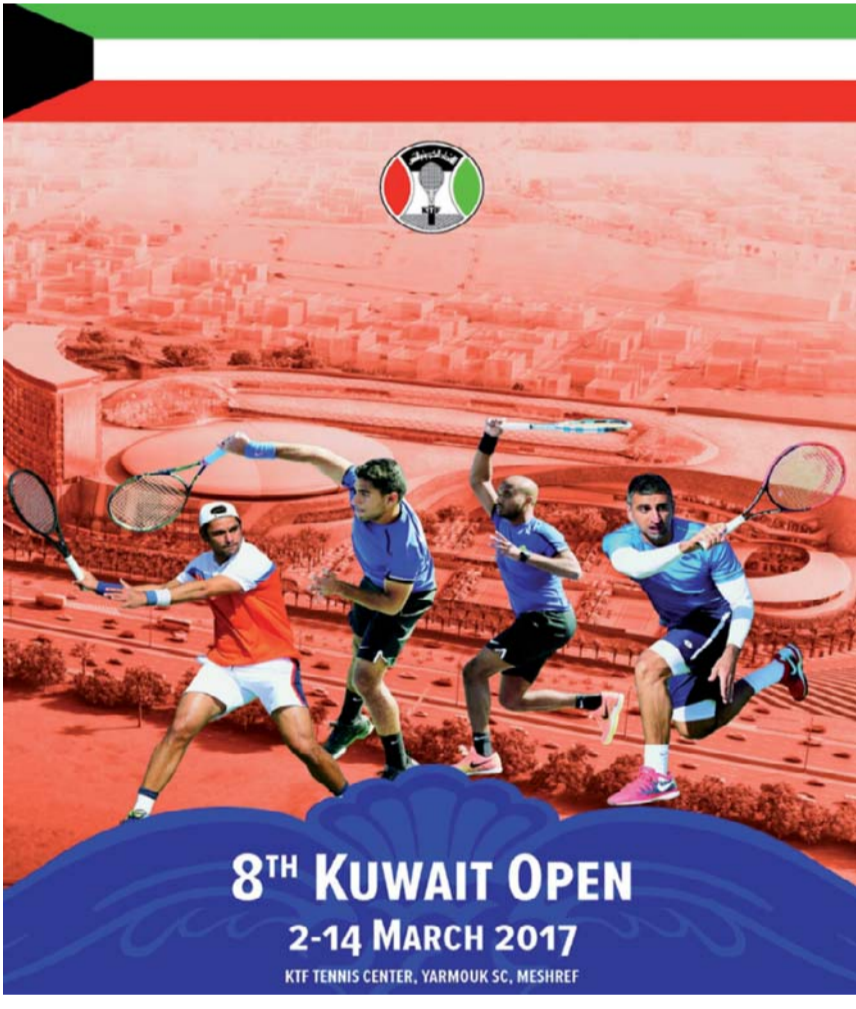
KUWAIT'S 8TH OPEN TENNIS TOURNAMENT BEGINS TOMORROW

By Abdellatif Sharaa

KUWAIT: President of Kuwait Tennis Federation, Chairman of the Higher Organization Committee Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah said all preparations are ready for Kuwait's 8th Open Tennis Tournament 2017, to start tomorrow and will continue until March 14. Kuwait Tennis Open tournament is considered the biggest tournament organized by KTF during the entire season, and it has an unprecedented participation this year in various age categories in addition to ambassadors and diplomatic core in Kuwait. The tournament includes 411 singles, 413 singles, 417 juniors singles, pioneers above 45, pioneer singles above 55, pioneers doubles above 45, men singles, men's doubles, girls 418 singles, ladies singles and diplomats singles.

HOC Chairman Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber said the committee completed its prepara-

tions to ensure its success and bring it out in a way that is suitable for Kuwait and KTF. He said this year's tournament sees the participation of all sports clubs who participate in tennis activities. He said the committee had to stop receiving additional participants and the registration period was not extended despite the heavy number of those wishing to participate due to the limited number of courts. He hoped the new facility "Sheikh Jabar Al-Abdallah International Tennis Complex" will accommodate all tennis players who wish to participate in the upcoming tournaments. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Abdallah thanked all those who contributed to ensure the tournament's success including official sponsors. The tournament will be held at the KTF courts and Yarmouk Sports Club courts, and will be officiated by general referee Barrak Al-Jouhari, assisted by Omaira Mohammad Ghafeel, Adel Al-Mansour, and Al-Haza Hamdi.



Winners with the trophy



Runners-up with the trophy.

PSAK HOLDS HALA FEBRUARY T20 CRICKET CUP TOURNEY

KUWAIT: On the Occasion of Kuwait National Day and Liberation Day celebrations Pakistan Sports Association Kuwait (PSAK) organized "Hala February T20 Cricket Cup 2017" on 22nd February at Salmiya Cricket ground Salmiya. The match was played between Kuwait Energy & United Elevators Cricket teams.

Kuwait Energy won the toss and elect-

ed to field first. United Elevator scored 162 runs in allotted 20 overs, while chasing 163 runs target Kuwait Energy scored 137 runs. United Elevators won the contest by 25 runs.

At the end of event, prize ceremony was held. President of Pakistan Sports Association Kuwait Maqbool Ahmed, PSA Founder/Director General Muhammad Irfan

Adil, Advisor M.Irfan Shafiq, Vice President Muhammad Younas Shahid, Tahir Bashir Patron in Chief VOOP media, were among the guests. Kuwait Energy captain Qasim Ali received the Runner up Trophy while United Elevators clinched the winner's trophy and was received by Captain Veeru Tanagi (Victor).

Irfan Adil said that Kuwait is our second

home and we wish peace and prosperity to our Kuwaiti brothers and sisters and we being a Pakistani community congratulates them on this occasion.

Maqbool Ahmed said that Pakistan Sports Association Kuwait (PSA) is engaged in the youth and community in positive and healthy sports activities. It is an avenue for camaraderie and to develop a sense of

belonging among individuals in the shared pursuit of sport and to provide an outlet for advanced participation and competition in a particular sport.

At the end Muhammad Younas Shahid, thanked all the guests for witnessing the thrilling game of cricket. Certificates of participation were presented to all players and match officials by distinguished guests.



MONTMELO: Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 Team's British driver Lewis Hamilton drives at the Circuit de Catalunya yesterday in Montmelo on the outskirts of Barcelona during the second day of the first week of tests for the Formula One Grand Prix season. — AFP

MOTOR RACING

HAMILTON GOES FASTER AND FURTHER ON SECOND TEST DAY

BARCELONA: Triple world champion Lewis Hamilton went faster and further than anyone else as his Mercedes team again led the way in pre-season testing yesterday while some others struggled to get into gear.

After the team completed 152 trouble-free laps on the opening day, Hamilton returned for a colder and windier morning session and pounded out another 66 - a race distance at the Circuit de Catalunya.

Ferrari's 2007 world champion Kimi Raikkonen, who was second fastest for

Ferrari, was 1.848 seconds slower and also did the second highest tally of laps before lunch - 47.

Hamilton's best lap was one minute 20.983 seconds, compared with a timesheet-topping 1:21.765 on Monday. The fastest time in 2016 testing in Barcelona was 1:22.765, showing how much faster the new cars are with bigger tyres and revised aerodynamics.

Red Bull and McLaren, who had a troubled debut day, were still not firing on all cylinders. Dutch teenager Max Verstappen did 31

laps for Red Bull but Belgian rookie Stoffel Vandoorne was halted after 29 in the McLaren. His car had earlier been pushed down the pitlane by mechanics.

Partners Honda said the car had suffered a power unit problem. "At the moment we don't know what has caused the issue. We are currently changing the power unit in order to investigate fully and identify the cause," said a spokeswoman.

Vandoorne's unhappy team mate Fernando Alonso had been unable to set a

timed lap on Monday morning due to an oil system problem while Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo suffered a sensor issue.

While those two teams at least got out on to the track, others wrestled with garage gremlins. Renault's Jolyon Palmer managed to do one untimed installation lap after the team flew in new parts overnight.

Italian Antonio Giovinazzi, standing in for the injured Pascal Wehrlein at Sauber, did five with the team swapping out the Ferrari power unit. French driver Esteban Ocon brought

out red flags with 15 minutes remaining when his Force India stopped on track.

Canadian teenage rookie Lance Stroll spun off after 12 laps, going through the gravel backwards and damaging his Williams. "We're having to send some composite parts back to the factory, which will be back with us at some point tomorrow," said head of performance engineering Rob Smedley. "We're doing the utmost we can now to get back out on track at the earliest opportunity today." — Reuters

CAPITALS ACQUIRE DEFENSEMAN KEVIN SHATTENKIRK FROM BLUES

WASHINGTON: With their championship window in danger of closing, the Washington Capitals made a strong move Monday to try to win the Stanley Cup this spring by acquiring defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk in a trade with the St. Louis Blues.

Shattenkirk is a pending unrestricted free agent, but was considered the top rental player available ahead of the NHL's today trade deadline.

Washington traded a 2017 first-round pick, forward Zach Sanford, a conditional 2019 draft pick and minor league forward Brad Malone to St. Louis for Shattenkirk and goaltender Phoenix Copley.

The 28-year-old right-handed-shooting defenseman gives the Capitals one of the strongest, deepest blue lines in the league with Shattenkirk, Matt Niskanen, Karl Alzner, John Carlson, Dmitry Orlov, Brooks Orpik, Nate Schmidt and Taylor Chorney. Shattenkirk has 42 points on 11 goals and 31 assists this season and 66 goals and 218 assists in 471 NHL games. "We felt it was important to acquire another defenseman to strengthen and add depth to our blue line," Capitals general manager Brian MacLellan said in a statement. "Kevin is a skilled, puck-moving defenseman who we think will help our team at even strength and on the power play."

The New Rochelle, New York, native counts \$4.25 million against the salary cap this season. The Blues retained 39 percent of his salary as part of the trade to make the numbers work under the Capitals' cap.

Shattenkirk, a power-play specialist who can also eat big minutes, adds depth and offense to Washington's defense. In addition to the 2017 first-round pick, the Blues get a 2019 second-round pick if the Capitals sign Shattenkirk for next season or reach the Eastern Conference final with him playing at least half of their playoff games.

Other conditions protect the Blues in the event Washington trades Shattenkirk prior to July 1, when he could hit the open market. If they trade Shattenkirk before July 1, the Capitals would send the Blues their next available seventh-round pick or if they get a fourth-rounder or better they'd send their next available pick two rounds worse.

It's the fifth trade at this deadline to include conditions based on a team's playoff success, but this one takes the cake for complexity. The Tampa Bay Lightning could receive as high as a second-round pick or as low as nothing from the deal that sent goaltender Ben Bishop to the Los Angeles Kings. Giving up future assets is no sweat for the Capitals, who know that with wingers T.J. Oshie and Justin Williams and Alzner set to be unrestricted free agents and other cap constraints that 2017 might be their last best chance to win a Cup. MacLellan said last week the organization tried to create a "sense of urgency" about this season, and that includes his own duties. "I have to do my job," MacLellan said. "I have to pursue anything that I think can be a possibility that might make us better, and when we get down into the nitty gritty you say yes or no. And it's going to be based on what affects it's going to have on our team."

Getting Shattenkirk not only strengthens the Capitals but keeps him away from the rival Pittsburgh Penguins and New York Rangers. Trading Sanford, a 22-year-old rookie with two goals and an assist in 26 games, depletes the Capitals' forward depth but with time to rectify that before the deadline.

Copley, whom the Blues acquired from the Capitals in the 2015 trade for Oshie, becomes Washington's third goaltender behind Braden Holtby and Phillip Grubauer. MacLellan said he has been looking for goaltending depth for a while. — AP



ST PAUL: Jonathan Quick #32 of the Los Angeles Kings blocks a shot by Jason Zucker #16 of the Minnesota Wild during the third period of the game on Monday at Xcel Energy Center in St Paul, Minnesota. The Wild defeated the Kings 5-4 in overtime. — AFP

NHL

GRANLUND LIFTS WILD OVER KINGS IN OT

ST. PAUL: Mikael Granlund beat two defenders to find open ice and wrap the winning shot around goalie Jonathan Quick just 12 seconds into overtime, giving the Minnesota Wild a 5-4 victory over the Los Angeles Kings on Monday night. Granlund's 20th goal of the season gave goalie Devan Dubnyk his NHL-leading 33rd win and the Wild their 15th comeback victory. They answered all four goals in regulation by the Kings, from Nick Shore, Tanner Pearson, Jake Muzzin and Marian Gaborik. Jason Zucker's spinning wrist shot midway through the third period tied the game for the Wild, who also had goals from Nino Niederreiter, Jordan Schroeder and Ryan White in his debut. White and Martin Hanzal were acquired in a trade with Arizona the night before. After losing 5-3 to Chicago before their bye, during which the Blackhawks pulled within one point in the Western Conference race, the Wild were given a gift from general manager Chuck Fletcher for their franchise-best record at this point in the season.

The decision to send draft picks to the Coyotes for the well-regarded Hanzal was as sure a sign as ever that the club is all-in with its belief it can win the Stanley Cup this year. Then came the buzzkill before the game that veteran forwards Zach Parise and Jason Pominville were out with the mumps. The Wild expressed wariness of the urgent state the Kings are in, with the teams directly in front of them in the play-offs picture on a roll, even before they learned they'd be short-handed.

The Wild adjusted well, though, with White on the first line with Niederreiter and Eric Staal and Hanzal centering Erik Haula and Charlie Coyle on the third line and an attack that produced 35 shots and plenty of prime scoring chances.

The Kings acquired Ben Bishop from Tampa Bay the day before for a capable alternative in the crease down the stretch with Quick working his way back from the groin injury that kept him out for 59 games until returning over the weekend. They started a stretch of 15 games in 31 days with this matchup, and Quick looked like a

goalie that needs some time to reach prime form. Niederreiter faked him out for the Wild's first goal with some slick right-left stick work after a feed from Jared Spurgeon in the first period. The next one was a fluke, though, a shot by Schroeder from behind the goal line that glanced off Alec Martinez's stick and in the uncovered corner of the net to tie the game at 2. The Wild wrapped up their franchise-record eight-game homestand with a 5-2-1 record. In their past 33 games since Dec. 13, they've scored four-plus goals 18 times. They've still only lost consecutive games in regulation once all season, to Buffalo and Colorado on Nov. 1 and 5.

CANADIENS 4, DEVILS 3, OT

Alex Galchenyuk scored on a power play at 2:54 of overtime as Montreal rallied from a two-goal third-period deficit to beat New Jersey. Max Pacioretty scored twice in the final 11:23 of

regulation to tie the game and Alexander Radulov added a goal for the Canadiens, who won consecutive games for the first time since early January. Al Montoya had 34 saves for Montreal. Kyle Palmieri, John Moore and Travis Zajac scored for the Devils, who have lost four straight games (0-2-2), the past two in overtime. Cory Schneider made 29 saves.

LIGHTNING 5, SENATORS 1

Nikita Kucherov scored three power-play goals in the second period to help Tampa Bay keep its fading playoff hopes alive with victory over Ottawa. Kucherov had the second hat trick of his career and added an assist in the third period. Jonathan Drouin assisted all three of his goals and Victor Hedman assisted on two. A day after trading goaltender Ben Bishop to Los Angeles and just hours after trading forward Brian Boyle to Toronto, the Lightning improved to 6-1-2 over their past nine games. — AP

NHL results/standings

Minnesota 5, Los Angeles 4 (OT); Tampa Bay 5, Ottawa 1; Montreal 4, New Jersey 3 (OT).													
Western Conference													
Central Division						Ottawa	33	22	6	161	162	72	
Minnesota	40	14	6	203	142	86	Boston	32	24	6	172	165	70
Chicago	39	18	5	187	159	83	Toronto	28	20	13	189	182	69
Nashville	31	22	9	183	173	71	Florida	28	23	10	155	172	66
St. Louis	31	25	5	172	177	67	Tampa Bay	28	25	8	171	171	64
Winnipeg	28	29	6	184	199	62	Buffalo	26	26	10	152	176	62
Dallas	24	28	10	173	201	58	Detroit	24	26	10	150	178	58
Colorado	17	40	3	121	199	37	Metropolitan Division						
Pacific Division						Washington	41	13	7	203	133	89	
San Jose	36	18	7	170	145	79	Pittsburgh	38	14	8	211	168	84
Anaheim	32	21	10	162	161	74	Columbus	39	16	5	199	145	83
Edmonton	33	22	8	181	166	74	NY Rangers	40	20	2	206	164	82
Calgary	33	26	4	169	177	70	NY Islanders	29	22	10	180	182	68
Los Angeles	30	27	5	154	156	65	Philadelphia	28	26	7	157	187	63
Vancouver	26	29	6	143	176	58	New Jersey	25	25	12	145	180	62
Arizona	22	32	7	148	196	51	Carolina	25	25	8	146	168	58
Eastern Conference						Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)							
Atlantic Division						Montreal	34	21	8	176	163	76	

RUGBY

WORLD RUGBY BOSS BEAUMONT TO 'DISCUSS' ITALY TACTICS

LONDON: Bill Beaumont, the head of World Rugby, is to "discuss" Italy's controversial 'no-ruck' play at Twickenham last weekend after being urged to take action by England coach Eddie Jones.

England won 36-15 on Sunday to stay on course for back-to-back Six Nations Grand Slams as they extended their winning run to 17 successive Test victories. But the result was overshadowed by the debate about Italy's tactics. The perennial underdogs remarkably led England 10-5 at half-time after repeatedly refusing to commit anyone other than the tackler to the breakdown, meaning no ruck was formed.

As a result offside became irrelevant and Italy players could stand directly between scrum-half Danny Care and fly-half George Ford. Afterwards a frustrated Jones said: "If that's rugby, I'm going to retire. That's not rugby." The Australian added: "I'm sure Bill Beaumont watched that game today and will take some action."

Beaumont, himself a former England captain, told the Daily Mail: "I will be discussing it when I go to Dublin, for a catch-up with our referees' manager, Alain Rolland, at the World Rugby offices. I spoke to Mark Egan—who runs our rugby committee—today (Monday) on a couple of matters and this was one of them."

But Beaumont ruled out the prospect of significant change before England's next match, against Scotland at Twickenham on March 11, although World Rugby's committee has a scheduled meeting before the next round of Six Nations matches.

'LOOPHOLE?'

"That is probably a bit tight. It is less than 24 hours since this happened and we will review it, as we do lots of things."

"Is it a loophole? I don't know," former lock Beaumont, said. "Italy felt they were acting within the laws of the game, which they were. I'm not criticising (Italy coach) Conor O'Shea or Italy because what they did was legal. Everyone was taken by surprise and it proved most of us have to revise our knowledge of the laws!" After Sunday's match, Jones accused referee Romain Poite of looking "flustered", but a World Rugby spokesman told AFP on Monday that the Frenchman and his colleagues had "officially law correctly".

Despite England's outrage, this was not the first time the tactic had been deployed, with New Zealand's Waikato Chiefs having done something similar in Super Rugby and Australia's David Pocock nearly creating a try against Ireland last year with the play. Ben Ryan, who as England Sevens coach pioneered the 'no-ruck' tactic in 2012, accused Jones of being "rude" in his reaction and told The Times: "It is so easy (to counter). You either make sure there is an Italian in the breakdown, so it has to be called a ruck, or you run straight through the middle, where there is a hole." Clive Woodward, having praised Italy for their use of an "entirely legitimate" tactic on Monday, admitted a day later that he'd changed his mind, with England's 2003 World Cup-winning coach telling the Daily Mail: "It can't be allowed so the law must be changed. Rugby must have an offside line." —AFP

CHINA TRANSFERS HIT NEW RECORD DESPITE CRACKDOWN

BEIJING: Chinese clubs splashed a record 388 million euros (\$411 million) on footballers in the January-February transfer window despite an official crackdown on spending, with Oscar's heavy-weight move to Shanghai SIPG leading the way. In spite of moves to curb "irrational" expenditure, China's top tier beat last year's record of 345 million euros and outstripped the English Premier League's winter spending (259 million euros) for the second year in a row, according to industry website transfermarkt.com.

Chelsea midfielder Oscar's Asian-record, 60-million-euro move to Shanghai SIPG reportedly made him the world's second highest paid player-

behind Carlos Tevez, who joined city rivals Shanghai Shenhua.

Rumoured moves for Cristiano Ronaldo and Wayne Rooney failed to materialise but Axel Witsel and Alexandre Pato were among other big names to join the Chinese Super League, while Zhang Chengdong became China's most expensive player.

One of the biggest surprises was out-of-favour Watford striker Odion Ighalo's 23.3m euro move to Changchun Yatai, which made him the sixth biggest transfer in Super League history.

Oscar and Tevez moved before the Chinese Football Association announced a raft of cooling measures, including caps on transfer fees and wages and

restricting match-day squads to three foreign players instead of four.

It seems to have stopped some mega-deals in their tracks, with Tianjin Quanjian's chairman saying the club had dropped bids for Diego Costa, Edinson Cavani, Radamel Falcao and Raul Jimenez as a result. However, the new curbs didn't dry up spending completely with players continuing to cash in on China's football boom.

ROONEY, RONALDO RUMOURS

"We're still going to see high levels of spending even with the change in regulations, and this will continue," said Tom Elsdon of the Mailman Group, a sports marketing company. "China is and will

still pull big names, purely because of the salary on offer," he added.

Shanghai SIPG got the ball rolling in December when they broke the Asian transfer record by plucking Oscar from Chelsea, where he had been sidelined from the first team.

When Argentina's ex-Manchester United forward Tevez joined Shanghai Shenhua on a reported world-record salary of 38 million euros a season, it sparked speculation that four-time Ballon d'Or winner Ronaldo and record England goalscorer Rooney could follow.

The sums spent often seemed divorced from reality, with clubs' big-business backers lavishing money seemingly in hopes of currying favour with

President Xi Jinping, who has called for China to become one of the game's superpowers.

But in early January Chinese regulators moved to rein in spending, urging teams to direct funds towards boosting domestic talent, with China's national team languishing at 86th in the world rankings.

Reigning six-time champions Guangzhou Evergrande responded by announcing they would field a Chinese-only squad by 2020, a U-turn after years of success based on big foreign signings.

The surprise curbs left some teams with expensive transfer and wage bills for foreign players they now cannot fit into their match-day squads.—AFP



MADRID: In this April 11, 2015 file photo, Real Madrid's Jese Rodriguez celebrates his goal during a Spanish La Liga soccer match between Real Madrid and Eibar at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid. Jese Rodriguez has struggled since leaving Real Madrid last summer, and he will be facing his former club today for the first time looking to end Las Palmas' four-game losing streak. — AP

PREVIEW

ZIDANE HOPES JESE FULFILS POTENTIAL

MADRID: Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane hopes Jese Rodriguez rediscovers the form that once made him the star of Madrid's academy, but only after his return to the Santiago Bernabeu with Las Palmas today. Jese left Madrid for French champions Paris Saint-Germain on a five-year deal in August for a reported 25 million euros (\$26.8 million).

However, he scored just twice in 14 appearances and quickly fell down the pecking order for PSG's Spanish coach Unai Emery before joining home town club Las Palmas on loan in January.

"I like him a lot as a player and a person, and I hope that from tomorrow it goes well for him at Las Palmas," Zidane said yesterday. When the Canary Islanders pushed the boat out to bring the 24-year-old forward back to La Liga at the end of January, qualifying for Europe was the aim.

Instead, Las Palmas have lost all four games to Granada, Sevilla, Malaga and Real Sociedad since signing Jese to slip to 12th and cap his miserable season for far.

A move away from Real was supposed to relaunch his career after the devastating effect of a cruciate knee ligament injury that cut short his breakthrough season in 2013/14 when Zidane was Madrid's assistant coach to Carlo Ancelotti.

At the time Jese was one of the bright-

est young talents in world football with goals against Barcelona, Valencia, Athletic Bilbao and Villarreal that campaign putting him on the verge of a call-up to Spain's 2014 World Cup squad.

Despite going onto to make 94 appearances in all for Madrid, his career at the Bernabeu never recovered as he lived in the shadow of Cristiano Ronaldo and Gareth Bale and was also ultimately usurped by the likes of Lucas Vazquez for first team opportunities.

"He is a high quality Spanish player who has always shown enormous potential," added Zidane. "It didn't go as he would have wanted at PSG, maybe he did not have all the minutes to show what he could do. I wish him is all the best from Thursday, and hope that he regains his form because he is a great player."

Substitutes Isco and Alvaro Morata made a huge impact as Real came from 2-0 down to beat Villarreal 3-2 on Sunday and could be rewarded with a start on Wednesday as Zidane promised to rotate his squad once more.

Gareth Bale started the Real fightback by scoring on his first start for three months and the Welshman has been included in Zidane's 19-man squad despite suffering a knock late on at the Ceramic Stadium. — AFP

CUP IS NOT A SIDE ISSUE FOR MAN CITY, SAYS FERNANDINHO

MANCHESTER: Manchester City midfielder Fernandinho insists the FA Cup remains a priority for his side despite their bid to advance in the Champions League.

Last week's thrilling 5-3 victory over French side Monaco has left Pep Guardiola's side in a strong position to advance to the quarter-finals in a competition in which the coach has excelled throughout his career.

But before the return leg, City must face second tier side Huddersfield Town in an FA Cup fifth round replay, with a place in the last eight of that competition at stake. And Fernandinho insists City are keen to add to their five successes in the FA Cup, the last one coming under Roberto Mancini's leadership six years ago.

"If we win we are in the quarter-finals and after that we can be at Wembley," Fernandinho told the club's website.

"It's extremely important because the FA Cup it's a beautiful competition and we want to go as far as possible.

"The support of our fans in the FA Cup will be very important. For us the aim is to be in the final." City flew to Abu Dhabi for a spell of warm weather training immediately after the Monaco victory, returning to Manchester on Monday.

'LOOKING SO CONFIDENT'

Guardiola is likely to rest key players, ahead of Sunday's Premier League visit to bottom side Sunderland, for the replay although, given the depth in his squad, City are certain to field a strong line-up.

Fernandinho, 31, has proved particularly important for Guardiola this season as he has rotated his squad with the Brazilian used in a number of positions, including

both full-backs spots as well as a variety of midfield roles.

"No matter what position I play, the aim is always to have possession of the ball, create supremacy, to allow the team to feel that we have more players in the midfield-to help create more passes and chances," he said.

"I don't know what position I will be playing from now on. I will try to play as often as possible as a midfielder, but for me the most important is the team's victory and try to achieve a good position on the Premier League table." Huddersfield remain in contention for automatic promotion from the Championship, despite a week-end draw at Barnsley.

Manager David Wagner has also been rotating his squad and is likely to do so again for the visit to Premier League opponents. "We are looking so confident and so strong at the minute that I am not concerned about the fact that we have another match," said the German, who was assistant to his close friend Jurgen Klopp at Borussia Dortmund.

"It's another opportunity to test ourselves against a very good opponent.

"The players who came in for the first match gained a lot of confidence from the performance. They are very hungry to play again and show that they deserve a chance. "We are not concerned about the number of matches. We played Tuesday when Barnsley were at home lying on the sofa, yet we were the team pushing right to the end to try and win it.

"It was good to see how we were fitness wise. It was a strong performance from the whole group and there is a really positive feeling in the dressing room." — AFP

SOCCER

ILLNESS CAPS GOETZE'S FALL FROM HERO TO ZERO

BERLIN: Mario Goetze had the nation at his feet when Germany's hero netted the winning goal in the 2014 World Cup final. Fast-forward nearly three years and Monday's news that the Borussia Dortmund star is sidelined indefinitely by a metabolism disorder is the latest blow to affect the attacking midfielder since the Brazil triumph. Among the Dortmund games he will miss is the Champions League round-of-16, second-leg clash at home to Benfica on March 8, having lost the first match 1-0 in Portugal.

"I am in the process of getting treatment and I will do everything I can to get back into training as quickly as possible," Goetze told the club website on Monday.

But there has been an air of frustration around the 24-year-old for weeks. Goetze has scored just two goals in 16 appearances for Dortmund in all competitions after returning to his hometown club for this season. It has been a poor return on the 22 million euros (\$23m) it cost to buy him back from Bayern, who forced Dortmund to sell him for 37 million euros in 2013 when the Bavarians triggered a release clause in his contract. Goetze failed to hold down a first-team place at star-studded Bayern in three seasons under Pep Guardiola, who preferred the silky skills of Thiago Alcantara to Goetze's industry around the edge of the box.

A telephone call with Guardiola's replacement Carlo Ancelotti towards the end of last season was enough to convince Goetze his future lay in Dortmund, but his return has not been a happy one. He has featured in only 11 Bundesliga matches this season, played the full 90 minutes just four times and spent six games entirely on the bench. Goetze has not played at all this month after picking up a leg injury. Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel dropped him for Dortmund's home Bundesliga win over second-placed RB Leipzig at the start of February because of poor form. There has been external criticism, most noticeably from Lothar Matthaeus, who captained Germany to the Italy 1990 title. The 55-year-old believes Goetze is running out of options and needs to adapt. "Quite honestly, even if it sounds a little nasty, if he does not sort it out at Dortmund, he has to go to China, because he certainly won't want to make less money," Matthaeus told magazine Sport Bild last week.

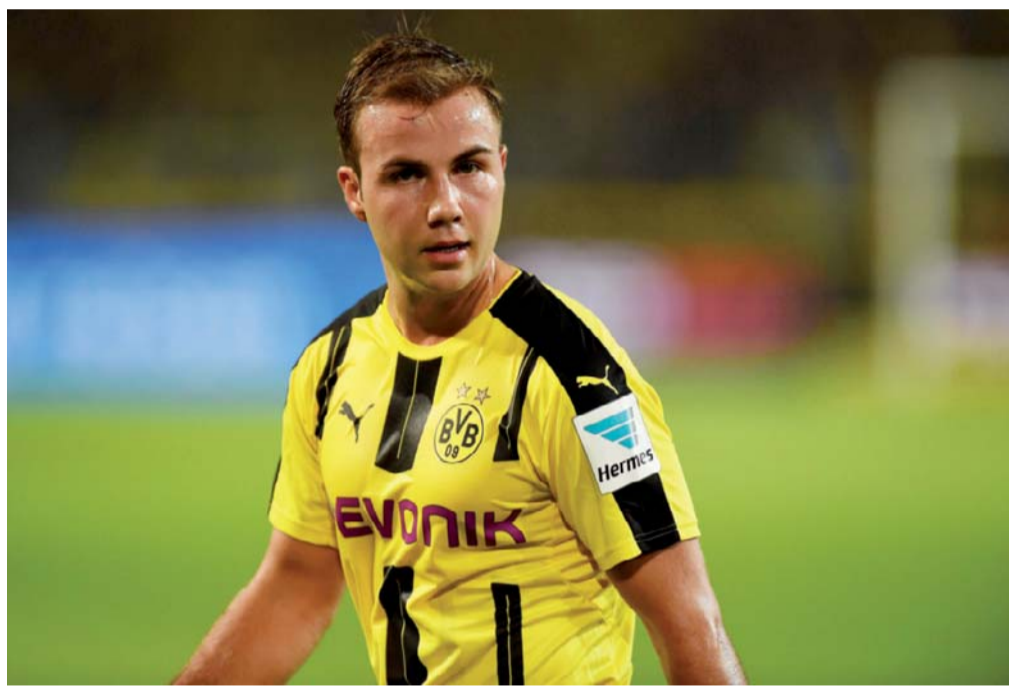
'HAS TO CHANGE'

"He can't go to (Dortmund's arch rivals) Schalke, he wouldn't fit at Bayer Leverkusen and Borussia Muenchengladbach can't afford him. "Top clubs from abroad no longer have him on their list. "He has to change, that is clear. "He doesn't have the speed, which is everything in football today. "Players like Xabi Alonso can perhaps compensate for that, but not an attacking player like Goetze."

Dortmund, who are third in Germany's top flight, have given no date for his return and are protective of Goetze, who came up through the junior ranks. "I am quite certain that some people still have to apologise to Goetze. Even if they are a big name," said Dortmund's CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke in relation to Matthaeus' comments. There is some relief around the club that

there is a medical reason to explain the Germany star's loss of form. "We are glad to know the reasons for Mario's complaints and we are convinced that after recovering he will give us extra quality with his exceptional abilities," said Dortmund's director of sports Michael Zorc. "Mario gets the full backing and maximum support from all of us at Borussia Dortmund on his way back."

But Goetze is a long way from his dazzling form in 2011 and 2012 when he helped Dortmund win the German league titles at Bayern's expense. In a Dortmund midfield boasting talent like Germany's Marco Reus, teenager Ousmane Dembele and Raphael Guerreiro, who Tuchel has heaped praise on, Goetze faces an uphill battle to once again hold down a first-team place. —AFP



DORTMUND: This file photo taken on September 23, 2016 shows Dortmund's midfielder Mario Goetze playing during the German first division Bundesliga football match between Borussia Dortmund and SC Freiburg in Dortmund, western Germany. Goetze, who has been virtually absent since the beginning of 2017, will remain unavailable for an indefinite period due to "metabolic disorders," his club said on Monday. —AFP

LAHM OFFERS SCHALKE TIPS TO FACE RAMPANT BAYERN

BERLIN: Philipp Lahm has offered Schalke tips on how to avoid being the next victims of a Bayern Munich pounding in today's German Cup quarter-final.

Holders Bayern have reached the cup's last eight in each of the last 10 years, which no other German club can match. They are bidding to reach the semi-finals for an eighth year-in-a-row, while Schalke have not got this far since the 2010/2011 season when they last won the trophy by hammering Duisburg 5-0 in the final. Bayern are in goal-scoring form after hammering Hamburg 8-0 in Munich on Saturday in the Bundesliga which came 10 days after their 5-1 demolition of Arsenal in the Champions League. Schalke are the next team bidding to halt Munich's goal-machine and are unbeaten in their last seven games in all competitions, dating back to their 1-1 league draw with Bayern at the Allianz Arena four weeks ago. The Royal Blues put in a battling second-half display to take a Bundesliga point on their last visit as Naldo's stunning free-kick cancelled out Robert Lewandowski's early goal.

Schalke use a three-man defence, operating alongside two wing backs who can drop back to form a back five.

Having an extra man in defence could pay off against Bayern, according to club captain Lahm, after his team ran riot against Arsenal and Hamburg's back four.

"That's how things are at the moment. It looks like it is easier for us against a back four," said Lahm as a compact defence of five defenders allows Bayern little space to attack. Playing a back five does however present disadvantages, admitted Lahm. "An opponent with a four-man defence has more potential to attack, especially on the counter, because they have more midfield players when they have won the ball," added Lahm.

Germany's star Thomas Mueller, who was impressive against Hamburg with two assists, agreed with his skipper that Bayern profit against a four-man defence. "It is easier for the lines of running if we do not have to play against a five-chain every time," says Mueller.

"You can move into the gaps better without betraying too much to your opponents."

Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti has said Franck Ribery will play on the left wing with Brazil star Douglas Costa rested, while left-back David Alaba, who is carrying a knock, is likely to be replaced by Juan Bernat. Teenage Portugal midfielder Renato Sanches is out with illness, but Ancelotti wants a win to keep alive their hopes of the Champions League, Bundesliga and cup treble.

"We want to go to Berlin," said Ancelotti with the final at the Olympic Stadium on May 27. —AFP



ABU DHABI: Al-Wahda's Salem Sultan (R) heads the ball in front of Persepolis's Vahid Amiri during the AFC Champions League qualifying football match between UAE's Al-Wahda and Iran's Persepolis yesterday. —AFP

JUERGEN KLOPP'S CONCERNS MOUNT AS LIVERPOOL SPUTTERS

ANFIELD: With his eccentricities, his passion on the sidelines and his quirky comments to the media, Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has quickly established himself as a cult figure at Anfield and a darling of English soccer in general. Liverpool's American owners were so sure that Klopp was the perfect man for the club, they handed him a six-year contract in July. But as another title challenge sputters in the Premier League and even Champions League qualification looks in doubt, questions are being asked about whether Klopp can make Liverpool - England's biggest team in the late 1970s and 1980s - great again. And front of line is Klopp himself. "It's getting more serious now. We all play for our futures, myself included," a dismayed Klopp said after Liverpool's 3-1 loss at Leicester on Monday, its latest setback in a forgettable 2017. The team, first-place Chelsea's nearest challenger over Christmas, has earned

only six points in seven games since the start of the year. The Reds have dropped to fifth place and are only a point ahead of resurgent Manchester United, which has played a game less. The 2-0 win over Tottenham two weeks ago proved to be a false dawn. Liverpool's players put in one of its worst performances of the season at Leicester: They were out-ran, out-fought and out-thought. Liverpool's squad spent some time at a training camp in La Manga, Spain, during its recent 16-day break from competitive activity. The trip was meant to refresh the players ahead of the Premier League run-in, but it felt at times as if their heads and legs were still in Spain. "It looked like a friendly game," Klopp said when describing his players' sluggish reactions during Leicester's build-up to the first goal by Jamie Vardy. As the recent firing of Leicester's title-winning coach, Claudio Ranieri, has proved, a manager will always take the

hit when a team underperforms even if the players are as much to blame. Klopp, who has been manager for 17 months, has to take his share of the increasing criticism coming Liverpool's way. He doesn't seem to have a "Plan B" if the team's high-energy pressing game isn't working. When Liverpool's players are on their game, they can blow opponents away - see, for example, how they overwhelmed Tottenham and the fact they scored more than four goals in a single game on eight occasions from August to December - but otherwise they are easy to play against when their intensity drops. **COUNTERATTACK** There's also an alarming trend of losses to lower-ranked teams. All five of Liverpool's losses in the league have come against teams in the bottom eight, including four who were in the bottom five. Is it

complacency? Are they too easy to pick off on the counterattack? "What has happened here, has happened too often this season," Klopp said at King Power Stadium. Liverpool simply wasn't ready for Leicester, despite having two weeks to prepare. The defense left space behind for Vardy - one of the league's quickest strikers - to exploit, which is unforgivable. And Liverpool didn't match the work rate of an opponent from whom there would obviously be a reaction following the criticism of Leicester's players because of their perceived role in Ranieri's departure. "We didn't adapt well in the game," Liverpool midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum said. "We were not ready at the beginning of the game." And then there's the seemingly annual concerns about Liverpool's defense, which featured two midfielders - Lucas Leiva at center back and James Milner at left back - against Leicester. Klopp's fail-

ure to significantly improve Liverpool's defense in the three transfer windows he has had at Anfield might be his biggest mistake. No other team in the top eight has conceded as many goals as Liverpool (33) so far this season. Simon Mignolet and Loris Karius are mistake-prone goalkeepers who have been in and out of the side, Milner isn't a long-term solution at left back, and they are too weak at center back no matter who plays out of Joel Matip, Lucas, Dejan Lovren or Ragnar Klavan. There is no immediate threat to Klopp's position - he is too highly thought of at Liverpool - but there is a sense of deja vu at a club that hasn't won the English league since 1990 and cannot compete financially with other heavyweights in English soccer. In the six-team race for the four Champions League spots, two big teams will miss out. Liverpool increasingly looks like being one of them. — AP

FORMER FIFA OFFICIAL VALCKE APPEALS 10-YEAR SOCCER BAN

GENEVA: Former FIFA official Jerome Valcke has appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport to overturn his 10-year ban from soccer for unethical conduct. The court outlined a procedural timetable yesterday that should take several months to reach a verdict. Valcke's case will go ahead while he remains under criminal investigation by federal prosecutors in Switzerland. He is also an expected target witness in an American federal investigation of corruption implicating senior FIFA officials. Valcke was fired as FIFA's secretary general in January 2016 after being implicated in irregular World Cup ticket and broadcast rights sales, plus expenses abuses including personal use of private flights. The FIFA ethics committee later banned the French former TV presenter and marketing executive for 12 years, and also said he destroyed evidence during the investigation. "Mr. Valcke acted against FIFA's best interests and caused considerable financial damage to FIFA, while his private and personal interests detracted him from his ability to properly perform his duties," the ethics committee said when ruling in February 2016. Valcke is now challenging a FIFA appeal committee ruling to cut the sanction by two years. Though his initial appeal verdict was announced in July, he received the written reasons from FIFA only this month, CAS said. Valcke has repeatedly denied wrongdoing in statements issued by his United States-based lawyers. The FIFA ethics investigation was provoked by allegations in September 2015 that Valcke sought to profit from a black market ticket deal for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. The deal, with a contracted FIFA ticketing partner, later fell through and no money was paid. FIFA was also conducting an internal investigation into his conduct as right-

hand man to former president Sepp Blatter since 2007. His main role was overseeing the troubled preparations for the ultimately successful 2010 and 2014 World Cups hosted by South Africa and Brazil, respectively. However, the South African connection implicated him in a U.S. Department of Justice indictment which rocked FIFA, and eventually removed Blatter, when it was published in May 2015. In 2008, Valcke's office transferred \$10 million on behalf of South African World Cup officials to senior FIFA officials in North and Central America. American federal prosecutors allege they were payments in a bribery conspiracy for World Cup hosting votes. Switzerland's attorney general's office opened a case against Valcke in March 2016 "on suspicion of various acts of criminal mismanagement." — AP

Live Matches on TV (Local Timings)

SPANISH LEAGUE		
Barcelona v Sporting Gijon	21:30	beIN SPORTS
Osasuna v Villarreal	21:30	beIN SPORTS
Celta de Vigo v RCD Espanyol	23:30	beIN SPORTS
Real Madrid CF v Las Palmas	23:30	beIN SPORTS
Granada v Deportivo Alaves	23:30	beIN SPORTS
ITALIAN CUP		
SS Lazio v AS Roma	22:45	beIN SPORTS
ENGLAND FA CUP		
Manchester City v Huddersfield	22:45	



Jerome Valcke

EVERTON BOSS KOEMAN OPEN TO ROONEY RETURN

LONDON: Everton manager Ronald Koeman paved the way yesterday for Wayne Rooney's return to the club of his youth by saying he would make the side "stronger". Last week Rooney said he was staying with Manchester United following persistent speculation he could make a lucrative move to the Chinese Super League. But doubts still surround the long-term club future of the 31-year-old Rooney, the England national side's record goal-scorer, and Koeman appears ready to try to bring him back to Liverpool-based Everton. "I believe that Wayne Rooney is still playing at a high level," Koeman told Sky Sports. "I think he made a good choice to stay at Manchester United and in the Premier League because he has still two or three years in front of him to play on a high level," the former Dutch international added. "What will happen at the end of the season? I don't know but in my opinion he is one of the players who can make Everton more stronger. "It's all about what the player likes, what Manchester United needs to do, and we are not involved in that project. "But every player that we at Everton think can make the team stronger is welcome to Everton."

Steve Walsh, Everton's director of football, endorsed Koeman's comments, adding: "Wayne Rooney is one of the greatest players that has ever played the game in England and for us not to be interested would be wrong. "He started his career here and if the opportunity arose that he could come back and it sat well with everyone it is something we would consider. "He is a class apart, he sees things, and all the things that have been said about Wayne are true. He comes into that category of being one of England's greatest ever players, so why wouldn't we be interested? "But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Wayne is contracted to Manchester United and made a decision to continue to play for them. "Let's wait and see what happens in the future." Rooney, born in Liverpool, joined Everton as a nine-year-old and made his senior debut aged 16 on the opening day of the 2002/03 season against Tottenham Hotspur. Six weeks later, Rooney became Everton's youngest scorer with two goals against Wrexham in the League Cup. Rooney catapulted to national attention when he scored his first Premier League goal - a last-minute winner against Arsenal five days before his 17th birthday. — AFP



LEICESTER: Liverpool's Belgian goalkeeper Simon Mignolet (R) vies with Leicester City's English striker Jamie Vardy during the English Premier League football match between Leicester City and Liverpool at King Power Stadium in Leicester, central England on Monday. — AFP

SOCCER

VARDY SCORES TWICE AS LEICESTER STUN LIVERPOOL

Leicester	3
Liverpool	1

LEICESTER: Leicester City returned to form in stunning fashion on Monday as Jamie Vardy scored twice in a 3-1 Premier League defeat of Liverpool that lifted the champions out of the relegation zone. In their first match since manager Claudio Ranieri was sacked after five successive defeats in which they failed to score a goal, Leicester produced the kind of vibrant display that carried them to glory last May. Liverpool were simply overwhelmed as their hopes of a top-four finish suffered a severe setback. Vardy gave Leicester the lead in the 28th minute with his first league goal since December. Danny Drinkwater made it 2-0 with a stunning volley six minutes before halftime and Vardy headed rejuvenated Leicester's third on the hour as Liverpool crumbled. Liverpool enjoyed plenty of possession and Philippe Coutinho gave them a lifeline after 69 minutes but Leicester held on for a crucial victory which took them up three places to 15th. "It feels good, we need to enjoy it while it lasts and build on this," Drinkwater said. "You could call it a reaction, we have come under a bit of stick." Vardy said he could not put his finger on why Leicester had suddenly produced a performance worthy of champions after a pitiful defence of their title. "We've been working hard on everything we've been asked to do but it's not been happening. Tonight it all clicked." Leicester's players looked fired-up from the first whistle and Vardy caught Sadio Mane with an ugly tackle inside a minute. Liverpool, well-rested after a two-week break and some warm weather training in Spain, lacked any rhythm and keeper Simon Mignolet was called into action to stop a Robert Huth header. Leicester's caretaker manager Craig Shakespeare made only one change from the side that took to the field for Ranieri's final game - last week's 2-1 loss in Sevilla in a Champions League last-16 first leg - bringing in Shinji Okazaki for Ahmed Musa. Okazaki's flying header forced Mignolet into another save before Vardy scuffed a volley at the Liverpool keeper having produced a wonderful piece of skill to control a high ball. The England striker, playing higher up the pitch on Shakespeare's instructions, made no mistake in the 28th minute though, racing on to Marc Albrighton's perfectly-weighted pass before drilling a powerful shot past Mignolet. It was Leicester's first goal for 638 minutes, and 11 minutes later they had another. James Milner's clearance bounced towards Drinkwater 25 metres out and the midfielder steadied himself before launching a rocket that flashed into the net. The expected Liverpool response never materialised after the break and Leicester went further ahead on the hour when Vardy timed his jump perfectly

to head in Christian Fuchs's cross. Leicester's fans roared "3-0 to the champions" while also chanting the name of Ranieri and it was easy to imagine they had been transported back to last season when their team took the title by 10

points. Coutinho scored in the 69th minute with a cool side-foot finish and the visitors suddenly came to life, although it was too little too late for Jurgen Klopp's side who have won only once in seven league games. — Reuters

LATE BELOTTI BRACE STUNS FIORENTINA

MILAN: Italy striker Andrea Belotti made amends for missing a second-half penalty for Torino with a late brace that secured a share of the points in a 2-2 draw at Fiorentina in Serie A Monday. In a clash helpful to both sides' chances of qualifying for Europe next season, Fiorentina raced to a two-goal lead before halftime after Riccardo Saponara, in the eighth minute and Nikola Kalinic, with a 38th minute header, beat Joe Hart in the Torino net. Hart was otherwise heroic in a one-sided first half that saw the England 'keeper save at the feet of Belotti then Borja Valero in the opening minutes, then deny Cristian Tello later on as the hosts piled on the pressure. Those stops proved crucial in a more balanced second half, in which Fiorentina added to their current woes by throwing away a two-goal lead for the second game in succession. When Carlos Salcedo fouled Lucas Boye, Torino were handed a lifeline, only for Belotti to sky his spot kick just after the hour. But the Italy front man was soon performing his trademark 'rooster' celebration - running away with his hand to his head imitating a rooster's crown - after reducing arrears only three minutes later by firing a loose ball in the area past Ciprian Tatarusanu. Five minutes from the end, Belotti was left unmarked at the back post to collect Daniele Baselli's cross past the Fiorentina 'keeper to claim his 19th goal of the campaign, pulling level with leader Edin Dzeko of Roma.

Fiorentina, who were whistled off the park by unhappy fans at the Artemio Franchi, remain in eighth place at six points behind AC Milan, who sit 19 points off leaders Juventus. Embattled coach Paulo Sousa said he could understand their frustration: "The fans pay for their tickets so they have a right to express themselves. "We could have settled it earlier, but the lads really gave it everything for the shirt. I can't have any complaints." Torino are ninth, five points adrift of Fiorentina and saw their late fightback prompt applause by some of the home fans as they left the pitch. "That's one of the nice things about our football," said Belotti, who was nevertheless disappointed not to have taken the sole lead of the Serie A scoring charts. "I'm on 19 now, but it could have been 20 if I hadn't missed the penalty. But I want to keep challenging. "I haven't set a target but I want to score as many as possible." Juventus, aiming for a record sixth consecutive scudetto, boast a seven-point lead over second-placed Roma, who saw Radja Nainggolan hit a spectacular brace in a 3-1 win at Inter Milan on Sunday to keep the title race alive. The win was all the more important after Napoli's title bid was dented by a 2-0 defeat at home to Atalanta on Saturday which left Maurizio Sarri's men in third place, 12 points off the pace. Atalanta are fourth, one point ahead of Lazio and three ahead of Inter. — AFP



FLORENCE: Fiorentina's Nikola Kalinic, left, and Torino's Arlind Ajeti, right, vie for the ball during the Italian Serie A soccer match between Fiorentina and Torino, at the Artemio Franchi stadium in Florence, Italy, Monday. — AP

Sports

Granlund lifts
Wild over
Kings in OT



Former FIFA official
Valcke appeals
10-year soccer ban



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2017

METS MINOR LEAGUER TEBOW HITS NINE HOMERS IN BATTING PRACTICE Page 16



CLEVELAND: LeBron James #23 of the Cleveland Cavaliers scores over Giannis Antetokounmpo #34 of the Milwaukee Bucks during the second half at Quicken Loans Arena on Monday in Cleveland, Ohio. The Cavaliers defeated the Bucks 102-95. — AFP

TEAGUE HAS 25 TO LIFT PACERS OVER ROCKETS

HOUSTON: Jeff Teague and Rodney Stuckey co-authored a rousing comeback as the Indiana Pacers erased a 17-point deficit and shocked the Houston Rockets 117-108 on Monday night at Toyota Center. Teague finished with 25 points, eight rebounds and six assists. Stuckey added 17 points. Lou Williams scored 28 points off the bench for Houston. James Harden added 25 points, seven rebounds and 12 assists.

RAPTORS 92, KNICKS 91

DeMar DeRozan capped a 37-point night by hitting the winning jumper with 1.9 seconds left and Toronto overcame a double-digit deficit for the fourth straight game. DeRozan turned in his 25th game with at least 30 points and capped Toronto's comeback by hitting the 19-footer from the right wing over Derrick Rose. Toronto then escaped when Carmelo Anthony missed an open 3-pointer at the buzzer. Anthony led the Knicks with 24 points. Rose and Courtney Lee added 16 points apiece for New York.

HAWKS 114, CELTICS 98

Despite losing Dwight Howard to two techni-

cal fouls, Atlanta blew open a tight game with a third-quarter explosion and ended a three-game losing streak. Dennis Schroder had 21 points, five assists and four rebounds. Paul Millsap had 17 points and 10 rebounds, Howard finished 17 points and 12 boards and Kent Bazemore added 15 points for the Hawks. Isaiah Thomas had his worst game of the season for the Celtics, scoring 19 points as his club record of 43 straight 20-point games ended.

CAVALIERS 102, BUCKS 95

LeBron James scored 24 points upon return from strep throat and Cleveland beat Milwaukee. James added 10 rebounds and six assists. Kyrie Irving led all scorers with 20 points and added nine assists for the Cavs. Rookie Malcolm Brogdon paced the Bucks with 20 points.

WARRIORS 119, 76ERS 108

Kevin Durant scored 27 points and Klay Thompson added 21 as Golden State beat Philadelphia. Zaza Pachulia added a season-high

16 points and Draymond Green contributed 14 points, 11 rebounds and five steals. Dario Saric finished with 21 points, seven rebounds and seven assists for Philadelphia. Gerald Henderson contributed 16 points.

MAVERICKS 96, HEAT 89

Seth Curry scored a game-high 29 points to help Dallas cool off Miami at the American Airlines Center. Dion Waiters had 12 points but was 2 of 5 from beyond the arc. Hassan Whiteside went for 19 points and 19 rebounds and Goran Dragic poured in 24 points and added six assists and five rebounds for the Heat.

TIMBERWOLVES 102, KINGS 88

Karl-Anthony Towns scored 29 points and added 17 rebounds, and Andrew Wiggins scored 27 as Minnesota routed Sacramento. Towns recorded his fourth straight double-double. Wiggins topped 20 points for the 18th consecutive game. Kosta Koufos had 14 points and 11 rebounds for the Kings. — Reuters

NBA results/standings

Indiana 117, Houston 108; Dallas 96, Miami 89; Atlanta 114, Boston 98; Toronto 92, NY Knicks 91; Golden State 119, Philadelphia 108; Cleveland 102, Milwaukee 95.

Eastern Conference					Western Conference				
Atlantic Division					Northwest Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB					
Boston	38	22	.633	-	Utah	37	22	.627	-
Toronto	36	24	.600	2	Oklahoma City	34	25	.576	3
NY Knicks	24	36	.400	14	Denver	26	33	.441	11
Philadelphia	22	37	.373	15.5	Portland	24	34	.414	12.5
Brooklyn	9	49	.155	28	Minnesota	24	36	.400	13.5
Central Division					Pacific Division				
Cleveland	41	17	.707	-	Golden State	50	9	.847	-
Indiana	31	29	.517	11	LA Clippers	36	23	.610	14
Chicago	30	29	.508	11.5	Sacramento	25	35	.417	25.5
Detroit	28	31	.475	13.5	LA Lakers	19	41	.317	31.5
Milwaukee	26	32	.448	15	Phoenix	18	41	.305	32
Southeast Division					Southwest Division				
Washington	34	23	.596	-	San Antonio	45	13	.776	-
Atlanta	33	26	.559	2	Houston	42	19	.689	4.5
Miami	27	33	.450	8.5	Memphis	35	25	.583	11
Charlotte	25	34	.424	10	Dallas	24	35	.407	21.5
Orlando	22	38	.367	13.5	New Orleans	23	37	.383	23

TENNIS

MURRAY DOMINANT ON RETURN BUT WAWRINKA DUMPED OUT

DUBAI: World number one Andy Murray eased into the second round of the Dubai Tennis Championships yesterday on his return five weeks after suffering a shock Australian Open exit.

The top seed, now fully fit after a bout of shingles, beat Malek Jaziri 6-4, 6-1, avoiding the fate of second seed and title holder Stan Wawrinka, dumped out as his form collapsed following an early 4-1 lead.

"I was a little bit uneasy, I've never hit with him or played against him before," Murray said. "It took a little bit of time to get used to his game."

"But I played better as the match went on. I don't feel sore anywhere, really. I felt like I moved good and the body felt good," Murray, who was knocked out in the fourth round in Melbourne, had to work for 45 minutes to win the opening set but the Scot ran away with the second against the outclassed Jaziri.

Murray will now face Spain's Guillermo Garcia-Lopez today. In contrast, the Swiss three-time Grand Slam winner Wawrinka was beaten 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 in the first round by outsider Damir Dzumhur. Wawrinka was playing for the first time since suffering a right knee injury in Melbourne, where he reached his eighth major semi-final before falling to compatriot Roger Federer.

Following defeat by the 77th-ranked journeyman from Bosnia-Herzegovina, he admitted that his fitness

was lacking after only a week of practice.

"I started well but it was tough because I was missing a little bit of something. In practice it was starting to be OK the last few days, but today I was missing something," Dzumhur will now face Marcel Granollers of Spain. "This is a big win for me, coming on hard court against a player who likes this surface and who won the tournament last year," the surprise winner said.

After taking an early lead, Wawrinka found his game slipping. By the time he got the first-set tiebreak, he was playing catch-up.

The Swiss was broken twice for 5-1 in the second set before a brief rally in which he broke back once.

Despite his exit Wawrinka said that his knee was giving him no pain, a positive sign heading into back-to-back Masters 1000 events starting next week in Indian Wells and Miami. "I need to focus on myself. I need to practise more, to get in a better level to expect to do some good results," Wawrinka said.

"I'm quite unhappy to lose the first round. It's tough because I played well last year here. I was happy to be back. I was happy to be back on the ATP Tour after a month."

Fifth seed Tomas Berdych needed just half an hour to win after fellow Czech Lukas Rosol quit with a knee injury trailing 6-3, 2-1. —AFP



DUBAI: Britain's Andy Murray returns the ball to Malek Jaziri of Tunisia during their ATP Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship yesterday in Dubai. — AFP



QX50 Concept: Infiniti's vision for mid-size premium crossover

KUWAIT REAL ESTATE SALES SOFTEN IN JANUARY



TEHRAN: Iranians walk through Tajrish bazaar in northern Tehran. Iran's economy rebounded out of a recession after the nuclear deal with world powers, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday though uncertainty over future sanctions and problems plaguing the country's domestic banks could cause fiscal trouble ahead. — AP (See Page 22)

ARAMCO INKS \$7BN DEAL FOR MALAYSIAN OIL VENTURE
 SAUDI FIRM'S LISTING BOOSTED BY MALAYSIA INVESTMENT: AL-FALIH

KUALA LUMPUR: Oil giant Saudi Aramco signed a \$7 billion deal yesterday to take a 50 percent stake in a mega Malaysian oil refinery project, in a pact expected to help Saudi Arabia increase trade in Southeast Asia.

Aramco inked the agreement with Malaysia's national oil company Petronas, which is developing a \$27 billion oil processing hub in southern Johor state bordering Singapore. It includes a refinery with the capacity to churn out 300,000 barrels of oil a day, a cracker plant and a petrochemical complex with an annual production capacity of 7.7 million metric tons. Officials have said the deal will make Aramco the single largest investor in Malaysia. "Saudi Aramco goes public next year and investors will be looking for a company that has breadth in its portfolio," Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said after the signing ceremony.

The planned listing of Aramco in 2018 is expected to be the world's biggest initial public offering-worth more than \$2 trillion, according to reports. The vast Malaysian refinery scheme under construction in the southern state of Johor near the Singapore border is known as the Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development project.

It is being led by Petronas, which said development was about 60 percent complete, with the project set to come online in 2019. Under the deal, Aramco will supply up to 70 percent of the crude requirement of the refinery, with natural gas, power and other utilities to be supplied by Petronas.

Saudi Arabia is the world's largest oil exporter, with much of its crude destined for customers in Asia. Saudi's Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said the Malaysian deal will help expand Aramco's portfolio ahead of its initial public offering next year, which is touted to become the world's largest share sale. Petronas chief Wan Zulkiflee Wan Ariffin said the investment will see Aramco taking up a 50 percent stake in the refinery and cracker plant portion of the hub. He hailed it as a "historic moment for the industry" for two national oil companies to tie-up for a mammoth greenfield project.

It took three years to negotiate the deal, said Aramco's CEO Amin H Nasser. He said Aramco will supply up to 70 percent of the refinery's crude feedstock requirements. "Malaysia offers tremendous growth opportunities and today's agreement further strengthens Saudi Aramco's position as the leading supplier of petroleum feedstock to

Malaysia and Southeast Asia," Nasser said. "It would also serve to enhance energy security in the Asia-Pacific region."

The signing of the agreement was witnessed by Saudi King Salman, who arrived here Sunday with an entourage of 600 on a multi-nation tour to boost economic ties with Asia.

The king's visit is his first to Muslim-majority Malaysia since he took the throne in January 2015. His predecessor, King Abdullah, visited in 2006. Ties between the countries drew attention when Malaysia's attorney-general said about \$700 million transferred to Najib's personal bank account in 2013 was a donation from the Saudi royal family. He said most of it was returned.

Najib has denied allegations the money was from the indebted IMDB development fund he founded. The state fund is at the center of allegations of a vast international scheme of embezzlement and money-laundering and is being investigated by several countries including the US, Switzerland and Singapore. After Malaysia, King Salman is due to visit Indonesia, Brunei, Japan, China and the Maldives, the official Saudi Press Agency said. He also will visit Saudi Arabia's neighbor Jordan before returning home. — Agencies



KUALA LUMPUR: Saudi's Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih (left) shakes hands with Malaysia's Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Abdul Rahman Dahlan during a press conference at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — AP

WARBA BANK LAUNCHES MARKETING CAMPAIGN FOR SUKUK TO BE ISSUED

KUWAIT: Warba Bank, the best investment bank in Kuwait and best corporate consultancy institution, announced launching a marketing campaign this week for sukuk to be issued with a total value of \$250 million. The campaign targets investors in Kuwait and Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in addition to global stock markets in Europe and East Asia.

In this regard, Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanim, Warba Bank's CEO, said that the marketing campaign is largely expected to be successful in attracting funds from global market, and that based on positive responses from investors. "We predict a successful marketing for sukuk within a very short period of time, especially that they are of high importance," he said. "Warba Bank has earned investors' trust, as it managed within a relatively short period of time to leave its mark through its local, regional and international investments, in addition to arranging financing for large corporations locally and internationally."

Al-Ghanim further noted that the IPO in Warba Bank's sukuk is considered a good opportunity for investment, and that stemming from what the bank has achieved in the past six years and the positive growth rates in assets and deposits, in addition to its increased profits. These sukuk will be listed in the Irish stock market and Nasdaq Dubai, he added.

Furthermore, Al-Ghanim explained that the bank signed a deal with McKinsey & Company to a new strategy for 2021, which is based on

improving the bank's operations in the corporate and investment sectors, and further enhancing the quality of assets, diversifying sources of income and achieving a stable income based on the bank's main banking activity. Moreover, the strategy is based on expansion in the local market through services and products tailored for the retail and corporate sectors, and offered in a distinguished and unique way with the goal of improving the bank's market share and competitiveness. In addition, Al-Ghanim said that the strategy is expected to cement and solidify the



Warba Bank CEO Shaheen Hamad Al-Ghanim

bank's position among Islamic banks in the local market in specific, and all local banks in general, in addition to maintaining a solid financial position that provides protection for shareholders.

Despite its relatively young age in the Islamic banking sector, Warba Bank has earned prestigious rankings from international rating agencies, including Fitch Rating's A+ Issuer Default Rating (IDR) and A+ Support Rating Floor (SRF) with stable future outlook, as well as Moody's Baa2/Prime-2 rating with a stable future outlook, which is considered a great achievement that reflects the bank's promising future.

Al-Ghanim concluded by saying: "Warba Bank strives in 2017 to continue earning the trust of investors and clients, and based on that, it spares no efforts to design Islamic financing and banking tools and solutions based on quality and innovation standards that support its goal to become the best Islamic bank in the corporate and investment sector in Kuwait."

Warba Bank has previously obtained approvals from the Central Bank of Kuwait and Capital Market Authority, while the General Assembly has also authorized the board of directors to issue sukuk and other financing contract-based tools that go in line with the Islamic sharia and requirements of the capital standard for Islamic banks (Basel 3), while completely committing with the relevant laws and regulations and after obtaining approvals from concerned auditing bodies.

US ECONOMY SLOWS IN Q4; CONSUMER SPENDING SHINES

WASHINGTON: US economic growth slowed in the fourth quarter as previously reported, with robust consumer spending offset by downward revisions to business and government investment.

Gross domestic product rose at a 1.9 percent annual rate in the final three months of 2016, the Commerce Department said yesterday in its second estimate for the period. That matched the estimate published last month.

Output increased at a 3.5 percent rate in the third quarter. The economy grew 1.6 percent for all of 2016, its worst performance since 2011, after expanding 2.6 percent in 2015. Economic data early in the first quarter has been mixed, with retail sales rising in January but homebuilding and business spending on capital goods easing. The economy may get a boost from President Donald Trump's proposed stimulus package of sweeping tax cuts and infrastructure spending as well as less regulations. Trump, who pledged during last year's election campaign to deliver 4 percent annual GDP growth, has promised a "phenomenal" tax plan that the White House said would include tax cuts for businesses and individuals.

Details on the proposal remain

vague, though Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Sunday that Trump would use a policy speech to Congress yesterday night to preview some aspects of his tax reform plans.

Economists polled by Reuters had expected fourth-quarter GDP would be revised up to a 2.1 percent rate.

US Treasury prices rose after the data, while the dollar dipped against a basket of currencies. U.S. stock index futures were largely unchanged.

Consumer spending jumps

Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of US economic activity, was revised sharply higher to a 3.0 percent rate of growth in the fourth quarter. It was previously reported to have risen at a 2.5 percent rate. That meant private domestic demand increased at a 3.0 percent rate, faster than the 2.8 percent pace reported last month.

Some of the rise in demand was met with imports, which increased at a 8.5 percent rate rather than the 8.3 percent pace reported last month. Exports declined, leaving a trade deficit that subtracted 1.70 percentage point from GDP growth as previously reported. — Reuters

INDIA GROWTH RATE SLIPS TO 7% IN Q3 AFTER CASH BAN

NEW DELHI: India's economic growth rate slipped to seven percent in the third quarter of the financial year after the controversial ban on high-value banknotes in November, official figures showed yesterday. Gross domestic product in one of the world's fastest growing economies expanded 7.0 percent year-on-year in the three months to the end of December, down from 7.3 percent in the previous quarter, data published by the central statistics office showed.

While growth came in lower than the previous quarter, it exceeded most analyst predictions in the wake of the government's shock move to remove all 500 (around \$7.50) and 1,000 rupee notes from circulation immediately. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has defended his so-called demonetization scheme as a necessary strike against corruption and a way of boosting tax revenues by dissuading people from doing business in cash.

But the move triggered massive lines outside banks in the weeks afterwards as authorities struggled to print replacement notes fast enough. Chief statistician T C A Anant said after the data was announced that it was difficult to assess the full impact of demonetization, which the government had already acknowledged has hit growth.

"Policies like demonetization are very difficult to assess without a lot of data," Anant told a press conference. "We will keep evaluating the numbers. I will not like to draw any conclusions at this stage." Anant said some sectors such as agriculture and mining had in fact performed better than expected in the third quarter.

"The only two sectors in which it is distinctly worse is finance and the real estate category," he added.

'Pleasant surprise'

The impact on the real state sector was widely expected as experts say most transactions are either wholly or partly conducted in cash in a bid to avoid paying tax. Analysts said the data was better than expected. "It's higher than our expectation. We were expecting 6.5 percent and the actual growth at 7 percent is a pleasant surprise," Sunil Sinha, principal economist at India Ratings & Research, told AFP. "But when I look at third quarter more carefully, half the quarter, including the festive season when spending is high, was gone by the time demonetization kicked in," he said in reference to the Diwali holiday.

"Wait and see what happens in the fourth quarter. That'll be a better parameter to judge the impact of demonetization." Ashutosh Datar, an economist at IIFL Institutional Equities, also cautioned that the full picture had yet to emerge. "There will be a downward revision of this as more data comes in over the next few quarters," he told AFP. The government data came in on the same day as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development released a survey which praised Modi's government for reforms which have spurred growth. In its report, the OECD said measures such as the implementation of inflation targets and a loosening of foreign direct investment rules, had been major factors behind the growth. "The pace of reform is quite remarkable," said the report, adding that "about 140 million people have been taken out of poverty in less than 10 years". But secretary-general Jose Angel Gurría warned that "there is no time for complacency and the main message today is that the reform momentum must be maintained so there can be more inclusive growth." — AFP



NEW DELHI: Indian passengers hang onto a train as it departs from a station on the outskirts of New Delhi yesterday. —AFP

ROSS SWORN IN NEW US COMMERCE SECRETARY

RETAILERS, OIL REFINERS FIGHTING TAX PROPOSAL

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has a Commerce secretary. Vice President Mike Pence has administered the oath of office to Wilbur Ross yesterday, a day after the Senate voted 72-27 to confirm him. Ross will help promote American business interests in the US and abroad. He'll also oversee agencies that manage fisheries, weather forecasting and the Census Bureau, which will conduct the next national headcount in 2020.

Ross has said the administration will work quickly to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico.

The 79-year-old Ross is worth an estimated \$2.9 billion and has extensive business ties around the world. He has promised not to take any action as secretary that would benefit any company in which he has a financial interest.

Meanwhile, major US corporations are going to war in Washington over a Republican 'border adjustment' tax proposal meant to boost exports over imports, with lawmakers in Congress coming under pressure from some of the nation's biggest employers.

The political split that is opening, most pronounced in the narrowly divided Senate, could doom the proposal. If it dies, prospects for a thorough tax code reform, a top 2017 goal for President Donald Trump's Republicans, would be diminished. Trump, who has vowed to produce a "phenomenal" tax reform package, without recently offering many specifics, has not taken a clear stand on border adjustment. He spoke favorably about it in a Reuters interview on Thursday.

The main thrust of border adjustment is to exempt companies from having to pay federal income tax on export revenues, while ending the deductibility of import costs from taxable income. Border adjustment is a core part of a broad tax reform "blueprint" being pushed by House of Representatives Republicans, including House Speaker Paul Ryan and tax panel chairman Kevin Brady. The blueprint has not been put into formal legislation, but border adjustment is already a sticking point. At least eight Republicans in the Senate have expressed concern about it. Several are from Republican-leaning states where Wal-Mart Stores Inc is a major employer.

Wal-Mart is a member of Americans for Affordable Products, a business coalition working against border adjustment. Other members include Best Buy, Costco, Gap Inc., Macy's Inc, Nike Inc and Target.

If the Republican-dominated House approves the blueprint and moves it to the 100-seat Senate, Republicans could lose only a handful of votes and still be able to pass the blueprint.

REPUBLICANS HAVE CONCERNS

"If it came up today, I couldn't support it," Arkansas Republican Senator John Boozman



WASHINGTON: Hillary Ross (center) watches as Vice President Mike Pence swears-in new Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross yesterday in the Vice President's ceremonial office in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House complex in Washington. —AP

told Reuters. "That's not to say I couldn't (support it) in the future with modifications." Boozman said he was concerned that border adjustment would raise prices for consumer goods such as cars and gasoline. He said he worried that Arkansas farmers could be hurt, too, if border adjustment triggered a global trade war.

Boozman's state is home to Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer. Wal-Mart and its employees have been among Boozman's biggest backers in 2011-2016, according to data compiled by the Center for Responsive Politics, a campaign finance watchdog. Wal-Mart Chief Financial Officer Brett Biggs, on a conference call with reporters a week ago, said, "The things that are being discussed about the border adjustment tax pose a concern."

Republican Senator Tom Cotton, Boozman's Arkansas colleague, has also expressed concerns on border adjustment. "He supports the goals of tax reform and job growth. But he believes that a new tax on working-class Americans is not the best way to achieve those goals," said Cotton spokeswoman Caroline Rabbitt. Perhaps border adjustment's most outspoken Senate critic is Georgia Republican David Perdue. He has called the House proposal "a bad idea" and urged colleagues not to support it.

One of Perdue's top backers in 2013-2016, according to data from the center on its website, has been the Club for Growth, a conservative group that donates large sums to like-minded politicians. Club for Growth opposes border adjustment.

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS

Border adjustment has attracted opposition not only from retailers, but also from oil refiners and automakers. Texas Republican John Cornyn, a senior senator whose constituents include oil and gas firms, as well as companies that do business with Mexico, told Reuters: "If you're talking about disrupting business models that people have come to depend on, there's a lot in play and a lot at stake." Border adjustment has support from U.S. multinational exporters organized in another group, the American Made Coalition. Its members include Boeing Co, Caterpillar Inc, Dow Chemical Co., General Electric Co, Honeywell International Inc <HON.N, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer Inc and United Technologies Corp.

Chief executives of 16 big companies sent a letter this month to lawmakers urging tax reform including border adjustment. In it, the CEOs said border adjustment would make U.S.-manufactured products more competitive abroad and at home. Since Trump's Reuters interview last week, the White House has sent mixed signals on border adjustment. Trump is scheduled to make a major speech to Congress yesterday. "We would be surprised if Trump specifically mentions (border adjustment)," said Chris Krueger, analyst at financial firm Cowen & Co. in a research report.

The proposal "is a 15-round heavyweight fight and we are only in the 3rd round ... It can all end with a single upercut from Trump in opposition, though that does not seem to be the direction the White House is headed," Krueger said. —Agencies



In this Wednesday, March 2, 2016, file photo, Target Chairman and CEO Brian Cornell speaks to a group of investors, in New York. — AP

TARGET RATTLES WALL STREET WITH WEAK QUARTER, OUTLOOK

MINNEAPOLIS: Target, stung by the mass migration by its customers online and elsewhere, said its profit plummeted 43 percent during the most recent quarter as sales at its stores weakened. The coming year doesn't look much better: Its outlook for the first quarter and all of 2017 were far below what industry analysts had been expecting.

Shares tumbled more than 13 percent to a two-year low yesterday, and the numbers in Target's report rattled Wall Street, dragging down Wal-Mart, Macy's and other retailers. Retail yesterday was the worst performing sector in the Standard & Poor's 500. All traditional retailers have struggled as Amazon.com and other online retailers draw shoppers away, but Target has been unable to keep pace with Wal-Mart Stores Inc., which posted another quarter of higher customer traffic and same-store sales. At a meeting with analysts Tuesday, Target CEO Brian Cornell said he hasn't seen as many troubled retailers since the recession nearly a decade ago.

"Our industry is in the midst of a seismic shift," Cornell said. Target said Tuesday that it will have to begin cutting prices, as well as update aging stores and open smaller locations in cities and near college campuses. It announced the launch of a dozen new brands, hoping they can add \$10 billion in sales in the next two years. For 2017, Target Corp. is projecting an adjusted profit of \$3.80 to \$4.20 per share. That's wasn't even close to the per-share earnings of \$5.32 that Wall Street was projecting, according to FactSet.

Neither was Target's first-quarter profit projection between 80 cents and \$1.

Analysts expected \$1.33 per share. For the three months ended Jan. 28, Target earned \$817 million, or \$1.46 per share. Stripping out certain items, earnings were \$1.45 per share, or 5 cents less per share than industry analysts had projected, according to Zacks Investment Research. The quarter's profit came in well below the \$1.43 billion, or \$2.31 per share, that the company reported last year.

And sales dropped to \$20.69 billion, from \$21.63 billion last year, which was also short of Wall Street projections. Sales at stores open at least a year, a key measure of a retailer's health, fell 1.5 percent. It was the third consecutive quarter of declines and, like overall sales and profits, weaker than most had anticipated.

The pain is spread across the retail sector, even though rival Wal-Mart has had some success. Last week, J C Penney swung to a profit for the fourth quarter, but total sales fell slightly. Kohl's Corp. reported a lower fourth-quarter profit and total sales declined. Earnings at Macy's, the nation's largest department store chain, slid 13 percent. Under Cornell, Target has pushed aggressively online and increased the number of stores that ship directly to online shoppers to match Amazon's two-day free deliveries for customers.

But weak sales at its stores are not going to be fixed easily. "Our fourth quarter results reflect the impact of rapidly-changing consumer behavior, which drove very strong digital growth but unexpected softness in our stores," Cornell said in a company release. Shares of Target fell \$8.80, or 13.2 percent, to \$58.11 in early trading yesterday. —AP

SAMSUNG GROUP CHIEF CHARGED WITH BRIBERY

SEOUL: South Korean prosecutors charged Samsung Group chief Jay Y. Lee with bribery and embezzlement yesterday as the top conglomerate announced the dismantling of its corporate strategy office, the latest developments in a graft scandal that has rocked the country.

Jay Y Lee, 48, was arrested on Feb 17 over his alleged role in the corruption scandal involving impeached President Park Geun-hye, dealing a fresh blow to the standard-bearer for Asia's fourth-largest economy. The special prosecutor's office said yesterday, the last day of its investigation, that it had charged Lee, third-generation leader of the tech giant "chaebol", and four other executives with bribery and embezzlement.

The charges against Lee included pledging bribes to a company and organizations tied to Park's confidant, Choi Soon-sil, the woman at the centre of the scandal, to cement his control of the smartphones-to-biopharmaceuticals business empire. "We apologize for the social controversy and distress we have caused," Samsung Group Executive Vice President Lee June told reporters. The charges came ahead of a Constitutional Court ruling on whether to uphold parliament's December impeachment of Park. That impeachment

was triggered by accusations that she colluded with Choi to pressure big businesses, including Samsung, to donate to two foundations set up to back the president's policy initiatives. The 65-year-old daughter of a former military strongman has had her powers suspended. The Constitutional Court's ruling is expected sometime in March. Should it uphold the impeachment, Park would become the country's first democratically elected president to be thrown out of office.

While a sitting president cannot be indicted, the special prosecutors nevertheless have classified her as a suspect. They did not disclose specifics of the charges against Lee or other Samsung executives. Samsung Group, which has denied paying bribes to Park or seeking improper favours from her, declined to comment on the indictment. Park, Choi and Lee have all denied wrongdoing. Based on the main charges levied against Lee, he could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted. Lee in December promised to shut Samsung's corporate strategy office, a key nerve centre responsible for major initiatives such as investment in new businesses, amid accusations by politicians that it was a key organ for illicit lobbying efforts. — Reuters

RE-ELECTED WTO CHIEF WARNS OF 'CHALLENGING TIMES'

GENEVA: World Trade Organization chief Roberto Azevedo secured a second term yesterday pledging to build on recent successes despite the "challenging times" confronting global trade. Azevedo, 59, was unopposed in the contest to lead the 164-member WTO, a body that for the first time since its founding in 1995 must deal with a US administration openly hostile to free trade.

Speaking to reporters following his formal re-election, Azevedo said the WTO was "stronger today than it was in 2013", when his first four-year term began.

He pointed to last week's ratification of the Trade Facilitation Agreement, the WTO's first-ever multilateral deal to come into force. But the steady flow of protectionist rhetoric from US President Donald Trump's administration has triggered concern about the WTO's chances of further progress.

"Clearly, these are challenging times for the multi-lateral trading system", Azevedo said, without mentioning Trump directly. "The threat of protectionism cannot be ignored."



Roberto Azevedo
Trade makes 'America great'

Azevedo, a Brazilian, again faced a series of questions about Trump, who during the campaign called the WTO "a disaster" and threatened to withdraw US membership. Trump's nominee for trade representative, Robert Lighthizer, has also said Washington could ignore WTO rules in order to redress what he claims trade imbalances, notably ones he considers favour China. "I am not going to comment on the trade policy of

any country when the US Trade Representative has not been confirmed", Azevedo told reporters, in reference to Lighthizer not yet having won the approval of Congress.

He also sought to downplay the widely-debated prospect of economic conflict between the US and China, the world's two biggest economies, with tensions also rising between the Washington and the European Union.

"We should not be talking ourselves into a trade war", Azevedo said. "I hope we can avoid anything that even remotely resembles that."

In an interview with Germany's Bild newspaper published yesterday, Azevedo was quoted as saying that "without trade, American will never be 'great again'" a reference to Trump's "Make America Great Again" campaign slogan. WTO spokesman Keith Rockwell told AFP that quote was prompted by a request from Bild asking Azevedo to suggest a tweet he would like to send to Trump. Trump has so far not followed through on several of his trade-related pledges, like immediately re-negotiating that the North American Free Trade Agreement. — AFP

TRUMP'S 'BIG' SPENDING HOPES PROP UP STOCKS

LONDON: World stocks hovered just off all-time highs and were on course for a fourth straight month of gains yesterday, as investors awaited a speech by US President Donald Trump...

trade quite so enthusiastically, was trading water against most of its major peers, with the only notable move a dip against the yen to 112.41. Gold was also steady, having hit a 3-1/2 month high yesterday and 10-year US Treasury yields hovered at about 2.36 percent...

Trump met US state governors at the White House on Monday and said he sees "big" infrastructure spending and that he is seeking a "historic" increase in military spending of more than 9 percent. That means some \$54 billion of military spending is now on the table...

to stir interest, including PCE inflation, which the Federal Reserve likes to look at, as well as updated fourth quarter GDP. David Kelly, Chief Global Strategist, JP Morgan Asset Management said Trump's speech later was unlikely to be highly detailed in terms of policy proposals...

percent, another record low interest rate that showed investors are still prepared to pay plenty for the privilege of holding German government debt. The euro barely budged on the day at \$1.0595, with February set to be its fourth monthly fall in the last five...

Daily Kuwait Stock Exchange Report. Table with columns: Index, Change, Closing, Last Closing, High, Low, Volume, Value (KWD), Number of Trades. Includes sections for Oil & Gas, Basic Materials, Consumer Goods, and Banks.

TIME TO TRIM

In Europe, the economic signals were largely encouraging, although not universally so. Sweden's crown rose as its economy showed solid 2.3 percent year-on-year growth and inflation figures were stronger across central Europe...



TOKYO: People walk past an electronic stock indicator of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. — AP

NIGERIA GROWTH DROPS, BUT OIL SECTOR BULLISH

ABUJA: Nigeria's battered economy suffered a year-long contraction in 2016, official data showed yesterday, but the oil sector showed signs of recovery, raising hopes for an end to recession.

The latest figures showed that the gross domestic product (GDP) shrunk by 1.5 per cent last year, largely due to oil production disruptions caused by attacks on infrastructure by militants demanding a greater share of revenues.

OECD SAYS INDIA NEEDS MORE INCLUSIVE GROWTH

NEW DELHI: India's rapid economic growth has lifted 140 million people out of poverty in the past decade but many of its people still lack access to electricity and toilets, the OECD said yesterday.

GDP per capita has risen by more than five percent per year since the mid-1990s and reforms introduced since Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election in 2014 have "brought a new growth impetus and improved the outlook"...

RYANAIR BUILDS UP FRANKFURT IN CHALLENGE TO LUFTHANSA

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: Irish low-cost airline Ryanair yesterday said it will expand routes from Germany's Frankfurt airport in future, but warned of challenges ahead for the airline industry from Brexit.

like Rome, London and Madrid, as well as adding sun-soaked holiday destinations to those it offered in summer. Ryanair hopes eventually to account for around 2.0 million of some 61 million passengers passing through Frankfurt each year...

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

QX50 CONCEPT

INFINITI'S VISION FOR A NEXT-GENERATION MID-SIZE PREMIUM CROSSOVER

KUWAIT: Making its global premiere at the 2017 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, the QX50 Concept showcases INFINITI's vision for a next-generation mid-size premium crossover. Demonstrating how the design of the 2016 QX Sport Inspiration, its conceptual forebear, could be adapted for a future production model, the QX50 Concept confidently articulates INFINITI's 'Powerful Elegance' design language.

A 'cabin-forward' silhouette combines with muscular lines and flowing surfaces to telegraph its purpose as a dynamic and practical crossover. The organic forms of the 'driver-centric, passenger-minded' cabin were designed in harmony with the exterior shape. Blending progressive design with modern craftsmanship, the QX50 Concept's interior reflects INFINITI's desire to challenge conventional approaches to premium interior design.

INFINITI MOTOR COMPANY LTD. 28-30/F, Hopewell Centre 183 Queen's Road East Wan Chai, Hong Kong www.infiniti.com INFINITI's latest concept is the next step toward the company's future autonomous drive support technologies. Central to the strategy for the development of all future INFINITI autonomous drive support systems, they ensure the driver retains ultimate control over their vehicle - in keeping with INFINITI's focus on driver engagement. Furthermore, the QX50 Concept illustrates a potential application for INFINITI's advanced Variable Compression Turbo (VC-Turbo) engine, offering drivers a powertrain that adapts to offer both power and efficiency. An evolution of INFINITI's 2016 QX Sport Inspiration mid-size crossover

* The QX50 Concept shows how INFINITI could develop its future presence in the world's fastest growing vehicle segment

* INFINITI seeks to explore a more emotional execution of crossover design than existing models in the class "With the unveiling of the QX Sport Inspiration at the 2016 Beijing Auto Show, we showed the future of INFINITI QX models.

The new QX50 Concept evolves this concept further and shows how INFINITI could develop its future presence in what is the fastest-growing vehicle segment globally." Roland Krueger, President of INFINITI With the QX50 Concept, INFINITI seeks to explore a more emotional execution of crossover design, bringing a degree of elegance and artistry to a segment typified by an uninspiring, clinical aesthetic. Marrying human artistry with utility, the QX50 Concept fulfills the expectation of practicality with a spacious cabin and cargo area. Furthermore, with a design adapted for the greatest possible packaging efficiency, the QX50 Concept previews how INFINITI could

adapt future vehicle designs to accommodate a compact powertrain, such as the company's VC-Turbo engine. INFINITI MOTOR COMPANY LTD. 28-30/F, Hopewell Centre 183 Queen's Road East Wan Chai, Hong Kong www.infiniti.com The QX50 Concept marks the next stage in INFINITI's continued renewal of its product range. INFINITI designs concepts with production intent, such as true-to-concept production versions of the Q30, QX30 and Q60 concepts. The creation of each of these has previewed the design and layout of the brand's next-generation models. The QX50 Concept previews the evolving signature INFINITI design elements, demonstrating how they could be adapted for a mid-sized premium crossover.

With its ground breaking proportions, the 2003 INFINITI FX45 set the template for future crossovers to follow throughout the last decade. The world's first mid-size multi-purpose sports vehicle, the INFINITI FX is still considered a crossover design icon today. Last year's QX Sport Inspiration sought to rekindle that excitement - and in an increasingly crowded and popular market segment, the new QX50 Concept now illustrates how these design themes could be translated into a production reality. Exterior: An artistic execution of functional crossover design

• QX50 Concept represents the latest interpretation of INFINITI's 'Powerful Elegance' design language

• Its design combines taut and muscular lines with heavily profiled surfaces

• QX50 Concept demonstrates how the design of the 2016 QX Sport Inspiration could be adapted for future production models. Influenced by the design of the INFINITI QX Sport Inspiration, the QX50 Concept expresses its crossover purpose through proportional clarity, clearly telegraphing its power and dynamic capabilities.

The QX50 Concept eschews many of the familiar, 'me too' design forms and themes



shared by established models in the mid-size premium crossover segment. The result is a highly original yet practical new crossover form, demonstrating how the design of INFINITI's earlier concept could be adapted for future production models. The QX50 Concept is the latest embodiment of INFINITI's 'Powerful Elegance' design language and is both aesthetic and functional. The exterior of the concept combines taut and muscular lines with flowing, heavily profiled surfaces.

A sharp, straight character line runs from the clamshell hood and INFINITI MOTOR COMPANY LTD. 28-30/F, Hopewell Centre 183 Queen's Road East Wan Chai, Hong Kong www.infiniti.com along the length of its shoulders, giving the QX50 Concept a commanding presence and extending the vehicle's visual length. A wide, muscular stance accentuates its versatile capability. INFINITI's signature design elements are evident on the QX50 Concept, each subtly evolved for their new application. At the front, INFINITI's double-arch grille conveys an immediate sense of power and pur-

pose and provides a focal point for every line on the concept's body. A taller, wider and more practical vehicle than the QX Sport Inspiration, the QX50 Concept's grille adds a greater sense of presence to the front of the car. At the rear of the vehicle, the leading edge of the crescent-cut D-pillar is higher than on any current INFINITI production car, further extending the visual length of the roofline.

The interplay of the exterior lines and surfaces is accentuated by a newly-created Forged Bronze paint finish, with three times the amount of metal flake compared with standard production paint finishes. In profile, the hood is shaped like the rise of a snake's head, with a pair of sharp creases extending upwards from the base of the A-pillar, then plunging down the hood, leading into the edges of the expansive 'double-arch' grille. These lines disguise the hood's relatively short length, suggesting how the appearance of a production car could be adapted for a more compact engine, such as INFINITI's VC-Turbo, applying power to the road through an intelligent all-wheel drive power-

train. Functionality is a necessity in the mid-sized crossover segment and is central to the QX50 Concept's design. More practical than its QX Sport Inspiration progenitor, the QX50 Concept has a 'cabin-forward' silhouette and a slightly more vertical rear hatch, both reference points for a versatile and accommodating interior. The new shape of the crescent-cut D-pillar provides clearer over-the-shoulder visibility for the driver and a better view out for rear passengers. Interior: Challenging conventional thinking on premium cabin design

• Concept cabin demonstrates new direction of thinking with premium materials and craftsmanship INFINITI MOTOR COMPANY LTD. 28-30/F, Hopewell Centre 183 Queen's Road East Wan Chai, Hong Kong www.infiniti.com

• Authentic materials and artistic design execution is at the heart of the concept's carefully curated cabin

• Driver-centric, yet passenger-minded, the cabin places similar importance on both form and function. Blending progressive design with elevated levels of modern craftsmanship, the cabin of the QX50 Concept demonstrates INFINITI's desire to challenge and reinterpret conventional thinking on premium crossover interior design and material usage. In the place of high-gloss woods and soft-touch plastics, the interior of the QX50 Concept features a more modern application of wood, leather and stitching. Each material is treated and applied in a way to establish new trends in the design of premium crossover interiors. Deliberately articulating a sense of advanced human artistry, the QX50 Concept's cabin espouses a handmade feel and is the result of two Japanese approaches to craftsmanship - 'mitate' (pronounced 'mee-ta-teh') and 'shitate' ('shee-ta-teh'). 'Mitate' relates to the practice of curating and bringing together the best possible selection of materials. 'Shitate' is the desire to tailor the chosen combination of materials, bringing out the best. With fine attention to detail and finish, such an approach creates an appearance and ambience throughout the cabin greater than the sum of its parts. The combination of materials and the way in which they have been applied has allowed INFINITI designers to demonstrate some of the highest levels of craftsmanship ever seen in a crossover in this segment. The QX50 Concept is wrapped in a variety of different leathers - genuine, semi-aniline, and synthetic nubuck - for a rich variety of textures and visual depth. The eyes naturally follow each different surface as it flows around the cabin. The QX50 Concept's cabin hints at a widening range of interior finishes for INFINITI customers to choose from, including a carefully selected three-tone color scheme.



AL-MAZAYA HOLDING LAUNCHES 'MAZAYA IR' APP FOR INVESTORS

KUWAIT: Al-Mazaya Holding is the first real estate company in Kuwait to launch an Investor Relations app, "Mazaya IR", that is available for download on iOS, Android tablets and smartphones.

Al-Mazaya is widely recognized as one of the most important and highly thought of real estate development companies regionally and globally. It has a multitude of impressive projects in six Gulf and Middle Eastern countries. The new "Mazaya IR" application serves as a connection to the company's stockholders, investors and analysts, providing rapid, streamlined access to an integrated database covering the company's operations, latest business developments and news.

The new application reflects the company's commitment to maintaining solid channels of communication with shareholders, investors, clientele and enhances cooperation with the company's business community by providing integrated information about the company's operations and financial results.

The company stated that the new application provides investors with immediate and live updates about the company's core business, including: share rates, dividends, company's fact sheets, financial performance, financial calendar, credit rating, financial analyses and Zakat calculation for shareholders.

Al-Mazayahas also introduced new updates to the company's website: www.mazayaholding.com, to accommodate the new application, including a new platform for 'Investor Relations' that includes the following ten clickable entries: Fact Sheet, Financial Information, Share Information, Dividends, Analyst Coverage, Financial Calendar, Credit Rating, Subscription Centre, Contact IR and Zakat.

The application is available in both Arabic and English, and provides detailed overviews of the company's financial indicators, key performance indicators as well as seasonal and annual reports. In addition, the application enables chronological search results of share rates and provides an investment calculator. It will stream-

line access to all of the company's investment portfolios, news bulletins, information and the data required by investors and stakeholders.

The launch of this app proves Al-Mazaya's unwavering commitment to provide clients with a rapid, sophisticated tool of communication. Maintaining sustained interactive channels with-

in our business community is increasingly important in this digital age.

The innovative app, "Mazaya IR" is accessible for download through the App Store or through accessing the investor relations platform on the company's website: <http://www.mazayaholding.com/Investor-Relations.aspx>.



KUWAIT SALARY

TRANSFER & WIN

KD 250,000

THE BIGGEST SALARY ACCOUNT PRIZE IN KUWAIT

بنك الخليج
GULF BANK

GULF BANK LAUNCHES KUWAIT'S BIGGEST SALARY ACCOUNT PRIZE OFFER

KUWAIT: Gulf Bank launched yesterday Kuwait's biggest salary account offer. This special account offer is for Kuwaiti customers who will be able to benefit from a multitude of offers by transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank. The campaign starts today and runs until 31 December 2017.

The new Salary account offer gives new Salary account customers the opportunity to either receive a KD 100 cash gift or an interest free loan. Kuwaitis must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and are fully eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer into Gulf Bank.

Customers can benefit from Gulf Banks Visa or MasterCard credit card with no annual fee for the first year. They can also get the chance to apply for a loan up to KD 70,000 payable over 15 years or a consumer loan up to KD 15,000.

Additionally, Gulf Bank offers its Salary customers not only an interest free loan but they are automatically

enrolled in quarterly draws and have the chance to win valuable cash prizes. There are three quarterly prizes of KD 25,000 and Kuwait's largest Salary prize of KD 250,000 in the last draw.

The draw dates are as follows:

- 8 May 2017 for the prize of KD 25,000
- 7 August 2017 for the prize of KD 25,000
- 6 November 2017 for the prize of KD 25,000
- 8 February 2018 for the big prize of KD 250,000

Gulf Bank invites all Kuwaitis, and particularly new customers, to take part of this new campaign and be part of the quarterly draws. As always, Gulf Bank seeks to provide new and interesting initiatives and reward its customer base.

To find out more about Gulf Bank's promotions and offers, visit one of Gulf Bank's 56 branches, call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805, or log on to www.e-gulfbank.com, Gulf Bank's bilingual website.

TRAVEL SMART WITH ABK'S PRE-PAID MULTI-CURRENCY CARD

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait's 'Freedom Multi-Currency' card gives travelers greater control over their finances when they are abroad and can potentially save them money. The card is backed by Mastercard and is accepted at over two million ATM machines and 35 million other locations around the world.

The Freedom Multi-Currency card is a prepaid card from ABK and is for both ABK customers and non-ABK customers. The card is available in any of the following currencies: Kuwaiti dinars, US dollars, Euro, British pounds, KSA riyals, UAE dirhams, Bahraini dinars, Qatari riyals, Swiss francs and Canadian dollars at an

exchange rate which is locked at the time of purchase. This means that customers are protected against fluctuations in future currency rates.

In addition to secure and easy access to funds, the card also provides free travel insurance of up to \$250,000, purchase and fraud protection, a dedicated online portal which customers can use to access card account details, MasterCard Global Assistance Services and a wide range of special promotions from Priceline Arabia, the exclusive online offers site from Mastercard. For more information about Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait please visit eahli.com.

OMAN AIR TO SHARE OFFICES WITH OMANTEL IN DUQM AND KHASAB

MUSCAT: Oman Air, the national carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, is delighted to announce the soft opening of its retail offices, within the Omantel premises in Duqm and Khasab. The move into Omantel's offices is expected to leverage the already existing relationship following the recently signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two companies. The MoU enables each company to create synergies across a range of activities to promote each other's products and services.

There will be a number of benefits to the move including Oman Air having the use of existing Omantel's self-service kiosk machines

for online check-in, co-operation on an e-commerce platform as well as overall joint marketing activities.

Oman Air offices in these locations provide the guests with full-fledged ticketing and reservation services. Oman Air will also co-operate with Omantel on an e-commerce platform using



the existing B2B and B2C originally launched by Omantel, helping boost Oman Air's interactions with other businesses and consumers.

As part of a progressive expansion of its services, Oman Air opened its offices with Omantel in Duqm and Khasab. The Khasab office is located in the LuLu Centre, which is in the heart of the city and the Khasab Business Area. The Duqm office, is located in the centre of Duqm town. Oman Air staff at both offices will work in two shifts from 9am to 9pm. Omantel has 70 retail offices in total across Oman which will be utilized for further collaboration and expansion between the two companies.

AL-GHANIM AND AL-MARZOUQ JOIN BOURSA KUWAIT BOARD WITH EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN BANKING AND FINANCIAL FIELDS

KUWAIT: Boursa Kuwait recently announced that two new board members have joined its board; Talal Fahad Al-Ghanim and Soliman Barrak Al-Marzouq. The board now consists of eight highly qualified professionals.

The Capital Markets Authority (CMA) assigned each of Al-Ghanim and Al-Marzouq following the recent resignation of Issam Al-Marzouq who has been appointed as the Minister of Oil, Electricity and Water, and Moussa Al-Kandari.

The CMA was keen to fill these vacant positions with high caliber professionals that can maintain the 'private sector' mindset within the company and contribute to the activation of the development plan which Boursa Kuwait is planning to roll-out by engaging all concerned parties.

Talal Fahad Yusef Al-Ghanim, is currently the Chairman of the Universal International Food Company. Prior to this, Al-Ghanim held the post of Deputy General Manager at the Kuwait Clearing Company. Throughout his career, Al-Ghanim was a member in several committees and councils of prominent institutions across Kuwait. Al-Ghanim holds an MBA with special emphasis on Accounting from St. Louis University, USA and a Bachelor degree in Accounting from Kuwait University.

The second new member, Soliman Barrak Al-



Boursa Kuwait Chairman Mohammad Al-Saqqaf

Marzouq is currently the General Manager of Group Treasury at National Bank of Kuwait (NBK). He joined the NBK Treasury Group in 2002. Prior to this, Al-Marzouq joined the Department of Foreign

Operations at the 'Central Bank of Kuwait'. Throughout his career, Al-Marzouq was a board member in several banks and companies in Kuwait and has extensive experience in investment and wealth management, in addition to his experience in treasury and banking operations. Al-Marzouq holds a bachelor degree in Economics from Portland State University, USA.

Commenting on the new additions to the Board, Boursa Kuwait Chairman, Mohammad Al-Saqqaf, said "We as a board, are always stronger with highly qualified and diverse board composition that can steer strategy and add value to Boursa Kuwait, especially during this critical and important phase of the significant restructuring program of the exchange". He added; "As we embark on a new phase of upward trajectory in our offerings and services, we seek to establish the regulatory framework for the various new investment and trading tools and initiatives we plan to rollout to the market in the near future. Our aim is to create a liquid and transparent capital market which can position our exchange as an attractive and efficient investment proposition".

Al-Saqqaf congratulated Al-Ghanim and Al-Marzouq on their new posts with Boursa Kuwait, and highlighted his confidence in the positive role



بورصة الكويت
BOURSA KUWAIT

the two new members will play in supporting Boursa Kuwait's vision to become a regional financial center.

"I trust that their expertise and knowhow from both the banking and financial sectors will contribute to the fulfillment of Boursa Kuwait's vision, and will reinforce the company's performance, thereby creating a positive impact on our exchange, and hence on our national economy", Al-Saqqaf added.



Suki Waterhouse in Zoe Bradley design for British Airways.

BRITISH AIRWAYS BRINGS FASHION ROYALTY TO MILAN

WATERHOUSE DAZZLES IN UNIQUE DRESS, DAVID GANDY TOURS CITY

KUWAIT: On Thursday, British Airways celebrated its love of Milan by taking British Supermodels Suki Waterhouse and David Gandy out onto the city's fashionable streets for two very special photoshoots - followed by an exclusive fashion show and very British afternoon tea experience.

Suki took to the fashionable and historic streets of Milan this morning to unveil the hand-crafted masterpiece - alongside British Airways pilots and crew - in front of the famous Cathedral in Duomo Square.

The dress was created by acclaimed British fashion designer and artist Zoe Bradley and took over 100 hours to assemble. A stunning head piece was also created featuring actual boarding passes with Suki's name printed on them. The dress travelled 965 miles from Cardiff, UK to Milan, Italy and arrived during one of the most stylish weeks in Milan's calendar.

25-year-old Suki who was thrilled to be in Milan said: "I was so excited when British Airways asked me to get involved, Zoe Bradley is renowned for her paper dresses! I love the fact that the colours and the shape subtly represent the airline. It's great to have it customized to me, and I think people are absolutely blown away by it. I was just praying it wouldn't rain!"

Celebrated artist Zoe Bradley - who has worked with the likes of Christian Louboutin, Harrods and Alexander McQueen in the past - created the design with her team at her studio

back in Cardiff, UK. She said: "I wanted to create a design which captured the line of the iconic British Airways logo and really communicated air travel and the link between Britain, British Airways and fashion. Suki is the perfect English rose to model the piece."

"I love to take on a challenge and when British Airways first approached me with the idea of creating a dramatic dress in paper to be worn by a model, it was a chance to create something truly eye catching."

Suki and the British Airways pilots and crew wowed locals before heading to a special afternoon tea experience at an exclusive Milan venue Corso Como, where the dress was put on display before it returns to the British Airways museum at Waterside - its UK headquarters.

Later in the day, it was the turn of fashion royalty David Gandy to turn heads once more in the Italian fashion capital as British Airways sent him out for a spin in a vintage Jaguar E-Type with a British Airways pilot in tow.

The 36-year-old, wearing a beautiful suit took to the streets to visit popular tourist landmarks including Arco della Pace where he stopped to pose for photographs with British Airways pilots and crew.

Speaking beside the Jaguar car David commented that Milan and London have a lot in common. "Both cities are absolutely revered throughout the fashion world - and rightly so," he said. "The two cities are where models and

designers alike want to be and for that reason hold a very special bond".

"They both offer incredible places to shop - but on top of that you have the wonderful food, the culture and the people. London and Milan are very special to me and today I had a great time exploring the city by road. It was nice to take a moment and soak it up all up - usually I'm in the back of a car zooming from one shoot to the next. I really enjoyed taking the driving seat."

British Airways teamed up with The Berkeley Hotel, London, to give VIP guests a taste of the Berkeley's legendary Pret-a-Portea afternoon tea inspired by the themes and colours of the fashion world. They also enjoyed an exclusive fashion show of British Airways cabin crew outfits through the ages.

Anjulika Dutton, Commercial Manager Middle East, said: "London and Milan are cities that are at the very forefront of the fashion industry. We offer multiple onward connections to Milan via London Heathrow which allows our passengers flying from Kuwait the chance to explore the best that both of these vibrant and exciting cities have to offer."

"Zoe Bradley's wonderful British Airways paper dress is the perfect piece to mark the launch of our special fares to celebrate the fashion capitals - especially as our staff pride themselves on their impeccable - and very fashionable - outfits. We're certainly very impressed by her interpretation."

ZAIN GROUP HONORED WITH 'OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO MOBILE INDUSTRY AWARD'

BARCELONA: Zain Group, a leading mobile telecom innovator in eight markets across the Middle East and Africa, announces its recognition as a winner of the GSMA's "Outstanding Contribution to the Mobile Industry Award" for 2017. The award was presented to Zain Group and four other mobile operators Asiacell, Deutsche Telekom, Turkcell and Vodafone on 26 February 2017, the eve of Mobile World Congress, at the GSMA's annual Welcome Dinner at the Palau de la Musica Catalana in Barcelona, in the presence of King Felipe VI of Spain.

Zain's recognition in this manner was based on the work the telco continues to undertake around the region to assist and improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable sectors of society, including those fleeing the crisis in Syria. In particular, GSMA applauded Zain's creation of several commercial packages in the Middle East intended to facilitate connectivity, which is much needed amongst refugees and internally displaced people.

Recently, Zain announced that in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioners for Refugees (UNHCR) and Facebook, the companies had reached an agreement to provide Wi-Fi connectivity (free and high-speed) for refugees in Jordan for the next five years. Using UNHCR's expertise and knowledge about where refugees are located, Zain agreed to provide Wi-Fi services to key areas across Jordan.

In a bid to empower refugees and not consider them as perpetual victims, last June Zain partnered with MIT Enterprise Forum Pan Arab to launch the Innovate for Refugees Initiative - a competition intended to promote innovative entrepreneurial businesses, providing tech-driven solutions that cater to the needs of refugees. The competition was supported by the UNHCR; UNICEF; Jusoor, an NGO established by Syrian expatriates supporting the country's development; and Uber. There were over 1,600 applications, with 21 finalists shortlisted to the final round.

Commenting on the recognition from the GSMA, Scott Gegenheimer Zain Group CEO said, "We would like to express our appreciation to the GSMA for this honor, which is a great endorsement to adding dignity to the lives of so many who face challenging circumstances. We are committed to helping those in need and will always look to provide ways in which sustainable solutions may be found and fostered to alleviate the difficult circumstances afflicting so many."

Jennifer Suleiman, Head of Corporate

Sustainability at Zain Group said, "We are all well aware of the positive impact that mobile communications and connectivity can have on the lives of people, and we witness this first-hand in our own region. We feel a strong sense of responsibility to assist those requiring help and this has become part of our corporate identity within Zain. We appreciate GSMA having recognized our efforts in this manner, and we shall use the award to raise further awareness of the desperate situations people are living under, and the need to assist wherever possible."

Another initiative that was identified by the GSMA was the #ZainWithRefugees Campaign, a joint initiative between UNHCR and Zain Kuwait, which aims to assist and support Syrian refugees who faced harsh winter conditions. The UNHCR donation portal campaign aimed to collect donations to raise awareness on refugee emergencies. The portal includes a social media aspect whereby Zain further raised awareness concerning the plight of Syrian refugees through its social media channels, and using a bulk SMS campaign.

Zain has also spearheaded a number of initiatives to improve the welfare of displaced people across the region. One of the most comprehensive of these was the Internally Displaced Person Assistance Project, a multilateral initiative launched in 2015 by Zain Iraq, involving the distribution of food, clothing and other supplies to nearly 20,000 people. This included food baskets for 2,500 people, 4,000 iftar meals, 700 bottles of baby milk, 1,000 sets of clothing, and 100 air coolers. The project also addressed the health concerns of displaced persons through collaboration with two specialized non-governmental organizations (NGO), Dary and Iraq Builder. Through this partnership, medical tents were established to provide medicine, medical consultancy and psychological care to people.

In particular, GSMA applauded Zain's creation of several commercial packages in the Middle East intended to facilitate connectivity, which is much needed amongst refugees and internally displaced people. Most notable of these packages is the Tawasoq Line offered by touch in Lebanon, which provides discounted rates for Syrian refugees for voice, SMS and data, as well as discounts for calls and messages to Syria. With over one million Syrian refugees hosted in Lebanon, there is high demand for the service, which was launched in 2015, and by the end of 2016 counted approximately 50,000 subscribers.



GSMA award from King Felipe VI of Spain.



DRAW YOUR DREAM CAR; EXPRESS YOUR CREATIVITY 'THE 11TH TOYOTA DREAM CAR ART CONTEST 2017'

KUWAIT: Toyota Dream Car Art Contest invites children from all corners of the globe to share ideas about the future of mobility by drawing their dream cars. The activity is held to cultivate children's imagination and artistic expression through the creation of artworks. Toyota aims to nurture the creativity of the next generation of great inventors, thinkers and dreamers through this contest. Every great idea was born in the glimmer of a dream

In Kuwait, Mohamed Naser Al-Sayer & Sons Est Co WLL, the authorized dealer of Toyota, and their group corporate company "Al-Sayer Group Holding" are conducting this event to profile the best talent to represent Kuwait to the global contest. National selection will be conducted by Al-Sayer Group Holding, and winners will be announced and awarded with

attractive prizes.

The National Contest winners enter into the World Contest. From these, the jury panel in Japan gives Gold, Silver, Bronze and Best Finalist awards for each age category. The winners are invited to Japan to attend the Award Ceremony in September.

Entry Guidelines:

Entry period:
Mid of February 2017 - to 9th March 2017.

Eligibility:

The contest is open to anyone in Kuwait, aged 15 years old or younger.

Age categories:

(1) Category 1: Under 8 years old



(2) Category 2: 8-11 years old
(3) Category 3: 12-15 years old

*What we are looking for - hand-drawn colorful artwork, which shows "Your Dream Car". Remember to include a brief about drawings to support your idea. Your art work may be viewed by the world, so let's bring your best dream, creativity and expressions.

*What I can use - any standard drawing medium. Coloring pencils, crayons, watercolors or markers. We restrict digital & computer drawings, one resemble the previous Toyota Dream Car Art Contest artworks, famous paintings, and that include trademarked characters.

ZAIN SAUDI ARABIA SELECTS ERICSSON FOR DIGITAL EVOLUTION

RIYADH: Zain Saudi Arabia has selected Ericsson to transform its technology infrastructure to meet the needs of the future digital frontlines. The end to end digital transformation will bring vital improvements in customer experience and equip the customers with necessary stimuli to react, be exposed and benefit from a larger array of services grounded through a seamless managed service back-stage performance by Ericsson.

The deal was signed in by Peter Kaliaropoulos, CEO of Zain Saudi Arabia, and Ali Eid, Head of Ericsson Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Palestine, in the sidelines of Mobile World Congress 2017, held in Barcelona. In a deal valued around USD 70 million over 5 years Ericsson will be responsible for IT Managed Services, Application Development and Maintenance. Ericsson MS team presence alongside Zain Saudi Arabia operations team will create a link between the current situation and the to-be desired operational position by implementing a joint roadmap to achieve this sought operational efficiency which contributes to enhanced customer experience.

Zain Saudi Arabia has taken another leap forward towards the continuation of their digital transformation journey to create a smarter



technology management infrastructure that will synergize consumer behavior with top-notch customer service fronts. Zain Saudi Arabia today announces that it has entered into a Technology and Digital Transformation partnership with Ericsson. The end to end digital transformation will bring vital improvements in customer experience and equip the customers with the necessary touch points to get exposed and benefit from a larger set of products and services grounded through a seamless managed service 'back-stage' performance by Ericsson.

This five-year deal pushes the promise made to the commitment

and focus of the first phase by instilling further the mindset of customer centricity that Zain Saudi Arabia is building up through this technology transformation project with Ericsson. Zain will work more effectively and efficiently while being ready to offer the exciting new digital services. "Providing a state-of-the-art customer experience is an essential part of our transformation plan," said Peter Kaliaropoulos, Chief Executive Officer, Zain Saudi Arabia

"This agreement represents a new step in our strategy to turn Zain Saudi Arabia into a true digital frontrunner. We are implementing a transformational strategy and investing in the



latest technology to improve customer experience hence responding to our customers' digital needs. It will help us centralize and streamline our business, creating lean and agile operations that will also result in cost efficiencies." Eng. Sultan Abdulaziz AlDeghaither, Chief Technology Officer, Zain Saudi Arabia, said "The new Digital Stack will help us to have a 360-degree view of customers, which will allow us to improve our

customer experience, by conveying all their digital needs. Zain's ongoing association with Ericsson ensures our solid growth in this dynamic market. We have become the front runners in the ICT field."

Ali Eid, Head of Ericsson Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Palestine, said "We have a history of collaboration with Zain Group across various markets at different maturity phases. Being part of their business

in Saudi Arabia - we are glad to join forces with Zain Saudi Arabia in this digital transformation journey to provide them with an agile and future-proof technology to fully go digital and allow them to realize their utmost potential, grow their business and offer Zain's customers innovative and competitive services allowing them to realize what an operator can truly enable in the Networked Society."

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RUN KIDS RUN!

We're happy to announce the **QRun Kids Marathon**, a fun day for all in support of Bayt Abdullah's Children.

Who's it for? Boys & Girls aged 2-9 yrs

When is it? 4th March, Saturday - 9 am

Where is it? Marjoud

Last Day to register is 2nd March, 12 pm & we have limited spots available, so hurry up and register today! For registration & more info, head to: events.pro-vision.com

Qualitynet_qb, Qualitynet_qk, Qualitynet_kwt, Qualitynet, Qualitynetkw, Qualitynet

Run Kids Marathon 2017, PRO VISION

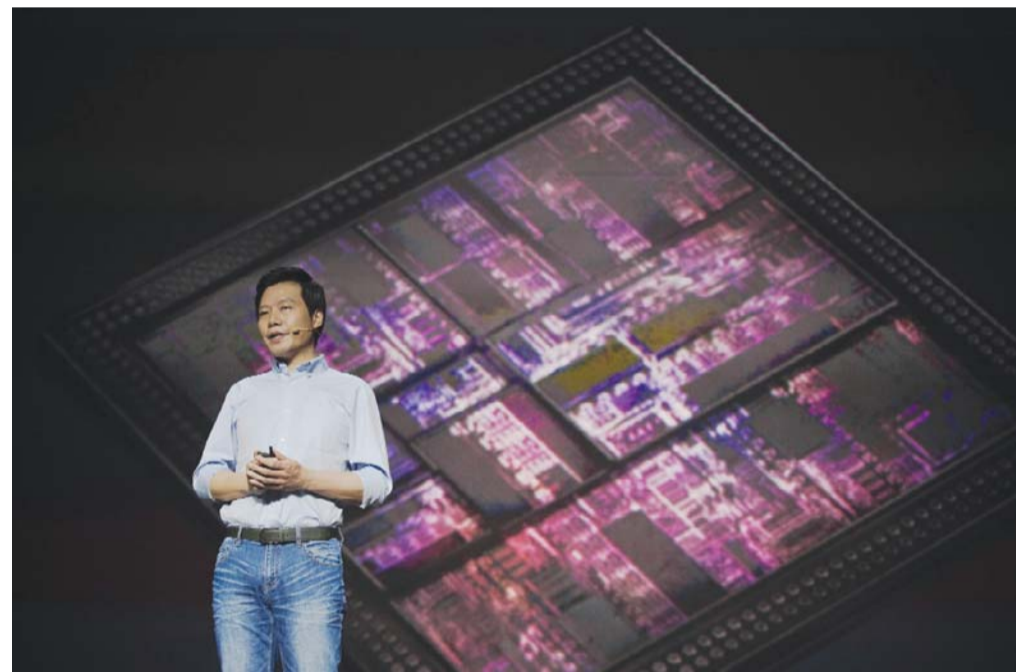
CHINESE TECH GIANT EYES GLOBAL MARKET WITH CUSTOM CHIP

CHINA ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF MICROCHIP TECHNOLOGY

BEIJING: Chinese technology giant Xiaomi yesterday unveiled an in-house processor, setting its sights on a top-tier global market long dominated by American companies. With the launch of its Surge S1 chipset, Xiaomi joins a rarified group of smartphone manufacturers with self-designed processors—the only others are Apple, Samsung and Chinese telecom company Huawei. "The ability to create its own chipsets is the pinnacle achievement for any smartphone company," said Lei Jun, Xiaomi's CEO and co-founder. Lei also introduced the Mi 5C, the first smartphone to be powered by the custom processor, and a new edition to its Redmi phone line at an event for media and "Mi fans."

Custom chipsets are designed to enhance the user experience by making the phone's software and hardware more cohesive. The Surge S1 was developed by a Xiaomi subsidiary called Pinecone that had been discreetly formed in 2014. "China is now on the cutting edge of microchip technology," Sun Changxu, a technology analyst for several trade magazines, said. "Xiaomi's release today is strategically significant." The company previously relied on chips made by MediaTek in Taiwan and Qualcomm in the United States.

Qualcomm's dominance in processor manufacturing has been challenged by antitrust investigations in several countries over the last few years, including a lawsuit filed by the US Federal Trade Commission last month. Around the same time, China's largest chip maker announced it will invest \$30 billion to build a new semiconductor factory, as the country seeks to reduce its dependence on foreign technology. At the event yesterday, Lei thanked local officials



BEIJING: Lei Jun, Chairman and CEO of Xiaomi Technology presents the new Surge S1 chipset, at a launch event in Beijing yesterday. —AFP

in Beijing for "encouraging us to invest in a microchip despite our lack of experience."

Xiaomi has long faced criticism for products bearing close resemblance to Apple's, but Lei emphasized the company's innovations. "We are not copying anyone," he said. "We are learning." The company faces an uphill battle not only to become globally competitive but also to best domestic rivals. While Xiaomi led Chinese smart-

phone sales in 2015, it slid to fifth last year, behind previously lesser-known brands like Vivo and OPPO. But at least one self-professed "Mifan" was optimistic about the company's future. Wang Haiyi, a 20-year-old university student who attended yesterday's launch, said he had no doubt Xiaomi will soon surpass Apple and Samsung. "We'll go beyond our borders," Wang said.—AFP

SAMSUNG GALAXY S7 EDGE NAMED BEST SMARTPHONE AT MWC 2017

BARCELONA: Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd, yesterday announced that the Galaxy S7 edge was recognized by the GSMA as "Best Smartphone 2016" in the Best Mobile Handsets and Devices category at the annual Global Mobile Awards at Mobile World Congress 2017. As the world leader in mobile innovation, Samsung continues to relentlessly pursue the best in hardware, software and services, redefining what is possible for consumers across the globe.

The Galaxy S7 edge was awarded for its refined design, advanced camera and outstanding performance. "We are honored to be recognized for our craftsmanship in design and innovation with the Galaxy S7 edge," said Junho Park, Vice President of Global Product Strategy, Mobile Communications Business at Samsung Electronics. "This award is a testament to our constant pursuit of excellence as we continue to exceed consumers' expectations through revolutionary mobile technology."



ASIACELL TO OFFER FREE ACCESS TO WIKIPEDIA IN IRAQ

BARCELONA: The Wikimedia Foundation, which runs online encyclopedia Wikipedia, said yesterday that telecoms operator Asiacell will offer free access to the website to its nearly 12 million mobile phone customers in war-torn Iraq. The partnership is the first by a telecoms operator in Iraq and the foundation's Wikipedia Zero project, which waives mobile data fees to subscribers of participating telecom operators so they can access Wikipedia without using their mobile data.

The news was announced at the Mobile World Congress, the biggest mobile event of the year, in Barcelona in northeastern Spain, which wraps up on Thursday. "Asiacell customers will be able to edit Wikipedia without mobile data charges—adding to and improving articles in their preferred language and sharing knowledge of Iraq's rich cultural history, heritage and its people with the rest of the world," the foundation said in a statement.

Like Wikipedia, Facebook and Google also operate programs internationally that exempt from users' data caps to help boost access to information in developing nations. — AFP

WEARABLE GADGETS SEEK PERMANENT PLACE IN USERS' LIVES

BARCELONA: Consumers are snapping up fitness trackers, smartwatches and other connected wearable gadgets—but huge numbers wind up in drawers unused after just a few months once the novelty wears off. "Abandonment has been a big problem with wearable products," said Mike Pedler, the leader of PwC's product innovation and development practice. "It is something that everyone involved in designing and producing wearables is still wrestling to address." With worldwide sales of smartphones now barely growing, many tech firms have turned their focus to wearable gadgets in the hope that they will be the next big source of growth.

Huawei, the world's third-largest phone maker, unveiled a new smartwatch at the Mobile World Congress, the phone industry's largest annual trade fair, with a sportier look than the first device it launched two years ago. Dozens of other wearable gadgets, ranging from bracelets that measure your heart rate to GPS-connected footwear, were on show at the event which wraps up tomorrow. CCS Insight predicts 411 million wearables devices—including virtual reality headsets and wearable cameras—will be sold around the world in 2020, up from 123 million in 2016.

But about a third of owners of smart wearables abandon these devices after six months, according to consulting firm Endeavour Partners. "For now most devices would not pass the 'turnaround test,' which is characteristic of an item you would turn around and retrieve if you realized you'd forgotten it on your way to work. Like your wallet. Or keys. Or smartphone," PwC said in a report on wearables last year.

Lack killer app

Part of the problem is that smartphones can already do most of the things people use wearables for — they act as pedometers, count calories, measure heartbeats and make payments. "Wearables lack a killer application," said Pedler. Wearables also often need to work together with a smartphone, leading consumers to complain that they are a hassle to use. The main reasons people gave for abandoning their fitness wearables was that they were "too difficult" or "are annoying", according to a 2016 study by German health insurer DKV. Huawei's new watch has its own cellular connection and the chief executive of the company's consumer business group, Richard Yu, said he believes this is the key to increase the appeal of smartwatches. — AFP

IN SOUTH KOREA, THE RACE IS ON FOR OLYMPICS 5G NEXT YEAR

BARCELONA: Tech-savvy sports enthusiasts will get their money's worth at next year's Pyeongchang Winter Olympics where South Korea's KT mobile operator wants to give spectators what it hopes will be their first 5G experience. Telecom firms have long been racing to develop this new, fifth generation of mobile networks that is expected to enable lightning-quick downloads or driverless cars guided by automatic connections to traffic systems.

At the weekend launch of Barcelona's Mobile World Congress, the world's biggest mobile expo, Spain's King Felipe VI said it would spark a "revolution in our lives and in the economy." Speaking Monday at the high-profile expo, KT chief executive Chang-Gyu Hwang promised that 5G would bring "dramatic changes."

"KT will introduce brand new services that have not ever been possible with the radio technologies of the current generations," a spokesman for the South Korean firm added.

Commercialization of 5G is still not expected to start before 2020, as companies and governments negotiate to try to standardize norms between different countries for smooth 5G use worldwide. Manufacturers must also build infrastructure that can carry mobile phone signals powerful and quick enough to unfailingly support split-second activities, such as surgical operations or automatic traffic movement.

But South Korea is planning to use the Olympic Winter Games in Feb 2018 to test 5G on the hundreds of thousands of spectators, providing them with access to very high definition content or virtual reality.

The current 4G standard enables fast broadband access via mobile smartphones, but government and manufacturers see the next generation enabling connection speeds up to 1,000 times faster than current ones. "Operators are

looking to 5G as a differentiator, especially in markets where LTE (4G) is ubiquitous" such as South Korea, says Dexter Thillien, an analyst at BMI Research.

Marketing ploy?

But as companies battle to reach the 5G Holy Grail, competition is more than stiff and South Korea runs the risk of being piped to the post. "We're going to see pretty significant roll-outs of 5G in the United States, and the first commercial services could even be available by the end of the year," said Frederic Pujol, a technology expert at the IDATE consulting firm.

This would only be a start, though, focusing on services that need high-speed connections such as 4K television which offers even better resolution than HD, or virtual reality—far from unlocking the Internet of Things such as driverless cars or talking fridges. And experts point out that all is needed for this is to improve 4G capacity, which is what Thillien thinks will happen for the Olympics in South Korea. "It will be pre-standards 5G," he said.

"The Olympic launch is more a marketing ploy to say they were the first," Pujol disagrees. He believes that the South Koreans will have changed their mobile networks entirely, allowing them to be managed partly by the 'cloud' and no longer from physical computers. The main risk for countries like South Korea that wants to be pioneers is that the norms and frequencies they decide to use won't, in the end, be those used at a global level.

"We know for example that the spectrum of frequencies that will be used in South Korea is not available in Europe but will be in the United States," says Thillien. Pujol adds that those countries and companies that are more advanced in developing 5G will seek to impose their own standards. A race that ultra-connected South Korea won't want to lose.—AFP

STUDY FINDS PECULIAR TIE BETWEEN WARM CLIMATE, SLOW SNOWMELT

DENVER: Global warming could mean that mountain snow melts at a slower pace, researchers said Monday, a peculiar finding that might be bad news for the West and other regions that depend on snow for water. Scientists have long known the annual snowmelt is starting sooner as the climate warms. New research by the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado, found that when the snow begins to melt earlier in the season, it dissipates more slowly than it does in late spring or summer, in part because the angle of the early year sun is lower so its rays are less intense.

The sun's intensity is particularly important because the energy in direct sunlight is the biggest driver of snowmelt, said Keith Musselman, the lead researcher. Another factor that slows the snowmelt in the early season is the fact that nights are still cooler. The conclusions, published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, could help explain why computer models show rivers fed by mountain snow are expected to run lower in a warming climate, even if rainfall increases as snowfall decreases,

said Musselman, a post-doctoral fellow at the Boulder research center.

The new study didn't examine the broader consequences of the findings, but Musselman said some slow-melting snow that lingers in the mountain soil could be taken up by trees and plants or evaporate into the atmosphere instead of flowing into rivers and reservoirs, where people can use it. Changing the timing and pace of snowmelt could also have implications for the annual surge of spring runoff that helps keep rivers healthy, and for floods and flood control. "We think the impacts could be far-reaching," Musselman said.

Mountain snow is a vital water source around the globe. NASA, which is conducting an unrelated study on how to measure snow from space, says one-sixth of the world's population gets most of its fresh water from snow. The snow that falls in Colorado's mountains alone feeds four rivers that provide water to a dozen states and Mexico. One of those rivers, the Colorado, supplies water to about 40 million people and 6,300 square miles of farmland. —AP



COLORADO: In this file photo, the Poudre River winds through a scenic canyon outside Fort Collins, Colorado. — AP



IN SPACE: This handout image shows an artist's rendering of the tidal disruption event in F01004-2237, which is 1.7 billion light years from Earth. — AFP

WHEN GALAXIES CRASH, BLACK HOLES DEVOUR STARS

PARIS: Super massive black holes rip up and devour hapless stars a hundred times more frequently than thought, according to research released on Monday. Scientists had previously calculated that such cosmic cannibalism was extremely rare, happening once every 10,000 to 100,000 years per galaxy. These so-called "tidal disruption events" had only been witnessed in astronomical surveys canvassing tens of thousands of galaxies. But the authors of a new study said they spotted a star being destroyed by a black hole in a survey of only 15 galaxy collisions—an extremely small sample size by astronomy standards.

The chances of a star disappearing into the maw of a black hole go up a hundredfold when galaxies crash, they concluded. "Our surprising findings show that when two galaxies collide, it dramatically increases how often stars get ripped apart and swallowed," co-author James

Mullaney, an astronomer at the University of Sheffield, said. Super massive black holes are millions to billions times more massive than our Sun. Astronomers agree they reside at the centre of almost all known major galaxies.

The Milky Way's own black hole—currently dormant—is tucked inside the constellation Sagittarius. But exactly how these monsters form is still hotly debated among scientists. For the new study, a team led by astronomer Clive Tadhunter, also from Sheffield, analyzed 15 colliding galaxies, each containing billions of stars. In 2015, they noticed a startling change in one of them—galaxy F01004-2237, some 1.7 billion light years from Earth—compared to a decade earlier.

Sifting through historical data collected by the Catalina Sky Survey, the researchers traced the transformation to 2010. The brightness flared that year in a way consistent with the death throes of a star being ripped apart. "Our

study shows that galaxy collisions play an important role in causing stars to fall toward black holes," Mullaney said. Once in the danger zone, the doomed star is sucked in by a black hole's gravitational pull. The stellar debris starts to travel faster and faster, heating up and emitting a flash of light as the star is obliterated.

When our own Milky Way merges with nearby Andromeda, in about 4.5 million years, such star-wrecking events will occur up to every ten years, the scientists said. These light shows would be brighter than any stars or planets in the night sky. "From Earth we'd see these events as a flare of light lasting a few months, or even years," said Mullaney. Assuming, of course, there was anyone around to notice. The findings, published in the journal *Nature Astronomy*, were based on observations made with the William Herschel Telescope, operated on the island of La Palma in the Canary Islands. —AFP

MIDWEST, WYOMING LAWMAKERS TARGET WOLF PROTECTIONS AGAIN

MINNEAPOLIS: Pressure is building in Congress to take gray wolves in the western Great Lakes region and Wyoming off the endangered list, which would allow farmers to kill the animals if they threaten livestock. Representatives from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Wyoming have asked House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin for a fast floor vote before the season during which most cows and sheep will give birth begins in earnest.

That followed testimony before a Senate committee a week earlier from the president of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, who said producers need to be able to defend their livestock and livelihoods. Meanwhile, both sides in the debate are waiting for a federal appeals court to decide whether to uphold lower court rulings that put wolves in the four

states back on the list or to let the US Fish and Wildlife Service return management of the species to the states, which it has wanted to do for years. Here's a look at some of the issues:

The letter

US Rep. Collin Peterson of Minnesota, the ranking Democrat on the House Agriculture Committee, sent a letter co-signed by seven of his colleagues from the four states to House leaders urging a quick floor vote on a bill to return their wolves to state management. A key component of both is language that would prevent the courts from intervening. The representatives said it's urgent because calving season is when cows and calves are most vulnerable.

"As you know, cows and their calves can easily be worth several thousand dollars, so each

instance of a wolf attack has devastating economic impacts on ranchers and their families. Currently, ranchers and farmers have no legal actions available to deal with gray wolf attacks because these predators are federally protected," they wrote.

Peterson said in an interview that they very nearly passed a similar provision in the last Congress and that he thinks they have a decent shot at persuading Ryan to grant an early floor vote. Otherwise they'll try to attach the language to a bigger appropriations bill later. The legislation is similar to what Congress used to delist wolves in Montana and Idaho in 2011 after courts blocked the federal government's attempts to lift protections in those states. "Wolves are not endangered," Peterson said.

The hearing

The Senate's Committee on Environment and Public Works held an informational hearing Feb. 15 billed as "Modernization of the Endangered Species Act." Jim Holte, president of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, complained that it's been illegal for farmers in the region to kill wolves that prey on their livestock since wolves went back on the list. "As wolf populations continue to increase, interactions between farmers, their livestock, rural residents and wolves continue to escalate without a remedy in sight," Holte testified.

The courts

The US Fish and Wildlife Service has long contended that wolves in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan and Wyoming have recovered to the point where they're no longer threatened, so hunting and trapping can be allowed under state control. Gray wolves were once hunted to the brink of extinction in the lower 48 states, but they recovered under Endangered Species Act protections and reintroduction programs to the point where they now number around 5,500, according to the service. —AP



MINNESOTA: In this file photo, a gray wolf is seen at the Wildlife Science Center in Forest Lake, Minnesota. — AP

HUMANS SPARK MOST US WILDFIRES

WASHINGTON: People sparked most US wildfires in recent decades, causing longer fire seasons and increasing the amount of scorched earth, according to a new study published Monday. Researchers found that humans caused 84 percent—or four out of five—of the total 1.5 million wildfires studied between 1992 and 2012. Lightning accounted for the rest. In addition, human actions tripled the length of the fire season during those two decades and were responsible for 44 percent of the total acreage burned, researchers reported in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

"Humans are expanding fires into more locations and environmental conditions than lightning is able to reach," said Bethany Bradley at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, a co-leader of the study. The spike in wildfires was aggravated by rising urbanization, they said. And the potential threat was expected to get worse. Places where houses are intermingled with natural areas are expected to double by 2030 from the current nine percent of all US land area.

"Our results highlight the importance of considering where the ignitions that start wildfires come from, instead of focusing only on the fuel that carries fire or the weather that helps it spread," said co-lead author Jennifer Balch at the University of Colorado-Boulder. "Thanks to people, the wildfire season is almost year-round." The United States has suffered historically large wildfires in the past decade, especially in the western half of the country. There is national concern about the duration and intensity of future wildfire seasons because of their potentially severe impact on agriculture, ecosystems, recreation and other economic sectors.

An additional worry is the high cost of putting out the blazes, which has topped \$2 billion in recent years. In the western state of Colorado, for example, 30 percent of wildfires between 1992 and 2012 were started by people and burned more than 1.2 million acres. The duration of the US wildfire season sparked by human activity was 93 days, more than double the 43 days of the lightning-ignited fires, which tend to be concentrated during the summer months.

Year-round threat

In the spring, autumn and winter seasons, humans added an average of 40,000 wildfires annually, more than 35 times the number of lightning-started fires in those seasons. "We saw significant increases in the numbers of large, human-started fires over time, especially in the spring," said Bradley. The potential for the blazes was being aggravated by climate change, the researchers said. "Climate change is making our fields, forests and grasslands drier and hotter for longer periods, creating a greater window of opportunity for human-related ignitions to start wildfires," said Balch.

John Abatzoglou, an associate professor of geography at the University of Idaho and a co-author of the paper, suggested the human factor offered hope of managing the threat. "We can't easily control how dry fuels get, or lightning, but we do have some control over human-started ignitions," he said. The researchers found one day in the 21-year period studied had the most number of human-started fires: 7,762. That was July 4, the country's Independence Day holiday, typically celebrated with fireworks. —AFP



SAN FRANCISCO: In this file photo, a marijuana joint is rolled in San Francisco. — AP

PEDIATRICIANS WARN AGAINST POT USE

CHICAGO: An influential doctors group is beefing up warnings about marijuana's potential harms for teens amid increasingly lax laws and attitudes on pot use. Many parents use the drug and think it's OK for their kids, but "we would rather not mess around with the developing brain," said Dr. Seth Ammerman. The advice comes in a new report from the American Academy of Pediatrics, published Monday in *Pediatrics*. The group opposes medical and recreational marijuana use for kids. It says emphasizing that message is important because most states have legalized medical use for adults, and many have decriminalized or legalized adults' recreational use.

Those trends have led parents to increasingly ask doctors about kids' use, said Ammerman, a Stanford University pediatrics professor who co-wrote the report. "Parents will say, 'I use it moderately and I'm fine with it, so it's really benign and not a problem if my kid uses it,'" he said. Doctors need to know how to respond to that thinking, and parents and teens need to know the risks, Ammerman said.

Potential harms

The brain continues to develop until the early 20s, raising concerns about the potential short- and long-term effects of a mind-altering drug. Some studies suggest that teens who use marijuana at least 10 times a month develop changes in brain regions affecting memory and the ability to plan. Some changes may be permanent, the report says.

Frequent use starting in the early teen

years may lower IQ scores, and some studies have shown that starting marijuana use at a young age is more likely to lead to addiction than starting in adulthood. Not all teen users develop these problems and some may be more vulnerable because of genetics or other factors.

Medical versus recreational use

Solid research on medical marijuana's effects in children and teens is lacking, although some studies have suggested it may benefit kids with hard-to-treat seizures. The report says other potential benefits, doses and effects are mostly unknown. Recreational use is illegal for those under age 21 even in states that allow adult use.

Parents should avoid using marijuana in front of their kids and should keep all marijuana products stored out of kids' sight, the academy says. Some young children who accidentally swallowed their parents' pot-containing cookies or drinks have landed in the emergency room for mostly minor symptoms although some developed breathing problems.

Who's using

Government data show that almost 40 percent of US high school students have tried marijuana, about 20 percent are current users and close to 10 percent first tried it before age 13. Use has increased in recent years among those aged 18 and older but not among young teens. Still, kids aged 12-17 increasingly think that marijuana use is not harmful. —AP

ROYALE HAYAT HOSPITAL CELEBRATES 7 YEARS OF TRUST



KUWAIT: Royale Hayat Hospital has been named Best Hospital in Kuwait for the Seventh Year at the Service Hero Awards, Arab World's 100 percent consumer-driven customer satisfaction index. "Receiving this award for the seventh time is an honor. We value this award, because it reflects the satisfaction of our community and customers. At Royale Hayat Hospital, we work as a team to provide the best and most advanced services and technology in the medical and hospitality industry. As chairman and members of the board, we are committed to fulfill the needs of patients and families in Kuwait."

Since launching in 2006, Royale Hayat continues to provide the safest, most modern and highest quality of medical care and services to the Kuwaiti society in an environment of compassion, comfort and care. This vision has guaranteed Royale Hayat's leading place in the health sector and has redefined the benchmarks in hospitality.



SURPRISED ASTRONOMERS FIND TATOoine-LIKE, TWO-STAR SYSTEM

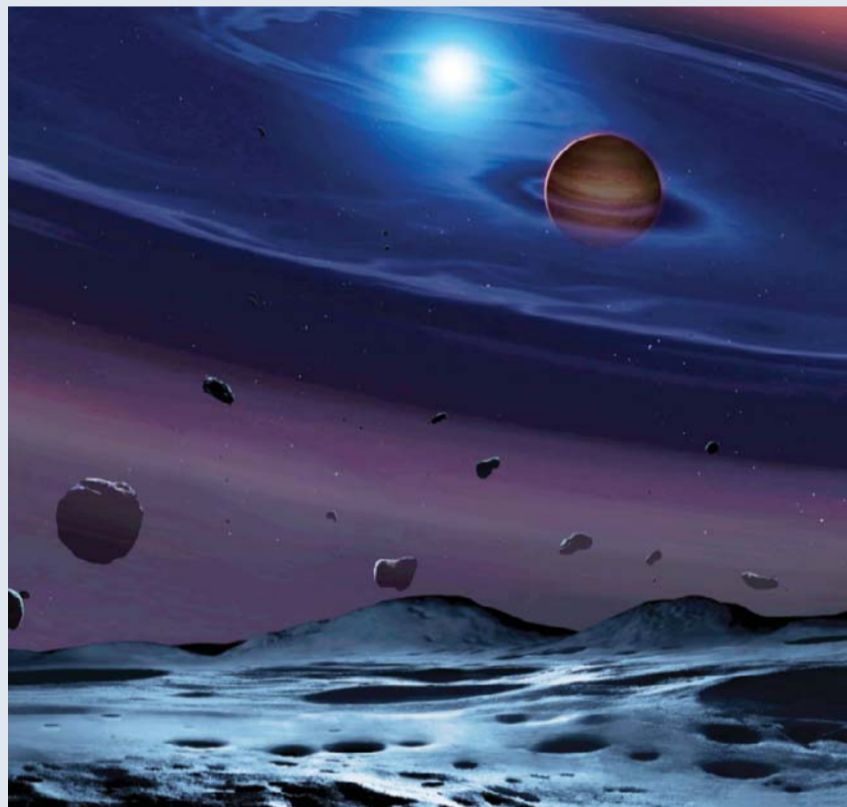
PARIS: Astronomers said Monday they had found hints of a planetary system closely resembling that of Tatooine, the home of Star Wars Jedi Luke Skywalker, orbiting a duo of suns. The evidence came in the form of seemingly rocky debris orbiting two stars "a white dwarf and a brown dwarf" in a system called SDSS 1557 some 1,000 light years away.

The "debris appears to be rocky and suggests that terrestrial planets like Tatooine might exist in the system," said a statement from University College London (UCL), which took part in the study.

All other planets discovered orbiting double stars have been gas giants similar to Jupiter. Now in SDSS 1557, a team has found planetary material with a high metal content, including silicon and magnesium, which is more common to rocky worlds. Building rocky planets around two suns is difficult, according to Jay Farihi from UCL, the study's lead author. The gravity of each star exerts push and pulls forces, preventing bits of rock and dust sticking together and growing, as in the usual planet-building process.

"With the discovery of asteroid debris in the SDSS 1557 system, we see clear signatures of rocky planet assembly," said Farihi. In our own Solar System, the asteroid belt contains left-over building blocks from the rocky planets Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars. These rocks are studied to better understand how potentially habitable planets are formed. The same approach was used to analyze the SDSS 1557 system, where planets cannot yet be detected directly, the astronomers said.

The discovery came as a "complete surprise," added the team, who assumed the system contained a single star, a white dwarf, only to discover a brown dwarf hidden in the asteroid dust. "But when we observed SDSS 1557 in detail, we recognized the brown dwarf's subtle gravitational pull on the white dwarf," said Steven Parsons of the University of Sheffield. The team studied the system by measuring different wavelengths of light, or spectra, using two large telescopes based in Chile. In the Star Wars saga, Tatooine is a desert planet circling two suns, and with three moons of its own. —AFP



IN SPACE: This handout image shows a disc of rocky debris from a disrupted planetesimal surrounds white dwarf plus brown dwarf binary star. —AFP

CHATting ROBOTS AND MUSIC: FUN GADGETS ON SHOW IN BARCELONA

BARCELONA: While smartphones get top billing at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain, it's the quirky, under-the-radar products that are getting a lot of the visitors' attention. Here's a glimpse of some of the gadgets and apps displayed by start-up companies this week at the fair, the world's largest for wireless technology.

Cute robot

Living in Seoul, Jong-Gun Park looked around him one day and decided his fellow South Koreans needed some help expressing their emotions. "We are so busy these days, always running to and from work, taking our kids to school, studying, that we no longer find the necessary time to interact with each other," said Park, CEO of the company Circulus. Enter Pibo, the friendly dinner table ice-breaker.

Pibo is a charming little robot whose goal is to get you and your loved ones sharing your daily life more. "Are you tired?" he asks, "I will play music without boredom." Sure, he still needs to hone his English, but he's always eager to ask about your day or provide updates on weather conditions. Still a prototype, Pibo comes in a case, should you wish to take him along on vacation. He is, after all, a member of the family. For an expected \$490 a pop.

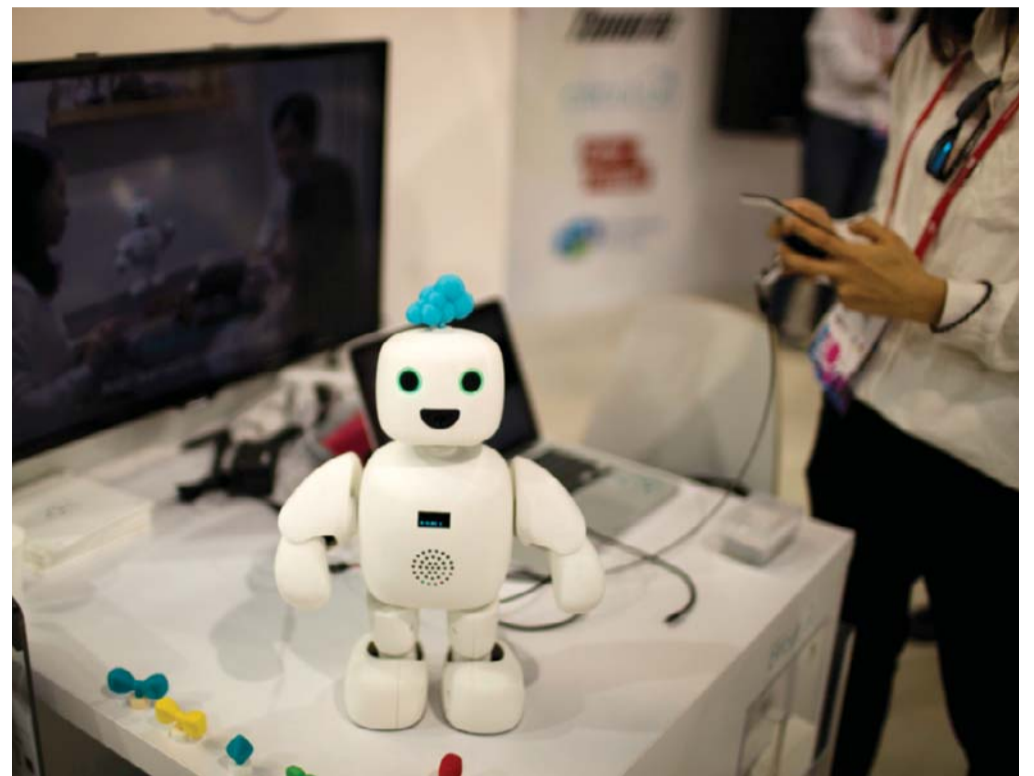
Just add water

Growing your own veggies may become possible even for urbanites with tiny studio apartments. Israeli startup Living Box offers a modular, unfoldable, solar-powered little greenhouse that you can use to harvest anything from tomatoes to tea and herbs. "We have a slow release water system for irrigation, with a novel liquid nutrient solution and bacteria to avoid the use of pesticides, as well as an app prototype updating weather conditions and other relevant data right to your smartphone, so you don't have to monitor it," explained Nitzan Solan, CEO of the company.

The idea was to create a sustainable, affordable and simple mobile farming system that could be operated by anyone around the globe. As of now, Living Box is testing in 50 sites around Israel, the U.S. and Nigeria, and aims to try locations in Spain and Fiji. It is expected to carry a market price of \$300.

Cool hang

The hang, a metal percussion instrument shaped like a flying saucer, is beloved of street performers the world round and often associated with meditation practices like yoga. Now it comes in a fully digital version. When delicately tapped, the Oval can reproduce the sounds of a



BARCELONA: Pibo robot, whose main purpose is getting you and your loved ones sharing your daily life again, receives instructions from her owner, at the Four Years from Now (FYFN) show, a sidebar event of Mobile World Congress in Barcelona, Spain. — AP

hang as well as other instruments, like drums, trumpets and even violins.

Musicians Ravid Goldschmidt and Alex Posada, the co-founders of the Spanish startup that makes the oval, say they sought to start a "revolution of percussion" with this instrument. Already on the market, the Oval is aimed at all kinds of consumers, with about 40 percent estimated to be amateur or professional musicians. It goes for about \$950.

To see or not to see

Samsung's Relumino headset aims to do nothing less than help the blind see. The gadget, shaped like virtual reality glasses, recasts images of the world in a way that someone with vision problems can see more clearly. The glasses are still in a developmental stage and, although it's still too early to venture a market price for them, Samsung Senior Engineer Junghoon Cho hopes to compete with other more expensive visual aids out there.

Besides correcting blurred images, the headset can eliminate blind spots and improve peripheral vision. "If we make our own project,

people who are visually impaired can walk outside using our glasses... We want to help them have a better social relationship with other people," said Cho.

Shopping vision

Worried the new couch might not squeeze through door? Sri Lanka-based startup Live room is trying to solve your angst. Its virtual reality technology aims to give shoppers a live look at how products in online stores would fit into your home. This is how it works: you shoot an image of the space in question via a live view button and then consult their catalog on the app for the item you want.

The item will pop up on your tablet or smartphone set in the image of your home. You can move and rotate the item and change its colors, fabric and material. "If you're buying online, via e-commerce, you have only images. You have to visualize the product in your mind and maybe the dimensions and the colors are wrong," said founder and CTO Sameera Nilupul. "With this technology, you can see exactly how the products look in your own home." —AP

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ACK ANNOUNCES ITS SECOND ANNUAL PROJECT BASED LEARNING SYMPOSIUM

After developing successfully a variety of active learning approaches, the School of Engineering at the Australian College of Kuwait (ACK) is organizing its second "Project Based Learning (PBL) Symposium" under the theme "Reshaping the Teaching and Learning experience" on March 5, 2017. Set to be held at ACK's campus in Mishref, the symposium will bring together engineers and educators to share expectations, learning techniques and experiences that influence and shape the learning process of the next generation of engineers.

The symposium will host two guest speakers from the Director of the Aalborg Centre for Problem Based Learning

in Engineering Science and Sustainability, Aalborg University, Denmark, Prof. Anette Kolmos, and from the Director of Academics and Research, Iron Range Engineering Minnesota State University, USA, Dr. Ronald Ulseth, the symposium will also serve as a platform for professional development, while providing networking and knowledge-sharing opportunities between the panel of speakers and symposium attendees. The School of Engineering invites interested parties to attend the symposium, whereby registration can be completed online by visiting the website: <http://www.ack.edu.kw/pbl2017>.



AOU ORGANIZES LECTURE ON RE-ACCREDITATION

The Arab Open University (AOU) organized a lecture on Re-accréditation on the occasion of the AOU's preparations for the academic re-accréditation by the Open University, UK that would be finalized in May. The lecture was delivered by Prof. Marwan Al-Akaidi, Vice President for Academic Affairs at AOU, who stressed the AOU's compliance with all requirements and conditions of local and British bodies of accreditation and quality under its partnership with OU.

During the lecture, Al-Akaidi marked the importance of the academic re-accréditation and its procedures and preparations. He addressed a number of topics, including, most importantly, conditions of re-accréditation, the system of quality assurance, intellectual property, the relationship of the university within and outside the academic community, and the requirements of the accreditation of each program

offered by the AOU in partnership with the OU.

Al-Akaidi highlighted the big responsibility resting with all AOU staff for a successful evaluation to obtain the academic re-accréditation. He added, "Re-accréditation is deserved due to the AOU's compliance with the procedures and preparations of re-accréditation, and to the AOU's efforts and commitment to applying all standards set by the local and international bodies for accreditation and quality, in particular the standards of institutional and academic accreditation bodies in the UK."

He pointed to the positive effect of the academic re-accréditation on the AOU's commitment and credibility to the high quality of its academic programs. He added, "The re-accréditation means the University is highly developed to be competitive to regional universities and those of developed countries."

PROMINENT INDIAN ONCOLOGIST HONORED IN KUWAIT'S NATIONAL AND LIBERATION DAYS CELEBRATIONS



Kuwait's National and Liberation Days was cheered by the Indian community a great celebration as the gathering included the prominent figures and special invitees in the series of events by NSH, the single largest employer in the Middle East. In honor of Kuwait's National and Liberation Days, NSH organized the cancer awareness program, conducted by the well-known Indian oncologist Dr V P Gangadharan.

The event was inaugurated by the Vice President Sabu who explained that the aim for this event is to help spread awareness of the causes and prevention of the cancer, and he read out the achievements of Dr V P Gangadharan; followed by the introduction by HR Manager Pani J Anthony and felicitation by GM Harikumar. In his inaugural address, NSH Vice President Sabu informed the large gathering the reason for arranging such a program during the National and Liberation Days celebrations of Kuwait. He happily added that Kuwait is a great country to live in, and that created a good platform for a peaceful working environment.

Dr V P Gangadharan described the importance of timely self-examination and reviewed the facts about the cancer and its genetic roots. He encouraged the females above the age of 40 to go for regular breast cancer checkup system. His speech included an elaborate dialogue on its causes, symptoms, treatment options, self-examination and preventive measures. The audience expressed their happiness that this seminar created awareness among them and encouraging them to pass on this important and valuable information to their peers and family members.

The question and answer session at the end of the seminar cleared certain myths the audience held about the cancer and addressed several queries. This joyful festival with fun and feast, witnessed the cultural events by the community members and kids, created more fervor and gaiety. Feathers were added in NSH's cap by the presence of top official from JGC like Mr Hanada who appreciated NSH for its yeomen service towards creating a healthy society and to shape the future of the community by promoting health and development.

Sabu honored Dr V P Gangadharan with the 1st NSH Global Harmony Award - 2017 for his excellent medical service, combining high professional skill, with compassion and personal bondage, saving many precious lives and alleviating pain and suffering. NSH took a different path in this celebration by maintaining its special interest of social responsibility. PV Santhosh, Abdul Rahman, Dileep Kumar, VG Nair, Michael O Baili, Dr. Camama, Santhos Babu, Manoj, KR Mohan, Padmakumar, Harish, Prakash, Shiju, Jayan were among those present.





KUWAIT EXPERIENCES GREAT PRODUCTS

A great event and European Food Product Presentation and Lunch took place in Four Points by Sheraton Hotel in Kuwait on the morning of February 16, 2017. Through a European program called "Great Flavors" campaign financed with the aid from the European Union and Greece, quality products certified by Protected Geographical indication (PGI) and Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) like Gruyere cheese, pistachios, extra virgin olive oil, olives and currants, have the opportunity to demonstrate in Kuwaiti audience.

The vice president of Agricultural Association from Naxos, the Greek biggest island of Cyclades, Mr Iakovos Valeris, supplier of the special cheese Gruyere, represented the program and hosted many guests like importers, distributors, Journalists and cheese buyers to join them for a product presentation and Lunch in Four Points Sheraton Hotel.

Attendees, watched presentation of the company, tasted Gruyere and discussed with Mr Valleris the import perspective product in Kuwait. Guests also enjoyed executive chef of Sheraton preparing a special recipe incorporating Gruyere EAS Naxos. The event was also attended by the Greek Ambassador in Kuwait, Mr Andreas Papadakis. The Naxos Gruyere P.O.D. is a hard cheese, with a golden yellow color, and small scattered holes inside its solid and elastic mass. It has a thin and dry rind, a light and fine flavor, and a very pleasant, fine, and sweet taste that makes it ideal for any purpose.



JUMEIRAH MESSILAH BEACH HOTEL AND SPA AWARDED FOR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES



General Manager Hakan Petek

Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa, Kuwait's idyllic resort is delighted to announce that its General Manager Hakan Petek received the prestigious title of General Manager of the Year 2016. The award was presented to him by Marc Dardenne, Group Chief Operating Officer of Jumeirah Group, the Dubai-based luxury hotel company and a member of Dubai Holding, for exceptional guest satisfaction and hotel leadership.

General Manager Hakan Petek said: "I wish to convey a special thank you to Jumeirah Group for these commendations. I would like to attribute this success to the strong support of my team at Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel and Spa. It is an honor to have these awards representing our commitment to achieving exemplary standards of hospitality services. I look forward to another successful year with confidence as we continue to maintain our leadership position in guest satisfaction and exceptional experiences."

With a track record marked by many notable achievements for personalized and thoughtful guest experiences, the resort has also been awarded with the Customer Satisfaction Growth Award for its contribution to outstanding experiences and the Most Improved Housekeeping Customer Satisfaction Score for its signature customer service culture.

The luxurious landmark was also honored with two respected industry awards by The Middle East, North Africa and Asia Awards (MENA). Setting new standards for best industry practices and innovative strategies, General Manager Hakan Petek was presented with the prestigious Best Business Leader Award alongside the Customer Delight Award at a ceremony held in Jumeirah's Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai.



THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF KUWAIT CELEBRATES THE FEAST OF ST VARTAN

On Friday February 17, the Armenian Church of Kuwait celebrated the Feast of St Vartan, an Armenian patron after whom the local Church is named. On this occasion, His Grace Bishop Massis Zobouian presided over the Divine Liturgy where he reflected in his sermon on the importance of the feast of St Vartan.

During the ceremony, his Grace remembered the National days celebrations of Kuwait and on this occasion he prayed to the almighty God to keep His Highness the Amir, the crown prince and the state of Kuwait safe and sound. As an annual tradition, ladies from the community prepared a madagh which is an Armenian custom by distributing the traditional lamb stew to its parishners.



CLASSIFIEDS



Kuwait Times
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 e-mail: info@kuwaittimes.net

Kuwait CINEMA					
KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (23/02/2017 TO 01/03/2017)					
SHARQIA-1 A DOG'S PURPOSE A DOG'S PURPOSE ELIMINATORS HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film A DOG'S PURPOSE HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film ELIMINATORS ELIMINATORS	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 7:30 PM 9:30 PM 11:00 PM 1:00 AM	ROCK DOG ROCK DOG EL QERD BEYETKALIM-Arabic HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film THE DEVIL'S CANDY THE DEVIL'S CANDY	3:00 PM 5:00 PM 7:00 PM 9:00 PM 10:30 PM 12:15 AM	THE DEVIL'S CANDY THE DEVIL'S CANDY	11:00 PM 12:45 AM
SHARQIA-2 HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES THE WORTHY - Arabic HIDDEN FIGURES THE WORTHY - Arabic HIDDEN FIGURES	12:00 PM 2:30 PM 5:00 PM 7:15 PM 9:45 PM 12:05 AM	FANAR-2 A DOG'S PURPOSE ELIMINATORS HAMAH - Kuwaiti Film A DOG'S PURPOSE A DOG'S PURPOSE ELIMINATORS ELIMINATORS	12:30 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM 6:30 PM 8:45 PM 11:00 PM 1:00 AM	MARINA-3 ROCK DOG ROCK DOG ROCK DOG THE WORTHY - Arabic THE WORTHY - Arabic THE WORTHY - Arabic	12:00 PM 2:00 PM 4:00 PM 6:00 PM 8:00 PM 11:05 PM 12:30 AM
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MUHALAB-1 ROCK DOG ROCK DOG ROCK DOG RANGOON - Hindi MERCURY PLAINS MERCURY PLAINS	12:45 PM 2:45 PM 4:45 PM 6:45 PM 9:45 PM 11:45 PM	FANAR-4 HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES	12:15 PM 2:45 PM 5:15 PM 7:45 PM 10:15 PM 12:45 AM	AVENUES-2 JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2 - 2D-4DX THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE - 3D-4DX THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE - 3D-4DX THE LEGO BATMAN MOVIE - 3D-4DX JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2 - 2D-4DX JOHN WICK: CHAPTER 2 - 2D-4DX	12:15 PM 2:45 PM 5:00 PM 7:15 PM 9:30 PM 12:05 AM
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MUHALAB-3 HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES THE WORTHY - Arabic HIDDEN FIGURES THE WORTHY - Arabic	12:30 PM 3:00 PM 5:30 PM 8:00 PM 10:15 PM 12:45 AM	MARINA-1 ELIMINATORS A DOG'S PURPOSE A DOG'S PURPOSE A DOG'S PURPOSE ELIMINATORS ELIMINATORS	1:00 PM 3:15 PM 5:30 PM 7:45 PM 10:00 PM 12:05 AM	360°-2 SPLIT KAABIL - HINDI RANGOON - Hindi RANGOON - Hindi SPLIT	1:30 PM 4:00 PM 6:45 PM 9:45 PM 12:45 AM
FANAR-1 ROCK DOG	1:00 PM	MARINA-2 HIDDEN FIGURES THE DEVIL'S CANDY HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES HIDDEN FIGURES	1:00 PM 1:45 PM 3:30 PM 6:00 PM 8:30 PM	360°-3 ROCK DOG ROCK DOG	12:15 PM 2:15 PM

DANAH UNIVERSAL SCHOOL OF KUWAIT
RECRUITMENT OPEN DAY
 AdvancED ACCREDITED | NCA

POSITIONS:
 ❖ PRINCIPAL
 ❖ VICE PRINCIPAL
 ❖ SOCIAL WORKER
 ❖ MUSIC TEACHER
 ❖ MATH TEACHER
 ❖ ENGLISH TEACHER
 ❖ LIBRARIAN

REQUIREMENTS:
 ▪ Native speakers for Principal & Vice Principal, Masters degree is a must
 ▪ Minimum Bachelor's in relevant subject for teachers.
 ▪ Minimum +5 years experience of working in any reputable Institution.
 ▪ Must be familiar with American curriculum.
 ▪ Health : No chronic disease likely to affect performance.

Venue:- Meeting room no. 15 A, Floor no. 15, Symphony Style Hotel, Salmiya.
 Date:- 4th March 2017.
 Time:- 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM.
 Contact us: Tel: 25662546/7
 Email: info@aldanahbsk.net

NOTE: PLEASE CARRY YOUR RESUME ALONG WITH YOUR PASSPORT & DEGREE COPY.
 FOLLOW US: Dusk_kw, Dusk_kw, Dusk Universal School of Kuwait, www.dusk-kw.net

SITUATION WANTED

Art director, Jordanian, BA graphic design, 13 years experience with international agencies (Dubai, Riyadh, Kuwait & Amman) in graphic skills, web design, story boarding, creative solutions & mobile design, proficient in Adobe Photoshop, Illustrator, Indesign. Seeks job in Kuwait, please call 00965 98773900 or email: mamoonalqutob@gmail.com (C 5277) 28-2-2017

URGENT REQUIREMENT

EXCAVATOR OPERATOR
 Can operate and using attachments such as grappler, hummer. The transportation will be a free, lunch free, and must have drive license, article 18 changeable, must join us immediately.
 Send CV to email (ferozeentex3@gmail.com)
 Contact: 66696839

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr:	04:56
Shorook:	06:14
Duhr:	12:01
Asr:	15:19
Maghrib:	17:47
Isha:	19:04

Directorate General of Civil Aviation Home Page (www.kuwait-airport.com.kw)

Flight Schedule

Arrival Flights on Wednesday 1/3/2017				Departure Flights on Wednesday 1/3/2017			
Airlines	Fit	Route	Time	Airlines	Fit	Route	Time
JZR	267	Beirut	00:30	AIC	988	Hyderabad/Chennai	00:05
JZR	539	Cairo	00:40	JAI	573	Mumbai	00:30
THY	772	Istanbul	00:55	FDB	072	Dubai	00:40
KAC	102	London	00:55	FDK	804	Damascus	01:55
FDK	803	Damascus	01:00	KAC	417	Manila	02:00
QTR	1086	Doha	01:15	THY	773	Istanbul	02:25
THY	764	Istanbul	01:50	DLH	635	Frankfurt	02:55
DLH	635	Doha	01:55	MSC	406	Sohag	03:30
PGT	858	Istanbul	02:00	PGT	859	Istanbul	03:35
MSC	405	Sohag	02:30	UAE	854	Dubai	03:45
GFA	211	Bahrain	02:30	KKK	6505	Istanbul	03:55
UAE	853	Dubai	02:30	OMA	644	Muscat	03:55
OMA	643	Muscat	02:55	THY	765	Istanbul	04:00
KKK	6506	Istanbul	02:55	ETD	306	Abu Dhabi	04:10
FDB	069	Dubai	03:05	MSR	613	Cairo	04:10
FDB	5061	Dubai	07:15	QTR	1077	Doha	04:40
KAC	204	Lahore	07:15	KAC	103	London	04:45
KAC	284	Dhaka	07:35	CEB	0019	Manila	05:20
FDB	053	Dubai	07:45	QTR	1087	Doha	05:50
KAC	302	Mumbai	08:20	JZR	1330	Al Najaf	06:00
UAE	855	Dubai	08:40	JZR	560	Sohag	06:05
KAC	382	Delhi	08:45	FDB	070	Dubai	06:30
IAW	157A	Baghdad	09:00	KAC	153	Istanbul	06:50
ETD	301	Abu Dhabi	09:05	THY	771	Istanbul	06:50
ABY	125	Sharjah	09:05	JZR	164	Dubai	06:55
KAC	362	Colombo	09:05	KAC	171	Frankfurt	07:05
KAC	352	Kochi	09:10	Amman	645	Amman	07:05
JZR	1331	Al Najaf	09:25	KAC	541	Cairo	07:15
QTR	1070	Doha	09:30	GFA	212	Bahrain	07:15
FDB	055	Dubai	09:40	JZR	1338	Al Najaf	07:40
IRC	6511	ABD	09:55	JZR	1332	Al Najaf	07:50
MSC	415	Sohag	10:15	FDB	5062	Dubai	07:55
IRA	665	Shiraz	10:40	KAC	563	Amman	08:00
GFA	213	Bahrain	10:40	BAW	156	London	08:40
TXC	1622	IQA	11:00	FDB	054	Dubai	08:55
JZR	1339	Al Najaf	11:05	KAC	691	Muscat	09:00
AXB	889	Mangalore/Bahrain	11:10	KAC	743	Dammam	09:00
JZR	1333	Al Najaf	11:15	KAC	117	New York	09:00
IRM	1188	Mashhad	11:15	JZR	534	Cairo	09:15
JZR	165	Dubai	11:30	KAC	513	Tehran	09:30
MEA	404	Beirut	11:55	KAC	101	London	09:35
IAW	157	Al Najaf	12:00	ABY	126	Sharjah	09:45
KAC	744	Dammam	12:10	UAE	856	Dubai	09:55
JZR	561	Sohag	12:40	IAW	158A	Al Najaf	10:00
FDB	075	Dubai	12:50	JZR	482	Istanbul	10:00
UAE	871	Dubai	12:50	KAC	671	Dubai	10:05
MSR	610	Cairo	13:00	KAC	613	Bahrain	10:10
CLX	792	Luxembourg	13:15	ETD	302	Abu Dhabi	10:10
KAC	614	Bahrain	13:30	JZR	787	Jeddah	10:15
KAC	564	Amman	13:40	JZR	356	Mashhad	10:25
KNE	231	Riyadh	13:55	KAC	161	Geneva	10:35
KAC	514	Tehran	13:55	FDB	056	Dubai	10:35
QTR	1078	Doha	14:10	QTR	1071	Doha	10:40
SVA	500	Jeddah	14:15	KAC	501	Doha	10:55
FDB	059	Dubai	14:20	IRC	6522	Lamerd	11:00
KAC	692	Muscat	14:30	MSC	416	Sohag	11:15
KAC	414	Bangkok	14:35	GFA	214	Bahrain	11:25
GFA	221	Bahrain	14:40	IRA	664	Shiraz	11:40
IRC	6521	Lamerd	14:40	JZR	1340	Al Najaf	11:55
KAC	542	Cairo	14:45	KAC	661	Abu Dhabi	12:05
KAC	672	Dubai	14:50	JZR	776	Jeddah	12:05
KNE	529	Jeddah	14:55	AXB	890	Mangalore	12:10
KNE	683	Geneva	15:05	IRM	1189	Mashhad	12:30
FDB	8053	Dubai	15:10	MEA	405	Beirut	12:55
				IAW	158	Al Najaf	13:00
				JZR	786	Riyadh	13:10
				KAC	511	Mashhad	13:15
				JZR	176	Dubai	13:45
				TXC	1623	IQA	14:00
				MSR	611	Cairo	14:00

CROSSWORD 1534



ACROSS

1. A member of a Mayan people of southwest Guatemala.
4. Any of various plants of the genus *Scabiosa*.
12. A beverage made by steeping tea leaves in water.
15. A constellation in the southern hemisphere near Telescopium and Norma.
16. Being everywhere equidistant and not intersecting.
17. An ugly evil-looking old woman.
18. Old World nocturnal canine mammal closely related to the dog.
20. A member of a people who have no permanent home but move about according to the seasons.
21. The residue that remains when something is burned.
22. A member of the Semitic speaking people of northern Ethiopia.
23. Genus of tropical hardwood timber trees.
25. Freshwater dace-like game fish of Europe and western Asia noted for ability to survive outside water.
27. French writer whose novels described the sordid side of city life (1804-1857).
28. Internal organs collectively (especially those in the abdominal cavity).
31. Having an eye or eyes or eyelike feature especially as specified.
35. A Spanish-speaking quarter in a town or city (especially in the United States).
38. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
40. The sign language used in the United States.
42. Of people.
44. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
48. (Irish) Mother of the ancient Irish gods.
49. A silvery ductile metallic element found primarily in bauxite.
50. Wild or domesticated South American cud-chewing animal related to camels but smaller and lacking a hump.
51. A light flintlock musket.
53. Be in contradiction with.
55. An ancient city in southeastern Greece.
57. Tag the base runner to get him out.
59. An official prosecutor for a judicial district.
60. (Babylonian) A goddess of the watery deep and daughter of Ea.
63. Mar or spoil the appearance of.
66. A nearly horizontal passage from the surface into a mine.
68. Before noon.
69. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
70. Rig used in drilling for oil or gas.
74. Relating to a recently developed fashion or style.
75. Become soft or disintegrate as a result of excessive soaking.
77. (Greek mythology) The winged goddess of the dawn in ancient mythology.
78. Used of a single unit or thing.
79. A bee that is a member of the genus *Andrena*.
80. A condition (mostly in boys) characterized by behavioral and learning disorders.

DOWN

1. Type genus of the Majidae.
2. The biblical name for ancient Syria.
3. Austrian physicist and philosopher who introduced the Mach number and who founded logical positivism (1838-1916).
4. A cut of pork ribs with much of the meat trimmed off.
5. Gradually decreasing in tempo and volume.
6. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
7. (law) The seat for judges in a courtroom.
8. The United Nations agency concerned with the interests of labor.
9. American landscape architect primarily responsible for the design of Central Park in New York City (1822-1903).
10. Fastener consisting of a resinous composition that is plastic when warm.
11. A monosaccharide sugar that contains the aldehyde group or is hemiacetal.
12. A feudal lord or baron in Scotland.
13. Freedom from difficulty or hardship or effort.
14. Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
19. An Arab country on the peninsula of Qatar.
24. Wild sheep of northern Africa.
26. A soft silver-white ductile metallic element (liquid at normal temperatures).
29. Speak in a nasal voice.
30. Agency of the United States government charged with mediating disputes between management and labor.
32. Noisy talk.
33. A native or inhabitant of Iran.
34. A small Asian country high in the Himalayas between India and Tibet.
36. (Irish) Mother of the Tuatha De Danann.
37. (Jungian psychology) The inner self (not the external persona) that is in touch with the unconscious.
39. Type genus of the Anatidae.
41. A close friend who accompanies his buddies in their activities.
43. A message received and understood that reduces the recipient's uncertainty.
45. A city in southern Turkey on the Seyhan River.
46. Of the common people of ancient Rome.
47. Knitted jacket that is fastened up the front with buttons or a zipper.
52. Widely distributed lichens usually having a grayish or yellow pendulous freely branched thallus.
54. A city in west central Washington on an arm of Puget Sound south of Seattle.
56. (slang) A gangster's pistol.
58. A manicurist who trims the fingernails.
61. A wealthy man (who made his fortune in the Orient).
62. A doctor's degree in musical arts.
64. Very dark black.
65. A golf shot that curves to the right for a right-handed golfer.
67. Fraught with extreme danger.
71. A digital display that uses liquid crystal cells that change reflectivity in an applied electric field.
72. A piece of furniture that provides a place to sleep.
73. A recurring sleep state during which dreaming occurs.
76. A light strong gray lustrous corrosion-resistant metallic element used in strong lightweight alloys (as for airplane parts).

Yesterday's Solution



STAR TRACK



Aries (March 21-April 19)

A touch of financial genius can result in phenomenally successful investments for yourself and others this Wednesday. This is a busy day with surprises at every turn. Because this is a fulfilling but tiring day, later this afternoon you may find yourself reorganizing a schedule so that you will not have to experience such a high stress level. You may be running a little late in getting home this evening but the changes you have made in your schedule will make life a little easier. A shared body massage with your mate is enjoyable this evening. From now until the end of the month, romance is a little more promising than usual. Take the time to build on your love relationship and make no demands for now.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You seem intuitive as you handle a difficult customer today. Co-workers may want to know what it was you said to calm the savage beast, so to speak. Progress is good and co-workers work well together. Young people in your family can enjoy some fun activity with your guidance this afternoon. Whether this activity is sports, shopping or a movie, it is not really important. The fact that you are sharing your time with each other is the glue that holds a family together. Stopping off at the library on the way home is a good way to occupy quiet time productively instead of television time. You encourage this activity of reading or listening to stories. Later, you and your family enjoy relaxing and talking about family traditions.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

After a busy day you may wish to stay at home and spend time in quiet solitude. You will probably find that someone close to you understands but will encourage you to get moving anyway. You are insightful and will find a way to arrange your day so that you can stop by a gym for a time. This will actually help you increase your energy level and become less sluggish. You will be happy to know that you will find your health improving as well. You may want to analyze whatever has caused the crowding of work so that it does not happen again. Problems with transportation and communication may not be helped-all is temporary. You have a chance to win a creative contest soon-you just have to be paying attention.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

Your professional life moves forward at a good pace. There are some lifestyle changes to adopt but you do better than most people when dealing with change. Too many changes at one time can be confusing and costly but one day at a time can accomplish many things. Expect a sense of support and good will from those around you. You may be moved to appreciate and discover the beauty in your life and in those around you. When there is a risk, you might spend more money than you have. Ask yourself if you can afford the energy that goes into paying off some particular item. You may meet someone new today, perhaps a potential friend. You will encourage each other in positive ways. Thrift is the order of the day, whether you like it or not.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

Good luck regarding money creates smiles for most of your day. Obtaining and exchanging information takes importance and you are finally able to fit a few perplexing pieces of a puzzling situation together. With better understanding you are able to communicate your true feelings and through your behavior you teach others. There are opportunities for you to become involved in issues surrounding law, medicine or business. Your charming personality wins others to your point of view. New ideas, causes and a desire to know where the next story, adventure or invention could take you, keep you busier than most. Separate yourself from your work when you are with your loved ones. This attitude helps you win friends and influence family.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

This is a day when you are much easier to understand. Perhaps you have conquered the task of learning a subject matter thoroughly. At any rate, you have become more confident and it shows. It is nice to have knowledge and facts behind you. Communication with authority figures is enhanced. Careful-ambitious schemes and the pursuit of success and status take on a high priority. This brings a focus on the practical, the successful, the pragmatic-whatever it takes to get you ahead in the end. Seek your successes with civility. This evening brings about opportunities to draw close to friends and to have a special time with someone you love. This calls for marshmallows over an open fire, card games or watching a movie at home.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

A task may be assigned to you today that stretches what you think are your capabilities. Do not turn this assignment down; you will be pleasantly pleased at the result of your efforts. Investments are encouraged. Business dealings and the work of this day progress very well. Mental resiliency is the word for this afternoon. This evening, your instincts and energies tend to be headed in the direction of cleaning, repairing and updating some of your belongings. This would be a good time to check your list for insurance coverage. You may not feel that you have time to goof off with your friends until you are happy with the results of this or some other personal project. Your concentration in the home place is in having things clean and comfortable.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Life is so exciting. Someday soon we will have the capabilities of deciphering stardust. You may decide that now is the time to encompass and encourage experiments with consumable items for space flight-perhaps a study of nutrition in space. This is the time to schedule trimming trees, bushes and perhaps the planting of trees. Work is full of opportunities to promote growth and home beckons for your creative hand. Distractions happen but they are well within your control. You are in a good mood and determined that everyone around you will share your enthusiasm. You are feeling lucky, self-confident and very pleased that you have chosen this time of the earth's development to enter into the scene of insights, discovery and development.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Because you are so versatile, you succeed at anything you set your mind to accomplish-today is no exception. Ideas, communication, encouragement and encouraging others seem to be the trend now. Patience in the workplace will bring rewards today. Gossip can destroy everything you have set up for yourself-don't. Petty quarrels can be identified and eliminated quickly. You are interested in short-term education classes or in learning by some recorded device. This might include lessons toward a better memory or better concentration skills. Good for you-this will impact your life in positive ways. Now consider a little volunteer work. Think of all the good you could spread around. There are some unexpected rewards yet to be enjoyed in your life.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

A little moody perhaps, but mostly you are tuned in to your surroundings and understanding of others. There is an instinctive urge to gain notice for your work and you go about your day to succeed beyond the usual. You are very successful at what you undertake, and to become known for your work, you may want to write a report on the results or steps to the end result. You are in a period of high-achievement and will see much progress toward the goals you are trying to reach. At times you enjoy planning social affairs. You love beautiful events instead of the relaxed lazy sort of affairs so you seriously consider a special gathering that will give people an opportunity to wear costumes. Prizes could be donated if the party becomes a community affair.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

Work projects take on a greater importance. You can expect your support system to be strong and reliable. A move in the right direction will bring activities in the workplace to a positive, more modern type of environment. This may mean new equipment, but more than likely a whole new building in which to conduct business. Beginning a diet or a nutritional program today or tomorrow would be good. The energies surrounding this decision help you to be productive. If you are looking to change your weight, keep notes and then you will be able to see where you can make positive changes to get you the results you want and to also maintain your goal. Tonight is for reading and staying updated on the latest scientific developments.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

Your production level at work is good and higher-ups are noticing your overall improvement. Keep up the good work-rewards are near. Easy on the emotions today; an irritating person is pushing the limits with you but it is not something you can do anything about so just keep moving forward. Find some other space to move your concentration into for a time. Think about what the scene you are looking at now would look like if you put the scene on canvas. Your sense of humor is good and will come into play to create a good end for this moment in time. A yearning to broaden your horizons may find you involved in a travel book this afternoon. Something you do out of fun this evening is contagious.

WORD SEARCH

Nursing Home 1

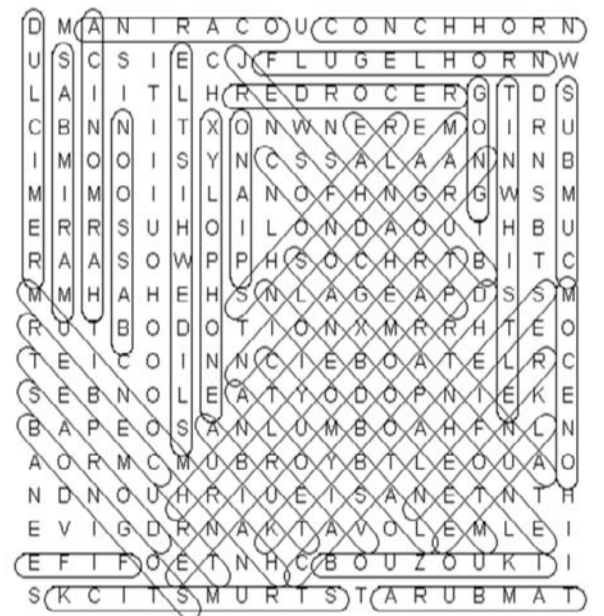
Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 47 letters spell a Mother Theresa quotation.



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| ACTIVITIES | COMFORT | HELP | OUTINGS | SING ALONG |
| AIDES | DENTURES | INCONTINENCE | PET THERAPY | SLEEPING PILL |
| ASPIRIN | DINING ROOM | LAUNDRY | PHYSIOTHERAPIST | STAFF MEETINGS |
| BATHROOM | DOCTOR | LINERS | PUZZLES | SUPPER |
| BEDRAIL | DRUGS | MAGAZINES | READING | TABLES |
| BEDS | EXERCISE | MEDICAL GLOVES | RESIDENTS | TELEVISION |
| BOARD GAMES | FALLS | MEMORY LOSS | ROUNDS | TRANSFER BELT |
| BULLETIN BOARD | FLU SHOT | MOISTURIZER | SCRABBLE | URINAL |
| CANE | FRAIL | MUSIC | SCRUBS | VOLUNTEERS |
| CARE | GLUCOSE METER | HAIRDRESSER | NEEDLE | WANDERING |
| CHARTS | HALLWAYS | NURSES | SHAVE | WHEELCHAIR |
| | | | SHOWER | |

Yesterday's Solution

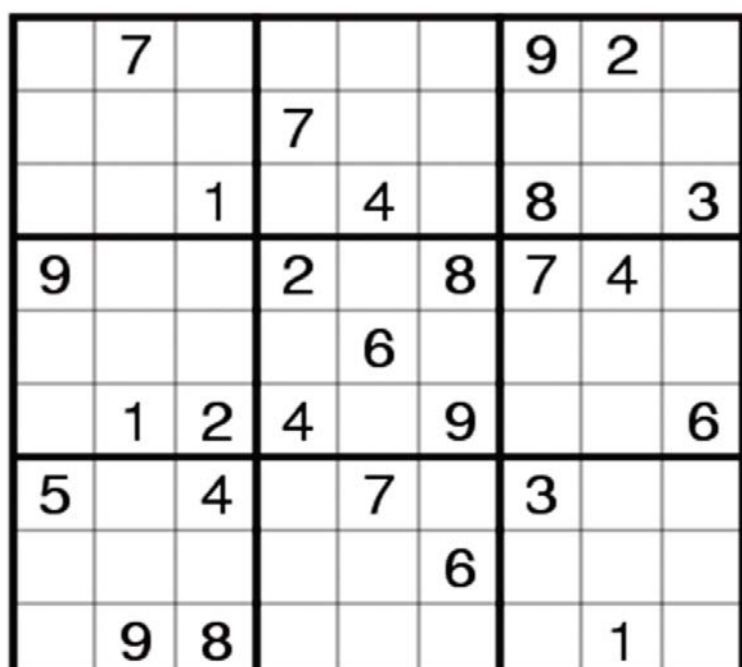
Musical Instruments 2



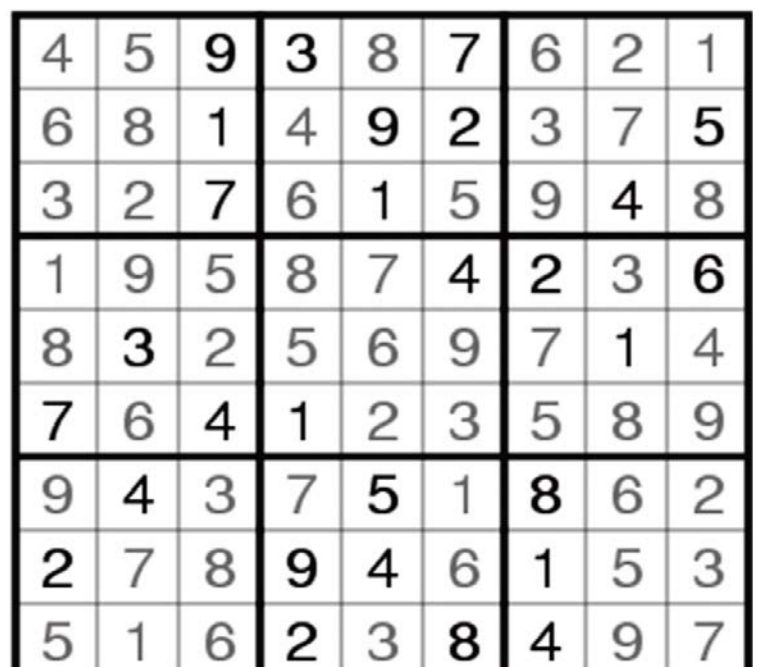
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| BONGOS | FLUGELHORN | MELODEON | SLIDE WHISTLE |
| BOUZOUKI | GONG | MOCENO | STRUMSTICK |
| BUGLE | HARMONICA | NEFER | TAMBOURINE |
| CASTANETS | HARMONIUM | OCARINA | TAMBURA |
| CONCERTINA | HUNTING HORN | PIANO | TIN WHISTLE |
| CONCH HORN | JEWIS' HARP | REBEC | TRUMPET |
| CLIMBUS | KEYBOARD | RECORDE | TUBA |
| CYMBAL | LUTE | SAROD | VIOLA |
| DULCIMER | MANDOLIN | SAXOPHONE | XYLOPHONE |

Hidden sentence: MUSIC WITH DINNER IS AN INSULT BOTH TO THE COOK AND THE VIOLINIST

Daily SuDoku



Yesterday's Solution



Colours of Australia

STUDENT ART COMPETITION

CATEGORY 14 YEARS & ABOVE



Australia art competition, tool for learning the culture

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Hassan Al-Majed from Al-Ruaya School won the first prize for the 6-9 category. He is eight-years-old and loves art and participated with great enthusiasm. "I don't expect to win, I just want to participate," he said through his mother Mariam Al-Failakawi. "I was surprised to hear my name. I am very happy," he said.

Hassan won a gift from the Australian Embassy which he has been dreaming of. "He has been insisting us to buy him the Play Station. I don't give what he demands for easily to teach him the importance of patience. That is what my policy is, to get things on their own merit," said Mariam. Mariam is an art collector herself. She also paints and does a lot of paper craft and collages images. "This is my hobby too. I am happy that Hassan is following my



1 Isra Hamdullah - New Pakistan School



2 Sara Mohammed Al-Shati - Omama Bent Beshar



3 Qassem Ahmed Al-Hwaj - Saleh Shehab School



4 Abd Al-Rahman Ahmed Mohammed - Khalifa Talal Al-Gare



5 Abo Amaan Pal - Indian Center School



6 Angel Tereesa - Gulf English School



7 Dana Hussain Ghulum Hussain - Omama Bent Bisher



8 Laial Al-Harb - English School of Pakistan



9 Esraa Ahmed Hamed Saleem - Faraa Bent Abi Al-Sult



10 Ibrahim Hafe - New Pakistan International School

Colours of Australia

STUDENT ART COMPETITION

SPECIAL EFFORT



Anfal Bo Hamad - Anfal Group



Aya Karem Abdel Hamed - Al-Ekhlis School



Meshary Abul - Kuwait English School



Aysha Mohammed Al-Khataib - Al-Ekhlis School



Myoungiae Son - Kuwait English School



Jumana Kamel Aljahed - Al-Ekhlis School



Minjae Son - Kuwait English School

footsteps. Also I have an art center, that teaches children how to do it, and the importance of art in our lives," she said.

The second winner is eight-year-old Nemah Hamza Abu-Ain from Al-Qutoof School. She also likes drawing. "Maybe her art instinct was influenced by her father. He is an engineer," said her mother. "We read a lot about Australia. We discuss about it and then she paints alone, with the help of our ideas," the

my teacher who helped me a lot," he said. She admitted that she has never been to Australia, but has seen Australia in many movies and kids programs. "I searched pictures of Australia on the web with the help of my teacher, and then started drawing," said Mouradian.

Houry Nalbandian, the art teacher from Armenian School recalled how she was able to relay the facts about Australia. "The best thing about joining

kids and based on that they formed an art for the contest," she said.

Dr. Jesusa Cristina V. Puno, School Principal of the New Kuwait Philippines International School was also happy to participate in the competition. "70 students participated from our school and many of them have already won in other contests. One of them is Lexine Jimmel Lunday. She bagged a prize. My students are wild readers they learned so much about Australia through social studies, so, from that they can be a valuable part of the society. They read books as well as research more about it on the internet," Dr Puno mentioned.

Warda Nabil from International School of Pakistan, won the third prize in the competition for 10-13 years old category. She is an artist by heart. She started this as a hobby when she was three, and become too fascinated by cartoon characters when she was 10. "I draw a lot of cartoon characters; I love ponies so I have many of those in my drawings. At first, I loved drawing the character 'sonic', now, I have the fascination of dragons, so I draw a lot of dragons, they are beautiful," she said.

On drawing about Australia, she said she had to research a lot online. "When I research about Australia, I not only see the pictures. I read a lot, so I've learned many things about Australia which I haven't learned yet. Then from those pictures, I used my imagination to draw a sunset near the opera house and the famous bridge. In my drawing you'll see a beautiful combination of the sunset in the colors red, orange and yellow," she said. Her mother has been her mentor and inspiration.



mother told Kuwait Times.

Third winner Sonia Anna Mouradian, from Armenian school in Surrah, said that her drawing is a colorful reflection of Australia. "My drawing comprises major composition about Australia. The kangaroo and koala are my favorite and I added the opera house. Thank you to

the contest is the fact that we were able to introduce ourselves to the Australian culture. We learned a lot about Australia. Australia is not only about the Opera House in Sydney, koalas or kangaroos. I researched about the country, and I found many interesting facts and stories about Australia. I shared it with the

Kuwait Times

Would like to extend its sincere gratitude to

H.E Warren Huak

Australian Ambassador to Kuwait

Dr. Osama A-Jamal

ACK

الكلية الأسترالية في الكويت
Australian College of Kuwait

Ms. Hessa Alsabe

VIVA

Mr. Antoine Fluty

CROWNE PLAZA

KUWAIT AL THURAYA CITY

Jury Members

Elanour Hale

Abd Al-Kareem Al-Enizi

Svetlana Arndit

People work behind the screen,
schools and students who participated.

FEATURES



A camerawoman makes adjustments prior to a photo and video fashion shoot with Ukrainian model Alexandra Kutas, who is in a wheelchair from a very early age due to a spinal cord injury resulting from a doctor's mistake at birth, in Kiev. — AFP photos



Ukrainian model Alexandra Kutas poses during a photo and video fashion shoot in Kiev.



Ukrainian model Alexandra Kutas, presents a creation during a fashion show of Ukrainian fashion designer Fedir Vozyanov, during the Ukrainian Fashion Week in Kiev.

Ukraine's first wheelchair model breaks taboos

When Alexandra Kutas headlined a recent fashion show in Kiev it was not just a personal dream come true but also a victory for disabled people in her homeland Ukraine.

Wearing a long, black dress, she wowed the crowd as she was carried across the catwalk on a wooden throne by four trim men, becoming the first model with a disability to take the lead in a high-profile event in the country. "I had the idea that I wanted to do a catwalk and show that a girl in a wheelchair can be perceived as a first-class professional", she told AFP.

For 23-year-old Kutas, it was the latest stage in a long journey. In a wheelchair since birth due to cerebral palsy, she had struggled for years to make it as a model in the ex-Soviet state where disabled people all too often get left behind. Kutas sent letters to modeling agencies-but the response was always the same polite refusals. "They told me that I am very pretty, but they do not know how to promote me because the market is still not ready for this", says Kutas.

'Huge inspiration'

Kutas was born in Dnipro city, in the east of Ukraine, and went to an ordinary school. It was a bold step to take in 2000, when inclusive education was rare. There were no ramps or elevators for special needs children in schools, so Kutas's father or

grandfather had to carry her up the stairs so that she could study with the other children. "Yes, it was difficult, but it is generally difficult to be a person with limited physical mobility in our country. Everyone knows that," Kutas says. In 2012, Kutas was having lunch in a cafe when a photographer approached her and asked if she wanted to become a model.

She agreed and loved the process of having her picture taken so much that she soon began looking for other photographers to work with. "When I realized that I wanted to do this, there did not seem to be a single model with a disability in the world", Kutas says, recalling how she conducted a search for role models to follow and found none. And then she suddenly came across a 1999 show of Alexander McQueen, the late British designer, where Aimee Mullins, a world-class Paralympic athlete, modeled in his statuesque and beautiful prosthetic legs. "It was a huge stimulus for me, a huge inspiration. I wondered why, if it was possible back then, in 1999, why it could not be possible now for a girl in the wheelchair?" When the Italian house FTL Moda invited models with disabilities to participate in New York Fashion Week recently, Kutas felt that the world was finally ready for a change.

'Potential is hidden'

Fedir Vozyanov, a 55-year-old Ukrainian designer, never expected the domestic market to be ready for such a dramatic change. But when he met Kutas and saw her confidence, Vozyanov says he understood that he, himself, was willing to give it a go. "People are not all the same-we are all different in this world", Vozyanov says. "It would be strange to cut a part of this world off at the podium."

Today Kutas is not only a rising model, but also an adviser to the mayor in her native city. She helps to adapt the city to the needs of disabled people, which is especially important due to the conflict between government forces and Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine's east that has claimed more than 10,000 lives and wounded 23,000 people. "I know that now is the moment that Ukraine simply cannot miss", she says. "It is always possible to grow, to evolve, to do something. The main thing is to create the conditions for these people whose great potential is hidden". — AFP



Ukrainian model Alexandra Kutas looks in a mirror prior to a photo and video fashion shoot in Kiev.

RIO CARNIVAL FANTASY HIDES DIRTY REALITY

Rio's Sambodromo parades are a fantasy of beautiful bodies and dreamlike costumes but the self-declared greatest show on Earth is prepared in a dirty street next to an open sewer. The contrast between what happens inside Rio de Janeiro's specially built samba stadium and just outside encapsulates the confounding, often tragic contradictions of Brazil. Inside, watched by 70,000 paying fans, the samba schools marched all night Monday into yesterday in a stunning blend of military precision, wild imagination and sexual energy.

Thousands upon thousands of performers turned the runway into a river of sequins, feathers, physics-defying floats, g-strings, and flesh oiled up to shine in the bright lights. Only minutes before though, these same dancers had been standing around in a filthy, poorly lit stretch of Avenida Presidente Vargas, which runs alongside one of Rio's many dead waterways, stagnant with raw sewage and other pollution. "In the Sambodromo, it's a dream and that's the whole point," said Georgina de Oliveira, a 62-year-old maid, as she waited in a long line for a fetid portable toilet on the avenue. "But here we're in reality. Here it's not a dream."

Beauty and the beast

Avenida Presidente Vargas is where each samba school gathers its approximately 3,500 performers before parading. Final assembly is done to floats, costumes are donned, make-up put on and each wing of dancers and drummers marshaled into position. The avenue is drab and lined with graffiti. An imposing building, once a

teaching hospital, sits abandoned and partly gutted, the faded sign at the entrance still reading: "Serving the community." During the days of carnival, the street is temporarily transformed, thronged with bizarre costumes, and pulsating with joyful music.

Late Sunday, African warriors came running by, a section of men dressed as knives and forks shuffled to the side, and three leggy women fiddled with their tiny, sparkling substitutes for underwear. An enormous man dressed as an emperor of some kind scrolled through his cellphone. Behind the performers, many of whom sat on the ground alongside their ungainly costumes, waited the crazy floats—a seahorse as big as a bus, a herd of golden camels, an entire Arab palace. It would have been momentarily easy to forget reality if it hadn't been for the combined smell of the canal, the portable toilets and gutters filled with urine and beer.

Silver linings

City authorities say that carnival brings about \$1 billion in extra revenue to Rio. That wealth clearly doesn't go toward facilities for the Sambodromo's makeshift backstage, let alone installing a sewage system in neighborhoods around the stadium. Still, a little wealth trickles down to the poor. Jonathan Torres Ribeiro, who says he's been collecting aluminum cans from the street since he was a child, does well at parade time. The revelers litter Avenida Presidente Vargas with beer and Coke cans, so the 23-year-old soon fills a large plastic bag. With 24 hours' work, he says, he'll make about 500 reais (\$160) —

10 times more than he would on a normal day.

The main difficulty? Hauling that bag through all the people dressed as sun gods, vegetables, fish and the like. "It's really hard to get through," he said. Just on the far bank of the stinking canal, free seats are available for people who want to watch the samba schools set off down the avenue before turning into the Sambodromo. Elaine Pereira da Costa, 60, shook her head sadly when asked how the same city could feature such splendor and squalor within touching distance of each other.

"The government just wants its money and that's the end of the story," she said, echoing most Brazilians' contempt for their corruption-riddled leaders. "They could see you standing here holding your nose and they wouldn't care." But when the Uniao da Ilha samba school, which had been prepping for hours on Avenida Presidente Vargas, suddenly started moving, da Costa's expression changed. "Look how beautiful it is," she said to her sister in law as a legion of people in butterfly costumes set off in perfect synchronization. "Mother of God, how beautiful it is." — AFP



Performers from the Mocidade samba school parade during Carnival celebrations at the Sambadrome in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, yesterday. — AP/AFP photos



A performer from the Portela samba school parades on a float.

'Wolverine' braves Taiwan's stinky tofu

Actor Hugh Jackman has not turned his nose up at the chance to sample Taiwan's famous snack "stinky tofu" as he tours Taipei to promote his last film in the superhero "Wolverine" franchise. Jackman and Patrick Stewart arrived in the Taiwanese capital over the weekend for the local premiere of "Logan," which sees Wolverine reunited with his ailing father figure Professor X and introduced to Laura, the mutant daughter created in a Mexican lab. Thousands of fans-some dressed up as the blade-fingered superhero character-thronged the landmark Taipei 101 skyscraper late Monday to see Jackman, who later ventured into the city armed with local food recommendations.

"We went to the night market last night. It was so much fun. We had stinky tofu ... It's not as stinky as I thought," Jackman told a press conference yesterday. Joking that he is "part Taiwanese" to explain his convincing pronunciation of "stinky tofu" in Mandarin, Jackman said his late night feast had also included another favorite Taiwanese snack-skewers of chicken hearts. Both actors were given Taiwanese puppets in the likeness of their X-Men characters. "Logan" premiered at the Berlin Film Festival earlier this month and hit cinemas in Taiwan yesterday ahead of its United States release on March 3. — AFP



Australian actor Hugh Jackman admires a Wolverine puppet gift during a press conference for the film 'Logan' in Taipei yesterday. — AFP

'Moonlight' win ignites hope in historic Miami ghetto

Too often, the stories portrayed in the news around the crumbling pastel apartment units in Miami's Liberty City tell of violence and bloodshed, of young lives cut short by drugs or guns. But the movie "Moonlight," which won three Oscars including the top best picture prize, has inspired hope that new narratives can emerge from this impoverished area, which was once a source of pride for those who live here. "A lot of people think that our community is a bad community, and it is not," said Natalie Joy Baldie, artistic director of the Performing and Visual Arts Center at Miami Northwestern Senior High School, the alma mater of director Barry Jenkins and where three students were recruited for minor roles in the film.

"We are tough, we are smart, we are talented, we are gifted and we do what we need to do," she told AFP. "We just need our children to see the positive aspect of Liberty City. And great things do come out of Liberty City, as you saw last night." Not only was the film the first movie made in Miami to win the Academy Award for best picture, it also earned Mahershala Ali accolades for best supporting actor-the first Oscar ever for a Muslim actor. "Moonlight" also won the Oscar for best adapted screenplay. The movie is based on a play by Tarell McCraney-titled "In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue"-which he has described as a semi-autobiographical account of events from his own life, growing up gay in Liberty City.

'70 years of trauma'

Jenkins also grew up in the same public housing project, which was built in 1937 and is the oldest in the United States. "It was the first segregated public housing anywhere in the United States," said Moses Shumow, assistant professor in the department of communications at Florida International University. Shumow has made a documentary about the area, showcasing the happy memories of longtime residents who moved in hoping for a better life.

His documentary also shows the struggles Liberty City has endured, ranging from segregation and the inability of residents to secure home loans, to racially-tinted riots in the 1980s and the crack cocaine epidemic. "Here is a community that didn't undergo a moment of trauma, but rather 70 years of trauma," he told AFP. Historians say some of the troubles of Miami's black community stem from the construction of major highways decades ago that cut through what were cohesive neighborhoods and drove poverty in those areas.

Due to the surging violence around Liberty City, with seven deaths and 43 shootings in 2015 alone, Miami Mayor Carlos Gimenez decided to redevelop the heart of the project, known as Liberty Square. Many changes lie ahead for the area. But looking back, "Moonlight" — which featured an all-black cast-earned praise for penetrating the inner lives of its characters as they fought against stereotypes, addiction, heartbreak and poverty.

"I don't think it puts a gloss on the reality, but it

moves beyond that, raising questions of sexuality and questions of poverty and how do you escape and what does it mean for you?" Shumow said. "To me, it is just so positive that a different kind of story could emerge. And that it is getting global recognition."

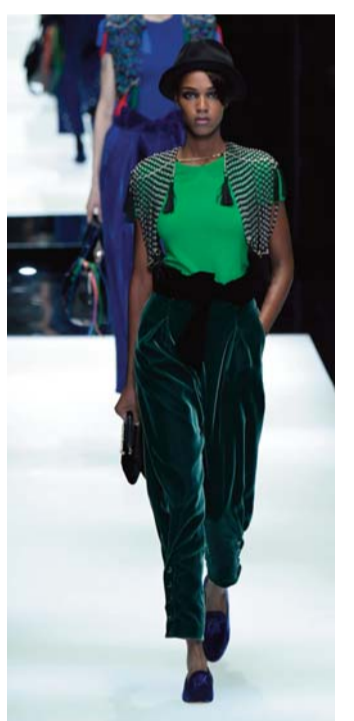
Vulnerable characters

Hollywood has been accused of overlooking black actors and films in past award seasons, making the timing of "Moonlight" and its trio of Academy Awards even more important for the African American community. It shows characters with depth and flaws, like the Cuban drug dealer played by Ali, who acts as a sensitive father figure to a bullied boy but looks ashamed when the child confronts him about selling drugs to his mother. "There is a tenderness and a vulnerability in the characters that we have not seen certainly coming from Hollywood and major film studios," said Anthony Browne, chair of the department of Africana and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies at Hunter College in New York.—AFP



Natalie Baldie, artistic director of the Performing and Visual Arts Center (PAVAC) at Miami Northwestern Senior High School, the alma mater of 'Moonlight' director Barry Jenkins and where several students were recruited for minor roles in the film, is pictured in Miami, Florida. — AFP

MILAN DESIGNERS ANNOUNCE A RETURN TO READY-TO-WEAR ELEGANCE



Models pose at the end of the show for fashion house Giorgio Armani during the Women's Fall/Winter 2017/2018 fashion week in Milan, on February 27, 2017. — AFP photos



The Milan Fashion Week previews that concluded Monday announced a return to more formal dress, confirming a trend seen on the red carpet at the Oscars the night before. Milan designers indulged in fringe, beading and elegant lines. Dark colors prevailed, but were tempered with bursts of tangerine, turquoise, icy blue and greens as seasons continue to blur on fashion runways. Some highlights from the last day of fall/winter shows, anchored by Giorgio Armani:

Irreverent, inventive Armani

Giorgio Armani may be known for his jackets, but trousers were the headliners of his ultra-elegant collection for next fall and winter. The designer's notes didn't offer a vocabulary for a new silhouette that smartly merges trousers with a skirt, but said the collection invokes "a new adaptation of the Armani style: free, aware, subtly irreverent." The look was an evolution of the tulip trouser introduced some seasons ago, updated for the new collection with a sweeping skirt in the shape of twin tulip petals that meld seamlessly into a snug pant leg.

The skirt element of the combination was mostly pleated, and the trouser legs, visible from behind, sometimes were done in contrasting colors - red on black, for example. That particular pairing was completed with a red blouse with a standing ruffle that framed the face, a two-button blazer and bowler hat. Pleating details were repeated on three-dimensional bell cuffs and high Victorian-like necklines. Another new silhouette was a bell-shaped top, working as a tunic over silky trousers or layered over a longer skirt for an evening dress. The color palette included a lot of red and black combos, segueing into colorful green and blues or red and purples. Velvet and furs created volumes and softness. The final look was a shimmering multi-color drop-waist gown worn with a crystal-studded head scarf and long beads for a refined hippy look.

Power through positivity at Versace

Donatella Versace has long promoted the power women through her uncompromising fashion. On Friday in Milan, she did it again. Emblazoned on her creations for next fall were key words: Solidarity; Equality; Courage; Unity. The words were embroidered on sheer layers peeking out from under black wool skirts. On the sleeves of blouses. And most symbolically, on patches placed on knit hats that recall the caps worn at recent demonstrations by women across the United States. Versace's hats weren't pink and didn't have cat ears, but the sentiment was unmistakable.

The Versace woman for next season is unapologetically streetwise. She wears a hoodie under her down-to-business suit, refusing to compromise her knowledge, the very definition of equality. "This is a collection about the power of women, and women who know how to use their power," Versace said in her notes. Versace tapped into all aspects of a woman's life, from work to play to evening. There were suits for the work day, but always with a streetwear edge, such as a cropped sweater with an open blazer and cropped pants. There were sexy body-hugging dresses that can transition from day to night. And there were pretty floral dresses that had a vaguely battle-fatigue camouflage effect. Sheepskin jackets are fitted, to show the curves. Versace said the collection "is a call for unity, and the strength that comes from positivity and hope." Model Naomi Campbell and Formula One driver Lewis Hamilton took in the show from the front row.

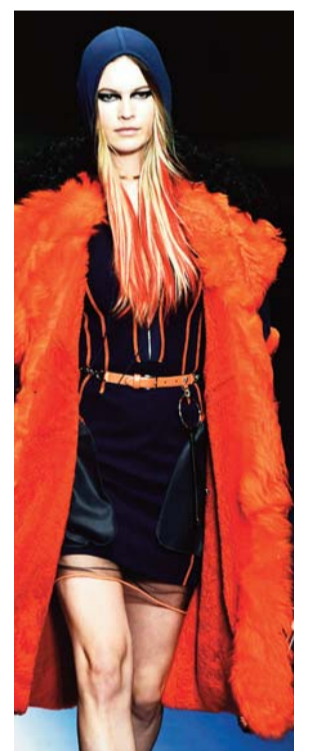
Seduction explored - and questioned - at Prada

Miuccia Prada officially disavows connecting fashion with politics. So let's let the clothes speak for her. Her latest collection had clear echoes of the protest movement of the 1970s,

interwoven with references to today's protests asserting the rights of women and native peoples. Prada's theme: Seduction, and questioning its relevance. And the implicit question: Is this all deja vu all over again? Of course if you ask Prada, she will deny it all. And yet: Crocheted bras spoke to a woman's handiwork and suggested a bygone protest era when women shed theirs, even burned them. Furry parkas with full hoods and Eskimo boots, beaded accents and trailing feathers referenced Native American cultures still fighting for control over their resources.

Prada said the collection took off from her menswear looks shown in January, just days before the US presidential inauguration. The male figure was her starting point "with the idea, with too much power. . . And to get back to reality, to people, to a more sensitive atmosphere." And she did that with decidedly feminine forms and materials. There were mohair dresses with a mermaid ruffle below the knees, crepe dresses with beading and feather accents and satiny gowns with knee-high red boots, clearly made for walking. But there were also marabout feathered slippers.

"Me personally, my point was seduction. How necessary is seduction: Do we use the same instruments as 50 years ago? Women want to appeal and be beautiful, but how if you are intelligent?" Prada asked, adding that this is "an argument that was never discussed and probably we should discuss again." There was handcrafted knitwear, while tweed and corduroy showed the more assertive, even homely, side. Seduction is, after all, all in the eye of the beholder. — AP



Models present creations for fashion house Prada.

Models present creations for fashion house Versace.

Lifestyle

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2017

Ukraine's first wheelchair model breaks taboos

38



Emirati men walk with their camels across the dunes in the Rimah desert, west of Al-Ain in the United Arab Emirates. — AFP

As Olympics loom, China plunges into snow biz

Hao Rui only took up skiing this winter, but the 17-year-old looked like a veteran as he perched casually atop a slope outside Beijing before schussing downhill. "I started my training on November 28. I'd never been skiing before," said Hao, standing with other young Chinese in brightly coloured ski jackets at a resort in Zhangjiakou, outside Beijing. For some it is a skill that takes years to hone, but already Hao is teaching others. "Since the end of January, I've been an instructor," he explained. China hopes millions of others can follow in his tracks. Beijing will host the 2022 Winter Olympics and authorities want to leverage interest in that to develop a winter sports culture.

Skiing is in its infancy in China and the powder on the slopes is typically shot out of a snow machine. Only around 5-6 million Chinese ski regularly, at roughly 200 sites around the country, most of them small and under-equipped. But China has ambitious plans to raise that to 300 million skiers at 1,000 locations by 2030, eyeing the economic potential of more resorts and greater spending on the sport.

Fake snow

The strategy is challenged by issues such as low snowfall. The Yan mountains, the future Olympic arena, barely reach 2,000 meters (6,600 feet) and have received only a few natural snowflakes this year. And also the fact that the costs for this sport exceed the reach of most Chinese consumers. Yet new resorts already are sprouting across northern China. Catering mainly to novices, the pistes are as wide as gentle sloping highways and well-groomed. Safety is a priority—especially after two recent fatal accidents at resorts near Zhangjiakou. The approach appears to be working, as weekend skiers flock to slopes outside Beijing covered in artificially produced snow.

The wealthiest Chinese can venture to Japan, the



This photos show skiers at a ski field in Zhangjiakou, one of the venues for the 2022 Winter Olympics, in China's northern Hebei province. — AFP photos

United States or Europe, but it is possible to find an international experience at home, with increasing numbers of foreign instructors. Thaiwoo resort near Zhangjiakou has 16 foreigners among its 60 instructors. The shortage of natural snowfall is not a huge problem because the artificial kind works well in this region, said Bertrand Camus, a French ski instructor who has followed the sport's rise in China.

"The weather is dry and constantly cold throughout the winter—the snow remains good," added Camus who contrasted it with the poor performance of artificial snow in some European resorts. "It's not like the Alps, where the snow is always melting and refreezing," he explained.

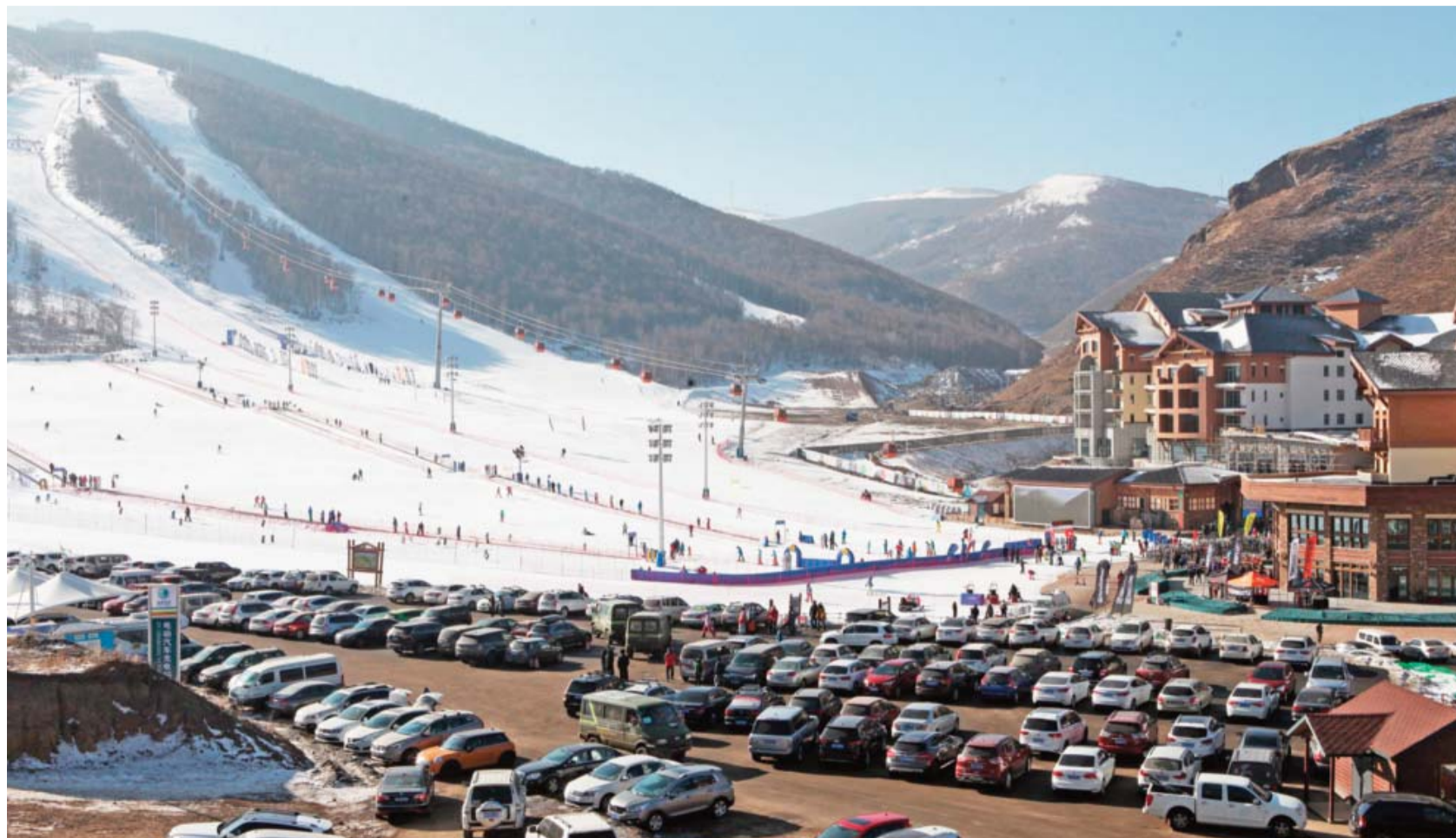
A 30-year-old dentist who gave only his surname Wang said he is a regular at Wanlong, the biggest ski resort near Zhangjiakou. "With (China's) economic development, a lot of Chinese have made a lot of money. These people are passionate about novelties," he said.

'The air is clean'

Wang frequently rises at 5:30 am for the three-hour drive from his Beijing home, 200 kilometers (125 miles) away. To make it easier—and to escape Beijing's notorious smog—he recently bought an apartment in Chongli, a large town near Wanlong. "It is much better

here than in Beijing, the air is clean," he said, pointing at blue skies on a day when the capital was shrouded in smog. Wanlong remains too pricey for many Chinese, with a lift pass costing at least 450 yuan (\$65), rising on holidays and weekends, when rooms at the few nearby hotels can go for 1,500 yuan per night.

Nine-year-old Tingting spent an entire month with her parents at one of Wanlong's most expensive hotels during the lengthy Lunar New Year holiday at the end of January, skiing for five straight days. "I never get bored (with skiing)," she said. — AFP



Skiers at a ski resort in Zhangjiakou, one of the venues for the 2022 Winter Olympics, in China's northern Hebei province.



Skiers at a ski field in Zhangjiakou, one of the venues for the 2022 Winter Olympics, in China's northern Hebei province.



Skiers at a ski field in Zhangjiakou, one of the venues for the 2022 Winter Olympics, in China's northern Hebei province.